



Cabinet

9 January 2018

**Options for Tree Protection and Promotion in
Rushcliffe**

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Report of the Executive Manager – Communities

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community and Leisure Councillor D J Mason

1. Summary

- 1.1. Tree protection and promotion is an issue often raised by Councillors and the wider public particularly as the Council supports significant housing and employment growth across the Borough.
- 1.2. Council resolved on 5 March 2015 that Cabinet investigate the possibility of a trees and woodlands policy in consultation with the Community Development Group and this resulted in the inclusion of a tree and woodland section in the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in November 2015.
- 1.3. Council on 13 March 2017, discussed the tree policy, where it was confirmed that this was included within the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and that the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy was not a planning policy but would be treated as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications.
- 1.4. Community Development Group was asked to consider further options for action and they have now met on 22 August 2017 and 21 November 2017 to consider new initiatives.
- 1.5. The outcome of these discussions includes a table of further opportunities for the Council, to support tree planting and protection, as detailed in the attached appendix. Whilst several actions can be contained within existing work there are also several actions that would require further council financial support equating to about £17,000 per annum.
- 1.6. The Community Development Group recommended that Cabinet support the table of actions and considers the creation of a three year tree budget of £50,000 to support this initiative. If this initiative is agreed the Community Development Group further recommended that they should receive an annual report on progress to ensure the required objectives of planting more trees and protecting where possible existing trees is being achieved.

2. **Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Endorse the table of actions detailed in Appendix 1
- b) Approve a three year £50,000 revenue budget commencing in April 2018 to support the new initiatives detailed in Appendix 1
- c) Request that annual monitoring reports on activity levels be presented to the Community Development Group.

3. **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. To consider how the Community Development Group resolution of 21 November 2017 should be implemented.

4. **Implications**

4.1. **Finance**

An allocation of £50,000 over three years is proposed and this will represent growth in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Full Council in March 2018.

4.2. **Legal**

Supports the duty of the council in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, enacted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

4.3. **Corporate Priorities**

This supports two of the priorities of the Council's Corporate strategy:

- Supporting economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy
- Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life

For more information contact:	<p>Dave Mitchell Executive Manager – Communities 0115 914 8267 dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk</p>
Background papers Available for Inspection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the Meeting of the Council - Thursday 5 March 2015 • Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet - Tuesday 10 November 2015 • Minutes of the Meeting of the Council - Thursday 2 March 2017 • Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Development Group - Tuesday 22 August 2017 • Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Development Group - Tuesday 21 November 2017
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix A - Tree options November 2017

Appendix A: Tree options November 2017

Enforcement		Budget
TPO	i) Training in TPO for councillors / parishes ii) Councillors and Parishes to notify suitable trees to Landscapes Officer (could be supported by Tree Wardens, see below)	Existing
Planning	Include policies in Local plan part 2 e.g. "All planning applications will be considered with reference to the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy"	No budget required
Community Infrastructure Levy	Establish a community Infrastructure levy to provide funds for tree planting / ecological enhancements, via planning gain from development sites that are unable to mitigate their ecological requirements on site.	Existing
Promotion		
Rushcliffe Grants	i) Specimen trees / gateway trees to villages (potential new grant for small number of trees in prominent positions similar to the previous parish grant / cricket willow grant) ii) Existing Rushcliffe Biodiversity Management Grant (will support tree planting of native trees e.g. in hedgerows or open spaces for nature conservation purposes) iii) Community Support Scheme, councillors can allocate, funding from their community support scheme allocation to tree planting	New Budget required - £5000 pa Existing or increase of £1000 to expand Existing Members budget
Free tree scheme	Public supply of trees (possibly as per a scheme run by North West Leicestershire District Council see https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/news/2017/09/27/bring_life_and_colour_to_the_district_through_free_tree_scheme)	New budget required - £10,000 (based on 13,500 trees supplied, as per NWLDC at 50p each plus admin costs)
Other Grants	Links to the Woodland Trust grants and Forestry Commission grants are given on the Rushcliffe Borough Council website. This information can also be shared at events and was published in the 'trees for life' article in the spring 2016 Rushcliffe Reports. Further publicity for these grants can be generated.	No budget required
Tree Charter	Woodland Trust campaign to promote to build a future in which trees and people stand stronger together. Action can be as simple as signing up to receive free copies of the Tree Charter's newspaper "Leaf!" to gathering signatures of support, to more imaginative projects and activities around trees (e.g. apple fairs or tree days), for which funding of up to £1500 is available.	Existing budget
Hedge Tree Campaign	Tree council campaign to mark saplings with easy-to-see tags, so that they can be avoided when cutting hedges. This can be promoted via publicity and volunteer schemes.	Existing budget
Tree Wardens	The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. The scheme was founded and is co-ordinated by The Tree Council.	£500 p.a. required

	<p>Tree Wardens are volunteers, appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods.</p> <p>This is a scheme we could promote through the parish network and organisations in the urban area and support by organising training, wardens could help identify opportunities for promotion, planting and protection.</p>	
Forum	<p>i) Parish Forum – promotion of opportunities for parishes to promote, plant and protect trees, including all the items above. Use County landscape assessment to identify opportunities for each parish.</p> <p>ii) Landowners Forum - promotion of opportunities for landowners to promote, plant and protect trees, including all the items above, working with NFU, IDB, Small Woodland Owners Group, Rushcliffe Business Partnership etc.</p>	<p>Existing budget</p> <p>Existing budget</p>
Highways trees	Discussions with Highways England and NCC about verge management are ongoing. Including volunteer verge management	Existing or possibly £500 p.a.
Community Awards	Ensure there are awards for environmental actions including tree planting / promotion / protection – Could be called the Paul Green Award (previous chair of Rushcliffe Agenda 21 and promoter of environmental projects including 'Trees across Rushcliffe')	Existing Budget
	Potential total increase in costs	£17000