

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

20 May 2008

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 ANNUAL TREE INSPECTION FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

Summary

The report outlines the tree inspection report recently completed by the Council's Ground Maintenance Contractor, which identifies tree work required on areas of Public Open Space on a prioritised basis.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Trees on Public Open Spaces are inspected annually by the Council's Ground Maintenance Contractor (KCC Landscape Services) as specified in the Ground Maintenance Contract.

1.1.2 The areas covered by the tree inspection report include Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground; Tonbridge Castle Grounds; Swanmead Sportsground; Frogbridge Sportsground; Tonbridge Farm Sportsground; St Stephens Churchyard, Tonbridge; Tonbridge Cemetery and St Peter and St Paul's Churchyard, Tonbridge; as well as other open spaces throughout the borough.

1.1.3 The annual inspection is received as a written report, which identifies the tree work required under four priorities:

Priority 1 – immediate action required

Priority 2 – high priority with action required in six months

Priority 3 – medium priority with action required within twelve months

Priority 4 – low priority with action required within four years.

1.2 2008 Tree Inspection Survey

1.2.1 The 2008 tree inspection survey undertaken in January 2008 has been received and this supersedes all previous reports. A summary of the present position, which is detailed at **[Annex 1]**, is as follows:

Priority	Number of Trees Identified	Approximate Cost (£)
Priority 1	0	0.00
Priority 2	42	8,330.00
Priority 3	191	26,590.00
Priority 4	50	7,075.00
Total approximate cost		<u>41,995</u>

1.2.2 It is the Council's policy that Priority 1 works should always be progressed on an urgent basis, and that Priority 3 and 4 works should only be progressed once Priority 2 works have been completed, and then only if the work can be funded from existing resources.

1.3 Woodlands

1.3.1 The Council is responsible for 22 woodlands in the Borough, the majority of which have unrestricted public access. In accordance with the Outdoor Leisure Operational Risk Register a tree inspection of all the woodlands has recently been undertaken, and reports are currently being received. The inspections are being progressed in accordance with guidance from the Woodland Trust with trees inspected that are 10 metres from boundaries and 10 metres either side of official pathways.

1.3.2 It is my intention to report the outcome of the woodland tree inspections to the next meeting of this Board. Members will be pleased to note that, to date with just over half of the reports received, no Priority 1 trees have been identified.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 Under the Occupiers Liability Act the Council has a duty to ensure that visitors to its premises are kept reasonably safe. As far as Open Spaces are concerned this includes a requirement for the Council to inspect and carry out work to any trees that may be regarded as a risk to safety.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 In accordance with the Council's policy, it is anticipated that the financial implications of progressing the tree works resulting from the 2008 tree inspection survey can be met from the agreed revenue budgets for 2008/09.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 The risk implications of having inadequate management systems for dealing with dangerous or diseased trees are highlighted in the Outdoor Leisure Risk Register.

1.7 Policy Considerations

1.7.1 Biodiversity & Sustainability, Asset Management.

1.8 Conclusion/Recommendations

- 1.8.1 The outcome of the 2008 tree inspection survey for Public Open Spaces is encouraging in terms of the relatively low number of Priority 1 and 2 trees requiring attention. A separate report be considered at the next meeting of this Board on the outcome of the tree inspection survey of Council woodlands.
- 1.8.2 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the tree works on areas of Public Open Space identified in the 2008 tree inspection report be progressed in accordance with the Council's agreed policy.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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