

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

18 May 2010

**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 TREE INSPECTION REPORT

Summary

This report outlines the 2009/10 Tree Inspection Report completed by the Council's Ground Maintenance Contractor, which identifies prioritised tree work required on areas of Public Open Space.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 At the last meeting of this Board Members approved a draft Tree Safety Strategy for consultation. The Strategy has recently been sent to consultees and responses will be reported to the next meeting of this Board.
- 1.1.2 Trees on Public Open Spaces are currently inspected annually by the Council's Ground Maintenance Contractor (Kent County Council Landscape Services) as specified in the Ground Maintenance Contract.
- 1.1.3 The areas covered by the Tree Inspection Report include Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground; Tonbridge Castle Grounds; Swanmead Sportsground; Frog Bridge 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.
- 1.1.4 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 2009/10 Tree Inspection Report

1.2.1 The 2009/10 Public Open Space tree inspection report undertaken in October 2009 has been received and this supersedes all previous reports. A summary of the present position, which is further detailed at **[Annex 1]**, is as follows:

| Priority | Number of Trees Identified | Approximate Cost (£) |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Priority 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Priority 2 | 116 | 16,620.00 |
| Priority 3 | 262 | 25,015.00 |
| Priority 4 | 127 | 4,680.00 |
| Total approximate cost | | <u>46,315.00</u> |

1.2.2 It is the Council's existing 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. It is encouraging to note that no Priority 1 trees have been identified from the reports, reflecting the responsible approach taken by the Council in addressing tree safety over a number of years. The total cost for Priority 2 trees is £16,620 and I can confirm that the majority of these works have already been progressed.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 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.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 In accordance with the Council's policy, it is anticipated that the financial implications of progressing the tree works (as in 1.2.2 above) resulting from the 2009/10 tree inspection reports can be met from the agreed revenue budgets.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 The risk implications of having inadequate management systems for dealing with dangerous or diseased trees are highlighted in the Outdoor Leisure Risk Register. The Council has recently developed a formal Tree Safety Strategy, which is currently the subject of external consultation.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Biodiversity & Sustainability, Asset Management.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the tree works on the Council's outdoor leisure sites identified in the 2009/10 tree inspection reports be progressed in accordance with the Council's existing 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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Youth and Arts