

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/022/2006-07.

Date of meeting: 10 July 2006.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing.

Subject: Housing Tree Maintenance Budget.

Officer contact for further information: Roger Wilson (01992 – 56 4419).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendations:

(1) That, in order to clear the backlog of major tree work on Housing owned land, a Supplementary Estimate for 2006/2007 in the sum of £42,000, to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account balances, be recommended to the Council for approval; and

(2) That the annual budget for major tree maintenance work on Housing Revenue Account land be increased by £15,000 from 2007/08, to be funded from Housing Revenue Account Balances.

Report:

1. The actual budget out-turn for major tree maintenance on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land, for 2005/2006, was £93,000. The tree budget for the current year is £98,000. In 2005/2006, the amount spent on the General Grounds Maintenance budget was slightly less than expected due to Leisure Services having difficulties recruiting staff, resulting in a reduction in the amount recharged to the HRA.
2. In addition to major tree works, some basic tree work and replanting is undertaken on housing estates, funded from a separate grounds maintenance budget within the HRA.
3. The amount of maintenance work required to trees on Housing land throughout the District continues to increase, which has resulted in a backlog of work valued at £42,000 that has accumulated over the last three years.
4. In 2005/2006 the HRA achieved an additional surplus of £357,000 when compared to the revised estimate for that year. This saving has therefore presented an opportunity to clear the backlog of tree work. The Cabinet is therefore asked to recommend to full Council that a Supplementary Estimate of £42,000, funded from HRA balances, be agreed to clear the backlog of major tree maintenance work.
5. The Cabinet is also asked to agree that the annual HRA budget for major tree maintenance on HRA land is increased by £15,000 (to £113,000) from 2007/2008, to ensure that trees are maintained to a reasonable standard.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. It is suggested that a Supplementary Estimate for 2006/2007 of £42,000, to clear the backlog of major tree works is agreed, and that the annual budget for major tree work is increased from 2007/2008 by £15,000 to ensure all trees on Housing owned land are maintained to a reasonable standard.

Other Options for Action:

7. Not to agree the Supplementary Estimate of £42,000 to clear the backlog of tree maintenance work on Housing land.

8. Not to agree to increase the annual tree maintenance budget by £15,000 from 2007/2008.

Consultation undertaken:

10. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation was consulted at its meeting on 26 April 2006 and agreed with the recommendations.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Supplementary Estimate of £42,000 for 2006/2007 funded from the HRA. Increase tree maintenance budget by £15,000 per annum from 2007/2008.

Personnel: N/A.

Land: Improved maintenance of trees on Housing owned land.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1985.

Background papers: N/A.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Improved environment due to better maintained trees.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.