



Item 5: Oak Noticeboard at the Centre

Purpose of Report

To consider the future of the oak noticeboard located at the Centre following the identification of significant deterioration during recent maintenance works.

Background

As part of routine maintenance, the Council's oak noticeboard at the Centre was inspected and found to be in a poor and deteriorating condition. The timbers have weathered over time, and the structure is approaching the end of its useful life. Photographs showing the current condition of the noticeboard are attached for Members' consideration.

The noticeboard currently houses a map of the town together with community information. However, the map displayed within the noticeboard is now outdated and no longer accurately reflects the current layout and facilities within the town.

Considerations

Council is asked to determine whether it wishes to:

1. Replace the existing noticeboard when it reaches the end of its serviceable life;
or
2. Remove the noticeboard entirely and not replace it.

Should Council choose to replace the noticeboard, consideration will need to be given not only to the replacement structure itself, but also to the information displayed within it. The existing town map would require updating and a new version commissioned. As no existing up-to-date map is available, this would need to be professionally designed and produced, resulting in additional costs beyond the purchase and installation of a replacement noticeboard.

A replacement oak noticeboard would also represent a substantial expenditure, particularly if a similar specification and quality are to be maintained.

Members may also wish to consider the ongoing value and usage of the noticeboard in light of alternative methods of communication now available to residents and visitors,

including the Council's website, social media channels, and other digital information platforms.

Financial Implications

Should Council decide to replace the noticeboard, costs would be incurred for:

- Removal and disposal of the existing structure (A quotation has been received for £166.00);
- Supply and installation of a new oak noticeboard;
- Commissioning, design and production of an updated town map; and
- Future maintenance requirements.

A decision to remove the noticeboard at the end of its life would avoid these replacement costs, although the information currently displayed would need to be made available through alternative means where appropriate.

Attached Documents

- Photographs of the existing noticeboard showing its current condition.





Gosford Allotment Trees – Overhanging Branches and Tree Works

Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval for willow tree works at the allotments, including the removal of trees on Council land and the cutting back of overhanging branches from adjoining land, with funding to be met from General Reserves.

Background

Willow (and other) trees are currently overhanging the allotment site. Some branches have already been cut back by allotment holders; however, the majority of the overhanging growth originates from land opposite the allotments. The Council has the right to cut back branches that overhang the allotment site. There are no TPOS on the trees, although these will be checked by the contractor.

Allotment holders have raised concerns and requested that the Council removes the tree located on the Council's side and cuts back all overhanging branches affecting the allotments.

Health and Safety Considerations

Some of the willow branches are falling or at risk of falling, which could present a health and safety risk to allotment holders and visitors to the site, especially over the end Sept to November period when we generally get a lot of windstorms. Completing the works would help reduce the risk of injury, obstruction, damage to plots, and further deterioration of the trees and branches affecting the allotments.

Quotes and Procurement

Quotes have been requested for the works. One quotation has been received, and the Council is awaiting the remaining two of the three quotes. Once all three quotations have been received, they will be presented for selection in accordance with the Council's delegated arrangements.

The current estimated maximum cost of the works is in the region of £7,200 excluding VAT.

Financial Implications

Due to the anticipated cost, the works will need to be funded from General Reserves. The estimated allocation required is in the region of £7,200 excluding VAT, subject to confirmation once all quotations have been received.

Social Value

There is an additional social value benefit associated with the proposed contract. Contractors have been asked to provide bark chippings from the works free of charge for use at Cophall Allotments, where appropriate.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council approves the willow tree works at the allotments, including the removal of the tree on the Council's side and the cutting back of overhanging branches, with the cost to be met from General Reserves in the region of £7,200 excluding VAT.

It is further recommended that, once all three quotations have been received, they are presented for selection under the Town Clerk's delegated arrangements (H&S).