

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director Planning and Development (Introduced by the Executive Member (Planning and Development))	Executive Member Decision	13/10/2021

Woodland Creation on Council Owned Land

Purpose of report

- To seek approval to take forward a programme of tree planting on Council owned land to create new woodlands

Recommendation(s)

- To approve the sites identified for woodland creation on Council owned land.

Executive summary of report

- Approval is sought for permission to allow tree planting to take place on the following pieces of Council owned land to create new areas of woodland in the Borough. See map for site locations.
 - Site 1 – Burgh Hall Road
 - Site 2 – Birkacre Road
 - Site 3 – Denham Quarry
 - Site 4 – Land off Burgh Lane South
 - Site 5 – Wigan Lane Playing Fields
- Chorley Council have a target to plant one tree for every resident in the Borough by 2025. This equates to 116,875 trees on around 65ha of land.
- All Council owned land has been analysed for tree planting potential. A tree planting schedule is planned from 2020 - 2025. Much of the planting will take place within existing public open spaces, recreation grounds and parks whilst maintaining the same land use. However, to hit the target, larger pieces of land have been put forward as listed above. These areas of land have been used in the past for grazing but have not been actively used for a few years.
- An internal consultation has been carried out amongst all departments to check that tree planting will not have any negative impact on the future viability of the land.
- All ward members have been consulted about the proposals and no one has voiced concern over the planting of trees on the land put forward.
- The land will be submitted to the Forestry Commission England Woodland Creation Grant which will help pay for the tree planting and future site maintenance.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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**Reasons for recommendation(s)
(If the recommendations are accepted)**

9. The creation of woodland on the pieces of identified Council owned land will help deliver the target of planting 116,875 trees by 2025. The creation of woodland will help to increase the woodland cover of the Borough and increase biodiversity.

Alternative options considered and rejected

10. To not plant trees on the land and to put the land back into grazing licences. Chorley Council will receive a payment for creating the new woodlands and annual income for 10 years from the England Woodland Creation Grant. This will cover any lost revenue.

Corporate priorities

11. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

Background

12. Chorley Council have a target to plant one tree for every resident in the Borough by 2025. This equates to 116,875 trees on around 65ha of land.
13. All Council owned land has been analysed for tree planting potential. A tree planting schedule is planned from 2020 - 2025. Much of the planting will take place within existing public open spaces, recreation grounds and parks whilst maintaining the same land use. However, in order to hit the target, larger pieces of land have been put forward as listed above. These areas of land have been used in the past for grazing but have not been actively used for a few years.
14. An internal consultation has been carried out amongst all departments to check that tree planting will not have any negative impact on the future viability of the land.
15. All ward members have been consulted about the proposals and no one has voiced concern over the planting of trees on the land put forward.

Table 1 Proposed Locations of Tree Planting Sites

Mass Tree Planting Site	Area of land for tree planting (this is not the total land size)	Number of trees proposed
Site 1 – Burgh Hall Road	1.4ha	2,500
Site 2 – Birkacre Road	4.5ha	7,500
Site 3 – Denham Quarry	2 ha	3,000
Site 4 – Land off Burgh Lane South/John Wood	0.1ha	5,00
Site 5 – Wigan Lane Playing Fields	1ha	1,600
TOTAL		15,100

11. This initiative to plant trees on Council land will deliver a total of 15,100 trees and this figure has been incorporated into the year 2021 - 2024 delivery. It is evident that to meet the target for tree planting the Council need to work in partnership with other landowners and residents.

12. We are working in partnership with United Utilities to plant trees within the catchment on UU land which totals a further estimated 20,000 trees by 2024.
13. We are also working in partnership with other landowners such as RMG, LCC, Jigsaw, CCH and National Farmers Union to identify other tree planting opportunities linked to grant funding.
14. Chorley Council is actively promoting tree planting to residents through the Tree Giveaway initiative and we are also working to support schools to plant trees in the school grounds.

Planting and Maintenance

15. The trees are being planted by Council streetscene staff, particularly the ranger service along with volunteer groups. It is proposed that the same staff and groups will help with the long-term maintenance of the trees. A 2-year ranger post is in place to plant the trees with further funding awarded from the Green Recovery Fund to appoint another ranger for a further 2 years.
16. A funding bid is proposed to be submitted once formal approval is granted to plant the trees on the Council owned sites from the England Woodland Creation Offer. This grant will cover the standard capital costs of tree planting (up to a cap of £8,500 per hectare), and annual maintenance payments of £200 per hectare for 10 years.
17. We will continue to bid for grant funding as and when it becomes available.

Finance

18. The budget for tree planting is allocated from the Climate Change budget of £500,000. The allocated capital finance is being used as match funding to lever in additional funding as outlined in Table 3. We are also obtaining free trees wherever possible through the woodland trust and the community through a Grow a Chorley tree campaign.

Table 2 – Budget approved to date

Finance Funded from Climate Change Budget	Amount
Tree purchase over 3 years	£38,000
Tree Giveaway over 3 years	£18,000
Ranger post for 2 years	£50,000
Additional ranger post for 2 years match funded	£2,500
TOTAL	£108,000

Table 3 – External Grant funding applied for

Grant Funding	Bid 1	Bid 2	Bid 3
Grant funding	Green recovery fund £50,000 secured	Urban Tree Challenge Fund £29,311 bid submitted 50% funded if successful (£14,655)	England Woodland Creation Grant. <i>Bid to be submitted for the mass tree planting sites once approved</i>
Capital /revenue from climate change budget above as match funding to maximise investment	£2,500 match	£14,655 match from 2yr ranger allocation towards planting and maintenance costs	TBC
Outcome	Secured	Awaiting outcome	Not yet submitted

Implications of report

Risk

19. The risks to this project are low, Chorley Council already own the land proposed for the tree planting. Staff are already in post to plant the trees and many trees are being obtained through the Woodland Trust and grant funding for free. Grant funding will also pay for long term maintenance. The risk is that is grant funding is not awarded. The bid will be submitted once approval is given to go ahead with the proposals. Other funding opportunities are being made available all the time for tree planting so we will bid for alternative sources if the first bid is not successful.
20. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

21. The Council has set aside £500k Climate Change Budget from which the costs outlined in the report will be met.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

22. There are no legal implications in relation to this decision, the land is owned by the Council and will not require any change of use.

Jonathan Noad
Director of Planning and Development

Report Author	Ext	Date
Lindsey Blackstock	5218	29/09/2021

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Dated: 13/10/21

Councillor Alistair Morwood
Executive Member (Planning and Development)