

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting	Community Services Committee
Date	12 January 2022
Report by	Alex Melson – Green Space Development Officer Phil Wright – Community Services Manager
Report title	Variations to HTC Tree Planting Plan
Business Plan theme	Conserve and improve our parks, green spaces and other assets so they offer a natural haven for residents’ use and enjoyment.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To present to the Community Services Committee proposed alterations to two planting areas within the approved Tree Planting Plan, together with a new proposal for Lydekker Park.
- 1.2. To provide an update on planting progress to date.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note and approve, subject to any comments or amendments, the proposed alterations and addition to the approved Tree Planting Plan for Marquis Meadow, Southdown Ponds and Lydekker Park.
 - 2.1.2. Note the planting progress to date (paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).
 - 2.1.3. Approve the release of up to £5k from the Tree Planting Earmarked Reserve to be used to deliver the HTC Tree Planting Plan (paragraph 4.1).
 - 2.1.4. Approve the release up to £50k of the capital that is allocated to tree planting, to be used in delivering the approved tree planting plan (paragraph 4.1).

3. Background information

- 3.1. The current progress made towards delivering HTC’s Tree Planting Plan is:
 - 3.1.1. 75% of the 950 trees proposed for Porters Hill Park were planted by Sir John Lawes School on the 2nd December 2021. The remainder of the trees

will be planted by Sauncey Wood School and a separate open event for the community to be involved in during either January or February 2022.

3.1.2. Five trees each at least 5m tall have been planted around Marquis Lane Playground

3.2. The proposed alterations to the Tree Planting Plan relate to the following sites:

3.2.1. Marquis Meadow – Year 1

3.2.2. Southdown Ponds – Year 2

3.2.3. Lydekkar Park – Year 1

Marquis Meadow – Year 1

3.3. The original proposal planned for completion by March 2022 includes planting 750 saplings to create an additional 160m of hedgerow on Marquis Meadow.

3.4. Much of the existing hedgerow running along Marquis Lane is beyond effective management to revert back to a species rich hedge with the ground conditions being too poor for saplings to be planted effectively.

3.5. The new proposal alters the direction in which the 160m hedgerow is planted. As opposed to planting a new line of hedgerow in the existing mature hedgerow, the new line would run Northeast along the middle of the meadow on the raised bank and link with the newly planted hedgerow east of the Marquis Lane. The alteration also includes planting saplings in gaps within the existing hedge. A gap will be left north east of the new hedge to allow access for the annual meadow cut.

3.6. The variation in the planting location will provide increased opportunity for wildlife and will improve ecological connectivity between the river and existing hedgerow.

Southdown Ponds – Year 2

3.7. The area around Southdown Pond offers a significant contrast to the rest of the Common. At this location conifers planted over 100 years ago are the dominant tree species, comprising primarily of Scots Pine and Larch.

3.8. The original agreed proposal planned for 2022 / 23 includes the planting of nine additional Scots Pine and nine additional Larches for successional planning as the original trees begin to fail.

3.9. Unlike Scots Pine, Larch is not one of the UK's native pine species. The proposed alteration asks for the reduction in the number of Larches to three Larches, with the other six planned Larches to be replaced with additional

Scots Pine and the other two UK native conifers, Yew and the locally rare Juniper.

- 3.10. Both these species are slow growing, and the proposal will allow that succession to happen without significant alteration to the existing area and allow time for these species to establish further.

Lydekker Park – Year 1

- 3.11. The central seating area close to the car park is surrounded by Yew hedging as part of the Park's aesthetics. Within the hedgerow there are several gaps. People misuse these gaps by walking through them and across the flower and shrub beds leading to continuous damage.
- 3.12. New Yew trees are requested to plant within the gaps to enhance the Park's aesthetics, protect the flower bed, and provide further biodiversity enhancements. To give the greatest likelihood of success in this location, the best option is to purchase and plant six ready grown Yew tree troughs.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1. There is currently £1k remaining in the Tree Planting Revenue Budget 21/22. There is £5k in a Tree Planting Earmarked Reserve. £1600 net would be required to purchase the correct sized Yews for Lydekker Park. £50k of capital is also allocated to tree planting.
- 4.2. It should be noted that savings were made during the Porters Hill Park Planting Plan as the Green Spaces Development Officer secured hundreds of free trees.

5. Other implications

Other Implications	Comment
Legal	None
Environment and biodiversity	Tree planting enhances this and leads to carbon reduction
Crime and Disorder	None
Risk/Health & Safety	None

6. Appendices

Appendix A - Original Tree Planting Plan

Appendix B - Summary of Variations to HTC Planting Plan with Maps