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## **Ladhope Tree Planting Project**

**Report by Service Director, Assets & Infrastructure**

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### **GALASHIELS COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE**

**14<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **The report seeks to obtain the consent of Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub Committee to allow a grant application to be made on their behalf for the planting of tree at Ladhope.**
- 1.2 **The plan showing the location of the proposed 28,048 trees, covering an area of 32.51 acres (131,563.3m<sup>2</sup>) also requires approval.**

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that Galashiels Common Good Sub Committee approves the planting of trees as shown on the attached plan with Tweed Forum and SAC Consulting acting as agent, the Council's Penmanshiel Compensatory replacement grant scheme as funder and Scottish Woodlands as the contractor.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A report was presented on 12 May 2016 seeking consent to plant trees on the land next to Galashiels Golf Course. This was agreed by members in principle, with several actions required before a final decision could be made.
- 3.2 Public consultation was carried out by way of a drop in session and meeting on 25 October 2016. The feedback from this was mostly positive and a working group was created. The working group have attended onsite meetings to discuss the tree planting design.
- 3.3 The final planting design has now been agreed after detailed consultation. Please see plan in appendix 1.
- 3.4 It has been established that there is funding available for the tree planting and associated works from Penmanshiel Compensatory Replacement Grant scheme through a twenty year contract. Please see forecast figures attached appendix 2. The Council is responsible for delivering this compensatory woodland in Scottish Borders, with an objective to providing multiple benefits for communities.
- 3.5 Once the woodland has been planted the Galashiels Common Good fund would then be responsible for the future maintenance. Although this will be monitored for the first ten years by SAC consulting who are administering the grant on behalf of the Council. The Common Good will be responsible for instructing any maintenance which is identified by the SAC, reporting to the Council. After the ten year monitoring period it will be the responsibility of the Common Good to identify and instruct any maintenance works required.

### **4 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Financial**

The cost of establishing the new woodland along with the associated works will be covered by the Penmanshiel Compensatory replacement grant scheme. It is forecast that the funding will be available for maintenance of the trees for the first 10 years after planting and this will be monitored by SAC Consulting. The Common Good fund would then be responsible for the cost of any routine maintenance. The forecasted figures show a surplus, which could be reserved for the future maintenance of the trees. It was mentioned in the previous report that the planting would include oak trees which in the long term would be classed as an asset, it has been established that this will not be viable. There is some possibility of generating income from productive broadleaves but this would be as local firewood/ wood fuel. It is advisable that the trees are insured against risk of fire, the site has a relatively higher risk being grassy in nature with high levels of public access. This premium will need to be covered by the Galashiels Common Good budget. A cost has been requested from the Council's Insures. The forecasted figures show that there won't be enough money to cover the maintenance until year five. Although this is based on 70% of the grant being paid out initially and then the final 30% after five years, this is the standard schedule on which the grant is usually paid out but this can be adjusted as and when the money is needed due to Council affiliation.

#### 4.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that the award of grant funding doesn't cover all the cost of establishing the woodlands and the initial maintenance. This is considered a low risk as it is forecast that there will be surplus. There is also a risk that the trees might not grow, although highly unlikely, if this occurs the grant money must be paid back with interest. There is also the risk of fire which could be mitigated through insurance.

#### 4.3 Equalities

No adverse equality implications are envisaged.

#### 4.4 Acting Sustainably

No significant economic, social or environmental effects are anticipated as a result of the recommendation in this report

#### 4.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions.

#### 4.6 Rural Proofing

None

#### 4.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

### 5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

#### Approved by

**Martin Joyce**  
**Service Director Assets & Infrastructure**

**Signature .....**

#### Author(s)

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**Background Papers:** 12 May 2016

**Previous Minute Reference:**

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Andrew Graham can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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