

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

DATE: 20th January 2020

TITLE: Request by Olivia Thornton to Plant Trees on WTC Property for Climate Action

CONTACT OFFICER: Operations & Estates Officer – John Hickman

BACKGROUND

This request was originally made to the Mayor. Ms Thornton would like to carry out tree planting within Witney for climate action, as is happening in other local areas.

CURRENT POSITION

The Operations and Estates Officer has met with Ms Thornton to discuss the possibilities of WTC land being used to carry out tree planting.

WTC has some large areas of land at the Lake and Country Park that may be suitable for larger areas of tree planting. If planted as whips, native British trees are not expensive to purchase and WTC contractors could possibly provide these free of charge as part of their carbon offsetting.

The main financial cost to council other than the land to plant the trees would be the ongoing maintenance of these trees in the years to come and this is an important area Ms Thornton should research. If a group/s could be formed that would look after, maintain and be fully responsible for a large area of trees planted on WTC land, it would ensure the trees survive and thrive and there would be no ongoing costs to WTC.

Planting a large area of approx. 400 trees on a suitable area of the Lake and Country Park could form part of the Climate and Biodiversity Working Party agenda on 26th February 20.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019, Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make in relation to the Council's facilities and the services it operates.

RISK

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- As stated in the report, further investigation would be needed regarding ongoing maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

- Ms Thornton's request to consider areas to plant trees on WTC property for Climate Action.