

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 30 May 2022

**Title:** Tower Hill Tree re-inspection

**Contact Officer:** Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

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### Background

The tree survey in 2021 recommended static load tests for tree's T442 and T310. Both are beech trees located in Tower Hill Cemetery, the latter being the wishing tree. This will be the second recommended static load test for the wishing tree's, the last one being carried out in 2019.

A static load test calculates the safety factor of the roots and stem in a storm. This is carried out by applying a load to a tree that is similar to the winds of a storm. The last tree inspection was in December 2021 with the next one be scheduled for around autumn and winter 2022.

### Current Situation

The static load tests are a recommended actions from the 2021 tree survey. All recommend actions from the tree yearly tree inspection are usually completed unless officers recommend/request alternative works. The static load test to be actioned are required to ensure that these large over mature trees are still safe to be in place and to best determine the correct course of action to preserve their health.

During the storms of February this year multiple large trees in Tower Hill Cemetery sustained substantial damage. The area is problematic for officers to be confident on internal inspections due to height of the canopy, multiple large trees in close proximity and the higher footfall along footpaths. For example, there are many beech trees that can breach limbs in warm weather unexpectedly. Many of these trees are not due for re-inspection for another 5 years, for this reason officers have requested a re-inspection this year to be carried out at the same time as the static load tests.

### Environmental impact

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

Preserving and increasing the council tree stock is an essential goal in tackling climate change. The static load test identifies works that are first to reduce any potential risk but also

preserving the health of a tree. Similarly with the tree inception it will identify works to the benefit of a tree.

### **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.

A limitation of the most recent inspection is that it is no longer valid following an extreme weather event. It's unknown at this time if the storms in February are considered extreme weather.

### **Financial implications**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- The cost to re-inspect all trees at Tower Hill is quoted at £785.00.
- The cost for the two static load tests on the beech tree's is quoted at £2,523.00.
- The current tree inspection budget will not cover these works but there are available funds in the tree maintenance budget carried forward from 2020-21.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. Commission the static load test to trees T442 and T310
2. Commission the re-inspection of trees at Tower Hill Cemetery