



Cabinet Member Report

Decision Makers:	Cllr James Spencer, Cabinet Member for City Management
Date:	8 th October 2021
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Highway Buildouts for Trees – Ongoing Programme of Works 2021-22
Wards Affected:	All Wards
City for All Summary:	This decision contributes to Greener and Cleaner under the City for All initiative by increasing the number of trees within the borough.
Key Decision:	Yes
Financial Summary:	This report seeks ongoing approval for capital expenditure of £2.459m to cover costs associated with detailed design and implementation of the proposals identified in this report. The scheme has been included in the approved ECM Capital Programme.
Report of:	Kevin Goad – Director of City Highways



1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is an extension of the Briefing Note titled *Highways Buildouts for Trees Scheme*, that was submitted and approved in September 2020.
- 1.2. This report provides the Cabinet Member with an update on the scheme; and
- 1.3. Explicitly seeks approval for the City Council to progress with the scheme and approval for the anticipated spend of £2.459m
- 1.4. It should be noted that this scheme has been included in the approved Capital Programme a budget of £2.459m has been agreed.
- 1.5. The City Council will implement the proposed works using its service provider FM Conway Limited.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That approval is given to proceed with detailed design and implementation of the proposed tree buildouts at the proposed locations – as set out in Section 5.6 of this report;
- 2.2. That approval is given to commit capital expenditure of £2.459m, necessary to carry out the detailed design and implementation of the proposals;
- 2.3. That delegated authority is given to the Director of City Highways to approve minor modifications, as necessary to the approved scheme, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Management.
- 2.4. The approval is given to modify and make traffic regulation orders in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, as necessary to accommodate the highways improvements of this scheme.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1. To allow completion of the Highways Buildouts for Trees scheme. The improvements, as part of this scheme, will help to increase the number of trees across the borough, whilst also improving the public realm.

4. Background including Policy Context

- 4.1. In August 2019, a capital funding allocation of £2.459 million was included in the approved capital programme to create highway buildouts for tree planting.



A briefing note dated August 2019 set out plans to increase the number of trees within the borough. A copy of this briefing note can be found in Appendix A.

- 4.2. The briefing note acknowledged that as tree planting sites on footways are becoming increasingly scarce, highways buildouts should be explored as a possible solution for introducing additional trees.
- 4.3. In September 2020, a briefing note on the Highways Buildouts for Trees scheme was submitted to Cllr Smith for his decision. A copy of this briefing note can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.4. Following the Highways Buildouts for Trees scheme briefing note, three pilot locations were identified – Park Street (West End Ward), Surrey Street (St. James's Ward) and Star Street (Hyde Park Ward). Ward Members were consulted on these locations and site investigation works were progressed. Park Street and Surrey Street are due to progress to construction; however, Star Street was not able to progress due to existing site constraints.
- 4.5. The scheme aligns closely with the Council's City for All – Vision and Strategy; in particular the Greener and Cleaner objective.
- 4.6. The *Trees and the Public Realm – a tree strategy for Westminster* document identifies and acknowledges the value and importance of trees. Trees can provide a wealth of benefits that can positively impact the lives of those who live, visit and work in the city. Alongside their aesthetic benefits, trees provide a myriad of sustainability benefits that in turn ensure a climate resilient Westminster.
- 4.7. As an authority in the heart of central London the carbon sequestration and storage benefits of trees are of significance as they can help to mitigate against the impact of climate change across the capital.

5. Scheme Proposals

- 5.1. In order to assess the ability to plant of additional trees across the City, our consultants, WSP, were commissioned to;
 - Create assessment criteria based on the presence of existing trees and parking density, the latter of which involved seeking advice from the Parking Team;
 - Identify and prioritise locations, based on the defined assessment criteria;
 - Develop three standard details of highway buildouts and provide estimated costs associated with each option for consideration
- 5.2. The methodology looked at two key considerations when identifying possible locations for highways buildouts for tree: parking occupancy, to understand if a loss of parking would impact negatively on the surrounding area; and existing tree provision, to appreciate where there are currently low levels of



trees.

5.3. Further detail on this methodology can be found in Appendix B

5.4. All streets with a parking occupancy of >80% have been excluded from the study in order to ensure that the impact to existing parking availability is minimised

5.5. The Tree Team have undertaken a desktop study of these locations, followed by site inspections in order to examine any initial site-specific constraints on the locations identified.

5.6. Following this initial assessment, the following locations have been identified:

Street Name	Ward
ABERCORN PLACE	Abbey Road
ALLITSEN ROAD	Abbey Road
ALMA SQUARE	Abbey Road
CHARLBERT STREET	Abbey Road
NEEDHAM ROAD	Bayswater
ORSETT TERRACE	Bayswater
ST STEPHEN'S CRESCENT	Bayswater
ST STEPHEN'S GARDENS	Bayswater
CHAPEL STREET	Bryanston and Dorset Square
UPPER BERKELEY STREET	Bryanston and Dorset Square
WESTMORELAND TERRACE	Churchill
BELL STREET	Church Street
PENFOLD PLACE	Church Street
RANSTON STREET	Church Street
CONNAUGHT STREET	Hyde Park
HYDE PARK STREET	Hyde Park
NORFOLK PLACE	Hyde Park
PORCHESTER PLACE	Hyde Park
SOUTH WHARF ROAD	Hyde Park
SOUTHWICK PLACE	Hyde Park
WILTON STREET	Knightsbridge & Belgravia
BELGRAVE PLACE	Knightsbridge & Belgravia
HALKIN STREET	Knightsbridge & Belgravia
PRINCE CONSORT ROAD	Knightsbridge & Belgravia
LANCASTER GATE	Lancaster Gate
PALACE COURT	Lancaster Gate
LANARK ROAD	Little Venice
DELAWARE ROAD	Maida Vale
AYBROOK STREET	Marylebone High Street



FITZHARDINGE STREET	Marylebone High Street
NOTTINGHAM PLACE	Marylebone High Street
WIGMORE STREET	Marylebone High Street
WIMPOLE STREET	Marylebone High Street
EAMONT STREET	Regent's Park
ABBEY ORCHARD STREET	St James's
DRURY LANE	St James's
KEAN STREET	St James's
STAFFORD PLACE	St James's
WHITEHALL PLACE	St James's
MORETON STREET	Tachbrook
ATTERBURY STREET	Vincent Square
HUGH STREET	Warwick
St GEORGE'S DRIVE	Warwick
BROOK STREET	West End
BROWN HART GARDENS	West End
GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET	West End
NASSAU STREET	West End
NEWMAN STREET	West End
PARK STREET	West End
BOURNE TERRACE	Westbourne
SEVINGTON STREET	Westbourne
SURRENDALE PLACE	Westbourne

5.7. Further site investigations will need to be undertaken to ascertain:

- Whether these sites can progress to detailed design and implementation based on physical surveys of the location. Locations with the following constraints are unlikely to be progressed; underground services; vaults and cellars; impacts to road safety; conflict with existing assets and infrastructure; and unsuitable townscapes/historic environments.
- The highway buildout design option that is most appropriate for each location. The design selection will depend upon: available space; environmental constraints; opportunity for additional public realm assets; and townscape features.

5.8. WSP have produced three standard highways buildout designs. The three designs vary in scale and complexity, all of the designs will utilise carriageway space and will therefore not reduce the available space on the footway:

- Option A – standalone highways buildout accommodating one tree. The buildout will be separate from the footway. It is similar in design to the tree buildouts found in Pimlico, please see the appendix for a photograph.



- Option B – highways buildout, accommodating one tree, incorporated into the surrounding footway.
- Option C – highways buildout, accommodating two trees, incorporated into the surrounding footway and including additional public realm assets, for example cycle stands or seating.
- The design drawings can be seen in Appendix D

5.9. Each design will be evaluated against each location, in order to ensure that the most appropriate design is selected.

5.10. Alongside site and design selection, the success of Westminster’s street tree planting and tree maintenance relies on selecting the right trees for the right locations. As a rule of thumb, the largest tree that a site can accommodate is selected, in order that canopy cover and environmental benefits are maximised.

5.11. Other considerations include:

- species diversity and biodiversity
- other ecosystem services - for example air quality, pollution absorption
- size, form and canopy shape
- townscape and urban design considerations
- resilience to the harsh street environment
- climate change resilience
- aesthetic qualities
- specific negative characteristics for example brittle branches or surface rooting
- resistance to pest and diseases

5.12. It is anticipated that 200-400 trees could be accommodated on highway buildouts within the current capital funding, subject to further detailed site investigations.

5.13. The scheme will proactively coordinate with existing proposed public realm projects and planned preventive maintenance works, in order ensure the greatest efficiencies.

6. Programme

6.1. Following further site investigations, the construction of the highway buildouts will proceed on a site-by-site basis.

6.2. Key phases of the proposed scheme are as follows:

Month	Programme Stage
July - September	Feasibility & Design
September - December	Design Development & Consultation
September - March	Construction



Due to the scheme being borough-wide, the programme will operate in a fluid nature. Some of the work stages will overlap and different locations will be constructed at different times, according to a variety of factors – including availability of work gangs. This will allow for coordination with existing and upcoming works and ensure that the programme operates efficiently. As the permits are applied for and approved, the Ward Members will be provided with further detail on likely construction dates.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. This project is funded by the approved capital programme of £2.459 million across two years.

7.2. In the approved capital programme that was agreed at full council in March 2021 the budget can be broken down as:

- 21/22: £1,459m
- 22/23: £1,000m

Total : £2.459m

7.3. The cost of planting trees within highway space will be greater than the standard street tree planting approach. It is estimated that highway build outs will cost between £5,000.00 and £15,000.00 per site. Exact costs will be confirmed on a site-specific basis, as they will need to take site conditions and constraints into account, along with the chosen buildout design.

7.4. The cost of each highway buildout will also depend on the complexity of the design.

7.5. An uplift of £185k in the Tree team revenue budget is required in order to provide ongoing maintenance commitment to these additional trees.

7.6. This funding stream will be reassessed as part of the MTP review process, so any future spending is subject to the outcome of this review.

8. Legal Implications

8.1. The proposed changes to parking locations and designation as part of this scheme will require a Traffic Order to be made under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Any objections the City Council receives during the Traffic Order making process should be delegated to the Director of City Highways (or such other authorised officer) in line with the current Traffic Order making process.



9. Consultation

9.1. Ward Member consultation was undertaken in July 2021. The list of proposed build out locations was sent to all Ward Members, on a ward-by-ward basis.

9.2. Ward Members were asked to provide feedback on the proposed locations and to advise whether there were any additional locations that should be considered within their ward. For any wards that did not have any locations proposed within the initial criteria, Ward Members were asked to advise whether there were any locations that should be considered within their ward.

9.3. The main Ward Member comments received from the Key Stage Review were as follows:

Ward	Comments
Bryanston & Dorset Square	Support the proposals and provided additional suggestions.
Churchill	Opposed to proposals. Location will not be taken forward.
Lancaster Gate	Keen to understand further detail, this information will be provided at a later design stage.
Little Venice	Support the proposals - keen to understand further detail, this information will be provided at a later design stage.
Maida Vale	Support the proposals and provided additional suggestions.
Queen's Park	Proposals shared with QP Community group, no further feedback received.
Regent's Park	Keen to use funding to create buildouts on St John's Wood High Street, as part of the wider scheme.
Vincent Square	Support the proposals.
Warwick	Support the proposals - keen to understand further detail, this information will be provided at a later design stage.
West End	Support the proposals - keen to understand further detail, this information will be provided at a later design stage.

The above table reflects all feedback that was received, no feedback was received from the missing wards.

9.4. Public consultation will be undertaken via the TMO process on an individual location basis.



If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A - City for All 3000 Trees Briefing Note – August 2019

Appendix B - Highways Buildouts for Trees Scheme Briefing Note – September 2020

Appendix C - Detailed Methodology

Appendix D - Design Drawings for Buildout Options