

**14 March 2017**

**Policy, Finance & Resources Committee**

**Forestry Management Plan**

**Report of:** *Philip Ruck, Chief Executive*

**Wards Affected:** *None*

**This report is** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Members are reminded of the paper agreed by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee (PFR) on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016.
- 1.2 Since that date officers have held discussions with the Forestry Commission to provide a Woodland Management Plan and associated maintenance for 10 years.
- 1.3 The Forestry commission are close to agreeing a slightly modified plan and this will be brought back to members soon.
- 1.4 The purpose of this paper, is for the PFR committee to approve the investigation into establishing a commercial arboricultural business run by Brentwood Borough Council.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees to commission a study carried out by officers, for Brentwood Borough Council to run an arboricultural business.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 With the Borough consisting of 89.1% Greenbelt, it is clear that there is plenty of opportunity for maintenance of land. With many afforested areas in the Borough, combined with the number of trees on resident's properties there is a great demand for arboricultural services.
- 3.2 Many of the services, referred to in 3.2 above, are carried out by commercial contractors. It is important to note however, that many clients of these services use the Council as there first point of contact and/or are referred by officers to these external contractors to resolve any

operational activities, such as pruning: felling etc. It would seem practical to investigate further and prepare a business case on how BBC would actually take back a proportion of such work and thus create an income form such an arrangement.

- 3.3 Whilst approval was given by members so that the Committee agree that further opportunities to generate business and income are developed, initial reviews indicate that this particular area (Arboricultural commercial activity) be brought to members attention as a significant area for potential income generation.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 Options for the operational model to be applied, will be a part of the business case to be put forward and agreed by members..

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To ensure that council assets are properly maintained and appropriate use is made for the benefit of residents and the environment.

#### **6. References to Corporate Plan**

- 6.1 Greater use of the Council's assets enables the Council to better deliver its corporate objectives.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **Financial Implications**

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- 7.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it should be noted that this decision may give rise to a future budgetary implication, the costing and management of which will need to be factored into the budget setting process. There are likely to be expenditure as well as income generation implications arising from this venture. These will not be known until the options appraisal exercise is complete.

##### **Legal Implications**

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- 7.2 Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 allows Local Authorities to recover the cost of discretionary services or "charge" for such services, and section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003 sets out circumstances

whereby the Council may actually “trade” in function-related activities, i.e. with a view to a profit. The Localism Act 2011 introduced the General power of Competence, which explicitly gives the Council the power to do anything that an individual can do which is not expressly prohibited by legislation, i.e. this can include charging or undertaking a commercial purpose. For practical financial and for legal and risk-management reasons, a solid business case will be required before embarking on trading activities.

**8. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

8.1 None.

**9. Appendices to this report**

8.1 None.

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