Dear Sir/Madam,

The Cabinet Member for Arts and Leisure (Councillor I.K. Lloyd) is to consider the following report and make a decision on Monday, 10th September, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in Interview Room D, Town Hall, Nuneaton.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN FRANKS
Managing Director

AGENDA

PART 1

PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE

A fire drill is not expected, so if the alarm sounds please evacuate the building quickly and calmly. Please use the stairs and do not use the lifts. Once out of the building, please gather outside the Yorkshire Bank on the opposite side of the road.

Exit by the door by which you entered the room or by the fire exits which are clearly indicated by the standard green fire exit signs.

If you need any assistance in evacuating the building, please make yourself known to a member of staff.

Please also make sure all your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent.
2. **PUBLIC CONSULTATION** - Members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items if notice has been received.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct.

   **Note:** Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary or a Deemed Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Member must withdraw from the room.

   Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but has received a dispensation from Standards Committee, that Member may vote and/or speak on the matter (as the case may be) and must disclose the existence of the dispensation and any restrictions placed on it at the time the interest is declared.

   Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest as defined in the Code of Conduct, the Member may address the meeting as a member of the public as set out in the Code.

   **Note:** Council Procedure Rules require Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation allows them to remain to vote and/or speak on the business giving rise to the interest.

   Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest, the Council’s Code of Conduct permits public speaking on the item, after which the Member is required by Council Procedure Rules to withdraw from the meeting.

Single Member Decision

Report Summary Sheet

Date: Monday September 10th, 2012
Subject: Tree Officer
Portfolio: Arts & Leisure (Cllr Ian Lloyd)
From: Paul Daly 02476376316

Summary: The report seeks approval for the creation of a tree officer post within Parks and Countryside

Recommendations: To give approval to the creation of a tree officer post within Parks & Countryside Team

Reasons: To ensure that the tree stock within the Borough is effectively managed and that control for inspections and priorities can be set and customer aspirations can be managed.

Options: To continue with the existing contractual arrangement in place with our Grounds Maintenance Provider.

Subject to call-in: No
Forward plan: No
Corporate priorities: Aim 2 Priority 2, Aim3 Priorities 1&2
Relevant statutes or policy: N/A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal Opportunity Implications:</th>
<th>The role will be open to any candidate that fulfils the minimum requirements of the person specification.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Implications</td>
<td>A new post to ensure delivery of a responsive high quality arboricultural service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Implications:</td>
<td>The revenue costs relating to the creation and establishment of the post will be met from within existing budgets and as laid out in paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Inequalities Implications:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Implications</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management Implications:</td>
<td>Tree stock will be inspected more and on a risk management basis, thus ensuring public safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Implications:</td>
<td>Improved quality of tree stock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal implications:</td>
<td>None</td>
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**Contact details:** Paul Daly  Parks & Countryside Officer 024 7637 6316
1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To outline the current method of delivery of tree inspections and tree related activities together with the associated costs

1.2 To outline the benefits of bringing this resource “in-house”, in the form of a Tree Officer, improving the current service offered to both the public and other council departments and the cost benefits available as a consequence.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 To give approval to the creation of the post of Tree Officer within the Parks and Countryside Team, from January 3rd 2013.

3.0 Background

3.1 Currently Glendale are contracted to undertake two surveys of approximately 7000 trees per annum, one in leaf and one out of leaf, which ensures they are viewed at different times of the year. This will allow for a snapshot in time and when the trees are subject to the different stresses of the weather. They provide us with this in a CD report form, of locations and identify those trees of significant risk and that need urgent attention.

3.2 In most cases we then subsequently look at the trees ourselves, to verify the situation, as in some cases the works identified can be of significant cost. Over the duration of the most recent grounds maintenance contracts these inspections and reports have been sporadic in nature and we have constantly been in dialogue with them about their requirement to supply them at the correct time and with useful information.

3.3 Glendale have utilised their arboricultural consultancy “arm” of the company to undertake the inspections, with up to three members of staff working at anyone time to complete the works.
This is one of a number of contracts that Glendale operates and it is very difficult to determine exactly how many man hours are spent within the Borough each year.

3.4 With regard to trees in relation to planning matters, Planning utilise and employ the assistance of consultants, to undertake surveys etc and to produce reports, this includes the creation of information relating to Tree Preservation Orders. The quality of this information has been questioned on a number of occasions and Planning together with Insurance/Finance have indicated that the current arboricultural services are considered to be of poor quality, in some instances requiring further site visits by Parks and Countryside Officers to confirm its reliability.

3.5 Our insurance officer also utilises structural engineers in relation to tree related claims every year. Whilst these works would remain, in some circumstances, outside the scope of practice for an arboricultural officer, it is considered that through having a more effective inspection regime and working more closely with planning, pre-development, we would be able to reduce the number of instances that require such as service.

3.6 The current costs relating to the provision of arboricultural services by both Glendale and companies working for and on behalf of Planning were as follows for 2012:

- GM Contracts 1-2 and 3 £38,152.27
- Planning Consultancy £4,730.00

Total **£42,882.27** (2012)

4.0 Benefits of Council Employed Tree Officer:

4.1 It is proposed to establish the full time role of Tree Officer and the benefits of such are outlined below:

- Control the inspection system
- Set the priorities
- We determine the programmes instead of the contractor removing the possibility of unnecessary work and claims
- Stop the duplication of work that we currently undertake on checking Glendale’ reports
- More flexible use of staff resources allowing us to look at emergencies and non-reliance on contractor
- Allow for long-term planning of tree programmes to become proactive and not so reactive
- 50% of customer enquiries are tree based, the employment of a dedicated officer will ensure they are dealt with more speedily, particularly pertinent with the loss of one of the grounds maintenance monitoring officers
- More reactive to Planning’s requirements with regard to new developments and tree preservation orders, will assist in meeting their targets
• More consistent approach to tree maintenance not happy with some of the consultancy work we get at the moment
• Would be able to undertake additional monitoring of grounds maintenance during peak times to assist in contract management
• Existing staff in Parks and Countryside will have time “freed up” to ensure additional time is spent on contract management and monitoring and that the quality and standards of the grounds maintenance is improved. This was identified by members of Labour Group during discussions on the options for the existing contracts
• We will look at opportunities if spare capacity exists, to generate external income with other local authorities or agencies, but It is not envisaged there will be provision for this initially. This can be assessed when the base data has been captured and proper systems developed.

4.2 The proposed costs for a full-time Tree Officer are as follows:

2012-13

Tree Officer Spinal Pt. 29                        £24,646.00
Super Ann                                              £4,338
N.I.                                                        £1,775
Mileage based on 350 miles per month            £1890
Mobile Telephone                                             £300
Professional Development & Training p.a.            £500

Total                                £33,449

5.0 Full Financial Implications

5.1 We have undertaken full discussions with Glendale on our intentions to remove the tree inspection element from the two contracts and have agreed that this will be formally omitted as of 31/12/12. This will allow them to undertake the 2012 “in-leaf” survey and ensure the affected business is worked into their financial model.

It has been agreed that a small percentage margin of 12.5% of the value of the works, be put back into the contract in other forms, so as to ensure the viability of the contract moving forward.

5.2 As the post would fall as identified above within the spinal point range 29-31, it will be subject to 2 increments over the period 2012-17

5.3 The figure for the contracted payments to Glendale would be subject to RPI increases in November of each year, so costs have been projected forward until 2017 (when Glendale’s contracts expire) for the savings scenarios shown below.

As it is difficult to confirm with any accuracy, what the RPI will be at any particular time, 3% per annum has been added (5.6% last year) to the contract figures to indicate the cost increases over the 5 year period the existing Grounds Maintenance Contracts will run to:
5.4

**Total savings forecast**

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<td></td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total base line from contracts</td>
<td>£9,538.07</td>
<td>£39,296.84</td>
<td>£40,475.74</td>
<td>£41,690.02</td>
<td>£42,940.72</td>
<td>£25,800.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Consultancy</td>
<td>£1,182.50</td>
<td>£4,730.00</td>
<td>£4,730.00</td>
<td>£4,730.00</td>
<td>£4,730.00</td>
<td>£2,759.17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total current costs</strong></td>
<td>£10,720.57</td>
<td>£44,026.84</td>
<td>£45,205.74</td>
<td>£46,420.02</td>
<td>£47,670.72</td>
<td>£28,559.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Officer costs</td>
<td>£8,362.25</td>
<td>£33,757</td>
<td>£34,821</td>
<td>£34,821</td>
<td>£35,859</td>
<td>£20,918</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.5% of base line contract</td>
<td>£1,192.26</td>
<td>£4,912.10</td>
<td>£5,059.47</td>
<td>£5,211.25</td>
<td>£5,367.59</td>
<td>£3,225.03</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total costs</strong></td>
<td>£9,554.51</td>
<td>£38,668.69</td>
<td>£39,880.60</td>
<td>£40,032.38</td>
<td>£41,227.00</td>
<td>£24,143.02</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Savings</strong></td>
<td>£1,166.06</td>
<td>£5,358.14</td>
<td>£5,325.15</td>
<td>£6,387.63</td>
<td>£6,443.72</td>
<td>£4,416.36</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5.5 The figures indicate the cost saving to the council over the five year period that the existing grounds maintenance contracts have been extended to.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 In view of the major benefits attributed to the establishment of the “in-house” tree officer together with the financial benefits, officers are of the view that the post be established to commence on the 3rd January 2013.