

Woodland Creation Initiative Grant Funding Income

Date: 28th June 2024

Report of: Parks Technical Manager

Report to: Chief Officer Climate Energy and Green Spaces

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report seeks approval and agreement to accept £362,695.52 of funding, secured from a successful funding bid for woodland and urban tree planting. The report recommends approval of entering into a grant agreement with the Council of the Borough of Kirklees and agree to the terms and conditions of the grant agreement for the planting and establishment management of 51 sites across the city during 2023/24 planting season.

Recommendations

- a) Approval of entering into a grant agreement with the Council of the Borough of Kirklees to support the delivery and maintenance for woodland creation tree planting of 2023/24 planting season.
- b) Agree to the terms and conditions of the grant agreement to support the delivery of the White Rose Forest through the Nature for Climate Fund Northern Forest (Grow Back Greener) programme.
- c) Agree receiving the grant for the delivery of £362,695.52 worth of planting by LCC across 51 sites in locations outlined in the agreement. The grant funding contains £352,359.42 for 2023-24 planting and £10,335 of funding for the establishment between 2024-2027.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report is to inform and approve entering into a funding agreement with the Borough of Kirklees supporting Leeds City Council climate targets and delivering the White Rose Forest through the Nature for Climate Fund Northern Forest (Grow Back Greener) programme.
- 2 The funding establishes the Woodland Creation programme objectives of securing match funding with grant and private funding to support the costs of delivery.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 The impact of the grant funding ensures the financial costs of the 2023/24 woodland creation initiative are being partially met through external funding in line with the costs outlined in February 2023 report gaining approval to spend, ref D56010.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 4 The initiative directly supports the climate emergency and addresses carbon emission pollution through carbon sequestration. The proposal also addresses the biodiversity crisis creating habitats for wildlife as well as future woodlands for public use supporting positive health and wellbeing.
- 5 The initiative supports the delivery of LCC key performance indicators, The Best Council Plan, Parks and Green Spaces strategy delivering 50 hectares of woodland every year to support the city to be carbon neutral by 2030.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: ALL		
Have ward members been consulted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

- 6 Significant consultation has taken place with ward members, internal LCC departments, West Yorkshire Ecology and Archaeology services, Parks and Green Space Forum members and Friends groups. Considerable consultation with the public took place through the Commonplace consultation platform, letters, onsite information, and face to face meetings.

What are the resource implications?

- 7 Receiving the funding supports the costs of delivery of the Woodland Creation project and long-term maintenance of the woodlands and standard tree planting. This meets the requirements of the Woodland Creation Programme securing private sector match funding for the scheme following the decision taken in February 2023 for the delivery and approval to spend, ref D56010.
- 8 The Council is being grant funded to plant trees and there is a 15 year maintenance obligation. The agreement will deliver £362,695.52 worth of planting by LCC across 51 sites in locations outlined in the agreement. The grant funding contains £352,359.42 for 2023-24 planting and £10,335 of funding for the establishment between 2024-2027.

Grant-funded items and costs			
Item No.	Item Description	Financial Year of Activity	Cost (£)
1	Whips and associated activities and materials (e.g., planting, ground preparation and protection)	2023-2024	£103,491.42
2	Establishment funding for woodland creation sites using whips.	2024-2027	£10,335
3	Standards and associated activities and materials (e.g., planting, ground preparation and protection) Grant paid at rate of £669 per standard, including 3 years of establishment funding.	2023-2024	£248,868
	TOTAL		£362,694.42

- 9 The terms of the agreement ensure the grant is used for the planting of new woodland and urban tree planting with the intention for this to be a permanent land use change.
- 10 The due diligence for ownership and consultation has been followed throughout the programme of planting for 2023/24 planting season ensuring tree planting is on land solely owned by LCC.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 11 The key risks of accepting the funding is the requirement of maintaining the woodlands to establishment over 15 years and a financial penalty if the area of land for woodlands are changed for another use during this time.
- 12 Within the agreement it states if the woodland is not maintained by the owner the grant monies would need to be repaid plus interest.
- 13 The risks will be managed through a three-year establishment management plan for all planting delivered through Green Spaces operational teams and contractors and the long term maintenance managed by the Green Spaces Forestry team.

What are the legal implications?

- 14 This is an administrative decision as this report follows the decision taken for delivery of woodland creation and authority to spend in February 2023 ref D56010 that was a direct consequence of the decision taken at Exec Board in January 2020 ref D50465.
- 15 Legal implications within the grant agreement include grant being used for the planting of new woodland and urban tree planting with the intention for this to be a permanent land use change with a 15-year maintenance obligation.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 16 The delivery of the 2023/24 woodland planting has taken place and the match funding secures the establishment management for three years and the long-term maintenance.
- 17 Delivery of the planting schemes took place in the winter of 2023/24 and the three years establishment will take place up to 2027 and long-term maintenance up to 2039.

How will success be measured?

- 18 Success of tree planting supported by the grant will be measured by regular quality assurance inspections by the Woodland Creation Team and inspections carried out by White Rose Forest project officers. A programme of establishment management works will be scheduled for three years or until established.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 19 The responsibility for the implementation of the funding requirements sits with the Parks Technical Team and wider Green Spaces management team.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- [Council and democracy \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://leeds.gov.uk/council-and-democracy) February 2023 Decision details.
- [Council and democracy \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://leeds.gov.uk/council-and-democracy) January 2020 Decision details