

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE

DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY:	Strategic Director of Growth & Development
DELEGATED BY:	Choose an item. (date of delegation)
IN CONSULTATION WITH:	Executive Member
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Growth & Development

SUBJECT: Coronation Living Heritage Fund Awards

1. DECISION

To accept the award of two grant allocations from Defra's Coronation Living Heritage Fund:

- £14,558 from Lot 1 to plant micro-woods
- £14,445 from Lot 2 to plant community orchards

2. REASON FOR DECISION

The Council has aspirations to plant 30,000 trees by 2030. The grant allocation will help with meeting the costs of this ambition, reducing pressure on the Council's resources and helping to make available resources go further.

3. BACKGROUND

The Coronation Living Heritage Fund was set up to support local tree planting initiatives to commemorate the King's Coronation and provide an improved natural heritage to be enjoyed by future generations. £2.5 million in funding was made available through Defra's Nature for Climate Fund for local authorities in England to bid into for micro-wood and community orchard schemes. The fund is made up of 2 schemes:

- Coronation Micro Woods: to enable local authorities to plant miniature areas of woodland in urban areas
- Coronation Community Orchards: to provide grants to local people and groups to establish community orchards

The Council worked with the Treescapes Team at Lancashire County Council to prepare bids to the fund. It is anticipated that there will be two micro-woods in the Miyawaki style (densely planted trees in a space of around 10x20m), one in Blackburn and one in Darwen, and at least two community orchards. Potential sites for community orchards include Corporation Park and Belmont village.

The deadline for completion of all schemes is March 2025. Only one micro-wood scheme has to be completed in the 23/24 planting season. A site in Queen's Park is being assessed for suitability for a micro-wood.

The funding will cover 100% of costs. No match is required.

Implementation of schemes will involve the community. The LCC Treescapes Team will assist with community engagement, raising awareness of the schemes, involving people in planting and encouraging involvement with future maintenance.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

A key risk is that implementation costs could rise, due to inflation, requiring financial input from the Council to complete the schemes. The Climate Emergency Working Group has earmarked a budget allocation for tree planting that could be used in this eventuality, which would avoid the Council having to return the grant and any reputational damage that will arise from letting the community down if a scheme is cancelled.

Loss of trees planted is another key risk that could result in grant clawback. Although the grant conditions have not set a minimum survival rate good tree management expects losses to be no more than 25%, allowing for tree failure, bad weather, especially drought, and vandalism. Community involvement and 'ownership' of sites and oversight by the Environment Team will help to minimise losses. Again, the Climate Emergency budget tree allocation can be called upon if absolutely necessary to make good any serious losses to avoid grant claw back.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The grant awards from the Coronation Living Heritage Funds are sufficient to cover the costs of at least two micro-wood and community orchard projects in the borough. The total grant on offer is £29,003 made up of:

- £14,558 from Lot 1 to plant micro-woods; and
- £14,445 from Lot 2 to plant community orchards

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The grant awards are subject to Defra's terms and conditions. These have been assessed and deemed acceptable by the Legal Department. A signed Memorandum of Understanding has been returned to Defra for each Lot and Legal Services has requested to hold a copy of each for record keeping as well as the client department.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Staff time from the Strategic Planning and Transport team in Growth & Development and the Environment Team in Environment & Operations will be needed to develop the schemes with the LCCC Treescapes team and the community.

8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None

9. CONSULTATIONS

None

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10. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Gwen Kinloch
DATE:	17 th November 2023
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	