

SUBJECT:	ALLOTMENT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – REMOVAL OF TREES
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT
LEAD OFFICER:	BRUCE KELSEY – ALLOTMENT STRATEGY OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform and advise elected members of the proposed removal of trees required as part of phase 1 of the allotment capital improvement programme.
- 1.2 To identify and specify only those trees that, in the opinion of the Arboricultural Officer and the Allotment Strategy Officer, need to be removed according to the schedule at Appendix 1 below.

2. Background

- 2.1 In April 2016 the Council obtained permission from the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) to de-commission the former allotment site on Riseholme Road, known locally as the Ermine allotment site.
- 2.2 Monies from the eventual disposal of this site have been earmarked to permit a comprehensive capital improvement programme of the city allotment sites.
- 2.3 A detailed action plan has been constructed which identifies a site by site programme of proposed works that need to be undertaken. The consultation version of this plan, which has been sent to all allotment tenants, is attached as Appendix 2 below and lists all projects scheduled between November 2017 and March 2018.
- 2.4 The main thrust of these works will be to address many years of minimal essential maintenance across the allotment sites and will primarily focus upon two key areas of work. Firstly, making improvements to site security to reduce incidents of break-ins and thefts of property from allotment sites. Secondly, to make significant improvements to site drainage to reduce incidents of flooding on allotment sites which has increased markedly over recent years and, as a result, makes a large number of potentially lettable plots unworkable.
- 2.5 To make these proposed security and drainage improvements successful, on some allotment sites the works will involve the removal of certain trees where their continued presence compromises either the preferred security solution or the proposed drainage solution
- 2.6 As might be expected of locations where there has been minimal maintenance for a number of years, certain sites contain a mixture of small medium and larger self-set species which have not been regularly maintained, trimmed or removed. Our aim is to carefully and selectively remove these species where necessary, to meet the objectives of the allotments improvement programme.
- 2.7 As well as removing physical barriers in many instances, these works will also increase available light to many plots which, in turn, will markedly enhance growing opportunities. At the same time, removal of areas of dense tree

- growth will permit, for the first time in many years, robust and defensible site boundaries to provide a substantial physical barrier to deter unwanted visitors.
- 2.8 An overriding principle of these works has been the wish to only remove the smallest number of trees possible. Through our lead contractor, Robert Woodhead Ltd, we have taken the opportunity to engage the views and opinions of an ecologist. This useful professional advice has been acted upon and has influenced both the timing and scope of the proposed works.
- 2.9 Wherever possible, we have taken note of the potential loss of natural habitats that may be compromised as a result of these works. The list at Appendix 1 represents the absolute minimum of removal works required to ensure that both security and drainage solutions, proposed as part of this major investment in the city allotments, will be a success.
- 2.10 Throughout the programme we will aim to retain and subsequently maintain as many mature and well established native species as possible to maintain the overall amenity value, feel and look of each site.
- 2.11 Where species are compromising waterways or creating major blockages to pathways, proposed fence lines and maintenance areas, these trees will either be removed entirely or sensitively trimmed to ensure that their amenity value can be retained whilst drainage and security are not affected.
- 2.12 Once completed, the trees on the allotment sites will be maintained on a regular basis as part of the ongoing grounds maintenance contract which will then allow them to grow and flourish properly. Such ongoing maintenance will also remove the need for further rectification works in the future, save for any species that are damaged through storms or growth issues.
- 2.13 Species affected by these works include:
Willow, Sycamore, Cypress, Apple, Prunus, Hazel, Oak, Elder, Ash, Cherry, Aspen, Lombardy Poplar, Norway Maple Alder and Beech
- 2.14 Of these species, the proposed removal of both willow and beech are as a direct result of self-set species or poorly maintained hedging. In these areas, species have simply been allowed to grow unchecked across defined site boundaries and into ditches, dykes and waterways.
- 2.15 This in turn, has resulted in water backing up across formerly viable plots, blockages of watercourses and enabling leaves and dead wood, together with associated undergrowth such as brambles etc. to span site boundaries and provide bridges across waterways for unauthorised access and unwanted guests.
- 2.16 No trees covered by this plan, and listed in Appendix 1 are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, nor are they located within a conservation area.
- 2.17 The proposed works on allotments sites are programmed to take place in two phases over eighteen months. This is so that clearance and improvement works can be carried out during winter months when the impact upon gardeners and wildlife will be at its least. Subject to planning permission being given for these tree removals, Phase 1 will commence in November 2017 and will conclude at the end of March 2018, phase 2 projects will commence in November 2018 and will finish at the end of March 2019. Some smaller, non-invasive works, which can be carried out without any direct impact to tenants

or wildlife may occur in the period April – October 2018. The tree works requested in this report relate to permissions to permit phase one to progress. A further report will be brought forward relating to the required tree removals for phase two.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The attached schedule at Appendix 1 details, by site, the trees which are scheduled for removal in phase 1, subject to permission being granted.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 A public consultation programme occurred in March 2017 across seven venues in the city. Tenants were personally invited to attend drop in sessions between 9am and 9pm at each venue. Additionally, specific plans relating to the site on which the tenant has a plot have been circulated to all current tenants.
- 4.2 Once the full costs of these works are known, tenants will receive a second letter, around the start of November 2017, informing them of what works will be taking place and when these works are proposed to start and end.
- 4.3 Residents whose properties border or back onto an allotment site will, at the same time as the tenants, also be contacted to inform them of what will be happening and when.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 Finance

- (i) The costs of the works outlined below will to be met by the receipt from the sale of the former Ermine allotment site.

5.2 Staffing

- (ii) All works relating to the Allotment Capital Improvement Programme will be managed and overseen by Robert Woodhead Ltd. Robert Woodhead may choose to sub-contract these works to third parties. In such cases, the sub-contractor will fully satisfy the Council's own policies and standard in this regard.
- (iii) Internally the works for the programme will be managed by the Allotment Strategy Officer and supported by the Client Procurement Officer, the Legal & Democratic Services Officer, Community Services Manager and Assistant Director for Community Services & Street Scene.

5.3 Property/Land/Accommodation Implications

- (iii) The loss of the former Ermine Allotment site – an area of 0.98ha – will be replaced by the establishment of a new allotment site in the Birchwood area to a similar size and will address a recognised strategic gap in the provision of allotments in the South West quadrant of Lincoln.

5.4 Procurement

- (iv) The contract to undertake the allotment capital improvement programme has been carried out using the East Midlands Property

Alliance SCAPE contractual framework under the control and guidance of the council's Client Procurement Officer.

6. Policy Implications

6.1 Strategic Priority

- (i) The Council's recently adopted strategic plan – "*Vision 2020 – together let's deliver Lincoln's ambitious future*" identifies the allotment capital improvement programme as a key project under the strategic heading "Let's Enhance our Remarkable Place"

7. Consultation and Communication

- 7.1 All allotment tenants are aware of the proposed improvements at their site. All have had the opportunity to view the entire programme of works. Allotment tenants have contributed to modifying and shaping the proposed plans.
- 7.2 Allotment societies, both locally and nationally, are aware of our proposed plans and have also engaged in consultation. Through the use of the council's webpages and social media as well as articles in the press, we will keep all residents informed of progress over the eighteen months of these proposed works.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Planning officers have viewed the overall proposals for the whole capital programme including the proposed removal of the trees listed in this report. With the exception of proposed works to install new perimeter fencing at the St Botolphs site, the installation of boundary fencing at the Sincil Bank and Tritton Road sites, we are advised that no other planning permissions associated with the capital improvement programme are required at this time. Should any such requirement become apparent as works progress, a further report on the subject will be brought to this committee.

9. Assessment of Options

Key Issues

- 9.1 Taking no action and leaving most or all of the trees listed in this report in situ will significantly hinder the overall effectiveness of the refurbishment of the city allotment sites. In short, new secure boundaries will not be effectively established, drains which are believed to be essential means for water to escape from the site, will not be recreated and site security in some areas will remain significantly compromised.
- 9.2 Some tenants have expressed concerns that the natural balance of certain sites could be affected by a large scale reduction of trees, especially well established and mature species. As mentioned earlier, it is not and never has been our intention to conduct whole scale site clearances in this way. We remain committed to maintaining the good balance of quality gardening spaces coupled with naturally occurring flora and fauna.
- 9.3 The site borders and the internal draining of allotment land has not seen significant investment for many years. As such the trees have been allowed to grow unhindered and are now becoming a problem. Trees identified, if left in-situ will hinder the free flow of water off site and along drains that would be cleared by the improvement works.

- 9.4 Large root systems will further hinder the flow of water off the site and canopy spread will reduce the amount of available light on the site, both of which are unhelpful to allotment gardeners.
- 9.5 The council is committed to enhancing its environmental credentials and reducing its carbon footprint. The Council has a policy of replacing trees that are removed. Planting additional trees, to compensate for the projected loss of species listed in Appendix 1 will take place.
- 9.6 Where possible, the council will re-plant trees in locations, on or off allotment sites, following the successful completion of the allotment capital improvement programme in March 2019 subject to the following constraints:
- i. Trees are re-planted so that, when fully grown, they do not and will not impinge upon the light or drainage issues at an allotment site.
 - ii. That trees when planted do not cause an ongoing nuisance to other parties such as residents and businesses.
- 9.7 A range of potential locations, where additional trees could be planted, are being identified across the city and it is the intention to have this confirmed and available on request in due course.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 That members approve the list of trees to be removed at Appendix 1

Access to Information:

Does the report contain exempt information which would prejudice the public interest if it was publicised? No

Key Decision: No

Key Decision Reference No: N/A

Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply? No

Call In and Urgency

Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply? No

List of Background Papers:

Lead Officer Bruce Kelsey, Allotment Strategy
Officer

Telephone: 01522 873706

E-mail:

bruce.kelsey@lincoln.gov.uk

Summary of Trees to be removed from Allotment Sites

The clearance works primarily involve the removal of self-set varieties resulting from non-maintenance at sites. The majority of species which are included in this work are self-set willow and elder. Listed in the summary table below, are those trees, in addition to those that are contained within the generic description above which are mature/semi mature species.

Allotment Improvement Programme - November 2017 – March 2018

Site	Willow	Sycamore	Cypress	Apple	Prunus	Hazel	Oak	Elder	Notes
Boultham Park								1	8m of privet hedge
Burton Ridge	3								Scrub growth predominantly self-set willow, sycamore & hawthorn
Canwick Hill	No tree clearance works required								
Clarence Street 'A'	No tree clearance works required								
Clarence Street 'B'	No tree clearance works required								
Greenbank Drive							1		Scrub growth predominantly self-set prunus & hawthorn
Hykeham Road	18*								Scrub growth predominantly self-set hawthorn & willow *All willow trees are in land owned by Hill Holt Wood and are to be removed with their permission
Kingsway	No tree clearance works required								
Simons Hill	28(31)	4				1	2		
Tritton Road									
Yarborough Cresc.	No tree clearance works required								
Total	80	4	0	0	0	1	3	1	

Site	Ash	Cherry	Aspen	Poplar	Maple	Alder	Beech	Notes	
Boultham Park								8m of privet hedge	
Burton Ridge		1						Scrub growth predominantly self-set willow, sycamore & hawthorn	
Canwick Hill	No tree clearance works required								
Clarence Street 'A'	No tree clearance works required								
Clarence Street 'B'	No tree clearance works required								
Greenbank Drive	3		1					Scrub growth predominantly self-set prunus & hawthorn	
Hykeham Road				12				Scrub growth predominantly self-set hawthorn & willow *All willow trees are in land owned by Hill Holt Wood and are to be removed with their permission	

Site	Ash	Cherry	Aspen	Poplar	Maple	Alder	Beech	Notes
Kingsway	No tree clearance works required							
Simons Hill	5(1)			3		(1)		Scrub growth comprised of hawthorn willow and elder. Figures in brackets indicate trees to possibly be removed on land outside the allotment site but which impacts upon on site drainage
Tritton Road							38	Formerly planted as a hedge but left to grow into an unmaintained hedge
Yarborough Cresc.	No tree clearance works required							

Total	9	1	1	15	0	1	38	
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The Proposed Improvement Programme.



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Boultham Park



- ▶ Possible new water main for whole site to mitigate continual water leaks. (blue line – 650m)
- ▶ Clearance and re-establishment of area marked red as viable plots.
- ▶ Complete track works. (yellow line 175m)



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Burton Ridge



- ▶ Whole site refurbishment option proposed.
- ▶ **ALL** plot holders would need to agree to relinquish their plot for 3 months.
- ▶ All plot holders to be asked to remove all boundary fencing and on-site rubbish.
- ▶ Original plots marked using posts on upper and lower boundary.
- ▶ Whole site rotovation.
- ▶ Plots re-laid and re-marked.
- ▶ Plots returned to tenants.
- ▶ Hard core (road planings 350m) pathways marked red on map.
- ▶ 10m wide boundary with hard core path (275m) created at lower edge of plots. (blue line)
- ▶ Lincolnshire fencing boundary (275m) to delineate allotments from rest of area.
- ▶ Access gate included for maintenance vehicles.
- ▶ Area below lower boundary left to grow naturally.



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Canwick Hill



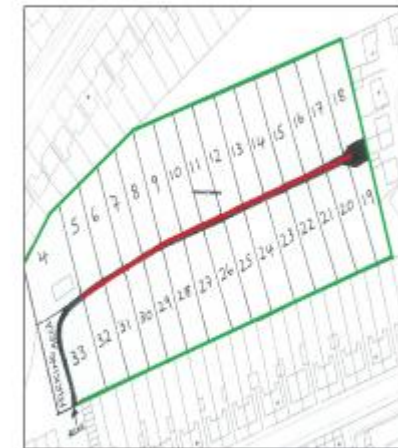
- ▶ Installation of a 5ft pallsade double gate at end of farmers track between plot 20 and 21. (light green line)
- ▶ Convert plots 56 & 57 into a parking bay for tenants. (plots currently un-let – dark green line)
- ▶ Installation of a 5ft pallsade fence to Northern boundary. (red line – 275m)
- ▶ Repairs/improvements to track to North boundary. (yellow line – 120m)
- ▶ Small hedge improvements along Northern edge of plot 30 as required.



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Clarence Street 'A'



- ▶ Complete the track works to the end of the site. (red line – 180m)
- ▶ After consultation with NLHS and tenants, identification of wildlife areas and sensitive clearance of remaining hedge works at site boundaries. (green line)
- ▶ General clearance of on-site rubbish and detritus.



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Clarence Street 'B'



- ▶ Replacement of mesh fencing panels to boundary fence. (red line – 350m)
- ▶ Installation of hard core (road planings) track throughout the site. (green line – 400m)



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Greenbank Drive

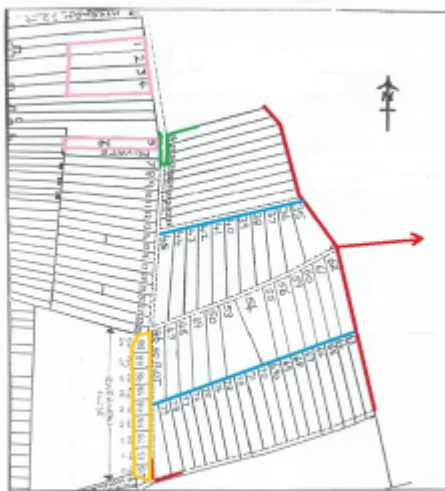
- ▶ 6ft perimeter palisade fence. (red line - 220m)
- ▶ New double palisade gates. (mauve line)
- ▶ Drop kerb at entrance and hard core (road planings) pathway. (blue line – 75m)
- ▶ Need to ensure that plots 6 & 7 move back within boundary of site.
- ▶ Need 3m access strip behind plots 7-11 to allow for installation of fence.
- ▶ Current bank at back of plots 7-11 (green line) to be flattened to reduce possibility of anyone climbing over the fence.
- ▶ Maintenance of border becomes tenant responsibility once works are completed.



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Hykeham Road



- ▶ Complete clearance and digging out of east side ditch. Possible re-routing of the ditch behind plots 24-35. (red line)
- ▶ New 6ft palisade gate at Rivermead entrance.
- ▶ New palisade fence at main entrance to site. (Green line)
- ▶ Consider selling off plots 1-6 (Pink line) – difficult to manage and maintain, long term un-let.
- ▶ Dig out existing cross site ditch. (blue line)
- ▶ Reduce number of mature trees along boundary line, especially poplars along plot 62/63.
- ▶ Clearance of on-site overgrowth/undergrowth.
- ▶ Discussion with tenants of plots 80-88 to return these to viable allotment plots rather than garden extensions.



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Simons Hill



- ▶ Re-establish boundary drainage ditches for whole site. (red line - 600m)
- ▶ Repair and re-hang main gate –replace with 6ft palisade fence and gate. (green line)
- ▶ Repair and re-hang second entrance to site. (blue line)
- ▶ Comprehensive clearance of ground cover at eastern boundary leaving mature oak trees but removing general brush.
- ▶ Reduce boundary hedge to 3ft.



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Tritton Road



- ▶ Hard core (road planings) track to be completed throughout whole site. (red line - 100m)
- ▶ 5ft palisade fence to be installed along Tritton Road boundary and along part of South boundary. (green line - 45m)
- ▶ Tree works to reduce number of trees on Tritton Road boundary and provide base for possible blackthorn hedge.
- ▶ Entrance way improvements to equalise levels. (blue line)



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Yarborough Crescent



- ▶ General perimeter boundary tidying and clearing. (red line)
- ▶ Look to relocate the Marne Gardens garage entrance (pedestrian gate) to remove the small gap between post and garage wall.



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For All Sites

- ▶ New fully enclosed double headed standpipes set in their own frost boxes to replace all existing water taps.
- ▶ Additional water taps on some sites where water pressure/supply is suitable to standard outlined above.
- ▶ A self-composting toilet on larger sites (subject to consultation and agreement by tenants).
- ▶ On larger sites, consideration given to designated areas where periodic woodchip & manure can be deposited by contractors (subject to consultation and agreement by tenants).
- ▶ On larger sites, consideration given to designated areas on sites where scrap metal, plastics and excess wood can be deposited for periodic collection (subject to consultation and agreement by tenants).
- ▶ Investigation of key card entry systems to replace traditional keys and padlocks.
- ▶ New corporate notice boards.



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