

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ALLOTMENT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – REMOVAL OF TREES (PHASE TWO)</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>BRUCE KELSEY – ALLOTMENT STRATEGY OFFICER</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform and advise elected members of the proposed removal of trees required as part of phase 2 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 in phase 2 of the improvement programme scheduled between November 2018 and April 2019.
- 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 theft 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 2 will commence in November 2018 and will conclude at the end of April 2018. 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.

2.18 Planning Committee, at its meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, approved a removal plan for those tree on sites involved in phase 1 of the capital improvement programme.

### **3. Proposal**

3.1 The attached schedule at Appendix 1 details, by site, the trees which are scheduled for removal in phase 2, subject to permission being granted.

3.2 After further investigation at Clarence Street A allotment, a further four trees have been identified as requiring removal and/or maintenance works during phase 1 of the programme between November 2017 and April 2018. The details are listed in the schedule at Appendix 1.

### **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 letter, around the start of November 2018, 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**

- (iv) 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

(v) 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 from 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 further report relating to the proposed replacement programme, identifying the locations, species and quantities where additional trees will be planted, will be brought to committee for approval 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:

Planning Committee          November 8<sup>th</sup> 2017  
Allotment Capital Development

Programme – Removal of Trees  
(Phase One)

**Lead Officer**                                  Bruce Kelsey -          Allotment Strategy Officer

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### Summary of Trees to be removed from Allotment Sites – Phase 2

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 2018 – April 2019

Site	Willow	Sycamore	Cypress	Apple	Prunus	Hazel	Oak	Elder	Notes
Boultham Glebe	69	2	1	2	7	1			Scrub growth - predominantly self-set willow & elder
Long Leys Road	12	1		1	1	1	1		Hawthorn hedge trim along western boundary
Sincil Bank					1				Clearance of undergrowth on site
South Common	No Tree clearance required								
St Botolph's Cresc.		9							Self-set sycamore on allotment/housing boundary
Yarborough Cresc. B	No tree clearance required								
Wragby Road		1							
Melbourne Road	No tree clearance required								
Clarence Street 'A' (Phase 1 additional)		2			4				Remove prunus on plot 7. Removal of 2 decaying sycamore near entrance gate.

<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
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Site	Ash	Cherry	Aspen	Poplar	Maple	Alder	Beech	Horse Chestnut	Notes
Boultham Glebe									Scrub growth predominantly self-set willow & elder
Long Leys Road	1	1		2	1				Hawthorn hedge trim along western boundary
Sincil Bank	1								Clearance of undergrowth
South Common	No Tree clearance required								
St Botolph's Cresc.	1								
Yarborough Cresc. B	No Tree clearance required								
Wragby Road									
Melbourne Road	No Tree clearance required								
Clarence Street 'A' (Phase 1 additional)								1	Removal of 1 stem of Horse Chestnut in danger of splitting out and causing damage to property behind allotment site. 20% thinning/crown lift of 3 cherry trees on plot 19.

<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
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# The Proposed Improvement Programme.



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## Boultham Glebe(1)



- ▶ Introduce new palisade fence to riverside boundary. (red line – 550m)
- ▶ Clear perimeter drainage ditch. (light green line – 350m)
  - ▶ Will need all plots (2-32) to relinquish 3m at rear of plot to allow for clearance and planting to take place, creating a permanent 'maintenance strip' and to standardisation of the plot boundaries.
  - ▶ **Temporarily** create clearance access points (yellow lines) for max. of 3 months. (as far as possible, we will use vacant plots as they become available). Plot owners may be asked to temporarily relinquish their plot).
  - ▶ Yellow lines are **indicative only** and should **NOT** be seen as definitive points of access.
  - ▶ **IF** any plots are affected, these will be returned to plot holders once clearance works completed. Plots will be fully rotovated and plot holders will have 1 year of rent-free gardening.
  - ▶ Estimated time of works – 6-8 weeks.



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## Boultham Glebe (2)



- ▶ On-site drainage ditches fully cleared and re-established. (blue line – 750- 850m)
- ▶ New drainage ditches to be installed to reduce flooded plots
- ▶ Clear undergrowth and old buildings and prepare plots for rent in green hatched box area.
- ▶ Clear and re-establish proper hard core (road planings) pedestrian access path for Ellison Avenue plots following existing pathway. (orange line – 150m)
- ▶ Once boundary fence and clearance works are completed, responsibility for plot boundaries (blackthorn hedge) will pass to plot holders once hedge is properly established. This will be written into any subsequent tenancy agreements
- ▶ Consideration given to installation of electric gate closer/opener to aid site security

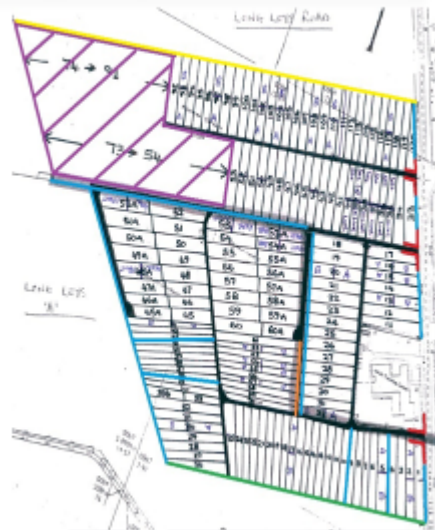


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## Long Leys Road & Long Leys Road 'A'

- ▶ New 5ft palisade gates and fencing at all entrances. (red line)
- ▶ Boundary hedge and ditch clearances. (green lines – 275m)
- ▶ Ditch clearances. (blue lines – 275m)
- ▶ Extend track after plot 60a. (orange line – 80m)
- ▶ Improvements to boundary hedge – infill planting with hedge whips only. (yellow line)



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## Sincil Bank

- ▶ Blackthorn hedge along Sincil Bank boundary. (orange line – 100m)
- ▶ Clearance of general undergrowth and brash. Extend temporary chestnut pale fence solution to provide security whilst hedge grows up. (orange line – 80m)
- ▶ Trimming and maintenance of hedge along school boundary down to 3ft. (red line – 150m)
- ▶ Hard core (road planings) track laid. (green line – 130m)
- ▶ Palisade fence solution for corner of site. (Blue box - tbc)

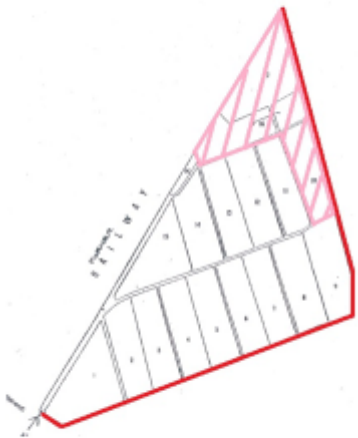


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## South Common



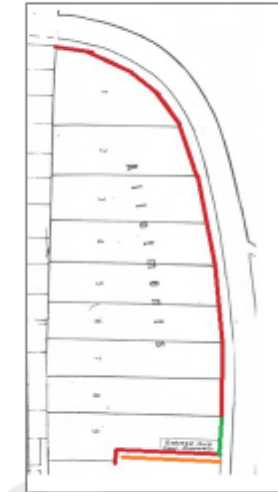
- ▶ Blackthorn hedge planted on entire South Common boundary. (red line - 250m)



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## St. Botolph's Crescent



- ▶ Install 5ft palisade fence around whole site. (red line - 100m)
- ▶ Install double 5ft palisade gates. (green line)
- ▶ Remove trees along boundary with housing line. (adj. to plot 9 - orange line)
- ▶ Remove misc. stumps along fence line.



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## Wragby Road

- ▶ Hard Core (road planings) trackway throughout entire site and along entrance track from Tesco gateway. (red line - 620m).
- ▶ Establish parking bays at plot 4b and plot 71. (long term un-let - green line).
- ▶ Minor tree works adjacent to plots 4-9.
- ▶ Consider thinning or leaving overgrowth as a natural barrier on plots 59 & 60. (orange line)



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## Yarborough Crescent 'B'

- ▶ Hard core (road planings) improvements to site tracks. (red line - 200m)
- ▶ Install improved water main to alleviate water pressure issues



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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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