



## **Report on 2025 Tree Survey and Risk Management Actions**

### **Background**

Councillors will recall that in March 2024, the Town Council appointed a qualified tree surveyor to carry out a survey of all significant trees on our open spaces. This survey was completed, with works prescribed and subsequently undertaken by a mixture of in house staff and external contractors. At the same time, the Town Council adopted a Tree Risk Management Strategy to guide our approach to managing risks posed by trees on our open spaces.

In May 2025, MTC took on a substantial number of additional open spaces across the town, which has significantly increased the number of trees we are responsible for. These newly devolved trees already have a current survey in place, but it was carried out by a different contractor, using a different platform and standard to that used by the Town Council.

### **Needs**

When the original March 2024 survey was carried out, the trees were not in full leaf. The surveyor recommended an additional visit before autumn 2025 to check on progress with prescribed works and to assess the trees in full leaf.

The devolved tree stock comes with varying inspection intervals, with the first batch of inspections due to expire shortly. A proactive approach to tree surveying and associated maintenance is therefore essential. This is also an opportunity to bring all trees under a consistent survey methodology aligned with the Tree Risk Management Strategy.

It is recommended that all MTC trees are resurveyed by a reputable, independent tree surveyor. This will:

- Identify and prioritise required works for completion over the winter months
- Enable accurate budgeting for the 2026/27 financial year
- Allow lower-risk trees to be surveyed less frequently
- Create an opportunity to upskill existing staff to undertake interim inspections after storms or at set intervals, reducing long-term costs

Several potential contractors, both local and national, have been approached for quotations. Due to the specialist nature of the work, quotes have been challenging to obtain. All invited contractors received the same specification of work.

One quotation was received from the contractor who undertook the 2024 survey. The Council has developed a positive working relationship with this contractor, their work

was of a high standard, and they are already familiar with many of our sites and tree stock.

### **Financial and legal considerations**

Councillors set a sensible tree management budget for the current financial year in anticipation of survey and maintenance costs. Sufficient budget exists for the surveys themselves. While some prescribed works can be carried out in-house, it is likely that not all works can be funded from the current year's budget. However, as most required works are expected to arise from devolved trees, Councillors may call on the devolution earmarked reserve if required.

The Council has a legal duty to manage risks from trees on its land, and commissioning surveys from suitably qualified tree consultants is a recognised way to meet this obligation. All quotations sought are from qualified, reputable businesses.

Powers to act for open space and tree management are given under the Open Spaces Act 1906, S.10.

### **Quotations received**

Quote A – £9,310.00

Quote B – £11,482.22

Quote C – £11,100.00

### **Recommendations**

That the Council:

- Appoint the contractor who provided Quote A to carry out the full survey of all MTC managed trees.
- Authorise the Clerk to engage the contractor and arrange for the works to begin without delay.
- Approve the virement of £5,000 from the Devolution Ear Marked Reserve to the tree management budget line to cover any urgent works identified.
- Delegate authority to the Clerk to authorise expenditure, within the remaining tree management budget, for any high priority works arising from the survey. This delegation will enable timely action on urgent safety matters, ensuring legal compliance and protecting public safety without the need to wait for the next Council meeting.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

August 2025