

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	22 March 2017
Subject:	Tree Inspections Follow-Up Audit Report
Report of:	Andy Noble, Asset Manager
Corporate Lead:	Rob Weaver, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor Dave Waters, Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

Following an audit of the tree inspections in August 2016, limited assurance was given that trees were being inspected that were not in the ownership of the authority, with 672 trees being inspected of which 191 were not on land owned by the authority.

At the time of the audit it was agreed that the Property team would produce comprehensive maps for the contractor to complete the inspections along with utilising the Public Services Software system to instruct the inspectors of areas to be inspected in line with the annual inspection programme. This report details those works that have been completed to assure Members that the only Council-owned trees are being inspected.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in respect of the recommendations arising from the tree inspections audit.

Reasons for Recommendation:

As a limited assurance opinion to the adequacy of the inspection regime has previously been issued by Internal Audit, this report highlights the changes and progress made.

Resource Implications:

None directly associated with the report.

Legal Implications:

The Council has a 'Duty of Care' under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the occupiers' liability legislation to ensure a risk management plan is in place to ensure reasonable steps are taken to minimise risk.

Risk Management Implications:

None directly associated with the report

Performance Management Follow-up:

Internal Audit will be following up the August audit at the end of the first quarter 2017/18 to ensure all measures within this report have been implemented and are at a satisfactory level of

control.

Environmental Implications:

None directly associated with the report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In September 2015 the responsibility of the management of trees on Tewkesbury Borough Council-owned land transferred to the Asset Management team. Ubico are appointed as the contractor to carry out annual inspections during the winter months from November until February and complete any remedial works found during these inspections.
- 1.2 In November 2015, the Asset Management team introduced new software and GPS hardware system to manage the trees as the previous system was very inefficient and difficult to access for follow up work.
- 1.3 Ubico used the system through the winter of 2015 inspecting the trees that had previously been identified as high risk using the knowledge within the Ubico team for these inspections.
- 1.4 In February 2016 it was established that Ubico were inspecting trees that were not in the ownership of Tewkesbury Borough Council and therefore the Asset Management team reviewed the process for future inspections.

2.0 SYSTEMS REVIEW AND OUTCOMES

- 2.1 Following the findings that trees on land not owned by Tewkesbury Borough Council were being inspected, and trees considered low risk were also inspected before high risk trees, the Asset Management team undertook a review of how Ubico is instructed and how trees were risk categorised.
- 2.2 During the summer of 2016 the Asset Management team undertook a review of all trees on Council-owned land and risk categorised them from 1 to 5 requiring from 1 to 5 yearly inspections. The team also utilised the grass cutting mapping system which identifies all land owned by the Council and is currently issued to Ubico for grass cutting to identify all trees to be inspected.
- 2.3 In November 2016 Members agreed an updated Tree Policy which incorporated the new risk categories and inspection regime.
- 2.4 In November 2016 Ubico received additional training on the software system and new risk categorisation system along with issuing them with the mapping system with all the Council-owned land.
- 2.5 In February 2017 it was noted that Ubico had completed 70% of inspections on Tewkesbury Borough Council-owned land with trees (117 of 170 sites). The new system has enabled the Ubico team to complete a high percentage of the inspections on Council-owned land and officers are confident all annual inspections are able to be completed in line with the new policy.
- 2.6 Officers have also identified that, during the inspection of 2016/17, only one tree has been wrongly inspected that was not in the ownership of the Council. Of the 222 findings reported we are currently awaiting an update from Ubico as to which of these works have been completed.

- 3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 3.1 None
- 4.0 CONSULTATION**
- 4.1 None
- 5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 5.1 Tree Safety Management Policy
- 6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 6.1 None
- 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 7.1 None
- 8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 8.1 None
- 9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 9.1 None
- 10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 10.1 Tree Safety Management Policy – Executive Committee 23 November 2016

Background Papers: Internal Audit Report September 2016

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Appendices: None