

Three Rivers District Council

OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH AND TREE HEALTH

PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT (P.I.D. Lite)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the document

The Council owns approx. 230Ha of mixed woodland across the District. The woodland is managed in accordance with Woodland Management Plans and Tree Management Strategy, however there have been some issues relating to tree health which have recently come to light which are starting to affect our tree stock and would impact on both the management implications of the above and increased survey frequency requirements. Both of these aspects are likely to lead to increased costs.

Oak Processionary Moth nests have been found for the first time this year in Three Rivers. As a result of this we have received **three Statutory Notices** from the Forestry Commission to comply with. The cost of removing nests on these three sites this year has been approximately £4,500, and there are further actions that are required to be undertaken in the next financial year which involve spraying affected trees in the spring and/or felling trees at Croxley Common Moor where it is not possible to spray due to its SSSI status.

Further nest sites were identified by our staff on a neighbouring site to Croxley Common Moor at Ebury Way at the end of this year's season and these were reported to the Forestry Commission.

In undertaking a review of our Strategic Woodland Management Plans this year, it has become evident that Ash dieback or Chalara is starting to impact on mature Ash in Three Rivers' woodland tree stock. The general health of mature Oak trees within our woodlands is also a concern for the future.

As a result of these tree diseases it is anticipated that there will be an increased future cost associated with tree survey within our woodlands. It is very difficult to give an accurate prediction at this time.

1.2 Executive Summary

- 1.2.1 Oak Processionary Moth nests have been found for the first time this year in Three Rivers. As a result of this we have received **three Statutory Notices** from the Forestry Commission to comply with. The cost of removing nests on these three sites this year has been approximately £4,500,
- 1.2.2 The Council must comply with Statutory Notices served by Forestry Commission and undertake pre-emptive survey work to identify further issues. We must also promote the dangers associated with the disease to the community.

1.3 Project Objectives

- 1.3.1 To comply with tree management requirements resulting from Statutory Notices received this year and two additional trees subsequently reported to the Forestry Commission (spraying seven affected trees and the removal of three trees growing on Croxley Common Moor) this work is required to comply with the Statutory Notices already received.
- 1.3.2 To survey sites surrounding the areas affected this year (Denham Way Playing Fields, Croxley Common Moor SSSI, Ebury Way (in TRDC ownership) and Oxhey Woods.
- 1.3.3 To comply with Statutory Notices anticipated to be received next year, which it is anticipated will rise significantly in number due to both a spread of the disease, and awareness of the disease increasing due to survey work being undertaken (both by ourselves and the Forestry Commission)
- 1.3.4 It is anticipated that taking the necessary action above will mean that the disease will remain under control.

1.4 Current issues and priorities

- 1.4.1 OPM is established in most of Greater London most of which comprises the Core Zone. In this area the Forestry Commission no longer intervene. The remainder of the Country however including Three Rivers remains a designated Protected Zone, hence the Forestry Commissions involvement this year. It is not possible to know at this point in time if the disease were to continue to spread, what the Forestry Commissions involvement will be. If the cost is wholly down to TRDC then this could increase far more significantly in future.
- 1.4.2 OPM does impact on tree health due to defoliation however the main concern is one of public health. The adult caterpillars develop tiny hairs which can cause significant allergies and potentially anaphylaxis. These hairs are on caterpillars, shed in nests, those most vulnerable to health hazards are;
 - Curious children and pets
 - People who work on or close to oak trees
 - Anyone spending time close to infested trees; and
 - Grazing and browsing livestock and wild animals

- 1.4.3 During July to September 2019 around 70 interceptions of OPM have been identified in the UK on recently imported Oak trees. This has affected a number of Counties across the Country including Hertfordshire. Both Welsh and Scottish Governments have also confirmed several cases.
- 1.4.4 Under the theme **Healthier Communities**: The following sections of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 are relevant: at 2.4 we state we will provide a safe and healthy environment and at 2.4.1 Ensure the safety of people in the District.
- 1.4.5 At 2.5.1 we strive to improve and facilitate access to leisure and recreational activities for adults CP02 – Satisfaction with parks and open spaces.

1.5 Implications of project not being complete

- 1.5.1 There is a legal requirement to comply with statutory notices served by the Forestry Commission.
- 1.5.2 There would be a significant public health concern if the problem remained unmanaged on public land with a particular risk to children.

2 Business Case

The business case for the project is about supporting strategic objectives relating to organisational efficiency and effectiveness and use of resources.

Why should this project be undertaken?

- To comply with legislation
- To ensure public health concerns relating to the disease are managed, limiting the potential risk to health

How will project success be measured?

- Effectively complying with legislation/notices served
- No or low number of cases of public health incidents relating to OPM on trees on TRDC land
- More regular survey work will help manage problems associated with tree health in a more proactive way, however may be likely to result in future bids for further works

2.1 Project Definition

2.2 Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs

- To comply with Statutory Notices served by Forestry Commission
- To undertake pre-emptive survey work to identify further issues as early as possible
- To promote the dangers associated with the disease effectively to the community

Outcomes

- Minimising risk to health for residents.

- Effectively managing all aspects of tree health

2.3 Benefits

- Less risk of public health incidents.
- TRDC will monitor occurrence of disease.

3 Project Costs

3.1 One off project costs

- 3.1.1 The costs of managing OPM in the district is difficult to predict, and a cost expected to increase over a number of years to both deal with the removal of nests and to survey tree stock on an annual basis for the presence of OPM/Chalara, and follow up treatment to prevent reoccurrence of the disease.
- 3.1.2 It is difficult to be able to realistically predict a cost associated with the disease as it is so new to the district, however I imagine that due to the location of sites this year along Ebury Way and Oxhey Woods that the disease is likely to have already spread into the surrounding areas. For this reason early survey and intervention will minimise future risk, however it is likely to flag up a number of nests to be removed at on average of around £1,500 per site if they occur in a similar pattern to those this year.
- 3.1.3 An estimate of £15,000 to treat nests on new trees in 2020 season.
- 3.1.4 A further £2,000 to spray trees forming nest sites this year to comply with the current Statutory Notices.
- 3.1.5 £3,000 to undertake a survey of trees to an extent of 50m surrounding nest sites discovered this year.
- 3.1.6 A total project cost for the year 2020-21 of £20,000.

3.2 Financial viability

- 3.2.1 We do not have a choice but to comply with Statutory Notices, the only variable is potentially how quickly the disease progresses to impact on other trees.
- 3.2.2 If the disease does not progress as predicted in this bid, then Members will be updated and the money will be offered up as a saving.

3.3 Resources and skills

- 3.3.1 It is anticipated that external arboricultural contractors (who have experience of dealing with the disease in London) will undertake nest removal as this year.
- 3.3.2 Again a specialist arboricultural consultant will be required to undertake a survey of surrounding trees of 2019 nest sites.
- 3.3.3 It would be anticipated that Tree and Landscape Officers undertake training during 2020 to enable them to undertake survey work in future.

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Has the project been agreed by the Head of ICT?

Yes	
No	X

3.4 Equalities

Is this project responding to an Equality Impact Assessment?

Yes	
No	X

If yes, please provide brief details of the EIA...

Has an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) been undertaken for this project?

Yes	
No	X

If yes, what are the outcomes and how do these link to the project?

3.5 Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

Has a [Data Protection Impact Assessment](#) be completed for this project?

Yes	
No	X

If yes, please attach a copy
 If no, why not? No data is involved

3.6 Risks

[Risk Management Strategy](#)

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Risk to public health	In worst case scenario death through anaphylaxis	In accordance with this PID	Treat with actions as detailed in this PID	4 (2 significant, 2 unlikely)

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Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- Remote	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16
	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
Low	Low	Medium	High	
2	4	6	8	
Low	Low	Low	Low	
1	2	3	4	
----- Impact -----> Unacceptable				

Impact Score
 4 (Catastrophic)
 3 (Critical)
 2 (Significant)
 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score
 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
 3 (Likely (21-79%))
 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
 1 (Remote (≤5%))