

# ***Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**27<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

### **Public Realm Planting Strategic Review**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 The proposal to consider an alternative approach to planting in the councils green spaces was being developed and early stakeholder engagement with interested groups had commenced in September 2017. This generated interest in the press and with the public prompting petitions and a debate in council.
- 1.2 The business case for planting options has now been prepared for consideration by the scrutiny committee.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue**

- 2.1 The project team were in the process of developing the business case evaluating the options for planting in the council's public realm, including the Long Gardens, Imperial Gardens and parks and gardens across the town.
- 2.2 To support this process, stakeholder engagement had commenced. This resulted in significant public interest in proposals being developed which led to 2 petitions being started, one against the proposal and one in support of the proposal. The petition against received in excess of 750 signatures and triggered a debate in council.
- 2.3 Following the council debate, an additional option has been modelled. As such, the business case and options appraisal now includes 3 options:
  1. Retain all seasonal bedding.
  2. Retain seasonal bedding in the Long Gardens and Imperial Gardens, change to herbaceous perennials in all other locations.
  3. Change to herbaceous perennials in all locations.
- 2.4 The business case outlines the financial and none financial evaluation of each option for consideration by the committee.
- 2.5 The business case and evaluation has been developed with the support of Publica working with the existing service provider Ubico. The project team has drawn on experienced gained by other councils which have considered similar proposals.

**2.6** The Cabinet welcomes feedback from the committee on the options being presented.

**2.7** The focus of the debate in council was around the 2 key locations i.e. the Long Gardens and Imperial Gardens. Any decision to change the planting approach in these locations will now be subject to further development and consultation.

### **3. Next Steps**

**3.1** The Cabinet is due to make a final decision in December 2017 and consider the implication of any decision on the nursery in February 2018.

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#### **Background Papers**

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**Accountability**

Councillor Chris Coleman

**Scrutiny Function**

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