

Date of Meeting: 6th October 2022

Foamstream

1. Purpose of Report

To consider officer recommendations for the purchase of a Foamstream machine to aid the removal of horsetail at the allotment sites. If approved the machine has other benefits.

2. Background

Brookfield allotment site has been experiencing extensive invasion of horsetail for several years despite attempts by officers and allotment holders to eradicate it. At present there are currently 12 allotments vacant as it is not possible to let them in the condition they are in. These plots currently have covering over them in an attempt to kill the horsetail.

As the town council now considers the environment impact on all its activities officers no longer use herbicides to treat weeds and horsetail due to the negative impact on biodiversity.

3. Considerations

The Town Clerk has researched alternative methods to kill weed and horsetail and has identified the Foamstream. The attached factsheet provides details on how the machine operates and how effective it is.

Manchester City Council is the closest authority that currently use the equipment and a demonstration has been arranged for town council officers. Should the equipment prove effective the Town Clerk seeks authority to purchase the equipment.

There are also additional benefits the equipment can bring including the use by the Town Ranger to aid in the weeding of areas within the town to compliment the weeding by Cheshire East Council. At present Cheshire East Council will only weed the town once in August of each year. Any additional weeding requirements will be charged for. The equipment is also effective in the removal of gum from pavements.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Town Council authorize the Town Clerk to purchase the Foamstream equipment if it proves effective during the demonstration.
- 4.2 That the Town Council approve the suspension of Financial Regulations to obtain three quotes as there is only one supplier of the equipment.

5. Financial Implications

The usual purchase cost of the equipment is £21,000, but there was a promotion running until the end of September bringing the cost down to £14,995. The Facilities Manager has been able to negotiate an extension to the promotion until mid-October.

Should members approve the purchase of the equipment as there is no budget the equipment could be purchased from earmarked reserves. There is currently £10,000 held for allotment tree felling which is not required, and there is £4969 remaining within earmarked reserves for carbon footprint. As the equipment will help reduce the town councils' impact on the environment the use of the carbon footprint budget can be justified.

The Financial Regulation of the town council require officers to obtain three quotes for purchases over £1,000 and under £25,000. There is the ability for the town council to suspend the financial regulations if approved formerly. As there is only one provider of the equipment in the UK the financial regulations would need to be suspended.

6. Equalities Impact

n/a

7. Personnel Implications

There would be no personnel implications as a result of the purchase, however it would aid the Town Ranger with their duties.

8. Environmental implications

The use of the Foamstream equipment will remove the need to use herbicides which can trigger loss of biodiversity, making ecosystems more vulnerable to pollution and climate change.

9. Consultation

n/a