

Report on	Enhanced Accessibility and Proposed Tree Works at Tullaghoge Fort
Date of Meeting	Thurs 10 th October 2019
Reporting Officer	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts
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Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Council of essential tree works at Tullaghoge Fort to be undertaken by Historic Environment Division of Department for Communities
1.2	To seek approval from Council to progress a tree planting scheme and a tree sculpture project at Tullaghoge Fort to be led by Culture and Arts Services and funded by Historic Environment Division.
2.0	Background
2.1	Officials from the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division have been closely monitoring the condition of the mature trees at the site over a number of years, and it is now evident that a significant intervention is required with regards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the removal of dead or diseased trees, and b) to top the over-extended canopies of several that overhang the road and other locations at the site.
2.2	Up to 25No trees require felling, including a small number in and around the fort itself, and up to 75No trees require significant crown thinning. The Department for Communities Historic Environment Division are in the process of arranging for these works to be undertaken, which are necessary in terms of maintaining public safety, maintaining the integrity of the monument, and to avoid further damage to adjoining trees in and around the site.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	As part of the 2016 project which enhanced the visitor access to the site, a determined effort was made to ensure that where tree cover was lost it would be extended elsewhere on the lands managed by the Historic Environment Division.

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>The project at that time included the planting of a substantial number of new trees, primarily oak, and this included some larger saplings. These have become very well established at the site, and over the years to come will increase in stature.</p> <p>As part of the work required at this stage the Historic Environment Division is proposing additional planting around the northern aspect of their lands, in an area where there will be minimal impact on any buried archaeological remains but also an area where new trees will be expected to thrive.</p> <p>In addition, it is intended that the trees that need to be felled are cut to no less than 3m from the ground surface, where this can be achieved (i.e. for trees that have died but are not badly decayed, a significant portion of the tree trunk could be kept on the site). Following from this is an opportunity to provide enhanced interpretation and interest in the site by way of carving the standing – or fallen – timbers. Examples elsewhere include the representation of the flora, fauna and history of a site. It makes use of the resources on site and draws together the natural and cultural heritage through art and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>As part of the additional planting works, it is proposed that local people, and in particular local schools, will be involved as part of the landscape management of the site.</p> <p>It is proposed that Arts & Cultural Services take the lead in engagement locally, especially with schools, in the tree planting project, and to take the lead in arranging for a wood sculptor to carve the timber or trunks from the tree felling and tree maintenance operations.</p> <p>A further enhancement of the site is also planned by way of making good the ground surface between the path constructed in 2016 and the fort itself. This area formerly had a narrow path leading to the monument, which was difficult to maintain. While the wider area of approach works well in dry periods, It has been found to become saturated after modest periods of rainfall. The Historic Environment are currently looking at a system of enhancement that makes for a firmer ground surface, but without impacting either on the buried archaeology of the site or the overall character of the existing approach to the monument.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: The main tree felling and surgery works, along with enhancing the ground surface between the end of the path developed in 2016 and the Fort itself, will be conducted directly by the Department for Communities’ Historic Environment Division.</p> <p>Subject to Council approval, It is proposed that the local engagement, including engagement with schools, and the commissioning of a wood sculptor is taken forward by Culture & Arts Services of Council. Expenditure in this regard will be met by Department for Communities’ Historic Environment Division through a letter of offer, paid on receipt of invoices from the Council. The final costs remain to be</p>

	<p>determined, but it is anticipated that the costs to be covered in this letter of offer from the Historic Environment Division are likely to be in the order of £15,000-£25,000.</p>
	<p>Human: Staff time and commitment to the delivery of the project can be met from within existing budgets and staffing resources</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>Failure to address the diseased and decaying trees will have a significant impact on maintaining public safety, maintaining the integrity of the monument, and the ability to avoid further damage to adjoining trees in and around the site.</p> <p>Tullaghoge Fort is instantly recognisable for its inner and outer border of trees that circle the Fort therefore there is also significant engagement with key stakeholders required in order to inform the wider community of the need to carry out the works proposed and the visual impact that this could have on the Fort. The visual impact of the required tree felling should be mitigated with the introduction of wood sculptures on site which will further enhance the visitor experience.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: Engagement with key stakeholders including representatives of local community groups, schools and local history groups will be undertaken to provide information on the proposed works at the site</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: Rural needs implications are considered as part of the proposed implementation of the works proposed</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Council to note the essential tree works required at Tullaghoge Fort and which will be undertaken by Historic Environment Division of Department for Communities
5.2	To seek approval from Council to progress a tree planting scheme and a tree sculpture project at Tullaghoge Fort to be led by Culture and Arts Services and funded by Historic Environment Division of Department for Communities.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/a