

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 05 August 2024**

**Question from: Councillor Prashad**

**Question to: Councillor Courtney**

We have now received the costings for festive lighting and trees in our ward, which, if we opt for the full service as previously supplied by Calderdale MBC, would cost a total of £4,532. If our local community groups decide to fund their own trees only, Calderdale MBC would charge £850 per tree to erect, decorate, connect to power and then remove after the festive period.

The full service figure includes a costing of £1500 for supplying and installation of one Christmas Tree. If you extract £850 from this figure for erection, decoration, connection to power and removal, this leaves a base cost for the tree itself of £650. I have sourced quotations from two separate companies for the supply of an 18 foot Christmas Tree and these are £230 from a Halifax supplier who can deliver to site, and £200 from a Kirklees supplier if the tree is collected. As Councillors, it is incumbent upon ourselves to provide best value for money for our local community groups and businesses who are being asked to fund this and £650 for one tree is not representative of good value for money.

Therefore in order to decide the best way forward of funding our festive lighting and trees, we have asked if a detailed breakdown of the figure of £850 could be provided, but have been told that this is not available.

Due to the fast approaching time limit of 13th August, we would ask that the requested information is made available as soon as possible so that we can move forward with our preparations for Christmas in the Greetland and Stainland ward.

## **Response**

Following consultation on a number of budget saving proposals one of the savings included in this years approved budget was the removal of funding for Festive Lighting.

The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget each year and in order to balance the budget while protecting the most vulnerable and delivering good quality statutory services the Council has had to make some very difficult decisions.

We know that festive lighting and events can add greatly to the appearance of towns and villages during the festive period supporting community life and local businesses.

Clearly in removing this valued service the Council wishes to support communities to enjoy festive lighting and festive events where it can. To this end the Council has responded quickly to develop a price list for a limited number of services.

We also want to develop processes for communities to have more options for delivering their own festive lighting in the future.

Where communities would like a Christmas tree we are offering two options.

1. The Council can order and deliver a Christmas tree including erecting, decorating, connecting to the power supply and later removing. The cost of this service will be £1,500, but orders will need to be confirmed by 13th August.
2. Alternatively this year communities will be able to provide their own Christmas Tree, but this cannot exceed 20-foot tall and will need to be delivered on a pre-agreed date. The delivery should be done safely to the planned location ensuring all traffic management requirements needed for a safe delivery are addressed and implemented by your tree supplier. You should ask your supplier to forward for approval a completed Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS). This should detail how you plan to deliver your tree to the planned location including potential road licence permits associated with installing traffic management on the public highway. On receiving the Christmas Tree, the Council will then arrange for the tree to be erected, decorated, connected to the power supply and later removed. The cost of this service will be £850.

We are aware that locally sourced trees can offer better value for money, but in previous years due to the number of trees we order we have had to look further afield for a suitable supplier which increases costs.

The breakdown of Option 2 is shown in the table below.

| Item   | Cost        |
|--|-------------|
| Erection of tree (inc traffic management and safe system of working)                     | £350        |
| Decoration of tree (inc energy and testing)  | £150        |
| Removal of tree and disposal of tree (inc traffic management and safe system of working) | £200        |
| Staff time and overheads   | £150        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>£850</b> |