

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Mr Gerard Flynn  
[request-852685-  
c1f41a91@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

**Our Ref:** 220416/F20  
**Direct Line:** 01253 478980  
**Email:** FOI@blackpool.gov.uk

Dear Mr Flynn

*FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST*

In accordance with s.50 of the Act, I have considered your request for internal review and complaint against the response issued to you in relation to your information request.

My decision is that your complaint is successful and the complaint is upheld. I have explained my reasons for this decision next and the information requested is enclosed.

It is clear from the emails and our records that the Council did not respond to your request within the legislated timescale. This is not the standard that we strive to achieve and I would like to apologise on behalf of the Council.

Please find below the answer to your request.

**I am requesting the total cost for the 6 trees planted on Edward Street.  
Could I also have a full breakdown of the costs?**

We have tried to be as helpful as possible but the straightforward answer to the question you have asked is as follows:-

There were 6 tree installed on Edward Street. These were extra heavy standard trees and cost £400 each plus VAT giving a total of £2,400.

There were labour and plant costs associated with planting the trees but these are harder to define as they are part of the daily charge the contractor has for on-site operatives and equipment (such as JCBs etc.). If we assume that this daily cost was about £4,000 and it took half a day of all of the workforce to plant the trees then the total cost was £4,400 to plant the six trees on Edward Street.



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I assume though that you are referring to ground works, tree pits and footway foundation. A traditional method would be simply to provide a foundation lay a footpath and then come back later dig out a tree pit fill it with soil and plant the tree in it. We do not have this cost because the work was not carried out in this way. A normal cost of this type of work would be measured in cubic metres and square metres of surfacing. For the length of street in question based on schemes from previous years this would have been somewhere between £50k-£150k dependent upon the ground conditions.

When we have used this traditional method of providing footway and trees it has almost always resulted in failures of the trees. We had mass failures in the central corridor using this method and in many other locations. A tree really requires a full grass verge with deep top soil to give space and medium for roots to grow and for them to find moisture in dry conditions to allow the tree to survive. This is particularly true in the windy conditions that Blackpool generally experiences.

The Council has tried to find other methods to create tree canopy in urban locations and has found one that has been utilised in Liverpool, London and a number of other locations in the UK. Creating tree canopy in these locations is deemed to be not only aesthetically and environmentally important but also benefits mental health and well-being. This system utilises an underground framework to provide the foundation for the footway (rather than simply laying stone, concrete and sand through which roots cannot grow). The growing medium and area can therefore be far more extensive but it is true that this method of providing footpath foundations is more expensive. The cost of this system including the tree cost listed above was £174,560. It is difficult to assess what figure should be removed from this to allow for the traditional method of footway construction as this was not the work that was completed. I can only say that the additional cost of providing trees in the way in which it was done may have been £25k-£125k more than simply providing the footway in the normal manner.

So to summarise the simple answer to the question is £4,400 but there is a system in place to ensure that the trees have a better chance of survival and this is the estimate you see above.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. You can contact the Information Commissioner at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, ([www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)).

If you have any queries about this letter you can contact me, or write to: FOI, PO Box 4, Blackpool, FY1 1NA, or email us at [FOI@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@blackpool.gov.uk). Please remember to quote your reference number when you contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Whitehead  
Information Governance Rights Team Leader  
Information Governance Team

