

Developing a Partnership Street Tree Strategy for Sheffield

FINAL NOTES AND ACTIONS

Meeting 5: Friday 20th December 2019

Attending

Chair: Liz Ballard, Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust (LB)

Joe Coles, Woodland Trust (JC)

Christine King, Co-Chair of Street Tree Action Groups (CK)

Brian Stocks, Amey (BS)

Darren Butt, Amey (DB)

Karen Ramsay, Sheffield City Council (KR)

Mick Croft, Sheffield City Council (MC)

Paul Selby, Street Tree Action Groups (PS)

Alison Holt, Natural Capital Solutions (also Trustee SRWT) (AH)

Apologies:

Deepa Shetty, Street Tree Action Groups (DS)

Glen Gorner, Leeds City Council (GG)

Welcome & Introductions

LB thanked everyone for coming.

LB noted that the minutes had been circulated some time in advance and the few comments received had been included so it was assumed that everyone was happy with the minutes.

All agreed.

The minutes will be uploaded to the SRWT website.

Actions & Decisions from 29th November 2019 minutes

- LB had organised the meeting with Alun Watkins reference UKWAS and this would be picked up later for discussion.
- KR: A decision making process is on the agenda.
- PS had sent through amended tree species selection process -this will be on the agenda today.
- DB/BS to provide a clear narrative on the current position of street tree numbers to be included in the strategy. **ACTION DB to share.** LB today we can decide where this fits.
- KR updated on Council sign off process. KR had discussed with Councillor Mark Jones, Lead Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change, and the aim is to take report to 18th March Cabinet. To meet Council meeting lead-in times, the draft Cabinet report and the latest version of the draft strategy was needed by 30th January 2020. The group note that Cabinet reports are made public a



Sheffield &
Rotherham

week before the meeting so the strategy would be in the public domain during the week beginning Monday 9th March 20. The group to agree a joint press release to accompany the report. KR when it goes to Cabinet it will be subject to call-in by scrutiny (for up to a week after it goes to Cabinet). Decisions that are called in by scrutiny cannot be implemented until either the call-in period has expired or, if the scrutiny committee refers the Cabinet decision back, until the decision is reconsidered. KR Local elections on 7th May, mean that the Council will be in purdah from end March/early April and this needed to be considered in planning the timing of the strategy launch.

AGREED to aim for 30th January for the draft strategy to be ready.

- KR draft introduction to the strategy completed - is on the agenda
- KR: had updated SCC comms team but timeline needs to be pinned down.
- **CF ACTION: LB** to draft text for accreditation section of strategy **following pefc meeting**
- LB has updated the strategy template – on the agenda
- **ACTION LB** Treeconomics report – to be uploaded to the website with Press Release in new year. MC asked for agreement that this be used constructively, PS gave his agreement and will speak to STAG but cannot guarantee they won't use the data negatively. KR suggests putting FAQ's alongside the press release.
- **ACTION LB** will circulate CSV files to the group.
- **ACTION CK** will start some FAQ's to share with the group.
- **ACTION LB** will draft Press release and circulate
- LB google drive – have 3 g mail addresses is still waiting from Amey. KR Will confirm. BS/DB to arrange theirs with AMEY
- I Tree canopy tool LB sent to DB/BS/AH – BS feels it can be done but is a time factor, for 28 wards. LB thought it could be done as one shape file. **ACTION BS AH** to assess options for calculating canopy cover and report back for the next meeting if not before
- LB asked for any other items, any matters arising. None raised

2. Outcome 2 Decision Making and Species Selection

KR ran through a series of slides outlining a decision making process, including RAG rating. This included using a matrix as a tool for decision making.

KR & BS have worked together on this framework. BS explained how the matrix assessment works and outcomes. We would consider the tree condition, quality, life expectancy of the tree.

DB re-iterated that Amey would use this to make a recommendation to the local authority for them to then take the decision.

DB explained the definitions of "high impact" on tree condition. DB agreed there would still be discussions on the impact rating and so clearer definitions are needed.

ACTION: DB/BS to define high, medium and low impact.

AH asked if the value of the tree is in the cost benefit analysis, and feels this needs to be included.

DB feels the people being affected by trees rated high impact isn't included in the matrix scoring.

KR felt we need a document setting out the SCC decision process in response to an AMEY recommendation including how the consultation process with AMEY/SCC will work.

MC/KR the strategy will contain the decision making process with the aim of transparency.

LB asked what PS & CK feelings were around this. CK feels ok, but needs to be worked on, i.e. conservation area, etc. LB feels it 70% there, with some clarity of definitions needed.

ACTION BS: will take away and continue to work on it.

ACTION DB/KR: to develop and confirm the process including consultation.

MC asked for some explanatory narrative on the decision making process to be included in the strategy.

DB will send KR narrative around updating method statements and Ameys approach to tree management.

ACTION CK: to try and 'break' the model

ACTION KR: to circulate in draft form

Species selection

PS has amended BS's species selection tool. PS went through the slide. There was some discussion about each of the steps. PS noted on the slide.

DB feels this could now be used in services across the Authority, not just in street tree selection eg landscape dept.

PS added in a new step from original version (air pollution) benefit. Step 5 was discussed, LB suggested changing Step 5 to "Pollution" adding in 5a and 5b air quality, water sequestration.

BS we need to decide if increasing canopy cover is our aim as this would impact on the size and type of species selected. AH feels we need to be clear on how accurate we can be on canopy cover and I Tree isn't specific enough. There will be difficulties identifying the canopy cover for street trees only. LB has looked at I Tree, which has been circulated to the trial. AH felt Blue Sky data has all the trees including the street trees.

BS if currently we couldn't plant a tree on a road (taken from) we would plant in the local vicinity, we can add in relocation of a tree.

DB other point not included is the landscape and amenity value.

MC asked where the residents views come into this? LB point 1 asks “has there been consultation”. LB if you consult on tree species in specific location, are you going to listen to and follow the consultation result?

LB we have to achieve tree diversity across the city rather than “specific roads” if there is a particularly important historic avenue for example.

PS added to the process a step to consider relocating trees to other less canopied parts of the city if we are fixed to 36,000 trees and if for example the loss of one tree on a road didn't mean crossing a threshold of 5% of the trees on that street. This approach may not be needed if SCC allow more than 36,000 on the highway through additional planting. There may also be better ways to even out canopy cover beyond just street trees.

DB 17 years left on contract to go, with 1 to 1 replacement. Any additional tree planting needs to consider the financial & maintenance impact on handback to SCC.

LB feels that SCC need to take a view on this.

ACTION KR/MC to feedback to the group whether additional tree planting on the network is acceptable or whether the aims is for the same number of trees to be returned,

3. Strategy Timeline, PR & launch

LB we have discussed the strategy timeline, which may now be June for the launch ie after local elections & purdah. DB could do a big tree event in the summer which could fit in with the strategy launch. JC suggested a street tree panel who can field questions from the public.

ACTION: MC/SCC events team to contact DB & JC to support event and work with group

LB future agenda item.

4. Drafting the Strategy

LB presented the current draft strategy to work through and comment on.

Introduction update

CK will look at the draft version and mentioned paragraph.

LB is amending the document adding highlights and notes

KR will update this point and share with CK.

KR final paragraph needed to show the strategy wasn't the end of the partnership.

LB has included the pictorial element.

Outcome 1

LB asked for comments on the meeting with Alun Watkins on Wednesday and a decision for accreditation. MC/KR concerned about paper exercise of auditing. DB FSC certificate is held in high regard. There was a discussion on the merits of external accreditation.

ACTION: LB to reply to Alun that the group is interested but need more information. CK has offered to remain as the lead contact.

ACTION JC will give info on tree cities of the world.

Outcome 2

PS “increasing trend” is it 5 year average?

ACTION PS will add explanation into the glossary.

DB suggested amendment from Amey to Streets Ahead. KR suggested we use organisations not names in action boxes.

Outcome 3

ACTION AH to report back on usefulness of data sets comparing air quality and tree data

Outcome 4

LB proposed Street Tree Canopy Cover is used as an indicator of benefit for biodiversity. See earlier action for AH/BS on canopy cover calculation.

Outcome 5

LB this section has a lot of baseline information. Most is in the appendices but can be pulled forward is felt to be more appropriate.

Outcome 6

LB We don't currently have a baseline for this.

ACTION PS to draft current levels of community engagement

Appendix X

Community Partnership proposal

Tree Warden Proposal – LB has been in touch with the National Council about the scheme. LB asked if there were any issues from SCC perspective? **ACTION KR** to report back at next meeting. DB Amey very supportive. **ACTION: LB** to discuss with DB

ACTION: PS to comment on tree warden information previously sent through by LB

ACTION ALL Send comments across all sections to LB by Friday 17th January 2020 – LB will circulate and send out on gmail before Christmas. In particular reflect on actions to take to deliver to outcomes.

5. Next Steps - Related Issues

LB asked if there were any other issues we needed to include in the strategy that SCC/STAG were discussing in other meetings etc. LB felt it was important that at the strategy launch other related issues etc had been resolved as far as possible.

MC the lessons learnt document has been produced. **ACTION KR** to send to LB

The meeting closed at 1pm

Next meeting is Friday 24th January 2020 at 9:30am in Room 2 (Otter) at Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust H.Q.