Developing a Partnership Street Tree Strategy for Sheffield

CONFIRMED NOTES AND ACTIONS

Meeting 3: Friday 8th November 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 Ramsey, Sheffield City Council (KR)
Mick Croft, Sheffield City Council (MC)
Paul Selby, Street Tree Action Groups (PS)

Apologies:
Deepa Shetty, Street Tree Action Groups (DS)
Glen Gorner, Leeds City Council (GG)
Alison Holt, Natural Capital Solutions (also Trustee SRWT) (AH)

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 are now on SRWT website.

1. Actions & Decisions from 7th October 2019 minutes

- All: to seek reference for health & wellbeing value of trees –JC had sent through a number of references
- LB: Had circulated draft vision and there had been further work done on this by email. Also on the agenda – **work in progress**
- LB, AH, KR, DB: to identify baseline for street trees. DB did not feel it was appropriate for them to do this work within Amey.
- LB & KR to draw up a brief and circulate to potential providers. Completed
  LB/KR has sent out a brief and had two expressions of interest from Treeconomics and Natural Capital Solutions. Both put forward a very good case, the decision was made to go with the cheaper option of Treeconomics, this has not yet been fed back to the two companies. Treeconomics will present their report to us by the next meeting on 29th November, we have the option of a video-link or conference call, or

for them to attend the meeting in person which does have an additional cost.
ACTION: JC will look at budgets to fund Treeconomics visiting in person to deliver the presentation of their report.

- DB: to seek more information from Dave Aspinall in relation to how SCC currently apply UKWAS to their woodlands. DB to email group with an update as soon as received.
  DB & KR met with Dave Aspinall in reference to UKWAS (Woodland Assurance Scheme) certification. LB also shared proposal from Alun Watkins (PEFC) to look at accreditation under UKWAS for 'Trees Outside Woodlands' which isn't currently on offer in the UK. The cost to SCC & Amey would be for the annual certification (£500-£1000?).
  AGREED this could be a good opportunity for Sheffield to be the first city to have external certification for how its Street Trees are managed. Inspection would most likely be by the Soil Association who accredit the current scheme for woodlands. More details are needed but definitely worth further exploration.
  ACTION: LB to keep in contact with Alun Watkins and invite him to a future meeting once he has approached his internal stakeholders.
- GG: to send LB/LC presentation for circulation & webpage - completed
- KR: to draft simple decision making process based on the outline by GG and Tree Guidelines booklet
  KR what we produce for the public around the decision making process needs to be rationalised. MC felt that anything to do with street trees needs to be transparent due to the historical issues. LB felt that the public tree guidelines come later and asked what a realistic timescale is.
  LB felt there is a grey area in the process is the cost benefit analysis - but using CAVAT for the value of specific trees and a RAG rating would help. KR it can come down to a negotiated process. PS we need to explain the reasoning i.e. memorial trees, Chelsea Road Elm. LB suggested there was space in CONFIRM to add in the "special nature" of a tree.
  ACTION: KR/DB Draft for December meeting
- BS: to draft out the key questions he and his assessors ask themselves as they work through tree species selection. DB – Amey are working on this internally (Yvonne) – **work in progress - for next meeting 29th November**
  MC will be meeting with colleagues in relation to Ash die back. BS there is lots of Ash die back not plotted and is all at risk and is a city wide issue. There is lots of good data we can include in the strategy.
- LB/BS: to circulate these additional CAVAT slides for a 'sense check' from the group. NB not to be distributed beyond the group at this stage as work in progress only - completed.
- All: to review additional slides from Amey and feedback on email - **outstanding**

LB noted that had been an e mail discussion since the last meeting about the total number of trees. Should this be in the strategy? DB explained that under the Amey contract

schedule 20 'approximately 36000 street trees' is included – based on the asset register provided at the time. There is an obligation in relation to this number of street trees which must be met or exceeded at the end of the contract when handed back.

PS asked if MC was content with the numbers DB quoted would be handed back.
MC SCC would be satisfied with a healthy, diverse tree stock.
PS feels that we need a clear story of the number of trees. CK quoted Paul Blomfield MP stating "we will have more trees in Sheffield than ever before".
BS stated that the total numbers can be misleading, disparity in tree to tree
ACTION: DB/BS to provide a clear narrative on the current position of street tree numbers to be included in the strategy.

2. Theme 3: Community Engagement

Examples from elsewhere

JC gave a verbal presentation on two examples of community engagement.

- The first example was of Bristol where the Bristol Tree Forum worked closely with the city council on highway trees. Volunteers planted trees, helping to carry out the watering and management. Bristol city council launched Talking Trees with the aim of doubling the canopy cover by 2050. Community website to help look after the trees, this was now a very positive relationship between the city council and local groups.
- The second example was in Swansea, there was an online petition with 5,000 signatures. The lobby group reached out to others including JC, with lots of community groups involved this was a really positive move. The council committed to double the green space. The start of this was street trees. Also involved companies.

STAG are working with Sheffield city council to fund tree planting through the Defra Challenge Fund. PS private companies wish to get involved, with lots of tree planting going on at present.

ACTION: JC to circulate examples of terms of reference Bristol & Swansea

PS gave a presentation on Community Involvement in Planting Additional Trees (see slides):

- The current position
- How two London council's do it
- What does this mean for Sheffield?
- What does STAG want?

DB has met with STAG and offered to support additional street tree planting, there is a potential to give out licences to individuals and community groups for early years care, there are some in place including residents, there are lots of opportunities out there. There are some constraints including accruing the trees into the Amey contract.

LB asked KR&MC about the Council's view for a city wide community fund that could be used across the city.

MC there is an appetite to work with local community groups - suggested perhaps a rebranding. LB perhaps a proposal coming through the strategy for a new partnership? But is it trees or broader? Is it trees or woodland? Natural environment? SCC's climate emergency declaration?

KR in doing this work it could lead to a broader partnership for theTree & Woodland Strategy? SCC is setting up a Citizen's Assembly

DB believes there is a Green City Partnership Board looking at electric vehicles etc

LB - in summary – the strategy should put forward a proposal for a partnership group to take the work of the street tree strategy forward – this may develop in to something beyond street trees.

3. Drafting the Strategy

LB our original timeline was for a draft to be ready for the end of December 19. If we can have 90% ready we will have the time to finalise and go through the various stages with the aim of April 20 as the completion time. LB shared an overview of a draft format.

LB asked for key decision timelines for partners around the table.

KR/MC the document to cabinet would need to be a final version

PS felt the earlier we can share a draft with STAG the better.

DB/BS there is no block on timelines from Amey.

JC no issues on timeline

ACTION: MC/KR to confirm the cabinet dates in spring 2020. Completed sent by KR

KR we will need to advise the communications department with a prepared statement when the strategy goes to cabinet as at this point it will become a public document.

ACTION: KR to inform SCC comms

LB, referred to the outline format paper:

Style

LB queried the format of the strategy, will it be prepared as a PDF, electronic version only or do we require paper copies.

AGREED that we would need a small print run of paper copies in addition to electronic versions, with the printed copies to be as pictorial as possible.

LB asked about consultation beyond the organisations involved in the strategy before it goes to the cabinet (6 week period).

A discussion was held on consultation.

LB, in summary it was felt that the draft could be adopted and used as a working document with consultation taking place during its first year, then using this to revise and adopt a final strategy. LB felt the delivery element of the strategy would need regularly reviewing anyway.

AGREED to continue to aim for the SST Strategy document to be ready for April.

LB asked if we want to have a launch of the Strategy.

A discussion was held with suggestions put forward.

KR suggested a symbolic tree planting. JC has up to 30 trees available. MC suggested a school project, LB felt this was used too often.

PS felt that we still needed to close off the current issues with Amey and MC (the number of trees still marked for felling and to be redesignated).

LB asked all to speak to their communications teams and come back to the next meeting with ideas.

ACTION: All to bring ideas to next meeting about the launch of the strategy

ACTION: JC to bring details of the option and type of tree available.

BS Ash die back needs to be discussed as this could impact on the SSTS if lots of trees were dying when the launch occurred. PS felt the public were aware of the issue of Ash die back disease and the scale would be seen next summer, or perhaps the summer after.

Format and Drafting

LB ran through the first version draft of the Strategy template.

Forward: do we want someone high profile? Eg Tree Champion

KR/JC felt it should be someone local. PS If it was someone who had been critical of SCC it may not be received well.

AGREED the Forward to be written for the group by LB.

Exec summary: To be done at the end

Brief Introduction: See note in paper. **ACTION: PS/KR to draft**

The Vision: as previously drafted.

There are then different 'outcome' sections reflecting those listed under the vision broken down into Outcomes, measures, actions and resources.

Outcome 1: needs to have some explanation about potential accreditation scheme

ACTION: LB to start, pass to DB/BS

Outcome 2: waiting on report from Treeconomic which should provide material for this section

Outcome 3 & Outcome 4: still in discussion about what we are looking for here and whether we need both. Ps feels we do. LB, if so we will need to find funds to pay for data sets (£1000). Also relates to section DB & BS are drafting about current number of trees.

Outcome 5: **ACTION: BS to draft text about current species profile and aims for the future based on BS slides and share with LB.**

Outcome 6: some further discussion needed from today about our 'proposal'

KR felt we needed a glossary of terminology included. PS we could add the technical information into appendices.

ACTION: LB to update the Strategy template following the discussion at this meeting

PS feels the structure is in place and thanked LB for her work pulling this together.

LB if any of the group wishes to look at and start putting appendices together please do start working on it.

4. Next Steps

Next meeting: Drafting the Strategy, Targets (i-tree eco) and Resourcing

LB by the next meeting we will have the Treeconomics data and continue the focus on drafting the strategy.

LB thanked everyone for coming and for their contribution. Meeting Closed 1:20pm.