



To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

6th November 2019

Subject: Draft Urban Forestry Strategy

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) of the progress being made in the development of the City Councils Urban Forestry Strategy. A copy of the draft Strategy is attached as an Appendix to the report.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is recommended to:
- a) Note progress in the development of the Urban Forestry Strategy detailed within the report.
 - b) Support the proposal to undertake further consultation.
 - c) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 In 2015/2016 the newly formed citywide Urban Forestry Team, started to work with the Forestry Team at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) on a project of combining our services to provide efficiencies. One of the joint working projects was the production of a combined Urban Forestry Strategy and RedKite were employed by SMBC to draft one.
- 3.2 During 2017, it became apparent that the tree surgery contractor delivering the combined service for SMBC and Coventry City Council was not suitable for working in Coventry and the relationship with SMBC was ended. However, the project to draft the Urban Forestry Strategy continued, but the strategy would focus on Coventry only. SMBC have also received a dedicated Urban Forestry Strategy, just for Solihull. This resulted in a delay in the development of the strategy. The draft Coventry Urban Forestry Strategy outlines the current condition and state of the urban forestry.
- 3.3 The drafting of the Urban Forestry Strategy included two workshops with elected members and the Coventry Tree Warden Network, to allow for ideas and aspirations to be included.
- 3.4 The draft document recognises the value and importance of the urban forest particularly in mitigating pollution, heat, flooding and wind as well as its value towards biodiversity, wildlife, the community's health and wellbeing, overall quality of the urban environment and economic value.
- 3.5 A number of challenges and opportunities are discussed within the document. Reductions in government spending has led to a decreased spend in greenspaces, as a result lack of funding has been identified as a main constraint in both improving and maintaining the tree stock. Focus should be made in maximising funding through S106 agreements, exploiting opportunities arising from Regeneration and Business Improvement Districts in establishing

sustainable urban forests along with establishing effective partnerships with developers and landowners.

- 3.6 The importance of strategically managing the urban forest is highlighted and the document makes reference to a number of Coventry City Council Policies which touch the City's urban forest including the Coventry City Council Area Action Plan, Development Strategy and the recently adopted Greenspace Strategy.
- 3.7 The draft strategy acknowledges the significant work done by Coventry's Urban Forestry team to explore new ways of working and provide better value for money in tree maintenance. A number of aspects are recognised as significant including the management of all street trees, the adoption of Tree Risk management processes and procedures to ensure the establishment of new trees.
- 3.8 Although measures are in place at Coventry to protect urban trees the strategy suggests that the need to communicate the benefits of trees as well as enforcement is important and identify a number of issues for consideration including policies which take into consideration the life cycle of the tree and its value to the environment, strong policies on enforcement and sustainable compensation measures and the protection of ancient woodlands and veteran trees
- 3.9 The need to develop a resilient and sustainable urban forest is highlighted and which should be directed by strong policies to establish wide ranging tree sizes and species distributions. A number of aspect are seen as important in achieving this such as tree mapping to identify gaps and establish population improvements, achieving a balance of numbers and genetic diversity, aiming to plant more and fell less, developing a species mix to protect against the impacts of disease and pathogens.
- 3.10 This document is now at a final draft and ready for the foreword to be written and inserted. It can then go out to consultation. The consultation will include internal departments, all ward councillors, Coventry Tree Warden Network, Coventry University, Warwick University and any other stakeholders that become apparent.

4 Themes and Key Actions

- 4.1 The draft strategy contains Themes and Key actions on:
 - **Planning: ensuring we have robust and relevant urban forest policies and technical guidance to facilitate high quality design and development.**
 - **Protection: putting biodiversity and the health of trees at the heart of all our work.**
 - **Procedures: ensuring we have appropriate operational plans and processes that are regularly monitored and reviewed.**
 - **Projects: developing and creating long term projects for the management and enhancement of the urban forest in Coventry.**
 - **Prosperity: making the link with the urban forest and natural capital for sustainable economic regeneration.**
 - **Promotion: having a presence and getting the message across to all our stakeholders and customers.**
 - **Partnerships: building on existing and facilitating new working relationships for the benefit of the urban forest in Coventry.**

- **Profile:** having a presence and influencing colleagues, stakeholders and professional networks in decision making.
- **Pioneering:** using technology and new ways of working to create innovation and efficient working.

Name:

Graham Hood

Job Title:

Head of Streetpride and Greenspace, Place Directorate

Contact Details:

Tel: 024 7683 2194

Email: graham.hood@coventry.gov.uk