Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy

Promoting and enhancing a network of street trees that Sheffield can be proud of

July 2020

Cabinet

Wed 20th Jan 2021

Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy Consultation Feedback

Background
(Section 2 of the consultation feedback report)

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Dec 18

Joint position statement between SCC, Amey & Sheffield Tree Action Groups Steering Group published following mediated talks

Agreed that future management of Sheffield City Council's street trees to be set out in a new street tree strategy

Aug 2019

Sheffield Street Tree Strategy Development Group begins to meet

Independently chaired by the chief executive of the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Development Trust

Mar 20

Sheffield Street Tree Working Strategy signed off by SCC & other partners

Jul to Oct 20

Consultation on Sheffield Street Tree Working Strategy

Approach to the consultation
(Section 3)

Consultation asked for views on:

The vision

The six outcomes to promote & enhance Sheffield City Council Street Trees & their long-term benefits

Proposed actions to deliver

Representation on the new Sheffield Street Tree Partnership

Live on Citizen Space on 16th Jul & ran for 12 weeks

Launched at Sheffield Tree Week 2020 (online)

Chair of strategy development group chair wrote directly to 65 organisations & 49 TARAs inviting a response

Analysis of consultation respondents

(Section 4)

- **282 responses received**

  - 271 (96.0%) from individuals
  - 11 (4.0%) from organisations

- Some voluntary response bias in the consultation response sample
- Comparison of socio-demographic characteristics of individual respondents with the general population of Sheffield, consultation response sample indicates:

  - **Over-representation** of 55-74s; people from white backgrounds; people living in the West and South West of the city
  - **Under-representation** of young people aged 16-34; people from BAME backgrounds; people living in the East and North East of the city

- Broadly speaking, this type of response bias is common in consultations that are open to the general population of Sheffield, even if explicit attempts are made to boost the sample

Comments on the overall strategy
(Section 5)

✦ Several respondents expressed support

✦ Some challenge to the working strategy for failing to address the adverse effects that street trees can cause including:

- ◆ Negative impact of street trees if poorly maintained
- ◆ Causing damage to or creating hazards on the pavement
- ◆ Creating access issues by limiting pavement width especially for wheelchair/mobility scooter users
- ◆ Negative mental health impact of street trees blocking light from homes
- ◆ Limiting parking options

✦ Some concerns about the current and future role of Amey, the Council & STAG in the future management of street trees

- ◆ Importance of maintaining a progressive attitude, resolving conflicts and ensuring that a wide range of views are taken into consideration

Vision
(section 6)

We want to see a network of street trees that Sheffield can be proud of: well-maintained and cared for; resistant to the threats of disease and climate change; and delivering many benefits for people and our environment. These benefits include:

✦ **Supporting our wildlife** – Wildlife habitats & corridors
✦ **Enhancing our city** – Status as a 'green city'; attracting & retaining students, new workers, investors, visitors
✦ **Cleaning the air that we breathe** – Producing oxygen & providing fresh air
✦ **Improving our health and wellbeing** – Green, natural environment; nature 'on your doorstep'
✦ **Helping to reduce our carbon emissions** – Offsetting or mitigating carbon emission rather than reducing
✦ **Helping combat the effects of climate change such as flash floods and rising temperatures** – Climate emergency; providing shade

Additionally:

✦ **Enhancing the local community & being part of the heritage & history of an area**
✦ **Improving the aesthetics of a place**
✦ **Providing a source of food**

Outcomes

(section 7)

✦ **Six outcomes proposed:**

- ◆ Our street trees are sustainably and carefully managed in accordance with best practice
- ◆ Our street trees are more resilient through the type and age of trees we plant and how we manage the current street tree stock
- ◆ Increase the value and benefits that flow from our street trees
- ◆ Contribute to a more equal distribution of urban forest across the city to promote health and wellbeing
- ◆ Increase street tree canopy cover
- ◆ The wider community is involved in care for and valuing street trees

✦ **Additionally**:

- ◆ **Improve understanding & public awareness across all ages of the value of trees**
- ◆ **Support & protecting biodiversity & wildlife**
- ◆ **Value & preserve mature trees**

Consultation themes I
(Section 9)

- **Need to engage with all members of the community through education to increase awareness of tree benefits.** Creating opportunities for people of all ages to learn, and share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the natural environment.

- **Aesthetic value of trees and the positive physical and mental health and wellbeing.** Connecting to the natural environment 'on your doorstep' and make local areas more appealing and attractive.

- **Biodiversity and wildlife protection needs more emphasis.** Biodiversity value to be included as a factor in species selection and assessment of the value of a tree.

- **Opportunity to be pioneering, to cement Sheffield's 'Green City' status, and boost the local economy.** Local pride in being a green city and a desire to be a pioneer, showing the way for other cities to follow.

- **Decision making processes to be made transparent.** Regular public updates and clear channels so members of the public can voice their concerns.

Consultation themes II

(Section 9)

- **Working strategy did not recognise tree maintenance concerns.** Those experiencing legitimate issues relating to street trees feel unheard.

- **Safety of streets for those with disabilities.** Recommends taking action to include and elevate the perspective of the disabled community on this issue.

- **Street trees as community heritage assets and creating a sense of local identity and belonging.** Trees can tell a story of a local area and become part of the history of a place.

- **Local involvement and shared custodianship of street trees.** Examples included starting a tree nursery; setting up tree sponsorship schemes; creating tree trails and wildlife corridors; an interactive street tree map.

- **Sometimes an uneasy relationship between pedestrians and traffic**. Benefits of street trees in tackling verge parking and reducing traffic noise and pollution.

Sheffield Street Tree Partnership & next steps
(Sections 10 & 12)

✦ **Appendix 3** – List of suggestions made for membership of the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership (SSTP)

✦ Future arrangements for SSTP under consideration

✦ Ongoing way of working will be to continue to engage with stakeholders & communities on the programme of work of the SSTP

✦ Along with the city and Council strategies that are already in place, the new street tree strategy will help to develop & shape guidance/policies that determine the future of the city including:

- ◆ Climate emergency
- ◆ Development of the city including the city centre, district centres and local neighbourhoods
- ◆ Health and wellbeing of residents

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

✦ Receive the feedback from the consultation

✦ Agree that the consultation feedback will be used in the following ways:

- ◆ To inform the final Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy to be brought to Cabinet in March 2021
- ◆ To help shape the future arrangements for a new Sheffield Street Tree Partnership
- ◆ To help shape the future programme of work for the partnership
- ◆ To inform and help shape Council policies and processes

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