

Geoff Raw – Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

7th February 2020

Dear Geoff

We are submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting of 17th March 2020.

We recently proposed to City Environment an idea to use the slopes above Carden Park in Hollingbury for a new woodland area. This area is presently open chalk grassland with a few mature trees scattered around. Part of the area sits within the western side of Wild Park Local Nature Reserve.

Following a meeting with officers, the Council's Conservation Manager assessed that part of the slope was species rich grassland and worthy of preservation and the rest suitable for extensive tree planting.

In further discussions it was felt that the following was possible and is reflected on the plan that we attach with this letter: -

1. The slope would be used to plant 8,000 trees with pathways cut between and around blocks of tree planting.
2. Trees would be planted down the northern boundary that would help screen the industrial estate from the park/ housing development and link up with Old Boat Corner Community Centre who are planting a small orchard at the rear of the building.
3. The very top of the slope (being species rich grassland) would be encompassed within the adjacent grazed area. The cost of fencing material can be met from s106 funds for Crowhurst Corner with the work carried out by volunteers.
4. The embankment separating the playing field and slope would be extensively landscaped to create bee banks, wild flowering and increased biodiversity provision. The cost can be met from the Changing Chalk HLF partnership led by the National Trust.

Adjacent to Carden Park is Carden Avenue that is subject to the SCAPE sustainable drainage system project using planted water catchment areas and immediately opposite is Carden School that will be part of the Brighton Chalk Management Project. To the south of Carden Park is Woodbourne Meadows that the conservation group has over several years transformed now resulting in rare butterflies being seen. We have an active Ward conservation group, a trained tree warden, dozens of

keen residents, and the city's only UN climate change qualified teacher. The schools are keen to take part and the community centre is able and willing to have display and educational areas and perhaps even organise walks and talks.

This proposal provides the council with an opportunity to create a vast area of rejuvenated open space that will conserve, preserve, create and increase biodiversity. It will produce a wealth of flora and fauna that also helps link and draw closer the natural environment to the built environment and it is a very long time since our city planted a brand-new woodland area on this scale.

This initiative will go right to the very heart of tackling climate change and our commitment to be carbon neutral. We all talk about the climate emergency and say there needs to be a radical change. We are offering an initiative that is possible now.

Officers advise that these ideas are achievable with minimum impact on the council's budget and we have allocated most of our ward budget to this proposition.

To that end, we respectfully ask this Committee to consider our idea and request officers to bring to 23rd June 2020 Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee a report that details the scheme and provides the necessary financial and legal advice that we hope will result in Committee authorising the scheme to progress. Time is of the essence, not just in respect to climate change but the need to organise and make purchases ready for planning in November this year.

Yours sincerely

Cllrs. Lee Wares, Alistair McNair and Carol Theobald