

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 48

Subject: Tree Planting Plan 2022 - 2027

Date of meeting: 15th November 2022

Report of: Executive Director of Economy Environment and Culture

Contact Officer: Name: Robert Walker
Tel: 01273 29
Email: Robert.walker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 A proposed Tree Planting Plan 2022-2027 was presented to Environment, Transport & Sustainability (ET&S) Committee in June 2022. A link to the original report is included as a Background Document.
- 1.2 This report updates the ET&S Committee on the consultation with Brighton and Hove Tree Forum on the proposed Tree Planting Plan.
- 1.3 The amendments, following the consultation, are highlighted in the Tree Planting Plan 2022-2027 (Appendix 1).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee approves the Tree Planting Plan 2022-2027 which has been updated following consultation.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Following ET&S Committee on the 21st June 22, the draft Tree Planting Plan was presented to the Brighton and Hove Tree Forum on the 2nd August 2022. Hove Civic Society provided a written submission as their usual representative was unavailable.
- 3.2 There were two areas where there were differences of opinion amongst the group. The first area of contention was highways planting and specifically how much width should be left for pavement users. The second area was species selection and to what extent the plan should restrict planting to native trees and where would be suitable for non-native trees.
- 3.3 In relation to pavement widths, there was a productive conversation with several groups agreeing that where the pavement is not wide enough, consideration should be given to the use of the highway by building out to make tree pits or extending the width of the pavement for those walking or

wheeling.. Different views were put forward on suitable clear pavement widths ranging from 1.2 to 2.5m. It was also pointed out that the issue of pavement restriction not only concerns trees, but other items of street furniture.

- 3.4 A Highways Policy and a City Accessibility Strategy are currently in development. These are intended to be presented to the relevant committees early in 2023. These policies will determine the minimum clear width of a pavement required to enable accessibility and safety. The Tree Planting Plan 2022 – 2027 will have regard to these policies in identifying suitable locations for new street tree planting.
- 3.5 There are many old tree stumps in the City's streets and, sadly, many street trees have been removed in recent years due to Elm Disease. The council will continue with the planned stump replacement before seeking to plant in streets without stumps. As above, any planting of street trees where there are no stumps or existing tree pits will be in accordance with the width parameters set out in the Highways Policy and the City Accessibility Strategy.
- 3.6 On species selection, the discussion hinged around whether more exotic species should be brought in to increase the tree stocks' resistance to climate change and future disease threats. There was generally less concern about the use of exotics in the urban parts of the city but there were firmly held views [in some cases based on groups' national policies] that the more rural areas should be predominantly native. The Forum did however accept the need to diversify the trees in our rural areas but felt that a lot could be achieved without large scale introduction of exotic species. The point was made that we could use native species but by sourcing stock raised from southern European seed increase the resilience to climate change.
- 3.7 The Committee should be aware that replanting completed due to ash die back clearance will be under terms stipulated by the Forestry Commission, which will include species selection.
- 3.8 Hove Civic Society felt that the information on the Carbon Neutral Funding for tree planting in the June report was not clear. For clarity, the £1.000m Carbon Neutral Funding for tree planting was a one off payment rather than an annual figure. This fund is still paying for the council's tree planting, in addition to other funds generated through grant applications.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Committee could decide to include more exotic species in rural areas, which could potentially increase future resistance to both disease and climate change however, this would be against the advice of both the Woodland Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust, both of which are on the City's Tree Forum. The plan would still allow for some planting of exotics in rural areas, but without the risk of making the woodlands unsuitable for our native wildlife.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The results of the consultation with the Tree Forum are outlined in section 3 above.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 There was general acceptance of the Tree Planting Plan. The additional input from the Forum will inform the choice of species of trees.
- 6.2 There is a clear desire to increase the number of street trees planted and the street tree planting programme will continue to focus on planting to replace stumps.
- 6.3 New tree planting will follow thereafter but in adherence to the forthcoming Highways Policy and City Accessibility Strategy that will take into account the broader accessibility and safety issues regarding pavement use.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. As set out in the Tree Planting Plan and Ash Dieback Action Plan report presented to ETS Committee in June 2022 the plan is funded from multiple streams. Costs associated with the consultation are maintained within existing City Parks Budgets. Any significant variations to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 24/10/22

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place in accordance with the previous committee decision. There are no other legal implications arising directly from this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted: 23/10/22

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Street tree planting can cause problems for highway users and although planting methods and species selection have been changed to reduce future pavement surface disruption, the issue of available pavement width remains a concern to some users. The accessibility issues caused by trees can be particularly problematic for less mobile or partially sighted pedestrians and cyclists. The Tree Planting Plan 2022-2027 will adhere to the parameters due to be set out in the forthcoming Highways Policy and City Accessibility Strategy.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Trees will provide many sustainability benefits in terms of the benefit an individual tree can provide this will tend to be highest with the urban trees.
- 10.2 Within the plan the area where there was concern from wildlife groups that species selection would not be the most suitable for native wildlife the plan has been modified to alleviate this.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Tree Planting Plan 2022-2027 (amended)
2. Tree Planting Action Plan 2022-2027

Background documents

1. [Tree Planting Plan.pdf \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)
2. [Tree Council Ash Dieback Action Plan Template \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)