

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 3rd October 2022

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM COUNCIL NOTICES OF MOTION

1. **Meeting Date:** Council, Thursday 23rd September 2021

Notice of Motion: Tree Planting

Council RESOLVED – that:

This council notes the importance of planting more trees in Gloucester and understands that those saplings together with mature trees will also need to be maintained. It welcomes the guiding principles of the 2020 Gloucestershire Tree Strategy, valuing the many benefits that a high-quality green infrastructure brings to our communities, which includes growing trees near where people live and work.

This council recognises that while there are valuable contributions from development and external grants, for example, the Forestry Commission, there is a pressing shortfall in tree planting, maintenance and resources, the fixed budget per financial year is acutely inadequate, and this status quo has already placed increasing pressure on achieving the objectives of the 2020 strategy.

This Council notes that the Cabinet Member agreed as part of the Budget delivered in February 2020 and delayed for a year by Covid that up to 300 trees would be provided to each Member to plant in their own wards with the help of local community groups and that virtually none of this has yet been taken up.

As such, this Council calls on the Cabinet Member to provide members with a written report, delivered in good time for members to consider before the next budget, that will:

- (a) identify ways we can do more to support tree planting and maintenance.
- (b) consider in the light of competing priorities whether further City Council funds can be identified for this purpose.
- (c) encourage the County Council to boost funding for Highway trees, and
- (d) set targets and map them against such further funding so that the 2020 Strategy for Gloucester can be fulfilled.

In essence, this council agrees that it is vital to support the planting and maintenance of trees and increase biodiversity in Gloucester.

Actions:

To provide members with a written report, delivered in good time for members to consider before the next budget, that will:

- (a) identify ways we can do more to support tree planting and maintenance
- (b) consider in the light of competing priorities whether further City Council funds can be identified for this purpose
- (c) encourage the County Council to boost funding for Highway trees, and
- (d) set targets and map them against such further funding so that the 2020 Strategy for Gloucester can be fulfilled.

Update:

- An update report was circulated to Gloucester City Councillors on 4th March 2022 outlining the progress made on implementing the notice of motion.
- In terms of progress since then, discussions are now ongoing regarding how we can minimise future losses in the event of increasing periods of drought and extreme heat, due to global warming, witnessed this summer.
- The Council's Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead (Jon Burke) is due to meet with County officers in the week commencing 26.09.22 to discuss replacement options for trees lost to Ash Dieback.
- The Council's Managing Director, Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead, and University of Gloucestershire Academics have recently submitted a grant application to the Local Government Association's Net Zero Innovation Hub for the purposes of conducting a study of the environmental and social benefits of street trees to the residents of Gloucester, which if successful may help form the basis of future businesses cases for investment in green infrastructure.
- 32,000 square metres of peripheral planting space remains available for tree planting this season, depending on budgets and internal capacity.
- The Open Spaces team have recently appointed a new arboricultural officer – with the post having been vacant for around a year – and tree planting in the district will be one of their top priorities.
- The proposed Green Infrastructure Plan will be developed subsequent to the forthcoming Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment being commissioned by the Council.
- The Council's Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead would be very happy to answer any further questions Members may have, and they are welcome to contact him via emailing Jon.Burke@gloucester.gov.uk .

