

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 10 April 2024

Report Title

Borough Wide Tree Planting Plan

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report accompanies the Tree Planting Plan which sets out progress in the delivery against the targets in the plan, sets out the consultation framework, the financial investment, and records the existing and planned locations for future planting.

Recommendations

1. Approve the March 2024 update to the Tree Planting Plan 2021 - 2030

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 RMBC Tree Planting Plan
Appendix 2 Part A - Equalities Impact Screening Assessment
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment
Appendix 4 Tree Management Protocol & Guidance

Background Papers

N/A

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Name of Committee – [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Borough Wide Tree Planting Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council committed to several broad aims for tree planting within its Tree Management & Maintenance Protocol which was first adopted in August 2021 and an update subsequently adopted in December 2023. The initial commitment in the protocol was for a minimum number of trees to be planted over a ten-year period from 2021 to 2031, to deliver a net increase in tree numbers and a net growth in woodland cover across the Rotherham borough.
- 1.2 The Tree Planting Plan provides context and detail to the broad planting aims of the Tree Management & Maintenance protocol.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Programme Delivery to Date

- 2.1.1 The Council committed £350,000 through its capital programme for tree planting across financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 and this has been augmented by external funding from several funders, providing a total of £521,098 across the two planting seasons.
- 2.1.2 The following improvements have been delivered to date as a result of this programme:

	Urban Trees Planted	Woodland Trees Planted
2021/22	414	20654
2022/23	2377	8919
2023/24 (to 26/03/24)	602	6925

- 2.1.3 The Council has committed £287,529 through its capital programme for tree planting across the financial year 2023/24 of which £206,388.39 has been spent. The balance of £81,140.61 will be carried over to 2024/25. In addition, new grant funding from the Forestry Commission of £121,408.92 is also available for 2024/25.

2.2 Proposed Additional Investment

- 2.2.1 Continued investment in tree planting will be required each year until 2031 in order to deliver the targets set out in the planting plan. It is anticipated that that some of this investment will be available from central Government through grant schemes as the Government is committed to a national strategy of increasing canopy cover nationally by around 2%.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 It is recommended that the proposed planting improvements outlined in this report are taken forward for completion.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 All tree planting undertaken to date has been carried out in consultation with the appropriate Ward Members, ensuring the Council's Neighbourhood Team were engaged. Local residents and businesses affected by planting were also consulted.
- 4.2 Where new works are proposed the appropriate Ward Members have been made aware of the proposals and had the chance to affect them. Consultation will also take place with local residents and businesses affected by the planting proposals.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Should the proposed tree planting plan be endorsed, the planting work will continue until 2031.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Council has approved capital funding of £350,000 to support this tree planting programme. This funding has been supplemented by successful grant bids. It is anticipated that opportunities to bid for grants will be available in future years, as this is a government priority area. Any future Council funding will be considered as part of the annual budget setting process.
- 6.2 All goods and services externally sourced to support the tree planting programme, must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 (whichever is the relevant procurement legislation at the time) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications envisaged at this stage but legal advice can be sought as necessary.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 No implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Through the increase of woodland areas across the borough, children and young people will have greater opportunity for outdoor play and exercise helping to deliver on the Cultural Strategy goal of getting more people, more active, creative and outdoors, more often.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment and Action Plan has been completed for the proposed guidance and can be found at Appendix 2.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Emissions associated with the delivery of this programme will initially result in an increase in emissions via transport, however these are expected to decrease as the Council's fleet decarbonises. Continued delivery of a well-managed tree planting programme is considered to have benefits for carbon sequestration and therefore a positive impact against the Council's climate change ambitions.

11.2 Trees also have positive benefits for climate adaptation and resilience and as such this plan will have positive benefits for communities throughout the Borough.

11.3 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed for this programme and can be found at Appendix 3.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1. There are no implications for partners

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There is a risk that tree planting could be seen as reducing open space in some situations and by some communities. Early engagement is the key to ensuring that the positive benefits of tree planting are understood and that the principle of 'right tree, right place' is followed.

14. Accountable Officers

Zoe Oxley, Head of Libraries, Green Spaces and Business Transformation
Andy Lee, Green Spaces Manager
Kevin Burke, Tree Service Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.

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