

THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE FOREST PARTNERSHIP

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FORESTRY COMMISSION, NATURAL ENGLAND, BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL, ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL, DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL AND SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL FROM 1ST APRIL 2010 to 31ST MARCH 2015

1. The concept and purpose of Community Forests

- 1.1. The South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (SYFP) is made up of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Sheffield City Council, the Forestry Commission and Natural England (the core partners) working with many other private, public and voluntary sector organisations.
- 1.2. SYFP was established in February 1991 as part of the national programme of 12 Community Forests. Community Forests are large areas in and around cities and towns where major environmental improvements will create attractive landscapes contributing to economic prosperity and enhancing the quality of life for local people and visitors.
- 1.3. SYFP brings together public, private and community organisations to realise major environmental and economic regeneration initiatives. Part of its vision is to create over 3,500 Ha of woodland by 2035. SYFP aims to improve and diversify the landscape in and around the towns and cities in South Yorkshire.
- 1.4. The partnership defined within this Memorandum provides an approach to implement the South Yorkshire Forest Plan that could not be achieved by the individual partners acting in isolation.

2. Scope and purpose of the Memorandum of Agreement

- 2.1. This Memorandum of Agreement sets out the detailed arrangements and agreement between the core partners for developing ways in which they will work individually and together to support the development of SYFP's work. This Memorandum is closely linked to the implementation of the South Yorkshire Forest Plan.

3. The South Yorkshire Forest Plan

- 3.1. The partners' common vision for the future of SYFP is set out in the South Yorkshire Forest Plan ('the Plan'). The first Plan was finalised in November 1994 following extensive public consultation. It was endorsed by all the partners and received formal Government approval. The plan was updated, including an extension to its area of coverage, and following a second period of consultation it was formally adopted in 2002. The partners are committed to further reviewing the Plan to encompass all of South Yorkshire and to provide a coherent network of green infrastructure assets that will support economic growth and quality of life improvements.

4. SYFP's business plan

- 4.1. Implementation of the proposals contained within the Forest Plan will be guided by an agreed SYFP business plan, which is produced for the partnership by the SYFP team.
- 4.2. The business plan sets out the priority tasks and targets towards developing SYFP's vision. Primarily focussing upon the main actions that the SYFP team will deliver, it will identify the key agencies and resources involved and detail the operational framework for SYFP's development. The business plan provides the basis for budgeted work programmes for the SYFP team and partners. It will be reviewed annually.

5. Steering arrangements - Members Steering Committee

- 5.1. A Members Steering Committee will meet at least two times per year and more often as needed. The role of the steering group should be to:
 - Agree and set the strategic direction and overall priorities for the partnership, and oversee programme delivery.
 - Agree any structural changes in the way that the partnership is managed.
 - Pro-actively identify new ways and new projects in which the priorities can be delivered.
 - Identify and contribute avenues that will help influence the future successful delivery of partnership priorities and projects.
 - Discuss and offer communication routes within their own organisation to advance SYFP's vision, its strategic priorities and emerging projects.
- 5.2. The Steering Committee is given no formal role for decision-making about specific projects; nor is it expected to decide on specific matters relating to business development or details of funding for local initiatives. These matters would be dealt with by a separate group tasked with delegated responsibility for implementation.
- 5.3. Each local authority will have one elected (Cabinet) member on the Committee and one officer. The Forestry Commission and Natural England will each have one officer on the Committee.
- 5.4. In addition, SYFP's Steering Committee may be extended to reflect more accurately the stakeholder's interests and South Yorkshire-wide geographical remit and the broader spread of (project) funders. Other organisations that closely reflect SYFP's wide economic and social objectives and which could play an important part in informing how SYFP's work develops may be invited to join the Members Steering Committee. The Steering Committee should remain open for future addition to ensure that other potential stakeholders may contribute to the future development of SYFP's work.
- 5.5. The Committee will elect a chair from its local authority elected Members every second year.
- 5.6. In signing this Memorandum of Agreement, the local authorities invite the SYFP Director to report on progress and development to appropriate committees within these authorities.

6. Support for the initiative by the partners

- 6.1. SYFP's development is currently led by a partnership of six organisations consisting of four local authorities and two national agencies. Each has a particular role to play and contribution to make towards SYFP's success. That success depends on the core partners being both fully committed individually and working in partnership with one another and with a wide range of external organisations that are able to bring their own resources and commitment to delivering SYFP's vision.
- 6.2. The broader spread of project funders, and other organisations that more closely reflect SYFP's wide economic and social objectives could play an important part in informing how SYFP's work develops. SYFP remains open to the potential that new core partners may become integral to delivering SYFP's vision. If the Member Steering Committee agrees that other partners should join the core partnership, this Memorandum will be reviewed and updated during its current five year (2010 to 2015) timescale.
- 6.3. The partners are expected to support the SYFP team and work determinedly, both individually and together in other ways to give additional priority to SYFP, seeking to maximise the resources available.

7. Steering Group for the South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 7.1. SYFP has been given custodianship of the South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. An officers working group (Steering Group) will meet to guide the development and delivery of the Strategy, monitor progress, give guidance on targets and provide technical advice. It will include representatives from each of the core partners. Others may be co-opted on to the group. It will meet at least every 6 months. This work shall help underpin the delivery of SYFP's operational activities, and contribute towards the implementation of the South Yorkshire Forest Plan.

8. The role and composition of the SYFP team

- 8.1. SYFP was established with a core team of staff. Such a core team will continue to lead and manage the development and coordinate the delivery of SYFP's work.
- 8.2. The SYFP team will have 3 primary functions, to:
- Provide strategic direction, acting as guardian of the South Yorkshire Forest Plan, discussing with partners how best to frame projects and programmes to have best 'fit' with the agreed strategy.
 - Secure new funding, with a significant priority being to identify and secure resources that would primarily then benefit partners' work.
 - Raise the profile of SYFP and of the work of the partners in delivering related projects and programmes.
- 8.3. The team will not be a substitute for local authority or government agency resources, but will add value to the actions of each partner in delivering the Forest Plan on the ground. The Business Plan will provide a focus for work by SYFP's team, its partners, the private sector, other agencies and voluntary organisations to develop programmes to progress the implementation of the Forest Plan.
- 8.4. The SYFP Director will be given discretion to operate a team that best delivers SYFP's priorities. Several successful funding programmes have allowed the extension of the team, with a number of staff on fixed term contracts, employed to deliver specific project related roles.
- 8.5. Sheffield City Council will act as employer for the core team on behalf of all the partners. The line manager for the SYFP Director will be Sheffield City Council's Head of Planning Services. The SYFP Director will be line manager for other posts in the SYFP team and where relevant will delegate other line management responsibilities to appropriate members of the SYFP team. Any posts that become vacant, or new posts created, will be advertised externally.
- 8.6. Achieving the SYFP vision is a long-term endeavour. At the heart of the Forest Plan's implementation is the working relationship between the SYFP team and the core partners. The core partners are fully committed to the SYFP team and its role outlined in this Memorandum of Agreement.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

- 9.1. SYFP may contribute to monitoring the implementation of the National Community Forest Partnerships programme. All partners will collect and supply appropriate data as required to the best of their ability. SYFP may use these data to assess progress against targets and set out clearly the progress being made in turning the vision into reality.

10. Financial arrangements

- 10.1. The resources required to realise full implementation of the South Yorkshire Forest are significant and will come from a range of sources, across the full spectrum of public, private and voluntary sector interests. The onus on all partners will be to seek extra

resources and to maximise the use of existing resources to further SYFP's work and its future development.

- 10.2. The SYFP Director shall be responsible for preparing a financial statement, including predicted and actual expenditure for the past and coming financial year, as part of the production of the yearly business plan.
- 10.3. Sheffield City Council will employ the SYFP team, and hold the budget on behalf of the partners.
- 10.4. The employing local authority will continue to be responsible for the exercise of proper financial control through its standing orders and financial regulations and for the collection of contributions from the other local authority partners.
- 10.5. Every effort will be made to maximise support for and from the private sector.

11. Termination

- 11.1. Any partner may terminate their adherence to this Memorandum at the end of a financial year having first given twelve months formal written notice.
- 11.2. In the event of Sheffield City Council wishing to withdraw from the agreement, it shall offer to transfer, on terms to be mutually agreed, to one of the remaining constituent organisations the staff and property of SYFP.
- 11.3. If, on conclusion of this current period of the agreement, it is decided to permanently dissolve the partnership, any termination costs arising therein, will be apportioned between the partners. Similarly any proceeds from the disposal of assets remaining in the partnership at the time of dissolution will be treated in the same manner.

12. Signatures to the Memorandum of Agreement



.....
on behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member for Development 27/4/12


here

.....
on behalf of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

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on behalf of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council


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on behalf of Sheffield City Council

Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs & Growth. 30/3/12


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on behalf of the Forestry Commission

AREA DIRECTOR - FORESTRY COMMISSION 26.7.12


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on behalf of Natural England

AREA MANAGER - Natural England Yorkshire 15/10/12