



EMBARGOED UNTIL 10th March 2020

Street Tree Working Strategy for Sheffield sets out new direction for the care of the city's highway trees

The first Partnership Street Tree Working Strategy for Sheffield has been released today and will be recommended to Sheffield City Council for adoption next week.

The Working Strategy has been developed by a group of partners including representatives of Sheffield Tree Action Groups (STAG), Sheffield City Council (SCC), Amey, independent experts from Natural Capital Solutions and Leeds City Council as well as the Woodland Trust, with Liz Ballard, Chief Executive of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust in the role of Independent Chair.

Care of street trees presents unique challenges as they are often coping with things like traffic pollution, road salt, compacted soils and drought. Despite the sometimes tough highway environment, the Working Strategy recognises the contribution of street trees to health and wellbeing, air quality and other ecological and environmental benefits. It outlines new ways of working around six outcomes to ensure the city's network of street trees is well-maintained and sustained for the future by:

1. Sustainably and carefully managing our street trees in accordance with best practice
2. Ensuring our street trees are more resilient through the type and age of trees we plant and also how we manage the current street tree stock
3. Increasing the value and benefits that flow from our street trees
4. Contributing to a more equal distribution of urban forest across the city to promote health & wellbeing
5. Increasing street tree canopy cover
6. Involving the wider community in caring for and valuing street trees

Liz Ballard, Chair of the Sheffield Street Tree Strategy Development Group said: *'We set out to develop an exemplary Partnership Street Tree Strategy for Sheffield that values street trees for the benefits they bring to people, the city and the wider environment. And we believe this Working Strategy is just that.'*

As a group we wanted to produce something positive and visionary - for the city to collectively view street trees as an asset, helping us to improve air quality, reduce flood risk, support wildlife and store carbon.

This strategy aims to learn from the past in order to deliver our vision for the future of Sheffield's street trees. '



As part of the strategy development, the group collated and commissioned baseline data for Sheffield's street trees. This included commissioning a report based on an inventory of Sheffield's highway trees and drawing on over 35,000 records from the 'Streets Ahead' database. The report, thought to be the first of its kind for street trees, values the ecosystem benefits of Sheffield's street tree using i-Tree Eco, a state-of-the-art open source software system used worldwide to assess and manage urban tree populations. This 'Sheffield Street Tree Inventory Report' has also been released today alongside the Working Strategy.

As a supplement to SCC's Trees & Woodland Strategy which was approved in December 2018, the Working Strategy has emerged through true collaboration, discussion and dialogue among the partners involved in its development.

Liz Ballard said 'This Working Strategy, if adopted by all partners, will need the support and involvement of many more people and organisations than those on our Development Group. Over the coming year we will be seeking the views, comments and commitments from people and organisations right across Sheffield, to the proposals set out here. Once we have heard from local people we will then finalise the Strategy.'

Quotes from Partners:

Paul Selby from STAG:

"This Working Strategy is the culmination of seven months collaboration between a whole range of partners, and I am personally extremely grateful to all those who have contributed their time and expertise.

Assuming the strategy is adopted and implemented by Sheffield Council, Sheffield residents can be confident that their street trees will be protected, sustained, and increased in number. The benefits of this new and enlightened approach will be felt not just by current generations, but future generations too."

Councillor Mark Jones, Cabinet member for Environment, Streetscene at Climate Change at Sheffield City Council:

"We live in a city famous for its greenery, something many of us are rightly proud of. We have almost five million trees covering our streets, parks and woodlands. That's approximately eight trees for each person who lives here. It is really important that we have a tree strategy that supports a sustainable and future-proof approach to managing our growing street tree stock.

"Trees matter. Not only do they help improve air quality and support wildlife but they have also been proven to benefit our mental health. We need better and more robust measures in



place to make sure trees across Sheffield continue providing value to our natural and urban environment.

“To make this strategy work for the city, we need feedback and collaboration from a range of stakeholders, partners and residents. Engagement is key for creating a way forward that works for us all, not just for now, but for many years to come.

“We’ve not always got the approach to street trees right. However, through the hard work and dedication of the development group and many others we have created this new strategy, one which ensures we listen carefully to all viewpoints and will shape how we do things better.

“Through this new way of working, we are committed to retaining trees wherever possible, planting additional trees, increasing canopy cover and building a more diverse and resilient street tree stock with varying species and age profiles.

“It’s not just about the number of trees we have; it’s about caring for them in the right way and maximising their many benefits whilst ensuring that our city can still develop and thrive in these times of continuous change.”

Darren Butt, Amey:

“We have welcomed the opportunity to sit down with all partners to discuss and agree a shared vision for street trees in Sheffield. By engaging with local communities and members of STAG we have a solid foundation from which to build, continuing to work collaboratively, achieving the outcomes that benefit everyone in the city. We are confident that our working relationships are stronger and more resilient as a result going forward.”

Joseph Coles, Urban Lead, Woodland Trust:

“This strategy Development Group is an example of the value in a collaborative approach to developing a strategy that achieves our shared ambitions for a greener Sheffield. As part of the Trees and Woodland Strategy, it embeds a holistic approach to managing Sheffield’s urban forest, and instils confidence in the sustainable future of Sheffield’s street trees. We are pleased to support an approach that has recognised residents as a key stakeholder with an important role to play”

Dr Alison Holt of Natural Capital Solutions:

“This strategy is a collaborative creation based on an assessment of the important multiple benefits that the street tree asset delivers to the inhabitants of Sheffield. Recognising these benefits, which range from the carbon that is stored and sequestered to increasing health and well-being, and their monetary value means that from now on more realistic cost-benefit analyses can be applied to decisions that may impact the asset.”



The Working Strategy and Sheffield Street Tree Inventory Report can be found here:

<https://www.wildsheffield.com/developing-a-partnership-street-tree-strategy-for-sheffield/>

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For further information, please contact Liz Ballard, Chief Executive at Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust on 0114 263 4335 or email l.ballard@wildsheffield.com

Notes to editors:

Background meeting information relating to the development of the strategy can be found here:

<https://www.wildsheffield.com/developing-a-partnership-street-tree-strategy-for-sheffield/>

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust is a registered charity and works with the local community to protect and enhance the environment in Sheffield and Rotherham, working towards a better future for wildlife, people and the green spaces we all rely on.

We are supported by almost 6,000 members and over 100 volunteers and we are part of a national network of 46 Wildlife Trusts, working together to make the UK a better place for wildlife and people. The Trust manages 16 nature reserves including Greno Woods, Wyming Brook, Blacka Moor, Sunnybank and Centenary Riverside and recent projects include the delivery of natural flood risk management schemes on the Rother and recording the return of the otter along the River Don. The Trust delivers a programme of activities throughout the year to inspire people of all ages to learn about nature and enjoy being outdoors. We also take action for wildlife and green spaces under threat, including campaigning to save Smithy Wood, an ancient woodland and local wildlife site, from being turned into a motorway service station.

For more information about our work please visit wildsheffield.com or contact us at mail@wildsheffield.com or 0114 263 4335.



Sheffield City Council (SCC)

As part of the £2bn Streets Ahead Highways Maintenance contract in Sheffield, Amey are responsible for improving and maintaining the city's infrastructure until 2037.

As well as the resurfacing of roads and pavements, the programme includes managing and maintaining more than 35,000 street trees.

STAG (Sheffield Tree Action Groups)

STAG was established in 2015 by Sheffield residents concerned by the large number of street trees being felled by Sheffield Council and its contractor Amey. Over time, the concern led to increasingly large scale peaceful protest and direct action to prevent felling.

We are now glad to say that, since March 2018, Sheffield Council and Amey have begun to take a different approach, and whilst we don't always agree, we are glad to be working collaboratively with both organisations, in order to establish a long term street tree strategy for Sheffield.

Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK. It has over 500,000 supporters. It wants to see a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.

The Trust has three key aims: i) protect ancient woodland which is rare, unique and irreplaceable, ii) restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life, iii) plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering over 28,700 hectares. Access to its woods is free.

Natural Capital Solutions

Natural Capital Solutions is a consultancy that specialises in natural capital, ecosystem services and biodiversity assessment. Working across the private, public and NGO sectors our technical analyses provide the evidence required to make informed decisions about how to best manage the natural environment for its multiple functions and benefits.