



**FOR RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 15/07/2020**

### **Partnership working strategy for city's street trees is unveiled**

A new shared vision for the care and management of Sheffield's street trees will be published this week alongside an online survey which asks for views from individuals and organisations to help shape a final strategy by spring 2021.

The working strategy, which outlines a positive and exemplary approach to the future management of the city's street trees, comes following months of partnership working between representatives from Sheffield City Council, Amey, Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Sheffield Tree Action Groups, The Woodland Trust and tree valuation experts.

The working strategy recognises the essential contribution that street trees provide for health and wellbeing, air quality and other ecological and environmental benefits, as well as outlining new ways of working to ensure the city's network of street trees is well maintained and sustained for the future.

Six outcomes, which will collectively help shape and develop the future approach to street trees, are outlined in the working strategy; putting into practice long-term and tangible plans to allow for smarter and more considered decisions.

These are:

- ◆ Sustainably and carefully managing our street trees in accordance with best practice.
- ◆ Increasing the value and benefits that flow from our street trees.
- ◆ Contributing to a more equal distribution of urban forest across the city to promote health & wellbeing.
- ◆ Increasing street tree canopy cover.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Involving the wider community in caring for and valuing street trees.

As a supplement to Sheffield City Council's existing Trees and Woodlands Strategy (2018-2033) the working strategy outlines a clear proposal to promote and enhance Sheffield's street tree stock whilst identifying the unique challenges of caring for trees growing in a highway environment.



As part of their work, the development group commissioned baseline data for Sheffield's street trees which included the production of a report by Treeconomics, based on an inventory of Sheffield's street trees and drawing on over 35,000 records from the 'Streets Ahead' database.

The report values the ecosystem benefits of street trees using i-Tree Eco, a state-of-the-art open source software system used worldwide to assess and manage urban tree populations and is thought to be the first of its kind for street trees.

The information will result in the council and its partners being able to better manage the city's street trees by using more accurate, timely and complete sets of data.

The 'Sheffield Street Tree Inventory Report' can be viewed here: <https://www.wildsheffield.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FINAL-Sheffield-Street-Tree-Strategy-i-Tree-Eco-Inventory-Report.pdf> **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, and to promote the wellbeing of our cities citizens.

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

**Councillor Mark Jones, Cabinet member for Environment, Street Scene and Climate Change at Sheffield City Council said:**

"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 and this will be gained through our 12



week consultation process. 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 and challenging change.”

**Paul Selby from STAG said:**

“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.

The working strategy was approved by the Council in March this year and, assuming it is implemented, Sheffield’s 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.”

Over recent years, there has been public interest in the approach to managing street trees in Sheffield, as part of the council’s Streets Ahead Highways Maintenance programme being delivered by Amey.

In a bid to find a way forward, in 2018 the council and Amey embarked on a series of mediated talks with members of the main campaign group, STAG. This resulted in a [joint position statement](#) being agreed and the start of a new programme of joint tree inspections.

A review of [lessons learned](#) from these inspections was published in 2019.

**Darren Butt, Account Director at Streets Ahead said:**

“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, as well as our street trees, are stronger and more resilient as a result.”

The city’s street trees are managed as part of the Streets Ahead highway maintenance contract between the Council and Amey.

Street tree management and maintenance forms part of the routine Streets Ahead programme alongside gritting, street cleaning and litter collection, gully emptying and grass cutting.

The proposed approach and actions in the working strategy support the council’s wider commitment to help combat climate change by becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030.

The strategy will be developed further in its first year, with input from stakeholders and engagement with residents in communities across the city. The aim is to review the working strategy to take account of the views from different groups of people and update the action plan in response to the outcomes of this engagement work.

A copy of the new working strategy can be found here:

<https://www.wildsheffield.com/campaign/street-trees/street-tree-working-strategy/> To take part in the online survey and give your views on the working strategy click here: <https://sheffield.citizenspace.com/place-business-strategy/partnership-sheffield-street-tree-working-strategy> The consultation will close on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

A webinar on the new Street Tree Working Strategy will take place as part of Sheffield Tree Week on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm. Details of this webinar and other events, including how to register, can be found here:

<https://www.sheffieldtreeweek.co.uk/>

## **ENDS**

Liz Ballard CEO, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust will be available for comment. For statements, interviews and further information, please contact Tania Shelley, Marketing and Communications Manager at Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, on [t.shelley@wildsheffield.com](mailto:t.shelley@wildsheffield.com) or 07817801538.

**Notes to editors:**

**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](http://wildsheffield.com) or contact us at [mail@wildsheffield.com](mailto: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 the city's 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.