



DRAFT Tree Policy Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

August 2017

1 Background

1.1 On 4th April 2017, City Council passed the following motion:

Council notes that:

- Birmingham is recognised as a Green City and that the quality of its green spaces and trees has been used over a long period to attract inward investment.
- The City is part of the Global Biophilic Cities Network - a group of Cities that aspire to integrate green infrastructure into everyday life.
- Trees provide health and wellbeing benefits along with a positive contribution to the ecosystem in the form of flood alleviation, air cooling etc.
- Its policy on trees was last updated in 2009 but dates back to 2002.

Council notes the work already under way to develop a new tree policy for the City and in particular the intention to develop a more sophisticated method of valuing trees that might replace the current 2 for 1 policy.

Council also recognises that opposition party representatives will be engaged in the process of developing the new tree policy along with a task and finish scrutiny.

1.2 Following that, the Scrutiny Chairs agreed to establish a task and finish group on the forthcoming revised tree policy.

2 Outline

Aim

To support the development of a revised cross directorate tree policy for the "Birmingham Forest" that will reflect the environmental and development challenges and pressures placed upon it. Utilising knowledge of best practice from the UK and around the world particular focus will be given to building resilience within the tree stock and retention, removal and replacement policies.

Approach

Two sessions for members to engage in the development of the new policy via a discussion of:

- Current processes and what has worked/not worked;



- Best practice examples – what can we learn;
- Valuing our tree stock - Economic, Social, Ecological (Ecosystem services)
- Proposed changes and how these might work;
- Working arrangements – involvement of other departments and partners to design and deliver;
- Other ideas;
- Evidence (contributors are outlined in Appendix A) has already been taken from some witnesses about the health aspects of trees in relation to their impact on air quality as part of the scrutiny inquiry into 'The Impact of Poor Air Quality on Health'. The Scrutiny Report is due to be presented to City Council in September. In particular the report contains two recommendations R08 and R09:
 - That when planning for future transport infrastructure consideration should be given to the wider and longer-term benefits of keeping mature trees, especially in roadside locations where a buffering effect on air pollution is provided; and that appropriate protection for mature trees should be incorporated into any planning permission granted.
 - That planning for new developments should incorporate the planting of trees of a suitable species in the right place with careful selection of the species to be planted, density of placement of the trees and with provision for appropriate maintenance for a period after planting, as a condition of planning for new developments.

Follow up sessions may be required, and members may want to publish a short report summarising their involvement and recommendations.

A document pack of existing background information will be circulated to the group in advance of the inquiry sessions.

Timescales

Informal meeting of the group to discuss TOR	Early September
Session 1	Late September
Session 2	October

Outcomes

To support the development of a robust and deliverable tree policy.

Members are to agree if they wish to take a report to City Council.

Membership

The Task and Finish consists of eight members with places allocated according to political proportionality (i.e. 5 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat) as follows:



Councillors Debbie Clancy, Roger Harmer, Keith Linnecor, Mary Locke, Ewan Mackey, Karen McCarthy, John O'Shea and Fiona Williams

The chair of the Task & Finish group will be appointed by the Scrutiny chairs. The Deputy Chair will be elected by the group members.

Officer Support

Rose Kiely, Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Research & Policy Officer

Simon Needle – Lead Support Officer

Key witnesses to include:

Birmingham City Council

- Planning (including BDP, DPD, Design Guide) (Uyen Phan Han/Richard Cowell)
- Highways (non-PFI), Parks management, Housing, Bereavement & Education (Simon Smith, Tree & Green Waste Recycling Manager)
- Councillors Ian Ward, Stewart Stacey and Lisa Trickett
- Ecological (Simon Needle to Lead)
- Green commission outputs (Nick Grayson, Climate & Sustainability Officer)
- Nick Barton, Amey – Highways PFI Contract



Appendix A – Contributors to the Scrutiny Inquiry on ‘The Impact of Poor Air Quality on Health’

Contributor	Organisation
Kevin Blacktop	Senior Research and Development Specialist, Network Rail
Kevin Chapman	Chair, West Midlands Campaign for Better Transport
Dr Chris Chiswell	Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Birmingham Children’s Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Nigel Cripps	Member of the public
Alec Dobney	Unit Head, Environmental Hazards & Emergencies Dept., CRCE, Public Health England
Karen Exley	Senior Environmental Public Health Specialist, Air Pollution & Climate Change Unit, CRCE, Public Health England
Jane Harding	Project Manager, Birmingham Trees for Life
David Harris	Transport Policy Manager, Birmingham City Council
Libby Harris	Birmingham Friends of the Earth
Adam Harrison	Senior Policy Officer, Transport for West Midlands
Dr Wayne Harrison	Assistant Director of Public Health, Birmingham City Council
Kris Jeffrey	Occupational Health, Network Rail
Andrea Lee	Healthy Air Campaigner, ClientEarth
Simon Needle	Birmingham Trees for Life
John Newson	Birmingham Friends of the Earth
Paul O’Day	Street Services Manager, Birmingham City Council
Patrick Power	Station Manager, New Street Station, Network Rail
Cllr Victoria Quinn	Birmingham City Council
Anne Shaw	Assistant Director, Transportation & Connectivity, Birmingham City Council
Cllr Lisa Trickett	Lead Cabinet Member for Reducing Air Pollution, Birmingham City Council
Mike Waters	Head of Policy & Strategy, Transport for West Midlands
Cllr Fiona Williams	Birmingham City Council
Mark Wolstencroft	Air Quality Lead in Environmental Protection, Birmingham City Council