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Thoughts on the Terms of Reference:

- The most successful and desirable cities in the world can all be measured by their green credentials- not lip-service- but making that centre-stage of their identity and USP. This gives confidence to investors. So what builds is an upwards spiral as the vital building block is not the economy per-se but the engagement of the citizens and businesses- so the vision is owned widely across the city not just the municipal institution. The role of the municipal institution is one of leadership.
- A 5 year study based at the University of Birmingham, called Liveable Cities (<http://liveablecities.org.uk/>) has researched all the essentially qualities and necessary conditions that need to be in place to craft a liveable city. Using systems thinking modelling it has been possible to reveal how inter-connected and inter-dependent all the various agendas and city challenges are.
- One principle finding has been how the solution going forward for many of these 'wicked' problems- connects back to the vital importance of nature in cities. Modern science has proved new tools such as ecosystem services- where our human dependency on nature can be made visible. And the new accountancy methodologies of natural capital can convert these benefits into multiple values.
- These tools and approaches start to show just how important a role trees and green space in cities plays.
- We need to move from a position whereby the environment in cities is seen as the sole responsibility of one party, one interest group; and seen as a financial liability. This current 'business-as-usual' approach needs challenging; and now is the time to challenge that. We are advancing new tools and new models that we want to trial in the city that will advance this cause; and move us closer to the point where those that 'benefit' – contribute. Not through legislation but because they are able to see the business case.
- The city's trees will be safe once we reach this new point of understanding.