

Information Briefing Paper

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To: Birmingham Tree Policy Task & Finish Group

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Birmingham Tree Bank

SUMMARY

A suggestion for a new system to replace the traditional two for one tree replacement policy on Council owned land with a scheme to help finance Birmingham's Green Infrastructure.

BACKGROUND

- 1) The current 'two for one' policy doesn't properly mitigate for loss on sites where there isn't enough room to properly accommodate tree replacement.
- 2) It is not flexible enough in terms of the time frame and funding required to successfully re-establish tree infrastructure in suitable locations.
- 3) It takes no account of the visual amenity, health benefits or value of the larger mature trees or larger pieces of green infrastructure currently part of our city.
- 4) Large or important groups of trees, especially within the highway, are vulnerable to loss both as part of adjacent development and as part of road improvement and other regeneration schemes.
- 5) Often BCC Highway road improvement schemes are not subject to the planning process and therefore loss of trees are not regulated by development control.
- 6) As part of the Amey contract any trees removed from the Highway network should result in a saving in the amount paid out annually through the contract to cover revenue costs. In theory this saving can be used to cover the revenue and maintenance costs of new trees added to the network. Currently any 'saving' or net gain in tree 'assets' is extremely hard to both to quantify over the network as a whole and therefore on the whole is not utilised.

THE SUGGESTION

- 1) Trees on council owned land (and possibility including trees under threat from development) are graded using a system similar to the CAVAT or Helliwell system [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN008.pdf/\\$FILE/FCRN008.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN008.pdf/$FILE/FCRN008.pdf) which places a monetary value on their visual amenity as well as their replacement cost. This system would place much higher monetary values on important trees than is currently considered as being necessary to cover just the cost of the nearest practical new tree replacement size
- 2) The potential loss of trees on any one particular development site can therefore be valued as a potential asset to BCC and in cases where there is insufficient room for reasonable compensation and mitigation to be secured through new tree planting within any one site in the direct locality, the difference in value is transferred into Birmingham Tree Bank.
- 3) We investigate whether the value of net savings on revenue costs from trees removed from the Amey contract within the Highway could also be transferred into Birmingham Tree Bank.
- 4) Funding secured into Birmingham Tree Bank can then be used to fund both the capital and revenue costs of new tree planting and green infrastructure within the city. Instead of looking at tree mitigation on a site by site basis this would give us the flexibility and funding to consider a more strategically green city wide infrastructure approach.
- 5) There is a potential for funding both more local tree planting through organisations like 'Trees for Life ' as well as council directed schemes as long as a coherent strategy could be adhered to.
- 6) Funding could also be secured from Framework contractors (i.e. Amey) working within the city through their commitment to the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility. For instance contributions to Birmingham Tree Bank could be part of a target under the Green and Sustainable existing charter principle.
- 7) Birmingham Tree bank could fund 'contract growing' of particular tree species through local tree nurseries which would add extra value to funding secured.

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