



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee
6 March 2023

Key Decision [**No**]

Ward(s) Affected: ALL
Cabinet Portfolio: Environmental Services

Trees for Streets

Report ,by the Director for the Economy Officer Contact Details

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out a new community tree planting initiative, working in partnership with specialist crowd funding and community engagement company, Trees for Streets.
- 1.2. To highlight how open space and urban tree planting supports Worthing council administration's core principles to be 'Fair, Green and Local'.
- 1.3. To highlight the benefits of local ownership and associated community power in the development of environmental improvements.
- 1.4. To recognise the emotional, environmental and economic betterment created through increased urban tree planting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Agree to enter into a 3 year contract with Trees for Streets for the facilitation of new street trees in Worthing Borough (circa £24K).
- 2.2. Delegate authority to the Director for the Economy to enter into all relevant contracts associated with the Trees for Streets programme.
- 2.3. Agree to allocate funds for the maintenance of young trees as they become established within the Trees for Streets and celebration trees in the WBC programme.
- 2.4. Agree to work collaboratively with WSCC in the licensing, future maintenance and ownership of the new street trees.

3. Introduction

3.1. According to Ordnance Survey research in 2018 Worthing has the least square metres of green space, per person, in Great Britain. Only 3.9 square metres of green space per person. While this may be as a result of the borough's unique geographical position, environmental mitigation can be sought through increased tree planting and in particular street trees.

3.2. Worthing's Labour administration has pledged to address the climate emergency by creating the 'greenest town on the South Coast' and in doing so develop 'green corridors and projects which support nature and wildlife'.

3.3. In September 2022 a meeting to explore the development of a street trees planting scheme brought together local Community Tree Champions, Council members, officers and arborists and representatives from West Sussex County Council. As a result national organisation, Trees for Streets, was identified as a potential delivery partner and a short period of research, with council cousins in London Borough of Haringey and Cambridge City Council followed. The reports from Haringey and Cambridge were very positive and discussions with Trees for Streets commenced.

3.4. Trees for Streets is a programme created by CIC, Trees for Cities. The organisation acts as a community engagement and community crowdfunding arm to assist local authorities seeking to increase their street tree stock. Trees

for Streets is also suitable for business sponsorship opportunities. Once a tree sponsor, or sponsors are identified. Trees for Streets liaise with residents and councils in identifying good locations and in collecting the necessary sponsorship funds. New trees may be planted in residential areas, particularly roadsides and verges or as 'celebration' trees in council parks.

3.5. As the first tier authority with responsibility for street trees West Sussex County Council is a key partner in the development of this scheme. WSCC have agreed that licences for tree planting under this scheme can be self licensed by WBC, however, the responsibility for the lifetime of the new tree would also fall to WBC.

4. Trees for Streets - Project Outline

4.1. Following a marketing campaign and using the Trees for Streets portal community sponsors express an interest in a new tree online. The location is assessed by council engineers first and then by the Parks team/arborists to ensure suitability. Sponsorship is received by Trees for Streets, as either an outright individual payment or as a community crowdfunding campaign. WBC arranges ground works for planting, irrigation, tree supply and planting, and protection for the young tree.

4.2. Wherever possible the council will seek to re-open 'capped' roadside tree pits.

4.3. As a part of the sponsorship package sponsors will be expected to water their own tree, if this is a street tree. Celebration trees will be watered by the Parks team. As an incentive the trees will be fitted with an irrigation pipe and tree 'gators'. Tree gators deliver water evenly over time and prevent immediate water run off

4.4. As an added incentive the council is keen to partner with Southern Water to provide free domestic waterbutts to sponsors to recycle grey water for use in their tree watering obligations.

4.5. Tree planting has particular seasons (Autumn and Spring) and as such the project seeks to commence planting in Autumn 2023. This allows sufficient time to market the scheme effectively and to generate community support. Below is an approximate timeframe for the five year project and agreement with Trees for Streets.

Year 1 2023/2024

Governance & WSCC agreements re licences - March/April
Trees for Street build platforms - April/May
Marketing the scheme inc comms and TfW - Start June
Planting and infrastructure inspections July - October
Planting - October to December (National Tree week, 1 December)
Target - 70 Community trees

Year 2 2024/2025

2 x Tree planting seasons - Spring/Autumn
Target - 100 Community trees

Year 3 2025/2026

2 x Tree planting seasons - Spring/Autumn
Target - 150 Community trees

Years 4 & 5 2026/2028

Continuous maintenance of Year 3 trees

4.6. Trees for Cities have an annual subscription fee of £8,000 per annum plus £60 + VAT per tree planted, a total of £24,000 over a three year agreement period. The cost to sponsors for a Street Tree is expected to be no more than £395.

5. Strategic Focus

5.1. Worthing's labour administration has adopted principles to be Fair, Green and Local. The benefits of street tree planting extends beyond that of the sponsor's immediate location through the positive environmental outcomes beneficial to all. Improved urban greening is of great importance to both council members and the wider electorate, featuring heavily in the Environmental Strategy 2022 (draft) which includes a Street Tree planting project.

5.2. Worthing's Climate Principles (also on 6 March 2023 WJSSC agenda) highlights the importance of 'putting Climate and Ecological action at the heart of policy actions'. Augmenting the 'Our Plan' missions themes Thriving Places & Thriving Environment.

5.2.1. Thriving Places - Street trees support the councils' ambitions to design places for people and nature and in bringing a sense of belonging by empowering communities to influence how places change.

5.2.2. Thriving Environment - Street trees support the transitions to net zero (2045), helping to increase biodiversity and improve the negative effects of climate change.

5.3. The Trees for Streets scheme precedes Worthing Borough Council's Greening Guide (due Spring 2023) but is aligned to it and features as a project under areas of community intervention.

6. Engagement and Communication

6.1. The marketing of the Trees for Streets scheme is very much a partner approach between the council and Trees for Cities. The on-the-ground community engagement is led by Trees for Streets, as is the sponsorship/crowdfunding platform. The marketing of the programme will also benefit from the support of the council's communications team (press release, social media etc) and Time for Worthing, given the scheme's attachment to Civic Pride.

6.2. Residents' associations, community champions and Friends groups are useful links to potential sponsors and will form a part of the first step engagement process. Trees for Streets offer a dedicated community engagement officer to support the programme where needed.

7. Outcomes/benefits

7.1. Connecting with the changing seasons and facilitating growth through nurture are tangible outcomes from greening initiatives. Neighbours working collaboratively with each other through tree sponsorship schemes help to alleviate loneliness and build healthy communities. Green environments are known to reduce anxiety and help to prevent depression.

7.2. The use of street trees in urban design have been found to assist in traffic calming; open grey streetscapes encourage faster driving, where leafy residential landscapes achieve the reverse. Attractive and safer streets also encourage active travel through walking and cycling.

7.3. The beneficial impact of trees in our urban environments are many and varied. In addition to improved air and water quality, through the filtering of harmful pollutants, trees also assist in cooling urban heat islands and

improving biodiversity and ecological resilience. Street trees enable wildlife corridors, join up our open spaces, store carbon, increase Summer shade and help to prevent rainwater run off..

7.4. Street trees impact how we view our neighbourhoods. Streets which have the appearance of being leafy and cared for are less likely to suffer from anti-social behaviour. Neighbourhood street trees also help 'curb-side appeal' and contribute to the perceived attractiveness of a residential area, resulting in economic property uplift.

8. Considerations

8.1. WBC will seek to offer a tree 'menu' to ensure sponsors not only receive a tree they would like but is also the correct species of tree for the chosen location, or put simply Right Tree - Right Place.

8.2. Early years nurture and ongoing stewardship - the first 12 to 24 months of a tree's life is crucial to its successful growth. Young trees need plenty of water and while sponsors are encouraged to monitor the health of their charges it is inevitable that the council's arborists will be keen to maintain a watching brief. In addition the continued maintenance of the sponsored tree will also be under the council's responsibility; a tree being for life and not just for Christmas.

8.3. WSCC have a current Donate a Tree Scheme available through the county council's website. In 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 WSCC planted 14 street trees p.a. in Worthing Borough Council.

8.4. The Trees for Streets scheme sits in addition to and not replacing the Adur & Worthing Councils' tree planting programme led by the Parks and Foreshore Service.

9. Financial Implications.

9.1. The Council already has sufficient budget in place to meet the Trees for Cities three year subscription @ £8,000 p.a which will be funded from within the parks budgets.

- 9.2. The fee per tree, payable to Trees for Cities, will be deducted from the Sponsorship fees paid to the council.
- 9.3. The cost of the tree supply and planting will be supported by the income generated from tree sponsorship.
- 9.4. In the longer term, once the trees are established, the Council will be responsible for the maintenance of the trees including pruning on a regular basis. Whilst this may be possible to accommodate within the existing resources, if needed additional budget provision may be required.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 10.2 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation
- 10.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 10.4 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the Council to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the Council.
- 10.5 When entering into a public contract, the authority is required to comply with the Councils' Contract Standing Orders found at Part 4 of the Councils' constitution.

Background Papers

- Addressing the Climate Emergency for Worthing - JSSC (Worthing) Report 6 March 2023
- [Our Plan - Our Missions \(Thriving Place & Thriving Environment\)](#)
- A&W Councils Trees Strategy - 2021
- www.treesforstreets.org

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

Matters considered and no impact identified.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

The Trees for Streets scheme is highly suitable for building community cohesion through Crowd funding and civic pride engagement. Neighbourhoods are actively encouraged to join together to identify suitable areas for increased greening and to nurture young trees as they develop. Urban greening increases social well being, is seen to calm traffic and encourages active travel.

2.2 Equality Issues

Areas of low income, who express an interest, can be paired with business sponsored trees. The use of free water butts for grey water collection also negate the use of mains metered taps. All other equality issues have been considered and no barriers to participation have been identified.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

Increased tree planting in urban areas lift the cared for and looked after feel of an environment through tangible actions resulting in civic pride. An area which is not well looked after is more likely to suffer the effects of anti-social behaviour and all that brings.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

Matter considered and no issues identified.

3. Environmental

A positive environmental impact lays at the heart of the Trees for Streets scheme and aligns to the council's priorities in increasing borough wide sustainability. The environmental impact of trees of trees in urban areas are well documented and numerous as noted in section 7. Outcomes/Benefits

4. Governance

Matter considered and no issues identified.