

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
<b>DATE:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	10
<b>TITLE:</b>	PROGRESS OF TREE STRATEGY AND 2013/14 STREET PLANTING PROGRAMME		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	PLANNING & TRANSPORT
<b>SERVICE:</b>	PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL	<b>WARDS:</b>	ALL
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	RICHARD STIMPSON	<b>TEL:</b>	01189372441
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEAM LEADER	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	richard.stimpson@reading.gov.uk

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details progress on the implementation of the Reading Tree Strategy over the last 12 months. The Reading Tree Strategy was approved by Council on 29th June 2010. This report also sets out proposed tree planting by the Council for 2013/14 planting season. Progress reports have previously been presented to Cabinet in November 2011 and 2012.
- 1.2 The Tree Strategy sets out policies and proposals for protecting, managing, maintaining and planting new trees in the Borough. Paragraph 7.3.9 of the Tree Strategy commits to annual monitoring of the Action Plan contained within it.
- 1.3 The 2012/2013 planting season [Nov-Mar] saw the planting of a total of 172 street trees funded through the capital programme and the work of the Reading Tree Warden Network through the successful partnerships with the Big Tree Plant Fund, Trees for Cities and with several residents' groups. In addition, over 173 trees have been planted by a other Sections of the Council (Parks, Housing and Education).

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee note the progress in achieving the various aims of the Reading Tree Strategy and its Action Plan over the last year and the programme that was carried out in the 2012/2013 planting season;

2.2 That Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee notes the 2013/14 Street Tree Planting Programme that will be implemented utilising funding from various sources including the Council's Approved Capital Programme;

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The development of a Tree Strategy contributes to achieving the 2020 Vision for the development of Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley. The strategy seeks to achieve the aims of the vision through protecting existing trees with high amenity value, appropriately managing and maintaining the existing tree stock, and facilitating and encouraging the planting of new trees.

3.2 The Reading Borough LDF seeks to protect trees and woodlands and to achieve new tree planting as part of landscaping provided in association with new development. The Reading Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) sets out the aims and approaches for Reading's public open space within which trees are an important component. The Reading Borough Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011 states that Reading's natural assets will be valued, enhanced and maintained. Trees are one of Reading's most visible and important natural assets. Reading's Climate Change Strategy identifies the need to maintain and enhance urban tree cover to mitigate, and adapt to, climate change, enhance biodiversity, improve air quality, reduce surface temperature and dissipate surface water runoff.

### 4.0 PROGRESS OF THE STRATEGY

4.1 Since the adoption of the Tree Strategy in June 2010 there has been significant progress on a number of the actions contained within its Action Plan.

4.2 During 2013 Officers have been contributing to the new climate change strategy for Reading for 2013-2020, 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change', which is being developed by the Reading Climate Change Partnership. Trees will play an integral contribution to Reading's adaptation process in many ways.

4.3 A first year of planting was undertaken during 2010/11, primarily utilising monies from the Capital Programme. A total of 134 street trees were planted during the 2011/2012 planting season (November - March). Some of this planting was undertaken using funding from the Big Tree Plant Fund, Trees for Cities and match funding in partnership with several residents' groups.

4.4 During 2012/13, further tree planting was undertaken as follows:

- 124 trees were planted as part of the Housing estate's landscape improvement programme, funded by the Decent Neighbourhoods Fund;
- 24 trees were planted in parks;
- 25 trees were planted by Education in school grounds

- 4.5 In 2013 officers continued to facilitate and support several local residents and community groups to plant street trees in their roads either by match funding or co-ordinating practical help. In many situations the Tree Warden Network also provided support. This style of community engagement has been successful.
- 4.6 In relation to the Council's existing trees, since the last progress report approximately 1,500 trees have been resurveyed to meet the Council's obligations in relation to health & safety. The total number of the Council's tree stock that has been surveyed is approximately 9,500, the majority of which relate to Parks and Open Spaces, Highways and Cemeteries. All survey information has been uploaded onto the Council's dedicated tree management software.
- 4.7 The Tree Officer in the Parks and Open Spaces Section manages the Council's public trees, utilising dedicated tree management software in responding to related enquiries. The Tree Officer is also responsible for the day-to-day workload of the Council's Tree Maintenance Unit who undertake work consisting of both reactive and proactive maintenance tasks across the Borough in relation to the Council's tree stock. During 2013 significant statutory Highway re-pollarding and pruning work was carried out, especially along the London Road. The Council also put in place robust, prioritised measures to deal with fallen trees and debris relating to the storm and high winds of the 28 October 2013.
- 4.8 The Reading Tree Warden Network continued to evolve and flourish during 2012/2013 with a variety of tree related events that included guided tree walks, presentations on a wide range of topics and providing support to resident and community groups to improve their local street tree cover. The Tree Warden Network is actively planning a number of projects for 2014 including World War One Centenary commemorative tree planting.
- 4.9 The Reading Tree Warden Network and the Council's Partnership with the charity, Trees for Cities, focused on 3 ambitious projects in 2013:
- Reading Old Cemetery, which engaged the local community in a number of tree related events and the eventual handing over to a "Friends of Group",
  - completion of a 3 year tree planting project at Long Barn Lane Recreation Ground; and
  - supporting the "Blossom" Group partnership [Residents from Courtenay Drive, Brooklyn Drive and Burnham Rise, Emmer Green] in planting 36 street trees.

The Reading Tree Warden Network and Trees for Cities are currently planning a community street tree planting project in Brunel Road, Southcote for the next planting season on which local residents will shortly be consulted.

- 4.10 The Council is continuing to secure additional tree planting where applicable as part of various development proposals through the planning process such as, for

example, the Reading Station Area development where in total 58 new street trees are being planted directly adjacent to the north and south entrances.

- 4.11 Officers continue to work in partnership with the tree wardens, local residents and community groups in raising awareness of the importance of trees and in engaging groups and organisations in various projects.

## 5.0 PROPOSED 2013/14 PLANTING PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The proposed 2013/14 Street Planting Programme is set out below in Appendix 1. This proposes new and replacement street tree planting in accordance with the priorities set out in the Tree Strategy that was adopted in June 2010. Officers will continue to work in partnership with Trees for Cities and other sponsors, the Tree Warden Network and community /residents groups to promote further tree planting in the Borough.

- 5.2 Officers are currently implementing a Planting Programme for 2013/14. Street tree planting proposals to be funded under the Capital Programme allocation and funding via Trees for Cities are listed in Appendix 1 to this report. Other tree planting is expected to be undertaken by the following services;

- **Housing:** Approximately 50 trees on Housing land funded by the Decent Neighbourhood Fund
- **Education:** Approximately 27 trees in school grounds
- **Parks & Open Spaces:** 6 trees

Members are asked to note the proposed programme of planting and to appreciate that these are initial proposals and are subject to change.

## 6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The Tree Strategy is a key corporate policy document that sets out a long-term process for protecting and enhancing Reading's tree cover.
- 6.2 The strategy contributes to the Council's strategic aims and supports other strategic documents such as the Climate Change Action Plan, the Local Development Framework, the Biodiversity Action Plan, etc.

### Equal Opportunities

- 6.3 The amenity value afforded by Reading's urban forest can be experienced by everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, social background, physical or financial means.
- 6.4 Protecting & enhancing tree cover will improve the quality of life for Reading's users and residents.

### Sustainability Implications

6.5 Protecting and enhancing Reading's tree cover contributes to a sustainable and healthy environment and to the biodiversity in the Borough. The Tree Strategy will make an important contribution in adapting to climate change. Well designed and maintained tree and landscaping contribute to social and health well-being.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 There are proposed actions within the Strategy that involve engagement with the general public, residents associations and organisations. These include initiatives such as the proposed Tree Warden Scheme, tree planting events and a dedicated area for trees on the Council's web site.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council has a responsibility to fulfil its legal "duty of care" with regard to the health and safety of its tree stock. It has now nearly completed a survey of its own trees as part of the management of its tree responsibilities.

8.2 Preparing, serving, confirmation and contravention of Tree Preservation Orders are services dealt with by the Council's Planning and Legal Sections.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are budget provisions for maintaining Council trees, an element of which will be used for limited planting and replanting of trees. However this depends on the amount of work necessary to deal with essential maintenance and health & safety issues.

9.2 The Council currently has a limited capital budget, specifically for tree planting projects, within which the replacement of street trees has a high priority. In addition, the Council is working with sponsors, including Trees for Cities and local communities, to undertake various tree planting projects. Tree planting is also a feature of new development proposals and some developer contributions are used to enhance the amenity value of parks and other land by planting trees.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Reading Tree Strategy (2010)

Reading's Climate Change Strategy 2008-2013

Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy

NI 188: Planning & Adapting to Climate Change.

Reading's Sustainability Community Strategy

Biodiversity Action Plan

Open Spaces Strategy

City 2020 Vision

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### Proposed Street Tree Replacements 2013/2014 Planting Season

Street	Location	No of Trees	Species	Justification	Ward/ Comments
Broad St	O/S Gap	1	Plane	Replacement for fire damage	Abbey
Wood Green Close	Adj to No. 1	1	Birch	10% or less canopy cover area	Battle
Beresford Road	Grass verge outside Recreation Ground	5	Sweet Gum & Cherry [Liquidambar] & Prunus	10% or less canopy cover area, where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity of the area. Major arterial route.	Battle
Portman Road	O/S 32-46 Barnwood Close	6	Sweet Gum [Liquidambar] & Prunus	10% or less canopy cover area, where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity of the area. Major arterial route.	Battle
Southview Ave	O/s 72/74, 76/78, 80/82, 84/86, 88/90	5	TBC	Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area.	Caversham. Caversham Globe
Northcourt Ave	O/S 74	1	Turkish Hazel	Integral feature of the character of the area.	Church
Barnsdale Rd	182	1	Species of seasonal interest	Integral feature of the character of the area.	Church
Stanhope Rd	42	1	Species of seasonal interest	Integral feature of the character of the area.	Church
Northumberland Ave	Near 433	TBC	Birch	10% or less canopy cover area. Integral feature of the character of the area	Church/ Whitley
	Junction with Bayfield Rd	2	Birch		
Hartland Road	Exact locations subject to utilities	TBC	Various species of seasonal interest	10% or less canopy cover area. Where trees would make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Church/ Whitley

Street	Location	No of Trees	Species	Justification	Ward/ Comments
Basingstoke Rd	O/S 196 National Tyres	1	Liquidambar [Sweet Gum]	Replacement due to vandalism. 10% or less canopy cover, Major Junction/arterial route where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity of the area	Katesgrove  Redlands Globe
Oxford Road	Roebuck Hotel /Borough Boundary O/S 887 Adjacent to 856 O/S 781 O/S 831/833 O/S Waitrose	TBC  1 3 1 1 1	TBC  Lime Birch Lime Lime Lime	Major arterial route near Borough Boundary.  10% or less canopy cover area. Integral feature of the character of the area.	Kentwood
St Peters Ave	O/S 168	1	Birch	10% or less canopy cover area. Integral feature of the character of the area.	Mapledurham  Resident
Berkeley Ave	Opposite 10-18A & O/S Esso Filling Station	7	1 x Indian Bean Tree, 3 x Sweet Gum, 3 x Turkish Hazel	Major arterial route. Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Minster  Tree Wardens
Berkeley Ave	From Bath Rd - Coley Ave	Several subject to utilities	Various species of seasonal interest including Mountain Ash	Major arterial route. Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Minster  Tree Wardens
Parkside Road (East Side)	Various Locations	7	Turkish Hazel/Liquidambar/Lime	Integral feature of the character of the area. Succession planting in view of threat to existing mature Horse Chestnut by disease	Minster  Residents Association
Craig Ave	O/S 11/13 O/S 45 O/S 59/61	3	Ornamental Pear	10% or less canopy cover area. Integral feature of the character of the area. Replacements. Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Norcot
Dee Road	Various locations	TBC	Various species of seasonal interest	Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Norcot

Street	Location	No of Trees	Species	Justification	Ward/ Comments
Buckingham Drive	Adjacent to Pond	1	Scots Pine	Replacement for heat wave death of young tree	Peppard Caversham Globe
Grove Road	O/s 95/97, 97/99, 99/101/103/105	4	Cherry	Replacements. Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Peppard  Tree Wardens. Residents/Caversham Globe
Peppard Rd	Side of 31 The Ridings  O/S 392 [Water Tower]	2	Turkish Hazel	Major arterial route near entrance to Borough Boundary. Integral feature of the character of the area. Replacement.	Peppard  Resident
Peppard Rd	Opposite 1 Rosehill Farm cottages	1	Wellingtonia	Major arterial route near entrance to Borough Boundary. Integral feature of the character of the area.	Peppard
Erleigh Rd	O/s 24 Erleigh Rd	1	Lime	Replacement due to vandalism. Integral feature of the character of the area.	Redlands Redlands Globe
Erleigh Rd	O/S 68 Erleigh Rd	1	Lime	Replacement due to vandalism. Integral feature of the character of the area	Redlands  Redlands Globe
Brunel Road	Several locations	10-15	Various species of seasonal interest	Tree Warden Network community project with residents and Trees for Cities	Southcote  Residents/ Tree Warden Network
Circuit Lane	O/S 7-9 O/S 11A-17 Roundabout	6 4 3	Pine, Oak, sweet Chestnut Wellingtonia	Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Southcote.  Highways request
Bath Road	Open Space opposite Granville Rd	1	Wellingtonia	Beacon tree	Southcote
Parkside Road (West Side)	Various Locations	3	Turkish Hazel/Liquidambar/Lime	Integral feature of the character of the area. Succession planting in view of threat to existing mature Horse Chestnut by disease	Southcote  Residents Association



Street	Location	No of Trees	Species	Justification	Ward/ Comments
Rotherfield Way	North side from Hemdean Rd - Surley Rd	17	Various species of seasonal interest	Bus route where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Thames Residents/MP
Surley Row	Side of 1 Surley Place	3	Cherry	Replacements. Conservation Area	Thames
Basingstoke Rd	O/S Ultima/Opposite Callington Rd	1	Wellingtonia	Replace young dead tree. 10% or less canopy cover area. Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Whitley Highways agreement with Ultima
Falmouth Rd	Side of 235 & 237 Whitley Wood, O/S 15/17, 19/21, 23/25, 27/29, 43/45, 47/49, 34/36, 28/30, 18	Up to 15	Various species of seasonal interest	Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Whitley Residents
Wincanton Rd	Junction with Northumberland Ave	2	TBC	Where trees make a notable and important contribution to the amenity to the area	Whitley
A33 Relief Road	From Island Road - Rose Kiln Lane	6	Aspen Poplar	Replacements for failing young specimens	Whitley