

Executive Items to be considered by O&S Committee 29 September 2020

Item no.	4	Title	Joint Local Plan Review	Requested by	Lib Dem Group
Reasons Considered	To discuss and clarify further the arrangements and role of the different bodies in Scrutiny. We would also like to explore options for strengthening the approach to Affordable Housing.				

Item no.	5	Title	Trees for our Future – Project Framework and Start-up	Requested by	Green Group
Reasons Considered	<p>To ask the questions below and to discuss the replies given yesterday, for example, it is implied that there will be a commercial forestry element to the plan.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>We are disappointed about the greatly increased timescale but this seems inevitable given the slippage so far. 6.1 and 6.2 describe risks of extending the timescale event further and that planted trees may die. Therefore,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can the Executive commit to catching up on the timetable from 2019 to 2030 by planting at least 40,000 trees by end of the 2021/22 planting season? 2. Please confirm that the 160,000 target is for the net number of trees gained i.e. those chopped down or die need to be replaced. <p>We are delighted to see frequent reference to community engagement.</p> <p>3. What is the strategy for involving both groups (such as schools) and individuals?</p>				
Officer response to questions above	<p>Based on the work carried out to date, there is currently no intention that the project will include a commercial forestry element.</p> <p>However, this report is focused on agreeing the approach and the resources for the start-up phase of the project. The mapping work will be vitally important in helping to identify the opportunities within the District and once underway we will then be able to understand where the opportunities are, the quantity of trees possible and the process we need to undertake for each site based on the results of the mapping exercise.</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>It would not be appropriate to commit to planting 40,000 trees by the end of 2021/22 prior to understanding the results of the mapping exercise. The target of 40,000 would appear to be ambitious given the work which would need to be carried out (identification of sites, surveys and permissions, site preparation etc.). It is important that appropriate time is taken to undertake this work in order to give the trees the best chance to survive and deliver other benefits (nature recovery, improvement to air quality, flood mitigation etc.). This does not mean that if there are the right opportunities and the funding to plant trees at scale in time for the</p>				

2021/22 planting season the Council would not endeavour to achieve a significant amount of planting.

Question 2

The Business Strategy commits to enabling the “planting” of 160,000 trees. This is therefore the gross number of trees which will be planted through the project. In any case, based on the information gathered to date, it would appear to be unrealistic to set a target which allows for 160,000 net trees given the opportunities identified to date.

Good practice woodland management requires a programme of thinning of trees to enable remaining trees to flourish and grow to maturity and the Council will be seeking to adopt similar good practice as part of this project.

That said, where possible we will replace whips lost during the first couple of years on newly planted sites.

Question 3

Depending on the sites identified we are keen to involve the community in planting and maintenance where appropriate.

The communication and publicity work will be important communicating the opportunities for the community to be involved and the community forester resource will play a key role in working with these groups (including schools) to co-ordinate events and provide support for planting and maintenance. We also hope to work closely with the stakeholders such as Warwick Tree Wardens and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to engage the community and co-ordinate volunteers for planting and maintenance activities. Links with Heart of England Forest have been made by the project. Heart of England Forest are a tree planting charitable organisation primarily operating in Stratford District Council area and who have had considerable success with their tree planting programme, including community input.

In terms of schools we are keen to link the project to schools where there are opportunities. Some initial work has been undertaken in terms of promoting the Woodland Trust free tree packs for schools and the Council is offering some additional input for schools taking part in terms of a tree plaque and a speaker for assemblies.