

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Tree and Ecosystem Strategy
Committee : Environment & Climate Committee
Date : 3 July 2023
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1. Report Summary:

1.1. This report requests Council to approve the final draft of the Tree and Ecosystem Strategy.

2. Background:

2.1. Salisbury City Council declared a Climate Change Emergency at Full Council on 17 June 2019.

2.2. An action plan was devised (Environmental Policy Action Plan), with aims to deliver on this declaration by moving the Council towards carbon neutrality, enhancing biodiversity in the spaces the council owns and manages, and displaying positive leadership to the community.

2.3. Action BM2 within the Environmental Policy Action Plan requests the delivery of a Tree Strategy.

2.4. This committee was provided with an update on the emergent Tree and Ecosystem Strategy at its meeting in March 2023. At the meeting in July, this meeting, a final version of the strategy is presented for approval. This final version has been reviewed by the Woodland Trust, and they support both the methodology and recommendations in this strategy.

2.5. The strategy will inform the council, its relevant partners, and the community about the management of trees in the city over the next 5-10 years.

3. Tree & Ecosystem Strategy:

3.1. A tree and ecosystem strategy for urban settlements is important for a wide range of important reasons including:

- **Biodiversity conservation:** Trees and ecosystems are essential for maintaining biodiversity. They provide habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species and support the ecological processes that enable ecosystems to function.
- **Climate change mitigation:** Trees and ecosystems play a crucial role in mitigating climate change by sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, storing carbon in the soil, and regulating the earth's temperature through the water cycle.

- **Human well-being:** Trees and ecosystems provide important ecosystem services such as clean air and water, food, and medicine, and contribute to human well-being and quality of life.
 - **Disaster risk reduction:** Trees and ecosystems can help reduce the impacts of natural disasters such as floods and landslides by providing natural barriers and reducing soil erosion.
 - **Economic benefits:** Trees and ecosystems can provide economic benefits such as timber, non-timber forest products, and ecotourism, which can contribute to local livelihoods and sustainable development.
- 3.2. Developing a tree and ecosystem strategy can help ensure that these important benefits are maintained and enhanced over the long term. It involves a holistic approach to conservation and management, taking into account the social, economic, and environmental aspects of tree and ecosystem management.
- 3.3. This Tree and Ecosystem Service Strategy is designed to support the achievement of this target by:
- defining the current tree stock including locations, numbers, canopy coverage, species, and function on SCC owned and managed land;
 - identifying suitable SCC land for planting and advise on suitable native trees for the identified areas, or alternatives;
 - providing an aerial canopy survey which produces a map and percentages of coverage; and
 - taking into account the findings of consultation with residents and partners.
- 3.4. The tree strategy also provides the opportunity to identify and therefore maximise a wide range of stacked nature-based benefits. “Ecosystem Services” that are and can be delivered from SCC owned land, including biodiversity, carbon, natural flood management, air quality, pollination, amenity, landscape, heritage, shade and cooling, health and wellbeing benefits, all set within the context of adapting and increasing Salisbury’s resilience to climate change.
- 3.5. Salisbury City Council’s trees and associated “natural capital”, together with other trees and habitats in the parish, is of critical importance to the community, the local environment and also has a large economic value. They are therefore worthy of protection and enhancement, whether situated within legally or policy protected locations or elsewhere. This strategy seeks to promote, protect, enhance, and increase Salisbury’s trees, and the habitats associated with them, and the role they play.

4. The Trees and Ecosystem Strategy:

- 4.1. The final strategy document is shown at Annex A and B to this report. The final strategy document is in two parts. Volume 1 which is the Core Strategy (Annex A to this report) and Volume 2 which is the Appendices (C-E) (Annex B to this report)
- 4.2. The key recommendations of the strategy are:
- 4.2.1. Review of the potential tree planting areas and those areas where an alternative management approach could be considered to maximise the ecosystem service opportunities
 - 4.2.2. Undertake feasibility appraisal of planting/alternative management to maximise the benefits to residents and the environment, including local consultation

- 4.2.3. Develop prioritised planting and management plans for those agreed areas where additional planting/alternative management has been agreed with local communities, and review current management plans elsewhere in response to the consultation carried out as part of this tree strategy
- 4.2.4. Implement program of planting/management funded through replacement planting, personal in memorium funding and legacy funding through the Salisbury Crematorium
- 4.2.5. If deemed helpful, undertake further detailed tree surveys of the larger sites where this strategy has been informed by data currently being collected by Bawden Tree Care on behalf of SCC
- 4.2.6. Review and update this tree and ecosystem service strategy every five years.
- 4.3. By approving this strategy, the Council is agreeing that these recommendations should be implemented where possible. The committee will oversee the implementation of this strategy as the action plans are developed and implemented.

5. **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 5.1. Approve the Tree and Ecosystem Strategy as detailed in this report.

6. **Wards Affected:** All

7. **Background Papers:**

- 7.1. Annex A – Tree & Ecosystem Strategy Volume 1 (Doc 91283).
- 7.2. Annex B - Tree & Ecosystem Strategy Volume 2 (Doc 91284).

8. **Implications:**

- 8.1. **Financial:** This will be assessed and reported to this committee as the recommendation are implemented.
- 8.2. **Personnel:** Nil in relation to this report.
- 8.3. **Environmental Impact:** As detailed in this report.
- 8.4. **Equalities Impact Statement:** Nil in relation to this report.