

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Housing and Environment
DATE	28 August 2012
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Tree for Every Citizen Final Report
REPORT NUMBER	H&E/12/056

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members that the progress made with the planting for the “Tree for Every Citizen” project has been completed.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- (i) Notes the contents of the report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

The “Tree for Every Citizen” project is entirely funded through external grants funding, partnership working and from contributions from local businesses.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Tree for Every Citizen Project has resulted in the establishment of approximately 100 hectares of new woodland within the City. These will be woodlands that are accessible to the local communities for recreational and educational purposes whilst also being valuable wildlife habitats.

Most of the sites are very close to centres of population so will contribute to the health and wellbeing benefits of the residents of Aberdeen.

The design and structure of the woodlands are such that they can be sustainably managed and as they mature will potentially produce marketable timber and woodland products that may generate income to support the long term management of these woodlands.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The “Tree for Every Citizen” Project was a policy set out to deliver a vision for Aberdeen City through the partnership agreement “Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking”.

The “Tree for Every Citizen” Project has succeeded in delivering the commitment to plant a tree for every citizen of Aberdeen. This has been achieved on a cost neutral basis taking into account the initial site preparation, tree planting works and the maintenance costs required for the first five years. After the first five years there will be a minimal requirement for ongoing maintenance works.

Once the woodlands are established there is the potential for management costs to be offset from the sale of timber and related products produced from the woodlands.

The project had a target of 210,000 trees to be planted throughout the city. This was a mix of large scale planting (two phases) and smaller scale community planting and individual trees, planted between 2007 and 2012.

It was intended that the planting of the trees would:-

- Benefit biodiversity,
- Sequester carbon (UK Woodland Carbon Code pilot site for Forestry Commission at Tullos Hill) in response to climate change,
- Potentially produce a sustainable source of utilisable timber and renewable energy for the City
- Benefit sustainable greenspace management,
- Enhance greenspace areas for people,
- Improve the environment and wellbeing of communities,
- Create an educational resource.
- Help deliver against the Scottish Forestry Strategy to increase woodland cover in Scotland to 25% by mid 21st century.

Urban woodlands are being recognized as being of great importance for people in towns and cities as they help to improve the environmental quality of the area, contribute to physical and mental wellbeing and are important for biodiversity. Forestry Commission Scotland are selling off forests in the more remote areas and investing in woodlands in urban and urban fringe areas.

Most of the sites chosen for tree planting were areas that had formerly been mown 6-12 times a year resulting in a short grass sward with very limited biodiversity value. Due to recent budget constraints, these areas were taken out of regular mowing. By creating woodlands on these sites,

it was intended that the biodiversity and visual amenity of the sites will be improved.

Appropriate tree species were chosen for each individual site and accordingly the species mix for the tree planting varies slightly across the sites. The species planted over the sites are made up of Scots pine, larch, Norway spruce, birch oak, ash, rowan, hazel, wych elm, blackthorn, hawthorn, and willow and native shrub species.

The project as a whole has been recognised nationally at the Herald Society Awards 2010 for the Best Environmental Initiative and at the COSLA Excellence Awards 2012 with a Bronze Award. The Tullos Hill site is also a pilot site for the UK Forestry Commission Woodland Carbon Code project. The Woodland Carbon Code project aims to develop a fully accountable carbon sequestration model to accurately model the amount of carbon that woodland can sequester through its lifetime (see www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode for more information)

The Woodland Trust Scotland (WTS) approached ACC regarding the Tree for Every Citizen Project as they were developing a Diamond Woods project. The Diamond Woods project is a UK wide initiative to plant 60 new woodlands of 60 acres or more in 2012, as a part of the celebration of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The woodlands needed to be accessible to the public. Public involvement with the planting and ongoing use of the site was required. The Tullos Hill site fitted the required criteria and following Housing and Environment Committee approval on 1 March 2011, this was taken forward. The WTS were able to assist in providing support, materials and a travel bursary for school groups involved with the tree planting, additional staffing to assist with community planting works and publicity through their website and press releases.

In addition to creating around 100 hectares of accessible new woodland in the City for the general benefit of citizens, this project has also created new and diverse woodland habitats, which will benefit a range of native wildlife including mammals, birds and insects. The woodlands have been created on areas of mainly formerly close mown grassland where the biodiversity value was minimal and the site was expensive to maintain.

A full report on the Tree for Every Citizen is appended to this committee item as Appendix 1.

6. IMPACT

6.1 This report links to Aberdeen City Council's Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan in terms of the following National Outcomes:

(1) We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe:

(6) We live longer, healthier lives.

(10) We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need:

(11) We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

(12) We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations; and

(14) We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.

6.2 This report links to the Council's policy statement "Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking", by promoting the city as a better place to live and work.

6.3 In more specific terms, the report links to Vibrant Dynamic & Forward Thinking as follows:

Environment

Aberdeen's environment - natural and built - is part of what makes our city unique. Aberdeen City Council has a duty both to protect that environment and to play its part in protecting our planet.

The partnership will:

3. Adopt and implement policies which safeguard Aberdeen's green belt and green wedges

4. Institute a programme of tree-planting with the objective, with partners, of planting one tree for every citizen by 2011.

6. Minimise the impact of council activities on the environment, including a target of being carbon neutral overall by 2020 and a commitment that all new council developments will be carbon neutral.

6.4 The delivery of this project will support the Council's Nature Conservation Strategy 2010, the Openspace Strategy 2011-2016, The Council's 10:10 Commitment, and Air Quality Plan 2006.

6.5 Aberdeen City Council also has a duty, as a public body, to advance the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The project is an initiative that supports this aim.

There is no requirement for an Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment arising from the recommendation in this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (i) The Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFS2006fcfc101.pdf/\\$FILE/SFS2006fcfc101.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFS2006fcfc101.pdf/$FILE/SFS2006fcfc101.pdf)
- (ii) Policy and Strategy Committee, 10 June 2008 – Item 7.3 Tree Planting Project
- (iii) 'Combating Climate Change - a role for UK forests' (Forestry Commission)
(see <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7y4gn9>)
- (iv) Housing and Environment Committee 11th January 2010 - Item 9.2 A Tree For Every Citizen.
- (v) Aberdeen City Council Nature Conservation Strategy 2010
- (vi) Housing and Environment Committee 13th April 2010 - Item 9.11 Update on A Tree For Every Citizen project.
- (vii) Housing and Environment Committee 25th May 2010 item 8.2 Update on A Tree For Every Citizen project
- (viii) Bulletin Report update on Tree for Every Citizen October 2010
- (ix) Aberdeen's Strategy for Access to the Outdoors 2004
- (x) Aberdeen City Council Core Path Plan 2009
- (xi) Woodland Carbon Code see
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-863ffl>
- (xii) Management of roe deer in the peri-urban environment
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7D4AXC>
- (xiii) Current and Future Deer Management Options Report on behalf of Defra European Wildlife Division December 2003
http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/managementoptions_tc_m6-4637.pdf

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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