

COMMITTEE Housing and Environment DATE 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

DIRECTOR Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT Update on A Tree for Every Citizen project

REPORT NUMBER: H&E/10/069

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members on the progress with the commitment in the Council's Policy statement, "Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking" to plant a tree for every citizen of Aberdeen.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- (i) notes progress to date;
- (ii) instructs officers to provide a further update on the completion of the first phase of the project and proposals for the second phase to the 24<sup>th</sup> August Housing and Environment Committee.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no additional funding implications beyond that reported and agreed in the previous report to Housing and Environment Committee on 11th January 2010. The project is on target to deliver within budget. The funding package agreed at the previous committee is as below:-

Estimated overall costs £343,500

Funded by:

- Forestry Commission (Scotland) through SRDP £216,400
- Aberdeen Greenspace £62,000 as matched funding
- In kind contribution by ACC through the Aberdeen Countryside Ranger Service £40,000 to support the on-going community consultation elements of the Planting Programme
- SURF Interreg IVB project up to £25,000 over three years to support the community/volunteer, schools involvement and consultation aspects of the project and to develop linkages with local businesses. This funding is for sites within the SURF project area in the north of the City.
- Contributions from local businesses currently amounting to £2500.

#### 4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

4.1 This report links to the 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.

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

4.3 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.

4.4 The delivery of this project will support the Council's Nature Conservation Strategy 2010, Proposed Openspace Strategy, The Council's recent 10:10 Commitment, and Air Quality Plan 2006.

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

## 5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The implementation of this project is being undertaken by existing officers in Housing and Environment assisted by an experienced consultant appointed through a tendering procedure and costed into the overall project budget.
- 5.2 The species mix and design of the woodlands will enhance the biodiversity value of Aberdeen green spaces by providing improved wildlife habitats and networks and promoting and conserving Local Biodiversity Action Plan species such as red squirrel and wych elm as well being sustainably managed to provide a future timber crop over the next 30-120 years.
- 5.3 The design of the planted areas incorporates public access and will be designed to make the new woodland areas inviting, pleasant and safe places to use and visit for recreational activities. The designs will respect the local conditions and features and avoid areas where there could be future light loss issues for local residents.
- 5.4 Overall the trees will absorb up to around 15,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide over the next 50 years, which will help provide a greener, cleaner future for the people of Aberdeen. (This is estimated at the lower end of the possible absorption rates, there are several ways of calculating the total which can give a range of outcomes)

## 6. REPORT

### 6.1 Background

A report was submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee of 10 June 2008 describing a range of options to deliver the Council's commitment to plant a tree for every resident in Aberdeen, approximately 202,000 trees, by 2011. This committee resolved to instruct officers to continue with current tree planting programmes (around 10,000 per year) and to investigate funding opportunities to deliver this commitment, as at the time there were no resources available from the Authority to deliver the greater rate of tree planting to plant the 202,000 trees.

This committee resolved to approve the plans for the project to deliver the first phase of planting at the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010 with the funding package that had been developed from a range of partners.

### 6.2 Progress as at mid May 2010

Planting work has continued at a number of sites following the delays caused by the lengthy period of snow cover and freezing ground conditions in February and March.

Since the update to Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> April all the trees at Seaton have been planted. St Fitticks Park, Balgownie Drive, Inverdee and Abbottswells are also completed. The contractors are currently working at Westfield Park, Danestone and Greenfern which are scheduled for completion by the end of May 2010.

### 6.2.1 Local Community Involvement

An important part of the project is community involvement, not only in developing the site plans but also with the planting and ongoing management. A public tree planting session at Abbotswells Openspace on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010 was successful and was a part of the ACC contribution to the national UK launch of Britain in Bloom 2010. Kirkhill and Abbotswell Schools have helped plant trees at Abbotswells Open Space. Tullos School, Walker Road School and Torry Academy pupils have planted trees at St Fitticks Park along with staff from Wood Group, Kelda Water and Grampian Fire and Rescue. Scotstown School and Bridge of Don Academy helped at Westfield Park.

### 6.2.3 Business Community Involvement

The Wood Group, Kelda Water and Grampian Fire and Rescue staff volunteered to help plant trees at St Fitticks Park with children from Tullos School and Torry Academy on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April. The Wood Group has also offered a financial contribution (of at least £2000) to the project. Another company has made a contribution. The Scottish Business in the Community organization has expressed an interest in helping to identify further business involvement in the next phase of the project.

### 6.3 Planting in phase 1 of the project

The proposed planting sites for the period up to December 2011 are:-

- Danestone (2.2 ha 4,700 trees)
- Balgownie Drive (2.69ha 5,470 trees)
- Greenfern Woodland (7.67ha 16,500 trees)
- Seaton (near Donmouth LNR to the rear of Shell petrol station) (8.54ha 19,000 trees)
- Inverdee pitches, (adjacent to the existing riverside woodland, not encroaching into the pitches). (1.87ha 4,000 trees)
- Lochinch Farm (3.29ha 7,150 trees)
- Abbotswells open space (6.95ha 12,000 trees)
- St Fitticks Park (7.23ha 13,250 trees)
- Westfield Park (7.55ha 12,150 trees)

Although it is planned to have all these sites planted by the end of May 2010.

## 7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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## 8. 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 Resources 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.