



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Catherine Nuttgens

Tel: 07837300203

Report of: *Lisa Firth – Director of Culture*

Report to: *Mick Crofts – Executive Director of Place (Interim)*

Date of Decision: *5th March 2021*

Subject: *Woodland Trust’s Emergency Tree Fund Grant*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Culture, Parks and Leisure</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee</i>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(850)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i>		

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to accept the £183,319 of funding from the Woodland Trust’s Emergency Tree Fund following Sheffield City Council, Community Forestry’s successful bid and to deliver the Treevitalise Project as outlined in this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Executive Director of Culture:

- approves the Council accepting the funding of £183,319 from the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund;
- approves the Treevitalise Sheffield project being delivered as outlined in this report;
- approves the Council entering into a Grant Agreement with the Woodland Trust.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Sonya Oates</i>
		Legal: <i>Gemma Day</i>
		Equalities: <i>Annemarie Johnston</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>Lisa Firth – Director of Culture</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted:	<i>Mary Lea and Mark Jones</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Catherine Nuttgens</i>	Job Title: <i>Community Forestry Manager</i>
	Date: <i>24/02/21</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Emergency Tree fund was launched by the Woodland Trust to help local authorities turn their ambitions around climate, nature and tree planting targets into a reality, overcome barriers, stimulate activity and provide exemplars of innovation and activity.
- 1.2 Community Forestry recently applied to the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Fund and was successful.
- 1.3 Projects delivered using the Emergency Tree fund are expected to deliver some or all of the key outcomes identified by the Woodland Trust. This includes things such as creating high quality accessible green spaces and delivering *'high outcomes for nature through creating new woodland based on the conservation hierarchy "protect – restore – create" and the Lawton Principles of bigger, better and more connected'*.
- 1.4 Community Forestry currently consists of a full-time manager and a part time officer, having been severely reduced in austerity, and somewhat limited in what they can achieve in the whole city. It is a credit to the City of Sheffield that the team still exists and leaves the city in an ideal position to react positively to the drive to plant more trees for climate change and biodiversity.
- 1.5 The bid was for extra staff and resources for two years for the Community Forestry Team. This will increase capacity to work with children, young people and adults on tree planting and woodland creation schemes around the city. It will also contribute to the aims of the SCC Trees and Woodland Strategy, planting 10,000 trees a year.
- 1.6 The intention of the project, known as the Treevitalise Project, is to help increase participants physical and mental health, while creating more attractive, biodiverse and climate friendly spaces around the city, and strategically manage much of the urban treescape for the future. It will also allow us to develop new initiatives to help ensure the team becomes sustainable.
- 1.7 By accepting the funding and entering in to the grant agreement with the Woodland Trust, the Treevitalise project will help meet the aims of the SCC Trees and Woodland Strategy, planting 10,000 trees per year in the city, and engaging schools and the community. The agreement will also meet the aims of the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Plan in particular protecting and restoring existing trees and native woodland, increasing capacity in the community forestry team, and protecting trees outside woods
- 1.8 The proposed programme will include:

- Gathering data – Map appropriate planting sites and spaces in the city to support a targeted approach to tree planting. The report should identify areas of low tree canopy cover, high levels of pollution, high social deprivation, and other variables such as an increased risk of flooding. This will be supported by natural capital and biodiversity data collected by the biological records centre and South Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership.
- Consultation, whip and tree planting, watering, mulching and beating up events with the community in Sheffield parks and green spaces and on highways.
- Complementary activities – Woodland creation projects such as seed gathering and planting, and promoting natural regeneration.
- Coordinate volunteers and local groups to help with tree-based tasks, e.g. Street Tree Warden Scheme already established to involve local volunteers in monitoring and looking after highway trees.
- Partnership with schools to run tree education and planting sessions across at least 6 schools.
- Community orchard creation and coordination.
- Community forest garden coordinated supported and maintained at Parkwood Springs.
- Local and national tree events both virtual and physical including events and initiatives from the Woodland Trust. We will plan a virtual launch event to announce the project in Spring 2021, followed by a live event at the Folk Forest in Summer if COVID restrictions allow.
- Project development & engagement – Working with partners to develop additional projects to diversify engagement with different groups and communities.
- Media engagement including traditional and social media

1.9 Two members of part-time staff will be recruited to oversee and deliver the programme.

1.10 The project is due to commence on the 1 April 2021 and end on 1 June 2023.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1 The funds will allow the city to strive for excellence, increasing not only Sheffield's canopy cover and potential for biodiversity, but engaging people from all backgrounds and parts of the city, particularly those who would most benefit with tree planting and related activities and events. The funding helps us meet our actions in the Trees and Woodland strategy around community engagement, volunteering,

supporting “friends” groups and tree planting. (Actions 7,8,10,11, and 18 - 24) These will help people connect with their green spaces, contribute to public goods such as flood mitigation, carbon capture and biodiversity through tree planting and woodland creation. This in turn leads to an increase health and wellbeing and helps encourage more climate positive behaviour.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Mapping of plantable space and consultation around places to plant trees forms part of the project.
- 3.2 Treevitalise will help meet the actions of the Trees and Woodland Strategy which was consulted upon when it was released.
- 3.3 The results of the consultation around the Street Tree Partnership Strategy will guide the direction of the project and future projects.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Advance equality of opportunity - opportunity for volunteering and training in arboriculture (Trees) will be a part of the project, particularly for those groups underrepresented. Arboriculture is a growing industry where there are likely to be new jobs in the future.
- 4.1.2 Foster good relations - Community Tree planting events help bring people together in a positive activity, and through tree planting people are connected to their greenspace in an individual and collective way as they watch and look after the trees grow into a woodland.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 Following a successful expression of interest, a grant offer of £183,319 has been made to SCC by the Woodland Trust from the Emergency Tree Fund in respect of the Treevitalise project.
- 4.2.2 Key features and terms and conditions of the grant are summarised below:
- 4.2.3 The grant agreement runs from 1st January 2021 to 1st June 2023, with a project start date of 1st April 2021.
- 4.2.4 Funding must be used only for the purposes of the project as set out in the agreement.
- 4.2.5 Use of sub-contractors and onward payment must only be made with written permission from the funder.

- 4.2.6 Any unspent funding at the end of the project must be returned to the Trust. Similarly, any funding received in error must be returned.
- 4.2.7 Where funding from a third party has been used to deliver any part of the project, this must be stated within the quarterly finance reports, along with details of its use. As the expression of interest states that some funding from Trees for Cities may be used towards this project, it is advised that the service ensure that written permission from Trees for Cities is sought prior to committing the third party funding to this project.
- 4.2.8 Grant must not be used for a number of purposes, as set out in section 4.3 of the grant agreement.
- 4.2.9 Clawback or withholding of payment may occur in a number of circumstances as set out in section 12 of the grant agreement.
- 4.2.10 Quarterly progress updates must be submitted to the funder. The Woodland Trust must also receive a financial claim with receipted evidence on a quarterly basis in order to pay the funding to the recipient. Payment will be made via invoice.
- 4.2.11 An end of project report must be submitted within thirty days of the project end date.
- 4.2.12 Funder must be notified immediately if there is an increase of more than 10% of costs as budgeted within the grant agreement. Overspend must be funded outside of the Emergency Tree Fund.
- 4.2.13 All public sector procurement is governed by UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).
- 4.2.14 Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council has a general power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specified in the Act. This gives the Council the ability to accept this grant from the Woodland Trust.
- 4.3.2 The Council are required to enter into a grant agreement with the Woodland Trust.

- 4.3.3 The funding should only be used for the purpose of the project and not for any of the specific activities listed as not being covered by the grant in the grant agreement for example running a small grant scheme or goods or services that the Council has a statutory duty to provide.
- 4.3.4 Any unspent funding should be returned to the Woodland Trust.
- 4.3.5 Officers involved in the delivery of this project must ensure that they comply with the monitoring and reporting requirements detailed in the grant agreement.
- 4.3.6 The Council must comply with the Woodland Trust's Ethical Policy.
- 4.3.7 The Woodland Trust are able to reduce, withhold or claim a repayment in full or in part of the grant in specified circumstances.
- 4.3.8 If any report or survey is commissioned as part of this project, a copy should be provided to the Woodland Trust.
- 4.3.9 There is a requirement to apply for a restriction to be added on to the title of the property to which the project relates. The wording is detailed within the grant agreement. The Land Registration Act 2002 provides mechanisms to protect third-party interests, like the Woodland Trust's. A restriction is an entry in the register that prevents or regulates the making of an entry in the register in respect of any disposal (section 40(1) of the Land Registration Act 2002). The Council will need to ensure that there is no obstacle to complying with this clause before the trees are planted on any particular land.
- 4.3.10 The grant specific requirements are detailed within the grant agreement, officers working on this project must be aware of these requirements and ensure they are complied with.
- 4.3.11 Procurement regulations and the Council's Contract Standing Orders must be complied with.

4.4 Other Implications

(Refer to the Executive decision making guidance and provide details of all relevant implications, e.g. HR, property, public health).

4.4.1

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Alternative option 1 – Not accepting the funding.
Not accepting the funding would mean that Community Forestry has limited capacity to deliver woodland creation within the community and

opportunities to further develop Sheffield's reputation as a Green City would be lost.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The funding helps us meet our actions in the Trees and Woodland strategy around community engagement, volunteering, supporting "friends" groups and tree planting. (Actions 7,8,10,11, and 18 - 24)
- 6.2 The people in Sheffield will have greater connection to their trees, through direct engagement via planting and other tree projects, and attendance at events and activities.
- 6.3 People will have had fun and have better mental and physical health as a result of being engaged with trees.
- 6.4 Sheffield will have a greater canopy cover as at least 3 hectares of new woodland or 15,000 trees will have been planted.
- 6.5 There will be increased biodiversity in woodland creation areas and wildlife corridors.
- 6.6 Flooding will be mitigated through planting in catchment areas or to intercept rainfall on hard surfaces.
- 6.7 Parks and Green Spaces will have a higher amenity value.