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Report of: Mick Crofts, Interim Executive Director of Place
Report to: Cabinet
Date of decision: 17th March 2021
Subject: **Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy**

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>Environment, Streetscene & Climate Change</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Economic & Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny & Policy 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? 703		
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"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."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>		

<p>Purpose of Report</p> <p>This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy as a 'sub-strategy' of the Sheffield Trees & Woodlands Strategy 2018-2033.</p>
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Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- ◆ Approve the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy
- ◆ Accept the 'You Said, We Did' report setting out how the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership dealt with the consultation feedback in preparing the final strategy
- ◆ Accept the proposed arrangements for the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership.

Background Papers:

- *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy – Consultation Feedback Report, Jan 21*
- *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy, Jul 20*
- *i-Tree Eco Stratified Inventory Report, Treeconomics, Nov 19*
- *Sheffield Trees & Woodlands Strategy 2018-33, Dec 18*

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: Kerry Darlow	
	Legal: Sarah Bennett	
	Equalities: Annemarie Johnston	
<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: Mick Crofts, Interim Executive Director of Place	
3	Cabinet Member consulted: Councillor Mark Jones	
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.	
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lead Officer Name: Karen Ramsay</td> <td>Job Title: Place Operational Services</td> </tr> </table>	Lead Officer Name: Karen Ramsay
Lead Officer Name: Karen Ramsay	Job Title: Place Operational Services	
Date: 8 th March 2021		

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 **This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy as a ‘sub-strategy’ of the Sheffield Trees & Woodlands Strategy 2018-33¹.**
- 1.2 The production of a new Street Tree Partnership Strategy for Sheffield honours the commitment made by the Council, Amey, and the Sheffield Tree Action Groups (STAG) Steering Group in the Joint Position Statement published in December 2018² to develop an exemplary new street tree strategy for Sheffield. It also delivers action 29 in the Sheffield Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2018-2033:
- ♦ *‘We will seek to develop a street tree strategy with partners which will be a ‘sub-strategy’ of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy’.*
- 1.3 Two documents accompany this Cabinet report:
- ♦ *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy (Word version)*
 - ♦ *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy Consultation Feedback – You Said, We Did.*
- 1.4 It should be noted that at the date of publication of the Cabinet agenda for Wednesday 17th March, the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy is in the final stages of design and may be subject to further typographical or grammatical changes after the Cabinet meeting. A designed and formatted version of the strategy will be launched by the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership in May 2021.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE SHEFFIELD STREET TREE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Street Tree Strategy Development Group was formed during the summer of 2019 and began meeting in August 2019. Members of the group included representatives from Amey, the Council (two officer representatives), STAG, and The Woodland Trust. Tree management and valuation experts advised the group on the development of the working strategy. The group was independently chaired by the Chief Executive of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust.
- 2.2 To ensure open and transparent development of the working strategy, the agendas, notes, presentations, and other supporting documents discussed at the development group meetings were published on the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust website³.

¹ <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/parks-sports-and-recreation/trees-woodlands/Sheffield%20Trees%20and%20Woodlands%20Strategy%202018-2033.pdf>

² <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/roads-and-pavements/managingtrees/Joint%20position%20statement%20SCC,%20Amey%20&%20STAG.pdf>

³ <https://www.wildsheffield.com/developing-a-partnership-street-tree-strategy-for-sheffield/>

- 2.3 In July 2019, Cabinet noted that further consultation with key stakeholder groups and with the public was planned as part of the work to develop the new street tree strategy (see paragraph 3.3, *Developing the Sheffield Street Tree Strategy*, Cabinet Report, 17 July 2019⁴).
- 2.4 The Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy⁵ was approved by the Council through a Leader's Individual Executive Decision on 19th March 2020⁶.
- 2.5 A consultation on the working strategy was launched on 16th July 2020 and ran for 12 weeks until 8th October 2020. In January 2021, Cabinet approved the consultation feedback report⁷.

3 CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Publishing the document as a working strategy meant that the consultation complied with the following principles:
- ◆ Consultation took place when the proposals around the future management and maintenance of Sheffield's street trees were at a formative stage.
 - ◆ The consultation honoured the commitment that further engagement with key stakeholder groups and with the public would be part of the work to develop the new street tree strategy. Consultees had access to the working strategy document; the i-Tree Eco report produced by Treeconomics that provided part of the evidence base for the strategy; the agendas, notes, presentations, and other supporting documents discussed at the strategy development group meetings (published on the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust website).
 - ◆ The consultation provided 12 weeks for consultees to consider the working strategy and provide a response. Between the end of the consultation in Oct 20 and Dec 20, the results were analysed and compiled into a consultation feedback report that was approved by Cabinet in Jan 21.
- 3.2 For openness and transparency and to demonstrate that the product of the consultation has been conscientiously considered, the attached 'You Said, We Did' report summarises how the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership (formerly the Street Tree Strategy Development Group) dealt with the feedback from the consultation in the preparation of the final Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy.

⁴ <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieIssueDetails.aspx?IID=28736&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI19527>

⁵ <https://www.wildsheffield.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FINAL-Sheffield-Street-Tree-Partnership-Working-Strategy-July-2020.pdf>

⁶ <http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2492>

⁷ <http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2683>

4 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

4.1 The consultation asked for views on:

- ◆ The vision
- ◆ The six outcomes proposed in the working strategy to promote and enhance Sheffield's street trees and their long-term benefits for the public, wildlife, and the wider environment
- ◆ Actions to deliver the outcomes.

It also asked respondents who they would like to see represented on the new Sheffield Street Tree Partnership (SSTP).

4.2 The 'You Said, We Did' report sets out how the SSTP processed the comments received. It can be read alongside the consultation feedback report which provides more detail on the specific comments made by individuals and organisations on the Street Tree Working Strategy.

4.3 A qualitative analysis of the responses was carried out. They were grouped together where the content related to a similar issue or a common theme. Specific comments relating to corrections or additional references were also reviewed.

4.4 The SSTP reviewed comments and suggestions against five criteria:

1. Falls within the scope of the strategy – *Accepted*
2. Falls within the scope of the strategy – *Not accepted*
3. Does not fall within the scope of the strategy – *Not included, dealt with by SSTP*
4. Does not fall within the scope of the strategy – *Not included, dealt with outside SSTP*
5. *Already included*

5 Sheffield Street Tree Partnership

5.1 Based on the consultation responses, the Street Tree Strategy Development Group considered options for the arrangements and membership of the SSTP. Appendix 4 of the final strategy sets out the terms of reference for the partnership.

5.2 The purpose of the SSTP is to:

- ◆ Oversee delivery of the actions in the Sheffield Street Tree Strategy
- ◆ Work in partnership to contribute and secure skills, resources, and funds to deliver the actions in the strategy
- ◆ Develop and evolve the strategy over time in response to the needs of the people of Sheffield, the climate, and ecological emergencies

- ◆ Encourage and direct donations with reference to this strategy, including funds for new tree planting and to support the retention of existing trees.

5.3 The structure of the SSTP is intended to support delivery through collaboration and ensure input from a wide range of stakeholders. It comprises the following:

- ◆ **Core Delivery Group** – Responsible for overseeing and driving delivery of the actions in the strategy; comprises an elected chair that is independent from the Council, Amey and STAG, and representatives from the main organisations involved in the management and maintenance of Sheffield’s street trees.
- ◆ **Street Tree Partners** – A wider group of partners interested in engaging with and supporting the delivery of the actions in the strategy, and able to offer expertise, ideas, and resources.
- ◆ **Street Tree Wardens** – A group of volunteers assigned to different parts of Sheffield who have committed to help care for the street trees and/or be the eyes and ears for their ‘patch’.

5.4 To address specific issues or develop areas of work, task & finish groups will be set up by the Core Delivery Group as required. These groups will be drawn from the representative partners outlined in 5.3 above and will be set clear objectives, linking directly to the strategy outcomes and actions. Once objectives have been met, the groups will be dissolved.

5.5 As this is a new partnership, the terms of reference and structure will be reviewed after a year to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose.

6 Other issues

6.1 The consultation highlighted other issues related to the ambitions of the street tree strategy that were not specifically about street trees.

6.2 The table below summarises these issues and the current actions to address them:

Issue	Comments/actions
<p>Environmental policy Several respondents requested that environmental concerns are embedded within Council policies, in particular, transport, planning, and education, to ensure that all policies address climate change, biodiversity, and air pollution in their delivery</p>	<p>A climate emergency was declared in Sheffield in January 2019 and a new commitment was made to bring forward the city's carbon neutral target from 2050 to a minimum of 2030. Carbon emissions are the biggest contributor towards climate change in the city and primarily come from burning fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel, and natural gas. Work is now concluding on a city decarbonisation pathways report which sets out where emissions can be reduced in the city. The report has been developed over the last nine months by Arup and Ricardo, in partnership with Sheffield City Council and the Green City Partnership, a group of local stakeholders with representatives from local businesses, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, both universities, and campaign groups including the Sheffield Climate Alliance.</p> <p>Over the coming months we will be aiming to engage and work with people across the city to help to raise awareness as well as develop actions that will help to support our ambition to become a net zero carbon city.</p>
<p>Low traffic neighbourhoods Some respondents mentioned the opportunity to introduce low traffic neighbourhoods in the city</p>	<p>Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) could offer the opportunity for tree planting or planters to help slow the flow of traffic as well as providing spaces for community and social activity. In summer 2019 the Council introduced an LTN in Kelham Island on an experimental basis, closing certain roads to through traffic using planters. The LTN in Kelham will be reviewed to determine whether the closures should be introduced permanently. Should this be the outcome, it may offer the potential for permanent improvements to the street scene, including the potential for tree planting. The introduction of two further LTNs during 2021 is currently in development.</p>
<p>Nature highways and byways Concerns around the ability of wildlife to move around the local environment were raised</p>	<p>Solid fencing in housing/other developments can inhibit the free movement of small animals. Alternatives to solid fencing could be considered and this is an issue for further discussion with relevant Council teams.</p>

<p>Sheffield Local Plan Recommendation that the overall vision and objectives of the Sheffield Street Tree Working Strategy and the current and future stock of trees in Sheffield is reflected and embedded in the forthcoming Sheffield Local Plan particularly in relation to Aim 1, 'An Environmentally Sustainable City' and Aim 7, 'A Green City'</p>	<p>When the Local Plan is drafted, it will take account of all relevant policy documents and strategies, including the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy. The strategy will be considered when determining Local Plan strategic and development management policies, drawing up policy area designations and proposing site allocations.</p>
<p>Verge parking Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction towards parking on road verges and concern about the damage this can cause</p>	<p>Parking on grass verges is recognised as a challenge – it is not illegal and the number of cars in the city outweighs the available off-street parking. The Council is running a project to look at options, including parking restrictions adjacent to verges and the use of alternative materials to limit the damage.</p>
<p>Wildflowers Some respondents expressed interest in planting wildflowers on road verges across the city or enabling residents to do so</p>	<p>The creation of wildflower verges is on the Council's agenda. A paper is being prepared with a view to a rollout in spring 2021. As the Council is the Highway Authority, an executive decision is required to enact a new approach to the creation of wildflower verges.</p>

7 HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

7.1 The Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy contributes to the following Council priorities:

- ◆ *Climate Emergency/Carbon Neutral City* – Improving the city's air quality, mitigating carbon emissions, and helping to protect against the effects of flooding.
- ◆ *Highway Network* – Street trees considered as natural capital assets with a value, to be assessed alongside the costs of maintaining the safety and integrity of the city's highway network.
- ◆ *Health & Wellbeing* – There is growing evidence to support the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of being near trees.
- ◆ *An In-Touch Organisation* – The strategy originated from the mediated talks between representatives of Amey, Sheffield City Council and the STAG steering group. These talks and the consultation enabled work on the strategy to progress through true collaboration, discussion, and dialogue, demonstrating the value of listening, being connected and responsive to a range of people, organisations, and ideas.

8 HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

8.1 The feedback from the consultation has been used to:

- ◆ Inform the final Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy
- ◆ Help shape the future arrangements for the SSTP.

8.2 It will also be used to:

- ◆ Help shape the future programme of work for SSTP
- ◆ Inform and help shape Council policies and processes.

8.3 Although the consultation on the strategy has concluded, the ongoing way of working will be to continue to engage with stakeholders and communities on the outcomes, actions, and programme of work of the SSTP. The strategy and actions will be kept under review and updated as circumstances evolve or change, and every five years as a minimum.

8.4 It is proposed that progress on the delivery of the actions in the strategy will be published in the form of annual report produced by the SSTP. In addition, to monitor progress, options under consideration are providing regular updates on progress against baseline and outcomes, setting clear timescales for delivering actions, and establishing targets where this might be helpful in achieving measurable change.

9 RISK ANALYSIS & IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

Equality of opportunity implications

9.1 The proposed outcomes and actions in the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy set out to balance sustaining and enhancing the benefits of the city's street trees with the need to maintain the integrity and safety of the highway network. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), this will help to protect all members of the public, including those with protected characteristics, from any hazards presented by street trees.

9.2 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) highlights:

- ◆ Positive and negative impacts: Health
- ◆ Positive impact: Age; disability; pregnancy/maternity; race; poverty & financial inclusion.

9.3 Along with the strategy itself, the EIA will be kept under review and updated as circumstances evolve or change, and in response to engagement work undertaken by the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership. The EIA will be updated as required to take account of any potential negative impacts and the mitigations needed to address these.

Financial and commercial implications

9.4 Based on the current proposals in the strategy, it is not envisaged that there will be any significant financial costs or commercial implications for the current Streets Ahead contract.

9.5 However, some of the proposed actions in the strategy are likely to incur modest expenditure and/or require the input of some human resources by the Council and partners, for example:

- ◆ Establishment and support for the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership
- ◆ Stakeholder and partner engagement activities
- ◆ Recalculation of ecosystem benefits using i-Tree Eco every five years so that progress can be monitored
- ◆ Some limited engagement of tree management and valuation experts
- ◆ Independent accreditation of our approach to street tree management in line with best practice.

9.6 There is an existing budget which could be used to fund modest expenditure.

9.7 The financial and commercial implications will be kept under review as the final strategy and action plan evolves.

Legal implications

9.8 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The implementation of the strategy may be subject to further decision-making in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation, and the legal implications of any proposal would be fully considered at that time.

10 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

10.1 Two alternative options were:

- ◆ No new street tree strategy
- ◆ Maintain and manage the highway network without taking account of the value of the benefits provided by street trees in decisions about whether to retain or replace them.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- ◆ Approve the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy
- ◆ Accept the 'You Said, We Did' report setting out how the Street Tree Partnership dealt with the consultation feedback in preparing the final strategy
- ◆ Accept the proposed arrangements for the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership.

12 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The recommendations are made on the basis that:

- ◆ This honours the commitment made by the Council, Amey, and the STAG steering group in the Joint Position Statement to develop an exemplary new street tree strategy for Sheffield.
- ◆ This delivers action 29 in the Sheffield Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2018-33:

‘We will seek to develop a street tree strategy with partners which will be a ‘sub-strategy’ of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy’.

- ◆ Along with other city and Council strategies that are already in place, the Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy will be instrumental in helping to develop and shape guidance and policies that determine the future of the city in a range of areas including climate emergency; development of the city centre, district centres and local neighbourhoods; and the health and wellbeing of residents.

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