

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 24 July 2023

Subject: Draft Tree Strategy

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SUMMARY

This report outlines the progress to date of the first tree strategy for Hammersmith & Fulham, detailing the vision of the strategy, how this will be achieved, and why the borough needs a tree strategy.

The strategy is currently maturing towards a final draft, and this report is for information on the progression of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the paper and attached presentation
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Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Promoting tree planting, community engagement and better urban forest management. All of which are evidenced to increase sustainability, improve aesthetics and to boost the economy and in-turn build prosperity within the borough and public realm.
Creating a compassionate council	Developing active citizenship with residents and stakeholders, improving communication, and promoting an environmentally aware community that supports the council's ambition of being

	the greenest borough.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Outlining active and strategic engagement with our residents that improves their quality of life such as educational events, walks, tree planting days and annual residents' surveys to foster the relationship between council and the community.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Identifying methods of acquiring external funding and cost saving strategies such as a consistent and effective funding application process, the development of our tree donation program, working with external partners to reduce the cost of planting and improving internal procedures to ensure less trees are lost, less money is spent on their replacement and more trees are planted through for the benefits of all.
Taking pride in H&F	By increasing canopy cover and environmental awareness, the strategy provides the environment required for residents to be proud of their borough. We demonstrate high aspirations by outlining the means to increase our canopy cover to meet target for England proposed by the EIP, ahead of the timeline they have proposed. We provide the platform for residents to play active roles in achieving said targets, fostering pride and shared equity in their borough.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The tree strategy, guided by emerging policy, internal strategies and a number of external partners outlines a shift towards ambitious, strategic and proactive tree management with the primary vision of becoming the greenest borough. These targets paired with internal policies, such as prioritising native tree planting and proactive tree planting, aligns with the Climate and Ecology Strategy and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. This supports the credibility of our targets and ensures the most current policy is adhered to, in order to combat the climate and ecological emergency as effectively as possible.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Background on H&F trees and the need for a strategy

1. To determine the baseline for the strategy, work was undertaken to understand the current value of the tree stock. This was undertaken using the councils tree data, open source software i-Tree and data from the London Data Store (GLA) and Forestry Research. Figure one outlines the headline figures from this research.



Figure 1, overview of H&F current (2023) tree stock

2. The London wide canopy cover is 20% and the Mayor of London aims to increase this by 10% by 2050 (London Environment Strategy 2018). The Environmental Improvement Plan (2023) aims to achieve England wide target of 16.5% by 2050m we aim to achieve this by 2030, paving the way for greater canopy cover goals beyond this.
3. Consideration of how the council manages its tree stock, works with stakeholders, and manages private trees through development was undertaken to identify gaps in processes and areas for improvement.
4. Examples of areas for improvement were identified as the need for the development of existing policies and procedures, new policies, training for contractors and council staff, increasing funding for tree planting, and improving communication with residents.

5. A tree strategy for H&F will provide roadmap of how the council can improve its tree management, increase canopy cover, and improve the service for residents, achieving shared targets and improving the quality of life of the constituent.
6. The tree strategy is being led by the healthy streets team in highways, however it is a borough wide strategy that covers all council owned land and is being supported by the relevant Parks and Housing teams, along with the Climate Change Team and Planning team and a range of external partners.
7. The strategy is developed using with guidance from the newly published Tree and Woodland Strategy Toolkit (TAWS), developed by The Tree Council and commissioned by DEFRA. Lessons learned from workshops delivered by The Tree Council have guided the strategy directly. Similarly, they have reviewed the initial draft with a view to comment on the final draft and proposed an ongoing working relationship.
8. The strategy is from 2023 to 2030, which aligns with the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP), along with the councils Climate and Ecology Strategy. This period of seven years will allow us to research our current tree stock, implement the action plan and achieve our targets. This will pave the way for new, greater targets that will be guided by the 2030 review of EIP, as well as the learnings from the strategy.

Vision, objectives, and action plan for the strategy

9. The vision for the strategy is to contribute to becoming the greenest borough.
10. To meet the vision three key objectives were identified, to increase canopy cover from 14% to 16.5%, to preserve and improve current tree stock and to work closer with residents and businesses.
11. To determine how to meet these three objectives, 12 key areas for development/goals were identified. And its these 12 areas that help form the action plan for the tree strategy. Figure 2, show how the 12 areas are linked to the three objectives and vision.



Figure 2, the vision, and objectives of the tree strategy

12. The tree strategy contents will follow the 12 key areas, outlining how each area will meet the vision and objectives.
13. The strategy will be supported by an action plan, with 40 actions designed to deliver the three objectives to meet the vision.
14. The actions are set to a time frame, with a department lead, and are costed. We use an action plan framework already used effectively internally. By specifying these details it ensures are targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely (SMART).

Next steps for the strategy

15. The strategy is moving to its final draft and procurement for graphics and design are being undertaken with final data being collected.
16. The final draft of the strategy is due for completion in August with the aim to consult on this in September and publish later in 2023 after sign off by cabinet.

Feedback on the draft Strategy

17. The main issue for consideration is feedback on the draft strategy. The PAC is invited to review the draft tree strategy and provide comments to allow the final development of the strategy.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Tree Strategy