

Council 10 October, 2019

Tree Planting in B&NES

Labour Group to move:

Council notes:

- 1 The independent Committee on Climate Change says 1.5 billion trees need to be planted by 2050 for the UK to achieve its net-zero carbon target;
- 2 The Woodland Trust says that meeting this target would require 50 million young trees to go into the ground each year up until 2050. However, according to the Trust, in England in the past year, just 1,420 hectares of woodland was created, against a government ambition of 5,000 hectares a year. Its Big Climate Fightback is a campaign to get one million people to join the fight against climate change by pledging to plant a tree by 30 November;
- 3 Friends of the Earth have launched a campaign to double the tree cover. Doubling the number of trees could deliver annual carbon sequestration of around 37-50 MtCO₂e (million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) per year. This is equal to around 10% of the UK's current greenhouse gas emissions;
- 4 Trees play a vital role in addressing the climate emergency as they remove emissions from the air around us. Trees and woodlands absorb CO₂, provide oxygen, cool urban areas, provide habitats for wildlife and give people opportunities to engage with nature;
- 5 The Institute of Chartered Foresters recommends an urban tree canopy cover of 20% and that it further recommends that those areas already achieving this target (for example Bath) should aim to increase the cover by a further 5%. Some parts of our area, for example, Paulton, have a tree canopy cover of only 9%.

Council believes:

- 6 Although planting trees will not on its own reverse climate change, tree planting can contribute to addressing the climate emergency and gives people a way to take direct action and should therefore be supported by this Council.

Council agrees therefore:

- 7 To support tree planting initiatives carried out by community groups, charities and other organisations and to undertake its own tree planting as part of a wider strategy identified at paragraph 9, ensuring that any such trees should be from sustainable sources;
- 8 To ask the Cabinet to consider within the budget proposals the production of a detailed tree coverage survey of B&NES with a particular focus on those locations affected by air pollution;
- 9 To ask the Cabinet to consider within the budget proposals the production of a clear strategy for planting trees in B&NES that, amongst other things:
 - a) Seeks to address climate change and mitigate air pollution through green infrastructure;
 - b) Recognises the differences between urban and rural areas and their specific needs;
 - c) Identifies appropriate tree types for specific locations and how these trees could be integrated into the landscape;
 - d) Supports residents to connect with the natural environment;

- e) Identifies how trees and other planting can support diverse habitats for wildlife; and
- f) Identifies how the planning process where possible, through for example a Supplementary Planning Document, could be used to:
 - (i) provide greater protection to existing mature trees;
 - (ii) deliver a net increase of tree cover across the district;
 - (iii) introduce a system of fines for destruction of protected trees;
 - (iv) ensure that no planning application for any development large or small shall be granted without a S106 for replacement planting;
 - (v) ensure that no planning application shall be granted which would involve the destruction of a neighbour's trees; and
 - (vi) require B&NES Council to replace trees it owns but fells.