

Update on nature and tree-planting initiatives in Leeds.

Date: 23rd September 2024

Report of: Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces

Report to: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

Parks and Greenspaces in Leeds make a contribution to mitigating climate change with around 2500 of the 4000 hectares of land managed for public access being either natural or semi natural. Inclusive within this landholding is 16 Local Nature Reserves and 50 Local Wildlife Sites with a wide distribution across all parts of the district. Elsewhere the City Council is in partnership with bodies such as the RSPB to manage significant nature sites such as the 400ha St Aidan's wetland.

In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency with a target of becoming the first net-zero city in the UK, which woodland creation and tree planting in the city will contribute towards. In 2020 the target of creating 1250 hectares of woodland tree canopy over 25 years was agreed at full council. Furthermore, at the beginning of 2024 Executive Board approved the principle of establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (a Habitat Banking Vehicle (HBV)) so that the sale of habitat units can be undertaken by the HBV in line with the Environment Act 2021.

This report and presentation provides an update on woodland creation and on the programme of tree planting related initiatives. In addition, an update is provided on biodiversity net gain as well as an update on practical initiatives such as the establishment of wildflower areas in collaboration with Butterfly Conservation in Roundhay Park using seed sourced through Natural England in order to provide areas of managed habitat for native butterflies and other invertebrates which links to the conservation work undertaken at Tropical World.

Recommendations

- a) Note the presentations and provide comment.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 This report provides a review of work undertaken linked to woodland creation on Leeds City Council land along with progress on the delivery of BNG investment and the establishment of wildflower meadows linked to conservation priorities at Tropical World.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 2 It is requested that a regular update is provided on the progression of these initiatives.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 Extensive consultation has taken place on each individual scheme.

What are the resource implications?

- 4 There are no direct resource implications as a result of this report.

What are the legal implications?

- 5 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 6 There are no specific risk management implications as a result of this report.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

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Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 8 Not applicable.

b) How will success be measured?

- 9 Not applicable.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 10 Not applicable.

Appendices

- 11 None

Background papers

- 12 None.