

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Downs Committee Meeting

10th September 2012

Report of: Caroline Hollies
Title: A Tree Planting Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs
Ward: Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East
Officer Presenting Report: Caroline Hollies
Contact Telephone Number: 0117 352 5638

RECOMMENDATION

1. To produce a tree planting plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs.
2. To organise a community tree planting event between November 2012 and March 2013 based on this plan.

Summary

A tree planting plan sets out where specimen trees will be planted, what species they will be and any removals or replacements to fit in with the overall landscape character. A tree planting plan is required as part of the Clifton and Durdham Downs Management Plan to inform the management of the site. It will be put together by the TreeBristol Officer working with a Landscape Designer. It will be finalised in November and can be used to attract individual and business sponsorship and to organise community tree planting events.

The significant issues in the report are:

Clifton and Durdham Downs currently has no tree planting plan and there is a need to examine the possibilities for both replacement and new planting to fit in with the historical and landscape context of this important site. The work will be funded and delivered by TreeBristol, Bristol City Council's tree planting initiative.

Policy

1. The recommendation to produce a tree planting plan does not directly relate to existing Council policy but will be sensitive to the protected nature of the Downs as designated through Nature Conservation policy NE5 in the Bristol Local Plan as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and through NE9 in the Bristol Local Plan as an Historic Landscape.

Consultation

2. Internal

Robert Westlake - Downs Ranger
Nigel Sands - Landscape Architect
Russell Horsey - Senior Arboriculture Officer
Richard Fletcher and Richard Gwyn - Neighbourhood Engagement Team for Neighbourhoods

3. External

The Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership
Bristol Tree Forum
Bristol Parks Forum
Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge

4. Context

4.1. What is a tree planting plan?

A tree planting plan is put together by a Landscape Designer and a Tree Officer working to high quality design principles. It deals only with specimen trees, that is not woodland planting or management, and sets out:

- where the trees will be planted to fit in with the surrounding landscape
- what species each tree will be

It may be necessary to remove trees for health and safety reasons or to improve or restore the landscape character of the area. In this case, the plan will define which trees will be replanted (indicating whether the same or a different species will be planted) and which trees will be removed completely and over what timescale.

4.2. Why a tree planting plan is needed for Clifton and Durdham Downs

The need for a tree planting plan is outlined in the Management Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs, objective 7.3.9:

“Prepare a tree planting plan for The Downs to include options for replanting with existing or new species to fill gaps within existing avenue planting and/or phased felling and replanting of horse-chestnut avenues.”

This tree planting plan will also deliver objective 7.3.10 in the Management Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs:

“Maintain an elm tree felling and removal programme where elm disease is identified in an effort to remove the residual disease base with a view to possibly reintroducing elm trees through a planting scheme later.”

4.3. How the tree planting plan will be put together

The Landscape Designer and TreeBristol officer will consult both within and externally to the Council to put the plan together. They will work closely with the Downs Ranger and the Arboricultural Officer familiar with the site to investigate opportunities to replant disease resistant elms and restore the historic avenues as outlined in the management plan.

A detailed methodology for how this will be achieved is outlined in Appendix 1.

4.4. What the tree planting plan will be used for

The tree planting plan will be a working document, to be referred for guidance when trees are removed or planted. It will be published on the TreeBristol website and can also be used to:

- plan Community Tree Planting Events
 - offer corporate team building events
 - attract business sponsorship
 - attract sponsorship from individuals, eg for memorial trees

4.5. When the tree planting plan will be produced

The tree planting plan will be produced in November for presentation at the next Downs Committee meeting. Please advise what format this should be in.

4.6. The community tree planting event

This will be organised by TreeBristol to plant between 10 and 20 trees per event as shown in the tree planting plan. TreeBristol has organised an average of 12 of these events across the city, every winter for the past 3 years. These events are attended by an average of 20 volunteers, including local residents, schools groups, and business volunteers, see Appendix 2 for photographs of past events.

The event on the Downs, if the committee are in support of holding one, will be organised following advice sought from the Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge and Mandy Leivers, The Avon Gorge & Downs Biodiversity Education Officer.

5. Proposal

5.1. To produce a tree planting plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs for the use outlined in this report and following the methodology detailed in Appendix 1

5.2. To present the draft tree planting plan to the Committee before it is finalised. This presentation can be in the form of a report or a detailed plan with notes for discussion, to be advised by the Committee

5.3. To organise a community tree planting event between November 2012 and March 2013 based on the tree planting plan

6. Other Options Considered

Option 1 - Not producing a tree planting plan

This would not meet the objectives set out in the Clifton and Durdham Downs management plan and means there is no working document for reference when removing and planting specimen trees.

Option 2 - Producing a tree planting plan for another park in the Neighbourhood Partnership

There are few large parks in the Clifton, Cabot and Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership which have significant scope for tree planting, or are sufficiently complicated to require a tree planting plan. Members of the Neighbourhood Partnership have indicated their support for the tree planting plan being developed for Clifton and Durdham Downs. There have been no alternatives put forward to date.

7. Risk Assessment

The main reasons for producing a tree planting plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs are that it is an objective in the Management Plan and that it is the largest park in the Neighbourhood Partnership with great scope for tree planting.

There is community support for the production of a tree planting plan and a community tree planting event on The Downs.

The Downs Ranger and the Arboricultural Team, who maintain the trees in the city all support the production of the plan.

The main risk to Bristol City Council is that the Committee agree to the production of the tree planting plan for The Downs but the Neighbourhood Partnership put forward and approve a different park. This would put strain on the resources to produce the tree planting plans and deliver the community planting events. The feedback received to date from members of the Neighbourhood Partnership suggests that this will not be the case.

If this did happen, the production of both planting plans would take longer and the community tree planting events would be smaller scale than if a single site was selected for this Neighbourhood Partnership area.

Bristol City Council Officers will endeavour to ensure this does not happen, but it cannot be guaranteed.

Public Sector Equality Duties

8a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due

regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
- promote understanding.

- 8b) An equality impact assessment has not been carried out because there are no equality issues raised by this proposal. Equality issues will be address during the production of the tree planting plan by consultation with relevant parts of the community and officers within Bristol City Council, where necessary.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None

Financial

(a) Revenue

Future maintenance costs of the trees will be bourne by the Arboricultural Team. They have approved the production of the planting plan and the plan will have to meet with their approval before being finalised.

(b) Capital

The tree planting and events are paid for through TreeBristol and through business and private sponsorship.

Land

Not applicable

Personnel

Not applicable

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Methodology for producing a tree planting plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs

Appendix 2 - Photographs of past TreeBristol community tree planting events

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None

APPENDIX 1

Methodology for producing a tree planting plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs

Working with Richard Goldthorpe (who carried out the Landscape Character Assessment and wrote the first Management Plan) and the Downs Ranger, the TreeBristol will carry out the following:

- 1) A desk based historic appraisal using Know Your Place web maps and The Management Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs (2012 - 2017)
- 2) A site visit to carry out landscape character appraisal looking specifically at tree locations and species and their contribution to the overall landscape
- 3) Consultation with Bristol City Council officers to understand constraints on the site that might affect tree planting, such as sports, future projects, nature conservation etc.
- 3) The production of a short piece of text (based on research done in 1 and 2) that outlines the principles of tree planting and replacement in the park
- 4) Production of an annotated map with target notes, these will:
 - a) identify problems that trees are causing which would be solved either by them being removed and not replaced over time; or by them being removed and replaced by the same or a more appropriate species
 - b) identify opportunities for planting new trees and replanting when existing trees that make a positive contribution are lost
 - c) show the arrangement of trees, the category of trees in terms of small, medium, large species and offer a shortlist of suitable species.
- 6) Consultation with the Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge and other interested members of the local community to understand their aspirations for tree planting and replacement.
- 7) Production of a final plan which is an acceptable compromise between the community aspirations, the landscape character assessment for trees in the park and our ability to manage the trees.



treebristol
Planting trees in our city

