



## Bristol Tree Forum AGM - 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019

### Address by Cllr Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor (Communities)

Good evening everyone.

I am delighted to welcome members of Bristol Tree Forum to City Hall this evening for your Annual General Meeting and it is good to see so many members of the Forum in attendance.

Richard Ennion and I are going to do a bit of a double act this evening. I will set out our One City Ambitions as set out in our One City Plan and will hand over to Richard who will flesh out more of the detail on what I am about to say.

As you are aware, Bristol was the first authority in the UK to declare a Climate Emergency and as a city we are working towards reducing our contribution to and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

We have produced a Climate Emergency Action Plan which sets out what we're doing in response to the climate emergency. This action plan sets out our ambition to be a carbon neutral and climate resilient city by 2030, and lists a number of actions we are taking to get there.

This work will continue to develop, and we will all play a leading role in creating a One City Climate Strategy for Bristol. The One City Climate Strategy will bring together many city organisations and partners to create a joined-up, comprehensive plan for Bristol. This will complement the Climate Emergency Action Plan which focuses on our response as an individual organisation.

Planting trees is not just about responding to climate change we will increase our biodiversity and make many parts of the city an even more pleasant place to live. We need to also explore nature-based solutions for carbon filtration and atmospheric cooling.

### **Environmental Sustainability Board**

We have now established an [Environmental Sustainability Board](#) which will lead the development of a new Climate Strategy for Bristol.

Taking a collective approach to tackling shared challenges is not unique to this city, but our Mayor Marvin Rees and partners across the city have developed a One City Approach in order to use the collective power of Bristol's key organisations to make an even bigger impact.

Part of this has involved creating a shared plan. We know that city agencies and organisations have hundreds of plans and strategies in place, many of which only look to the next 3-5 years,



with few aligning with each other. If we want to tackle poor mental, poor housing, child poverty and indeed the climate emergency facing the planet, then we cannot look to the next three years and we cannot expect a single organisation to achieve this.

Bristol has developed a One City Plan and a new way of working to bring focus around our priorities - looking as far as 2050. In essence we are seeking to harness our collective power to benefit the whole of Bristol - with a focus on creating a more equal, inclusive and sustainable city.

Through this approach we are regularly coming together to assess progress and to ask for support when it is needed. There is a recognition that we all have a part to play in making the changes we want to see in our city, and there is a growing enthusiasm from all sorts of partners to get stuck in and do all they can.

It is using this approach that as a city we have set a target to increase tree canopy cover by 25% by 2030 and to double it by 2046.

We will be taking our ambitions for tree planting (One Tree Per Employee and Replant Bristol) to our Economic & Sustainable Development Boards and we also hope to present our ambitions to the City Gathering in January 2020, with something known as an offer and ask.

#### BCC commitment to produce a Bristol's City Council Urban Tree Strategy

Earlier this year (May 2019) the Cabinet agreed to produce a Bristol City Council Tree Strategy - The tree strategy will be a key way for BCC to set out how we wish to support tree planting and this work is currently being taken forward in the following ways:

- The Council has been engaging with Forest of Avon, Woodland Trust and the Bristol Tree Forum with regards to a new tree strategy that will set out a proposed way forward with regard to tree planting in the city and how this may be funded and delivered. The One City Plan's aspirations include very high numbers of new trees to be planted each year and this can only be achieved with a clear and logical approach to identifying suitable sites and identifying species, generating commitments from landowners, having sufficient capital funds to procure trees and a suitable vehicle / resource to engage the public and communities and carry out tree planting.
- The Strategy will set out the Council's approach to managing its tree stock appropriately - meeting its obligations with regard to heritage and important landscapes, maintaining a diverse age structure in our parks and in streets, acting when trees destroy and disturb important infrastructure or prevent public access and when they impact on public safety or the commercial potential of parks and green spaces. It is important that we give a clear message as to why we sometimes need to



remove trees and offer reassurance to residents and communities that we do this in a sensible, logical way and that we advise of our approach to compensatory planting.

- Initially the strategy will focus on council trees. It is hoped that as the One City approach matures the strategy can be expanded and incorporated into the city approach for delivering the tree canopy aspirations through the One City Plan Environment Board. We are keen to take a key role in the development of this plan.
- The tree strategy will of course be subject to a full public consultation

Cabinet also agreed to fund One Tree Per Child for a further 2-years from April 2020 - officers are in negotiation with a number of parties to extend this period via a sponsorship agreement - this is something that we could put forward as our offer and ask to the city? We will plant the trees, but we need the city to sponsor them.

In addition to One Tree per Child, the launch of One Tree Per Employee campaign gives the Council the opportunity to sign up to that pledge - we have just over 6,000 employees. By adopting the one city approach we will easily reach over 100k employees. This would result in us possibly meeting our overall target to double tree canopy cover sooner than 2046. The great thing about the OCP is that it is iterative, and targets/actions can be changed.

We could easily plant a few small woodlands to soak up these numbers or set out a more ambitious approach - planting new street trees for example -but as you may be aware the unit costs are much higher - at least £300 to plant and establish a street tree planted in a grass verge.

You will hear more about One Tree Per Employee and Replant Bristol from Heather Elgar from the Woodland Trust later on.

BCC has been part of a catalyst group (which includes the Woodland Trust, Bristol Tree Forum and Forest of Avon Trust) to champion a citywide approach to good tree care and tree planting [we secured funds from the Woodland Trust via the People's Postcode Lottery] and have developed a promotional 'Bristol's Urban Forest' brochure -which incorporates data on the benefits of Bristol's trees following the i-Tree survey which we co-funded last year. The brochure includes a number of ways people and organisations can get involved to help plant more trees.

So as you will see we are not resting on our laurels

I will now hand over to Richard who will talk more about BCC's tree planting programme for this winter - he also has an announcement to make regarding the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, but I will leave it to Richard to explain further.



Over to you Richard.