



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Department: Growth &
Neighbourhoods

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Dear Mr Schreibke

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the Tree Strategy which was presented to the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2015.

I have set out below your request for information and the Council's response to your questions.

1. The report outlines how many trees have been planted over the specified time frame. Can the officers please give some figures on how many trees and hedges have been felled in the same period, if possible with a break down of why the trees were felled?

We do not maintain records of the trees and hedges that are managed by the Council on highways and parks (including some public gardens and playing fields). On average approximately 12 mature trees are removed per year. We are not aware of any hedges having been removed in the past year on council land. This is a very small percentage of the total tree population.

Trees are removed for a variety of reasons and these include:

- Trees that have died, are in serious decline and considered to be a risk to the public;
- Trees which have been found, on inspection, to have extensive internal decay;
- Trees which have suffered structural failure in storm events; and
- Trees which have been directly implicated in major structural damage to adjacent structures (quite rare in Manchester).
- As part of a longer term tree or Green Flag management plan.

The Council occasionally undertake woodland management projects, which involve the thinning of plantation woodlands to allow the growth and future development of the better formed trees. This is a normal silvicultural practice and is an ongoing process that will carry on for generations.

2. How long has the Forest School project in Moston been active?

1 year.

3. Following on from that, has any funding been allocated to the roll out of this pilot, if not why is this sentence in the report?

No funding has been allocated, but it is hoped that good practice will be shared, with the onus on schools to take forward forest schools programmes independently. For example, The Wildlife Trust offer training sessions on forest schools development in Manchester. There was a training session on Tuesday 29th September at Bowker Vale Primary School in Crumpsall.

4. Page 4 of the report notes that 20,000 people have been engaged through a range of events. What were these events and how were participation numbers gathered?

These are conservative estimates based on known high profile events that were delivered, with figures based on estimated footfall and park management experience.

For example

- Manchester Tree party /Tree Athlon events, Heaton Park 2008 -11: average of 3,000 people per event, all hosted at Heaton Park.
- BBC Breathing Places Tree o'clock Event, December 2009: 4,000 people involved in citywide planting events and activities
- BBC Springwatch Festival Wythenshawe Park, June 2010: Estimated 2,000 people.
- Manchester Festival of Nature Heaton Park, September 2013: estimated 2000 people attending.
- Citywide tree related events: on average 10 people per event per year over 10 years = 1000 people attending.

5. How many schools received a Wild about Nature Handbook? and was there any follow up of how this book was used?

91 schools in the city have a copy /copies of the wildabout nature handbook.

The Eco-Schools News Bulletin is sent to Manchester schools and promotes the handbook every spring term to remind teachers to use it. Partner organisations may also have a copy, and can use it to engage schools to deliver outdoor activities. The handbook links to the biodiversity and school grounds themes in the Eco-Schools programme which is promoted nationally by Keep Britain Tidy /Eco-Schools.

6. What has been lost as a result of cutting the Tree Warden Network?

The Council is no longer able to coordinate and support the Tree Warden Network however, we are discussing with partner organisations the options are available in relation to progressing with a tree warden network.

7. Can the figures regarding tree canopy coverage please be clarified? On page 10 it is stated that the higher than average level of canopy cover in Manchester may be as a result of incomplete auditing across the country. Yet elsewhere in the finding that Manchester has a higher percentage of canopy cover is repeated without this caveat. Why is this the case?

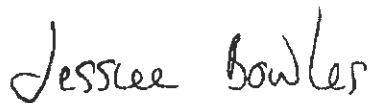
Manchester has got a higher than average tree cover, as illustrated in national comparisons (made in DCLG Trees and Towns 2 Feb 2008). However, the level of detail applied in the Manchester audit may not have been applied nationally, which may make some figures appear lower. Manchester still has higher than average tree cover, illustrated by using comparable Greater Manchester data sets e.g. an average of 20% in Manchester against an average 16.2% across Greater Manchester (Source: Red Rose Forest GMTA 2012).

8. The report notes that 60,000 new trees have been planted since 2006. What consideration has there been of the environmental impact of cutting down mature trees and replacing them with saplings?

Tree or woodland ecology is a complex subject with no short cuts and no guarantees of success. As such the City Council tries to only remove mature trees as a last resort. Many more mature trees fail naturally than are actively removed. Wherever possible, dead trees in parks and woodlands are made safe and then retained as 'standing dead wood'.

However, new trees must be planted to ensure the woodland 'veterans' of the future. Saplings (and forest transplants) are the traditional means used to extend existing woodlands and create new woodlands.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Bowles". The script is cursive and fluid.

Jessica Bowles
Head of Policy; Partnerships; Research

