

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 26 April 2022

Edinburgh Million Tree City Update

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All 43
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note:
 - 1.1.1 The successful launch event of the Edinburgh Million Tree City (EMTC) Project held at Lauriston Castle Gardens in October 2021;
 - 1.1.2 A recorded net increase of 24,332 trees in and around Edinburgh in 2021/22;
 - 1.1.3 Progress with the EMTC Project in determining planting locations and planting trees, and collating tree numbers;
 - 1.1.4 That Champion City status has been awarded to Edinburgh by the Queen's Green Canopy Initiative Committee to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022; and
 - 1.1.5 Regular EMTC Project updates will be provided on progress towards the Council's target of one million trees by 2030.

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Report

Edinburgh Million Tree City Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Edinburgh Million Tree City (EMTC) project and details progress with tree planting activities, procuring supplies, and establishing contacts with stakeholders and suppliers who wish to contribute to achieving the ambition to reach one million trees by 2030.
- 2.2 From October 2021 to March 2022, 25,230 trees were planted; however, 898 tree removals were recorded. This leaves a net increase in tree numbers of 24,332 (97% of the target of 25,000 trees for the period). It should be noted that the figure of 24,332 does not include any new trees planted by developers on private land.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting of [28 January 2020](#) Committee recognised the value that urban trees play in addressing the Climate Emergency and global biodiversity losses, supporting an ambition for Edinburgh to be a “Million Tree City” by 2030.
- 3.2 An update report was presented to Committee on [26 January 2021](#) noting the progress made in initiating the EMTC project, including a successful application to the Woodland Trust’s Emergency Tree Fund for £298,055 to support project delivery until December 2023.
- 3.3 Progress has been made in:
 - 3.3.1 Undertaking site visits;
 - 3.3.2 Identifying tree planting locations;
 - 3.3.3 Initiating a communications plan;
 - 3.3.4 Establishing existing tree numbers in parks and greenspaces;
 - 3.3.5 Identifying the means through which tree planting can be funded and encouraged across the city; and
 - 3.3.6 Ascertaining how we can more effectively monitor, record, and communicate tree planting data.
- 3.4 The Ash Dieback Action Plan has been produced and approved by [Committee](#). The impact of the significant loss of Ash trees in terms of numbers and loss of habitat will present an ongoing challenge to achieving the one million trees target by 2030.

Additional planting will need to be undertaken to mitigate the losses arising from Ash Dieback.

4. Main report

- 4.1 In February 2021, the EMTC Project Manager was appointed and an internal Project Board has been formed with representation from Council services including Parks and Greenspace, Planning, Roads and Transport, Facilities Management and Finance. The Board meets quarterly, receiving progress reports on project workstreams, focusing on planting proposals and plans, tree numbers, and finance.
- 4.2 A project delivery plan with supporting documentation to help manage and coordinate activities, record and schedule tree planting proposals, track progress and update on tree numbers has been prepared and is being implemented and further developed.
- 4.3 In May 2020, the Project Forum successfully reconvened and was well attended with representatives from various Council services, the Edinburgh Greenspace Forum, as well as attendees from the Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust, Forest Research, Forestry Commission Scotland, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, NatureScot, Scottish Wildlife Trust, The Conservation Volunteers, Trees of Edinburgh, and Woodland Trust Scotland.
- 4.4 It is proposed that a round table discussion takes place with partner organisations in the Spring 2022 to develop a Communications Plan for the project for the coming year(s).
- 4.5 Over the Summer and Autumn 2021 the Project Manager, along with the Forestry Service and Natural Heritage Service teams, visited potential tree planting locations in the Braid Hills, St. Katherine's Park, Burdiehouse Valley Park, Braidburn Valley Park, VAT Run Park South Queensferry, Gypsy Brae, Silverknowes Park, and Gyle Park. Friends of Parks groups have also been involved and are enthused by the project and contribute to design considerations and outcomes.
- 4.6 Designs for planting in these parks are in discussion with the Friends of Parks groups supported by officers where possible.
- 4.7 The official project launch event took place on 13 October 2021 at Lauriston Castle Gardens and the occasion and milestone was marked by planting of a Ginkgo tree (donated by Edinburgh Royal Botanical Gardens) by the Lord Provost with the Convenor of Culture and Communities Committee. After the planting ceremony, there was a guided tour of the gardens conducted by volunteers from the Friends of Lauriston Castle Gardens. A further Ginkgo tree was planted in the Lauriston Japanese Garden by the Chairman of the Friends Group.
- 4.8 Planting at Redford Wood, adjacent to Colinton Primary School, was completed by The Conservation Volunteers to coincide with the project launch. Also, a Wee Forest was planted at East Pilton Park by Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust with the help of local volunteers.

- 4.9 The planting of six Wee Forests has taken place this 2021/22 planting season, through partnership working with Earthwatch UK and Nature Scot, using the findings of the Edinburgh Nature Network to inform suitable locations. The locations are West Pilton and East Pilton Parks, Mount Vernon greenspace, Peacocktail Close greenspace, Colinton Mains Park, and Hailes Quarry Park.
- 4.10 In November 2021, the Council's Commercial and Procurement Service facilitated a conference on Community Benefits for contracted suppliers. An EMTC project presentation led to follow-up discussions with new suppliers to consider how they can support the project including, for example: monetary donations; sponsoring planting projects; or supplying trees, equipment, labour, and transport. Appendix 2 shows suppliers currently engaged.
- 4.11 Contacts have been established internally with Housing and Education and Children's Services to explore opportunities that progress tree planting proposals in residential and housing open space areas and in school grounds. Several schools have expressed interested in planting trees, namely Cramond Primary School, Boroughmuir High School, Gracemount High School, St Margaret's Primary School, and Clermiston Primary School, and these will be followed up over the course of the project.
- 4.12 Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of trees planted by locality and by land ownership. However, the target does not include tree planting by land developers as these numbers have yet to be captured.
- 4.13 A successful application was made for Queen's Green Canopy "Champion City" status to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. In early March 2022, a launch event was organised in partnership with Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and Trees for Cities. It was held at Stenhouse, in the greenspace on Broomhouse Drive adjacent to the Saughton Tram Station. The Council is grateful to the 53 adults and 26 children who generously volunteered to plant over 1,200 trees at the event.
- 4.14 As the project requires a contract for the supply of trees and equipment, a procurement service request was submitted in February 2021. The procurement process started in November 2021 and despite initial interest, some of the tender returns were not as expected. Further work will be required to develop contracts for the start of Autumn 2022.
- 4.15 The Planning service are looking at a process to extract tree planting proposals from Planning Applications from land developers. This will include tree removals as part of the development of land for construction as well as any increase in planting identified as conditions of Planning permission. A template has been created to begin capturing this information. Due to the pace of each development, it will be important to ensure that information about tree numbers is reported accurately. The information will allow future checks on completed developments to determine tree mortality rates.
- 4.16 Changes to tree numbers arising from tree work and development requiring consent within Conservation Areas is also being investigated.

- 4.17 A calculation of tree losses in 2021/22 is given in Appendix 1. The Forestry Service have removed 877 trees. These tree losses have been because of emergency storm damage (85 trees); Dutch elm disease (37); other pathogens, structural damage, death, etc. (512); and ash dieback (243).
- 4.18 Tree loss figures do not include tree numbers associated with planning applications or removals by private residents.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 With the EMTC Project officially launched, progress on a supply of trees contract and a host of tree planting locations identified, a significant step up in tree planting activities is planned for later in 2022 to build on the success of this first planting season (since the launch in October 2021).
- 5.2 The following actions during 2022 will see many more young trees appearing across parks, greenspaces and residential gardens across the city:
- 5.2.1 Develop a comprehensive Communications Plan for the project for this and subsequent years;
 - 5.2.2 Engage with contracted nurseries on supplies for tree planting programme for Autumn/Winter 2022;
 - 5.2.3 Arrange tree planting designs, stakeholder consultation, and community and volunteer involvement in tree planting activities;
 - 5.2.4 Establish contacts with external organisations, agencies, and land developers to increase tree planting on other land areas;
 - 5.2.5 Arrange a free-tree giveaway initiative for local communities and residents; and
 - 5.2.6 Undertake tree planting across the city.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The EMTC Project has a Woodland Trust grant award of £298,000. The funding is available until December 2023 and covers costs associated with project management and tree planting. Amongst the funding conditions, there is a requirement that the supply of trees be sourced from registered nurseries and promote planting of native tree species.
- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Environment Service budget currently has a revenue budget allocation of £120,000 to undertake tree planting.
- 6.3 The existing supply of trees framework contract covers provision of street trees. As the main tree planting requirement for EMTC Project shall be larger volumes of small trees, a new tree supply and ancillary items contract and specification was required, and the procurement process is underway. The conditions as set out in

the Woodland Trust funding agreement are covered in the contract specification. The new contract will be developed to be in place by Autumn 2022.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 All tree planting proposals relating to Council-owned land go through a stakeholder and community consultation process. Details of each proposal at design stage showing species selection, location, and protection equipment (e.g. fencing, stakes, etc) are shared at site meetings and circulated to all interested parties. Changes are made to reduce impact to residents and communities, i.e. by not planting too close to paths or boundaries, or by not planting on ground actively used for sport or recreation, etc.
- 7.2 Care is taken to ensure no infringement, encroachment, or damage to over ground or underground utilities cables and pipelines.
- 7.3 Residents, businesses, schools, and community groups (e.g. Friends of Parks groups, etc.) are encouraged to take part in tree planting opportunities and to look after newly planted trees in their neighbourhood.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Edinburgh Million Tree City](#) website.
- 8.2 [Woodland Trust](#) website.
- 8.3 Wee Forests – [Nature Scot](#) website and [EarthWatch Europe](#) website.
- 8.4 [Edinburgh Nature Networks](#) website.
- 8.5 [Queen's Green Canopy](#) website.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Tree numbers reported to EMTC Project 2021/22.
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – EMTC project donor engagement.

Appendix 1

Tree Numbers Reported to EMTC Project 2021/22

By Locality	Planted Trees	%
North West	18,872	75%
North East	792	3%
South East	1,325	5%
South West	3,241	13%
Pentlands	1,000	4%
Total	25,230	

By Land Ownership	Planted Trees	%
The City of Edinburgh Council		
Parks	4,791	19%
Cycleways	*	-
Open spaces or Housing	1,570	6%
Streets	347	1%
Schools	422	2%
Natural Heritage	4,647	18%
Other Land Owners/Managers		
Gardens and Church Grounds	-	-
Private Estates	13,400	53%
Residential Developers	*	-
Commercial Developers	*	-
Edinburgh Leisure Golf Courses	*	-
Edinburgh Leisure Centres	*	-
National Health Service	*	-
Universities and Colleges	53	0.2%
Golf Courses (Privately-owned)	*	-
Total	25,230	

Note: * tree numbers to be determined and confirmed.

Tree removals 2021/22

Trees removed by	Number removed
City of Edinburgh Council	877
University of Edinburgh	21
Total Removed	898
Net Increase in Trees	24,332

Net increase in numbers against annual target

Annual Target	Tree numbers	Difference against target
25,000	24,332	-668
	97%	3%

Appendix 2

EMTC Project Donor Engagement

Name	Business/Services Supplied
Kelly Bros	Transport - Roads Surfacing
Robertson Group	Construction - Housing
Azzurro Ltd	Interior Solutions - furniture
A C Whyte	Social Housing Refurbishment