



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 30 JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: THE QUEENS GREEN CANOPY- PLANT A TREE FOR THE JUBILEE

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform Council on the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) project which was launched on 17 May 2021.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section F (11) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to Parks, Open Spaces and Tree/Woodland management and maintenance.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council:-

- (i) notes the proposals for the Queen's Green Canopy project;**
- (ii) progress a compensatory tree planting programme as part of the Council's contribution to the project;**
- (iii) delegates authority to the Head of Direct Services in consultation with other Heads of Service to consider requests against a set of criteria from schools, communities, members of the public and other organisations for opportunities for avenues, copses, plaques and individual trees to be planted on Council property as set out in paragraph 3.4; and**
- (iv) considers the invitation to nominate an elected member or members to join the Steering Group to deliver the project.**

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 On 17 May 2021 the QGC project was launched <https://queensgreencanopy.org/> The project is a UK wide tree planting initiative created to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, by inviting people to Plant a Tree for the Jubilee. Communities and individuals will be

encouraged to plant trees from October 2021 when the tree planting season begins to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022.

- 3.2 Trees must be planted with care at the right time of year, in the right place and with suitable species. From October all planting projects can be uploaded onto an interactive map on the new QGC website so that everyone can share and inspire others as well as creating a green canopy of projects to cover the country.
- 3.3 The QGC is a not for profit initiative and money raised will benefit deprived areas and urban schools primarily through the QGC partner, Trees for Cities. The project also offers people the opportunity to commemorate loved ones through the donation of a Jubilee tree.
- 3.4 The planting of new trees may take the form of:
 - Individuals- planting trees on their private land
 - Corporates and businesses planting trees on their land and creating tree planting projects with employees
 - Platinum Jubilee Community Planting-projects for youth groups, community councils
 - A Platinum Jubilee Avenue of medium sized or large trees ideal for cities, large estates, new housing developments
 - A platinum Jubilee Copse on private land or land allocated by the Council
 - A Platinum school tree- all schools are encouraged to actively engage with the project, schools may apply for free saplings through the Woodland Trust on the QGSC website from July 2021. There is also an education hub on the website which provides materials for schools

The project aims to ensure that the organisation or individual planting the tree(s) is responsible for watering and caring for the trees as they grow.

- 3.5 The project is being led in Moray through the Lord Lieutenants of Moray and Banff respectively, with a Steering Group initially meeting on the day the project was launched consisting of the Lord Lieutenants, their deputies and representatives from the Council's Education, Planning and Lands and Parks Services. The Group is chaired by the Earl of Moray. The Group has invited the Council to consider whether an elected member(s) wish to be on the Group.
- 3.6 As the project has just been launched, awareness raising and establishing a network of contacts is being progressed to inform and develop Moray's approach to support the project. It is proposed that the Council's role is;
 - To act as a conduit for information and to raise awareness of the project through the Council's Communications team and a Communications and Engagement Plan.
 - To work with the Lord Lieutenants to set up a process for consideration of requests for planting on both public and private land. Requests on Council owned property will be scrutinised by Officers from Lands and Parks, Estates, Education and Planning against a set of criteria including amenity value, appropriateness of species, maintenance proposals, biodiversity

value. If the Council officers are not satisfied with the proposals, including for ongoing maintenance then the planting will not be supported.

- To progress proposals agreed at the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 25 February 2020 (para 14 of minute refers) for compensatory planting to be delivered to tie in with the timing for the QGC. This is funding which is secured from development proposals where trees have been felled and not compensated for on site or on another site and the Council has secured a commuted payment. The commuted payment sum covers the maintenance cost for the life time of the trees. It is proposed that £10,000 from this compensatory planting budget is ring fenced for long term maintenance of trees arising from the Queen's Green canopy project, to safeguard the Council from incurring additional cost arising from supporting this project. A List of sites agreed for compensatory planting is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- To encourage schools to get involved in the project.
- To support the Working Group in developing, co-ordinating and implementing proposals and to maximise the benefits of the project.
- To ensure the Lord Lieutenants proposal for a commemorative avenue of semi mature trees in Cooper Park is complimentary to other proposals for improving the Park and to consider other proposals for commemorative avenues. These are to be funded by individuals or communities at no cost to the Council. In the case of Cooper Park, a private individual has offered to pay for the avenue. It is important that the proposed location of the avenue, running north from Grant Lodge, compliments wider proposals for the Cultural Quarter project and the consultants who are being commissioned to prepare designs for Cooper Park will consider and advise upon this proposal. The community will be consulted on the proposed avenue as part of the consultation on Cooper Park.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The project supports the environmental aspirations of the Corporate Plan, with associated education and health benefits.

(b) Policy and Legal

The project supports the environmental aspirations of the Local Development Plan and supports the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

(c) Financial implications

The project requires that the individuals, groups or business who plant the tree(s) take responsibility for ongoing maintenance. This will be a key consideration in considering requests for tree planting and will be scrutinised by officers. Ring fencing an element of the compensatory planting budget to cover longer term maintenance costs safeguards the Council from incurring additional costs arising from this project.

The maintenance costs arising from the programme of compensatory planting is covered by the budget as the cost per hectare secured through the commuted sum reflects the cost of planting and maintenance for the lifetime of the trees.

(d) Risk Implications

Risk that trees are not maintained by those planting the trees and responsibility falling to the Council. This has been mitigated by the introduction of an application/ request process which will be scrutinised by officers and by ring fencing an element of the existing compensatory planting budget to cover longer term maintenance.

There is also a risk that uptake of the project is low if the Council do not support and help raise awareness of the project.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are staffing implications arising for Lands and Parks in particular and also implications for Education, Estates, Strategic Planning and Development and Communications Team. It is important that expectations are managed and that the Council plays a facilitation role, rather than leading on delivery of the project due to resource issues.

(f) Property

The QGC project is likely to result in tree planting on Council owned open spaces and school grounds.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The project will be inclusive in terms of including people of all ages and abilities in the planting and maintenance of trees. Planting will also be encouraged in areas of poor quality open spaces to improve amenity value for local residents.

(h) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Environmental and Commercial, the Head of Education Services, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, the Head of Financial Services, the Open Spaces Manager, the Estates Manager, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer, the Communities Service Manager, Kevin Pirie (Acting Quality Improvement Officer) and the Equalities Officer have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The QGC encourages individuals, communities and other organisations to “plant a tree for the Jubilee” as part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The delivery of the project in Moray is led by the Lord Lieutenants of Moray and Banff with support from the Council. It is proposed that the Council delivers a programme of compensatory tree planting as part of the project and acts as a conduit for information to support the project, including encouraging schools to get involved.

5.2 It is important that short and long term maintenance issues are addressed to ensure the longer term benefits of the project, with a process being set up to consider requests for tree planting on Council owned land as part of the project.

Authors of Report: Gary Templeton, Strategic Planning and Development Manager
James Hunter, Open Spaces Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: <http://spman.moray.gov.uk/MANComRepDraftSite/DevServLib/2021%2006%2030/Th e%20Queens%20Green%20Canopy.docx>