
Report to: Cabinet **Date:** 5th December 2013

Subject: The Mersey Forest Plan

Report of: Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential: No

Purpose/Summary

The purpose of this report is to request that Cabinet approves the refreshed Mersey Forest Plan, for policy purposes.

This can be downloaded by going to www.merseyforest.org.uk/plan

The Mersey Forest Plan provides the long term vision for the work of the team and the partnership. Delivery is through partnership working, including the seven local authorities, Natural England, the Forestry Commission, and the Environment Agency, as well as other public, private and community sector organisations. The partnership is coordinated by The Mersey Forest team.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet approves the Mersey Forest Plan as Council policy

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	/		
2	Jobs and Prosperity	/		
3	Environmental Sustainability	/		
4	Health and Well-Being	/		
5	Children and Young People	/		
6	Creating Safe Communities	/		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	/		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	/		

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The report is asking for the recommendation as the Council is one of the seven Local Authority Partners.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Cost

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications as a result of approving the Mersey Forest Plan.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal None	
Human Resources None	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

Not applicable.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT (FD 2624) has been consulted and notes the report indicates there are no direct financial implications..

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 2623) has been consulted and comments have been incorporated in the report

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No, the Mersey Forest Plan provides the Mersey Forest, and importantly it’s partners and the wider public with a clear direction over the next five years.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet

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Background Papers:
None

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In the early 1990s, 12 areas of England were chosen by Government to be the focus of long term tree planting programmes to improve their environment and benefit local communities. The largest of these designated “Community Forests” was named The Mersey Forest.”

In the Plan, the term “we” refers to the team and partners. The Plan has 20 overarching policies (under the headings Who, What, How and Why) and spatial policies (under the heading Where). Case studies highlight some of the major achievements to date.

The Mersey forest received over 1600 responses as a result of the consultation in early 2013. It will be refreshed every ten years, with any minor amendments made to an online version of the PDF attached with this report. It is accompanied by a 5 year Delivery Plan, which sets out monitoring and shorter-term activities. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually to allow consideration to be given to resource availability at the time.

Policy context

Achieving the ‘more from trees’ vision will provide many benefits. At the national level, there are key links are with the Government’s Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Plan incorporates the concept of green Infrastructure,— the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lie within and between our cities, towns and villages, which provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. Trees and woodlands are an important component of this.

Uses of the Plan by the team and partners

- To guide their work to achieve the ‘more from trees’ vision
- To develop funding bids for activity
- To demonstrate the importance of trees and woodlands to different agendas and partners
- To guide cross boundary working, in relation to local authorities’ duty to cooperate
- To contribute to planning in the local area
- To guide delivery of actions relating to trees and woodlands (or their functions) within Green Infrastructure Frameworks, Strategies and Plans.

Page 78 of The Mersey Forest Plan indicates the amount and location of indicative woodland cover appropriate for Sefton’s open spaces and landscape character areas, and opportunities for developing the Mersey Forest Plan objectives.