

# THE 6Ds & Highway Engineering Specifications

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## A Framework Used by the Streets Ahead Team

### (Amey and Sheffield City Council)

#### To Decide Whether or Not to Fell a Street Tree

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Since May, 2015, the Save Our Roadside Trees (formerly Save Our Rustlings Trees: SORT) Sheffield Tree Action Group has been requesting to have detail of how decisions to fell healthy, structurally sound trees are made.

When neither Sheffield City Council (SCC) nor Amey (the PFI contractor) would provide any information, SORT submitted a range of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. These can be found in Appendix 15 (pages 241 to 247) of the SORT letter dated **29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**.<sup>\*</sup> Further questions were also asked. None received a response that included answers or any of the information requested.

\* The SORT letter can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01> . It was in response to this that Amey quickly cobbled together a “*Streets Ahead Five Year Tree Management Strategy*” for highway trees. They back-dated it and made it public on **2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016**. It is NOT a tree strategy. In fact, it is a strategy in name only. However, Sheffield City Council have incorporated it “as is” in to the draught tree strategy that was finally released for public consultation on **30<sup>th</sup> September 2016**, after a wait of over fourteen months<sup>\*\*</sup>. Later, SCC and Amey presented it, as part of their defence, to the High Court of Justice.

The SORT letter, in its entirety, formed part of Nether Edge petition “hand-out” that was **DISTRIBUTED TO EVERY COUNCILLOR** in Sheffield by SCC’s John Turner (Democratic Services Legal and Governance Resources), on **1<sup>st</sup> February, 2016**, prior to the meeting of full Council on **3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016**, in Sheffield’s Town Hall. This was the meeting at which the Nether Edge Sheffield Tree Action Group presented their 6,295 plus signature petition.

<sup>\*\*</sup>For the first seven months (since the first “*bi monthly*” Highway Trees Advisory Forum [HTAF] meeting, on **23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015**), SCC didn’t even start work on a draught tree strategy. See:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/544#comment-544>

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/570#comment-570>

However, SCC had responded to some earlier FOI requests. On **6<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**, the following request was submitted to Sheffield City Council:

***“Under the FOI act, I request a copy of the risk assessment for the trees that are proposed to be felled on Rustlings Road please”.***

THE FOLLOWING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSE WAS RECEIVED:

*“From: FOI@sheffield.gov.uk*

*Subject: Response – Freedom of Information Request – Reference **FOI/423***

*Date: Wed, **22 Jul 2015***

*Dear xxxx*

*Re: Freedom of Information Request – Reference **FOI/423***

*Thank you for your recent request for information regarding Risk Assessments for the trees due to be felled on Rustlings Road, which we received on 06/07/2015.*

***Please find below, Sheffield City Council’s response to your request:***

*Dear xxxx*

***WE DO NOT CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT*** as part of our review of trees. ***We do however undertake an assessment of whether a tree meets any of the criteria for removal*** as outlined on the Council’s website I.e. Dangerous, Dead, Dying, Diseased, Damaging the road or pavement or Discrimination (causing extreme obstruction to pavements). Please note that 7 of the trees on Rustlings Road are damaging the footway to such an extent that we cannot rectify it using reasonably practical means and 1 further tree is diseased. As we have outlined in previous correspondence to you 3 of the trees may be able to remain in situ but this cannot be confirmed until we have excavated the footway.

*Kind Regards,*

***Streets Ahead Team”***

Source:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/206#comment-206>

On **18<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**, the following request (**FOI / 493**) was submitted to Sheffield City Council (see Appendix 23 of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016):

*“Under the FOI act, I request to see the **assessment criteria and completed assessments** that led to the decision to fell trees causing pavement ridging on Rustlings Road.”*

Mark Knight - Information Management Officer provided “answers” in a communication dated **7<sup>th</sup> August 2015** (see **Appendix 15**):

*“The assessment criteria are as set out on the Council’s website. Each of the trees on Rustlings Road was assessed against these criteria in order to reach a decision of the retention or felling of the tree. It would not be possible to extract the amount of information requested from our management information Systems within the timescales set out within the Freedom of Information Act.”*

This type of response is typical of the standard of response received by SORT. SORT searched the Council’s website long and hard, both before and after receiving the response. All that SORT could find that even remotely resembled “assessment criteria” was the 6Ds (The Council confirmed that the 6Ds are what they were referring to: see **Appendix 24**):

***“As part of the Streets Ahead approach to tree management we will therefore be removing and replacing those roadside trees that are:***

- *Dangerous*
- *Dead*
- *Dying*
- *Diseased*
- *Damaging the road or pavement*
- *Discrimination (Causing severe obstruction to pavements)*

*If a tree is dangerous, diseased, dead or dying then it will need to be replaced.*

***IF A TREE IS DAMAGING OR OBSTRUCTING WE WILL MAKE ALL REASONABLE PRACTICAL ATTEMPTS TO TRY AND RETAIN THIS TREE IN SITU*** by applying one or more of over 20 sensitive engineering solutions.

*If these cannot be applied then the tree will be replaced.”*

(Sheffield City Council, 2015c)

From previous experience, SORT expected such an inadequate response and submitted two more FOI requests (FOIs 563 & 564), in an attempt to help ensure that we would gain the information that we had hoped to receive in the FOI 493 response (see **Appendix 15**).

The only criteria used to assess “*pavement ridging*” that *Streets Ahead* appear to have and to use are the 6Ds (**Appendix 24**). In reality, this is a list to aid highway tree inspectors, but it has variously been described as: a “**framework**” (by Mr Symonds - Director of Amey, “*responsible for the improvement works across the city*”), a “**strategy**” (by Cllr Fox\* & Cllrs Dore<sup>†</sup> & Dunn<sup>\*\*</sup>); a “**maintenance strategy**” (by *Streets Ahead*), and a “**policy**” (by Cllr Fox and Cllrs Dunn & Dore).

<sup>†</sup> Cllr Julie Dore (Labour) is Leader of Sheffield City Council.

\*Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

\*\*Cllr Jayne Dunn (Labour) is Chair of Sheffield’s Green Commission, responsible for developing a 20 year strategy for management of Sheffield’s green infrastructure (Sheffield City Council, 2015b).

#### REFERENCES

Sheffield City Council, 2015b. *Sheffield Green Commission’s fifth public hearing*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sheffieldnewsroom.co.uk/sheffield-green-commissions-fifth-public-hearing/> [Accessed 8 June 2015].

Sheffield City Council, 2015c. *Roadside Trees*. [Online] Available at: [https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/report\\_request/plants/trees.html](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/report_request/plants/trees.html) [Accessed 15 August 2015].

The above information about FOI/493 is taken from pages 80 & 81 of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01>

Since **May 2015**, SORT and Sheffield Tree Action Groups have repeatedly attempted to get a definition of each of the 6Ds criteria, as even trees associated with the most minor damage to footways, edging and boundary walls are scheduled for felling for either being associated with damage &/or associated damage being classed as “discriminatory”. This is of particular concern as 73.8% of Sheffield’s highway trees were classed as mature when assessed in 2007 (25,877 trees) and most of those will be associated with such damage. Furthermore, SCC’s Head of Highway Maintenance (Steve Robinson) and the Deputy Leader of Sheffield City Council (Cllr Leigh Bramall) have stated that THE AMEY PFI CONTRACT PERMITS AMEY TO FELL 67.7% OF SHEFFIELD’S MATURE HIGHWAY TREES (half the highway tree population).

In 2012, Steve Robinson was interviewed for the December 2012 issue of Transportation Professional (a Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation publication). The publication stated (on page 12):

**“OVER THE FIRST FIVE YEARS** of the 25 year Streets Ahead deal...” AMEY will be: **“REPLACING HALF OF THE CITY’S 36,000 HIGHWAY TREES”**.

Reference:

The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, **2012**. *Transportation Professional*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.ciht.org.uk/download.cfm/docid/EAFEC96C-F341-455B-B811F1C627AC75AD> [Accessed 15 October 2015].

Clear written definitions for each of the 6Ds criteria have never been provided to the public, despite repeated requests. However, SCC were obliged to provide written definitions to the High Court of Justice (Queen’s Bench Division Administrative Court), earlier this year (2016), in the case of *R (Dillner) v Sheffield CC and Amey Hallam Highways Ltd*. Those definitions appeared in the Witness Statement (case ref: CO/613/2016) of David Caulfield\*, dated **29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016**. Numbered extracts from Mr Caulfield’s Witness Statement appear below.

\* In February 2016, David Caulfield was still SCC’s Director of Development Services: “responsible for highway related-matters”. However, in a Witness Statement to the Court of Appeal (Civil Division: case ref: C1/2016/1819), dated **15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016**, Simon Green (SCC’s Executive Director for the “Place” portfolio, to which the Planning and Highways departments report) informed:

**“MR CAULFIELD RECENTLY LEFT SCC TO TAKE UP A NEW POST”**.

THIS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICISED.

THE DISGRACED STEVE ROBINSON IS NOW AGAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR  
HIGHWAY TREES.

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/we-re-not-interested-sheffield-council-boss-caught-on-tape-slamming-residents-petition-1-7498593>

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listen-sheffield-council-sorry-after-highways-chief-s-views-on-tree-felling-recorded-1-7498357>

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/trees-new-council-chief-to-lead-sheffield-felling-confirmed-after-secret-recording-apology-1-7530838>

'Furious' residents slam plans to axe WWI memorial trees in Sheffield:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/furious-residents-slam-plans-to-axe-wwi-memorial-trees-in-sheffield-1-8254745>

'Urgent' campaign to save Sheffield war memorial trees”:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/urgent-campaign-to-save-sheffield-war-memorial-trees-1-8265367>

**37.**

As set out earlier, in 2006/7 an independent survey\* assessed the city's highway tree stock. **This survey found that over 75% of the city's 36,000 highway trees were nearing the end of their natural life** and only 5% of the trees were classed as being in the 'young' age group. The survey also indicated that approximately 10,000 of the city's highway trees required intervention and that if a programme of **sustainable** replacement didn't commence then a **catastrophic decline in tree numbers** would occur. **In 2011/12 Amey also undertook a survey of trees** for their own purposes. That does not exist as a standalone document. The survey data was collected on hand held devices and downloaded directly into Amey's "Confirm" system. I understand that the results of it generally aligned with the Council's earlier survey.

**38.**

Trees are assessed to see whether they fail one of six criteria namely: Dangerous, Dead, Diseased, Dying, Damaging or Discriminatory. **These criteria are known as the "6Ds".** [...]

**42**

**The following definitions are applied to each of the "6Ds".**

**43**

**Dangerous** means that the tree is **assessed** as having a **structural fault** that means it is **likely** to fall or fail. The faults could arise from internal decay, root instability, rot, or leaning trunk leading to potential instability. Also, there could be decay of the tree trunk or cavity which means that there is evidence of internal decay, split stem or trunk split.

**44.**

**Dead** means the tree has been **assessed** by Amey **and subsequently verified** by tree surveyors from the Council as being dead and therefore **likely to fall** into the road or on to private property.

\* "Sheffield City Highways Tree Survey 2006 – 2007" was commissioned by an asset management company contracted by SCC (Chris Britten Ltd); it was undertaken by Elliott Consultancy Ltd. A document was provided to the High Court of Justice, as part of Mr Caulfield's evidence [Exhibit DC1]. It was not until **15<sup>th</sup> July 2016** that Sheffield City Council permitted a member of the public to see this document, although access to it had been requested on multiple occasions previously. You can access the document using this link:

[https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Elliott\\_SCC\\_Highway%20Tree%20Survey%202006-07.pdf](https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Elliott_SCC_Highway%20Tree%20Survey%202006-07.pdf)

**45.**

**Diseased** means the tree has been **assessed by a qualified arboriculturalist** as having a specific and identified disease that will lead to the tree dying in a relatively short period of time. **A risk based approach** can be adopted towards diseased trees depending on the impact the disease will have on the tree. Safety will always be a primary factor. Examples can include fruiting body (chicken of the woods) on oak trees which have been weakened by fungus.

**46.**

**Dying** means that the tree is **assessed** by Amey **and verified** by tree surveyors from the Council as dying as a result of for example a vehicle strike or suffering from disease.

**47.**

**Damaging** means that the tree is **assessed** by Amey **and verified** by surveyors and highway engineers from the Council as **significantly damaging** a footway, the road surface, underground cables or pipes, private property or pushing out kerbs into the road. Examples can include kerb displacement in to the highway causing a hazard to motorists and cyclists and pavement trip hazards. It must also be the case that the damage must be such that it cannot be rectified by using reasonably practicable engineering solutions such as flexible paving materials, root removal, raising the footway levels, or thinner and smaller kerbs.

**48.**

**Discriminatory** means that the tree is **assessed** by Amey **and verified independently** by officers of the Council as **obstructing the footway in such a way to prevent reasonable usage** of it by all footway users including the disabled, the visually impaired and parents with pushchairs. Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency) guidance is generally followed regarding the minimum width of footway. Where there are physical constraints such as trees, then **1500 mm is regarded as the minimum acceptable width under most circumstances. The absolute minimum is 1000 mm clear space** measured at all points from footway level to 2.3 m above footway level.

At the inaugural *Highway Trees Advisory Forum* (HTAF) meeting, on **23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015**, on the process of how trees are assessed and what happens after Amey have made their recommendations, SCC's Head of Highway Maintenance (**Mr Steve Robinson**) stated:

*"...those recommendations are then made to the Council tree experts who then independently verify that recommendation. The Council has the final say on any treatment of a tree. Those decisions are made at a corporate level rather than independent – at the individual. **SO, THERE IS A DETAILED PROCESS THROUGH WHICH DECISIONS ARE MADE, ULTIMATELY ENDING WITH ME.**"*

*"So, why the 6D's then?" [...] "We had a survey carried out by an independent firm in 2006/2007 that identified that there was **10,000 trees** - that's out of a highway tree stock of 36,000 - that **required some type of intervention**, and they **recommended that there was a process of sustainable replacement**. So, **in light of that, the Council, as part of its application to Government for the Streets Ahead project, received funding to manage the city's highway tree stock**. It also seeks to repair the city's infrastructure..."*

*So, we believe that the Streets Ahead project offers a unique opportunity to manage, maintain and replace trees, and... So, our underinvestment and underfunding left us with a number of **DEAD, DYING AND DANGEROUS** trees. Some of you would be surprised that **there were 1,200 trees that were within that category**. So, **AMEY IDENTIFIED THOSE TREES AND ADDRESSED THOSE FIRST.**"*

*"So, just to give you a summary of where we are today, **there's been 2,563 highway trees removed because they met one of the 6Ds and there was NO OTHER RECTIFICATION that we could carry out**. Each tree that is taken out is replaced on a one-for-one basis."*

*"**Our next priority is to improve the condition of our roads and pavements. So, in other words, deal with the DAMAGING trees – those trees that are damaging kerbs, pavements and drains.**"*

*"So, we're now looking to deal with **DISCRIMINATORY** trees, which is the final 6th D, and those are trees that block the pavements, affecting those people that have mobility issues."*

Continued...

*“The other three Ds - **Diseased, Damaging and Discriminatory** – there is a degree or, erm, of judgement to be taken on it. That word was used earlier. So, **JUST BECAUSE A TREE IS DISEASED DOESN’T MEAN TO SAY THAT THAT TREE NEEDS TO BE REPLACED.** It is the type of disease, the effect that disease will have on the tree’s life, err, whether it turns out to be dangerous, so on and so forth, and those judgements are made by tree people. Err, Darren has alluded to those tree people earlier on.*

*Erm, **those tree people make no account of profit or cost**, so those factors do not come in to play. **These are tree people who used to work for the Council. They have the same mind-set, now that they have their budget to look after their trees.***

*In terms of damaging, yes, again, there is a degree of judgement and, erm, and, you know, if something can be done, **IF AN ENGINEERING SOLUTION CAN BE APPLIED, THEN IT WILL BE APPLIED.** Err, there was a lots [sic] of comment made earlier on about whether a tree is removed as a last resort; and a tree is removed as a **LAST** resort. And, finally, on discriminatory, again, yes, there is some judgement to be applied that, err, if a tree is restricting the width of a footpath beyond, err, nationally and recognised guidelines, then that tree is discriminatory and, err, will be removed. So there are degrees of judgement, and there are others where there’s a zero tolerance.”*

At the second “*bi-monthly*” HTAF meeting (the most recent one: the last?), on **2<sup>nd</sup> September**, 2015 Steve Robinson gave a presentation about each of these options. He stated:

*“We are replacing about **70% of the City’s footways over the first five years.** We have a duty to consider equalities. Now, in the past, existing **TRIP HAZARDS** have been left, and the Council has a defence under the Highways Act - **section 58 defence under the Highways Act** – of not having sufficient funding to deal with all those defects. It now can’t have that defence because it has **funding of £2.2bn** on the PFI project. So we must take in to account the consideration of the Equalities [sic] Act.”*

**“THE ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS ARE ONLY APPLICABLE TO THOSE TREES THAT ARE CATEGORISED AS DAMAGING.**

[...]

*The engineering and tree-based solutions come at **no extra cost to the Council.** So, **the tax-payer does not pay if an engineering solution or a tree-based solution can be applied,** and the reason for that is that the Streets Ahead project is a highway maintenance project and engineering and tree-based solutions are highway maintenance solutions. The other **non-engineering solutions** involve changes to the highway. So, these are solutions such as introducing build-outs in to the carriageway. Those solutions would **require additional funding**, which is currently not available... They would require Traffic Orders...”*

*“Item three is the one that we use most regularly, which is ramping or re-profiling of footway. Erm, this happens, erm, where there are slight deviations in the footway, such as an upstand in the footway of less than 20mm – which is regarded as a trip hazard. Erm, **national guidance on trip hazards** is that a trip is considered to be a hazard if it is somewhere between twenty and **twenty-five millimetres**. Some authorities, such as Westminster, consider a trip hazard to be 15mm, but we, **we use**, err, 20mm ordinarily but, if you add a 5mm tolerance on here to **twenty-five**. There is further assessment **even if the trip hazard is greater than 25mm**, in where is the trip hazard. So, if the trip hazard is at the side of a footway, in other words, where it’s less likely to be walked on, **we may well leave that hazard in place after a RISK ASSESSMENT is done.**”*

The above quotes, from speeches by Steve Robinson, are taken from the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01>

**Extracts From Cllr Fox's Speech, as  
Cabinet Member For Environment & Transport, at  
The Meeting of Full Council: 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015**

*"And it's also welcoming, Lord Mayor, that, as decision-makers in this Town Hall, we have our policies and procedures to scrutinise not by only by us in this place but scrutinised by the public..."*

***We had an independent survey done in 2006-2007 which HELPS US INFORM OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FORMATION OF THE CONTRACT...***

***THE PROCESS IS THAT AMEY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL about which trees, in their expert opinion, should be removed by the highway, and in which categories.***

***THE COUNCIL WILL THEN ASSESS EACH INDIVIDUAL TREE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEN MAKE A DECISION ABOUT WHETHER THAT TREE SHOULD BE FELLED OR NOT.***

*Lord Mayor, sometimes **WHEN WE** plant and **PLANE THE TOPS**, WE IDENTIFY THAT WE HAVE ROOT PROBLEMS OR NOT, is if we have not then we obviously do not take that tree. **TAKING THE TREE IS THE LAST RESORT**, Lord Mayor.*

***THE SHEFFIELD HIGHWAY TREE STRATEGY CONSISTS OF THE SIX D's: dangerous; dead, dying, diseased, damaging and discriminatory.***

*By incident, Lord Mayor, if I may, on to Rustlings Road. There are over thirty trees on Rustlings Road. ... Out of the eleven that have been identified to be felled, three have been noticed, and that **ONCE WE DIG UP THE PAVEMENT, as I say, ONCE WE TAKE THAT PLANING OFF, IF THEY CAN BE RETAINED, THEY WILL.***

*I have said on numerous occasions that **ONCE AMEY DESIGNATE THE TREES THEY WANT TO FELL, THE COUNCIL GO AND DO THEIR INDEPENDENT CHECKS.** Lord Mayor, **ANY FELLING OF A TREE IS A LAST RESORT.***

*Other, not only cities in England, in Britain, but in Europe are watching how we manage this, Lord Mayor, and I've to do that; we have to take everybody with us.*

Continued...

*As I say, I believe, Lord Mayor, because this is such a delicate and in-depth debate, I've suggested the Council will endorse an Highways Tree Forum, where, as we have already heard, so **MANY BIG ISSUES NEED TO BE TALKED THROUGH** and, also, we are we are not – we are not – able to drive, forget the pun.*

**OUR POLICY IS STILL THAT WE WANT TO CROSS-CHECK THEM**, not only with methods in this place, but WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS AND LOCAL CONSERVATION GROUPS.

*Lord Mayor, I'D LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THESE, ERR, CAMPAIGNERS, RESIDENTS AND PEOPLE who feel very strongly about our city, BECAUSE WITHOUT THEM, Lord Mayor, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DELIVER OUR PROJECTS together."*

Source:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/177#comment-177>

<https://ianswalkonthewildside.wordpress.com/2015/07/16/update-on-sheffield-street-tree-issues/>

## **The Streets Ahead Engineering Options**

The information below is taken from Appendix 17 (pages 265 to 266) of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01> . SORT had copied & pasted it direct from a document supplied, via e-mail, by SCC (Mark Knight: Information Management Officer), on **20<sup>th</sup> August, 2015**, in response to a Freedom of Information request (Reference **422**), submitted by SORT on **6<sup>th</sup> July, 2015** (for ease of reading, the spacing between lines has been increased):

*"Under the FOI act, I request the **specifications for the range of options** that were considered and deemed to be impracticable, for the 11 healthy trees due for felling on Rustlings Road."*

Continued...

## **Streets Ahead engineering options**

### **Sensitive Engineering Solutions**

1. Installation of thinner profile kerbs
2. Excavation of footways for physical root examination prior to an ultimate decision being made on removal
3. Ramping / Re-profiling of footway levels over roots (within acceptable deviation levels).
4. Flexible paving/ surfacing solution
5. Removal of displaced kerbs leaving a gap in the channel

### **Tree based options**

6. Root pruning
7. Root Shaving
8. Root Barriers and Root guidance panels
9. Excavation beneath the roots damaging the footway
10. Tree Growth Retardant
11. Creation of larger tree pits around existing trees
12. Heavy tree crown reduction / pollarding to stunt tree growth.
13. Retain dead, dying, dangerous and diseased highway trees for their habitat value

### **Other non-engineering solutions**

14. Line markings on the carriageway to delineate where it is not safe to drive or park
  15. Building out kerb line into carriageway
  16. Footpath Deviation around the tree
  17. Installation of a Geo-grid under the footway to reduce reflective cracking
  18. Reconstruction of the path using loose fill material rather than a sealed surface
  19. Filling in of pavement cracks
  20. Reduce the road width and widen the footways as well as converting them to grass verges
  21. Close a road to traffic
  22. Change to contract specification to leave the footways as they are without carrying out any repairs and removing trip hazards
  23. Abandonment of the existing footway in favour of construction of a new footway elsewhere
  24. Permanent closure of footways to pedestrians. Dig up and replace as grass verges.
  25. Seeking the views of residents about removal where that is considered by the Council to be the only option and getting the residents to sign a legal agreement regarding accepting liabilities regarding accepting liabilities
-

Since May 2015, the SORT group have repeatedly requested to see the alternative highway engineering specifications that are supposed to be considered for use as a means to protect and retain mature trees when undertaking works in close proximity to them.

At the meeting of full Council, on **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015** (when SORT presented the >10,000 signature petition), the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (Cllr Terry Fox: Labour) read out a list of twenty ideas that he referred to as “*engineering solutions*”. The list followed a month during which SCC & Amey requested that the public submit alternative highway engineering specifications for them to consider.

Because SORT did not receive the information requested, an FOI request was submitted (**FOI / 422**), on **6<sup>th</sup> July 2015**:

*“Under the FOI act, I request the **SPECIFICATIONS for the range of options** that were considered and deemed to be impracticable, for the 11 healthy trees due for felling on Rustlings Road.”*

A response was received on **20<sup>th</sup> August 2015**. It consisted of the list of ideas that Cllr Fox had read out previously, plus five additional ideas, but **no engineering specifications**. The list of 25 “*solutions*” can be found in Appendix 17 of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (pages 265 & 266). It also appears in the Amey 5yr document that is being incorporated in to the tree strategy.

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/205#comment-205>

Because the engineering specifications requested by SORT had not been supplied, FOI / 422 was referred to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). On **19<sup>th</sup> February 2016**, the ICO revealed that, over three years in to the £2.2bn, city-wide “*Streets Ahead*” highway maintenance project, **no alternative highway engineering specifications for footway or kerb construction, etc. have ever been commissioned or draughted by Amey or SCC**. Excerpts from the Information Commissioner’s conclusions can be accessed via the following links:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/693#comment-693>

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/690#comment-690>

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/435#comment-435>

## **The Response from the Information Commissioner, Following Investigation of the Response to FOI/422**

From: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

To: Xxxx

Subject: FS50596905 ICO complaint against Sheffield City Council [Ref. FS50596905]

Date: Fri, 19 Feb 2016 14:29:53 +0000

**19 February 2016**

**Case Reference Number FS50596905**

Dear Xxxx

Further to our previous correspondence, I write to inform you that my investigation into Sheffield City Council's ("the council") handling of your information request is now concluded.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 give the public the right to request information which is held at the time of the request. Under the Acts, public authorities are not obliged to create new information to fulfil the request.

**When investigating cases where a public authority claims information is not held, the Commissioner will decide whether this is correct based on the balance of probabilities.** He will consider the adequacy of the public authority's search for information and its responses explaining why such information is/is not held.

The council confirmed there is no statutory requirement to document a decision to fell a tree and also explained that the decision making process involved verbal discussions at ground level which were noted and recorded in the form of the table provided on 18 February 2016. **The council also liaised with the relevant staff, at the request of the ICO, and confirmed that *"they have been unable to locate any relevant information through email/file searches and consideration of manual records"*.**

The council also provided an explanation of how the decision is made to fell individual trees and why no further information is recorded from this.

**ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY/LACK OF SUITABILITY FOR ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS IS MADE DURING A "WALK AND BUILD" PROCESS BY AMEY.** This is a joint inspection between a highway engineer and an arboricultural surveyor.

Continued...

The team carrying out this “*walk and build*” hold detailed discussions at site level, considering and debating any and all potential engineering solutions which may be utilised to retain each specific tree, considering the council’s legislative requirements, inclusive mobility and how they can construct the new road surface, however **THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION IS NOT RECORDED**. The council’s own highway engineers then also assess Amey’s findings on site and explore whether there are any reasonably practicable alternative solutions prior to giving any approval to replace a tree. These findings are then uploaded and recorded in the table provided to you on 18 February 2016.

The Commissioner considers that in this case, **NO FURTHER INFORMATION IS HELD BEYOND THE LIST OF 25 OPTIONS**, provided in response to your initial request, and the table titled ‘*Tree removals Rustlings Road*’ provided recently.

**THE COMMISSIONER DOES HOWEVER NOTE THAT THE COUNCIL DID NOT MAKE CLEAR THAT THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION REQUESTED WAS NOT HELD**

and that the list provided was in terms of relevant associated information to aid your request. As such, the council has breached regulation 14 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 by not providing an adequate refusal notice citing exception 12(4)(a) “*it does not hold that information when an applicant’s request is received*”.

The request should have been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 which is the appropriate legislation regarding the public’s right to request information on the environment.

I have raised these issues with the council’s Information Team and will be recording them as part of our ongoing monitoring of public authorities. A decision notice is not required for the ICO to use this information in our intelligence gathering.

As **THE COUNCIL HAS NOW CONFIRMED TO YOU THAT NO INFORMATION IS HELD WITHIN THE SCOPE OF YOUR REQUEST** and has provided you with information related to your request (but not strictly within the scope of the request), the Commissioner proposes to close the case without issuing a decision notice.

Should you wish to challenge the Commissioner’s decision at the First-Tier Tribunal a decision notice would be required. Please notify me within 10 working days, that is by 4 March 2016, if you require a decision notice. If I do not hear from you within this timeframe, I will assume the case may be closed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this case further.

Continued...

Kind regards,

**Victoria Parkinson**

**Case Officer – Improving Practice**

**01625 545 817**

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The table referred to in the above e-mail - '*Tree removals Rustlings Road*' - was attached to the following e-mail communication from SCC's Information Management Officer (Mark Knight: the same man that had provided the FOI/422 response and subsequently undertook an internal review of the response that he had provided):

From: [FOI@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@sheffield.gov.uk)

To: Xxxx

CC: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

Subject: Information Disclosure in reference to FOI 422 (ICO reference FS50596905)

Date: Wed, 17 Feb 2016 16:50:59 +0000

Dear Xxxx, (ICO copy for reference)

As you will be aware the Council has been in dialogue with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in regard to your request for information.

In discussion with the ICO it has been considered that the attached information may be of relevance to your initial enquiries and could have been considered for disclosure within our initial response under our duty to assist a requestor. **The reasons for felling the trees on Rustlings Road as held at the time of your initial request (11 trees) is attached.** Please note that subsequent to this initial record 3 of these trees have been retained by engineering solutions in the interim period between this document being published and present day. Consequently there are only 8 trees currently due to be removed on Rustlings Road.

This document details the physical site constraints preventing engineering solutions being practicable for tree retention in each case, it does not however identify the "range of options that were considered and deemed to be impracticable" as you specifically requested.

Continued...

The Council would like to take this opportunity to note specifically that the options considered instead of felling each of these individuals trees is not (and would not be) recorded, therefore there is no information held in respect to your initial request. As there is no relevant information held it meets the terms of exception 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

We initially provided the list of engineering options to highlight the considerations that would be made at the time of initial review of the trees in order to aid you as a requestor. There is no record to note the considerations of these options for these specific trees, i.e. we do not hold any specific record of the review, consideration and ultimate non-application of these solutions from this time; as there would be little value in the retention of such information in the management of an extensive number of highway trees.

I hope this additional response aids your enquiries.

Kind regards

Mark

**Mark Knight**

Information Management Officer  
Information and Knowledge Management  
Business Change & Information Solutions (BCIS)  
Sheffield City Council  
PO Box 1283 Sheffield S1 1UJ  
[www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

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It should be noted that at the time of the above response, NO trees on Rustlings Road had been "*retained by engineering solutions*". In fact, no resurfacing or edging works had begun on that road. To date (1<sup>st</sup> December 2016), resurfacing works on Rustlings Road have not begun. Some kerb edging has been replaced. This happened prior to tree felling. The Table referred to by the ICO, was attached to the e-mail from Mark Knight (dated 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016). It is reproduced, below.

## The 'Tree removals Rustlings Road' Table

12007339	TR: Felling (Armillaria)	Poor physiological condition, crown dieback consistent with Armillaria mellea infection	432819.16	385687.56	o/s park opp Ranby Rd	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Acer pseudoplatanus	Decay	Replant in same position as previous tree	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017102	TR: Felling	Kerbs missing, unable to reinstall - buttress root immediately in way	432246.82	385846.05	o/s 189	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in existing pit	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017108	TR: Felling	Kerbs loose and missing, cannot relay, f/w uplifted	432490.06	385813.14	o/s 131	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in new 800 pit in same place	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017098	TR: Felling	Kerbs pushed out alignment by buttress root directly behind	432187.84	385849.12	o/s 203	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in same pit	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017110	TR: Felling	Kerbs missing, cannot replace without significant root damage	432516.08	385802.17	o/s 125	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in new 800 pit in same place	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017106	TR: Felling	F/W uplifted and kerbs tipped - cannot repair, roots in way	432385.97	385844.54	o/s 155	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in new 800 pit in same place	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017104	TR: Felling	Kerbs broken - cannot replace due to buttress roots in way	432307.47	385851.51	o/s 175	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in new 800 pit in same place	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017112	TR: Felling	Kerbs displaced, cannot replace without significant root damage	432530.7	385795.94	o/s 121A	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in new 800 pit in same place	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12014214	TR: Felling	Stem in carriageway at 1.5m only, previously struck; obstruction.	432141.98	385859.83	o/s park nr crossing	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Alnus glutinosa	Carriageway Obstruction	Plant Tilia in existing pit, same place.	Tilia cordata X mongolica 'Har
12017114	TR: Felling-	Extensive f/w uplift and kerb displacement	432922.19	385661.09	Adj junction Ecy Rd, by bus stop at	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in same position in new 800 pit	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'
12017116	TR: Felling-	Large buttress root in f/w above tarmac - will be severed upon reconstruction	432884.84	385665.71	opp 25	RUSTLINGS ROAD	Tilia x europea	Damage to Surface	Plant in verge in same position	Tilia cordata 'Rancho'

**PREVIOUSLY... FALSE ASSURANCES FROM STREETS AHEAD TEAM (SCC & AMEY)**

**From:** streetsahead <[streetsahead@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:streetsahead@sheffield.gov.uk)>

**To:** XXX

**Sent:** Friday, **1 MAY 2015**, 15:20

**Subject:** FW: Tree felling Rustlings Road S11 XXX

Dear XXX

Thank you for your email dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 regarding Tree felling Rustlings Road.

We have checked our records: on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 we spoke to XXX advising twelve out of thirty trees on Rustlings Road are scheduled to be removed and replaced prior to the road improvement works.

**ELEVEN OF THESE TREES ARE CAUSING DAMAGE TO THE SURROUNDING STRUCTURES WHICH CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY REPAIRED WITHOUT CAUSING IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO THEIR ROOTS.**

[...]

**AMEY RECOMMENDED** the twelve trees to Sheffield City Council for removal and replacement for the reasons stated. **THE COUNCIL HAVE AGREED AND GIVEN APPROVAL.**

[...]

XXX asked if this was the only option we had to remove the trees, and was advised that **WE HAVE LOOKED INTO EVERY OPTION** and we FEEL that removal is the best solution. However we will replace each tree that is removed will be replaced. XXX thanked us for the information and getting back to him.

Follow us on twitter @sccstreetsahead

Yours sincerely  
Customer Services

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There is further comment on the felling planned for Rustlings Road in Appendix 25 (pages 328 to 322) of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016. **In light of the above content, it is strongly recommended that you read the letters that follow.**

SIMON GREEN (SCC's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR for PLACE)

&

THE DEATH OF

SOUTH YORKSHIRE COMMUNITY FOREST

## **Closure of the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership –**

### **SYFP Partners Briefing October 2016**

*“Also for SYFP one of the biggest challenges has been **THE LACK OF ANY STRATEGIC WORKING CONTEXT FROM WITHIN COUNCIL, IN OUR CASE THE PLACE DIRECTORATE, AND SPECIFICALLY IN RESPECT TO the Key challenges for SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING and projects.***

*My immediate colleagues Maria Duffy former acting Head of Planning and Mike Hayden former Head of Planning did try to support SYFP through their line management role but MY VERY STRONG IMPRESSION IS THAT **THERE HAS BEEN NO POSITIVE FEEDBACK OR INTEREST FROM MORE SENIOR OFFICERS TO BUSINESS PLANNING OR OTHER INITIATIVES I HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO TRY AND CREATE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE** for the organisation. THIS INCLUDES THE SUCCESSFUL WORK THAT WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN ON LOW CARBON AND RENEWABLES with SME's through our ERDF Technical Assistance Project.”*

*“Looking back on the performance of Place in respect to the environment the demise of Sustainable City Service under the former leadership of Andy Nolan appears to have been the beginning of a severe decline and deskilling. The Place Capital Delivery Service lead for renewable energy has recently left the Council with no replacement and the team also no longer exists.*

*There is also **NO COMMITTED RESOURCE FOR THE GREEN COMMISSION AND NO DELIVERY STRATEGY IN PLACE. ALL CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR SHEFFIELD HAS BEEN ERODED AT AN ALARMING RATE** and although austerity is a factor lack of proactive positive management is a more fundamental problem.”*

Continued...

*“During my year in post I have tried to promote a renewed focus on the **LOW CARBON AGENDA THROUGH** developing projects that link to **TREE PLANTING, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**. This is increasingly recognised as one of the key urgent responses to climate change and fundamentally for the Community Forest Network, necessitates significant investment in new woodland and forestry planting.*

*For Sheffield specifically the potential for **A JOINED UP RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST TREE FELLING AND REPLACEMENT** should have also created an additional opportunity for SYFP to work with SCC on tree planting. **THIS IS ANOTHER LOST OPPORTUNITY**.*

*The outcome of the **PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS** and its **NEW TARGETS FOR CARBON REDUCTION** is already starting to influence Government policy making and regional responses will be required to step up to the challenge.*

*Sadly, the SCR response and **MY RECENT EXPERIENCES AT SCC DO NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE THAT A WELL-INFORMED RESPONSE IS IN PROCESS LOCALLY**. This has to be compared with some of the other city regions and core cities which are illustrating much more positive and informed leadership.*

*Johanna Mawson, Director South Yorkshire Forest, **29<sup>th</sup> October 2016**”*

Source:

<https://ianswalkonthewildside.wordpress.com/2016/11/03/the-end-of-an-era-closure-of-the-south-yorkshire-forest-partnership-syfp/>

“THE ARBORICULTURAL ASSOCIATION COMMENT ON THE HANDLING OF THE FELLING OF TREES ON RUSTLINGS ROAD AND THE COUNCIL'S TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY.”

**“Street Trees in Rustlings Road, Sheffield**

Last Updated: **24/11/2016**

*The Council have a legal responsibility to remove trees which are in a seriously diseased or dangerous condition. The removal of trees which are not dangerous but are merely seen to be “damaging” (to the pavement or nearby walls) or “discriminatory” (causing alleged obstruction to people with visual or physical impairments) has to be questioned. **WE WOULD HOPE THAT ALL ALTERNATIVES TO REMOVAL WOULD HAVE BEEN FULLY CONSIDERED AND EXPLAINED TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS BEFORE ANY ACTION WAS TAKEN.***

**FURTHERMORE, WE REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNCILS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ANYONE WITH TREES UNDER THEIR STEWARDSHIP TO STRIVE FOR AND ADVOCATE THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TREES,** as well as highlighting the need for clear lines of communication and collaboration between all relevant parties before such crucial decisions are made.”

Source:

<http://www.trees.org.uk/News-Blog/News/Street-Trees-in-Rustlings-Road,-Sheffield>

“ABOUT US:

**AS THE LEADING VOICE ON ALL MATTERS ARBORICULTURAL IN THE UK,** the AA provides a home and membership for all those employed within the sector; **CHAMPIONING THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TREES** in places where people live work and play – **FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY.**

*We provide the standards, training, support and recognition that put our members - in the UK and overseas - at the peak of their profession.”*

Source:

<http://www.trees.org.uk/About-Us>

PREVIOUSLY...

*“...we are unable to comment on **Sheffield** in any specific way, but... **WE ARE ...CONCERNED AT THE LEVEL OF UNNECESSARY TREE LOSS THAT MAY RESULT FROM OVER-ZEALOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS.***

*The AA position on trees in streets closely reflects the very strong research evidence and government guidance that trees **MUST** be properly and fairly accounted for in the urban management decision-making process.*

**THE RECENT LONDON I-TREE PROJECT VALUED LONDON’S STREET TREES AT £6 BILLION** and identifies and quantifies the wider benefits they bring (eco system services) in respect of storm water alleviation, carbon storage and pollution removal. This report clearly demonstrates that in the light of the benefits that trees bring, **THERE CAN BE NO CREDIBLE CASE TO ADOPT AN AUTOMATIC PRESUMPTION TO REMOVE TREES CAUSING LOW LEVELS OF DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE.**

*...the Arboricultural Association would urge all managers involved in this sphere to appreciate the importance of trees in streets, and particularly their beneficial effects on human wellbeing and health, flood buffering and their ability to make urban environments more pleasant places to live and work. **WE ACTIVELY ADVOCATE THAT** when tree removal is being considered, in addition to the maintenance costs associated with the presence of street trees, the **BENEFITS ARE ALSO PROPERLY FACTORED INTO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. THIS PARTICULARLY APPLIES TO INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE, WHERE THE HIGHWAYS GUIDANCE CLEARLY IMPLIES THAT A FLEXIBLE AND BALANCED ASSESSMENT IS REQUIRED.**”*

(Barrell, 2016a)

*“**The Arboricultural Association has in its members a wealth of knowledge about the practical aspects of planting and caring for trees...**”*

(Framlingham, 2015)

*“Speaking at the **Arboricultural Association** National Amenity Conference, Lord de Mauley, **PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENCE** has recognised the Association as **THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR THE TREE CARE PROFESSION** and ‘**The voice of arboriculture**’.”*

(Arboricultural Association, 2014)

## **References**

(From the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016)

Arboricultural Association, 2014. *Defra recognizes Arboricultural Association as the ‘Voice of Arboriculture’*. [Online]

Available at:

<http://www.trees.org.uk/aa/news/Defra-recognizes-Arboricultural-Association-as-the-Voice-of-Arboriculture-323.html> [Accessed 25 September 2014].

Barrell, 2016a. *Jeremy Barrell comments on the Sheffield Street Trees issue*. [Online]

Available at:

<http://www.trees.org.uk/News-Blog/News/Jeremy-Barrell-comments-on-the-Sheffield-Street-Tr> [Accessed 18 January 2016].

Framlingham, M., 2015. *Queen’s Speech — Debate (4th Day) – in the House of Lords at 3:24 pm on 2nd June 2015: House of Lords Debate (c381)*. [Online]

Available at:

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2015-06-02a.298.8&s=speaker%3A10370#g381.0> [Accessed 4 June 2015].

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SOURCE:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/704#comment-704>

**First letter:** dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016...

“SCC / AMEY: DECEIT & MISINFORMATION

A LETTER TO SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH

The £2.2 billion, city-wide, 25yr Amey PFI contract for highway maintenance (the Streets Ahead project) permits **the felling of 67.7% of MATURE highway trees** – half the population of Sheffield’s 35,057 highway trees. **Non-compliance with good practice could result in the felling of many more.**

At a meeting of full Council, on **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015**, the Deputy Leader of the Council (Cllr Leigh Bramall) stated:

*‘Just before Streets Ahead, we had an independent survey done, erm, assessing all the trees across Sheffield, and it found that **70% were nearing the end of their life and 10,000 needed urgent attention.** ...Now, **the contract says up to 50 % of trees can be removed, erm, and actually that’s 18,000.**’*

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport (Cllr Terry Fox) added:

*‘The survey noted that **74% of our mature tree stock with very few young trees has given this combination the rate of decline evidence by the number of trees needing treatment.**’*

Commenting on the survey, Cllr Fox added: it **‘helps us inform our priorities for the formation of the contract’** (the Amey PFI ).

At a later meeting of full Council, on **3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016**, Cllr Bramall stated:

*‘In 2006/7 an independent survey assessed the city’s highway tree stock. This survey found that over **75% of the city’s 36,000 trees were nearing the end of their natural life** and only 5% of the trees were classed as being in the ‘young’ age group.’*

(Cllr Bramall also stated: **“We have 36,000 highway trees on the street. The contract states that up to 50% can be replaced.”**)

Continued...

These exact words later appeared in a document that **SCC presented to the High Court of Justice** (during R [Dillner] v Sheffield CC and Amey Hallam Highways Ltd), under the heading: “**Streets Ahead Approach to decision making regarding highway tree removal and replacement**”.

The survey referred to is ‘**Sheffield City Highways Tree Survey 2006 – 2007**’. It was undertaken by Elliott Consultancy Ltd. I contacted Mr Elliott to enquire about the findings of the survey and to request a copy of the report: **SORT had been requesting these from the Streets Ahead team for almost twelve months**. Mr Elliott responded: “**A formal report was not requested nor provided.**” He added:

*‘IF THERE WAS EVER ANY REQUEST FOR A FORMAL REPORT THEN WE WERE NOT AWARE OF IT - OUR ROLE WAS TO SURVEY THE STREET TREE STOCK AND PROVIDE THAT DATA TO THE ASSET MANAGEMENT COMPANY... THAT REALLY WAS OUR COMPLETE REMIT - NEITHER FORMAL MANAGEMENT OR A STRATEGIC ROLE.’* He added: **‘I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PFI BID OR WITH ANY OF THE SUBSEQUENT SURVEYS, MANAGEMENT, OR STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS’**.

Last week, Save Our Roadside Trees (SORT) released a news update. It has caused a stir! SORT used a direct quote from **Mr Elliott’s response** to me:

**‘Did I tell them they needed to remove half of their tree stock? NO.**

**Did I tell them that 70% of the trees were nearing the end of their life? NO [...]**

**Did I even suggest that the 10,000 bits of tree work were 'urgent'? NO –**

**(you have seen the pp and IT WAS CLEARLY EXPLAINED THAT 25,000 TREES NEEDED NO WORK, and of that 10,000 almost half were routine crown-lifting operations, another quarter being deadwooding operations, and others including the whole gamut of routine works etc. (I DID SUGGEST TO THEM THAT THERE WERE A COUPLE OF HUNDRED TREES THAT COULD BE RETAINED BUT THEIR CONDITION WAS SUCH THAT THEY MAY MERIT REPLACEMENT - THIS WAS THE ONLY PRE-EMPTIVE FELLING ISSUE THAT I RECALL MENTIONING).’**

A copy of the ‘pp’ (PowerPoint slide show), mentioned above, can be accessed online, at Stocksbridge Community Forum (news).

Continued...

THERE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN WILFUL ATTEMPTS BY SCC AND THE STREETS AHEAD TEAM TO DECEIVE THE PUBLIC AND THE HIGH COURT. Trust in the Council and in its credibility is at an all-time low. Openness honesty and transparency is long overdue. WHEN WILL THE COUNCIL BEGIN TO HONOUR THE POLICY COMMITMENT IT MADE ON 3RD FEBRUARY, 2016: 'TO BEING OPEN AND TRANSPARENT WITH THE SHEFFIELD PUBLIC ENSURING ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN'?

D.Long (Arboriculturist & Urban Forester), Sheffield."

Source:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/683#comment-683>

#### NOTES:

The SORT update (dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016) can be accessed via these links (SCC published a **Corporate Tree Risk Management Strategy** later the same day, for incorporation in to the draught tree strategy – over half way through the two month public consultation period for the draught tree strategy):

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/673#comment-673>

<https://www.change.org/p/sheffield-city-council-streetsahead-sheffield-gov-uk-save-the-12-trees-on-rustlings-road-sheffield/u/18390599>

When commenting on the survey, Cllr Fox's exact words (on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015) were:

***"We had an independent survey done in 2006-2007 which helps us inform our priorities for the formation of the contract..."***

Source:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/177#comment-177>

The "**Sheffield City Highways Tree Survey 2006 – 2007**" PowerPoint presentation ("pp") that Elliott referred to can be accessed using this link:

[https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Elliott\\_SCC\\_Highway%20Tree%20Survey%202006-07.pdf](https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Elliott_SCC_Highway%20Tree%20Survey%202006-07.pdf)

FELLING: SCC/AMEY INCOMPETENCE AND DECEIT

A LETTER TO THE STAR

“Following the 5:00am raid on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016, to fell healthy, structurally sound, mature street trees on Rustlings Road, households on streets in many parts of the city have received a letter from Sheffield City Council (SCC) inviting a household representative to complete an online survey to indicate whether or not the household agrees to tree felling proposals for their street. The letter presents a number of assertions, each of which are intended to foster support for felling. In this letter, I will briefly tackle the matter of sustainable management, with the intention of enabling households to develop a more informed opinion.

The collective tree and woodland cover of the city represents an urban forest, as defined by *The UK Forestry Standard: The Governments' Approach to Sustainable Forest Management* (UKFS) and the United Nations (*FAO Forestry Paper 178*). The latter clearly states that street trees are part of the urban forest. It states: “**urban forests are the backbone of the green infrastructure**”. The UKFS defines a sustainable approach as:

*‘the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that **maintains...** their potential to fulfil, **now and in the future,** relevant **ecological, economic and social functions,** at local, national, and global levels..’*

The urban forest is defined by area of **canopy cover** and trees outside woodland contribute the most to that, as they have larger crowns. According to SCC guesstimates, **trees outside woodland account for about 56% of Sheffield’s trees. The magnitude and value of eco-system service benefits** (e.g. grams of nitrogen dioxide captured per year\*) that trees afford to the environment and communities, associated with functions (e.g. filtration of airborne pollutants), **is dependent on the shape size and distribution of canopy cover.** This is why the felling of so many thousands of healthy, structurally sound, mature trees is so controversial. **Mass felling diminishes canopy cover. It does not maintain it.**

Continued...

I have met with **SCC's Cabinet Member for the Environment** (Cllr Bryan Lodge) and **Amey's Operations Director** (Darren Butt: responsible for all highway maintenance until 2037). **Neither recognise nor accept that street trees are part of Sheffield's urban forest.** This is why they have wrongly set their own definition of sustainable tree population management: '*one-for-one replacement*'. **It takes no account of the impact of proposals on canopy cover.**

According to the Chairman of the Arboricultural Association (Keith Sacre: Chartered Arboriculturist), 60 trees would need to be planted to replace the leaves lost by felling just one mature London plane tree. Furthermore, neither SCC nor Amey (the contractor for the £2.2bn, city-wide highway maintenance project) have valued Sheffield's highway trees, or any of the range of benefits they afford to neighbourhoods and communities. **The mean capital asset value for amenity trees (CAVAT) for the eight trees felled on rustlings road was £19,933**, as assessed by the inventor of the nationally recognised and accepted CAVAT method: Mr Christopher Neilan (Landscape Officer & Arboriculturist).

When I met **Cllr Lodge, on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2016**, and complained about the apparent **disregard for compliance with current good practice**, by the *Streets Ahead* team (SCC & Amey), when undertaking works in close proximity to highway trees, and an apparent absence of adequate supervision, monitoring, auditing and enforcement, Cllr Lodge responded:

*'We're having to shave back on where we're monitoring. So, the money for the maintenance side is in there, but the monitoring – the client management side – is not part of that, and that's where we're having to make funding cuts... **the money that we need to monitor that contract is not there**, because we try to make savings and...where people have left, we haven't replaced. **We've done vacancy management, so we haven't got the number of people in that client management team which we ought to have.**'*

**Cllr Lodge informed that SCC had fined Amey over £2m during 2015**, for neglect to meet agreed standards. He added that SCC were '*just in the process of taking some action against Amey*', for the same reason. **If felling is genuinely a "last resort", all but one of the trees felled on Rustlings Road should have been retained.** Cllr lodge led me to understand that the £2m could be used to retain trees on rustlings road, specifically.

Continued...

In **October 2015**, Amey's Operations Manager (Jeremy Willis: responsible for highway trees), stated:

*"Firstly, I would like to stress that we are not removing any trees unless it is absolutely necessary.*

*...there is no financial gain for Amey to remove trees. In fact the opposite is true, as **IT IS MORE COSTLY TO FELL AND REPLACE A TREE THAN MAINTAIN IT IN THE CURRENT POSITION.**"*

The trees on Rustlings Road were felled because, like most mature highway trees in Sheffield, they were associated with **damage to the footway and kerb**. With regard to such damage, at the second (most recent) meeting of the "*bi-monthly*" Highway Tree Advisory Forum (2<sup>nd</sup> sept, 2015), **SCC's Head of Highway Maintenance** (Steve Robinson) promised: "*...if an engineering solution can be applied, then it will be applied. ...a tree is removed as a last resort*". He added: "*the Council has a defence under the Highways Act - section 58 defence under the Highways Act – of not having sufficient funding to deal with all those defects.*"

Previously, I have criticised SCC and Amey: "*both Amey and SCC have neglected to commission or draught any alternative highway engineering specifications for consideration for use as an alternative to felling*". This is supported by the conclusions of an investigation by the Information Commissioner, published in **February 2016**. On **5<sup>th</sup> October, 2016**, **SCC's Director of Place** (Simon Green: responsible for highways and planning) responded: "*the Council has not needed to commission any alternative engineering solutions*". On **1<sup>st</sup> August, 2016**, Cllr Lodge informed me that use of alternative specifications would represent a "*deviation*" from the Amey contract and that their use had not been budgeted for. He asserted that the use of such specifications was unaffordable and therefore not a reasonably practicable option. This is contrary to the range of "*national best practice*" that SCC & Amey claim to comply with and aim to "*build on*".

In **December 2015**, communicating on behalf of **Mr Green**, SCC's Director of Development Services stated: "*I can advise that the scope of the UKFS and guidelines does not extend to the management of individual trees (arboriculture)*".

Continued...

In **October 2016**, the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (SYFP: the partnership responsible for the south yorkshire community forest) finally closed, when scc withdrew support. The FYFP Director (**Johanna Mawson**) commented:

*“Also for SYFP **one of the biggest challenges has been the lack of any strategic working context from within council, in our case the place directorate, and specifically in respect to the key challenges for sustainability and environmental planning and projects.** ...There is also no committed resource for the Green Commission and no delivery strategy in place. All capacity for developing environmental sustainability for Sheffield has been eroded at an alarming rate”.*

**SCC’s Green Commission was a group set up “to recommend how to make the city sustainable”** and develop a twenty-year plan for SCC’s approach to policies for and management of green infrastructure (**Cllr Lodge is co-Chair**). A final report was published in **February 2016**; it includes a Venn diagram that presents economic, health/social and environmental benefits as a ‘*triple bottom line*’, with **sustainability** at the core.

The UK government has existing international and European commitments to apply the precautionary principle:

*“Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”*

To quote the **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** (“the public body that advises the UK government and devolved administrations”):

*“The precautionary principle is one of the key elements for policy decisions concerning environmental protection and management. It is **applied in the circumstances where there are reasonable grounds for concern that an activity is, or could, cause harm but where there is uncertainty about the probability of the risk and the degree of harm.**”*

Continued...

However, in **September 2015**, the *Streets Ahead* team asserted:

***“Government summit commitments of this kind (i.e. Rio Earth Summit 1992) are not binding on local authorities unless and until they are incorporated into legislation.”***

In **December 2015**, communicating on behalf of Mr Green, this opinion was supported by SCC’s Director of Development Services. He stated:

***“agreements in EU conventions are not binding upon local authorities unless written into statute.”***

The Director was responding to the following criticism:

***“The Council have failed to comply with both the **Arhus Convention** and **European Directive 2001/42/EC**”.***

The Directive requires application of the precautionary principle.

Unless there is a change in the attitude of decision-makers, **Sheffield stands to lose almost all its 25,877 mature highway trees as a result of disregard for current good practice when undertaking works in close proximity to trees.**

Firm government guidance and adequate legislation is urgently required and long overdue.

\* NO<sub>2</sub>: a pollutant associated with road transport, resulting in increased heart and respiratory problems, and increased mortality rates.

D.Long (BSc Hons Arb), Sheffield.'

SOURCE:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/698#comment-698>

**Third Letter:** Dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2016

RECKLESS TREE FELLING: OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY & JUSTICE

A LETTER TO THE SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH (Similar was sent to The Guardian)

“Dear Editor,

Last Thursday, EIGHT TREES ON RUSTLINGS ROAD were felled as part of the city-wide tree felling programme that is part of the £2.2bn ‘Streets Ahead’ highway maintenance project. Seven of the trees (limes) were healthy and structurally sound, but FELLED BECAUSE, LIKE MOST MATURE HIGHWAY TREES IN SHEFFIELD, THEY WERE ASSOCIATED WITH DAMAGE TO THE FOOTWAY AND KERB. At the second (most recent) meeting of the “bi-monthly” Highway Tree Advisory Forum (2/9/2015), SCC’s Head of Highway Maintenance (Steve Robinson) promised: ‘**...IF AN ENGINEERING SOLUTION CAN BE APPLIED, THEN IT WILL BE APPLIED. ...a tree is removed as a last resort**’. He added:

*‘...the Council has **A DEFENCE UNDER THE HIGHWAYS ACT - Section 58 defence under the Highways Act – of NOT HAVING SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO DEAL WITH ALL THOSE DEFECTS.***’

**THE TREES FELLED HAD BEEN VALUED** by Mr Christopher Neilan (Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters), using his nationally recognised Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) method. **THEY HAD A COLLECTIVE VALUE OF £139,534 AND A MEAN VALUE OF £19,933.**

In February 2016, the Information Commissioner completed an investigation. The conclusions revealed that, **OVER THREE YEARS IN TO THE £2.2BN CONTRACT, NEITHER SCC NOR AMEY HAVE COMMISSIONED OR DRAUGHTED ANY ALTERNATIVE HIGHWAY ENGINEERING SPECIFICATIONS** for consideration for use as an alternative to felling, to retain trees. This was confirmed on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, when SCC’s Director of Place (Simon Green: responsible for Highways and Planning) commented: **‘THE COUNCIL HAS NOT NEEDED TO COMMISSION ANY ALTERNATIVE ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS’**.

On 1/8/2016 I met Cllr LODGE (**SCC’s Cabinet member for Environment**). He informed that use of alternative specifications would represent a ‘*deviation*’ from the Amey PFI contract. He informed that their use had not been budgeted for and, for this reason, they are unaffordable and not a reasonably practicable option. However, he added that **SCC HAD FINED AMEY OVER £2 MILLION during 2015**, for neglect to meet agreed standards. He added that SCC were “*just in the process of taking some action against Amey*”, for the same reason. **I WAS LED TO UNDERSTAND THAT £2 MILLION WAS AVAILABLE AND COULD BE USED SPECIFICALLY TO RETAIN TREES ON RUSTLINGS ROAD.** Unless there is a change in the attitude of decision-makers, SHEFFIELD STANDS TO LOSE ALMOST ALL ITS MATURE STREET TREES.

D.Long (BSc Hons Arb), Sheffield.”

SOURCE:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/714#comment-714>

**Fourth Letter:** Dated 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

FELLING: SCC/AMEY INCOMPETENCE AND DECEIT

A LETTER TO SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH, YORKSHIRE POST & THE GUARDIAN

"Dear Editor,

**When Sheffield's £2.2bn "Streets Ahead" highway maintenance PFI project began, in 2012, mature trees accounted for 73.8% of all highway trees in the city.** Most are associated with damage to footways and kerbs and, consequently, scheduled for felling. Prior to the project, Sheffield City Council (SCC) relied on section 58 of the Highways Act as a defence for not undertaking works, due to insufficient funding.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has informed that The Highways Act does not set out specific standards for maintenance, stating:

*"it is for each individual local highway authority to assess which parts of its network are in need of repair and what standards should be applied, **BASED UPON THEIR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND CIRCUMSTANCES.**"*

*"THE UK FORESTRY STANDARD: The governments' approach to sustainable forest management" defines and requires the sustainable management of street trees, as part of the urban forest. Last month, the United Nations also officially recognised street trees as such and added: "**URBAN FORESTS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**" (FAO Forestry Paper 178).*

**In February 2016, the Information Commissioner informed that both SCC and Amey had neglected to commission or draught any alternative highway engineering specifications for consideration for use when undertaking works in close proximity to trees.** This discredits the oft stated project/policy commitment: *"removal of any highway tree is always the last resort"*. This gross omission is contrary to the range of national good practice that the Streets Ahead team claim to comply with and aim to *"build on"*, such as British Standard 5837:2012 and UK **ROAD LIAISON GROUP GUIDANCE**. The latter states:

*"Although ensuring the safety of footways for users will be a priority, in some cases the presence of roadside trees may complicate the provision of footway surface regularity. **THE RADICAL TREATMENT OR COMPLETE TREE REMOVAL NECESSARY TO ENSURE SURFACE REGULARITY MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE OR DESIRABLE AND REDUCED LEVELS OF SURFACE REGULARITY MAY BE A MORE ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.**"*

**TREES AND ASSOCIATED BENEFITS CAN AND SHOULD BE VALUED AND RETAINED.**

Perhaps the £2m plus that SCC fined Amey last year could be used to this end?

D.Long (BSc Hons Arb), Sheffield."

SOURCE:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/710#comment-710>

## TREE FELLING : THE RUSTLINGS ROAD MASSACRE

On Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 8 trees on rustlings road were felled (7 healthy & structurally sound). Two pensioners and a third person were arrested.

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SHEFFIELD LIVE

“Harrassment of councillor’s family condemned by tree campaigners”

<http://web.sheffieldlive.org/harrassment-of-councillors-family-condemned-by-tree-campaigners/?autoplay=1>

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BBC RADIO 4

“PM: Eddie Mair with interviews, context and analysis.”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08296js>

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BBC RADIO 2

“JEREMY VINE: Freebies and Cryogenics: Paddy discusses the arrest of two women for protesting against the removal of trees...”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b081nnp7>

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RADIO SHEFFIELD

“Toby Foster at Breakfast: Tree felling: The Cabinet Member for the Environment at Sheffield City Council discusses tree feeling.”

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ITP PETITION

“Sheffield Independent Tree Panel, please resign now to reject your sham role”

[https://www.change.org/p/members-of-the-sheffield-independent-tree-panel-sheffield-independent-tree-panel-please-resign-now-to-show-that-you-won-t-be-ignored?recruiter=9757195&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=facebook&utm\\_campaign=share\\_for\\_starters\\_page&utm\\_term=des-lq-no\\_src-no\\_msg](https://www.change.org/p/members-of-the-sheffield-independent-tree-panel-sheffield-independent-tree-panel-please-resign-now-to-show-that-you-won-t-be-ignored?recruiter=9757195&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=share_for_starters_page&utm_term=des-lq-no_src-no_msg)

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ITV

“Several arrested over Sheffield tree-felling protest”

<http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2016-11-17/several-arrested-over-sheffield-tree-felling-protest/>

BBC

“Dawn tree felling in Sheffield sparks outrage”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-38012189>

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“Sheffield trees felled to 'save £50,000 repair cost'”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-38024846>

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EXPRESS

“Three people arrested in tree felling protest after residents woken at 2am to move cars”

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/733303/Tree-felling-protest-residents-woken-move-cars-three-arrested-Sheffield>

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TELEGRAPH

“Two women in their 70s arrested in dawn stand-off with 'sneaky' council tree fellers”

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/17/two-women-in-their-70s-arrested-in-dawn-stand-off-with-sneaky-co/?utm\\_content=buffer530df&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/17/two-women-in-their-70s-arrested-in-dawn-stand-off-with-sneaky-co/?utm_content=buffer530df&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

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DAILY MAIL

“Arrested pensioners defiant after protest over tree-felling 'dawn raid'”

Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3945076/Pensioners-arrested-dawn-tree-felling-stand-off.html#ixzz4QmAmFrug>

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THE GUARDIAN

“A dawn raid, dissenters silenced: is this a war on trees?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/21/dawn-raid-war-on-trees-sheffield>

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THE SUN

“GRANNIES IN THE NICK Two OAPs arrested after coming to blows with council workers over secret tree-cutting plans”

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2208611/two-oaps-arrested-after-coming-to-blows-with-council-workers-over-secret-tree-cutting-plans/>

THE STAR

“VIDEO: Protesters arrested as Sheffield tree fellers start cutting down trees in 'middle of the night”

Read more at: <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/video-protesters-arrested-as-sheffield-tree-fellers-start-cutting-down-trees-in-middle-of-the-night-1-8242914>

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THE STAR

“Police 'advice' led to early morning tree felling in Sheffield”

Read more at: <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/police-advice-led-to-early-morning-tree-felling-in-sheffield-1-8243179>

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THE STAR

“Arrested Sheffield pensioners vow to continue tree protests”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/arrested-sheffield-pensioners-vow-to-continue-tree-protests-1-8245045>

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THE STAR

“TREE-FELLING- all you need to know about the 'anti-terrorist operation' against Sheffield protestors”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/tree-felling-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-anti-terrorist-operation-against-sheffield-protestors-1-8245440#comments-area>

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SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH

“Sheffield pensioner arrested in tree felling protest 'wanted to make a stand”

Read more at:

<http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/sheffield-pensioner-arrested-in-tree-felling-protest-wanted-to-make-a-stand-1-8243491>

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SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH

“UPDATE: Three arrested in tree felling protest on Sheffield street”

Read more at:

<http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/update-three-arrested-in-tree-felling-protest-on-sheffield-street-1-8243000>

SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH

“Sheffield MP demands answers over early hours tree felling”

Read more at:

<http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/sheffield-mp-demands-answers-over-early-hours-tree-felling-1-8244012>

## **PREVIOUSLY**

THE STAR

“Police called to protesters fighting against tree felling in Sheffield”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/police-called-to-protesters-fighting-against-tree-felling-in-sheffield-1-8213946>

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THE STAR

“Sheffield tree protesters arrested”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-tree-protesters-arrested-1-8214614>

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THE STAR

“Sheffield tree protesters released from police custody”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-tree-protesters-released-from-police-custody-1-8216224#comments-area>

## **FURTHER COVERAGE**

THE HUFFINGTON POST

“Authoritarianism in Sheffield”

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/582d9998e4b0eaa5f14d40ac?timestamp=1479384418011>

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THE STAR

“Not the last resort”

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/your-say/not-the-last-resort-1-8253991>

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THE STAR

“Sheffield trees: Hundreds chant for councillor’s resignation at protest rally”

Read more at:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-trees-hundreds-chant-for-councillor-s-resignation-at-protest-rally-1-8260725>

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THE GUARDIAN

“Sheffield trees dispute prompts 'scenes you'd expect in Putin's Russia'”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/28/sheffield-trees-dispute-scenes-putin-russia-nick-clegg-arrests>

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THE GUARDIAN

“Sheffield council urged to drop plans to fell war memorial trees”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/30/sheffield-council-urged-to-drop-plans-to-fell-war-memorial-trees>

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THE GUARDIAN

“Demonstrations outside tree-felling court hearing in Sheffield”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/01/demonstrations-sheffield-tree-felling-court-hearing>

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THE GUARDIAN

“The Guardian view on Sheffield’s trees: decline and fall”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/01/the-guardian-view-on-sheffields-trees-decline-and-fall>

## **SHEFFIELD GREEN COMMISSION**

**(Now co-Chaired by two Labour Councillors\*:** Cllr Bryan **Lodge** [Cabinet Member for Environment] and Cllr Mazher **Iqbal** [Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport].)

*"We are very lucky in Sheffield to live in the greenest and most wooded city in Britain. This means that our city is not only beautiful, but has enormous advantages in terms of*

**FLOOD RESILIENCE,**  
**HEALTH AND WELLBEING** and  
mitigation for **HARMFUL EMISSIONS.**

*This hearing focusing on green and blue infrastructure will consider how Sheffield's natural and planned assets can deliver **ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL** and **SOCIAL** outcomes for the city."*

(Cllr Dunn, Chair of the Sheffield Green Commission)

Source:

Sheffield City Council, 2015. Sheffield Green Commission's fifth public hearing.

Available at:

<http://www.sheffieldnewsroom.co.uk/sheffield-green-commissions-fifth-public-hearing/>

[Accessed 8 June 2015].

\* E-mail: [mazher.iqbal@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:mazher.iqbal@sheffield.gov.uk) & [bryan.lodge@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:bryan.lodge@sheffield.gov.uk)

On 25th June, 2015, an earlier version of the SORT petition hand-out (distributed to every Councillor in the city) was submitted to the SCC GREEN COMMISSION as "evidence" for consideration by the Commission. An amended version was submitted, on 29th of June, 2015. On 30th June, 2015, acting "for the GREEN COMMISSION team", Heather Stewart (SCC Project Officer: CAPITAL DELIVERY SERVICE DEPARTMENT) confirmed acceptance of the document (a PDF) as "evidence". For a copy, visit:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/news/streets-ahead-stocksbridge-trees>

On 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2016, SCC published "**Sheffield's Green Commitment – The Final Report of the Sheffield Green Commission**".

## **EXTRACTS**

### **"TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE**

#### **ECONOMIC**

*GREEN SPACE CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS BY PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY URBAN ENVIRONMENTS to live, work and play in.*

*The Crown Estate's £1.5 billion investment in an ecology masterplan for the West End of London demonstrates that World Cities recognise the economic asset of **QUALITY URBAN GREEN SPACE**.*

*The £30m cost of the 2007 floods to Sheffield creates **THE BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTMENT IN FLOOD RESILIENCE THROUGH GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE**.*

#### **HEALTH/SOCIAL**

*Green and Blue infrastructure can reduce emissions and improve **AIR QUALITY**; contribute to sustainable urban **COOLING** and **HEATWAVE MITIGATION**; improve physical **HEALTH** including reducing body mass index and **OBESITY**; improve **MENTAL WELLBEING**; increase longevity; reduce isolation, reduce health inequalities and increase **SOCIAL COHESION**.*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

*Green and Blue Infrastructure provides ecosystems services for cities: **FLOOD** resilience, **CLIMATE** adaptation (sustainable urban cooling/reduction of urban heat island effect); **AIR QUALITY** mitigation and increasing **BIODIVERSITY**; **CO2** sequestration."*

(p.35)

The three components of this "TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE" are represented by a Venn diagram. Guess what label is attached to the centre of the diagram, where all three circles overlap:

\*\*\*\* "**SUSTAINABLE**"! \*\*\*\*

The SCC report can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/green-commission.html>

## **SUSTAINABLE TREE POPULATION MANAGEMENT**

*"At the Second Ministerial Conference, held in Helsinki in 1993, ministers adopted Resolution H1, which included the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) definition of SUSTAINABLE forest management:*

*'the **STEWARDSHIP AND USE** of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that **MAINTAINS** their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, **NOW** and in the future, relevant **ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, AT LOCAL, national, and global LEVELS, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems'.***

*(Forestry Commission, 2011, p. 93)*

**THIS IS THE DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORESTRY USED BY THE GOVERNMENT**, set out in The UK Forestry Standard: The governments' approach to sustainable forest management.

**"THE UKFS AND GUIDELINES ENCOMPASS THE ENTIRE FOREST ENVIRONMENT**, which may include open areas, water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds, and shrub species in addition to the trees themselves. **THEY APPLY** to the planning and management of forests within the wider landscape and land-use context, and **TO ALL UK FOREST TYPES AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE COLLECTIVE TREE AND WOODLAND COVER IN URBAN AREAS.**

[...]

*In assessing whether the Requirements have reasonably been met, the overall balance of benefits or ecosystem services will be taken into account.*

### **DEFINITIONS AND TERMS**

**THE UKFS AND GUIDELINES APPLY TO ALL UK FORESTS.** *The term forest is used to describe land predominately covered in trees (defined as land under stands of **TREES WITH A CANOPY COVER OF AT LEAST 20%**)...*

*(Forestry Commission, 2011, p. 4)*

Continued...

Reference:

Forestry Commission, 2011. The UK Forestry Standard: The governments' approach to sustainable forest management. 3rd ed. Edinburgh: Forestry Commission.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs>

## **THE UN SUPPORT URBAN FORESTRY IN SHEFFIELD**

*“Guidelines on Urban and Peri-urban Forestry explains how cities can maximize the contribution of urban forests to addressing local and global sustainable development challenges, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security, and human health and well-being.”*

[...]

*‘City planners and other urban decision-makers are often unaware of the crucial economic, social and environmental benefits that urban forests can provide, which means they are spending their budgets elsewhere,’ said FAO Forestry Officer Simone Borelli, one of the authors of the book. ‘In this publication we show them why **MAKING URBAN FORESTS A PRIORITY AND “TURNING GREY TO GREEN” IS A WISE INVESTMENT THAT WILL IMPROVE MANY ASPECTS OF CITIZENS’ LIVES.***

[...]

### **“WHAT IS AN URBAN FOREST?”**

[...]

**URBAN FORESTS CAN BE DEFINED AS NETWORKS OR SYSTEMS COMPRISING ALL WOODLANDS, GROUPS OF TREES, AND INDIVIDUAL TREES LOCATED IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS; THEY INCLUDE, therefore, forests, **STREET TREES**, trees in parks and gardens, and trees in derelict corners. **URBAN FORESTS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**, bridging rural and urban areas and ameliorating a city’s environmental footprint.**

[...]

*Urban and peri-urban forestry (UPF) is **THE PRACTICE OF MANAGING URBAN FORESTS TO ENSURE THEIR OPTIMAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PHYSIOLOGICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF URBAN SOCIETIES.***

*UPF is an integrated, interdisciplinary, participatory and strategic approach to planning and managing forests and trees in and around cities.*

Continued...

*It involves the assessment, planning, planting, maintenance, **PRESERVATION** and monitoring of urban forests, and it can operate **AT SCALES RANGING FROM SINGLE TREES TO LANDSCAPES.***

[...]

*At the community scale, **UPF EMPHASIZES THE ENGAGEMENT OF URBAN CITIZENS IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC TREES, INCLUDING BY EDUCATING THEM** on the value and benefits of trees and forests **AND SUPPORTING** their full ownership and responsibility for the environment around them.*

**WHY URBAN FORESTS?**

*Forests in and around cities face many threats, such as those posed by unregulated urban development and a lack of investment and management. Although it has been demonstrated that coherent investment in the establishment, protection and restoration of **URBAN FORESTS CAN HELP CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**, such forests are often appreciated more for their aesthetic value than for their ecosystem functions.*

*Mayors, planners and other urban **DECISION-MAKERS ARE OFTEN UNAWARE OF THE CRUCIAL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS THAT URBAN FORESTS CAN PROVIDE.***

(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Salbitano, F. et al., 2016, p. 2)

**Reference:**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016. *FAO Forestry Paper 178: Guidelines on urban and peri-urban forestry*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Available online at:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/news/92439/en/>

[https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/UN\\_FAO\\_2016\\_URBAN%20FORESTRY%20GUIDANCE\\_Planning\\_Green%20Infrastructure\\_a-i6210e.pdf](https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/UN_FAO_2016_URBAN%20FORESTRY%20GUIDANCE_Planning_Green%20Infrastructure_a-i6210e.pdf)

## **GUIDANCE FROM THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE**

Extracts detailing the importance of the urban forest, including its STREET TREES, to green infrastructure.

*“Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers*

***Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers, produced by the Trees and Design Action Group, sets out 12 action-orientated principles for the 21st century URBAN FOREST. Trees are increasingly viewed as essential alleviators of many of the adverse effects of urbanisation.***

***STORM-WATER MANAGEMENT, urban cooling and microclimate control, air-quality improvement, visual amenity and carbon sequestration can all be addressed through better management of existing trees and the promotion of new planting.***

*The guide is aimed at all those whose actions and decisions may affect, both directly and indirectly, the management and planting of urban trees. It provides examples of good practice, explanations of delivery mechanisms and links to further references. It sets out the importance of having a comprehensive tree strategy and understanding the tree resource of a particular area and how MULTIPLE BENEFITS ARE DERIVED FROM TREES.*

*This publication is particularly relevant for the management of trees in existing urban areas. Where space is at a premium and the built environment is dominant, trees provide SIGNIFICANT NATURAL ASSETS that can be retrofitted into streets and other available spaces with relatively little disturbance to surrounding activities.*

***In addition, the ECOSYSTEM SERVICES THAT THESE TREES PROVIDE WILL INCREASE AS THEY GROW.*** Urban tree planting therefore provides a significant opportunity to incorporate green infrastructure benefits into both existing and new built up areas.”

### **SOURCE:**

[https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Landscape%20Institute\\_Green%20Infrastructure%20Position%20Statement\\_2013\\_0.pdf](https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/sites/default/files/files/Landscape%20Institute_Green%20Infrastructure%20Position%20Statement_2013_0.pdf)

**WHAT THE STREETS AHEAD TEAM (SCC & AMEY) SAY ABOUT  
TREES AND DESIGN ACTION GROUP (TDAG) GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In a letter to a lead SORT campaigner, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, David Wain - leader of SCC's Environmental Maintenance Technical Team – stated\*:

" <http://www.tdag.org.uk> is a useful resource for learning more about sustainable and sensible tree design and planting selection, and one of the arboriculturalists [sic] working on the Sheffield Streets Ahead project was actually involved in authoring much of the content, so **WE DO AGREE STRONGLY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OUTLINED WITHIN THE DOCUMENTATION.**"

In an e-mail to one citizen, dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, the Streets Ahead team (AMEY & SCC) stated:

"We can also confirm that we are fully aware of the Trees in the Townscape II report, and **A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF AMEY'S ARBORICULTURAL TEAM** actually contributed to authoring this document, making a positive impact and **PUSHING FORWARD** national **BEST** practice documents for the industry."

Because that didn't make sense, the citizen responded:

"I think you mean Trees in Towns II? To the best of my knowledge, none of your team contributed to it. If they did, it will have been surveying (data collection). Regardless, the acts and omissions of the Streets Ahead team do not appear to comply with any aspect of the guidance and recommendations therein. If you are referring to the TDAG publication, the same criticism applies."

On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the citizen received an e-mail (characteristically vague) from the Streets Ahead team. Their response to the citizen's comment was:

"With regards to Trees in Towns 2 (Brit et al) vs TDAG ? we can confirm that **EMPLOYEES OF THE STREETS AHEAD PROJECT WERE INVOLVED AS ?AUTHOR? CLASSIFICATION CONTRIBUTORS ON TDAG.** We apologise for any confusion."

\*An extract from the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01>

*"Campaigners fighting tree felling in Sheffield have been calling for a city-wide tree strategy - but documents reveal one was drafted 14 years ago. ...A consultation document for Sheffield's Tree and Woodland Strategy seen by The Star, which was printed in 2001\*, said*

**'SHEFFIELD IS BLESSED WITH ONE OF THE FINEST URBAN FORESTS IN THE COUNTRY'** and 'trees affect everyone's lives.' [...]

*The council did not say why the strategy had not been adopted."*

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\* See: Lewis, D., Sellwood, N. & Page, M., 2001. *Sheffield's Tree and Woodland Strategy • Consultation Document.* Sheffield: Sheffield City Council.

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- Source: <https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/503#comment-503>

**AMEY's COMMENTS ON THE TOPIC OF DAMAGE CAUSED TO TREES DURING  
HIGHWAY RESURFACING WORKS**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015, at the inaugural meeting of the “bi-monthly” Highway Trees Advisory Forum (which has not met since the second meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015),

DARREN BUTT (OPERATIONS DIRECTOR FOR AMEY) commented\*:

*“The majority of, err, tree roots are actually in the upper sixty mill of the, err, of the surface and therefore **REMOVING THE TOP LAYER WILL REMOVE AND BE EXTREMELY DETRIMENTAL TO THOSE TREES.** I appreciate the problem. This gentleman’s trees were surviving well; the trouble is, when you see them in absolute blossom, and they are green, you think they’re safe and will continue to thrive, which is sometimes, can be, almost a pinnacle before **THEY FAIL.** So, hopefully, your tree doesn’t, but, err, **THAT DOES HAPPEN.**”*

Most trees that Amey have scheduled for felling are healthy and structurally sound. The main reason for felling appears to be (see **Appendix 22 & Appendix 25** of the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01> ):

*“DUE TO DAMAGE TO THE PAVEMENT OR ROAD”*

Before Amey took its felling lists offline in autumn 2015, to re-word the reasons given for felling (possibly after realising that they represented evidence of non-compliance with the guidance they claimed to comply with and aimed to “build on”), common reasons included\*:

*“...**LIKELY TO BE DAMAGED** upon reconstruction”*

*“...**WILL BE DAMAGED** upon reconstruction”;*

*“...**WILL BE DAMAGED** upon planing off”;*

*“...**CANNOT REPAIR WITHOUT ROOT DAMAGE**”;*

*“Kerbs absent, **UNABLE TO INSTALL/REPAIR WITHOUT SEVER** [sic] **ROOT DAMAGE**”*

*“Kerbs pushed into c/w by buttress root pressing immediately on kerb rear - **CANNOT REALIGN**”;*

*“...root growing into and uplifting f/w at shallow depth – **WILL BE DAMAGED UPON RECONSTRUCTION.**”*

Continued...

Many healthy, structurally sound, mature highway trees are scheduled for felling on the basis that the USE OF MOWERS, STRIMMERS AND MACHINERY USED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO TREES DURING RESURFACING WORKS, SUCH AS DIGGERS AND THE PLANING MACHINES, will cause damage of such severity that that tree health and structural integrity will be compromised to such extent that the only reasonable option is to fell the trees. This appears to be one of Amey's primary reasons for felling.

The team responsible for the £2.2bn Streets Ahead project (SCC & Amey) have even prescribed felling on the basis that mowers or excavations by Streets Ahead operatives could damage roots and lead to the same consequences.

DAMAGE CAN BE MINIMISED OR AVOIDED. MATURE TREES CAN BE SAFELY RETAINED, LONG-TERM, THROUGH COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS (TDAG; BS5837 & NJUG) that exists to minimise the likelihood and severity of such damage.

\* Extracts from the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016: <http://bit.ly/2dGxO01>

## A LETTER TO THE STAR

"Over several months, the Council have repeatedly, falsely claimed to have used Flexi®-Pave to retain healthy, structurally sound, mature highway trees. Flexi®-Pave is a product that can be used when resurfacing footways, as an alternative to tarmac. The key benefit is that when tree parts thicken – as they do each year – the product flexes rather than cracks, unlike tarmac. For this reason, it has been widely used elsewhere in other cities, to retain mature highway trees. A letter appeared in last Thursday's Sheffield Telegraph (21<sup>st</sup> July, 2016), written by someone claiming to be an "*independent arboriculturist*". I believe he is a sub-contractor on the city-wide, £2.2bn Streets Ahead highway maintenance project, working for the main contractor: Amey.

I was shocked and appalled by the implication that the slightest wound on a tree would be likely to result in "*rapid decline*" of the tree. For a tree, its bark is like skin; the wood is like flesh. Just like an animal, if wounded, in theory, the organism can become infected and a disease could result that could lead to death.

However, **like animals, plants have evolved ways of resisting infection and limiting its spread.** It is why trees can receive multiple wounds when pruned, attacked by herbivores, otherwise damaged, and remain strong, healthy and safe. **Trees have also evolved ways of compensating for any decay, by reducing crown size and, through incremental growth, adding layers of biomechanically optimised wood, known as reaction wood.** This strengthens affected regions and can compensate for cross-sectional loss; **it is what enables plant parts to have a safety factor greater than that of most mammal bones.** It is why you see many trees with large wounds or cavities (great for wildlife) and yet they remain perfectly healthy and their parts do not fail.

Most people involved with tree care in Sheffield do not fulfil the British Standard requirements necessary to qualify as competent arboriculturists. An arboriculturist is defined (by BS 5837) as:

***"PERSON WHO HAS, THROUGH RELEVANT EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE, GAINED EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD OF TREES IN RELATION TO CONSTRUCTION"*.**

Continued...

Only a small handful of people in Sheffield meet these criteria. **An education and training deficit leads to misunderstanding and inappropriate comments, as well as bad policy and bad decisions** that are not soundly based on available evidence, but: *“unduly influenced by transitory or exaggerated opinions, whether formed by the media or vested interests.”*

Provided *Streets Ahead* contractors comply with the current, widely accepted, nationally recognised good practice guidance and recommendations that they claim to comply with and aim to *“build on”* (e.g. **BS5837** and guidance published by the **National Joint Utilities Group** and **Trees & Design Action Group**), there is no reason why mature highway trees cannot be safely retained, long-term, by use of products like Flexi®-Pave. An air-spade can be used to excavate around roots and avoid wounding.

The Council & Amey repeatedly state that felling is a *“last resort”* and that they are willing to consider all other options to retain mature highway trees. However, on 19/2/2016, the Information Commissioner completed an investigation (Case Ref: FS50596905) which revealed that, over 3 years in to the £2.2bn city-wide Streets Ahead project, neither Amey or the Council had ever commissioned or draughted any alternative highway engineering specifications for footway, edging (kerb) or drain construction for consideration as an alternative to felling, as a means to enable the safe long-term retention of valuable mature highway trees, and the range of valuable ecosystem service benefits they afford to the environment and communities each year. This revelation confirmed that **felling is certainly not the “last resort”** and that **the Streets Ahead team have a long way to go before they can rightfully claim to comply with current good practice.**

D.Long (BSc Hons Arb), Sheffield." (24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016)

Source:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/533#comment-533>

Also, see:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/clarification\\_of\\_fox\\_tree\\_retention\\_solutions#comment-69476](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/clarification_of_fox_tree_retention_solutions#comment-69476)

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-tree-campaigners-question-council-flexi-paving-figures-1-8012728>

## **EXISTING POLICY COMMITMENTS, TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE**

(Extracts from the SORT letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016)

In an e-mail (Ref: 101002358788) dated **8<sup>th</sup> January, 2016** (Appendix 19), sent in response to a complaint made on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 (Appendix 19), **STREETS AHEAD** Customer Services stated:

**"THE STREETS AHEAD PROJECT AIMS TO WORK TO BEST INDUSTRY PRACTISE AND GUIDELINES** in all working sectors, including when working in the vicinity of highway trees."

*"In fact, we intend to expand the concept with a series of workshops starting in January 2016 looking at improving our processes and **BUILDING ON** industry good practise."*

On **8<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**, **STREETS AHEAD** team stated:

*"all works will be supervised by a qualified arboriculturalist [sic] **TO ENSURE NO TREE ROOT DAMAGE OCCURS** as part of our works. The Streets Ahead team work to **National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG)** regulations **AND RELEVANT BRITISH STANDARDS** for construction works in the vicinity of trees".*

On **8<sup>th</sup> December, 2015**, Cllr TERRY FOX (**Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport**) stated:

*"I can confirm that Amey's **ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT** exists **TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH BOTH BS 5837 AND NJUG STANDARDS.**"*

In a communication dated **8<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**, with regard to works to and in close proximity to highway trees, Mr DAVID CAULFIELD (**SCC Executive Director**: see The Star report: "TREES: New council chief to lead Sheffield felling confirmed after secret recording apology") responded to the question: "Can you provide evidence of the use of National BEST Practice?". His response was:

**"YES, WE CAN EVIDENCE USE OF NBP ACROSS THE WHOLE CONTRACT"**

The response to Freedom of Information request **FOI / 574**, dated **7<sup>th</sup> August, 2015** ("*Please **provide a copy of the current national highway maintenance standards, guidance and recommendations** that the Streets Ahead project claim to be using and working in accordance with; **please also provide an online link** to these standards.*"), stated:

Continued...

"Highways maintenance standards and **REQUIREMENTS ARE DICTATED BY A NUMBER OF PIECES OF BOTH INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICE** (for example the Well-Maintained Highways Code of Practice for highway maintenance management - <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/UKRLG-and-boards/uk-roads-board/wellmaintained-highways.cfm> ).

### **THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO RETAIN MATURE HIGHWAY TREES**

"In a letter dated **18th November, 2015** (see Appendix 7), **David Caulfield** (Director of Development Services: with overall responsibility for highway trees) stated:

**'...REMOVAL OF ANY HIGHWAY TREE IS ALWAYS THE LAST RESORT...'**

In an e-mail dated **17<sup>th</sup> December, 2015** (see Appendix 7), **Mr Caulfield** stated:

**'Clearly IF A SITE SPECIFIC OR BESPOKE SOLUTION CAN BE IDENTIFIED by either the Council or Amey's arboricultural surveyors or highway engineers WHICH CAN BE APPLIED WITH REASONABLE PRACTICABILITY TO RETAIN A TREE THEN WE WOULD LOOK TO DO SO. ...We like to think that as THE UK'S LARGEST HIGHWAYS PFI PROJECT...'** "

(From page 44)

In an e-mail (Ref: 101002355831) dated **16th December, 2015** (see **Appendix 11**), **Jeremy Willis (Amey)** stated:

**"Unlike many other large UK cities, Sheffield is in a unique position and HAS THE FUNDING through the Streets Ahead project to upgrade its roads, pavements, street lights and streetscene. This also includes BETTER MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT of the street trees."**

**"ONE OF THE AIMS OF THE STREETS AHEAD PROJECT IS TO RETAIN HEALTHY TREES WHEREVER POSSIBLE..."**

**A NEW TREE CAN NEVER REPLACE A MATURE SPECIMEN...**

**Please be assured that we are COMMITTED TO RETAINING, MAINTAINING and investing in the city's tree stock for future generations"**

(From page 103)

Continued...

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015, The Star reported:

*“Cllr Terry Fox, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, said:*

*‘We have always said that **WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO RETAIN A TREE, THIS IS WHAT WE WILL WORK HARD TO DO...** we are serious about that commitment.’”*

On 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, The Star reported:

*“Coun Bryan Lodge, cabinet member for environment, said:*

*‘**IF WE CAN USE PRACTICABLE AND AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO RETAIN TREES, THEN WE WILL LOOK TO DO THAT.**’”*

Source:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/axe-might-stop-for-12-city-trees-1-7973228>

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

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<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/WhiteRoseForest/pdf/treesFromNurseryToIndependenceInTheLandscape.pdf>

Continued...

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Roads Liaison Group, 2013. **Well-Lit Highways - Tracked Changes** [Online] Available at: <http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=2B75EC40-0A6F-4BE2-884C6F53ECAEC87B>

The National Tree Safety Group, 2011. Common Sense Risk Management of Trees: Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers. Forestry Commission Stock Code: FCMS024 ed. Edinburgh: Forestry Commission.  
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Trees and Design Action Group, 2014. Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery. Available at: <http://www.tdag.org.uk/trees-in-hard-landscapes.html> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

## Sources of Further Information on Good Practice

“RISK & LIABILITY”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/565#comment-565>

“THE COUNCIL AND THE STREETS AHEAD TEAM HAVE EXISTING POLICY COMMITMENTS, TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE. See below.”;

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/484#comment-484>

**“EXTRACTS FROM WELL-MAINTAINED HIGHWAYS - CODE OF PRACTICE”**

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/630#comment-630>

“EXTRACTS FROM WELL-LIT HIGHWAYS - TRACKED CHANGES”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/631#comment-631>

“EXTRACTS FROM British Standard 5837”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/632#comment-632>

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/634#comment-634>

“ROOT PROTECTION”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/633#comment-633>

“SCC & AMEY: NON-COMPLIANCE WITH GOOD PRACTICE: A FEW EXAMPLES”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/542#comment-542>

**“Quotes from the THE TREES AND DESIGN ACTION GROUP (TDAG) document that AMEY claim to have contributed to AND THE Council claim to “AGREE STRONGLY” with”**

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/539#comment-539>

"...EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR for Place Simon Green said: '...WE WILL of course CONTINUE TO assess our trees and REPLACE THOSE THAT ARE DANGEROUS.'"

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/555#comment-555>

“THE COUNCIL’S COMMITMENT TO RETAIN MATURE HIGHWAY TREES”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/536#comment-536>

"THE DISCRETION TO RETAIN MATURE TREES"

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/543#comment-543>

“POLICY & SUSTAINABILITY: THE COUNCIL'S POLICY COMMITMENTS SUPPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/545#comment-545>

Continued...

“SUSTAINABLE TREE POPULATION MANAGEMENT”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/546#comment-546>

“SHEFFIELD'S FIRST TREE STRATEGY...We're Still Waiting!”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/598#comment-598>

“EXTRACTS FROM THE FORMER (2001) TREE STRATEGY ‘CONSULTATION DOCUMENT’”

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/599#comment-599>

## **ECO-SYSTEM SERVICES = HEALTH & WELLBEING**

"INTRODUCING 'TREE ECONOMICS': HOW STREET TREES CAN SAVE OUR CITIES:

As a fight over 11 lime trees in Sheffield escalates, activists in cities all over the world are making the case for urban trees – to cut pollution, increase land value and even make you feel younger"

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/aug/15/treeeconomics-street-trees-cities-sheffield-itree>

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"THE IMPORTANCE OF URBAN FORESTS: WHY MONEY REALLY DOES GROW ON TREES:

Mature trees clean air, lower stress, boost happiness, reduce flood risk – and even save municipal money. So why are they cut down when cities develop – and how should the UN's new urban agenda protect them?"

[https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/12/importance-urban-forests-money-grow-trees?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/12/importance-urban-forests-money-grow-trees?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

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"WHO NAMES AND SHAMES UK CITIES BREACHING SAFE AIR POLLUTION LEVELS:

Birmingham, Leeds, London, Nottingham and SHEFFIELD among cities breaching particulate limits, UN agency says"

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/07/who-names-uk-cities-breaching-safe-air-pollution-levels>

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“WHY THE UK NEEDS 64 MILLION NEW TREES

Did you know that the UK is one of the least wooded places in Europe? Trees are nature's air and water purifiers, and they need our help. Learn more about our precious trees, the Woodland Trust's mission to restore UK woodland and how you can help”

<https://www.theguardian.com/woodland-trust-64-million-trees/ng-interactive/2016/sep/23/why-the-uk-needs-64-million-new-trees>

## **ACT NOW**

If you disagree with Sheffield City Council's reckless, negligent, unsustainable approach to tree population management, please sign the following petition, as Councillors understand voter numbers better than anything else (to the exclusion of almost everything else, in Sheffield):

<https://www.change.org/p/sheffield-city-council-streetsahead-sheffield-gov-uk-save-the-12-trees-on-rustlings-road-sheffield>

Growing numbers indicate growing, continued support and indicate the reach of media attention and wider support. One thing that Councillors really can't stand is negative publicity. So, the more they get, the greater the likelihood of positive change and a strategic approach that will help initiate, encourage and support responsible, sustainable management that accords with current, nationally recognised and widely accepted good practice.

The online SORT petition went live on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. At 12:30am, on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015, the online petition had 4,693 signatures and was supplemented by >5,307 on paper. At the end of 2015, it had 6,047 signatures (supplemented by ~8,800 on paper). Currently, the petition has over 16,000 signatures.

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-trees-we-will-carry-on-our-fight-campaigners-vow-after-no-action-taken-on-10-000-strong-petition-1-7337321>

Update:

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/673#comment-673>

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### **SCC & AMEY: IGNORANCE**

The Council and Amey have been ignoring people for well over a year: since at least May, 2015! (follow the link):

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/save-our-trees-have-your-say-1-7292659>

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/biggest-ever-scheme-to-improve-sheffield-s-36-000-street-trees-1-5412367#comments-area>

\*\*\*\*\*

### **FOR THE LATEST, SEE:**

"SAVE OUR ROADSIDE TREES (SORT) NEWS UPDATE":

<https://www.stocksbridgecommunity.org/comment/673#comment-673>

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