

Sheffield City Council

Public Apology

The Council unreservedly apologises for mistakes made in its handling of a complaint about the way we removed street trees from Rustlings Road in November 2016 and accepts the findings made in the report of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman which draws attention to general failings in the implementation of the street trees elements of the Streets Ahead programme. We apologise for these failings.

Cabinet member for Environment, Street Scene and Climate Change at Sheffield City Council, Councillor Mark Jones said:

“We fully accept the findings of this [report](#) and recognise that our approach to managing the city’s street trees needed to change. We got some things wrong and whilst this report is reflective of a very different and difficult time, we are continuing to make real and significant progress towards a more transparent and collaborative future when it comes to managing our valuable street tree stock.

“Many of the actions outlined in the report are already underway, with the creation of a partnership group and the recent production of a new [Street Tree Partnership Working Strategy](#) for Sheffield. Whilst the report recognises this, we know we must do better and we are confident that through our new collaborative approach, we are now in a much more positive and favourable position to ensure our street trees are properly and effectively managed.

“The new working partnership street tree strategy recognises the many benefits trees bring to our urban environment and proposes a more open and inclusive way of working to ensure more transparent processes going forwards. What’s more, we are already in the process of finalising plans to make all historic materials relating to street trees publically available via an online archive. In doing so, we can allow those who want to look over past documents to do so, but equally, we can all start to look forward as we embark on a new, more constructive chapter.

“Through our new approach, we are committed to retaining trees wherever possible, planting additional trees, increasing canopy cover and building a diverse and resilient street tree stock with varying species and age profiles. We are also committing to engaging with stakeholders and the wider public about our plans for street trees in a more proactive way, to avoid any uncertainty about what we are doing and why. Engagement is key for creating a future-proof strategy that works for us all.

“In this specific case, we will be apologising to the complainant’s family and giving reassurances that we are already on the right path towards a more open and sustainable vision for how we manage street trees, not just for now, but for many years to come.”