

## **Council meeting, Tuesday 19 October 2021**

### **Item 6 - Questions from Members of the Public**

#### **1. From Mr Daniel Kuszel**

“We know that the planting of new trees that act to capture carbon are among the easiest actions that can be taken to fight climate change. Could the Leader, who has strongly pushed for the borough council, and borough residents to make efforts to limit their environmental impact, therefore explain that since 5 May 2019, Waverley Borough Council has only planted 35 trees across the whole borough?”

#### **Reply from Councillor Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability**

“Thank you for your question. As a Council we are fully aware of the importance of trees to carbon reduction. Planting is certainly one way to achieve this but maintaining current mature tree stock should not be overlooked. Allowing existing trees, especially in woodlands, to grow to their full size and potential through active management for instance, generally offers much greater carbon capture than smaller newly planted trees. To this end we are bringing together a Tree & Woodland Policy to be adopted by Council early next year to further support our climate emergency action plan.

The Council is in the process of identifying suitable sites for more tree planting, but it is important to do this in a structured way and making sure it follows the notion; “the right tree in the right place” as plenty of well-meaning efforts often go awry because of poor planning, poor species choice and lack of aftercare, and clearly hedgerows are important as well.

The Council has been successful in bidding for Government funds for tree planting in a combined bid with SCC and other Surrey Districts and Boroughs under the Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF). For Waverley this means that, for this coming planting season, we will receive just under £45,000 in two tranches, for the planting, fencing and subsequent maintenance of approximately 7000 trees spread over five Council owned sites across the Borough. Further funding to deliver this important strand of work from Defra and planning policy is also being bid for.

All of these efforts ensure a structured and effective approach to tree planting and management in our borough and is necessary to ensure we contribute to the aims laid out in our action plan.”