

FC London Workplan 2013/14: March - July 2013 activity

1 Purpose

This report summarises Forestry Commission (FC) activity in London since March 2013, and reflects the work set out in the [FC London workplan 2013/14](#).

2 General Update on FC London developments

FC London team

The London team moved to Nobel House on 6th July, co-located with (a) FC colleagues who work with the Defra forestry policy team (b) the London Natural England team. The Environment Agency team are also moving into the Defra Nobel House complex. Co-location should prove very helpful in 2 ways (a) raising our area delivery profile amongst Defra forestry policy team, directly and through our work to enable others to deliver (b) assist joined up area delivery with Defra family, ensuring we work together efficiently and effectively on common objectives.

3 Priority work for 13/14

Controlling Oak Processionary Moth

Within a very short timescale we have enacted the largest OPM control programme since it arrived in Britain in 2006, marking a step change in management intensity. This has been funded by Defra on the basis of a pilot this year, which will help guide the development of a sustainable long term approach. Work has been implemented fully as per the agreed OPM control plan, with improved:

- Prophylactic pesticide control programme (200 sites across London)
- Landowner liaison including financial support
- Plant Health Notice reissue and support for notice recipients
- Survey intensity, coordination and data collection
- Systems and processes for managing data and information that assists management decisions
- Stakeholder liaison
- Cost effectiveness in survey and control work & timeliness of all aspects of our work

Tackling other tree health issues

Chalara – Given the distribution of outbreaks last year around the edges of London and expected spread, it is reasonable to prepare for the possibility that there may be a

Chalara outbreak this summer in London. We are managing stakeholder and public expectations accordingly, and material is prepared for if outbreaks occur. Messages are based on the *Chalara* management plan.

An overriding message for London is that mature ash trees will not immediately die so the principles of good tree/woodland management remain whether trees are infected or not. The principles of the National Tree Safety Group guidance are highly relevant to promote a proportionate approach to tree safety; this will help avoid wholesale, unnecessary felling of ash trees that would result in loss of ecosystem service benefits.

Resilience – Resilience has become a common thread through FC London activity as a proactive response to tackling the threats to the urban forest. We weave the messages of right tree in the right place, species and age diversity and good practice in all of our activities. A resilience based conference at Kew Gardens will be organised in 2014 that builds on some of the messages from the Tackling Threats conference e.g. use of alternative species to replace the vulnerable genus/species under threat.

I-Tree London project

In agreement with the main project partners it has been decided to defer the survey work on the i-Tree Eco London Project until summer 2014. This was due to the risk that the identified volunteer base required for completing the survey this year would be insufficient. All the background logistical work is in place with development continuing to refine the use of the online recording system. The issue with volunteers this year has highlighted the need for a greater contingency in respect of “mopping up” the plot surveys and work is underway to identify further funding to assist with this.

Supporting cross sector working through the [RE:LEAF partnership](#):

The FC continues to be a key partner in the partnership, chairing the steering group meetings and contributing to major projects. There have been recent discussions with GLA, LTOA and other stakeholders about the potential to build further successes from the partnership for pan London strategic benefit.

The RE:LEAF London Tree & Woodland Awards were held on the 15th May 2013 and feedback from attendees suggest the event was a great success. The nominations and winners were particularly good this year, demonstrating a wide range of innovative and committed action to protect, improve and expand the London urban forest.

Since the award event we have developed some case studies, to champion their work and inspire other people who may want to do similar in their local neighbourhood. The winners have been publicised in a variety of media, with further work planned for some winners to promote their work further.

A summary of the event, award winners, photos from the evening and the case studies are all available on the FC London website www.forestry.gov.uk/london-awards

4 Protection & Resilience

Data, evidence and advocacy work

The FC London workplan for 2013/14 is published on the [website](#). To support this, we have our own PowerPoint presentation to explain our objectives and priorities including

partnership and advocacy work. It highlights the often unique challenges and opportunities in London as well as explaining the benefits that the urban forest provides.

Influence other regulations

The Department for Communities and Local Government are assessing the responses to the internal consultation on the new TPO guidance and will be publishing this sometime during the summer. FC London is assisting with this.

Support partnerships

London Enterprise Panel

We are working with the Defra family and the Natural Environment Leaders Group to find the most effective ways to connect with the London Enterprise Panel. The London LEP is different to LEPs elsewhere in the country – a summary is on the GLA website:

“It should be noted that, because of London’s unique governance arrangements, the Panel’s role will not be the same as that of the local enterprise partnerships that have been established elsewhere in the country. For example, in London, the functions of the former London Development Agency (the Regional Development Agency for Greater London) have been folded into the GLA and will not be taken on by the London Enterprise Panel. The Panel will therefore have an advisory role and work within the framework set by the London Plan and other Mayoral strategies. Whilst the Panel may make recommendations to the Mayor with regard to funding and policy decisions, the Panel will not deliver services such as business support.”

All London Green Grid

The GLA have recently announced the successful projects to receive their Green Fund support (totalling £2M). We are starting to review these to see if (a) they include tree & woodland related activity (b) there are opportunities for us and partners to contribute / complement the successful projects with our own activity.

Planning & construction sector

TDAG is continuing to work on its new guidance “Trees in the hard landscape” with FC London assistance. CIRIA are promoting its role as an information source on trees to the construction sector through the Green Infrastructure Partnership and is currently working (with FC London help) to produce an online website portal aimed specifically at the construction sector.

Work standards

Proposed British Standard: BS 8545 Trees - from nursery to independence in the landscape - has just been released for public consultation. The London team are coordinating the response from Forestry Commission England, to ensure issues such as biosecurity and plant passports are considered.

BTP Barriers to tree planting report

The barriers report is now released on the websites of five leading sector partners (LTOA, NATO, TC, TDAG and Community Forests). It was referred to in a Sunday

Telegraph article on the 6th of June on urban forestry and tree loss. Partners are currently working on taking forward specific recommendations.

5 Improvement

Woodland Management

Due to the focus on OPM control, there has been less capacity for proactive work to encourage woodland management. Despite this, good progress is being made with LB Bromley, with grant support potentially totalling more than £100k for woodland management, environmental enhancement and public access improvement.

There have been no felling licence or EIA schemes during this period.

Recently approved EWGS support

Wimbledon & Putney Commons - Woodland Management Grant (WMG) 226 ha. Total grant value £33,900. Work includes 7 ha Holly clearance, 2ha Coppice work, 4ha Bracken control, Litter control, Health and safety audit, 2 ponds created, 7 ha glade management, Drainage works

LB Haringey– Woodland Planning Grant £2200 to produce a management plan that covers 117Ha of woodland

LB Haringey – Woodland Management Grant £9015 over 94Ha of woodland. Work includes tree safety inspections and remedial work, ride management, drainage improvement, open space management

RELEAF Community Grant Scheme

The application window for round 2 of the fund is open until 16th August and there is a budget of £100k again. [Forms and guidance](#).

6 Expansion

Financial incentives

Big Tree Plant

On the 15th May Minister David Heath attended a planting event on Great Portland Street to celebrate the final planting of a Big Tree Plant funded project implemented by the W1W Tree Planting Initiative. At the event, the Minister announced the final round for BTP, through which we want to commit the final ~35,000 trees required that will deliver the 1 million tree target. [Applications](#) must be submitted by 31st August.

Mayors Street Tree Initiative

As with the Community Grant Scheme, the application window is open until 16th August. This is an important year where we hope to see the majority of tree planting committed towards the 10,000 tree target – so we are keen to encourage [applications](#) this year.