

**Environment & Climate Change
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Tree Management Strategy

9th November, 2021

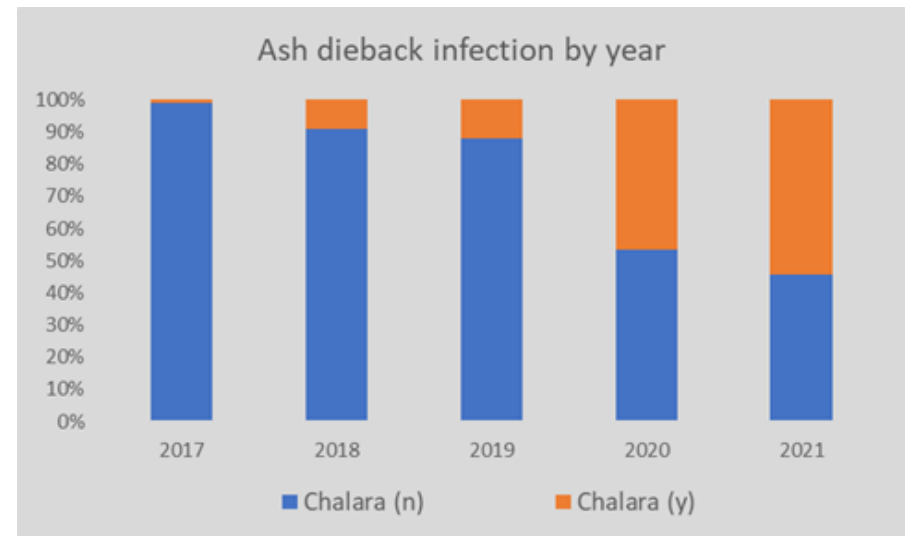
Adam Goodall

Principal Tree & Woodlands Manager

- ❑ The Tree Management Strategy and Tree Planting Action Plan were approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday 24th March 2020.
- ❑ The Strategy included an action plan to set out the Council's targets to significantly increase tree planting across Leicestershire in relation to the challenges faced as one of the least wooded counties in the country with 6% overall cover, compared to 10%+ nationally.
- ❑ The effects of Ash Dieback will have a significant affect on the biodiversity and landscape of the County with over 80% of ash trees predicted to die.
- ❑ The need for increased tree cover, both globally and locally, is well documented as a major action to mitigate climate change.
- ❑ The Tree Management and Planting Plan make a significant contribution to increasing the number of trees across the County, the Plan aids in delivery of both our Environment and Country Parks Strategy
- ❑ The Conservative manifesto included a pledge to plant 700,000 trees across the County: one tree for every resident of Leicestershire.

- ❑ Ash are one of the most common trees in Leicestershire. It is anticipated that Ash Dieback will decimate the species, increasing pressure on already threatened tree populations, landscapes and the environment.
- ❑ The challenges posed by the Ash Dieback disease now present within Leicestershire, are being addressed through the Council's Ash Dieback Action Plan & Project Board.
- ❑ Over the next 10 years between 75% and 90% of all ash trees in the County may be lost. (estimated 500K+ pop)
- ❑ There are an estimated 130,000 ash within or adjacent to the highway network - 98,000 on third party land and 32,000 on adopted highway.
- ❑ From 2017 the Forestry Group have been undertaking a programme of ongoing inspections of its highway trees to monitor progress of the disease and identify works as required..
- ❑ The trend between 2017 and 2021 suggests that ash die back has now fully established in the County and the rate of spread has increased.

2017 - 1% of trees inspected showed symptoms of ash dieback.
2020 - 47% of trees inspected showed symptoms of ash dieback.
2021 - 54% of trees inspected showed symptoms.



Delivery of the Pledge over next 10 years – Two key threads



Partnership working

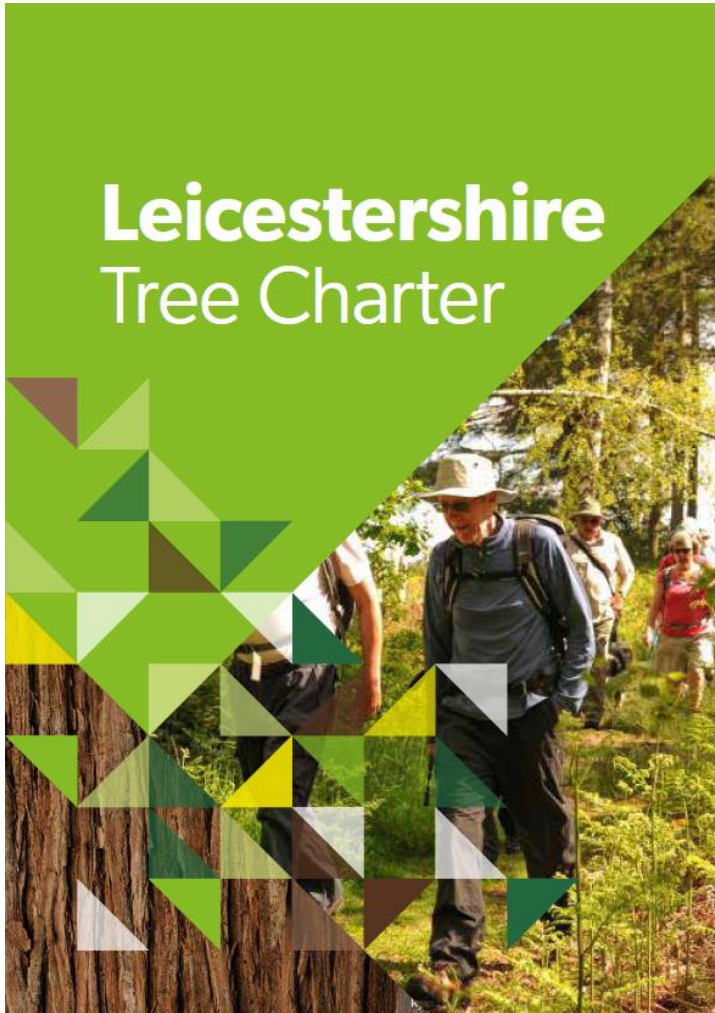
- ❑ We will collaborate with a range of different partners to facilitate the planting of 700,000 trees in Leicestershire.
- ❑ Through our Tree Charter we will collaborate with partners to deliver campaigns which will engage residents and other partners by raising awareness about the benefits of trees and encouraging tree planting.

Leading by example

- ❑ As a major landowner in Leicestershire, we will identify areas of our own estate where trees, hedgerows and woodland can be planted, in order to increase overall tree coverage.
- ❑ We will develop new approaches to securing significant numbers of tree stock to ensure continued supply for planting schemes, including a new tree nursery to facilitate tree planting objectives.



- ❑ Project Board met on 8th September, 2021.
- ❑ Board is attended by a cross-section of departments to ensure buy-in to the project and chaired by Gordon McFarlane.
- ❑ Board will meet Quarterly to monitor progress and provide oversight.
- ❑ Website pages being redesigned to provide landing page for the project, further information on Tree Strategy, Charter and advice/guidance for planting projects.
- ❑ Website will include means of registering tree planting projects being undertaken throughout the County by other organisations.
- ❑ Comms plan approved for regular media releases and good news stories.
- ❑ Delivery will start this year with a number of new planting across the County (also see delivery plan).



- ❑ Aim to launch the Charter during National Tree Week in November 2021.
- ❑ Produced in partnership with the National Forest.
- ❑ Calls for collective vision and partnership working across Leicestershire to protect and enhance our treescape.
- ❑ Identifies three key drivers for action: to support a secure and safe future, to enhance the wellbeing of our communities and to facilitate sustainable enterprise.

- ❑ A Woodland Management Plan has been produced to guide the sustainable management of 338ha of woodland across the County Parks estate.
- ❑ An application has been made for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Improvement Grant to fund management activities over five years from January 2022
- ❑ The total value of the grant would be c.£110,000 over 5 years, plus £3,000 in capital works
- ❑ The primary objectives for all sites to meet sustainable forest management over a long-term vision are:
 - ❑ To manage the woodlands through a programme of felling, thinning and replanting to create and maintain a varied age class distribution.
 - ❑ To maintain and enhance the public amenity and access provision across all sites.
 - ❑ To maintain and enhance the woodlands' landscape value into the future.
 - ❑ To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.
 - ❑ To work towards a varied age class distribution across the woodland estate.
- ❑ A sounds communication strategy will be developed to manage public interest to ensure site users are fully informed of planned work.

Tree Planting Action Plan

Key Updates

Action

Local Authority Treescapes Fund – LCC application to the Forestry Commission on behalf of a partnership bid – provides 100% capital costs to increase tree planting and natural regeneration in local communities. The bid will provide £227k over four years to plant and maintain **over 20,000 new trees** across the county by parish councils, community groups, district councils and LCC.
FUNDING SECURED for delivery in 2021/22

20,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Urban Tree Challenge Fund (round 3) – Application to be developed for highway sites in NW Leicestershire - The fund provides 50% of published standard costs for planting and establishment within urban areas. The bid will provide £25k to deliver the planting of additional **60 street trees** planted in Coalville. **Expected before end of 2021**

60 street trees
plus 200 BAU
street trees
Winter 2021/22

Partnership Working - Work with partners to monitor newly planted trees in the county by individuals/partners. E.g. Woodland Trust, National Forest, Tree Council and other partners. Provide advice / guidance to district councils' Planning Authorities in the revision of Local Plan policies and other strategic documents to include woodland cover and canopy cover targets
20,000+ trees per annum. In progress.

20,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Changing Landscapes scheme - Ravenstone. National Forest funding to transform 9ha of arable farmland to a mix of woodland and rough ground for barn owl foraging. Will establish over **12,000 trees** across the site and provide capital costs of £180k towards the scheme.
Potential to dedicate new woodland as part of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations
FUNDING SECURED for delivery in 2021/22

12,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Woodland Trust Partnership – Have agreed with the Woodland Trust to increase support for tree packs/woodland creation to provided estimated **30,000 trees and hedge plants per annum** for planting within the County. **SECURED for delivery in 2021/22**

30,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Tree Planting Action Plan

Tree Planting Delivery– Indicative annual planting numbers

Delivery	Yr0 20/21	Yr1 21/22	Yr2 22/23	Yr3 23/24	Yr4 24/25	Yr5 25/26	Yr6 – 10 26-31	
Free Trees/Woodland packs	19,300	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	60,000	
LCC Estate	300	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	110,000	
Direct advice & support	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	
Partnership activities	-	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000	
Totals	19,600	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	360,000	<u>739,600</u>

Tree Planting Action Plan - Funding

- ❑ The England Trees Action Plan, supported by an intended £500m from the Nature for Climate Fund support the creation and management of trees and woodland.
- ❑ Aims to treble tree planting rates in England reflecting England's contribution to meeting the UK's overall target of planting 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament.

This includes opportunities of:

- ❑ over £25 million for Woodland Creation Partnerships this year alone – **Suitable for farm estate**
- ❑ £6 million for the Urban Tree Challenge Fund for 2021/22 & 2022/23 – **Bid in progress**
- ❑ £2.7 million Local Authority Treescapes Fund for 2021/22 – **Bid Successful**
- ❑ £15 million for the England Woodland Creation Offer - supports woodland establishment as well as natural colonisation, agroforestry and riparian planting – **Aimed at landowners but will fund LCC to design.**



The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 
May 2021



Tree Planting Action Plan - Funding

Appendix A – Current Grant Schemes for tree planting projects	Funding
<p>Ash Dieback Project Board: £80k per annum to fund recovery tree planting – currently covers free tree schemes including Woodland Trust and other landscape restoration work</p>	<p>£80k per annum</p>
<p>England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO): support to create new woodland, including through natural colonisation, on areas as small as 1 hectare. Minimum block size 01.ha. Woodlands scored based on criteria such as nature recovery, improved water quality, planting riparian buffers, flood risk prevention & social benefits, such as public access</p>	<p>100% capital costs for establishing woodland. Additional payments for public benefits.</p>
<p>HS2 Woodland Fund: funding to support native woodland creation or the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) within a 25-mile zone surrounding the HS2</p>	<p>Up to £8,500 for new woods & £4,000 for PAWS rest.</p>
<p>Woodland Creation Grant: capital grant supplies 80% of standard costs through the Countryside Stewardship scheme.</p>	<p>capped at £6,800/ha</p>
<p>National Forest Changing Landscape Scheme: based on standard costs to establish new woodland and key wildlife habitats</p>	<p>100% capital/maintenance costs plus incentive payments.</p>
<p>Urban Tree Challenge Fund: 2 years funding for urban tree planting and establishment within target areas.</p>	<p>up to 50% of standard costs for urban tree planting</p>
<p>Local Authority Treescapes Fund: Towards establishing trees in non-woodland settings such as in riverbanks, hedgerows, parklands, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths.</p>	<p>100% capital costs and 3 yrs maintenance based on standard costs</p>
<p>Small scale schemes: Annual small scale schemes by Tree Council (Community Hedge Fund, Orchards for Schools free tree packs); Woodland Trust (Community/School packs/Trees for your farm), TCV (I dig trees) etc</p>	<p>Various.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank