

# TREE MANAGEMENT AND PLANTING PLAN

2021





# Introduction

Leicestershire's trees and woodlands provide multiple benefits, including producing oxygen and storing carbon, absorbing pollutants and aiding flood water control all of which mitigate the effects of climate change. Trees also provide multiple ecological benefits, they promote health and well-being and produce fuel and timber.

The Tree Management Action Plan focuses on the policies identified in the County Council's Tree Management Strategy. It identifies key actions and timescale required for the County Council to manage and enhance tree and woodland assets under its stewardship..



# Biodiversity and Climate Change

The County Council's Environment Strategy addresses the council's response to climate change and biodiversity loss.

The pivotal role that trees have in stabilising and mitigating climate change is widely recognised by government, the scientific community and industry advisory groups. HM Government's 25 Year Environmental Plan draws this to our attention

*"By using our land more sustainably and creating new habitats for wildlife, including by planting more trees, we can arrest the decline in native species and improve our biodiversity" (Prime Minister, 2017,).*

## **In all of the work that we do we will ensure that we :-**

- ✓ Sustainably manage the County Council's tree resource
- ✓ Maximise the multiple benefits that trees provide
- ✓ Work to increase our tree cover across Leicestershire
- ✓ Follow all industry recommendations to maintain bio- security
- ✓ Increase biodiversity and tree resilience





# Service delivery - roles and responsibilities



- ❑ The strategic management of the County Council's tree resource is the responsibility of the Forestry Group in the Corporate Resources Dept. The Forestry Group undertake tree safety inspections, deal with customer enquiries and specify the programme of maintenance and remedial work.
- ❑ The Forestry team in Operational Highways include tree surgery and tree maintenance operatives and undertake the specified tree maintenance contracting works on the highway network.
- ❑ Tree maintenance on other County Council sites is undertaken by an external tree work contractor.
- ❑ The County Council's tree preservation orders are managed by the Environmental Policy and Strategy Team



Excellent  
Forestry Service  
Development



# Forestry service delivery

In 2018 the Transformation Unit undertook a service review of the authority's Forestry function. This included the Forestry Group in Corporate Resources and Operational Highway Forestry Team in Environment & Transport.

The review concluded that the current arrangements should be retained but recommended a number of service improvements.

Priorities	Key Actions/ Performance indicators		Lead	Timescale	Cost £
Service Review	Identify service level requirements to meet future service demands (i.e. BAU)  Establish an effective Inspection and advisory function		Head of Service		n/a
Review contracting arrangements	Review the process and procedures for contracting works		Forestry Group	2019-2020	TBC
Inspection and works Programme	Implement a programme of tree inspections to eliminate the backlog  Eliminate back log of highways tree work programme	Reduction in backlog of inspections No of inspections completed  Reduction in backlog of highways tree work Oldest work request outstanding	Forestry Group  Operational Highways Forestry Team	2020	£77K allocated



# Tree Management (BAU)



# Tree Management

The Tree Management Strategy sets out the actions required to manage and increase the County Council's tree resource, and outlines the authority's approach relating to the various activities of tree management.

Tree management				
Priorities	Key actions	Key performance indicators		Lead
<b>Inspection</b>	Implement a comprehensive programme of tree inspections across the County	Routine Inspections Specialist Inspections Low Risk Trees High Risk Trees	Annual Every 3 years Every 6 years Every 18 months	Site Officers Forestry Group Forestry Group Forestry Group
<b>Maintenance</b>	Ensure all tree maintenance is prioritised appropriately to maintain the safety of the public; highways and buildings	Hazard posing imminent danger (Category 1a) Urgent Works (Category 1b) High Priority Works (Category 2) Routine Works (Category 3) Annually Programmed Works (Category 4)	Same Day 24 -48 hours 28 Days 3 Months 12 Months	LHO Forestry team
<b>Tree related subsidence</b>	Respond appropriately to all enquiries /claims relating to tree subsidence and deal with all claims in accordance with the Civil Procedure rules	Initial inspection within x days ? No and cost of insurance claims ?		Forestry Group
<b>Emergency response</b>	Implement an emergency call out procedure for tree surgery	Maintain an emergency call-out procedure to ensure a timely response to emergencies in extreme weather.  Provide and train staff to be able to receive incoming enquiries and reports and prioritise tasks to ensure resources are deployed effectively  Undertake follow-up inspections where there has been personal injury or damage to property	ongoing  Ongoing  Within 7days	LHO Forestry team  Forestry Group/Ops control room  Forestry Group



# Tree Management

Priorities	Key actions	Key performance indicators		Lead
<b>Standards of work</b>	Ensure all operations meet the requirements of appropriate industry codes of practice work	Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to carry out activities in compliance with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant B.S.I. recommendations</li> <li>• NTSG 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees'</li> <li>• LCC specifications</li> <li>• Standards/codes of practice relating to Bio-Security</li> </ul>	100% of work compliant with relevant standards	Operational Highways Forestry team/Forestry Group

## Biodiversity and climate change



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Trees play a key role in addressing climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, producing oxygen, retaining water and reducing air temperatures. Trees also provide vital shade in our towns and cities which is so important during periods of hot weather. They also reduce the effects of atmospheric pollution by intercepting airborne particles and play a key role in preventing flooding through the absorption and storage of water.



# Ash dieback

Ash die-back has been identified across much of Leicestershire and the effects of the disease are likely to have a significant and detrimental impact on the county's rural landscapes. The County Council has produced an Ash Die-back Action Plan, identifying the procedures and resources which need to be put in place to manage the effects of the disease.

Priorities	Key actions	Key performance indicators/ Timescales	Lead	Budget £'s
Ash Dieback (ADB)	Provide an annual ADB inspection report	Annual – March 2020 onwards	Forestry Group	£400k currently (per annum MTFS)
	Implement a programme of inspections	% of inspections completed to plan	Forestry Group	
	Ensure all tree wardens and highway inspectors are appropriately trained to identify the disease and report as appropriate	Ongoing	Forestry Group/E&T	
	Develop and implement a tree replacements scheme to mitigate against the effects of ADB	Ongoing	Forestry Group/E&T	

# Woodland Management

The County Council owns some 400 hectares of woodland on its country park and county farm land holdings. Appropriate areas of woodland could be put into active management under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, administered by the Forestry Commission . There is currently a potential to generate up to £25K per annum

Priorities	Key actions	Timescales	Lead
Woodland Management	Identify and map all areas of woodland under LCC ownership	Complete	Forestry Group
	Identify and carry out appropriate prescriptions of woodland management works	2020	Forestry Group
	Develop a the woodland management plan and obtain approval from the Forestry Commission/Natural England for implementation	Plan approval 2021 Implementation - 2022-2027	Forestry Group
	Apply to the Forestry Commission to obtain Countryside Stewardship funding	2021/2022	Forestry Group



# Tree Planting

Leicestershire today is one of the least wooded counties in the country. The potential effects of Ash Die-back will further contribute to the decline of trees in the county. The need for increased tree cover, both globally and locally is well documented as a major action to mitigate climate change.

## We need to plant more trees !

The County Council has actively planted trees for many years and has been a major supporter of the National Forest converting over 200 hectares of farmland and derelict land within Leicestershire into new woodland. The county council has also supported tree planting on private land through a variety of planting initiatives. The current initiatives which support planting on private land include : -

**Free Trees Scheme** – providing over 1,500 specimen trees (2-3m ht) per annum for planting as new individuals within the landscape

**More Hedges** – for planting a new native hedgerow with hedgerow trees. Applicants are required to contribute 20% of the costs. Target of 1,250m

**More Woods** – for planting a new native woodland of 0.5ha (1.25 acres) in size. Applicants are required to contribute 20% of the costs. Target of 10ha+ per annum

**Targeting Tree Disease packs** – offers landowners and farmers free tree packs to help renew and restore existing woodland and hedges under threat from tree diseases such as Ash Dieback. 100 packs per annum.

The above schemes are funded from service budgets and are supported by the Woodland Trust and from landowner contributions and will achieve over 30,000 trees per year.



# Tree Planting – Annual Programme

Action Plan	Target
Strategic review of farms, Country parks, highway verges (urban & rural) and other Council property. Design rolling programme of schemes for new hedges, copses, hedgerow trees and identify any potential large-scale woodland creation sites e.g. Lutterworth East, Snibston etc. <b>10,000+ trees per annum.</b>	Rolling programme <b>100,000+ trees</b>
Develop new approach to securing significant numbers of tree stock to ensure continued supply for planting schemes including the creation of new native tree nursery.	ongoing
Introduce targeted landowner advice and liaison to increase tree & hedgerow planting across Leicestershire to farms, schools, parish and district councils, signposting to other grant schemes e.g. woodland challenge offer.. <b>10,000+ trees per annum</b>	Rolling Programme of advice/support. <b>100,000+ trees</b>
Double the capacity of Woodland Trust Tree Packs/MOREwoods/MOREhedges from 50 packs and 5ha woodland to 100 packs, 10ha woodland & 1.2km of new hedges per annum. <b>30,000 trees per annum.</b>	<b>300,000+ trees</b>
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. Launch webpage/media to support and pledge as part of the Charter. <b>20,000+ trees per annum</b>	<b>200,000+ trees</b>
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.	Rolling programme
Establish Strategic Project Board to agree plans and initiatives towards the tree planting pledge; identify capacity and required resources to accelerate delivery of the project and provide clear reporting and monitoring structures.	Autumn 2021. Report Quarterly.