

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Ian Selby (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Johnson, Councillor Bridget Ley, Councillor Paul Martin, Councillor Charmaine Morgan, Councillor Murray Turner, Councillor Mark Whittington and Councillor Paul Wood

Agenda Supplement

7.	Environmental Crime Partnership To receive an annual report and presentation.	(Pages 3 - 28)
10.	Tree and Woodland Strategy To seek the support of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024 - 2034, and to recommend to Cabinet for approval and adoption.	(Pages 29 - 112)

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LINCOLNSHIRE

Environmental
Crime
Partnership



Annual Report 2023

Agenda Item 7

**Protecting
Lincolnshire's
environment by
working together to
effectively tackle
waste related
crimes.**

Our Mission

To reduce and prevent fly tipping across Lincolnshire, by bringing all relevant agencies together and working in partnership.

To seek to find new and innovative methods for closer working, both operationally and strategically.

Message from the Chair

I am delighted to introduce you to the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership (ECP) Annual Report for 2023.

It has been another busy year for the ECP and our approach remains two-strand. We continue to spread important messages and positive results of the partnership by attending events, delivering presentations and through our usual digital channels.

Communication campaigns have helped to empower local communities to make more informed decisions about how they dispose of excess domestic waste, whilst our work with external agencies is designed to help stop environmental crime at the source. One of the biggest events of our calendar, The Lincolnshire Show in June 2023, helped us to reach thousands of Lincolnshire residents - we even managed to make the topic of waste fun for the younger generation with an interactive fly tipping game.

As well as public facing events, networking with those from within our industries has been an effective way of sharing our combined achievements of partners as well as exchanging best practice. This helps us to ensure that our environment is protected - not just within Lincolnshire, but across the UK. Through this, and through the authoring of blog posts and sharing of social media, we hope to inspire other professionals to emulate our model in their own partnerships.

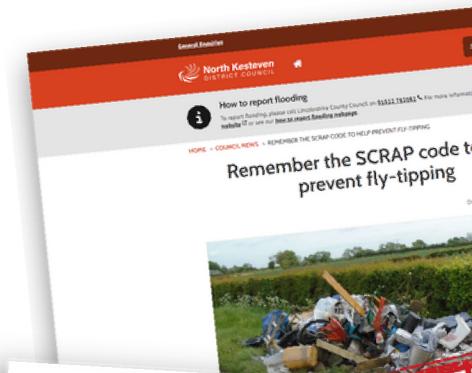
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With a renewed energy from all partners, I am looking forward to seeing what this truly remarkable partnership can achieve. A heightened social media presence, more days of action and a process for capturing accurate and useful data are all planned.

Finally, it is an honour to serve as Chair and I am delighted to showcase to you the impactful work we have accomplished together in 2023.

Ayeisha Kirkham

Chair of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership



Blog Creating a better place

Organisations: [Environment Agency](#)

Creating an effective waste crime partnership

[Environment Agency](#), 6 September 2023 - [Environment Agency - Waste](#)



Stuart Hoyle has worked at the Environment Agency for eight years and has been a Waste Crime Engagement Specialist since the role was created in 2019.

He highlights the panel session on 13 September by the Waste Crime Engagement Specialists at the annual Resource and Waste Management Expo and why effective partnerships matter.



Membership



Sharing best practice

Leading the way

Alongside his colleagues in waste crime engagement, Stuart Hoyle, Vice-Chair of the Partnership, delivered a presentation at the Environmental Services and Solutions Expo at the NEC Birmingham. The session was followed by a Q&A panel session.

The purpose of the presentation was to position the Environmental Crime Partnership as an industry leader in tackling waste crime.

It was also designed to inform and support other local authorities and stakeholders from right across the country to create their own effective waste crime partnerships, or get direction on how to improve existing ones.

Having been recognised by national peers and external partners such as Keep Britain Tidy and the National Fly tipping Prevention Group, the formation of the ECP was used as an example of best practice throughout the event.

Stuart's blog published ahead of the event is available online:
<https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2023/09/06/creating-an-effective-waste-crime-partnership/>



It is clear that the ECP is leading the way and has been showcased as an effective model to follow in tackling and preventing environmental crime

Stuart Hoyle, Vice Chair of the ECP and Waste Crime Engagement Specialist at Environment Agency



Following the session,

100%

of delegates said they would look to improve, refresh or establish a waste crime partnership

Sharing best practice

A national presence

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The Chair and Vice Chair were invited to be part of the National Flytipping Prevention group. This resulted in the development of the **Fly Tipping Partnership Framework** which was published in March 2023.

By pooling resources and expertise, a cooperative approach has helped partners of the ECP to achieve positive, impactful results. It is really fantastic to see.

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presented the findings of the National Waste Crime Survey to the ECP, with an emphasis on what this meant for Lincolnshire.

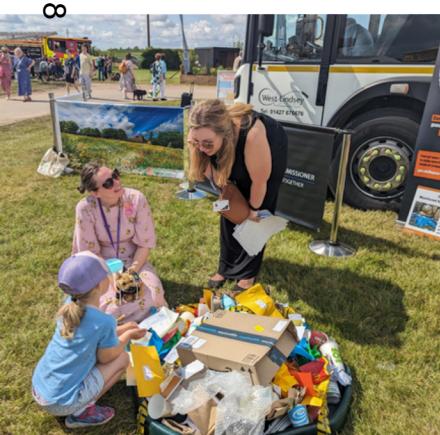
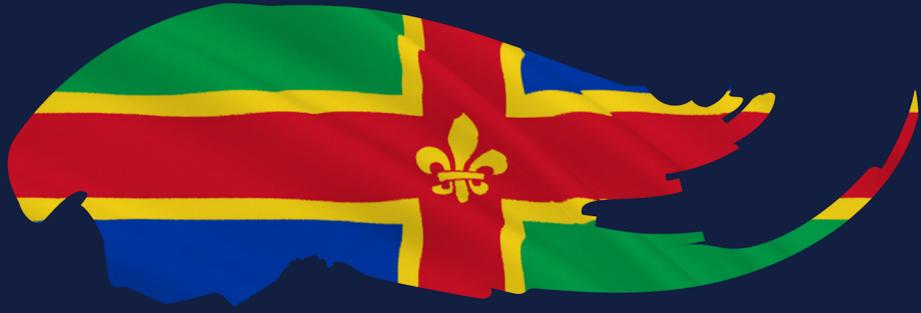
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Raising awareness

The Lincolnshire Show

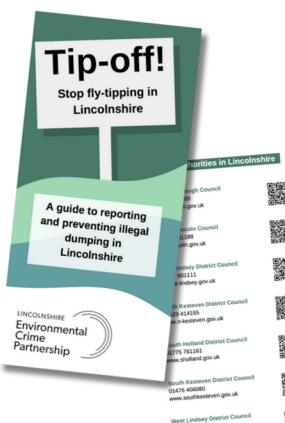


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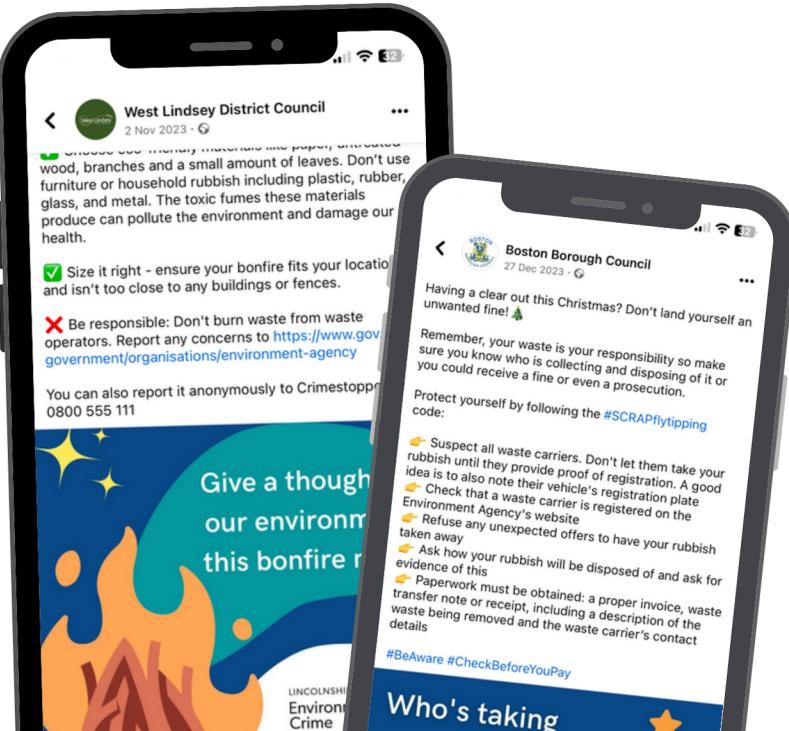
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Communicating as a partnership

When combined, the social media channels of all 23 members of the ECP reaches hundreds of thousands of Lincolnshire residents every day.

Using those powerful platforms to share success stories, educational information and examples of partnership working is instrumental in highlighting the work of the ECP, its partners and the part they play in tackling environmental crime.



Social media as a communications tool

The ECP continues to utilise social media as an efficient tool for information sharing.

Five social media campaigns were distributed by the ECP in 2023, including key topics such as spring cleaning guidance, Bonfire Night Safety and how to dispose of Christmas waste over the festive period.

In 2024, the partnership plans to launch its own social media platform to strengthen its online presence and share further success stories.

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The Communications Lead helps to disseminate this information throughout the partnership and can provide approved statements from the Chair and Vice Chair of the ECP.

Ambitions for the year ahead

An action plan for 2024

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It is vital that we work together to empower our communities to make the right decision when it comes to waste and environmental crime.

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The Environmental Crime Partnership is a fantastic example of how effective that partnership working can be.

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Police & Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

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Renewal and continuation of Operation Asgard.

Continue to build a calendar of activities to support with targeted communication and education.

For example, an ECP presence at The Lincolnshire Show 2024 is already planned.

Establish a wider social media presence and continue to implement the Communications Plan established by the ECP across the county and beyond.

Find ways to improve consistent data capture across all partners of the ECP to highlight the impact of the partnership.



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Chair:

Ayeisha Kirkham

Head of Service (Public Protection)
South Kesteven District Council
Chartered Environmental Health
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ayeisha.kirkham@southkesteven.gov.uk

Vice Chair:

Stuart Hoyle

Waste Crime Engagement Specialist
The Environment Agency

stuart.hoyle1@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership



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ayeisha.kirkham@southkesteven.gov.uk

Vice Chair:

Stuart Hoyle Waste Crime Engagement Specialist at The Environment Agency.
stuart.hoyle1@environment-agency.gov.uk

ECP Comms Lead: Molly- Mae Taylor (SKDC)
Secretarial Support- Paige Monaghan (OPCC)
Andrew Beaver- ECP Enviro Crime Officers
Working Group Chair (SKDC)



**SOUTH
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The Beginning - 2019

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We pledge to work together to tackle fly-tipping across Lincolnshire

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

CLA
Country Land & Business Association

East Lindsey DISTRICT COUNCIL
East Lindsey District Council

Environment Agency
The Environment Agency

Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Lincolnshire POLICE
policing with PRIDE

NFU
National Farmers Union

North Kesteven DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Lindsey DISTRICT COUNCIL

#FlyTipFreeLincs



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The Catalyst for formation of the Partnership- Summer 2020



Waste Deposit- Norton Disney, North Kesteven (Farmland 40 Tonne Deposit)



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The Catalyst for formation of the Partnership- Summer 2020

11



Waste Deposit- Leadenham (Farmland 40 Tonne Deposit)



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In November 2020 the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership was formed.

(Autumn 2020 approval by the SOWG and the LWP)

⇒ **We have a Terms Of Reference and Information Sharing Agreement.**

We have over 20 different Partners on the Partnership.

We have an established Environmental Crime Officers Working Group that feeds into the ECP.





The aims of the partnership are to:

- Reduce and prevent fly tipping across Lincolnshire, by bringing all relevant agencies together and working in partnership.
- Seek to find new and innovative methods for closer working, both operationally and strategically.

The Annual Report can be accessed here:

[Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership \(lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](http://lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk)





Annual Report 2023



Protecting Lincolnshire's environment by working together to effectively tackle waste related crimes.

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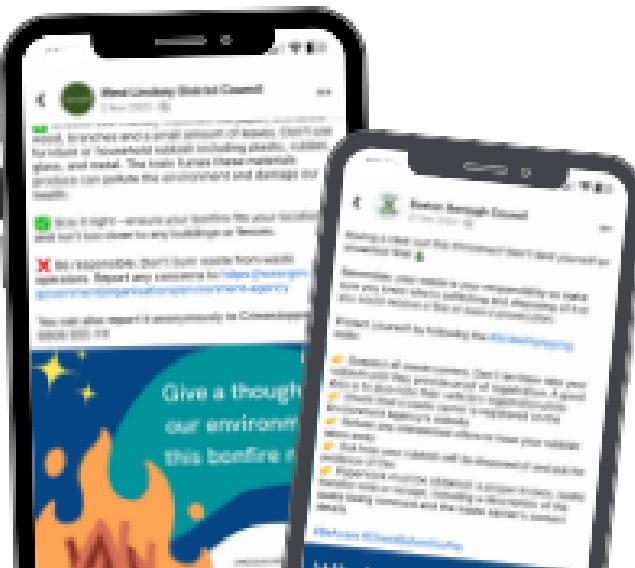
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Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 March 2024

Report of Councillor Patsy Ellis and
Councillor Rhys Baker, Cabinet
Members for Environment and Waste

Tree and Woodlands Strategy 2024 - 2034

Report Author

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

Serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To seek the support of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024 - 2034, and to recommend to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Recommends the new South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024 - 2034 to Cabinet for approval.**

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven
Which wards are impacted?	All wards

1 Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 A newly established post for a Tree Officer has been established from the 2024/25 financial year onwards, in order to deliver on the Council's work on trees on land within the ownership of South Kesteven District Council as well as to deliver on the actions of the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy. In order to facilitate the delivery of specific actions there may a requirement to consider budgetary support as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 South Kesteven District Council have several legal obligations regarding trees, particularly regarding those found in land within the ownership of the Council that could present a risk to members of the public. The introduction of the new draft Tree and Woodlands Strategy documents do not seek to override these obligations, but to set out a more proactive approach to management of trees for the whole district.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Climate Change

- 1.3 The primary aims of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy are to protect, enhance and increase the district's tree canopy cover, therefore there are clear benefits for

the environment. The planting of trees of any kind provides valuable ecosystem services such as climate change regulation, carbon sequestration, filtering of pollution and in some cases flood prevention.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

2 Background to the Report

- 2.1 Trees play an important role in helping us adapt to a warmer world: trees near rivers help to improve water quality and flood risk, and in our towns help to provide shade. The benefits of trees and greenspace for wellbeing and mental health is also becoming better understood.
- 2.2 As a county, Lincolnshire has one of the lowest levels of tree cover in England, at 5.67% compared to an average for England of around 10%. The lower than national average tree cover is driven by land use in the county, in particular the high proportion of agricultural land with low tree canopy cover. Lincolnshire, including the southern and eastern edges of South Kesteven, include areas of fenland where larger scale tree planting may not be advantageous. Features such as hedges and shrubby plants may be more appropriate to provide an effective ecosystem in some areas.
- 2.3 The UK Government published the new [England Trees Action Plan](#) in May 2021, which sets out the target for tree cover in England to be at least 12% by mid-century. This document includes a call to action for stakeholders to help deliver on the long-term vision for trees and woods in England:
 - Apply for grants for establishing and managing trees and woodlands;
 - Access more and better advice and guidance on establishing and managing trees and woodlands;
 - Work with the UK government to unlock more private finance to invest in trees and woodlands;
 - Plant trees particularly where they make the most difference – for water, biodiversity, climate resilience and close to where people work, live and play;
 - Responsibly enjoy wooded landscapes.
- 2.4 The Environment Act 2021 sets out new environmental duties for public authorities in England. Under the Environment Act public authorities must, as of 2024, consider and report on what action the Council intends to take for biodiversity across the authority. The Council recognises that a carefully planned and managed tree canopy offers a wide range of benefits to the district's biodiversity. Trees can support health and well-being, improve air quality, offer shade for crops and livestock, prevent nutrient loss and soil erosion, improve water quality, and reduce the risk of flooding.

2.5 The Environment Act 2021 also includes expectations for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG for qualifying development sites. This new policy is expected to have a significant effect on on-site biodiversity improvements, and interact with considerations for tree, woodland and hedge retention for sites.

2.6 Local authorities are looking to make progress on the ground to improve tree planting and deliver improvements for biodiversity on a landscape scale. To enable this and target informed selection of sites for wider scale planting, local authorities are starting to produce tree strategies, and some have commenced mass planting programmes.

A Trees and Woodland Strategy for South Kesteven

2.7 South Kesteven District Council is itself responsible for the management of around 6,000 trees of varying age and maturity on land within the ownership or remit of the Council. The Council's Tree Guidelines for the Management of Trees in South Kesteven were approved on 17 September 2019. This guidance sets out the Council's approach as an authority to tree management and protection within the district, noting the need to balance safety with amenity concerns and continuity of care for all the Council's tree stock. South Kesteven District Council further recognised the value of trees through working with the Woodland Trust to develop and adopt the Local Government Charter for Trees, Woods and People at Cabinet on 12 November 2019. This endorses ten key principles to endorse the Council's community leadership role, while recognising the need to balance positive commitments to trees with wider responsibilities including safety, value for money, public amenity and development and growth.

2.8 The need was identified for the Council to take further action with regards to enhancing and protecting the trees of the whole district, as well as those directly managed by the Council. A district-wide Trees and Woodland Strategy would provide the Council with a strategic approach to the management of its tree assets. In order to provide the adequate technical knowledge to develop a high quality and informed strategy which is responsive to the context of South Kesteven, Treconomics were appointed as an external organisation to assist with development of a new district wide strategy.

2.9 The aims of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy were:

- a) To set out the current level of tree canopy cover in the district
- b) To highlight main areas of opportunity to enhance trees and woodlands
- c) To set out what role the Council as local authority can play in facilitating that alongside key partners.

The strategy considers key national, regional as well as local influences and provides clarity on the intricacies of managing trees as assets. By understanding these key requirements, the Council can prioritise service needs, improvements and investment.

- 2.10 Following the development of a draft strategy document, the Council launched a period of research and consultation to inform the new Strategy in early 2024, which included workshop events for internal and external stakeholders on proposed priorities and actions. The event was also open to Councillors and internal Council staff involved in the drafting process.
- 2.11 A public consultation exercise followed, which was completed in February 2024, consisting of a survey which was open to residents for 3 weeks. The purpose of the survey was to assess both public attitudes around trees and woodlands for to increase tree canopy cover within the district, as well as to gauge views on the Council supporting wider tree planting within the district. This consultation saw a response from over 900 respondents with a very strong consensus in support of increased tree planting, maintenance and protection. Detailed results from the consultation can be seen at Appendix 5, which have been used to inform the Trees and Woodland Strategy and clarified the importance of particular actions.
- 2.12 The Trees and Woodlands Strategy is comprised of four separate documents:
 - Trees and Woodlands Strategy Introduction and Vision (Appendix 1)
 - Trees and Woodlands Strategy Targets and Priorities (Appendix 2)
 - Trees and Woodlands Strategy Action Plan (Appendix 3)
 - Trees and Woodlands Strategy Appendices (Appendix 4)
- 2.13 Members are asked to provide comment on the suite of documents comprising the South Kesteven District Council Tree and Woodlands Strategy 2024 and are asked to recommend their approval and adoption to Cabinet.

3 Key Considerations

- 3.1 While the Council has in place Tree Guidelines to set out a number of duties around trees, there is an absence of formal strategic direction for the trees within the district as a whole.
- 3.2 This new strategy provides a stronger approach, which confirms the Council's commitment to enhanced tree management and increased tree canopy cover. The strategy comes following a period of research and consultation, which included a public consultation exercise which received a significant volume of supportive comments, as well as a detailed workshop for internal and external stakeholders on proposed priorities.

4 Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to have a Trees and Woodlands Strategy. However, this decision would not align with the Council's commitment to delivering on its ambitions as set out in its adopted Climate Action Strategy and

on new duties for biodiversity improvements. The results of the public consultation (Appendix 5) also demonstrate a clear desire from residents for the Council to develop a strategic approach to the management of its tree assets.

5 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Trees and Woodlands Strategy will inform how the Council will protect and enhance the district's tree population, with specific reference to tree preservation orders, development control and tree canopy cover increase through public and partnership engagement. In doing so, the Strategy will play a key role in the Council's ambitions to increase biodiversity.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 All Members were invited to attend a workshop on the proposed Trees and Woodlands Strategy on 18 January 2024. The workshop was led by Treeconomics, who were appointed to lead on the development of a new strategy. This offered Members the opportunity to feed into the draft strategy and agree and amend the priorities and action plan.
- 6.2 A separate workshop was held for parish councillors and environmental stakeholders as identified by officers that same day. The workshop was led by Treeconomics and offered attendees the opportunity to feed into the draft strategy and agree and amend the priorities and action plan.
- 6.3 A three-week public consultation subsequently followed on the outcomes from the stakeholder workshops. The consultation received 919 responses which is one of the highest responses of any consultation undertaken by the Council in the last eighteen months. The consultation report is available in Appendix 5.
- 6.4 99% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that trees and woodlands are a valuable natural asset.
- 6.5 96.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that planting, maintaining, and protecting trees in South Kesteven is a worthwhile investment, and something the Council should be involved in/contribute towards.
- 6.6 Overall, the consultation found a very strong consensus for increased tree planting, maintenance and protection from respondents.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 Environment Act 2021 – Government legislation, available online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>
- 7.2 South Kesteven District Council Climate Action Strategy, available online at:

[https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/Climate Action Strategy.pdf](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/Climate%20Action%20Strategy.pdf)

7.3 *Update on Local Authority Biodiversity Duties* - Report to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 4 December 2023 and available online at:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s39873/Update%20on%20Local%20Authority%20Biodiversity%20duties%20Report.pdf>

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Trees and Woodlands Strategy Summary and Vision
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Trees and Woodlands Strategy Targets and Priorities
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Trees and Woodlands Strategy Action Plan
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Trees and Woodlands Strategy Appendices
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South Kesteven District Council

Trees & Woodland Strategy

2024 - 2034

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Appendix 1



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Foreword

We are now facing the major challenges of climate change and experiencing changes in our weather patterns and disruption to the usual balance of nature.

In response to this, South Kesteven District Council recently published its revised Climate Action Strategy, which set out our way forward on reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

As we know, the planting of trees of any kind brings with it valuable ecosystem benefits such as providing natural habitats, limiting the impact of heatwaves in urban areas and the filtering of pollution and flood prevention. Trees also play an important role in positively impacting on the wellbeing of communities and residents. They improve air quality, offer shade for crops and livestock, prevent nutrient loss and soil erosion and improve water quality. They also help to reduce the risk of flooding.

To ensure we have a resilient tree scape that continues to deliver these benefits, there needs to be a comprehensive plan for the management of our existing canopy. The Council has therefore worked to develop and deliver a District-wide Tree and Woodland Strategy as part of its ensuing work-plan.

The purpose of the strategy and accompanying action plan is to establish the current level of tree canopy cover in the District, highlight main areas of opportunity to increase the number of trees and areas of woodland and set out what role the Council can play in facilitating this alongside key partners.

Knowing that trees play such an important part in ensuring our District remains habitable for the future means that we need to protect the trees we have and enhance the tree scape of South Kesteven through continual planting and an expansion of our canopy cover.

We are therefore delighted to introduce South Kesteven District Council's Trees and Woodland Strategy 2024 – 2034.

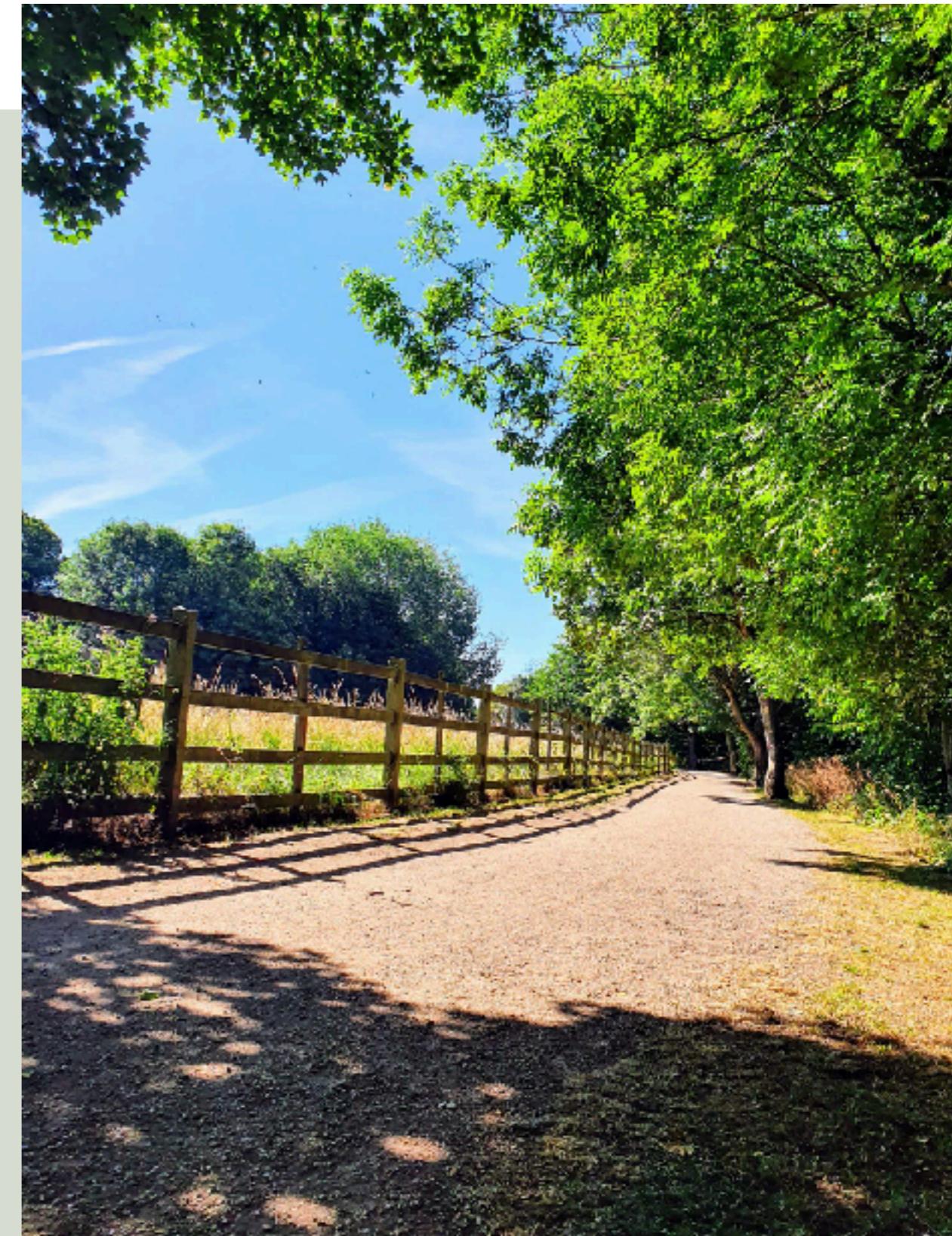
Cabinet Members for Environment and Waste, Councillors Rhys Baker and Patsy Ellis



Cllr Rhys Baker, Joint Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste



Cllr Patsy Ellis, Joint Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste



Benefits of Trees

There are more benefits to trees than many of us appreciate. In keeping with benefits of other natural systems, they are also known as ecosystem services. This approach was standardised by the World Commission on Ecosystem Service Management of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Work continues to quantify and value each of them.

Those that are quantifiable with valuations adopted by national or local government have been included within this report. They include carbon storage and sequestration, pollution mitigation, avoided stormwater runoff, all determined using i-Tree.

Many UK local authorities have also adopted CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees) to place a valuation upon the amenity of public trees.

There are a large number of other benefits where research continues to help assign meaningful financial valuations.

Increased property or rental value:

A series of international third-party studies have shown that trees increase property prices by between 5% to 18%.

Increased consumer spending:

Consumers are willing to spend more in shopping areas with large, well cared for trees. This has been measured as an increase of 9% to 12%.

Climate Adaptation - Temperature Regulation:

Trees and woodlands can reduce peak summer temperatures by up to 7°C. This particular adaptation has long been adopted by authorities in warmer locations and forms a key tenet of green infrastructure thinking. Current research extends into examining the cooling effectiveness of individual species.

Reduced Stress and improved mental health:

Forest Research recently valued this particular benefit of forests and woodlands nationally at £185m. More trees immediately around the home (less than 100 meters) are associated with a reduced risk of being prescribed antidepressant medication. This association is especially strong for deprived groups.

Improved concentration and academic achievement:

Greener schools have higher test scores, even after taking income into account. Middle school students get a boost from school greening. Planting trees within 250m of schools has the greatest effect.

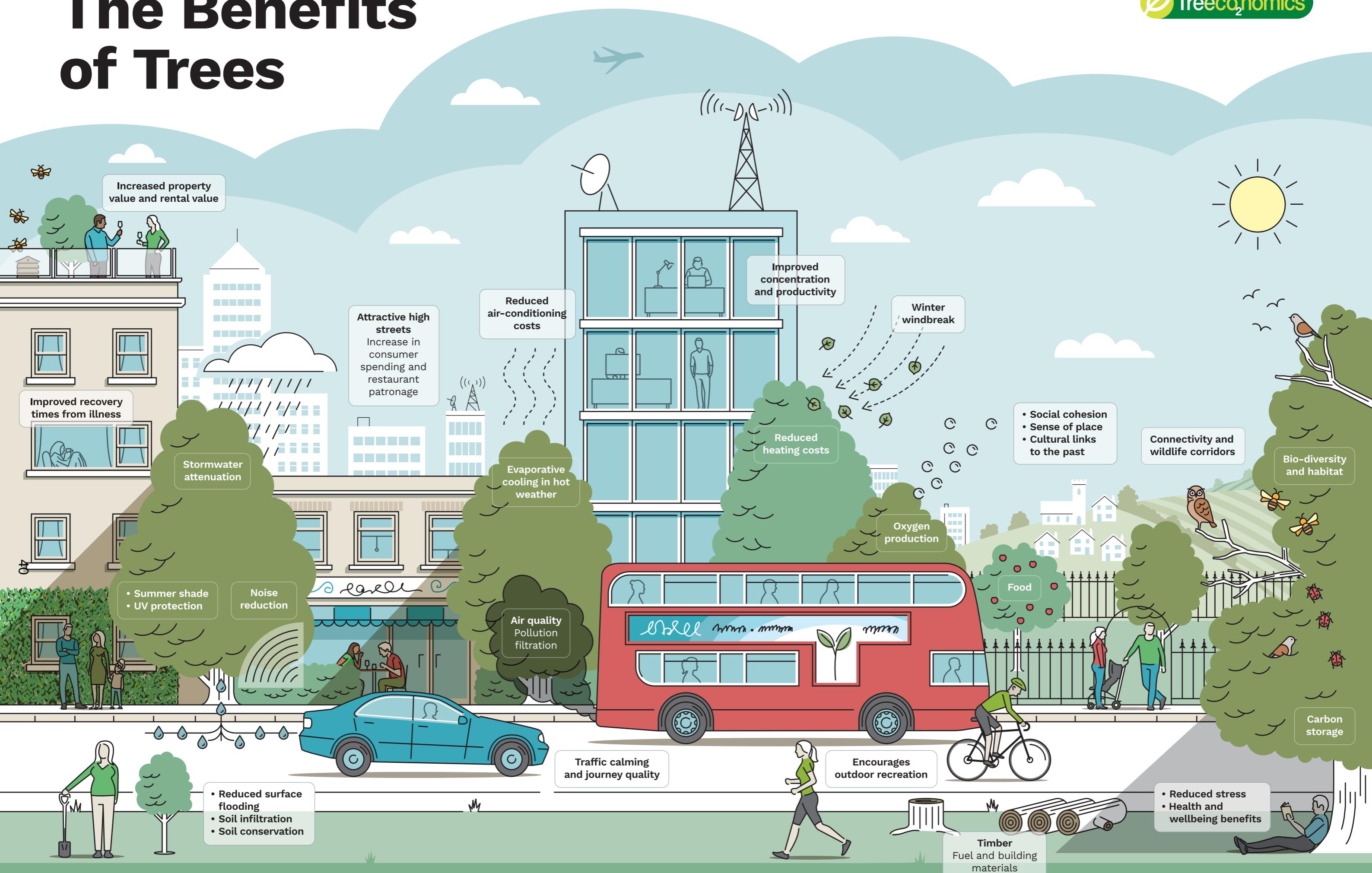
Improved recovery times from illness:

Patients placed in rooms with views of nature experienced shorter stays in the hospital than patients in rooms that faced other buildings.

The image on the following page serves as a good illustration of the many benefits of trees



The Benefits of Trees



History

South Kesteven has a rich range of trees and green spaces. The District is home to a number of ancient tree treasure troves, including over 600 protected ancient trees with notable sites including the charming Belton Park and Grimsthorpe Castle.

The Council is committed to its policy of planting two trees for every one removed. Recent years have also seen new additions to South Kesteven's tree canopy cover:

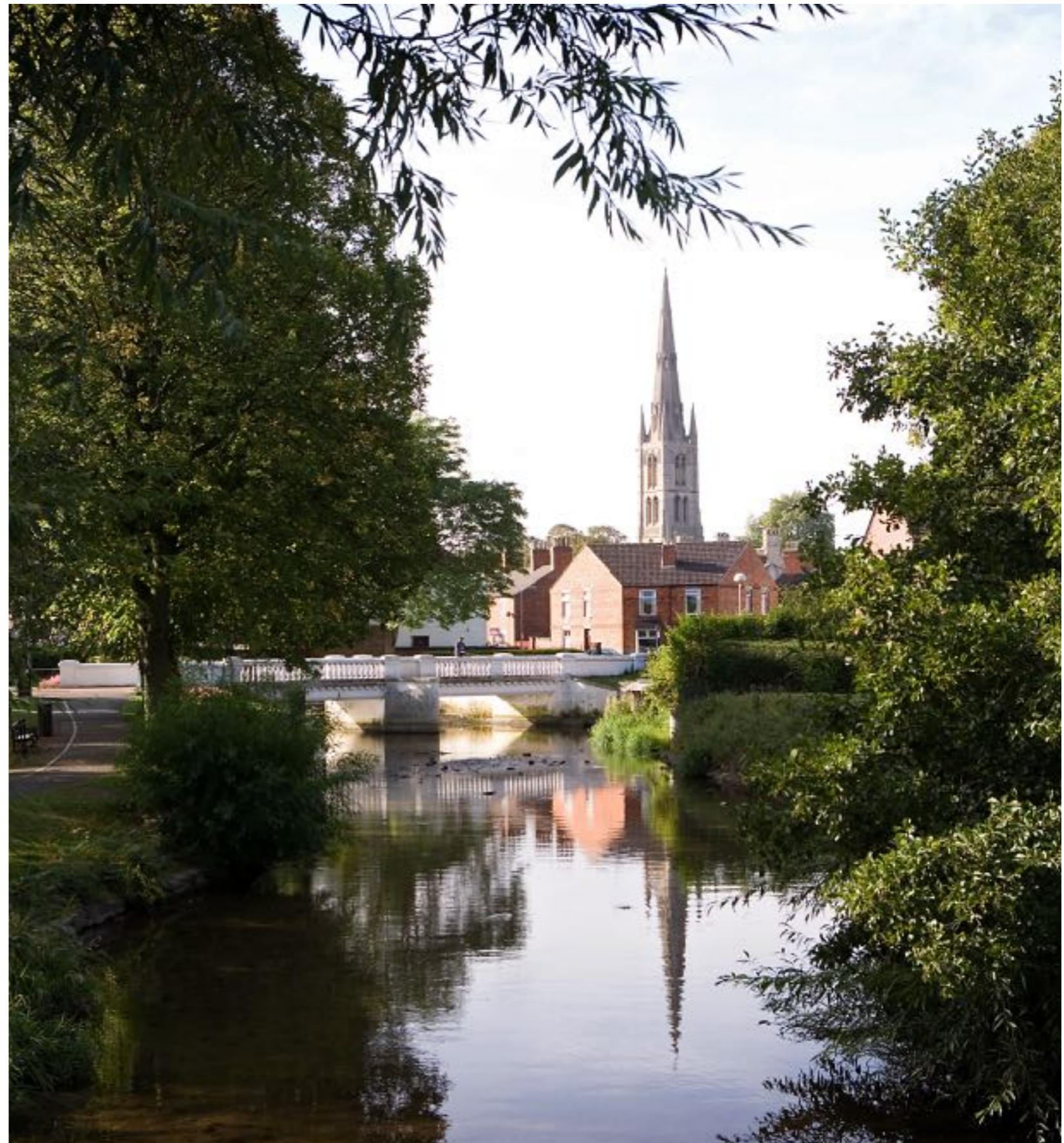
Queen Elizabeth Park is home to Grantham's Diamond Grove. In 2011, sixty silver birch trees were planted by the Wyndham Park Forum in an open area of the park. At the heart of the grove, an English Oak- 'Quercus Robur'- was planted to hopefully live on as Grantham's 'Elizabeth Oak' for hundreds of years.

Grantham's Heroes Commemorative Orchard is home to 75 heritage variety Apple, Plum and Cherry trees. These were planted in 2020 by the Wyndham Park Forum to mark the 7th anniversary of the end of WWII and the joint efforts of the RAF, airborne forces of First Airborne and America's Troop Carrier Command.

To celebrate National Tree Week in 2021, 50 trees - Wild Cherry, Rowan, Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Medlar and Whitebeam – were planted on council-owned areas of green space in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping.

The Witham/Slea Blue Green Corridor ran from 2019 to 2023 and involved tree planting along the River Witham's corridor as well as tree hinging and felling; all with the aim to improve biodiversity in the local area.

2024 will see further trees planted across the District thanks to funding from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund which celebrates the coronation of King Charles III. This will fund up to 31 small community orchards which are due to be created across South Kesteven.



Wyndham Park, Grantham

Current State of Trees and Woodland

South Kesteven's trees and woodlands are a vital resource for the District, with a growing role within the public policy of South Kesteven District Council.

Previous & Current Tree planting initiatives:

- Gaps in key settlement areas
- Connectivity as a challenge
- Threats of new development

South Kesteven's 10% tree cover is half of the 20% recommended by Forest Research and significantly below the 30% target for urban spaces within the 3-30-300 rule recommended by the IUCN. It is not, however, entirely unexpected; South Kesteven's rural setting is dominated by open farmland and hedgerows, with few woodlands. To address the low canopy cover, different approaches will be required in rural areas, versus towns.

This strategy strives to ensure we plant the right trees, in the right places for the right reasons and are also able to provide care and maintenance, involve communities and measure the outcomes (both good and bad), take stock, learn and continually improve.

This strategy reflects the aims of South Kesteven District Council, in line with current international, national, and local policy.

The plan will have a 10-year lifespan from its launch date and sets out a commitment to delivering Key Priorities and Actions for the next 3 years. The targets, priorities and actions laid out in this 10 year tree strategy document will build on South Kesteven District Council's previous successes and include actions around sustainable management, community engagement and on ongoing measurement of the structure and composition of the District's treescape.

As the climate changes, the loss of biodiversity and the need for resilience need to be tackled now to ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from our trees long into the future. This is a challenge for us all, hence the central focus on acting through local capabilities and decision-making.

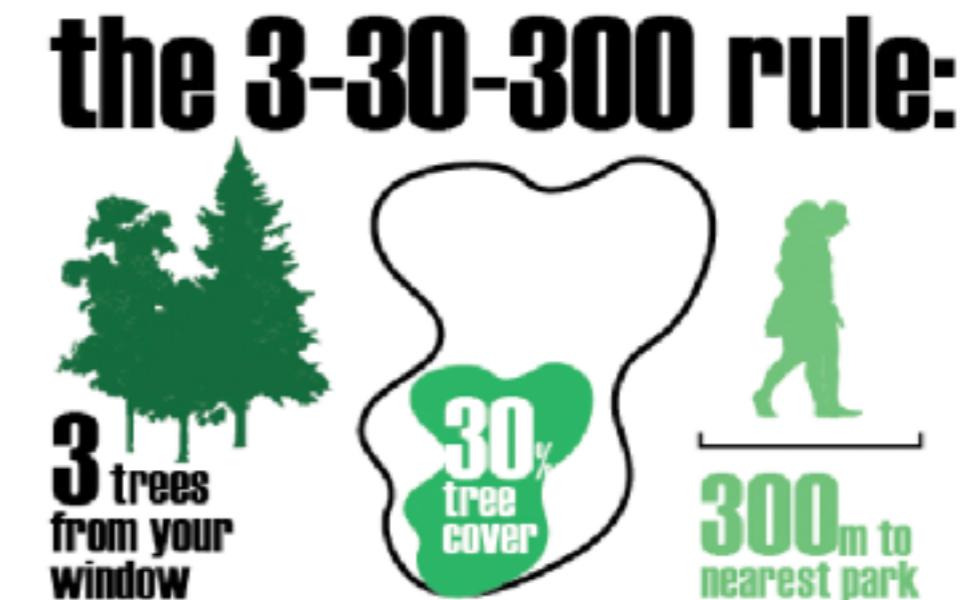


Figure 1 - The 3-30-300 rule (Konijnendijk, 2021)

What is the 3-30-300 rule?

This rule of thumb provides clear criteria for the minimum provision of urban trees in our urban communities at the same time, it is straightforward to implement and monitor – and easy to remember.

1. You should be able to see 3 trees from your window
2. There should be 30% tree cover in every neighbourhood
3. You should only be 300m or less from your nearest park

What is covered by 'Trees & Woodlands'
We have taken a broad definition, to include all trees, shrubs and hedges, which can be found anywhere from deliberately planted roadside trees to self-seeded scrubland. They provide benefits to those who live nearby and within them. These benefits include air pollution removal, carbon sequestration and storage and reducing flood risk. Other social benefits such as an increase in house value, amenity value of trees and health benefits for residents are also increased in a diverse, healthy natural landscape.

Our Vision

Exploration of the decided vision and how the strategy will link to fundamental goals are within that vision. Description of how the strategy is divided into different sections which will aid the same vision but with very different approaches and outcomes.

The vision is centred upon local communities. It recognises the vital importance of the parish structure in enabling a responsiveness to the concerns and wishes of those who live in each particular part of the District.

The Strategy outlines key topics, priorities and actions under three central themes:

- 1) Trees and Forest Structure
- 2) Community Framework
- 3) Sustainable Resource Management Approach

The Strategy is structured around a comprehensive set of key performance indicators, informed by the current state of evidence and best practice. For each of these performance indicators, an assessment of the current situation is made, ambitions are laid out and priorities are identified.

Moreover, specific actions and roles and responsibilities are defined. This ambitious Trees and Woodland Strategy is an important step forward. Its implementation, in collaboration with both Lincolnshire County Council and all 65 parish and town councils, will create a greener, healthier and more resilient place to live and work.

Our vision:

**Healthy Trees, Healthy South Kesteven:
Strengthening our tree assets through protection,
enhancement, and growth, ensuring resilience and
vitality in perpetuity**

Alternative formats are available on request: audio, large print and braille

South Kesteven District Council

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Targets and Priorities

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3.1 Trees and Woodland Structure

This section covers the physical structure of the trees and woodland from various perspectives. It does not cover the management of those trees which is covered in a later section.

Targets and Priorities

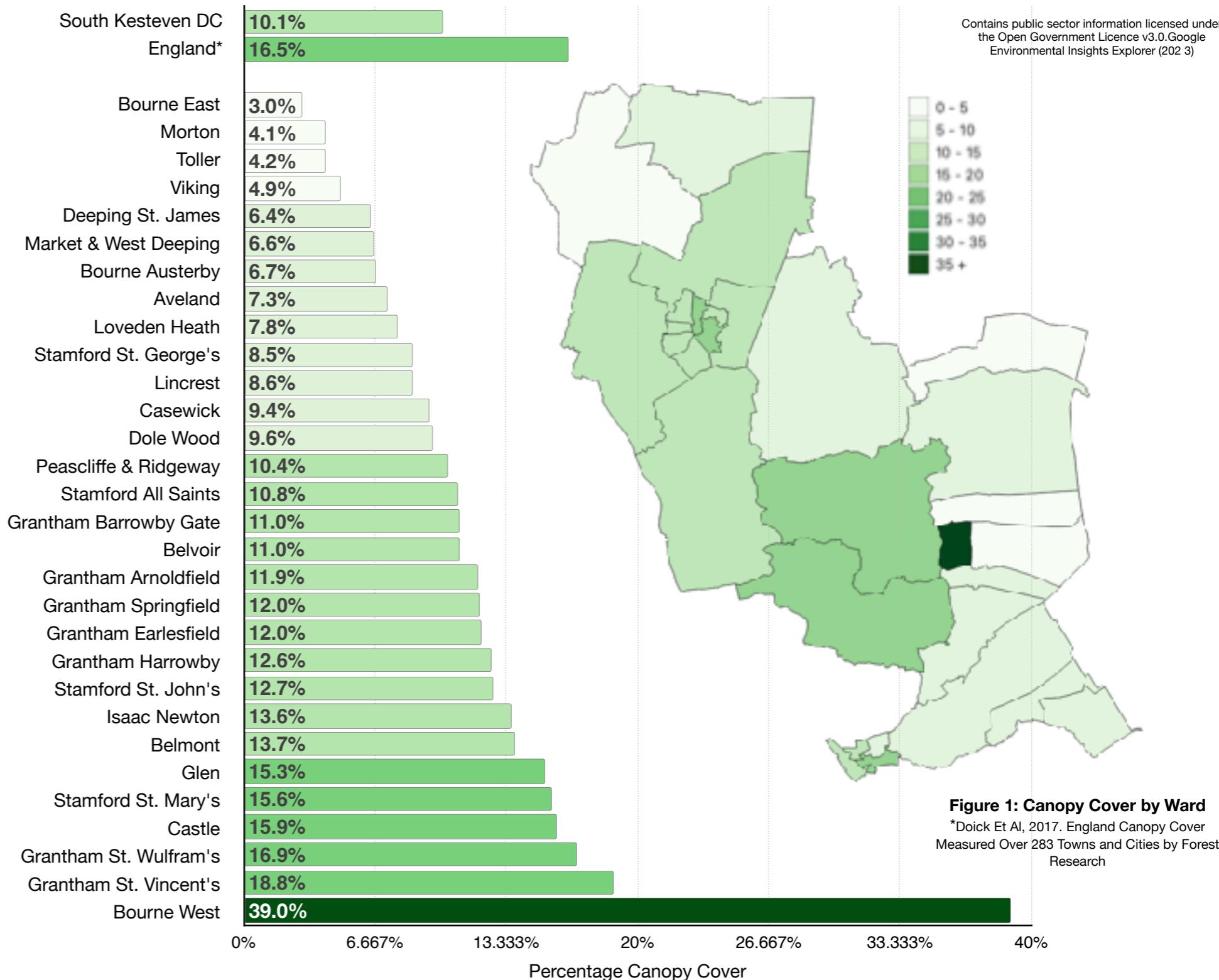
T1 Relative Tree Canopy Cover

Tree Canopy Cover, which is often also referred to as tree cover, can be defined as the area of leaves, branches, and stems of trees covering the ground, across a given area, when viewed from above. Canopy cover is a two dimensional metric, indicating the spread of canopy cover across an area. Potential canopy cover is the area which could be covered by tree canopy with constraints on tree establishment removed.

There are many methods of assessing canopy cover at this scale, including i-Tree canopy, Bluesky National Tree Map, Google Environmental Insights Explorer etc. These methods are not directly comparable with each other as they use different metrics and definitions of what constitutes canopy cover.

Low canopy cover percentage is often a result of widespread agriculture. Comparatively low canopy cover in these areas is not a reason to avoid or delay appropriate woodland management. Canopy cover increases can be achieved through both tree planting and increasing the canopy of existing trees (with improved management and maintenance).

In order to set realistic canopy cover targets, the opportunities for and constraints preventing new tree planting must be identified, ensuring canopy cover goals do not exceed what is possible at maximum stocking levels. It is recognised that the key goal for the District is canopy cover equity across settlement areas. It has also been acknowledged that for any future assessment it will be important to be able to differentiate between the tree canopy cover provided by woodlands, parks and street trees.



Link to relevant corporate policies:
- SKDC's Local Plan

Geography	Tree Cover	Source
South Kesteven District	10.1%	Google EIE 2022

Table 1: Urban Tree Cover Estimates

Targets and Priorities

T2 Size (Age) Diversity

In total, trees and woodlands depend upon their age diversity to maintain their ability to provide constant benefits to the people who live in South Kesteven over time. The first step in this direction is to establish the current position in enough detail to enable meaningful decision making.

Maturing trees need to be protected and managed to best enable them to reach veteran status (senescent). Juvenile trees must be continually planted to replace old trees, dying trees and trees removed for safety reasons. Whilst larger, older trees typically provide more annual benefits than smaller, younger trees, the latter are vital to maintaining a healthy and sustainable treescapes.

Generally, the most accurate way to gauge age diversity is to compare current tree size in each species (in terms of stem diameter) to the maximum diameter for that species. The goal would then be to maintain a tree population that is unevenly distributed among different age classes; therefore making sure that there are enough juvenile trees for the future.

It is of course also important to strive for age diversity across the entire tree population – including public trees managed “extensively” (as a group) in parks and natural areas, as well as trees on private property, both District-wide and at neighbourhood level.

Sources and references:

Richards, N.A., (1982/1983). Diversity and stability in a street tree population. *Urban Ecology* 7, 159–171 – as cited in McPherson, Urban Forestry & Urban Greening 12 (2013) 134–143.

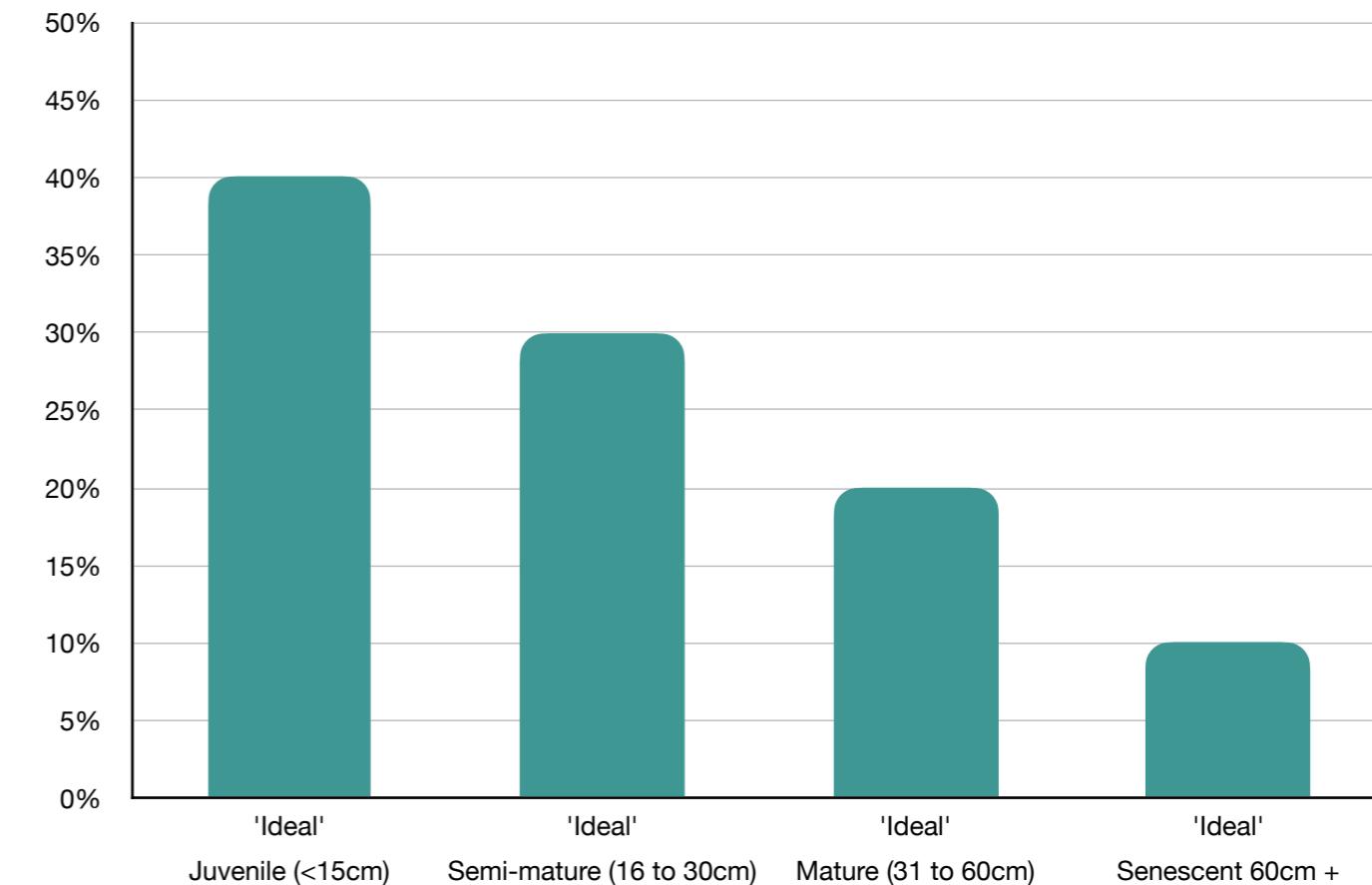


Figure 1: Richards “Ideal” Distribution of Tree Age Across the Urban Forest Showing Typical Stem Diameter for Each Age Class.

Targets and Priorities

T3 Species Diversity

Diversity is an important aspect of trees and woodlands to monitor. It underpins the wider concept of biodiversity within our trees and woodlands and provides a natural protection against large scale tree loss. Trees are split into families, genera, species and varieties and a mix of these is what we understand by a diverse treescape.

Sufficient tree diversity can increase overall resilience in the face of biotic and environmental stresses and threats. Many threats target individual species, so in aggregate, a more diverse tree-scape is better able to deal with possible changes in climate or pest and disease impacts.

Understanding the species diversity of South Kesteven DC's existing trees and woodland is a vital first step. From there, tree planting and management plans can enhance the diversity in line with the goals and KPI's of the action plan.

Santmour's (1990) 10-20-30 rule for species, genus and family and Barker's benchmark of 5% per species are useful tools in assessing and providing targets for species diversity in the urban context. Ideally, the array and location of suitable tree species would be so diverse that no single species would represent more than 5% of the tree population across the District or more than 10% in any given parish (Barker, 1975). However these rules apply only to street tree populations.

For landscape scale approaches, Hubbell's dominance diversity curves can be a more useful aid to visualise species diversity. The longer and shallower the curve, the greater the diversity.

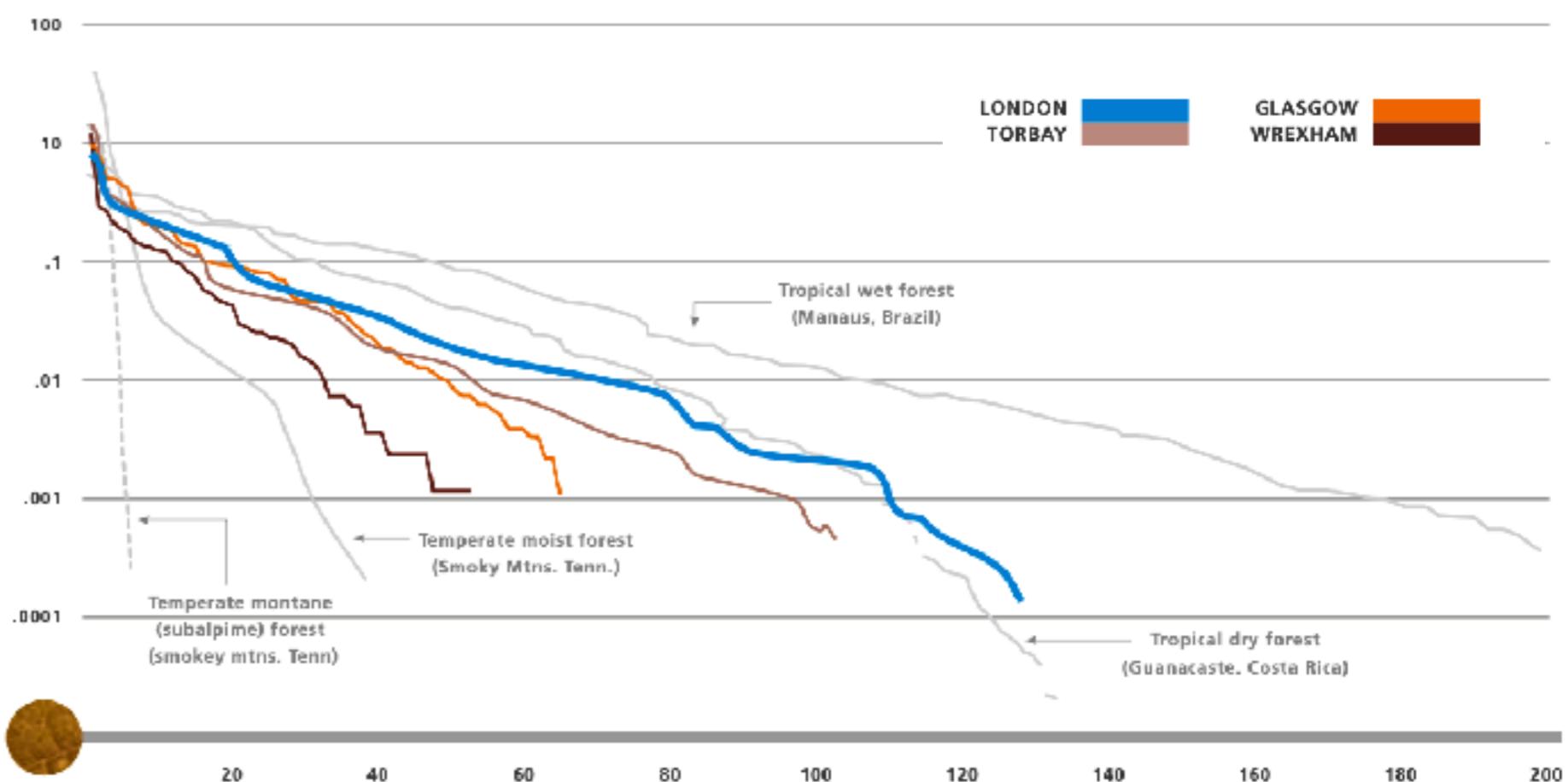


Figure 2: Dominance diversity curves for UK cities compared with example forest types

Sources and references:

Santmour, F.S. (1990) Trees for urban planting: Diversity, uniformity and common sense, in: Proceedings of the Conference Metropolitan Tree Improvement Alliance (METRIA). pp. 57–65.
Barker, P.A. (1975) Ordinance Control of Street Trees. Journal of Arboriculture. 1. pp. 121-215.
Beechamp, K. 2016 Measuring Forest Tree Species Diversity. Forest Research.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

- SKDC's Climate Action Strategy

Targets and Priorities

T4 Species Suitability

Selecting a broad array of species which are well suited to their context, whether that is urban or rural, is fundamental to the concept of species suitability. Trees have unique needs; all tree species have different genetic characteristics and growth strategies which have been developed to maximise survival and growth in their natural habitats. Climate, soil and other environmental aspects can affect their ability to survive and thrive.

Urban contexts create greater external stresses than those trees experience in their natural habitat. This can limit their lifespan and increase vulnerability to pests and diseases. Securing species suitability means trees are less likely to be placed under those stresses and more likely to reach maturity.

That context is also going to change under the impact of climate change. Predictions from the UK Meteorological Office forecast warmer, wetter winters and hotter, dryer summers. Even that simplistic high level summary is enough to indicate that some species will struggle in the future. Such factors need to be taken into account today when making tree species selection decisions. Many of our native species will be closer to the edge of their suitability range under even the best case scenarios now being envisaged.

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Link to relevant corporate policies:

- SKDC's Climate Action Strategy



“A greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers”

A headline summary of UK Climate Projections from the Met Office, 2022

Targets and Priorities

T5 Publicly Owned Trees

Trees managed individually, such as street trees, are considered to be “managed intensively,” according to arboricultural techniques – whereas trees in woodlands or other natural areas are typically “managed extensively,” as a group. Park trees can fall into either category, depending on how they are managed.

Understanding how many trees are managed in this way and what this type of management entails will help provide a baseline for improving future ‘intensive’ practices. A tree inventory documenting these trees, their location, species, health, etc is invaluable for tree maintenance and risk management.

It can also form the basis of a detailed community engagement tool, enabling people to learn and understand more about the individual trees that they pass in the streets where they live and work. Such information has proved instrumental in improving care of trees by residents.



The Bandstand, Dysart Park in Grantham

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Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC’s Local Plan

South Kesteven and Rutland Infrastructure
Delivery Plan

SKDC Tree Guidelines

Wyndham Park in Grantham



Targets and Priorities

T6 Trees on Other Land (Influence)

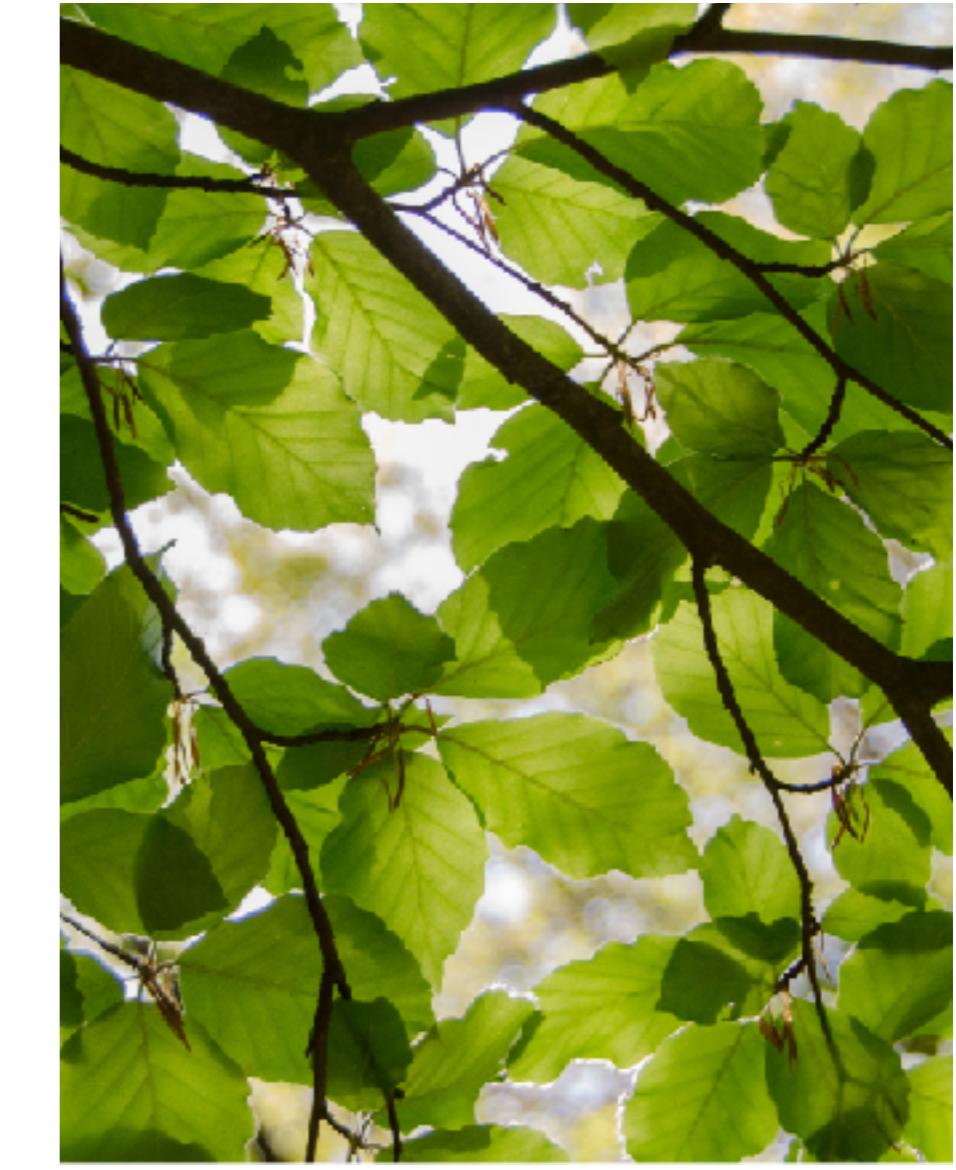
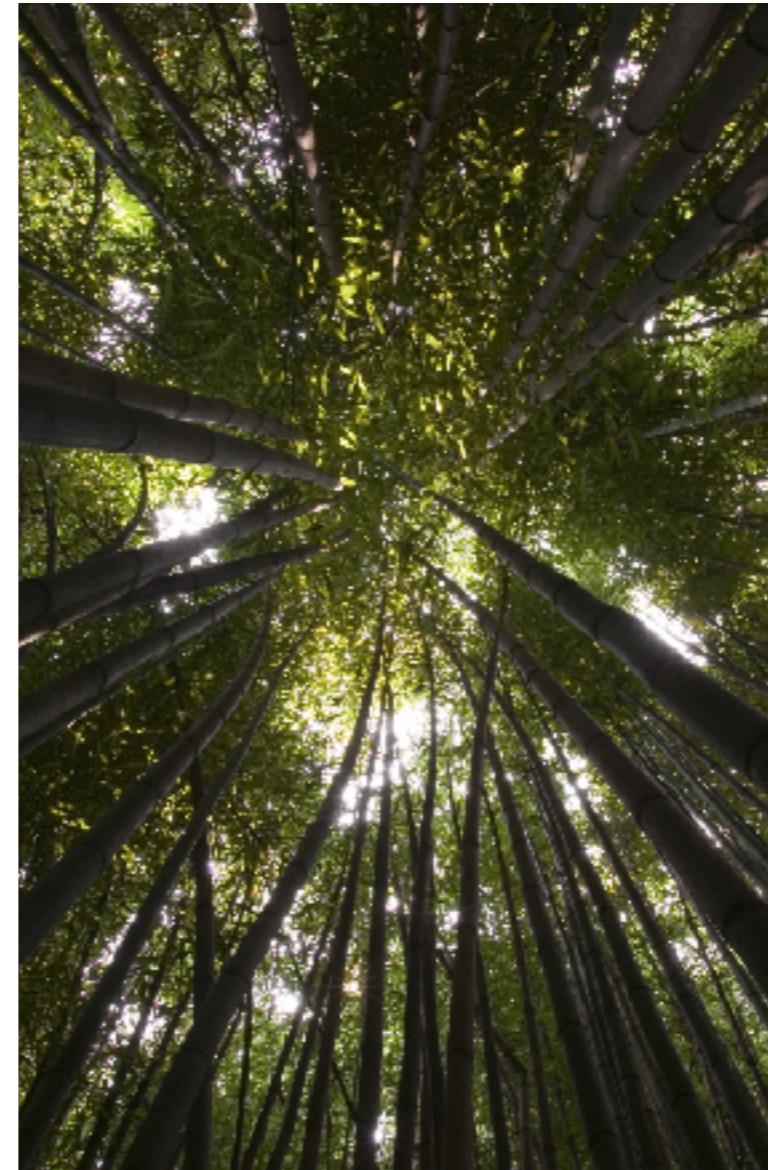
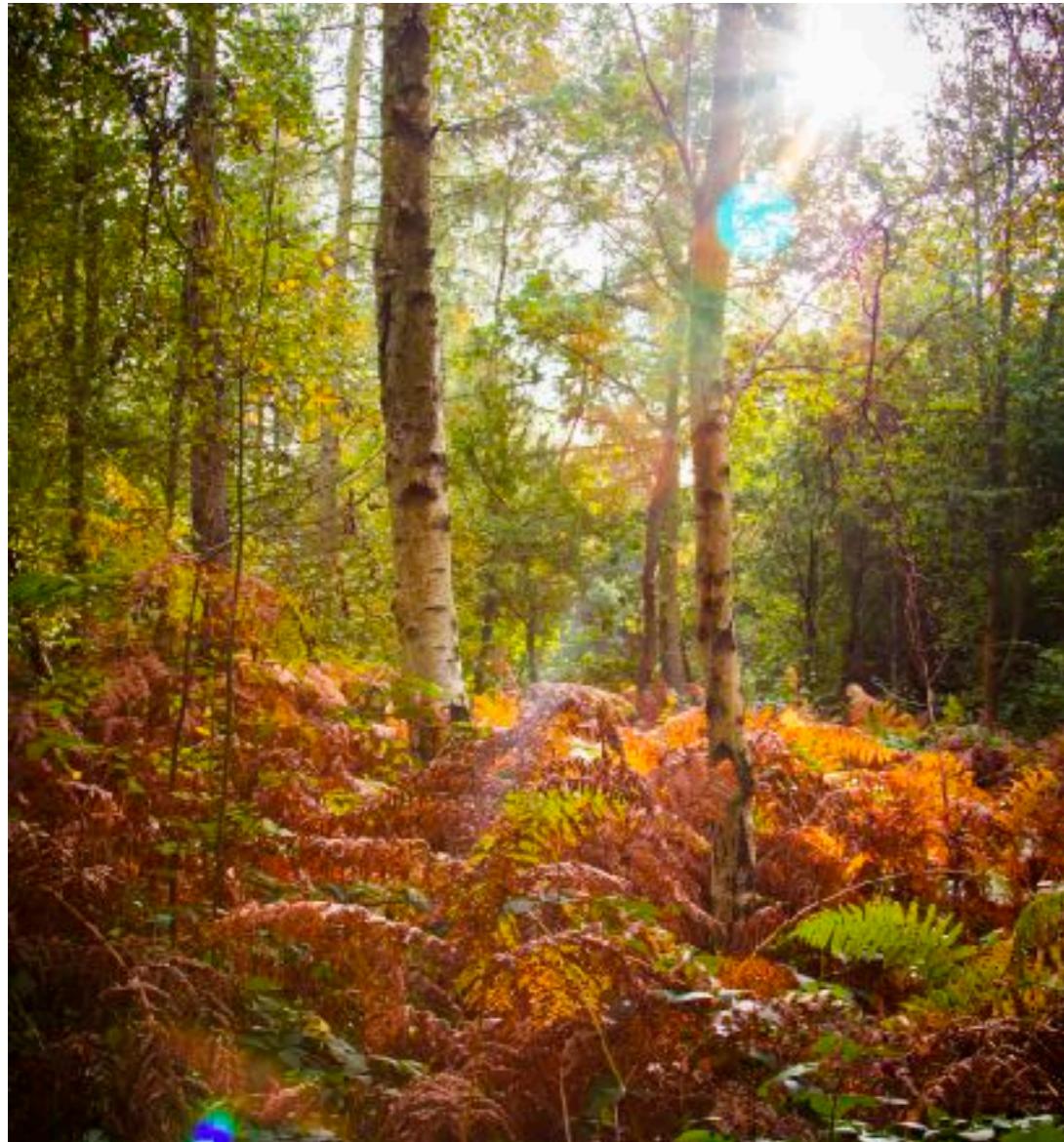
Trees on private property are more difficult to survey and manage than those on public land due to the extent and inaccessibility of these trees. It relies on land owners taking an active role in tree management.

Developing the tools to influence other land owners with trees on their property can become a significant factor within management of the totality of the trees and woodlands across the District.

This can simply mean understanding the extent of the tree estate that is outside public ownership. This is generally a mix of the gardens of private householders together with larger privately owned estates.

Notable large woodland areas outside of SKDC ownership include the following: Londonthorpe Woods managed by Woodland Trust, Bourne Woods managed by Forestry England and Dole Wood managed by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

A full inventory of trees on private properties is difficult; many will fall into conservation areas, and many more will be on record with a tree preservation order (TPO). Fully collating the data already held on these trees may be useful in combination with an i-Tree Eco sample survey.



Targets and Priorities

T7 Tree Benefits

Trees and woodlands bring with them both benefits and costs. Whilst many of the costs are well known, the benefits can be difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, a considerable and expanding body of research exists on the benefits that trees and woodlands provide to those who live and work nearby, to green infrastructure and to the wider ecosystem.

Trees provide a 'sense of place', moderate extremes of high temperature in urban areas, improve air quality, reduce rainwater runoff and act as a carbon sink. Yet, trees are often overlooked and undervalued.

Understanding and valuing these services allows us to make more informed planting and management decisions for the benefit of current and future generations. It can also help communicate the importance of trees to the public and to those in the planning and development sector, encouraging the protection and management of existing trees as well as new planting.

i-Tree Eco is a tool which can be used to quantify tree benefits or Ecosystem Services (ESS) whilst also giving an overview of the structure of the trees and woodlands.

About i-Tree:

i-Tree is a free to use, open-access suite of tools developed to assess the value of the urban forest and the ecosystem services provided:

- Quantifies the benefits and values of trees around the world.
- Aids in tree and forest management and advocacy.
- Shows potential risks to tree and forest health.
- Is based on peer-reviewed international research.



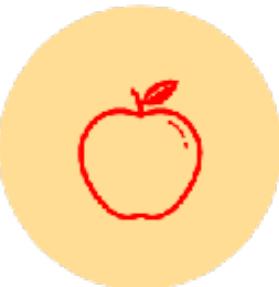
i-Tree Eco is an application designed to use field data from individual trees, complete inventories or randomly allocated plots across the sample area to analyse the forest structure and ecosystem services provided.

Carbon Sequestration



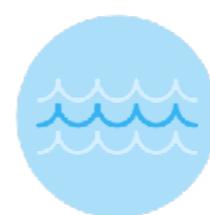
Foods

Urban Cooling



Pollution Removal

Rainwater Attenuation



Carbon Storage



Amenity Value

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

South Kesteven and Rutland Infrastructure Delivery Plan

SKDC Tree Guidelines

Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven

SKDC's Climate Action Strategy

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People

Lincolnshire County Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Targets and Priorities

T8 Wider Environmental Considerations

South Kesteven's trees and woodlands have a vital part to play in the fight against climate change and can be part of both adaptation and mitigation strategies. Urban trees and woodlands are particularly important as a way of reducing the urban heat island effect and in removing air pollution from built up areas and highways. In certain situations, trees can also cool our built up areas in the heat of summer.

Biodiversity is a vital underpinning of a healthy environment. The myriad intricate connections between species all play a role in the creation of rich ecosystems where individual members, such as trees, can thrive.

With the UK target of carbon net neutrality by 2050, SKDC aims to Reduce emissions by 30% by 2030 and be completely net zero by 2050. To achieve these aims, the trees, woodlands and other elements of urban forests are key, alongside emission reductions.

Climate change poses a direct risk to the residents in South Kesteven; a warming climate increases risk of heatstroke, while increased rainfall will cause more frequent and more severe flooding. Biodiversity is also at risk, as species will struggle to adapt to warming climates, earlier springs and mild winters.

These considerations should be taken into account when managing trees and woodlands to ensure that the correct management practices are being enforced, tree and shrub species are as suitable to the future environment as possible and that biodiversity is protected and enhanced, with biodiversity net gain as a key drive.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

SKDC's Climate Action Strategy

SKDC's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy

Lincolnshire County Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy



Targets and Priorities

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3.2 Community Framework

This section considers the various communities that are required for a successful, long term approach to management of trees and woodland. This covers not only the local residents, but local government in all its forms, NGOs and commercial entities.

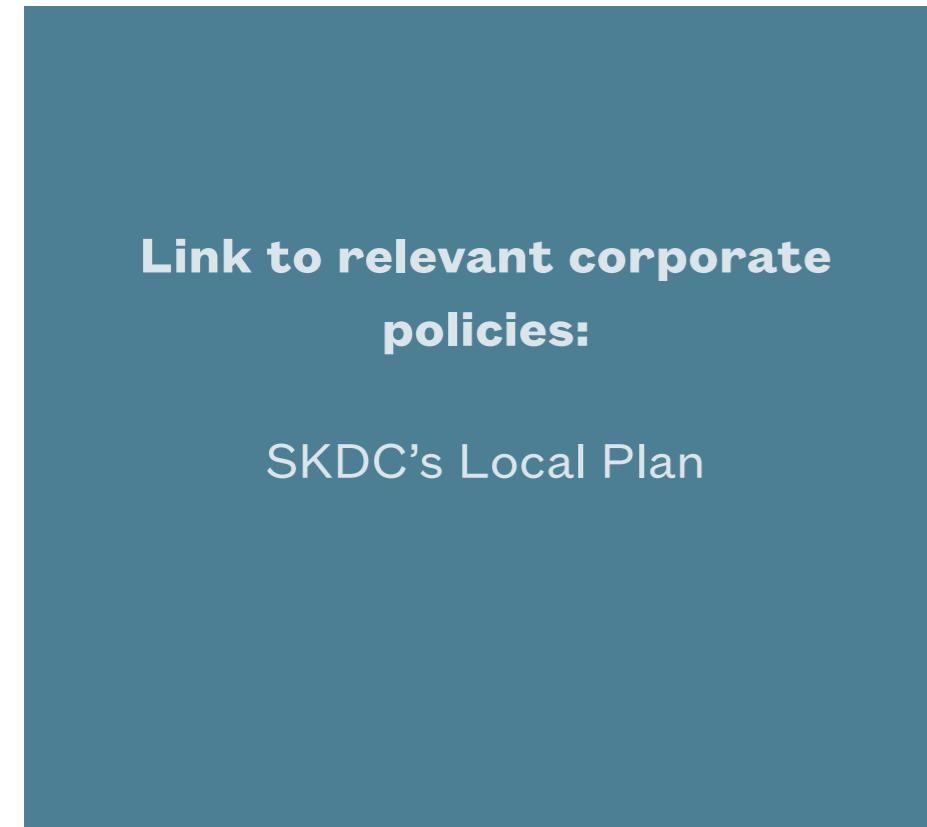
Targets and Priorities

C1 South Kesteven District Council Departmental Co-operation

This target aims to encourage all departments within SKDC to consult and collaborate with the tree and woodland managers on issues relating to trees and woodland.

Regular communication across departments and agencies will be key to ensuring that trees and woodlands are considered to the fullest extent throughout the council. Key stakeholders to incorporate into this network are planning and development. Other key departments include Lincolnshire County Council and other district and parish councils, which although external to the council, still need to be involved in the process.

Opening communication channels and interdepartmental teams can help to coordinate tree and woodland management by providing knowledge and guidance to all council departments ,when required, in order to ensure that trees, woodland and green infrastructure are considered in full at all stages of decision making.



Colleagues from SKDC

Targets and Priorities

C2 Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Action

At the neighbourhood level, communities and residents groups will be encouraged to participate and collaborate with SKDC and its partnering Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in tree and woodland management activities.

Collaborating with smaller community groups such as volunteers, schools and charity groups can encourage further community involvement with projects in small neighbourhoods and wider District areas, which would benefit the whole District. Neighbourhood activities often help the community members to connect more with their trees and woodlands, and encouraging communities to get involved will reduce the likelihood of conflict or opposition to tree planting.

Creating an interactive Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) can be a useful tool for helping communities, organisations and individuals understand and manage their natural resources more effectively. It is a research methodology, community organising approach and partnership mapping tool developed by the USDA which shows who is responsible for the local environment. It could be an invaluable tool to engage local residents and establish a network of trees and woodlands capabilities across the district. At a basic level, in order to create a STEW-MAP it is necessary to identify and involve stakeholders (local communities, environmental groups, governmental agencies, etc.), gather input on what data and features are important to them and identify the types of data needed (geographical, ecological, cultural, etc.). Appropriate GIS software for creating and managing the map must be chosen, with layers and visualisations developed to effectively represent the data. For a STEW-MAP and Assessment Project to be successful, it must engage and serve the needs of the community and stakeholders involved.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People



Volunteers supporting tree planting in Wyndham Park, Grantham

Targets and Priorities

C3 General Appreciation of Trees as a Community Resource

In order for the strategy to be considered a true success, the most powerful legacy is that the residents of South Kesteven love, respect, appreciate and care for its trees.

Community initiatives could provide an invaluable opportunity to promote the progress made by the District in terms of urban greening and green infrastructure. School and youth involvement is a powerful tool, and volunteer tree wardens schemes have proven very successful all over the country.

Widely publicising events all year round - making good use of digital communications and social media - such as National Tree Week (usually in late November to early December), Arbor Day, planting days (winter time) and outdoor events, will bring focus onto South Kesteven's trees and woodlands, encouraging participation from those that live and work locally.

By engaging and encouraging the community in this way, trees and woodlands will be protected and enhanced for generations to come. Changing peoples' values can be difficult, but through education, celebration and engagement, the hope is that people will come to value the trees around them and the wider part which they play in the health of us all.

The same logic applies to us in our professional capacities as well as private, and also to the organisations that we belong to – private and public, commercial, nonprofit, governmental.

Sources and references:

Clark, J.R., Matheny, N.P., Cross, G. And Wake, V. (1997). A Model of Urban Forest Sustainability. *Journal of Arboriculture*. Volume: 23. Issue: 1

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Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People



23 November – 1 December

“Having public agencies, private landholders, the green industry, and neighbourhood groups all share the same vision ... is a crucial part of sustainability. This condition is not likely to result from legislation. It will only result from a shared understanding of ... value to the community and commitment to dialogue and cooperation among the stakeholders.”

Clark et al, 1997.

Targets and Priorities

C4 Regional Collaboration

Regional collaboration means engagement with both Lincolnshire County Council and the other Districts that it comprises. It also manifests itself within the District at the level of the Parish Council.

Currently, Lincolnshire county is estimated to have just 4% canopy cover - LCC are working to improve this by planting 750,000 trees across the county (project start: 2021/22) - in an attempt to reach a goal of having one tree for each resident. Community planting days and highways projects have proven successful thus far. South Kesteven could benefit from this scheme by finding suitable space for new tree planting initiatives.

South Kesteven's trees and woodlands have an important role to play in the development of the network creating corridors and joining up habitat for wildlife. Individual woodlands and SSSIs can cross district boundaries; the species that depend upon them certainly do. Coordination on the management and public engagement regarding these vital green assets should provide better outcomes at lower costs.

South Kesteven District Council has worked closely with the Lincolnshire County Council in delivering the Local Authorities Treescapes Fund planting projects in 2021/2022.

Sources and references:
Linclonsire County Council - <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/news/article/1129/a-tree-for-every-resident-help-us-reach-our-tree-planting-target>

Link to relevant corporate policies:

Lincolnshire District Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy



Targets and Priorities

C5 Utilities Co-operation

C5 aims to ensure that all utilities – above and below ground – employ best management practices and cooperate with SKDC to advance goals and objectives related to urban forest issues and opportunities. This includes electric, gas, water, cable, telephone, fibre-optics, etc.

Utilities are required to follow certain standards for managing vegetation – including pruning branches, protecting roots, and performing overall management of trees and other vegetation that could impact their services, and District policies may also regulate certain utility management practices, such as overhead line clearance. Introducing and enforcing best practice standards which protect trees and other elements of the urban forest will be key, and collaboration with utilities could help advance the goals and objectives of the Tree and Woodlands Strategy.

Some utilities extend beyond the South Kesteven area. Figure 11 shows the water catchment areas which supply South Kesteven.

These areas are not constrained by political boundaries, and this should be taken into account when assessing how the urban forest and utilities interact. Water companies should also be encouraged to develop systems in which trees provide a vital role in water management.

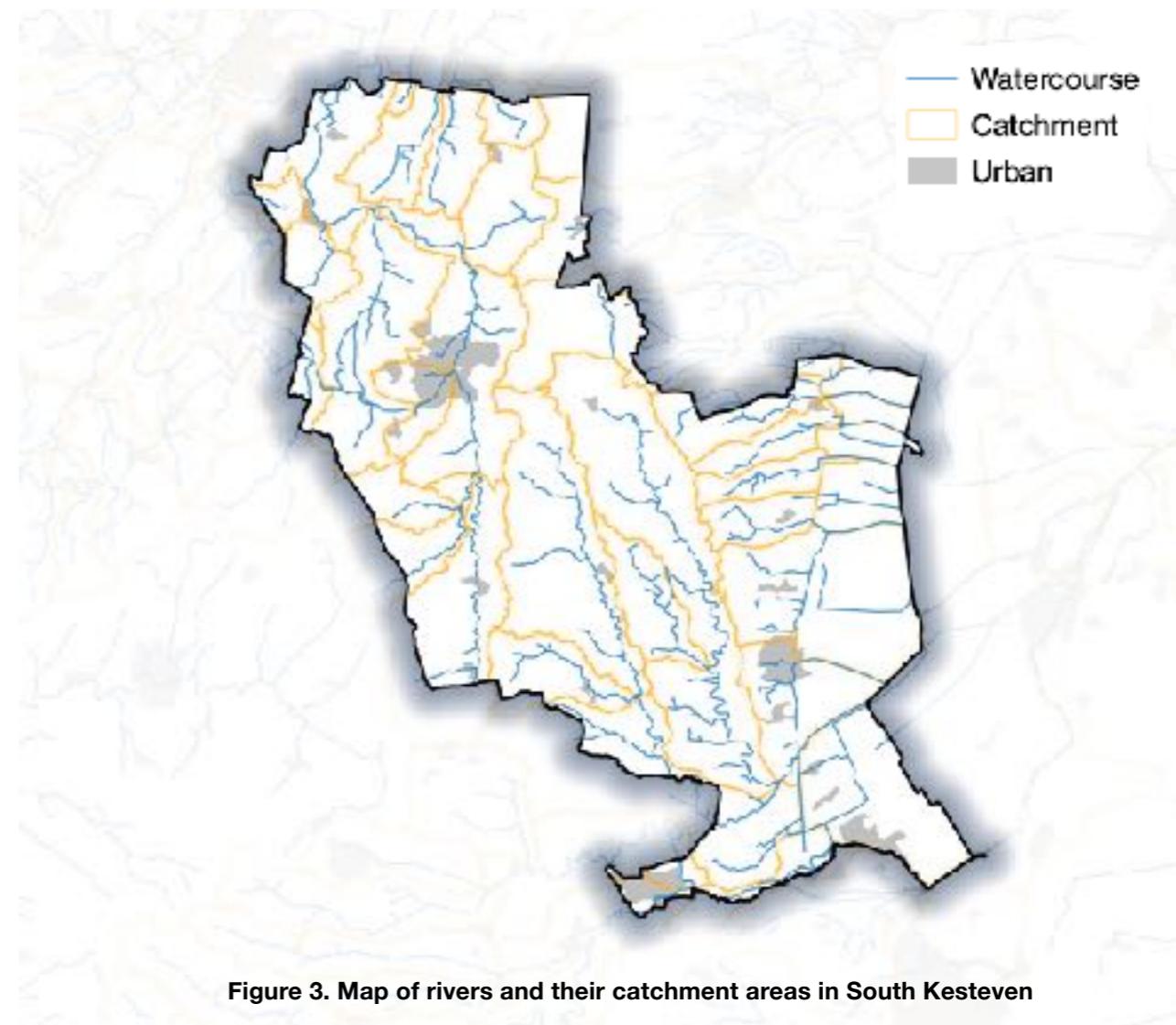
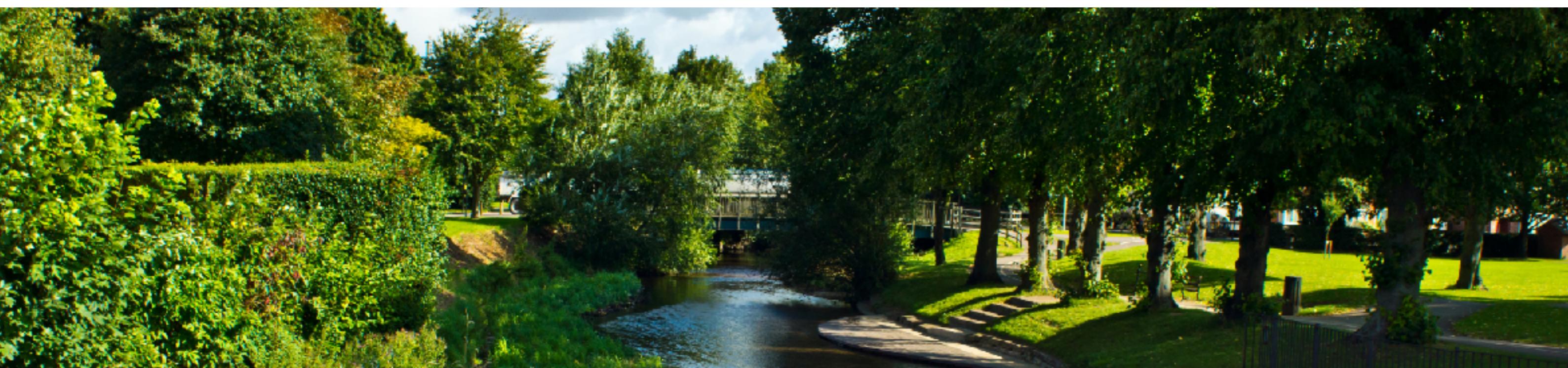


Figure 3. Map of rivers and their catchment areas in South Kesteven

View from the White Bridge in Wyndham Park, Grantham



Targets and Priorities

C6 Green Industry Co-operation

The “green industry” encompasses all professions and businesses that routinely support or engage in tree and vegetation management activities. Among others, these can include landscapers, nurseries, garden centres, contractors, maintenance professionals, tree care companies, landscape architects, foresters, planners and developers.

SKDC will work together with green industries where relationships already exist to advance District-wide trees and woodlands goals and objectives and adhere to high professional standards. Where appropriate, this will be done in conjunction with Lincolnshire CC and local parish councils.

Close co-operation with the green industry presents an excellent opportunity to influence management of the forest resource on private property.

South Kesteven is a large District, with the vast majority of the land area used for farming. Modern advancements and demands also mean that more open fields are being used for solar energy generation and wind farms.

Given land-holdings within South Kesteven include these key sectors for focused co-operation:

- Farming
- Renewable Energy (Wind & Solar)
- Forestry
- Tree Surgeons

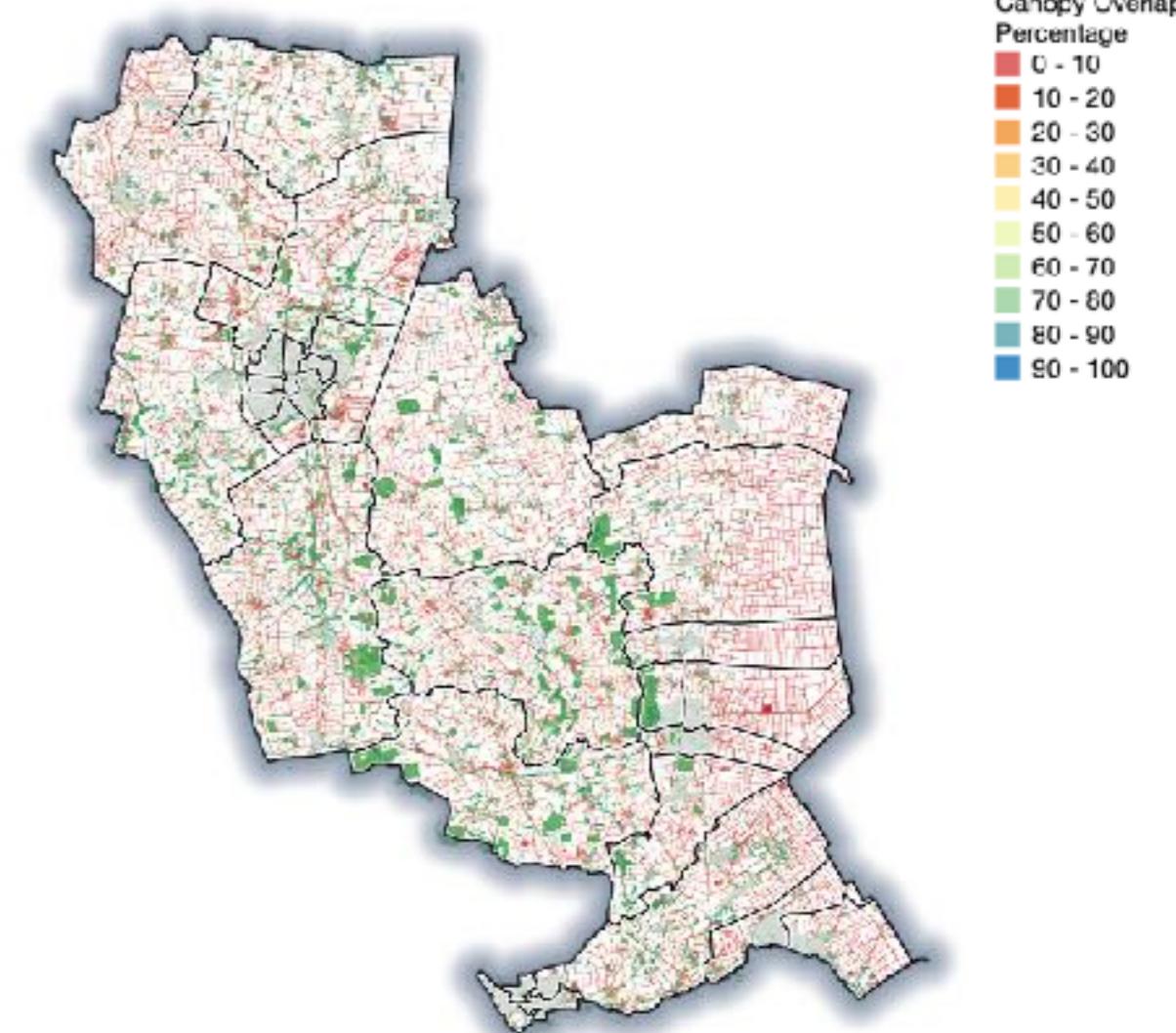
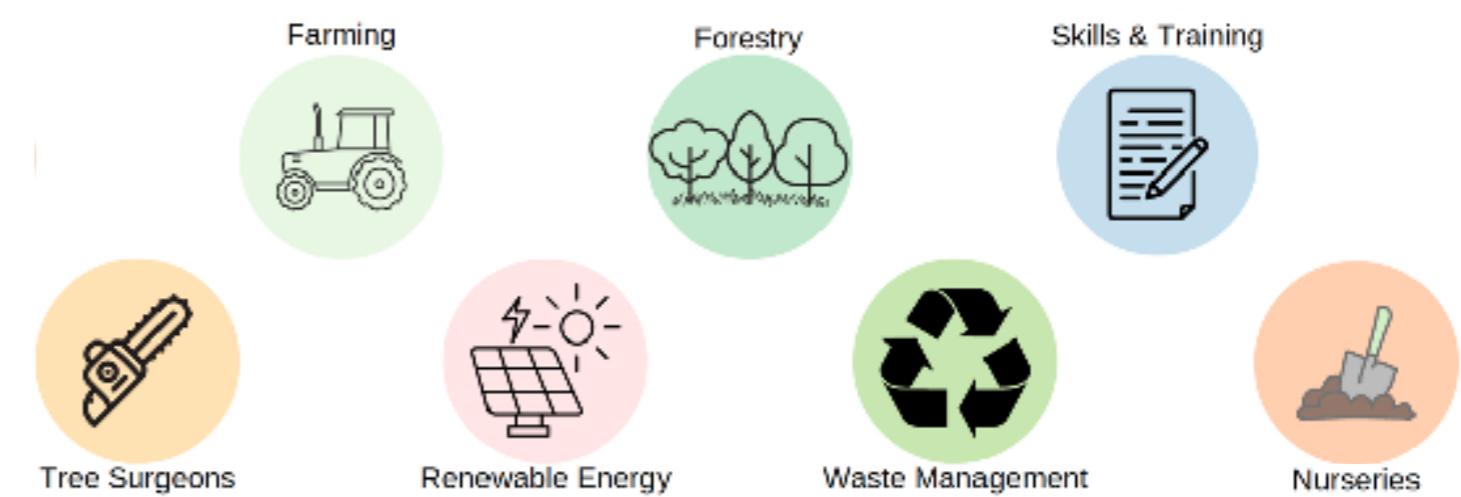


Figure 4. Map of hedgerows across South Kesteven coloured by the amount of tree canopy within them. Red indicates low tree cover, whilst green and blue indicates high tree cover.

08



Targets and Priorities

C7 Involvement of Private and Institutional Landholders

As a large proportion of land within the District is owned by private individuals, organisations and institutions, enlisting their help in enhancing and protecting trees and woodland is paramount. Outreach programmes, management plans and funding strategies will help to incorporate these landholders.

Communicating the benefits of trees will help inspire landholders and institutions to invest time and money in natural resources.

The goal is to help large private landholders embrace and advance District-wide tree and woodland goals and objectives by implementing specific resource management plans so that they can manage trees on their property in the most beneficial way.

There is also a also a suite of supplementary planning documents and Local Plan supporting documents for large developers such as:

- Design Guidelines for Rutland & South Kesteven SPD
- Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)
- Habitat Regulations Assessment

The Local Plan is being reviewed. To inform the new Local Plan the following has been undertaken:

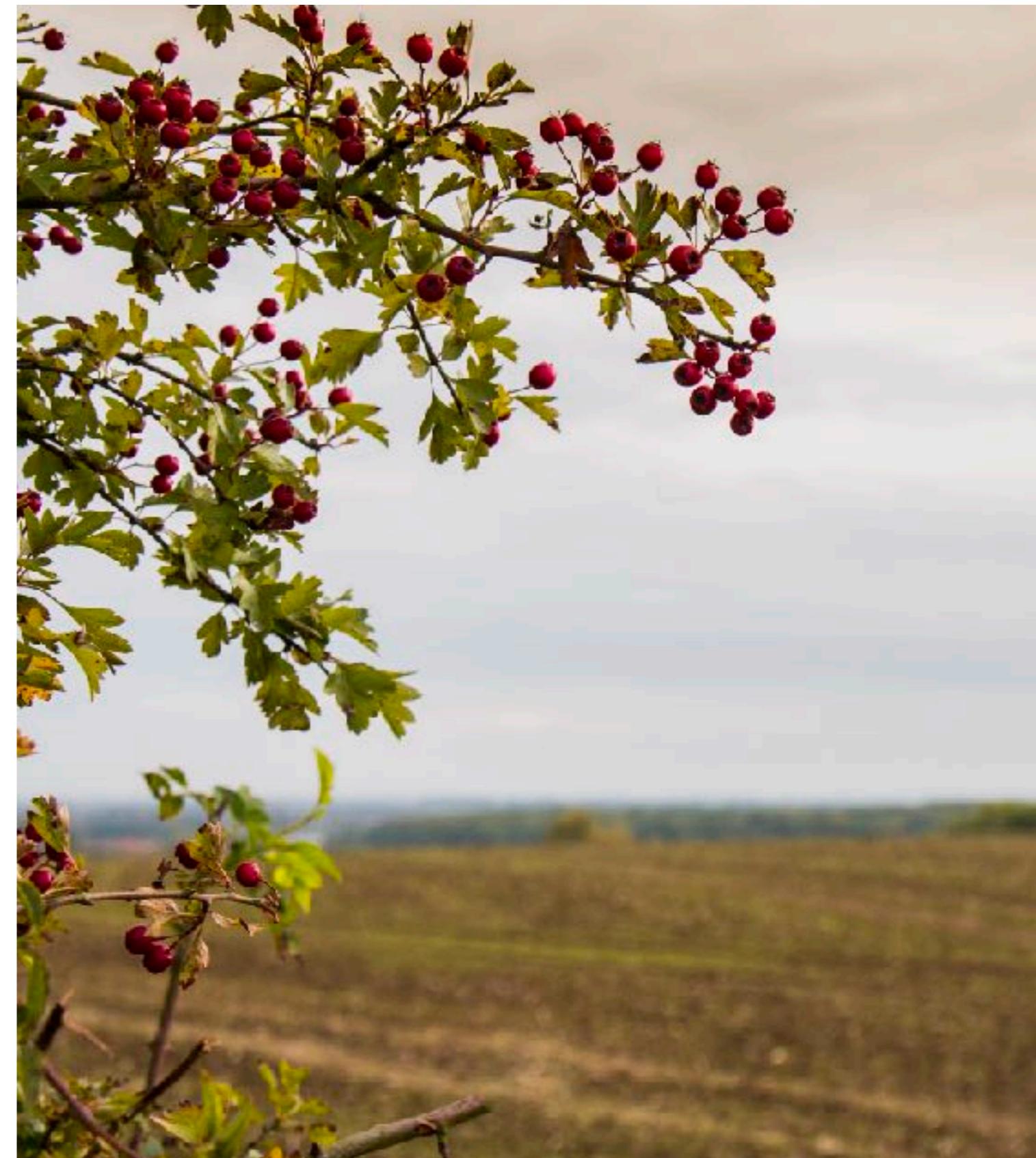
- Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping
- Green Infrastructure Mapping
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study

↳ www.southkesteven.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-local-plans

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

SKDC's Climate Action Strategy



Targets and Priorities

C8 Governance and Leadership

The aim of this target is to help all departments and agencies within SKDC to communicate and cooperate to advance goals and opportunities and address issues related to South Kesteven's treescape. Presently, SKDC work with other NGO's and agencies when necessary, however, building a focussed network of urban forest partners would be desirable. Following stakeholder workshops it was agreed that the creation of a South Kesteven Tree Board would benefit the District providing leadership and co-ordination in managing the District's treescape

As well as SKDC, a number of external partners will work with the council to manage and maintain the treescape. This includes, among others, Parish Councils, the Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and the Local Nature Partnership.

Market Deeping



Targets and Priorities

3

3. Sustainable Resource Management Approach

This section considers deals with the practical management of the trees and woodland resource. For much of the trees and woodlands of South Kesteven District, this can mean seeking to engage and influence other land owners.

Targets and Priorities

R1 Tree and Woodlands Inventory

A tree and woodland inventory is an exercise to take stock of the assets within the District as a whole. An understanding such as this is an essential starting point for establishing the structure of the trees and woodlands, including the number of trees, diversity of species and age distribution.

Inventory methodology needs to get the nature of the tree assets. Individual trees, often under a risk management protocol, or within a Tree Protection Order database, can be dealt with in detail in turn. Woodland trees and other large groups are more cost-effectively measured on a sample basis.

Sampling is also a very cost effective mechanism for establishing an understanding across all ownerships, where limited access to property is required, with remote sensing often allowing part of the task to be carried out without a site visit.

An inventory allows the setting of a baseline from which to monitor future progress and from which to manage the tree stock.

SKDC currently has an inventory of some publicly owned trees, however, a more comprehensive understanding of trees and woodlands across both public and private land is desirable.



Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC Tree Guidelines

Targets and Priorities

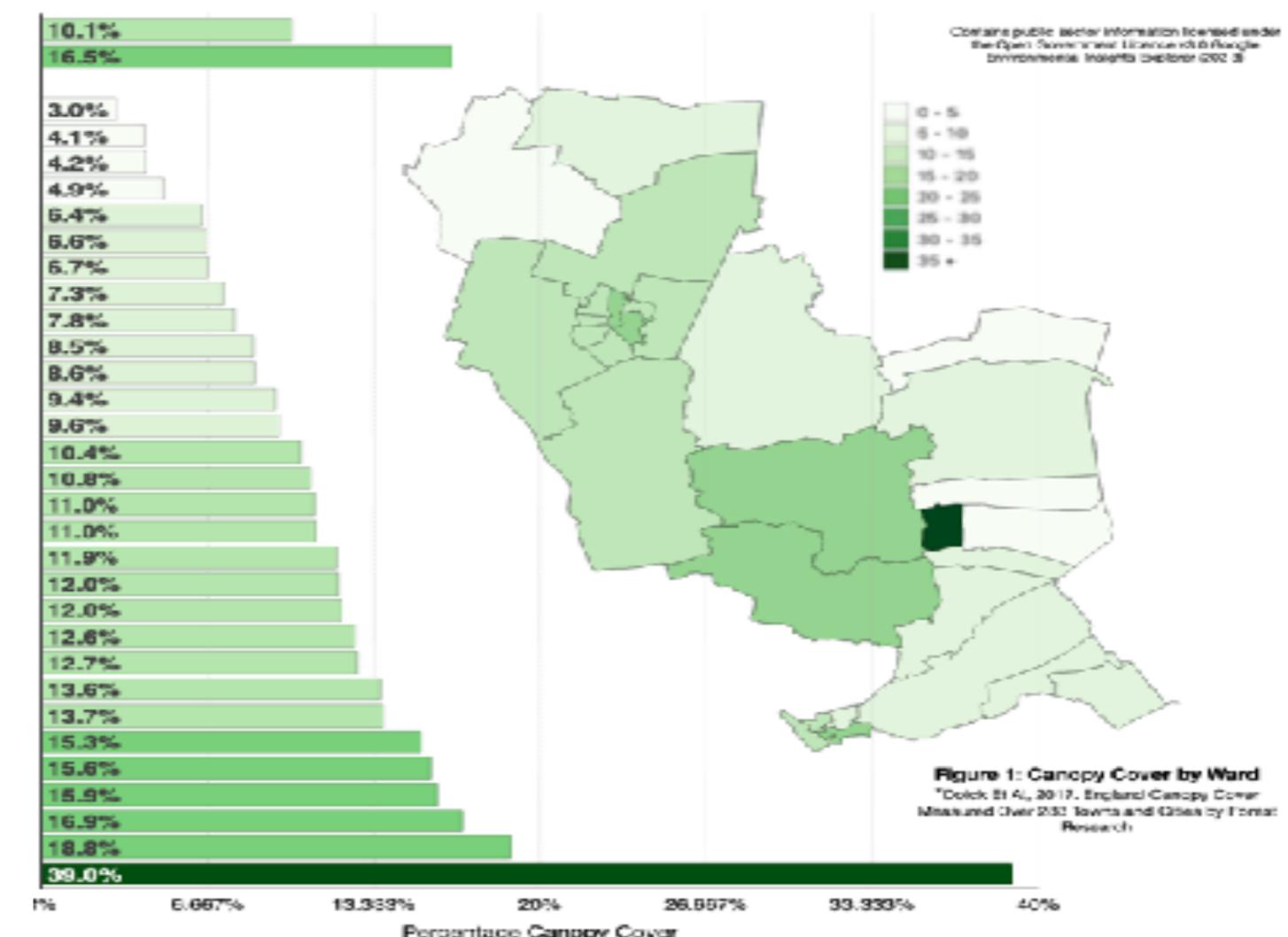
R2 Canopy Cover Assessment and Goals

Assessing canopy cover is vital, as this metric is used frequently as a figure which is clear and easy to compare with other areas. Whilst canopy cover is not a thorough study of the health and diversity and therefore overall benefit of trees and woodlands, it is an important aspect which should not be overlooked simply for its simplicity.

This target involves assessing the existing canopy cover in detail, and setting goals based on reasonable potential canopy cover and achievable steps to maximising cover. This leads into T1-'Relative Tree Canopy Cover'- and would provide the necessary baseline for achieving that target. It is important that any tree canopy target is achievable within a reasonable time frame, and considered within the wider context of the strategy.

The IUCN Urban Alliance suggest a 30% tree canopy cover target, which has been adopted by many cities around the world.

It should also be noted that tree planting does not necessarily provide an instant increase to canopy cover; in an urban setting trees are constantly being felled for any number of reasons, so insufficient planting can contribute to making up the deficit without actually increasing canopy cover.



City	London	Bristol	Plymouth	Cambridge	Torbay
Existing Canopy Cover	21% (2015)	18% (2018)	18.5% (2017)	17% (2008)	12% (2011)
2050 Target	30%	30%	20%	19%	20%

Table 2: Other Canopy Cover Estimates and Goals

Link to relevant corporate policies:

Climate Action Strategy

R3 Tree Valuation and Asset Management Approach

Tree valuation is an important part of managing and promoting trees and woodlands. With the trees valued, local people can understand the value of trees beyond the material worth. With these figures to hand, advocating for trees becomes easier.

Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) was developed by the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) and others in 2008. It is one of the principal methods of tree valuation in the UK, and aims to provide a method for managing trees as assets rather than liabilities. It can be used for individual trees or for the tree stock as a whole. Documents related to CAVAT including a user guide and the spreadsheet calculator can be viewed online at: <https://ltoa.org.uk/documents-1/capital-asset-value-for-amenity-trees-cavat>.

The CAVAT system is only really appropriate when applied to trees that are visible to the public. Furthermore, SKDC's individual woodlands are currently not subject to an asset valuation. These knowledge gaps will be addressed in the future.

The various valuation systems all use tree measurements as their starting point, larger trees generally being worth more. This infers that any valuation of trees can only be done following the creation of a tree inventory or plot based sample study (R1).

Link to relevant corporate policies:

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People



Bourne Memorial Gardens

Targets and Priorities

R4 Green Network Connectivity / Woodland Creation

Green network connectivity is vital for maintaining habitats at a scale suitable for our native species. A core principle in understanding such a network is to see it as a hub and spoke configuration. Hubs are those areas with the richest concentration of flora and fauna and usually the highest level of statutory protection. Good candidates to build a hub and spoke approach within South Kesteven are the towns and major road networks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), special areas of conservation and areas of ancient woodland.

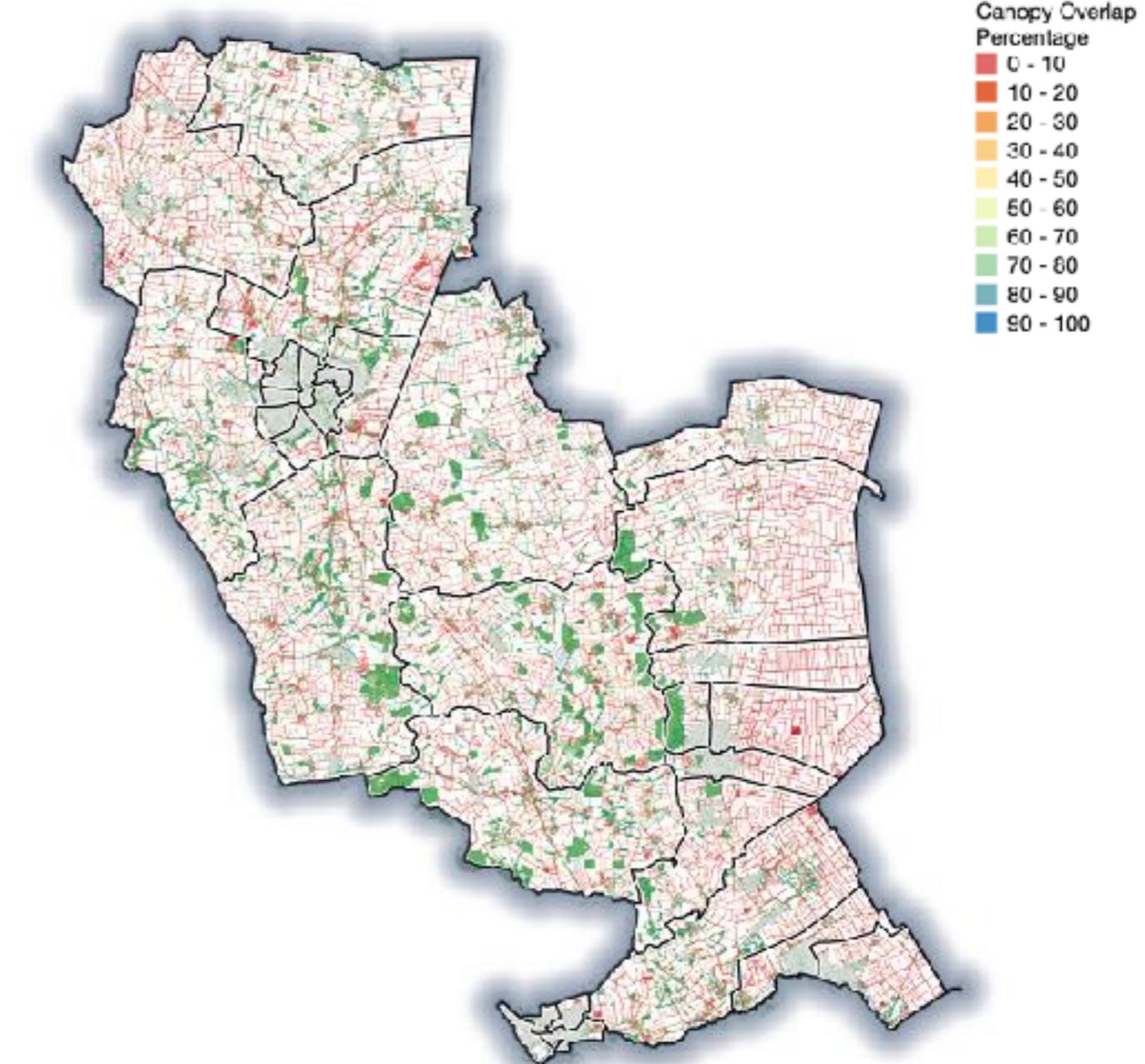
South Kesteven has large areas of Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land preventing large scale woodland creation. For this reason green network connectivity has focused on the Districts hedgerows. A mapping exercise was carried out to establish where hedgerow creation and enhancement may be used to improve connectivity. Datasets expressing the percentage field boundaries are overlapped by tree canopy, with a percentage figure of how much each hedge-line or boundary line is overlapped by canopy. This gives an indication as to the "gappyness" of hedges whether 100% covered in canopy or not at all.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

South Kesteven and Rutland Infrastructure Delivery Plan

SKDC's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy



Map of hedgerows across South Kesteven coloured by the amount of tree canopy within them. Red indicates low tree cover, whilst green and blue indicates high tree cover.

Targets and Priorities

R5 Environmental Justice and Equity

South Kesteven District Council have declared a climate emergency, recognising the threat to people, animals and habitats worldwide. Within South Kesteven District, those threats are likely to arrive in the form of hotter drier summers and warmer wetter winters - more periods of drought, more heat and a greater risk of surface flooding.

Trees have a significant role to play in creating resilient places to live for both humans and wildlife. Their largest contribution is the through the active cooling created by evapotranspiration as the trees draw water up from the ground when actively photosynthesising. Combined with physical shade, this can lower temperatures to a point where it can still remain quite pleasant to be outdoors even in the heat of the day.

Trees also, by virtue of their expansive canopies, capture water before it gets to the ground, reducing surface water run off. In using water as part of their natural growing processes, they also create space in the soil for new water ingress to take place at the next rainfall.

Trees are one of the most important tools in the climate resilience toolbox. It is important that they are deployed on as wide a basis as possible, which will require identifying and then addressing areas with lower tree cover.

This target aims to ensure that the planting and management of trees can be focussed in the areas where it will most benefit the local people, by increasing planting in the areas with the lowest canopy cover. Tree management plans in these areas include community engagement and neighbourhood outreach to maximise the benefits of trees in the area.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

South Kesteven and Rutland Infrastructure Delivery Plan

SKDC's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy

Lincolnshire District Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy



Autumn in Market Deeping

Targets and Priorities

R6 Funding

Securing sufficient funding on an annual basis is vital to not only secure and grow local municipal funding, but also to expand and diversify finances for tree and woodland funding.

There are several government schemes for funding tree planting of different types, from woodland establishment to urban forestry.

Whilst funding for tree planting is readily available, funding for management and monitoring of trees and woodland needs further investigation.

Private-sector funding as well as funding from one-off projects offer additional opportunities.

Three broad routes exist:

1. External funds from central government directed at different parties e.g.
 - i. Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) for street trees
 - ii. Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) for other trees and replacement street trees
 - iii. ELMS
2. External funds from major NGOs such as the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Fund
3. Levies and agreements within the planning system- best practice directs funds within developments to make good / surpass any tree loss on a fully funded basis using a more appropriate metric than tree numbers, which do not reflect the impact on ecosystem services from the loss of large trees.

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Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan



Wyndham Park, Grantham

Targets and Priorities

R7 Capacity and Staffing

Adequate staffing means there are enough staff with the correct training and experience to carry out all necessary tasks relating to the implementation and day-to-day running of the tree and woodland programme. This may mean hiring new staff or arranging further training for current staff.

This includes anyone involved in the delivery of tree management and implementation, e.g., Tree Wardens and other volunteers, Tree Officers, Parks and Countryside staff, etc.

One of the key limiters of this target is money, therefore fully costing the Tree Strategy and establishing a dedicated and coordinated budget is the first step.

A fully costed budget to deliver this plan can be used to help obtain the necessary funding to deliver the plan. This funding would then allow for the important longer term work.

One approach may be to encourage SKDC and LCC to promote future employment training for school leavers. If there is capacity within the team and budget, develop a work experience programme to encourage the next generation to be highly skilled in land based industries (Grow your own).



Tree planting initiatives



Targets and Priorities

R8 Tree Establishment - Planning and Implementation

Tree planting is more complex than most people realise; it is more than simply sticking trees in the ground. In order to ensure the trees survive, thrive and reach their full potential, the right tree species must be selected, be planted in the right place, be planted for the right reasons and be planted and maintained in the right way. This way, the trees are given the best chance to survive and avoid being removed again further down the line.

Right reason- Tree planting should focus not just on quantity, but also quality. Trees can benefit future generations by mitigating climate change, improving biodiversity and enhancing health and well-being.

Right place- Location is key when planting, particularly where conditions can be less than ideal. Trees require space to grow, both above ground and below, of a scale appropriate to its size when fully grown. Potential conflicts should be understood early before deciding to plant.

Right tree- The benefits and drawbacks of different species must be considered, including site suitability, climate tolerance, size, rooting characteristics, aesthetics (canopy, leaves, flowers, etc.), ecosystem service provision, biodiversity and more.

Right way- How the tree should be planted may vary depending on where the tree is, but all trees need the same essentials: good soil volume for root establishment, water, particularly for young trees and trees in urban areas which may struggle, air and support to keep it upright whilst its roots establish, protection from damage, and maintenance. In urban areas, hard paved impermeable surfaces present challenges which trees are not adapted to deal with, such as soil compaction, nutrient recycling and reduced water infiltration. These issues should be considered to help establish a healthy, long-lasting urban forest.



YOUNG TREE AFTERCARE

Planting a tree is just the beginning...
the hard part is making sure that it becomes
established in the landscape.

It is good practice to put newly-planted trees on a **young tree maintenance programme** for at least two or three years.

This can be achieved without huge investment,
just some time and attention.



After three years consider if the tree is ready to be taken off the young tree maintenance programme, or if it needs a bit longer. If it is ready then it is time to remove the stakes and ties.



Always consult an arboricultural professional if in any doubt about tree care.

For further information, including training and publications, please visit trees.org.uk.



Source: Young tree aftercare: <https://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/Documents/Tree%20Aftercare/Young-Tree-Aftercare-A3-web.pdf>

Link to relevant corporate policies:

Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven

R9 Growing Site Suitability

This target links to the R9 target, specifically on choosing the right tree. Often trees are selected purely for their aesthetic attributes, however this can mean that the tree suffers if the site conditions have not been taken into account.

Site suitability should be investigated from the ground up, starting with soil. Urban soils are often very poor or non-existent, so it is vital to know what is there and what the tree will need before it is planted. Other site considerations include the amount of light, ie if the tree will be in permanent shade from buildings or not, the amount of impermeable service surrounding the site which would limit the amount of water infiltrating through to the roots, and the amount of space both above ground and below ground to facilitate tree growth. Once these things have been assessed, the right tree can be planted in the space.

Guidelines should be put into place for all tree planting, to ensure that trees can fulfil their maximum potential and provide the maximum benefit for the District. Any planning relating to trees should adhere to BS 8545 (Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape) and BS 5837 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction). In particular, trees must be a priority in planning and development rather than an afterthought to ensure they are given enough space to mature. This should be extended for both public and private development and consistently enforced. This links to R10-'Tree Protection Policy Development and Enforcement'.

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Link to relevant corporate policies:

Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven



Tree cover in Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham

Targets and Priorities

R10 Tree Protection Policy Development and Enforcement

Urban trees are sometimes viewed as irritating and costly, dropping leaves on lawns, causing blocked drains, and damaging foundations and pipes with their roots. They may also be considered dangerous as branches can fall seemingly without warning, if they are not managed. For all these reasons and more, people may want to remove trees from public land or private properties.

Trees can and should be protected, and most councils have guidance in place; South Kesteven have conservation areas and Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Trees may also be protected as part of planning conditions associated with planning approval. To carry out works to a tree protected by a TPO consent from the Local Planning Authority is needed through submitting a tree works application.

To carry out works to a tree in a conservation area a six-week notice of intention must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. This is known as a 'Section 211' notice. The Local Planning Authority can either accept the notice or make a TPO.

Polices and guidelines must be enforced in both public and private sectors. The public must be made aware of these policies to ensure they are kept up to date with the best practice guidance and ensure they know where and how to find further information before undertaking any work.

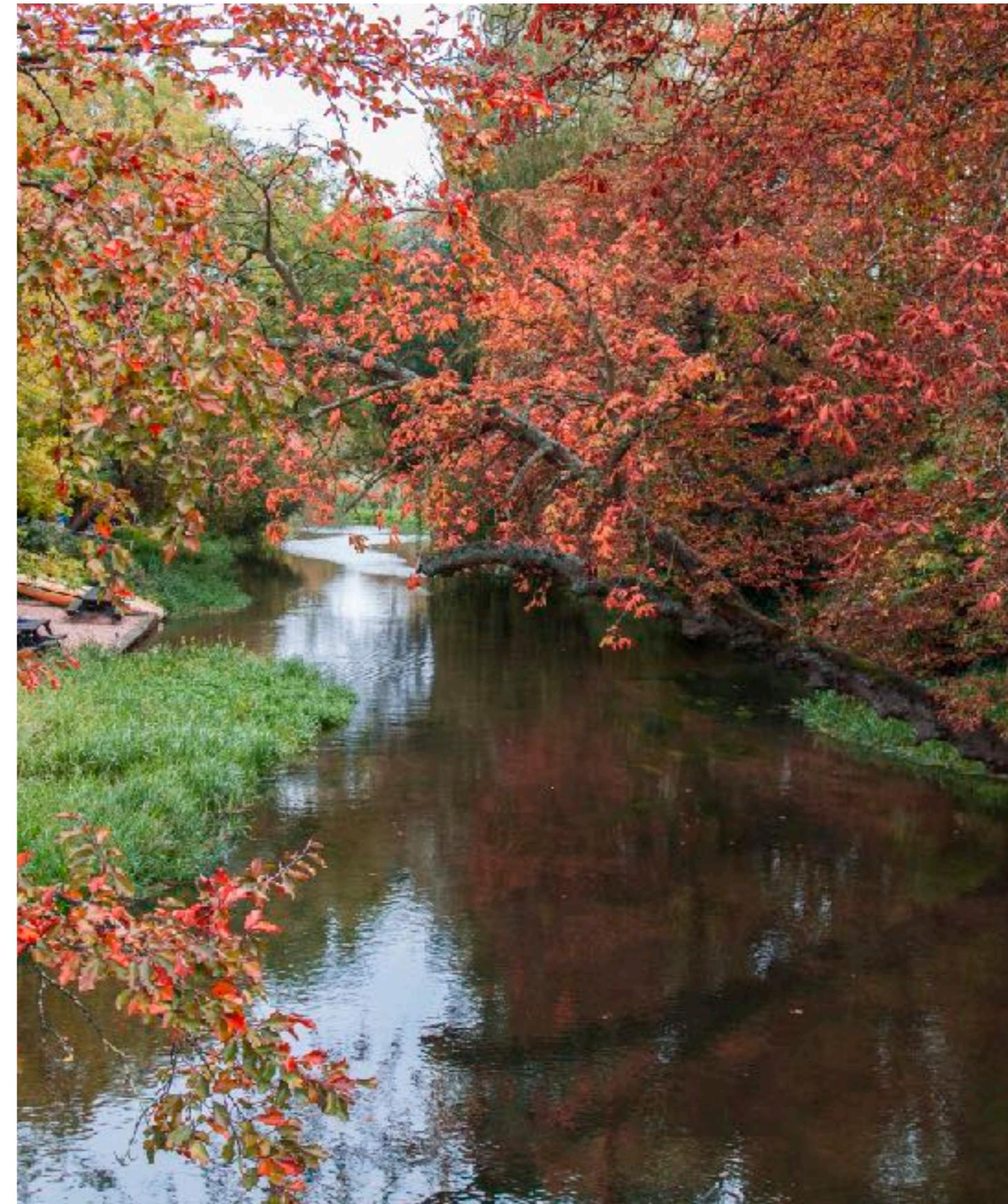
Under the Town and Country Planning legislation the local planning authority may protect important trees in the District by making Tree Preservation Orders. Any unauthorised works to such protected trees is a criminal offence. Trees in Conservation Areas are also afforded a degree of protection under the planning legislation. Unauthorised work to and/or removal of trees in a Conservation Area also constitutes a criminal offence.

- 2 The Council has powers to prosecute offenders and/or require replacement trees to be provided. In circumstances where it is a first offence, the Council may offer the defendant a caution and ask for a contribution towards their costs instead of a formal prosecution. If there is a repeat offence, the caution will be presented to the courts in any subsequent prosecution.

Link to relevant corporate policies:

SKDC's Local Plan

SKDC's Tree Guidelines



Autumn in Market Deeping

Targets and Priorities

R11 Trees, Woodland and Green Waste Utilisation

Trees are a resource in many ways, from providing ecosystem services like carbon storage and pollution removal to bearing fruits and supporting wildlife. Often when a tree is felled the branches are chipped and used for mulch or compost, with larger timber being used for firewood or biomass energy.

However a tree's value as a resource does not necessarily end when the tree dies or requires felling.

Although much green waste is used for composting there is potential to generate income through the by-products of tree and woodland management. Trees can be processed into various wood products like timber for construction, furniture, or artisan crafts.



Targets and Priorities

R12 Tree Risk Management

Existing tree management policy covering South Kesteven DC owned trees is not under review within this trees and woodland strategy. However, these are its principal components :

- tree/woodland maintenance
- tree protection policy
- risk management

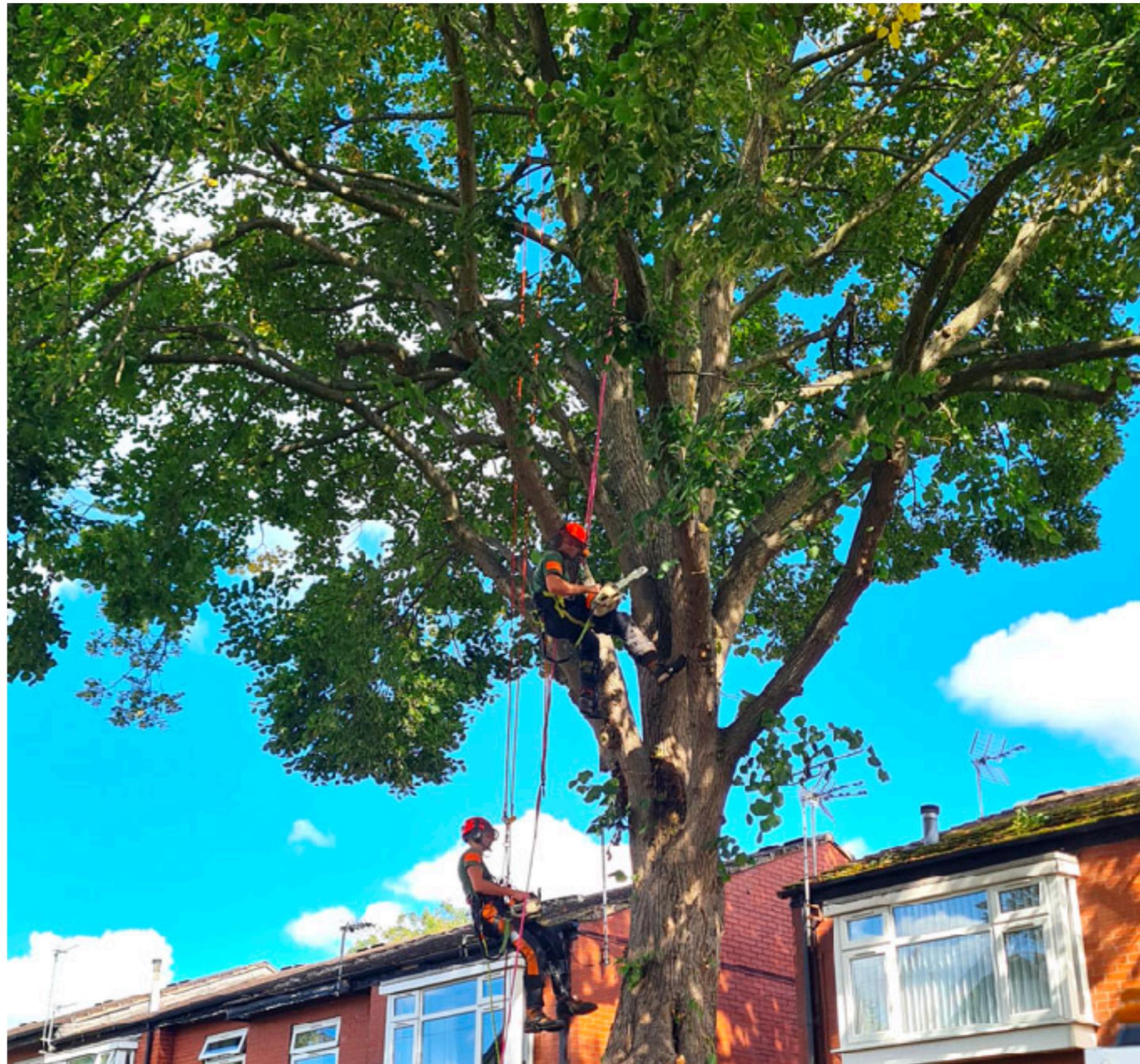
Existing practice for risk management and associated tree maintenance is considered to serve South Kesteven District well and is in keeping with its scale in terms of both numbers of residents and budgets.

Tree preservation orders (TPOs), intended to protect significant/important trees irrespective of ownership is an area where improved communication (see section 3.2) combined with more consistent enforcement could have substantial impact.

Sources and references:
National Tree Safety Group. (2011). Common sense risk management of trees. Forestry Commission

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Link to relevant corporate policies:
South Kesteven and Rutland Infrastructure Delivery Plan
SKDC's Tree Guidelines



Targets and Priorities

R13 Biosecurity

Biosecurity refers to the need to prevent new pests and diseases being introduced into the UK from abroad. This measure is necessary to stop the spread of potentially devastating organisms and protect forestry, agriculture and horticulture. In recent history, the introduction of Dutch Elm Disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) killed 20 million mature English elm trees between its introduction in the late 1960's and 1980. By 1990, this figure had risen to 25 million- over 85% of the British population. Now, Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is sweeping through the country and will likely kill off 80% of ash trees across the UK.

These diseases and others will continue to have a profound effect on trees and woodlands. Native tree species provide vital habitat for many other species and without them there would be a huge ecological deficit.

The importation of trees, particularly large landscape trees, from across Europe and elsewhere can increase the risk of diseases being introduced to the UK.

South Kesteven District Council must take responsibility for the sourcing of its trees, and actively work to eliminate pests and diseases from its trees and woodlands and prevent new diseases becoming prolific.

Sources and references:

Brasier, C.M., 1996. New horizons in Dutch elm disease control;
Defra, 2014; Defra, 2018. A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment;
The Woodland Trust: State of the UK's Woods and Trees 2021.

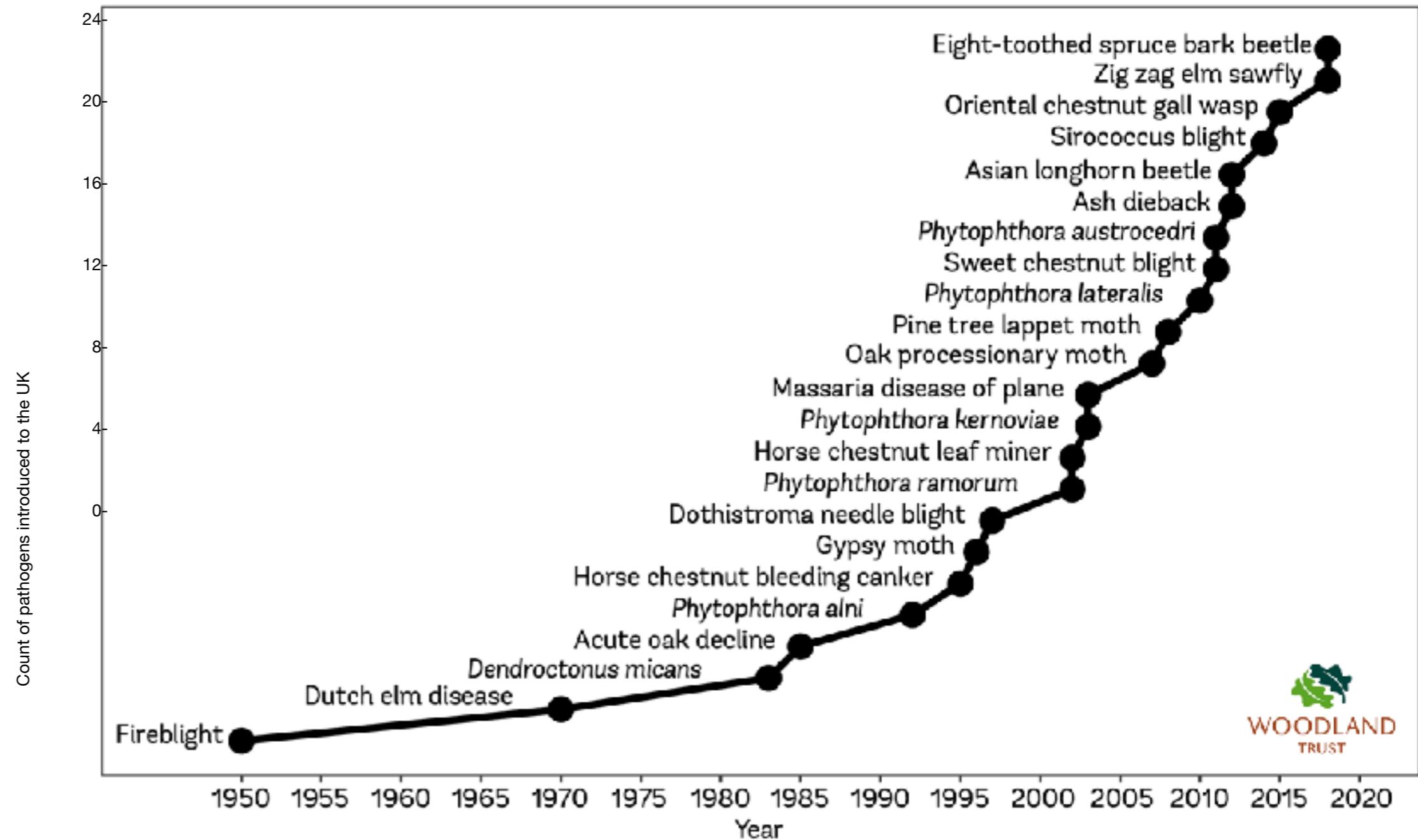


Figure 6: Tree pest and disease introduction in the UK

Targets and Priorities

R14 Native and Non-native Trees

Trees and woodlands are a diverse place, consisting of a range of trees and plants from all over the world. Whilst diversity is key to a healthy treescape, native plants should be selected above non-native species whenever appropriate. Native species of trees, shrubs, fungi, ferns, insects, mammals, birds and more have evolved together in the UK, each finding and filling an ecological niche in which to thrive.

The balance between species in an ecosystem is delicate: just one missing link could tip the system out of balance.

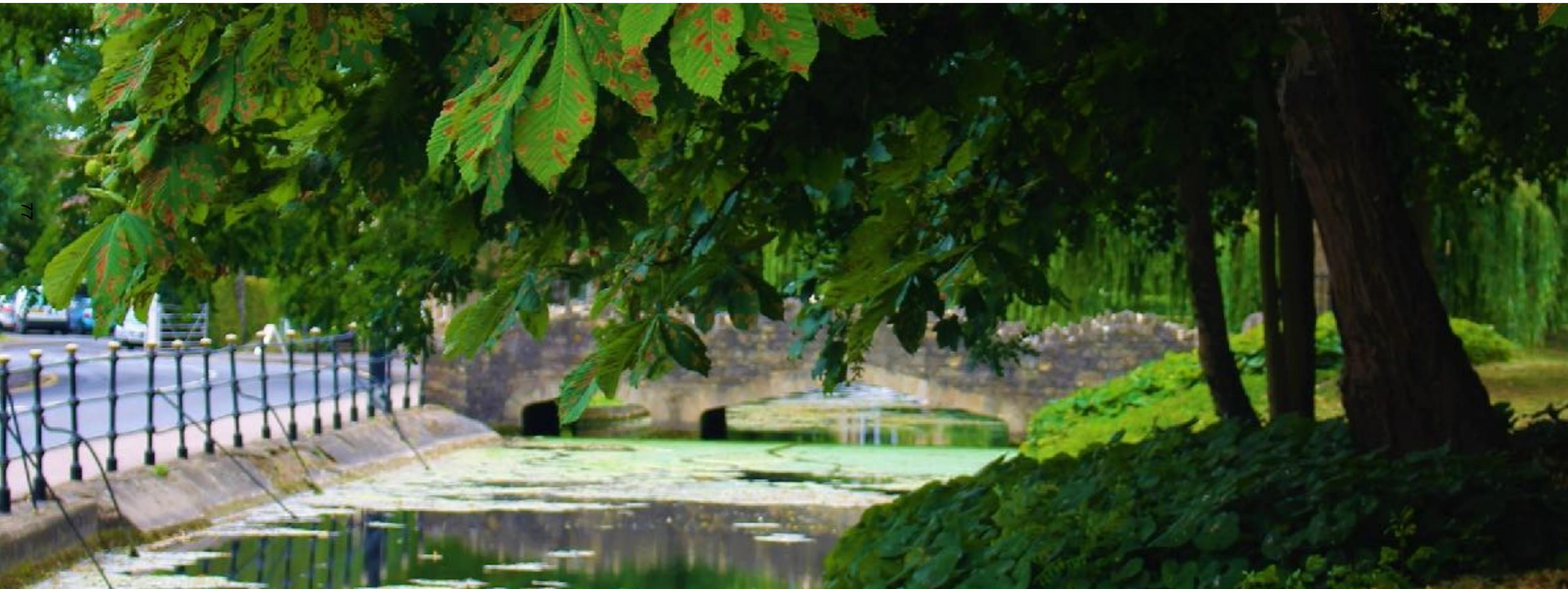
Trees provide habitats for a whole range of species. In the UK, English oak (*Quercus robur*) supports more organisms than any other tree; more than 1,000 insect species have been identified to date on oaks in central Europe, with a total of 2,300 different species relying on oak in the UK. Without native trees, other native species may struggle to find suitable habitats and therefore suffer.

Sources and references:

PuRpOsE: Protect Oak Ecosystems, 2019. <https://protectouroaks.wordpress.com/work-packages/wp4/purpose-impact-event/>

<https://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/ancientoaksofengland/distribution>

The Woodland Trust. (2022) Ancient Tree Inventory -



Targets and Priorities

R15 Open Data and Web-map (Management and Assessment Tools)

Management and assessment tools are fundamental and indispensable when considering a resource as vast as the urban forest. Being able to clearly see tree data would help the trees and woodland management team keep track of the trees, and make the public aware of them and their value.

A web-map is an interactive tool for displaying information to the public about trees and woodlands, and data can be broken down by parish and ward. They can display a range of things including tree benefits such as canopy cover, annual ecosystem benefits (avoided runoff, carbon sequestration, air pollution removal), and tree condition, to name a few. They are an excellent way to engage with the public and communicate benefits of trees.

In creating a public web-map, tree data could be easily communicated and compared. Ideally the tool will be accessible, easy to use and comprehensive for all the trees and woodlands of SKDC. The data should be kept up to date with the most recent reviews of the urban forest.

Implicit in the creation of a web map is the collection of the data that underpins it - see R1

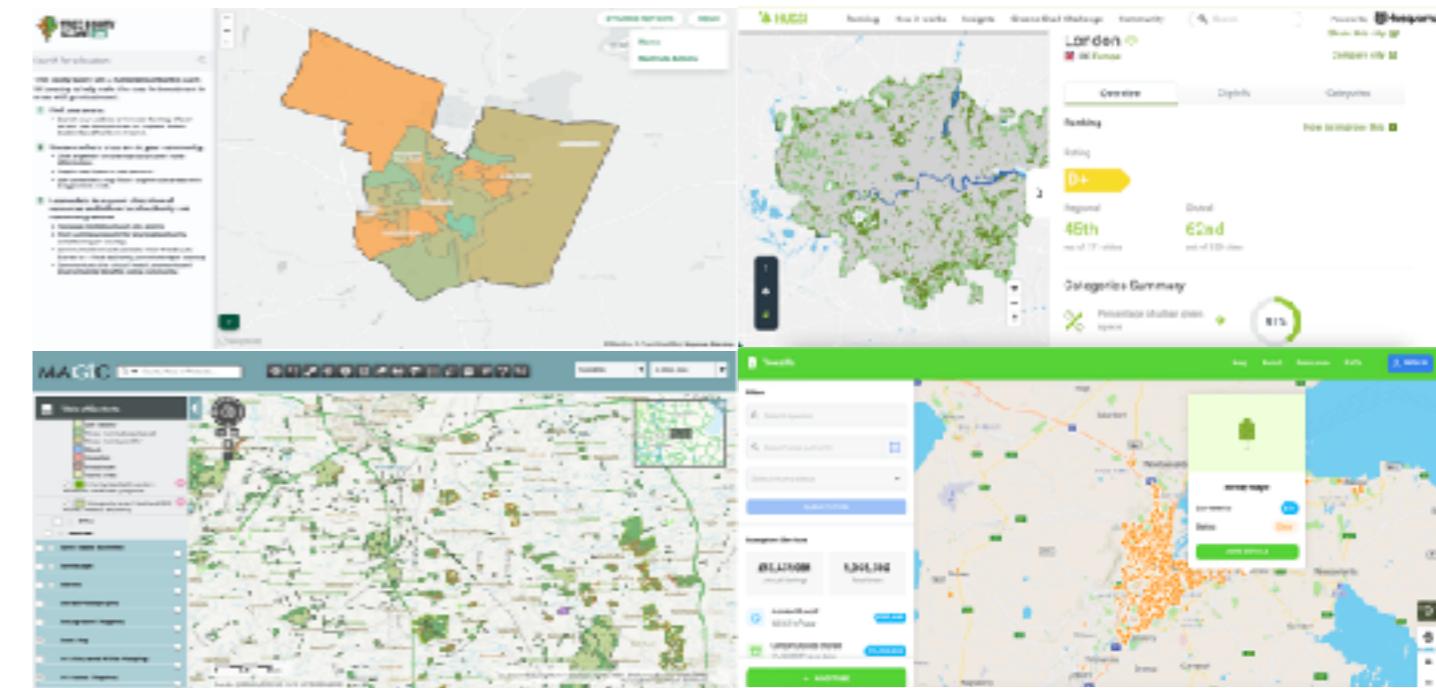


Figure 7: A selection of online mapping tools.

Top right - Hugsi (<https://www.hugsi.green/city/?London>)

Top left - Tree Equity Score UK (<https://uk.treeequityscore.org/map#11.72/52.9204/-0.626>)

Bottom Left - DEFRA's Magic Map (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>)

Bottom right - Treezilla (<https://treezilla.org>)

Targets and Priorities

R16 Reviewing and Improving the Strategy

South Kesteven District Council is taking a strategic approach to its trees and woodlands. It follows an action based model more widely used in countries like the US and Canada. The Plan will help South Kesteven District Council set and work towards a vision for its trees that is sustainable well into the future.

The Trees and Woodlands Strategy outlines a vision for the development of the urban and rural tree resource. It provides a long-term framework in which strategic plans can be developed.

Tree-planting programmes are just one element of tree and woodland management, and long-term management plans are just as important. With a tree and woodland management plan in place, tree planting programmes can be focused and strategised, as well as better guiding the achievement of a long-term vision.

With agreement on an ambitious vision, the Tree Strategy can be divided into management periods, with goals and targets clearly outlined. A series of performance indicators will then be put into place to monitor performance and help progress towards the achievement of goals and the wider vision.

It is important that progress is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and actions modified as necessary. This way, SKDC can focus on the most relevant and urgent areas going forward.

 The Tree Strategy is an ongoing piece of work and this document represents the first step and will be subject to ongoing improvement and updating. For each and every target within the plan, further detail will be added and projects will be planned and actioned to take SKDC towards its vision.



Alternative formats are available on request: audio, large print and braille

South Kesteven District Council

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

South Kesteven District Council
Trees & Woodland Strategy 2024 - 2034

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Action Plan

3.1 Trees and Woodland Structure

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
T1 - Relative Tree Canopy Cover	1. Protect existing trees 2. Right tree right place 3. Work with private landowners (poss tree give aways etc). Parish agreements 4. Identify planting opportunities. Planting opportunity mapping (LCC). BNG - Developer LNRS	SKDC – From parish level up	2026	High	The existing canopy cover equals 0–25% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 25–50% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 50–75% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 75–100% of the potential.
T2 - Size (Age) Diversity	1. Ancient woodland mapped and ATI (wood pasture) recording completed across district 2. Review quality of SKDC Tree inventory data	SKDC	2026	Medium	Even age distribution or highly skewed toward a single age class.	Some uneven distribution, but most of the tree population falls into a single age class.	Total tree population across district approaches an ideal age distribution of 40% juvenile, 30% semi-mature, 20% mature, and 10% senescent.	Total population approaches that ideal distribution borough-wide as well as at the ward level.
T3 Species Diversity	1. Create a tree planting strategy and diversity index	SKDC	2026	Medium	Five or fewer species dominate the entire tree population across the district.	No single species represents more than 10% of total tree population; no genus more than 20%; and no family more than 30%.	No single species represents more than 5% of total tree population; no genus more than 10%; and no family more than 15%.	At least as diverse as “Good” rating (5/10/15) district-wide – and at least as diverse as “Moderate” (10/20/30) at the neighbourhood level.
T4 Species Suitability	1. Create a supplementary document on species suitability	SKDC	2026	Medium	Fewer than 50% of all trees are from species considered suitable for the area.	>50%-75% of trees are from species suitable for the area.	More than 75% of trees are suitable for the area.	Virtually all trees are suitable for the area.
T5 Publicly Owned Trees	1. Review quality of SKDC Tree Inventory data	SKDC	2026	Low	Condition of urban forest is unknown.	Sample-based tree inventory indicating tree condition and risk level.	Complete tree inventory that includes detailed tree condition ratings.	Complete tree inventory that is GIS-based and includes detailed tree condition as well as risk ratings.

T6 Trees on Other Land (Influence)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ancient woodland mapping & ATI recording 2. Engage with private land owners to share inventories and increase understanding of privately owned trees & woodlands 3. Orchard creation initiatives and tree give aways 	SKDC	2026	Medium	No information about privately owned trees.	Aerial, point-based assessment of trees on private property, capturing overall extent and location.	Bottom-up, sample-based assessment of trees on private property, as well as basic aerial view (as described in "Moderate" rating).	Bottom-up, sample-based assessment on private property, as well as detailed Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) analysis of entire urban forest, integrated into district-wide GIS system.
T7 Tree Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the use of i-Tree tools to establish ecosystem services provided by the districts tree 	SKDC	2026	Medium	No comprehensive information available about tree benefits in the district.	Some information available on key tree benefits, such as biodiversity.	Sound information available on a key set of tree benefits, such as biodiversity, recreation, environmental services (see below).	Comprehensive information available on all tree benefits across the district.
T8 Wider Environmental Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priority zones to be identified where specific benefits can have the highest impact. (Shade, storm water, pollution etc.) with species choice related to species ability to deliver required benefits 	SKDC		Medium	No consideration/ information that relates urban trees to climate change, air quality, water.	Some consideration of environmental aspects in relation to urban trees, e.g. looking at climate change.	Consideration of at least major environmental aspects in relation to urban trees.	Full consideration of environmental aspects in relation to trees, based on comprehensive, state-of-the-art information.

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3.2 Community Framework

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
C1 SKDC Departmental Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify policy areas across all departments where trees and woodlands can contribute or are potentially impacted 2. Ensure enforcement is followed, where in the public interest to do so, for any unapproved works to protected trees 3. Review best practice for local plan policies on tree protection (retain trees and a requirement for greater than 1:1 replacement) 	SKDC	2026	High	Departments/ agencies take actions impacting urban forest with no cross-departmental coordination, consultation or consideration of the urban forest resource.	Departments/ agencies recognise potential conflicts and reach out to urban forest managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa.	Informal teams among departments and agencies communicate regularly and collaborate on a project-specific basis.	UF policy implemented by formal interdepartmental/ interagency working teams on all projects.

C2 Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Share tree information publicly - web based. Enable participation / decision-making at parish level Create community group mapping / contact hub (STEW-MAP) 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Little or no citizen involvement or neighbourhood action.	Some neighbourhood groups engaged in advancing treescapes goals, but with little or no overall coordination with or direction by district or its partnering NGOs.	Many active neighbourhood groups engaged across the community, with actions coordinated or led by SKDC and/or its partnering NGOs.	
C3 General Appreciation of Trees as a Community Resource	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Share tree information publicly - web/app based Develop local communication programmes built around national initiatives in conjunction with sector NGOs 	SKDC	2026	Medium	General ambivalence or negative attitudes about trees, which are perceived as neutral at best or as the source of problems. Actions harmful to trees may be taken deliberately.	Trees generally recognised as important and beneficial.	Trees widely acknowledged as providing environmental, social, and economic services – resulting in some action or advocacy in support of the urban forest.	Urban forest recognised as vital to the community's environmental, social, and economic well-being. Widespread public and political support and advocacy for trees, resulting in strong policies and plans that advance the viability and sustainability of the entire urban forest.
48	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participation of all significant groups within South Kesteven District Seek collective approach across District on carbon sequestration measurement 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Const. and Wards have no interaction with each other or the broader region. No regional planning or coordination on urban forestry.	Some neighbouring authorities and regional agencies share similar policies and plans related to trees and urban forest.	Some urban forest planning and cooperation across authorities and regional agencies.	Widespread regional cooperation resulting in development and implementation of regional urban forest strategy.

C5 Utilities Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the utilities companies and get contact details for each utility 2. Strengthen communication usually through planning 3. Active coordination by the Tree Board 	SKDC	High	<p>Utilities take actions impacting urban forest with no council coordination or consideration of the urban forest resource.</p>	<p>Utilities employ best management practices, recognise potential municipal conflicts, and reach out to urban forest managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa.</p>	<p>Utilities are included in informal council teams that communicate regularly and collaborate on a project-specific basis.</p>	<p>Utilities help advance urban forestry goals and objectives by participating in formal interdepartmental/interagency working teams on all municipal projects.</p>	
C6 Green Industry Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish list of organisations and relevant individuals in green industries operating within SKDC 2. Communicate South Kesteven DC Tree Strategy directly 3. Engage to shape a coherent approach across the District 4. Active coordination by the Tree Board 	SKDC	High	<p>Little or no cooperation among segments of green industry or awareness of district-wide urban forest goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Some cooperation among green industry as well as general awareness and acceptance of district-wide goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Specific collaborative arrangements across segments of green industry in support of district-wide goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Shared vision and goals and extensive committed partnerships in place. Solid adherence to high professional standards.</p>	
C7 Involvement of Private and Institutional Landholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish list of major landholders and key individuals 2. Communicate SKDC Tree Strategy directly & engage 3. Integrate Trees & Woodland Strategy as appropriate planning documents - timescales to align with the emerging Local Plan 	SKDC	2026	Medium	<p>Large private landholders are generally uninformed about urban forest issues and opportunities.</p>	<p>South Kesteven DC conducts outreach directly to landholders with educational materials and technical assistance, providing clear goals and incentives for managing their tree resource.</p>	<p>Landholders develop comprehensive tree management plans (including funding strategies) that advance district-wide treescape goals.</p>	<p>As described in "Good" rating, plus active community engagement and access to the property's forest resource.</p>
C8 Governance and Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a Tree Board 2. Establish list of major landholders and key individuals 3. Communicate South Kesteven DC Tree Strategy directly & engage 4. Integrate Trees & Woodland Strategy into Supplementary Planning Document 	SKDC, Woodland Trust, LNP	2026	Medium	<p>Agencies take actions impacting the treescape with no cross-departmental coordination, consultation or consideration of the urban forest resource. Leadership for tree & woodland management is fragmented.</p>	<p>SKDC works with other NGO's and Agencies on ad-hoc projects as and when they arise.</p>	<p>SKDC regularly and frequently works with other NGO's and Agencies to establish projects and plans. There is a cultural champion in place.</p>	<p>Integrated tree & woodland governance and leadership provided by a Tree Board and is measured to plan and reflects local and international policies.</p>

3.3 Sustainable Resource Management Approach

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
R1 Tree & Woodlands Inventory	1. Conduct Tree inventory Study (SKDC trees) 2. Consider conducting and i-Tree Eco Sample Study (all trees in District) in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council and partner Districts and Parishes			Low	No inventory.	Complete or sample-based inventory of publicly owned trees.	Complete inventory of publicly owned trees and sample-based privately owned trees that is guiding management decisions.	Systematic comprehensive inventory system of entire treescape – with information tailored to users and supported by mapping in district-wide GIS system.
R2 Canopy Cover Assessment and Goals	1. Agree canopy cover goals appropriate to broader aims of connectivity and tree equity 2. Determine planting and management programme to meet aims	SKDC	2026	Med	No assessment or goals.	Low-resolution and/or point-based sampling of canopy cover using aerial photographs or satellite imagery – and limited or no goal-setting.	Complete, detailed, and spatially explicit, high-resolution Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) assessment based on enhanced data (such as LiDAR) – accompanied by comprehensive set of goals by land use and other parameters.	As described for "Good" rating – and all utilised effectively to drive urban forest policy and practice district-wide and at neighbourhood or smaller management level.
R3 Tree Valuation and Asset Management Approach	1. Determine appropriate mechanism for valuing SKDC trees and woodlands	SKDC			Tree valuation nor assessment management are in place.	Some form of tree valuation is used, at least for key projects involving public trees.	Tree valuation and asset management are implemented across the district, for most public trees.	Tree valuation and asset management are implemented for all public trees - and in some cases also private trees.

R4 Green Network Connectivity / Woodland Creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine target biodiversity connectivity corridors across the District, both broad (woodlands) and narrow (hedgerows, linear tree corridors). Drive stakeholder engagement programme via parish councils to bring local landowners on board. Engage private landowners to increase/improve hedgerow connectivity across district 	SKDC	Low	No consideration given to green connectivity or habitat fragmentation	Mapping of woodland pockets and opportunities for connectivity, but limited intervention.	Complete, detailed understanding of green connectivity / habitat fragmentation challenge. Dialogue open with other major land owners.	Adoption of an ongoing landscape-scale approach to effectively conserve biodiversity and combat fragmentation using best practice tools in collaboration with all major land owners
R5 Environmental Justice and Equity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish current levels of tree canopy distribution across the District Determine a minimum floor for performance across the District (e.g. 3.30.300) Identify options for targeting resources to areas with lower tree cover 	SKDC/LCC	Med	Tree planting and outreach is not determined equitably by canopy cover or need for benefits.	Planting and outreach includes attention to low canopy neighbourhoods or areas.	Planting and outreach targets neighbourhoods with low canopy and a high need for tree benefits.	Equitable planting and outreach at the neighbourhood level is guided by strong citizen engagement in those low-canopy/high-need areas.
R6 Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider funding for trees, taking into account Biodiversity Net Gain, through developer contributions, either through the review of the Council's Developer Contributions policy, or through the government's introduction of the national infrastructure levy Identify all major external funding streams for SKDC and other landholders for trees and woodlands and the best route to securing them 	SKDC	High	Little or no dedicated funding.	Funding only for emergency, reactive management.	Funding sufficient for some proactive management based on Tree & Woodland Strategy	Sustained funding from public and private sources to fully implement comprehensive Tree & Woodland Strategy.
R7 Capacity and Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase capacity to ensure there is appropriate staffing to carry out the actions of this Strategy. Explore volunteer schemes such as Tree Wardens to increase capacity 	SKDC	2026	High	Team severely limited by lack of personnel and/or access to adequate equipment. Unable to perform adequate maintenance, let alone implement new goals.	Team limited by lack of trained staff and/or access to adequate equipment.	Team able to implement many of the goals and objectives of the Tree & Woodland Strategy.

R8 Tree Establishment – Planning and Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure right tree, right place philosophy is embedded in all future SKDC tree planting programmes 	SKDC	High	Little or no tree planting; tree establishment is ad hoc.	Some tree planting and establishment occurs, but with limited overall district-wide planning and post-planting care.	Tree planting plan is guided by district-wide goals, with some post-planting establishment care.	Comprehensive tree establishment plan is guided by needs derived from canopy and other assessments, maintains species and age diversity, includes both planting and young tree care, and is sufficient to make progress toward canopy cover objectives.
R9 Growing Site Suitability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure right tree, right place philosophy is embedded in all future SKDC tree planting programmes 	SKDC	High	Trees selected and planted without consideration of site conditions.	Appropriate tree species are considered in site selection.	District-wide guidelines in place for the improvement of planting site conditions and selection of suitable species.	All trees planted in sites with adequate soil quality and quantity, and with sufficient growing space and overall site conditions to achieve their genetic potential and thus provide maximum ecosystem services.
R10 Tree Protection Policy Development and Enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure SKDC planning team are appropriately resourced with qualified tree advice, enforcement officers and conservation officers 2. Review all confirmed SKDC Tree Preservation Orders 	SKDC	Med	No tree protection policy.	Policies in place to protect public trees and employ industry best management practices, but inconsistently enforced.	Policies and practices in place to protect public and private trees, generally enforced.	Integrated district-wide policies and practices to protect public and private trees, consistently enforced and supported by significant deterrents.

R11 Trees, Woodland and Green Waste Utilisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain good practice by reviewing SKDC's protocols with sector leading advice. Identify potential end uses for green waste and industries/contractors capable of utilising SKDC's green waste 	SKDC		Low	No utilisation plan; wood and other green waste goes to landfill with little or no recycling and reuse.	While most green waste does not go to landfill, uses are limited to chips or mulch.	The majority of green waste is reused or recycled – for energy, products, and other purposes beyond chips or mulch.	Comprehensive plan and processes in place to utilise all green waste one way or another, to the fullest extent possible.
R12 Tree Risk Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current practices for risk management and maintenance Explore the adoption of the Trees & Woodland Strategy through the development of appropriate planning documents - timescales to align with the emerging Local Plan (2026) Seek better communication and enforcements on TPOs 	SKDC	2026	Med	No tree risk assessment or risk management program. Response is on a reactive basis only.	Level I (limited visual assessment) inspection and follow-up conducted periodically.	Level II (basic assessment) conducted periodically, resulting in scheduled follow-ups.	Level II (basic assessment) conducted routinely, according to defined cycle and intensive follow-up (i.e., priorities and timelines for mitigation established based on the characterisation of risk).
R13 Biosecurity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish South Kesteven DC protocols for tree-sourcing Take a citizen science approach to early warning / monitoring for pests and diseases (Observatree) Engage with other major landowners on the topic to disseminate best practice 	SKDC		Low	No biosecurity strategy nor actions in place for urban trees.	Some consideration of biosecurity aspects, e.g., through pest management.	Biosecurity management actions are integrated in urban forestry.	Biosecurity strategy developed and implemented, with emphasis on urban trees. Integration of this into day-to-day urban forest management.
R14 Native and Non-native Trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate a balanced policy for native and non-native vegetation in SKDC's tree and woodland management. 	SKDC		Low	No coordinated focus on native vegetation.	Voluntary use of native species on publicly and privately owned lands; invasive species are recognised.	Use of native species is encouraged on a project-appropriate basis in all areas; invasive species are recognised and discouraged on public and private lands.	Native species are widely used on a project-appropriate basis.

R15 Open Data and Web-map (Management and Assessment Tools)	1. Present a basic webmap of woodlands 2. Present an interactive map of tree inventory		2026 2027	Low	No specialist UF management software.	Information on some elements of the urban forest is available through a web map.	Large parts of the district's urban forest are presented through web maps.	South Kesteven DC has a clear and openly accessible tree management portal for all tree data.
R16 Reviewing and Improving the Strategy	1. Review the Tree and Woodland Strategy after 5 years.	SKDC	2029	Low	No plan.	Existing plan limited in scope and implementation.	Recent comprehensive plan developed and implemented for publicly owned forest resources, including trees managed intensively (or individually) and those managed extensively, as a population (e.g., trees in natural areas).	Strategic, multi-tiered plan with built-in adaptive management mechanisms developed and implemented for public and private forest resources.

Appendices

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Glossary

Abbreviations

BSI - British Standards Institution
CAVAT - Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees
ISA - International Society of Arboriculture
LPA - Local Planning Authority
NFI - National Forest Inventory
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NTSG - National Tree Safety Group
NTM - National Tree Map
RTC - Relative Tree Canopy
SKDC - South Kesteven District Council
SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest
TB - Tree Board
TPO - Tree Preservation Order
TDAG - Trees and Design Action Group
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

Glossary of terms

Arboriculture- The selection, production, planting, maintenance, and removal of all woody plants for amenity purposes.

Biodiversity- A measure of biological variation, whether represented by gene, species, habitats or ecosystems.

Biosecurity- A set of precautions to reduce the risk of accidentally introducing or spreading alien invasive species, including potential pests and pathogens.

Canopy Cover- A 2-dimensional metric quantifying the area of ground covered by tree canopy when viewed from above, where tree canopy is the collective branches and foliage of the tree.

Carbon sequestration- Processes that remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Carbon storage - The amount of carbon bound up in the above-ground and below-ground parts of woody vegetation.

Community forestry- Addresses the social benefits of the urban forest: community pride, community planting and care projects, reduction of violent crimes and a sense of safety.

Conservation- Use, management and protection of natural resources that insures use and enjoyment for future generations

Ecosystem Services- The ways in which humanity relies on ecosystems for the continued provision of clean air, drinking water, an equitable climate, the productivity of agriculture, forestry and oceans, control of flooding, soil erosion, coastal erosion, carbon sequestration etc.

Ecosystem- A unit of ecology consisting of a more or less discrete community of species, interacting with each other and their physical environment.

Environment- The prevailing conditions which reflect the combined influence of climate, soil, topography and biology (other plants and animals) present in an area.

GIS (Geographic information system)- A collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analysing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Green infrastructure (GI)- An interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, greenways, parks, forests and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to health and quality of life. Includes parks, parkways, riparian buffers, residential landscaping, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs, and window boxes.

Green roof- A specially designed roof that incorporates plants. Depending on the structural capacity of the building, depth and type of soil and desired maintenance. Green roofs can be planted with anything from sedums to trees.

Green space- Any vegetated land or water within an urban area that serves as recreation or open space. This includes neighbourhood and regional parks, gardens, cemeteries, playing fields, bike and walking paths and urban landscaping.

Greenway/green corridor- Corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas.

Habitat- Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life.

Impervious surface- A hard surface (such as a car park or rooftop) that prevents infiltration of water into the ground, causing water to run off the surface.

Infiltration- The downward movement of water from the land surface into the soil.

Inventory, Tree- Gathering of accurate information on the health and diversity of the community forest which can include the following: listing and description of trees and planting sites.

Microclimate- The climate of a site as modified by local site factors.

Native Species- Species present in a defined region for a certain amount of time without having been brought by humans (cf. exotic), for instance in Britain since the English Channel was flooded around 6,000 years ago.

Non-native species- A species that due to direct or indirect human activity occurs in locations beyond its known historical or potential natural range. Refers to species from another continent, region, ecosystem or habitat.

Pollution- Substances introduced into the environment by human actions that contaminate the environment.

Stormwater runoff- Precipitation that falls on impervious surfaces (such as roofs and roads). Because it is not absorbed by soil and vegetation, it flows into storm drains.

Glossary

Subsidence- In relation to soil or structures resting in or on soil, a sinking due to shrinkage when certain clay soils dry out, sometimes due to the extraction of moisture by tree roots.

TDAG - The Trees Design Action Group

Tree Protection Order (TPO)- A legally enforceable document made by the local planning authority to protect trees and woodland in the interests of public amenity. While trees in conservation areas are automatically protected, individual trees outside these areas may be protected with a Tree Preservation Order.

Urban Forest- Trees, woody shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants, waterways, wildlife, grasses, and other green infrastructure (including green roofs, green walls etc.) within the built environment, considered collectively over an extensive area.

Urban heat island effect- A phenomenon where air temperatures in urban areas are 2-10°F hotter than surrounding rural areas due to the high concentrations of buildings and pavement in urban areas.

Stem Diameter- The diameter of a tree at around 1.5 metres above ground level.

Alternative formats are available on request: audio, large print and braille

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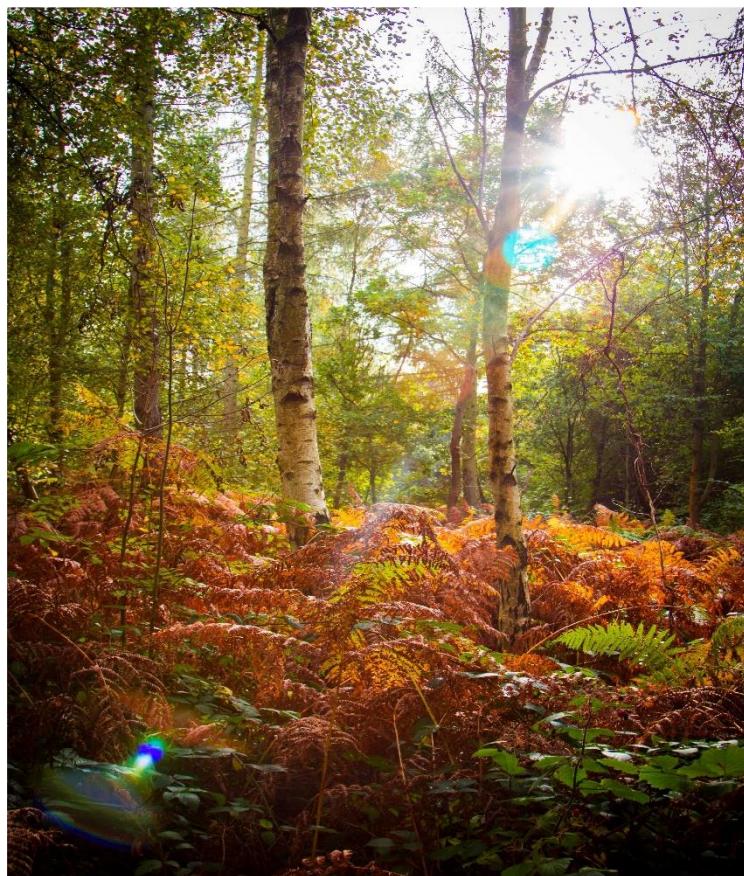


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Trees and Woodland Strategy Report Consultation Results March 2024



Deborah Wyles

March 2024

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BACKGROUND

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the results of a consultation undertaken with a variety of stakeholders on the founding principles of South Kesteven District Council's draft Trees and Woodland Strategy. The consultation was undertaken to:
 - Assess public attitudes around trees and woodlands
 - Assess public attitudes for increasing tree canopy cover within the district
 - Establish what people think the Council should be doing and the role it should play – particularly in relation to schemes which support wider tree planting across the district

Scope

2. The scope of this consultation was focused on three main areas. These were to:
 - Inform the approach SKDC should take regarding trees and woodland in South Kesteven
 - Gauge the degree of support for the emerging Tree and Woodland Strategy
 - Enable stakeholders to state opportunities for how the Council can support wider tree planting, and the extent to which both they and SKDC should get involved

Objectives

3. The objectives of the consultation were identified as follows. To:
 - Measure the level of public support for existing trees and woodlands in the district
 - Measure the level of public support for the provision of additional trees and woodlands in the district over the next ten years
 - Understand which areas of activity supporting trees and woodlands are those where the Council can or should contribute, and how this should be achieved

Timescales

4. The timescales of this consultation were as follows:

Two workshops were held on the morning and afternoon of 18 January 2024, to which district councillors and various external stakeholders were invited. Cabinet members Cllrs Patsy Ellis and Rhys Baker were updated on the approach, the proposed questions for the public consultation etc prior to the consultation going live. The survey was launched on 31 January 2024. Open for 3 weeks, it closed on 21 February 2024. Results were then analysed, and a report prepared for presentation to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside the final draft version of the Tree and Woodland Strategy on 19 March.

Stakeholders

5. The stakeholders were identified as:

- Cabinet members for Environment and waste – Cllrs Patsy Ellis and Rhys Baker
- Chair and Vice Chair of SKDC'S Environment OSC – Cllrs Ian Selby and Emma Baker
- Residents of South Kesteven
- District Councillors for South Kesteven
- Town and Parish Councils in South Kesteven
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Large landowners within the district
- Other organisations with a focus on the natural environment
- Voluntary and Community Groups with a focus on the natural environment
- The Woodland Trust
- The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Grantham Rivercare
- The Environment Agency
- East Mercia Rivers Trust
- Park Groups
- Forestry Commission (as they own and manage Bourne Wood)
- Planning section in SKDC

Methodology

6. The table below identifies the method(s) that were used to contact the stakeholders:

Stakeholders	Method(s)	Details
Cabinet members for Environment and Waste	Discussion took place with portfolio holders Approval sought for approach and content of consultation.	Cllr Rhys Baker Cllr Patsy Ellis
Chair and Vice Chair of Environment OSC	Invited and attended the stakeholder workshops on 18 March.	Cllr Ian Selby Cllr Emma Baker
Residents of South Kesteven	Members of the public were made aware of the consultation through the following channels: Press release to the local press SKDC Social Media Channels	Potential respondents referred to survey monkey to participate in the consultation. Alternatively, if necessary, they were able to email the Climate Change officer who would have sent them a printed copy of the survey. No requests were received. Press release prepared promoting the consultation to district. Release included the link to survey. Consultation promoted on social media channels - Facebook and Twitter. Posts included a link to the survey.

	SKDC website	Webpage of consultations updated to include information about the consultation.
District Councillors	District Councillors informed of the consultation via members email. Also invited to stakeholder workshop.	
Town/Parish Councils in South Kesteven	Town/parish clerks contacted and asked to participate. Also invited to stakeholder workshop.	Climate Change Officer / Projects Officer contacted town and parish councils with link to consultation.
Landowners within district	Landowners which own significant areas of land contacted by SKDC's Climate Change/ Project Officer. They included:	National Trust Buckminster Estates
Voluntary and Community Groups (with an environmental focus)	Contacted by email and asked to comment	CD and VH contacted voluntary and community groups
Organisations with an environmental focus	Organisations contacted by SKDC's Climate Change / Projects Officers included: The Woodland Trust The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership Lincolnshire Rivers Trust Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Grantham Rivercare Lincolnshire County Council The Environment Agency	<p>enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk</p> <p>https://glnp.org.uk/contact-us</p> <p>lincsrivers@gmail.com</p> <p>info@lincstrust.co.uk</p> <p>Rivercare Grantham David Martin sustransranger@hotmail.com Ian Simmons iansimmons@icloud.com</p> <p>https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/comments-feedback/contact-us and then chose environment and planning</p> <p>enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk</p>

DETAILS

7. To assess attitudes in relation to the founding principles of SKDC's Trees and Woodland Strategy, the consultation officer was asked to support the consultation undertaken during February 2024. Actions undertaken by the consultation officer, the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer and the Projects Officer included:
 - Preparation of a press release to promote the consultation in the local press
 - Drafting of Facebook posts and Tweets to promote the consultation on the Council's social media channels Facebook and X (Twitter)
 - Setting up a webpage to host the document
 - Emailing all parish councils, voluntary and community groups and organisations with an environmental focus
 - Preparing, designing and setting up the on-line survey
 - Analysing feedback from 919 respondents
 - Preparing a report
8. The survey¹ included the following sections:
 - An introduction to the consultation. This included information on SKDC's Tree and Woodland Strategy, setting out the Council's position regarding existing trees and woodlands in the district as well as proposals for SKDC to action, including proactively managing trees and woodlands; and working in partnership with other stakeholders to support wider tree planting. It emphasized how those participating in the consultation can help the Council to turn their ambitions into actions.
 - Section 1 contained questions designed to measure the degree of support for the principles of the Trees and Woodlands strategy including how best to protect and manage existing trees within the district
 - Section 2 contained questions designed to determine the extent of support for SKDC's proposed actions. These included supporting tree planting across a wide remit and improving tree management within the district
 - Section 3 asked respondents to supply some demographic information
9. The opportunity to participate in the consultation was promoted both in the local media and on the Council's social media channels and website during the consultation period. The consultation was promoted three times on the Council's Facebook account, and three times on its Twitter (X) account. The first Facebook post on 1 February had a reach of 6,500. 94 people clicked on the link and there were 455 engagements. The second post on 8 February had a reach of 5,765. 35 people clicked on the link and there were 279 engagements. The final Facebook post on 17 February had a reach of 2,738. 19 people clicked on the link, and it had 64 engagements.
The first post on X (formerly Twitter) had 218 impressions. 2 people clicked on the link and there were 5 engagements. The second post had 253 impressions, 2 people clicked on the link and there were 4 engagements. The final post had 374 impressions, 12 engagements and 8 link clicks.

¹ Copy of survey attached at appendix one

10. 2,800 residents who have signed up to receive an online edition of SKToday (and had given their permission to be contacted by the Council about other issues) were also contacted directly and asked to participate.
11. Various stakeholders including parish councils and organisations with an environmental focus, were contacted at the start of the consultation. Other statutory bodies including Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency were also asked for their feedback.
12. The consultation opened on 31 January 2024. It closed three weeks later, on 21 February 2024. 919 responses were received. The margin of error for this number of responses is 3.22%. This means it is possible to be 95% sure that the results of this consultation are statistically representative of the district's population +/- 3.22%. (Based on a district population estimate of 146,359², at a 95% confidence level).

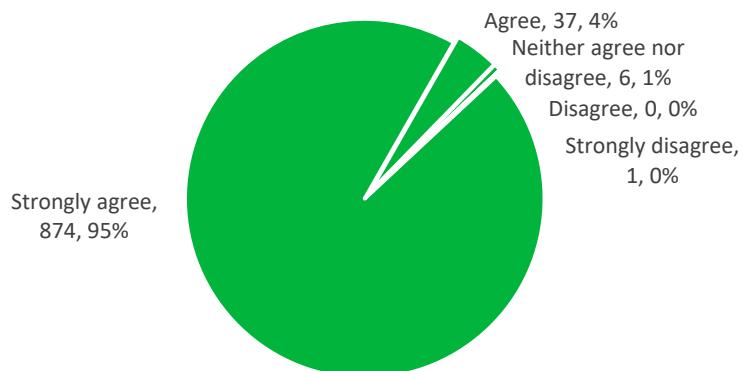
RESULTS

13. The purpose of the first section of the survey was to find out how much support there is for trees and woodlands within South Kesteven, as this forms the basis of the Council's Trees and Woodland Strategy. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:
 - Trees and Woodlands are a valuable natural asset
 - Trees and Woodlands make an important contribution towards biodiversity
 - Trees and Woodlands are really important to me
14. An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with each of these statements. 99% of respondents (911) thought that trees and woodlands are a valuable natural asset as illustrated in the graph below:

² Population estimate for South Kesteven for 2024 from ONS 2018

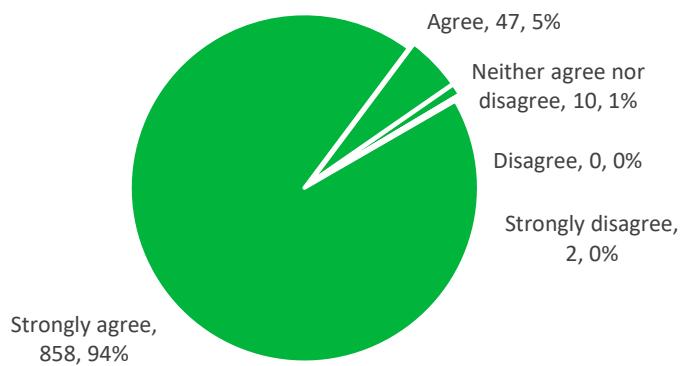
[Population projections for local authorities: Table 2 - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/epc/population-projections-for-local-authorities-table-2-office-for-national-statistics)

Q1. Trees and Woodlands are a valuable natural asset



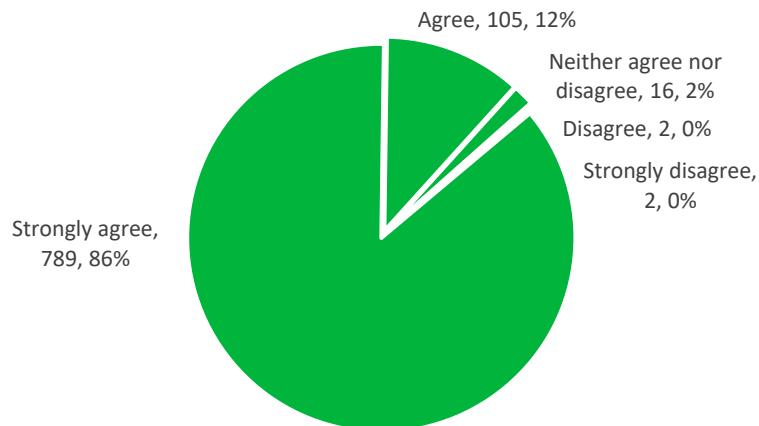
15. A similar proportion (905 or 98.7%) thought that trees make an important contribution towards biodiversity. Two respondents (0.2%) didn't agree.

Q2. Trees and woodlands make an important contribution to biodiversity



16. Trees and Woodlands are very important to people. Nearly all respondents (894 or 97.8%) agreed with this statement as illustrated in the pie chart below. Four respondents (0.4%) didn't agree.

Q3. Trees and Woodlands are really important to me



17. When asked why they had chosen to answer in this way, over 700 respondents took the time to comment. Trees are viewed as a valuable natural resource for a wide variety of reasons – their contribution towards biodiversity, their role in tackling climate change, the physical barrier they provide (to mitigate noise, help prevent flooding and provide shade) and the wildlife habitats they host. The quotes below provide a flavour of peoples' motivations:

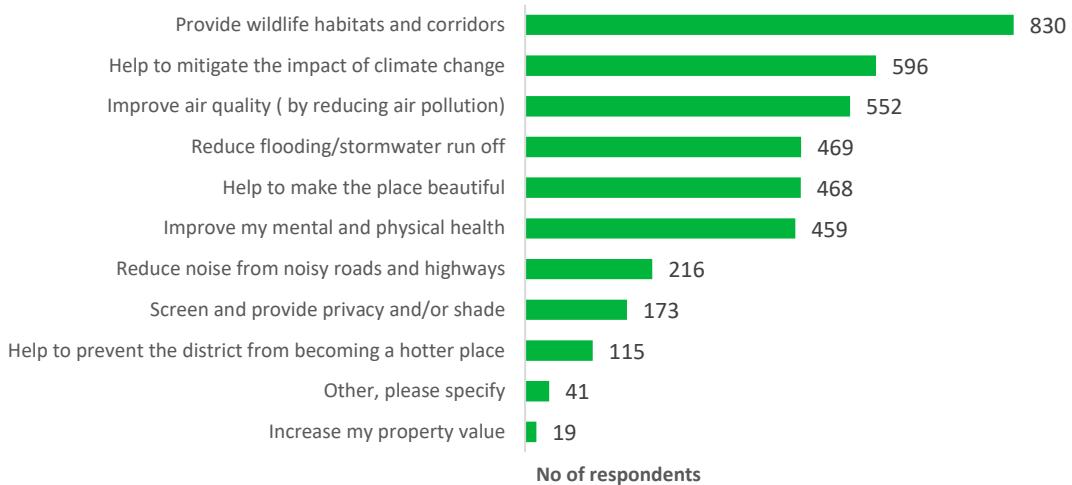
“Trees and woodland are nature's green lungs. Essential to wildlife and air quality.”

“Trees help the environment and people's mental health. We need to plant more to help with pollution”

“Natural woodland is a precious habitat for so much wildlife, trees store carbon, clean and cool our air, are good for our mental health. We need to protect our trees and plant more for future generations to enjoy.”

18. To help inform the focus and direction of the strategy, respondents were then provided with some of the benefits of trees and woodlands. These included providing habitats and corridors for wildlife, reducing noise from noisy roads and helping to tackle climate change through carbon sequestration (the capturing, removal and storage of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the earth's atmosphere). When asked to choose up to four reasons why trees are important, respondents' priorities became clear. Providing wildlife habitats and corridors was the most popular choice, chosen by 830 (92.5%) respondents. Helping to mitigate the impact of climate change and improving air quality by reducing air pollution were also popular choices – chosen by two thirds (66.4%) and three fifths (61.5%) of respondents respectively. The number of respondents choosing each of these benefits is illustrated in the graph below:

Q5. The trees and areas of woodland in South Kesteven are important because they



An analysis of the responses received under other, please specify revealed the following common threads:

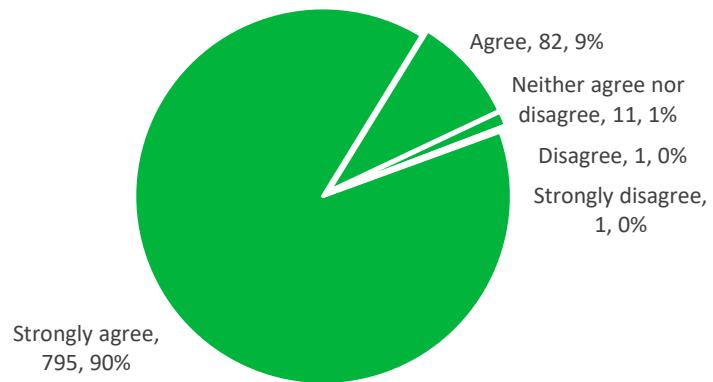
- Some respondents found it difficult to choose four. They wanted to tick them all
"I actually struggled to only select four as every statement was relevant"
- Trees and areas of woodland provide opportunities for nature-based leisure activities including walking and mountain biking
"Provide important leisure opportunities"
- They are a good source of micronutrients and provide important ecosystems
"Good source of micronutrients from leaf carpet in autumn"

19. The second section of the survey concentrated on support for tree and woodland planting, management, and protection within South Kesteven – specifically focusing on the role of the Council. To establish the extent to which there was an expectation that SKDC would be involved, and the role it should play, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodlands in South Kesteven is an important function
- Planting, maintaining and protecting trees in South Kesteven is a worthwhile investment and something the Council should be involved in/contribute towards
- The Council should focus on planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodlands in South Kesteven

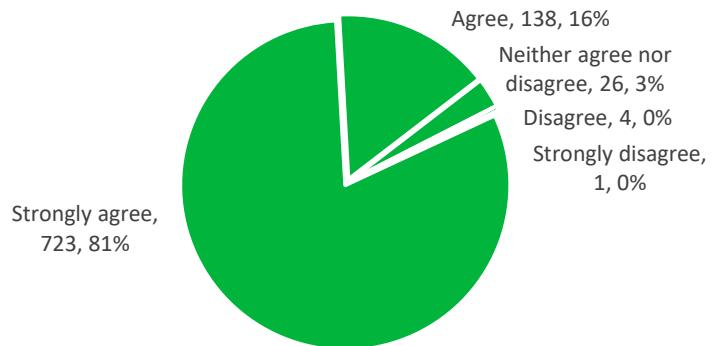
20. There was very strong support for planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodlands in South Kesteven. Nearly all those responding (877 or 98.5%) agreed with this approach, as illustrated here:

Q6. Planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodlands in South Kesteven is an important function



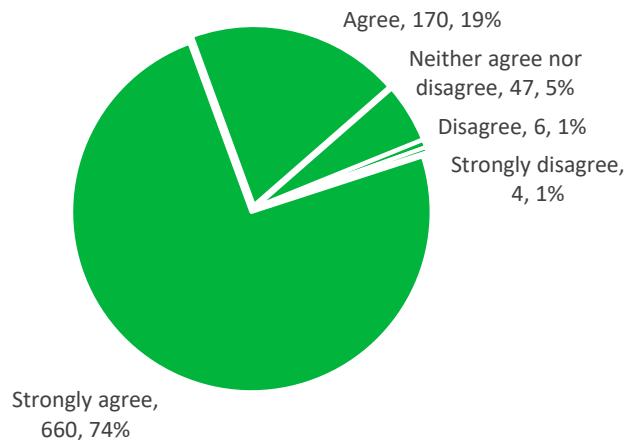
21. When asked if they thought planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodland in South Kesteven was a worthwhile investment and something the Council should get involved with/contribute towards, the majority of respondents 861 (96.5%) were in agreement, as shown overleaf:

Q7. Planting, maintaining and protecting trees in South Kesteven is a worthwhile investment, and something the Council should be involved in/contribute towards



22. Respondents were also asked if they thought this was something the Council should be focusing on. More than nine out of ten respondents (830 or 93.6%) agreed with this statement, as illustrated here:

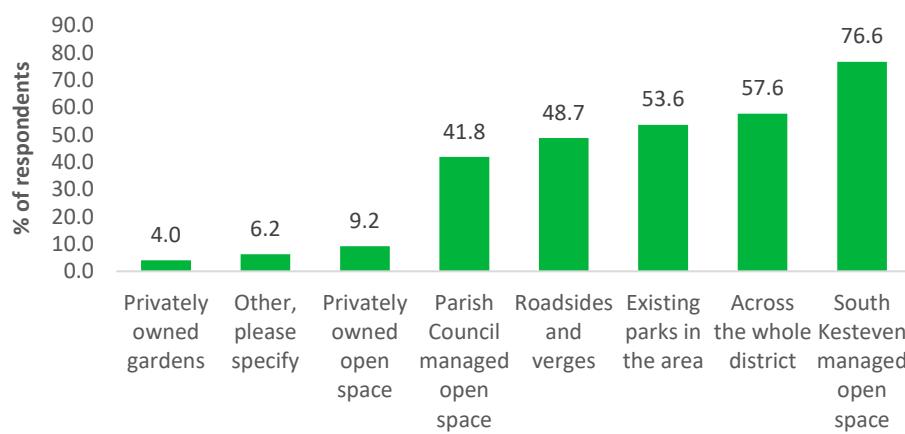
Q8. The Council should focus on planting, maintaining and protecting trees and woodlands in South Kesteven



23. These questions were asked to help define and measure peoples' expectations as to the role the Council should fulfil in this area. Their feedback will inform the content and direction of the strategy, and underpin the action plan.

24. To enable a better understanding of respondents' priorities, they were asked to identify the areas where they thought the Council should concentrate its efforts. They were asked to choose no more than three options. Their choices are illustrated in the graph overleaf:

Q9. If you think SKDC's role is to focus on planting, managing and protecting trees and woodlands, which of the following locations do you think they should concentrate on?



25. Respondents thought that the Council should concentrate its efforts in respect of tree and woodland planting, protection and management on areas it already owns. Parks and areas of open space were popular choices, identified by 53.6% and 76.6% of respondents respectively, as were roadsides and verges, which, although maintained by Lincolnshire County Council, not SKDC, were chosen by just

under half of those taking part in the consultation. Perhaps not surprisingly, “across the whole district” was the second most popular choice – chosen by just under three fifths of those responding to the survey (57.6%).

26. Other suggestions included but were not limited to:

- Closed Churchyards which the Council has responsibility for
- All areas of public land
- Ensuring new developments protect existing trees as well as include tree planting schemes
- School sites
- Unused farming land

27. When given a list of actions the Council should undertake to achieve this, and asked to pick three, the top choices were a combination of actions focused on sustainability and protection of existing areas of woodland, as well as attracting funding for additional provision and highlighting opportunities for community involvement. This is illustrated overleaf:

Q10. The Council should do this through



An analysis of the responses received under “other, please specify” included several suggestions. A few stressed the importance of working with other partners and organisations – particularly The Woodland Trust – as it’s HQ is in Grantham. Others were just keen for the work to commence. The importance of the planning process as a means of increasing the amounts of trees planted was also mentioned.

“Liaison with the Woodland Trust on your doorstep”
“Get on with planting”

“Enforce developers’ tree planting”

28. The next question on the survey asked respondents if they would be interested in volunteering - either to look after existing trees or by helping to plant new ones. A significant proportion (349 or 41%) said that they would.

28. When asked if they had any questions or would like to comment on anything else in relation to the development of SKDC's Trees and Woodland Strategy, over 150 comments were received. The importance of forging closer relationships with partner organisations that are specialists in this area including the Woodland Trust and The Forestry Commission, was mentioned by several respondents. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

“Please partner with experts like The Woodland Trust so we get the right type of trees in the right places.”

“There is a need to establish stronger relationships with woodland management organisations including Forest England/the Forestry Commission to provide a coherent strategy....”

The role the planning/development process can play in protecting existing trees and encouraging more provision was also popular, as shown here:

“Ensure that property developers are not permitted to destroy established trees and hedges!!!”

“Do not lose existing planting to urban development.”

“There should be more tree planting on new housing schemes including private gardens.”

Demographics

29. To enable the authority to assess if responses had been received from across the district, those participating in the consultation process were asked to supply their postcode. Responses were received from across the district as illustrated below:

Postcode sector	Number of responses	% of responses
NG23	26	3.0
NG31	224	26.2
NG32	87	10.2
NG33	67	7.8
NG34	32	3.7
PE6	92	10.8
PE9	162	18.9
PE10	151	17.7
Prefer not to say	3	0.4
Other	11	1.3
Total	855	100.0

An analysis of the responses received from other postcode sectors revealed most were actually from areas in the district. One response was received from someone who had an LE15 postcode, and two responses were received from people with a PE11 postcode – both of which are postcode sectors for areas adjacent to the district of South Kesteven (Rutland and Spalding)

30. The final question on the survey asked respondents to identify if they had answered the survey as a resident, a landowner, a voluntary group or organisation, a parish or district councillor or on behalf of another organisation in the public sector. Most responses were from people living in the district. 819 responses (95.7%) were from residents, with responses from parish and district councillors forming the next largest group. 17 responses were received from individuals representing a group with an environmental focus.

Conclusion

31. Respondents were really keen to protect trees and woodland and were very supportive of the founding principles of SKDC's Trees and Woodlands Strategy. Many of the responses were indicative of a strong environmental focus- with wildlife, nature, air pollution and climate change emerging as dominant themes.
32. There is a significant expectation that the Council should play an active role in protecting, maintaining and planting trees and areas of woodland – and that they should be involved/contribute towards activities and actions in this area.
33. When asked where they thought SKDC should concentrate its efforts, respondents thought it prudent to focus on areas already owned by the Council. They were also keen however to see progress and delivery of initiatives across the district.
34. A significant minority of those responding (around two fifths) stated that they would be interested in helping to plant trees or look after those already in situ. Some thought will have to be given to how best to harness and make the most of this willingness to help.
35. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Prepared by:

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Communications and Consultation

11 March 2024