



Tuesday, 10 December 2024

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Tree and Woodland Strategy Summary Work Programme

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To update Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the South Kesteven District Council Tree and Woodland Strategy summary Work Programme

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the Tree and Woodland Strategy Summary Work Programme.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? N

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 This work programme outlines the implementation of existing agreed actions and does not require additional financial resources beyond those already committed in the original strategy documents.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This work programme does not present any legal or governance issues.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

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.
- 1.4 The Tree and Woodland Strategy Work Programme will help to ensure actions of the Strategy are prioritised and implemented in the most efficient manner.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy 2024-2034 on 24 May 2024. The Strategy aims to increase tree canopy cover, enhance biodiversity, and engage communities in sustainable tree management practices across South Kesteven, contributing to a greener, more climate resilient district.

2.2 A Tree Project Officer role was created to drive forward the implementation of the Tree and Woodland Strategy. This role will also be responsible for managing the Council's stock of trees.

2.3 Following successful recruitment into the role, the following 18-month work programme has been developed to support the delivery of the action plan included in the Strategy by 2034:

- Review the Council's 'Tree Guidelines' document, providing additional emphasis to relevant Tree and Woodland Strategy targets such as increased climate resilience, enhancement of biodiversity value, and social cohesion. The new document should also include policies which demonstrate that the Council's approach to managing its duty of care to trees is reasonable, proportionate and complies with current best practice.
- Introduce a new tree record management system which will allow the Council to own (and have control over) its tree inventory data and provide insights into the climate resilience of its trees.
- Analyse existing inventory data to obtain baseline population statistics about the number of trees, species diversity and the age distribution of trees on land in South Kesteven.
- Obtain baseline data for tree canopy cover over all towns and large villages within the district.
- Assess planting opportunities and constraints on land in South Kesteven to allow realistic targets to be set for new planting. Undertake consultation with Councillors, Parish Councillors and local community groups on planting proposals
- Expand the tree planting programme on Council owned land, prioritising high-impact areas such as parks, open spaces, and land adjacent to transport routes. Investigate and implement delivery models for post-planting monitoring and maintenance, including condition assessments, watering, weeding, formative pruning and removal of redundant support systems.
- Promote best practice in all tree planting schemes by producing a guidance document for parish/town councils and community groups, introducing a system for recording and monitoring newly planted trees and reviewing tree planting procurement policies to ensure that suppliers and contractors comply with current best practice guidelines.
- Establish a 'Tree Board' to oversee the delivery of the current and future work programmes.
- Run tree-related training courses for relevant Council officers to raise awareness within the organisation of arboricultural issues and enhance the skills and knowledge of the various staff members with responsibility for managing the council's trees.

- Produce promotional content that highlights the key elements and objectives of the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy, to foster the development of partnerships working towards shared objectives and gain buy-in from local communities.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

3.1 The Committee are asked to note the work programme which defines specific objectives for the first 18 months of the delivery of the Strategy.

4. Background Papers

4.1 [Item 10, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#), Tuesday 19th March 2024

4.2 [Item 5, Cabinet](#), Tuesday 14th May 2024