



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 23 September 2025

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

Update on Tree Planting Proposals for Winter 2025 Onwards

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the Council's proposed tree planting programme for the 2025/26 season, including planned planting numbers, locations, and delivery methods. The report also explains how planting sites have been selected to ensure fair distribution across the district and outlines future improvements to site selection using canopy cover data and the Woodland Trust's 'Tree Equity Scores'.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to endorse the tree planting programme for 2025/26

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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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 There is sufficient budget in place to fund the tree planting programme for 2025/26 along with the required aftercare and watering costs. The funding for the tree planting programme was allocated through a one-off growth bid as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26. Therefore, any planting and aftercare for future years will require funding to be allocated and potentially form part of a new growth bid for 2026/27 and beyond. No additional procurement risks have been identified at this stage.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The proposals set out in this report are consistent with the Council's adopted Tree and Woodland Strategy (2024) and fall within the Council's powers to manage its own land and assets.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.3 Delivery of the tree planting programme will make a positive contribution to the Council's emerging Climate Action Plan by increasing climate resilience through benefits including provision of shade and natural cooling from trees once established and supporting carbon sequestration in the longer term.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability & Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. SKDC adopted a [Tree and Woodland Strategy in 2024 \(Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 14th May, 2024\)](#). Through the adoption of this strategy the council has committed to increasing tree canopy cover across the district. A central principle is planting the right tree in the right place, ensuring species are chosen for local conditions and long-term survival. The Strategy also emphasises equity, ensuring

planting reaches communities that currently lack canopy cover so that all residents have fair access to the benefits trees provide.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Currently, tree-planting initiatives are strategically focused on land owned or managed by the council. This approach provides a clear and manageable starting point. Alternative delivery methods will be explored, such as partnerships with private landowners or community groups, as our initial planting program matures.
- 3.2. The primary focus is planting individual amenity trees in existing green spaces. However, the Council is also actively identifying opportunities for smaller-scale woodland and hedgerow planting to enhance biodiversity and landscape connectivity.
- 3.3. The distribution of resources for planting new amenity trees would ideally be based on where the most benefit can be delivered such as in areas with low tree canopy cover or poor air quality, areas at risk of flooding due to high levels of run off. At the start of this planning period, however, informative data on these parameters was still being collected and acquired, so planning began based on achieving an equitable geographical distribution across the district.
- 3.4. The method of distributing amenity trees across the district was as follows:
 - 3.4.1. Utilising the most recent census data to establish population figures for the four main towns. For this analysis, Market Deeping and Deeping St. James were considered a single conurbation. The remaining population of South Kesteven was designated as the "villages" category.
 - 3.4.2. A total achievable planting target for the next three years was determined by working backward from the allocated budget, taking into account planting, aftercare, and maintenance costs. A key consideration is the cost of watering new trees for their first three years, which increases annually. To guarantee sufficient funds for tree watering and maintenance, the planting schedule is deliberately paced to avoid over-committing the budget in the initial years.
 - 3.4.3. An ideal distribution model was developed based on the percentage of the population in each area. For instance, if Grantham accounts for 30% of the district's population, the objective is to allocate 30% of the new amenity trees to this area over the three-year period.
 - 3.4.4. Given the limited annual budget and the objective of creating cohesive and aesthetically pleasing planting schemes, it is not always feasible to meet the ideal population-based distribution in a single year. Therefore, the strategy is to achieve this equitable distribution over a longer, three-year planning period.
 - 3.4.5. To ensure an even distribution within the 'villages' category, they have been stratified into three geographical zones: North, Central, and South.

The total number of trees allocated to the villages is then evenly divided among these three strata.

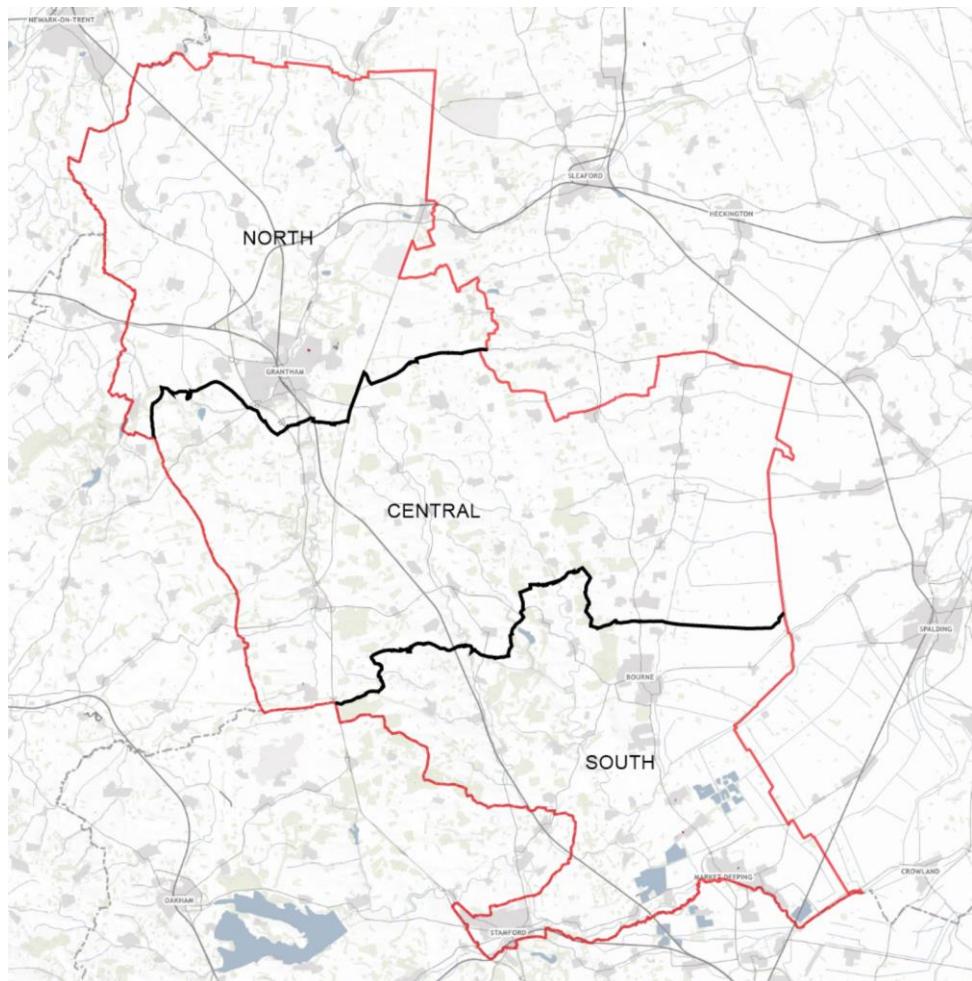


Figure 1. Strata used to select sample villages for the assessment of tree canopy cover.

4. Proposed Planting (Amenity Trees)

4.1 The draft annual planting targets and the projected costs are as follows:

Year	New trees per year	Tree Planting Costs	Aftercare and Maintenance Costs*	TOTAL
2025/26	100	£ 29,870	£ 8,685	£ 38,555
2026/27	65	£ 19,998	£ 23,387	£ 43,385
2027/28	65	£ 20,598	£ 32,257	£ 52,855

*Note: watering continues for three years after planting to ensure the tree has the best chance of establishment

4.2 The three-year projected distribution for amenity trees is currently as follows:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Grantham	28	21	21	70
Bourne	13	8	8	29
Stamford	20	8	9	37
The Deepings	9	6	7	22
Villages - North	0	16	8	24
Villages - Central	14	6	4	24
Villages - South	16	0	8	24
Villages (Combined)	30	22	20	72
Total	100	65	65	230

4.3 The planting sites for 2025/26 are as follows:

Location	No. of Trees
Princess Drive, Grantham	23
Trent Road Play Area, Earlsfield, Grantham	5
Wingate Way, Bourne	5
Ash Grove, Bourne	8
Kesteven Road, Stamford	8
Stamford Leisure Pool	7
St. Martins Graveyard, Stamford	5
Burchnall Close, Deeping St. James	7
Broadgate Lane, Deeping St. James	2
Langtoft Recreation Ground	16
Throughton Park Play Area, South Witham	14
TOTAL	100

4.4 Site plans showing the layout and species chosen for each site are available in Appendix 1.

4.5 Ward councillors for each of the above sites have already been contacted for feedback, which has all been supportive and positive, although some concerns were raised about the risk of vandalism. To address this risk, protective cages will be used at some locations.

4.6 Since the beginning of this planning period, the Council has been actively assessing existing tree canopy cover across the district's towns and villages. This assessment is on track for completion by December 2025.

- 4.7 Furthermore, the Council now has access to the Woodland Trust's 'Tree Equity Scores' for our district. These scores provide valuable, data-rich insights into 'tree need' by considering factors such as population density, surface temperatures, and public health indicators.
- 4.8 Following the successful implementation of the upcoming planting season's program, the Council will review and adjust the tree-planting distribution plans for the following two seasons. The integration of both the canopy cover data and the Tree Equity Scores will enable a strategic shift from an equitable distribution model to a needs-based distribution. This data-informed approach will ensure that future tree-planting efforts deliver the maximum environmental and social benefits to areas that need them most.

5. Proposed Planting (Woodlands and Hedges)

- 5.1 In addition to planting individual amenity trees, the Council is also proposing two larger schemes in the Grantham area and a small hedge planting proposal in Witham on the Hill.

5.2 Blessed Hugh Moore:

5.2.1 This is a collaborative planting proposal with the Woodland Trust (WT). The final design and specifications for this scheme will be informed by a targeted public consultation to residents nearby the open space launching in September 2025. A draft site plan is included in appendix 2.

5.2.2 The main planting area is 0.23 hectares, which will require between 350 and 600 small trees/shrubs (40-60cm tall). The Council is considering a planting density of either 2,500 trees per hectare (2m spacing) without protective tubes or 1,600 trees per hectare (2.5m spacing) with tubes.

5.2.3 Adjacent to the main planting area, in the SE corner of the site, there is provision for an area of larger trees at wider spacing. There will also be a row of larger amenity trees along the Northern edge of the site.

5.2.4 The WT will supply all the nursery stock and materials for the site. Due to the relatively small number of trees involved, all the planting should be done by volunteers, so the only labour costs will be for site and ground preparation works, if required. The burden of post planting maintenance and aftercare will be shared between the Council and the WT.

5.2.5 The consultation process will involve a leaflet drop to approximately 1500 addresses in the vicinity of the site followed by a drop-in session at a local venue (TBC). This will provide an opportunity for SKDC and WT staff to be

present together at the event, confirming the partnership in the eyes of the community.

5.3 Brittain Drive:

5.3.1 This planting proposal is being developed in partnership with a local private company who have agreed to fund the planting of 75 trees and three years of aftercare and maintenance. The trees will be small (40-60cm tall) and will be planted in protective tubes to prevent damage from browsing deer. Ward councillors and residents closest to the planting site have been contacted for feedback. A site plan is available in appendix 3.

5.4 Witham on the Hill:

5.4.1 30m of mixed native hedging will be planted on the wide verge between Elm Avenue and the houses at East Green. This is to replace the hedging non-native that was planted here several years ago but failed to establish. This project will require 80-90 trees, which will be 20-30cm tall at the time of planting.

6. Reasons for the Recommendations

6.1 To update the Committee on the Council's tree planting programme for the 2025/26 season.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Site plans for proposed amenity tree planting

7.2 Appendix 2 – Site plan for proposed tree planting scheme at the Blessed Hugh Moore Site

7.3 Appendix 3 – Site plan for proposed tree planting scheme at the Brittain Drive Amenity Area

