



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 30 June 2026

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

## Implementation of the Tree Planting Strategy 2026/27

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

To set out how the approved Tree Planting Strategy principles will be applied in practice during 2026/27, including the proposed allocation of tree planting resources and delivery priorities across the district.

### Recommendations

**The Committee is asked to note the draft tree planting programme for the 2026/27 season.**

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven Effective council
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 As part of the budget setting process for 2026/27 a growth bid of £51,500 was submitted and approved so funds are in place to support tree planting strategy for 2026/27.

*Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 This is a report for noting; therefore, there are no governance implications.

*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 Biodiversity Action Plan through improvements to Council managed open spaces, and the 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 and Climate Change Manager*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 In March 2026 EOSC endorsed a set of principles for prioritising how the Council will allocate its budget for tree planting.

- 2.2 The agreed principles were as follows:

1. The programme will focus on tree planting *and* establishment, not just planting
2. Tree establishment will be focused on Council-owned land
3. The replacement of high-value trees will be a priority
4. Where possible, tree establishment will support public sector development
5. Site potential for tree canopy cover will be maximised

6. The creation of new areas of tree cover will be targeted to where they can deliver the greatest benefit
7. Within towns, the creation of new areas of tree cover will be guided by tree equity scores

2.3 The way that these principles interact is represented visually in diagram 1 below.

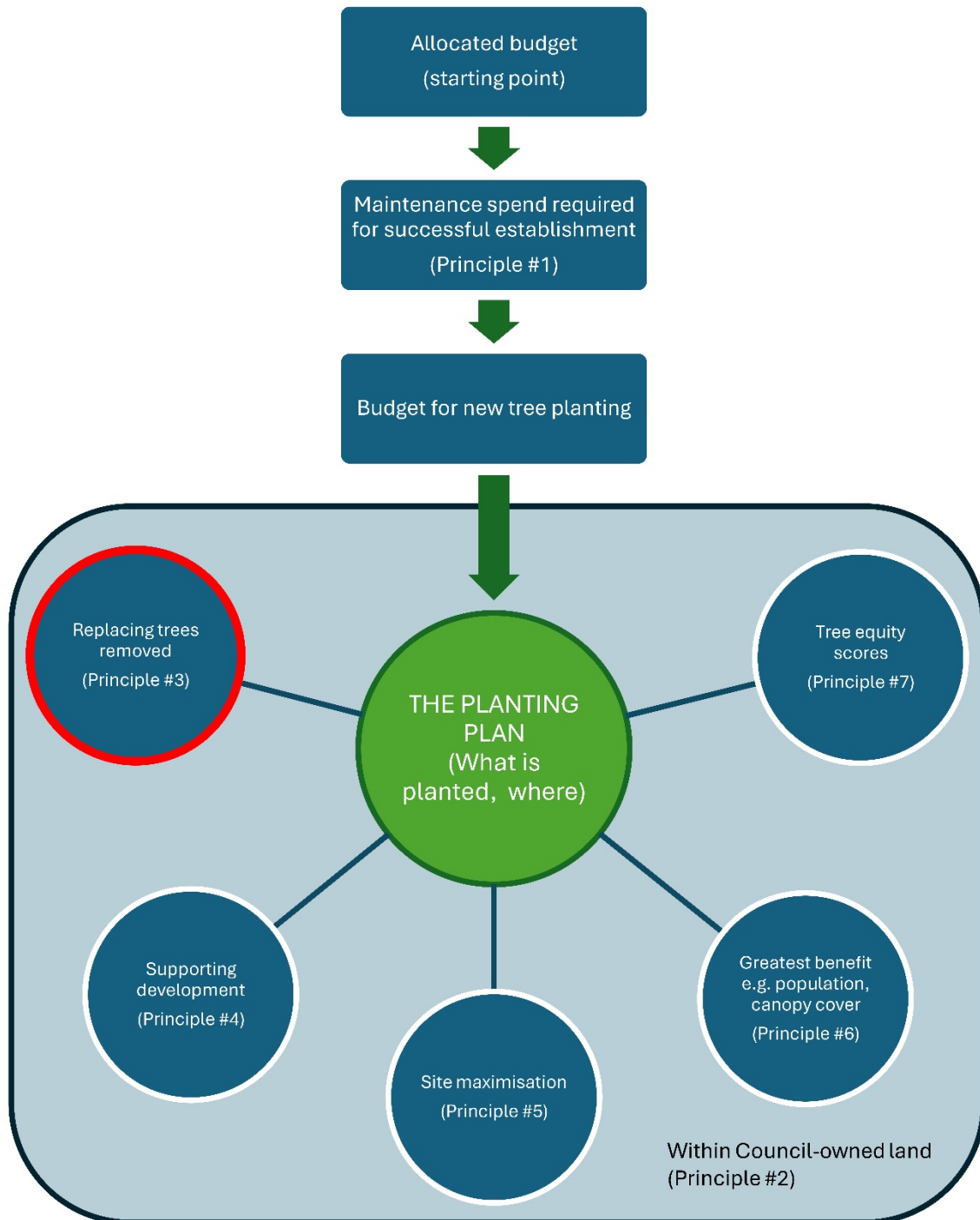


Figure 1. A diagram showing the policy choices influencing a tree planting plan for a given year. Elements outlined red have a high relative importance for the 2026/27 season.

- 2.4 For a young tree to be 'established' it must be healthy and be likely to achieve its full potential to deliver the benefits it was planted for, without excessive or abnormal management input. The British Standard for tree planting (BS8545:2014) describes this as reaching 'independence in the landscape'.
- 2.5 It is good practice to put newly planted trees on a maintenance programme for two to five years. Maintenance includes regular watering, weeding, topping up mulch around the trees and adjustment of stakes, ties and guards.
- 2.6 The Council planted 79 new amenity trees in 2024/25 and 145 new amenity trees in 2025/26. This means we currently have 224 newly planted trees on a maintenance programme.
- 2.7 The tree establishment budget, approved as part of the budget setting process for 2026/27, is £51,500.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 To ensure trees planted in the previous two seasons establish and achieve independence in the landscape (compliance with principle #1 above) it is projected that the Council will need to spend approximately half of its available budget in 2026/27 on maintenance operations.
- 3.2 Planting numbers in 2026/27 will need to be managed to ensure the Council can continue to meet its commitment to the successful establishment of newly planted trees. A large planting commitment in 2026/27 would significantly increase future maintenance liabilities and risk reducing the quality of aftercare provided, potentially undermining tree survival and long-term canopy benefits.
- 3.3 A survey of trees within the closed churchyard at St. Wulfram's Church, Grantham, resulted in the requirement to remove two trees with Tree Protection Orders. Planning consent was granted on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026 following consideration by the Planning Committee. This consent was conditional to replanting three trees within the church grounds. In 2026/27 this will be the only location where Council-funded tree planting will take place outside of Council owned land. In compliance with principle #2 above, all other proposed tree planting will be on Council-owned land.
- 3.4 In recent years, some high-value trees in the district have been removed without being replaced, creating a legacy issue that now needs to be addressed. In addition, several more are planned for removal during this financial year. To comply with principle #3 above, it is therefore anticipated that the remainder of this year's tree establishment budget will be used on planting replacement trees, rather than for the creation of new planting areas.

- 3.5 Due to the need to focus on replacement planting this year, no tree planting is planned to support public sector development (principle #4 above).
- 3.6 Potential sites for replacement planting are spread out across several sites. Due to the need to control future maintenance costs, it will not be possible to maximise site potential at every location (principle #5).
- 3.7 The focus on replacement planting means, by default, that planting locations are determined by the locations of high value trees that have been, or are due to be, removed. Principles #6 and #7 above are therefore not applicable in the current financial year.
- 3.8 In the planting season 2026/27 it is proposed that 44 nursery standard trees, 14 half-standard trees and 74m of native hedgerow will be planted across 16 sites. A summary of the planting sites is provided in table 1 below. Plans showing the locations of the proposed planting and the selected species/cultivars for each site are provided in appendix 1.
- 3.9 These proposals, including the sites identified for planting, the precise planting locations within those sites, and the species or cultivars selected, are currently draft proposals. Following discussion with Environment OSC to note the proposed planting programme, they will be subject to consultation with the Streetscene team to assess any implications for grounds maintenance operations, and with ward councillors in their role as representatives of local communities. In the case of tree planting adjacent to Council-owned housing sites (e.g. Manners Street, The Grange, and Essex Road) local residents may also be consulted directly. The final planting programme may therefore be amended to reflect the outcomes of this consultation.

Table 1. Summary of the proposed replacement planting to be undertaken during the 2026/27 season, grouped by location

Site name and location	High value trees removed/to remove	No. of nursery standards proposed	Other proposed planting
<b>GRANTHAM</b>			
Second Avenue	Multi-stemmed rowan removed autumn 2025	3	
Queen Elizabeth Park	Large multi-stemmed willow and amur maple planned for removal 2026	1	3x feathered half standards
Gonerby Hill Foot Recreation Ground	16 poplar and 1 Leyland cypress planned for removal 2026	11	74m of native hedging
Wyndham Park	Large lime and large whitebeam planned for removal 2026	3	2x feathered half standards
St. Wulfram's church	Sycamore and weeping ash planned for removal 2026	3	
Gorse Rise	Poplar tree planned for removal 2026	1	
Manners Street	Large crab apple removed spring 2026 Silver birch planned for removal 2026	2	
The Grange	Rowan and Swedish whitebeam planned for removal 2026	3	
<b>STAMFORD</b>			
Airedale Road	Silver maple removed 2025	2	
Corporation Coppice	Atlas cedar removed 2025	1	
Kings Road/Essex Road	Six rowans removed 2025	4	
<b>BOURNE</b>			
Mercia Gardens	Large ash and whitebeam removed 2025	5	
<b>THE DEEPINGS</b>			
Church Field, Manor Way	Large poplar removed autumn 2025	-	9x feathered half standards
Marigolds/Burchnall Close	Rowan removed spring 2026	1	
Tattershall Drive	Large lime removed spring 2026	2	
<b>OTHER</b>			
Reedings Road amenity area, Barrowby	Large ash removed 2025	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>		44 nursery standards	14x feathered half standards 74m of hedgerow

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The proposed planting programme set out in table 1 and appendix 1 has been developed in accordance with the guiding principles agreed in March 2026. Without reviewing and amending those principles, there is limited scope to pursue alternative approaches. However, to remain within the allocated budget, some degree of trade-off is required between the different principles.
- 4.2 An alternative approach would have been to place greater emphasis on maximising the planting potential of each site, rather than prioritising the replacement of high-value trees across a wider number of locations. This would have enabled more efficient delivery by concentrating planting, watering and maintenance operations on fewer sites, thereby reducing travel time and labour costs. However, this approach would have resulted in some high-value trees not being replaced in the short term and would not have addressed the current level of demand for replacement planting. The proposed programme therefore seeks to strike a balance between principle #3, which prioritises replacement planting, and principle #5, which seeks to maximise site potential, while remaining within the available budget and maintaining a manageable level of ongoing maintenance liability.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 The recommendation is made to provide the Committee with an opportunity to review the draft proposed planting programme before it is finalised, and to note how the proposals have been developed in line with the agreed strategic principles, current budget provision and operational constraints.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Item 7, EOSC, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026: [Strategy for Allocation of Tree Planting Resources](#)

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 (Draft) Tree planting site plans