

## **Appendix B – Trees and Woods Strategy Action Plan**

The Tree Strategy Officer will collaborate with the service areas, partners, parish and town councils responsible for each action to aid delivery.

There are multiple actions, within these there will be three key priorities:

1. To undertake benchmarking so that we can clearly understand the condition and benefits of our current treestock, enabling us to develop robust and costed management plans.
2. Identify planting opportunities that may be eligible for external (eg grants) funding
3. Start to work in close collaboration with the town and parish councils to share our experience and to maximise any opportunities.

### **Delivery Actions**

#### **5.1 Theme 1 – Plant and Protect**

<b>Source</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
5.1.1 Purpose	1.	Look for opportunities to plant on WNC land	ECP	1
5.1.2 Expand canopy cover	2.	Identify priority areas for tree planting - e.g. areas with a low Tree Equity score or high air pollution. Collaborate with colleagues and Local Area Partnerships.	ECP	2
	3.	Implement a programme of proactive replacement planting for trees that will be lost, for example, to ash dieback.	ECP	1 (F)
	4.	Explore opportunities to create new woodland in areas where provision is poor, this could be part of the provision made as part of any new country park	ECP	2
	5.	Work with Highways to identify priority sites for tree planting across the network, specifically suitable sites for replacement planting and new Street Trees	ECP	1
	6.	The current highway contract seeks to replace all trees removed by our operations and increase tree coverage by 5% in the district by the end of the contract. Monitor this to ensure it is happening.	HW, ECP	1
	7.	Plant a minimum of 250 street trees into empty pits during first 5 years of plan.	ECP	1 (F)

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Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
	8.	Work with local housing associations and the Housing Partnership Board to encourage more tree planting on their land.	ECP	2
	9.	Look for opportunities to encourage residents to plant more trees in front and rear gardens	ECP	3
5.1.3 Creating diversity and resilience	10.	Develop tree planting and management plans that seek to increase diversity of existing tree stock.	ECP	2
	11.	Ensure all opportunities are taken to plant new, climate resilient trees and hedgerows to support wildlife and public amenity value, and encourage appropriate natural regeneration	ECP	2
	12.	Work with partner organisations and volunteers to actively monitor for new tree pests and diseases, for example Observatree volunteers	ECP	2
	13.	Work with local volunteers to encourage watering and ownership of new trees	ECP	1 (F)
5.1.4 Tree replacement standard	14.	Establish clear guidance and training for highways teams on potential planting options for highways and verges (ref. 1.5m verges). Review how tree and woodland works are procured and assess if there are better ways of procuring this moving forward e.g. new tree specific schedules of rates.	P&C	1
5.1.5 Trees and development	15.	Adopt and implement a tree replacement standard for planning applications. Work with highways to develop and improve a set of specifications that developers can use for adopting trees within the highway.	PL	1
	16.	Ensure that well-designed planting schemes in future use final spacings, to maximise the potential to plant larger canopy trees.	ECP; PL	1
	17.	Look to produce guidance for trees and landscaping. This will provide a clear guide to developers when making planning applications to ensure plans for new building or development make provision space for natural regeneration and for increasing the numbers of trees and hedgerows in line with targets for increasing canopy/tree cover.	PL	1
5.1.6 Biosecurity	18.	Write procurement policy to ensure that any tree stock purchased is bio secure, continue to monitor and develop as new pests and diseases emerge.	ECP	3
	19.	Consider establishing and supporting local tree nurseries to provide future tree stock that will be climate resilient and reduce the need for importing trees. This could also offer green skills and jobs and engage schools, community groups and volunteers	ECP	4 (F)

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<b>Source</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
5.1.7 Biodiversity	20.	Seek to increase the species diversity of our tree stock to make it more resilient to climate change and pests and diseases.	ECP	2
	21.	Review the management of existing woodlands on our estate and work with partners to understand management practise more widely.	ECP	3
	22.	Work with colleagues and partners, such as Forestry Commission, including as part of our evolving LNRS to promote the expansion and connection of woodlands across West Northamptonshire; for example, West Northamptonshire contains clusters of Ancient Woodland which, if connected would create valuable shelter belts and improve biodiversity, e.g. Whittlewood Forest and Pottersbury.	ECP	1
5.1.8 Adopt the right tree for the right place	23.	Update and apply the Cultivation Guide to influence species selection for trees in verges	ECP	1
	24.	Publish the Councils approach/tree planting plans once specified	ECP	2
	25.	Develop tree selection guide	ECP	2
	26.	Work with Local Nature Recovery Officer and partners to ensure tree planting plans are appropriately targeted and do not conflict with other priority habitats and land use types, for example archaeology, rare grasslands and pastureland	ECP	1
5.1.9 Create new woodland	27.	Seek to work with Forestry Commission and other partners to signpost landowners to relevant government grants and information to increase the knowledge base around the benefits of trees, woodlands, hedgerows and agroforestry	ECP	1
5.1.10 Create new orchards	28.	Support and advise as and when the opportunity arises to create or extend new orchards	ECP	1
5.1.11 Plant restore and maintain hedgerows	29.	Seek, including through our emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to work with local stakeholders on local ambition for hedgerows. Where possible, apply for grant funding to support and work with partners, communities and Town and Parish Council's to plant new hedgerows.	ECP	1
	30.	Maximise opportunities to raise awareness of the many values of hedgerows in urban and rural areas.	ECP	1 (F)
5.1.12 Young tree establishment	31.	Produce and share good practice guidance for young tree maintenance.	ECP	1
	32.	Incorporate new tree maintenance into planting contracts	ECP	3

## 5.2 Theme 2 – Restore and Protect

Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
5.2.1 Implement proactive tree management	33.	Establish a cyclical programme of tree risk assessment and update management and action plans on an annual basis.	ECP	1*
	34.	Review procurement for tree management services and explore the feasibility of bringing tree management across the Council's estate into one team.	ECP	1
	35.	Look to procure new tree management software for the council. This should allow multiple users so that officers from across the Council can access and share information.	ECP	1 (F)
	36.	This system should be able to link to other systems via API, incorporate itree and CAVAT values for council owned trees, so that these can be used by Council staff. System should also allow the public to see more information, such as tree species, location, itree values. System should link with CRM for enquiries	ECP	2
	37.	As existing contracts finish migrate all tree data onto centrally held platform.	ECP	1
	38.	Implement an inventory system for all publicly owned trees to establish clear and up to records of existing stock. Give access to, and train, all relevant service areas on using this system. Give training access to Parish Clerks (read only). Offer training annually.	ECP	1 (F)
5.2.2 Trees on highways	39.	Work with Highways to ensure the Council is compliant with statutory obligations.	ECP, HW	1*
	40.	Undertake a comprehensive survey of trees on the West Northamptonshire Highway Network. Benchmark against surrounding authorities to see how they are managing the trees on their networks, Oxfordshire County Council is a good example of a service that has recently been through this process	ECP	1*
	41.	Review risk-based management practise and explore opportunities to enhance and increase tree cover on the highway. Work with highways to ensure appropriate staffing and budget are agreed to ensure highway stock continues to be surveyed and proactively maintained following initial survey.	ECP	1
	42.	Develop a clear process to ensure that the Duty to consult on the removal of street trees is being adhered to.	ECP, HW	1

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<b>Source</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
5.2.3 Woodland management	43.	Signpost to partners such as Wildlife Trusts BCN and Woodland Trust to raise awareness of appropriate management, restoration and protection of ancient woodland and PAWS sites	ECP	1
	44.	Undertake provisional woodland surveys, focussing on condition, safety and type.	ECP	1-3
	45.	Develop woodland management framework.	ECP	4
	46.	Develop mapping to plot locations in preparation for woodland management planning.	ECP	5
5.2.4 Protect ancient trees, woodlands and hedgerows	47.	Manage, maintain and enhance hedgerows on our estate and where suitable look to plant new hedgerows	ECP	3 (F)
5.2.5 Protect our most valuable trees	48.	Record traditional orchards as they are found, including, where possible, species and cultivars to build up a clearer picture of what exists across the county	ECP	2
	49.	Support a comprehensive review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conservation areas to reassess historical orders and digitise TPO record.	ECP	3
	50.	Identify opportunities and mechanisms to educate homeowners on TPOs and the duty to replace.	ECP	3
	51.	Explore the potential to work more closely with parishes to monitor and protect TPO trees.	ECP	2
5.2.6 Protect during development	52.	Look to produce guidance for trees and landscaping. This will provide a clear guide to developers when making planning applications to ensure plans for new building or development make provision for retaining and protecting existing trees.	ECP	1
	53.	Review, strengthen and implement enforcement policies to maximise the retention and protection of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows on development sites.	ECP	1
	54.	Work with Highways to develop and improve a set of specifications that developers can use for adopting trees within the highway.	ECP; HW; PL	1

### 5.3 Theme 3 – Collaborate and Coordinate

Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
5.3 General	55.	Improve communication between WNC and residents to ensure advanced notice and reasoning for essential and planned maintenance works, where possible using multiple platforms, both online and offline.	ECP	3
	56.	Update the Councils Tree FAQs, forming one consistent set of policies to be applied across all WNC trees and published online. The FAQs should make clear the decision-making processes involved in tree retention or loss	ECP	1
	57.	Create a 'short version' FAQ document that can easily be distributed to homeowners and enquirers	ECP	1
	58.	Share FAQs with town and parish councils and other owners of public land.	ECP	1
5.3.1 Adoption of tree and woodland strategy	59.	Trees and Woods strategy to be taken to full Council for adoption.	ECP	1*
	60.	Promote the tree strategy through internal comms channels, for example, via the bi-monthly 'Place' newsletter.	ECP	1*
	61.	Work with colleagues and policy leads to cross-reference the tree strategy in aligned policy documents.	ECP; RSA	1
	62.	Explore opportunities to embed the tree strategy within active travel planning and the forthcoming Local Transport Plan, which will follow the regional economic heartland commitment to stronger environmental policy and 'quality of the public realm'.	ECP	1
	63.	Publish Tree Strategy online and promote through social media channels and newsletters; provide paper copies in accessible formats and locations; work with a graphic designer to design the final document with creative illustrations and diagrams to make it accessible to a wide range of audiences.	ECP	1 (F)
5.3.2 Expertise and resource in the right place	64.	Ensure relevant officers are professionally trained and have access to continued CPD.	ECP	1

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<b>Source</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
5.3.3 Working with our communities	65.	Build relationships with local housing associations to work more closely to increase tree canopy across WNC, actively work with them to bid for joint funding where appropriate.	ECP	1
	66.	Run community awareness and celebration events. These could take place annually and throughout the year, for example Tree Charter Day in National Week, or in celebration of the Urban Tree Festival in May.	ECP	3 (F)
	67.	Work with third sector and community organisations to grow, plant and maintain trees with communities, including for example, the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TVC), Wildlife Trust BCN, Woodland Trust, Canals and Rivers Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, RSPB, Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire, Local Friends of Groups, More Trees Now and groups such as the local U3A and Geo caching groups.	ECP	3
	68.	Explore setting up a Tree Forum.	ECP	3 (F)
	69.	Explore setting up a tree wardens scheme and community engagement programme, working where possible with aligned services, including parks, sustainability, waste, education and public health to maximise the use of limited resources and ensure joined up messaging. For example, health walks and talks that engage the community with the local treescape.	ECP	3 (F)
5.3.4 Supporting town and parish councils	70.	Explore how to better support town and parish councils to implement similar regimes for the trees in their care. Provide a clear point of liaison, advice and support for parishes and town councils within WNC on all aspects of WNC tree management.	ECP	1
	71.	Work with the Larger Parishes Forum to develop a local level Tree Strategy template to help improve neighbourhood plans/village design statements	ECP	1
	72.	Create a training program on trees, hedges and woodlands for Parish and Town clerks and councillors using the wider parish forum - this could include tree planting, grants available, how to inspect trees for adoption from planning, best practice etc	ECP	1
	73.	Give access to, and train, all relevant service areas on using this system. Give training access to Parish Clerks (read only). Offer training annually.	ECP	1
5.3.5 Facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration	74.	Deliver cross-departmental training for a wider group of WNC staff and members on the Tree Strategy's vision. Continuous work on how this aligns with wider strategic objectives, building a more widely informed team who support the protection and care of trees,	ECP	1

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		hedgerows and woodlands across West Northamptonshire and to facilitate a joined-up approach to decision-making and operational delivery.		
	75.	Look to allow read only access for town and parish clerks so they can check on ownership to reduce duplication.	ECP	2
	76.	Develop a toolkit and training package for town and parish councils. This should include advice on developing a local tree strategy and cover topics such as: resident/landowner engagement and communicating the benefits of trees; securing best value when commissioning contractors; basic tree management, funding applications and advice on negotiating commuted sums with developers.	ECP	2
5.3.6 Engaging landowners and farmers	77.	Update the Council website to signpost private landowners and farmers to partner schemes from organisations such as the Forestry Commission to help them plant more woodland, trees and hedgerows.	ECP	2
	78.	Seek to work with Forestry Commission and other partners to signpost landowners to relevant government grants and information to increase the knowledge base around the benefits of trees, woodlands, hedgerows and agroforestry	ECP	2
5.3.7 Engaging young people	79.	Offer a guest lecture to Moulton College and Northampton university around what is urban forestry, how it relates to the local area and encourage students to get involved with local tree planting opportunities.	ECP	3
	80.	Look to work with primary and secondary schools to plant more trees and hedgerows on school open spaces. Plant a minimum of one school per year.	ECP	3
	81.	Encourage the benefits of forest school activities and the use of educational resources, such as the Woodland Trust's Green Trees Schools Award.	ECP	4
5.3.8 Engaging with local business	82.	Work with local businesses and institutions for support, maximising opportunities to benefit from CSR initiatives, environmental objectives and partnership projects, for example, the Active Quarter in Northampton and through the Sustainable Local Innovation Partnership Agenda Hub - <a href="https://slipah.co.uk/">https://slipah.co.uk/</a>	ECP	2
5.3.9 Identify training and volunteering opportunities	83.	Work with WNC sustainability team to support their continued collaboration with the University of Northampton on related research projects	ECP; ST	2
	84.	Work with partners, such as Wildlife Trusts BCN, Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission to deliver training and awareness events on relevant tree and woodland subject matters, for example, tree ID, tree pests and diseases.	ECP	2 (F)



## 5.4 Theme 4 – Delivery and Funding

Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
5.4 General	85.	Actively explore capital and revenue funding opportunities to recruit, train and retain the expertise that we need.	ECP	1
	86.	Look to update canopy map at least every 4 years to help spot issues such as canopy loss and increase to help shape the outcomes in this strategy moving forward.	ECP	4 (F)
	87.	Benchmark how tree works are being procured and how moving forward better value for money can be achieved. Work with procurement on a new procurement framework.	ECP	1*
	88.	Draft business case to move tree and woodland management to proactive from a reactive service.	ECP	1*
	89.	Develop guidance for contractors on maintaining trees in accordance with this strategy.	ECP	2
5.4.1 Funding sources	90.	Introduce an improved standard for replacement planting through the local plan. Adopt CAVAT across the council to be used where third parties and capital projects require the removal of council owned trees. Any monies raised to be ringfenced for planting initially on WNC land, and then also look at how this could be used to fund planting on other public land such as parks and open spaces owned by Town and Parish Councils.	ECP	1
	91.	Bid for Government funding for new staffing and for tree planting - currently being offered through the Treescapes Project - this will need to be delivered with partners such as parish and town councils.	ECP	1
	92.	Produce a clear and simple procedure that allows residents, parishes and town councils and businesses to adopt/ pay for the planting of replacement trees within the highway especially where trees have historically been lost and tree pits capped.	ECP	3
	93.	Bid for funding from central government for additional staff, for example, a tree planting officer post would support planting in public open space, e.g. in parishes, as well as to support community groups.	ECP	1
	94.	Maximise opportunities to fund tree planting as part of aligned service area funding bids, for example projects linked to public health and air quality action planning	ECP	1
5.4.2 Carbon trading	95.	Assess how carbon schemes can help us to deliver the tree strategy, whilst supporting the WNC Net Zero 2030 target and 2045 area wide target.	ECP	3
	96.	Work with aligned services, such as Sustainability to identify opportunities.	ECP	1

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Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
5.4.3 Other funding opportunities	97.	Benchmark commuted sums across different authorities to ensure sufficient funds are passed to parishes and town councils to be able to adequately manage and maintain young trees.	ECP	1
	98.	Explore better ways to work with neighbouring authorities on grant funding bids.	ECP	1
	99.	Work with residents, businesses and parish and town councils to identify funding for new street trees.	ECP	1
	100	Review procurement for tree management services to ensure the Council is securing best value and consider separating tree management from wider street scene contracts.	ECP	1
	101	Explore strengthening opportunities for people to donate funds to tree and woodland planting, including, for example, tree planting in wills.	ECP	2
5.4.5 Environmental land management scheme	102	Monitor the introduction of the scheme and engage when the opportunity arises	ECP	2

## 5.5 Theme 5 – Recording and Reporting

Source	No.	Action	Service Area	Year
5.5 General	103	Develop and carry out benchmarking of council trees and woodland management to identify weaknesses and good practice .	ECP	1*
	104	Research the best way of collating data and sharing data across the council and with wider parishes.	ECP	1
	105	Tree Policy Board to review tree strategy and action plan annually with key stakeholders .	ECP	1
	106	Produce a public report every year on progress in achieving the strategy.	ECP	1

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	107	Undertake a full strategy review in five years.	ECP	5
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**Service Area** abbreviations:

HW Highways  
Ho Housing  
ECP Environment, Countryside & Parks  
PL Planning  
RSA Relevant Service Areas  
ST Sustainability Team

**Year** key

1\* High priority  
(F) Funding element identified