



North Tyneside Council

TREE PLANTING STRATEGY 2021/2024



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In July 2019, North Tyneside Council declared a climate emergency, reflecting its commitment to tackling climate change and preserving the natural environment in North Tyneside. The Authority is taking steps to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council has worked with a range of stakeholders to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan that includes a number of ways to achieve the established targets. The Action Plan recognises that trees have an important part to play in meeting the agreed targets through the removal of carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

2.0 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Government has committed to increasing tree planting in the UK. In 2020, the Government set a target of planting 30,000 hectares of trees per year, across the UK, by 2025. This ambition is similarly reflected in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, which includes a target to plant 180,000 hectares by the end of 2042.

In May 2021, the Government also produced the 'England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024' which sets out policy priorities to deliver an ambitious tree planting programme across England. The action plan focuses on '*expanding, protecting and improving our woodlands*'. The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021, (in response to this), also sought to further emphasise the Government commitment to increase tree planting with the national guidance for planning recommending that all new streets should be tree-lined.

Also, in January 2020, the UK's Committee on Climate Change released a report on land use which asserted that Britain must double its tree planting efforts in order to contribute towards a carbon neutral UK by 2050. A recommendation, from the Committee on Climate Change, specified that the area of woodland cover in the UK increase from the current 13% to at least 17% by 2050. This is based upon annual tree planting levels reaching at least 30,000 hectares from 2024, possibly up to 50,000 hectares, with one-fifth of agricultural land turned to tree planting and growing plants for fuel. These targets surpass the Government's current aspirations. Although this target has not been formally adopted by Government, it shows the rapidly developing thinking that is happening at a national level which is turning increasing focus to the role of trees in tackling climate change.

3.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

The North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) contains a policy to protect and manage existing woodland and trees and to promote and encourage new woodland, tree, and hedgerow planting schemes. This links to other policies to protect and enhance wildlife corridors, maximise opportunities for biodiversity, and to achieve the objectives set out within the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which includes objectives for woodland creation.

The Council's Greenspace Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy, also support these objectives as they aim to achieve a well-used, managed, connected and expanding network of green infrastructure within the Borough.

The Council's Tree Management Policy commits the Council to maximising tree planting and requires that when a tree is removed, it will be replaced with a minimum of two trees at the same location or at a suitable alternative location. This policy has guaranteed a steady surplus of tree planting by the Council across North Tyneside each year.

4.0 TREE PLANTING STRATEGY FOR NORTH TYNESIDE

This Tree Planting Strategy sets out how the Council will increase tree planting beyond its current commitments. The intention of the strategy is that additional tree planting will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions in accordance with the Council's commitments to tackling climate change. Secondary objectives include preserving and increasing the natural environment and biodiversity, as well as capitalising the health, social wellbeing, and aesthetical benefits of tree planting. There is also recognition of the increasingly important role tree planting can play in mitigating the effects of flooding and pollution.

A 4 year plan has been developed which sets out the Council's ambition for the planting of new trees and the principles to be considered when making decisions about tree planting. The main focus of this strategy will be on the planting of new trees and woodlands, within a wider context of improving the high quality management and maintenance of new and existing trees and woodland.

Sourcing the right trees, and the right mix of trees is important to ensure they can withstand the extreme weather associated with our changing climate, as well as pests and disease, which can result in significant tree loss. Proficient tree planting also reduces the need for maintenance, thus reducing future costs to the Authority. The right mix of trees is also important for maximising the biodiversity of a location. Careful consideration must always be given to

suitable planting locations, in order to give trees and woodland the best chance of survival. There will be different factors and considerations for each location based on local circumstances and conditions.

Any ownership agreements as well as existing and current land use will be thoroughly assessed to ensure that the locations identified for tree planting results in sustainable woodland. It is likely that the majority of tree planting sites will be located on existing open space owned by the Council.

The Tree Planting Strategy will relate to the Council's Greenspace and Green Infrastructure Strategies, which sets out the Council's approach to the management and maintenance of all open space and green infrastructure assets.

All new tree planting will utilise high quality, disease free planting stock from reputable suppliers grown to British Standard 3936 (1992). Specification for Trees and Shrubs (sections 1-5). Planting will be undertaken following the principles set out in the British Standard 8545 (2014) Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape – Recommendations.

Types of areas identified for suitable tree planting include:

- Urban settings including residential areas
- School grounds maintained by the Council
- Community sites including parks and cemeteries
- Highways and other transport corridors

In order to maximise the benefits of tree planting, the Council will:

- Avoid tree planting in sensitive areas, such as locations that already have a high biodiversity or carbon sequestration value, in order to protect ecologically rich landscapes
- Ensure that a diverse range of trees are planted to avoid mono-cultures, an area with a single type or species of tree, which are less resilient and offer less biodiversity benefit
- Ensure that tree species that are planted are appropriate to the particular conditions of a location
- Seek opportunities to prioritise better connectivity of woodland, through woodland expansion and the creation of new hedgerows and copses, in order to create wildlife corridors and reverse impacts of habitat fragmentation
- Ensure tree planting does not affect the integrity of buildings, road, and pavement surfaces

5.0 OVERVIEW OF TREE AND WOODLAND BENEFITS

- **Economic** - People prefer to live, work, and visit areas with an abundance of nature. This can, in turn, lead to economic benefits with increased visitor spending, increased spending, and employment opportunities. People and companies are attracted to well-designed, well-managed public places which can increase levels of investment in these areas and well-planned improvements to public green spaces in town centres can boost commercial trading. The presence of trees can reduce fuel costs for heating and cooling our homes, providing shade in the summer and protecting buildings from cooling winds in the winter.
- **Extreme Weather** - Trees also play an important role in adapting to the increasing extreme weather events caused by climate change. As well as sequestering carbon emissions to mitigate climate change, the planting of broadleaf trees located in urban areas can reduce the rate in which rainwater reaches ground level and soaking up excess ground water, reducing the impact of flooding. Tree canopies can provide natural cooling during periods of extreme heat as well as reducing soil erosion and excessive sediment entering watercourses, capture pollutants and thereby reduce the level of pollution entering groundwater.
- **Health** - The Covid-19 Pandemic has shown that trees and green spaces can improve our general health and wellbeing. They provide space for physical activity, which has a multitude of physiological and psychological benefits which could in turn result in a reduction in the cost of health care provision. Trees have been specifically linked to improvements in stress, anxiety and mental health issues. Street trees can have a beneficial impact on traffic, also working to buffer noise, dust and light pollution of busy roads.
- **Environmental** - Trees host complex microhabitats. They provide essential habitat to a wide range of species and can act as a major feature of 'green corridors', particularly in urban areas, providing essential links and transport routes for a range of wildlife. Trees provide feeding, nesting and roosting sites for many species. Trees, as part of a wider green infrastructure, can influence biodiversity by increasing habitat area, increasing populations of some protected species and increasing species movement. There are also the positive impacts that urban green infrastructure can have on air, soil and water quality which in turn, provide benefits for biodiversity. Trees can also provide increased environmental and aesthetic quality, the regeneration of previously developed land and improved quality of place.

- **Social** - Trees and woodlands are an important part of our society. Green spaces offer increased opportunity for positive social activity, improving community cohesion and engagement as well as developing local attachment and ownership. Tree planting opportunities provide opportunities for all. Trees also increase the aesthetic value of an area and provides a boost to civic pride for local residents.
- **Educational** - Tree planting can increase people's knowledge and understanding of trees, the natural environment and climate change. Not only do outdoor learning spaces help improve educational outcomes and attainment, but both children and adults can learn while making a real difference. It is important that both children and adults learn to appreciate and protect their natural environment.

6.0 COUNCIL OWNED TREES

The North Tyneside Tree Management Plan relates to trees owned or managed by the Council. It includes guidance on common enquiries about trees, tree management, tree pruning and removal, damage to trees, conservation and wildlife, education, community involvement and subsidence. There is also a suggested species list included.

The Tree Planting Strategy allows for opportunities within the design of Council schemes to increase tree planting. Highway renewal, new highway schemes, major development and redevelopment offer the best opportunity for new tree planting.

Locations for new street trees will be considered with great care and will concentrate predominantly on streets that have verges and new road schemes where tree planting can be planned at the outset.

7.0 ENSURING SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT

In line with best practice, the planting of trees will usually be undertaken during winter (mid November to mid March), whilst it is dormant, allowing the tree to establish in its new environment. Planting outside of this time can increase the stress on a tree when it is in leaf and the tree may struggle to become successfully established.

Street trees live a tough life and therefore need to be able to cope with drought, compacted soils, road salt and traffic pollution. Therefore the choice of street tree species needs to be appropriate to enable them to thrive in their environment.

In order to ensure successful tree establishment in urban areas we will look to install, where practicable, tree pits with sufficient soil volumes to avoid untimely death or costly repairs.

8.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council will engage with local residents, ward councillors and other stakeholders such as schools, businesses and community groups, in order to mitigate any risks at a location identified for tree planting. The Council will also support independent requests for tree planting by individuals or groups to ensure we meet the expectation of the local community. The Council will work with schools in North Tyneside to help support any of their own tree planting initiatives including providing practical assistance and materials.

9.0 FUNDING

There are significant funding opportunities available for tree planting due to the planned creation of a North East Community Forest. North Tyneside Council will work with five local authorities (Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Sunderland) to increase tree planting with £480,000 available from the Nature for Climate Fund. The scheme intends to plant five million square metres of trees by 2025 and is an opportunity to significantly increase tree planting in North Tyneside and the North East.

Locally, the Council will also continue to explore funding opportunities to support tree planting across the borough, including Section 106 funding relating to planning gain, from within existing tree management budgets, and externally funded grants such as the 'Trees for Climate' bid.

APPENDIX (i)

4 YEAR PLAN FOR TREE PLANTING ACROSS NORTH TYNESIDE 2021

There are several key sites across North Tyneside that have been identified for new tree planting over the next 4 years. These sites are detailed in the table below.

Tree planting location	Reason	Location	2021/22 No. of trees	2022/23 No. of trees	2023/24 No. of trees	2024/25 No. of trees
URBAN SETTINGS INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL AREAS, HOUSING ESTATES, CAR PARKS, TOWN CENTRES, INDUSTRIAL ESTATES	Appropriate tree planting can enhance the local environment, bringing benefits in relation to air quality, biodiversity, climate change adaptation (shading, cooling, flood mitigation), mental health and wellbeing and sense of place. The Council's Tree Planting Management plan includes information on choosing the right tree for the site	Coast Road/Beach Road	50			
		Earsdon Road	20			
		Rake Lane/New York Road verges	20			
		Ridley Avenue up to Silverdale School	50			
		Billy Mill/Lynn Road/Netherton Avenue	25			
		Westminster Avenue	25			
		West Bailey/Northgate	10			
		B1321 Wideopen	30			
		Park Drive/Elsdon Drive	20			
	Council's Tree Planting Management plan	Boroughwide		250	250	250
PUBLIC SPACES & WILDLIFE SITES	The Council's Tree Planting Management plan includes	Holy Cross Cemetery	25			
		Dudley Cemetery			300	

INCLUDING CEMETERIES, SCHOOLS, AND WAGONWAYS	information on choosing the right tree for the site	Benton Cemetery		5		10
		Wagonways	100	100	100	100
	Request from school	Forest Hall Primary School		150		
PARKS	Refer to 'Tree Planting' document for Parks 2021/2026 (Pixie)	Rising Sun Country Park	5			
		Northumberland Park	80			
		Wallsend Parks	15			
		Marden Quarry	6			
		Whitley Park		5		
		Hilltop Park		5		
		Lockey Park	5			
		Benton Quarry Park	5			
		Killingworth Lake Park	130			
		Churchill Playing fields		140		
		Souter Park North	4			
		Souter Park South	2			
		Springfield Park		5		
		Royal Quays Parks		5		
		Alexander Scott Park		5		
Tynemouth Park	7					
		North Shields Masterplan		25		25

REGENERATION PROJECTS		Wallsend Town Centre		25		25
			634	720	650	410

Note - specific sites for tree planting are subject to appropriate surveys and consultations to ensure they are suitable for planting and these will be reviewed on an annual basis. In addition, tree numbers for each site are approximate and will be subject to funding and the appropriate surveys and consultations. The tree numbers and locations are not fixed, they can decrease and increase depending on the implementation of the strategy. Similarly, the year in which a location is planted can be moved forward or back.