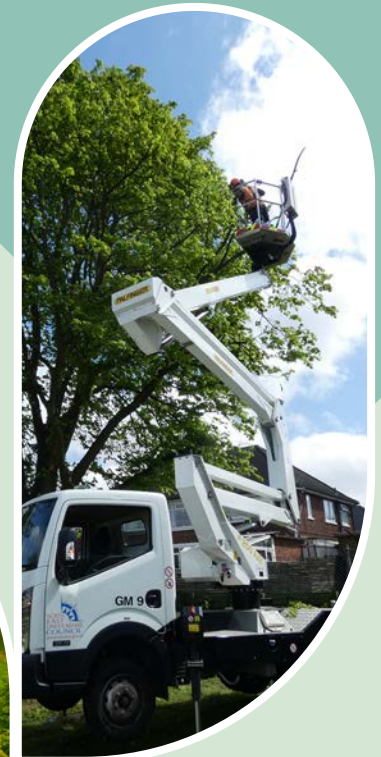


North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy Part One

June 2023



Working in partnership

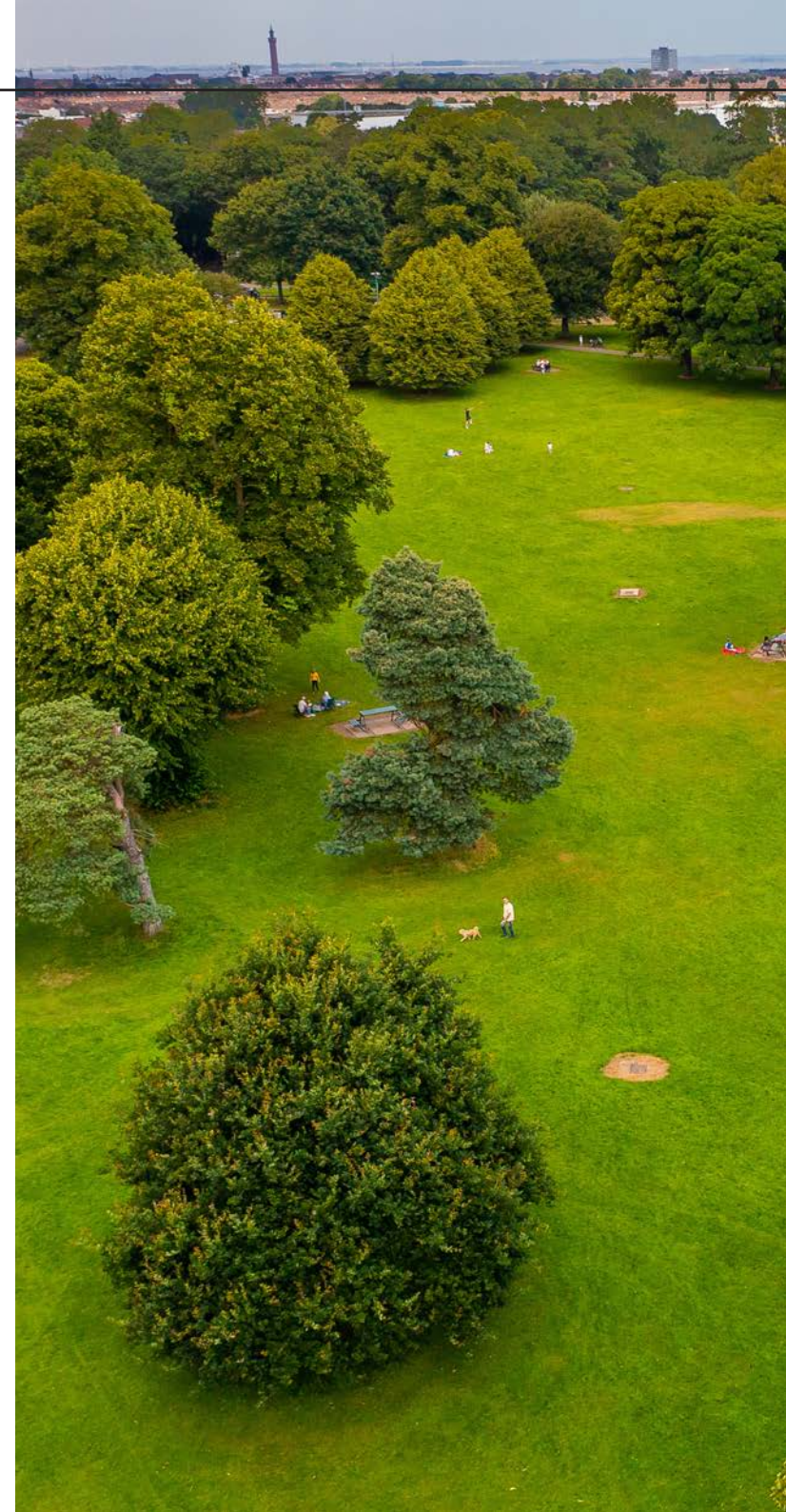


North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy

Part One

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Benefits of trees

The benefits of trees, woodlands and hedges have long been acknowledged. Trees provide one of the most cost-effective ways to improve the environmental quality of a town, delivering physical, social and economic wellbeing as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity and visual amenity to name but a few. The council must work with all their partners to ensure that their tree canopy cover is not only maintained but increased to a level which allows them to mitigate the effects of climate change living within the built-up environment. Planning for the future is key to having resilient towns which are sustainable places to live in.

1.2 Why have a Tree Strategy?

A Tree Strategy provides a strategic framework for the management of the local tree population to achieve agreed aims and objectives. This Tree Strategy helps the council deliver its obligations under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (S40: Duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity), 2006 (S40: duty to conserve biodiversity), deliver aims contained in the Government's 25 year Environment Plan 2018 to leave our environment 'in a better state than we inherited it', and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework. Trees North East Lincolnshire proposes an integrated approach to tree management across the borough.

1.3 Status of this document

This will be North East Lincolnshire's first tree strategy. By adopting this tree strategy North East Lincolnshire Council demonstrates its commitment to caring for the trees under its management and increasing the number of trees in public places. The strategy will also be used as best practice to influence private landowners to look after their trees and encourage planting on their land.

1.4 Scope

The North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy aims to cover all trees and woodlands within the borough, both public and private. It is to be used as a framework for all stakeholders who have a role to play in protecting and increasing tree cover across the borough including all organisations and individual households that own trees. It addresses how the benefits trees give can be enhanced, and how challenges can be met, delivering a tree population that will benefit all people who visit, work and live here.

1.5 Document structure

The North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy has five parts:

- Part One - A Tree Policy which sets out the strategic objectives that guide and influence the decisions the council take.
- Part Two - Tree Management Guidelines - provides the detail around managing trees under the ownership and influence of the Council.
- Part Three - Tree Risk Management Plan - outlines processes the Council will use to manage the risks trees can cause.
- Part Four - Tree Planting Guidelines - provides the detail around sourcing, planting, and establishing trees under the ownership and influence of the Council.
- Part Five – Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines - will set out developers' responsibilities regarding existing and new trees within planning applications.

1.6 Guiding principles

The guiding principles of this strategy document are:

- Protect and care for North East Lincolnshire's trees.
- Plant more trees.

Achieving the UK national average by 2050 would be particularly challenging. The geography of the borough is a particular constraint, with a condensed urban population and large areas of land use given to agriculture and industry. Local context, geography and landscape can impact suitability for planting and therefore it may be a reasonable approach to look at what space is available to plant before committing to a set target.

There may be an aspirational target of 2.5%, increasing canopy cover to 13% by 2030. By the year 2030, there will be a better understanding of what is achievable locally given available resources and land availability. This approach addresses the challenges of baseline and plantable space and will give a certain confidence that a target should be attainable.

The overall objective is for the borough of North East Lincolnshire to have a sustainably managed and protected, healthy and diverse tree population with sufficient canopy cover to benefit and meet the needs of all who live, work and visit. The tree canopy cover will be reviewed every 5 years. The strategy itself will be reviewed every 5 years to ensure it keeps up to date with legislation, regulations and industry standards.



2.0 Background and context

2.1 Overview

The borough of North East Lincolnshire covers 192 square kilometres or 19165.9 hectares and of this, the council has a wide collection of parks, woodlands and biodiversity sites. There are 60 parks and open spaces ranging from small, grassed areas to a country park covering over 60.7 hectares. The borough also includes over 40 square kilometres of land in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Also, the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) manages nearly 12,500 affordable rental and shared ownership homes, with associated public open spaces, much of which is within the borough of North East Lincolnshire.

Many of North East Lincolnshire's trees were planted over one hundred years ago along streets and in parks. Some are remnant trees associated with historical estates and manor houses. Our parks and recreation grounds also have a long history, some being provided by our philanthropic predecessors as recreation space for the local community. Other parks have been created more recently, for example Cleethorpes Country Park. The council needs to protect and care for the legacy which has been passed to us and plant new trees to ensure that legacy continues. Healthy trees and woodlands should be protected, retained and managed to ensure healthy growth, development and species diversity. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason as set out in the Tree Management Guidelines.

2.2 Public perceptions

Trees invoke strong emotions amongst residents. Nuisance such as leaf and sap drop or shade can cause a negative reaction, whereas people recognising the benefits trees can provide within our urban environment with a growing appreciation of the wider environmental benefits of our urban forest is a positive response.

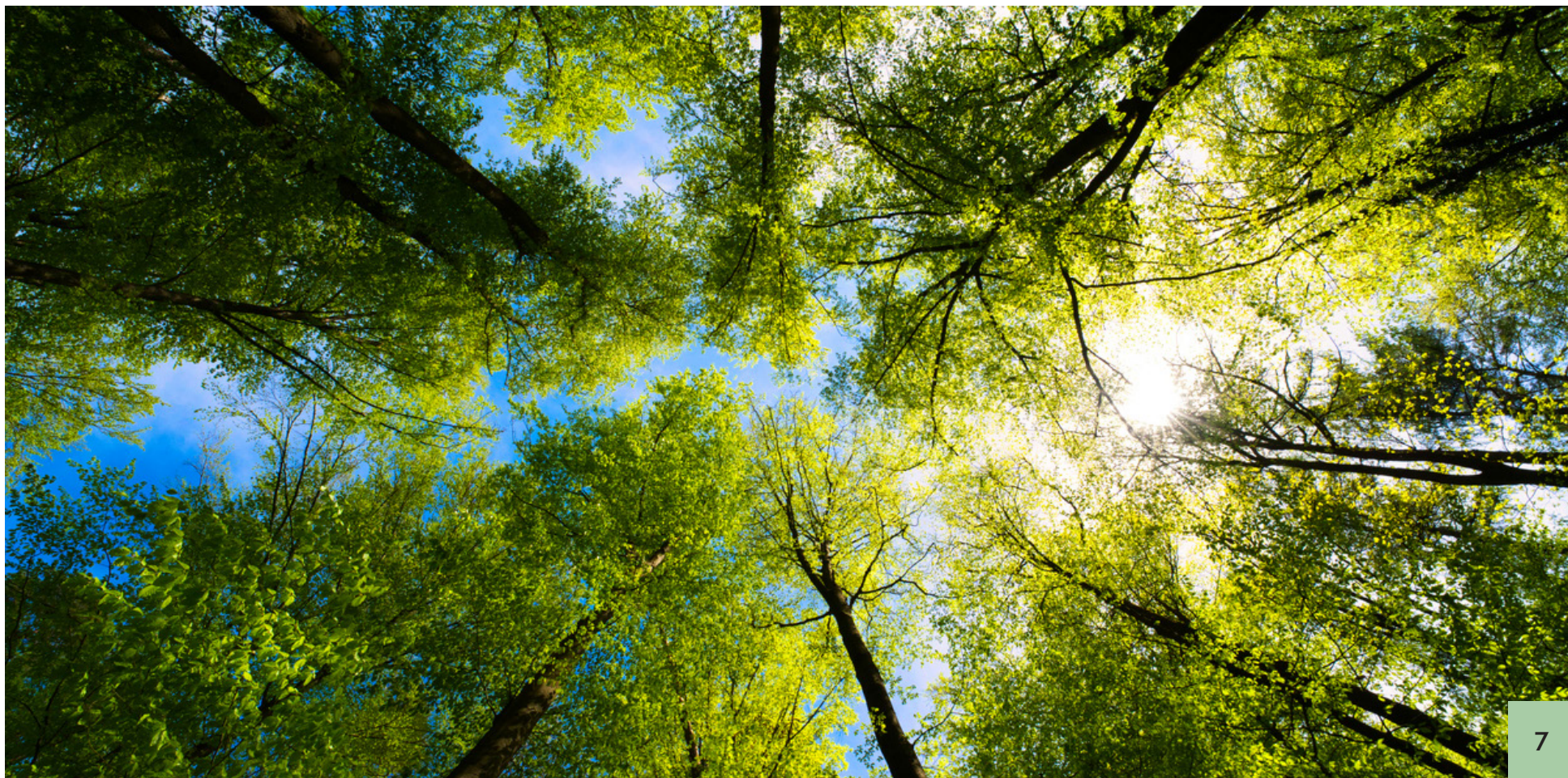
2.3 Benefits of trees

Trees provide many benefits within the borough, some of which are interlinked: The Forestry Commission for England has published 'Case for Trees' and the Trees for Cities website (treesforcities.org) is a useful source of further reading.

Trees help create a green environment and the presence of trees in the borough makes it feel more natural, improving its visual and physical quality.

Although tree population numbers are a useful measure of the tree cover, it is the healthy leaf area which delivers a tree's benefits. For this reason, it is also important to remember that there is a 20-to-100-year lag between planting a tree and the delivery of its full range of benefits, making planning for the future key to achieving the aims of this strategy.

The Tree Strategy aims to support water management and green infrastructure to address future changes in climate, land use, water management and social-economic activity while contributing to the attractiveness of the borough.




2.3.1 Why urban trees are so important

There is a growing body of evidence that trees in the urban environment bring a wide range of benefits.

Economic benefits of urban trees:



Social benefits of urban trees:



Trees help create a sense of place and local identity

They have a positive impact on crime reduction.

They have a positive impact on people's physical and mental health

They create focal points and landmarks

They benefit communities by increasing pride in the local area

Environmental benefits of urban trees:

Urban trees reduce the 'urban heat island effect' of localised temperature extremes

They capture and store carbon from the atmosphere

They provide shade, making streets and buildings cooler in summer

They help remove dust and particulates from the air

They help improve the quality of polluted ground

They help to reduce traffic noise by absorbing and deflecting sound

They help increase biodiversity by providing food and shelter for wildlife

They help to reduce wind speeds

They reduce the effects of flash flooding by slowing the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground

They can be incorporated into a Sustainable Urban Design System (SuDs).

2.3.2 Mitigation of climate change

Policy – North East Lincolnshire Council Natural Assets Plan 2021:

The Environment Act 2021 Government Bill and the push by the Government to achieve carbon goals is slowly increasing public awareness. Urban blue and green infrastructure, like trees, can provide significant heat reduction benefits through shading, make a significant contribution to carbon sequestration and storage, and reduce the impact of sudden rainfall. For these reasons more tree planting alongside the protection of our existing tree population will make a positive contribution to reaching net zero carbon emissions. Trees mitigate climate change in many ways, including removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Like great carbon sinks, trees absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries. The Natural Assets Plan and Net Zero Carbon Road Map polices sets out the council's aims and objectives.

Policy - North East Lincolnshire Council Net Zero Carbon Road Map 2021:

It is estimated that the current tree cover in NEL sequesters 6,570 tCO₂ annually, as well as 2.16 tonnes of carbon monoxide and 11.76 tonnes of nitrogen dioxide. Next steps NELC should agree incremental tree planting targets to increase tree cover year-on-year, with a high-level tree planting plan for the next 5 years. Additional tree planting opportunities could also be explored through engagement with private landowners in the region. This could be achieved through engaging with businesses on aligning contributions via their corporate social responsibility activities. Schools and community groups are also key stakeholders that can be engaged around potential schemes. It is also possible to engage with all these groups around volunteering.

This Tree Strategy helps deliver these aims.

2.3.3 Mitigation of airborne pollution

In the UK it is estimated that trees remove four million tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year. Within the right context (right tree species, right planting layout) trees can decrease air pollution by trapping dust and absorbing air pollutants such as ozone. The council's Natural Assets Plan 2021 makes reference to trees in the context of air quality.

Policy – North East Lincolnshire Council Natural Assets Plan 2021:

Nature based solutions, such as planting trees, can be an effective way of improving air quality by removing harmful particulate matter

Species type and density are important considerations.

2.3.4 Trees and flooding

As well as protecting and enhancing the urban environment, trees and green infrastructure can provide complimentary benefits to surface water management. These are mainly through:

- Transpiration – water evaporated by trees into the air.
- Interception – reducing the amount of water that reaches the ground.
- Increased infiltration and attenuation of water – roots and the soil in the planting pits increase the capacity of the ground to hold water by keeping the soil structure open. The retained water can be used by the tree or will infiltrate into the surrounding ground.
- Phytoremediation – turning harmful chemicals into less harmful substances

A variety of engineering techniques are available to manage surface water, but planting with a range of tree pits and planters can collect and slow down the flow of water in heavy storm events. New tree planting and existing trees can be incorporated into

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Future maintenance is also an important issue that needs to be considered to ensure trees remain healthy and continue to deliver surface water management benefits. Trees can also assist in managing erosion along slopes adjacent to rivers or roads.

Policy – North East Lincolnshire Council Natural Assets Plan 2021:

Nature based solutions, such as planting trees, can be an effective way of improving air quality by removing harmful particulate matter

2.3.5 Improving health and wellbeing

International studies and research have identified that urban trees provide 'breathing spaces' within the built-up environment, decrease respiratory problems, encourage walking and cycling, reduce traffic speeds and generally help to reduce stress. The Nature Conservancy report 'Funding Trees for Health' demonstrates these benefits, showing them to have economic value by decreasing health budget spend. Trees improve the urban environment. Trees and urban greening have been shown to reduce stress levels and so increase feelings of well-being.

2.3.6 Biodiversity

Trees play a vital role in the urban ecosystem, providing many benefits for wildlife. Birds, mammals and invertebrates use trees, scrub and hedgerows as roosts, breeding sites and feeding areas, while deadwood associated with these habitats is valuable for a variety of organisms such as bacteria, lichens and fungi which help decompose the deadwood. Native woodland, scrub and hedgerows are considered priority habitats.

North East Lincolnshire aims to conserve and enhance the natural environment to protect these natural resources and leave a legacy for future generations. Tree planting is a great way of increasing biodiversity. They are a major element in creating urban green links and wildlife corridors, as part of green infrastructure.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and the Environment Act:

Government Bill - Environment Act 2021

The Environment Bill received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021, meaning it is now an Act of Parliament: World-leading Environment Act becomes law - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Mandatory biodiversity net gain as set out in the Environment Act applies in England only by amending the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) and is likely to become law in 2023.

The Act sets out the following key components to mandatory BNG:

- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan
- Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations or conservation covenants
- Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity credits
- There will be a national register for net gain delivery sites
- The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss
- Will also apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
- Does not apply to marine development
- Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections



2.3.7 Ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient / veteran trees

Ancient woods, those continuously wooded since 1600, are home to more threatened species than any other habitat in the UK. A closely-knit network of plants and animals, some of which are rare and vulnerable, has developed and are dependent on the stable conditions which these ancient woodlands provide. Therefore, if tree species change, they may become threatened and vulnerable to climate change. It is the closest the UK has to natural woodland and is an irreplaceable part of our heritage. Many have been left to develop naturally but most have been altered in some way with additional planting. Ancient semi-natural woodland covers only approximately 2.4% of the UK's land area.

North East Lincolnshire Council are fortunate enough to own and manage Bradley and Dixon Woods, a collective area of 41.77-hectares. Classified as a local nature reserve, it is composed of ancient woodland, meadows, ponds and bird feeding sites. This historic woodland is considered one of North East Lincolnshire's most important sites.

This ancient woodland is over 1000 years old, and was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and has remained largely unchanged ever since. Grimsby's coat of arms, the three boars' heads, are believed to have links to Henry VIII, who is said to have hunted in the woods while staying at nearby Thornton Abbey in 1540.



Ancient Trees:

An ancient tree is one that has passed beyond maturity and is old, or aged, in comparison with other trees of the same species. Its canopy may be small. It will probably have a very wide trunk relative to other trees of the same species and it is very likely that it will be hollow. The older the tree, the more valuable it becomes. Dying ancient trees may endure for many decades and by still being present in the landscape continue the biological, historical or cultural connection, as well as providing very valuable habitat for wildlife.

Veteran Trees:

Veteran is a term describing a tree with habitat features such as wounds or decay. It is important to know the differences between an ancient tree and a veteran tree. A veteran tree is a survivor that has developed some of the features found on an ancient tree, not necessarily as a consequence of time, but of its life or environment. Ancient veterans are ancient trees, not all veterans are old enough to be ancient. A veteran may be a young tree with a relatively small girth in contrast to an ancient tree but bearing the 'scars' of age such as decay in the trunk, branches or roots, fungal fruiting bodies, or dead wood. These veteran features will still provide wildlife habitat and have exceptional cultural, landscape and nature conservation value.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the following definition:

Ancient or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Policy – North East Lincolnshire Council Natural Assets Plan 2021:

Local Nature Reserves are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally and can offer opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature. In our area our Local Nature Reserves are Cleethorpes Sand Dunes, Bradley and Dixon Woods, Weelsby Woods and Cleethorpes Country Park.

North East Lincolnshire Council will support the objectives of the Woodland Trust to help monitor the threats to the UK's ancient, veteran, historic or 'interesting' trees and where appropriate, help populate their ancient tree inventory.

2.3.8 Trees as part of our landscape and heritage

Landscape value and features are important to our towns and cities, with trees and hedgerows adding to this value by providing physical features such as historical boundaries, drives and woodlands. North East Lincolnshire's Landscape Character Assessment cite trees as being important.

Trees have an architectural and place-making role. On a local level they can improve the quality of our environment by screening, enhancing the sense of scale, reducing glare from buildings and hard surfaces, directing pedestrians, and slowing vehicular traffic. They bring colour and character to our urban and rural areas.

2.3.9 Economic and Social benefits of trees

Urban trees can provide a range of different by-products, from small amounts of timber and wood fuel to mulch and fruit. These benefits can contribute significantly to local economies.

There are many ways in which trees can indirectly contribute to local economies. Research has shown that people prefer to live, work and play in green leafy environments, which can lead to economic benefits including property value increases. The positive impact of trees can lead to increases in property value ranging from 5% to 18%. The larger the trees, the greater their proportional value.

Industrial areas and employment sites with access to natural greenspace can have more productive employees and those employees tend to have greater job satisfaction. Retail areas with trees perform better than shopping centres without trees, as customers are found to spend both more time and money.

The tourist attraction of wooded areas is widely acknowledged with many local economies benefiting significantly. As a consequence of these contributions, commercial and urban areas with good tree cover tend to attract higher levels of inward investment. Good levels of tree cover within our green spaces are proven to be less costly to manage than open grassed areas. Trees can create and sustain community wealth.

Research conducted in the Netherlands has shown that neighbourhoods with good tree cover are, statistically significantly healthier than less green areas. The presence of trees encourages people to be more active, thereby reducing the incidence of heart attacks and type 2 diabetes. Trees absorb considerable quantities of airborne pollutants and the resulting cleaner air cuts asthma levels. A woodland environment is known to calm people, relieve stress and provide a spiritual value that supports improved mental health and wellbeing. Neighbourhoods with good tree cover strengthen and improve people's lives.

Policy – North East Lincolnshire Council Natural Assets Plan 2021:

The coronavirus pandemic has created a greater need for public access to open space and has raised awareness of the benefits of having access to open space and how nature influences public health. Environment is incredibly important for health and is inextricably linked to it. Many studies have evidenced the positive impacts that nature can have on wellbeing. We have also learned that there are so many activities that we can enjoy outdoors; alongside the more traditional organised sports and walking/cycling we are now seeing more cultural activities, community gardening, green gyms, guided exercise routes, and naturebased volunteering.



2.3.10 Problems trees can cause

Although trees have many benefits, they do in some cases cause conflict with our way of life. Trees can sometimes cause an ongoing and increasing inconvenience to residents, such as dominance, debris, interference, and damage.

In a community context, it is generally accepted that trees provide a significant benefit to society, and it is reasonable for individuals to tolerate some level of inconvenience from their presence. There will always be a balancing of the benefit to community, weighed against the inconvenience suffered by an individual. What is acceptable, tolerable or reasonable is often a matter of judgement for each specific situation, tempered by experience and common sense.

Due to the conflict's trees can cause, it is important to have clear guidance on what action can be taken in any specific circumstance and the need to balance inconvenience against benefits. Guidance on how a decision will be reached is presented in our Tree Management Guidelines.



3.0 Issues affecting our tree resource

3.1 Challenges

Our trees face challenges from the day they are planted, through their establishment to growth and maturity. Many factors threaten not only the tree's survival but its ability to reach its full potential and deliver its many benefits.

To achieve the aims of this strategy the current and future distribution, health and suitability of our tree stock will be considered and managed. The following section discusses threats on both council and private land.

3.2 Climate change

Climate change will impact our trees and woodlands due to increases in extreme weather such as high winds, heavy rainfall and drought. These effects will probably be seen in a declining health in some species or an increased difficulty establishing newly planted trees.

As climate change progresses, some mature trees will be lost through both direct causes, such as windthrow due to high wind events, or indirectly as weather conditions make them more stressed, decreasing their tolerance to pests and diseases. Other factors such as increased rainfall may lead to water logging, which can affect tree roots and stability.

If our woodlands are affected, this has a knock-on effect upon the ecosystem.

3.3 Pests and diseases

Climate change is changing and extending the range of pests and diseases that trees are exposed to, and new pests and diseases will become common in the UK.

In the 1970's Dutch elm disease was introduced into the UK and is one of the most well-known examples of a 'new' pathogen dramatically changing the landscape character of our urban forest. The importation of trees, along with their associated soil and packaging materials, from across Europe and elsewhere continues to bring threats and these imported pests and diseases are already having an effect on the tree population of North East Lincolnshire.





The following are some of those currently present or which could pose a threat in the future: ash dieback (present in NE Lincs); horse chestnut bleeding canker (present in NE Lincs), Dutch elm disease (present in NE Lincs), horse chestnut leaf miner (present in NE Lincs), acute oak decline (in the Midlands at the time of writing), sweet chestnut blight (most in southern England but outbreaks elsewhere), Asian longhorn beetle (southern England), Gypsy moth (southern England), plane wilt, emerald ash borer (not in the UK at the time of writing).

North East Lincolnshire Council will only purchase new trees for planting from nurseries which work in accordance with strict biosecurity policies and will use, wherever possible, trees raised entirely in the UK.

3.4 Poor species diversity

There are two relevant factors to species diversity; the number of different species present within the borough and the genetic diversity of the trees. Increasing both factors will reduce the impact of threats such as pest and disease as well as climate change.

Surveying trees provides vital information about the diversity of local stock, which will guide the council's approach to tree planting on both council land and within landscape plans for new development. It will also inform advice given to private individuals or developers on species choice.

3.5 Loss or damage through development

Demolition and construction can damage trees in a variety of ways. This may be through direct loss to make way for the development, a reduction in space for retained trees' future growth and spread, direct damage due to compaction of soil, severing roots or branches or from spill of chemicals or the use of fire. Infrastructure and service installation can also be damaging due to open trenching.

For new trees, the presence of pre-existing or new utility provision must be carefully considered if future conflict is to be avoided. The Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines will give guidance to developers regarding tree retention, protection and planting.

The council will use its powers to prevent unnecessary damage to trees within all construction/development in accordance with the current version of BS 5837 and pursue enforcement action where appropriate if trees are damaged or destroyed.

The council is committed to preserving the landscape character of North East Lincolnshire. In order to conserve the benefits that trees provide, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012, the Local Planning Authority has the power to make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

3.6 Permitted Development Rights

Where a planning application is needed, there is the opportunity for trees to be considered and protection sought if necessary. If development is 'permitted' this means that no planning application is needed and there is no third party to assess the removal of, or potential damage to, trees. Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out when planning permission is not required. Probably most relevant to our urban trees is maintenance and improvement of the highway, repairs to services by utility companies and small extensions or alteration to dwellings or commercial buildings. Local authorities also have permitted development rights for work on their own land.

3.7 Work associated with installation and repair of utility services

Street trees are very vulnerable to damage which can cause at best, loss in vigour, and at worst, death, both of which may take several years to become evident. It also poses a health and safety risk if trees are structurally compromised with the severing of major roots, from which work is just covered over. The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) has clear guidelines for the planning, installation, and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees.

3.8 Specification, planting, and maintenance

Unless a tree reaches maturity and is healthy, it cannot deliver its full benefits. Many of the trees in North East Lincolnshire are merely 'surviving, not thriving' wasting the time and finance invested in their purchase and planting.

To ensure planted trees reach their full potential they need to be correctly sourced, planted, established and then maintained. Poor planting (trees planted too deep, in tree pits with inappropriate surfacing or small soil volumes) either kills or stunts the trees. Poor establishment maintenance (particularly insufficient watering), tree guards, stakes and grilles left in place (which is damaging to bark and stems) and a lack of woodland management also reduces the value tree stock. As mentioned above (3.4) a limited palette of trees species reduces species diversity as well as the landscape value. Correct species choice for the final setting of the mature tree is essential at the initial design stage.

3.9 Damage and vandalism

Damage to trees, either deliberate, through neglect or through ignorance, is common.

- Criminal damage includes cutting down or lopping/topping, snapping saplings, setting fires beneath trees and various other attempts to kill council trees.
- Damage through ignorance includes failing to maintain trees, leaving them on stakes or tied to metal grilles etc.
- Damage through neglect is often resulting from indirect operations, such as grass cutting and strimming, whereby there is a lack of care for trees within this setting.
- Highway use and maintenance can also cause damage to trees, for example branches can be torn by high-sided vehicles, rooting areas can become compacted, driveway installation can cut across verges and the salt in grit or hydrocarbons can cause contamination.

Enforcement action will be taken against anyone who damages council trees.





3.10 The Helliwell system (Visual Amenity Valuation of Trees and Woodlands)

The Helliwell system is an internationally recognised method for the visual amenity valuation of trees and woodland. The basic approach of the Helliwell system is to allocate point scores under a number of different factors such as tree size, life expectancy, suitability to setting etc. These scores are then combined to give an overall comparative score for a tree or woodland. As a further step, it is then possible to attach a value to this point score by use of a monetary conversion factor.

Six factors are identified for trees. For each of these factors a score is given. The scores for all six factors are then multiplied together. For example, a tree which is large, long-lived, prominent, and suitable for its setting will have a high score. On the other hand, a tree that is very small, so defective as to have little further useful life expectancy, or is totally unsuited to its setting, it will score very low.

North East Lincolnshire Council's current scoring threshold is set at "3". Trees that score below this threshold are lacking the values necessary to determine high amenity value. Trees that score 3 or above are considered to have high amenity value.

This scoring matrix is a guideline for assessing the amenity value of trees.

Scoring Matrix

Helliwell System Score NELC Score

0-50	1
50-100	2
100-150	3
150-200	4
200-250	5
250-300	6
300-350	7
350-400	8
400-450	9
450-500	10



The above chart and threshold will be subject to periodic review to ensure effective protection of the borough's important amenity trees.

The resulting amenity score is used as a guide when deciding whether to protect a tree using a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) but is not the only consideration. Other factors may also be considered, which may counter-balance the amenity provided by the tree, as the council is required to consider whether it is expedient to make a TPO. In some situations, it may therefore be the case that trees scoring 3 or more are not considered appropriate for inclusion in a TPO and, less commonly, trees scoring less than 3 could still be considered appropriate for protection.

North East Lincolnshire Council will protect trees and woodlands that are of important amenity value where there is a discernible threat, by making Tree Preservation Orders. The council will use the 'Helliwell system' to assess the amenity value of trees and woodland. Primarily this system will be used when assessing the suitability of trees for protection by new Tree Preservation Orders. However, in many cases it is also of use when considering tree works applications under existing TPOs and in other situations where the council may need to demonstrate the value of trees and woodland.





4.0 The future of North East Lincolnshire's trees

4.1 Understanding our tree population

Before considering the future of the local tree stock, it is important to know what is currently in place. Consequently, there is a continual regime of inspections that keeps a large number of the council's tree inventory updated. To supplement this inventory data, an iTree Canopy survey was undertaken in 2020. This study shows the canopy cover for the borough as a whole as well as on a ward-by-ward basis. Where feasible it shows relationships between canopy cover and information gathered from the Office of National Statistics such as health, mortality rates, deprivation. The study highlights areas of high and low tree cover to give a baseline which informs an integrated plan for maintaining the existing tree stock and increasing it for the benefit of future generations.

The council will investigate opportunities to commission a full iTree Eco survey. This will give a fiscal value to the ecosystem benefits North East Lincolnshire's trees provide for:

- Storm water attenuation and assess their current value.
- Annual carbon storage and value
- Annual amount to carbon sequestered and value
- Amount of pollution removed annually and value
- Energy savings attributed to trees in relation to buildings.

This type of study will highlight areas of good and poor tree cover and identify areas for future tree planting allowing assessment of the required level of investment to deliver improvements to the borough's environment and the health of its residents. This type of study will provide the council with information policy makers can use to take full account of trees in future decision making.

4.2 Canopy cover targets

Results from the iTree Canopy study completed in 2020 indicate that North East Lincolnshire has a canopy cover estimated at 10.5%, which puts it below the national average of 15.8% estimated from 320 towns and cities surveyed across the UK.

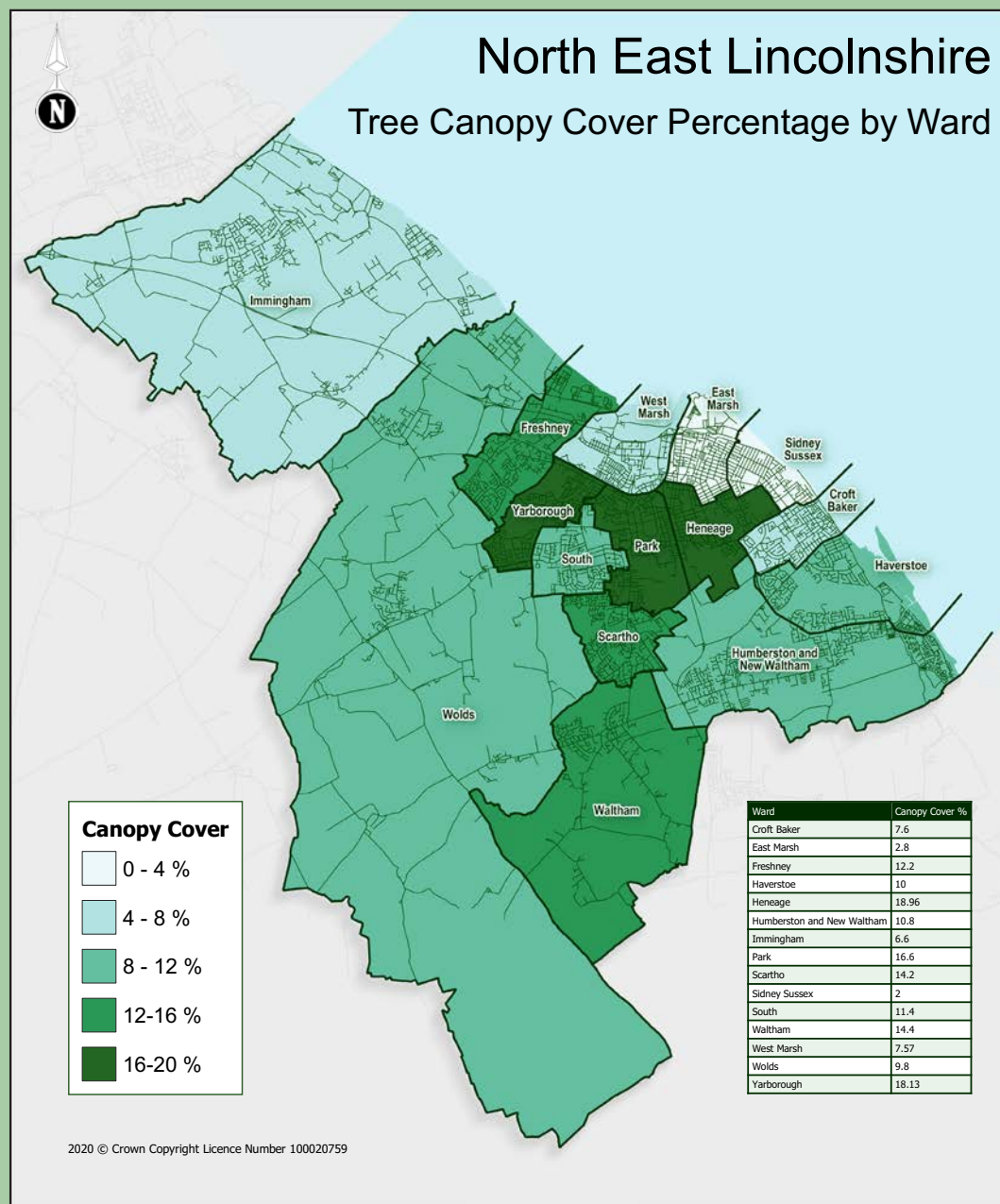
To increase canopy coverage to at least the national average by the year 2050 will be challenging. The number of new trees that can be planted is governed by a number of factors including availability of planting land, funding etc. Any target number of trees to be planted will need to allow for losses over the same time period and therefore the target number of new trees will need to be higher.

4.3 How canopy cover will be increased

The iTree Canopy study will allow for the identification of sites where new tree planting is both possible and most beneficial to improve canopy cover, air quality, flood prevention and habitat quality. It will not be possible to deliver target canopy cover on council owned land alone, so other ways will need to be investigated.

These include, although are not limited to:

- Use of planning conditions and obligations in Development Management
- Working with community partners on funding bids
- Using opportunities within the design of council schemes to increase tree planting
- Working with agencies such as the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission
- Giving advice, encouragement and raising awareness
- Developing a NE Lincs Trees website.



4.4 Tree planting – what we will do

There are many factors which need to be considered when planting urban trees involving both species selection and the actual growing and living conditions for the trees in the future. If trees merely survive, rather than thrive, then they will not provide the many benefits they offer, such as their ecosystem benefits and aesthetic qualities. The Tree Management Guidance and Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines will set out the detail covering the following:

4.4.1 Guidance

There is a wealth of information available to assist experienced designers in making the right choice of tree, including 'Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide for Specifiers' published by Trees & Design Action Group (TDAG). Local guidance will also refer to BS 8545 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations and CIRIA's (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) guidance, 'The benefits of large species trees in urban landscapes: a costing, design and management guide (C712).

Issues to be considered include:

- Where trees are planted in relation to highway, property, and outlook
- Species choice to give an appropriate mature size and shape
- Species diversity including non-native genera and species and those from different latitudes to account for climate change and provide resilience to pests and disease
- Planting size to reduce maintenance requirements and improve establishment.

4.4.2 Species diversity selection

Rather than specify a small group of 'reliable performers' which make up the majority of planting schemes, consideration of a wider range of commercially available genera and species will be encouraged.

A town needs large and mature trees to deliver the widest possible range of environmental benefits in urban areas. However, there must also be trees in varying age classes to replace the mature trees as they decline and die. It is also important to allow for loss



Image: People's Park Grimsby

within the younger age classes due to damage, poor maintenance, or disease so that the planting programs deliver the target tree canopy levels.

North East Lincolnshire's trees are split between those owned and/or managed by the council and those in private ownership. The Tree Management Guidelines which form part of this strategy set out how decisions regarding tree stock will be made. However, the urban environment is not always conducive to successful tree cultivation and therefore the choice of tree species must be appropriate to ensure it maximises the overall benefits. Trees lost or made vulnerable through climate change may need to be replaced with more resilient species.

4.4.3 Trees in hard landscapes

It is often necessary to plant trees in areas within hard surfacing such as car parks, streets and pedestrianised areas. It is better to design in open planting areas, but where this is not possible, special planting techniques and methods are available which ensure adequate soil volumes to ensure the trees reach their full potential.

The publication by TDAG, 'Trees in hard landscapes - a guide for delivery' considers practical challenges and solutions to allow integration of trees in our streets, civic spaces and surface car parks. These areas are the most challenging urban environments for growing trees but are also the areas that benefit most from their inclusion.

North East Lincolnshire Council will encourage the use of modern planting methods and techniques which have been researched and developed to enable successful tree establishment and growth in these areas.

4.4.4 Community Woodland

North East Lincolnshire Council supports the principle of community owned and managed woodlands. It recognises the potential benefits, such as increased community cohesion and building 'natural capital' through the creation or management of woods, that a community woodland can bring to a neighbourhood or area.

The council also recognises that there are some risks and challenges in creating community woodland and will therefore work with organisations including the Woodland Trust to ensure a successful and sustainable outcome. The council welcomes approach from community groups who wish to discuss potential opportunities for establishing community woodlands.

4.5 Consultation and Engagement

In order to achieve the Strategy's objectives, especially achieving the increased canopy cover, requires not only the commitment of the Council but also engagement and involvement of other large landowners, businesses, schools, volunteer groups and the public to achieve buy in and active participation. There will need to be a collaborative approach with private residents and community organisations. There is already co-operation between community, volunteer groups and the Council. With a history of successful community engagement on other issues there will be an opportunity to connect with volunteers and community organisations and support and encourage the delivery of community-led and focused tree projects.

We will involve and consult with the public as much as we can in order to build a sense of ownership. There will be times when this consultation is not appropriate, for example due to the low-key nature of the work or its urgency in relation to public safety but we will commit to keep the public informed as much as possible.

For consultation and engagement the Council will also be guided by Part 6, Section 115 of the Environment Act 2021 and Part 2, Section 12 of the The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012.

The Council's website will need to be one of the main points of contact for community engagement and will require improvement to fulfil this purpose. There should be a single location, where information on trees, including this Strategy, are set out in a clear, easy to access format. This will enable the Council to produce information for residents or landowners on important aspects of planting and maintenance. Subject to resources, the Council will also need to consider targeted distribution of information that can help us meet the objectives for trees.



5.0 Management of Council Trees

5.1 Application

The Strategy will be applied to trees on all council land, including council run schools, cemeteries and green spaces. North East Lincolnshire Council has an in-house Tree Team that carries out works to the council's tree stock. The council has access to Trees and Woodland Officers that provide specialist arboricultural advice across the council. The Council's Operations Services manage Public Open Spaces as well as the tree stock within the Adopted Highway. The Tree Officers inspect the Council's highway tree stock and trees within public open spaces. The Tree Officers provide recommendations and guidance to the council's Operation Services, as per the Tree Management Guidelines.

5.2 Tree pruning and removals

The council receives a high volume of requests from the public and other sources relating to trees each year. These range from requests to remove trees completely to minor pruning. No such work to trees will be carried out without arboricultural justification.

The council will consider consultation on the removal of trees with significant amenity value. The Tree Management Guidelines set out the circumstances within which work, and consultation will be carried out.

All management and maintenance work will be undertaken in accordance with the current version of BS 3998 Tree work - Recommendations, as detailed in the Tree Management Guidance.

5.3 Replacement trees

Except in the case of woodland or plantation thinning for reasons of good management, replacement planting is essential to ensure continuity of the tree stock. A single young tree will take many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature one. One for one replacement does not give the same benefit, nor does it give the increase in canopy cover that is needed.

When it is necessary to remove trees, the council will ensure that appropriate replacement takes place in order to not only maintain the existing canopy cover but also to help achieve the 2050 tree canopy cover target and Carbon Neutral Roadmap as well as the Natural Assets Plan. Replacement trees do not have to be in the same spot as the felled tree: a nearby location within the Ward may



be more practical and appropriate. The Tree Planting Guidelines will detail the standards for tree replacement which will be aligned to those in the Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines.

5.4 Permitted Development on council land

Local Authorities have some Permitted Development Rights and the policies referenced within North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy ensure tree retention, protection and replacement is given due consideration and is in accordance with the procedures within the current version of BS 5837. These standards are detailed in the Tree Management Guidelines.

In summary, they include the need for a pre-development tree survey, an arboricultural implications assessment (prior to design of the scheme), an arboricultural method statement and arboricultural supervision for any work within the root protection area (RPA) of a retained tree and a tree protection plan. If there is work within the RPA no-dig construction will be used.

The Tree Management Guidelines set this out in detail, and this will be mirrored in the Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines.

5.5 Existing trees in the highway

Trees add considerably to our streetscape and parking areas, however urban streets offer a very unnatural environment for trees, and this influences the tree's morphology and longevity as well as their reaction to pests and diseases.

Highway trees are not only located within the carriageway and footways but also within verges and small areas of green space. These areas need to be retained; their importance fully understood as they provide a better environment for healthy root growth than fully hard surfaced areas.

In residential areas verges are often resurfaced with tarmac and used for parking; this will have a detrimental impact on the existing tree's. Where tree roots could previously access adjacent gardens, these have now, in many places, been paved and often with non-porous surfacing. Opportunities should be taken wherever possible to reinstate soft landscaping. If reinstating soft landscaping is not practical, then improving the porosity of the hard surfaces around the base of trees needs to be carried out. Due to the difficulty establishing replacement trees in the existing highway, the removal of street trees will only be considered as a last resort where all other solutions have been considered.

The local street tree population are of mixed age classes. Many are coming to the end of their natural lives and will, over time, need to be removed. When this occurs, they will be replaced as per the council tree replacement guidance, as close as possible to their original position. It is not always possible or desirable to replace trees on a like for like basis in the same location, however the replacement trees will be positioned within the same Ward as the original trees.

Major development or redevelopment offers the best opportunity for planting new street trees, and this must be utilised whenever possible. Locations for new street trees need to be chosen with great care, concentrating on streets that still have verges and new road schemes where tree planting can be planned at the outset. Guidance will be produced with reference to street trees including species choice, establishment and maintenance.

5.6 Establishing new and replacement trees in the highway

The value of trees within the streetscape has been detailed throughout this document and as such, every opportunity should be taken to include street trees within highway renewal and new highway schemes. When considering the use of street trees, underground constraints such as services and soil condition will be addressed via tree pit design. Guidance for highway tree design is included in the Tree Management Guidance, which in turn will reference the latest 'Manual for Streets'.

5.7 Trees in green space

There are many different types of green space across North East Lincolnshire; parks, recreation grounds, allotments and countryside sites. They will be managed in accordance with the policy contained in this document and in the Tree Management Guidance. North East Lincolnshire's green spaces provide excellent space for existing trees and offer potential sites for additional planting. In line with both the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and the Natural Assets Plan, tree planting will take place to maintain the current tree cover and where possible to increase the canopy cover.



5.8 Strategic Property (NELC Property Estate)

The NELC property estate has several sites that contain a tree stock of varied age class. These sites are spread over Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham. Many of these sites are leased and the terms of the existing leases tend to protect the council's tree resource. Any new leases will be required to consider this tree strategy and ensure similar protection as well as undertaking to implement the policies and the Tree Management Guidance herein.

5.9 Sale of Council land

Where council land is sold or leased there may be an increased risk of existing trees being removed and a risk that little new planting will occur. The use of Tree Preservation Orders will be used so that important valuable trees are retained when council land is sold. When land is leased out, lease holders will be required to work within the guidelines of the Tree Strategy.

5.10 Tree related damage claims

The council's Insurance Section, supported by the Trees and Woodland Officers, currently manage all claims relating to council-owned trees. Where a council tree is implicated as having caused damage to property, the onus is on the claimant to provide comprehensive evidence that the tree is the cause. Where trees are of high visual amenity value and where they would be worthy of protection by a TPO, the council will require the submitted evidence and information to be in line with what would be expected for a TPO tree. The Tree Management Guidance sets out our requirements.

5.11 Tree management plans

Management plans are a valuable tool for not only maintaining existing trees and woodlands but also introducing and managing new trees and woodlands. On both council land and private land, the use of long-term management plans will be encouraged and supported. This will be done through funding applications, working with communities, partner landholders and land managers and, within developments, through planning conditions and obligations as set out in our Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines. Regarding adopted highways and parks and open spaces, newly planted tree will be covered by the 'Tree Planting Guidance'.

5.12 Staff skills and training

Arboricultural inspections and works will be carried out to the relevant British Standards and following current industry best practice guidance. All staff dealing with trees whether in a planning, landscape, design, highway, safety or operational context will hold the relevant skills, experience and qualifications to undertake their particular roles.

5.13 Risk Management

The issue of risk to property and people is one that is taken seriously by NELC and therefore a Risk Management Plan has been produced. This sets out our approach to prioritising inspection based on the level of impacts and potential risks posed to people and property. Areas with mature large trees, which may present the highest potential impacts such as high-volume roads and heavily used public spaces, will be prioritised before lesser used areas or those with young trees. The frequency of inspection is also guided by these criteria and helps us comply with best practice guidance and our duty of care responsibilities.

Planting the 'right tree in the right place' can prevent future problems and although NELC want to plant large canopied long lived tree species, this may not always be the best choice and each situation must be considered on its own merits. Veteran and trees of special character or interest will be identified in the course of ongoing tree inspections and assessed as to their future merits and controls required at that time as set out in our Tree Risk Management Plan and in accordance with Natural England's Veteran Trees Guide to Good Management.



6.0 Trees on private land

6.1 Overview

Most tree owners appreciate the contribution the trees make to their own land value, as well as the wider benefits associated with trees. The majority of the land within North East Lincolnshire is in private ownership. It is the aim of this Tree Strategy to support private landowners in the management of trees as well as the planting of new trees and woodlands, in accordance with the council's Carbon Neutral Road Map and the Natural Assets Plan as well as central government policy and guidance.

- Using powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act, related legislation and/or lease clauses, North East Lincolnshire Council will, in the interests of amenity, protect trees and woodlands that are of acknowledged value where they are visible to the public, are in reasonable health and condition and where there is a threat
- Where council land containing trees is to be sold, the trees will be assessed to determine whether protection via a TPO or restrictive clause in a lease is appropriate to ensure retention for the benefit of the wider population
- The council will engage with partners, the public and other landowners to raise awareness of tree protection, maintenance, planting and establishment best practice.

6.2 Trees and development

Trees on streets, open spaces and private land can be at risk from the pressures of development. Where development is proposed it is essential that both existing and proposed trees are considered from the very early stages of the design process.

The current version of BS 5837 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations is the foundation document that will inform all developments in relation to existing trees. The effect of proposed development on trees is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

There is a presumption that trees on development sites with a BS 5837 categorisation A or B will be retained unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify their removal. In the event of trees needing to be removed, irrespective of category grading, an emphasis will be placed on a landscaping scheme which supports the council's Carbon Neutral Roadmap and the Natural Assets plan as set out in the Tree Planting Guidelines and Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines.

The use of BS 5837 in conjunction with planning conditions will enable the council to limit potential detrimental damage to trees through soil compaction, direct damage to roots or branches or by leaving them with little room to grow and develop so preventing the long-term contribution they can make to North East Lincolnshire. The retention of trees and how they contribute to the council's Carbon Neutral Roadmap and Natural Assets Plan as well as Biodiversity Net Gain as set out in the Environment Act will be considered. The council will also consider how the landscape proposal fits into the wider system of habitat corridors and ecology.

Although new tree planting can replace poorer quality trees lost through development and also enhance the development and the local area, sufficient space for the trees to mature needs to be considered. North East Lincolnshire's Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines will set out what is expected from development regarding tree protection, mitigation for loss and enhancement. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national policy and so guides local policies which are translated into local plans.

The NPPF pursues development but with specific reference to the need to protect local character and environmental quality as well as to include trees.

Developing a green infrastructure network, conserving and enhancing biodiversity, landscape character and healthy green spaces are all key components of the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan. Existing trees and new tree planting are integral to achieving the aims and objectives of the council's Local Plan.

This Tree Strategy document will be a material consideration within the determination of planning applications.



6.3 Protected trees

Trees are protected under planning law by the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012. This allows the council to protect trees on private land with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) if they have 'good visual amenity value', meaning that they can be seen by the public in general and add to the quality of the local area. Not all high value trees need to be protected, only those which are under threat. The wording from the legislation is:

TPOs can be used to protect trees if the Local Planning Authority believes there is a risk of trees being felled, pruned or damaged in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area. It is not necessary for there to be immediate risk for there to be a need to protect trees. Extracts from Government guidance of when a TPO may be expedient are:

- 'Local planning authorities can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be 'expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area'.
- '...the authority may believe that certain trees are at risk as a result of development pressures.'
- '...consider other sources of risks to trees for example, changes in property ownership.'
- 'Intentions to fell trees are not always known in advance, so it may sometimes be appropriate to proactively make Orders as a precaution.'

Once a tree has a TPO, permission is required from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before any work takes place to the tree including work to roots.

In a Conservation Area the legislation gives blanket protection to all trees with a stem diameter greater than 75mm above ground level. A section 211 Notice is required, this is 6 weeks written notification, to the LPA, of any planned works to trees that fulfil the above criteria. If the council assesses that the works will be detrimental to the visual amenity value or health of the tree it can make a TPO to prevent this occurring.

6.4 Implementation of planning conditions

On the granting of planning permission for those sites that have a detailed landscaping scheme, this will be subject to standard condition requiring a 5-year management regime. However, for those sites that have extensive woodland and/or individual tree planting within public open space, a 20-year management plan may be secured via a planning condition.

On the granting of planning permission for those sites that have a detailed landscaping scheme and that include areas of public open space, this may be subject to a planning condition requiring the approved landscape scheme to be implemented prior to the occupation of the first dwelling. This will be particularly relevant to large areas of public open space and woodland. This will ensure the early establishment of new tree planting. Where required and appropriate, the use of a Section 106 planning obligation will be used. The LPA will monitor major development sites and where appropriate seek to use the enforcement powers available to it, to enforce breaches of planning conditions.



6.5 Influencing landowners

The council has a role to encourage landowners to manage their trees responsibly and work in collaboration with the council to reach local tree canopy targets. The council will engage with landowners and other stakeholders, led by example, and encourage organisations to develop their own tree management plans.

6.6 Unsafe trees on private land

Owners and occupiers have a 'duty of care' to others with regard to the safety of the trees on their land under the Occupiers Liability Act.

If trees are dangerous, local authorities have limited powers granted under the Miscellaneous Provisions Act to require an owner to make safe a tree which is deemed to be an immediate threat to people or property. In the absence of the landowner, the council can also act directly in the interests of public safety and recover any reasonable costs associated with the works. Miscellaneous Provisions Act does not place a duty on the local authority to act. Any other dispute between neighbours is a private matter which should be resolved between the affected parties. Further guidance and the processes that the council will follow in regard to the Miscellaneous Provisions Act can be found within the Tree Risk Management Plan.

Where private trees are considered a threat to users of the highway or public footpaths, the Local Highway Authority has powers under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 and can require the owner to make the trees safe. If trees and hedges are causing an obstruction to the highway the council will issue a letter requesting works to be carried out to remove the obstruction within 28 days. If the works are not carried out in this time a formal notice will be issued giving a further 14 days to have the works carried out. If the works are still not carried out after this time legal proceedings may be instigated. Even if the trees are protected, emergency work can be carried out if specified by an arborist. Owners are advised to contact the Tree Officer to discuss the extent of the works and any additional work to the crown which may be required.

7.0 Tree Policies

7.1 Tree Strategy Policies

The following policies which form this Tree Strategy aim to allow North East Lincolnshire Council to retain healthy trees, increase canopy cover and ensure species and age diversity across the borough. This will be done through the use of legislation, through the good practice contained in our Tree Management Guidance, Tree Planting Guidance, Tree Risk Management Plan and Development & Our Green Infrastructure Guidelines in addition to working in partnership with landowners and developers to encourage good practice.

Tree Policy Detail

- **TP1** Healthy trees and woodlands will be protected, retained and managed to ensure healthy growth, development and species diversity. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason as set out in our Tree Management Guidelines.
- **TP2** North East Lincolnshire's tree stock and canopy cover will be increased to give greater species and age diversity to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.
- **TP3** The council will use its powers to prevent unnecessary damage to trees within all construction/development in accordance with the current version of BS5837 and pursue enforcement action where appropriate if trees are damaged or destroyed.
- **TP4** Using powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act, related legislation and/or lease clauses, the council will, in the interests of amenity, protect trees and woodlands that are of recognised value where they are visible to the public, are in reasonable health and condition and where there is a threat.
- **TP5** Where council land containing trees is to be sold, the trees will be assessed to determine whether protection via a TPO or restrictive clause in a lease is appropriate to ensure retention for the benefit of the wider population.

- **TP6** The council will engage with partners, the public and other landowners to raise awareness of tree protection, maintenance, planting and establishment best practice.
- **TP7** The council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by the Helliwell system.
- **TP8** In conjunction with the Tree Team, land holding departments and teams will ensure appropriate management of their trees. Requests for work to trees on council land will be assessed in accordance with legislation and the Tree Management Guidelines.



8.0 Delivery, Monitoring and Review

8.1 Reporting

The Tree Strategy will be monitored and reviewed by the nominated Tree Officer and Tree Team and with the cooperation of the council's Operations Service annually to ensure its aims are being met and progress is being made on the actions identified. The outcome of the review will form an annual report which will be published on the North East Lincolnshire Council website. The following areas will be covered in the report

1. To ensure the number of trees and level of canopy cover is being maintained and increased the report will include:
 - a. A comparison of the felling rate against replacement tree planting rate
 - b. A summary of new planting included in both public and private development schemes (including highways)
2. To ensure our own trees are properly looked after and the quantity and species variation is improved the report will include
 - a. The level of tree loss among trees planted over the year
 - b. A table outlining the number and type of trees planted
 - c. A summary of the inspection and surveying work undertaken over the year
3. To assess how private landowners have been encouraged to manage their trees in accordance with the strategy and tree protection legislation the report will include:
 - a. An assessment of changes in the tree canopy cover over a 5-year period
 - b. The number of applications to fell TPO'd trees approved over the year
 - c. A summary of enforcement actions taken following reported contraventions

At an appropriate time, to allow for new tree planting to establish a visible canopy structure, the canopy cover within North East Lincolnshire will be assessed through an i-Tree study using the data from the 2020 study as a comparator.

For council owned highway trees, the Ezytreev tree management software will be used to record numbers, species and positions of trees planted, removed and replaced as well as the condition of our current tree stock.

For the council's parks and open spaces, in cooperation with the council's Operations Service, new tree planting can be recorded, with data including numbers, species and positions of newly planted trees. For both public and private development schemes new tree planting will be recorded using the relevant approved landscape schemes, with data including numbers, species and positions of trees in accordance with the approved plans.

8.2 Risk Management

The council will use the National Tree Safety Group's (NTSG) guidance 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees' to achieve the right balance between public safety and amenity.

The NTSG position is underpinned by a set of five key principles:

1. Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society;
2. Trees are living organisms and naturally lose branches or fall;
3. The risk to human safety is extremely low;
4. Tree owners have a legal duty of care;
5. Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management.

National Tree Safety Group link: <https://ntsgroup.org.uk/>

The council will prioritise its legal obligations over all other aspects of the service. The council's Tree Officers will operate a system of proactive and reactive tree inspections and maintain a record of trees and inspections.

8.3 Emergencies

If an assessment by a Tree Officer confirms a council tree to be dangerous then the council will implement its emergency procedures. In the first instance, a tree that poses an immediate risk to public and/or property will be 'made safe'. Only the minimum works required in order to remove the risk may be carried out. Subsequent remedial works may be required following the removal of risk.

Dangers posed by privately owned trees are the responsibility of the tree owner and are a matter to be resolved by the tree owner. Before contacting the council, any concerns about potentially dangerous privately owned trees needs to be raised with the owner. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached, then as a last resort, in limited circumstances the council may be able to help, using their discretionary powers under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. The tree must be shown to be imminently dangerous to persons or property and that it has not been possible to resolve the situation as a civil matter. Any costs reasonably incurred by the council may be recovered from the person(s) in default. Further guidance and the processes that the council will follow in regard to the Miscellaneous Provision Act can be found within the Tree Risk Management Plan.

For privately owned trees there is a legal responsibility under the Highway Act 1980 s154 to ensure the highway or public footpath is not endangered. If a privately owned tree is considered a 'risk' to the highway or public footpath and the owner does not take action within a reasonable time the council will issue a formal notice for the work to be undertaken. If this formal notice is ignored and action is not taken, the council will organise the undertaking of the necessary work to remove the 'risk' and seek to recover the costs from the owner.

8.3.1 Tree Related Damage

The council's Insurance Section, supported by the Tree Officers, currently manages all claims relating to council owned trees.

A claimant must contact the council's Insurance Section to report the claim. The onus is on the claimant to provide the evidence to support their claim that a council tree is the cause. Trees will not necessarily be felled because of a subsidence claim. Remedial action will be considered with felling being the last resort. The council will manage all claims directed at its trees and challenge unwarranted claims based on poorly investigated or inaccurate evidence.

9.0 Other tree related issues

9.1 Fruit/berries/nuts

To help manage public health and safety risks associated with fallen fruit/berries/nuts, the council will clear fallen leaves and associated fruits/ berries/nuts from paths in the autumn. The council will not prune or fell trees to remove or reduce the nuisance of fruit/berries or nuts or remove such fallen fruit from private property. However, where fallen fruit is leading to significant anti-social behaviour problems it will consider measures to reduce the problem.

9.2 Trees too big or too tall

A tree is not dangerous just because it may be considered too big for its surroundings. The council will not prune or fell a council owned tree simply because it is considered 'too big' or 'too tall'.

9.3 Light

In law there is no general right to light either in buildings, gardens or other open space. If natural light is being blocked by the growth of an evergreen/semi-evergreen hedge then action may be taken to reduce the problem under high hedges legislation, Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. The council will not prune or remove trees in cases where they cause a reduced amount of light to fall on a property. In exceptional circumstances the council may consider measures to reduce the problem.

9.4 Bird droppings

The nuisance of bird droppings is not considered to be a sufficient reason to prune or remove trees. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other related wildlife law). The council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees or remove bird droppings from private property.

9.5 Sap/honeydew

Honeydew is caused by greenfly (Aphids) feeding on the tree, which excrete a sugary sap. Often the honeydew is colonised by a mould, which causes it to go black. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to remove the aphid which causes the problem and pruning the tree may only offer temporary relief. The council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce honeydew or other sticky residue from trees.



9.6 Pollen

It is not feasible to prune trees to remove pollen sources. The council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce the release of pollen.

9.7 Telephone Wires

It is the telephone service providers responsibility to maintain your service. The council will generally not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce interference with telephone wires.

9.8 TV/satellite reception

The responsibility for receiving a satellite television signal is with the company that erects the satellite dish or aerial. The company should erect their equipment in a location that receives a clear signal. The council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to prevent perceived interference with TV/ satellite installation/ reception.

9.9 Trees and solar panels

Whilst the need to provide renewable energy resources is appreciated, trees have an important role in maintaining and improving local amenity, in addition to contributing to local and national targets in tackling climate change. The presence of trees must be fully appreciated when considering a suitable location for solar panels or the placement of solar panels. The council will not prune or fell its trees to improve natural light to a solar panel/s.

9.10 Wild animal/insect pests

Bees, some animals, and many birds are protected species and advice should be taken before considering their removal. The council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, or wild animals.

9.11 Trees overhanging property

Householders have a 'Common Law' right to prune overhanging branches back to their boundary. However, this is bad practice as it may not enable the principles of good pruning to be applied, can further damage the tree to allow disease in and can unbalance the tree making it more of a risk. It is better to get agreement from the owner to prune the tree in accordance with best practice. If the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order planning consent will be required. If a tree is within a Conservation Area, formal notification to the local planning authority will be required. The council will not prune or fell its trees to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches. In exceptional circumstances the council may consider measures to reduce an ongoing and increasing inconvenience.

9.12 Trees obstructing view

There is no legal right to a 'view'. The council will not prune or fell its trees to improve the view from a private property.

9.13 Personal medical complaints

The council will not normally prune or fell a tree because of a personal medical complaint unless it can be established that the presence of a tree is causing a detriment to the health of a resident. Further consideration will be given to the management approach of trees especially where elderly, infirm or disabled persons who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected. This consideration will also consider the quality and importance of the tree in question, as well as the benefits to the wider community. The council will not prune or fell its trees because of a personal medical condition other than in exceptional circumstances.

9.14 Exceptional circumstances

It is recognised that in some exceptional circumstances the problems caused by a tree are so great that the council may consider undertaking remedial works. Where these problems, and likely future maintenance costs, are excessive the tree may be removed and replaced with a more suitable species. Where multiple tree removals from an area are involved, this may be done in a phased manner. Exceptional circumstances will be assessed individually on their merits and tree works will only be undertaken if there are sufficient funds available after all safety works have been concluded.



North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy

Part One



Working in partnership