



# Tree planting BRIEFING

CONSERVATIVE  
ENVIRONMENT  
NETWORK

June 2020

## **CEN Councillors: Tree Planting briefing**

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*This is not intended to be an exhaustive briefing but an overview of the key facts, figures and information that can help you to respond to the topic. This is written as if the reader is a new Councillor who does not have a background in climate policy. If you are interested in finding out more please see the useful organisations in Section 8.*

### **1. Background to tree planting targets**

#### **Key information**

- The proportion of woodland in England is only 10%, (13% in Great Britain) compared to the EU average of 38%. However, this current figure represents an increase by 73% since 1947. Outside of our woodlands, an estimated 4% of England's land area is tree cover. Our urban landscape is composed of an estimated 89 million trees, with 8.4 million of these in London.
- 59% of woodland in England is actively managed, but we import 88% of the wood we use.
- The Bowthorpe Oak in Bourne (Lincolnshire) is estimated to be more than 1,000 years old, and believed to be one of the oldest oak trees in England.
- Including the market value, economic, environmental and social elements of the treescape in England, trees are [estimated](#) to be worth £4.9 billion per year. The asset value of our trees, woods and forests can also be estimated at £175 billion. This includes over £1 billion in carbon sequestration value.
- The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) urges a *minimum* of 17% tree cover across the UK by 2050, with the Woodland Trust aiming for the CCC's preferred 19% coverage. The Woodland Trust is engaging with over 180 councils across the UK on their tree planting plans, many as part of their climate emergency/net zero motions.
- Land Registry data suggests that councils collectively own 1.5 million acres of land in England and Wales, making them even larger landowners than the Forestry Commission. Councils can also influence how land is used across their local authority areas by changing Local Plans and working with other landowners.
- As well as tree planting, opportunities exist for retaining, restoring and increasing natural capital: the natural wealth that provides the "ecosystem services" underpinning our wellbeing and our productive economy.

#### **Why plant trees?**

- Trees provide vital habitats, from their branches and trunks, to the fallen leaves and branches. They can also connect wildlife habitats, particularly in urban areas. Different trees attract different species, and native trees provide the most biodiversity benefits.
- People value their trees and some can have particular significance to a community. Community orchards, school planting projects, and so on are often cared for by local residents. Enhancing this link through your tree planting strategy can be vital to the long term success of the plan (see section 7).
- Trees also provide forest products, local employment and educational opportunities. Tree professionals such as surgeons and forestry practitioners can help with skills training and learning opportunities, particularly to learn more about sustainable and local sourcing and management practices.
- Forest Schools are increasingly seen as an essential part of primary education, with a broadening base of trained practitioners.
- Ancient woodlands are historical artefacts (minimum 400 years old), and trees could be your area's oldest inhabitants.
- Trees can provide shade, filter pollutants and slow the flow of water, protecting your community during heatwaves and floods. Roots can also help to bind and enrich the soil, another way they help to combat flooding and can boost agricultural productivity.
- Time spent in nature and woodland has proven health benefits, both physical and mental. More and more people journey to spend time in nature each year, creating important leisure and tourism opportunities. Ensuring fair access for all helps to spread these benefits, and working with your NHS Trust to enhance social prescribing options can be a great outreach tool (see Section 7).
- Pests, diseases and climate change can threaten trees, which is why it's important to plant more, and to ensure that they are responsibly sourced and the right kind of tree is planted in the right place. Mixed species of different ages can help ensure a robust woodland ecosystem.
- Trees (and woodland soils) lock in carbon, but the tree has to be old enough and undisturbed in order to maximise that benefit. Trees and foliage can also act as a sound barrier along major road works and highways, if the right trees are in the right place.
- Trees and forests are also beautiful. **Northumberland County Council's [Growing Together strategy](#)** aims to improve tree cover to enhance the county's reputation for its 'breathtaking scenery' and 'environmental quality'. Even in the cherished upland landscape of the Lake District, research by Cumbria University indicated that the public thought more tree cover would add to the beauty.

### Relevant policy and planning guidance

- A tree strategy can help local authorities to meet statutory biodiversity obligations and comply with the requirements of the **National Planning Policy Framework** to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- **Tree and woodland strategies** are local authority documents which set out the policy framework, and management approaches, for trees and woodlands, based on an assessment of the local authority's tree and woodland resource. There is currently no requirement to produce them, or guidance (outside London) on how to. They provide a basis for long-term thinking and enable LAs to plan for a resilient resource.
- The **[25 Year Environment Plan](#)** set out the plan for a new Northern Forest (stretching coast to coast from Lancashire and North Yorkshire down to the North Midlands, backed by £5.7m of government funding), a review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and

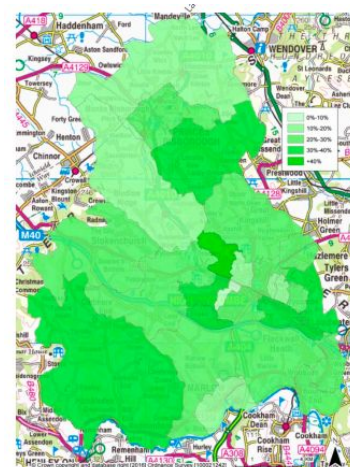
the government's ambition to plant 11 million trees. The plan also pledged to develop a Nature Recovery Network (which is being developed as part of a forthcoming Nature Strategy) which aims to provide 500,000 hectares of additional habitat by more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green and blue infrastructure.

- Since the publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan, the designated [Landscapes Review](#) - which was led by Julian Glover - has been published, which called for a new National Landscapes Service to protect and enhance our landscapes in recognition of their beauty and value.
- The Budget in March 2020 also announced a new **Nature for Climate Fund** (worth £640m) which will support the Government's increased tree planting target of 30,000 hectares every year. Defra's forthcoming **English Tree Strategy** will set out detailed policies on how the Government will meet the new tree planting target.
- A **Tree Preservation Order** is made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees or groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. Trees in a conservation area that are not protected by a TPO are protected by provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act. Find out more about tree protections [here](#), which LPAs have a duty to consider.
- Paragraph 175c of the **NPPF** states: 'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'.
- It's also important to consider regional regulations and plans e.g. London Tree and Woodland Framework (under review) and the London Plan for London Boroughs.
- **Neighbourhood plans** (Localism Act 2012) allows parish and town councils in England to produce general planning policies for the development and use of the land in their neighbourhoods. These can create material considerations for planning decisions, and should be in conformity with relevant Local Plans across the district.
- In October in response to a [consultation](#) the government agreed to introduce a new LA duty to consult on the felling of urban street trees (with exemptions); and to produce best practice guidance on local authority Tree and Woodland Strategies.
- The landmark [Environment Bill](#) currently going through Parliament will introduce biodiversity net gain commitments for developers, and targets to restore nature including expanding LA duties to enhance biodiversity. CEN will look to provide you with a briefing on how the Bill will impact local authorities in due course.

## 2. Setting a tree planting target

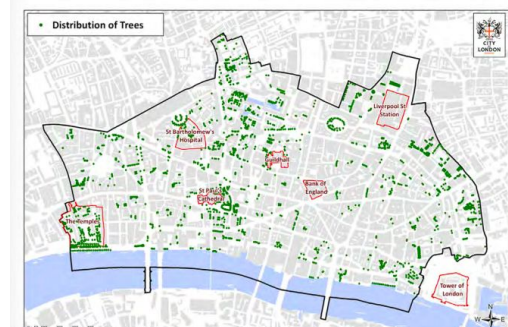
### Scope out your area

- The strategy should assess the nature of the tree stock, its function and value, using well-established tools such as CAVAT and iTree. This can help to demonstrate that, whilst tree management brings costs, these are balanced out by benefits and services provided by trees (e.g. carbon sequestration, etc.).
- The assessment should cover all trees within the LA's geographical boundary, with a brief consideration of broad topography, geology and soil conditions.





- The strategy should also set principles which underpin the planting of trees e.g. species diversity, longevity and succession of the tree stock.
- **Wycombe District Council** (now merged with Buckinghamshire) undertook a [Canopy Cover Assessment](#) in partnership with local researchers that calculated its tree coverage and made recommendations. Canopy cover, in comparison to ground surveys, was considered to be cheaper to monitor over time (purchased via [BlueSky](#)). It aimed to set a 'baseline' for 'evidence-based planting and protection strategies by enabling the setting of measurable targets'. They also found that houses on leafier streets sold for higher prices. (*See map of canopy cover by ward, above*)
- **City of London** (right) scoped out all of their urban trees - approximately 2,413.
  - This includes 141 commemorative trees planted in memory of someone or having an association with the City Corporation, giving them historical and emotional relevance.
  - 62% of their trees are in gardens rather than along streets.
  - They counted approximately seventy types of trees, but six main types: plane, lime, cherry, maple, hornbeam and birch.
  - They also mapped out the maturity of those trees, and which ones they manage or own.
- **Leicestershire County Council** [recorded](#) their individual trees in 2018 using i-Tree. They then calculated their amenity value using the CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) system. This found that their 82,599 trees were valued at £428 million, delivering annual benefits of £358,951 in carbon storage, pollution removal, water run-off prevention and more. Their trees stored carbon equating to emissions from 19,700 cars.
- Where are your trees? In open spaces, parks or private gardens? Along roads or pathways? What is your area like, where are trees distributed, and do they have any designation?
- What type of trees are they? How old are they? Do you have any ancient woodland, ancient or notable trees or wood pasture? Do you have any community woodlands or street trees? Do any of your trees have heritage or cultural value?
- Who has responsibility for the trees? For example, public or private sector, Transport for London, boroughs, Highways England, the church, etc.
- Where is your green infrastructure and where is it lacking? Where are parks and green spaces, woodland or urban woodlands? Where are the gaps in provision and where could new development disturb existing woodland or trees?
- Friends of the Earth have also broken down Forestry Commission data on UK woodland cover (which doesn't include street trees) by local authority area (download the [Excel spreadsheet](#)).



### Examples of targets set

- **Surrey County Council** aims to facilitate the planting of [1.2 million new trees by 2030](#), one for every Surrey resident. They will now be working on a 'robust, evidence based strategy and action plan' to deliver those trees and 'ensure that they survive to maturity and deliver the intended benefits'.
- **Gloucestershire County Council** is [aiming to plant a million trees by 2030](#).

- **Kent County Council** has committed to [a tree per person](#), totalling just over 1.5 million trees. They plan to set out a strategy over the next year to consider: how they can protect and restore existing trees and native woodland; where in the county opportunities exist for the creation and restoration of woods and trees; and how to ensure any new tree cover provides a role in the recovery of wildlife and benefits residents as well as supporting climate targets.
- **East Hampshire District Council** has [committed to see 120,000 trees planted in their district](#), one for every person. The council made the pledge as part of a motion to declare a climate emergency in July 2019, with a target to be carbon neutral by 2050. They plan to work with local community groups and the South Downs National Park to ‘plant the right trees in the right place’ and are currently seeking other project partners.
- The **West Midlands Combined Authority** launched a [‘virtual forest’](#) initiative so that authorities, residents and businesses could register trees they have planted, helping to establish over 1,000 trees. They also aim to plant a tree for every resident over the next 20 years (over 2 million trees).
- **Barnet London Borough Council** have a detailed five-year [tree policy](#) which plans to increase the number of trees and canopy cover across the borough, targeting areas with the highest levels of CO2 and NO2 concentrations and where they have been most impacted by urban warming.
- The Woodland Trust recommend that for residential development, a target canopy cover of at least 30% should be pursued through the retention of important trees, appropriate placement of trees lost through development, ageing or disease on an at least ‘two for one’ basis and by new planting to support green infrastructure.

#### **A broader strategy**

- Setting a tree planting target should be part of a wider strategy to protect your trees and woodlands. This should take into account existing trees, and work with developers and landowners to enhance tree cover across your entire area.
- We recommend considering setting a tree target as a percentage of tree canopy cover rather than a set number of trees, as this is easier to measure and a more holistic approach.
- A tree strategy can streamline enquiries and give long term direction to council officers. It can set out practical implementation of policy and help deal with upcoming issues, such as the potential threat from pests and diseases (see Section 6).
- Strategies and targets should be based on evidence as much as possible, which is why it’s important to properly consult to gather views and build support, and scope out your area.
- The strategy should also measure how a tree planting scheme will contribute to your wider goals on climate change and the environment - what might this mean for your net zero target? Consider a way to measure this contribution and report back on it.
- Identify who is going to lead on this strategy within the council cabinet - is it the Councillor with responsibility for climate change or the environment? All council departments should understand and apply the strategy as it can reach many different parts of it.
- Urban forests are also important and face unique challenges. You may find **Solihull Borough Council’s** [Urban Forestry Strategy 2019 - 2029](#) and **Walsall Borough Council’s** [Urban Forestry Strategy](#) helpful.

#### **Examples of tree strategies**

- **Leicestershire County Council's** [tree management strategy](#) aims to tackle the loss of tree coverage and the effects of climate change via a substantial and sustained programme of tree planting. Their strategy acknowledges that trees contribute 'significantly to the character of the county'. They have had a strategy since 2008 and have five specialist technical staff and eight operational staff members who manage their tree assets, alongside one external tree work contractor.
- **Surrey County Council** have [just announced](#) that they are planning to plant 1.2 million trees by 2030, [with a new tree strategy](#). This will form part of the Council's Land Use Framework which it plans to set out over the next year in partnership with their borough and district authorities, Nature Partnership, AONB, Forestry Commission and so on. They also used the strategy to revise their guidelines for tree planting along Surrey's highways. Their strategy establishes a Tress Officer Task Group to develop an action plan to deliver their strategy which will meet every two months to review progress and report updates to the Council's Climate Change Board.
- **East Cambridgeshire District Council** has a [comprehensive tree planting strategy](#) which seeks to protect, enhance and guide opportunities to expand the treescape, ensuring sustainability for present and future generations of East Cambridgeshire.
- **Peterborough City Council's** [Trees and Woodland Strategy](#) aims to create 'a sustainable tree and woodland population for a growing city'. It acknowledges potential concerns regarding people living closely with trees in an urban environment, leading to potential overcrowding, blocking daylight etc, and aims to overcome these issues in its careful planning of tree planting.

### 3. **Protecting existing trees**

The burden of proof should always fall on the argument to fell the tree, not the other way around. The default position should be that all trees should be protected and maintained, unless you are presented with overwhelming circumstances to fell that tree. In that instance that tree should be replaced somewhere suitable nearby, or ideally additional trees should be planted to increase tree cover each time one is felled.

#### **Ancient woodland**

- The **Ancient Woodland Inventory** is held by Natural England and lists ancient woods over 2 hectares in size. Natural England and The Woodland Trust are updating this inventory to support councils and to ensure they make sound planning decisions in accordance with the NPPF. Devon is the initial county under review as part of this programme.
- The Ancient Tree Inventory also records ancient and veteran trees across the UK. There are over 158,000 such trees recorded across the UK, although 500,000 are estimated to exist.
- Natural England also manages the Wood-Pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat Inventory. There are often also Local Environmental Record Centres that not for profit organisations manage.
- Ancient woodland should be protected from loss or damage, particularly from development as recommended in the NPPF. This also extends to veteran trees or those that are valued wildlife habitats. Further guidance is available in the Woodland Trust's [Planners' Manual](#).

#### **Urban and street trees**

- Roads and pavements often cover cabling, pipe work and equipment which tree roots can damage. Considering this street infrastructure when siting a new urban tree will ensure its longevity.
- Similarly, it's worth considering if there are any ancient monuments or archaeological remains suspected in the area, as trees can impact them and so can their irrigation.

- A membrane or root barrier can help to restrict the impact of the tree on the surrounding infrastructure. However trees in unrestricted soil are more likely to grow healthily for longer.
- [Forest Research](#) has produced an Urban Tree Manual setting out advice on selecting and producing the right tree for the right place in urban areas. A few examples from the manual include:
  - Location: identify the location first as this influences all subsequent decisions in order for the tree to thrive, obtaining professional advice and the permission of the local tree officer for public land planting is essential. Consider the type of soil needed and its permeability.
  - Tree selection: consider its suitability, the ecosystem services it delivers (wildlife), potential disservices (high pollen or fruit), and the resilience of the tree (e.g. to frost or pests).
  - Ecosystem services: consider how the tree might benefit air quality, water quality, shading etc.
- **Fylde Borough Council** set out that two key themes for their strategy included their ‘urban forest’ and reversing trends in the non-replacement of street trees. They aimed to boost their urban forest by planting in more open grassed areas in the borough and along verges.
- The Trees and Design Action group offer [best practice advice](#) on trees in the townscape and other related guidance.

### Processes

- Safeguarding trees subject to Tree Protection Orders and identifying new trees for TPOs can be a good starting point. TPOs give some legal protection against a tree being cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed without consent from a local planning authority. It’s an offence to cause or permit another to harm a protected tree.
- Ensuring that developers, utility companies and planners are taking into account all trees impacted at the earliest design stage of their projects and proposals can help safeguard more trees.
- Starting from the position that trees should only be removed in exceptional circumstances and putting the burden of proof on removal rather than protecting the tree can also help to meet your goal.
- It’s important to enforce these rules and be prepared to take enforcement action where unauthorised tree work has taken place or when a breach of condition has occurred.
- The Tree Council is working on a national coordinated Tree Warden Scheme that aims to enable local people to play an active role in protecting their local trees. They are volunteers appointed by parish councils or other community organisations who gather information on local trees and encourage projects. Why not extend your outreach with a designated Tree Warden in each ward? (see Section 7)

### Maintenance

- The strategy should set out the criteria for conducting management activities as part of a sustainable approach to tree management. It should also set out circumstances in which pruning or felling will not be carried out, e.g. where satellite dishes are obstructed by trees or where trees drop leaves onto private gardens.
- Unmaintained trees have the potential to cause harm - so it’s important to keep track of your trees, and ensure they aren’t dead or dangerous. This is particularly the case with urban trees along roads, footpaths or railways that could obstruct users, or even cause danger by falling onto the road.
- Similarly a lack of maintenance can damage the tree or surrounding infrastructure.
- Pruning, where necessary, at appropriate times of the year can ensure a healthy tree, and should keep in mind key nesting seasons to reduce the impact on wildlife that depends on the tree.



- Similarly leaf clearance and litter picking should be considered. Some tree grilles help reduce the collection of e.g. littered cigarette ends.
- If there is a threat of pests or disease on our trees, a speedy response is crucial to allow existing trees to recover after containing or eradicating the threat (see section 6 for further details).
- The [National Tree Safety Group](#) has set out guidance on the management of trees, including a summary for landowners or domestic tree owners.
- [Gloucester City Council](#) has a policy that non-urgent tree works or hedge cutting operations will not be undertaken during bird nesting or breeding season (1 March to 31 August). Hedges will only be trimmed during that period if they are considered a danger to pedestrians or road users. This acknowledges that all wild birds, their young, eggs and active nests are protected by law.
- [Leicestershire County Council](#) aims to ‘maximise the financial value of timber harvested as part of its woodland management operations’ by ensuring it is part of an approved management plan. They estimate that they produce 3-5 cubic metres of wood waste each day from its tree surgery which are processed into wood chips and supplied as wood fuel.

#### **4. Funding your target**

##### **Grants/programmes to apply to**

- The Government’s [Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) is a £50 million scheme to accelerate woodland planting rates, providing you with the option to sell your captured carbon dioxide in the form of verified carbon credits to the government for a guaranteed price every 5 or 10 years up to 2055/56. This provides an additional long-term income from your woodland. It doesn’t contribute to the cost of planning, establishment or early maintenance but provides long-term certainty.
- There is also the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#) for landowners, land managers and public bodies through the Forestry Commission to support large-scale, multi-purpose productive woodland creation. Total funding is capped at £30,000 per project.
- The [Countryside Stewardship](#) woodland creation grant provides funding to farmers and land managers to supply, weed and protect young trees.
- The [Environment Bill](#) currently going through Parliament will also bring forward a new Environmental Land Management scheme which will incentivise tree planting, alongside biodiversity net gain requirements on developers through the planning system (for instance by planting more trees).
- The Government’s [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#) began in Autumn 2018, with the recent round ending in May 2020. It provides 50% of published standard costs for planting and establishment. The remaining cost must be met either from match funding or labour. The fund is competitively distributed according to the greatest environmental and social benefits to the area, and value for money assessments.
- The Woodland Trust offer a [variety of schemes](#) including:
  - Subsidised tree packs from 30-420 trees.
  - Support in designing the woodland and funding for up to 75% of the costs, where at least 500 trees are planted as woodland on at least half a hectare.
  - Funding for up to 85% of the costs, together with Defra, if you are planting over 500 trees in the Northern Forest.

- Support for up to 50% of eligible costs, via a Partnership Innovation Fund, for large scale woodland creation in the Northern Forest area delivered through innovative models and mechanisms.
- [Free trees](#) for schools and community groups, with current orders being taken for delivery in November 2020.
- Direct advice, if you have ambitions to plant woodlands at scale to address climate emergency declarations or to address the nature crisis.

### Setting local budgets

- Some councils have proposed to include tree planting and maintenance in their budgets, including potential one-off funding agreements to boost short-term tree planting rates.
- **Surrey County Council** have allocated a budget for their scheme in their Medium Term Financial Plan, and are partnering with the local Wildlife Trust to enable them to receive donations for trees.
- **Fylde Borough Council** has a 2016-2032 [Tree & Woodland Strategy](#) to increase its tree coverage with a 2018/19 tree planting budget which supported the planting of 140 trees.
- Setting up a tree sponsorship scheme could help you to raise additional funds to plant your trees, and encourage a strong relationship with the tree that would build on its value to a community group, individual (as a gift or in memorium) or business. (See the [National Forest](#) in the Midlands for an example). **Havering Council's** [tree strategy](#) just ended in 2019 and aimed to include private sponsorship as an alternative funding method.

## 5. Where should your trees go

### Greening the Green Belt

- Green Belts today cover 13% of England - 1.5 million hectares of land - but don't often provide great value as places to visit or habitats for wildlife. Could you plant more trees on your green belt?
- Only 13.6% of Green Belt land in England comprises broadleaf and mixed woodland — barely higher than the UK average.
- Some of this land may be owned by the council and so easier to reforest - why not start there? Or encourage those pieces owned by landowners or farmers to reforest or involve trees in the way they use the land, perhaps through [agroforestry, or establishing a local tree nursery \(see later\)](#).

### Developments

- How can developers work with you to enhance your tree cover? They should take into account and protect existing trees, particularly ancient woodlands. Where trees need replacing, the new sites should be nearby and identified in advance. The Woodland Trust has [useful advice](#) on this.
- **Wycombe Council's** canopy assessment found that trees and forest cover in development growth areas 'add value' and 'homes on wooded lots sell sooner than homes on unwooded lots'. This added to the potential benefits of retaining or enhancing tree cover in development. They recommended that the appropriate target level of tree canopy cover for new developments should be 25% (the current level of cover for the district, in line with national targets alongside biodiversity factors). The document also included suggestions of how to plant trees across a development with varying numbers of dwellings.
- **Surrey County Council** considers replaced trees (including those removed by developers) to be additional to their target to plant 1.2 million trees.

- **East Cambridgeshire District Council** plans to set up a reference library of good quality landscape schemes from previous planning applications to encourage and support developers to include more trees in their plans.

## 6. Where should they come from (and what type)

### Tree health

- Outbreaks of plant disease can devastate natural landscapes and native species, and can also endanger our economy and wellbeing. Examples of risks include Ash Dieback, Oak Processionary Moth and Sweet Chestnut Blight. Due to climate change, tree pests and diseases are becoming a greater threat.
- **Leicestershire County Council** [noted](#) that Dutch elm disease and other disorders reduced the number of individual trees in their county by 52% from 1980-1998.
- It's important to reduce the risk of pests and diseases, and strengthen our trees, woods and forests. A key part of this is planting more trees that are better connected and made up of diverse species, to give your woods and forests greater resilience.
- It's also important that your trees are locally sourced wherever possible, and where they are brought in from external nurseries, they should be from trusted sources.
- Only 12% of wood used in the UK is home-grown and sourced (2017, Forestry Commission), and we are estimated to import around 22 million tonnes of plants each year. These can act as hosts or vectors and are one of the primary ways in which new pests and diseases are introduced.
- There are currently approximately 1,000 pests and diseases in the UK Plant Health Risk Register, with around 5 new risks added each month. Approximately 30% of these pests and pathogens are capable of attacking trees.
- It's worth considering forming a Local Action Plan so that it's prepared in the instance of an outbreak. The Tree Council has created a [toolkit](#) to help develop these plans.

### Setting up a nursery to source your own trees

*This could ensure your trees are locally grown, safely sourced, and guarantee a pipeline of trees to plant.*

- **Location:** As a council-run initiative this should ideally be done on council-accessible/owned land. Either as a first choice for such land, or when looking at land owned by third parties, greenbelt land should be considered. Use of this space would help to keep the greenbelt green, improve formerly under-used areas in the greenbelt, and utilise the land that is otherwise held from long-term positive use with a transferable operation that can be moved (should developmental pressures on that area of greenbelt land prove too demanding).
- **Irrigation:** Make sure that the land either has access to a water supply or has space for the construction of an on-site reservoir suitable in size to the operation proposed. If a reservoir is chosen, this can be filled by rainfall during winter and then applied to trees during the summer months. Some large commercial operations have reservoir capacity up to 72,000 cubic litres.
- **Purpose:** Establish the purpose of the trees being grown – this will impact the level of Forestry Commission registration required.
- If the trees are being grown for non-forestry purposes, such as landscape planting for transport infrastructure, urban planting associated with industrial and urban developments, and production of Christmas trees, then full registration as a provider of Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) may not be required. Check with the Forestry Commission for clarity in the event of uncertainty.

- You do need to register (which is free) with the Forestry Commission as a supplier of FRM if you are growing trees for the following purposes: timber production; forests and woodlands for tourism, recreational, sporting, educational or amenity purposes; and the conservation and enhancement of the forest and woodland environment. Further information can be found via the Government [website](#).
- **UKISG.** To become a recognised provider of UK and Irish Sourced and Grown material, the seeds that you are using should be sourced from approved sources in the UK and/or Ireland. Seed can be sourced from the council's own land provided it meets the requirements noted above and is used specifically for non-forestry purposes. If your operation is going to rely on a mixture of sources of seed (UKISG seed for 'forestry' purposes and council-sourced seed for non-forestry purposes) then separate records need to be kept in order to be compliant with Forestry Commission regulations.
- **External sourcing.** If you do source trees or seed from outside of the UKISG parameters this must be kept in quarantine and physically separated from UKISG stock for a period of 12 months (one growing season). During this time they should be checked regularly for signs of infection and/or pest prevention. This is to prevent biosecurity threats from endangering the entire stock of the nursery.
- **Sanitary measures.** Boot cleaning measures must be provided for all staff and visitors to the nursery. This will help to prevent the spread of infection and is considered sound biosecurity control, although other measures can be introduced too such as wheel washing.
- **Peat.** In recognition of the role of peatland in combating the climate and nature crises, peat should be avoided, either as a growing medium or in seed and other treatments. UKISG Nurseries should have a peat avoidance policy or statement on their peat reduction strategy.
- **Further information.** If you do need further advice or information about establishing a tree nursery then you should contact the Woodland Trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/> or enquire with other municipal nurseries. The Arium, in Leeds, is the largest municipal nursery in the country and supplies more than 600,000 to 700,000 trees every year through its operations <https://www.theariumleeds.co.uk/>

### **Natural regeneration**

- Natural regeneration is the process by which woodlands are restocked by trees that develop from seeds that fall and germinate.
- Some natural regeneration is hampered by browsing animals (deer) who damage seedlings, or competition where other vegetation inhibits their growth. Selective cutting can help to leave gaps for new trees, and fencing can keep animals from accessing certain sites while seedlings grow to a suitable height.
- Using plastic tube tree guards can help to protect saplings from being eaten but they are often left behind as the tree grows. These plastic tubes can then break down into particles that are absorbed into the soil and environment. Biodegradable alternatives are being trialled, alongside alternative fencing measures. It's important to remember to collect the tubes and dispose of them responsibly where they are used.
- Natural regeneration is usually good for wildlife because the saplings are better adapted to local conditions, helping them to survive and also creating a natural composition of ages, species and so on.

### **Other points to be aware of**



- A native species is one that has made its way to the UK naturally, including ash, blackthorn, common beech, silver birch, crap apple, wych elm, English oak, Scots pine and yew. Non-native trees are those that were brought to the UK by humans such as apple, copper beech, field elm, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, European larch, pear, white poplar, London plane and sycamore.
- Trusted local arborists and nurseries can display a supply chain audit trail that ensures it's under a biosecurity regime, and you can help to support a local business.
- What is the pollen load of your tree? This is particularly important near schools, hospitals and care homes. Avoid planting trees with high allergenic potential near vulnerable sites. Diverse types and genders of trees can limit the impacts of pollen. Consider also favouring trees known for filtering air pollution (particulate matter etc).

## 7. **Outreach**

### **Tree Wardens/Champions**

- **Worcestershire County Council** is part of the [tree warden scheme](#) which is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. There are currently over 8,000 Tree Wardens across the UK and around 110 in Worcestershire.
- The Tree Council has established the network of local volunteer Tree Champions who speak for trees at a local level. Why not set up your own scheme to ensure local buy in? Some councils also have councillor tree champions, or you can work with schools to identify interested young people.
- Tree Champions can: drive practical science and research into our treescape, encourage and inspire people of all ages to value their trees, care for and protect trees, and connect organisations to deliver local action. They can also help to identify places where new trees may be required and assist with planting efforts, and act as advocates for trees in their communities.

### **Schools and skills**

- Trees can provide great learning opportunities for your local schools. As well as teaching the national curriculum in a novel way, Forest School helps children develop many skills that are hard to teach in the classroom. These include: learning to assess, appreciate and take risks, and making sensible, informed decisions about how to tackle the activities and experiences they encounter.
- You could encourage your schools to join a yearly wildlife survey, including a tree count or taking part in the RSPB's Big [Birdwatch](#) to engage them with your plans.
- Often schools also have areas where they could plant more trees, and so you could reach out to them about the benefits of planting trees on their sites.
- Your tree planting programme could also provide opportunities for a scheme on skills and apprenticeships in tree surgery or forestry to help local students to get more involved in tree planting or learn about trees and nature.

### **Other opportunities**

- [Hillingdon Council](#) gave away 5,000 saplings to residents, local businesses, communities, and schools through a voucher in the local paper. They set up collection points around the borough, including at the local garden centre and libraries. This built on their successful tree planting programme which saw more than 2,500 trees planted over the last five years.
- **Rushcliffe Borough Council** distributed over [5,000 trees](#) in November/December as part of their strategy to provide sustainable environments across communities in the borough. Over 2,500

households applied successfully for up to two free Crab Apple or Rowan Trees (native to the borough) and parishes could apply for up to 10 trees.

- **Northamptonshire County Council** had a successful [tree planting scheme](#) in partnership with the Woodland Trust over the last five years which has delivered over 150,000 trees and hedging plants each year. Schools, community and youth groups and not-for-profit organisations could apply for a mixture of trees of different sizes. The trees had to be planted on publicly accessible sites.
- **South Ribble Borough Council's** [Our Big Tree Plant](#) aims to plant over 110,000 trees in South Ribble, one for every resident, over four years. This will support their carbon neutral plans and improve local air quality. They kick-started the project with a tree giveaway event, giving away over 3,000 trees and hedging whips to residents to plant in their gardens. They update their website with a tally of trees planted thus far - 35,000 trees as of February.
- **Surrey County Council's** approach aims to include tree planting events, fundraising, publicity and building relationships with partners and experts to assist in the delivery of their goal.
  - This included donating 600 trees to families to take home to plant, and a yearly event to celebrate and report back on progress. They also host tree planting events during 'Tree Week', where this year they planted trees along the M5.
  - Surrey is developing a Tree Friendly Business initiative to get the business sector to support tree planting in the county with financial contributions. Donating businesses will be recognised with a certificate providing reputational benefits and supporting their social responsibility.
  - One of their key lessons learnt is that "early engagement with partners and stakeholders has been essential in ensuring support for the strategy and programme"
- Acknowledging that trees and nature can play a role in improving physical and mental health, the [NHS Forest](#) programme aims to increase access to green space on or near the NHS land. Consider how you might improve tree cover near your local hospitals and GPs, to encourage social prescribing and **engage your NHS Trusts in your target**. Time in nature has been shown to have benefits for those suffering from dementia, asthma, cardio-health and more.

## 8. Useful Organisations

- [Woodland Trust](#)
- [Tree Council](#)
- [Forestry Commission](#)
- [Natural England](#)



**CONSERVATIVE  
ENVIRONMENT  
NETWORK**