

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Tom Davies, Cabinet Member for Resources	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 20 th January 2022	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3329
TITLE:	Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan - Adoption	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Please list all the appendices here, clearly indicating any which are exempt and the reasons for exemption Appendix A The Tree & Woodland Delivery Plan Appendix B Appendix to the Tree & Woodland Delivery Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and set a target of carbon neutrality by 2030. Tree and woodland planting is an important tool in addressing these emergencies.
- 1.2 On the 10th October 2019 B&NES Council agreed a motion to increase tree cover and develop a clear strategy for planting trees in B&NES with a target of planting 100,000 trees within the district with partners and communities, by May 2023. The tree and woodland delivery plan (Appendix A & B) detail this strategy and is intended to be a "live" document to be updated annually with progress.
- 1.3 The majority of the B&NES district sits within the Forest of Avon (one of England's Community Forests which allocates grant funding), and our local B&NES 'strategic tree planting objectives' are encapsulated within the Forest of Avon Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for resources is asked to;

- 2.1 Agree the content of the Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan
- 2.2 Note that the plan is intended to be a live document with regular updates

2.3 Note progress towards the target of 100,000 trees to be planted in B&NES during the current administration period to May 2023

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The Council commissioned Ethos Environmental Planning consultancy in Spring of 2021 to develop the Council's Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan, consulting with relevant partners and referencing other tree planting intentions within the district and the West of England region. After a period of consultation and revision the final tree and woodland delivery plan is now ready to be approved.

3.2 Existing woodland canopy cover in B&NES (woodland over 0.5Ha) is 2,892ha (equivalent to a percentage cover of 8.25%). However, overall tree and woodland canopy cover for all trees and woodlands, urban and rural, is a much higher figure of 5,937ha (16.54%). This highlights the added contribution of urban trees in parks, open spaces, and streets as well as individual and small groups of trees in the rural landscape.

3.3 B&NES Council's ambition is to plant 100,000 trees during the term of the current administration by May 2023, and to contribute to the West of England Nature Partnership's (WENP) Nature Recovery Network ambition of doubling semi natural tree and woodland cover by 2060.

3.4 The delivery plan covers a period of 5 years and therefore should be reviewed and updated eight times over the 40-year period to 2060. It is intended to be a 'live' document, to be monitored annually, setting out a detailed action plan each year.

3.5 The Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan aims to enable those with an interest in planting trees in B&NES to get involved and empower them to plant the right trees, in the right places, and for the right reason.

3.6 A presentation on the Tree & Woodland Delivery Plan was given to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel on 22nd November 2021. This outlined the draft plan, and the progress towards the Council's target of planting 100K trees. (3.1 below).

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&MId=5806&Ver=4>

3.7 The underpinning principle for the Tree and Woodland Delivery plan is the right tree, in the right place.

Ensuring the right trees are planted in the right places will:

- I. Ensure where possible that trees are not planted on land where soils already store carbon efficiently and effectively.
- II. Avoid damage or loss of ecological habitats and species and heritage features.
- III. Avoid loss of the most productive agricultural land and soils.
- IV. Contribute to the tree & woodland aspirations of the WENP Nature Recovery Network and Forest of Avon Plan.

- V. Ensure that the aspiration to double canopy cover by 2060 in the West of England uses this principle to ensure the most appropriate distribution of tree canopy increase across the whole West of England area.

3.8 The plan consists of the following parts: •

- I. Main report and action plan. The action plan is detailed from p15 in Appendix A of this report.
- II. Communication and engagement strategy
- III. A series of supporting appendices, which form the evidence base for the action plan.

3.9 Monitoring of the action plan (and therefore achievement of the objectives), is essential to the successful delivery of the plan. The following broad areas will be monitored:

- I. Tree and woodland canopy cover and its corresponding carbon value, on a 3 yearly basis to accord with the updating of the APGB canopy cover mapping.
- II. Numbers of individual trees and hectareage of woodland/tree groups planted annually in B&NES using council data, other parties' data (with permission), and through data inputted into the B&NES Virtual Forest Map (set out within the Action Plan) on an annual basis.
- III. Nature-based solutions achieved through planting to include carbon capture (through i-Tree Canopy and i-Tree Eco).
- IV. B&NES contribution to the FoA Plan targets.
- V. BANES expenditure to deliver the action plan.

3.10 Tree planting progress to date (as of 2nd August 2022). This figure includes internally led projects on council owned/managed land, schemes delivered by external organisations that they have told us about, and Council tree giveaways. This will not be the total number of trees planted in B&NES, as there will be unknown tree planting activity by residents and landowners.

Table 1. Overview of tree planting progress since the 100,000-tree planting ambition statement release in October 2019 (updated August 2022).

Planting Season	2019 – 2020	2020 -2021	2021 – 2022	TOTAL
<i>Internal Planting</i>	3895	6666	5180	15741
<i>External Planting*</i>	4370	10067	29743	44180
<i>Tree Giveaways</i>	N/A	500	3537	4037
TOTAL	8265	17233	38460	63958

* NB we are reliant on third party organisations giving us their data to report accurately.

3.11 The forecast for the 22/23 tree planting season is a further 40K trees, a combination of Council, and private planting, taking us over the total of 100K trees. We will be launching our One Tree Per Child project (with an estimated 2K trees to be planted in schools) and submitting grant funding applications to the next round of the Forest of Avon Trees for Climate fund.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the health & safety legislation to manage trees planted on its own land to reduce the danger posed by falling branches and trees.
- 4.2 The Council/local planning authority has a duty to ensure that adequate provision is made for the preservation or planting of trees under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended Section 197 - this allows it to make Tree Preservation Orders as necessary.

When granting planning permission authorities have a duty to ensure, whenever appropriate, that planning conditions are used to provide for tree preservation and planting in connection with the granting of planning permissions

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The Council has invested in a Tree & Woodland Manager, and a Tree Planting Project Officer to take forward the delivery of the plan.
- 5.2 An additional £75K of capital money was allocated in 21/22 from the community infrastructure levy (CIL), and a further £75K of capital has since been awarded for 22/23 to take forward tree planting schemes.
- 5.3 130k was awarded in 2021/2022 via the Forest of Avon Trust's Trees for Climate Grant (DEFRA backed). Grant funding for Council planting projects in 2022/2023 is anticipated to match 2021/2022, with the ambition to source further funding for the One Tree Per Child initiative launching within BA&NES schools. Partnership working with the community, landowners and volunteers is essential to delivering the plan in both urban and rural areas, as the Council does not have sufficient resources, in particular land to deliver these targets on its own.
- 5.4 The 2022/2023 planting season will prioritise working with parishes, community groups, and the National Farmers Union to increase planting numbers. In partnership with these organisations and groups, the Council will facilitate the distribution of heavily subsidised tree bundles for copse, woodland, and hedgerow planting on privately owned land. The Council will liaise with the above groups throughout the planting off-season ready for implementation at the commence of the 2022/2023 season.
- 5.5 The Council's delivery plan actions will be consistent the Forest of Avon Plan: A Tree Strategy for the West of England and has identified the Forest of Avon Trust (FoA) as its key partner. We will work with the FoA to continue to identify how planting and future management can best be resourced in partnership with communities, volunteers, and landowners.
- 5.6 The Council will apply for grants from the Forest of Avon and the Woodland Trust (amongst others) to implement tree planting schemes and will signpost private landowners to grants available for tree planting.

5.7 Of the trees planted, a very small proportion will inevitably die. Where practical the Council will facilitate the replanting of these trees within resource available.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out on the plan, but impact assessments will be carried out at specific locations (eg. For the planting of street trees) as necessary.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 Planting trees in the right location makes a positive contribution to climate change, sequestering carbon, alleviating flood risk, providing shade, reducing energy use by shading buildings, reducing air pollution. Different species provide differing degrees of benefit, and careful selection of species is required for the function they need to serve in varying locations.

8.2 The current tree canopy cover in B&NES is estimated to sequester 52,008 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year, and store 456,258 tonnes of carbon.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None. The production of a delivery plan is essential to provide the framework for tree planting.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Stakeholder consultation was undertaken by Ethos in June 2021 to develop the evidence base and inform the action plan. This is detailed in the document in Appendix A

10.2 The Council's Climate & Emergency & Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the Tree & Woodland Delivery Plan at their meeting on the 22nd November 2021. (Link in background papers)

Contact person	Sally Crudge 01225 396820
Background papers	<i>B&NES Climate Emergency & Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny panel 22 November 2021. Tree & Woodland Delivery Plan. Minutes & webcast</i> https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&MId=5806&Ver=4 <i>Forest of Avon Plan</i> https://forestofavontrust.org/forest-of-avon-plan/ <i>West of England Nature Partnership, nature recovery network information</i> https://www.wenp.org.uk/nature-recovery-network/
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