

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

# Tree and Hedgerow Strategy

2022 – 2027



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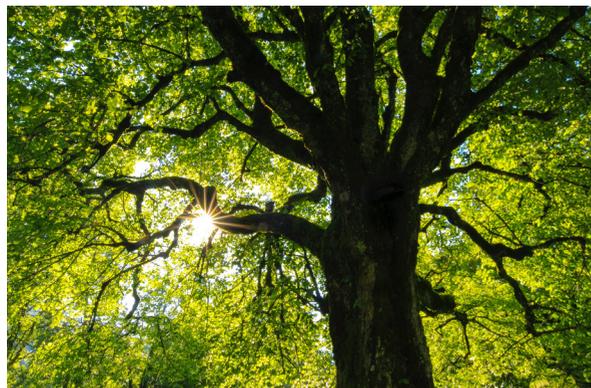
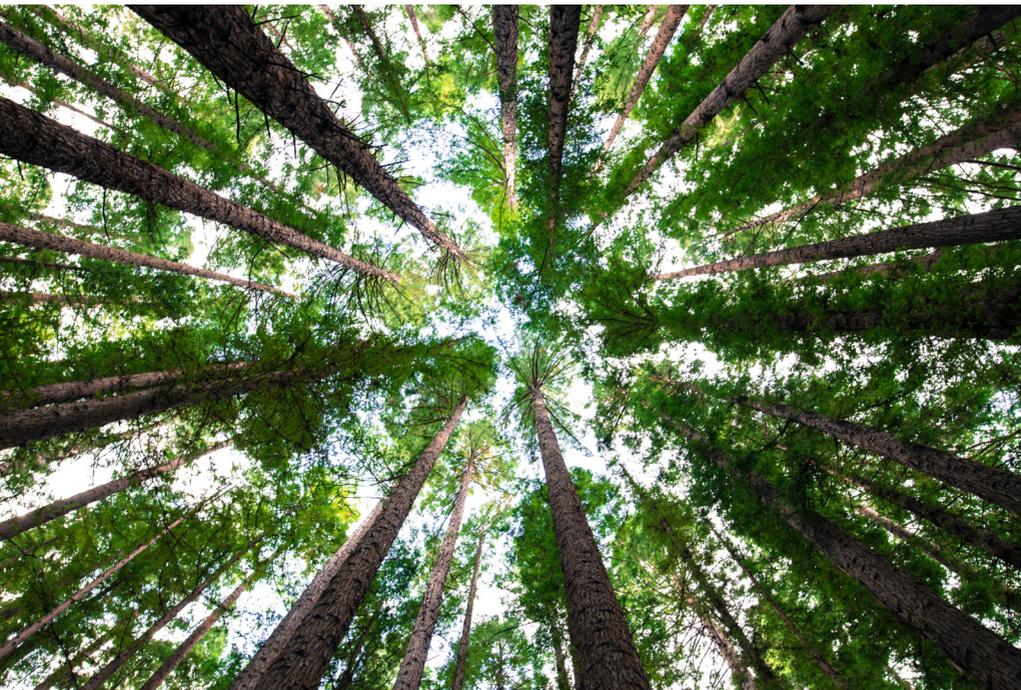
Through our vision, strategic aims and objectives, this Tree Strategy sets out how we intend to manage, plant and promote trees and hedgerows across the sub-region of East Lindsey, Boston and South Holland.

It ensures a consistent and considered approach to tree management, increasing tree and hedgerow cover and involving communities and will guide our investment priorities, service and policy development for the next five years.

This is a plan to deliver better public spaces and work with our local communities and wider stakeholders to influence and encourage positive change.



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## Why do we need a Tree Strategy?

Trees are a vital part of the world around us. From street trees in urban centres to agricultural shelter belts and hedgerows to larger woodlands, they help to make our towns, villages and surrounding countryside distinctive and have an important role to play in bringing a sense of place to our local communities.

More than that, trees and hedgerows are part of the solution to some of the key challenges we currently face - from climate change to our mental and physical health and wellbeing. They have the potential to restore both environmental and social balance in our communities while also contributing to our economic success. From storm-water management to urban cooling, air quality management, carbon capture and visual amenity, they can often provide a range of benefits in a more cost-effective way than traditional forms of infrastructure.

Our changing environment continues to place immense pressure on trees and hedgerows and there is a need to build resilience against growing threats such as climate change, increases in pests and diseases and urbanisation. This resilience must be applied to the management of our own public resource while we also influence and encourage the private sector where a much wider resource lies.

## The Vision

Our communities are richer in greener spaces to live, visit and invest through the sustainable presence of trees and hedgerows which help people and wildlife adapt to the future challenges of our changing environment.



## Our Objectives

# Protect

Looking after existing trees and hedgerows is vital because they are already providing important benefits for people and biodiversity whereas newly planted trees will take many years to deliver the same benefits.

Sustainable management of our existing resources will help to prolong their lives and maximise the benefits they provide. We will commit to ensure our management procedures and policies demonstrate best practice and are appropriately resourced.

While this strategy seeks to protect, there are occasions where tree and hedgerow management is required for example to protect the health and safety of the public, to address pest and disease issues or as an important part of countryside management. In all cases our decisions will be transparent and justified, and take a balanced and proportionate approach to protecting tree and hedgerow benefits.

## Our Aims:

- ❖ Take an innovative and consistent approach to ensuring important trees and landscapes are looked after, ensuring there are clear, published policies in place to protect the existing resource and to promote best practice guidance around development sites
- ❖ Ensure transparency and accountability in our decision-making process
- ❖ Ensure that our activities, and those of our contractors, minimise negative environmental impacts and consider this as part of the procurement process
- ❖ For each tree removed on Council owned land we will ensure there is an overall net gain in the number of trees replanted
- ❖ Promote robust biosecurity measures to minimise the spread of pests and diseases
- ❖ Quantify the existing resource, its distribution and valuation across the sub-region



# Plant

Increasing tree and hedgerow cover is important for the wellbeing of both people and wildlife and will contribute towards the expansion of ecological networks in line with UK Government ambition.

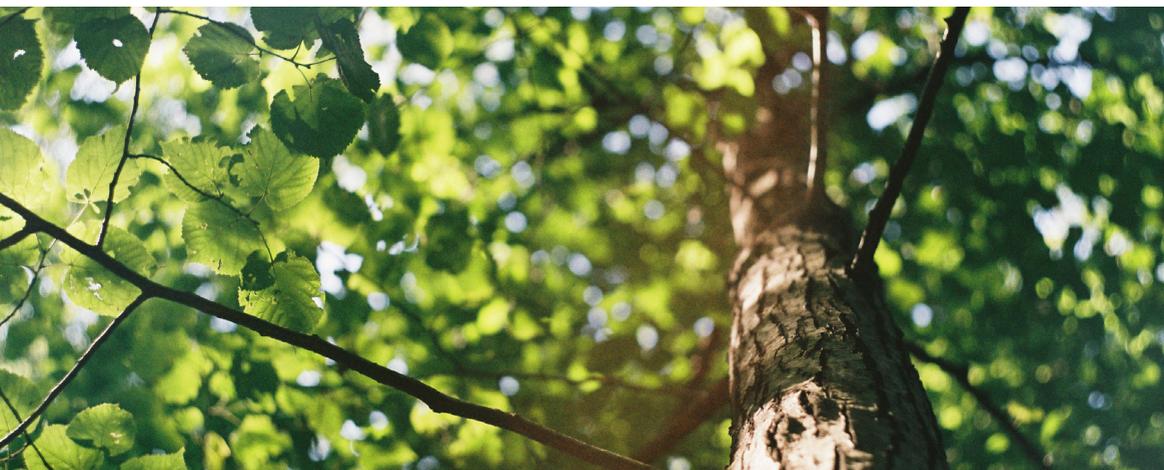
New planting needs to be planned carefully to ensure both location and species choice are appropriate for the setting and in line with the existing landscape character of the area. This must be supported with a clear plan for the financial resourcing of future maintenance requirements. New planting must also be sustainability sourced to minimise the spread of pests and diseases and be underpinned by a commitment to the Right Tree in the Right Place.

The intended objectives of new planting schemes should be clearly outlined, and the long term management of new sites fully considered to ensure those benefits are realised.

## Our Aims:

- ❖ Consider all new planting sites in terms of suitability and make decisions on tree species in the context of both local biodiversity and resilience to climate change
- ❖ Assess the credentials of nurseries and suppliers to ensure they have strong biosecurity policies and procedures in place
- ❖ Ensure long-term management plans are considered at the outset of new planting schemes
- ❖ Ensure that Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and other strategic documents contain strong policies to enhance natural capital and seek commitments to increase canopy cover on new developments as part of well-planned and adequately resourced landscaping schemes.





# Participate

Engaging local communities with Council tree services will build strong foundations to deliver greater impact. We must develop a culture of openness and transparency around our operations which puts our residents first and ensures our services meet or exceed expectations.

The amount of land in Council control across the sub-region is relatively small and so encouraging best practice approaches to management and new planting in the private sector will require close partnership working with local people and wider stakeholders to deliver the vision.

Community planting schemes are often more focused on initiatives such as edible hedgerows or community orchards providing more tangible local benefits beyond biodiversity or carbon sequestration and local people should be involved in the decision-making process.

## Our Aims:

- ❖ Establish a web portal for open public access to documents relating to tree and hedgerow applications, and publish detailed information about planned tree works on our website
- ❖ Develop opportunities for local residents to get involved with both the management and planting of trees and hedgerows
- ❖ Support engagement with businesses, town and parish councils, community groups and local schools as well as neighbouring councils and conservation bodies, working together to encourage tree and hedgerow management and enhancement

# How will we achieve the Vision?

- ❖ Develop Action Plans to embed and deliver our strategic objectives across the Partnership.
- ❖ Undertake a comprehensive review of our policies and procedures to identify areas to prioritise.
- ❖ Use existing data to identify opportunities for tree and hedgerow planting across the sub-region and establish an informed tree planting target based on the opportunities identified
- ❖ Quantify the current tree canopy to enable an informed commitment to increasing tree canopy on Council-owned land
- ❖ Establish a Tree Forum alongside a network of Tree Wardens to bring together stakeholders to support delivery of the strategy
- ❖ Ensure our financial and resource planning supports our strategic direction to Protect, Plant and Participate across the Partnership

Trees and hedgerows are just one part of a much bigger picture in terms of how we interact with the landscape around us and the benefits it derives and so this document will also become part of a much wider Natural Environment Strategy for the sub-region.





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