

# TREE PLANTING STRATEGY

2019 - 2023



NORTH  
NORFOLK  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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## 1. Introduction

In April 2019 North Norfolk District Council recognised the devastating impact of global warming and in doing so became the first district council in Norfolk to declare a climate emergency.

Following on from this declaration the Council announced its ambition to plant 110,000 trees – one for every resident of North Norfolk – in a four year period.

The scheme was launched at the annual environmental sustainability event ‘Greenbuild’ in September 2019 with an appeal to get members of the public and community groups involved with the tree planting initiative.

### 1.1 Purpose

The aim of this document is to outline how the planting of 110,000 trees will be delivered across the District in order to meet the Council’s ambitious target of 2023.



## 2. Objective – Why trees?

### 2.1 Biodiversity

The 2019 ‘State of Nature report’ highlighted the position in the UK regarding habitat loss and species decline and stated that, since the 1970s 41% of all UK species studied have decreased in number and that 26% of the UK’s mammals are at a very real risk of becoming extinct<sup>1</sup>.

The State of Nature report also emphasised the role that protecting and enhancing biodiversity has to play by providing a huge range of benefits to society including, clean air and water, healthy soils for food production, and the health and well-being impacts that result from connection with nature<sup>2</sup>. North Norfolk District Council therefore recognises the role that it has to play in enhancing biodiversity and considers tree planting as a great way to enable positive change within the District and beyond.

When the right types of trees are planted in the right place they can create rich, exciting and diverse habitats capable of supporting a wide range of native mammals, birds and invertebrate life. An oak tree alone, for example, can support up to 2,300 species – 326 of which are entirely dependent on oak for their survival<sup>3</sup>. This strategy sets out the ways in which planting 110,000 trees will increase woodland, hedgerow and scrub across North Norfolk thus creating new habitats and enhancing others in order to give nature a home.

### 2.2 Carbon sequestration

In addition to biodiversity benefits that tree planting can yield, trees are also very good at capturing and storing carbon and therefore play a role in mitigating the effects of climate change. Woodland and forest areas are capable of absorbing atmospheric carbon and locking it up for centuries. They do this through the photosynthesis process. The whole woodland ecosystem plays a huge role in storing carbon, including the living wood, roots, leaves, deadwood, surrounding soils and its associated vegetation<sup>4</sup>.

### 2.3 Additional ecosystems services

As previously mentioned trees also have a key role to play in improving soil quality and protection from flooding – when planted in the right location

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<sup>1</sup> [www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature](http://www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature)

<sup>2</sup> [www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature](http://www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature)

<sup>3</sup> [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

<sup>4</sup> [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

trees provide a sustainable and low maintenance solution to lessening the risk of localised flooding<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.4 Community engagement, health and wellbeing

The State of Nature report, among many things, was also unequivocal in emphasising how humans have lost their connection to nature. We are disconnected from the world around us and this has been to the detriment of both humankind and the flora and fauna that exist in our landscape alike. This balance needs to be restored by providing opportunities for people to connect with nature once more.

Across multiple studies, researchers have found a link between experiencing and accessing green spaces, forests, parks and gardens, and a reduced risk of mental health issues, improved mood, and increased life satisfaction. Other benefits found also include reduced stress, increased physical activity, and better physical health<sup>6</sup>. Tree planting is therefore one simple and accessible way to connect people and communities back with nature as it provides meaningful time to come together outside. Whether a single tree is planted, a hedgerow, or an entire woodland, tree planting provides the occasion for communities to share a unique experience and collectively contribute to making their local areas healthier, happier places to live. Tree planting can also provide great opportunities for all generations to learn about biodiversity and climate change, share knowledge and inspire one another to go out and make a difference.

## 2.5 Aims

Evidently the range of benefits brought about by tree planting are numerous and far-reaching. For the purpose of this strategy it is therefore considered that the 110,000 trees project, will meet the following three broad aims as already outlined in 2.1 to 2.4.

- **Increasing/ enhancing biodiversity** (*The variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi*<sup>7</sup>)
- **Carbon capture - sequestration** (*The process by which atmospheric carbon dioxide is taken up by trees, grasses, and other plants through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in biomass (trunks, branches, foliage, and roots) and soils*<sup>8</sup>.)

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<sup>5</sup> The Woodland Trust; ' *Stemming the Flow, The role of trees and woodland in flood protection*' 2014

<sup>6</sup> [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/thriving-with-nature/guide](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/thriving-with-nature/guide)

<sup>7</sup> [www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/biodiversity/](http://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/biodiversity/)

<sup>8</sup> [www.fs.fed.us/ecosystemservices/carbon](http://www.fs.fed.us/ecosystemservices/carbon)

- **Community engagement** *(Connecting people to their local environment and informing people of the environmental /climate challenges and the actions that can help to address them)*

These aims are inextricably linked and therefore the majority of tree planting schemes delivered as part of the overall 110,000 trees project will provide a combination of outcomes and benefits.

## 2.6 Monitoring

Each tree planting scheme that North Norfolk District Council delivers as part of the overall 110,000 tree target should meet one, if not more, of the above aims and should state clearly the aims and anticipated outcomes within each project pro forma. This will help keep the scheme focussed and assist in evaluating its effectiveness. This will also help to focus resources on the most beneficial schemes and help bring in external resources if required.



### 3. What trees will be planted as part of the scheme?

When considering ‘what’ trees to be planted the above aims will be central and the primary focus will therefore be on the delivery of native tree species, particularly those which thrive in local environmental conditions (for example the coast can sometimes present a challenging environment for newly planted trees to establish). Native tree species can generally be considered as those which have colonised the UK naturally since the last ice age. Plants from local stock will be particularly sought after and used wherever feasible.

The benefits of planting native trees species mixes are numerous; as native trees and shrubs have a long history of co-evolution with other native species such as fungi, insects, birds and mammals, they tend to be the richest and most diverse for wildlife and therefore promote the greatest biodiversity<sup>9</sup>. An additional benefit of planting native tree species mixes is that they are also well adapted to the geology, soils, topography, day length and climatic environment of the UK and so are more likely to successfully establish into mature trees.

As all trees are able to sequester carbon, North Norfolk District Council will choose to plant tree species which promote biodiversity and therefore support the widest range of plant, animal, bacteria and fungi species.

#### 3.1 Direct Planting

The main route for achieving the 110,000 tree target will be through direct planting, as opposed to natural regeneration or rewilding, and, as previously stated, these trees will be primarily native species, grown and sourced locally where practicable, as well as tree species which thrive in coastal areas.

#### 3.2 Hedgerows

The establishment and enhancement of new and existing hedgerows within the District will be encouraged and promoted by the Council and under this Strategy, such planting will be included in the overall 110,000 target.

Hedgerows are an important part of our landscape heritage, often delineating historic field boundaries. In addition to this hedgerows provide incredibly valuable habitat for a range of invertebrates, mammals and birds in particular. It is estimated that hedges may support up to 80 per cent of woodland birds in the UK, as well as 50 per cent of our mammals and 30 per cent of our butterflies. In areas with few woods, many species of birds

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<sup>9</sup> [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

depend on hedgerows for their survival and at least 30 species of birds in the UK nest in hedgerows<sup>10</sup>.

Beyond these benefits hedgerows have a role to play in carbon sequestration, for example, a 100 metre length of mature hedgerow can sequester approximately 120 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> a year<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, hedgerows are also valued for the major role they have to play in preventing soil loss and for their potential to regulate water supply and to reduce flooding<sup>12</sup>. As a result it is clear that planting new hedgerows will contribute towards an increase in biodiversity and habitat provision across the District, as well as carbon sequestration and therefore meets the aims laid out within section two of this strategy.

### **3.3 Natural Regeneration and Rewilding**

The process of woodland creation through 'natural regeneration' or 'rewilding' is encouraged as an effective means of creating suitable tree cover and the Council will, where appropriate and practicable, support such schemes and will include an assessment of the trees established via this means in the overall 110,000 target.

Natural regeneration or 'rewilding', in the context of trees, refers to the renewal by natural seeding (self-sown seed), sprouting or suckering. It is widely held that naturally regenerated trees show strong adaptation to local environmental conditions, often establishing as well as, if not better than, direct planted trees. New generations of naturally regenerated trees are the descendants of those already thriving in the local area, therefore making regenerated, or rewilded woodlands more resilient to the threats posed by localised climate change, pests and diseases. Natural regeneration has the potential to create incredibly biodiverse habitat capable of sustaining a wide range of wildlife species<sup>13</sup>.

### **3.4 Innovative planting practices**

Innovative planting schemes and projects, such as Miyawaki forests, edible hedgerows and community orchards, will be encouraged throughout the 110,000 tree project.

Edible hedgerows and community orchards are planting schemes which favour 'food' bearing tree species such as blackthorn, hazel, walnut, pear, cherry, plum and apple. These planting schemes are community focused and, beyond simply encouraging biodiversity and carbon sequestration,

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<sup>10</sup> [www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/conservation-and-sustainability](http://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/conservation-and-sustainability)

<sup>11</sup> [www.agroforestry.ac.uk](http://www.agroforestry.ac.uk)

<sup>12</sup> [www.hedgelink.org.uk/hedgerows/importance-of-hedgerows](http://www.hedgelink.org.uk/hedgerows/importance-of-hedgerows)

<sup>13</sup> [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/natural-regeneration](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/natural-regeneration)



give something else, perhaps more tangible, back to local communities in the way of fruit and nut production.

Miyawaki forests involve the planting of trees to deliver fully formed, mini-woodlands in urban and sub-urban areas by using a range of native tree species that, when planted very densely and across a small area, create diverse, complex and multi-layered forest communities. The benefits of Miyawaki forest planting can be summarised below:

- Trees in a Miyawaki forest grow up to ten times faster than trees planted in conventional woodland planting schemes at around one metre per year.
- Miyawaki forests sequester more carbon than conventional woodland schemes because they grow more quickly and are more densely planted.
- Native trees, such as those planted in a Miyawaki forests are more resilient to environmental changes<sup>14</sup>

The Council are looking to establish a series of Miyawaki forests on publically accessible sites within North Norfolk.

### **3.5 Expertise and Advice**

We are fortunate to have a number of specialists working within North Norfolk District Council including ecologists and arboriculturalists who are able to comment on planting schemes and provide advice on best planting or regeneration practices, tree species selection and planting densities. Where necessary and appropriate, officers from within the Council may also liaise with external organisations such as Norfolk County Council, the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency, DEFRA, or Natural England.

### **3.6 Conclusions and Implementation**

This strategy covers a range of different tree establishment methods in order to meet the 110,000 target. Where direct planting occurs, either within hedgerows, woodlands or in standalone locations, tree species will be carefully considered and in most circumstances an approach which delivers a mix of native tree species will be favoured. In general, whether trees are directly planted or enabled to establish through regeneration or rewilding, the question of, '*what, or which, tree*' will be answered by a focus on enhancing biodiversity and applying the 'right trees for the right location' approach.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.creatingtomorrowforests.co.uk](http://www.creatingtomorrowforests.co.uk)

## 4. When will North Norfolk District Council plant 110,000 trees?

North Norfolk District Council has included in its Corporate Plan, the target to plant 110,000 trees by 2023 and has identified the financial and staffing resources to help achieve this.

The 110,000 target is highly ambitious and has therefore been broken down into a range of targets, each of which will represent significant progress in achieving the overall aims of the 110,000 tree project, as outlined within section two of this strategy.

### 4.1 Numerical Targets

Tree Figure	Target date
20,000	March 2021
60,000	March 2022
80,000	December 2022
110,000	December 2023*

### 4.2 Key Outcomes

Whilst the number of trees planted is a key indicator of progress there are also some other important outcomes which the Council should seek to achieve and celebrate. These outcomes focus on the overall aims laid out within section two of this strategy.

Target	Primary Aims
5 hectares new native broad-leafed woodland	Biodiversity, Carbon Sequestration
10 kilometres new native broad-leafed hedgerows	Biodiversity, Community Engagement and Carbon Sequestration
All 122 parishes in NNDC offered trees	Biodiversity, Community Engagement

All schools in North Norfolk District Council offered trees	Biodiversity, Community Engagement
10,000 engagements with the 110,000 project via social media and web content	Community Engagement
50 tons of carbon sequestered by project completion in 2030	Carbon Sequestration, Biodiversity

### 4.3 Conclusion and Implementation

While the aim is to ensure the 110,000 tree total is achieved by December 2023, it is anticipated that some further established and agreed upon projects may be completed after 2023 and therefore may be finalised in 2024.

### Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the project will be monitored and reported upon, via the Council’s established reporting mechanisms, and its effectiveness will be evaluated towards the end of the period, following which a decision will be made about the continuation of the initiative and the review of this strategy.



## 5. Where will we plant 110,000 trees?

A range of different options and approaches will continue to be explored about 'where' planting and natural regeneration across the district will take place. These considerations need to be opportunistic, in terms of the numbers of trees that can be established, but must also account for the overall aims set out within section two of this strategy.

This section of the strategy will outline the main types of sites where we plan to plant trees, which overall aims these meet, and the rationale behind selecting them.

### 5.1 Public Land

Planting or natural regeneration on public land will primarily focus on the Council's own land and that owned by town and parish councils.

Whilst these sites are often constrained in size, and therefore ability to deliver large woodland areas or extensive hedgerows, they are generally accessible and provide good opportunities for community planting schemes as well as innovative projects such as the Miyawaki Forests outlined in 3.4 of this strategy.

Community orchards will be considered on public land. Where possible linear woodlands, hedgerows and native tree species will be encouraged to improve biodiversity.

All 122 parish and town councils within North Norfolk District will be offered the opportunity to plant trees on their own land.

### 5.2 Third Party, private, or 'other' land

All residents, businesses, charities, organisations and community groups operating within the North Norfolk District Council area will have the opportunity to plant trees on their own land and in doing so, it is believed, the climate and environmental benefits brought about by tree planting will be greater understood and disseminated.

Tree giveaway events will be held across the district in which trees may be collected for planting. These events will be held throughout the tree planting season and will be promoted through the Council's social media outlets and website.

Alternatively residents, businesses, charities, organisations and community groups who wish to organise tree planting events on their own land will be provided with trees, and any expertise, as required. This may be arranged directly by completing a tree planting request form on the [Climate Change and Environment webpage](#).

We understand that not everyone may have access to appropriate land, or the space, for trees to grow. In these instances we will carry out public

events, which anyone may attend, so that they can have the opportunity to plant trees.

This strategy recognises that planting single trees, enabling natural regeneration, or establishing hedgerow or woodlands on third party, private, or 'other' land may not necessarily always bring the wider benefits of community planting and public access. However, in these scenarios, the benefits of trees planting outweigh any disadvantages as tree provision remains valuable due to the vital eco-system services that they provide in carbon sequestration, flood alleviation, soil improvement and biodiversity enhancement. These benefits are hugely impactful, meet the aims of this strategy as outlined in section two of this report, and will be felt by all of those living and working in the North Norfolk District and beyond.

### **5.3 Conclusion and Implementation**

This section of the strategy has outlined where the 110,000 trees will be planted. While there is a primary focus on planting on publically accessible land, be that publically or privately owned, all tree planting or regeneration schemes within the North Norfolk District Council area will be considered *provided* that they meet the primary objectives laid out within section two of this strategy which are, carbon sequestration or capture, biodiversity enhancement or improvement, and community engagement.



## 6. Legal Agreements and Enforcement

Where tree planting projects occurs on land that is owned by a third party landowner there will be a requirement for them to enter into an agreement with the Council. This is to ensure that the trees planted are correctly maintained in order for them to mature and fully realise the aims outlined within section two of this strategy.

As tree planting projects across North Norfolk will vary greatly in scale there are three differing agreements which landowners can enter into. These options reflect the variation in project type, each offering a changing degree of enforceability.

All agreements outlined below, in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of the strategy, stipulate the following basic requirements from landowners on whose land trees are planted. These are as follows;

- to assume responsibility and liability for ongoing management and maintenance of the trees planted
- to replace on a like-for-like basis any trees which as a result of negligence, lack of maintenance or intentional damage die within the first five years from the date on which they are first planted at the Landowner's own cost
- not to fell or otherwise cause to be removed any tree planted for a minimum of 10 years from the date of this agreement unless prior written consent has been granted by the Council

### 6.1 Option One - Memorandum of Understanding

For applications involving a relatively low level of expenditure North Norfolk District Council will rely on a Memorandum of Understanding which will act as an informal contract between parties. This may be appropriate for small scale planting schemes, tree planting projects on public land, or land belonging to partnership organisations such as Town and Parish Councils.

### 6.2 Option Two - Deed of Agreement 10 year term (Personal)

For medium sized projects North Norfolk District Council will provide a Deed of Agreement personal to the landowner on which the trees will be planted. The Deed of Agreement will act as a more formal contract between the parties than the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding.

This agreement however will only be binding on the landowner so if the landowner passes away and the trees are neglected or removed the agreement could not be enforced. Similarly if the landowner sells their land and the trees are subsequently neglected or removed it will also be difficult for the Council to enforce the Deed of Agreement.

### **6.3 Option three – Deed of Agreement 10 year term (Land Charge)**

For major tree planting projects a Deed of Agreement which is tied to the land, and not simply the landowner, may be appropriate as this will offer greater enforceability in a scenario where trees planted are removed, or neglected, within the term of the agreement.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 contains a section titled ‘Enforceability by local authorities of certain covenants relating to land’ (section 33). North Norfolk District Council’s proposal to sign up landowners to the tree planting objective would fall into section 33(1)(b) of this Act because the planting of trees, and the proposed covenants, would be an example of regulating the use of the land where the trees are planted.

Where a landowner, or their successor in title of the land, breaches the covenants, i.e. removes or neglects trees within the term of the agreement, section 33(3)(a) will allow North Norfolk District Council to;

- Enter the land and carry out remedial works itself (such as re-planting the trees), or rectify anything which has been done and which the covenant requires not to be done (such as replacing felled trees within the first 10 years and/or replacing any trees on a like-for-like basis which have died within the first five years).

Section 33(3)(b) would allow North Norfolk District Council to;

- Recover from the landowner, or successors in title, any expenses incurred, meaning that if North Norfolk District Council is required to correct breaches of the covenant, then it could recoup the costs of doing so.

### **6.4 Assessing Agreement Options**

Each individual tree planting project will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ascertain the suitability of the agreement type however, in general it is assumed that:

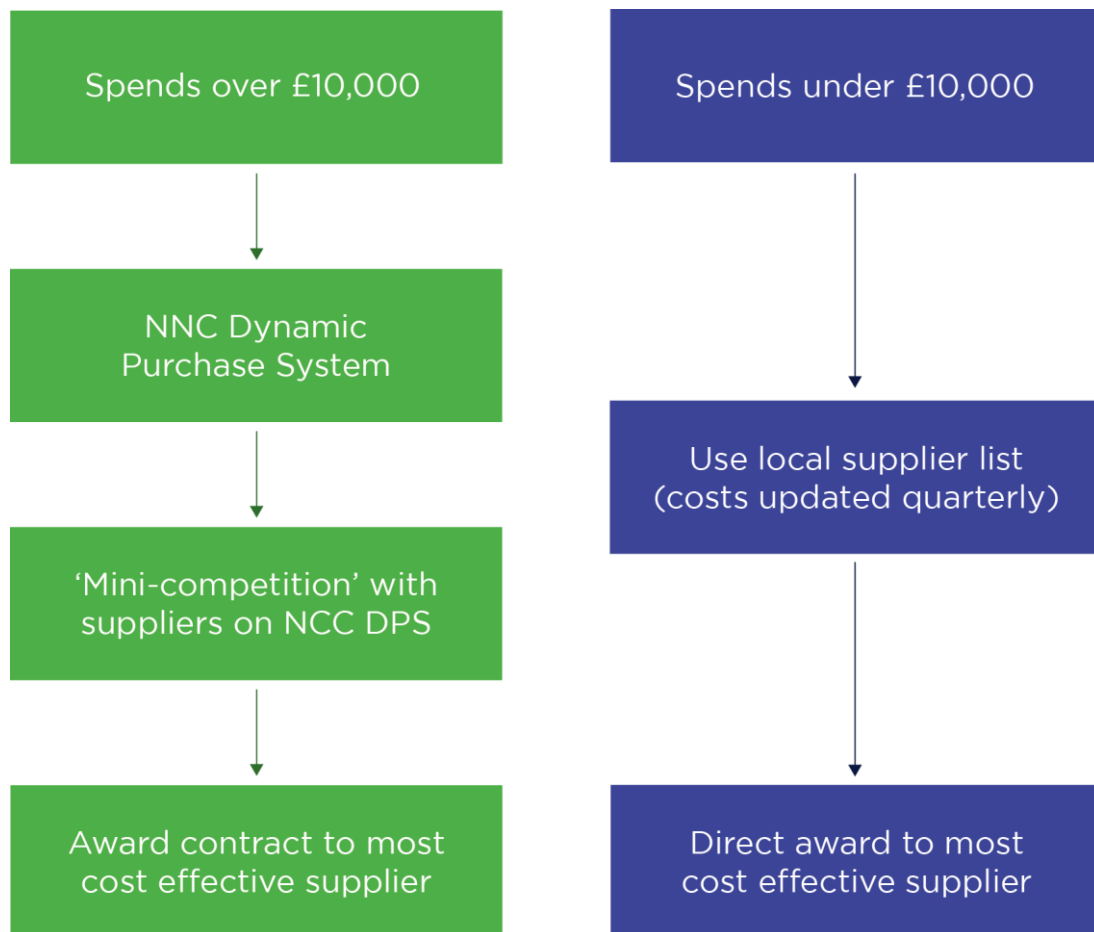
- projects under £1,000 will require landowners to enter into option one
- projects < £10,000 and on public land will require landowners to enter into option one
- projects < £10,000 and on third party/private land will require landowners to enter into option two
- projects > £10,000 will require landowners to enter into option three

## 7. 110,000 Trees Procurement Strategy

### 7.1 Procurement options

Due to the nature of the 110,000 tree project a hybrid approach to the procurement of trees will be implemented. This process will use an existing framework but also provides the mechanism, where appropriate, to work with local suppliers:

- For projects >£10,000 – North Norfolk District Council will use Norfolk County Council’s Dynamic Purchase System (see green options in table below)
- For projects < £10,000 – officers have collated pricing information and details and have created a list of local suppliers. This information will be updated on a quarterly basis. Direct awards will be made based on best value for money. (see the blue option below)
- Where practicable partner organisations may purchase their own trees and planning accessories, and will then be reimbursed.





## Conclusion

To be added