

# Newcastle-under-Lyme Urban Tree Planting Strategy



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## **URBAN FORESTRY**

Urban forestry is a simple concept. It aims to manage the urban forest in much the same way that a forester would manage a rural forest. The urban forester is less concerned with preserving every individual tree but more concerned with the health, vitality and productivity of the forest, as a whole.

The urban forester recognises the need to remove trees for the benefit of the forest, both to space trees out and to make way for new planting. The forester recognises that it is his or her job to ensure that future generations enjoy the same forest in years to come and that local communities are key stakeholders in guiding how the forest evolves.

The forester also recognises the importance of proper planning and management of any new tree planting, to ensure that the overall balance of the forest is not compromised.



## **WHY HAVE AN URBAN TREE PLANTING STRATEGY?**

The Council's newly adopted Sustainable Environment Strategy recognises the importance of and benefits to be gained from increased tree planting in the Borough to improve environmental sustainability and particularly to capture carbon from the atmosphere.

To communicate these benefits to local communities and drive positive change we need a plan. This will both drive the initiative and provide justification for actions in the face of challenge or opposition.

Key elements of the Urban Tree Planting Strategy are as follows:

- To involve urban Ward Members and members of the community in the selection, planting and protection of trees through promotion and consultations;
- Work towards minimising conflicts with the built environment and to provide protection to and from tree growth;
- To develop tree planting designs and strategies suited to the nature of the local community and built environment;
- To implement a priority based programme for the continual rejuvenation of trees within the whole of the urban forest.
- To examine traditional problem areas for urban tree planting and recommend innovative solutions to minimise problems with future plantings;
- To develop a species selection database of generally available stock suited to local conditions and local characters within the area;
- To increase our tree canopy and carbon sequestration by the combined efforts of the Council, town and parish councils, volunteers and residents
- To establish community orchards on appropriate urban green spaces and encourage community ownership
- To develop and promote a community tree sponsorship initiative for the Borough

The Newcastle Borough Council Urban Tree Planting Strategy has the following broad set of objectives:

- **Protect**  
Objective 1: Retain and protect existing woodland where appropriate  
Objective 2: Retain and protect existing hedgerows where appropriate  
Objective 3: Protect and enhance existing trees and groups including street trees where appropriate
- **Care**  
Objective 4: Care for woodlands and hedgerows to promote healthy growth and development  
Objective 5: Care for trees, and woodlands to promote healthy growth and development
- **Plant**  
Objective 6: Plant more woodlands and hedgerows, utilizing small urban

greenspaces and road verges

Objective 7: Plant more trees, tree groups and street trees

- **People**

Objective 8: Consult with public and interest groups over proposed tree planting schemes and initiatives

Objective 9: Listen to public opinion and manage Council-owned trees in the interests of good neighborliness and human comfort while protecting our tree stock

‘Protect’, ‘Care’, ‘Plant’ and ‘People’ are the guiding principles that Newcastle Borough Council will apply to the trees, woodlands, and hedges for which we have responsibility.

In any tree planting strategy, but especially one which may seek to consider large scale planting as a way of ameliorating the effects of climate change and mitigating carbon emissions, it is important to recognise that poorly prepared schemes can actually reduce carbon absorption and damage local biodiversity and livelihoods.

Therefore, it is important to plan properly, and this strategy advises carefully considering the following guidance produced by APSE, via a paper produced by the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, before embarking on new tree planting projects.



## **The Ten Golden Rules for Reforestation to Optimise Carbon Sequestration, Biodiversity Recovery and Livelihood Benefits**

### **Protect existing forests first**

Keeping forests in their original state is always preferable; undamaged, old forests soak up carbon better and are more resilient to fire, storm and droughts. Whenever there's a choice, halting deforestation and protecting remaining forests must be a priority

### **Put local people at the heart of tree planting projects**

Studies show that getting local communities on board is key to the success of tree planting projects. It is often local people who have most to gain from looking after the forest in the future

### **Maximise biodiversity recovery to meet multiple goals**

Reforestation should be about several goals, including guarding against climate change, improving conservation and providing economic and cultural benefits

### **Select the right area for reforestation**

Plant trees in areas that were historically forested but have become degraded, rather than using other natural habitats such as grasslands or wetlands

### **Use natural forest regrowth wherever possible**

Letting trees grow back naturally can be cheaper and more efficient than planting trees

### **Select the right tree species that can maximise biodiversity**

Where tree planting is needed, picking the right trees is crucial. Scientists advise a mixture of tree species naturally found in the local area, including some rare species and trees of economic importance, but avoiding trees that might become invasive

### **Make sure the trees are resilient to adapt to a changing climate**

Use tree seeds that are suitable for the local climate and how that might change in the future

### **Plan ahead**

Plan how to source seeds or trees, working with local people

### **Learn by doing**

Combine scientific knowledge with local knowledge. Ideally, small scale trials should take place before planting large numbers of trees

### **Make it pay**

The sustainability of tree replanting rests on a source of income for all stakeholders, including the poorest



## **CONCLUSION**

Newcastle Borough Council will follow the above guiding principles when considering new tree planting proposals on land within its ownership and control, and work in partnership with adjacent landowners. The Council will also promote these guiding principles with partner organisations and community groups, where new tree planting is proposed.

An Urban Tree Planting Action Plan will be prepared to guide tree planting projects and link in to the Councils Sustainable Environment Strategy.