

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

TREE PLANTING PLAN 2021 -2031

Updated
March 2024



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

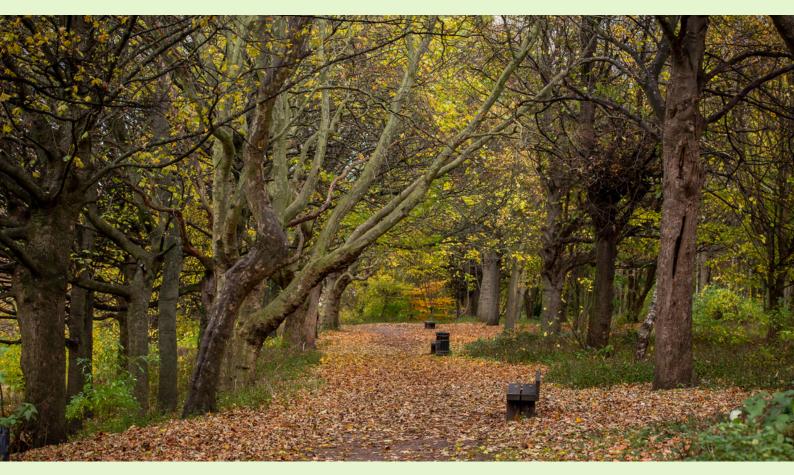
Tree canopy cover refers to the physical layer and habitat zone created by trees, especially when they are connected in proximity to each other. Owing to the widely accepted benefits of trees, particularly in urban areas it is seen as a measure of the livability of an area. Across Rotherham Borough in 2020 tree canopy cover has been measured around 10.1% which is less than the UK national average of 16% and significantly short of aspirational national targets of 19%, recommended by the Committee on Climate Change if the UK is to be carbon neutral by 2050.

The Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in 2019 highlights the need to find solutions to the pressures presented by a changing climate and potential global overheating, either through reduced emissions, sequestering more carbon within our tree stock or by expanding Rotherham's tree planting, especially increasing woodland to help mitigate the future increase in temperatures. Planting in civic and urban spaces is an adaptation strategy to modify the town to help residents cope with climate and environmental changes.

Increasing tree cover to meet the national target of 19% will provide a valuable solution to carbon sequestration and maintaining our towns in a liveable condition, whilst also helping to improve the ecology and biodiversity of the borough and helping to mitigate surface water flooding risk during extreme weather events.

This plan will provide details on what a suitable planting location entails, what checks and consultations will be undertaken prior to planting and what planting methods will be used (urban, woodland, re-wilding) to achieve the Council's targets. It will also give an indication of sites already identified for planting.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the Council's adopted Tree Management Protocol and Guidance.



1.2 The Benefits of Trees

Trees and woodlands make vital contributions to the Borough's ecosystem services and its diverse landscape, and the health and wellbeing of communities. The Council has signed up to the Climate Emergency Agenda and there is increasing recognition of the role of planting and maintaining trees as the most efficient way of absorbing and sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide to reduce global overheating.

The Regulating benefits of trees include:

- Capturing atmospheric carbon (carbon sequestration)
- Cleaning the air that we breath
- Filtering atmospheric pollution
- Stabilising soils, and riverbanks and controlling/ attenuating water flows
- Moderating rainfall absorption and attenuating runoff
- Improving the quality of contaminated land
- Providing a barrier to noise and screening poor views; trees and other vegetation can play an important role in reducing noise
- Providing shelter from the sun, wind, rain, and other weather events
- Shading out harmful solar radiation, reducing "heat island" effects.

Provision of these benefits are strongly linked to tree age and these benefits tend to be greater with increased tree stature and leaf area, as well as condition. To continue to benefit from our trees, we need to protect and manage them, particularly our large, mature trees, and ensure they remain healthy into old age.

Trees provide shelter and reduce wind speed, thus reducing heat loss from buildings during winter. They provide shade in the summer and evapotranspiration of water from the leaves has a cooling effect on the surrounding air. This can significantly reduce the need for air conditioning during hot weather.

Research by Lancaster University (Hewitt et al, undated) has found that trees can remove several pollutants from the atmosphere, including ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and harmful particulates.

Different species of tree have different net effects on air quality. Willows, poplars, and oaks can worsen air quality during hot weather, whilst ash, alder, and birch have the greatest beneficial effects.

The shade cast by trees can significantly increase the life of the road by reducing the temperature that the surface reaches during hot weather

The Cultural and Social benefits of trees include:

- Providing pleasant green settings in which to live and work
- Encouraging inward investment by enhancing the livability of the Borough
- Making the Borough attractive to tourists and visitors
- Softening the impact of built development
- Strengthening landscape character
- Maintaining people's link with the natural environment.
- Contributing to physical and mental health and well-being (the "biophilia effect")
- Contributing to local heritage and history
- Contributing to recreational opportunities

Both visitors and businesses have been found to favour districts with high tree cover and this increases inward investment in an area. The 'linger effect' of town centres planted with attractive trees is well documented, and the financial benefits of well-landscaped areas can be assumed to attract businesses to the Borough

Property owners share a common interest in the value of their assets. Trees, it has been estimated, can increase property values by as much as 18%, with houses and homes in tree-lined avenues much desired and sought after. Trees also mask the intrusive nature of many developments where space is at a premium.



The Biodiversity and Wildlife benefits include:

- Providing a diverse range of valuable habitats for wildlife
- Providing feeding and habitat opportunities for threatened pollinators
- Providing a food source and shelter for many forms of life
- Many animal, plant, and fungal species are completely dependent on particular species of tree
- Providing connectivity from habitat to habitat

Trees, woodlands, and hedgerows are important wildlife habitats. They provide nesting sites for birds, roosting sites for bats and birds, and support a wide range of invertebrates that are an important food source for wildlife and are often more important to pollinating insects than meadowland. Trees that produce fruit and berries are a direct source of food for many animal species.

In an urban setting, linear corridors of habitat are important. They connect otherwise isolated areas to each other and allow wildlife to move around safely. Trees and other vegetation along highways, waterways, and railways are particularly important linear corridors.



1.3 Aims

As per the Council's Tree Management Protocol and Guidance 2021, it aims to:

- Create a minimum of 45 new hectares of new woodland in the borough between 2021 and 2030.
- Plant a minimum of 100,000 new woodland trees between 2021 and 2030
- Plant a minimum of 5,000 new urban trees between 2021 and 2030
- Plant at least 2,500 more urban trees than felled between 2021 and 2030
- Mitigate for the loss of ash trees from our landscape, caused by Ash Dieback disease.



2. Tree Planting Plan

2.1 Urban Tree Planting

The planting of urban trees requires careful consideration to ensure that any tree does not create future problems as a result of inadequate planning. The right choice of species is paramount and a policy of 'Right tree, Right place' will be implemented when choosing the correct tree. Consideration will be given to the size and effect a mature tree will have on neighbouring residents and infrastructure to ensure the tree remains an important amenity asset and does not impact negatively. The Council will choose trees that when mature will not adversely affect residents living in close proximity but will balance this with species that will sequester the greatest amount of carbon within the space available.

Species chosen will be a 2 to 1 mixture of native and non-native species so that a balanced mix can provide the support needed to our native wildlife, whilst providing tree species that will thrive in future warmer climate and provide seasonal display. In addition, a diverse tree stock will help protect planting schemes from species-specific diseases, such as Ash Dieback.

The targets, starting from planting season 2021 will be to plant 500 urban trees, increasing net tree stock by at least 250 per year.

Although tree planting target numbers are vitally important to achieve desired canopy cover and net zero goals, the survival rate of planted trees is equally important. The first few years following planting are critical to a tree's survival, so the planting should be accompanied with a five-year after-care programme to ensure, for example, that adequate watering takes place in times of drought, that adjustments of stakes and ties and correct formative pruning is carried out to ensure the establishment of a healthy, well-structured, balanced, and safe tree. Protection from strimmer and mower damage is essential.



The following table shows urban tree planting sites that were surveyed in 2021 and the anticipated number of trees to be planted.

Please note this is not a definitive list of all planting sites.

Ward	Site	Current Stage	Proposed	Land Manager
Anston & Woodsetts	Greenlands Park	Details to be finalised	24	Green Spaces
Anston & Woodsetts	Woodland Drive Greenspace	Details to be finalised	13	Green Spaces
Anston & Woodsetts	West Street Memorial Gardens	Details to be finalised	8	Green Spaces
Aston & Todwick	Florence Avenue Greenspace	Completed	8	Green Spaces
Aughton & Swallownest	Alexandra Park	Details to be finalised	25	Green Spaces
Aughton & Swallownest	Wetherby Drive, Swallownest,	Details to be finalised	5	Highways
Boston Castle	Broom Valley Road Green	Completed	22	Housing
Boston Castle	Herringthorpe Playing Fields	Completed	143	Green Spaces
Bramley & Ravenfield	Ferndale Drive Green	In Progress	16	Green Spaces
Bramley & Ravenfield	Jubilee Field	Details to be finalised	4	Green Spaces

Ward	Site	Current Stage	Proposed	Land Manager
Brinsworth	Bawtry Road	Details to be finalised		Green Spaces
Brinsworth	Bawtry Road	Details to be finalised	38	Green Spaces
Brinsworth	Normanville Avenue, Brinsworth,	Details to be finalised	10	Highways
Dinnington	Dinnington Park	Details to be finalised	13	Green Spaces
Greasbrough	Fenton Road Green	Completed	13	Highways
Hellaby & Maltby West	Milton Street	Milton Street Details to be finalised		Highways
Hellaby & Maltby West	Addison Road large verge			To be identified
Hellaby & Maltby West	Addison Road Highway verge			Highways
Hellaby & Maltby West	Amory's Holt	Amory's Holt Planned for 2024		Green Spaces
Hoober	Smithy Bridge Lane	Smithy Bridge Lane Details to be finalised		Highways
Hoober	West Melton Park	n Park Planned for 2024		To be identified
Hoober	Barnsely Road	Details to be finalised	16	Highways
Hoober	Wath Road Park	Details to be finalised	35	To be identified

Ward	Site Current Stage		Proposed	Land Manager
Keppel	Barnsley Road Rec, Thorpe Hesley	I Planned for 2024 I		Green Spaces
Keppel	Sheldrake Close, Thorpe Hesley,	Details to be finalised	5	To be identified
Keppel	Studmoor Road, Kimberworth Park,	Details to be finalised	5	To be identified
Keppel	West Close, Kimberworth Park,	Details to be finalised	6	Green Spaces
Kilnhurst & Swinton	Calcot Green	Details to be finalised	6	Green Spaces
Kilnhurst & Swinton	Carlisle Street	Details to be finalised	7	Green Spaces
Kilnhurst & Swinton	Celandine Rise	Complete	7	Highways
Kilnhurst & Swinton	Homoak Close Planned for 2024		11	
Kilnhurst & Swinton	Larkspur Close	Larkspur Close Details to be finalised		Green Spaces
Maltby East	Cherry Tree Park	Complete	70	Green Spaces
Maltby East	Limesway, Maltby, Rotherham	The state of the s		Highways
Rawmarsh West	Victoria Park	Victoria Park Complete		Green Spaces
Rawmarsh West	Roman Crescent	Details to be finalised	9	Highways

Ward	Site	Current Stage	Proposed	Land Manager
Rother Vale	Highfield View Green	Complete	27	Housing
Rotherham East	Tennyson Road, Herringthorpe	Planned for 2024	23	Highways
Rotherham East	Dryden Road	Details to be finalised	6	To be identified
Rotherham East	Herringthorpe Valley Road, Herringthorpe,	Details to be finalised	83	Highways
Rotherham West	Bradgate Park –	Planned for 2024	15	Green Spaces
Sitwell	Hall Close Avenue, Whiston,	Details to be finalised	5	To be identified
Swinton Rockingham	Highfield Park - Open Space	Details to be finalised	18	Green Spaces
Swinton Rockingham	Horsefair Park	Details to be finalised	9	Green Spaces
Swinton Rockingham	Broadway Greenspace	Details to be finalised	12	To be identified
Swinton Rockingham	Thomas Street Park	Details to be finalised	21	Green Spaces
Wales	Essex Close Green	Planned for 2024	10	Green Spaces
Wath	Crowley Drive, Wath- upon-Dearne,	Details to be finalised	6	Highways
Wath	Church Street, Wath	Details to be finalised		Green Spaces

Ward	Site	Current Stage	Proposed	Land Manager
Wath	Campsall Field Road	Details to be finalised		Green Spaces
Wath	Newhill Park - planted	Details to be finalised	23	Green Spaces
Wickersley North	Northfield Lane Footpath 1, Wickersley,	Details to be finalised	6	To be identified
Wickersley North	Pear Tree Avenue, Bramley,	Details to be finalised	12	Highways
Wickersley North	Plane Drive, Wickersley,	Details to be finalised 6		Highways

Tree planting schemes will be developed and considered with resident engagement where appropriate, through a consultation process from April to September each year. To ensure comprehensive consultation on tree planting, the following methods will be, where appropriate, implemented:

- 1. Consultation with Ward Members and Cabinet Members: The service will engage with the appropriate Ward and Cabinet Members to gather their insights and perspectives on proposed tree planting.
- 2. Engagement with Local Organisations: The service will actively involve local organisations that have a stake in tree planting initiatives.
- 3. Letter Drops to Impacted Homes and Businesses: To reach out to the residents and businesses directly affected by the tree planting, the service will conduct letter drops. These letters will provide information about the proposed plans, seek feedback, and address any concerns or questions they may have.



5. Public Meetings: The service will organise public meetings to provide a platform for open dialogue and discussion about the tree planting initiative. These meetings will allow residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to voice their opinions, ask questions, and contribute to the decision-making process.

6. Posters in Relevant Locations: Posters will be strategically placed in locations where the trees are proposed to be planted. These posters will provide information about the project including a map of the location of the trees, its benefits, and contact details for further enquiries.

By implementing these various forms of consultation, the service aims to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and community engagement in the tree planting project. This will follow the process outlined in Tree Planting Consultation Framework at Appendix 2. Where appropriate, community groups, schools, volunteers etc. will be invited to participate in planting events. Trees will be ordered before September/October, according to trade availability, for planting during the planting season from November to February whilst the trees are dormant and have greatest chance of surviving the stress of translocation and planting.

Where possible avenues of trees within parks lost through disease or storm damage will be reinstated by phased re-planting, and hedgerows may be gapped-up, but otherwise trees may be planted in small groups or individually within a site to make best use of the location for the trees but also taking into consideration other uses of the site throughout the year such as community events. It is expected that the vast majority of urban planting will utilise 'standard', 'heavy standard' or 'semi-mature' trees as they tend to be less prone to vandalism and make an instant impact.





2.2 Woodland Creation

The creation of woodland will be carried out in the context of good habitat management and biodiversity practice, particularly in line with the emerging Nature Recovery Strategy and Supplementary Planning Policy to ensure that woodlands are part of a diverse habitat creation and restoration programme. There are many habitats and species which are threatened that deserve equal consideration for creation and restoration such as meadows, lowland heath, hazel/willow coppice, hedgerow and ditch, and woodland margins.

Woodland creation sites will provide the locations where the largest number of trees will be planted within the Borough. Planting will be undertaken to either extend current woodland boundaries or to create new woodland. Where practical, species will be used that match the existing woodland cover. The trees used will be predominantly whips (trees generally less than 1m tall) and supplemented with standards (trees that are over 1.8m tall). This creates a mixed age range and an immediate impact on the landscape. Consideration should be given to creating coppice, glades, and dells, plus understory and ground flora planting as part of the programme, including for established and developing plantations. This will enrich the habitats and biodiversity of the developing woodland.

A small number of sites have been identified which are currently maintained as grasslands. These areas will be considered as locations for woodland creation or to create smaller groups of trees. This will only happen where the community need for the open space site is not long required, alternative habitat creation has been considered, and it is agreed that it could be better utilised as woodland, providing new recreational opportunities as well as meeting the aims identified above.

The annual targets starting from the baseline planting season 2020/21 will be to plant 10,000 new woodland trees per annum where possible

10,000

The potential sites identified for new woodland are broken down by ward as follows:

Ward	Site	Current Stage	Proposed	Planting Season
Sitwell	Herringthorpe Valley Park	Completed	7,000	2020/21
Sitwell	Herringthorpe Valley Park Extension	Completed	2,040	2021/22
Sitwell / Wickersley North	Brecks Lane	Completed	5,355	2021/22
Rotherham West	Winterhill	Completed	5,500	2021/22
Anston & Woodsetts	Greenlands	Completed	2,958	2021/22
Rotherham West	lckles Lock	Completed	2,822	2021/22
Kilnhurst & Swinton East	Swinton Piccadilly	Completed	4,309	2021/22
Dinnington	Queen Elizabeth II Community Woodland	Completed	7,700	2022/23
Sitwell	Herringthorpe Final Extension	In Progress	1,415	2023/24



2.3 Community Orchards

Orchards are part of the districts heritage and are a disappearing and endangered habitat, which supports a rich biodiversity. Community Orchards help re-establish these important habitats and create community cohesion and encourage different cultures to come together and to provide opportunities for events and to harvest fresh fruit.

Organisations such as Sheffield Fruit Trees, South Yorkshire Woodland Partnership and community groups will be key partners. Their expertise and local knowledge will be key to help safeguard local fruit trees ensuring diversity of species, correct pruning and identifying trees, especially heritage cultivars some of which are specific to Rotherham.





2.4Community Engagement

It is important that the benefits of trees and the expansion of tree planting in the borough is well interpreted, well understood by residents and ultimately appreciated for their multitude of benefits.

The Council funded a Tree Engagement Officer in 2021/22 to start the process of interpretation and education as well as organising community involvement in planting schemes. In November 2023 a second Tree Engagement Officer was employed on a two-year temporary contract to further support the existing officer, particularly regarding community engagement and consultation.

Woodland planting schemes, rather than street tree planting schemes, will be most suited to community events such as volunteer planting of trees or for educational events with schools and groups. Trees used on these events are smaller and easier to handle as well as the large number of trees required will allow whole year group or whole school inclusion as well as family, local community planting and community interest groups. However, where possible we will include volunteer planting with larger-sized urban trees where it is safe to do so.



Appendix one

Trees and Planning in Rotherham

Planning permission is generally not required to plant trees. Planning permission is always required for non-forestry uses of land, buildings, or any other form of development. If the tree planting scheme involves extensive land sculpting or contouring, then this might involve development as a possible engineering operation. Under the UK planning system, Local Planning Authorities (LPA) have a statutory duty to consider the protection and planting of trees when granting planning permission for proposed development. The potential effect of development on trees, whether statutorily protected (e.g., by a tree preservation order or by their inclusion within a conservation area) or not, is a material consideration that is considered when dealing with planning applications. Where trees are statutorily protected, it is important to contact the LPA and follow the appropriate procedures before undertaking any works that might affect the protected trees.

The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the importance of trees and includes measures at para 131, 174 and 180. Rotherham Local Plan is in two parts, the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and the site allocations and development management policies of the Sites and Policies Document. Together this is the Rotherham Local Plan and provides measures for the provision and conservation of trees within many policies including:

The Core Strategy (adopted 2014):

- Policy CS 1 Delivering Rotherham's Spatial Strategy
- Policy CS 19 Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS 20 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy CS 21 Landscape (criterion b. now omitted as the area of High Landscape Value has been removed from the adopted Policies Map at the time of the adoption of the Sites and Policies Document in June 2018).
- Policy CS 22 Green Space (specifically explanatory text 5.6.76)
- Policy CS 28 Sustainable Design



The Sites and Policies Document:

- SP32 Green Infrastructure and Landscape
- SP 33 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- SP34 Sites Protected for Nature Conservation
- SP41 Conservation Areas
- SP44 Historic Parks, Gardens, and landscapes
- SP55 Design Principles

The explanatory text that accompanies all policies, provides further guidance on the use and application of that policy

Further guidance is given in Rotherham Local Plan Supplementary Planning Documents such as Trees Supplementary Planning Document: Trees and Supplementary Planning Document 11: Natural Environment

Planting decisions should seek to maximise positive environmental impacts. Planning Services host helpful information online (within their pages on the Rotherham MBC website). There is available an extensive evidence base used to prepare the Rotherham Local Plan, including the Rotherham Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Landscape Character Assessment, Greenspace Audit, Archaeology Scoping Study, green infrastructure strategies etc including the South Yorkshire Community Forest Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011 that promotes projects across the region.

The Local Plan on-line policies map (a static map adopted June 2018) shows the boundaries of 'Statutory Sites' including SSSIs and Scheduled Monuments and 'Non-Statutorily Protected Sites' (including Local Wildlife and Geological Site series; Local Nature Reserves; Ancient Woodland and Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest).

Suggested plant species lists are provided in the Natural Environment SPD11. Furthermore, Rotherham MBC has contributed to the Natura Capita Mapping report hosted on the SYMCA web site at South-Yorkshire-natural-capital-and-biodiversity-mapping.pdf (southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk) careful consideration of such evidence will enhance the sustainability, benefits and resilience of proposed tree planting schemes.



Selected Bibliography/Links

Rotherham evidence base (planning)

<u>Evidence Base Downloads – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</u> <u>https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/79/evidence-base-</u> downloads

Rotherham Local Plan interactive policies map

<u>RMBC Mapping (rotherham.gov.uk)</u>

<u>https://maps.rotherham.gov.uk/mapping/Map.aspx?MapName=LocalPlan</u>

Rotherham Local Plan

<u>A guide to the Local Plan – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</u> <u>https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/guide-local-plan</u>

Green Space Audit 2005

https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/763/rmbc-green-space-audit-2005-

Landscape Character Assessment 2010 https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/663/landscape-character-assessment-and-capacity-study-2010-

National Planning Policy Framework https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

<u>Supplementary Planning Document 11: Natural Environment</u>
(<u>rotherham.gov.uk</u>)

<u>https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/2425/spd11-natural-environment-june-2021</u>

Trees Supplementary Planning Document

ltem 15 - 2022-07-11_Cabinet_SPDs_Appx 3_Trees.pdf (rotherham.gov.uk)

https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s136846/ltem%2015%20-%202022-07-11_Cabinet_SPDs_Appx%203_Trees.pdf



Appendix Two

Tree Planting Consultation Framework

This framework acts as a guide for officers to work with Elected Members and members of the public to agree appropriate locations for tree planting across the Borough and appropriate engagement programmes to undertake planting in agreed locations.

STAGE 1: SITE IDENTIFICATION

RMBC Tree Service will identify suitable locations according to the following criteria:

- ·Land is in ownership of the Council or has been identified as having support of the landowner
- ·Planning guidance, policy and deeds allow for planting take place on this land
- •The environmental conditions of the land are appropriate for planting e.g., not on contaminated land or used for other environmental gain such as biodiversity or other habitat creation
- ·A reasonable split of planting schemes across wards where availability of land allows

STAGE 2: SENIOR OFFICERS & CABINET MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Trees & Woodlands Manager will present proposals for discussion with Head of Service, Senior Management and Cabinet Member for endorsement ahead of consultation with Ward Members

STAGE 3: WARD MEMBER CONSULTATION

Proposals including site maps will be emailed to Ward Members with options to:

- ·Request a meeting to discuss the proposed plans in detail
- ·Advise on the appropriate level of public consultation for any specific sites in their wards

Neighbourhood coordinators to be engaged throughout





STAGE 4A: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Carry out the agreed level of public consultation if requested a public consultation meeting will be arranged and residents in locations agreed with Ward Members will be contacted with the support of the Neighbourhood Coordinators. The meeting will be attended by Ward Members and Officers and minuted to record objections, endorsements and agreed resolutions.

STAGE 4B: EMAIL AGREEMENT RECEIVED

If plans are agreed by Ward Members via email a written record of the endorsement for the proposals will be kept by the Trees & Woodlands Officer.

STAGE 5: RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

An Officer Decision Report will be submitted and added to the Forward Plan ahead of that year's Tree Planting Season outlining the agreed locations and the level of consultation undertaken.

STAGE 6: ENGAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Following agreement of planting locations, the Trees & Woodlands Officer will set out a proposed planting schedule for the season and provide recommendations for engagement programmes in each ward. These will be agreed with the Head of Service and shared with Ward Members as opportunities for direct support or signposting to communities.

Depending on the volume of tree planting proposed in each area some of this work may need to be undertaken by contractors to ensure it is completed within the season window.

