

West Sussex Tree Plan

Don Baker

Team Manager, Environment & Heritage
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Background

- Trees are valuable and essential part of character of West Sussex as well as providing other economic, social, and environmental benefits, all of which contribute to quality of life
- Plan addresses how County Council will undertake its statutory duties and responsibilities, and how it will operate as a landowner
- Overall, it seeks to ensure that trees within our ownership are maintained, protected, and improved for current and future generations
- Also seeks to influence how wider tree resource within the County is managed and improved

Strategic Aims

- Plan has three strategic aims:
 - to **maintain** trees and woodlands in County Council's ownership
 - to **protect** trees and woodlands from new development and other threats
 - to **improve** woodland cover in West Sussex through natural regeneration, planting of new trees, and creation of new woodlands
- Although focus is on delivery over next five years, strategic aims provide framework over medium and longer-term

Legislative and Policy Context

- County Council subject to wide range of legislation covering highways, environmental issues, planning, heritage, and safety
- Plan also influenced by range of policies and guidance at national and local level
- In addition to policies specific to trees and woodlands, context includes policies relating to broader issues:
 - such as planning, climate change, environmental net gain, and nature recovery strategies

Key Issues

- Key issues facing County Council with regard to management of the trees in its ownership and management of trees more widely in West Sussex:
 - Data and intelligence
 - Climate change
 - Ash dieback
 - Biodiversity net gain and nature recovery
 - Natural capital
 - Resources

Objectives and Actions

- To deliver longer-term strategic aims, Plan has five shorter-term strategic objectives:
 1. Better data management and evidence-based decision-making
 2. Establishing and embedding policies and processes
 3. Managing impacts of Ash Dieback and other tree pests & diseases
 4. Identifying opportunities for investment and income generation
 5. Working with partners and supporting communities and individuals
- Key actions to be undertaken by County Council over next five years are identified under each objective

Consultation

- Internal & external consultation complete
- External stakeholders included major landowners, central and local government and agencies, and other relevant bodies:
 - Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Sussex Nature Partnership, and Tree Council
- Very well received
- Offers of partnership and support
- Minor corrections to technical matters