

Agenda Item 9



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

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| Report to: | Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 30 November 2021 |
| Subject: | Tree Strategy: "The Right Tree in the Right Place" |

Summary:

This report provides a progress update on the Green Masterplan and outlines the initial progress towards the Council's targets to reach net zero carbon by 2050.

Actions Required:

The Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee:

- 1)** Is asked to give support to submitting an application to the Trees Call for Action Fund; and
- 2)** is invited to review and comment on progress towards developing a Tree Strategy for the County.

1. Background

At the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee in September 2021 the item on the Green Masterplan Progress included an update on the tree planting work and progress towards the Council's target of planting a tree for every resident in the county. This report provides a further update on the tree planting work, the development of a tree strategy and options to obtain further funding to enable tree planting.

2. Local Authorities Treescapes Fund

As reported previously, the Council was successful with a funding bid to the Forestry Commission for tree planting in non-woodland locations. The total funding allocated was £169k for tree planting in the 2021/22 planting season and the first tranche of this funding has now been received.

Every Parish Council in the county was contacted to see if they were interested in having tree planting within their areas and had suitable sites for planting within their control. In addition, the district councils were asked for any suitable sites. A tender for the supply of trees, tree planting and maintenance was sent out at the start of November and the contract is expected to be let in early December.



Figure One: Map of Treescapes Fund Planting Locations

Figure One shows the locations of tree planting schemes that have been identified for the Treescapes Project. As well as Parish and District Councils some of the sites are on farmland. Some of the new trees will replace trees that have been lost to ash dieback disease.

The map shows that the project team has been able to identify a good spread of sites right across the county. Every district is represented within the planting plan.

The project team has undertaken a due diligence exercise to make sure that the planting sites are appropriate and do not have other protected features – such as habitat and archaeological value.

Planting will begin in January 2022 and the Sustainability Team are working with the Communications Team to develop a programme of events and news releases around the planting dates.

3. Trees Call for Action Fund

The Trees Call to Action Fund (TCAF) is a new funding stream to support the development of new and existing projects and partnerships, helping to deliver the England Trees Action Plan. This is part of the Nature for Climate Fund, which the government has created to treble tree planting rates in England by 2025.

The Treescapes Project has highlighted that to reach the target of planting a tree for every resident the Council will need to work in close partnership with the District Councils, landowners and organisations such as the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission.

TCAF aims to build the capacity of organisations working with the trees and forestry sector in England. These projects should aim to deliver the objectives of the England Trees Action Plan:

- expanding and connecting our trees and woodlands
- trees and woodlands as part of the green economy
- protecting and improving our trees and woodlands
- connecting people with trees and woodlands

The funding is for grants of £250,000 to £500,000, for projects to deliver by March 2025.

The funding can be used for the capital costs of tree planting, but it can also pay for revenue costs for staff time. An objective of the funding would be to get funding for an officer who can undertake liaison work with landowners to identify larger scale tree planting sites and look for funding to develop them. Another important objective of any bid to the Fund would be to look at improving public access and interpretation for visitors to the woodland sites.

Initial discussions have been held with the district councils and North East Lincolnshire Council to submit a partnership application to the fund that covers the Greater

Lincolnshire area. The partnership would also include the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

An initial expression of interest has been submitted for the Fund. The final bid has to be submitted by 20th January 2022.

4. Tree Strategy for Lincolnshire

The work undertaken so far on the tree planting target has identified that Lincolnshire has one of the lowest tree coverage rates in the UK. The tree coverage level is around 3.8% compared to a national rate of 13%.

It would be unrealistic to raise the tree cover level to the national rate, but there are opportunities to increase tree cover around the county.

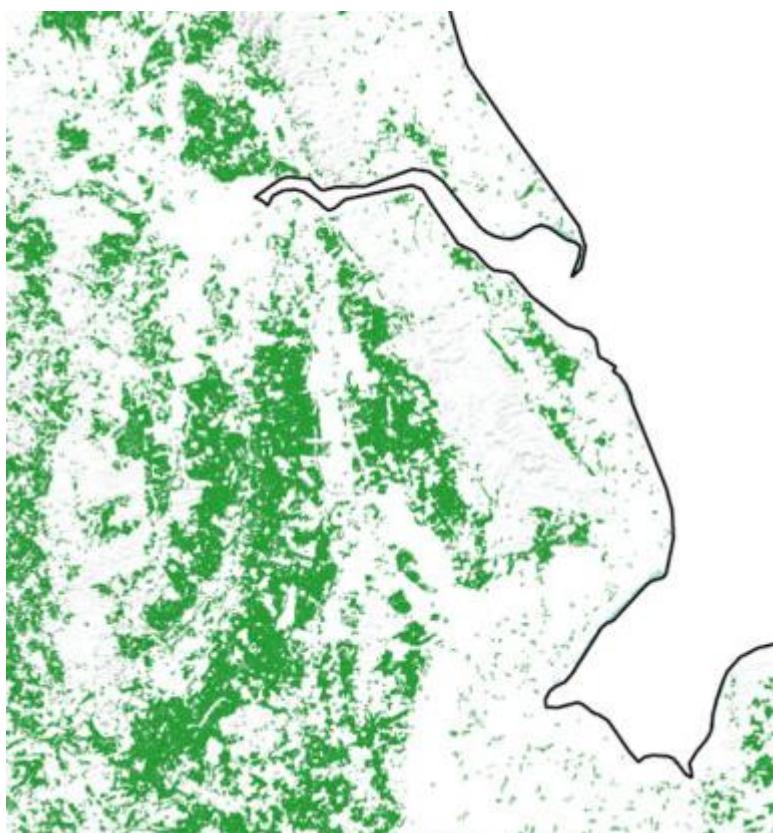


Figure Two: Low Risk Woodland Creation Areas

Figure Two shows an exercise that was undertaken by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, which maps all areas that are likely to be suitable for woodland creation around England. The areas excludes high grade agricultural land and sites that already have a high habitat values.

Any tree planting programme needs to be based on the principle of planting the right tree in the right place. The Council does not wish to plant on high grade agricultural land, areas of habitat value, archaeological sites and land which could be put to better habitat creation uses.

In order to ensure that the right tree in the right place principle is followed a tree strategy for the county is required.

The Woodland Trust has developed a draft content list for local authority tree strategies. It is proposed to use this as a framework for developing the Lincolnshire Tree Strategy

The Woodland Trust Tree Strategy Guide has the following suggested content:

Theme 1: Community, place and heritage - Community woodland - Place and design – street trees - Heritage and culture

Theme 2: Sustainability, climate change and natural capital - Sustainability and green infrastructure - Climate change, pests and tree disease - Natural Capital and Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES)

Theme 3: Planning - Duties under NERC Act 2006 and NPPF - National and local planning policy – trees and development - Protecting trees - TPOs and conservation areas - Developer obligations

Theme 4: Woodland management - Wildlife and landscape – PAWS restoration - Woodland creation and management - accessible woodland - Wood products - Certification - Grants and funding

Theme 5: Council trees - Street and trees in residential areas - Parks and open spaces - Woodland - Urban woodlands - Village and rural trees - New and replacement planting - Asset management and standards of service

IMPLEMENTATION - Action plan - Future strategy review

APPENDICES - National policy - Local policy (including Local Plan/ Core Strategy) - Case studies - Glossary

It is proposed to bring a draft tree strategy to the Committee in the first quarter of 2022.

5. Conclusion

Members of the Committee are invited to review progress on producing a tree strategy for the county and to support the application to the Trees Call for Action Fund.

6. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not applicable.

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Dan Clayton, Sustainability Manager- Environment, who can be contacted on 07825 607157 or by e-mail at Dan.Clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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