Tree Strategy

Management Strategy for Trees in Council Ownership 2023-2027

Contents

1 Vision Statement

To take proactive measures in managing trees, aiming to enhance and safeguard the environment, establish green spaces and effectively mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

2 Why do we need a Tree Strategy?

Trees have an immense value and need to be protected and correctly managed for a number of reasons:

- They have a vital role to play in mitigating climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.

- They act as natural air filters, improving air quality and reducing pollution.

- They provide habitat for wildlife, supporting biodiversity and preserving ecosystems.

- They contribute to the overall health and well-being of communities by enhancing aesthetics, providing shade, and reducing urban heat island effects.

- A Tree Strategy ensures that existing trees are appropriately managed, promotes tree planting initiatives, and ensures that trees are integrated within the planning process.

As the public's perception and awareness of the importance of trees develops, it is imperative that the Council has robust mechanisms in place for the management of existing tree stock and considers ways in which to increase canopy cover across the Borough in the future.

3 Scope of the Strategy

This strategy is designed to be a framework for the management of trees owned and managed by Broxtowe Borough Council, detailing the guiding principles by which arboricultural decisions are influenced.

The Council are responsible for trees on land such as the parks and open spaces. Trees growing from pavements or public highway verges are usually the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council Highways department.

The level of tree canopy cover across the Borough is detailed in the appendix.

The Tree Strategy will be reviewed annually, in line with the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy to ensure that it is relevant, and meets all legislative requirements.

4 Policy Context

The Council's requirement for a Tree Strategy is underpinned by policy at a National, Regional and Local level and is detailed in Table 1.

National	Regional	Local
25 Year Environment Plan England Tree Action Plan 2021–24	Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Nature for climate fund	Part 1 of the Local Plan (the Aligned Core Strategy) Part 2 of the Local Plan Corporate Plan

National	Regional	Local
Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended and in the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 Section 192 of the Planning Act 2008 Climate Change Act 2008 Environment Act 2021		Business Plans Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy

Table 1: National, Regional and Local Policies

5 Objectives

The Tree Strategy provides the Council with a framework to manage its own tree assets with the aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide a framework for tree management, which will enhance their value and improve:

Landscape Enhancement

Trees form an important component of the landscape. They provide form, colour, texture and movement, changing with the seasons. Trees can be important local landmarks giving a sense of continuity and place. They can help provide privacy, frame the appearance of buildings and screen eyesores.

Biodiversity

Trees, particularly indigenous species, can provide valuable support to a range of wildlife. Trees can provide food, shelter, nesting and roosting sites, particularly for invertebrates, birds and bats.

Physical Environmental Benefits

In urban areas, trees help to modify the climate by providing shade from the sun, reducing wind speeds and reducing the extremes of temperature. They are important in reducing air pollutants and helping to absorb noise.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Tree planting serves as a powerful tool for mitigating the impacts of climate change, particularly in relation carbon sequestration and mitigating flooding.

Trees are key in capturing and storing (sequestering) Carbon Dioxide, the most prevalent Greenhouse Gas. On average, a tree absorbs anywhere between 10 and 40kg of CO_2 per year (Source: Ecotree How much CO_2 does a tree absorb? (2023)).

Trees also play a crucial role in regulating water cycles and mitigating flood risks acting as natural flood barriers. They help prevent soil erosion, slow down and absorb floodwaters, protecting vulnerable areas from severe inundation and their canopies intercept rainfall, reducing the intensity of precipitation hitting the ground and minimising the chances of flash floods.

Health and Well-being

"Trees boost our physical and mental health in so many ways… Research has shown that chemicals called phytoncides, released by plants and trees, strengthen our immune, hormonal, circulatory and nervous systems when we breathe them in. Trees also improve our quality of life - offering relief from the symptoms of anxiety and depression". (Source: Woodland Trust. Why we need Trees (2023)).

2. To engage and educate residents, green space users, employees and contractors on the sustainable management principles and maintenance regimes for the Borough's tree stock. This will be achieved using a variety of platforms and methodologies including; social media, Green Festivals, direct email, Green Rewards, leaflets and posters.

3. Provide appropriate communications to all stakeholders regarding the implementation of any tree work.

4. Replenish and increase the Borough's tree stock; fostering environmental resilience and sustainability.

5. Undertake effective woodland maintenance by removing selected trees, in order for the woodland to mature and to support a diverse range of habitats and ecosystems.

6. Fulfil the Council's legal obligations as a tree owner by addressing safety and maintenance issues effectively.

7. Utilise external funding to support tree planting programmes within the Borough.

8. Maintain an accurate database of tree assets and appropriate maintenance / survey arrangements.

9. Calculate the sequestration value of the Council's tree assets to inform the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy.

6 Key Highlights

- In 2022/23, the Council planted over 4,000 trees, that's over 132,000 planted since 2008 (more than one tree for every resident in the Borough).

- 26% of the Borough has tree canopy cover. (Appendix 1)

- The Council manages 94 hectares of mixed woodland.

- The Council spends £150k each year on planting, protecting and managing trees.

- 168 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) across the Borough.

7 Stakeholders

Identifying key stakeholders is crucial in helping to provide strategic direction and in the delivery of actions captured in the Tree Strategy. It ensures that the right people are involved in the planning and implementation process and that their needs and interests are taken into account. Key Stakeholders for the Tree Strategy are identified in figure 1.
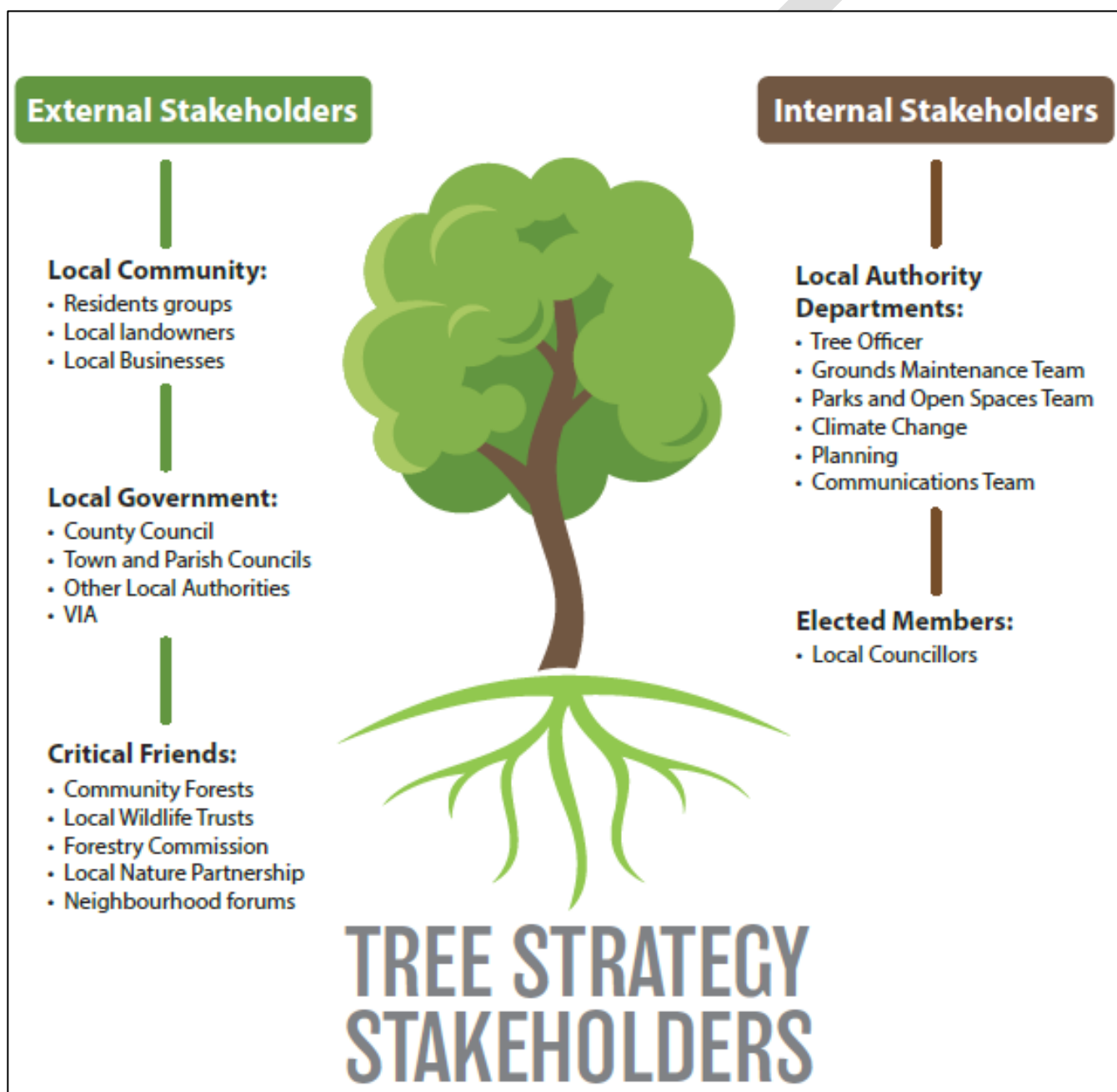

Figure 1: Key Stakeholders
Adapted from: DEFRA, Forestry Commission and the Tree Council - TREES AND WOODLAND STRATEGY TOOLKIT (2022)

8   Governance

The Council currently operates under a Cabinet system with a Lead Portfolio Holder for each priority area within the Council. Represented on the Cabinet is a Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change.

Within the Council, the Tree Strategy for the Council's own trees is managed and delivered (in the main) by the Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Reports on progress will take place via the Climate Change and Green Futures Board, which meet on a quarterly basis. This group provides updates on progress to the General Management Team and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change.

9   Stakeholder engagement

Keeping stakeholders informed with regards to any potential tree works ensures that there is an awareness of the reasons, requirements and timeframes for these to be carried out.

Tree Management and Maintenance

The tables below specify how the maintenance work requests are prioritised by the Council. The tables also detail expected timescales for undertaking the work.

Once a tree has been assessed and the appropriate level of work determined, an instruction is passed to the Council's tree team or nominated contractor to complete the work within the relevant timescale.

The Council will employ arboricultural techniques to maintain the oldest and most prominent trees located within the Borough.

The Council will address any tree enquiry in the following way:

1. **REQUEST -** Contact made from member of public, agency or other stakeholder.
2. **ASSESS -** Tree officer will visit site to asses any work that may be required. An update is provided to enquirer as to outcome of the inspection.
3. **INSTRUCT -** If any works are identified, then an instruction is sent to tree team/contractor with appropriate timescale of completion.
4. **COMMUNICATE –** Ensure all relevant stakeholders have been informed of when the works are due to take place.
5. **WORK -** After the works have been completed then a follow up visit or scheduled re-inspection is undertaken.

Once the Tree Officer has been on site to assess the tree/s, they will prioritise the works required using the categories highlighted in Table 2.

Category	Description	Timescale to undertake action
1	**Tree poses serious threat** - hazardous tree/fallen tree etc.	**Immediate** (within 24 hours)
2	**Tree causing or likely to cause physical damage** – to property etc.	**Within one month.** This

Category	Description	Timescale to undertake action
3	**Work to allay a potential future threat** – dying/diseased tree, or self-seeded poor specimens, growing in an unsuitable location.	excludes trees that may be subject to an insurance claim, where it needs to be proved beyond reasonable doubt that the tree is responsible for the damage.
4	**Work to manage a legal nuisance** e.g. blocked access.	
5	**Routine maintenance**	**In line with good arboricultural practice.** Target time within 5 months of receiving initial request.

Table 2: Tree work prioritisation categories and expected timeframes

What is routine maintenance?

Routine tree maintenance is the process of inspecting, pruning and maintaining trees to keep them healthy and safe. The following includes details of issues where consideration would be made for pruning/maintenance:

- Fallen or snapped branches.

- Low branches (below head height or affecting access).

- Trees touching properties.

- Trees obscuring lights on paths within parks or Council owned land.

- Low sprouting growth from the trunk or base of the tree (known as epicormic growth).

Timescale for undertaking routine maintenance work

The process for assessing work and the relevant timescales are detailed in Table 2. This is intended to provide guidance on the standards that the public can expect. However, timescales may need to be adjusted due to weather conditions, budget constraints and existing workloads. Trees that pose a serious threat or are causing physical damage will be dealt with in line with the timescales indicated in Table 3.

The Tree Officer will advise complainants on any appropriate works and corresponding timescale.

Operation	Timescale
Enquiry received and assessment made by Tree Officer. Some requests may not require a visit by the Tree Officer and will be added direct to the work list.	Up to 4 weeks
Works scheduled and issued to tree team or contractor. Where possible works will be grouped into geographical batches and allocated in packages rather than as one-off jobs.	Up to 8 weeks
Tree contractor/Broxtowe Borough Council Tree Team complete works	Up to 10 weeks
Maximum total time to undertake routine maintenance.	**22 weeks (5 months)**

Table 3: Timescale for undertaking routine maintenance work

Situations where work on a tree maybe delayed

Most tree works will take place alongside a visual ecological inspection to ensure that the tree is clear of wildlife. However, there may be occasions where works needs to be stopped or delayed due to nesting birds or roosting bats.

Instances where tree works may not be undertaken

The Council receives many requests that it is not legally required to address. These requests are classified as non-legal nuisance. Work to resolve the following issues is not undertaken unless it forms part of routine maintenance:

- Effects on TV reception (either satellite or terrestrial television)

- Effects on solar panels

- Obstruction of views

- Minor or seasonal 'nuisances' such as:
    - Honeydew (dripping sap)
    - Bird droppings
    - Leaf, fruit or flowers fall

Whilst the Council acknowledges that these issues can be frustrating, these challenges are outweighed by the substantial environmental benefit that trees provide.

Removal of Council Owned Trees

The Council will never undertake unnecessary works to trees, because to do so would require the allocation of scarce resources.

The Council will not remove trees unless it is for one of the following reasons:

- Trees that are considered dead, dying or dangerous. A professional assessment and detailed inspection will be carried out on a trees condition to ascertain if the tree is either:

    - **Dead** – a tree that has no growth present within the crown.

    - **Dying** - a tree that is in the process of irreversible decline.

- **Dangerous** – biological and/or mechanical defects are noted, and the likelihood of failure is deemed high.

- Removal of trees to benefit adjacent trees, for example trees in groups on parks/open spaces that are being suppressed by adjacent trees.

- Trees that are proven (beyond reasonable doubt) to be the sole cause of subsidence to property.

- Occasionally, exceptional circumstances may arise that are not covered by the previous points (or self-seeded poor specimens, growing in an unsuitable location). In such circumstances either the Head of Environmental Services, nominated deputy or the Head of Housing (Housing owned land) will assess the tree and a decision will be made as to whether works on the tree are required or if it needs to be felled.

Trees will not be removed for the following reasons:

- To increase light penetration to properties.

- To improve a view.

- To alleviate any of the situations listed in the non-legal nuisance category.

10 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)

"A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity." (Source: Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas. Gov.UK 2014) TPOs are issued by Local Authorities and can be applied to individual or groups of trees. The purpose of a TPO is to protect trees that are of, special value, old, rare or have historical / cultural significance.

TPO trees are usually mature, of good form and, most importantly, can be clearly seen from a public area.

It should be noted that residents must not undertake work to Council owned trees, trees which may be in a conservation area or that may have a TPO order on them without the express permission of the Council.

Further information on TPO's, including a register of all TPO's in the Borough can be found on the Council's website: https://www.broxtowe.gov.uk/for-you/parks-and-nature-conservation/trees-and-hedges/tree-preservation-orders/

11 Tree Planting

The Environment Act 2021 has set out the key components of mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) for planning permissions granted in England. Sites will have to deliver at least 10% BNG from January 2024. Tree planting will play a valuable role in facilitating and enhancing this initiative. Detail and actions on BNG are captured in the Council's Climate Change and Green Futures strategy.

To align with the Council's commitment to climate change and becoming carbon neutral by the end of 2027, there is the constant need to replenish and expand the Borough's tree stock.

Broxtowe Borough Council invests in new tree planting each year on public spaces, and also in its woodlands and hedgerows.

Broxtowe Borough Council, as part of its drive to address climate change and be responsible for its tree stock has planted over 132,000 since 2008, that's more than one for every resident in the Borough.

The Council's tree planting schedule is undertaken during the winter months (between November and the end of February). This takes into account the most arboriculturally appropriate time for planting trees during dormancy. However, trees may be planted outside this time and if such instances occur, trees are given suitable aftercare.

In line with standard horticultural practice, newly planted trees will be watered for the first three years to ensure that they stay healthy and have the best possible chance of establishing.

In order to supress weeds and retain moisture the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) recommends mulching around the base of new trees. The Council will evaluate the effectiveness of undertaking this practice moving forward. Consideration though will need to be given to cost and resources.

Wherever possible, trees that are felled by the Council shall be replaced with an appropriate species in the next planting season, except in cases where it is deemed unsuitable to plant a replacement in the same place. In such situations, wherever possible, an alternative position shall be sought within the Borough.

The planting of new trees shall only be undertaken in situations where it is assessed that the Council has the **RIGHT TREE for the RIGHT PLACE**. This means before a tree is planted, the area selected for planting will be assessed. This is to ensure that a complimentary tree species is selected and the planting of the tree shall not have a negative effect upon:

- The public's safe, free movement within the public highway.

- Utility supplies and equipment, or any other similar services.

- The integrity, use and enjoyment of private property.

- Existing biodiversity.

Tree planting will entail the selection of any suitable species to maximise its long term retention. It may also be unsuitable to replant with a like-for-like species. This is where the former tree has died of a particular disease or has been removed due to growing in a dangerous position or be found to be causing damage.

Since January 2023, all tree stock for the Council is sourced from British nurseries and is UK grown. This is to remove the risk of importing invasive species such as Oak Processionary Moth (OPM), or the fungus causing Ash dieback.

In local nature reserves and woodlands, only native species will be planted and will be of UK provenance.

12 Action Plan

Ref	Action	Target for 2024/25	Responsible Officer		Cost
1	Monitoring and data management	Create a monthly monitoring report that will capture the following: - Number of trees planted. - Number of trees receiving maintenance. - Number of trees removed. - Number of TPO's issued. - Number of TPO maintenance works. Using GIS mapping, estimate the total number of trees under Council ownership. Establish a carbon sequestration value for Council owned natural assets. Calculate the amenity value for Council trees.	Parks and Open Spaces Manager		£
2	Tree Management and Maintenance	Ensure that all maintenance works takes place within the relevant pre-agreed timescales. Deal with all dangerous trees within 24 hours after receiving the report. Routine tree assessments will be carried out within four weeks.	Parks and Open Spaces Manager		££

Ref	Action	Target for 2024/25	Responsible Officer	Cost
3	Planting and establishment of new trees	Plant 3,000 trees, 10% of which will be drought tolerant. Provide 800 trees for the free tree scheme, utilising the Green Rewards Platform as a method for qualification. Consider other sustainable plant options for residents who do not have enough room in their garden for a tree. Identify 1 area and install a pocket orchard. Identify and create one new woodland. Establish an appropriate aftercare programme for new trees (especially during periods of extreme heat and drought). Explore external funding opportunities to help support the tree planting programmes. Look for opportunities to increase Council owned tree canopy cover across the Borough. All trees to receive three years' aftercare after planting. Increase tree canopy cover by 1% per annum.	Parks and Open Spaces Manager/Climate Change Manager	£££
4	Enhance Biodiversity	Plant Black Poplars and re-wild the Erewash flood plain at Toton.	Head of Environmental Services/ Parks and Open Spaces Manager	£££

Ref	Action	Target for 2024/25	Responsible Officer	Cost
		Evaluate the effectiveness the mulching around the base of new trees. Undertake a trial for benchmarking. Work with stakeholders to identify trees with the best biodiversity potential (including veteran trees) and look at ways to incorporate these into yearly planting plans. If safe to do so, don't clear away felled or fallen trees.		
5	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation	Identify opportunities to increase urban tree canopy to reduce urban heat islands. Identify opportunities to diversify woodlands so that they are more resilient to natural hazards such as wildfires and storms.	Head of Planning and Economic Development/Parks and Open Spaces Manager.	£
6	Communication and Stakeholder Engagement	Work with the Communications Team to ensure that sustainable management principles and maintenance regimes are clearly communicated to all key stakeholders. Engage with community groups to identify three woodland enhancement planting project. Undertake regular tool box talk training sessions on tree maintenance with the Grounds Maintenance team.	Head of Environmental Services/ Parks and Open Spaces Manager/ Communications, Cultural and Civic Services Manager	£

Ref	Action	Target for 2024/25	Responsible Officer		Cost
7	Pests and disease management in trees	Maintain awareness of emerging tree pests and diseases and adapt management practices accordingly. Undertake proactive inspections on trees for pests and diseases. Ensure and obtain relevant documentation that all trees purchased for the Council are UK native species, grown in the UK.	Head of Environmental Services/ Parks and Open Spaces Manager		££
8	Health and Wellbeing	To increase the number of residents taking part in the 'switch off' action on the Green Rewards platform by 5%. Produce a Green Social prescribing model in relation to health and wellbeing for the Borough. Utilise wood from routine maintenance work, to support activities such as basket making and supporting structures for gardens and allotments.	Chief Communities Officer/ Communications, Cultural/Civic Services Manager/Parks and Open Spaces Manager		£

£ - Low	££ - Medium	£££ - High

13 References

DEFRA, Forestry Commission and the Tree Council - TREES AND WOODLAND STRATEGY TOOLKIT (2022)

Ecotree: How much CO_2 does a tree absorb? https://ecotree.green/en/how-much-co2-does-a-tree-absorb#answer referenced 11 September 2023.
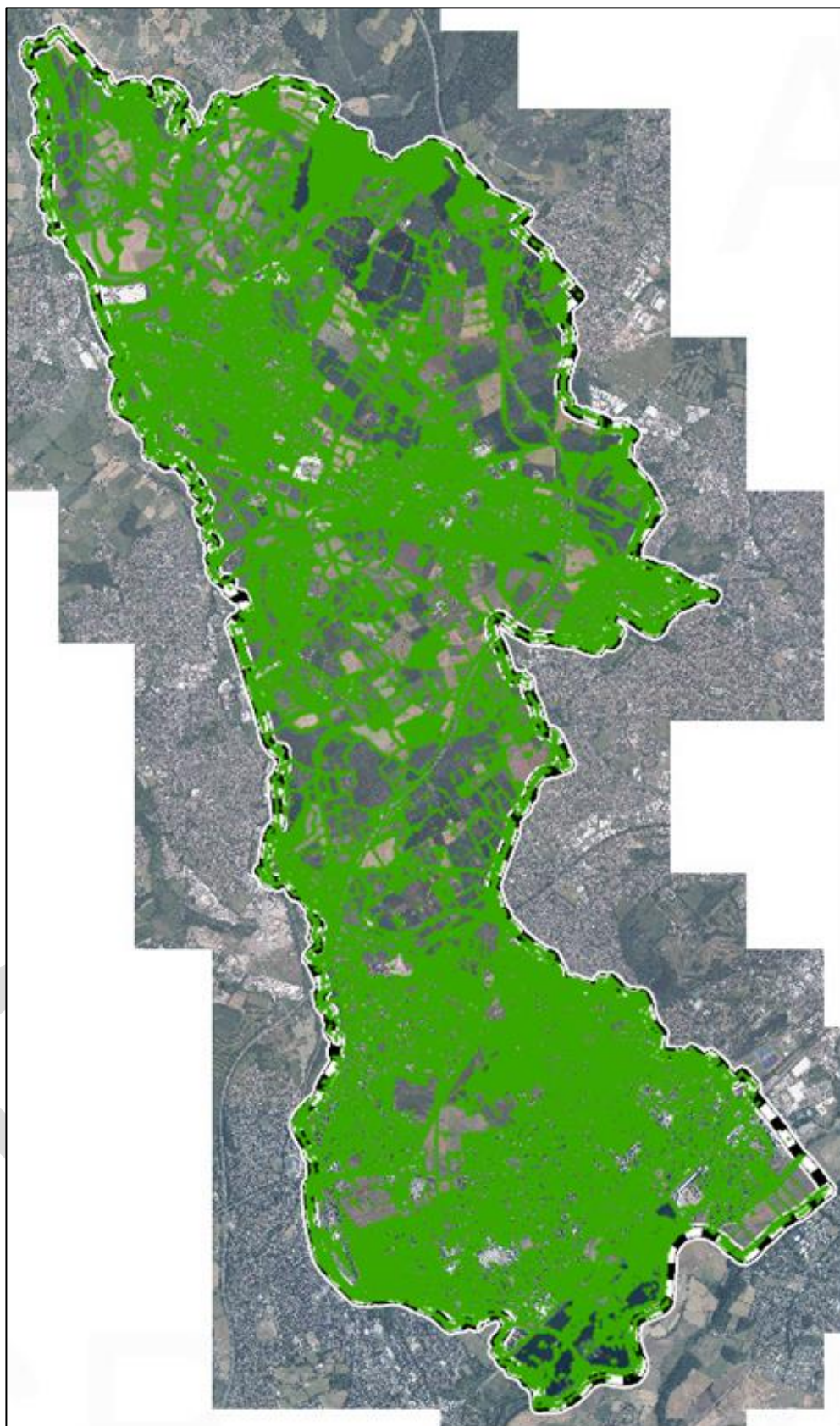
Gov.UK Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas referenced 15 September 2023

Woodland Trust: Why we need trees. https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/benefits/ referenced 11 September 2023.

14 Appendix – Tree Canopy cover across the Borough

*Tree Canopy Cover: 26%
This has been calculated using Ordnance Survey's MasterMap. The Borough's canopy cover is estimated to be 21.4 square kilometers. The total area of the Borough is calculated at 81.08 square kilometers.
The maps small scale does not accurately reflect the 26% tree canopy cover.