



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CLIMATE CHANGE,  
BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION**

**MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2024**

**Report of the Executive Director - Place**

**Million Trees Project Update**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction with an update on the work being undertaken by the Council to deliver the Million Trees Project.

**2. Information and Analysis**

**Background**

- 2.1 The Million Trees Project was launched by the Council in June 2021 and is aiming to facilitate the planting of a million trees in Derbyshire by 2030.
- 2.2 In the current decade Derbyshire is facing a significant change to its tree landscape with the onward spread of Ash Die Back and a range of other tree diseases. Along with the changing climate, this is leading to a loss of trees in the landscape on a scale not seen in the county since Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. Furthermore, the UK has less than three decades to reach net-zero emissions and tree planting has emerged as a well-received and prominent part of the Government's plan to get there. Trees offer a way of making a positive impact with their carbon sequestration and storage abilities, whilst at the same time contributing to improvements for wildlife, flood management and the physical and mental health of UK citizens.

- 2.3 The Million Trees Project was created to help address these tree losses within the Derbyshire landscape and encourage public participation through the realisation of the ambitious target to facilitate the planting of 1 million trees by 2030. Tree planting being the ideal vehicle to engage people with climate change and current environmental issues.
- 2.4 The Council prepared a [Tree and Woodland Strategy](#) for Derbyshire which was formally approved by Cabinet on 21 September 2023 (Minute No. 137/23 refers). The Tree and Woodland strategy links to the Council's Natural Capital Strategy and current work on the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The strategies will highlight opportunities and guide future tree planting in Derbyshire.
- 2.5 The Tree and Woodland Strategy initially focuses on the three-year period of 2023-24 to 2025-26. During this time, the Council's intention is to accelerate appropriate action to improve the quantity and quality of, and public accessibility to, Derbyshire's varied treescapes. New resources will need to be identified to ensure the Strategy's effective delivery. Hence, through the Strategy the Council will seek innovation in combining public, private and community sector vigour, experience, landholdings, and funding to identify solutions that demonstrate a viable return on investment from the high value ecosystem benefits of woodlands and trees.
- 2.6 The primary goals of the Tree and Woodland Strategy are detailed below. By 2050:
- Trees and woodlands across Derbyshire are making their greatest contribution to protecting society from the impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration, flood prevention, cooling and shading and nature conservation.
  - Woodlands are sustaining and connecting wildlife-rich habitats that are valued by all the County's residents, businesses, and visitors, for the social, economic and environmental benefits that nature provides.
  - A collaborative and evidence-based approach will have increased the quantity, quality, and diversity of Derbyshire's treescape, that is effectively maintained and adapted to ensure its maturity and replenishment against the challenges of a changing climate.
  - The Council and its partners have demonstrated their commitment and credentials for delivering sustainable tree and woodland stewardship and have secured fitting levels of Government and investor funding to enable the delivery of this Strategy.

## Progress to Date

- 2.7 The Million Trees Project has been very successful from its inception in June 2021 in planting trees on Council land, supporting community action and capturing tree planting activity across Derbyshire.
- 2.8 The Project is working with volunteers, landowners, schools, partner organisations and businesses to reach the target of planting a million trees in Derbyshire by 2030. The Council is also working with districts, boroughs, town and parish councils to facilitate tree planting and collect tree planting data from these organisations and areas.
- 2.9 Tree planting data is also being collated from businesses and organisations operating in Derbyshire who have planted trees. These figures are being included in the Million Trees totaliser, which can be found on the Council's Million Trees website: [www.milliontrees.co.uk](http://www.milliontrees.co.uk)
- 2.10 Tree planting activity will now be focussed on the development and delivery of the new Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest. Existing work streams within the Million Trees Project will continue and these will be completed where possible.
- 2.11 The Council has a revenue budget for the Million Trees Project, this will be utilised to fund the Council's Million Trees Officer post.
- 2.12 Table 1 sets out the indicative annual target for tree planting to reach one million new trees planted by 2030. These targets were set out at the inception of the Project and represented best realistic estimates of annual planting across the life of the project.

**Table 1: Tree planting annual targets**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Cumulative Target</b>
2021-22	7,600	7,600
2022-23	40,000	47,600
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>97,600</b>
2024-25	60,000	157,600
2025-26	100,000	257,600
2026-27	125,000	382,600
2027-28	125,000	507,600
2028-29	150,000	657,600
2029-30	150,000	817,600
2030-31	200,000	1,007,600
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,007,600</b>	<b>1,007,600</b>

2.13 The Million Trees website totaliser is currently on 420,399 (as at 12 April 2024), which is well ahead of the target set for this point in the Project.

2.14 Table 2 shows the current tree planting data held since the Project began. Tree planting data for this most recent tree planting season (2023-24) is still being collated and therefore the figures will rise.

**Table 2: Confirmed 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 Tree Planting:**

Confirmed tree planting delivered in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24			
	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24
<b>Individual local authority tree planting</b>			
Derbyshire County Council (Million Trees)	2,776	21,051	11,299
Amber Valley Borough Council	21,500	325	
Bolsover District Council	6,200	12,042	
Chesterfield Borough Council	2,000	2,543	
Derbyshire Dales District Council	10	60	
Erewash Borough Council	*	336	
High Peak Borough Council	*	2	
North East Derbyshire District Council	32	4	
South Derbyshire District Council	*	*	*
Cosy Ltd micro tree nursery			770
National Forest (three sites in South Derbyshire)		5441	
Woodland Trust's Young People's Forest at Mead (Smalley)	194699		
Woodland Trust's Northern Forest (in Derbyshire)		4086	
Woodland Trust's Free Trees for Schools (in Derbyshire)	34245	28260	
Woodland Trust's Free Trees for Schools (in Derbyshire)		17340	
Million Trees website submissions (as of 10th April 2024)		16808	
<b>Peak District National Park Authority tree planting</b>	*	*	*
<b>Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) partnership tree planting project <sup>1</sup></b>	2,760		619
<b>Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) partnership &amp; Million Trees tree planting project <sup>2</sup></b>		1408	
<b>The Queen's Green Canopy (Shipley Country Park)</b>		6	
<b>The Queen's Green Canopy (Derbyshire wide)</b>		33,777	
<b>Total</b>	264,222	143,489	12,688
<b>GRAND TOTAL FOR 2021/22 &amp; 2022/23 and 2023/24 (as at 10th April 2024)</b>	<b>420,399</b>		
<sup>1</sup> LATF partnership of Derbyshire County Council (lead), High Peak Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, and Peak District National Park Authority			
<sup>2</sup> LATF partnership of Derbyshire County Council (lead), Amber Valley Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Peak District National Park Authority, Pilsley, Pinxton, Etwall parish councils.			
* No return yet			

## Promotional Activities

- 2.15 The Million Trees website was launched in March 2023 and, since then, has proven to be an effective tool for engaging with the public on the Million Trees Project. One key feature of the website is the interactive [map](#), where individuals and organisations are encouraged to log trees they have planted in order for them to be included in the total number of trees planted across Derbyshire. So far, 16,808 trees have been added to the map and totaliser since the website launched. A running totaliser can be found on the website [homepage](#).
- 2.16 Since the website launched in March 2023, it has received direct enquiries from 87 landowners, 42 businesses and 148 volunteers (groups and individuals).
- 2.17 Two businesses have recently supported the Million Trees project with donations totalling £4,500, which funded approximately 11,000 trees.
- 2.18 These 11,000 trees were distributed for planting to Derbyshire private landowners who had enquired through the Million Trees website, Derbyshire County Council sites and sites managed by both Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Groundwork.
- 2.19 Eight staff from Griffith Foods, one of the Million Trees company donors, volunteered to plant trees at Brook Park – a 37-hectare site with specially recreated limestone grassland on the site of the former Shirebrook Colliery. Some 600 trees were planted at the event which the Council facilitated and included hazel, hawthorn, dog rose, yew and oak. The volunteer day was run with the support of three members of local charity Groundwork which helps to manage the site on behalf of landowners The Land Trust.
- 2.20 The Council has also been successful in securing Government approval for the creation of a new community forest named Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest, which will help to facilitate the Million Trees Project by including those trees planted in the totaliser. The boundary for the new Community Forest spans the eastern and southern fringes of Derbyshire, which was identified as needing more trees and community access to nature. Information on the map boundary can be found [here](#).

Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest is funded by the Government's Trees for Climate programme and offers generous tree planting grants to landowners and communities to increase woodland cover.

- 2.21 Trees for Climate is a woodland creation programme focusing on the Community Forest areas. It is part of Defra's Nature for Climate fund which is a national initiative for natural solutions to climate change. The grant aims to cover all costs associated with woodland creation, as well as providing ongoing funding to support the maintenance of the trees.
- 2.22 Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest has a target of 75 hectares, or 300,000 trees planted by March 2025. This will be achieved through landowner engagement and partnership working with organisations.
- 2.24 Since the launch of Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest, there have been 24 enquiries from potential landowners for tree planting.
- 2.25 The information provided in this update shows that the Million Trees project has been successful to date in facilitating tree planting in Derbyshire. The project remains well ahead of its annual targets and work continues to promote its objectives and to engage collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to achieve the objectives.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 Not applicable.

### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Not applicable.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

### **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Cabinet Report, Preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire, dated 11 January 2024 (Minute No. 8/24 refers).
- 6.2 Cabinet Report, [Tree and Woodland Strategy](#) for Derbyshire, dated 21 September 2023 (Minute No. 137/23 refers).
- 6.3 Cabinet Member – Infrastructure and Environment Decision, The Creation of Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest, dated 9 November 2023 (Decision Reference D894 refers).

## **7. Appendices**

7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

## **8. Recommendation**

That the Committee:

- a) Notes the update on the work being undertaken by the Council to deliver the Million Trees Project.

## **9. Reason for Recommendation**

9.1 To ensure that the progress made regarding the Million Trees Project is understood by the Committee.

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## **Implications**

### **Financial**

- 1.1 The delivery of the Million Trees Project requires officer time to support its delivery and monitoring. The approved budget for 2024-25 is £0.047m which covers this staffing element of the project.
- 1.2 The project utilises grant schemes to fund tree planting meaning there are no additional revenue costs to the Council. Examples include Trees for Climate and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. These have establishment maintenance costs for between three - five years following planting, meaning no additional costs to the Council during this term.
- 1.3 In the longer term, maintenance costs would be the responsibility of the landowner. Trees planted on Derbyshire County Council sites will be managed through existing resources.

### **Legal**

- 2.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **Human Resources**

- 3.1 The delivery of specific actions in the Million Trees Project may have human resource implications for the Council. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Information Technology**

- 4.1 The delivery of specific actions in the Million Trees Project may have information technology implications for the Council. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 There are no equalities impact implications associated with this report.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 Delivery of the Million Trees Project will improve the environmental sustainability of the Council and support delivery of the Corporate Environment Policy.



6.2 The Project is also helping to deliver the following Council Plan priorities: Resilient, Healthy and Safe Communities and A Prosperous and Green Derbyshire.

**Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

7.1 None.