

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting of the Executive on 3rd November 2025

Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy update

Report of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Classification	This report is Public.
Contact Officer	Chris McKinney Senior Devolution Lead for Planning Policy, Strategic Growth and Housing

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To seek approval for public consultation on the Consultation Draft Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy.

REPORT DETAILS

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Council has been delivering the Bolsover Community Woodlands project between 2021 and 2025 with funding from the Woodland Trust.
- 1.2 Bolsover District Council received just under £270,000 in funding across a four year period and with this funding the Council made great strides in tree planting across the District, seeing:
- establishment of the Bolsover Community Woodlands project;
 - creation of a temporary Project Officer role to take the project forward;
 - planting of over 25,000 trees across more than ten projects across the District, covering the parishes of Elmton-with-Creswell, Old Bolsover, Whitwell, Clowne, South Normanton, Langwith and Shirebrook;
 - engagement with over 1,000 volunteers on these tree planting projects and other environmental activity days;
 - working with social enterprise Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise to deliver the majority of the tree planting programme;
 - taking part in the National Tree Week campaign, including our wonderful school children's painting competition that led to the delightful banner on the wall in our building's reception; and
 - work commence on the preparation of a Tree and Woodland Strategy with consultancy, Treeconomics, to carry forward the legacy of our positive work with the Bolsover Community Woodlands project.

- 1.3 In addition to internal officer and Member engagement, the preparation of the Tree and Woodland Strategy has to date involved engagement with a number of relevant external stakeholders, including the District's Parish and Town Councils, Derbyshire County Council officers, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and National Trust representatives.
- 1.4 This has led to the preparation of a Consultation Draft Strategy that seeks to set an ambitious strategy that will continue the great work of the Bolsover Community Woodlands project and see further opportunities for tree planting across our District.
- 1.5 The draft Strategy forms an appendix to this report and its contents are summarised below.

2.0 Details of Proposal or Information

Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy

- 2.1 The prepared draft Tree and Woodland Strategy is a comprehensive document that sets out a vision, a baseline of the District's existing tree and woodland coverage and condition, sets out a range of targets, priorities and actions and is supported by a Delivery Plan and a Monitoring & Review Plan.
- 2.2 In terms of what the draft Strategy seeks to achieve, based on the undertaken stakeholder engagement Chapter 3 of the draft Strategy sets out the following vision.

"To create a greener, healthier, and more connected Bolsover by nurturing and expanding our trees and woodlands, fostering community pride in them, enhancing biodiversity, and taking care of our trees and woodlands for the benefit of current and future generations."

- 2.3 This vision is intended to capture the Council's desire to look after the District's existing trees and woodlands, increase the canopy coverage in the District and to ensure this both involves local communities and fosters their pride in their local environment.
- 2.4 Chapter 4 sets out a baseline of the District's existing coverage and provides both an assessment of tree canopy coverage by ward as a percentage of the total land area of each ward and information about public access. This shows a range from 6% coverage in the Bolsover East Ward up to 30.6% coverage in the Langwith Ward. For information the national average for tree canopy is 14%.
- 2.5 Through the initial stakeholder engagement, the following three themes have emerged:
 - Taking care of existing trees and woodlands;
 - Expanding tree and woodland coverage;
 - Fostering community pride in trees and woodlands.

- 2.6 Chapters 4, 5 and 6 outline these three themes and expand on how the draft Strategy seeks to deliver the vision through these themes via a range of targets and key performance indicators. These are:

Taking care of existing trees and woodlands

- T1 – Establish comprehensive tree and woodland inventory
- T2 – Ensure operational plans exist for key woodland assets
- T3 – Promotion of tree benefits
- T4 – Tree protection policy development, monitoring and enforcement
- T5 – Secure resources to support existing tree and woodland assets

Expanding tree and woodland coverage

- E1 – Increase overall land dedicated to canopy coverage across Bolsover District
- E2 – Expand tree canopy cover in Wards with low coverage
- E3 – Establish community planting across all parishes
- E4 – Expand existing key woodland assets
- E5 – Secure resources for new tree and woodland planting

Fostering community pride in trees and woodlands

- C1 – Establish more Tree Warden / Champions
- C2 – Community involvement and neighbourhood action
- C3 – General appreciation of trees as a community resource
- C4 – Utilities cooperation
- C5 – General industry cooperation

- 2.7 Each of these targets has information about its link to corporate policies, the actions proposed and an assessment of the Council's current performance.
- 2.8 As can be seen within the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy, the Council's performance has been judged to be low or moderate across most of the performance indicators. This is considered to be in large part due to the Council not holding much information about the District's existing trees and woodland assets and having little established support networks for looking after these assets.
- 2.9 To address these assessed levels of performance, the draft Strategy proposes a range of actions to enhance the level of information the Council holds for existing trees and woodland assets, such as setting up a digital inventory for tree and woodland survey data and obtaining copies of management plans for woodlands. In addition, the draft Strategy includes actions relating to establish a new tree wardens / champions register to help build a good understanding of and support network for community led actions. It is considered that these actions can be delivered using the recently increased level of staffing resource within the Planning Policy and Housing Strategy team.
- 2.10 Beyond this, the draft Strategy proposes actions to seek to secure sufficient staff funding to enable proactive management of existing tree and woodland

assets and also to pursue further funding bids to enable further tree planting projects as this would be likely to require more officer time than is currently available. Should these actions be present in the final Tree and Woodland Strategy, this would lead to a more detailed assessment of the workload and staffing resource required to deliver projects, such as reviewing the Council's Tree Preservation Order register and any significant, future externally-funded tree planting project like that funded recently by the Woodland Trust.

Proposed public consultation exercise

2.11 It is proposed that a four week period of public consultation will take place and that this exercise will involve:

- a digital copy of the Consultation Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy and consultation questionnaire will be available to read and print off on the Council's website;
- a link on the webpage will direct people to a digital version of the consultation questionnaire that can be completed online;
- the same questionnaire will also be on the Ask Derbyshire webpage as many residents use it as their 'go to' when finding out what consultations are live across the district;
- paper copies of the Consultation Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy and consultation questionnaire will be made available at the District's libraries and Contact Centres throughout the 4 weeks of the consultation period.

2.12 Following this consultation period, the outcome of the consultation exercise and a final version of the Tree and Woodland Strategy will be reported back to Executive for approval.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The report updates Members on the preparation of the Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy with the recommendation that Members approve the contents of the proposed draft document for the purposes of public consultation.

4.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 It would be possible to not prepare a Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy, although this is a requirement of the Woodland Trust's funding agreement and would need to be reported to them. As a result, this alternative option has been rejected.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Executive:

- 1) approve the contents of the proposed Consultation Draft Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy as discussed in the report and attached as Appendix 1;
- 2) gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning and Planning Policy, in consultation with the Portfolio Member, to agree the final

arrangements of the proposed consultation exercise on the Consultation Draft Bolsover Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Approved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders, Portfolio Holder for Environment

IMPLICATIONS:

<u>Finance and Risk</u> Yes ☐ No ☒	
Details: There are no specific finance or risk issues arising from this report.	
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer	
<u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u> Yes ☐ No ☒	
Details: There are no specific legal or data protection issues arising from this report.	
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council	
<u>Staffing</u> Yes ☐ No ☒	
Details: There are no human resources implications arising from this report.	
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service	
<u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u> Yes ☐ No ☒	
Details: There are no specific direct or indirect negative impacts on any person with a protected characteristic or any group of people with a shared protected characteristic arising from this report.	
<u>Environment</u> Yes ☒ No ☐	
Details: The Tree and Woodland Strategy will make a notable contribution to enhancing the environment as outlined in the report.	

DECISION INFORMATION:

☒ Please indicate which threshold applies:	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes ☐ No ☒
Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) ☐ (b) ☒
	(a) ☐ (b) ☒

Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more. District Wards Significantly Affected: <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick All if all wards are affected:	All ☒
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Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i> If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i> Consultation carried out: <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i> Leader ☐ Deputy Leader ☐ Executive ☒ SLT ☐ Relevant Service Manager ☐ Members ☐ Public ☐ Other ☒	Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☒ No ☐ Portfolio Holder for the Environment
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Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing
<u>Environment</u> - Enhancing biodiversity across the district. - Working with stakeholders, regional and local partnerships to deliver shared strategies and priorities that support the local environment.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1	Consultation Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy

Background Papers <i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>