Tree, Hedge & Woodland Strategy for East Devon 2024 - 2034

Treeco$_2$nomics

East Devon District Council

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

East Devon's trees, hedges and woodland are an integral part of our landscape, our cultural heritage, and our future. They define the landscape where we live, work
and enjoy our beautiful countryside. It is now universally accepted through research that society feels better when they are in the company of trees. Just as importantly our urban areas require our contact with the natural world and trees bring this right into the heart of our towns reducing the impact of the built environment by providing shade, shelter and improving our air quality.

East Devon District Council declared a Nature Emergency in 2023 and central to restoring our natural environment are our trees, hedges, and woodland as they provide a crucial home for our wildlife to live and to thrive. Trees are integral to our wellbeing, health, and quality of life.

We are fortunate in East Devon to have areas of parks and woodland which are freely accessible to the public and many trees lining our residential streets and within our town centres. A recently completed tree canopy study measured East Devon's area of tree canopy cover at 21.7% which is above the national average, but it has revealed that some areas of our District have greater tree cover than others. Not only is it important that our existing trees are conserved and managed to ensure they bring benefit to future generations, but we also need to identify and action ways to increase their numbers across the whole of East Devon. This is one of the overriding objectives of the Strategy to be bold and ambitious and increase our tree canopy cover to 30% by 2035.

We cannot achieve this alone and so this Strategy, developed in close collaboration with many of our important partners, will actively seek to develop a close partnership working with local communities and landowners who can help us achieve our challenging tree canopy target in the next 10 years.

We face our own challenges with Local Government reorganisation but despite this we are fully committed to making this Strategy a success. We will be focussed on delivering as many of the priority actions identified and ensure that this Strategy will continue in this area, following any re-organisational changes.

The objectives of the Strategy apply to all trees within East Devon whether they
are on council owned land, on land owned by other organisations or by individuals.
The document explains how the Council will work with and seek to support others in their tree and woodland management and encourage additional planting.

We have sought to ensure that this Tree, Hedge & Woodland Strategy also aligns with our Climate Change Strategy and emerging Local Nature Recovery Plan so that we can achieve maximum outcomes for our outstanding natural environment.

Cllr Geoff Jung
Portfolio Holder – Coast, Country & Environment

Contents

1.

Introduction

1.1 Background

The development of a comprehensive Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy (THAWS) reflects the commitment of East Devon District Council (EDDC) to protect and enhance the district's cherished trees, woodland and hedges. In doing so, it will enhance landscape character and biodiversity, improve the overall quality of life for its residents and sustain the natural beauty for which the area is renowned. Based on the principle of establishing the right trees in the right places for the right reasons, this strategy outlines how EDDC will provide essential care and maintenance of its own stock, encourage community engagement and private landowner cooperation with a framework to monitor the outcomes. The strategy will serve as a roadmap over the next decade, focusing on key priorities and actions in the first three years to ensure tangible results.

East Devon's landscape is distinctly rural, with 90% of the district comprising a mosaic of farmland, woodlands, coastline, lowland heaths, estuaries and river systems, while its urban areas make up the remaining 10%. Rural and urban areas often require different approaches to managing trees, hedges and woodlands. Notably, East Devon is home to two National Landscapes including a section of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, and the Blackdown Hills. Together, these cover some two-thirds of the district. The primary purpose of the National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

A total of 11,534 ha of land (14% of the total land area) within East Devon is woodland. This comprises a mix of natural, semi-natural and plantation woodland and includes ancient woodlands like Holyford Woods and Knapp Copse, which are managed by EDDC. East Devon possesses a varied range of woodland types, from wet woodlands, coastal woody habitats, rare temperate rainforest, commercial forestry, orchards and pasture woodlands. Dominant species tend to be oak or ash in lower lying areas, with beech on inland plateaus and birch and pine on heathland areas. East Devon's distinctive hedges - some of the densest in the UK - play a vital role in maintaining ecological connectivity and supporting wildlife, particularly in agricultural settings. Additionally, East Devon boasts beautiful parkland, with notable estates: Killerton (the National Trust's largest country estate), Bicton, and Poltimore. The diversity and quality of trees, woodland and hedges is a major contributor to the varied landscape character and natural beauty of the district.

Furthermore, the district is home to innovative conservation projects, such as Seaton Wetlands, the Lower Otter Restoration Scheme and the recent re-establishment of beavers along the River Otter, which are helping to enhance biodiversity and restore vital habitats.

This strategy recognises the importance of local community involvement, education, and collaboration with key stakeholders, including landowners, conservation groups, and businesses, all involved in its development. Exemplars of best practice, such as Sidmouth Arboretum, Yonder Wood near Exmouth and the work of Clinton Devon Estates, serve as models for future initiatives that aim to balance conservation with economic needs.

Through this strategy, EDDC aims to not only conserve existing natural heritage but also to actively enhance and improve the resilience of East Devon's natural capital. By integrating this strategy with existing and developing policies and focusing on the district's unique environmental features and outstanding landscapes, the strategy will ensure that East Devon remains a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainable land management.

To ensure the strategy reflected a wide range of perspectives, balancing local input with expert knowledge and best practices, EDDC conducted an extensive stakeholder engagement process. This included a series of workshops with key groups such as environmental NGOs, landholders, utility companies, and industry professionals, complemented by a public consultation to gather input from residents on the role of trees, hedges, and woodlands in the district.

1.2 Why Trees, Hedges and Woodland Matter

There are far more benefits to trees than many of us appreciate. In keeping with the benefits of other natural systems, they are also known as ecosystem services. This approach was standardised by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Commission on Ecosystem Service Management. Over 100 Ecosystem Services have been identified by the CICES system (Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services) and work continues to quantify and value each of them.

Trees play a crucial role in supporting healthy, resilient environments. They provide a wide range of ecosystem services that are essential to both people and wildlife. These include improving air quality by absorbing pollutants, reducing the urban heat island effect through cooling, and mitigating flooding by absorbing excess rainwater.[1] Beyond their environmental benefits, trees also offer significant social and economic value by enhancing the aesthetics of communities, providing recreational spaces, and improving mental well-being.[2]

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a mandatory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 for most development types. It provides a legal framework for valuing and assessing trees, hedges, and woodlands (including orchards and wood pasture) in the development process.[3][4] BNG units are used to quantify ecological uplift by calculating the habitat enhancement and connectivity benefits provided by trees, hedges and woodlands.

There are a large number of other benefits of trees where research continues to help assign meaningful valuations, especially in terms of quantifying societal impacts, such as an increase in house value, amenity value of trees and health benefits for residents are also increased in a diverse, healthy natural landscape.

Climate Adaptation - Temperature Regulation:
Trees, woodlands and hedgerows can reduce peak summer temperatures by up to 7°C.[5] This particular adaptation has long been adopted by municipalities in warmer locations and forms a key tenet of green infrastructure thinking. Current research extends into examining the cooling effectiveness of individual species.

Noise Attenuation:
Trees, hedges and woodlands act as natural barriers to sound, reducing noise pollution from traffic, industry and urban activities, contributing to a more peaceful environment.[6]

Increased property or rental value:
A series of international third-party studies have shown that trees increase property prices by between 5% to 18%.[7]

Increased consumer spending:
Consumers are willing to spend more in shopping areas with large, well cared for trees. This has been measured as an increase of 9% to 12%.[8]

Reduced Stress and improved mental health:
Forest Research recently valued this particular benefit of forests and woodlands nationally at £185m.[9] More trees immediately around the home (less than 100 meters) are associated with a reduced risk of being prescribed antidepressant medication. This association is especially strong for deprived groups.

Improved concentration and academic achievement:
Greener schools have higher test scores, even after taking income into account. Middle school students get a boost from school greening. Planting trees within 250m of schools has the greatest effect.[10]

Improved recovery times from illness:
Patients placed in rooms with views of nature experienced shorter stays in the hospital than patients in rooms that faced other buildings.[11]

The infographic on the following page serves as a good illustration listing all the relevant benefits which trees provide to communities.

Sources and References:
1 i-Tree Eco (2024)
2 Doick,*et al* (2018)
3 Defra (2024)
4 Forestry Commission (2024)
5 Doick and Hutchings (2012)
6 Oliveira and Reis (2022)
7 Wolf, K.L. (2007)
8 Wolf, K.L. (2005)
9 Forest Research (2021)
10 Kuo *et al.* (2021)
11 Ulrich,R. (1984)

The Benefits of Trees

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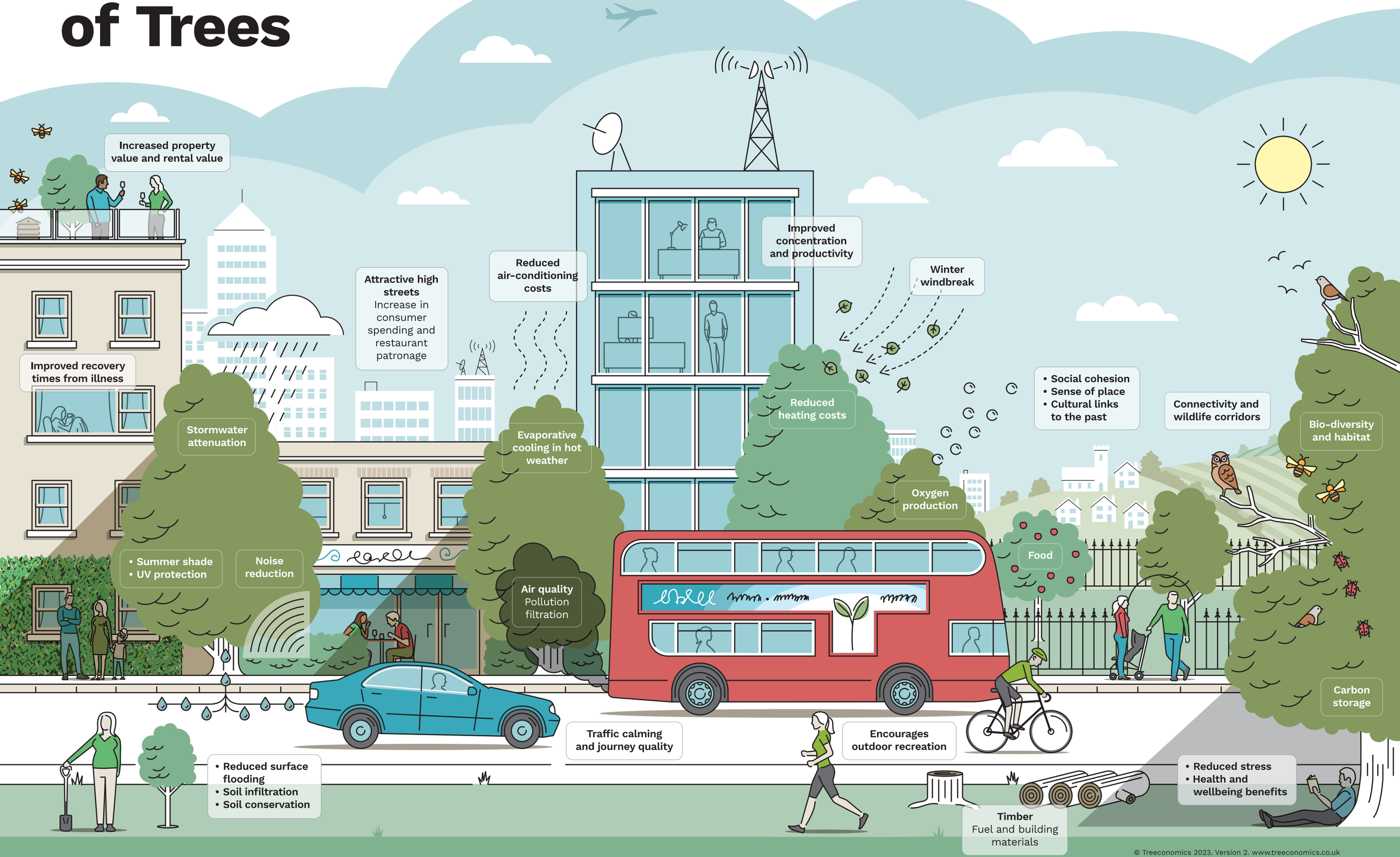


1.3 Current State of Trees, Hedges and Woodland in East Devon

East Devon's trees, woodlands and hedges are a vital resource for the district, with a growing role within the public policy of EDDC.

The contrast between urban and rural treescapes poses a level of complexity for East Devon, in terms of understanding each system and how they interact and are managed. Large areas of East Devon are protected by designations such as the East Devon National Landscape, Blacktown Hills National Landscape, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site, nature reserves, and other conservation designations.

A canopy cover study was carried out by Treeconomics using Google Environmental Explorer (refer to Appendix 5.2) which found East Devon currently has just shy of 17,700 hectares of tree canopy cover, covering 21.7% of the district, with average. 12.6% cover within urban areas, and 22.7% cover in rural areas. There is a large variation across East Devon, with the lowest canopy cover found in Exmouth Town ward (10.3%), and the highest canopy cover in Exmouth Brixington ward (37.3%). The average urban tree canopy cover figure for England is 16%, measured from over 283 towns and cities[12].

Whilst a 20% canopy cover has previously been suggested as a minimum for urban areas[12], the 3-30-300 rule[13] [14] (recommended by the IUCN), proposes that every resident should be able to see at least 3 trees from their home; neighbourhoods should aim for 30% tree canopy cover and Every resident should live within 300 metres of a quality green space. In rural areas there is less definitive guidance, as landscapes can vary significantly. However aiming to improve tree cover and hedge extent, particularly in agricultural areas which may be lacking is important for improving connectivity for nature and climate resilience.

According to Ezytreev the existing tree population in East Devon consists of over 130 species, the most common being English Oak (*Quercus robur*) accounting for 15% of the population, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with 12% and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with 7%.

Currently, the biggest threat facing the tree population is Ash dieback, a deadly fungal disease which already exists across East Devon. Given the size of mature ash trees, and the amount of native biodiversity which rely on these species, both tree canopy cover and native ecosystems are at serious risk of widespread devastation over the next 10-20 years. The Woodland Trust estimate that 80% of Ash in the UK could be killed by this disease.

Climate change is another major threat to trees, woodlands and hedges. Ensuring that both the urban and rural tree populations are resilient to changing temperatures, changing weather patterns, and new pest and disease threats will be crucial to ensuring the future of East Devon's landscapes. Improving resilience means improving biodiversity, protecting soils, diversifying urban forests and woodland types and using trees and hedges to connect isolated green pockets to help pollinators and wildlife to diversify and thrive.

Sources and References:
12 Doick(2017)
13 Konijnendijk, C. (2021)
14 Browning *et al.* (2023)

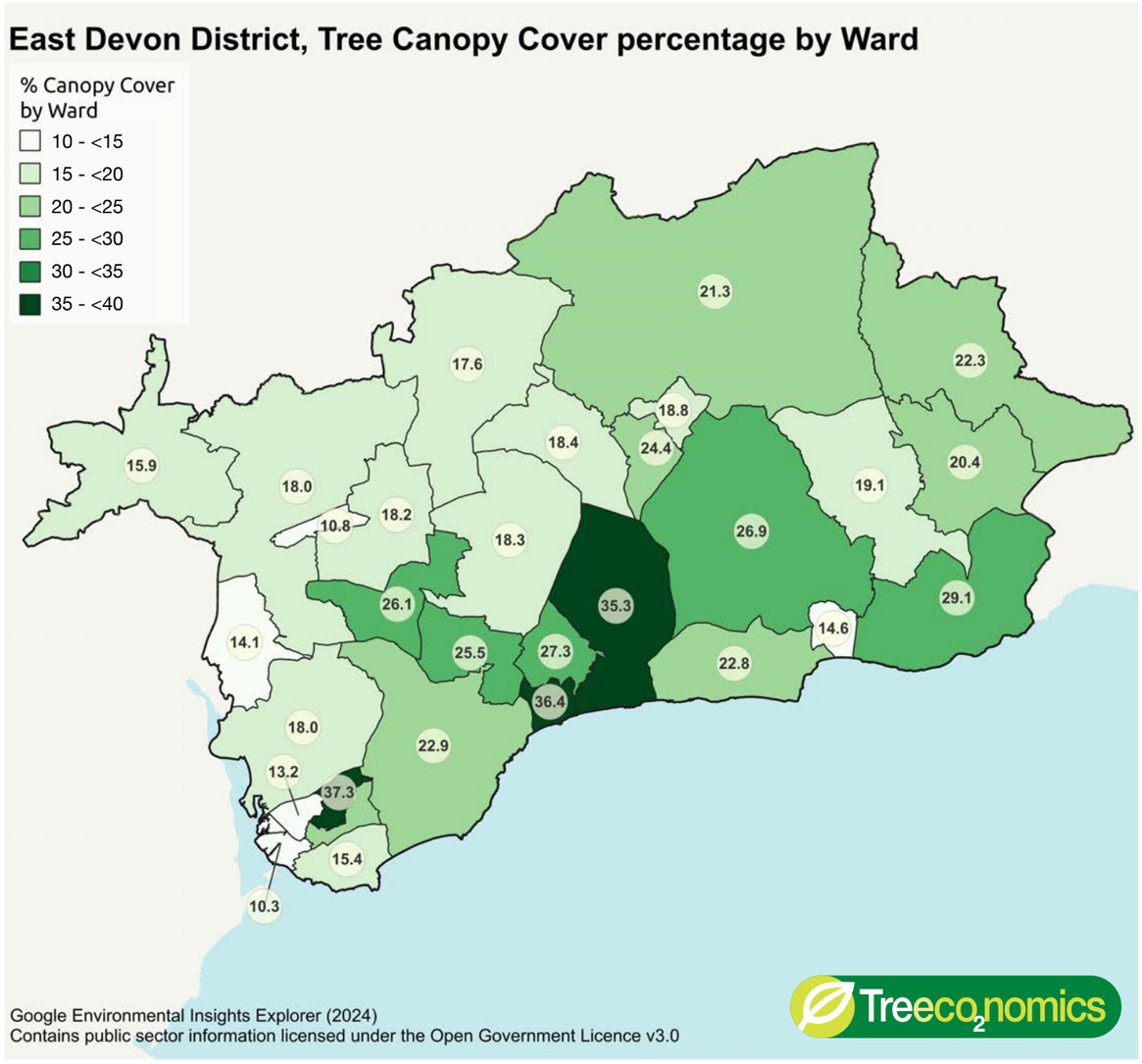


Figure 1. East Devon Tree Canopy Cover by Ward

What is covered by 'Trees, Woodlands and Hedges'

We have adopted a broad definition, encompassing all trees, hedges and woodland; ranging from carefully planted roadside trees to naturally occurring scrubland. These natural features offer valuable benefits to the people living nearby.

2.
Vision

East Devon: where trees, hedges and woodlands are cherished and enhanced, enriching our landscape, economy and the wellbeing of all who live and visit.

2 Vision

The Vision for East Devon's treescape is influenced by the rich heritage of its natural landscape and the desire to protect its beauty and positive environmental and social impacts for the benefit of local people and visitors. The Vision also aims to capture the critical aspect of how healthy trees, woodlands and hedgerows are an asset to more productive and sustainable agriculture and tourism in East Devon.

To shape this strategy, East Devon District Council held multiple stakeholder workshops involving environmental NGOs, large landholders, utility companies, and relevant green industry experts. Additionally, a public consultation was conducted to gather residents' views on trees, hedges and woodlands in the district. This collaborative approach ensures that the strategy reflects a broad spectrum of perspectives, addressing local needs and aspirations while drawing on expert knowledge and best practices.

This strategy aims to help EDDC fulfil the Vision by providing a clear and thorough pathway via Targets, Actions and Key Performance Indicators. By grouping these targets into themes, a rounded approach can be applied to tackling areas of highest priority first, to improve and enhance East Devon's environment in line with the vision.

The strategy outlines key topics, priorities, and actions under three central themes:

1. East Devon's Trees, Hedges, and Woodlands
2. Community Framework
3. Sustainable Resource Management Approach

The strategy is structured around a comprehensive set of key performance indicators informed by the current state of evidence and best practices. For each of these performance indicators, an assessment of the current situation is made, ambitions are laid out, and priorities are identified.

Moreover, specific actions and roles and responsibilities are also defined. This ambitious strategy is an important step forward. Its implementation, in collaboration with both Devon County Council and all local parishes, will create a greener, healthier, and more resilient place to live and work.

East Devon: where trees, hedges and woodlands are cherished and enhanced, enriching our landscape, economy and the wellbeing of all who live and visit.

Figure 2. Diagram indicating how the THAWS fits in with other Devon (red) and East Devon (blue) policies.

3.

Action Plan: Targets, Priorities and Actions

This section considers the physical structure of the trees hedges and woodland from various perspectives. It does not cover the management of those trees which is covered in a later section.

3 Using this document

This section of the strategy is divided into three parts:

3.1 East Devon's Trees, Hedges and Woodlands considers the current extent and physical structure of the trees hedges and woodland across the district from various perspectives with recommendations for further data gathering, monitoring and target setting for their enhancement.

3.2 Community Framework considers the role of local governance and opportunities for working with communities, NGOs, businesses and private landowners for a successful, long term approach to establishment and management of trees, hedges and woodlands.

3.3 Sustainable Resource Management Approach deals with the practical management of the trees, hedges and woodland resource. Each of these parts is broken down into a series of related topics using a standardised format as illustrated below which includes a brief analysis and illustration of each topic, identified priorities and actions, together with key performance indicators showing the overall current rating and target for improvement.

Performance Indicator Name →

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T4 Species Suitability

Explanatory text →

Selecting a broad array of species which are well suited to their environment, whether that is urban or rural is fundamental to the concept of species suitability. Trees have unique needs; all tree species have different genetic characteristics and growth strategies which have been developed to maximise survival and growth in their natural habitats. Climate, soil and other environmental aspects can affect their ability to survive and thrive.

Urban contexts create greater external stresses than trees experience in their natural habitat. This can limit their lifespan and increase vulnerability to pests and diseases. Securing species suitability means trees are less likely to be placed under those stresses and more likely to reach maturity.

The urban and rural context is also going to change under the impact of climate change. Predictions from the UK Meteorological Office forecast warmer wetter winters, hotter, dryer summers and stronger winds. Even that simplistic high level summary is enough to indicate that some species will struggle in the future. Such factors need to be taken into account today when making tree species selection decisions. Many of our native species will be closer to the edge of their suitability range under even the best case scenarios now being envisaged.

Table 1 shows the expected suitability of the most common tree species in East Devon's Council owned tree inventory. Under the current climate, most species displayed are comfortably within their survival range, but in the worst case scenario by 2090 most species are expected to struggle.

Species	2020 Current suitability	2050 Emissions Limited	2090 Business as Usual
English Oak	9	9	6
Common Ash	9	9	6
Sycamore	9	9	2
Silver Birch	9	9	6
Holm Oak	9	11	11
Cherry species	9	9	6
Lime species	11	9	6
Field Maple	9	9	6
Norway Maple	9	9	6
Beech	9	9	6

← Supporting data or illustration

Table 1. Species suitability under 3 climate scenarios for the most common species in East Devon's tree inventory.
Current is based on the climate of 2020.
2050 Emissions Limited uses the SSP2 or RCP4.5 emission scenario as laid out by the IPCC.
2090 Business as Usual uses the SSP3 or RCP7.0 emission scenario as laid out by the IPCC.
11 - Middle of natural range
9 - Middle of Botanic Garden range
6 - Shoulder of Botanic Garden range
2 - Not known but possible to survive

References →

Sources and references:
Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens. (2024)

Links to relevant policies & strategies →

Link to relevant corporate policies
Street Tree Establishment Guide DCC Right Tree Right Place LNRS

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Assess species suitability across East Devon for a changing climate (incorporating BS5837 & DCC tree data) 2. Create a Tree Establishment Strategy for East Devon	EDDC Tender	2026

← Responsible entity / department and review point

Priority of performance indicator High, Medium, Low →

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Fewer than 50% of all trees are from species considered suitable for the area and for projected climate	>50%-75% of trees are from species suitable for the area and for projected climate	More than 75% of trees are suitable for the area and for projected climate	Virtually all trees are suitable for the area and for projected climate

Actions within years 1 to 3 to move towards desired position on performance indicator

Current position (2024)

Please note. Whilst in theory, 'Optimal' is the desirable state for each target, the goal for each has been determined, taking into account the limitations presented by time and resources. One consequence of this is the prioritisation of some activities over others, which manifests itself as a lower target for lower priority areas.

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T1 Tree Canopy Cover (Links to R3)

Tree Canopy Cover (TCC) or tree cover is defined as the area of leaves, branches and stems of trees covering the ground, across a given area, when viewed from above. Assessing canopy cover is relatively simple to determine and can be calculated at relatively little expense. This helps determine nature connectivity and is a good indicator of the scale of ecosystem services provided by trees as the majority of benefits are directly related leaf area.

There are many methods of assessing canopy cover at this scale, including i-Tree Canopy, i-Tree Eco, Sentinel satellite data and Bluesky National Tree Map. These methods are not directly comparable with each other as they use different metrics and definitions of what constitutes canopy cover.

Treeconomics have conducted a TCC assessment using Google Environmental Insights Explorer (EIE). The example in Figure 1 and 3 provides a more nuanced analysis of urban and rural canopy cover, offering greater detail than district-wide estimates. This data has been overlayed with National Forest Inventory (NFI) data to assess the contribution to TCC provided by woodlands (broad-leaved, coniferous & riparian), orchards and hedges, whilst separating urban TCC from rural TCC. The use of EIE data allows for a repeatable and comparable assessment of TCC over time.

A 30% tree canopy cover target for the district is a proposed ambition for the strategy.

Geography	Total Tree Cover	Urban Tree Cover	Rural Tree Cover	Source
East Devon	21.7%	12.6%	22.7%	Google Environmental Insights Explorer (2024)

Table 2: Average Urban Tree Cover Estimates

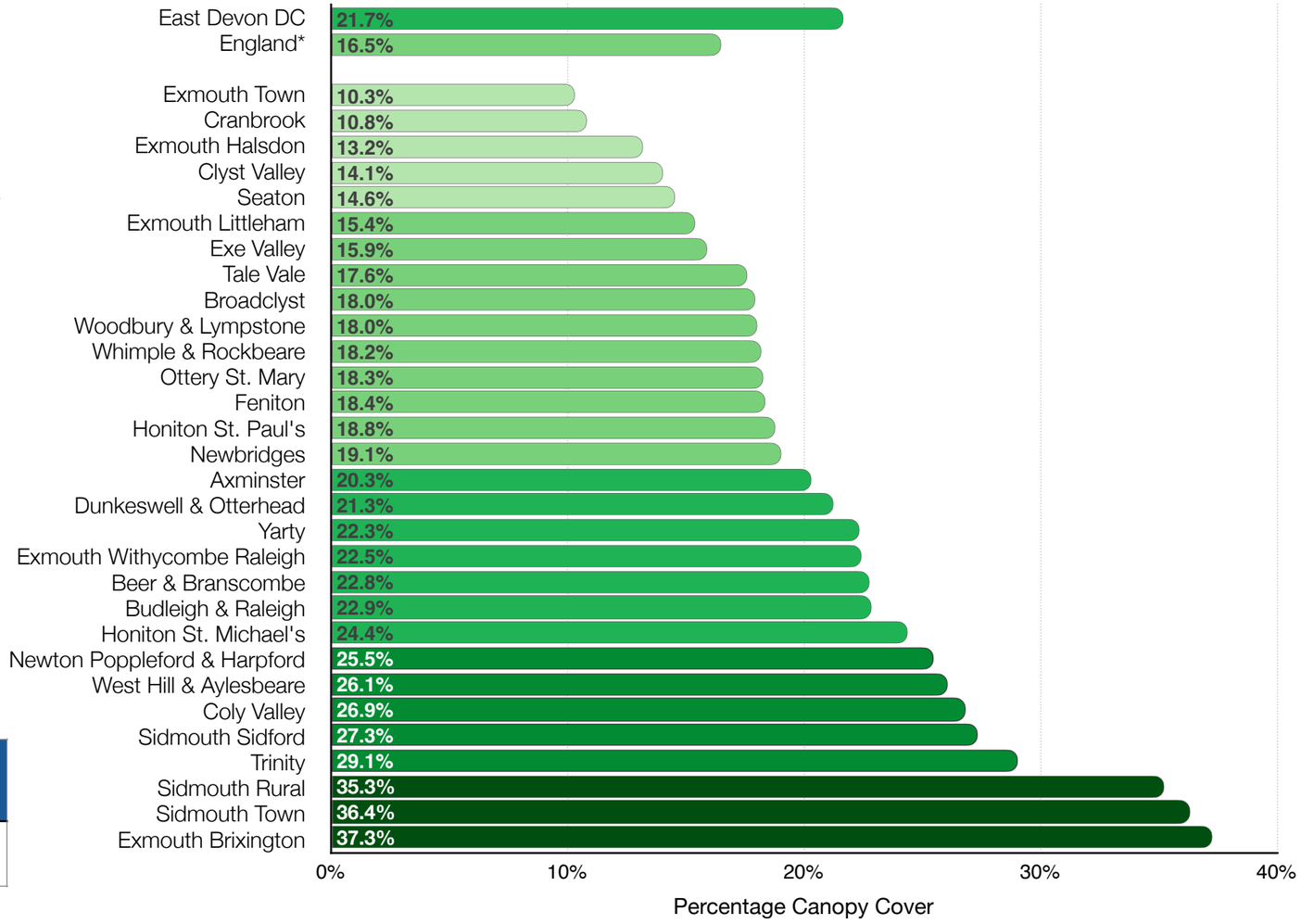


Figure 3: Canopy cover by ward

Link to relevant corporate policies
Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy EDDC Nature Recovery Plan National Landscape Management Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Carry out a detailed assessment to establish accurate potential canopy cover for EDDC land 2. Assess potential canopy cover for Cranbrook & Exmouth (based on current planting levels/ existing trees) 3. Review every 10 years by carrying out a canopy cover assessment	Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	The existing canopy cover equals 0–25% of the target	The existing canopy cover equals 25–50% of the target	The existing canopy cover equals 50–75% of the target	The existing canopy cover equals 75–100% of the target

T2 Size (Age) Diversity

A healthy treescape relies on its age diversity to maintain its ability to maximise benefits to residents and visitors of East Devon. Size can be used as a broad proxy for age when dealing with vast numbers of trees. Larger, older trees such as veteran trees typically provide more benefits than smaller, younger trees and therefore must be protected and managed appropriately. Younger trees are vital to maintaining a healthy and sustainable forest by providing lower canopy and ensuring trees which are naturally lost or felled for safety are replaced.

Generally, the most accurate way to gauge age diversity is to compare current tree size in each species (in terms of diameter at breast height, or DBH) to the maximum diameter for that species[16]. The goal would then be to maintain a tree population that is unevenly distributed among different age classes, making sure that there are enough juvenile trees for the future such as that shown in Figure 4 by Richards 'Ideal' Distribution.[17]

The data used for these assessments reflects the urban tree population recorded in Ezytreev, which may lack younger trees as they are generally not surveyed or recorded for risk management purposes. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the age diversity of East Devon's trees. However, it is not particularly useful or accurate when considering hedges where height, width, density and health are more useful metrics. Devon Hedge Group provides more detail on hedges across East Devon and their makeup. It is also important to strive for an understanding of age diversity across the entire tree population – including public trees in parks and natural areas, trees on private property, hedgerows and public and private woodlands. Understanding how the population varies geographically is important too - across the district, at a neighbourhood level and in urban vs rural areas.

Sources and references:
16 Kimmins, (2004).
17 Richards. (1982/1983) as cited in McPherson (2013)

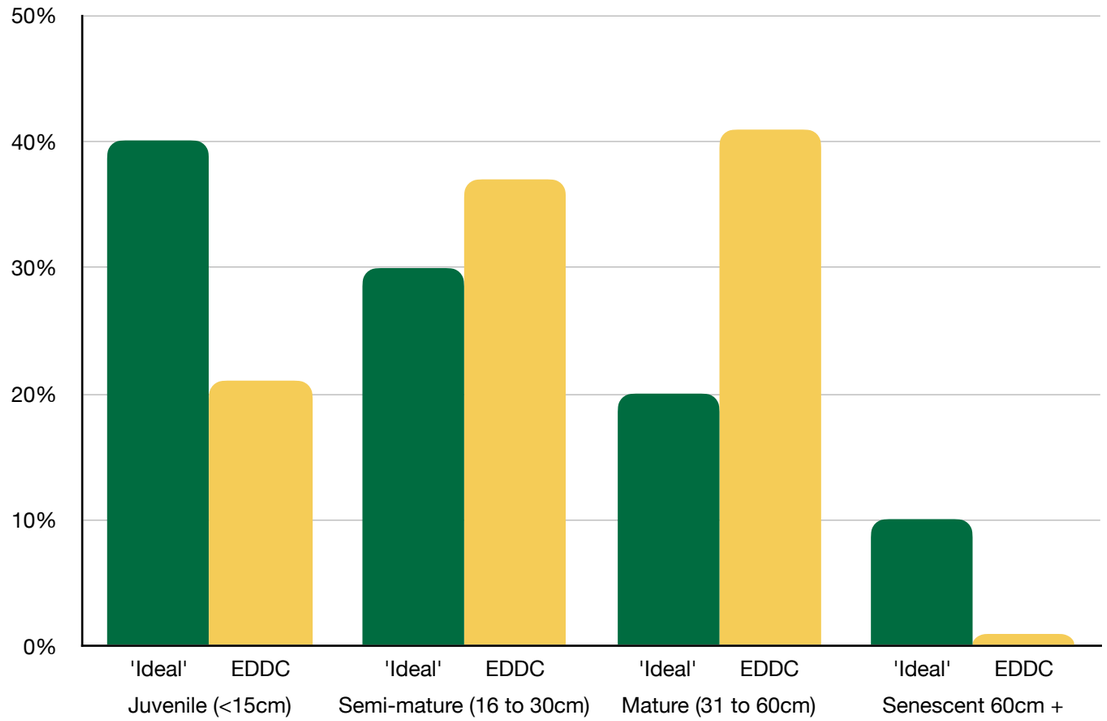


Figure 4: Richards "Ideal" Distribution of Tree Age Across the Urban Forest Showing Typical Stem Diameter for Each Age Class, and the Size Class Distribution of East Devon's Council Owned Tree Population (the EDDC data is not representative of the district as a whole as it only shows inventoried trees)

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Local Nature Recovery Strategy East Devon Local Plan	1. Improve accuracy of age diversity data through other sources, e.g. BS 5837 2. Incorporate DCC tree inventory & Sidmouth i-Tree data into this KPI	EDDC DCC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	Even age distribution or highly skewed toward a single age class	Some uneven distribution, but most of the tree population falls into a single age class	Total tree population across district approaches an 'ideal' age distribution of 40% juvenile, 30% semi-mature, 20% mature, and 10% senescent	Total population approaches that ideal distribution district-wide as well as at the ward level

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T3 Species Diversity

Species diversity is an important aspect of trees and woodlands to monitor as it underpins the wider concept of biodiversity within our treescapes, woodlands and ecosystems. The taxonomy of trees is categorised into families, genera, species and varieties. Having a mix of these is what is commonly understood to be a diverse treescape. Sufficient tree diversity can increase overall resilience in the face of biotic and environmental stresses and threats. Many biotic threats target individual species, so in aggregate, a more diverse tree-scape is better able to deal with possible changes in climate or pest and disease impacts.

Understanding the species diversity of EDDC's existing trees and woodland is a vital first step. From there, tree planting and management plans can enhance the diversity in line with the recommendations of EDDC's action plans for future management. Diversity should be monitored across the whole tree population, both public and private, rural and urban, to provide a complete picture. This will help with decisions of species selection towards better diversity, reducing dominance and reliance on any single species.

In addition to trees and woodlands, Devon's hedges play a significant role in biodiversity. The species composition of hedges is highly varied across the district, reflecting differences between rural and urban areas and across landscape character types. The Devon Hedge Group[17] provides an interactive map of the distinctive hedge types in Devon, offering insight into their species richness and geographic distribution.

Santamour's 10-20-30 rule[18] (where species, genus and family should not exceed 10%, 20% and 30% of the tree population respectively), and Barker's benchmark of 5% per species[19] are useful tools in assessing and providing targets for species diversity; however these rules were developed to guide urban tree populations and are not suitable for rural or woodland populations. For landscape scale approaches, Hubbell's dominance diversity curves[20] are a more useful aid to visualise and plan for species diversity (see figure 5). The longer and shallower the curve, the more species and the more evenly distributed they are within the population, therefore (generally speaking) the better the diversity. Data of public trees from Ezytreev, shows two species, English Oak and Ash, above 10% of the population.

The Woodland Trust's 'Tree Species Handbook'[21] (which accompanies the 'Woodland Creation Guide'[22]) identifies 10 to 30 dominant tree species associated with different types of woodlands across the UK.

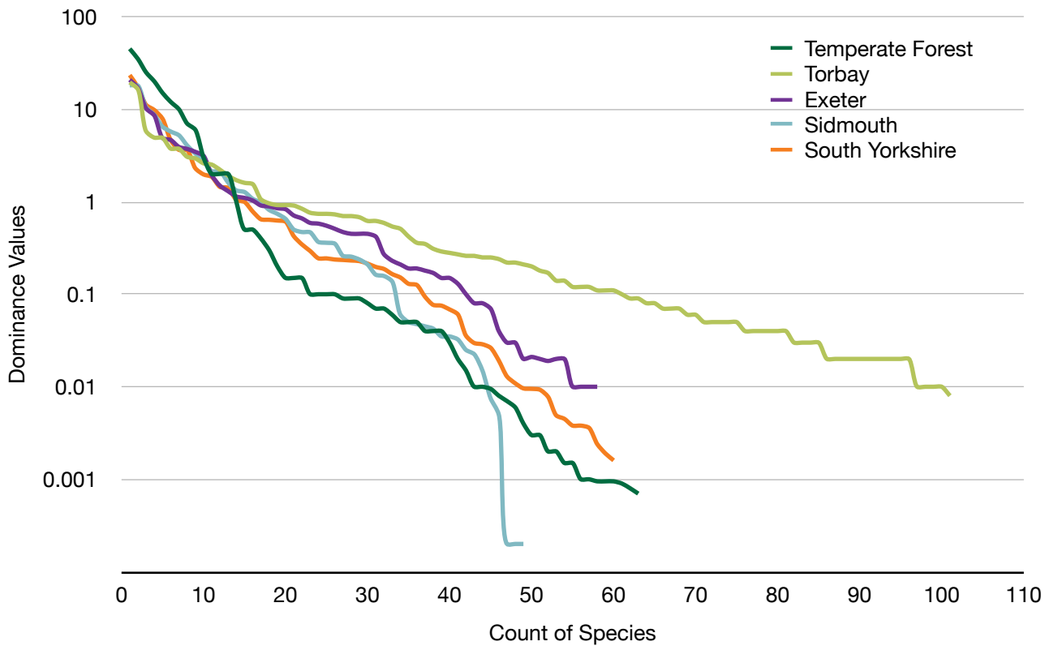


Figure 5. Dominance Diversity Curve showing example forest types and selected UK cities & towns.

Sources and references:

17 The Devon Hedge Group. (2015)

18 Santamour (1990)

19 Barker (1975)

20 Hubbell (1979)

21 Woodland Trust., (2022) (a)

22 Woodland Trust, (2022) (b)

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) EDDC Nature Recovery Plan National Landscape Management Plan	1. Carry out a diversity study of EDDC's urban tree stock 2. Improve accuracy through other sources, e.g., BS 5837	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	Five or fewer species dominate the entire tree population across district	No single species represents more than 10% of total tree population; no genus more than 20%; and no family more than 30%	No single species represents more than 5% of total tree population; no genus more than 10%; and no family more than 15%	At least as diverse as "Good" rating (5/10/15) district-wide – and at least as diverse as "Moderate" (10/20/30) at the neighbourhood level

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T4 Species Suitability

Selecting a broad array of species which are well suited to their environment, whether that is urban or rural is fundamental to the concept of species suitability. Trees have unique needs; all tree species have different genetic characteristics and growth strategies which have been developed to maximise survival and growth in their natural habitats. Climate, soil and other environmental aspects can affect their ability to survive and thrive.

Urban contexts create greater external stresses than trees experience in their natural habitat. This can limit their lifespan and increase vulnerability to pests and diseases. Securing species suitability means trees are less likely to be placed under those stresses and more likely to reach maturity.

The urban and rural context is also going to change under the impact of climate change. Predictions from the UK Meteorological Office forecast warmer wetter winters, hotter, dryer summers and stronger winds. Even that simplistic high level summary is enough to indicate that some species will struggle in the future. Such factors need to be taken into account today when making tree species selection decisions. Many of our native species will be closer to the edge of their suitability range under even the best case scenarios now being envisaged.

Table 1 shows the expected suitability of the most common tree species in East Devon's Council owned tree inventory. Under the current climate, most species displayed are comfortably within their survival range, but in the worst case scenario by 2090 most species are expected to struggle.

The Tree Establishment Strategy referenced in Action 2 will include species selection taking into account other factors beyond climate resilience.

Sources and references:

Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens. (2024)

Species	2020 Current suitability	2050 Emissions Limited	2090 Business as Usual
English Oak	9	9	6
Common Ash	9	9	6
Sycamore	9	9	2
Silver Birch	9	9	6
Holm Oak	9	11	11
Cherry species	9	9	6
Lime species	11	9	6
Field Maple	9	9	6
Norway Maple	9	9	6
Beech	9	9	6

Table 1. Species suitability under 3 climate scenarios for the most common species in East Devon's tree inventory.

Current is based on the climate of 2020.
2050 Emissions Limited uses the SSP2 or RCP4.5 emission scenario as laid out by the IPCC.
2090 Business as Usual uses the SSP3 or RCP7.0 emission scenario as laid out by the IPCC.

11 - Middle of natural range
9 - Middle of Botanic Garden range
6 - Shoulder of Botanic Garden range
2 - Not known but possible to survive

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Street Tree Establishment Guide DCC Right Tree Right Place LNRS	1. Assess species suitability across East Devon for a changing climate (incorporating BS5837 & DCC tree data) 2. Create a Tree Establishment Strategy for East Devon	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Fewer than 50% of all trees are from species considered suitable for the area and for projected climate	>50%-75% of trees are from species suitable for the area and for projected climate	More than 75% of trees are suitable for the area and for projected climate	Virtually all trees are suitable for the area and for projected climate

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

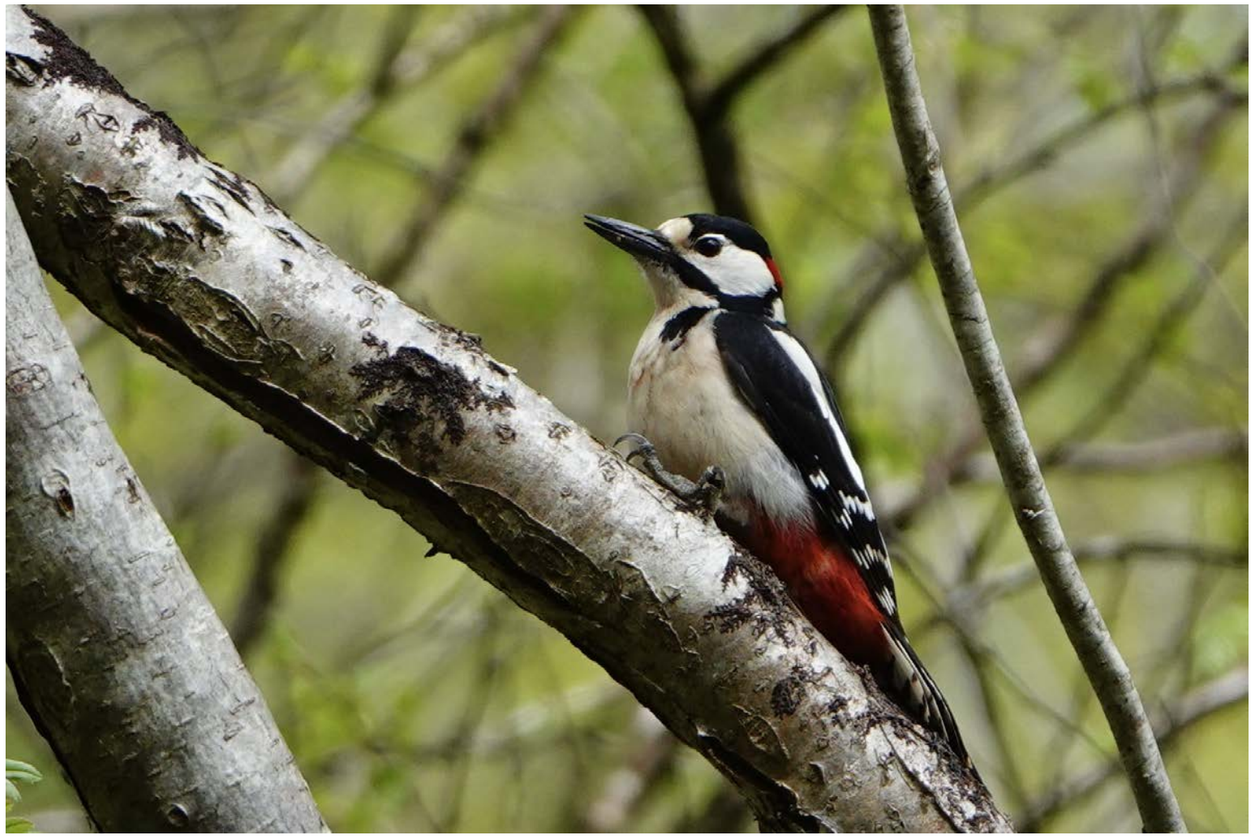
T5 Publicly Owned Trees in the Urban Environment

Trees managed individually, such as street trees and some park trees, are considered to be “managed intensively” according to arboricultural techniques. These trees are often pruned, surveyed, and otherwise monitored for the safety of the public and the wellbeing of the individual tree.

Understanding how many trees are managed in this way and what this type of management entails will help provide a baseline for improving future ‘intensive’ practices. A tree inventory (such as East Devon’s Council-owned tree inventory) documenting these trees, their location, species, health, etc is invaluable for tree maintenance and risk management.

It can also form the basis of a detailed community engagement tool, enabling people to learn and understand more about the individual trees that they pass in the streets where they live and work. Such information has proved instrumental in improving care of trees by residents.

Target links to R10 & R12



Link to relevant corporate policies
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Street Tree Establishment Guide Exeter and East Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Carry out a complete risk management strategy, and plan for the inventory of EDDC trees in Ezytreev 2. Provide training equivalent to LANTRA Basic Tree Survey & Inspection to Street Scene Officers	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	Condition of publicly owned treescape is unknown	Sample-based tree inventory indicating tree condition and risk level	Complete up to date tree inventory that includes detailed tree condition ratings & reviewed every 5 years	Complete tree inventory that is GIS-based and includes detailed tree condition as well as risk ratings

T6 Publicly Owned Woodlands & Natural Areas (Links to R10)

Trees in woodlands or other natural areas are typically “managed extensively” as a group, whereas trees managed individually, such as street trees, are considered to be “managed intensively,” according to arboricultural techniques (See T5). Park trees can fall into either category, depending on how they are managed.

Understanding how many trees are managed in this way, and what this type of management entails, will help provide information for improving future ‘extensive’ practices.

Natural area surveys that incorporate patterns and structures of ecological functions would be useful. Woodland fragmentation, recreational overuse, disturbance and invasive species such as Rhododendron have all been highlighted as issues of serious concern, which are as yet unquantified.

Developing individual management plans and a web map for these areas can be a useful tool for both management, community engagement and connectivity. Current ‘extensive’ management methods should be reviewed and updated if necessary to reflect best practice and the unique situation of each woodland area, whether ancient woodland, productive plantation, young and pioneering, or newly created.

Woodlands should be connected through green corridors such as hedgerows and linear tree features, and rivers and waterways, to promote the movement of wildlife and broaden the genetic pool for plants and animals alike, thereby boosting biodiversity and resilience.

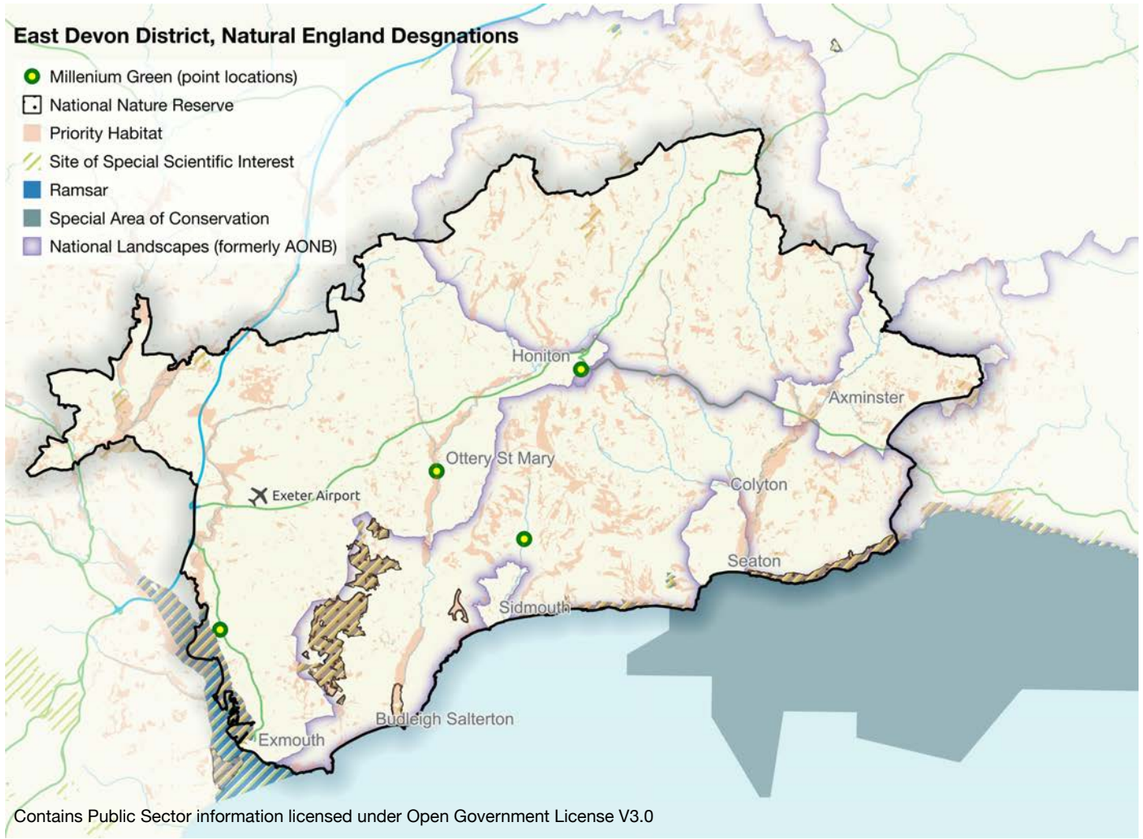


Figure 6. Public green space designations across East Devon.

NB. Some areas fall under multiple landscape characteristics.

Link to relevant corporate policies
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy EDDC Nature Recovery Plan National Landscape Management Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Improve habitat connectivity of the wider landscape through tree and hedge planting on new developments (where possible) 2. Migrate woodland and other natural environment data to a publicly accessible web-map	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Limited information about publicly owned natural areas	Publicly owned natural areas identified in a “natural areas survey” or similar document or on webmap	Survey document also tracks level and type of public use in publicly owned natural areas	In addition, usage patterns, ecological structure and function of all publicly owned natural areas are also assessed and documented

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T7 Trees & Hedges on Private Property

Tree owners, whether an individual or large estate have a legal duty of care to take reasonable steps to ensure no harm is caused to person or property even where trees are protected by a TPO or fall within a CA. Therefore, privately owned trees rely on property owners taking an active role in tree management. Developing the tools to help tree owners manage their trees can become a significant factor within management of the totality of the trees, hedges and woodlands across the District. This can simply mean understanding the extent of the tree estate that is outside public ownership.

A full inventory of trees on private properties is difficult, however, many will fall into conservation areas, whilst others will be recorded within tree preservation order's (TPO). Fully collating the data already held on these trees may be useful in combination with an ecosystem services survey.

Some private landholders may be interested in collaboration, particularly educational bodies such as universities, colleges and schools. Engaging with these stakeholders is a good way to understand their trees as part of the wider East Devon population, whilst also promoting other research projects and community engagement.

For homeowners and small land holders, signposting clear, accessible guidance on tree planting, establishment, species choice, and management of trees and hedges (eg. The National Tree Safety Group - Common Sense Risk Management of Trees and The Devon Hedge Group) is a good way to improve the health and diversity of trees and hedges, particularly in urban spaces.

BICTON COLLEGE

WOODLAND TRUST

CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

National Trust

Link to relevant corporate policies
Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy Exeter and East Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Make available and signpost to online advice on tree, hedge & woodland management 2. Review and update existing TPOs 3. Map hedges and trees on private property across East Devon	EDDC Volunteers Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	No information about privately owned trees	Aerial, point-based assessment of trees on private property, capturing overall extent and location	Site based assessment of trees on private property, as well as basic aerial view (as described in "Moderate" rating)	Site based assessment on private property, as well as a detailed Tree Canopy Cover (TCC) analysis of entire treescape, integrated into district-wide GIS system

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T8 Natural Regeneration & Habitat Restoration (Link to R10)

Habitat restoration through natural regeneration is a key component of East Devon's policy and strategy. It relies on natural processes over time, allowing ecosystems to recover holistically. For example, at Holyford Woods Local Nature Reserve, a 12-hectare conifer plantation was felled and left to regenerate naturally, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach. Natural regeneration should play a central role in woodland restoration wherever feasible.

EDDC's Nature Recovery Plan promotes sustainable land management practices, such as agri-environment schemes and habitat creation initiatives, while fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including communities and landowners, to support wildlife corridors and enhance ecological resilience.

Hedge recovery should be prioritised as part of the push for connectivity of woody habitats. Minimal maintenance and limiting hedge flailing where appropriate is preferred, particularly away from roads. Techniques like rotational hedge-laying create thick, stock-proof hedges while allowing bushier growth between cycles; though this method is labour-intensive. Alternatively, leaving hedges to grow into mature linear woodlands offers significant ecological & climate benefits. Fencing can manage livestock movement, and allowing hedges to mature also supports agricultural benefits, as livestock gain access to woody browse and herbal grazing.

Natural regeneration provides valuable benefits for natural flood management by increasing soil infiltration and reducing surface runoff, which helps slow water flow during heavy rainfall. Regenerating habitats also support nutrient neutrality by filtering pollutants and excess nutrients, preventing them from entering watercourses. This is particularly critical for riparian woodlands, which protect waterways from agricultural runoff and help maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems.

The council's Nature Recovery Plan recognises that in some cases, such as heathland conservation or maintaining woodland glades, where tree removal is necessary to restore valuable open habitats and protect species reliant on them.

Figure 7. Holyford woods

Link to relevant corporate policies
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Natural Flood Management Guidance EDDC Nature Recovery Plan National Landscape Management Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Map sites suitable for natural regeneration 2. Work to establish ecologically robust locally relevant habitat banks	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	Minimal efforts with no formal tracking of land area designated for natural regeneration and habitat restoration	Initial baseline survey and identification of designated areas for NR+HR with basic monitoring of plant and animal species	Established biodiversity index, expanding of NR+HR areas, regular surveys; detailed tracking of species' health and growth	Comprehensive GIS-based mapping of NR+HR areas, detailed biodiversity index, high survival rates of NR species, and extensive monitoring and reporting

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T9 Beavers & the Treescape

As the first District in England to have beavers recorded as living wild since their extermination by humans in 1789, it is appropriate for this strategy to feature this large herbivorous mammal with a particular relationship with East Devon's trees. In October 2022, beavers were granted legally protected status and the East Devon population, now thought to be present since 2008, was allowed to grow and spread naturally. Since this legal status was announced, populations of beavers have also been confirmed on the Exe and Clyst.

Beavers are large herbivores that feed on a wide range of bark, shoots, leaves and roots, including riparian and aquatic vegetation. They fell trees for food but also building materials for constructing their dams and lodges. Their dams are created away from the main river channel to make larger areas of open water and wetland, in which the animals prefer to spend the majority of their active time. Lodges are created above burrows dug into the riverbank and are not placed on dams, as is the case with the North American and Canadian beaver.

Beavers prefer tree species with soft wood, such as Willow, Birch, Alder and Hazel, but their diet can adapt. When they fell deciduous trees, they do not necessarily kill the tree, but stimulate regeneration, creating multiple stems from the base, similar to human coppicing. This process can extend the lifespan of certain trees, strengthen riverbanks, and improve light conditions for aquatic ecosystems, benefiting a variety of plant and animal life.

Tree felling by beavers can sometimes be undesirable or hazardous, particularly near sensitive riparian zones. Protective measures, detailed in the *Beaver Management Handbook*, may be needed to safeguard certain trees. Any actions affecting beavers, their dams, or lodges must be carried out by licensed operatives.

Beavers are a welcome and legally protected part of our countryside and EDDC Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy recognises this status and will only move to intervene in beaver activity, through a fully licensed officer, when there is a threat to life, property or business and when no alternative solution or mitigation can be found.

Figure 8: Beaver on the bank of East Devon's River Otter. Source: Devon Wildlife Trust.

Link to relevant corporate policies
The East Devon Local Plan Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy Exeter & East Devon GI Strategy Devon Hedges Management Advice

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Support, participate in & strengthen links with the East Devon Beaver Management Group 2. Ensure key officers have CL51 licence to intervene where necessary in beaver dams and lodges legally 3. Promote best practice for landscape management with free living beavers to other stakeholders and partners	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	No comprehensive information available about tree benefits in the district.	Some information available on key tree benefits.	Sound information available on a key set of tree benefits, such as biodiversity, recreation, environmental services (see below).	Comprehensive information and best practice guidelines are available to EDDC Staff and private landowners, with public information also available

3.1 Targets, Priorities and Actions

T10 Quantifying Tree & Hedge Benefits

Trees, hedges, and woodlands provide vital benefits that, although sometimes difficult to quantify, are increasingly recognised for their role in climate resilience, biodiversity and human well-being. Valuing these contributions is crucial for their protection and integration into local strategies.

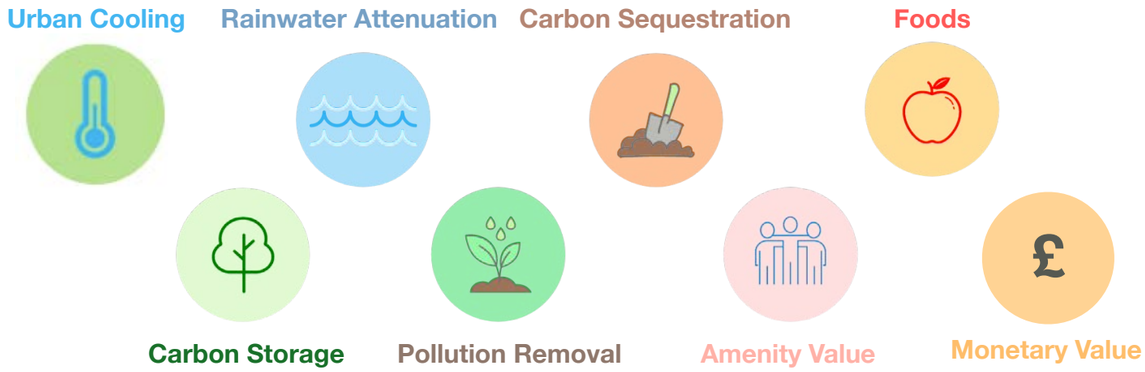
One of the key roles of trees is their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Urban trees and hedgerows reduce the urban heat island effect, filter air pollution, and provide shade, making cities more liveable during hotter summers. Natural processes like carbon storage, water filtration, and stormwater runoff mitigation further enhance their value. Tools such as i-Tree Eco and CAVAT help quantify these ecosystem services and amenity values, supporting cost-benefit analyses and policy decisions. Local initiatives, like Sidmouth Arboretum's 2014 & 2024 treescape surveys, exemplify the importance of assessing these benefits and inform planning and funding to support healthier landscapes.

Biodiversity is a key benefit of trees and hedgerows, as diverse species create habitats that sustain wildlife, fostering the intricate connections essential for thriving ecosystems. The council's Nature Recovery Plan, including projects like the Lower Otter Restoration, shows how habitat restoration and wildlife corridors boost biodiversity, resilience, and carbon sequestration, helping species adapt to environmental changes.

Hedges, in particular, play a vital role in connectivity, acting as wildlife corridors between fragmented habitats. Their management should prioritise biodiversity through light-touch maintenance or rotational hedge-laying, which balances ecological benefits with practicality. Where appropriate, hedgerows left to mature into linear woodlands can support biodiversity and agricultural systems.Underpinning all of this is the UK's mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) framework, which promotes habitat retention, enhancement, and replacement where loss is unavoidable. By incorporating tools like the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and protections for irreplaceable habitats, BNG ensures that trees and hedgerows are valued within development processes, driving better outcomes for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

About i-Tree:
i-Tree is a free to use, open-access suite of tools developed to assess the value of the urban forest and the ecosystem services provided which:

- Quantifies the benefits and values of trees around the world.
- Aids in tree and forest management and advocacy.
- Shows potential risks to tree and forest health.
- Is based on peer-reviewed international research.



About CAVAT:
Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) is regarded as one of the principal methods of tree valuation in the UK. It provides a method for managing trees as public assets rather than liabilities. It is designed not only to be a strategic tool and aid to decision-making in relation to the tree stock as a whole, but also to be applicable to individual cases, where the value of a single tree needs to be expressed in monetary terms.

Link to relevant corporate policies
The East Devon Local Plan EDDC Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan Natural Flood Management Guidance Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Extend and work with the Tree Wardens network to highlight the benefits of trees at local level 2. Explore tree benefits for Council-owned trees using i-Tree Eco with the existing Inventory 3. CAVAT valuation of EDDC trees 4. Run a community MyTree Study across the district	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	No comprehensive information available about tree benefits in the district	Some information available on key tree benefits	Sound information available on a key set of tree benefits, such as biodiversity, recreation, environmental services	Comprehensive information available on all tree benefits across the district

3.1 Summary - Trees and Urban Forest Structure

Key Performance Indicator	Current Performance Level				Priority
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal	
T1 - Tree Canopy Cover			Good		Medium
T2 - Size (Age) Diversity	Low				Low
T3 - Species Diversity	Low				Low
T4 - Species Suitability			Good		Medium
T5 – Publicly Owned Trees in the Urban Environment		Moderate			High
T6 – Publicly Owned Woodlands & Natural Areas			Good		Medium
T7 – Trees & Hedges on Private Property		Moderate			Medium
T8 — Natural Regeneration & Habitat Restoration		Moderate			High
T9 – Beavers & the Treescape		Moderate			Medium
T10 – Quantifying Tree & Hedge Benefits		Moderate			Medium

3.2

Community Framework

Targets, Priorities and Actions

This section considers the various communities that are required for a successful, long term approach to management of trees, hedges and woodlands. This covers not only the local residents, but local government in all its forms, NGOs and commercial entities.

3.2 Targets, Priorities and Actions

C1 Governance & Inter-departmental Co-operation

This target aims to establish a path of leadership and cooperation for the successful delivery of the targets, priorities and actions within and relating to this strategy, and to encourage all departments within EDDC to consult and collaborate with the tree and woodland managers on issues. Leaders must delegate responsibilities and ensure goals are delivered on time and on budget by partners and associates. Leaders who delegate these responsibilities must also ensure that a clear system of accountability is also in place to deliver set goals.

Regular communication across departments and agencies is key to ensuring that trees, hedges, and woodlands are fully considered by the council. Key stakeholders to incorporate into this network are planning and development. Other key departments include are housing, environmental health and parks & gardens, also parish councils, which although external to the council, still need to be involved in the process. Opening communication channels and interdepartmental teams can help coordinate tree and woodland management by providing knowledge and guidance to all council departments, when required, in order to ensure that trees, hedges, woodlands and green infrastructure are considered in full at all stages of decision making.

Assigning clear roles and responsibilities to District and Parish Council Members will help to maintain momentum for the strategy, and organising regular checkins and updates will help to cement two-way relationships. It also encourages the sharing of ideas and resources, which will make delivery of actions and targets easier at a lower level.

Figure 9. Foxgloves growing in East Devon woodland

Link to relevant corporate policies
The UK Climate Change Act National Planning Policy Framework

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Engage in other department strategy consultations to promote the importance of trees, hedges and woodlands, and encourage them to consider how they can contribute to the targets and actions of this strategy	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	Agencies take actions impacting treescape with no cross-departmental coordination, consultation or consideration of the treescape resource. Leadership for trees, hedge & woodland management is fragmented	Departments/agencies recognise potential conflicts and reach out to tree & woodland managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa	Informal teams among departments and agencies communicate regularly and collaborate on a project-specific basis	Tree, hedge & woodland policy implemented by formal interdepartmental/interagency working teams on all projects

C2 Community Involvement, Neighbourhood Action & General Appreciation of Trees, Hedges & Woodlands

In order for the strategy to be considered a true success, the most powerful legacy is that the residents love, respect, appreciate and care for its trees. Public consultation has already demonstrated the deep connection people feel towards the landscape, with 94% of respondents stating that trees, hedges and woodlands are very important to East Devon's character, with 74% feeling there are too few trees in the district. Community initiatives, such as planting 1 tree per resident, could provide an invaluable opportunity to promote the progress made by the district in terms of urban greening and green infrastructure, while fostering this strong sense of local pride.

Existing schemes, such as public involvement in nature reserves, have demonstrated the value of community engagement. Activities like invasive species removal and habitat restoration show how residents can contribute to environmental care while building stronger community ties.

Community and resident groups will be encouraged to participate and collaborate with EDDC, alongside partnerships with Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), in tree, hedge and woodland management activities. By collaborating with smaller community groups such as volunteers, schools, and charity organisations, EDDC can further deepen community involvement in projects that will benefit both small neighbourhoods and the wider district. Encouraging such involvement helps to strengthen the connection residents feel towards their natural environment and reduces the likelihood of conflict or opposition to tree planting efforts.

Widely publicising events year-round – making good use of digital communications and social media – such as National Tree Week (usually in late November to early December), Arbor Day, planting days (in winter), and outdoor events, will bring attention to East Devon's trees, hedges and woodlands, encouraging participation from those who live and work locally. This model of public engagement can have further benefits, such as providing a resource for watering in drought conditions for example. The success of Sidmouth Arboretum model should be widened where appropriate to continue recruiting and rewarding public participation.

Link to relevant corporate policies
The East Devon Local Plan Open Spaces Strategy EDDC Leisure Strategy Exeter and East Devon GI Strategy

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Aim to have at least one Tree Champion in each ward of the district 2. Work with local arts sector to promote the benefits of trees 3. Increase engagement in community tree planting and care initiatives	EDDC Woodland Trust Volunteers	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High (maintain performance)	Little or no citizen involvement or neighbourhood action	Some neighbourhood groups engaged in advancing tree & woodland goals, but with little or no overall coordination with or direction by EDDC or its partnering NGOs	At the neighbourhood level, citizens participate and groups collaborate with EDDC and/or its partnering NGOs in tree & woodland management activities to advance district-wide plans	Many active neighbourhood groups and a tree warden in every ward engaged across the community, with actions coordinated or led by EDDC and/or its partnering NGOs

C3 Utilities & Insurance Co-operation

This target aims to ensure that all utilities companies – above and below ground – and insurers (in relation to subsidence complaints) employ best management practices and cooperate with the EDDC to advance goals and objectives related to tree, hedge and woodland issues and opportunities. This includes electric, gas, water, cable, telephone, fibre-optics, rail etc.

Utilities companies are required to follow certain standards for managing vegetation – including pruning branches, protecting roots, and performing overall management of trees and other vegetation that could impact their services. Local or national policies may also regulate certain utility management practices, such as overhead line clearance and the management of rail track-side trees. Introducing and enforcing best practice standards which protect trees, hedges and woodlands will be key, and collaboration with utilities could help advance the goals and objectives of the THaWS.

Insurance-related subsidence claims present another critical area for collaboration. A drying climate increases the risk of subsidence. Working closely with insurers to adopt evidence-based approaches is essential to ensure that trees are retained wherever possible. This includes identifying alternative mitigation methods, such as targeted root pruning or the use of structural solutions, rather than defaulting to tree removal. EDDC can play a pivotal role in facilitating these discussions and promoting solutions that balance risk management with tree retention.

Some utilities extend beyond the local area, such as river catchments. These areas are not constrained by political boundaries, and this should be taken into account when assessing how trees, hedges, woodlands and utilities interact. Water companies should be encouraged to develop systems in which trees provide a vital role in water management.

Figure 10. A fallen Oak which continues to grow in Holyford Woods

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Carbon Plan & Carbon Reduction Plan EDDC Climate Change Strategy & Climate Change Action Plan Natural Flood Management Guidance	1. Compile list of relevant utility providers and contacts 2. Set up initial engagement workshops with utility providers on trees in the built environment 3. Coordinate collaborative arrangements to meet the objectives of the plan (e.g. a tree charter that utilities can sign up to when they want to work on EDDC land and training courses on trees for relevant employees in these fields)	EDDC DCC Woodland Trust	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Utilities take actions impacting treescape with no council coordination or consideration of the treescape resource	Utilities employ best management practices, recognise potential municipal conflicts, and reach out to tree & woodland managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa	Utilities are included in informal council teams that communicate regularly and collaborate on a project-specific basis	Utilities help advance tree & woodland goals and objectives by participating in formal interdepartmental/interagency working teams on all municipal projects

3.2 Targets, Priorities and Actions

C4 The Green Industry & Agriculture Co-operation

The “green industry” encompasses all professions and businesses that support or engage in tree and vegetation management activities, including landscapers, nurseries, garden centres, contractors, maintenance professionals, tree care companies, landscape architects, foresters, planners, developers, and large landowners such as the National Trust, Woodland Trust, and Clinton Devon Estates.

EDDC will collaborate with existing green industry partners to advance the District's tree, woodland, and hedge objectives while adhering to high professional standards. This work will be done, where appropriate, in conjunction with Devon County Council and local parish councils. In addition, EDDC will work closely with Bicton College, Exeter University and local training providers to establish networks and pathways for job creation within the green sector, including apprenticeships. These partnerships will help to build skills, foster new careers, and create local employment opportunities within the sector. There will also be a focus on engaging Habitat Bank providers and exploring Green Finance initiatives to support sustainable growth and restoration efforts. Collaborating with these emerging sectors will further enhance the District’s environmental strategies and provide financial mechanisms for long-term management.

Close co-operation with the green industry offers an excellent opportunity to influence the management of forest resources on private property. Given the landholdings within East Devon, the key sectors for focus include: Farming, Forestry, Tree Surgeons and Renewable Energy (Wind & Solar).

Agricultural land can have huge potential for tree and woodland planting, and for encouraging full sized trees within hedges and along verges. Agroforestry involves the planting of trees on agricultural land with assumed benefits for existing agricultural processes. It includes typical farming such as cropland and pastures, but also orchards and wood pastures.

Working with farmers and land holders in agricultural areas is crucial for both tree planting and long term management of new and existing woodlands and hedges. Farmers and rural land holders must be involved to make this target successful. In East Devon, around 90% of land is considered rural, and it currently has tree canopy cover of 22.7%. This target can also feed into the targets of T7, T8, T10, T11 and C7.

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Carbon Plan & Carbon Reduction Plan EDDC Climate Change Strategy & Climate Change Action Plan	1. List representatives and contact details for each relevant business or organisation (link to local AA approved companies on EDDC website) 2. Coordinate collaborative arrangements to meet the objectives of the plan (e.g. a tree charter) 3. Explore opportunities for skills building in the sector and potential courses and apprenticeship schemes	EDDC DCC Woodland Trust	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	Little or no cooperation among segments of green industry or awareness of district-wide treescape goals and objectives	Some cooperation among green industry as well as general awareness and acceptance of district-wide goals and objectives	Specific collaborative arrangements across segments of green industry in support of district-wide goals and objectives	Shared vision and goals and extensive committed partnerships in place. Solid adherence to high professional standards

3.2 Targets, Priorities and Actions

C5 Devon Tree & Woodland Strategy & Saving Devon's Treescapes

The Devon Local Nature Partnership has produced a Tree and Woodland Strategy for the county. Despite lower levels of woodland cover than the national average (11.8% compared to 13.2%), trees are a very prominent characteristic of the Devon landscape, with the county boasting the longest hedgerow network in the country. Devon is also rich in ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and opportunities for woodland expansion. Furthermore, it has an active woodland economy, accounting for the equivalent of 4,500 full time jobs and contributing £200million to the local economy; a long history as a centre of innovation and excellence within the forestry sector; and a large number of high profile tree and woodland themed projects. However, efforts are not always as well linked as they could be.

If the UK is to reach its carbon neutral target by 2050, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has recommended an increase in woodland cover from 13% to 19%. This equates to 50,000hectares of new woodland in the UK every year until 2050. This is an unprecedented level of change and is not going to be achieved by piecemeal efforts or without overcoming some major barriers.
In response, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched the England Trees Action Plan in May 2021. This sets out their long-term vision for trees, woodlands and forests. It provides a strategic framework for implementing the Nature for Climate Fund and outlines over 80 policy actions required to achieve these ambitions. It also stresses the need for ownership at a local level.
Due to the potential scale of tree loss, both within the Devon landscape and nationally, a number of regional projects have been established to plan and deliver mitigation measures on a large scale.

Within Devon, the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum (DADRF) has been established from the Devon Tree Officers Group with a number of additional partners. The Forum has been successful in securing funding for the Saving Devon's Treescapes Project (SDT), to be led by the Devon Wildlife Trust.

The Project Steering Group represents the wider interests of DADRF and other key partners in the delivery
of the project.

The project aims to encourage communities to get involved in planting trees outside of woodland areas, both in the countryside and in towns and cities, in order to replace trees expected to be lost due to Ash dieback.

By engaging with local communities, schools, and volunteer groups, three community nurseries and micro-nurseries will distribute free trees. Headline project proposals include:

- the establishment of at least 250,000 new trees in Devon, outside of woodland areas;
- 125 events and workshops, annual 'tree-week' festivals and 360 landowner visits will inspire community involvement and action; and
- creating or enhancing more than 150km of hedgerow.

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy National Landscape Management Plan Exeter and East Devon GI Strategy	1. Promote the planting of trees on private land 2. Encourage community involvement and volunteering opportunities 3. EDDC to work in collaboration with other local authorities and non-government organisations to ensure that there is partnership working in delivering the Devon Tree & Woodland Strategy	EDDC Woodland Trust Devon Wildlife Trust	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Const. and Wards have no interaction with each other or the broader region. No regional planning or coordination on trees & woodlands	Some neighbouring authorities and regional agencies share similar policies and plans related to trees & woodlands	Some tree & woodland planning and cooperation across authorities and regional agencies	Widespread regional cooperation resulting in development and implementation of regional tree & woodland strategy

3.2 Summary - Community Framework

Key Performance Indicator	Current Performance Level & Future Goal				Priority
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal	
C1 — Governance and Inter-departmental Co-operation		Moderate			High
C2 – Community Involvement, Neighbourhood Action & General Appreciation of Trees, Hedges and Woodlands			Good		High
C3 – Utilities & Insurance Co-operation	Low				Medium
C4 – The Green Industry and Agriculture Co-operation			Good		Low
C5 – Devon Tree & Woodland Strategy & Saving Devon's Treescapes			Good		Medium

3.3

Sustainable Resource Management Approach

Targets, Priorities and Actions

This section deals with the practical management of the tree, hedge and woodland resource. For much of the trees, hedges & woodlands of East Devon, this can mean seeking to engage and influence other land owners.

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R1 Tree, Hedge & Woodland Inventory

A tree and woodland inventory is an exercise to take stock of the assets within the district as a whole. An understanding such as this is an essential starting point for establishing the structure of the trees, woodlands and hedges, including the number of trees, diversity of species, age / size distribution, pests and diseases, ownership, condition, etc.

Using remote sensing sampling is a cost and time effective methodology for establishing a baseline for tree inventory across the district. An analysis of the inventory will enable evidence-based management, and a starting point from which to monitor future progress and to further manage the tree stock over time.

A web-map is an interactive tool for displaying information to the public about trees, woodlands and hedges, and data can be broken down by parish and ward. They can display a range of things including tree benefits such as canopy cover, annual ecosystem benefits (avoided runoff, carbon sequestration, air pollution removal), and tree condition, to name a few. They are an excellent way to engage with the public and communicate the benefits of trees. In creating a public web-map, tree data could be easily communicated and compared.

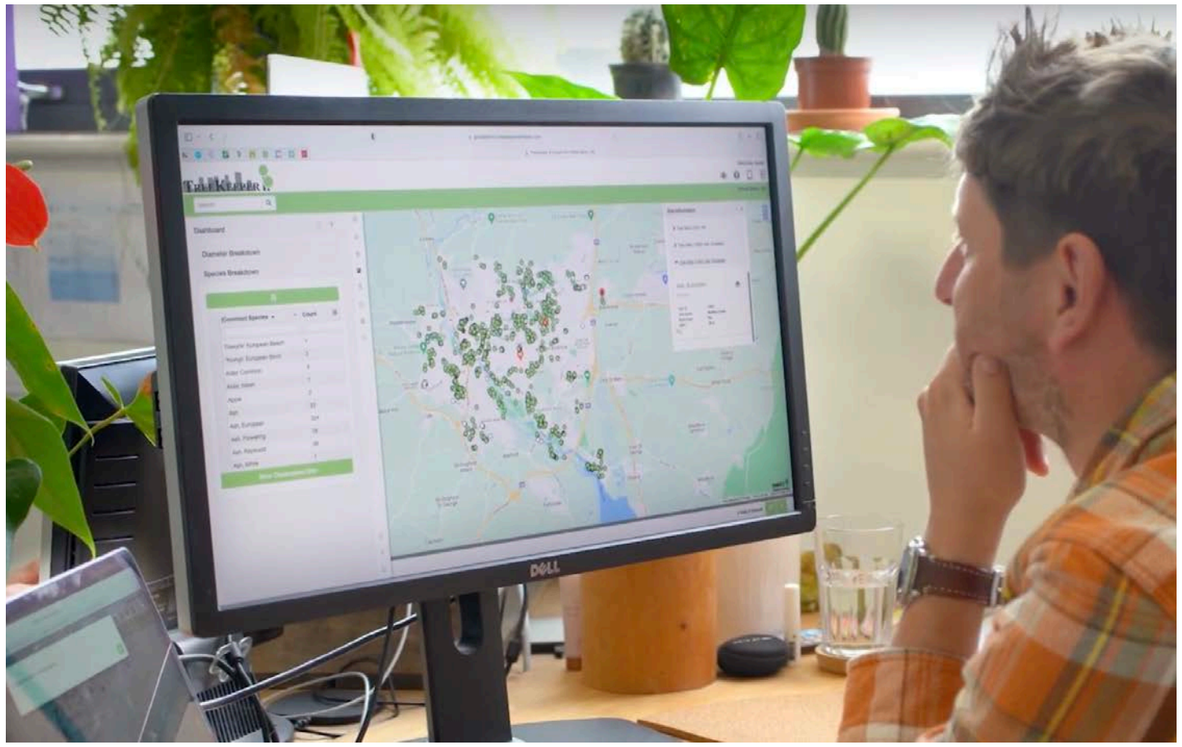


Figure 11. Treekeeper tree inventory management system developed by Davey Resource Group.

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Local Plan	1. Create open-data web map for displaying tree benefits from inventory data 2. Supplement with Ancient Tree Registry & Habitat mapping 3. Include hedges in inventory 4. Separate urban and rural areas	EDDC Tender Devon Hedge Group	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	No inventory	Complete or sample-based inventory of publicly owned trees. No open source mapping	Complete inventory of publicly owned trees and sample-based privately owned trees that is guiding management decisions. Some data is mapped and openly accessible	Systematic comprehensive inventory system of entire treescape – with information tailored to users and supported by mapping of trees, woodlands, and their benefits in district-wide GIS system which is openly accessible

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R2 Tree Valuation & Asset Management Approach

Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) was developed by the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) and others in 2008. It is one of the principal methods of tree valuation in the UK and aims to provide a method for managing trees as assets rather than liabilities. It can be used for individual trees or for the tree stock as a whole. Documents related to CAVAT including a user guide and the spreadsheet calculator can be viewed online. The CAVAT system is only really appropriate when applied to individual trees that are visible to the public. Furthermore, EDDC's hedges and woodlands are currently not subject to an asset valuation. These knowledge gaps will be addressed in the future.

Where trees have been deliberately damaged or felled CAVAT can be used to give a financial value to the trees to enable appropriate mitigation to be implemented. The value is based on a number of factors including the size of the tree, its location, its amenity, condition and life expectancy; generally the larger the tree, the more valuable it is. East Devon have successfully used CAVAT in relation to unauthorised works to council owned tree and in development schemes where tree protection conditions have not been correctly implemented. CAVAT is also a useful tool for valuing trees implicated in subsidence where large important trees can often be valued over £100,000.

By undertaking a valuation of the trees to society, this can enable a simple comparison to be made against perceived costs of trees. Valuation methods can also be made including ecosystem services, and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Figure 12. Holyford Woods

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	1. Conduct CAVAT assessment of EDDC trees and include valuations in EDDC tree inventory data 2. Promote the use of My-tree/ i-tree for individual trees	EDDC Woodland Trust Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Tree valuation nor assessment management are in place	Some form of tree valuation is used, at least for key projects involving public trees	Tree valuation and asset management are implemented across the district, for most public trees	Tree valuation and asset management are implemented for all public trees - and in some cases also private trees

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R3 Tree Canopy Cover Assessment & Goals

Assessing tree canopy cover is vital, as this metric is used frequently as a figure which is clear and easy to compare with other areas. Whilst tree canopy cover is not a thorough study of the health and diversity and therefore overall benefit of trees, hedges and woodlands, it is an important aspect which should not be overlooked for its simplicity.

This target involves assessing the existing canopy cover - the area of leaves, branches and stems of trees covering the ground, across a given area, when viewed from above - in detail, and setting goals based on reasonable potential canopy cover - the percentage of land area that could theoretically be covered by tree canopies if all suitable available space (e.g. open areas, or spaces where trees could be planted) were utilised for tree planting - and achievable steps to maximising cover. This relates to T1 - 'Tree Canopy Cover'- and would provide the necessary baseline for achieving that target. It is important that any tree canopy cover target is achievable within a reasonable time frame, and considered within the wider context of this strategy.

It should also be noted that tree planting will not provide an instant increase to tree canopy cover; trees are constantly being felled for any number of reasons, so insufficient planting can contribute to making up the deficit without actually increasing canopy cover.

Town/City	London	Plymouth	Babergh	Mid Suffolk	Torbay	Sidmouth
Existing Canopy Cover	21% (2015)	18.5% (2017)	10.4% (2022)	8.5% (2022)	18.2% (2021))	23.2% (2015)
Target	30%	20%	15%	15%	20%	25%

Table 3: Other Canopy Cover Estimates and Goals

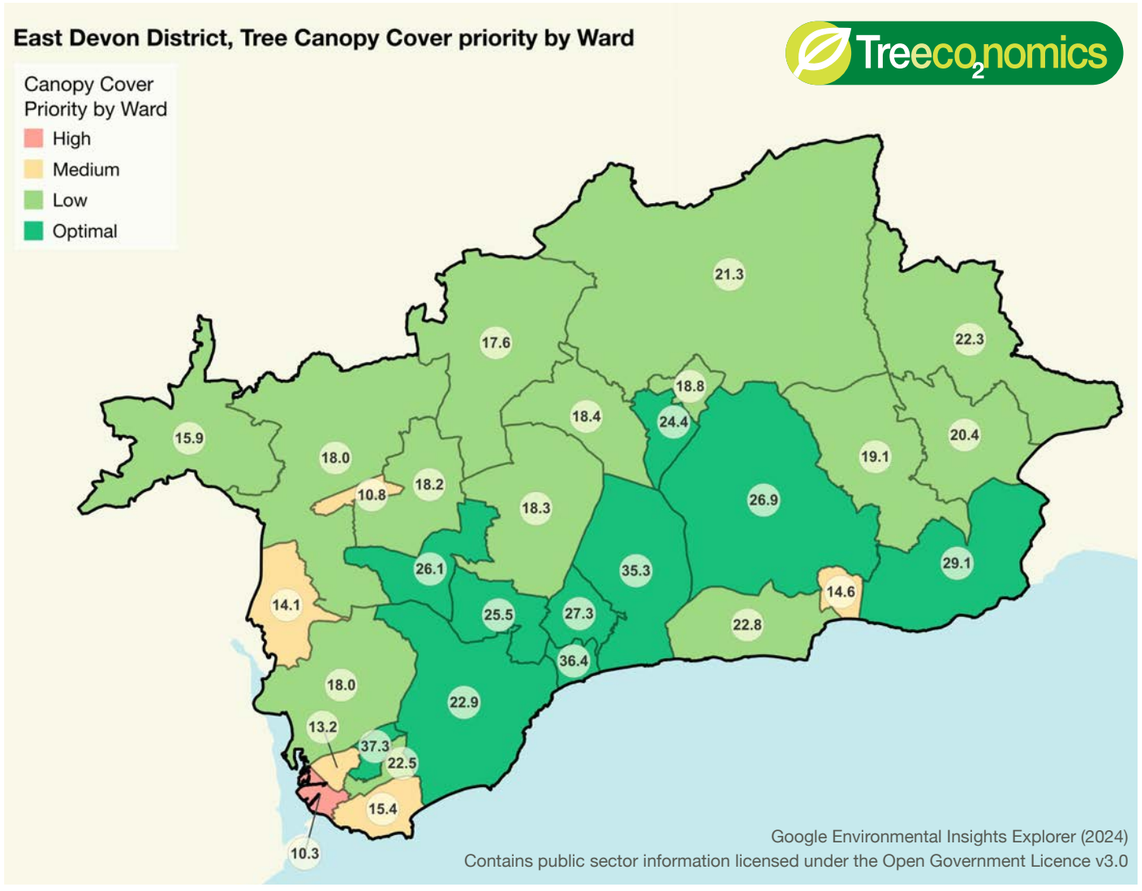


Figure 13. of EDDC wards with existing canopy cover ranked against target canopy.

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
The 25 Year Environmental Plan Local Plan	1. Include 3-30-300 rule as a target for new developments 2. Include 3-30-300 as a guiding principle in the development of the new town & include in SPDs 3. Target of 30% TCC across district 4. Complete a Tree Canopy Cover assessment	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	No assessment or goals	Low-resolution and/or point-based sampling of canopy cover using aerial photographs or satellite imagery – and limited or no goal-setting	Complete, detailed, and spatially explicit, high-resolution Tree Canopy Cover (TCC) assessment based on enhanced data (such as LiDAR, Satellite or NTM) – accompanied by comprehensive set of goals by land use and other parameters	As described for "Good" rating – and all utilised effectively to drive tree, hedge & woodland policy and practice district-wide and at neighbourhood or smaller management level

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R4 Tree Equity

Tree equity is the idea that all communities have equitable access to the benefits of trees where they live. As shown in T1 canopy cover varies widely across urban areas of the district. EDDC aims to progress equality in all spheres of social and economic life and empower and engage local communities to effect positive change.

Urban forests are connected to a range of socio-economic factors, with studies linking canopy cover to health, wealth education and crime. Typically, lower-income areas have fewer trees, and this inequality should be addressed across East Devon. Lack of tree canopy cover can also be linked to the level of urban intensification and the lack of physical space to plant trees (e.g. low-cost housing with small gardens is not always suitable for trees). Therefore, utilising other aspects of the urban forest, such as green roofs, may be part of the solution. The benefits of trees and green space should be made available to all people in all areas of the district which was reflected in the public consultation, which found 74% respondents felt there are too few trees in the district. EDDC recognises that trees and green space should be a right for all, and environmental exclusion must be avoided.

In East Devon, a tree equity map produced by the Woodland Trust currently only covers Honiton, Exmouth and Sidmouth. Canopy cover should be assessed alongside other data sets, such as air quality and indices of multiple deprivation, to ensure that areas not covered by the map are not overlooked. This target aims to ensure that the planting and management of the urban forest focus on areas where it will most benefit local people, particularly in regions with the lowest canopy cover. Tree management plans in these low-canopy areas should include community engagement and neighbourhood outreach to maximise the benefits of trees in the area. The multi-faceted meanings of trees to different people should be recognised.

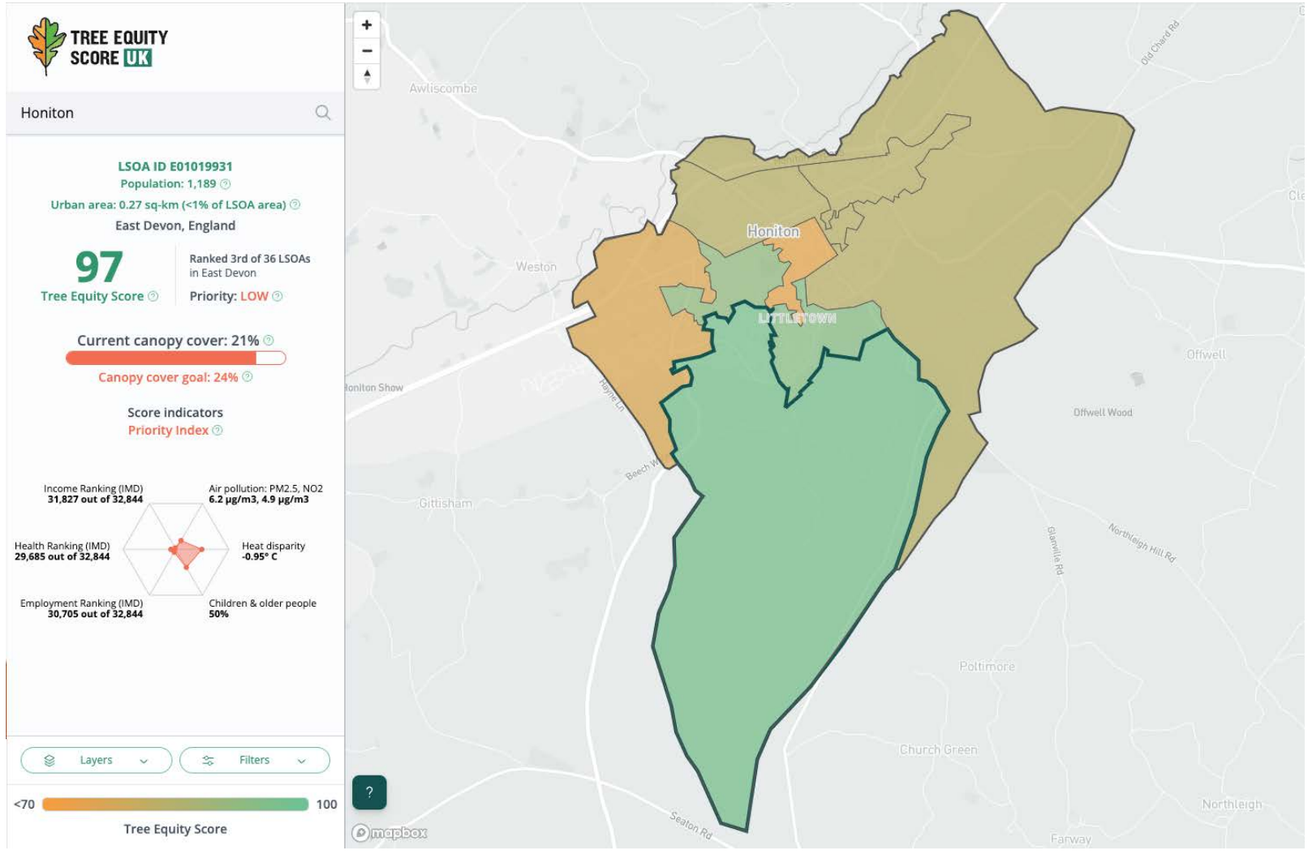


Figure 14: Tree Equity Score Map for Honiton, East Devon. https://uk.treeequityscore.org/

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy Natural Flood Management Guidance Open Spaces Strategy	1. Use EDDC tree canopy cover study (R3) coupled with Woodland Trust Tree Equity Map to focus efforts around tree planting and community engagement in the areas that most need it 2. Identify opportunities for the greening of social housing estates	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	Tree planting and outreach is not determined equitably by canopy cover or need for benefits	Planting and outreach includes attention to low canopy neighbourhoods or areas	Planting and outreach targets neighbourhoods with low canopy and a high need for tree benefits	Equitable planting and outreach at the neighbourhood level is guided by strong citizen engagement in those low-canopy/high-need areas

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R5 Trees, Hedges & Woodland in Development

Considering the requirements for existing and new trees and hedges early in the design and planning stages for new development will help to ensure their successful retention and/or establishment. This includes providing adequate protection and space for them to thrive and avoiding conflicts with underground and overhead services. Some losses of existing poor quality and non-native trees and hedges may be acceptable, but standing dead wood should be retained where possible for wildlife benefit.

Current EDDC planning policies require the appropriate retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedges on development sites and provision of new planting. Existing policies could be strengthened to ensure adequate compensatory planting for any losses of trees and hedges and provision of additional tree and hedge planting to meet potential tree canopy targets.

The preparation of a Trees and Hedges Supplementary Policy Document (SPD) could provide more detail on requirements for tree and hedge retention, together with planting and maintaining new trees and hedges, than can be covered in Local Plan policies and, if adopted, would be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Key aspects that could be considered for inclusion in an SPD would be soil protection, handling and preparation; species selection; tree pit design; soil volume requirements for trees in areas of hard paving; co-ordination of services to avoid conflict with tree planting; and management and maintenance requirements.

Recent surveys by EDDC show a high failure rate of newly planted trees in some large, recent developments in East Devon. This highlights the need for rigorous oversight of tree planting schemes and subsequent monitoring to ensure the success and longevity of these green assets. Providing guidance for developers and contractors as well as training and support for enforcement officers to raise awareness of the issues affecting tree retention and new planting could help to significantly improve retention and establishment rates, taking enforcement action where necessary to ensure failures are replaced and that protection and maintenance works are appropriate and effective.

Links to R6 - Tree & Hedge Protection and Enforcement.

Figure 15. Fence repair at Knapp Copse

Link to relevant corporate policies
The East Devon Local Plan NPPF BS5837 Street Tree Establishment Guide

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Assess potential plantable space and model canopy growth and planting scenarios to determine suitable timeframe for 30% tree cover in new developments 2. Engage with the Devon Tree Strategy group to strengthen policy around tree retention & establishment in developments 3. Develop and adopt a Supplementary Planning Document regarding trees, hedges & woodland	EDDC Tender Partner Authorities	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	Tree planting in new developments will achieve less than 30% success of new tree establishment after 5 years	Tree planting in new developments will achieve less than 20% potential canopy cover. 50% success of new tree establishment after 5 years	Tree planting in new developments will achieve potential 25% canopy cover. 70% success of new tree establishment after 5 years	Extensive tree planting and maintenance in new developments. New developments achieve the 3-30-300 rule. 90% success of new tree establishment after 5 years

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R6 Tree & Hedge Protection & Enforcement

Urban trees are sometimes viewed as irritating and costly - dropping leaves on lawns, blocking drains, and damaging foundations and pipes with their roots. They may also be considered hazardous, especially if they are not properly managed. For these reasons, individuals may wish to remove trees from public land or private properties.

Healthy trees should be protected whenever possible. EDDC will seek to protect trees where appropriate. TEMPO (Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders) is one methodology for assessing the suitability for trees to be protected. Conservation areas (CAs) and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are just two examples of the council's duty to safeguard trees and hedges. Additionally, trees and hedges may be protected as part of planning conditions associated with planning approvals. Any unauthorised work on trees or hedges protected by a TPO, CA, or planning condition will be addressed by planning enforcement officers as necessary. Planning enforcement officers should also collaborate with tree officers, who can offer detailed guidance and support on tree and hedge protection in development.

To carry out works on a tree protected by a TPO, consent from the council is required through the submission of a tree works application. For trees in a conservation area, a six-week notice of intention must be submitted to the council, which may either accept the notice or serve a TPO. ‘Important’ hedgerows in the countryside are protected and one must apply to the Council under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 via a Hedgerow Removal Notice to gain permission to remove.

All TPOs are available to view online by visiting: https:// eastdevon.gov.uk/trees/

The vast majority of trees and building are able to coexist without any structural issues from occurring at all. However, in a small number of cases where there is clay soil, subsidence can be an issue particularly where buildings have been constructed with inappropriate foundations or poorly constructed extensions. The insurance industry will often state that tree removal is the only method to alleviate subsidence and tends to ignore the detrimental impact that tree removal has on the amenity of the local area, the environment, biodiversity, and contribution trees make to ameliorating the negative impact of climate change particularly in urban areas. Conveniently for the insurance industry, tree removal also happens to be the cheapest solution to apparently reducing the risk of further damage. Increasingly, tree removal is also being stated as the ‘greenest option‘ in comparison to traditional underpinning with concrete. It is important to note that tree removal on its own also does not guarantee that the issue of subsidence has been permanently resolved. Where trees protected by a TPO are implicated in subsidence, the council will follow the guidelines as set out within the LTOA Strategy.

Figure 16. Susannah on work experience

Link to relevant corporate policies
National Landscape Management Plan Local Plan BS5837

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Work to ensure enforcement is pursued in the event of contraventions 2. Protect where appropriate existing trees & consented landscape schemes to ensure appropriate tree retention and long-term management 3. Provide tailored training for enforcement team on trees, hedges & woodlands	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	No tree protection policy	Policies in place to protect public trees and employ industry best management practices, but inconsistently enforced	Policies and practices in place to protect public and private trees, generally enforced	Integrated district-wide policies and practices to protect public and private trees, consistently enforced and supported by significant deterrents

R7 Tree, Hedge & Woodland Funding

Securing sufficient funding on an annual basis is vital to not only secure and grow local government funding, but also to expand and diversify finances for tree, hedge and woodland funding. Therefore each action should include a budgeting exercise to determine where and how much funding will be needed.

There are several government schemes for funding tree planting of different types, from woodland establishment to urban forestry.

Whilst funding for tree planting is readily available, funding for management and monitoring of trees and woodland needs further investigation.

Private-sector funding as well as funding from one-off projects offer additional opportunities. Moreover, as a large share of East Devon's trees, hedges and woodlands are owned by private residents and organisations their involvement and support is also essential.

Three broad routes exist:

1. External funds from central government directed at different parties e.g.
    1. Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) for street trees
    2. Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) for other trees and replacement street trees
    3. ELMS
2. External funds from major NGOs such as the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund and More Woods scheme, and the Forestry Commission England Woodland Creation Offer
3. Levies and agreements within the planning system. Best practice directs funds within developments to make good / surpass any tree loss on a fully funded basis using a more appropriate metric than tree numbers which do not reflect the impact of ecosystem services of the loss of large trees. These funds can be sourced through Payment for Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Net Gain.

Figure 17. Beech leaves among conifer plantation.

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
The 25 Year Environmental Plan	1. Scope and implement Section 106 funding for impact mitigation 2. Carry out Tree Planting Opportunity Mapping to assist in funding bids 3. Create a dedicated officer role for bid/funding applications	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Little or no dedicated funding	Funding only for emergency, reactive management	Funding sufficient for some proactive management based on tree & woodland management plan	Sustained funding from public and private sources to fully implement the strategy

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R8 Capacity & Staffing

Adequate staffing means there are enough staff with the correct training and experience to carry out all necessary tasks relating to the implementation and day-to-day running of the tree and woodland programme. This may mean hiring new staff, arranging further training for current staff or bringing in extra capacity from partners to help deliver. For example, Devon Forest Partnership has been set up specifically to help deliver Districts' tree strategies.

This includes anyone involved in the delivery of tree management and implementation, e.g. Tree Wardens Countryside Volunteers, Tree Officers, Countryside & Streetscene staff, etc. One of the key limiters of this target is money, therefore fully costing the Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy and establishing a dedicated and coordinated budget is the first step.

A fully costed budget to deliver this plan can be used to help obtain the necessary funding to deliver the plan. This funding would then allow for important longer term work.

It would also help for EDDC to encourage DCC to promote future employment training for school leavers across the county. Bicton College should be a feeder school to EDDC's THAWS implementation and management teams. If and when there is capacity within the team, it would be valuable to have a work experience programme to encourage the next generation from the local area to be highly skilled in land based industries (Grow your own).

Figure 18. Clearance after Storm Bert

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
The 25 Year Environmental Plan Clean Air Strategy	1. Secure funding for roles necessary to take target to good 2. Work with organisations such as WT, FC, NE & other partners to provide advice and assistance	EDDC Partner NGO's	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	Team severely limited by lack of personnel and/ or access to adequate equipment. Unable to perform adequate maintenance, let alone implement new goals	Team able to implement some of the goals and objectives of this THAWS management plan	Team able to implement many of the goals and objectives of this THAWS management plan	Team able to implement all of the goals and objectives of the THAWS management plan

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R9 Tree Establishment - Site Suitability, Planning, Implementation

New tree, hedge and woodland planting should be undertaken in accordance with the four-point mantra: Right Reason - Right Place - Right Tree - Right Way as described below. This approach gives the best chance of establishment, a good landscape fit and reduces the likelihood of removal later. Where appropriate, the use of natural regeneration for scrub and woodland creation should be considered in preference to new planting but to be successful will require an adequate seed bank to be present over the site and protection from browsing.

- Right reason: Tree, hedge and woodland planting or creation should be undertaken to achieve a clear purpose and focus not just on quantity, but also on quality.

- Right place: Choosing the right location for new trees, hedges and woodland is very important and in rural areas should be guided by published landscape character assessments. In some important habitats tree and hedge planting may be inappropriate and other sites may have archaeological constraints, be part of an historic designed landscape or provide important views which should be respected. In urban areas existing services and buildings may limit choices. Potential constraints should be understood early before deciding to plant.

- Right tree: The benefits and drawbacks of different species must be considered in relation to factors including local landscape character, site suitability, climate tolerance, size, rooting characteristics, aesthetics (canopy, leaves, flowers, etc.), ecosystem service provision and biodiversity.

- **Right way:** How the tree should be planted may vary depending on where the tree is, but all trees need the same essentials; good soil quality and volume for root establishment; water, particularly for young trees and trees in urban areas which may struggle; air and support to keep it upright whilst its roots establish; protection from damage, and maintenance. In urban areas, hard paved impermeable surfaces present challenges which trees are not adapted to deal with, such as soil compaction, limited nutrient recycling and reduced water infiltration.

Adherence to BS 8545 (Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape) and BS 5837 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction) must be a priority in planning and development, rather than an afterthought.

Figure 19: Trees and Design Action Group species selection criteria guide

Sources and references:
Trees and Design Action Group. (2018)
East Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2019).
Devon County Council Landscape Character Assessment (2024)
Devon County Council (2024)

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
Street Tree Establishment Guide Devon GI Strategy Exeter and East Devon GI Strategy Devon Right Tree Right Place Guidance	1. Complete a comprehensive prioritised plan and opportunity map for tree hedge and woodland creation/establishment in urban areas and on EDDC managed land, identifying opportunities for active travel and wildlife corridors 2. Develop SMART targets for implementing the establishment plan including private landowner planting initiatives	EDDC Tender	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	Little or no tree planting; tree establishment is ad hoc. Trees are selected and planted without consideration of site conditions	Some tree planting and establishment occurs, but with limited overall district-wide planning and post-planting care. Appropriate tree species are considered in site selection	Tree planting plan is guided by district-wide goals, with some post-planting establishment care. Guidelines in place for the improvement of planting site conditions and selection of suitable species	Comprehensive tree establishment plan is based in evidence, and maintains species and age diversity, includes both planting and young tree care. Trees planted in sites with adequate soil quality and quantity, and with sufficient growing space and overall site conditions

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R10 Maintenance of Publicly Owned Trees

Intensively managed trees include street trees and trees in high target areas such as parks and open spaces, which require more care and attention due to the additional stresses and challenges of life in proximity to humans, particularly in hard landscapes, along transport routes, and in areas of high foot traffic resulting in soil compaction. In order to ensure the safety of public trees, cyclical inspections and appropriate maintenance is often required.

East Devon uses Ezytreev to proactively manage its tree stock; however, ensuring that it is fully comprehensive, including recording maintenance schedules and works undertaken is the first step in ensuring that all trees are appropriately maintained.

Occupancy levels and target value are key drivers for inspection frequency, therefore an understanding of public land is essential in developing the inspection frequency, which should in turn help prioritise monitoring and management.

Proactively managing trees helps reduce the level of risk to acceptable levels, which in turn helps reduce the likelihood of failure, reduce the level of perceived nuisance, reduces trip hazards, the spread of tree diseases and poor management such as leaving tree guards and stakes in situ too long, which can cause harm to trees. Proactive management is also essential in ensuring successful tree establishment in planting schemes.

Extensively managed trees are trees in parks, woodlands and other natural areas which are often allowed to grow more naturally and freely than intensively managed trees. These areas still require management to provide a healthy and diverse green space. They are often used by the public and therefore risk management is a key consideration. The frequency of land use and target value are key drivers for inspection frequency, and any inspection rota should accommodate this to prioritise monitoring and management. This is expanded on in T6 and T8.

Figure 20. Bella and Sam on Work Experience

Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
National Planning Policy Framework	1. Ensure EDDC tree stock is proactively managed and recommended works are undertaken as necessary via Ezytreev	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Medium	No maintenance of publicly owned trees, or on a reactive basis only	Publicly owned trees receive only periodic inspection and maintenance	Publicly owned trees are inspected and proactively maintained on a cyclical basis	All publicly owned, intensively managed trees are routinely and thoroughly maintained on ongoing basis according to a comprehensive management plan

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

R11 Tree Risk Management of Council Owned Trees

Existing tree management policy covering EDDC-owned trees is not under review within this strategy. Its principal components of tree and woodland maintenance, tree protection policy and risk management, are reflected here to ensure that higher-level issues are captured.

Existing practices for risk management and associated tree maintenance are considered to serve East Devon well and align with the district's scale in terms of both population and available budgets. These practices are informed by the principles of the National Tree Safety Group's (NTSG) Common Sense Risk Management of Trees, ensuring a balanced approach to managing tree risks proportionately while recognising the many benefits trees provide. EDDC's risk management policy emphasises the importance of assessing and mitigating risks effectively without unduly compromising tree retention or the wider benefits of its urban and rural treescape.

In certain cases, however, trees may need to be removed not only due to the physical risks they pose, such as falling limbs, but also because of damage they may cause to buildings through tree-related subsidence. Addressing such issues requires careful investigation and collaboration with insurers to balance the need for public safety and property protection with the retention of tree cover wherever possible.

The management of street trees in East Devon is the responsibility of either East Devon District Council, Devon County Council or Local Parish Councils, each of which has its own policies in place. Collaboration between the various authorities is essential to ensure consistency in tree management and risk mitigation across the district.

Sources and references:
National Tree Safety Group. (2011)

Figure 21. Oak in Shute

Link to relevant corporate policies
FAO Guidelines on Urban and Peri-urban Forestry EDDC Tree Management Guidance

Actions	Responsibility	Review
1. Review EDDC tree risk assessment and management guidance	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
High	No tree risk assessment or risk management program. Response is on a reactive basis only	Level I (limited visual assessment) inspection and follow-up conducted periodically	Level II (basic assessment) conducted periodically, resulting in scheduled follow-ups	Level II (basic assessment) conducted routinely, according to defined cycle and intensive follow-up (i.e., priorities and timelines for mitigation established based on the characterisation of risk)

3.3 Targets, Priorities and Actions

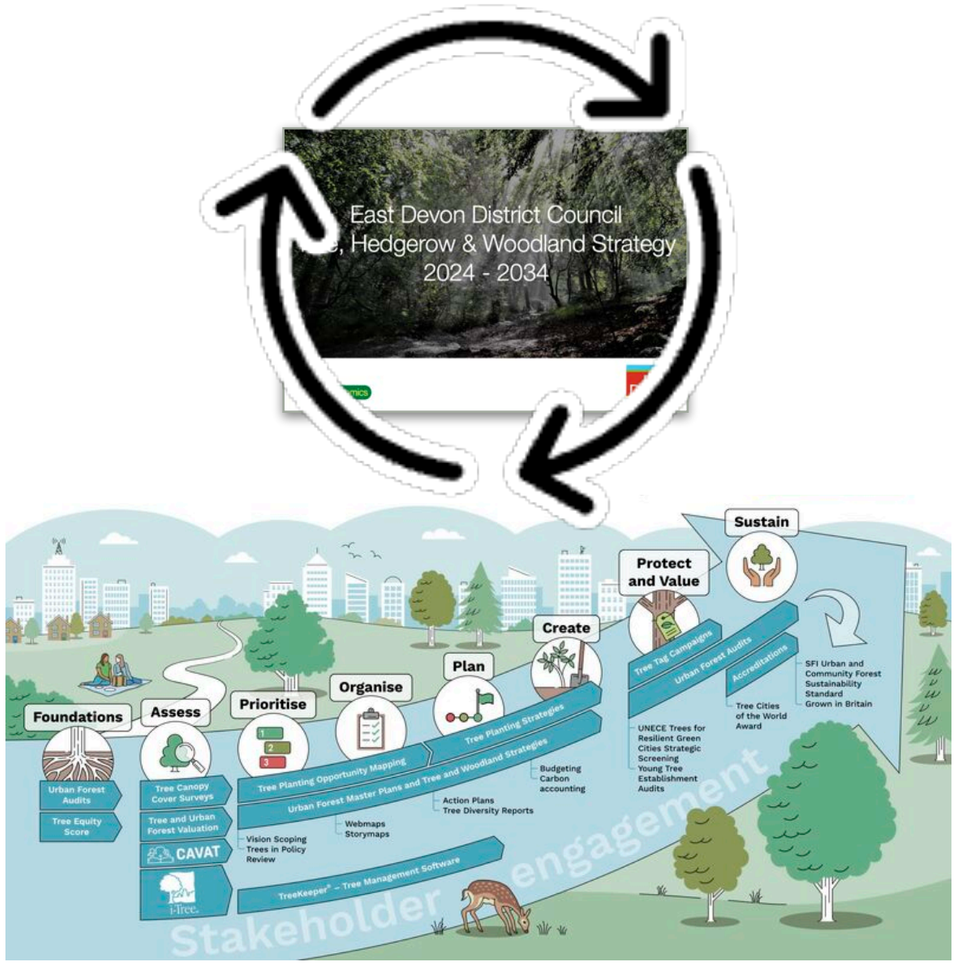
R12 Reviewing & Improving the Strategy

EDDC is taking a strategic approach to its trees, hedges and woodlands. It follows an action based model more widely used in countries like the US and Canada. The Plan will help EDDC set and work towards a vision for its trees that is sustainable well into the future.

The Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy outlines a vision for the development of the urban and rural tree resource. It provides a long-term framework in which strategic plans can be developed. Tree-planting programmes are just one element of tree and woodland management, and long-term management plans are just as important. With a tree and woodland management plan in place, tree planting programmes can be focused and strategised, as well as better guiding the achievement of a long-term vision.

With agreement on an ambitious vision, the Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy can be divided into management periods, with goals and targets clearly outlined. A series of performance indicators are then be put into place to monitor performance and help progress towards the achievement of goals and the wider vision. It is important that progress is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and actions modified as necessary. This way, EDDC can focus on the most relevant and urgent areas going forward.

The Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy is an ongoing piece of work and this document represents the first step and will be subject to ongoing improvement and updating. For each and every target within the plan further detail will be added, projects will be planned and actioned to take EDDC towards its vision.



Link to relevant corporate policies	Actions	Responsibility	Review
All relevant EDDC plans, policies, and strategies	1. The Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it remains relevant to East Devon and is compliant with current legislation, guidance and industry best practice	EDDC	2026

Priority	Key Performance Indicators showing current position			
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
Low	No plan	Existing plan limited in scope and implementation	Recent comprehensive plan developed and implemented for publicly owned forest resources, including trees managed intensively (or individually) and those managed extensively, as a population (e.g., trees in natural areas)	Strategic, multi-tiered plan with built-in adaptive management mechanisms developed and implemented for public and private forest resources. (Add in plan is reviewed)

4.3 Summary - Sustainable Resource Management Approach

Key Performance Indicator	Current Performance Level & Future Goal				Priority
	Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal	
R1 – Tree, Hedge & Woodland Inventory		Moderate			Low
R2 – Tree valuation and asset management approach		Moderate			Medium
R3 – Tree Canopy Cover assessment and goals		Moderate			High
R4 – Tree Equity (links to C6)		Moderate			High
R5 — Trees, Hedges & Woodlands in Development		Moderate			High
R6 – Tree protection policy development and enforcement		Moderate			High
R7 – Tree Hedge & Woodland Funding			Good		Medium
R8 – Capacity and Staffing		Moderate			Low
R9 – Tree Establishment - Site Suitability Planning and Implementation		Moderate			Medium
R10 – Maintenance of publicly owned trees		Moderate			Medium
R11 – Tree risk management of Council Owned Trees			Good		High
R12 – Reviewing & improving the Strategy			Good		Low

4.

Consultation Feedback

This section presents the outcomes of the public consultation regarding the creation of this document and the key themes, targets and actions.

4 Consultation Feedback

Introduction

As an integral part of this strategy, public consultation was sought, in order to gather opinions from a wide section of the community on how trees in EDDC are perceived and managed. The process was undertaken via an online public survey to gather opinions before any of the strategy was written, helping to inform its scope and direction.

The public opinion survey, consisted of around 20 questions with quick, selectable answers and additional space for free text on each. Feedback was overwhelming, which saw one of the greatest responses East Devon had seen in recent times, with almost 500 respondents taking part.

A key result of the feedback highlighted the main themes that members of the public want the Council to focus on. These are:

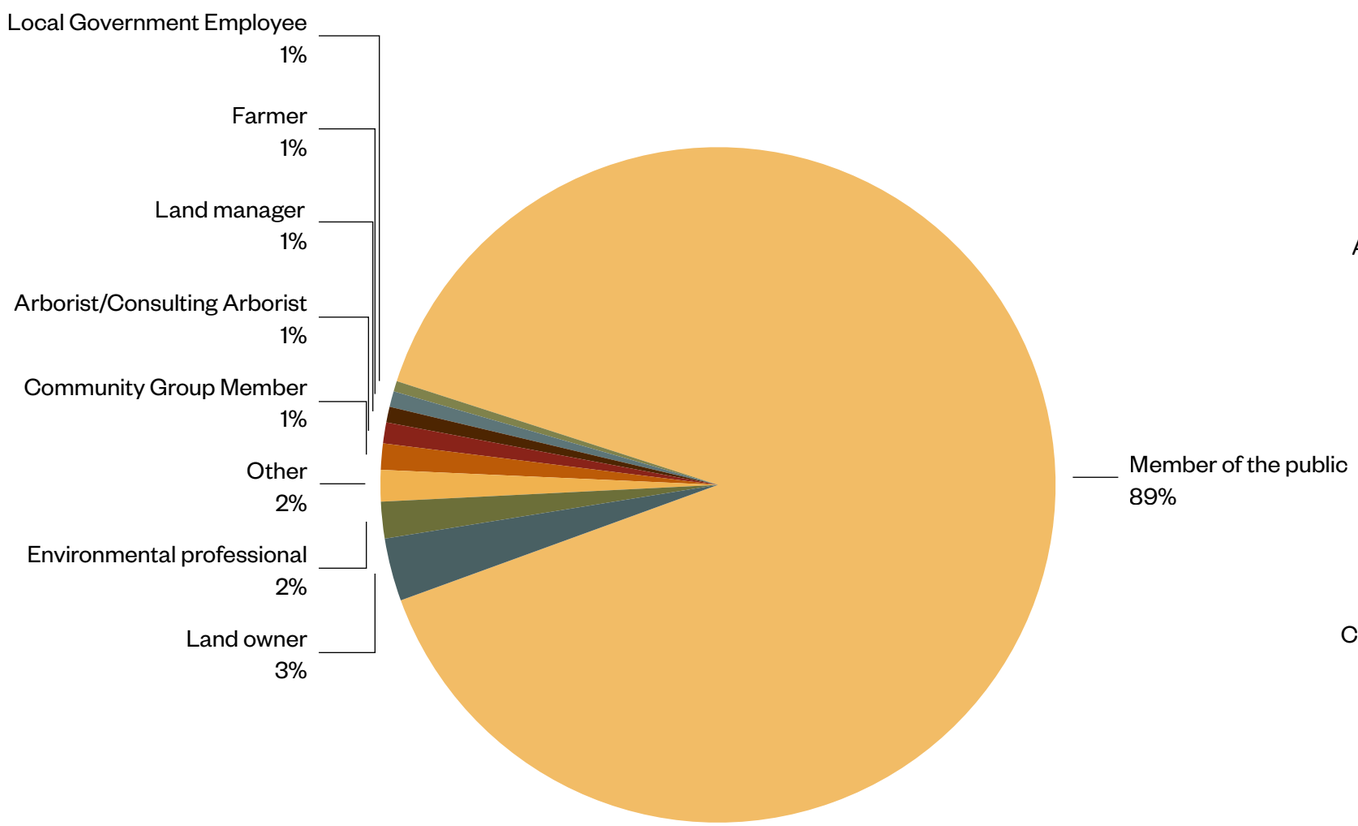
- Wildlife, biodiversity and concerns for native species,
- Safeguarding EDDC's Trees, hedges and woodlands for future generations,
- Managing trees to deliver ecosystem services such as stormwater attenuation and improving air quality,
- Protecting, enhancing and regenerating the natural green spaces across East Devon for the amenity, health and natural beauty of the local area.

Further to the public consultation, a number of workshops were held for internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. The outcomes from these workshops helped to deliver the vision, actions and priorities for this plan.

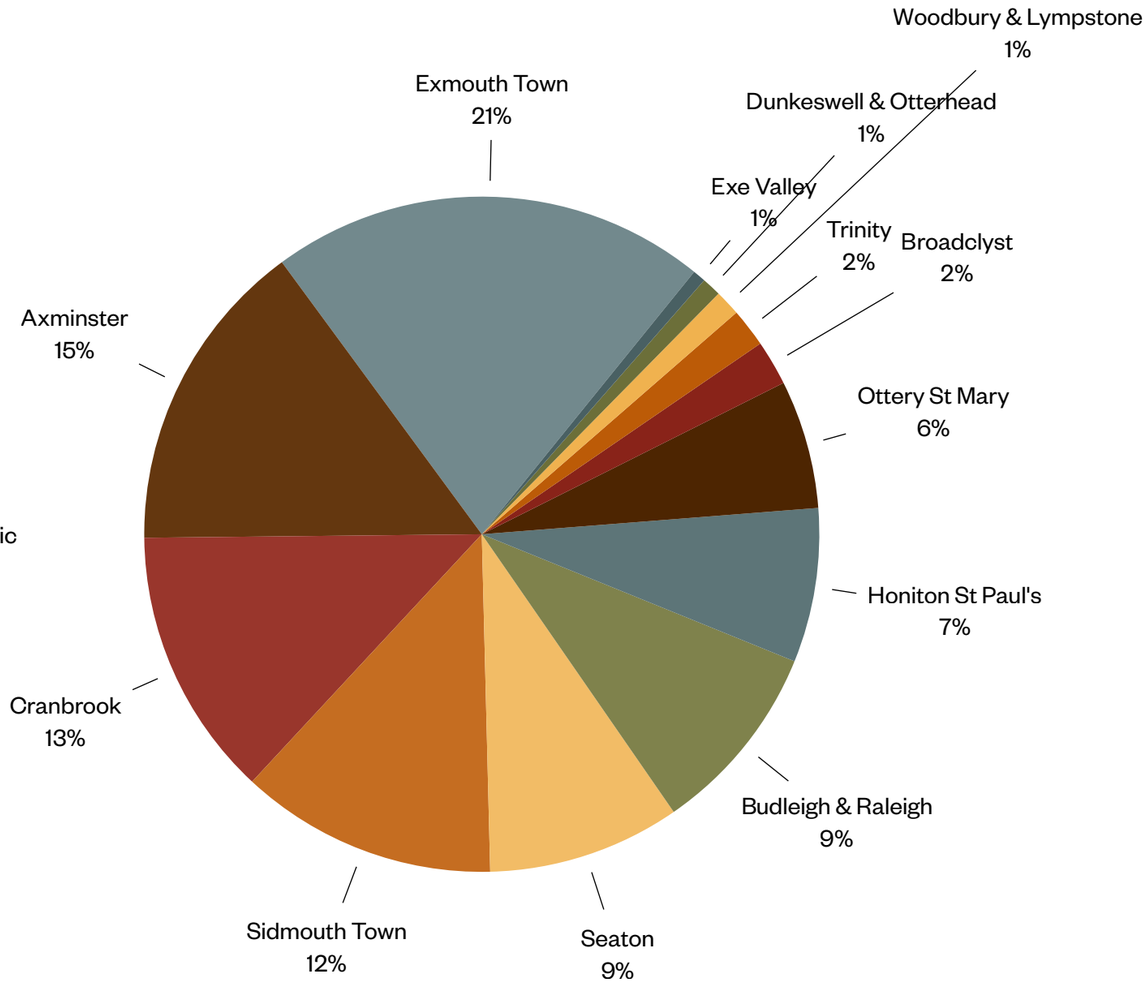
4 Consultation Feedback

Responder profiles

Who are our consultees?



Where are our consultees based?



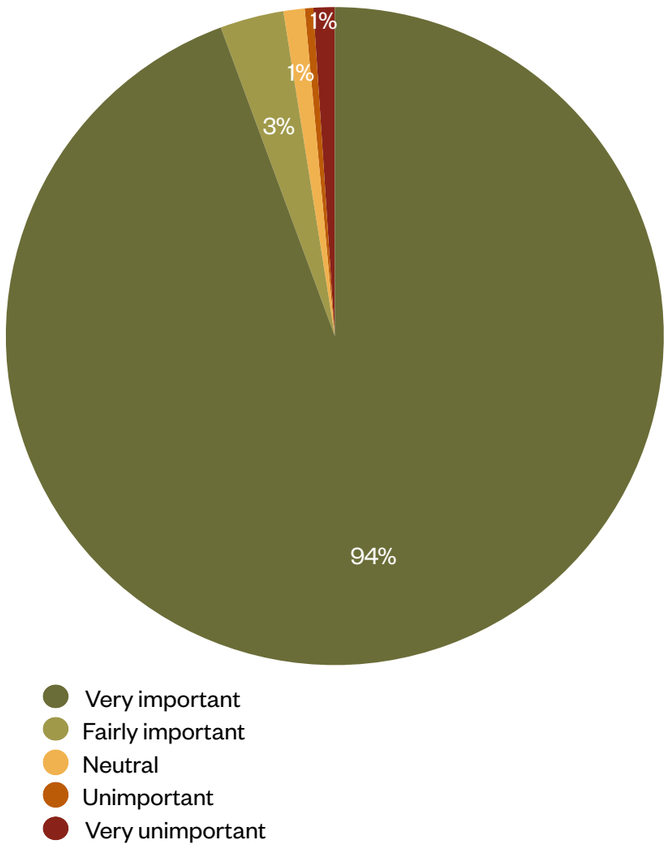
Almost 500 individuals interacted with this consultation. Some, however, did not complete all questions; most questions had 400-450 responses.

The vast majority of responders were members of the public. It is positive to see environmental professionals and local community group members interacting with this consultation.

13 of East Devon's 30 wards were represented by the consultees, however the larger towns account for a higher proportion of responders than the less densely populated wards. This may impact the results of the later questions in this survey, as the more urbanised areas of East Devon have a very different tree, woodland and hedgerow makeup than the rural areas.

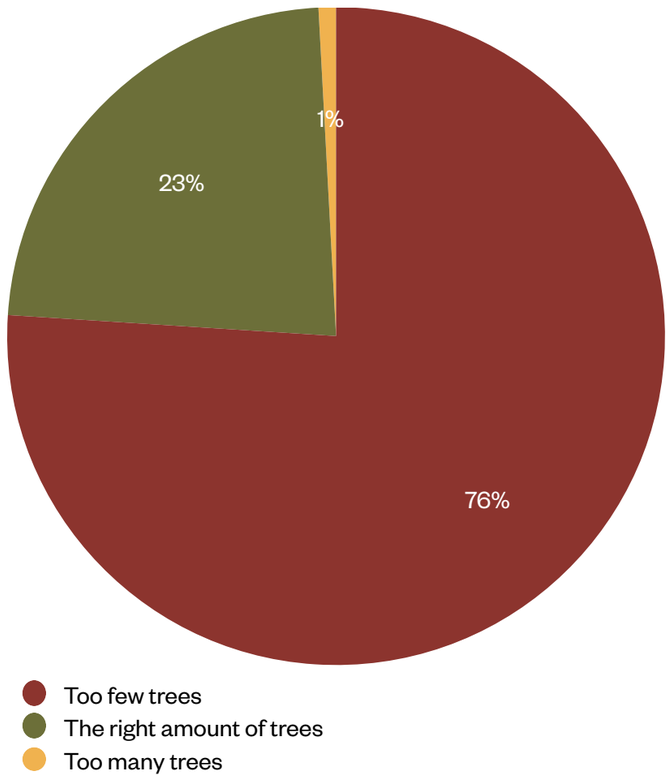
4 Consultation Feedback

Q1. How would you rate the importance of having trees, woodlands, and hedges in East Devon's landscape?



When asked about the importance of trees across the region the overwhelming response is that trees woodlands and hedgerows are "very important" to the people of EDDC.

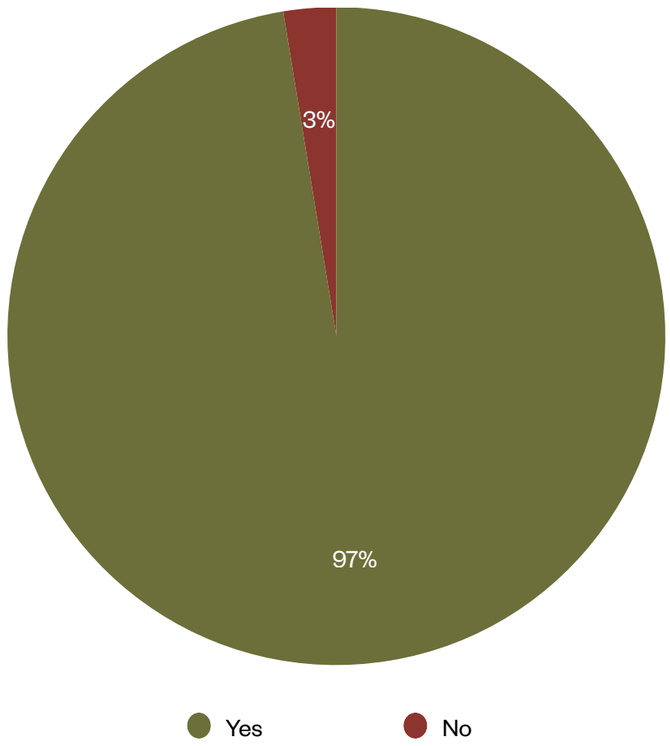
Q2. Do you feel that there are the right amount of trees across East Devon?



When asked specifically about the number of trees in East Devon, the majority of respondents believe East Devon needs more trees, although almost a quarter believe that there are the right amount of trees .

The current tree canopy cover across EDDC is 21.7%, and this strategy includes a target of increasing canopy cover to 30%.

Q3. Can you see any trees from your property?



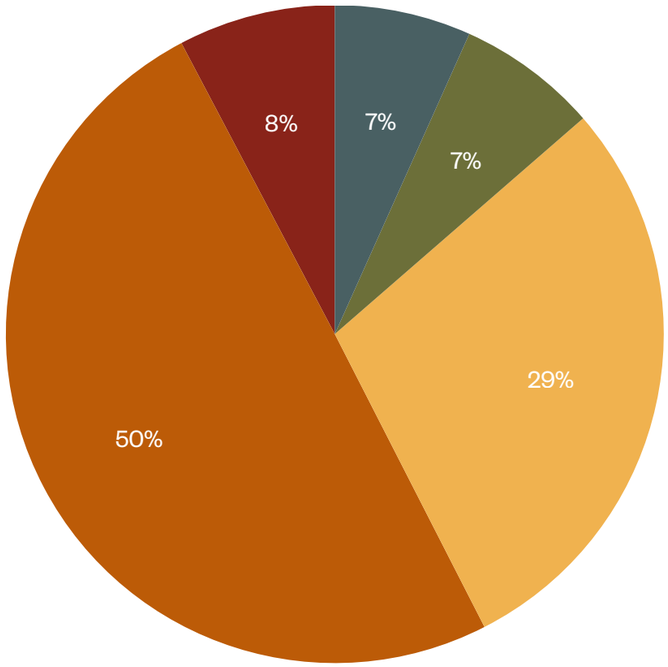
Almost all survey respondents state that they can indeed see trees from their property.

It is interesting to note that regardless of the fact that almost all respondents being able to see at least one tree from their home, that according to Q2, 23% of people believe that more trees are needed across East Devon.

The 3-30-300 rule may be a helpful guide to improve the public view on trees, particularly in urban and residential areas.

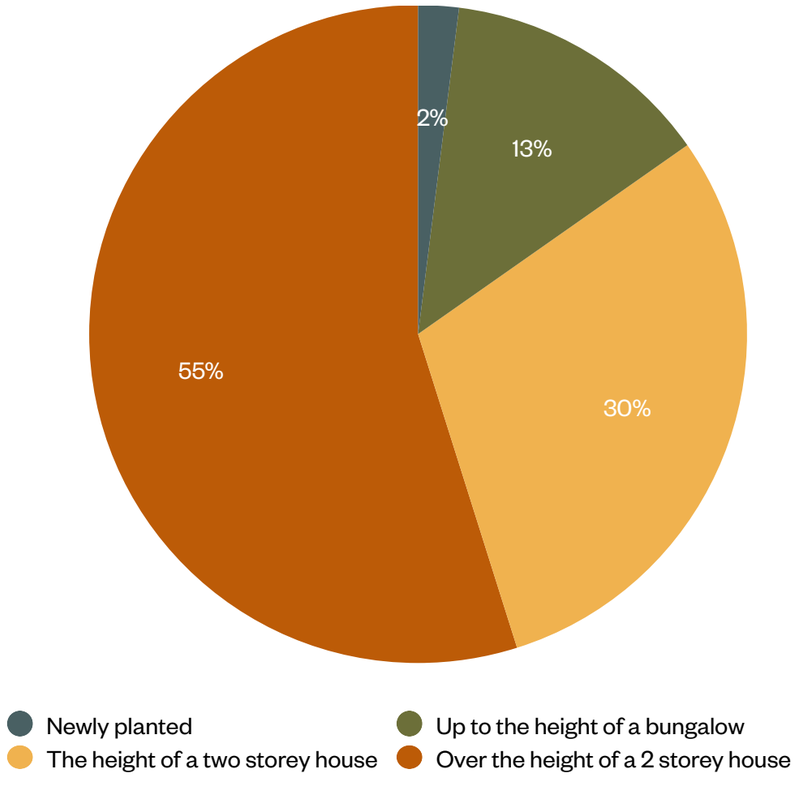
4 Consultation Feedback

Q4. What type of tree(s) can you see from your home?



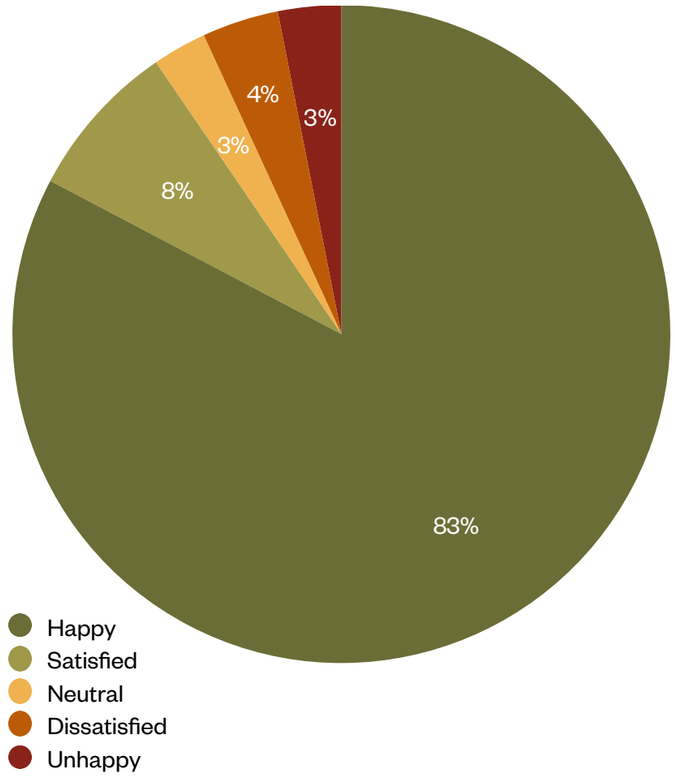
Interestingly, exactly half of the trees seen from respondents' homes are privately owned trees, either in their own gardens or that of neighbours. The next highest proportion of trees belong to woodlands and hedgerows, highlighting the importance of these features in East Devon's landscape.

Q5. What size is/are the tree(s) you can see from your home?



Question 5 reveals that only 2% of trees seen from homes are newly planted. This is likely simply that small trees are difficult to see and more are likely to be obscured by other infrastructure, but could also be a potential indication that new planting has been limited in residential and urban spaces. Further investigation into recent planting practices and priorities would clarify this. The majority of trees seen are large, mature trees. Again, this may be simply that they can be seen from further away and are not obscured by buildings thereby appearing to be more common than smaller trees, however given the response the Q4, it is reasonable to believe that more of the trees within view of homes are simply mature woodland trees.

Q6. How do you feel about the tree you can see from your home?

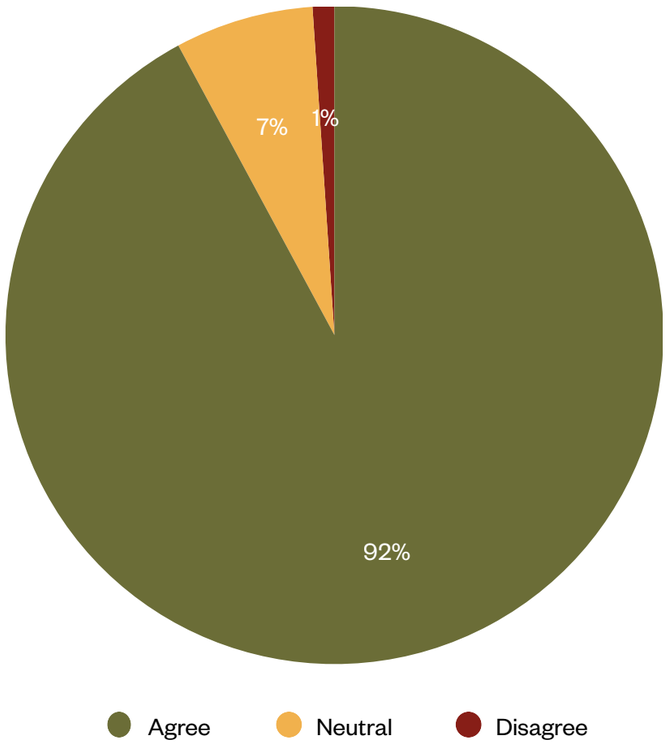


The responses to question 6, regarding the feelings towards the trees that consultees can see from their properties are exceptionally positive. The few which are negative are understandable and the comments of the respondents reflect the main themes of a lack of light, excess leaf litter and lack of maintenance and potential risk of property damage.

The positive feedback reflects consultees intrinsic understanding of the value of trees, even if they are not directly aware of the specifics.

4 Consultation Feedback

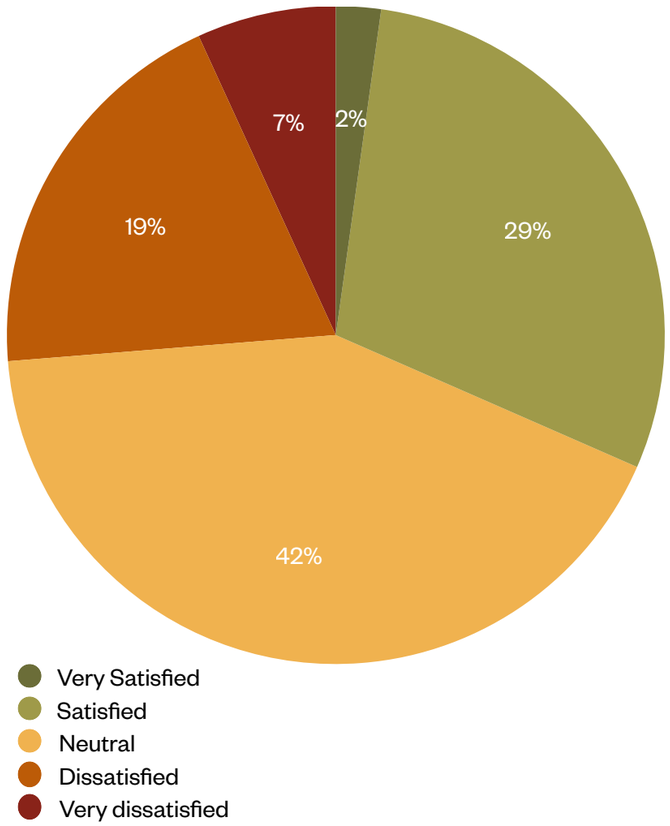
Q7. Should EDDC actively encourage new tree planting across both private and public locations?



The vast majority of respondents believe that EDDC should promote and action more tree planting, and most others did not feel strongly either way.

This is interesting considering 23% of respondents answered Q2 by stating that they believe East Devon has the right number of trees. This may be indicative of the belief that more is better when it comes to trees, and that people recognise the benefits to continuing to plant trees, both in terms of ecosystem service provision and to replace dead and dying trees each year, regardless of the number of existing trees.

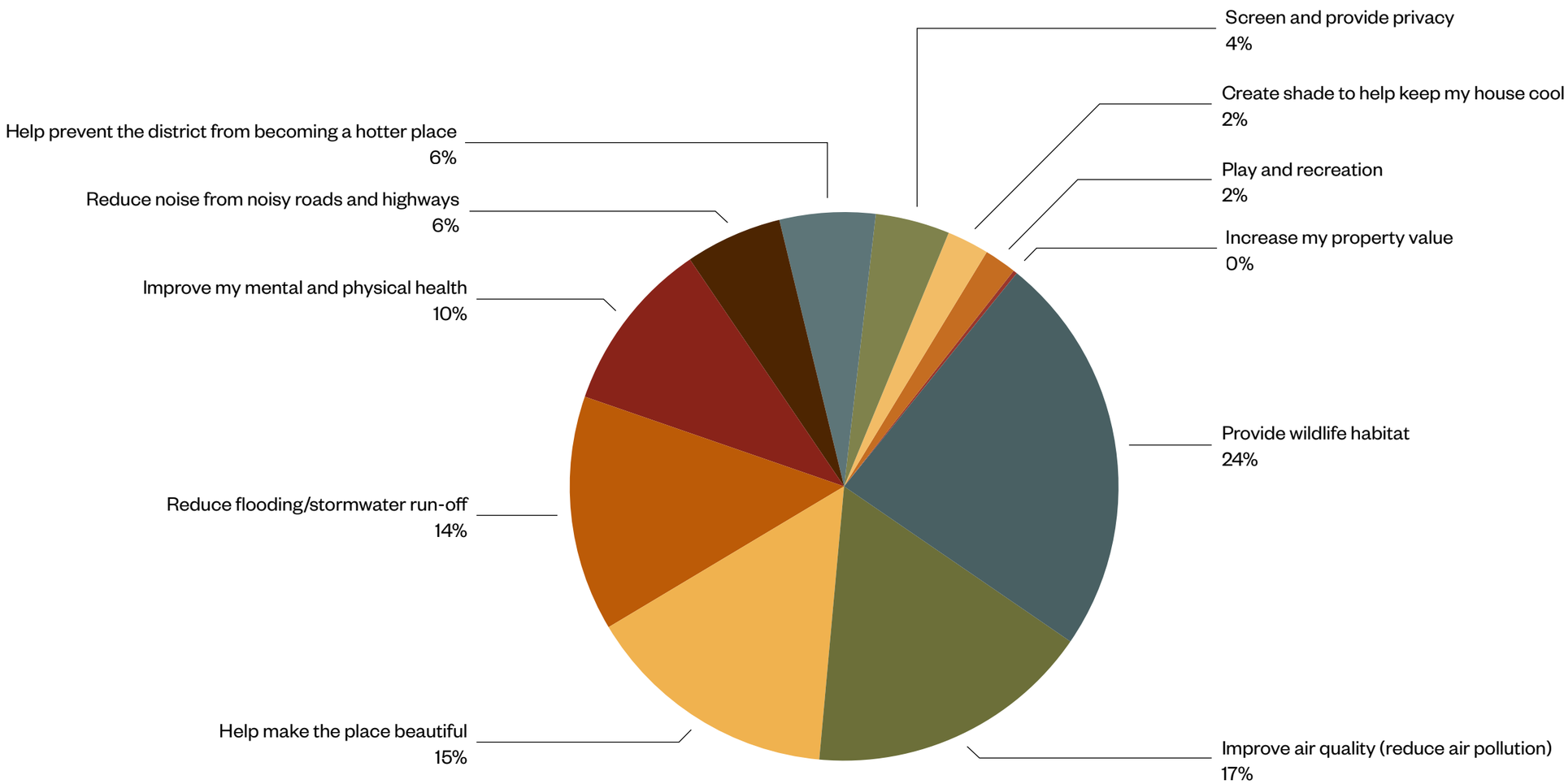
Q8. How do you feel about the care of street and park trees in East Devon?



Question 8 adresses public perception ot tree management. Whilst a considerable proportion of consultees did not feel strongly either way, 58% of respondents did have an opinion on street and park tree management. This opinion was split almost in half by those who felt positively and those who felt negatively, with about 5% more respondents feeling positively than negatively. However, 7% of people feel “very dissatisfied’ compared with only 2% who feel ‘very satisfied’.

4 Consultation Feedback

Q9. Which benefits that trees, hedges, and woodlands in East Devon provide are most important to you?



The highest priority for the consultees is to ensure that the trees, woodlands and hedgerows of East Devon provide a habitat for wildlife. Other ecosystem services were also considered important, particularly regarding air quality and flooding. Amenity benefits were also important, with natural beauty, mental and physical benefits, and recreational space accumulating 27% of votes.

5 Appendices

5.1 Best Practice Guidance

Biosecurity

1. Sourcing Healthy, Certified Plant Stock
Using UK-grown, biosecure plant stock from nurseries with Plant Healthy certification reduces the risk of importing pests and diseases.
Example: Kent County Council works with certified nurseries for planting projects to promote local sourcing and reduce disease transmission.

2. Inspection and Quarantine of Imported Plants
Carefully inspecting and quarantining imported plants before planting prevents the spread of invasive pests and pathogens.
Example: Cornwall Council enforces stringent inspection protocols for plants used in public green spaces.

3. Implementing Clean Equipment Protocols
Cleaning boots, tools, and vehicles before entering sensitive tree areas reduces the spread of soil-borne diseases like Phytophthora.
Example: New Forest National Park Authority promotes "Check, Clean, Dry" guidance to protect forest biodiversity.

4. Monitoring and Reporting Pest Outbreaks
Early detection of pests like oak processionary moth (OPM) and ash dieback enables swift containment.
Example: Richmond upon Thames Borough Council collaborates with the Forestry Commission to monitor and manage outbreaks of OPM.

5. Restricting Movement of Infected Material
Careful disposal of diseased plant material and restrictions on moving wood from infected areas helps contain threats.
Example: Ashdown Forest Conservators enforce restrictions on the movement of ash wood to curb ash dieback spread.

6. Public Engagement and Education
Raising public awareness about identifying pests and diseases supports biosecurity through community vigilance.
Example: Surrey County Council runs educational campaigns to help residents recognise and report tree pests.

Conclusion
Effective tree and plant biosecurity measures, as demonstrated by councils such as Kent, Richmond upon Thames, and Surrey, highlight the importance of sourcing healthy plants, maintaining strict hygiene practices, and engaging the community to protect trees and plants from emerging threats.

British Standards

BS 5837:2012 – (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations)
BS 5837:2012 provides a structured approach to protecting trees during construction, ensuring that development and tree conservation can coexist. It sets out best practices such as early tree surveys to assess trees for retention, Arboricultural Impact Assessments to evaluate potential risks, and Tree Protection Plans to safeguard retained trees with fencing and Root Protection Zones. The standard also highlights the importance of developing a Tree Constraints Plan during the initial design phase to guide site layout decisions. Protective fencing must be installed before site work begins, and Root Protection Areas must be calculated and respected to prevent soil compaction and root damage. Monitoring during construction and post-development inspections help ensure long-term tree health. Example: Oxford City Council enforces strict Tree Protection Plan conditions to prevent damage to trees on development sites, ensuring compliance with BS 5837.

BS 8683:2021 (Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain. Specification)
BS 8683:2021 provides a structured process for achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in development projects, ensuring that habitat improvements are maintained in the long term. It emphasises early commitment to biodiversity, integrating ecological considerations throughout project design, and applying clear, measurable targets for biodiversity improvements. The standard is applicable across different sectors and project scales, promoting a consistent and transparent approach to delivering lasting ecological benefits. Example: The UK government's Environment Act 2021 mandates a 10% net gain in biodiversity for most developments, aligning with the principles outlined in BS 8683.

BS 42020:2013 (Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development)
BS 42020:2013 sets out best practices to ensure biodiversity is properly considered in planning decisions. It provides guidance on conducting ecological surveys, assessing impacts, and implementing biodiversity enhancements. The standard promotes transparency in decision-making, ensuring that planning authorities have the necessary ecological information to make informed choices.

It also recommends the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan to establish biodiversity protection measures during construction, such as risk assessments and designated protection zones. Post-development monitoring is another key aspect, ensuring that mitigation and enhancement measures remain effective over time. Example: Leeds City Council integrates BS 42020 principles by requiring detailed ecological assessments for planning applications, ensuring biodiversity is protected and enhanced in new developments.

BS 8545:2014 – (Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations)
BS 8545:2014 provides comprehensive guidance on establishing young trees so they survive and thrive in the long term. It covers every stage, from nursery production and tree selection to planting, aftercare, and long-term maintenance. The focus is on ensuring trees are resilient, well-placed, and suited to their environment to reduce the risk of failure. The standard details the entire process of tree establishment, ensuring their successful integration into the landscape through appropriate species selection, site preparation, and ongoing care. Example: Bristol City Council follows BS 8545 when planting new street trees, ensuring proper species selection, soil preparation, and post-planting care to maximise survival rates.

Tree Planting & Establishment

Tree planting and establishment are critical to enhancing urban and rural landscapes, increasing biodiversity, and mitigating climate change. Successful long-term outcomes depend on careful planning, correct species selection, and ongoing maintenance.

1. Right Tree, Right Place
Selecting tree species suited to the local soil, climate, and landscape ensures better growth and reduces future maintenance. Avoid planting large species near buildings, utilities, or transport infrastructure.
Example: Manchester City Council promotes species selection tailored to urban microclimates to support climate resilience and biodiversity.

2. Soil Preparation and Site Design
Thorough site assessments, including testing soil conditions and ensuring adequate space for root systems, are essential for successful establishment.
Example: Nottingham City Council prioritises thorough site preparation for its street tree planting schemes to improve survival rates.

3. Planting Techniques
Correct planting techniques, such as ensuring the correct depth, using high-quality rootstock, and avoiding root girdling, help trees establish well.
Example: Bristol City Council follows British Standard BS8545 for tree planting to optimise tree survival in its urban environment.

4. Protection and Maintenance
Newly planted trees must be protected from damage by wildlife, vandalism, and vehicles. Maintenance during the first five years is essential, including mulching, watering, and formative pruning.
Example: Glasgow City Council implements a five-year maintenance program for newly planted trees, significantly improving survival rates.

5. Community Engagement
Engaging residents and volunteers fosters a sense of ownership, helping to ensure trees are valued and cared for.
Example: Lewisham Council runs tree planting days with local community groups to raise awareness and encourage care for newly planted trees.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation
Regular inspections help track tree health and identify issues early, such as pest infestations or disease.
Example: Milton Keynes Council monitors the health of newly planted trees annually, making adjustments as necessary to improve establishment success.

Best practice in tree planting and establishment focuses on appropriate species selection, careful planting, proactive maintenance, and community involvement. Authorities like Bristol and Glasgow showcase effective approaches, demonstrating how sustainable tree planting can contribute to healthier landscapes and vibrant communities.

Green Infrastructure in Planning

1. Embedding GI in Local Plans and Policies
Explicitly incorporating GI into local development frameworks ensures its prioritisation in decision-making.
Example: Greater Manchester Combined Authority has a GI Framework integrated within its Spatial Framework, guiding nature-based solutions and development strategies.

2. Multi-Functional Design
Green spaces should deliver multiple benefits, such as flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, and recreational opportunities.
Example: London Borough of Camden integrates GI features like rain gardens and urban greening as part of development conditions.

3. Tree Planting as Essential GI Components
Tree-lined streets, pocket parks, and woodland buffers provide shade, cooling effects, and carbon capture in urban areas.
Example: Islington Council mandates tree planting and green roofs as part of urban greening in dense development areas.

4. Green Corridors and Connectivity
Creating linked green spaces allows wildlife movement and enhances biodiversity.
Example: Glasgow City Council supports the creation of green corridors through the Clyde Climate Forest Initiative.

5. Integration with Blue Infrastructure
Combining GI with water management features, such as swales and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), enhances flood resilience and water quality.
Example: Exeter City Council includes SuDS within new developments to mitigate flooding risks while enhancing biodiversity.

6. Community Engagement and Co-Design
Involving residents in the design and stewardship of GI fosters ownership and long-term care.
Example: Sheffield City Council actively involves communities in its Grey to Green project, transforming urban spaces into vibrant green areas.

Conclusion
Successful integration of green infrastructure into planning, as demonstrated by Greater Manchester, Camden, and Sheffield, showcases the value of multi-functional, connected, and community-focused approaches. These best practices highlight how GI can create healthier, greener, and more sustainable places for future generations.

Hedgerow Management and Maintenance

Hedgerows play a vital role in supporting biodiversity, preventing soil erosion, improving air quality, and enhancing landscape character. Proper management and maintenance ensure their ecological and structural health, benefiting both wildlife and landowners.

1. Routine Cutting and Trimming at the Right Time
Hedgerows should only be cut during the dormant period (generally between late September and February) to avoid disturbing nesting birds and to encourage wildlife-friendly berry production.
Example: Devon County Council works closely with landowners to promote winter hedge trimming to protect wildlife.

2. Encouraging Hedgerow Biodiversity
Incorporating a mix of native species in new hedge plantings and leaving mature trees within hedgerows provides habitats for a variety of species.
Example: East Riding of Yorkshire Council supports native hedgerow planting schemes through biodiversity initiatives.

3. Hedgerow Restoration through Laying and Gapping Up
Traditional techniques like hedge laying and filling gaps help extend the lifespan and health of hedgerows.
Example: South Gloucestershire Council promotes traditional hedge-laying through workshops and financial support.

4. Minimal Intervention and Rotational Cutting
Reducing the frequency of hedge cutting to once every two or three years supports flowering and fruiting, which benefits pollinators and birds.
Example: Herefordshire Council encourages rotational hedge cutting as part of its local conservation strategy.

5. Protecting Veteran and Ancient Hedges
Identifying and protecting older, species-rich hedges ensures the conservation of important ecological and historical features.
Example: Devon Hedge Group, in partnership with local councils, promotes the conservation of ancient hedgerows.

6. Community Involvement in Hedgerow Care
Engaging local communities in hedgerow restoration and maintenance builds a sense of ownership and awareness.
Example: *Wiltshire Council* runs community hedge planting and maintenance days as part of its biodiversity action plan.

Conclusion
Effective hedgerow management and maintenance balance environmental conservation and practical land use. Authorities like *Devon*, *South Gloucestershire*, and *Herefordshire* highlight the importance of traditional techniques, minimal intervention, and community involvement to maintain these valuable green corridors for generations to come.

5.1 Best Practice Guidance

Woodland Management and Maintenance

Woodland management and maintenance are essential for maintaining the health, biodiversity, and resilience of woodlands. Proper management ensures that woodlands continue to provide environmental, economic and social benefits, such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement, recreational opportunities and timber production. Best practices in this field involve sustainable practices that promote the long-term health of woodlands while meeting the needs of local communities.

1. Sustainable Management Plans
Developing a long-term woodland management plan is crucial. These plans should outline goals, such as biodiversity enhancement, timber harvesting, or recreation. They should also include a strategy for ongoing maintenance, regeneration, and monitoring.
Example: Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire has a long-standing management plan focused on sustainable timber production while maintaining ecological balance. The Forest's strategy includes clear guidelines for regeneration, selective thinning, and biodiversity enhancement.

2. Diversity of Species
Promoting species diversity is key to woodland resilience. A mix of native species ensures that the woodland is more resilient to pests, diseases, and the impacts of climate change.
Example: The Woodland Trust encourages landowners to plant a variety of native species to improve the ecological health of woodlands, particularly focusing on increasing biodiversity.

3. Natural Regeneration
Where possible, allow natural regeneration to occur. This process is often more sustainable and cost-effective than replanting, as native species are more likely to thrive in the local environment. It also enhances biodiversity and promotes a more natural ecosystem.
Example: Northumberland National Park promotes natural regeneration, particularly in areas where grazing pressure has been reduced. This allows native tree species to naturally regenerate and maintain the ecological integrity of the woodland.

4. Monitoring and Adaptive Management
Regular monitoring of woodland health, species composition, and environmental conditions is crucial. Adaptive management allows for adjustments to be made based on monitoring results, ensuring that management practices remain effective in a changing climate.
Example: Yorkshire Dales National Park employs a monitoring system that tracks woodland regeneration and health. The data collected informs adaptive management decisions, such as the introduction of specific species or changes in grazing management.

5. Engaging Local Communities
Involving local communities in woodland management is crucial for long-term success. Engaging local people in activities like tree planting, conservation work, or educational programs helps foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the woodland.
Example: Hampshire County Council has a strong community engagement program that includes volunteer groups working to manage and maintain local woodlands, focusing on practical conservation tasks such as invasive species control and path maintenance.

Best practices include creating sustainable management plans, promoting species diversity, and engaging local communities. Regular monitoring, controlling invasive species, and maintaining structural diversity are all key to ensuring woodlands remain healthy and resilient.

Watercourse & Wetland Management and Maintenance

The effective management and maintenance of watercourses and wetlands is essential for flood risk reduction, biodiversity enhancement, and water quality improvement. Best practice involves a combination of natural flood management techniques, habitat restoration, and regular maintenance to ensure long-term sustainability.

1. Natural Flood Management (NFM)
Utilising natural processes to slow water flow and enhance infiltration. Techniques include re-meandering rivers, creating wetlands, and planting riparian buffers.
Example: Leeds City Council's NFM Programme, which uses tree planting and wetland creation to reduce flood risks.

2. Wetland Restoration and Creation
Restoring degraded wetlands to improve biodiversity and water storage. Enhancing habitat connectivity and resilience to climate change.
Example: Somerset County Council's Hills to Levels project, focusing on natural flood mitigation and habitat restoration

3. Routine Maintenance and Monitoring
Regular inspection and removal of blockages to maintain flow. Managing invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.
Example: Norfolk County Council's Drainage Maintenance Strategy, which outlines inspection regimes and vegetation management

4. Community Engagement and Partnerships
Involving local communities in river stewardship and monitoring programs. Working with local landowners to implement sustainable drainage solutions.
Example: East Devon AONB's River Otter Beaver Trial, demonstrating how beavers naturally regulate water flow and improve wetland habitats

5. Policy and Strategic Planning
Aligning with local flood risk management plans and biodiversity action plans. Incorporating watercourse management into local planning policies.
Example: London Borough of Enfield's Blue Green Strategy, which integrates wetlands into urban planning for climate resilience

By adopting these best practices, local authorities can effectively manage watercourses and wetlands, contributing to climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

Tree-Related Subsidence

Tree-related subsidence occurs when tree roots extract moisture from shrinkable clay soils, causing ground movement that may affect nearby buildings. Effective management minimises risks while maintaining the environmental benefits of trees.

1. Site-Specific Risk Assessments
Conducting detailed assessments of subsidence risk, including soil type analysis and proximity of trees to structures, helps determine appropriate mitigation measures. Risk assessments should account for the specific needs of different tree species and soil conditions.
Example: *Camden Council* integrates arboricultural assessments in planning applications for developments on clay soils to reduce the likelihood of future subsidence issues.

2. Collaborative Monitoring Programs
Establishing monitoring programs between local authorities, homeowners, and insurers helps detect early signs of ground movement and identify potential tree-related issues.
Example: *Islington Council* has partnerships with insurance companies to monitor properties at risk of tree-related subsidence, reducing unnecessary tree removals.

3. Appropriate Tree Species Selection
Planting species with low water demand near clay soils reduces the risk of future subsidence. Native species with minimal moisture uptake may be prioritised for areas near built structures.
Example: *Southwark Council* promotes the planting of species less likely to contribute to subsidence near residential areas, including smaller native species such as field maple and rowan.

4. Responsible Pruning and Crown Management
Regular tree maintenance, including crown thinning and crown reduction, helps control moisture uptake without compromising the health of the tree.
Example: *Croydon Council* uses strategic crown pruning to maintain trees near structures and manage subsidence risk on clay soils.

5. Engineering Solutions
Where subsidence risks persist, non-invasive engineering solutions can help stabilise soils, including the use of root barriers and foundational reinforcements.
Example: *Surrey County Council* advises homeowners on engineered root barriers and building foundations where tree-related risks are identified.

6. Avoiding Unnecessary Tree Removal
Maintaining a balanced approach that prioritises tree retention wherever feasible is essential. Expert arboricultural advice should be sought to identify cases where tree removal is a last resort.
Example: *Lewisham Council* advocates for alternative solutions before any tree removal, considering environmental and biodiversity value.

Managing tree-related subsidence requires a combination of proactive assessments, thoughtful species selection, ongoing monitoring, and collaborative problem-solving. Councils across the UK, such as *Camden* and *Southwark*, are leading examples of how to mitigate risks while retaining the valuable benefits of trees.

Data Sources

1. Canopy Cover – Google Environmental Insights Explorer (EIE)
Google Environmental Insights Explorer (EIE) was used to collect information on the tree canopy cover. Google EIE uses high-resolution aerial imaging in combination with human-driven machine learning to map tree canopy cover. This is the most accurate data available and is updated regularly, although the data presented in this report will be reliant on the most up-to-date images at the time.

2. National Forest Inventory (NFI)
The National Forest Inventory (NFI) was used to assess woodland contributions to East Devon's overall tree canopy cover. This dataset categorises woodland into broad-leaved, coniferous, riparian, and mixed types. The NFI is maintained by the Forestry Commission and is regularly updated to reflect changes in woodland cover.

3. Ezytreev – Tree Inventory Data
Ezytreev is a tree management system used to catalog and monitor East Devon's tree population. This inventory includes detailed records of tree species, condition, location, and maintenance history. The data collected through Ezytreev aids in managing urban trees effectively, tracking species diversity, and identifying risks such as pest infestations and disease outbreaks.

4. i-Tree Eco – Tree Benefits Valuation
i-Tree Eco was used to quantify and assess the environmental benefits provided by trees in East Devon. This software evaluates ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, stormwater mitigation, and air quality improvement. The tool is widely recognised for its ability to calculate the economic and ecological value of trees, helping to inform policy and conservation efforts.

5. Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees (CAVAT)
The Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) method was used to assess the financial and amenity value of East Devon's trees. CAVAT provides a monetary valuation that considers tree size, location, condition, and public benefit. It is an essential tool for decision-making related to tree preservation, compensation in case of tree loss, and investment in urban greening.

6. Biodiversity Net Gain Metrics – DEFRA
DEFRA's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metrics were used to evaluate ecological uplift from tree planting and woodland management initiatives. The BNG framework quantifies habitat improvements by assessing biodiversity units, habitat connectivity, and species diversity. This methodology ensures that new developments contribute positively to the local environment rather than causing net habitat loss.

7. The Devon Hedge Group – Hedgerow Diversity & Management
The Devon Hedge Group provides comprehensive data on the composition, structure, and ecological importance of hedgerows in East Devon. The group's research informs best practices for hedgerow restoration, maintenance, and policy development.

8. Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens – Climate Resilience Data
The Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens provides scientific data and tools to assess the resilience of tree species in a changing climate. Their Climate Assessment Tool helps evaluate species' suitability under different climate scenarios, considering factors like temperature shifts, precipitation changes, and extreme weather events. This data supports East Devon's strategy by guiding tree species selection for long-term adaptation and ensuring that newly planted trees are resilient to future climatic conditions.

9. Woodland Trust Data & Research
The Woodland Trust's research was referenced to support tree equity and species selection.Their data provides insights into native tree species' adaptability, resilience, and ecological benefits, ensuring a science-backed approach to reforestation and urban greening.

5.3 Glossary

Abbreviations

BNG - Biodiversity Net Gain
BSI - British Standards Institution
CAVAT - Capital Asset Valuation for Amenity Trees
DCC - Devon County Council
EDDC - East Devon District Council
ISA - International Society of Arboriculture
LPA - Local Planning Authority
NFI - National Forest Inventory
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NTSG - National Tree Safety Group
NTM - National Tree Map
RTC - Relative Tree Canopy
SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest
TDAG - Trees and Design Action Group
TEMPO - Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders
TPO - Tree Preservation Order
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

Glossary of terms

Arboriculture - The selection, production, planting, maintenance, and removal of all woody plants for amenity purposes.

Biodiversity - A measure of biological variation, whether represented by gene, species, habitats or ecosystems.

Biosecurity - A set of precautions to reduce the risk of accidentally introducing or spreading alien invasive species, including potential pests and pathogens.

Canopy Cover - A 2-dimensional metric quantifying the area of ground covered by tree canopy when viewed from above, where tree canopy is the collective branches and foliage of the tree.

Carbon sequestration- Processes that remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Carbon storage - The amount of carbon bound up in the above-ground and below- ground parts of woody vegetation.

Community forestry - Addresses the social benefits of the urban forest: community pride, community planting and care projects, reduction of violent crimes and a sense of safety.

Conservation - Use, management and protection of natural resources that insures use and enjoyment for future generations

Ecosystem Services - The ways in which humanity relies on ecosystems for the continued provision of clean air, drinking water, an equitable climate, the productivity of agriculture, forestry and oceans, control of flooding, soil erosion, coastal erosion, carbon sequestration etc.

Ecosystem - A unit of ecology consisting of a more or less discrete community of species, interacting with each other and their physical environment.

Environment - The prevailing conditions which reflect the combined influence of climate, soil, topography and biology (other plants and animals) present in an area.

GIS (Geographic information system) - A collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analysing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Green infrastructure (GI) - An interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, greenways, parks, forests, and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to health and quality of life. Includes parks, parkways, riparian buffers, residential landscaping, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs, and window boxes.

Green space - Any vegetated land or water within an urban area that serves as recreation or open space. This includes neighbourhood and regional parks, gardens, cemeteries, playing fields, bike and walking paths, and urban landscaping.

Greenway/green corridor - Corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas.

Habitat - Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life.

Impervious surface - A hard surface (such as a car park or rooftop) that prevents infiltration of water into the ground, causing water to run off the surface.

Infiltration - The downward movement of water from the land surface into the soil.

Inventory, Tree - Gathering of accurate information on the health and diversity of the community forest which can include: listing and description of trees and planting sites.

Microclimate - The climate of a site as modified by local site factors.

MyTree - MyTree is a tool for assessing and quantifying the ecosystem services provided by individual trees

Native Species - Species present in a defined region for a certain amount of time without having been brought by humans (cf. exotic), for instance in Britain since the English Channel was flooded around 6,000 years ago.

Non-native species - A species that due to direct or indirect human activity occurs in locations beyond its known historical or potential natural range. Refers to species from another continent, region, ecosystem, or habitat.

Pollution - Substances introduced into the environment by human actions that contaminate the environment.

Stormwater runoff - Precipitation that falls on impervious surfaces (such as roofs and roads). Because it is not absorbed by soil and vegetation, it flows into storm drains.

5.3 Glossary

Subsidence - In relation to soil or structures resting in or on soil, a sinking due to shrinkage when certain clay soils dry out, sometimes due to the extraction of moisture by tree roots.

Tree Protection Order (TPO) - A legally enforceable document made by the local planning authority to protect trees and woodland in the interests of public amenity. While trees in conservation areas are automatically protected, individual trees outside these areas may be protected with a Tree Preservation Order.

Urban Forest - Trees, woody shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants, waterways, wildlife, grasses, and other green infrastructure (including green roofs, green walls etc.) within the built environment, considered collectively over an extensive area.

Urban heat island effect - A phenomenon where air temperatures in urban areas are 2-10°F hotter than surrounding rural areas due to the high concentrations of buildings and pavement in urban areas.

Stem Diameter (DBH) - The diameter of a tree at around 1.5 metres above ground level.

5.4 Bibliography

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