



RESIDENT & NEIGHBOURHOODS TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY 2024-2029 SUMMARY



The Tree and Woodland Strategy 2024-2029 by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) outlines comprehensive plans for the sustainable management, preservation, and enhancement of trees and woodlands across the borough. This strategy is aligned with both local and national environmental policies and reflects WHBC's commitment to biodiversity, climate change mitigation and the health and well-being of those who live or work in the borough.



KEY OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES



1 Active Tree Management (Policy 1)

WHBC commits to inspecting managed trees on a three-year rolling basis, addressing any issues related to decay, structural damage, or public safety. The policy ensures that maintenance is conducted by qualified tree officers and follows industry standards in accordance with BS3998 Recommendations for Tree Work (2010). This approach also includes targeted interventions for trees at higher risk or affected by pests and diseases.



2 Urban Tree Management (Policy 2)

This policy covers the maintenance and restrictions on urban tree management to preserve their benefits. WHBC will not undertake works solely for reasons such as sunlight obstruction or aesthetic concerns. Urban trees play a crucial role in reducing urban heat and pollution, providing habitats, and contributing to mental and physical well-being.



3 Tree Planting (Policy 3)

A commitment to planting at least 300 urban trees annually is emphasised, alongside strategies to replace felled trees on a one-for-one basis. Tree planting sites are selected to maximise environmental benefits, and historical planting designs are preserved where feasible.



4 Pests and Diseases (Policy 4)

Monitoring and responsive management strategies are in place to address tree health threats such as ash dieback, oak decline, and other pest-related issues. A proactive approach focuses on planting diverse tree species to enhance resilience against future outbreaks. WHBC will continue to control Muntjac Deer numbers in Northaw Great Wood and will monitor the rising numbers in Sherrardspark Wood as advised by the Forestry Commission.



5 Protecting Trees Through the Planning System (Policy 5)

WHBC will utilise Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Section 106 agreements to safeguard trees on development sites, enforcing stringent conditions for tree felling and promoting the incorporation of green infrastructure in new developments.



6 Woodland Management (Policy 6)

The council manages significant woodland areas, including Sherrardspark Wood and Northaw Great Wood, designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Active measures such as glade creation, thinning, and controlled public access during sensitive periods support biodiversity and woodland health.



7 Community Engagement (Policy 7)

The strategy highlights the importance of community involvement, with volunteer groups and initiatives like the Tree Warden Scheme playing pivotal roles in planting and maintaining trees. WHBC aims to adopt a sense of collective responsibility for tree stewardship through events and educational programs.



8 Green Infrastructure (Policy 8)

Integrating trees within the borough's broader green infrastructure supports connectivity and ecological health. The strategy seeks partnerships with developers, statutory bodies, and local organizations to strengthen these green networks, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Climate Change and Biodiversity Goals

Recognising the climate emergency declared in 2019, WHBC acknowledges the critical role of trees in achieving net-zero targets by 2030. Trees contribute to carbon capture, temperature regulation and flood prevention. The strategy aims to expand tree canopy coverage, aligning with the national target of 25% in urban areas.

Implementation and Review

The strategy includes mechanisms for regular monitoring and an adaptable framework to incorporate legislation changes or new challenges. Transparent communication with the public, including updates on tree felling and planting initiatives, reinforces WHBC's commitment to community engagement and accountability.

