

Chelmsford City Council - Mass Tree and Woodland Planting Programme – March 2020 (updated June 2020)

A key action in Our Chelmsford Our Plan and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration Action Plan is to undertake a greening programme to significantly increase the amount of woodland and the proportion of tree cover in Chelmsford through a sustained medium-term 'mass tree planting' campaign as follows; -.

- Increase tree cover to at least 20% in the Chelmsford area i.e. the best in Essex
- Plant 175,000 additional trees creating an additional 84 hectares of woodland / tree cover (September 2019) using native species (see appendix 1)
- Provide at least one tree planted for every existing resident and at least three new trees planted for every new home in the Local Plan growth sites
- Introduce a minimum tree planting standard for all new developments
- Make a significant contribution to the woodland creation target in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan
- Plan and execute a 10-year programme commencing September 2019
- Help to achieve the Climate and Ecological Emergency target to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030

Context

Urban trees and woodland are increasingly recognised as providing a diverse range of environmental and quality of life benefits that are important in tackling the current climate emergency by:

- Increasing the biodiversity of the area through the introduction of native and pollinator rich plant species that will provide habitats and food for wildlife
- Improving the water holding capacity of an area, helping to mitigate flood risk
- Providing shade and improving heat absorption during periods of hot weather
- Reducing air pollution and improving air quality
- Helping to manage and offset carbon emissions
- Creating a better quality of life and environment, providing mental and physical health benefits for all

A climate and ecological emergency was declared by the City Council on 16 July 2019.

A mass tree and woodland planting campaign, sustained over the medium-term, is a crucial element of the action plan to address the climate and ecological emergency and will be fundamental to achieving the target set for the Council's activities to be net-zero carbon by 2030.

Currently the tree canopy cover in Chelmsford is assessed to be 13.8% [study by Forest Research published in 2018] This compares to a UK average of 16%. Assessed tree cover in other Essex districts is as follows: Braintree 17.4% – Colchester 18.8% – Southend 15.6% – Harlow 19.0%.

Mass tree and woodland planting targets

1. To uplift tree cover to 20% (or 175,000 trees) and provide a new tree for every resident [based on 175,000 residents] by planting 148,000 additional trees or 71 hectares of land to be planted (over and above the current tree planting scheme of 27,000 trees).
2. Adopt the Chelmsford City Council Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document and Making Places Supplementary Planning Document requiring minimum tree planting standards for new developments as follows; -
 - a. At least one tree for every resident
 - b. At least three trees per net new dwelling

Approach to delivering the mass tree and woodland planting

The proposed approach to delivering the mass tree and woodland planting is as follows; -

1. Woodland planting; woodland planting on sites owned/managed by Chelmsford City Council estimated to deliver 27,000 trees by April 2021 and on other sites 148,000 trees; totalling 175,000 by 2030.
2. Street tree planting and tree planting on smaller residential green space; to be scoped and delivered through the “call for trees” initiative.
3. Tree and woodland planting through new development. The Local Plan through its site allocations aims to provide an estimated 30,000 new trees (based on 9,579 new homes) by 2036 (local Pan).
4. Consider and introduce a scheme to provide residents with free small garden trees allowing tree planting in front and back gardens. This would be a medium-term initiative and will require the Council to plan logical arrangements and supply chains – 2022/23

Much of the planting and aftercare will be supported by and undertaken as volunteer activities in accordance with the Chelmsford City Council Volunteering Policy. These tree planting and aftercare activities are through corporate volunteering (and donations), existing volunteering groups/activities, schools/college volunteering activities, and community tree planting days.

The tree barometer shows progress to date against this 10 year plan.

As most of the tree planting will be undertaken in the planting seasons of autumn/winter each year, the barometer will be updated during the planting season.

Programme update – 2019/20

The woodland and mass tree planting programme executed in autumn/winter 2019/20 was as follows; -

1. Mass woodland and tree planting areas; -
 - a. Hylands Park; 8090
 - b. Creekview – South Woodham Ferrers 2660
 - c. Admirals Park 2585
 - d. Chaucer Flood Meadow 650
 - e. Galleywood Common 350
 - f. **Total 14335**
2. Street tree and donated tree planting (individual large trees 12-14cm girth); **204 trees** planted throughout the City.
3. Over 1000 volunteers participated from a diverse range of organisations such as WI, Gallagher Insurance, ARU, Thriftwood College as well residents and visitors on the two public community planting days at Creek view on the 2nd February 2020 and at Hylands Park on the 1st March 2020.

Programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22

The proposed programme and sites for planting in autumn/winter 2020/21 and 2021/22 is as follows; -

1. Mass woodland and tree planting sites for 2020/21 are; -
 - a. Chaucer Flood Meadow - South 1400
 - b. John Shennan Playing Field Phase 1 3500
 - c. Runwell Park 3000
 - d. Ford End Parish Ground 1600
 - e. Admirals Park/Beech's Road 850
 - f. Swan Pond Pasture, Lawn Lane 2000
 - g. Brewhouse Hoppit, Writtle 1675
 - h. **Total 14025**
2. Mass woodland and tree planting sites for 2020/21 (sofar) are; -
 - a. Chaucer Flood Meadow – North 2000
 - b. John Shennan Playing Field Phase 2 3500
 - c. Brook End Gardens 3500
 - d. Gt Leighs Balancing Pond 2000
 - e. Hylands Park 1900
 - f. Other smaller sites 2500
 - g. **Total 15400**

The combined mass woodland programme including 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 will provide 43760 trees or 25% of the total target of 175000 (one tree for every resident). To expand mass woodland planting further, additional sites will be required (beyond those already identified. Work will be ongoing to work with partners to identify or acquire such sites (in time to provided planting areas beyond 2022). Tree and woodland planting in new development areas will also contribute to the overall target, whilst also providing for new residents as they move into the City.

3. Street trees and donated trees for 2020/21
- | | |
|---|------------------|
| a. Trees for Melbourne and Tile Kiln - | 111 trees |
| b. Trees for Westway (on ECC license) - | 34 trees |
| c. Trees for routine replacements and donations - | 50 trees |
| d. Total | 195 trees |

Item 3a trees for Melbourne and Tile Kiln is an approach whereby we seek to undertake tree planting on green spaces and large verges extending the tree canopy in urban areas where mass woodland planting is not achievable (some photos of example areas will be provided at the next Cabinet Member briefing). The proposed locations have been informed by the “call for trees” and scoping site surveys. All the proposed locations have been checked for services and where there is local interest, local residents will have opportunities to be involved. This area-based approach is suggested because these larger trees require intensive watering and aftercare to get them established. In practice, the most resource effective way of doing so is if locations are closely grouped together. For 2021/22 and beyond, further parts of the City will be selected and surveyed, and a similar list of areas prepared.

Appendix 1 - Woodland Planting Native Species List – UK Grown and Sourced

Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
Common Alder (*Alnus glutinosus*)
Downey Birch (*Betula pubescens*)
Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
Hazelnut (*Corylus avellane*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
Cherry Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*)
Blackthorn or Sloe (*Prunus spinosa*)
English Oak (*Quercus robur*)
Goat Willow or Pussy Willow (*Salix caprea*)
Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
English Yew (*Taxus baccata*)
Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)