

South Kesteven District Council
Trees & Woodland Strategy 2024 - 2034

Action Plan

3.1 Trees and Woodland Structure

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
T1 - Relative Tree Canopy Cover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Protect existing trees Right tree right place Work with private landowners (poss tree give aways etc). Parish agreements Identify planting opportunities. Planting opportunity mapping (LCC). BNG - Developer LNRS 	SKDC – From parish level up	2026	High	The existing canopy cover equals 0–25% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 25-50% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 50–75% of the potential.	The existing canopy cover equals 75–100% of the potential.
T2 - Size (Age) Diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient woodland mapped and ATI (wood pasture) recording completed across district Review quality of SKDC Tree inventory data 	SKDC	2026	Medium	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 borough-wide as well as at the ward level.
T3 Species Diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a tree planting strategy and diversity index 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Five or fewer species dominate the entire tree population across the 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.
T4 Species Suitability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a supplementary document on species suitability 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Fewer than 50% of all trees are from species considered suitable for the area.	>50%-75% of trees are from species suitable for the area.	More than 75% of trees are suitable for the area.	Virtually all trees are suitable for the area.
T5 Publicly Owned Trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review quality of SKDC Tree Inventory data SKDC 		2026	Low	Condition of urban forest is unknown.	Sample-based tree inventory indicating tree condition and risk level.	Complete tree inventory that includes detailed tree condition ratings.	Complete tree inventory that is GIS-based and includes detailed tree condition as well as risk ratings.

T6 Trees on Other Land (Influence)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ancient woodland mapping & ATI recording 2. Engage with private land owners to share inventories and increase understanding of privately owned trees & woodlands 3. Orchard creation initiatives and tree give aways 	SKDC	2026	Medium	No information about privately owned trees.	Aerial, point-based assessment of trees on private property, capturing overall extent and location.	Bottom-up, sample-based assessment of trees on private property, as well as basic aerial view (as described in “Moderate” rating).	Bottom-up, sample-based assessment on private property, as well as detailed Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) analysis of entire urban forest, integrated into district-wide GIS system.
T7 Tree Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the use of i-Tree tools to establish ecosystem services provided by the districts tree 	SKDC	2026	Medium	No comprehensive information available about tree benefits in the district.	Some information available on key tree benefits, such as biodiversity.	Sound information available on a key set of tree benefits, such as biodiversity, recreation, environmental services (see below).	Comprehensive information available on all tree benefits across the district.
T8 Wider Environmental Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priority zones to be identified where specific benefits can have the highest impact. (Shade, storm water, pollution etc.) with species choice related to species ability to deliver required benefits 	SKDC		Medium	No consideration/ information that relates urban trees to climate change, air quality, water.	Some consideration of environmental aspects in relation to urban trees, e.g. looking at climate change.	Consideration of at least major environmental aspects in relation to urban trees.	Full consideration of environmental aspects in relation to trees, based on comprehensive, state-of-the-art information.

3.2 Community Framework

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
C1 SKDC Departmental Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify policy areas across all departments where trees and woodlands can contribute or are potentially impacted 2. Ensure enforcement is followed, where in the public interest to do so, for any unapproved works to protected trees 3. Review best practice for local plan policies on tree protection (retain trees and a requirement for greater than 1:1 replacement) 	SKDC	2026	High	Departments/ agencies take actions impacting urban forest with no cross-departmental coordination, consultation or consideration of the urban forest resource.	Departments/ agencies recognise potential conflicts and reach out to urban forest managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa.	Informal teams among departments and agencies communicate regularly and collaborate on a project-specific basis.	UF policy implemented by formal interdepartmental/ interagency working teams on all projects.

C2 Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share tree information publicly - web based. 2. Enable participation / decision-making at parish level 3. Create community group mapping / contact hub (STEW-MAP) 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Little or no citizen involvement or neighbourhood action.	Some neighbourhood groups engaged in advancing treescape goals, but with little or no overall coordination with or direction by district or its partnering NGOs.	Many active neighbourhood groups engaged across the community, with actions coordinated or led by SKDC and/or its partnering NGOs.	
C3 General Appreciation of Trees as a Community Resource	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share tree information publicly - web/app based 2. Develop local communication programmes built around national initiatives in conjunction with sector NGOs 	SKDC	2026	Medium	General ambivalence or negative attitudes about trees, which are perceived as neutral at best or as the source of problems. Actions harmful to trees may be taken deliberately.	Trees generally recognised as important and beneficial.	Trees widely acknowledged as providing environmental, social, and economic services – resulting in some action or advocacy in support of the urban forest.	Urban forest recognised as vital to the community's environmental, social, and economic well-being. Widespread public and political support and advocacy for trees, resulting in strong policies and plans that advance the viability and sustainability of the entire urban forest.
C4 Regional Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure participation of all significant groups within South Kesteven District 2. Seek collective approach across District on carbon sequestration measurement 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Const. and Wards have no interaction with each other or the broader region. No regional planning or coordination on urban forestry.	Some neighbouring authorities and regional agencies share similar policies and plans related to trees and urban forest.	Some urban forest planning and cooperation across authorities and regional agencies.	Widespread regional cooperation resulting in development and implementation of regional urban forest strategy.

C5 Utilities Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the utilities companies and get contact details for each utility Strengthen communication usually through planning Active coordination by the Tree Board 	SKDC		High	Utilities take actions impacting urban forest with no council coordination or consideration of the urban forest resource.	Utilities employ best management practices, recognise potential municipal conflicts, and reach out to urban forest 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 urban forestry goals and objectives by participating in formal interdepartmental/interagency working teams on all municipal projects.
C6 Green Industry Co-operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish list of organisations and relevant individuals in green industries operating within SKDC Communicate South Kesteven DC Tree Strategy directly Engage to shape a coherent approach across the District Active coordination by the Tree Board 	SKDC		High	Little or no cooperation among segments of green industry or awareness of district-wide urban forest 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.
C7 Involvement of Private and Institutional Landholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish list of major landholders and key individuals Communicate SKDC Tree Strategy directly & engage Integrate Trees & Woodland Strategy as appropriate planning documents - timescales to align with the emerging Local Plan 	SKDC	2026	Medium	Large private landholders are generally uninformed about urban forest issues and opportunities.	South Kesteven DC conducts outreach directly to landholders with educational materials and technical assistance, providing clear goals and incentives for managing their tree resource.	Landholders develop comprehensive tree management plans (including funding strategies) that advance district-wide treescape goals.	As described in “Good” rating, plus active community engagement and access to the property’s forest resource.
C8 Governance and Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Form a Tree Board Establish list of major landholders and key individuals Communicate South Kesteven DC Tree Strategy directly & engage Integrate Trees & Woodland Strategy into Supplementary Planning Document 	SKDC, Woodland Trust, LNP	2026	Medium	Agencies take actions impacting the treescape with no cross-departmental coordination, consultation or consideration of the urban forest resource. Leadership for tree & woodland management is fragmented.	SKDC works with other NGO’s and Agencies on ad-hoc projects as and when they arise.	SKDC regularly and frequently works with other NGO’s and Agencies to establish projects and plans. There is a cultural champion in place.	Integrated tree & woodland governance and leadership provided by a Tree Board and is measured to plan and reflects local and international policies.

3.3 Sustainable Resource Management Approach

Target	Actions	Responsibility	Review	Priority	Performance Indicators showing Current (■) and Target (■, □) positions			
					Low	Moderate	Good	Optimal
R1 Tree & Woodlands Inventory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Tree inventory Study (SKDC trees) Consider conducting an i-Tree Eco Sample Study (all trees in District) in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council and partner Districts and Parishes 			Low	No inventory.	Complete or sample-based inventory of publicly owned trees.	Complete inventory of publicly owned trees and sample-based privately owned trees that is guiding management decisions.	Systematic comprehensive inventory system of entire treescape – with information tailored to users and supported by mapping in district-wide GIS system.
R2 Canopy Cover Assessment and Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agree canopy cover goals appropriate to broader aims of connectivity and tree equity Determine planting and management programme to meet aims 	SKDC	2026	Med	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 Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) assessment based on enhanced data (such as LiDAR) – accompanied by comprehensive set of goals by land use and other parameters.	As described for “Good” rating – and all utilised effectively to drive urban forest policy and practice district-wide and at neighbourhood or smaller management level.
R3 Tree Valuation and Asset Management Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine appropriate mechanism for valuing SKDC trees and woodlands 	SKDC			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.

R4 Green Network Connectivity / Woodland Creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine target biodiversity connectivity corridors across the District, both broad (woodlands). and narrow (hedgerows, linear tree corridors). Drive stakeholder engagement programme via parish councils to bring local landowners on board. Engage private landowners to increase/improve hedgerow connectivity across district 	SKDC		Low	No consideration given to green connectivity or habitat fragmentation	Mapping of woodland pockets and opportunities for connectivity, but limited intervention.	Complete, detailed understanding of green connectivity / habitat fragmentation challenge. Dialogue open with other major land owners.	Adoption of an ongoing landscape-scale approach to effectively conserve biodiversity and combat fragmentation using best practice tools in collaboration with all major land owners
R5 Environmental Justice and Equity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish current levels of tree canopy distribution across the District Determine a minimum floor for performance across the District (e.g. 3.30.300) Identify options for targeting resources to areas with lower tree cover 	SKDC/LCC		Med	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.
R6 Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider funding for trees, taking into account Biodiversity Net Gain, through developer contributions, either through the review of the Council's Developer Contributions policy, or through the government's introduction of the national infrastructure levy Identify all major external funding streams for SKDC and other landholders for trees and woodlands and the best route to securing them 	SKDC		High	Little or no dedicated funding.	Funding only for emergency, reactive management.	Funding sufficient for some proactive management based on Tree & Woodland Strategy	Sustained funding from public and private sources to fully implement comprehensive Tree & Woodland Strategy.
R7 Capacity and Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase capacity to ensure there is appropriate staffing to carry out the actions of this Strategy. Explore volunteer schemes such as Tree Wardens to increase capacity 	SKDC	2026	High	Team severely limited by lack of personnel and/or access to adequate equipment. Unable to perform adequate maintenance, let alone implement new goals.	Team limited by lack of trained staff and/or access to adequate equipment.	Team able to implement many of the goals and objectives of the Tree & Woodland Strategy.	Team able to implement all of the goals and objectives of the Tree & Woodland Strategy.

R8 Tree Establishment – Planning and Implementation	1. Ensure right tree, right place philosophy is embedded in all future SKDC tree planting programmes	SKDC		High	Little or no tree planting; tree establishment is ad hoc.	Some tree planting and establishment occurs, but with limited overall district-wide planning and post-planting care.	Tree planting plan is guided by district-wide goals, with some post-planting establishment care.	Comprehensive tree establishment plan is guided by needs derived from canopy and other assessments, maintains species and age diversity, includes both planting and young tree care, and is sufficient to make progress toward canopy cover objectives.
R9 Growing Site Suitability	1. Ensure right tree, right place philosophy is embedded in all future SKDC tree planting programmes	SKDC		High	Trees selected and planted without consideration of site conditions.	Appropriate tree species are considered in site selection.	District-wide guidelines in place for the improvement of planting site conditions and selection of suitable species.	All trees planted in sites with adequate soil quality and quantity, and with sufficient growing space and overall site conditions to achieve their genetic potential and thus provide maximum ecosystem services.
R10 Tree Protection Policy Development and Enforcement	1. Ensure SKDC planning team are appropriately resourced with qualified tree advice, enforcement officers and conservation officers 2. Review all confirmed SKDC Tree Preservation Orders	SKDC		Med	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.

R11 Trees, Woodland and Green Waste Utilisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain good practice by reviewing SKDC's protocols with sector leading advice. 2. Identify potential end uses for green waste and industries/contractors capable of utilising SKDC's green waste 	SKDC		Low	No utilisation plan; wood and other green waste goes to landfill with little or no recycling and reuse.	While most green waste does not go to landfill, uses are limited to chips or mulch.	The majority of green waste is reused or recycled – for energy, products, and other purposes beyond chips or mulch.	Comprehensive plan and processes in place to utilise all green waste one way or another, to the fullest extent possible.
R12 Tree Risk Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain current practices for risk management and maintenance 2. Explore the adoption of the Trees & Woodland Strategy through the development of appropriate planning documents - timescales to align with the emerging Local Plan (2026) 3. Seek better communication and enforcements on TPOs 	SKDC	2026	Med	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).
R13 Biosecurity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish South Kesteven DC protocols for tree-sourcing 2. Take a citizen science approach to early warning / monitoring for pests and diseases (Observatree) 3. Engage with other major landowners on the topic to disseminate best practice 	SKDC		Low	No biosecurity strategy nor actions in place for urban trees.	Some consideration of biosecurity aspects, e.g., through pest management.	Biosecurity management actions are integrated in urban forestry.	Biosecurity strategy developed and implemented, with emphasis on urban trees. Integration of this into day-to-day urban forest management.
R14 Native and Non-native Trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulate a balanced policy for native and non-native vegetation in SKDC's tree and woodland management. 	SKDC		Low	No coordinated focus on native vegetation.	Voluntary use of native species on publicly and privately owned lands; invasive species are recognised.	Use of native species is encouraged on a project-appropriate basis in all areas; invasive species are recognised and discouraged on public and private lands.	Native species are widely used on a project-appropriate basis.

R15 Open Data and Web-map (Management and Assessment Tools)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present a basic webmap of woodlands 2. Present an interactive map of tree inventory 		2026 2027	Low	No specialist UF management software.	Information on some elements of the urban forest is available through a web map.	Large parts of the district's urban forest are presented through web maps.	South Kesteven DC has a clear and openly accessible tree management portal for all tree data.
R16 Reviewing and Improving the Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Tree and Woodland Strategy after 5 years. 	SKDC	2029	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.