

Crawley Borough Council tree planting strategy



Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce Crawley Borough Council's Tree Planting Strategy, to thank everyone who has worked on its production and, of course, everyone who works in some way to look after our trees.

This is an area of environmental stewardship in which the council occupies a position of strength. There are more than 250,000 trees in a variety of species owned by the council, plus tens of thousands more owned by others around the borough. Visitors to Crawley will surely never have imagined a new town this close to London with a globally significant airport could be so leafy. We're also fortunate that our trees are not subjected to a vigorous timber industry. If you look down from space, you'd see them covering more than a quarter of Crawley, far more than the national average, and we're fortunate to have the amenity value of several forests and wooded parks.

This strategy will prevent us from becoming complacent or losing the advantage we already have. We know trees are a vital component of a successful ecosystem and provide us with a raft of economic and social benefits.

We also know we need to care for them, but we are fortunate to have a team of tree officers and park staff who intimately know the trees, our soil, climate and environment to manage them effectively over the previous decades. Our focus is on maintaining the coverage we already have and ensuring the species best suited to surviving and thriving in our local environment are selected. This strategy will ensure that we plant trees for the future using organisational expertise which is rooted in our past.

Councillor Bob Noyce

Cabinet member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change



Contents

Background: **Page 6**

Strategy aims: **Page 7**

Benefits of trees: **Page 8**

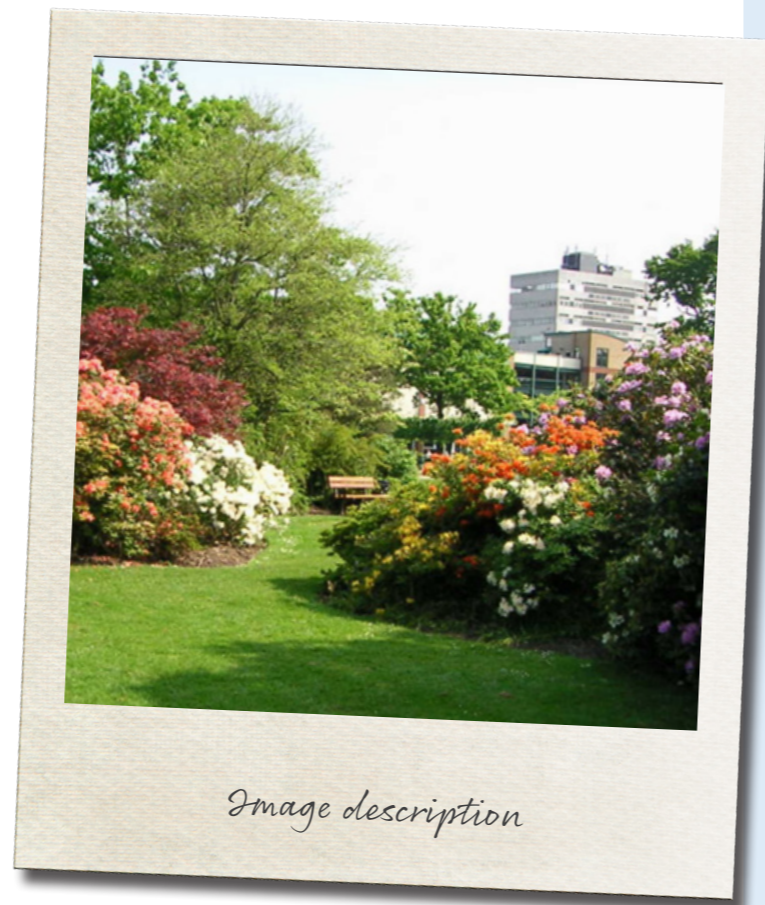
The planting process: **Page 9**

Tree selection criteria: **Page 10**

Planting criteria: **Page 11**

Canopy facts: **Page 12**

Funding and community woodland: **Page 13**



Background

Trees are an essential element of a healthy balanced environment. They improve wellbeing for our residents, businesses and visitors.

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The action plan identified the need for a sustainable tree planting strategy to help tackle the effects of climate change.

Crawley Borough Council is responsible for the management of trees on its land including woodlands, residential and commercial areas.

Crawley has always had a high percentage of tree cover. When trees fail it is becoming ever more challenging as the available and suitable open space is reducing.

There are an estimated 250,000 council-owned trees across the Borough, 13,000 have been surveyed so far as they are 'high interest' which means trees that have been identified as likely to strike people or property if they were to fail or fall.

The tree survey is ongoing and a further 7,000 trees will be added to the tree database over the next two years.



Image description

Crawley Borough Council's current tree policy prioritises work on trees that are dead, dying or dangerous.

This tree planting strategy has been created to inform future management decisions that will support a healthy and sustainable tree stock and tree canopy.

Strategy aims

A sustainable planting strategy will help manage and maintain Crawley's trees and tree canopy to ensure they meet the needs of the present and future generations by:

- Replanting the tree stock where possible and appropriate, planting the right tree in the right place
- Preserving, maintaining and managing the existing tree canopy cover
- Planting a diverse range of tree species that will thrive in a warmer and wetter climate
- Purchasing tree stock only from reputable and safe suppliers, ensuring as far as possible that new trees are disease and pest free.

Did you know?

There are an estimated 250,000 council-owned trees across the whole borough.

The benefits of trees

Environmental

- Conserves property energy by reducing the need to heat or cool because they provide shelter and shade
- Removes and processes pollutants from our environment through tree foliage
- Reduces the risk of flooding by tree roots soaking up rainwater
- Trees provide a very efficient barrier to noise
- Provides important ecological habitats and wildlife corridors.

Social

- Increases amenity value and creating desirable landscapes
- Provides physical health benefits and increases feelings of wellbeing
- Psychological improvements by providing a link with the natural environment which reduces stress
- Creating a pleasant community areas to be, exercise or meet others.

Did you know?

Trees are an essential part of a healthy environment, they improve people's wellbeing and provide an efficient barrier to noise.

Economic

- Reduces heating and cooling costs by providing shelter and shade to properties
- Reduces the health care costs to a population by improving health and wellbeing
- Increases property values in areas with high tree canopy cover.

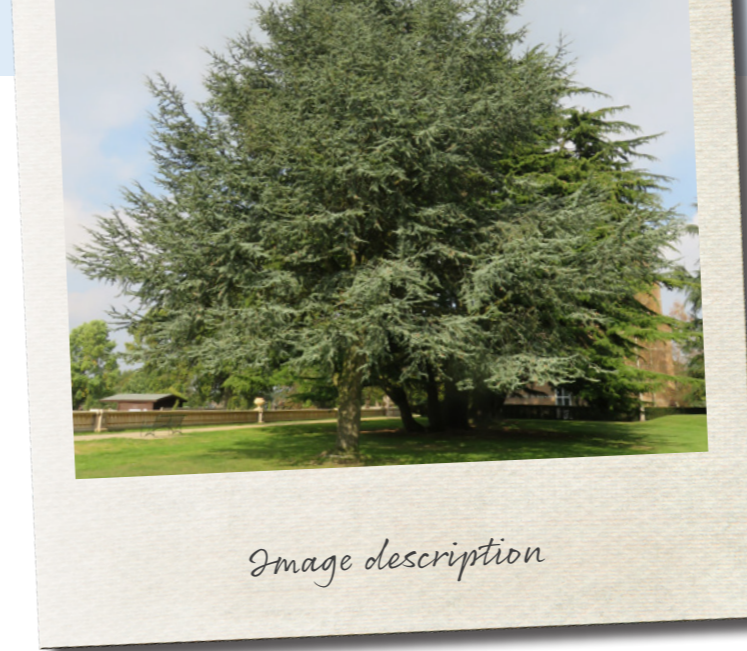


The planting process

An annual planting plan will be created using information from the tree survey database.

Newly planted trees will be maintained to the British Standard best practice.

Maintenance and management of newly planted trees will be recorded on the tree database.



Tree selection criteria

The council's Tree Officers will select tree species for planting using the following criteria:

- Is it an existing native species?
- Will it suit the location?
- Is it the right size and spread in relation to the surrounding structures?
- Is there enough open space for the tree to thrive?
- Is it compatible with existing ecology?
- Will it be tolerant of future warmer/wetter climates?



Overview of the planting process:



Did you know?
Crawley has 26.6 per cent tree canopy cover which is 10.2 per cent above the national average.



Planting criteria

Trees will only be planted on land owned by Crawley Borough Council.

Felled trees will be considered for replacement, however it may not always be possible to replace on a one for one basis. (N.B. this excludes self-seeded trees and saplings).

Small trees will not be planted within 5m, and large trees not within 15m, of property to prevent encroachment and property damage. This also adheres to current insurance requirements.

In most circumstances, trees will not be planted over pipes, cables or other services running underground.

Species where the canopy will obstruct highways, footpaths or sight lines will be avoided.

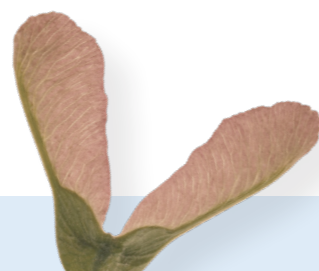
The existing tree stock will not be adversely affected by new planting.

Trees will be procured from a safe, reputable, disease and pest-free source that can provide bio passport documentation. Donated trees will not be accepted.

Experienced staff or approved contractors only will plant new trees. Volunteers will be supervised by a council Tree Officer to ensure correct planting, therefore giving the tree the best chance of survival.

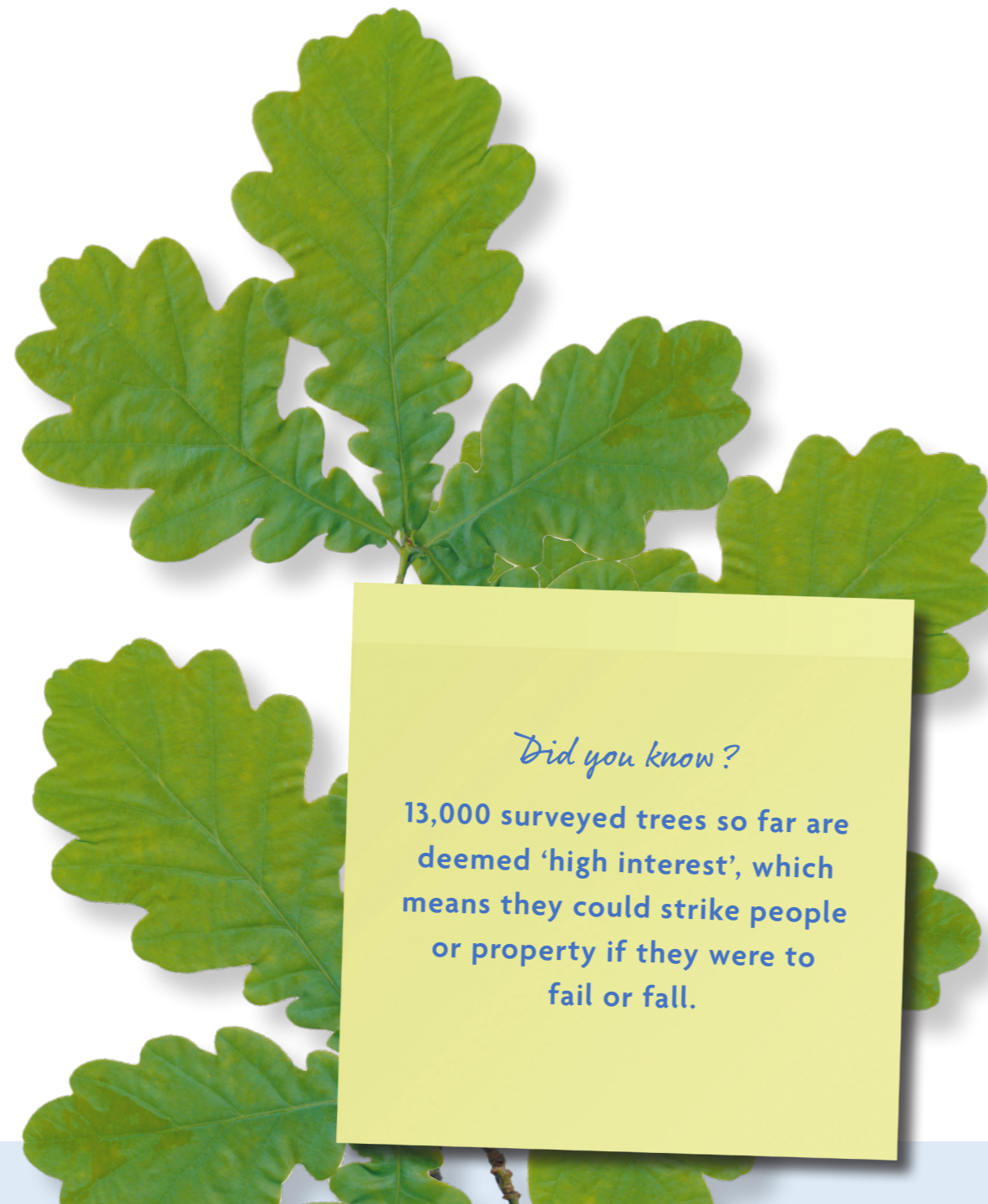
Wherever possible re-planting will take place in the same location the tree was removed from. In cases where it is not possible to replace in the same location, then a location nearby will be sought.

Where trees are removed due to disease the ground will be quarantined for two years to allow the disease to disperse before new trees are planted to avoid reinfection.



Canopy facts

- Some diseases such as ash dieback will have a significant detrimental impact on the canopy cover. At present there is no known cure
- Canopy cover is defined as the percentage of ground covered by a tree crown viewed from above
- Good management of the existing trees and woodlands will protect future tree canopy cover
- Crawley has 26.6 per cent tree canopy cover which is 10.2 per cent above the national average
- Planting more trees is not the only way to maintain canopy cover.



Did you know?

13,000 surveyed trees so far are deemed 'high interest', which means they could strike people or property if they were to fail or fall.



Image description

Funding

Current funding provided through Section 106 payments in the form of developer contributions for tree mitigations is sufficient for this strategy.

Funding includes tree purchase, planting and aftercare including one replacement if required.

Other organisations that wish to plant trees on their land will be encouraged to seek grant funding opportunities.



Community woodland development

An area of Tilgate Park has been earmarked for a new Community Woodland as part of the Queen's Green Canopy pledge.

Volunteers assisted with tree planting and will continue to manage the trees for the next few years until the Community Woodland is established.



Image description

