



Tree Cover Regeneration Strategy

2025 - 2035

Table of Contents

1. Cabinet Member’s Foreword	0
2. Executive Summary.....	1
3. Background	3
4. Benefits of Trees	9
5. Threats to Urban Trees	14
6. Tree Cover Regeneration Strategy	17
7. Aims.....	18
Appendix 1: Potential Sources of Funding	29
Appendix 2: Current Policy Documents	32

1. Cabinet Member's Foreword

- 1.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity are two of the biggest challenges of our time. It is vital that Newport City Council and Newport City are on the right track to meet our commitments to the residents and environment of Newport for this generation and Future Generations.
- 1.2 I am passionate about the need for all of us to move to a more sustainable way of living, reducing the amount of carbon we produce and protecting our environment. The changes needed come in many forms including the way we work, the way we shop and the way we travel.
- 1.3 Across Newport I can see many environmental groups who are attempting to move us towards a more sustainable life and I applaud all the work that they are doing. I also recognise that whilst some people are going the extra mile, some people are more involved with their day to day lives. One thing I think we are all agreed on is the importance of trees and need to have more trees.
- 1.4 Trees are important because of the carbon they capture, the contribution to air quality they make, the shade they provide and the improvements to appearance of our living spaces, as well as supporting biodiversity. Increasing the tree canopy is fundamental to these aims.
- 1.5 There are many challenges to this aim, the land for trees be planting and the damage being done to our existing trees by diseases such as Ash dieback, however these challenges must be tackled, and this report lays out a strategy and ambitious targets with the aim of making Newport a Tree City of the world.
- 1.6 As the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity I am delighted to commend this report to you.



Councillor Yvonne Forsey

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity

MM 2022

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Newport City Council has set itself a target of achieving 25% urban canopy cover by 2032.¹ This is an increase of 7% from the Natural Resources Wales report's estimation of 18% coverage in 2016.² This Tree Cover Regeneration Strategy sets out how the Local Authority will work towards this goal over the next five years.



- 2.2 Trees have wide-ranging benefits for all those who live, work and engage with the outdoors in and around Newport. Trees provide numerous ecological, landscape and health benefits and are a key component in work tackling the ecological and climate emergency declared by the Local Authority in November 2021. Protecting existing

¹ Newport City Council, *Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows and Development Sites: Supplementary Planning Guidance* (2016) p.6

² Dafydd Fryer, *Town Tree Cover in Newport City: Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage our urban trees*, Natural Resources Wales (2016) p.11

trees and the natural environment has never been more crucial for current and, more importantly, future generations.

- 2.3 Complementing the Council's vision for the land detailed in the Organisational Climate Change Plan 2022-27, this strategy commits the Local Authority to creating a healthy, resilient natural environment in Newport that will benefit the community, the country, and the wider world. This will be realised by preventing net loss in existing tree canopy cover, proactively managing pre-existing stock and expanding canopy cover with effective new planting on public land as well as encouraging tree retention and planting on private land.
- 2.4 In addition to the wider target of increasing the number of trees, the Council will aim to create an inventory of current green assets, engage with community groups, and achieve recognition of Newport as a Tree City of the World. In line with its commitments under the climate change plan, the council will plant 27,000 trees between 2024 – 2027. This strategy will take the councils commitment beyond this date

- 2.5 This strategy will not be easy to implement due to the many challenges facing urban trees at present, including suitable and available planting sites, disease development and budgets for long-term aftercare. However, we have a legal and ethical responsibility to overcome these difficulties to create a healthier, greener future.



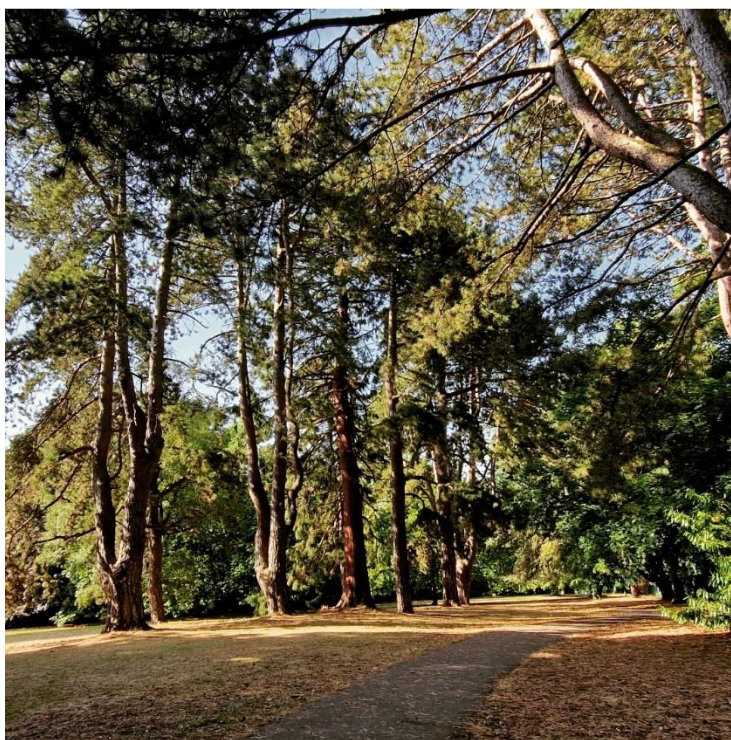
3. Background

3.1 An urban forest is defined as *all the trees in the urban realm*; Newport City Council not only considers this to be the city centre and built-up residential and industrial areas, but also the outlying rural and industrial fringes within the city boundary. This includes trees both in private and public ownership and includes:

- woodlands
- tree groups
- parks
- trees in gardens and allotments
- trees that line streets, transport routes and waterways.
- industrial and retail areas
- commercial centres
- healthcare environments.

3.2 All are considered to contribute significantly to the health, setting, ecological and landscape value of the city, its residents and visitors.

3.3 The Valuing Newport's Urban Trees study conducted in 2019 estimates there are 259,900 trees within the urban city limits. It is recognised that the city has many more in the surrounding countryside including over 200 Ha of woodland. (The number of rural trees requires additional research to fully establish the extent of the tree stock). The existing trees range from young saplings to historic ancient specimens.



3.4 Residential areas make up the largest proportion of urban tree sites, containing 36% of the tree population, while parklands account for 16% and vacant property 13%.

3.5 Based on this study's data, the most common species in the city are Leyland Cypress, Birch and Hawthorn. Ash was the fourth largest species at the time, but this species has significantly declined since due to the development of Ash Dieback and the need for felling across the city.

3.6 80% of the trees sampled were in good or excellent condition and the data suggests that Newport's trees are among the most sustainable of those studied in the United Kingdom.

3.7 However, it was noted that some areas lack large specimens and species diversity. Moreover, there are areas of Newport that are especially lacking canopy cover, with the area of lowest coverage being identified as Pillgwenlly at just 5%.³

3.8 Goal II of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is 'A Resilient Wales' and this is defined as:

*"A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change."*⁴

3.9 In pursuit of this vision, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 was passed to require public authorities to manage their natural resources sustainably. The Well-being Act is further underpinned in the endeavour for resilience by the *Woodlands for Wales* strategy, the target of which is for Wales to reverse its current status as one of the least wooded nations in Europe and become known for high-quality woodland areas.⁵ The combined effect of this government legislation and policy is a duty placed on Local Authorities to take care of and enhance the natural environment in all aspects of their decision-making.

3.10 The Tree Cover Regeneration Strategy will serve as one of several components in how Newport City Council delivers on this obligation. The Local Authority's overarching guide is the Organisational Climate Change Plan 2022-27, which commits the Council to review and adapt services to reach net zero carbon by 2030. Trees are a priority resource in achieving this goal for their carbon capture abilities, informing subsequent points in the action plan to develop this strategy and identify new planting sites, among others. To read the document ([Click Here](#)).

3.11 At a service level, the management of existing trees and woodlands is appraised by the Tree Policy and Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows and Development Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance 2017. The main aims of Newport City Council's Tree Policy are:

- The continued and sustainable management of the tree population.
- The completion of an inventory of the city's public-owned trees by 2030.
- Risk-based allocation of resources.

³ A. Buckland et al, *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees: A report to Newport City Council and Welsh Government*, Forest Research (2020)

⁴ Welsh Government, *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials* (2015) p.6

⁵ Welsh Government, *Woodlands for Wales: The Welsh Government's Strategy for Woodlands and Trees* (2018) p.7

- Ensuring new planting is designed to meet the lifelong biological needs of specimens installed in terms of current genetic suitability and future needs in response to climate change.
 - To carry out proactive work on developing trees to enable a long-term reduction in maintenance budgets.
 - Allocation of resources and target setting based on effective establishment and growth of specimens prioritised over the number of trees planted.
 - To encourage and develop community involvement in the design, establishment, care and maintenance of trees across the county.
 - To ensure Council woodlands are managed on the principle of continuous cover to ensure they provide the widest possible benefits in terms of ecological habitat, biodiversity, carbon reduction and wider public benefit for current and future generations.
 - Planting is focused on ensuring diversity in species, age class and habitat value.
 - To promote and progress the development of individual ward tree action plans, covering the planting, maintenance, and care of trees in the local areas.
 - Allow natural regeneration, where appropriate.
- 3.12 The overarching principle of the Tree Policy is to ensure that all trees in Newport City Council ownership are kept in an acceptably safe condition for their lifespan including the period of natural decline.
- 3.13 The policy ensures that suitable and sufficient ground level, visual inspections of Newport's trees are completed on a cyclical basis and safety-related works are completed within specified time scales. Inspection periods may be reduced based on known defects, the size of the hazard and frequency and value of potential targets.
- 3.14 Alongside the proactive tree management detailed above, Newport City Council will address any emergencies that may arise such as storm damage in a reactive but efficient way.
- 3.15 The Council will also ensure that highway vegetation is maintained so as not to pose an unacceptable risk to highway users or cause obstruction of normal highway use as per the Highways Act of 1980. The Act applies to all trees located on both public and private land. Where the risk of harm is identified from trees on private (non-Council) land, the Council can serve a notice requiring action within a specified time limit.
- 3.16 It identifies that on rare occasions, where owners of private, non-highway land fail to maintain their trees in a safe manner, the Council can order owners to take appropriate action under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 3.17 The Council will not undertake non-essential works on trees, as per the Council's Tree Policy.

- 3.18 All new planting will be conducted based on “the right tree in the right place”, meaning that all trees planted are genetically well-suited to their existing and future environment.
- 3.19 The Policy also commits Newport City Council to the maintenance of standards and professional development for its staff as this will ensure the aims of the Policy can be fully met in the future.
- 3.20 Procured consultants must demonstrate their suitability for the work via recognised qualifications and / or a curriculum vitae of experience and training.
- 3.21 Contractors must prove their ability for the task assigned with certificates of competence. All works will be fully risk-assessed and verified with onsite spot checks. From 2025, all contractors employed by NCC must come under the Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor scheme.
- 3.22 In order to ensure the safe retention of Newport’s green infrastructure more widely, all Newport City Council departments will discuss proposals affecting trees with the Tree Team and/or consultants at the outset of proposed works. This will identify implications and any protective measures that must be taken to ensure trees are unharmed and retained safely and sustainably and avoiding costly mitigation or replacement planting works.
- 3.23 All sales of Council land will be brought to the attention of the Tree Team to assess the amenity and ecological value of any trees on site and ensure retention where appropriate.
- 3.24 Section 6 of Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 2024⁶ ([Click here](#)) identifies the importance of green infrastructure including trees in all aspects of development. It identifies their importance in regards:
- visual landscape value
 - human physical and mental health
 - mitigating climate change
 - improving air quality
 - flood prevention, flood mitigation and water quality
 - ecology and habitat preservation and development
 - ecosystem links
- 3.25 Therefore, there is a requirement to retain and plant trees and this must be fully considered when making a planning application.
- 3.26 Section 6 of Planning Policy Wales - Distinctive and Natural Places provides specific guidance to ensure green infrastructure and canopy cover is maintained and increased

⁶ Planning Policy Wales. Edition 12. February 2024

across the county. Planning applications must demonstrate they have followed the following stepwise cascade of protection principles:

- **Avoid** – trees, woodland, and hedgerows on sites should be retained wherever possible.
- **Minimise** – designs must reduce negative effects on trees, woodlands, and hedgerows and through good design minimise the future impacts of trees on the proposed development.
- **Mitigate and restore** – where trees are felled, replacement trees will be planted.
- **Compensation on site** – additional planting to meet and exceed the loss of maturing canopy cover.
- **Compensate off-site** – if it is not possible to replant at the same site, the developer must provide alternative sites together with funding for planting, future management and aftercare.

3.27 Where the above principles have not been followed planning consent may be refused.

3.28 When mitigation or on- or off-site compensation is proposed, section 6.4.42 provides a minimum requirement for the number of trees to be installed. The design must include consideration of scale, species mix, quality and environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost. As a minimum, trees should be replaced at no less than

- Individual Trees – three trees for every individual tree removed.
- Woodlands and Shelterbelts
 - 1600 trees per hectare for broadleaves
 - 2500 trees per hectare for conifers

3.29 The 3:1 planting ratio is to COMPENSATE for tree loss. The stepwise approach requires that we seek enhancement, or net benefit, above and beyond this.

3.30 In tandem, Newport City Council's *Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows and Development Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance* will ensure all new development sites are created with existing and future trees as a key component of the final design.

3.31 Landscape planting and maintenance proposals are a key element in the determination of all planning applications will be refused where requirements fail to be met as they fail to provide adequate tree cover for current and future generations.

3.32 From the outset developers are required to consider the size, height, maturity, and species of the specimens on site, the potential for root severance, and the siting of buildings in regard to future shading, dominance and potential damage. However, the amount of detail required in assessments will depend on the nature of both the site and the proposed development. Trees that are outside the proposed site but close enough to impact must also be considered in assessments.

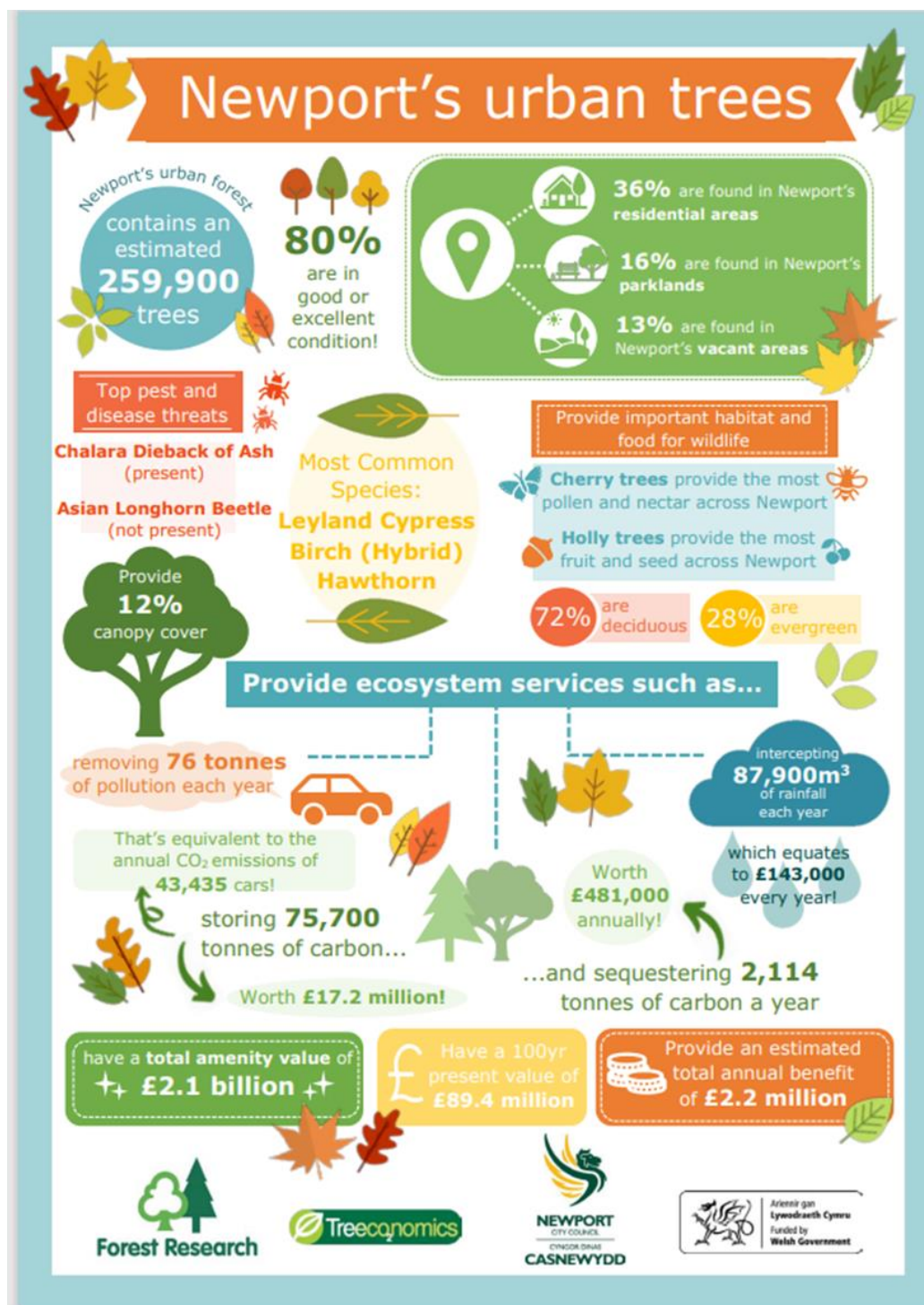
3.33 Where existing trees are present, applications will not be accepted unless supported by Arboricultural reports in accordance with British Standard 5837 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction 2012 (as amended) are submitted. Tree surveys,

design and implications assessments, arboricultural method statements and tree protection plans must be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced Arboricultural Consultant.

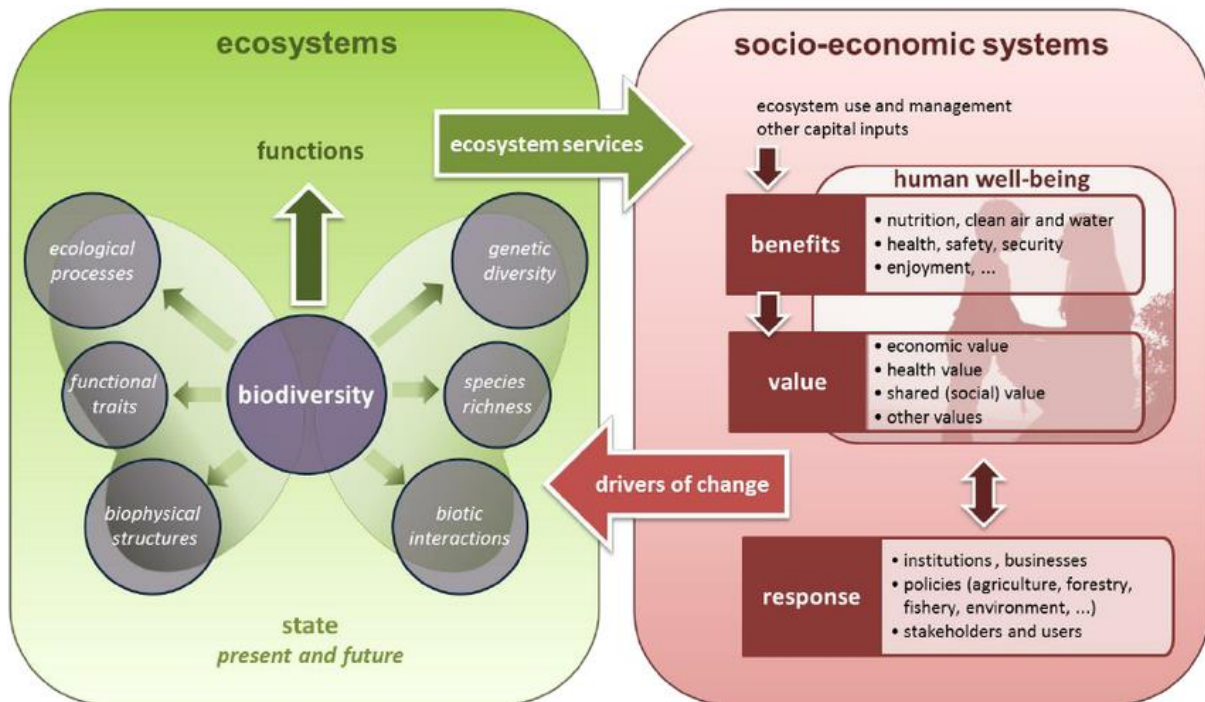
3.34 For the full Tree Policy and Planning Guidance documents [click here](#).

4. Benefits of Trees

- 4.1 As already mentioned in this strategy, conserving Newport's urban trees is vitally important as the benefits of a strong population in the area are numerous.
- 4.2 Trees offer so many benefits that their planting and maintenance can be considered a sound economic investment. A summary of benefits as detailed in the 2019 study *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees* is shown below.



4.3 The ecological and financial benefits of trees, woodlands and green infrastructure are similarly diverse and important for both wildlife and economic growth. A summary of these benefits is shown below.



4.4 Newport's trees are estimated to provide services to the city worth £2.2 million every year⁷ Through such processes as carbon capture and storage, flood risk alleviation and air filtration.

4.5 Trees provide a sense of place; they soften and screen built-form, frame views, form landmarks, give visual connections to the changing seasons, provide habitat and links to habitat and have intrinsic beauty in their own right.



⁷ A. Buckland et al, *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees: A report to Newport City Council and Welsh Government*, Forest Research (2020) p.6

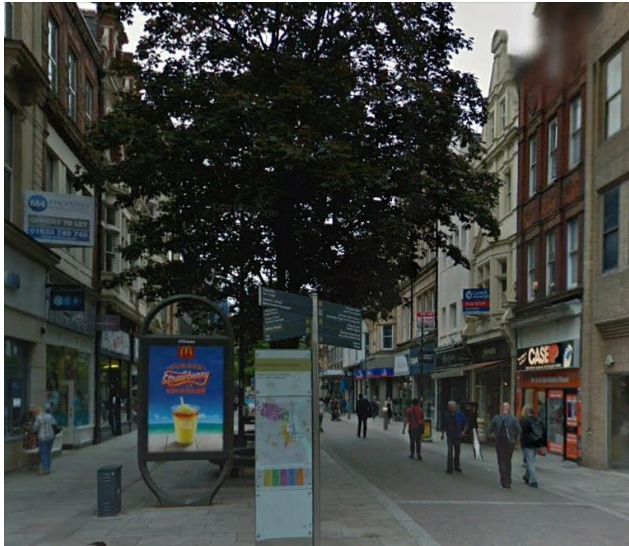


4.6 They complement historic buildings both in form and setting giving a living connection through development and use.

4.7 Newport's trees produce life-giving oxygen - on average one mature tree produces around 130kg of oxygen per year.



4.8 Old or ancient trees are unique, irreplaceable habitats that take centuries to develop. Having old trees (veterans) and associated habitat for the future generations will only happen if we plant and maintain young trees now.



4.9 Trees provide economic benefits - the presence of trees within shopping areas positively influences consumer behaviour. Shoppers prefer tree-lined streets as a more favourable place to visit. They provide shading on sunny days and combat issues with urban heat islands. In addition, they are more accepting of higher prices compared with goods from business districts with no trees.⁸

4.10 Development sites with trees typically sell for a higher price, with one study estimating a price increase of 18% for land with substantial mature tree cover. The same study also recorded that homes built on development sites with preserved trees then sell faster and for more money, compared to homes without mature trees in the landscape.



4.11 The cost of heating is generally lower with trees in the vicinity of the property, with trees acting as a windbreak. Conversely and importantly in future years, air-conditioning costs can be reduced by trees as their canopies provide shade from direct sunlight.

⁸ Kathleen L. Wolf, 'Trees in the small city retail business district: Comparing resident and visitor perceptions', *Journal of Forestry* Vol. 103 No. 8 (2005) pp. 390-395

4.12 All, but especially urban, trees significantly reduce air pollution by trapping particulates on leaves, twigs and bark which are then washed off by rain into the soil. Air pollution can have detrimental impacts on human health, with long-term exposure linked to strokes, lung cancer, respiratory conditions, cardiovascular disease, and even brain syndromes like dementia.⁹ Newport has a relatively poor air quality, with nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter of most concern.



4.13 Trees cannot prevent this pollution, which is largely caused by road traffic in Newport, but can go a long way to mitigate it. Forest Research has shown that a 10km² landscaped area can filter over 96 tons of particulate pollution per year preventing two deaths and two hospital visits.

4.14 Trees help mental and physical health. Multiple studies have shown that trees can reduce stress and negative thoughts by up to a third. This is especially valuable in city environments where the mental health of citizens is generally poorer than in rural areas¹⁰. For those with ill health or convalescing, views of trees can reduce recovery times and the need for medication. Landscaped and tree lined areas encourage greater interaction with the outdoors and physical recreation in the form of walking, cycling and running.



⁹ Public Health England, *Health matters: air pollution*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution?adlt=strict> (2018)

¹⁰ <https://canopy.org/blog/impacts-of-trees-on-mental-health/#:~:text=Of%20all%20green%20spaces%2C%20trees%20seem%20to%20have,shown%20to%20experience%20a%20third%20less%20psychological%20stress.?adlt=strict>



4.15 With the continuation and acceleration of global warming and climate change, trees play a vital role in both capturing and storing atmospheric carbon and in improving flood resilience. This is especially valuable in Newport, with more than half of the city identified as being at risk of rising sea levels over the coming years..

5. Threats to Urban Trees

5.1 There are a wide number of existing and developing direct and indirect threats to new and established trees in Newport.

5.2 Councils across the country have had to accommodate severe budget cuts due to austerity since 2010, losing around 60p out of every £1. It is estimated that by the period 2024/25, there will be an overall funding gap of around £8 billion for local government.¹¹ There is a risk, therefore, that a steep increase in the number of trees under Council control could cause the stock to become less manageable, resulting in the high standards of tree quality recognised in 2019 to be compromised. As will be explored further in this document, there are multiple sources of funding available for tree planting. However, the costs of the upkeep of these new trees falls to Newport City Council and its partner organisations.

5.3 Pests and diseases such as Ash Dieback, Massaria Disease of Plane, and Oak Processionary Moth are spreading and colonising nationwide with limited control options available.

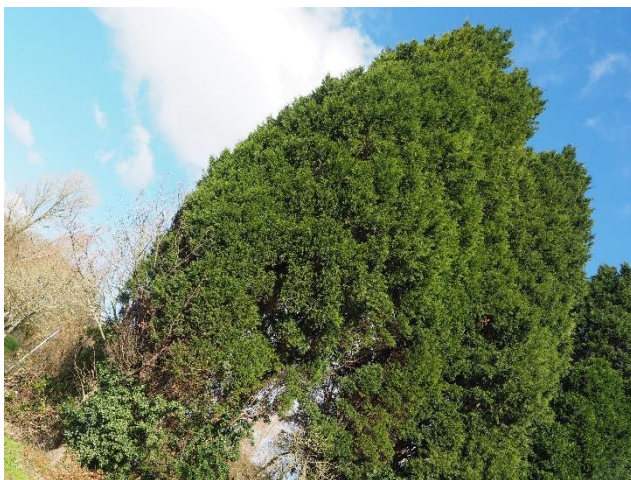


¹¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/statement-local-government-funding-figures#:~:text=%E2%80%9CLocal%20government%20in%20England%20faces%20an%20overall%20funding,in%20demand%20for%20children%E2%80%99s%20and%20adult%20social%20care.?adlt=strict>



5.4 Poor environmental conditions such as the lack of space (both above and below ground), poor drainage and aeration, poor soil quality, nutrient loss and soil compaction all prevent or limit the establishment of new trees or significantly impact on their development, preventing them reaching their full design potential and life span.

5.5 Climate change will render temperature-susceptible species liable to decline and early death preventing their use in future planting schemes.



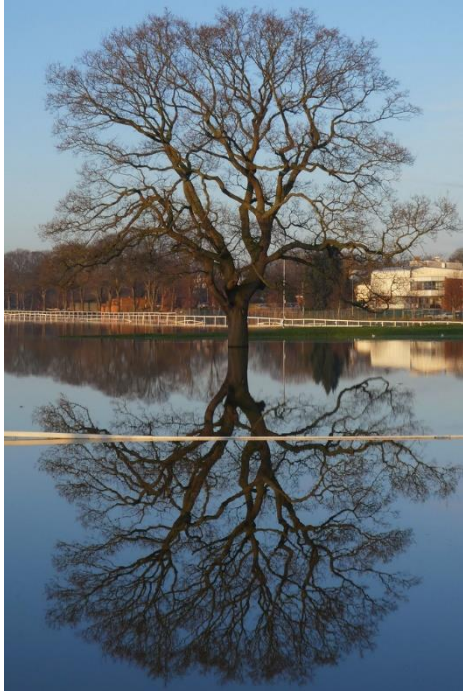
5.6 The Forest Research report *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees* of 2019, noted that Newport lacks species diversity and it has a high proportion of Leyland Cypress.¹² If a disease or pest fatal to Leyland Cypress were to spread to the area, a large proportion of the urban tree cover would be wiped out and this is likely to impact on other organisms and habitats which rely upon them.

¹² A. Buckland et al, *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees: A report to Newport City Council and Welsh Government*, Forest Research (2020)

- 5.7 The risk from pests and disease is much more prevalent today than previously, with the risk of outbreaks increasing year on year. Globalisation has enabled harmful organisms to travel further¹³ and more quickly. There are at least six epidemics in the UK currently, but of particular concern is Ash dieback. Ash is the third most common type of tree in the country and Ash dieback disease is believed to have the potential to kill 80-95% of the Ash population.
- 5.8 Trees are also being threatened by other species of plant introduced from overseas, both accidentally and intentionally, these are known as invasive species. For example, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam can suppress the natural regeneration of favourable species by blocking sunlight to seedlings and dominating root space in the soil. Some invasive species release growth-inhibiting hormones which prevent the development of native and more desirable plants.



¹³ Andrew Liebhold & Michael Wingfield, 'Globalization and its implications to forest health' in *Forests and Globalization: Challenges and opportunities for sustainable development*, ed. William Nikolakis and John Innes (Oxon, UK: Routledge Publishers, 2014) p.36



5.9 As much as trees can help us mitigate climate change, they are also negatively impacted by its effects. Increasing temperatures and rainfall volume are resulting in wetter, milder winters, and hotter, drier summers. Species which are poorly suited to such conditions, like Beech, will struggle to survive over the long term.

5.10 The built environment in general is a difficult setting for trees to become established and thrive in. Limited soil volumes and compacted soil are not ideal for roots to establish and grow in. Trees in engineered environments are exposed to much higher temperatures and concentrations of pollution than trees in a rural environment. There is very limited room for planting and even less for trees to reach their full growth potential, both above and below ground. With Newport's population projected to reach 357,000 people by 2035, urban development will only accelerate.¹⁴ Balancing the need to sustain both human and forest expansion will become more challenging as demand increases and space decreases.

6. Tree Cover Regeneration Strategy

6.1 This strategy sets out how a county-wide increase in canopy cover will be achieved by both retaining existing trees and planning, implementing, and maintaining new tree establishment that will provide the greatest long-term public and environmental benefits.

¹⁴ <https://populationstat.com/united-kingdom/newport#:~:text=Newport%20Urban%20Area%20Population%20Projections,2023%20321%2C000%202024%20323%2C000%202025%20325%2C000?adlt=strict>

7. Aims

7.1 Aim 1: Continued fulfilment of statutory duties

7.1.1 As a major landowner in the city, Newport City Council is responsible for the health and safety of the public on its property and on affected adjacent land. Under civil law, the landowner must take 'reasonable care' to ensure known risks are reasonably mitigated and can be held to pay damages if this is not fulfilled. Under criminal law, a landowner may be prosecuted in the event of a breach of legislation like the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

7.1.2 Through delegated powers, Newport City Council is also responsible for administering the Highway Act of 1980. The Act ensures that all highways, including footways and associated infrastructure, are safely maintained. This Act applies to both public and private land, so the Local Authority has the power to impose duties on all landowners and occupiers.



7.1.3 It is impossible to wholly guarantee the safety of a tree, but the Local Authority has a responsibility to mitigate risks as far as is reasonably practical by managing its tree stock effectively for the benefit of both the general public and the trees themselves.

7.1.4 Defendable practice is based on:

- Reasonable care
- Reasonable likelihood
- Reasonable practicability

7.1.5 Newport City Council will continue to uphold this duty of care by carrying out proactive and reactive management in a priority ranking system. Proactive management concerns assessments of trees' needs whereas reactive management is usually reserved for emergencies. The highest priority will be given to trees that pose an imminent danger to people and/or property. Due to the sudden nature of some of these cases, lower-priority works may be deferred to accommodate works

necessary for safety and risk reduction. In this event, the Local Authority will attempt to make relevant parties aware of the delays.

- 7.1.6 By retaining existing trees safely and sustainably, the benefit associated with large trees is enhanced and full value is obtained from every tree; the positive public perception of tree value and safety is increased and a wider acceptance of the real but minor impacts of existing trees is more widely tolerated, reducing requests for unnecessary works.
- 7.1.7 For more information on the Council's management of trees, please see the Tree Policy ([Click here](#)).

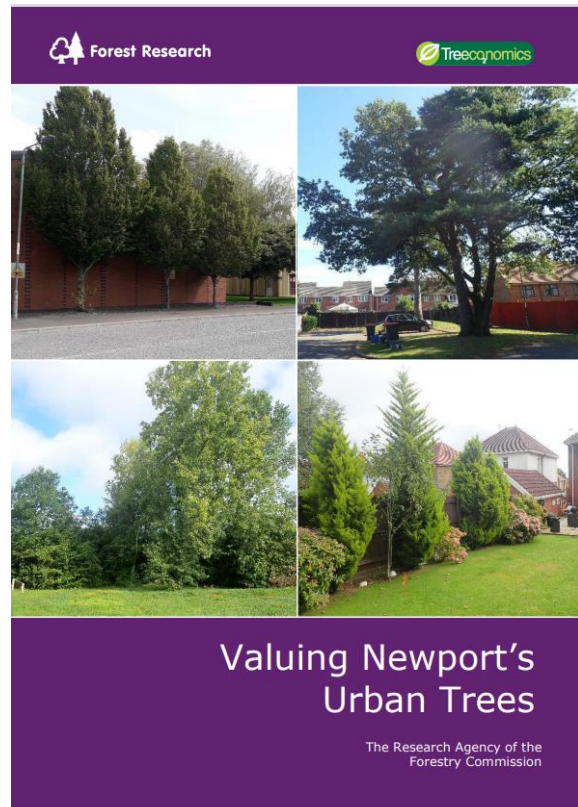
7.2 Aim 2: Conduct an updated inventory of current tree stock

7.2.1 In order to more effectively manage the Council's tree stock, baseline data is required of all Council-owned trees and other green infrastructure. Typically, data is gathered on species, health, combined canopy cover, etc., of trees in the scope of study. Within the Newport area, there is estimated to be around 2 million trees which not only includes those in the urban area but also 200ha of woodland contained within the wider countryside. Inventories have historically been carried out using a variety of sample plots for practical and financial reasons.

7.2.2 Regular tree inventories are vital for monitoring the health of the urban forest and identifying where interventions are needed. They enable the Council to be more economically efficient in regard to tree management, allowing for preventative measures to be taken and reducing instances of sudden expenditure for emergencies.

7.2.3 The most recent inventory report was conducted by Forest Research and Treeconomics, using the USDA Forest Service's software i-Tree, in 2019. The frequency with which inventories should be updated is subjective, with some groups recommending every ten years while others conduct an inventory in rotational segments every two to three years. In the case of Newport City Council, an inventory needs to be completed by 2024 in order to fulfil Aim 6 of consecutively achieving Tree City status. An inventory must be done every five years at most to meet the criteria of the programme.

7.2.4 Following the 2024 inventory, with the installation of PearGIS tree database software, an ongoing rolling programme of survey works will be implemented. The Local Authority's database will serve as a continuously updated inventory, meeting one of the criteria of Tree City status. Implementation will be carried out gradually after installation of the database, with high-risk areas such as highways and schools prioritised for recording and low-risk areas like pathless woodland coming later on. Henceforth, the database will be kept up to date by the cyclical assessment procedures that come under fulfilment of statutory duties.



7.3 Aim 3: Increase canopy cover

7.3.1 For reasons explored prior in this document, it is imperative that Newport's canopy cover is increased to help secure a bright future for the city. This can be achieved in two simultaneous ways. Firstly, managing the existing tree population effectively to promote growth and longevity whilst replacing any existing trees lost to disease, weather damage, etc., this is essential for keeping the current percentage of canopy cover stable (Aim 1).



7.3.2 Secondly, planting new trees is the fastest way to directly increase canopy cover. A delivery plan will be produced by 2025 and this will identify potential sites for planting and will be updated on a regular basis as new opportunities become available.

7.3.3 Consideration will be given to the adoption of land that is offered to the Council as part of Section 106 Planning Gains Agreements within Planning Applications or as required for biodiversity net gain requirements in the future. Such agreements will include:

- A primary ecological appraisal.
- Supporting surveys of protected species that could be impacted by the proposals and that will require further mitigation measures to prevent or minimise harm.
- Biodiversity enhancements required to improve the site.
- Preparation and planting of sites prior to handover, and

- A realistic commuted sum for future care and maintenance as set and agreed by the Council.

7.3.4 Due to financial pressures on the Local Authority, sites for planting already in the Council's ownership will be identified and these will be exhausted first before Newport City Council considers the purchase of additional private land for planting purposes.

7.3.5 Areas of the city with the scarcest canopy cover like Pillgwenlly and Victoria will be prioritised for planting where possible, along with sites located in areas of particular social deprivation. Sites that already contribute a positive effect to the environment, such as wetlands and grasslands, will not be planted to the extent of affecting positive pre-existing conditions.

7.3.6 As per the *Organisational Climate Change Plan*, purchasing low-value private land may need to be considered if existing Council property and that offered by developers does not offer sufficient space to reach the **3.5%** increase needed by the end of this strategy's lifespan to enable 25% overall cover by 2032.



<https://forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d8c253ab17e1412586d9774d1a09fa07>

7.3.7 All planting will be informed and guided by a Green Infrastructure Assessment that integrates with Newport City Council's wider Green Infrastructure Strategies which the Council develop and produce. Assessments of which species are best suited for potential sites and the number of specimens that could be hosted will also be conducted as part of the delivery plan. A priority will be biased towards native species, where appropriate, to contribute to Aim 5. This will help ensure that the number of trees needed to hit the target are planted. An initial assessment of identifying planting sites by Ward is shown at Appendix 1.

7.3.8 Saplings will take several years to grow a notable canopy. As any predictions will be unreliable, it is most appropriate to use the number of trees planted as the performance indicator for this aim. Trees will however only be included in any calculation once they are established and fully independent within the landscape. Plot sampling of planting sites will be conducted and used as a performance indicator at 3 and 5 years after planting and compared with the number installed to give a reliable establishment percentage.

7.3.9 Planning what trees and in what numbers will also allow the Local Authority to establish a cost for the tree planting and maintenance needed. The Trees and Design Action Group is currently developing a cost calculator which could be used for estimating future budgets. This will determine how much funding will need to be secured. This could be from Section 106 planning Gain Agreements attached to Planning Approvals, externally from grants such as from The Woodland Investment Grant (TWIG) or internally from Local Authority budgets.

7.3.10 Long term canopy cover increase will only be achieved by ensuring new trees survive to maturity and meet their full design potential in terms of longevity and continued vitality. New trees which die or become moribund provide little or no short term benefit, waste dwindling resources and impact on the quality of the city for future generations. Newport City Council will ensure that:

- Detailed planting specifications are provided for each scheme.
- New planting fully considers the biological requirements of each tree for its full life.
- Planting is carried out under the supervision of trained, qualified and experienced staff.
- Planting stock is of high quality and correctly stored and transported.
- Planting sites are fully assessed and prepared.
- Trees are installed, supported and protected correctly.
- Trees will be formatively pruned and maintained on a regular basis until fully independent within the landscape.

7.3.11 A working and continually developing register of potential planting sites is held by the Newport City Council Tree Team. This identifies planting sites by Ward together with guidance on the likely numbers of trees that can be installed. New planting is recorded on the Council's GIS system to aid future care and maintenance.

7.4 Aim 4: Improve and promote bio-diversity

7.4.1 Much like the statutory duties detailed in Aim 1, the Local Authority also has a legislative duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the area. Under the goal of A Resilient Wales, a biodiverse environment is a target of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This responsibility is primarily conferred by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which:

“requires public authorities in the proper exercise of their functions to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems”

7.4.2 The 2022-2027 Organisational Climate Change Plan, under Theme 3: Our Land, commits Newport City Council to sustainably restoring, creating, and connecting biodiversity as a priority. Trees are vitally important pillars of a biodiverse environment, contributing to the diversity index not solely as their own species but as hosts for many others. For example, an Oak tree can support up to 2,300 other species of wildlife, including birds, bats, mice, ants, butterflies, lichen, and countless microorganisms.¹⁵



7.4.3 In tandem with actions detailed in the plan and other Council publications relating to biodiversity, both of which can be viewed ([Click here](#)), this strategy will assist the Local Authority in fulfilling this priority in two main ways: conserving existing stock and expanding it.



7.4.4 The Council will protect and enhance existing biodiversity by effectively managing the current tree population, as per its Tree Policy, with this objective in mind. Any maintenance work will be carried out for essential reasons only and any wildlife that may be present, such as nesting birds and bats, will be considered.

¹⁵ <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/oak-tree-wildlife/?adlt=strict>

7.4.5 Trees deemed to have particular value may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or planning conditions where located on private land. All planning applications must seek to keep existing trees on site and limit any potential negative impacts on them wherever possible. When a tree cannot be retained, the Council will always seek replacements to maintain a net zero loss in overall cover.

7.4.6 Dead wood is a vitally important and diminishing resource. It provides important habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna, providing a slow release of nutrients necessary for plant growth and health. Where appropriate to do so, all efforts will be made to retain dead wood in the form of standing trunks (where safe to do so), lying bulk timber sections or as habitat piles for smaller material.



7.4.7 All new trees planted to increase canopy cover, as per Aim 2, will be chosen and positioned on the basis of '*the right tree in the right place*'. As mentioned previously, sites with alternative environmental benefits, such as wetlands, will not be negatively impacted to allow for planting.

7.4.8 Native tree species will be prioritised wherever possible, as their innate compatibility with the environment helps sustain other native organisms in the vicinity. However, as the effects of climate change intensify in coming years, trees from overseas which are resistant to extreme weather will likely become more suitable for the environment.



7.5 Aim 5: Engage with community groups

7.5.1 Although Newport City Council is charged with the power of formulating and executing policy, the Local Authority is only directly responsible for trees on its property. A significant majority of Newport's urban trees are on privately owned land, with only 19% of the urban forest estimated to be on public property.¹⁶ Therefore, for this strategy to be a success, it must apply to the whole city. Landowners, businesses, organisations, and citizens are all equally as important in reaching our target of a greener Newport.

7.5.2 With public space ever more limited in the city, working with stakeholders to plant trees on private land is essential to increase canopy cover. Perhaps most importantly, however, engaging with the community on the topic of the urban forest encourages residents to form an attachment to it based on pride and ownership. Growing the urban forest at the pace set by government legislation and the



rate of climate change will require intense effort over a short space of time. Despite this, it is also a long-term, intergenerational commitment. Even the shortest-lived species of trees like Willows and Birches will be around for decades, while others like Oaks will go on for centuries. A community attachment is crucial to securing the future of the city's trees by increasing the number of people who will advocate for them as the years pass. In turn, this ensures that trees remain a matter of importance to decision-makers by being important to the public they represent.

7.5.3 Collaboration is also vital to the fulfilment of this strategy's other aims. Partnerships boost the resources available for tree planting, maintenance and after care and they are often required for successful grant applications. Public participation and work with forest schools also assists in maintaining Tree City Status which is the final objective of this strategy.

7.5.4 Newport City Council commits to involving the community in the conservation and planting of urban trees when appropriate, such as encouraging schools to make use of grants like *The Branching Out Fund* and *Orchards for Schools* and inviting other community groups to get involved in planting and maintenance.

¹⁶ A. Buckland et al, *Valuing Newport's Urban Trees: A report to Newport City Council and Welsh Government*, Forest Research (2020) p.19

7.6 Aim 6: Maintain Tree City of the World status.



7.6.1 Tree Cities of the World is an international programme created by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Arbor Day Foundation. The programme recognises the cities and towns across the world that maintain, manage, and celebrate their urban forests. The overall goal of the programme is:

"to foster a robust and diverse network of communities, practitioners, advocates, and scientists that will lead to sustainable urban forests across the globe"

7.6.2 Councils can apply for the designation if they verifiably meet the five core standards of the programme:

- **Establish Responsibility** – the city has a written statement by city leaders delegating responsibility for the care of trees within the municipal boundary to a staff member, a city department, or group of citizens.
- **Set the Rules** – the city has in place a law or an official policy that governs the management of forests and trees. These rules describe how work must be performed – often citing best practices or industry standards for tree care and worker safety – where and when they apply, and penalties for noncompliance.
- **Know What You Have** – the city has an updated inventory or assessment of the local tree resource so that an effective long-term plan for planting, care, and removal of city trees can be established.
- **Allocate the Resources** – the city has a dedicated annual budget for the routine implementation of the tree management plan.

- **Celebrate Achievements** – the city holds an annual celebration of trees to raise awareness among residents to acknowledge citizens and staff members who carry out the city tree programme.

7.6.3 Aside from the numerous benefits of a healthy tree population already detailed, maintaining Tree City status will allow Newport to be recognised for good practice on an international stage. Newport would be one of only nineteen areas in the UK, and only the second in Wales, to have earned this status. In addition, the standards of the programme will provide an additional source of structure for ongoing management and keep initiative fresh as the status must be earned in annual applications.

7.6.4 More information ([click here](#))

Appendix 1: Potential Sources of Funding

Annual Local Authority Budget

- £200,000 allocated to climate change and carbon neutral agenda for the period 2024/25

The Woodland Investment Grant (TWIG)

- Funded by the Welsh Government and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to create new woodlands and/or expand existing areas
- £40,000-£250,000 grants available for up to 100% funding over two years

Branching Out Fund

- Funded by the Tree Council for schools, community groups, and Warden networks to plant trees, hedgerows and orchards
- £200-£2000 grants available

Orchards for Schools

- Funded by Tree Council for schools to plant orchards and hedgerows
- Up to two packs of bare root trees available per school.
- 90 hedgerow whips in a small fruiting pack, 150 whips in a large pack

MOREhedges*

- Funded by the Woodland Trust for projects of 100+ metres with a large tree every six metres, connecting with woodland directly or via existing hedgerows within 500m
- Up to 75% subsidy available

MOREwoods

- Funded by the Woodland Trust for woodlands of 500+ trees over at least half a hectare
- Up to 75% subsidy available, with design assistance, bespoke species mix, supply of trees and protection

Grants

- Working with other grant providers to deliver environmental benefits to the community.

Trees for Cities

- Financial support for small to medium whip planting schemes of 0.5-7 hectares (2,000-30,000 native trees)

*Native species of shrub only, due to Leyland Cypress populations already exceeding the 10% guideline in the Newport area, as per the findings of the 2019 i-Tree Eco report

Trees for Streets

- Support for implementation of a street tree sponsorship programme to create engagement and raise funds for planting

Ash dieback action fund

- 5-year action plan funded via capital bid and annual reserve allocations to manage ash dieback disease in the area
- Estimated £2 million spend in 2022

Appendix 2: Current Policy Documents

Newport City Council, Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows and Development Sites: Supplementary Planning Guidance (2016) p.6

Dafydd Fryer, Town Tree Cover in Newport City: Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage our urban trees, Natural Resources Wales (2016)

A. Buckland et al, Valuing Newport's Urban Trees: A report to Newport City Council and Welsh Government, Forest Research (2020)

Welsh Government, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials (2015)

Welsh Government, Woodlands for Wales: The Welsh Government's Strategy for Woodlands and Trees (2018)

Public Health England, Health matters: air pollution