
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	31 October 2024
Report By:	Director, Environment and Regeneration	Report No:	ENV061/24/SJ/KL
Contact Officer:	Kenny Lang	Contact No:	01475 715906
Subject:	Tree Management and Planting Strategy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Council's proposed tree planting strategy.
- 1.3 Inverclyde Council as a major land holder are responsible for maintaining a sizeable area of woodland, and individual trees.
- 1.4 The Council are signatories to a concordat of agreement with Clyde Climate Forest increase the urban tree canopy as part of a wider Glasgow City Region planting project. In addition to this, the Council will develop further tree planting schemes within its existing resources and larger projects as and when funding is available
- 1.5 This Strategy aims to ensure that trees contribute to the enhancement of well being among residents and visitors alike and adds to the built environment.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee
- notes the aims and objectives of the Tree Growing Strategy
 - notes the development of larger scale tree projects as funding is made available

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3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council hold a large area of land which contain a mix of woodland, small forest areas and individual or copses. Many of these trees are long established or have naturalised and grown unaided, a large proportion of these trees are not native to Scotland and tend to be more prone to disease.
- 3.2 Inverclyde Council have signed a Concordat agreement with Clyde Climate Forest to participate in the planting of 18 million trees across the Glasgow City Region by 2031. Our work is also underpinned by The Scottish Forestry Strategy (2019-2029). It is acknowledged by Clyde Climate Forest that to meet this target on a regional basis would take a sustained level of resources over time.
- 3.3 Trees are acknowledged to provide many positive benefits such as visual enhancement of the environment, surface water management during heavy rainfall, trees also contribute to carbon storage and encourage wildlife habitat and enriched biodiversity.
- 3.4 It should be noted that this strategy is for land within the Councils control and does not include trees on land owned by any other landowners or public bodies.
- 3.5 The Council are working on a database of trees which are within its area, this database is only in its infancy with a priority to identify those trees in high amenity areas. Where there are issues with accessibility to trees or densely wooded areas shape files identifying the acreage will be created. Street trees and many of the trees in parks and public open spaces are already on the register.

4.0 STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The importance of woodlands, and in particular woodland which are in close proximity to communities has increased in recent years largely in recognition of associated health and educational benefits. Woodlands and naturalised areas contribute to wellbeing and biodiversity amenity.
- 4.2 The aim of this strategy is to ensure that Inverclyde's trees, woods forests and naturalised hedgerows and meadows contribute to improving both the natural and social environment and that they enhance the enjoyment of our outdoor areas for our residents and visitors alike.
- 4.3 To this end the Tree Planting Strategy is broken down into a number of key objectives and strands
- Woodland Expansion
 - Heritage
 - Control and management
 - Community and Partner engagement
 - Urban Trees
 - Habitat development and Connectivity
 - Climate Change
 - Placemaking
 - Access

Woodland Expansion

- 4.4 Inverclyde Council benefits from good conditions for tree growing which greatly contributes to the expansion of new woodlands. The topography and soil makeup of Inverclyde lends itself to a wide

variety of tree species. In recent years there has been a number of trees planted in areas abutting existing woodland or creating new areas of trees. Looking ahead Grounds services, working with partner organisations will identify new locations for tree planting within Inverclyde Council controlled land while ensuring woodlands are developed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard.

- 4.5 Our regular independent tree survey, has identified a number of rare species trees within Inverclyde. In particular a large congregation of rare trees have been found in Kelburn Park. It could be possible with the introduction of other rare native species to have this area designated as an arboretum. Further investigation is required, however this would provide an interesting addition to our woodland creation aims.

Heritage

- 4.6 To ensure that established woodland and tree areas are protected and maintained in areas where they have been established over several years and form part of the local area history. The service will focus on native or naturalised species such as Acer, Malus (crab apple), Field Maple and Cherry and native species such as Birch, Rowan and Beech, Lime along with other trees that are suitable for such locations. Grounds services will also look to re-establish woodland in areas they previously existed (for example a small area of Parklea had been a tree nursery and orchard, this area which over many years was turned into grassed land has been replanted with apple trees in recognition of its past. Appendix 1

Control and management

- 4.7 The Council have a responsibility to manage and control those trees within its ownership. Regular assessments, inspections and independent surveys are carried out and where necessary trees that are a risk to humans or property will be made safe for example by pollarding or monolithing or removed. Where a tree is removed and where possible a new tree will be replanted in its place. At present this is more prevalent due to the issues associated with Ash dieback. Since 2021 a total of 473 ash trees have been removed because of this disease and 184 trees removed for other reasons. All these trees have now been replaced with more robust native species.

Community and Partner engagement

- 4.8 Through community engagement and participation there are opportunities to foster community involvement in the management of woodlands. Working with our Clyde Muirshiel rangers opportunities could exist for community tree growing or even engaging with local business to participate in the enhancement of our woodlands. Already we are engaged with Schools in community tree growing and this has been widely received and successful. Further opportunities exist to engage with other land owners and support their activities around tree planting.

In addition to this, it is acknowledged that in some instances where trees are planned in the immediate proximity of households we may need to engage with individuals and explain and advise the proposals.

Urban Trees

- 4.9 Working with Clyde Climate Forest has identified opportunities to plant trees in and around Central Greenock as it has a low canopy cover of just 11.3% of the land area. An aim of planting 1000 trees in this area has been stated by Clyde Climate Forest details of which are available on their website <https://www.clydeclimateforest.co.uk/projects/target-neighbourhood/inverclyde/central-greenock> .

The Council currently have a large number of trees within the urban area and this includes street trees such as are found at the West end of Greenock. Controlling and managing these trees will

ensure that these trees, some of which are of historical importance, continue to be enjoyed by their communities.

Habitat Development and Connectivity

- 4.10 Developing woodlands and even individual tree planting can encourage and enhance wildlife and create a diverse tree population which supports a valuable food chain and ecosystem, as well as a home for many species.

It is recognised that a corridor of trees, hedgerows copses and naturalised grassland could have beneficial impact on the movement of wildlife and insect habitat within an area. Connected corridors encourage and enhance pollinators, foraging wildlife and can maintain bird and invertebrate populations. Grounds services have identified a number of hedgerows and replanted these to improve such conditions, this along with a development of naturalised wildflower meadows has demonstrated a noticeable increase in pollinator populations. (Appendix 2)

Climate Change

- 4.11 Trees will benefit our environment through climate control. providing shade and lowering temperature through aspiration cooling. Trees also produce oxygen and control CO2 emissions through photosynthesis and can help remove carbon from the atmosphere. Trees further can help in removing pollutants from the atmosphere such as nitrogen dioxide and some particulate matter. Trees can also mitigate some flooding due to capture of rain water through the leaf canopy and root systems control water run , soil erosion and can filter water entering our waterways.

Placemaking

- 4.12 Trees greatly enhance the built environment and are seen as valuable tool in encouraging development. Incorporating woodlands into new and existing developments and providing a link with existing natural habitats provides a range of benefits for both people and wildlife. Aside from the climate change benefits stated above a natural environment provides recreation space which can attract residents, visitors and potential inward investment. The development of a public realm that can draw people or even bring local communities closer is a valuable aspect of woodland development. While this strand is more in keeping with general regeneration and planning aims , Ground services will support those areas of activity which fit within the strategy.

Access

- 4.13 Ensuring that our residents and visitors can enjoy the benefits of trees and woodlands will underpin this work. We will develop paths and desire lines that allow safe and natural access to our woodlands, meadows and green spaces where appropriate.

5.0 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The creation and expansion of woodland and individual tree planting will continue to form the main focus of the Tree Strategy.
- 5.2 Integrated bio habitat corridors of wildflower meadows and naturalised grassland will be developed where possible adjacent to woodland. Desire lines within these locations will be created to ensure public access and we will engage with our local communities in developing areas for planting.
- 5.3 It should be noted that the tree strategy is directly linked to the availability of financial resources, for example annually the Service aim to plant 1000 trees within existing budget resources. In 2023/24

the service managed to plant 1,727 trees. The addition of funding from the Nature Restoration Fund increased on this by a further 10,762 trees which included 10,627 trees within Coves Nature Reserve.

5.4 This Committee reallocated £30k through the Shared Prosperity fund from the Local Business theme the Communities and Place theme to provide delivery capacity to the emerging Tree Planting Strategy, with spend to be made within the lifetime of the Shared Prosperity programme.

5.5 Further funding opportunities will be explored to enable the service to build on this success and proposed larger scale projects reported to the relevant Council Committee.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability	X	
Data Protection		X

6.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report (£000)	Virement From	Other Comments
Shared Prosperity Fund	Communities and Place	2024/25	£30		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact (£000)	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments

6.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources issues arising from this report.

6.5 Strategic

There are no direct strategic implications as a result of this report.

6.6 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

X	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant services in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

