

Tree and Woodland Delivery Framework



Wandsworth 2023- 2033

*Appendix 1 - Paper No. 23-207
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1. Introduction:

This framework is a sister document to the Wandsworth Tree Policy (Paper No 21-261), in particular section 4 “planting new trees” and the Wandsworth Biodiversity Strategy (Paper No21-26), in particular the key principles identified in para 5. It has also been informed by the Wandsworth Tree Wardens “a 21st Century Tree Strategy for Wandsworth” published in 2017. This forward-looking framework will explain how suggestions for planting and habitat creation are considered and the principles that will guide decisions and prioritisation. It will detail the approach to be taken to the creation and planting of all new street trees, woodlands and associated “woody” habitats on Wandsworth Council owned land. All actions within this document are founded on the “Right Tree, Right Place” principle and all tree planting, woody habitat creation and future management will be guided by what is necessary for both the tree’s health and the health and safety of the public.

It should be noted that the ongoing management and maintenance of existing trees or woody habitats is delivered through the Leisure and Culture contractor (Enable), the horticultural grounds maintenance contractor (Continental Landscapes) and the arboricultural contractors (KPS and City Suburban Tree Surgeons) and is not discussed in detail in this framework.

1.1 Context:

1.1.1 National Context:

Woodland creation in England has averaged 2,000 hectares per year in the ten years to 2022. The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 sets out the government’s long-term vision for the treescape it wants to see in England by 2050 and beyond. It states that “*England will have at least 12% woodland cover by mid-century, contributing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Its conifer and broadleaf woodlands will be managed for biodiversity and other environmental benefits, along with providing sustainable sources of hardwood and softwood timber and woody products, which can be effective carbon stores and are already seeing increased demand for as we transition to a green economy.*” It includes a “call to action” in recognition that the government cannot achieve this alone and provides an outline of funding approaches to support this up to 2025. It states that “*Alongside considering the types of trees themselves, different planting methods offer alternative ways to support vibrant woodland ecosystems. While most woodland creation sites are planted with saplings, direct seeding and natural colonisation has the potential to be a powerful approach for woodland creation when utilised on appropriate sites, as an alternative to or complementing conventional planting. Through careful planning and management, allowing and helping natural processes to colonise land with trees can create woodlands with a structurally diverse range of habitats, while appearing natural in the landscape. Natural colonisation can reduce the need for plastic tree guards and can also create resilient woodlands as it may enable adaptation to local sites, the changing climate, and new pests and diseases. We will prioritise the use of this approach where it will bolster the connectivity of habitats and can provide important buffers to existing woodland, working alongside further integration of wooded and open priority habitats in supporting nature recovery as part of the Nature Recovery Network.*”

A Guide to Planning New Woodland in England 2021 sets out the parameters and processes required for successful establishment of completely new woodlands but it does not set specific regional or local targets.

1.1.2 Regional Context:

The Mayor of London has set a target in the London Environment Strategy to increase tree cover by 10% of current levels by 2050. Future funding has been secured for various tree planting programmes which will target areas where there are low numbers of existing trees or

canopy cover, where Londoners are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change or in areas of high deprivation. There is also an ongoing commitment to coordinate the London Urban Forest Partnership, whose plan published in 2020 includes targets for increased canopy cover alongside the percentage of woodlands in favourable management. The London Plan provides a policy framework for development management which encourages the protection and maintenance of existing trees alongside the planting of new trees and woodlands in association with developments.

London Borough of Richmond, as a neighbouring borough do not accept requests for tree species or tree planting locations. All new tree planting is done in accordance with their Tree Planting Policy which focuses on street trees and which aims to ensure that: the right tree is planted in the right place giving priority to native species, planting takes place within or as close as possible to the location of trees that have been removed, and they encourage species and genetic diversity amongst the borough wide tree population. The Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan includes ancient and veteran trees, broadleaved woodland and hedgerows. Although there are no clear proposals to create future veterans from existing mature trees there are actions to propagate from native veterans. For woodlands the focus is on habitat condition and the eradication of invasive non-native species; there are no targets to increase woodland / canopy cover. For hedgerows there are actions to plant new ones where gaps are identified in borough wide connectivity with an aim of 500m per year.

London Borough of Lambeth, also a neighbouring borough, includes tree planting within its Climate Action Plan. Tree planting again focuses on street trees and individual trees in greenspaces. The Biodiversity Action Plan identifies trees and woodlands as priorities with clear commitments to the use of native species, prioritising extending existing parcels and joining them up and also support for orchard planting.

London Borough of Merton prioritises the replacement of removed trees and responded to requests for new planting where funding can be identified to support this and to species suggestions if deemed suitable and available.

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Tree Strategy details street tree planting and makes it clear that it may not always be possible to immediately replace a tree or replant in the same location. The Climate Action Plan outlines a commitment to revisit the tree strategy and to plant an additional 500 trees per year. Their Climate Action Plan commits to increasing tree cover by 10% by 2050 identifying that the main opportunity to deliver this is on private garden land

1.1.3 Local context:

Wandsworth's Biodiversity Strategy defines priority habitats that are regional, national or local habitats of distinction and which in many cases support rare, declining or characteristic species. Conservation effort is required to maintain and enhance them both spatially and in terms of their quality and condition. Woodlands and scrub including veteran trees and dead wood are a priority and in the context of this framework, action is required to prioritise the enhancement of the quality and condition of habitats first, with work to create new parcels and join parcels together as a secondary action. This framework will guide how these actions to create new woodland and scrub habitats will be delivered but it is crucial to remember that the priority is to improve the quality and condition of existing woodlands to ensure they can remain resilient to the pressures of climate change and to the impacts of significantly increasing numbers of regular visitors.

The Wandsworth Citizen's Assembly is guiding priorities for addressing Climate Change across the borough. It is anticipated that priorities to address air quality and pollution will include proposals for new tree planting particularly in streets. In accordance with the Wandsworth Tree Policy, locations identified as being subject to higher levels of pollution may be prioritised for planting.

2. Definitions and status:

Definition for types of tree planting and woody habitats are detailed in this section. Where it is known, the numbers, size or location are given along with the current status. Historically the trees and biodiversity teams have worked in parallel but this has resulted in gaps in baseline data for some habitats. The framework will guide joint future delivery ensuring any gaps can be plugged and that future working is improved. It is important to have a baseline, so we know where we are starting from to allow us to meet the biodiversity principles of improving existing habitats as a priority before creating more / new areas.

2.1 Street Trees and standalone trees in green spaces:

There are currently 15,700 existing street trees across the borough with a further 19,500 individual trees on council owned housing land, 17,700 in council owned greenspaces (including parks, and allotments) and 2,800 in council owned and managed cemeteries.

2.2 Parkland Trees and Avenues:

Parkland trees differ from woodlands in that these areas have no structured woodland understorey beneath the tree canopy. These are locations where trees have been deliberately planted in greenspaces at a spacing that allows canopies to just touch. Avenues are tree lined routes, often (but not exclusively) of a single species of tree. Areas of parkland trees can be found on both Wandsworth and Tooting Commons. Avenues can be found on both Commons as well as in Battersea Park, King Georges Park and along Putney Park Lane.

2.3 Woodlands:

The definition of woodland in United Kingdom forestry statistics is "land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (or having the potential to achieve this), including integral open space". In London it is recognised that parcels need to be a minimum area of 0.25ha and / or a minimum width of 10m to function ecologically as woodland habitat. Woodlands are defined not only by their size and canopy cover but also by the layers beneath this canopy; the ground cover, field layer and shrub or understorey layer. Woodlands are most commonly areas that have developed naturally through regeneration from the seed bank without deliberate planting. This has brought about resilient habitats adapted to local microclimates.

Trees in woodlands in Wandsworth have not always been individually plotted, with many groups plotted as one tree. Recently changes to information management have allowed groups of trees to be more accurately plotted and this work will continue. London wide habitat data held by GiGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London) also allows us to map parcels of land which contain woodland, but not the woodlands in isolation. We will build on our work with GiGL to understand if this can be unpicked to show woodland areas mapped in detail.

A pilot undertaken for Tooting Commons has identified 8 parcels of woodland that meet our current definitions with a further 30 groups of trees not currently large enough to meet the woodland definition. Enable intend to work on this data extraction over the next 12 months for all greenspaces although it is expected that most of the existing woodlands on council land are to be found on Tooting Commons, Wandsworth Common and in Battersea Park

2.4 Hedgerows:

A hedgerow is a boundary line of bushes which can include trees. They often have associated features such as ditches and banks which enhance their value to wildlife and are distinct elements of the landscape. Some hedgerows are afforded legal protection if they meet set

criteria for length, location, and importance. There are very few natural hedgerows in the borough on council owned land but there are several ornamental hedges in greenspaces and many more found in private gardens. They provide important connecting routes for wildlife allowing species populations to expand their range and find new forage areas and territories.

2.5 Scrub:

Scrub is a vital component of many habitats and has a high wildlife value. It includes the early successional stages of woodland development from scattered bushes to closed canopy vegetation, dominated by locally native shrubs and tree saplings (usually less than 5 m tall), occasionally with a few scattered trees. Until recently, scrub had been regarded as a problem to be addressed, with little consideration given to its nature conservation value. However, the importance of scrub communities for biodiversity is now increasingly being recognised. In Wandsworth, most of our scrub includes gorse and / or blackthorn as the dominant species. There are parcels of scrub on Wandsworth and Tooting Commons, Battersea Park, Putney Lower Common Cemetery, Putney Park Lane, and King Georges Park.

2.6 Orchards:

The orchards that are in the borough are all recent provenance and have been planted to meet community interest rather than for commercial production. Management of orchards for commercial fruit production is more intensive and resource heavy than managing fruit trees for community and wildlife benefit and there is no intention to create commercial style orchards within the borough. Several community orchards have been planted but ongoing maintenance has been varied with many orchards now consisting of very few trees. We are aware of community orchards existing at Furzedown Recreation Ground, Coronation Gardens, Ashburton Estate and Wendlesworth Estate. We are also aware of the "fruit trees in schools project" supported by Wandsworth Tree Wardens where nine schools have established "soft fruit" trees.

3. Importance of trees and woodlands:

We know that trees, woodlands, and associated habitats are important for a wide range of reasons. They improve wellbeing, lowering stress levels and heart rates. They provide homes for wildlife and improve soil quality. They clean the air, capture carbon, lower the temperature and provide shade. They are also key at preventing flooding by soaking up water. For all these reasons there is an increasing desire to plant more trees and create more woody habitat areas across the borough.

4. Budgets:

Historically budgetary resources for street trees, standalone trees in greenspaces, avenues and parkland trees have focussed on the costs of management for public health and safety only; with a further annual sum being made available for replacement street tree planting. Woodland and scrub management has been "light touch" and has been delivered under the wider budget of the Horticultural Grounds Maintenance Contract. This only delivers annual maintenance work to ensure clear sight lines are in place within woodland parcels, to prevent the encroachment of paths and key desire lines and to seek to maintain a dense understory for biodiversity.

This Wandsworth Tree and Woodland Delivery Framework signifies a shift in these approaches and a move towards woodland habitat management work to significantly improve woodland condition and quality, to deliver expansion of habitat parcels and to provide the delivery of new street tree planting opportunities. The costs of this progressive and proactive tree and woodland

management with a biodiversity and climate adaptation focus will be a new area for expenditure if the plans for future delivery are to be successful.

Whilst this Tree and Woodland Delivery Framework aims to lay out a way to achieve meaningful expansion of our woodland habitats, alongside increasing our new tree planting in greenspaces and streets, these proposals will result in, and indeed depend on, an incremental increase in allocated budgets. Whilst it is expected that the capital costs for new planting will be met from a combination of external grant funding sources with the Council making available an annual sum to serve as “match funding,” there will be an increase in revenue costs annually which cannot be met from existing budgets and is unlikely to attract external funding. This will include the increased costs of a commitment to additional watering during the first three years of establishment in line with recently published best practice guidance from the professional body, the Arboricultural Association. Additional costs will also include not only the extra resources needed for the inspection of these new trees but the arising health and safety works and habitat management to achieve improved biodiversity quality and value. There is also the risk of additional potential subsidence claims, street repairs and other highways operations resulting from future tree growth.

5. Principles and priorities for new planting:

5.1 Street trees

All street trees that are removed for reasons of tree health and safety are replaced unless there is a specific reason not to do so. Currently there is a rolling programme of tree replacement which delivers an average 450 trees annually. The projected tree replacements numbers cannot be predetermined as this will depend on the need although it is noted that the overall aim will be to plant a minimum 300 new trees and 400 tree replacements totalling a minimum 700 per annum

Specific reasons for not replacing street trees usually fall into two categories. The first is where there has been a proven case of building damage confirmed by WBC (Wandsworth Borough Council) building control team. There are on average 10 of these cases per year although it is anticipated that this number will rise because of climate change. It is also understood that if budgets for regular pruning are reduced and pruning occurs less frequently, there will be a rise in the number of claims.

The second is where the pavement layout has changed since the original tree was planted, and it may no longer be appropriate to retain or replant a tree in that location (there are less than 5 of these cases per year).

In regard to completely new locations for street tree planting, to bring about an overall increase in street tree numbers, investigative work took place across 2022 with every street in the borough visited and surveyed to find potential new sites. A range of practical criteria were considered including identifying locations where there would be enough space for a good tree canopy to develop. Sites need to be far enough away from highways and utilities features and furniture to prevent future maintenance concerns. A total of 3,108 potential new street tree pits have been identified but further exploration of limitations will, we anticipate, result in approximately 2,000 to 2,500 new street tree locations being feasible. This would be a maximum 20% increase in the total street tree population across the borough.

The delivery of this planting will be phased across the next ten years meaning that on average 250 completely new tree pits will be created and planted annually between 2023 and 2033.

This is in addition to the rolling replacement programme. It is anticipated that trees (and contractor planting costs) will increase by inflation, however market prices for tree stock may also be impacted via supply chains and any detrimental impacts on these of climate change.

It is a deliberate proposal to phase this new planting across 10 years to allow the age diversity of tree stock across the borough to be improved. Trees planted at the same time are likely to fail at the same time so by staggering the planting it will be possible to ensure that there is no significant future burden of replacements required. Phased planting will also allow for both the annual planting, long term maintenance and associated staffing and management costs to be gradually increased. Annual costs will include the purchase price of trees, the installation of the tree planting pits, the planting and establishment care of the trees including watering. The long-term costs will include the increased inspection requirement and the associated maintenance work. There is also an increased possibility of potential subsidence claims with increased tree planting in streets which has an associated financial penalty for the Council.

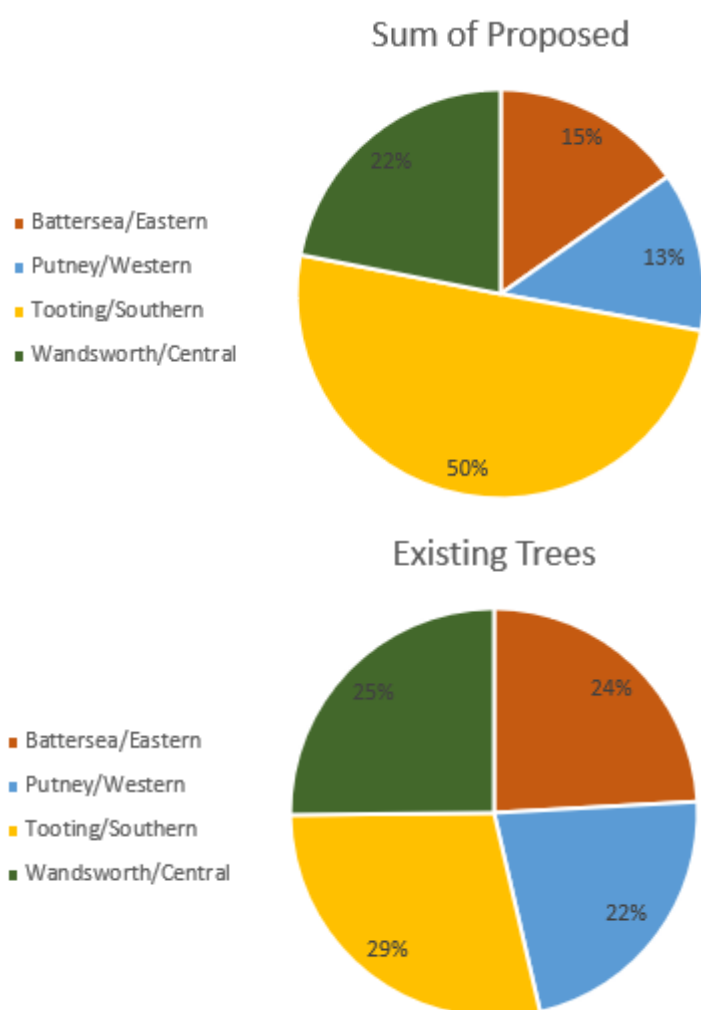
Phased delivery will also allow for species selection to be continually adjusted to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Some species used for street tree planting are proving to do well with hotter, drier conditions whilst some traditional species are coping poorly with the changing climate. Available nursery stock with the relevant plant health passports is increasingly pressured and a staggered approach will allow us the pick of the annual supply ensuring that trees are of good shape and condition at the point of planting. This can ensure the future resilience of the tree stock across the borough.

With most councils nationwide promising to increase tree planting it cannot be stressed enough how significant a limitation to ambitions stock availability will be in the future and why a phased approach is key to success.

However to ensure an effective start, the planting will be front loaded to deliver a higher number of new and replacement trees in the first two years whilst stock is known to be available. In 2023/24 there will be a maximum of 500 replacement trees and 300 new street trees planted, totally 800. IN 2024/25 there will be a maximum of 650 replacement trees and 350 new street trees, totalling 1000.

Previously decisions on street tree planting locations were driven by ad hoc requests. With the data gathered across 2022 there is the opportunity to take a more strategic approach to site selection for new tree planting. A larger scope for new street trees has been identified in wards in the south of the borough. Fig 1 shows this distribution broken down by tree office administrative areas. This reflects the existing provision which is also weighted to the south of the borough when considered by numbers (rather than tree size or condition).

Fig 1:



The 2022 survey identified 3,108 potential new street tree locations, in 648 roads. Most of these roads only have modest potential for increase with 134 roads only having space for one new tree and 120 roads only having space for two new trees. Only 76 roads have the opportunity to plant ten or more trees.

There are several ways that planting could be prioritised including apportioning the work evenly each year across all wards, targeting those that currently have the lowest number of trees, focussing on those with the greatest potential increase, targeting wards with the poorest air quality or continuing to purely respond to demand. It is felt that the best practical way to prioritise would be to begin with wards which are currently the least planted so that the new street tree planting will bring about the most immediate improvements. This order is shown in the table below:

PHASED PLANTING PRIORITY FOR STREET TREES				
WARD	Identified potential new locations	Current number of trees	Percentage of overall identified locations currently planted	
Tooting Broadway Ward	276	586	68%	
Furzedown Ward	446	1065	70%	
Tooting Bec Ward	345	846	71%	
Nine Elms Ward	12	31	72%	
Balham Ward	235	894	79%	
South Balham Ward	147	627	81%	
Trinity Ward	108	462	81%	
Wandsworth Common Ward	230	1027	82%	
East Putney Ward	148	793	84%	
Thamesfield Ward	173	967	85%	
Wandle Ward	111	625	85%	
Wandsworth Town Ward	141	830	85%	
Shaftesbury & Queenstown Ward	144	943	87%	
Northcote Ward	132	970	88%	
Southfields Ward	120	895	88%	
Battersea Park Ward	49	420	90%	
Lavender Ward	70	725	91%	
St. Mary's Ward	30	318	91%	
West Putney Ward	88	979	92%	
Falconbrook Ward	27	310	92%	
West Hill Ward	58	764	93%	
Roehampton Ward	18	316	95%	

Annually investigative works will be undertaken to ground truth the potential locations identified in 2022 for the ward(s) prioritised for tree planting. This will help refine the final tree choice (in line with the species selection criteria below) and will guide the annual tree order. Trial pits will be dug in autumn by the tree planting contractor with suitable pits being backfilled, incorporating composted green waste and the tree stake installed in preparation for the tree. Where practicable street tree pits will be of the largest dimensions possible without impeding safe pedestrian use of footpaths. Unsuitable pits will have the original surface reinstated and will be recorded as being “unplantable.”

A continuous historic street tree planting programme has ensured that there are very few roads across the borough with no street trees. In most cases these unplanted roads will be unsuitable for new street tree planting due to below ground cabling or other utilities infrastructure, however the recent survey work has identified that in some locations there will be potential for new planting down one side of the street.

We will inform local communities and Wandsworth Tree Wardens of new planting and support them and individual volunteers to “adopt a tree” and provide additional watering (reusing grey water from around the home) particularly in times of drought. We will not encourage the

planting of additional plants in trees pits during the first five years of establishment so that trees are not held back by competition for resources.

It should be noted that it is intended to continue the current policy of permanently closing street tree locations which have been subject to proven successful subsidence claims.

5.2 Street tree species selection

To ensure that a good resilient mix of trees are included, urban foresters frequently apply the '10, 20, 30 Rule'. This rule states that the target for an urban tree population should be to have no more than 10% of a particular species, no more than 20% of a particular genus and no more than 30% of a particular family". We will aspire to this by applying the following principles:

If a road has existing planting of one species or genus of trees, then this will be the priority choice for future planting. Examples include Magdalen Road, Sutherland Grove and Ritherdon Road and common species used for this type of planting include London Planes, cherries, and limes. There may be one or two individual trees that are not of the consistent species type, but these are mature specimens in good health which will be retained until they naturally demise. Replacement planting will match the dominant species.

If a road has a limited species palette where just two or three species dominate, one of the main species used will be chosen for the replacements subject to availability at the point of ordering and best adaptation to climate change. Again, these are often roads where limes and London planes are mixed as pollard trees along the road or where a mixture of cherry species line a road.

For roads where the above planting palettes apply, this may result in occasional pits being left vacant from one winter to the next if the tree loss occurred after the order for new trees has been placed and / or that season's planting has been programmed.

If a species in one of these situations is identified as not coping well with climate change, a replacement species will be identified that replicates the form and function of the original species whilst having proven resilience in comparable urban locations.

Many roads have mixed ornamental species along their length with a diversity of ages and species. These roads, whilst being less visually coherent are the best for biodiversity with a range of flowering and fruiting times. Mixed species roads are also more resilient to pests and diseases. New planting in these locations will prioritise tree size at maturity and climate change resilience to ensure suitable choices are made.

5.3 Parkland trees and avenues – principles and priorities for new planting

One way to enhance greenspaces and other council owned land and provide adaptation for climate change, by way of increased shade and amelioration of flooding, is through the creation of more areas of parkland trees and using avenues to shelter footpaths. On a site-by-site basis greenspace management plans will identify opportunities for planting new areas of parkland tree cover or for creating new avenues.

We will plant new parkland trees and avenues where we can be confident that they will not restrict the multifunctional uses of the greenspaces or adversely impact other priority biodiversity habitats identified in the Wandsworth Biodiversity Strategy. Feasibility will be required ahead of planting to assess localised ground conditions, below ground services and other aspects of site

suitability. We will plan planting carefully to allow the trees to achieve their fullest canopy at maturity. A range of approaches will be trialled including the use of smaller, bare root specimens which may establish better and faster than standard sizes used for street tree planting. Species will be chosen that are native or that provide the same form and function for wildlife that native parkland trees deliver. In some locations species will be chosen specifically for their ability to absorb water to mitigate localised flooding.

The creation of new avenues will focus on the use of single species to give a sense of place and to visually enhance the landscape. The creation of areas of parkland trees will consider a diverse mix of tree species to provide seasonal interest and biodiversity value.

Where existing avenues become over mature with individual trees failing and requiring removal, replanting will not always take place immediately. It is not always appropriate to replant directly in the vacated space left by a failed tree as establishment can be compromised by competition. On a case-by-case basis, and informed by engagement with the local community, it may be preferable in some locations to replant the entire avenue in one season to ensure that trees are of uniform age, and structure and to ensure they can be spaced to allow them to achieve maximum canopy potential.

To “future proof” landscapes, in particular in historic listed landscapes at Battersea Park and Wandsworth Park, consideration will be given to the creation of new avenues in parallel to existing ones ahead of any significant failure of trees, to ensure continuity of this key landscape design feature for future communities.

5.4 Woodland – principles and priorities for woodland creation

The Wandsworth Biodiversity Strategy identified a priority hierarchy for action where the improvement of biodiversity quality precedes actions to enlarge woodland habitats or create new ones. Many of the woodlands on council owned land are of unknown biodiversity quality and efforts will prioritise an understanding of this and the delivery of any identified actions to enhance it.

We will not create or expand woodlands where this will be at the expense of other priority biodiversity habitats that are harder to establish. These can be defined by reference to the GiGL London Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat Suitability dataset and the Wandsworth Biodiversity Strategy.

Where parcels of trees and scrub are identified that are below threshold size for ecological functionality, and where the adjacent land does not support other priority habitats, we will expand woodland through natural regeneration or whip and plug planting. The approach will vary site by site dependent on specific conditions including the residual impacts of previous land uses and maintenance actions. Areas will be temporarily fenced to remove pressure from trampling and to limit damage from dogs whilst they establish. Successful woodland creation will also require the removal of self-set seedlings from invasive non-native species which do not support native invertebrates well and which will rapidly outcompete the intended species range of woodland vegetation. Where it is feasible to join up existing parcels of woodland, the same approach will be used.

5.5 Hedgerows – principles and priorities for new planting

We will create new hedgerows in greenspaces where they link parcels of woodland or scrub or where they create borders/ boundaries or replace fences. Hedgerow creation will improve local microclimates, capturing carbon, alleviating flooding, providing shade, and delivering habitat for biodiversity. New hedges will however not be planted on or adjacent to existing priority biodiversity habitats identified in the Biodiversity Strategy nor in locations where there are future plans to enhance such habitats because leaf litter fall from hedgerows causes nutrient enrichment of soils which is detrimental to more fragile habitats. New hedges will also not be planted underneath existing trees unless there are exceptional reasons to do so. Shade and competition for water from established trees significantly compromises the success of new planting. The increased competition for resources is also detrimental to the established trees. To seek to establish hedgerows in these locations would be unsustainable.

Hedgerows of native species will be created with double or triple rows of mixed species scrub and understorey plants interspersed with tree species. The inclusion of field layer and ground cover species will be key to successful establishment retaining moisture as trees & woody species establish. The hedges will be managed through hedge laying to ensure dense bases to provide enhanced habitat.

Ornamental hedges will be created in more formal landscapes, often of single species. They will be planted according to the mature size requirements of the chosen species and will be managed to form an “A” shape. This shape provides incidental value for wildlife but is crucial to allow hedges to be resilient to extreme weather events shedding heavy snow or rainfall easily and resisting wind throw.

5.6 Scrub – principles and priorities for habitat creation

Natural regeneration is the preferred means of establishment or expansion of scrub. Defined areas for scrub creation will be temporarily fenced to remove pressure from trampling and to limit damage from dogs whilst the scrub species develop from the seed bank and via the introduction of seeds from birds and other wild animals. However, in the absence of an appropriate seed source, ground scraping will be necessary to remove dense mats of rank vegetation that can suppress natural regeneration. Establishment of scrub can be aided through the sparse planting of key species such as gorse and blackthorn. Successful scrub establishment will also require the removal of self-set seedlings from invasive non-native species which do not support native invertebrates well and which will rapidly outcompete the native range of scrub species.

A guiding principle for the creation of scrub instead of woodland will be the association of this habitat with other habitats such as acid grassland where the interface between the two vegetation types can provide increased ecological niches and add value. These areas are known as “eco tones” and the diversified microclimate often supports greater biodiversity than either woodland or grassland in isolation.

A recent example of this approach can be seen on Wandsworth Common north side adjacent the A205 South Circular.

Without active management action, parcels of scrub habitats will develop into woodlands after about 15 years. It is therefore important that where the intention is to create scrub habitats for biodiversity benefit, rotational management action is implemented to ensure that all stages of scrub development including bare ground are supported. The parcel size and the shape of the

parcels will influence structural diversity with smaller parcels with wavy edges supporting greater biodiversity.

5.7 Community Orchards – principles and priorities for new planting

For community orchards to be successful in the future, firm commitments are required from recognised community groups such as residents' associations, greenspace friends' groups and existing community gardens. These commitments will include an agreement to undertake establishment tree watering, necessary annual pruning tasks, and general tree health monitoring. Enable tree officers can provide advice and support including species and variety selection, training in pruning and basic tree maintenance, and liaising with WBC Housing colleagues for proposals on Housing land. It may also be possible to provide support with tree purchasing and tree planting where this "in kind" help is matched by appropriate grant funding. It must always be noted that fruit produced by community orchards is not the property of one individual nor the individual members of the associated community organisation. It should be shared in an agreed way ideally with the aim of meeting an identified food need in the local community (e.g., a local food bank) or to meet nutritional educational opportunities in the neighbourhood (e.g., used in school cookery lessons).

5.8 Veteran trees and dead wood:

Other related classifications of trees / woody habitats include veteran trees and dead wood. Both cannot be instantly created; by their very nature they are the products of the passage of time. Veteran trees include ancient trees but not all are old enough to meet that definition. Veteran trees are survivors that have developed some of the features found on ancient trees, however, veteran trees are usually only in their second or mature stage of life. Although veteran trees are not as old or complex as ancient trees, they still provide holes, cavities and crevices which are especially important for wildlife. We will plot veteran trees across the next three years during our routine surveys. We do not currently believe there are any ancient trees on Wandsworth Council land although we will continue to support the GiGL ancient woodland inventory project in case new evidence is identified.

We will also be considering how "future veterans" can be identified and safeguarded through relevant management actions on a case-by-case basis. Future veterans will be species known to support a rich biodiversity. We will choose trees that will not be hazardous for the community as they age. For future veterans to be successful we may prioritize one tree and manage the others around it, as well as surrounding habitats, differently to make sure it is successful. This may include measures such as adding organic mulches to the base of these trees regularly to protect roots and retain additional moisture to improve resilience in dry periods or halo pruning of nearby trees to reduce competition for resources. This has previously been beyond the scope of tree management budgets but is necessary to provide continuity of habitat for priority species such as tawny owls.

Dead wood in all its forms is vital. It returns nutrients to the soil and improves its structure as well as providing homes for invertebrates, birds, small mammals, and fungi. We have long retained dead wood on both Commons and intend to continue this practice where it is safe to do so. Dead wood can be retained as standing dead wood trees, monoliths (when we remove the dead branches for safety), as fallen trunks and stumps and as log piles. We use brush (branches and twigs) for dead hedges to provide habitat for birds and small mammals. We will also be introducing dead wood in the form of stag beetle "loggeries" within ornamental planted areas in greenspaces to deliver the Wandsworth Biodiversity Strategy.

6. Action plan:

category	action	responsibility	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
woodlands	Continue joint working with GiGL to accurately map existing woodland parcels borough wide & to support the ancient woodland inventory project	Enable and GiGL										
woodlands	Continue to better capture and plot groups of trees as part of regular survey and inspections	Enable										
woodlands	Accurately map woodland parcels on Tooting Commons, Wandsworth Commons and Battersea Park	Enable										

Woodland	Assess biodiversity quality of existing woodlands	Enable & WBC		Tooting Commons	Wandsworth Common	Battersea Park						
Woodland	Undertake gap analysis to identify locations for new woodland creation	Enable										
hedgerows	Accurately map hedgerows on council owned land	Enable & WBC Housing Horticultural Services										
hedgerows	Community campaign to promote hedgerows in private gardens	Enable & WBC communications										
scrub	Produce a map of scrub habitats on council owned land & inform the community of their habitat value	Enable & WBC communications										
scrub	Create new areas of scrub on Local Wildlife Sites where these meet defined biodiversity	Enable										

	aims outlined in biodiversity action / site management plans											
orchards	Community campaign to find out about other community orchards within the borough	Enable & WBC communications										
orchards	Advise & support community groups to create and care for new orchards	Enable & WBC Housing Horticultural Services										
Hedgerows, Parkland trees and avenues	On a case-by-case basis assess opportunities for new planting in site management plans	Enable	Christchurch Gardens Coronation Gardens Fountain Rd Rec Tooting Gardens Queenstown Green	Fred Wells Gardens Garratt Park Latchmere Recreation Ground Leaders Gardens Swaby Gardens	Bramford Gardens Falcon Park Shillington Park Harroway Gardens Tooting Common	Furzedown Recreation Ground Garratt Green Godley Gardens Wandsworth Common Lavender Gardens	Montefiore Gardens Putney Park Lane & The Pleasance Fishponds Playing Fields Roehampton Playing Fields King Georges Park	Garratt Lane Old Burial Ground Putney Lower Common Cemetery Putney Old Burial Ground Battersea Park	Huguenot Burial Ground (mount Nod) Heathbrook Park Wandsworth Park			
Parkland trees and avenues	Devise an approach to replacement avenues in historic landscapes	Enable								Wandsworth Park	Battersea Park	

street trees	Continue rolling programme of street tree replacements (av. 300 per year)	Enable & WBC tree planting contractor	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed	Ad hoc as needed
street trees	Expand street tree planting to new locations (av. 200 per year)	WBC funding; Enable & WBC tree planting contractor	Tooting Broadway	Tooting Broadway & Furzedown	Furzedown	Furzedown & Tooting Bec	Tooting Bec & Nine Elms	Balham	South Balham & Trinity	Wandsworth Common	East Putney & Thamesfield	Wandle & Wandsworth Town
Veteran trees and dead wood	Plot veteran trees	Enable										
Veteran trees and dead wood	Identify and manage "future veterans" on council owned land	Enable										
Veteran trees and dead wood	Create stag beetle loggeries within ornamental planted areas	Enable & WBC grounds maintenance contractor	Coronation Gardens									
Veteran trees and dead wood	Retain standing and fallen dead wood in situ where safe to do so and where it does not impede recreation	Enable										