



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KINGSTON**  
UPON THAMES



# Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames **TREE & WOODLAND STRATEGY 2026–2036**

***DRAFT***



## Contents:

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Vision &amp; Strategic Objectives</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Policy Context</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Baseline Assessment</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Challenges &amp; Opportunities</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Strategic Themes</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Theme 1 — Protecting existing Trees & Woodlands.....	5
Theme 2 — Tree Planting & Canopy Cover Expansion.....	6
Theme 3 — Sustainable Management & Maintenance.....	6
Theme 4 — Biodiversity & Nature Recovery.....	7
Theme 5 — Planning, Policy & Green Infrastructure.....	8
Theme 6 — Community Engagement & Promotion.....	8
Theme 7 — Pests, Diseases & Climate Resilience.....	9
Theme 8 – Governance, Funding & Monitoring.....	10
<b>7. Delivery Plan / Action Plan (Summary)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Roles &amp; Partnerships</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>9. Monitoring &amp; Reporting</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>10. Risks &amp; Mitigation</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>11. Appendices</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Appendix A — Glossary.....	13
Appendix B — Existing Species Composition Diagram.....	19
Appendix C — Canopy Cover Stats.....	20
Appendix D — Woodland Coverage.....	21
Appendix E — Photographs of trees.....	22
Appendix F — Legal Framework.....	25

## Foreword

Our trees and woodlands are essential to the biodiversity of the natural environment and the quality of life within our Borough. They provide scenic beauty and landscape features, clean our air, cool our streets, and provide vital homes for wildlife. This strategy sets out how we will protect, grow and cherish our urban forest for future generations.

This detailed strategy document provides the full evidence, policy framework, and action plan underpinning our approach for the years 2026–2036.

*Some people called it the Tree of Heaven. No matter where its seed fell, it made a tree which struggled to reach the sky. It grew in boarded-up lots and out of neglected rubbish heaps and it was the only tree that grew out of cement. (Quote from A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Betty Smith)*

## 1. Executive Summary

Kingston's Tree & Woodland Strategy sets out a 10-year vision to protect, enhance, and expand the borough's trees, woodlands and hedgerows. This strategy recognises the essential role that trees play in biodiversity, climate resilience, public health, and the character of local neighbourhoods.

The strategy will therefore guide the management and enhancement of RBK's "treescape and urban forest," encompassing all trees within the borough on public land, where

appropriate. The strategy will cover individual trees, woodlands and hedgerows. The strategy aims to contribute to the Council's response to global environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss and climate change, in alignment with national policies and local priorities. It also aims to engage stakeholders and encourage co-ownership of the treescape.

Over the next decade the Council aims to deliver a comprehensive Action Plan, some of the key targets include:



- **Complete tree planting opportunity mapping in hard and soft surface areas to produce an effective tree planting strategy.**
- **Increase tree canopy cover to 20% in the 14 wards which are currently deficient.**
- **Restore, expand, and manage woodlands and hedgerows by delivering the Woodland and Hedgerow Habitat Action Plans within the Biodiversity Strategy.**
- **Review and update the Council's tree management and operational practices.**
- **Protect all high-value trees through effective TPO and planning enforcement processes.**
- **Create a network of community partners to support planting and long-term care.**
- **Prepare a funding plan to identify and source external and alternative sources of funding to support the delivery of the strategy.**

Trees are vital assets, and this strategy will ensure that they are safeguarded for future generations. It recognises that long-term success depends not only on

planting new trees, but on sustained maintenance, aftercare, and proportionate risk management within finite resources.

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## 2. Vision & Strategic Objectives

### Vision

*A greener, healthier, climate-resilient Kingston where thriving trees and woodlands enhance biodiversity, strengthen communities, and improve quality of life.*

### Strategic Objectives

1. **Protect** existing trees and woodlands.
2. **Increase** canopy cover through targeted tree planting and woodland creation.
3. **Enhance** biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and ecological resilience.
4. **Engage** communities in tree stewardship, education, and volunteering.
5. **Integrate** trees & green infrastructure into environmental, transport, health, and planning policy.

6. **Manage** the risks posed by pests, diseases, and climate-driven stress.
7. **Deliver** effective operational management and maintenance practices.
8. **Monitor** progress and report annually to maintain accountability.

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
- **Local Plan policies on green space, climate change, and habitat protection**

Kingston’s declaration of a **Climate Emergency (2023)** positions trees as a key tool for carbon sequestration, heat reduction, flood mitigation, and air quality improvement.

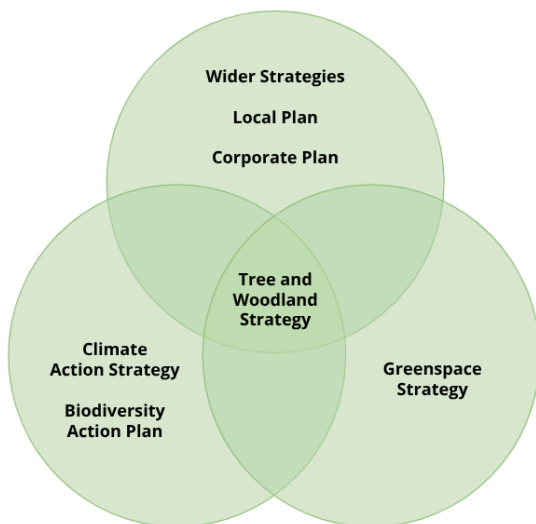


Figure 1. Strategic Interrelationship

### 3. Policy Context

The Strategy aligns with:

- **Environment Act 2021**
- **Net Zero Strategy**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Regulations**

### 4. Baseline Assessment

Key findings from the 2024 Kingston Canopy Cover Assessment:

- **18% average borough canopy cover, as low as 8% in some wards.** (below the UK urban average of 21%)
- Declining street tree population due to aging specimens and urban pressures
- 12 existing Council-owned woodlands (approx. 340 hectares)
- 1,640 designated TPO trees
- High vulnerability to **ash dieback**, **oak processionary moth**, and urban heat stress
- Lower canopy cover and access to nature in more deprived wards

This baseline guides targeted action and investment.

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## 5. Challenges & Opportunities

### Challenges

- Development pressure in growth areas with built density
- Climate change impacts: drought, heatwaves, storm events
- Pests and diseases threatening key species
- Limited operational management & maintenance budgets
- Need for long-term community stewardship

### Opportunities

- Funding through national tree programmes and planning contributions
- Partnerships with schools, volunteer groups, and KBAP
- Areas of public land suitable for new tree planting, hedgerows & woodland creation
- Greening public realm schemes (active travel routes, town centres)

- Existing and emergent digital surveying & mapping technology for better monitoring and decision-making
- 

## 6. Strategic Themes

### Theme 1 — Protecting existing Trees & Woodlands

The Council has regulatory responsibility for certain trees which are in private ownership. These include trees with existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's), the creation of new TPO's to protect trees under threat of removal & trees within Conservation Areas where stricter planning rules apply to trees.

Various policies within the Kingston Local Plan, which is still in development with a target submission date of December 2026, seek to protect and improve the green infrastructure of the borough.

The development management function is of critical importance in ensuring that trees are not needlessly lost when determining the suitability of planning applications.

#### Actions:

- Review existing TPO's, prepare consistent policies for new TPO's

and improve public awareness of their importance

- Emphasise protection of trees in Conservation Areas through proactive communication
- Require detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs) in planning applications
- Rigorous enforcement for breaches of policy such as illegal felling
- Promote tree retention over replacement wherever feasible

## **Theme 2 — Tree Planting & Canopy Cover Expansion**

Increasing tree planting and expanding canopy cover brings major environmental and community benefits. Trees clean the air by absorbing pollutants, cool urban areas by providing shade, and help manage heavy rainfall by slowing runoff and reducing flood risk. They also store carbon, making them an effective and affordable tool for tackling climate change while supporting richer biodiversity.

Beyond environmental gains, more trees create healthier, more attractive places to live. Green, shaded streets encourage outdoor activity, reduce stress, and strengthen community wellbeing.

They can also lower energy costs, boost local economies, and increase property values. In short, investing in canopy cover is a practical way to build more resilient, liveable, and climate-ready communities.

### **Actions:**

- Plant 5,000 new trees by 2035
- Prioritise: greenspaces, streets, schools, public housing areas, heat-vulnerable neighbourhoods
- Establish 5 new community woodlands/Miyawaki forests
- Use climate-resilient, diverse species mix (no >10% of any species)
- Prepare an initial Tree Planting Opportunity Map

### **Theme 3 — Sustainable Management & Maintenance**

Kingston owns many trees and recognises and values the benefit that they bring to the local environment. Kingston Council has a legal duty of care to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk and hence seeks to be a responsible manager and maintain trees reasonably within the wide range of pressures and demands it faces.

The Council employs specialist arboricultural staff, principal responsibilities include; manage surveying and keep a record of the Borough's trees (through developing and maintaining a computerised database and mapping system detailing the location, species and history of each tree, identify changes in tree sizes and safety hazards and how these should be addressed, organise and oversee pruning and other tree works via Planned and Reactive work programmes organise and deliver the annual tree planting programme, provide support and advice relating to trees to other Council services.

#### **Actions:**

- Develop 10-year woodland management plans

- Emphasise “right tree, right place, right management” principles
- Deliver cyclical maintenance schedules for street trees
- Introduce soil enhancement and improved watering regimes
- Monitor and routinely inspect the existing tree stock to determine maintenance and replacement policy

### **Theme 4 — Biodiversity & Nature Recovery**



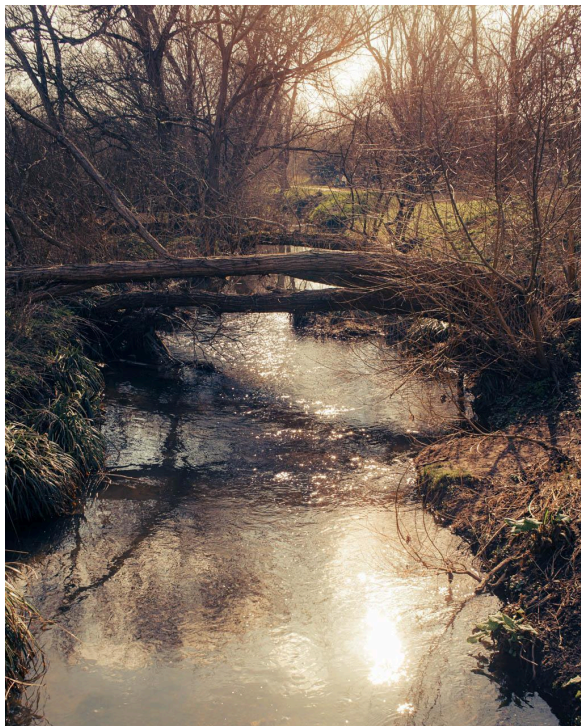
This theme will be delivered primarily through the Kingston Biodiversity Action Plan (KBAP) and the habitat and species action plans (HAPS & SAPS) relating to woodland and hedgerows. The Kingston

Biodiversity Partnership oversees and monitors the delivery of the KBAP on behalf of the Borough and a range of partner organisations.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for London; the Borough and its partners have been active participants in the preparation of the LNRS to date. The planning policy, greenspaces and green infrastructure of the borough will be a key part of the delivery of the LNRS locally, as it moves into the delivery phases.

**Actions:**

- Increase availability of deadwood, nesting sites, and understorey habitats



- Design new plantings to support pollinators and local wildlife
- Use natural flood management approaches in suitable areas
- Monitor climate impacts and adjust species selection accordingly

**Theme 5 — Planning, Policy & Green Infrastructure**

The new Kingston local plan will set out a range of policies to guide development in the borough up until 2041. Policies specific to trees will be contained within the Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure section of the plan. The new local plan is still in development with a provisional finalisation date of 2026.

The purpose of a Green Infrastructure Plan is to ensure that green spaces are planned and managed as an interconnected system rather than isolated features, supporting healthier places for people and wildlife. The tree strategy will support these objectives by effective tree canopy cover mapping, tree planting opportunity mapping leading to the development of long term benefits.

**Actions:**

- Ensure all major developments achieve measurable canopy gain

- Include trees at the design stage, not as afterthoughts
- Require sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) integration where appropriate
- Prepare Supplementary Documents for trees in development sites
- Use developer contributions (S106 / CIL) where appropriate to fund planting and maintenance

### Theme 6 — Community Engagement & Promotion

Ultimately, a successful tree strategy is one that communities feel part of, not one that is simply delivered to them. By combining inclusive consultation, hands-on involvement, and ongoing communication, through this long-term strategy Kingston will aim to build a shared sense of responsibility for the urban forest and ensure that the borough's trees continue to thrive for future generations.

Whilst much of the focus of the strategy will be on council owned land, it is considered that trees and hedges within private residences make a valuable contribution to the landscape and environment of the borough. Commercial and institutional premises and transport networks will be encouraged to engage with the strategy

and develop their own tree and woodland management plans.

Community involvement will complement, but not replace, the Council's statutory and operational responsibilities for tree safety and management.

#### Actions:

- Form the **Kingston Tree Partnership** (residents, schools, volunteers, commercial and institutional interests)
- Establish a "Tree Warden" volunteer network
- Deliver tree-planting events and school learning programmes
- Publish user-friendly tree and woodland maps to develop interest and engagement
- Promote neighbourhood-led watering schemes for young trees

### Theme 7 — Pests, Diseases & Climate Resilience

Pests and diseases present a growing challenge to our tree population, with threats such as ash dieback, oak processionary moth, and phytophthora species already causing significant loss and long-term change in the landscape. A resilient tree strategy must therefore prioritise strong biosecurity practices, regular monitoring, and early detection.

This includes our sourcing of trees from reputable nurseries, reducing the movement of high-risk plant material, and training staff and volunteers to recognise symptoms of emerging threats. Diversifying the species and age structure of the urban forest is also essential, reducing reliance on vulnerable species and limiting the impact of any single pest or pathogen.

Climate resilience is equally critical as the UK experiences warmer temperatures, more intense rainfall, and increased drought stress. Our climate-ready tree strategy will focus on selecting species that can tolerate future conditions while still supporting biodiversity and local character. This may involve trialling new species, improving soil quality, expanding canopy cover to reduce heat, and ensuring young trees receive adequate aftercare during establishment. Monitor key threats including:

- o Ash Dieback
- o Oak Processionary Moth
- o Dutch Elm Disease

**Actions:**

- Train staff in biosecurity best practices
- Diversify species to increase climate and disease resilience

- Implement rapid response protocols for new outbreaks

Where large-scale disease outbreaks occur, the Council will prioritise works based on public safety, risk, and ecological value, recognising the financial implications of widespread tree loss.

**Theme 8 - Governance, Funding & Monitoring**

Good governance is essential to delivering this tree strategy, ensuring that responsibilities are clearly defined and decisions are clearly understood. The progress and success of the strategy will be monitored and reported through the Climate Action Board, a cross-departmental steering group/board.

This will assist to embed the strategy across council functions and ensure that tree-related decisions are consistent with wider policies such as climate action plans, Local Plans, and nature recovery strategies. Regular reporting to elected members and senior leadership maintains accountability and keeps tree management visible within corporate priorities.

Long-term delivery also depends on secure and diverse funding. Kingston will aim to combine core budgets with external sources such as government grants, developer contributions (including Section 106 and CIL),



charitable funding, and partnerships with community groups or businesses where these are available.

Clear financial planning supports sustained planting, maintenance, and aftercare, ensuring that new trees survive and existing trees are properly managed.

**Actions:**

- Ensure that existing operational budgets are spent efficiently
- Publish annual monitoring reports
- Prepare a Tree Risk Management Strategy
- Review and refresh external maintenance contracts as required
- Research and seek new funding sources.

## 7. Delivery Plan / Action Plan (Summary)

Action	Timescale	Lead	KPI
Increase canopy cover to 20%	By 2036	Greenspace Team	Annual % change
Plant 5000 trees	2026–2036	Greenspace Team	Trees planted per year
Create 5 community woodlands	2026–2032	Greenspace / Climate	Hectares created
Publish updated TPO guidance	2026–2027	Planning	Guidance adopted



Action	Timescale	Lead	KPI
Establish Tree Warden network	2026-2027	Neighbourhood Managers	Volunteers recruited
Produce woodland management plans	By 2027	KBAP / Biodiversity	Plans completed

## 8. Roles & Partnerships

Key partners:

- Local schools
- Volunteer groups and residents' associations
- Wildlife Trusts, GLA, Habitats & Heritage
- Developers and housing associations
- Local businesses via sponsorship schemes

Council responsibilities:

- Planning: protection & regulation
- Greenspace Services: planting & maintenance
- Education: school programmes

- Public Health: wellbeing metrics

## 9. Monitoring & Reporting

- Annual reporting and publication online
- Updated canopy mapping every 3 years
- Delivery Plan updated bi-annually
- KPI dashboard tracking:
  - o canopy cover
  - o planting rate
  - o woodland biodiversity indices
  - o enforcement statistics

## 10. Risks & Mitigation

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Budget pressures	Reduced planting / maintenance	Diversify funding; developer contributions
Climate stress events	Higher tree mortality	Climate-resilient species; improved watering
Pests / diseases	Loss of key species	Biosecurity protocols, diversification
Development conflicts	Tree loss	Stronger planning policy and enforcement

## 11. Appendices

### Appendix A – Glossary

#### Arboriculture/Arboricultural

Arboriculture is the practice and study of managing, caring for, and maintaining individual trees, woodlands, and hedges. In the UK, it includes activities such as tree inspections, pruning, planting, and managing risks associated with trees.

#### Arboricultural Impact Assessment

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) is a structured report used in the

UK planning system to evaluate how proposed development may affect existing trees on or near a site. It identifies which trees can be retained, which may be lost, and what measures are needed to protect them. An AIA forms part of the BS 5837 process and helps planning authorities understand the arboricultural implications of a project.

#### Ash Dieback Disease

Ash dieback is a serious fungal disease caused by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* that

affects ash trees across the UK. It leads to leaf loss, crown dieback, and ultimately the death of many infected trees, with young trees particularly vulnerable. Now widespread, the disease is expected to cause the long-term decline of most native ash, significantly altering landscapes and biodiversity. Management focuses on monitoring, removing dangerous trees, and supporting the natural resilience of the small proportion of ash that show tolerance.

### **Biodiversity**

In a UK context refers to the variety of life found across the country's landscapes, from woodlands and wetlands to urban parks and private gardens. It includes all species of plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, as well as the ecosystems and natural processes that support them. Biodiversity is considered essential for healthy, resilient environments because it underpins services such as pollination, soil formation, clean water, and climate regulation. In the UK, biodiversity has been declining for decades due to habitat loss, pollution, invasive species, and climate change, which is why national and local policies increasingly prioritise its protection and enhancement.

### **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

A Biodiversity Action Plan is a strategic document that sets out how a local authority, organisation, or community will protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity within a defined area. BAPs identify priority habitats and species, outline the pressures they face, and establish targeted actions to support their recovery. They provide a practical framework for delivering national and local nature recovery objectives and help ensure that biodiversity considerations are embedded across planning, land management, and development decisions.

### **Biosecurity**

Arboricultural biosecurity refers to the measures taken to prevent harmful pests, diseases, and invasive species from entering, spreading, or affecting trees in the UK. It involves hygiene practices, monitoring, and controlling the movement of plant material.

### **British Standard 5837**

British Standard 5837 (BS 5837) is the UK guidance that sets out how trees should be considered during the planning and development process. It provides a structured approach for surveying trees, assessing their quality, and determining how they should be protected before, during, and after construction. The standard outlines requirements for tree surveys, root protection areas,

construction exclusion zones, and the preparation of arboricultural reports such as Arboricultural Impact Assessments and Method Statements. Its purpose is to ensure that trees are properly integrated into development proposals and safeguarded throughout the project.

### **CAVAT**

CAVAT stands for Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees. It is a system used in the UK for valuing the non-monetary benefits of trees to assign a monetary worth, particularly in planning, insurance, or compensation cases.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge that local authorities in England and Wales can apply to new developments to help fund local infrastructure. This may include schools, transport improvements, parks, flood defences, or health facilities. CIL is usually calculated on the basis of floorspace created and is separate from Section 106 obligations, although both may apply to the same development.

### **Climate Change**

Climate change describes long-term shifts in global or regional climate patterns, largely driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels. In the UK, it influences tree health, species

suitability, and the frequency of extreme weather events.

### **Climate Emergency**

A climate emergency is a formal declaration by a government or organisation recognising that urgent action is required to address climate change. Many UK councils including Kingston have declared one to guide environmental and planning policies.

### **Canopy Cover**

Canopy cover is the percentage of land area shaded by the leaves and branches of trees when viewed from above. UK local authorities often measure it to assess the health of the urban forest and plan tree-planting strategies.

### **Conservation Area**

A Conservation Area is a designated zone protected for its special architectural or historic interest. In the UK, anyone wishing to prune or remove a tree in such an area must notify the local planning authority six weeks in advance.

### **Dutch Elm Disease (DED)**

Dutch elm disease is a devastating fungal infection spread by elm bark beetles, responsible for the widespread loss of mature elm trees across the UK since the 1970s. The disease blocks the tree's vascular system, causing rapid wilting, yellowing leaves, and eventual death.

Although some resistant elms and isolated populations survive, the disease remains present, requiring ongoing monitoring, sanitation felling, and careful management to protect remaining elms and support the re-establishment of more resilient varieties.

### **Greater London Authority (GLA)**

Is the regional governing body responsible for strategic planning, transport, environment, economic development, and policing across London. Led by the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, the GLA sets city-wide policies and frameworks that guide how boroughs manage growth, climate action, green infrastructure, and the urban forest.

### **Green infrastructure**

Refers to the network of natural and semi-natural spaces that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits within towns, cities, and wider landscapes. In the UK, it includes parks, woodlands, street trees, rivers, wetlands, green corridors, private gardens, and features such as green roofs or sustainable drainage systems. Green infrastructure is planned and managed as an interconnected system that supports biodiversity, improves air quality, reduces flood risk, enhances climate resilience, and creates healthier, more attractive places for people. It

emphasises the idea that green spaces are essential infrastructure—just as important as transport, utilities, and housing—in shaping sustainable and liveable communities.

### **Habitat Action Plan (HAP)**

A Habitat Action Plan focuses on the conservation and improvement of a specific habitat type—such as woodland, grassland, wetland, or hedgerows—within a local or regional area. It describes the current condition of the habitat, the threats it faces, and the measures needed to protect, expand, or connect it. In the UK, HAPs often sit beneath a wider Biodiversity Action Plan and guide practical management, restoration projects, and long-term monitoring to ensure that key habitats remain resilient and ecologically valuable.

### **Natural Capital**

Natural capital, in the UK context, refers to the stock of natural assets—such as soils, forests, water, air, and marine environments—from which humanity derives a wide range of services.

### **Nature (Local) Recovery Strategy**

Nature recovery describes the coordinated effort to restore ecosystems, rebuild wildlife populations, and create a more connected and resilient natural environment across the

UK. It goes beyond simply conserving what remains and focuses on actively improving habitats, expanding green networks, and allowing nature to regenerate. Key tools in this process include Local Nature Recovery Strategies, biodiversity net gain requirements in planning, and long-term land management initiatives such as rewilding and habitat creation. The aim is to reverse ecological decline, strengthen climate resilience, and ensure that nature can thrive alongside sustainable development.

### **Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)**

Oak processionary moth is an invasive pest established in parts of southern England, whose caterpillars feed on oak leaves and can weaken trees by stripping foliage. The caterpillars also pose a public and animal health risk because their hairs can cause skin irritation, eye problems, and respiratory issues. The UK's response centres on surveillance, controlled removal of nests, and public awareness to limit spread and reduce health risks, while protecting the long-term health of oak populations.

### **Right Tree, Right Place**

The principle of “right tree, right place” is a core tenet of sustainable urban forest management. It means selecting a tree species that is perfectly suited to the specific site conditions where it will be

planted. This involves a careful assessment of factors such as available rooting space, soil composition, eventual size and form of the mature tree, and resilience to local environmental stresses like drought, pests, and disease. By ensuring the right species is planted in the right location, it maximises the tree's chances of survival and long-term health and minimises future maintenance and risk.

### **Section 106 Agreements**

A Section 106 Agreement is a legally binding planning obligation between a developer and a local planning authority. It is used to mitigate the impacts of a development by requiring contributions such as affordable housing, highway improvements, community facilities, or environmental measures. These obligations must be directly related to the development and necessary to make it acceptable in planning terms.

### **Species Action Plan (SAP)**

A Species Action Plan sets out targeted actions to conserve and recover a particular species that is threatened, declining, or of special local importance. It identifies the species' ecological needs, the factors affecting its survival, and the interventions required—such as habitat creation, protection measures, or public awareness work. In the UK, SAPs are commonly used for species such as bats,

hedgehogs, pollinators, or priority birds, and they help focus resources where they can have the greatest impact on species recovery.

### **SuDS**

Sustainable Drainage Systems, commonly known as SuDS, are designed to manage surface water in a way that mimics natural drainage. SuDS aims to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity by using features such as swales, permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and detention basins. They are often integrated into new developments to create more resilient and environmentally friendly drainage solutions.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Supplementary Planning Documents, provide additional detail to support policies in a local authority's development plan. SPDs offer practical guidance on topics such as design standards, tree protection, biodiversity, or sustainable drainage. They do not have the same legal weight as the development plan but are a material consideration in planning decisions.

### **Tree Preservation Order**

A Tree Preservation Order is a legal protection placed on specific trees, groups of trees, or woodlands. It makes it an offence to cut down, prune, uproot,

or damage a protected tree without permission from the local planning authority.

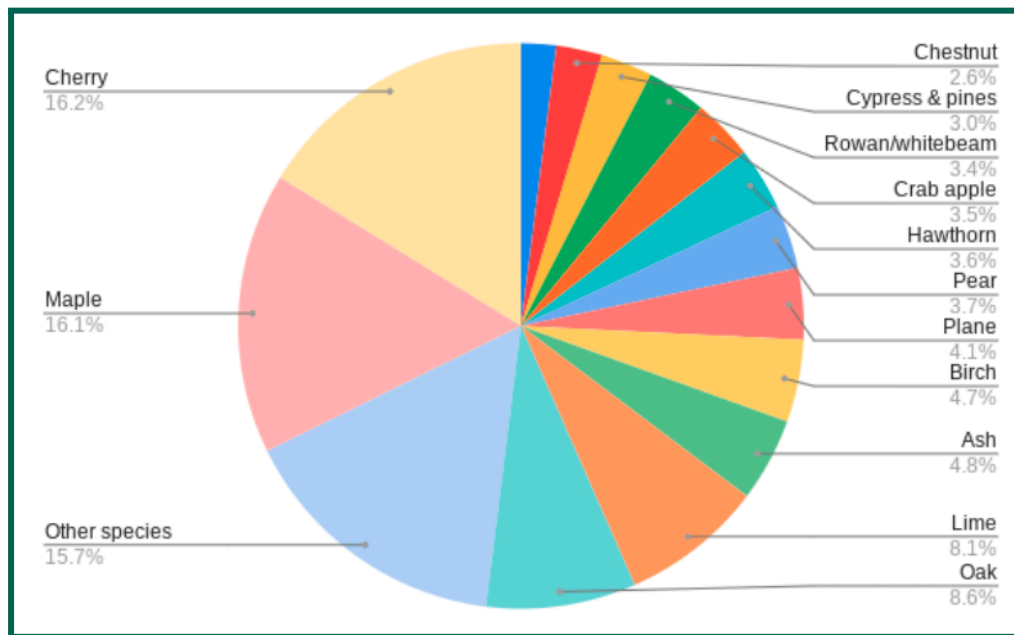
### **Tree Warden**

A Tree Warden is a local volunteer champion for trees, who plants, protects, promotes, and monitors trees and woodlands in their community, acting as "eyes and ears" for local trees, with no prior experience needed, just a passion for trees. They work with local councils, schools, and groups on activities like planting days, aftercare, woodland management, raising awareness, and reporting tree health issues, forming a vital network for local environmental care.

### **Urban Forest**

An urban forest refers to all the trees and woodland-related vegetation within a town or city, including street trees, parks, private gardens, school grounds, nature reserves, and even green roofs. In a UK context, the urban forest is understood as a connected network of trees that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits such as cleaner air, shade, biodiversity, improved wellbeing, and climate resilience. Rather than focusing only on individual trees, the term emphasises the collective value of the entire tree population and the need to manage it as a shared, long-term asset for the whole community.

**Appendix B — Existing Species Composition Diagram**



*Figure 1. Council Owned Tree Species*

The chart indicates the range of tree species prevalent amongst council owned trees, as can be seen a few species dominate. Further analysis needs to be done on this information to support tree planting policies and priorities. This would include age and species diversity, species suitability - current and future.

**Appendix C — Canopy Cover Stats**

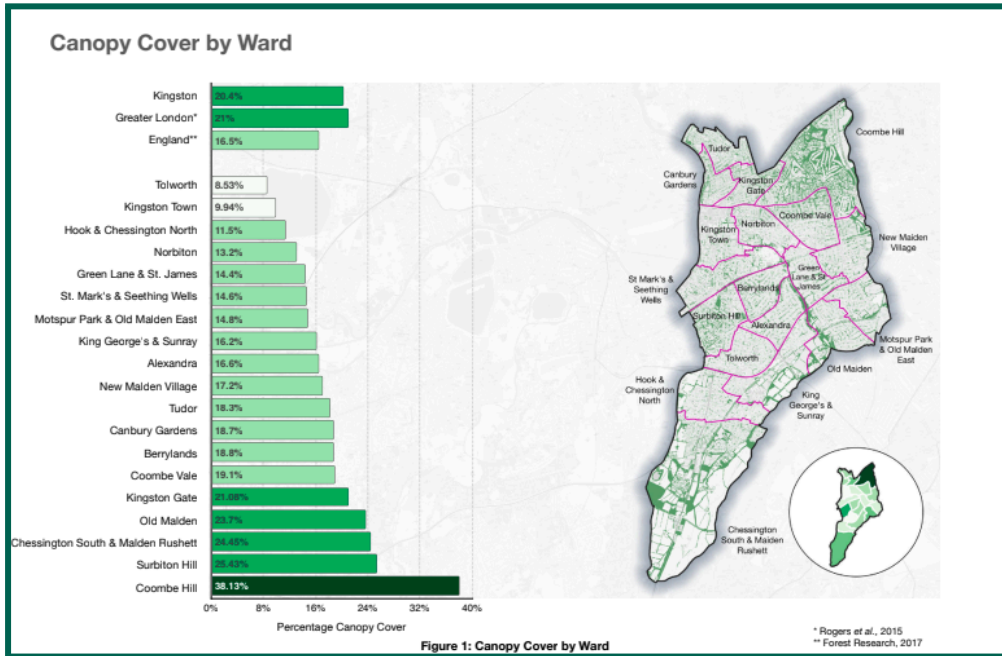


Figure 1: Canopy Cover by Ward

Figure 2. Tree Canopy Cover - Neighbourhood and Ward Statistics

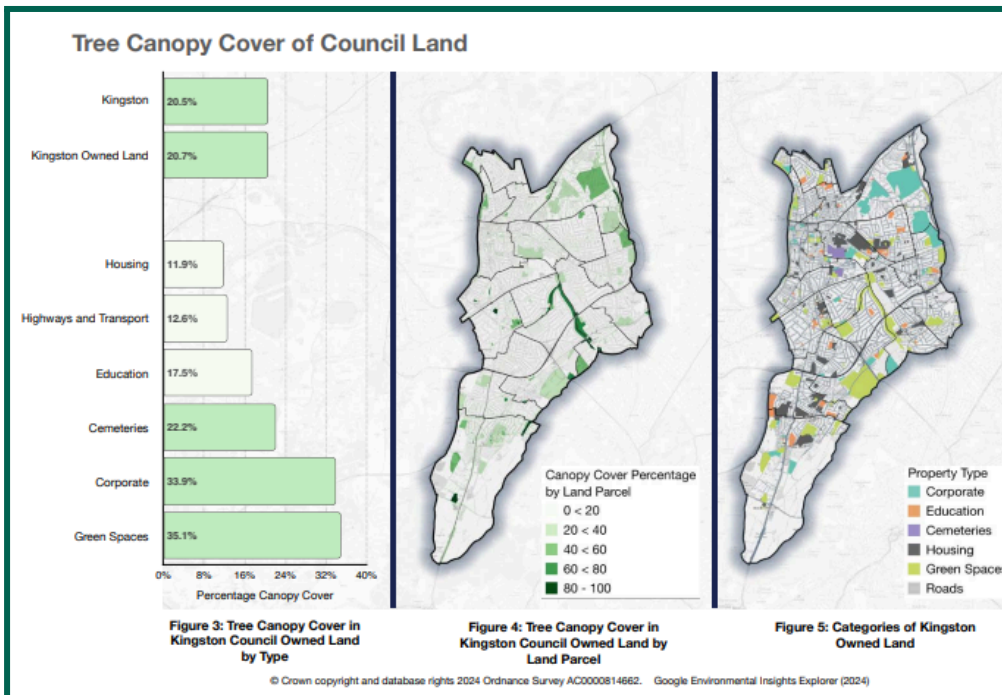


Figure 3: Tree Canopy Cover in Kingston Council Owned Land by Type

Figure 4: Tree Canopy Cover in Kingston Council Owned Land by Land Parcel

Figure 5: Categories of Kingston Owned Land

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Figure 3. Canopy Cover of Council Land

A Treeconomics canopy cover study shows that Kingston’s total tree canopy (including trees on private land) covers an area of 763 hectares. This is equivalent to approximately 20.4% of the Borough. The major concentration of canopy cover is in the north east of the borough within Coombe Hill ward.

From the study we also know that of the total tree canopy there is a variation according to Council owned land type. For example housing sites have a lower canopy cover while as expected green spaces have a higher percentage coverage. Further details are shown in this table.

### Appendix D — Woodland Coverage

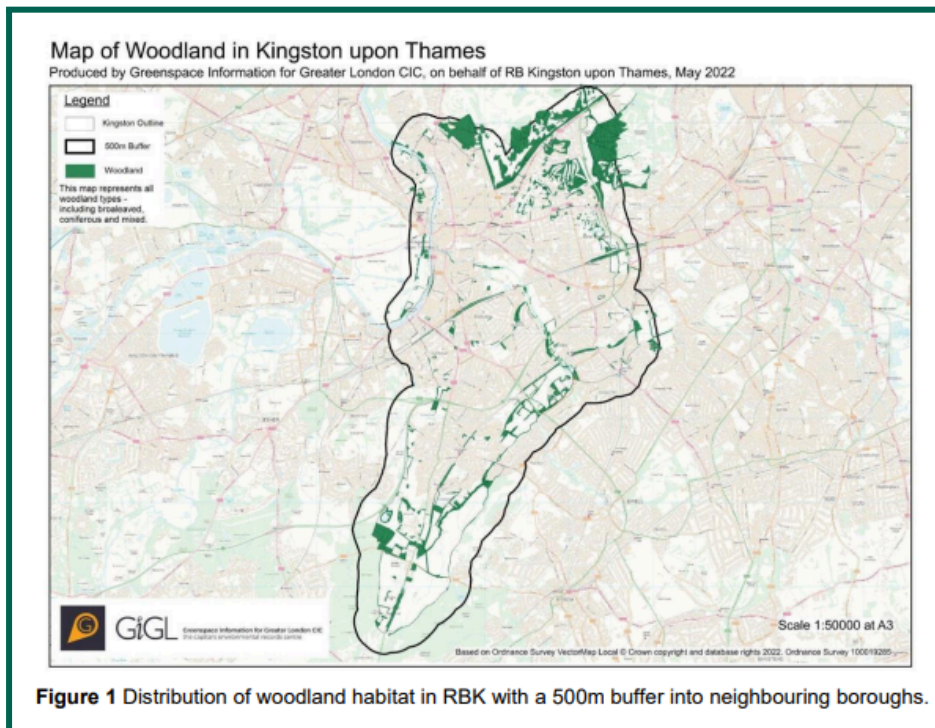


Figure 4. produced by GiGL shows the distribution of woodland habitat across the borough which covers approximately 13% (496 Hectares) of Kingston's total land area.

**Appendix E — Photographs of trees**



*Images above: Flowering Cherry Avenue Spring and Autumn*



*Images above: The Beauty of Trees in Flower, Seed and Bark*



*Images above: Oak Processionary Moth active phase (left) and Oak Processionary Moth - caterpillar damage (right)*



*Images above: Major Street Tree Pruning Work Before and After*

# Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames TREE & WOODLAND STRATEGY 2026–2036



*Images above: Planting to Ensure the Future of our Urban Forest in streets and greenspaces.*



*Image above: London Planes - Canbury Gardens*

## **Appendix F — Legal Framework**

### **Environment Act 2021**

The Environment Act 2021 is a landmark piece of UK legislation that sets the legal framework for environmental protection and improvement in the country, particularly following the UK's exit from the European Union. It establishes a new governance structure for the environment and introduces binding targets across several key areas such as BNG.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as amended February 2025 is the UK government's key document setting out planning policies for England, guiding local authorities, developers, and communities on achieving sustainable development by balancing housing, economic growth, and environmental protection, influencing decisions on homes, businesses, transport, and the natural environment, with recent updates focusing on mandatory housing targets and better use of land like "grey belt" areas.

### **Highway Authorities - Duty to Consult on Street Trees**

The statutory Duty to Consult before felling street trees was introduced for local highway authorities in England under Section 115 of the UK Environment Act 2021. This provision, which came into force around December 2023, is intended to increase transparency and community involvement in decisions affecting the urban environment. The duty applies specifically to local highway authorities responsible for the maintenance and management of public roads, covering trees located on or next to highways. The primary purpose is to ensure that decisions are made transparently, giving due consideration to the social, environmental, and cultural value of street trees, as well as public concerns and alternatives to felling.