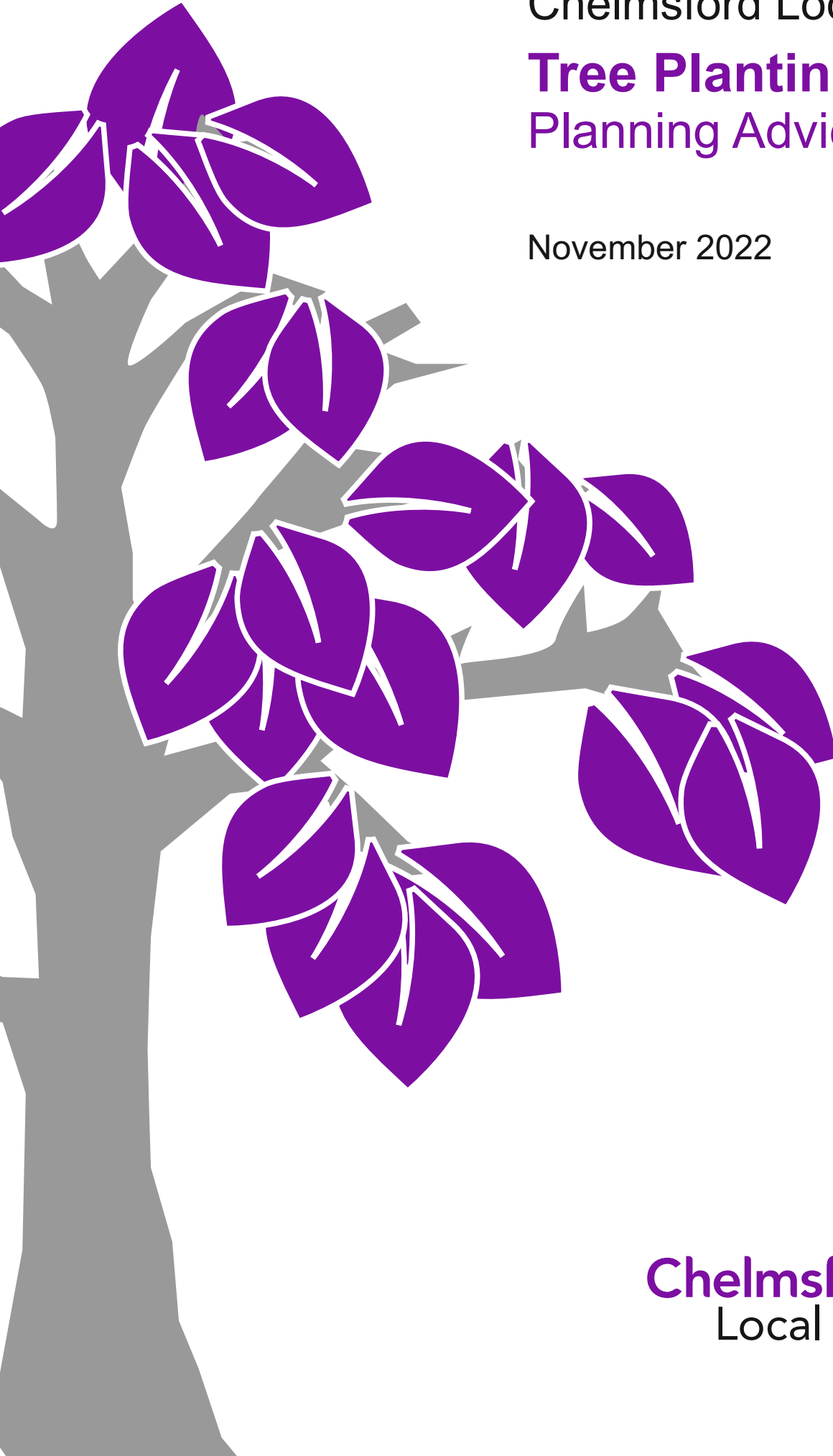


Chelmsford Local Plan
Tree Planting
Planning Advice Note

November 2022



Tree Planting: Planning Advice Note

Purpose

The purpose of this advice note is to provide guidance on how the Council will implement and monitor the ambition in the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan to secure three new trees are planted for every new home in the Local Plan.

Background

The Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency to focus attention on reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions in the area and to plan for a more sustainable future. The Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan includes undertaking a greening programme to significantly increase the amount of woodland and the proportion of tree cover in Chelmsford.

The Council has an ambition to plant at least one tree for every existing resident and at least three new trees planted for every new home in the Local Plan to assist in the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Paragraph 9.13 of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (January 2021) states that where practicable, all new housing development should seek to plant three trees per net new dwelling.

Paragraph 5.18 of the Making Places Supplementary Planning Document (January 2021) states that green spaces provided in connection with new housing development should, where practicable, include the planting of three trees per net new dwelling.

Proportion of provision in private and public green spaces

In most cases the planting of new trees should take place in landscaped areas maintained as part of the public realm. On some sites it may be possible to include trees within large private gardens providing there is sufficient space to allow the tree to grow and flourish during its normal expected lifetime.

On-site provision versus off-site contributions

Where possible the Council will expect tree planting to take place on development sites as part of the approved landscaping scheme. On small or more dense urban sites, where on-site planting is impractical, a commuted sum will be sought to pay for planting on Council owned land or other sites agreed by the Council.

How will tree planting be secured?

Where practicable the Council will secure tree planting until established through a planning condition requiring tree planting on site, usually as part of a landscaping condition.

Where on-site provision is not possible a financial contribution will be sought as a commuted sum. This will equate to £300 per new house and can either be paid in advance before planning permission is granted or secured through a planning obligation. Commuted sums will be used to provide and maintain an additional three trees per new dwelling on sites identified for planting by the Council (see Council Planting Scheme below).

Tree planting secured under this initiative to combat the Climate and Ecological Emergency will be in addition to any compensatory tree planting. This means where there is already a requirement to plant trees as compensation for trees that are proposed to be removed to facilitate development, those replacement trees will not count towards this initiative.

On-site Planting

The appropriate trees for on-site planting will be determined by the size, position, and type of location available. Council officers will assess proposed planting schemes and provide advice where necessary on suitable species for individual locations although native tree species will usually be required.

Drawings accompanying planning applications should clearly demonstrate how the requirement of three trees per dwelling is being accommodated on site, in addition to Annex 1 - Tree Recording Form (further details below).

Council Planting Scheme

Where it is not practicable to plant trees on-site, commuted sums will be used towards paying for the following:

- Woodland planting - 2 square metres per new house, planted as whips on sites identified as suitable for woodland planting and
- Individual trees – 1 tree per new house planted as heavy standards generally 12 -14 cm girth at 1m up the stem. These will be planted as street trees, or in a park or other open space, including highway verge.

The figure of £300 per new house is based on:

- Woodland planting - £4.00 per sqm for the cost of planting and aftercare for mass woodland planting (excluding land purchase); and
- Individual trees – £292 per semi-mature tree (excluding land purchase). The cost estimate assumes the trees will be staked and equipped with a watering bag and intensively cared for, including regular watering for three seasons after planting.

When only part of the tree planting provision is achieved on-site, the commuted payment will be calculated based on £100 per missing tree and contributions pooled to deliver tree planting where funding is sufficient and alternative suitable locations available.

The Council has a 10-year woodland and tree planting aspiration to plant 175,000 new trees, creating 84 additional hectares of woodland/ tree cover. To help meet this aspiration, the Council will seek to use commuted sums in the way described above on land already in the Council's ownership. In exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider a proposal for planting on land not in its ownership, where there is a willing landowner on land that lies adjacent to the development site, and this arrangement would help screen new development and/or enhance existing green infrastructure.

Tree Species

Woodland planting will be native species, UK grown and sourced, and selected from the following:

Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Common Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Cherry Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*), Blackthorn or Sloe (*Prunus spinosa*), English Oak (*Quercus robur*), Goat Willow or Pussy Willow (*Salix caprea*), Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*), Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), English Yew (*Taxus baccata*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

Individual trees species will generally be native with some exceptions to non-native, but in parks settings where a specimen tree is appropriate some more “exotic” stock may be used. The native stock includes oak and lime. The non-native stock includes Norway maple, and plane. More exotic stock includes gum tree, Dawn redwood, giant sequoia, Indian bean tree, ornamental maples trees, etc.

Maintenance

On-site trees will be required by condition to be watered and protected. Council planted trees will be staked and equipped with a watering bag. They will be intensively cared for, including regular watering for at least three seasons after planting, until established.

Any trees that die or are damaged, defective, diseased, uprooted, or removed within the first five years will be required to be replaced.

Monitoring

The Council will monitor the number of new trees planted or funded through commuted sums to ensure compliance with the Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Action Plan. On-site provision will be recorded in accordance with the information provided in Annex 1. Planting relating to commuted sums received in lieu of on-site provision will be recorded and reported in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement, where relevant. Applicants will be asked to complete the Tree Recording Form set out in Annex 1 to this note as part of their proposed landscaping scheme submitted with their planning application.

Key Documents

Local Plan

The Chelmsford Local Plan (2020) includes a series of strategic policies which underpin spatial planning decisions and ensures that the Local Plan Focuses growth in the most sustainable locations.

Strategy Policy S2 recognises that new development will seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Planning Obligations SPD

The Planning Obligations SPD sets out the City Council's approach towards seeking planning obligations which are needed to make developments acceptable in planning terms, including green and blue infrastructure that seeks to address climate change.

Making Places SPD

The Making Places SPD seeks to promote and secure high-quality sustainable new development.

Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan identifies a range of actions that have immediate impact on reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and plan for a more sustainable future.

Annex 1: Tree Planting Form

CATEGORY	No. of trees to be removed from site (LOSS)	No. of trees to be planted on site (GAIN)	No. of trees on site NET/OTHER
Existing trees			
Proposed tree removals (if applicable)			
Trees planted as compensation for existing tree loss			
New tree planting - Individual trees on-site			
TOTAL			

You are required to plant three trees for every new home on-site (excludes compensatory planting). Where this is not possible a contribution may be taken by the Council towards the equivalent tree planting to be undertaken off-site.

Is there a need for contribution towards new tree planting off-site (Y/N)

Is this a partial or full contribution (partial/full) (in some cases it may be possible to provide some new tree planting on-site, but not all)