

2050 Urban Forest Strategy

Executive summary

The 2050 Urban Forest Strategy for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) provides a vision, key guiding principles, and priorities for action so that residents, visitors, and businesses in our conurbation get the most from trees both now and in the future.

Few coastal conurbations can boast a treescape as diverse, extensive, and spectacular as BCP's. In light of the quality of this resource, the production of an up-to-date strategy focused on trees and woodlands was one of the key action points identified by the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

A small team led by Anne Jaluzot, Green Infrastructure Planning Consultant, were commissioned to take on this work from September 2022. Oversight and integration of this work into BCP processes, has been undertaken by a small working group led by Denise Hewlett in Greenspaces, Andy Sherlock in Planning and Nick Colledge in the Arboricultural team. Work has also engaged with and have worked with council departments including planning, and highways, as well as representation from Public Health Dorset.

The resulting Urban Forest Strategy replaces the three legacy documents previously used in each of the individual former authorities and offers an up-to-date roadmap that is aligned with other key strategies including the emerging Local Plan, the Climate Action Plan. The Green Infrastructure Strategy, Urban Greening Guide, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The vision promoted by the Urban Forest Strategy states that:

"By 2050, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) will be home to a sustainable urban forest delivering benefits to people and wildlife in every neighbourhood, according to its character and needs. Our trees and woodlands, regardless of ownership, will be managed in balance with our valuable open heathland habitats as a critical infrastructure and a positive investment underpinning healthy lives in a nature-rich setting."

To achieve this vision, a set of 34 priorities for actions are defined actions that are guided by six principles:

1. **Fairness:** Grow the urban forest providing access to trees for all residents.
2. **Benefits:** Consistently utilise the full range of benefits that trees can provide.
3. **Resilience:** Nurture a healthy, diverse, and climate-resilient local tree population.
4. **Responsibility:** Build a committed and knowledgeable community of professionals and individuals caring for local trees.
5. **Value:** Co-ordinate and improve data and resources to optimise benefits from the local tree population.
6. **Innovation:** Use research to build a better future for trees and their uses.

Progress in adhering to these principles will be monitored against a set of indicators measuring key aspects of urban forest sustainability.

Sustained delivery requires long-term commitments from a wide range of partners, including multiple council departments and other public agencies, local landowners,

businesses, charitable organisations, community groups and residents. To coordinate this process, the Urban Forest Strategy identifies two primary delivery vehicles:

- (1) A **Tree Charter**, inviting local Parish and Town Council, landowners, businesses, and community groups to sign-up to the six key guiding principles featured in this strategy and develop their own action plans.
- (2) An **Urban Forest Working Group** acting as a governance body for the coordination, monitoring, reporting, review and update of the strategy. This group working with core project team members will construct a **delivery plan**. The delivery plan will be used to help determine decisions made on investments, budgets, in consideration of any constraints, and resources required to implement the strategy. It is expected the delivery plan will be reviewed and updated every 4 years.

The Working Group is expected to include representatives from:

- BCP Council Arboriculture teams (both Environment and Planning).
- BCP Council Greenspace Development team, including landscape architects and GIS officer.
- BCP Council Planning Policy team.
- BCP Council Highway Design and Maintenance teams.
- BCP Council Flood Risk Management team.
- BCP Council Communication team.
- BCP Council Communities team.
- Dorset Council.
- Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP).
- Public Health Dorset.
- Health and Nature Dorset (HAND) Partnership.

Achieving the vision set out in this strategy depends on ongoing funding opportunities extending beyond the council and include key stakeholders in the public sector, the private sector, including developers, businesses, and landowners as well as the wider community. Potential funding sources to draw upon might include:

Planning receipts

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Planning obligations (Section 106 agreements).

Green finance

- Habitat banking –woodland / urban tree habitat credits secured via implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Council carbon emissions offsetting.

Grants

- Heritage Lottery.
- Local Authority Treescapes Fund.
- Urban Tree Challenge Fund.
- Woodland Management Planning Grant.

Sponsorship

- Tree sponsorship schemes, such as Trees for Streets.

Stakeholder engagement

The stakeholder engagement conducted to inform and guide the Urban Forest Strategy development involved:

- A Tree and Woodland Engagement Survey conducted from 24 October 2022 to 2 January 2023, which attracted 308 responses.
- Two half-day stakeholder workshops held on 29 September 2022 and 10 March 2023 with a cross-sector and multidisciplinary group of 50 participants.
- A Public Consultation Survey ran from 6 November to 17 December 2023 inviting the public to give their opinion on and suggest new ideas to incorporate to a Draft version of the Urban Forest Strategy. 52 people completed an online or paper survey. 22 people also submitted 33 actions on the ideas wall on haveyoursay.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Urban-Forest-Strategy.

Findings from the Tree and Woodland Engagement Survey and the two half-day stakeholder workshops were incorporated in the Draft Urban Forest Strategy.

An overview of how findings from the Public Consultation survey were incorporated in the final version of the Urban Forest Strategy is provided overleaf.

Regarding the vision	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
The vision statement could be more explicit on what outcomes are expected	We amended the wording to clarify that the delivery of benefits to people and wildlife was the outcome being pursued.
It was important to recognise local differences between neighbourhoods in their ability to accommodate trees.	We qualified the aspiration to establish by 2050 a sustainable urban forest delivering benefits to people and wildlife to every neighbourhood by adding: ‘ according to its character and needs ’.
Regarding Principle 1. Fairness and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
What we meant by growing the urban forest ‘evenly’ was unclear.	We clarified and simplified our statement by taking ‘evenly’ out: “ Grow the urban forest providing access to trees for all residents ”.
The need for adequate post-planting care needed to be further highlighted, especially in relation to tree planting in new developments.	This was not possible to amend.
Regarding Principle 2. Benefits and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
Greater support for the use of native trees was needed, in an effort to support wildlife.	We have reordered priorities for action and moved to the front of the supporting body text all considerations related to using tree to support nature recovery, including, among a wide range of other possible measures, where prioritising the use of native species is appropriate. We have also added in the priorities for action that new woodland creation offered a good opportunity to prioritise the use of native species . We have kept existing explanations related to the importance of species diversification to secure better resilience to pests and diseases, especially in more urban locations. In this context the Strategy continues to support the use of near-natives and naturalised species as defined by the Royal Botanical Kew Gardens ¹ .

¹ <https://growwild.kew.org/blog/uk-native-plants-and-fungi>

Opportunities to continue conducting new planting in parks ought to be highlighted.	We added a new priority for action (2e) addressing this point.
Regarding Principle 3. Resilience and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
We could better communicate opportunities to partner with the private sector, possibly better placed than the Council to support actions 3c and 3d when budgets and staffing are tight	We amended the wording of priorities for action 3c and 3d to emphasise partnership working.
Regarding Principle 4. Responsibility and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
We should emphasise opportunities to work with existing community organisations to deliver a Friends Group (priority for action 4c).	We amended the wording of priorities for action 4C to emphasise partnership working.
Regarding Principle 5. Value and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
It was difficult to comment on priority for action 5b as it didn't provide enough insights in the outcomes to be pursued via 'improvements.	We amended 5b to clarify the outcomes pursued : save officer time and facilitate access for all to local tree data.
Regarding Principle 6. Innovation and associated priorities for action	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
The purpose of a partnership with academics for research was unclear (priority for action 6a).	We amended 6a to clarify the purpose of a joint research programme : to support the delivery of the Urban Forest Strategy. Greater details on this is also provided in the body text supporting Principle 6 and associated priorities for action.
It was worth highlighting opportunities for partnerships in the implementation of priorities for actions 6b and 6c.	We amended the wording of priorities for action 6b and 6c to emphasise partnership working.
Other suggestions	
<i>You said</i>	<i>We did</i>
The need to consider cross-boundary connectivity of tree and woodland cover with the New Forest National Park and the Isle of Purbeck ought to be highlighted.	We expanded the section related to connectivity in the body text setting out recommended approach to use trees to support wildlife recovery, adding an explicit reference to cross-boundary areas and naming the New Forest National Park and the Isle of Purbeck.
The sponsoring of memorial trees or woodland ought to be mentioned.	In the body text supporting Principle 4: Responsibility, in the list of examples

	illustrating different way in which local communities could seek to get involved, we've added memorial trees.
Issues related to trees and hedges obstructing pavements or cycle lanes were not sufficiently addressed.	In the body text supporting Principle 2: Benefits, we have added highway obstruction to the range of potential conflicts that can arise in relation to neglected trees in an urban setting. We have also clarified the steps that can be taken to address such situations.