



Notice of a public meeting of

Decision Session - Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

To: Councillors Douglas

Date: Wednesday, 18 September 2024

Time: 9.00 am

Venue: West Offices - Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

<u>AGENDA</u>

1. Declarations of Interest

(Pages 1 - 2)

At this point in the meeting, Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

[Please see attached sheet for further guidance for Members]

2. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous Decision Session - Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships held on 17 July 2024.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee. Please note that our registration deadlines are set as 2 working days before the meeting, in order to facilitate the management of public participation at our meetings. The deadline for registering at this meeting is 5:00pm on Monday 16 September 2024.

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill in an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting, please contact Democratic Services. Contact details can be found at the foot of this agenda.

Webcasting of Public Meetings

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During coronavirus, we made some changes to how we ran council meetings, including facilitating remote participation by public speakers. See our updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

4. Micro wood sites

(Pages 7 - 28)

This report seeks approval for micro-wood creation at two recommended planting sites following a successful funding application to the Government's Coronation Living Heritage Fund (CLHF) and subsequent detailed site identification and appraisal.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Executive Leader considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

For more information about any of the following please contact the

Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- · Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

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我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)
Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim
własnym języku.
(Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

(Urdu) یه معلوات آب کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں ہی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔



Declarations of Interest – guidance for Members

(1) Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:

Type of Interest	You must
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Disclose the interest, not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)	Disclose the interest; speak on the item only if the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting unless you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Affects) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)	Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being: (a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or well-being of
	a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward; and (b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.
	In which case, speak on the item only if the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise do not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting unless you have a dispensation.

- (2) Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.
- (3) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

City of York Council	Committee Minutes
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
Date	17 July 2024
Present	Councillors Douglas
Officers in Attendance	Claire Foale – Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy Sam Blyth - Strategic Manager

1. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Leader was asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. She had none to declared.

2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Executive Leader (incorporating Policy, Strategy and Partnerships) meeting held on 9 March 2022 be approved and then signed by the Executive Leader as a correct record.

3. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. Corporate Improvement Action Plan

Officers introduced the report seeking approval for the Council's Corporate Improvement Action Plan, informed by the LGA Peer Challenge. They confirmed that the action plan had been considered by Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee and their recommendations had been feed into the action plan for consideration. It was noted that updates against the action plan would be reported to the internal Corporate Improvement Board, a progress report would be taken to Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee

by the end of 2024, and a further report would be presented to Executive in May of 2025.

The Executive Leader thanked officers for the work on the Corporate Improvement Action Plan. She noted that the peer review had been very constructive and that the action plan was well received by City of York Council staff, Councillors, partners, and the public.

Resolved:

 Approved the City of York Council's Corporate Improvement Action Plan, informed by the LGA Peer Challenge and the Council Plan 2023-2027, One City for All.

Reason:

The action plan has been developed following extensive consultation. It sets out those actions that respond to issues raised through the LGA Peer Challenge with action, action owners and timescales clearly set out.

5. A York pipeline of projects for the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Officers outlined that the report contained a pipeline of project proposals to be submitted to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority that could achieve funding for delivery. They confirmed that all of the Council's scrutiny committees had feed into the proposals and thanked the Executive Leader for allowing for the publication of the report after the agenda, to allow the final considerations of the Council's scrutiny committees to be feed into the pipeline of projects. They confirmed that from here on if agreed the pipeline would not be a static document, new opportunities could be considered with the Combined Authority when they arose.

The Executive Leader welcomed the cross-party input to the pipeline of projects. She confirmed that York had a fantastic opportunity with a new Mayor of the combined authority whose priorities aligned with that of the Council. She noted that once agreed the Council would then seek to prioritise which projects to work up and when to prepare viable business cases to seek funding to deliver.

Resolved:

i. Approved the pipeline of projects which reflects the priorities for York and tasked officers to work with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to implement.

Reason: To enable officers to seek to progress funding bids based on the pipeline of projects as funding streams from York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority are published, noting funding business cases will still require Executive Member or Executive approval, dependent on the key decision threshold.

Cllr Douglas, Executive Leader [The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.14 am].



Meeting:	Executive Member Decision Session
Meeting date:	18/09/2024
Report of:	Claire Foale
Portfolio of:	Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and
	Partnerships

Decision Report: Coronation Living Heritage Fund Micro-woods Site Approval

Subject of Report

- This report seeks Executive Member approval for micro-wood creation at two recommended planting sites following a successful funding application to the Government's Coronation Living Heritage Fund (CLHF) and subsequent detailed site identification and appraisal. Each of the micro-woods will be approximately 200sqm in size and within York's urban area.
- 2. It is intended the micro-woods will be delivered during the 2024/25 tree planting season (October to March) in accordance with grant requirements.

Benefits and Challenges

- 3. The woods will be planted using the Miyawaki¹ method, entailing high density planting of native mixed broadleaf species. The method delivers fast-growing woods rich in biodiversity.
- 4. A key challenge for planting trees within York's urban area is finding suitable sites free of physical and other constraints.

Policy Basis for Decision

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¹ Further information on the Miyawaki method can be found on the Tree Council website. https://treecouncil.org.uk

- 5. The Council Plan 2023-2028 set a target to plant 4,000 new trees within York's urban area as part of a wider aim to enhance biodiversity, support nature recovery and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 6. The new micro-woods will contribute towards the council's agreed tree canopy expansion target that aims to increase York's tree canopy cover from a baseline of 10.8% in 2021 to 13% by 2050.

Financial Strategy Implications

- 7. Expert advisors have confirmed that the CLHF Capital Grant award of £38,748 should be sufficient to fully-fund micro-wood creation and initial aftercare, subject to securing volunteer input to assist with planting and establishment. In the event that tendered costs are above what is available, adjustments will be made to site size and specification to come within the available funding.
- Delivery will be managed by the council's York Green Streets (YGS) project team, itself fully funded by external grant until 31 March 2025.
- The grant award covers aftercare costs for three years to support successful establishment, after which the woods will maintain themselves as they begin to self-select and gap-up to prevent weed growth.
- 10. A contractor/s will be sought to deliver and initially manage the woods through a competitive tender process in line with the council's contract procurement rules and within the funding available.

Recommendation and Reasons

- 11. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - i) Approve the two preferred locations for micro-wood creation within the 2024/25 tree planting season:
 - a) Land to the South-West of Village Street, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward (see attached map at Annex A). With delegated authority granted to the Director of City

Development to approve the planting block within this location following targeted resident consultation.

Reason: This site is in an area deemed to be a high priority for new tree planting according to the Woodland Trust's Tree Equity Score UK² (TESUK). It is publicly accessible and relatively free of constraints. Three feasible locations (labelled A, B and C on the map) have been identified. Block A provides an extension to an existing woodland strip and visually frames the nearby beacon and pavilion building. All blocks are easily visible aiding self-policing. Final block selection will be informed by targeted resident/stakeholder consultation.

b) Land to the north of The Fox Inn, Holgate Ward (see attached map at Annex B).

Reason: This site is in an area deemed to be a high priority for new tree planting according to the TESUK, is publicly accessible and free of physical constraints. The site is a former industrial brownfield site. It is highly visible from Holgate Road and the adjacent cycle and pedestrian pathways.

- ii) Approve the following site as a reserve option should either of the preferred sites above prove undeliverable.
 - a) Land to the south of Burnholme Sports Centre, Heworth Ward (see attached map at Annex C).

Reason: This site is in an area deemed to be a high priority for new tree planting according to TESUK. It is publicly accessible and free of constraints.

Background

12. In September 2023, the Council submitted a bid for grant funding to the CLHF to support the creation of two new micro-woods, each approximately the size of a tennis court and including up to 600 trees each. The CLHF fund was established to mark the coronation

² Tree Equity Score UK is a map-based application that was created to help address disparities in urban tree distribution by identifying the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees. https://uk.treeequityscore.org

- of King Charles III. The bid for £38,784 capital grant was successful.
- 13. In early 2024, residents, elected members and parish/town councils were invited to suggest potential locations for the new micro-woods. Over 50 ideas were received. Site suggestions were initially screened to against essential criteria, including being within York's urban area, of the required minimum size, being on publicly accessible land and not subject to protected habitat status and/or special land designation.
- 14. Sites meeting essential criteria were then screened for feasibility in terms of archaeology, ecology and the presence of utility services and other site constraints, including highways considerations. Site planting plans have been informed by these specialist inputs, for example, the Holgate Road site will be planted to allow sufficient minimum distance from the existing cycle/pathway to accommodate potential future widening of the cycle/pathway should funding become available.
- 15. Finally, sites were prioritised using the Woodland Trust Tree Equity Score UK, a map-based application created to help address disparities in urban tree distribution by identifying the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees.
- 16. Following this process, a shortlist of four sites was arrived at. Using external grant funding, the council appointed a consultant landscape architect to advise on the detailed suitability of each of the four shortlisted sites. As set out in the officer recommendation above, two sites were assessed as highly suitable (the preferred sites) due to being free of constraints, in highly visible locations and in areas deemed to be high priority for new tree planting. One site was recommended as a reserve site with the remaining site deemed unsuitable due to a range of factors including challenging topography, drainage issues and the presence of invasive species and pernicious weeds.
- 17. The council's consultant landscape architect has advised that micro-wood delivery should be achievable within the grant funding available, though not without securing volunteer input into planting and aftercare. This requirement will be built into the contract specification. The landscape architect has also advised that substantial soil amelioration will be required on both preferred sites due to existing ground conditions.

Consultation

- 18. Residents, elected members, parish/town council's as well as a range of internal council teams were invited to suggest potential planting sites.
- 19. As part of the technical feasibility assessment and prioritisation process, a range of specialist internal teams have been consulted including Archaeology, Ecology, Landscape architect, Public Realm, Property Assets, Highways, Leisure Services and Housing. Detailed site design has been informed by comments received through this consultation.
- 20. The Director of Regeneration Partnerships (York) at Homes England, a key partner in the York Central Development Team, has been consulted on the Holgate Road site and confirmed their support.
- 21. An active community group currently tending the wider Holgate Road site on a volunteer basis has been engaged with no objections lodged. Officers will continue to liaise with this group as a potential volunteer base for micro-wood delivery and aftercare and seek to support our shared objectives for the area within the grant funding available.
- 22. More focussed resident consultation will be undertaken prior to implementation.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

- 23. The following options have been considered:
 - i. Do not progress with micro-wood creation and return the grant money to the funding body.
 - ii. Approve the recommended sites for planting, with one backup site as reserve.
 - iii. Identify entirely new sites.

Options analysis:

 Do not progress with planting at these sites – This option would reduce the council's ability to meet planting targets as set out in the Council Plan and involve returning £39,000 of awarded grant.

- ii. Approve the two recommended sites for planting, subject to any further local consultation, with the one back-up site as reserve. This option would contribute significantly to the council's tree planting target as set out in the Council Plan and enable the council to fully utilise £39,000 of external grant funding.
- iii. Look for entirely new sites. This option would cause delays in micro-wood delivery and would not provide sufficient time for a full re-appraisal of sites within the funding and delivery timescale available. This would significantly impede progress towards the council's tree planting target.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial** Micro-wood creation will be fully funded by a Section 31 CLHF Capital Grant of £38,748 received in 2023/24 and managed by the council's York Green Streets (YGS) team, which is itself fully funded by external grant.
- Human Resources (HR) No HR implications identified.
- Legal No legal implications identified.
- 24. **Procurement** A contractor/s will be sought to deliver and initially manage the woods through a competitive tender process in line with the council's procurement procedures and within the funding available.
 - Health and Wellbeing There is a significant evidence base that indicates that being close to woods and trees has a positive impact on our health, it does this in many ways including reducing stress levels, improving mood and boosting the immune system. The closer we live to green spaces the more likely we are to use them so boosting physical activity levels, which has positive impacts on our weight, and our cardiovascular health. Being close to green wooded space can be seen as a health boosting, and a positive preventive tool in reducing ill health, so improving quality of life. Public Health fully support the creation of green spaces that are available to all.
 - Environment and Climate action Tree planting aligns with the city's climate change objectives, providing both carbon

sequestration and adaptation benefits. Trees have the potential to provide urban cooling, shading and natural flood resilience while also enhancing biodiversity and connectivity to nature.

- Affordability No affordability implications identified.
- Equalities and Human Rights No equalities implications identified.
- Data Protection and Privacy The DPIA screening questions
 were completed for this report and as there is no personal, special
 categories or criminal offence data being processed for the options
 set out in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at
 this time. However, this will be reviewed where required, on the
 approved options from this report.
- **Communications** Communications will be developed to support the Micro-wood project, including media release.
- **Economy** No economy implications identified.

Risks and Mitigations

25. Key risks include:

i. Procuring the services of a contactor to deliver and initially manage the woods within the timescale and grant funding available.

This risk will be mitigated through early planning. There is sufficient time between the approval of sites and the 2024/25 tree planting season to enable the procurement to conclude. Early discussions have taken place with potential contractors eager to undertake this work and there are aware of the standard costs associated with the grant funding.

ii. Deliverability within the timescale and budget available.

This risk will be mitigated by procuring experienced contractors, creating the woods on land owned by City of York Council. Localised consultation will be undertaken where necessary to ensure local support.

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Volunteer inputs into planting and aftercare will be required as part of the contract specification to help reduce costs. Additional costs arising from ground preparation and soil amelioration requirements may require adjustments to be made to the size of the wood/s so that costs remain within the overall fixed budget available.

iii. Ensuring successful establishment of the woods.

This risk will be mitigated through a detailed aftercare arrangements within the contract. Funding for management and maintenance (3 years) is included in the grant award. The woods will be protected with temporary fencing / tree guards as part of the contract.

Wards Impacted

- Holgate
- Rawcliffe and Clifton Without
- Heworth

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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Date:	19/09/2024

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Report approved:	Yes

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Date:	19/09/2024
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Background papers and references

- Executive Member for Climate Change and Environment report May 2021: York Tree Canopy Expansion Target.
 EMDS_Tree Canopy Expansion Target.pdf (york.gov.uk)
- Tree Equity Score UK is a map-based application that was created to help address disparities in urban tree distribution by identifying the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees. https://uk.treeequityscore.org

Annexes

- Annex A: Land to the South-West of Village Street, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward
- Annex B: Land to the North of The Fox Inn, Holgate Ward
- Annex C: Land South-West corner of Burnholme Sports Centre field, Heworth Ward.











Decision Session – Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change

5/05/2021

Report of the Chief Operating Officer

York's Tree Canopy Expansion Target

Summary

1. This report provides analysis of an appropriate tree canopy expansion target for York, which will contribute towards the city's net zero ambition, biodiversity and improve air quality.

Recommendations

- 2. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - 1) Approve a 13% target for tree canopy cover in York by 2050

Reason: Increasing the tree canopy cover to 13% from the current level of 10.76% will produce carbon sequestration, biodiversity and health benefits. A target of 13% is achievable when balanced against the capacity for tree planting within the unique landscape and setting of York.

2) Acknowledge that this target will form part of a wider ambition for the White Rose Forest across the region

Reason: The regional ambition will be published in a report by WRF on 1st August 2021.

Background

3. City of York Council is a member of the White Rose Forest (WRF) partnership, a local authority joint venture hosted by Kirklees Council, which acts as the partnership's accountable body.

4. WRF is the community forest for North and West Yorkshire, one of four community forests in the north of England working together to create the larger Northern Forest that will stretch from Merseyside across Manchester and Yorkshire.



- 5. WRF are planting millions of trees in urban centres and countryside that will help manage flood risk, combat climate change, create jobs and provide happier and healthier places.
- 6. The WRF reports to a Director of Development (DoD) group comprising directors of development across each constituent local authority. In Nov 2019, DoDs gave the WRF Carbon Group responsibility to identify a methodology to calculate the region's tree canopy expansion target by 2050. Targets emerging from the methodology will form the basis of a carbon-led tree planting strategy for the WRF area known as the WRF Plan.
- 7. WRF commissioned a group of regional and national experts to assess the potential level of carbon sequestration that could be achieved through tree planting across the WRF area. Phase 1 of this study was completed in September 2020. The study set out to:
 - help local authorities understand the potential for carbon sequestration through woodland creation and to estimate the carbon contribution of existing trees outside of woodland and;
 - provide local authorities with evidence to help set carbon-led ambitions for 2050 tree canopy expansion.
- On 14 December 2020 the study findings were presented to the districts to initiate individual district discussions on tree canopy ambitions for 'Phase 2'.

- 9. WRF set a deadline for districts to conclude these 'Phase 2' discussions and make recommendations regarding their district level tree canopy expansion target for respective DoD sign off by the end of January 2021. CYC have reached an agreement with WRF that we provide a suggested target for York in March 2021, for sign-off by the WRF Steering Group.
- 10. The WRF area target is due to be presented to the Yorkshire Regional Leaders' Group in spring 2021 with the WRF Plan being officially published on 1st August 2021 (Yorkshire Day).

Current Tree Canopy Cover & Regional Targets

- 11. Annex 1 details current district level tree canopy cover (ha/%). This shows:
 - That average tree canopy cover across the 9 districts is 11.96% against a national average of 13% (Across the expanded WRF area of all 13 districts the average is 10.95%)
 - Leeds and Kirklees are the only two districts with current tree canopy cover in excess of the national average at 17.16% and 15.17% respectively
 - Craven and Selby are well below this average at 5.37% and 9.94% respectively
 - York's current tree canopy cover is 10.76%
- 12. York currently has 2,926 ha of tree canopy cover, representing 10.8% of its total area. 60% of this canopy cover is made up of trees outside woodlands.
- 13. The declared 2050 tree canopy targets from 7 of the 9 original WRF districts shows a collective ambition to increase tree canopy cover to an average of 19.14% by 2050

Consultation

14. This report and associated documents has been developed in consultation with the White Rose Forest, Community Forest Trust and The Forward Plan Team within City of York Council.

Analysis

Developing an Evidence Based Tree Canopy Cover Target

15. Increasing York's tree cover from the current 10.76% of total area to 13% (national average) by 2050 would require 608 ha of new cover, or 21 ha per year.

Tree cover in 2050	New Canopy Cover	Annual increase
(%)	(ha)	(ha/yr)
13	608	21
15	1,150	39
20	2,506	86

- 16. Achieving 21 ha of tree planting every year in York would result in the annual removal of 1-2% of the estimated regional residual emissions in 2038, rising to 8-15% of residual emissions in 2050.
- 17. WRF has provided each district with data showing areas for potential low risk woodland creation. This data shows York to have over 8,000 hectares of assessed low risk woodland (LRW) land (low risk in terms of political and ecological constraints).

Area	Total Low Risk A	ea for Woodland Creation
	Hectares	% of Total Area
York	8,245	30

- 18. Officers have combined this dataset with available information relating to heritage and land designation to identify existing and potential constraints and considerations to tree planting and canopy creation (Annex 3).
- 19. Following this process, it is estimated that a maximum of 6,500 ha of land identified by WRF has potential for tree planting. While further work is required to understand impacts on key views and desirable openness of land, further limiting the available planting area, the implication is that York could accommodate greater tree canopy cover.
- 20. The rate of viable delivery imposes a significant constraint on new canopy cover. The York Community Woodland project in West York aims to deliver 50-60 ha of new tree cover over the next two years. A 13% target for 2050 would require a similar level of growth every two years.

- 21. This target would result in an annual carbon sequestration rate at 2050 of circa 9,000tCO₂ per year; equivalent to around 1% of the regions total CO₂ emissions between 2020-2050.
- 22. This target is considered achievable when balanced against the capacity for tree planting within the unique landscape and setting of York.

Council Plan

- 23. The project accords with the Council Plan 2019-2023 in regard to the following core outcomes of the Plan:
 - A greener and cleaner city Working towards becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030
 - Getting around sustainably Cutting congestion, pollution and carbon emissions
 - Good health and wellbeing Promoting active travel, healthy eating and improving air quality
 - Safe communities and culture for all Supporting groups who are at greatest risk of climate change
 - Well paid jobs and an inclusive economy Creating employment opportunities in the green economy

Implications

Financial – No financial implications associated with this report

Human Resources – None associated directly with this report

Equalities – None associated directly with this report

Legal – None directly associated with this report

Crime and Disorder – None directly associated with this report

Information Technology – None associated directly with this report

Property – None associated directly with this report

Other – None associated directly with this report

Risk Management – None identified in relation to this report

Risk Management

24. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Contact	Details
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Author: Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Shaun Gibbons
Head of Carbon Reduction
Corporate Policy and
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lan Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

Alison Cooke Forward Planning Manager Forward Planning Report Date 13/04/2021 Approved

Wards Affected: [List wards or tick box to indicate all]

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Council Plan 2023

Annexes

Annex 1 – District Tree Canopy Ambition 2050

Annex 2 – UBoC/WRF Summary

Annex 3 - Mapping WRF Outcomes and Local Constraints

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

CO₂ - Carbon Dioxide

DoD – Directors of Development

LRW - Low Risk Woodland

WRF – White Rose Forest