

Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (h-THAWS)

Herefordshire Council

Final Report

Prepared by LUC

March 2025



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Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

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Executive Summary

Thank you to all the residents, groups and organisations and other stakeholders in Herefordshire for their time and support in developing this Strategy.

The aim of the Strategy is to set out an aspirational, yet achievable, shared future vision for Herefordshire's treescape. The document will support the conservation, improved management and expansion of the county's treescape and hedgerow network.

Acting as a key reference for interested stakeholders, landowners, managers, planners, developers and the public, the Strategy will provide a streamlined resource to guide the planning and delivery of a connected treescape within Herefordshire.

The shared vision for Herefordshire

The shared vision statement establishes the overall strategic direction for the Strategy, including the development of key supporting objectives. Developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders, the shared vision is for everyone within Herefordshire, with the aim of accelerating action. The need for bold and collaborative action to maximise the extensive benefits offered by trees and woodlands is emphasised.

To create and sustainably manage a thriving network of trees, woodland, traditional orchards, riparian vegetation, wood pasture & parkland, species-rich hedges and hedgerow trees across the county. The treescape will connect across the urban and rural landscapes of Herefordshire, delivering multiple benefits for people, place and nature – now and into the future.

Executive Summary

Figure 1: A vision for Herefordshire's treescape



Strategic objectives to support the shared vision

The shared vision is supported by a series of strategic objectives which will help guide the delivery of the Strategy and should be considered when making decisions regarding future tree planting. Informed by feedback from stakeholders, each strategic objective will form the basis for monitoring the future success of the Strategy.

Establish priorities for future tree planting

- Establish measurable tree establishment targets within both urban and rural contexts within the county.

Deliver the right tree in the right place

- Carefully select appropriate species which respond to local character and distinctiveness, support biodiversity, consider heritage constraints and embed resilience to future challenges.

Ensure effective establishment and aftercare

- Commit to maintenance and management to ensure the successful establishment, active management and ongoing monitoring of the treescape.

Support partnership working

- Work collaboratively at all levels, and across boundaries, to share knowledge and align with other supporting initiatives.

Promote the value of the treescape

- Lead by example by promoting the benefits of the urban forest and the rural treescape, including contributions to national and local policy relating to climate change and nature recovery.

Coordinate action and future monitoring

- Identify and secure ongoing funding opportunities for woodland creation, establishment and long-term management.

Proposed targets and outcomes

The Strategy defines effective targets and outcomes, set within the framework of the six strategic objectives of the shared vision. The outcomes are also framed in the context of local and national ambitions for the treescape within Herefordshire.

Establish priorities for future tree planting

- Increase the average canopy coverage in the county to 20% by 2041, with a 30% 'stretch' target for urban areas.
- Deliver planting in areas of greatest need.
- Adopt an urban tree canopy cover standard for development proposals.
- Implement a process for identification of new tree planting locations across Herefordshire.

Deliver the right tree in the right place

- Consider a range of factors when determining species selection and siting.
- Deliver a climate resilient and diverse canopy cover to future-proof the county's tree stock.

Executive Summary

- Contribute to the development and delivery of Herefordshire's Nature Recovery Network.

Ensure effective establishment

- Ensure the protection and sustainable management of the county's existing treescape.
- Promote the use of best practice standards for the establishment of new tree and hedgerow planting.
- Ensure all woodland SSSIs are in favourable condition by 2041.

Support partnership working

- Develop a Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
- Establishing strong working partnerships and support community involvement.

Promote the value of the treescape

- Raise awareness, increase understanding and highlight the benefits of trees to Herefordshire's residents
- Recognise the significance of traditional orchards and hedgerows within Herefordshire.

Coordinate delivery and monitoring

- Coordinate achievable actions to help deliver the shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape.
- Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

The Strategy provides an action plan which sets out the collective measures required to meet the targets and outcomes to achieve the shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape and its supporting objectives. The action plan is evidence based and structured to include measurable actions, timescales and delivery partners who will help coordinate delivery of the actions.

The actions outlined are not intended to be exhaustive and the Strategy encourages all partners, including local residents, to develop their own actions to contribute to the shared vision for the county.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned to develop the Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (h-THAWS) on behalf of the county. The document will support the conservation, improved management and enhancement of Herefordshire's treescape and hedgerow network.

Purpose of the Strategy

1.2 The aim of the Strategy is to set out an aspirational, yet achievable, shared future vision for Herefordshire's treescape. The document will facilitate the improved management of the existing tree stock, and the expansion of tree cover and hedgerow networks across the county. Acting as a key reference for interested stakeholders, landowners, managers, planners, developers and the public, the Strategy will provide a streamlined resource to guide the planning and delivery of a connected treescape within Herefordshire.

1.3 The Strategy outlines strategic objectives to support the protection and enhancement of Herefordshire's rural and urban treescape, across both public and private land, to help maximise the benefits for place, nature and people. The document aligns with Herefordshire Council's (herein referred to as the 'Council') declaration of a climate and ecological emergency, promoting the value of trees, woodland and hedgerows as key to the climate and nature recovery agenda. Wider multi-functional economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural and heritage benefits are also recognised. The Strategy complements other local initiatives such as the publication of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and net zero response for the county.

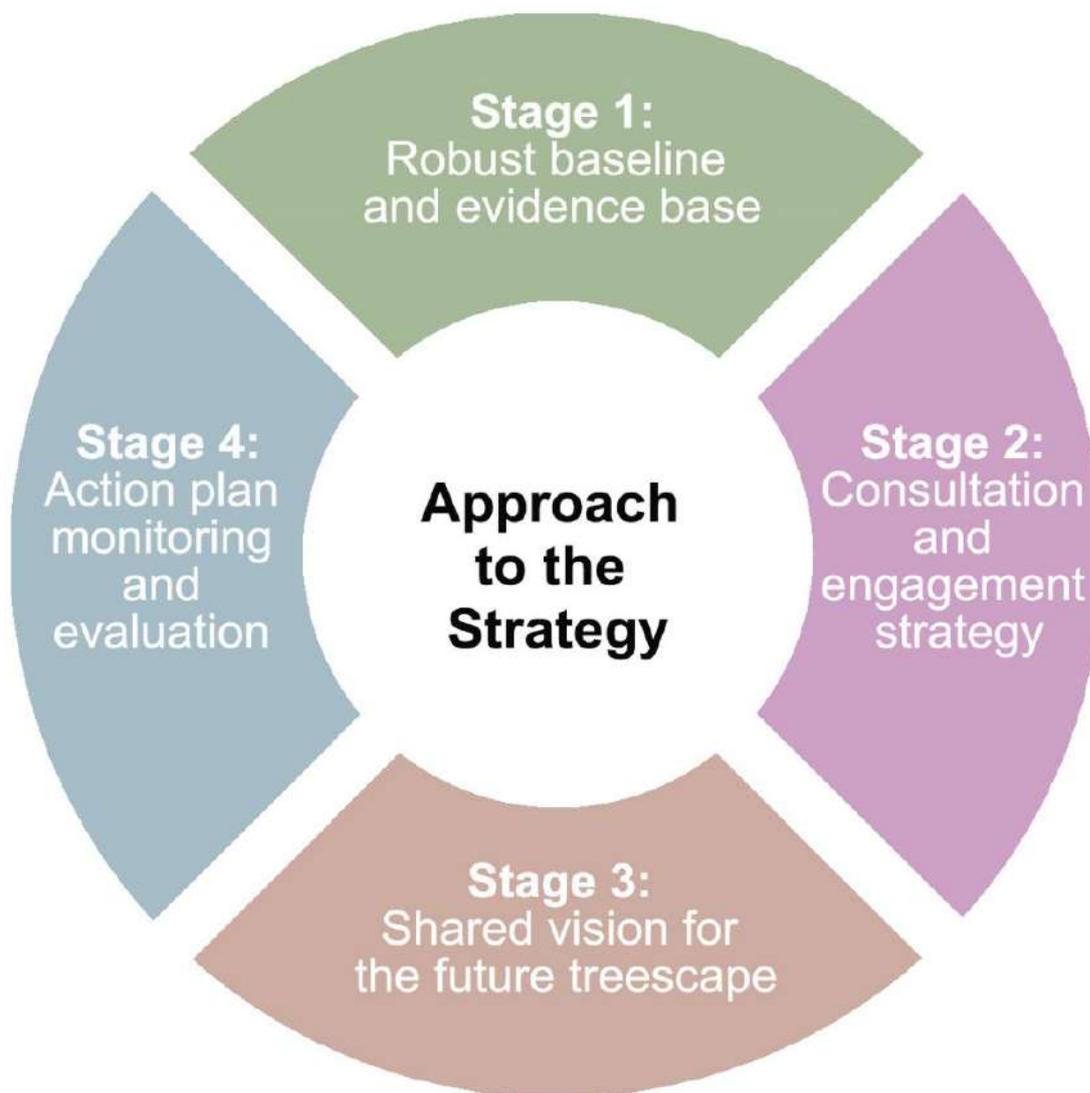
Approach to the Strategy

1.4 The approach to the Strategy has ensured adherence to current and best practice methodologies, including the Trees and Woodland Strategy (TAWS) Toolkit published by the Tree Council [See reference 1]. This guidance document is aimed at local authorities and describes the tasks required in the development of a strategy to promote the future resilience of the treescape. The methodology is centred around the development of an evidence-based action plan with measurable targets which promote delivery with timescales and responsibilities.

1.5 Based on the approach outlined in TAWS Toolkit, this Strategy has been informed by the stages outlined below, and illustrated graphically in **Figure 1.1**:

- Stage 1: Development of a robust baseline and evidence-base, tailored to the local context;
- Stage 2: Adoption of a comprehensive, structured approach to consultation and engagement;
- Stage 3: Creation of a shared vision for the future of Herefordshire's treescape; and
- Stage 4: Incorporation of monitoring and evaluation processes within the action plan to examine progress against targets.

Figure 1.1: Approach to the development of the Strategy



1.6 The TAWS Toolkit refers to the term 'treescape', which is also used throughout this Strategy. This definition is outlined below:

The term 'treescape' is used here to encompass all trees within a given area, whether that be a town, a city, a county, or a wider landscape. It includes individual trees, hedgerows, orchards and woodlands, and those that grow on private land as well as land owned or managed by local authorities or other public bodies. The term 'treescape' is intended to recognise the connectivity

between trees and emphasise that managing them in a 'joined-up' manner can improve outcomes.

1.7 The Strategy has been prepared with reference to local and national policies, including the Herefordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy, which aims to inform the investment and future delivery of GBI in the context of the county's future growth agenda.

Scope of the Strategy

1.8 The Strategy is structured as follows:

■ Chapter 1: Introduction

Outlines the purpose, approach and scope of the Strategy and how it should be used by a range of audiences. The process of consultation and engagement is described.

■ Chapter 2: Understanding the baseline context

Provides an overview of the contextual baseline relating to the county's treescape. A summary of management issues relevant to the Herefordshire context and existing barriers to delivery are also outlined.

■ Chapter 3: Policy review

Summarises national and local policies that play a key role in shaping the future planning, design and management of the treescape in Herefordshire.

■ Chapter 4: The vision for Herefordshire's treescape

Establishes the strategic direction of the Strategy, including the development of key supporting objectives.

■ Chapter 5: Proposed targets and outcomes

Identifies effective targets at various scales and contexts within the county, set within the framework of the strategic objectives of the Strategy.

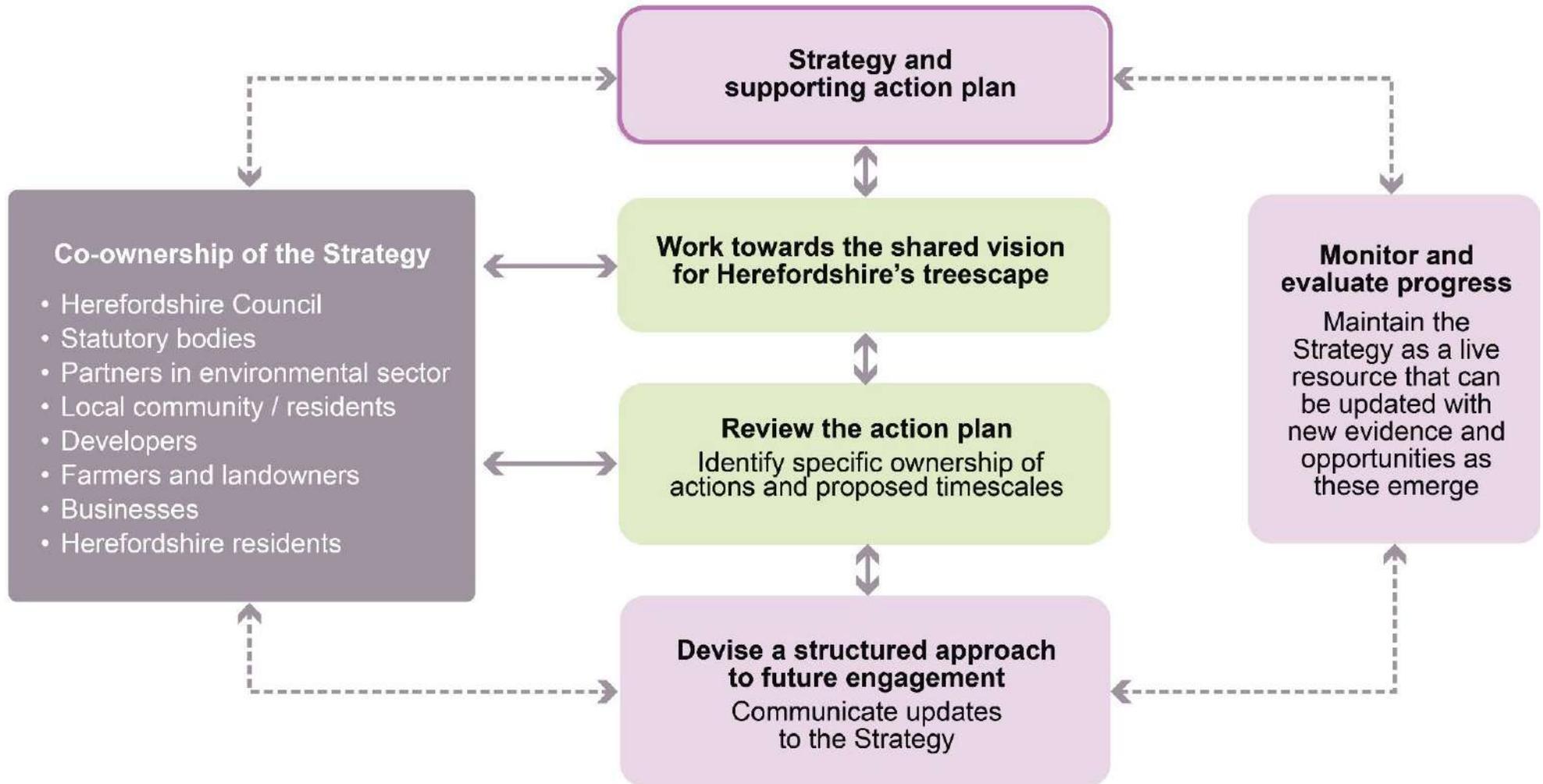
■ Chapter 6: Development of the action plan

Provides an overview of actions, with measurable targets which describe the approach to delivery with timescales and responsibilities.

How to use this document

1.9 The Strategy provides a 'how-to' guide to help ensure the successful delivery of a healthy and resilient treescape across Herefordshire. Consequently, a user guide has been developed (see **Figure 1.2**) as part of this Strategy to demonstrate how the document should be used by various audiences.

Figure 1.2: User guide

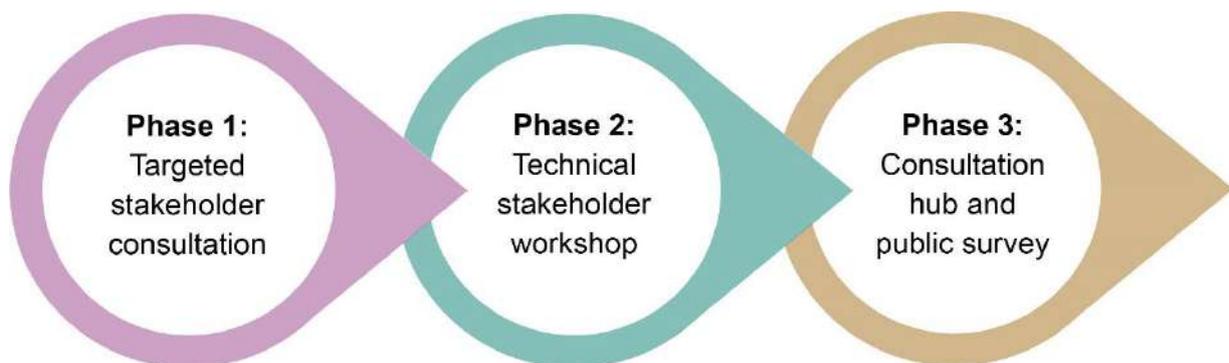


Consultation and engagement

1.10 Consultation was used to help identify key stakeholder and resident attitudes, expectations and aspirations for the Strategy. A holistic approach was adopted to ensure alignment with the TAWS Toolkit. A three stage consultation process was used, as outlined below and illustrated graphically in **Figure 1.3**:

- Phase 1: Targeted (1-to-1) stakeholder consultation;
- Phase 2: Technical stakeholder workshop; and
- Phase 3: Consultation hub and online public survey, which remained live for four weeks.

Figure 1.3: Phases of consultation



1.11 The consultation process considered the priorities of participants to promote a sense of ownership of the Strategy. Relevant stakeholders were identified and mapped to ensure engagement with those involved in the management of local treescapes. Consultees with an interest in the strategic direction of the future treescape in the county were also targeted. This included those involved in supporting national tree planting objectives as well as wider climate change initiatives.

1.12 Stakeholder mapping adopted the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) methodology, in accordance with the TAWS Toolkit. This approach helped to identify stakeholders across multiple relevant categories with the aim of mitigating bias relating to over or under representation of a particular group of stakeholders.

Phase 1: Targeted stakeholder consultation

1.13 Targeted (1-to-1) consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders early in the process to promote a collaborative approach, whilst also capturing any outstanding datasets. Engaging with key individuals prior to the stakeholder workshop also helped to identify further contacts and inform the next phases of consultation, ensuring focus remained relevant and inclusive. Targeted stakeholder consultation was delivered virtually using Microsoft Teams and followed a semi-structured format. An overview of the project was circulated to each stakeholder prior to the call, with the aim of focussing the discussion.

Phase 2: Technical stakeholder workshop

1.14 Following targeted consultation, an online workshop was delivered for a focussed group of technical internal and external stakeholders. The attendees included statutory consultees, relevant Council Officers, key interest groups / landowners and neighbouring authorities. The workshop was used as an opportunity to gather technical stakeholder input as part of the collaborative approach to the development of the Strategy. The workshop was semi-structured using key questions / prompts focussing on the subjects listed below:

- Existing approach to canopy cover targets for the county, including options for defining targets for specific urban locations;
- Testing of the draft vision and overall strategic direction for the current and future treescape in the county. This was developed prior to the workshop based on the findings of the initial policy and document review;
- Identification of current issues relating to the management of the existing treescape, and constraints to the delivery of tree planting across the county; and
- Approaches to fundraising, sponsorship, grant applications and other activities / existing initiatives to promote the delivery of tree and hedgerow planting in the county.

1.15 The workshop was delivered using the Microsoft Teams platform as a 'base' for discussion. Participants were also provided a link to a collaborative 'virtual

whiteboard' (Miro software) (see **Figure 1.4**) to access during the workshop in order to animate discussions. This platform was used to structure the workshop, with inputs recorded using virtual 'sticky notes'.

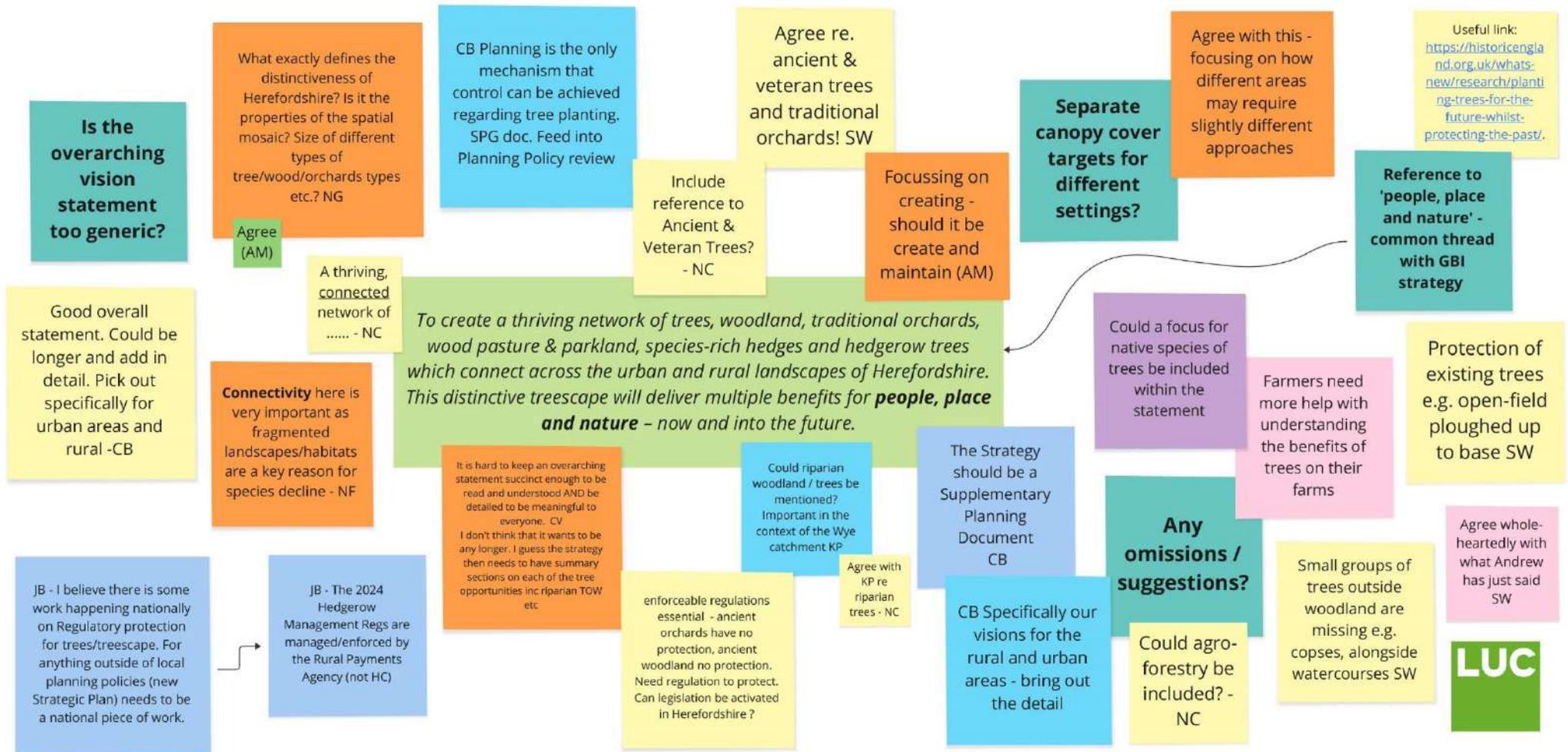
Phase 3: Consultation hub and online survey

1.16 A dedicated interactive website was developed to function as a 'consultation hub' for the Strategy. This platform provided a central communication tool for all stakeholders for the duration of the project. The consultation hub was also used to host an online public survey to help inform the approach to the Strategy and action plan.

1.17 A total of 551 responses were received to the public survey (including 73 who did not consent to the privacy statement). 401 of these were members of the public, 19 were agents / landowners and 25 were town / parish councils and councillors. The remaining responses were from community interest groups, businesses, statutory bodies, planning authorities and 'others'. It is recognised that the consultation survey data is a small sample, representing the views of only a small proportion of the Herefordshire population. However, much of the value of the public survey responses lies in the comprehensive nature of the participant's comments when asked to populate 'open text' responses. The results and comments are useful and tangible, which have been supplemented with national data to help shape priorities for the Strategy.

A summary of the findings of both stakeholder and public consultation are presented in green text boxes throughout this Strategy.

Figure 1.4: Example output from the technical stakeholder workshop



Key benefits of the treescape

1.18 The mosaic of trees, hedgerows and woodlands offer multiple benefits with both rural and urban contexts (see **Figures 1.5 and 1.6**) and will be vital in addressing the climate and ecological emergency (declared by the Council in December 2019). Using the ‘themed approach’ of Place, Nature and People adopted by the Herefordshire GBI Strategy, the value of these networks to Herefordshire are described.

Figure 1.5: Overview of the benefits of trees

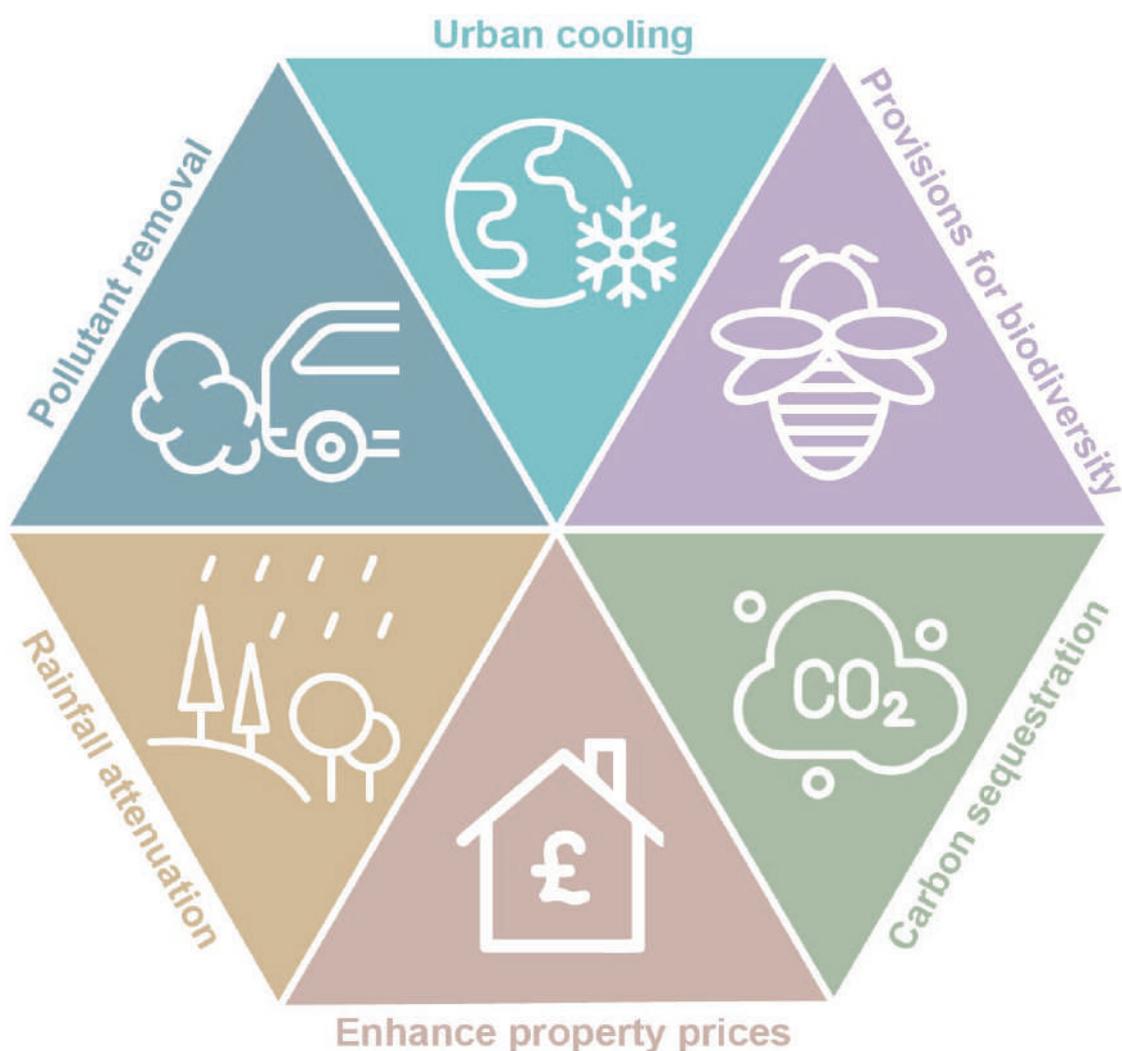
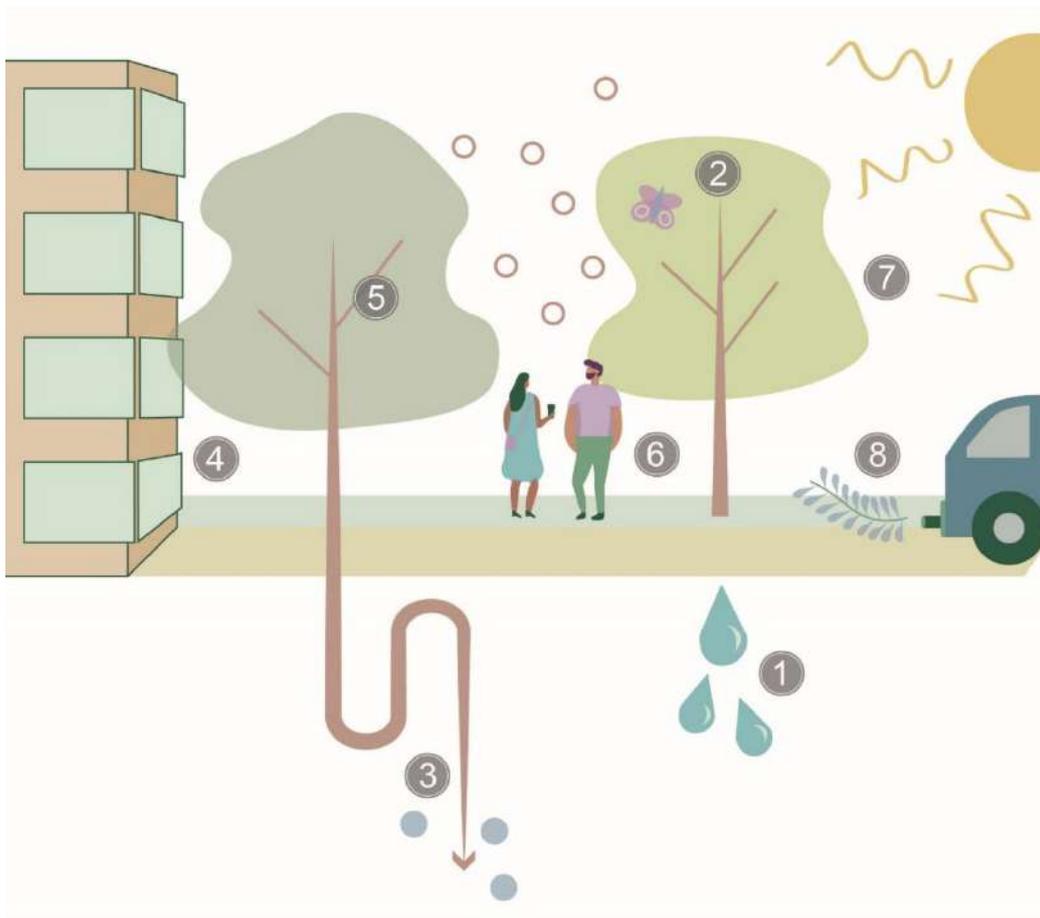


Figure 1.6: Focussed values of tree cover



1. A mature tree can reduce the amount of rainfall reaching the ground by as much as 45% through interception [\[See reference 2\]](#).
2. One mature oak can support over 2,300 species – 326 of which are entirely dependent on oak for their survival [\[See reference 3\]](#).
3. A tree can absorb up to 150kg of CO₂ per year, sequester carbon and consequently mitigate climate change [\[See reference 4\]](#).
4. Trees effectively sited around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and save energy for heating by 20-50% [\[See reference 3\]](#).

5. Over a season, a tree can produce enough oxygen for 10 people to breathe [\[See reference 5\]](#).
6. People who live in tree-lined streets are less likely to be prescribed anti-depressants [\[See reference 6\]](#).
7. Properties in a tree-lined area are worth up to 18% more than in similar areas without trees [\[See reference 7\]](#).
8. In 2020, the removal of air pollution by trees was estimated to have avoided 2,001 deaths and the loss of 49,126 years of life [\[See reference 8\]](#).

Place

1.19 Improvements to tree cover provision can provide significant place related benefits, offering cultural and aesthetic value as well as enhancements to local distinctiveness (see **Figure 1.7**) in both urban and rural contexts. In urban areas, tree cover characterises many existing land uses; including streets, greenspaces (including natural / semi natural greenspace, parks, play areas and allotments), private gardens, school grounds, church yards / cemeteries, golf courses, business parks and industrial estates. As well as improving localised climatic conditions through cooling, incorporating trees into areas can also contribute to enhanced economic prosperity through increased property values.

1.20 In rural areas, the woodland, tree and hedgerow networks are key to defining landscape and historic character and contribute positively to sense of place. Trees also play a vital role in sustainable agricultural systems, providing shelter and shade for livestock, improving soil health, preventing soil erosion and helping to protect water bodies from polluted run-off. In addition, trees reduce the amount of rainwater entering watercourses and can help reduce the risk of flooding in both urban and rural catchments.

Figure 1.7: Place-focussed benefits of the treescape



What are the benefits to place?

As indicated by **Figure 1.8**, responses to the public consultation show that 10% of participants consider that protecting and improving distinctive features of the county (including traditional orchards, ancient woodlands, veteran trees and designated sites) are a principal benefit of increasing tree cover and improved management of Herefordshire’s treescape. However, the value of trees in supporting the local economy was considered to be a key benefit to Herefordshire by only 1% of respondents. This may be reflective of a gap in knowledge and points towards the need for educating the public on the importance of trees for the local economy. This includes emphasising the importance of ecosystem services as well as the value of trees in making Herefordshire an attractive place to live and visit.

People

1.21 People have a deep emotional connection to trees. By providing opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and volunteering; trees and hedgerows can help

build stronger communities and foster a sense of ownership and stewardship of the local environment. Enhancements to air quality and a reduction in noise pollution also contribute to public health and well-being improvements (see **Figure 1.9**). Trees remove carbon from the air as well as sequester and store it away. The carbon stored in trees transfers to soil when leaves fall and decompose, highlighting the importance of leaving soils undisturbed.

Figure 1.8: What do you consider are the key benefits to Herefordshire of increasing tree cover and improved management of the treescape?

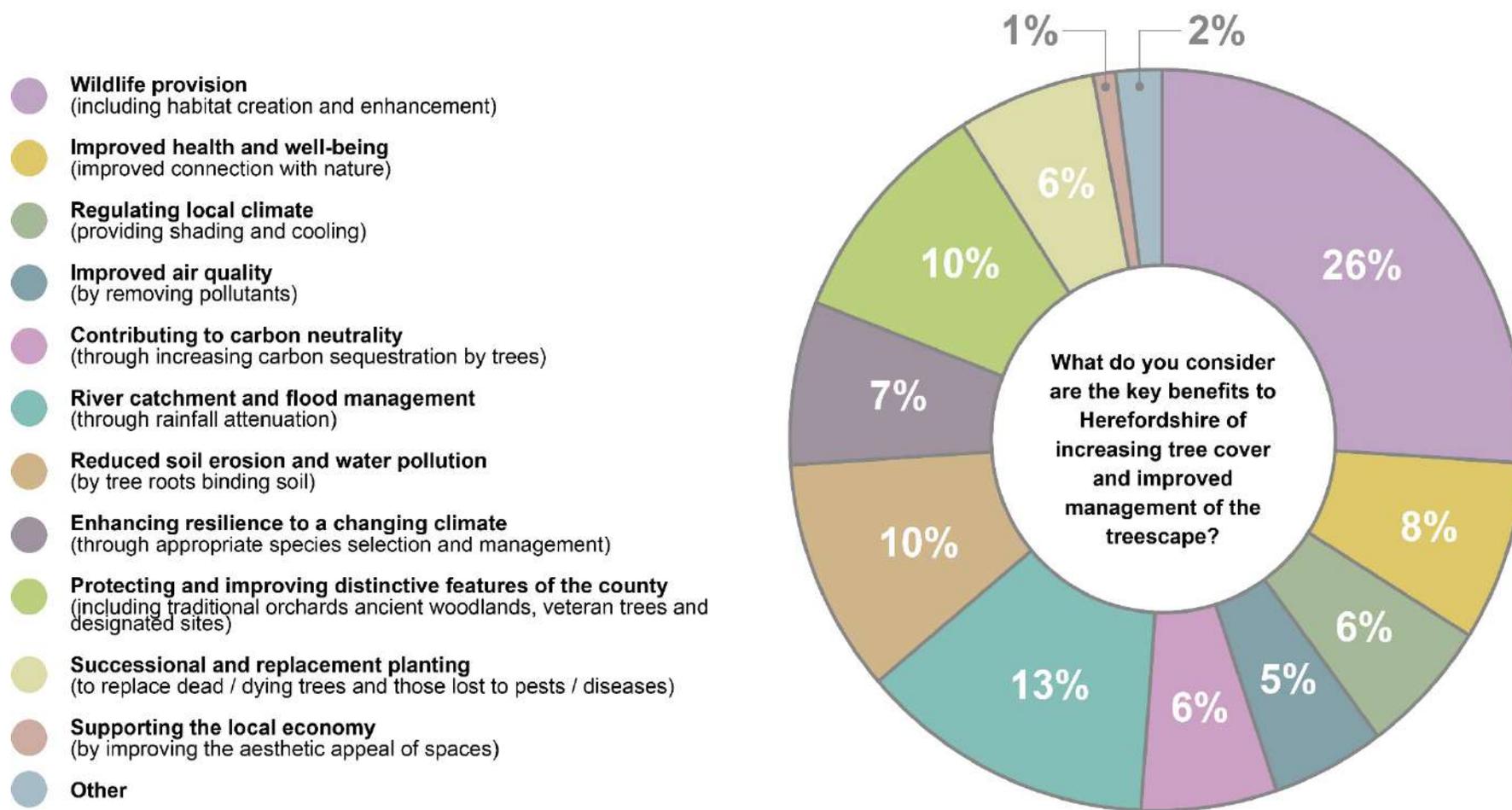


Figure 1.9: People-focussed benefits of the treescape



What are the benefits to people?

The results of the public survey indicate that respondents recognise the wide range of benefits offered by the treescape within Herefordshire (see **Figure 1.8**). 8% of participants considered the key benefit of increasing tree cover and improved management of the treescape was associated with the improved connection with nature offered by health and well-being enhancements. Similarly, the role of trees in regulating the local climate and delivering air quality improvements were highlighted as the principal benefit by 5% and 6% of the respondents, respectively.

Social and cultural value of trees

1.22 The identification of social and cultural elements of the treescape which are particularly important to communities can help shape local aspirations and future priorities. A national survey of 5,000 people conducted by Forest Research [See **reference 9**] tested a composite measure of 19 statements to understand the range and importance of social and cultural values. This survey question was replicated in the public consultation for this Strategy to allow the comparison of local results with

the national picture (see **Figure 1.10**). An assessment of the relative order of social and cultural statements was undertaken, as well as comparisons at the national level.

I value trees, woods and forests because....

The results of public consultation indicate broad alignment at both the national and local levels, with the importance of treescapes for wildlife achieving the highest ranking in Herefordshire and within the England-wide dataset. Closely associated with wildlife provision, other social and cultural statements which were highly valued at the local level include 'I like being part of a landscape which is also home to wildlife' (ranked 2nd), 'being among them makes me feel more connected to nature' (ranked 5th) and 'they can help me learn more about nature' (ranked 11th).

The value of old and ancient trees had an increased perceived importance at the local value (ranked 4th) within Herefordshire, in comparison with a ranking of 11th at the national level. This trend is reflective of the county's rich network of ancient woodland and veteran trees and highlights an opportunity for the Strategy to locally promote Herefordshire's significant contribution to the national resource and the importance of maintaining up to date records.

The three lowest ranked social and value statements at the local level ('they make me feel creative and inspired', 'they connect me with memories of my past' and 'they provide places for the community to come together') were also ranked lowest at the national level.

Figure 1.10: Comparison of the relative order of social and cultural value statements at the national and local level – I value trees, woodlands and forests because....



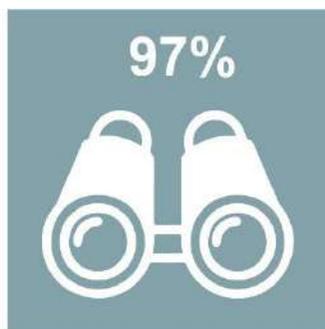
I value trees, woodlands and forests because....

As shown by **Figure 1.11**, the results of the public consultation indicate that seven of the 19 social and cultural value statements achieved agreement / strong agreement with over 90% of respondents. These statements focussed primarily on wildlife provision and the role of trees as indicators of the changing seasons. The contribution of trees to the historic landscape, as well as the benefits for mental well-being were also recognised.

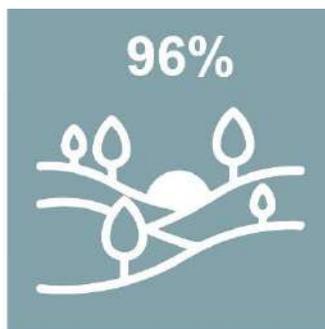
Nature

1.23 Trees and hedgerows play a key role in creating provision for biodiversity, offering nesting sites for a huge number of species and supporting ecological resilience (see **Figure 1.12**) in both urban and rural areas. The opportunity also exists to use the treescape for educational purposes and to promote interactions with nature. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity range across all contexts; from designated nature reserves, farmland, local parks / school grounds and private gardens. Trees contribute to climate mitigation (through storage and sequestration of carbon) and offer adaptation to future climatic changes (establishing habitat corridors, providing shade, improvements to air quality and increased protection from flooding).

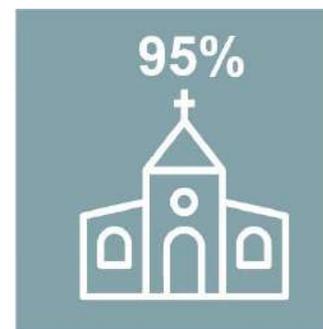
Figure 1.11: Social and cultural value statements achieving agreement / strong agreement with over 90% of respondents to public consultation



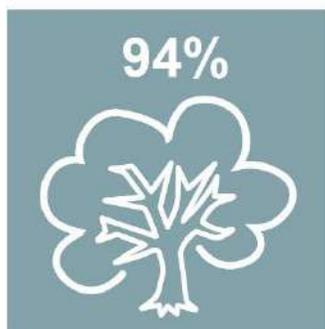
Of their importance for wildlife



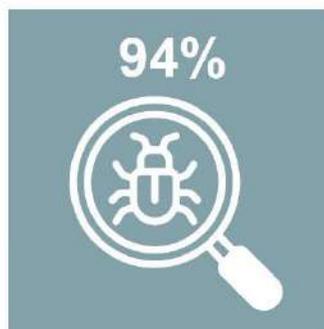
I like being a part of a landscape which is also home to wildlife



They are part of our cultural and historic landscape



Old and ancient trees are especially attractive to me



Being among them makes me feel more connected to nature

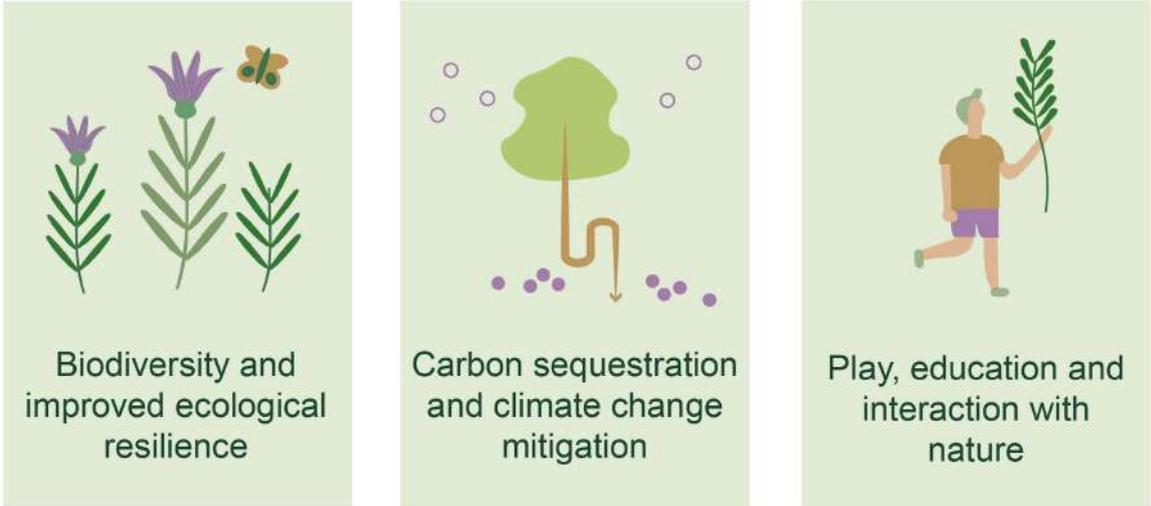


They are good for my mental well-being



They make me notice the changing seasons

Figure 1.12: Nature-focussed benefits of the treescape



What are the benefits to nature?

Wildlife provision (including habitat creation and enhancement) was the most common response (26%) when participants to the public consultation were asked to state the key benefit of increasing tree cover and improved management of Herefordshire’s treescape (see **Figure 1.8**). This trend was also observed when respondents were asked what they value about their local treescape, with over 97% of people agreeing or strongly acknowledging the importance of tree cover for wildlife (see **Figure 1.11**).

Chapter 2

Understanding the baseline context

2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the contextual baseline relating to Herefordshire's treescape, including a summary of landscape character and environmental designations. The findings of public and stakeholder consultation relating to current pressures facing the treescape and the barriers to delivery of tree planting across Herefordshire are also considered.

Baseline context

Landscape character

2.2 Herefordshire is primarily an agricultural county, with approximately 80% of land in use as farmland. This rural land cover contributes to a sense of rurality, with a strong agricultural influence and deep historic character **[See reference 10]**. Although Herefordshire is predominantly rural, around half of the population of the county are concentrated in a number of settlements, including the city of Hereford and the market towns of Leominster, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye, Kington and Bromyard.

2.3 Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) **[See reference 11]** identifies 14 discrete landscape character types within Herefordshire, each representing a distinct landscape character formed by the interrelationship of physical and cultural influences (including geology, soil, landform, hydrology, topography, land use, ecology and historic environment). The LCA provides an important tool in understanding how woodland, trees and hedgerows contribute to existing landscape character and how these landscape features may be perpetuated and enhanced through appropriate planting and management.

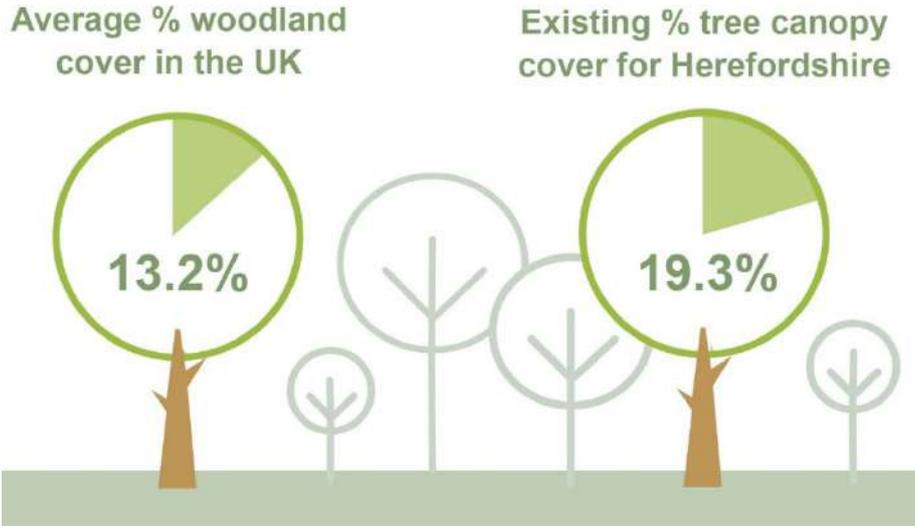
2.4 The county comprises a large central area of lowland farmland, associated with river floodplains (including the Rivers Arrow, Clun, Dore, Frome, Leadon, Lugg, Monnow, Teme and Wye). Areas of rising topography and woodland connect to

upland areas on its boundaries. These are differentiated by their woodland cover and geology. The prominent sandstone uplands of the Black Mountains lie to the west. The lowland wooded sandstone hills located in the centre of the county contrast with the elevated rolling brownstone plateau farmland and estates to the north east. Woodland, wood pasture and parkland, grassland habitats (including meadows) and traditional orchards form the most common habitats across the county. Black poplar and Scots pine are historically significant tree species within Herefordshire.

Tree cover

2.5 The Woodland Trust estimates that woodland covers 13.2% (3.2 million hectares) of the UK’s land surface [See reference 12]. National Tree Map data of Herefordshire includes approximately 743,000 individual trees, woodlands, and groups of trees [See reference 13], resulting in an average % tree canopy coverage of 19.3% (see **Figure 2.1**). However, this percentage masks a considerable variation in tree canopy coverage across the county, reflecting the range of urban and rural contexts across Herefordshire.

Figure 2.1: National and county wide existing canopy provision



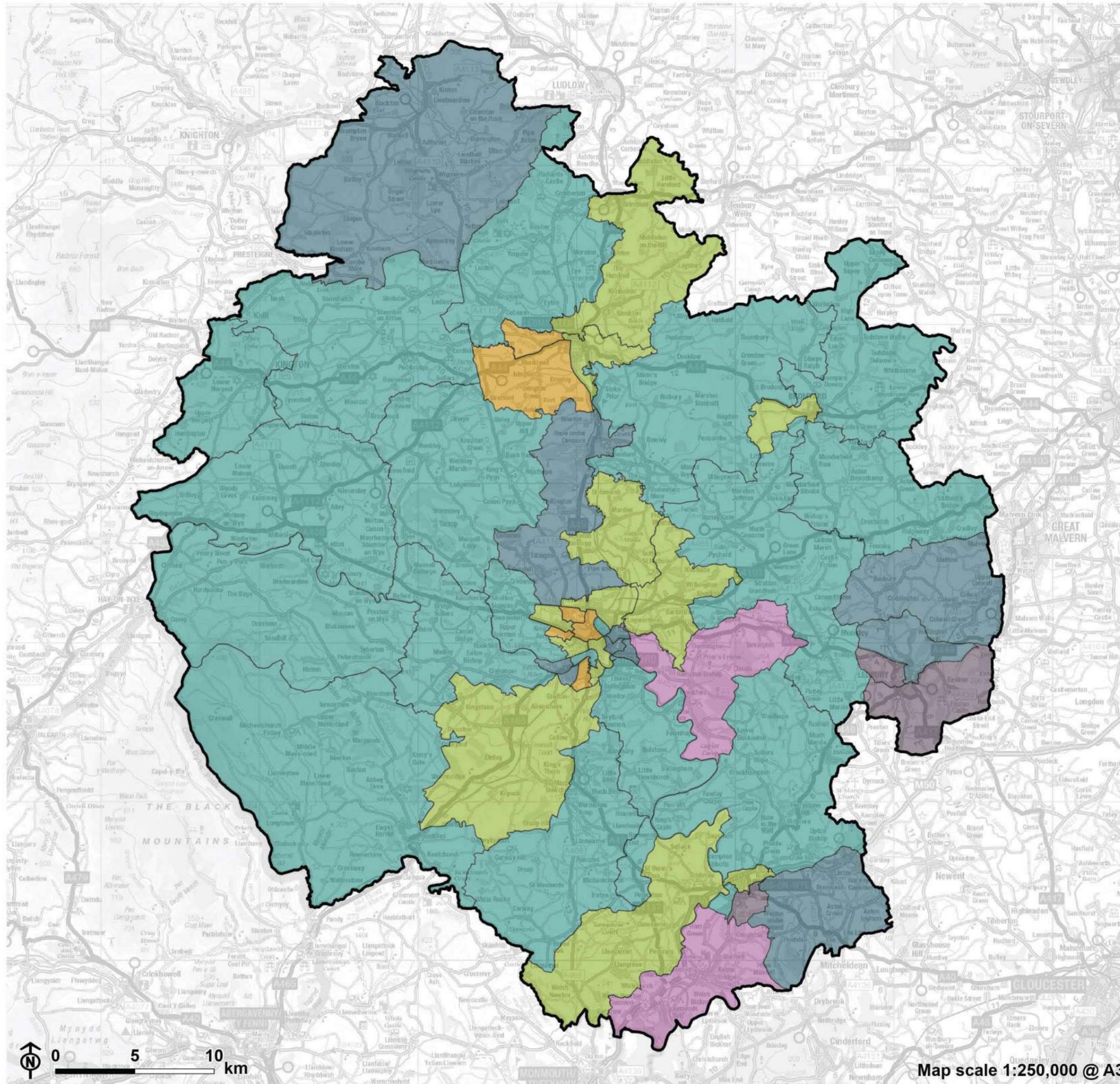
2.6 Analysis of average tree canopy coverage by ward (see **Figures 2.2 and 2.3**) indicates that some wards within Hereford (Bobblestock, Red Hill, Whitecross and Widemarsh) and Leominster (Leominster South and Leominster West) are

characterised by tree canopy coverage of 10% or less. This contrasts with Backbury, bordered to the west by the River Wye, and Kerne Bridge (forming the southern extent of the county) where an average tree canopy coverage of between 30-35% is achieved. In general, areas of higher tree canopy coverage are found in wards partially or wholly encompassed within either the Malvern Hills or Wye Valley National Landscapes. Other locations typified by average tree canopy coverage of between 20-25% include Mortimer ward, associated with large tracts of Mortimer Forest, as well as Queenswood ward which broadly follows the corridor of the A49.

Figure 2.2: Variation in average tree canopy coverage by ward



Figure 2.3: Percentage tree canopy cover by ward



Herefordshire Council Boundary

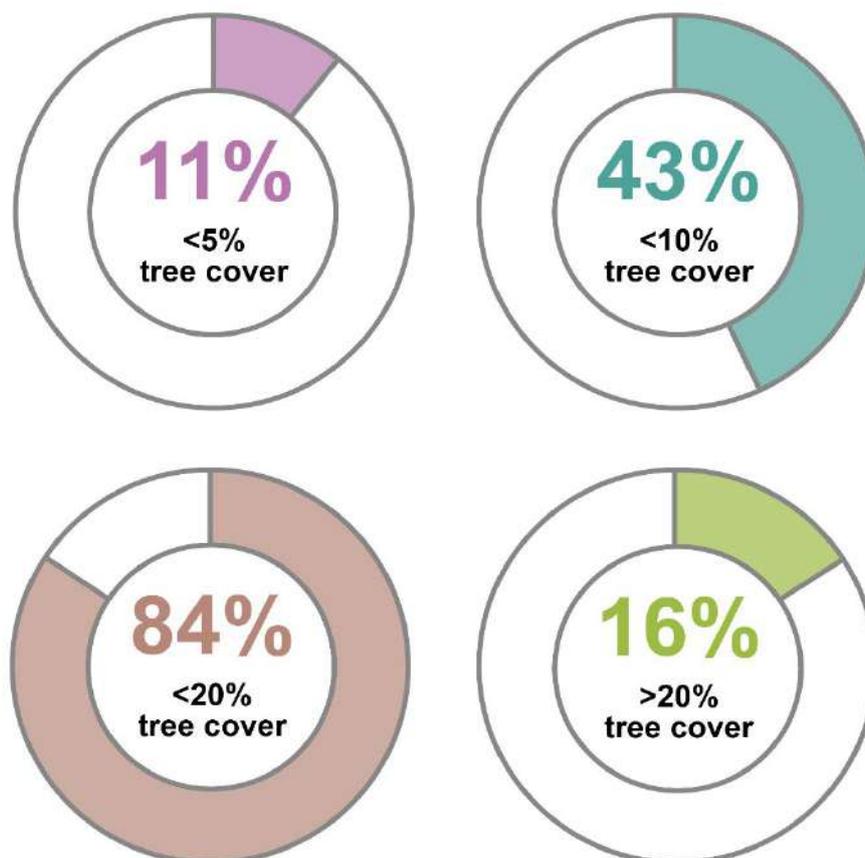
Tree canopy cover by ward

- ≤10.0%
- >10.0 to 15.0%
- >15.0 to 20.0%
- >20.0 to 25.0%
- >25.0 to 30.0%
- >30.0 to 35.0%

Map scale 1:250,000 @ A3

2.7 Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data published by Friends of the Earth and Terra Sulis [See reference 14] indicates that 84% of neighbourhoods throughout the UK are characterised by less than 20% tree canopy cover (see **Figure 2.4**). Existing tree canopy cover within Herefordshire was estimated at 15.8%, placing the county within the top third of predominantly rural local authorities. The data concludes that 25,838 hectares of the county provide potential areas of woodland opportunity, of which 12,252 hectares could be delivered through re-wilding. However, Friends of the Earth emphasise the need to supplement the results with ecological surveys and datasets at the local level to sense-check the suitability of sites for woodland creation. The potential for new trees in urban areas is also not included in the data, which highlights significantly more opportunities to grow trees within the county.

Figure 2.4: Proportion of neighbourhoods in the UK and percentage canopy cover

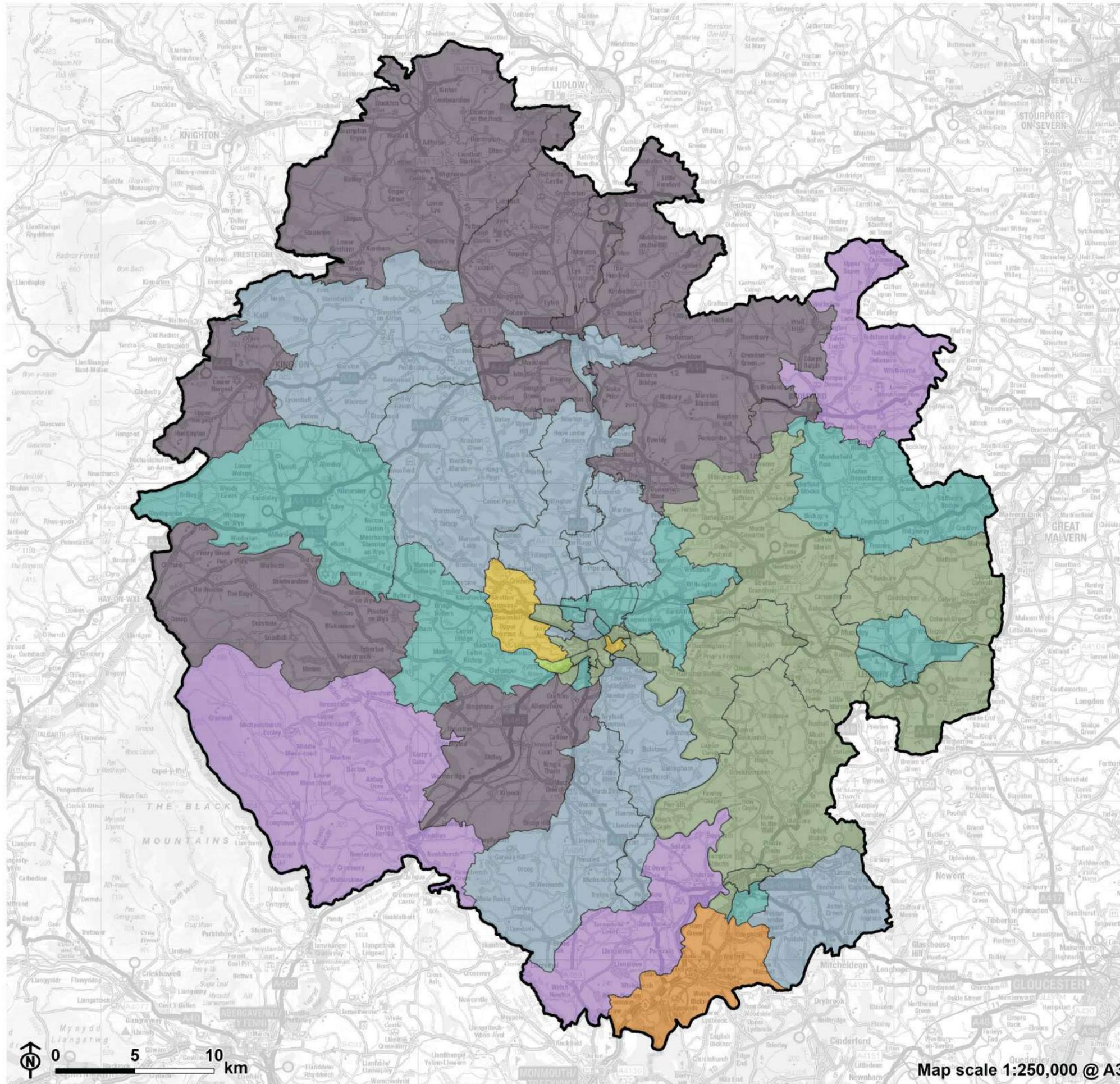


2.8 Figure 2.5 indicates the change in tree canopy coverage between 2009 and 2019 across the county. In general, wards to the north and west have seen percentage increases of between 0-4% during this 10-year time period. However, locations to the south and east of the county, associated with the boundaries of the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes, have been characterised by increases of up to 8%. Increases in tree canopy coverage of approximately 6% were also observed between 2009 and 2019 at some wards at the west and east of Hereford.

2.9 Variations also exist in the pattern of percentage canopy cover within settlements in the county, as illustrated by **Figure 2.6**. These percentages compare against an average urban tree canopy cover in England of 15.8% [\[See reference 15\]](#). Within Herefordshire, only the existing tree canopy cover within Ledbury and Kington exceeds this percentage. The lowest average tree canopy cover in the county is found within Leominster (12.7%) and Hereford (13.6%).

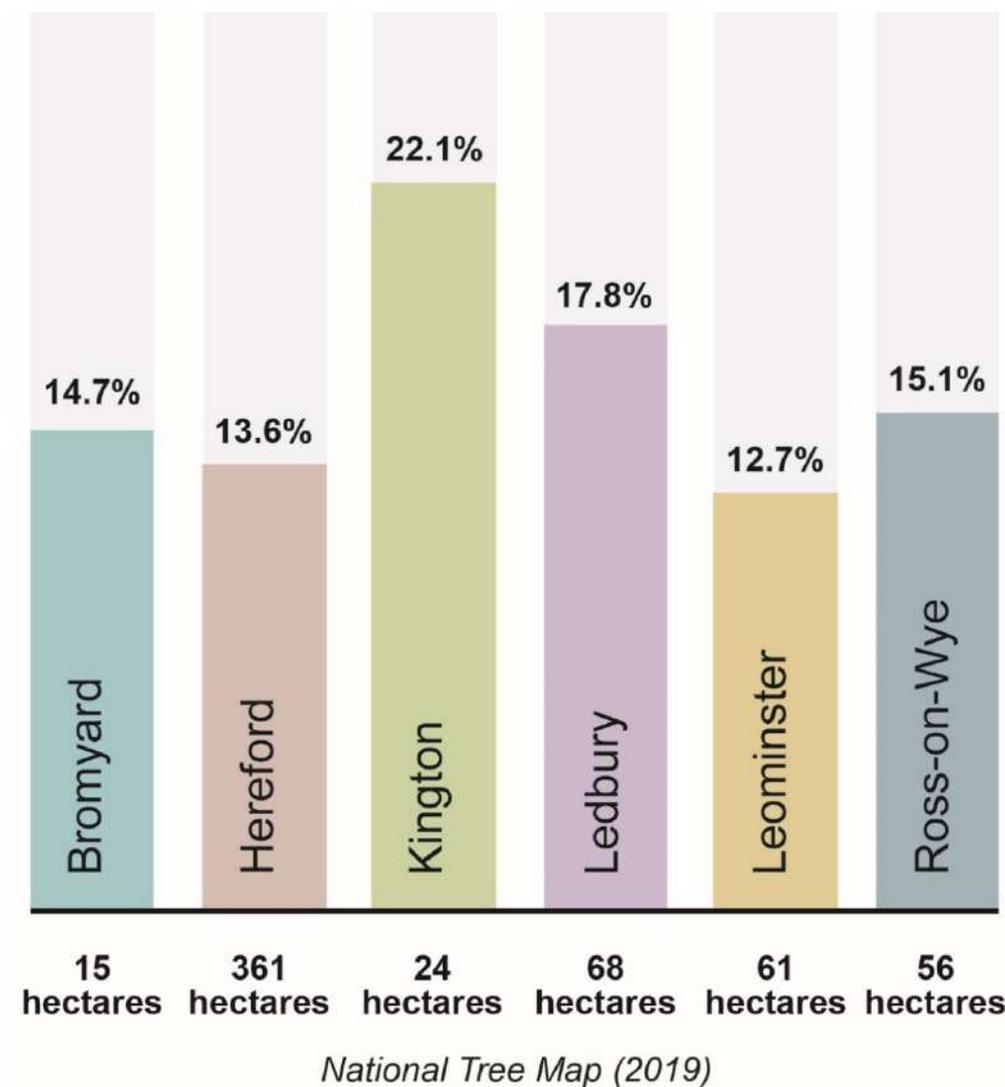
2.10 Forest Research and the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network (UFWACN) [\[See reference 16\]](#) (see **Chapter 3**) suggest that the minimum target for urban locations within the UK should be 20% tree canopy coverage. Of all the market towns in Herefordshire, only Kington is characterised by existing tree canopy cover of over 20%. However, Trees for Cities [\[See reference 17\]](#) now advocates for 30% urban tree canopy cover, in accordance with the 3+30+300 rule. This principle focuses on the role of urban greening in health and well-being enhancements. None of the five market towns or Hereford City currently achieve existing tree canopy coverage of 30%.

Figure 2.5: Percentage change in tree canopy cover by ward (between 2009 and 2019)



- Herefordshire Council Boundary
- Percentage change in tree canopy cover by ward (between 2009 and 2019)**
- 0% (no change)
- 1% increase
- 2% increase
- 3% increase
- 4% increase
- 5% increase
- 6% increase
- 8% increase

Figure 2.6: Percentage canopy cover by settlement in 2019



Tree equity

2.11 Developed in winter 2023 by American Forests, the Woodland Trust and the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, the Tree Equity Score [See reference 18] seeks to identify the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees within the UK. The map-based application examines disparities in tree distribution and measures how well the benefits of trees are reaching communities disproportionately impacted by extreme heat, pollution and other environmental hazards. The score uses six climate, health and socio-economic datasets that measure social deprivation and quality of life. Collectively, these indicate how vulnerable a community is to

environmental hazards and how beneficial tree equity would be to them. The lower the Tree Equity Score, the greater priority for tree planting. A score of 100 indicates the neighbourhood has met a minimum standard for tree cover appropriate for that area.

2.12 The Woodland Trust Tree Equity Score estimates existing tree canopy coverage within Herefordshire at 43m² per person. At a national level, this figure equates to 45m² per capita. Areas achieving Tree Equity Scores of 0-69 are judged to form the highest priority for future tree planting throughout the UK. The county is allocated a composite score of 84 (out of 100), demonstrating a moderate / good overall assessment of tree equity. However, these figures mask a degree of variation in tree equity scores across the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of the county.

2.13 Herefordshire includes two LSOAs with a Tree Equity Score in the 0-69 range; Portfields (57) and Widemarsh (62) in Hereford. The existing canopy cover percentage of these LSOAs is 10% and 8%, respectively. However, the Woodland Trust recommends that the minimum percentage of tree canopy required to deliver the requisite benefits of trees to these two neighbourhoods, adjusted for population density, is 36%. It is estimated that 288,185m² of canopy expansion is required to get all LSOAs in Herefordshire to a score of 75 (out of 100), equating to approximately 5,170 trees with a medium sized canopy.

2.14 The LSOA achieving tree equity (i.e. a score of 100 out of 100) is located at the eastern extent of the county, partially encompassing land within the Malvern Hills National Landscape, and incorporating the settlements of Upper Colwall and Mathon. Current percentage canopy cover at this location is estimated to be 38%.

Tree Preservation Orders

2.15 Legislation governs Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and tree protection in conservation areas in England. Herefordshire includes over 500 TPOs which cover over 743,000 individual trees [See reference 19]. TPOs are primarily concentrated within the city of Hereford and the market towns. However, smaller settlements such as Luston, Wigmore, Lugwardine and Burghill also contain a relatively large distribution of TPOs. Large TPO groups characterise the landscape to the east of the

county, including Old Colwall Estate, land to the east of Munsley and Highgrove Wood. TPOs are also scattered throughout the rural landscape in the form of hedgerow trees, field trees and woodland. The county also includes 64 conservation areas which cover parts of Hereford, the markets towns and smaller villages. Concentrations of TPOs often occur within, or in close proximity, to conservation areas. Additional information relating to the location of trees covered by TPOs in the county can be found on the Council's administrative interactive map [\[See reference 20\]](#).

Woodland

2.16 Woodlands are one of the most extensive semi-natural habitat types in Herefordshire and are primarily concentrated outside the central plain, in upland areas and on steeper slopes. As per the National Forestry Inventory, the total extent of woodland is approximately 27,800 hectares, covering 12.6% of the county. The average woodland habitat patch size is 3.7 hectares. Approximately half of the woodlands within Herefordshire are recorded as ancient. However, ancient woodland is very fragmented across the county, and most of this habitat is recorded in small clusters with notable gaps around Leominster and Hereford. Powys on the north west border and Monmouthshire on the south west border exhibit good coverage of ancient woodland. Herefordshire's woodland on the south east border plays an important role in buffering and connecting the large continuous area of the Forest of Dean.

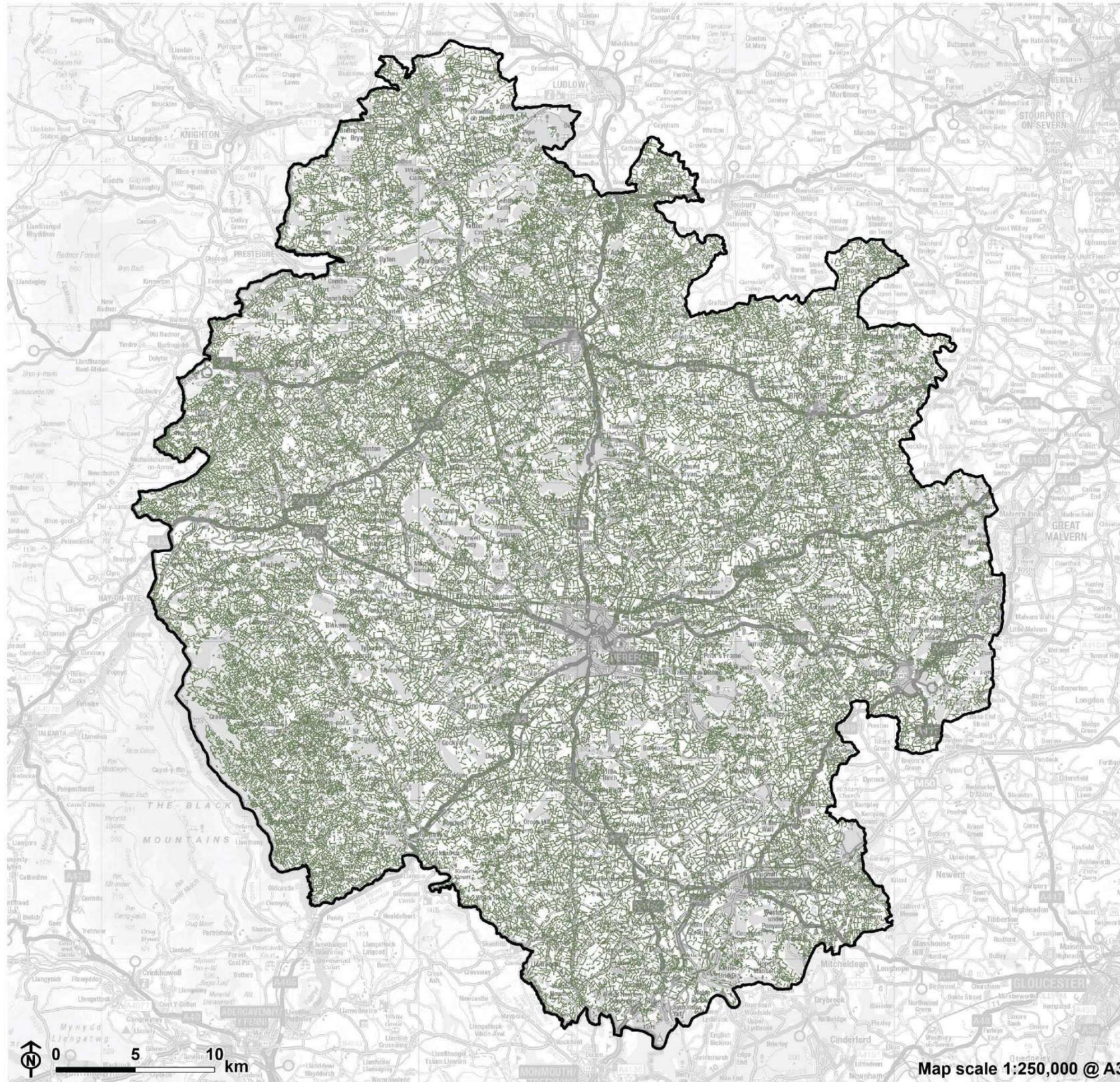
Hedgerows

2.17 Hedgerows form important features within both rural and urban contexts within the county, offering a range of ecological and cultural benefits. In more urbanised settings, hedgerows play a particular role in mitigating a range of environmental challenges. This includes reducing flood risk, sequestering airborne pollutants, providing shade as well as habitat connectivity. Urban hedgerows can help to minimise these risks and improve environmental quality.

2.18 Within the rural context of Herefordshire, hedgerows provide valuable ecological and visual connectivity (see **Figure 2.7**). These linear landscape features link woodland blocks with areas of farmland, providing complex wildlife networks. Hedgerows within the county often contain substantial trees, frequently veteran oaks, which form important landscape features and can be visually dominant. Hedgerow management varies across the county, resulting in different effects on landscape character, including where hedgerows have been over-trimmed, rejuvenated, well managed or overgrown.

2.19 Hedgerows are important archaeological and historical features of the landscape, representing how land use has changed and boundaries defined in the county over the last 300-400 years. Planted on archaeological banks and forming medieval ridge and furrow land divisions, hedgerows are fundamental to Herefordshire's historic landscape character. The Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) holds a large amount of data indicating how the landscape has evolved over time, including information regarding hedgerow planting and loss in different locations. The Historic Landscape Characterisation project looked at field shapes and identified why they were created. Although this document wasn't completed, the HER still records some of this information.

Figure 2.7: Distribution of existing hedgerow networks and best and most versatile agricultural land



- Herefordshire Council Boundary
- Hedgerow network (for illustrative purposes only)

Map scale 1:250,000 @ A3

Relevant designations

Protected landscapes

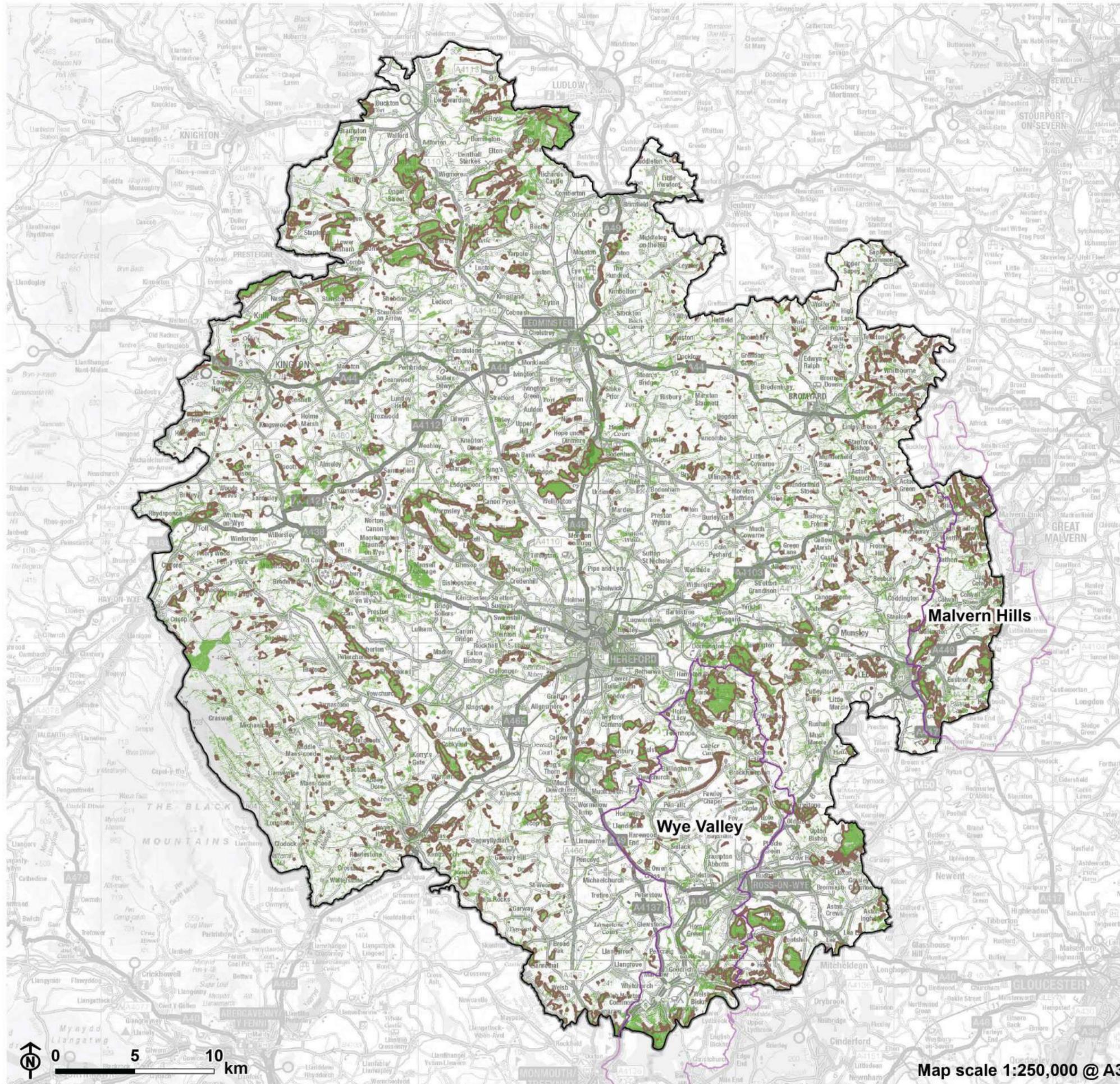
2.20 Two National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) lie partially within Herefordshire; the Malvern Hills National Landscape to the east of the county and the Wye Valley National Landscape to the south (refer to **Figure 2.8**). Both are recognised as protected landscapes due to their distinctive character and natural beauty. The Brecon Beacons National Park borders Herefordshire to the south west and the Shropshire Hills National Landscape is also located just north of Herefordshire in neighbouring Shropshire.

2.21 The Malvern Hills National Landscape forms a distinctive skyline in views eastward from Herefordshire's rolling lowlands and from the hill summits, providing panoramic and distant views across the county. Woodland covers approximately 20% of the total area, consisting predominantly of small broadleaved woodlands on banks, ridges and hilltops, and hedgerows. The Malvern Hills Management Plan indicates that 55% of this woodland is in active management.

2.22 The Wye Valley National Landscape provides a more intimate landscape scale, with wooded valleys enclosing meandering riverbanks and hedgerow-lined fields. Forestry and woodland occupies approximately 27% of land within the boundary of the protected landscape, comprised largely of ancient woodland of high value for nature conservation. Despite tree cover forming a dominant feature of the Wye Valley, the Wye Valley Management Plan highlights that woodland creation should be carefully targeted to avoid the loss of key carbon stores such as species-rich grassland. Opportunities to improve habitat connectivity, including the planting up of hedgerows, should also be explored.

2.23 The approximate extent of woodland cover within both the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes is indicated in **Figure 2.9**.

Figure 2.8: Existing tree coverage and protected landscapes



- Herefordshire Council Boundary
- Tree canopy cover
- Ancient Woodland
- National Landscape

Figure 2.9: Existing woodland cover within protected landscapes within Herefordshire



Heritage designations

There are 25 Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest within Herefordshire [See reference 21], noteworthy examples include Garnons Estate, Eastnor Castle, Berrington Hall, Moccas Court, and Croft Castle. A large proportion of these assets are concentrated to the north west and west of the county. Designed historic landscapes are often characterised by distinctive tree and woodland features; including tree avenues, individual parkland trees and designed boundary woodland. Veteran and ancient trees are often located within historic landscapes and are a defining feature of wood pasture and parkland habitat.

Sites of nature conservation

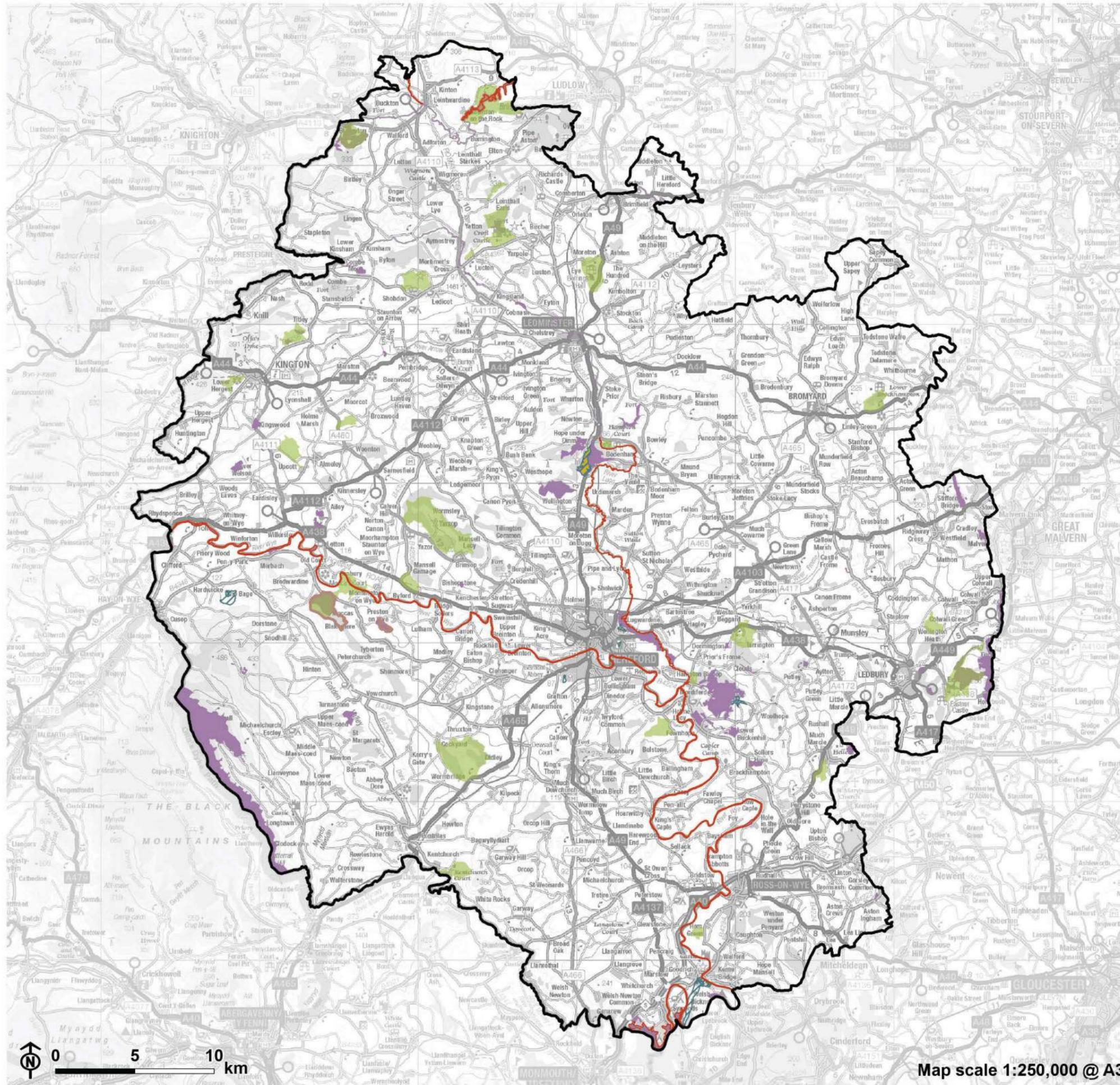
2.24 The international, national and local sites of nature conservation within the county are listed below (refer also to **Figure 2.10**):

Chapter 2 Understanding the baseline context

- Four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) totalling approximately 984 hectares, covering 0.5% of Herefordshire including the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC, Downton Gorge SAC and River Clun SAC,
- 77-80 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) totalling over 4,601 hectares, covering 2.1% of Herefordshire;
- Three National Nature Reserves (NNRs), covering 0.1% of Herefordshire;
- Eight Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); and
- 742 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) totalling approximately 18,954 hectares, covering 8.7% of Herefordshire.

The network of ecological sites is somewhat fragmented due to the extent of intensive agricultural land-use. Two major rivers, the River Wye and the River Lugg, dissect the county and create nationally and internationally significant ecological corridors. The River Wye originates within the Cambrian Mountains and enters Herefordshire at Hay-on-Wye. The meandering course of the river traverses west to south through the county and brings with it fertile floodplains and a rich mosaic of riparian habitats and ancient woodlands. The River Lugg, which rises in Radnorshire in Wales, also flows north to south through Herefordshire and merges with the River Wye just downstream of Hereford. The ecological value of these two river corridors is recognised through their designation under the River Wye SAC and various SSSIs.

Figure 2.10: Nature Conservation and Historic Landscape Designations



- Herefordshire Council Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Country Park
- Registered Parks and Gardens

Map scale 1:250,000 @ A3

Traditional orchards

2.25 Traditional orchards (priority habitat) form characteristic features of the Herefordshire landscape, comprising a significant proportion (14%) of remaining orchards within England. Within the county, traditional orchards cover 2.4% of Herefordshire [See reference 22], representing 2,511 hectares in total. However, orchards are often small and found in isolated patches, with an average habitat patch size of just 0.26 hectares. Over a third of the UK's remaining traditional orchards can be found within the Three Counties (Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire).

2.26 Traditional orchards are comprised of widely spaced, mature trees which support species-rich grassland. Not only do traditional orchards offer huge biodiversity value, their presence also reflects Herefordshire's heritage of apple, pear and hops growing for cider production. The specialist skills and knowledge required to manage traditional orchards, including low impact grazing, makes them an important feature in Herefordshire's agricultural heritage. However, these habitats have experienced a drastic national decline as a result of intensive agriculture practices, with an estimated loss of 90% of the UK's traditional orchards since 1950 [See reference 23]. This trend is reflected in Herefordshire, with traditional orchards habitats becoming an increasingly rare habitat.

Wood pasture and parkland

2.27 Some of the largest continuous areas of priority habitat in Herefordshire are provided by wood pasture and parkland, covering approximately 4.1% of the county [See reference 24]. Wood pasture and parkland is most commonly associated with large historic estates (e.g. the National Trust's Croft Castle and Berrington Hall) but smaller and remnant areas also occur, including at Moccas NNR and Downton Gorge SAC and NNR.

Current issues facing the treescape

2.28 This section discusses the current and future pressures facing the treescape of Herefordshire, including the management issues which arise. **Figure 2.12** illustrates public perception of these threats, as detailed within the results of public consultation.

What are the key current and future pressures facing Herefordshire's treescape?

Public consultation

Results from the public consultation (see **Figure 2.11**) indicate that 93% of respondents were in agreement or strong agreement that 'pressures from development' were a pertinent threat facing the treescape of Herefordshire. However, this was closely followed by 'pests and diseases', 'inappropriate management', 'climate change' and 'lack of legal tree protection and enforcement', all considered significant pressures by at least 81% of survey participants. Vandalism was judged to be less of a threat overall, albeit still recognised as an issue by 59% of respondents.

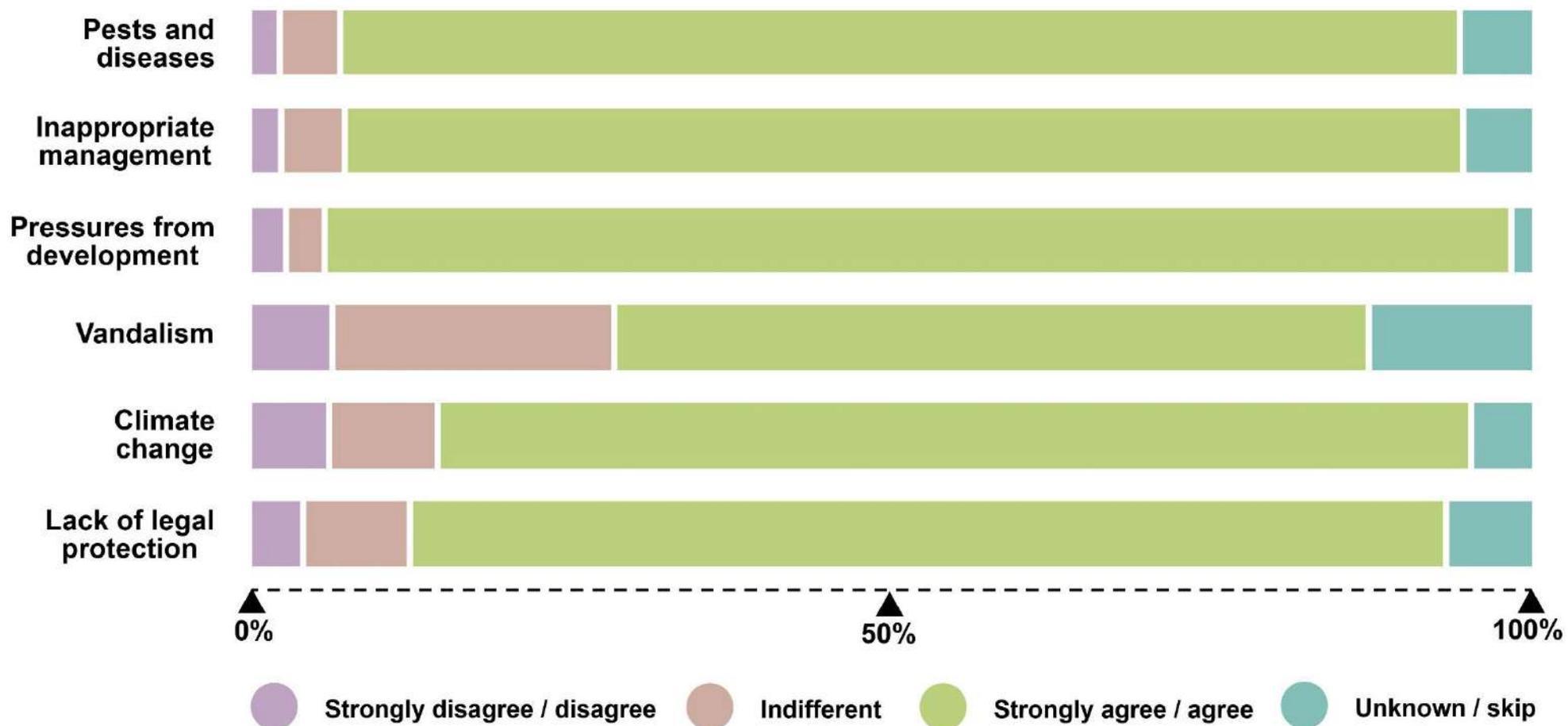
When asked to elaborate further within the survey, respondents identified climate change, invasive species, ash dieback disease, and the associated felling of affected trees as primary concerns. Respondents highlighted the need for the protection of veteran trees and those in rural areas, particularly in the face of increasing development pressures. Some also emphasised the multifaceted nature of issues, with pressures often exacerbating and worsening one another.

What are the key current and future pressures facing Herefordshire's treescape?

Stakeholder workshop

During the interactive voting session at the technical stakeholder workshop, less emphasis was placed on 'pressures from development' as a key threat affecting Herefordshire's treescape than during the public consultation. 'Climate change' was instead judged to be the key factor for over half of attendees, closely followed by 'pests and diseases' and 'inappropriate management'. 'Lack of legal tree protection and enforcement' was flagged as a key threat by approximately one third of attendees. Consistent with the results of the public survey, 'vandalism' was not recognised as a key pressure affecting Herefordshire's treescape.

Figure 2.11: State the extent to which you agree that the following factors are current and future pressures / threats facing the treescape of Herefordshire



Climate change and the biodiversity crisis

2.29 Future climatic projections for Herefordshire indicate that flooding is likely to become more intense and unpredictable, heatwaves and droughts more common and prolonged, and storms more extreme and damaging [See reference 25]. These climatic extremes are likely to add stress to the treescape and will impact the ability of some specimens to grow and survive, worsening the death rate before maturity. The Herefordshire Climate Change Risk Assessment (within the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Herefordshire 2023-2028 [See reference 26]) summarises the risks (and opportunities) that climate change presents in Herefordshire.

2.30 The following issues relate to the management of the treescape:

- Changing climatic conditions and extreme events; including temperature change, water scarcity, flooding, wind, and alterations in hydrology (including water scarcity and flooding) potentially causing severe damage to and weakening of the health of the treescape;
- New and increased prevalence of existing pests, pathogens and invasive species as a result of climatic changes;
- Fires and wildfires resulting in habitat destruction;
- Damage to soil quality caused by changing climatic conditions, including seasonal drought and water retention; and
- Necessity for understanding of alternative species which will colonise as a result of climate change and the new / alternative resilient and appropriate species (in terms of landscape character and context) which should be prioritised in future planting schemes.

Pests and diseases

2.31 The rapid increase in movements of goods and people between countries has increased the risk of the spread of pests and diseases into locations where limiting factors (e.g. predators and environmental factors) are not present. This threat is compounded by climate change; resulting in prolonged drought, flooding and high

temperatures where trees are likely to be stressed and more vulnerable to disease. Mild, wet winters create ideal conditions for disease and pests to spread.

2.32 Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is forecast to kill approximately 80% of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees across the UK [See reference 27]. Trees in woodlands with high proportions of ash are likely to decline more quickly. Herefordshire is in the top 10 counties for its percentage coverage of ash canopy in woodland [See reference 28]. The county contains more than 500,000 fully grown / mature ash trees (outside woodland), ash is the most numerous hedgerow tree and 17% of highway side trees are ash. Woodland dominated by ash covers approximately 6,500 hectares (<25%) of all broadleaved woodland in the county and ash trees comprise 10% of all the trees recorded in the Ancient Tree Inventory for Herefordshire [See reference 29]. The Ash Health Monitoring Pilot, managed by the Herefordshire Tree Warden Network, shows the distribution of the disease across the county.

2.33 According to Forest Research, acute oak decline, caused by multiple agents, is increasingly present along the Welsh borders. For infection to occur, it is likely that trees need to be weakened and made vulnerable by certain factors, including drought and water logging (due to exacerbated by climate change) [See reference 30]. Ash dieback, acute oak decline, *Phytophthora*, horse chestnut bleeding canker and horse chestnut leaf miner are all cited in the Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan as of particular concern [See reference 31]. Detrimental effects on landscape character due to the effects of Ash dieback and alder *Phytophthora* are also highlighted within the Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan [See reference 32].

2.34 The spread of Dutch elm disease resulted in the death of virtually all the mature English elms in Herefordshire during the 1970s, impacting on landscape character. Replacing dead or felled trees with a diverse range of native trees provides an opportunity to re-establish other native trees and create resilience for the future. Herefordshire Tree Wardens are currently developing a plan to produce different varieties of trees available that are resistant to Dutch elm disease.

2.35 Increasing populations of deer and grey squirrel are affecting the biodiversity and viability of woodlands across Herefordshire. Grey squirrels cause considerable

damage to broadleaf woodland by bark stripping. This damage will cost the economy an estimated £18.6 million a year under a moderate scenario in damaged timber, lost carbon capture, and tree replacements [See reference 33]. Lack of natural regeneration due to high deer browsing pressure is a principal reason for the county's SSSI's not being in favourable condition. Deer particularly target young trees, a factor requiring consideration when setting tree planting ambitions.

Inappropriate management

2.36 Identified factors contributing to inappropriate management of the Herefordshire treescape are listed below:

- Despite an increased ambition for street tree planting across Herefordshire, inconsistencies in ongoing maintenance result in variations in successful establishment;
- Inappropriate forestry operations (including insensitive felling operations, inappropriate planting methods and track installations);
- Lack of active woodland management resulting in a general loss of biodiversity, particularly those species that are dependent on the cyclic light to shade development in woods;
- Lack of management of some private woodland (identified within the Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan);
- As land managers retire, skills are lost leading to a general loss of traditional agricultural and woodland management practices and skills. This includes orchard management, coppicing and hedge laying (identified within the Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan and Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan);
- Need for specialised (and costly) skills and machinery to deal effectively with ash die back;
- Lack of collaborative and holistic landscape management; and
- Administrative complexity due to the range of woodland strategies and plans covering different areas (identified within the Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan).

Pressures from development

2.37 The treescape can be vulnerable to future development and / or the construction of infrastructure. Potential impacts include fragmentation and habitat disturbance, as well as variations to soil composition and site drainage. The effects of reduced tree health due to pollution or other cumulative effects also pose risks to the existing tree stock on or within close proximity to development sites.

Lack of legal protection and enforcement

2.38 Trees, woodland and hedgerows are afforded a degree of legal protection within the UK. However, the issue of how protection is enforced in the context of limited resources (staffing and funding) for administration is a key consideration within Herefordshire. A summary of the legal protection available to trees is listed below:

- LPAs have a statutory duty to consider the protection and planting of trees when granting planning permission for proposed development. Often planning conditions are used by LPAs as a means of securing the retention of trees, hedgerows and other soft landscaping on sites during development and for the stated establishment period.
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) – administered by the LPA to protect specific trees, groups of trees and woodlands of amenity value. A TPO prohibits cutting or damaging of trees without LPA written consent. Guidance explaining the legislation governing TPOs is available from UK Government [\[See reference 34\]](#).
- Conservation Areas – If a tree in a conservation area is not protected by a TPO the LPA has to be consulted on any proposed work. Guidance explaining the legislation governing tree protection in conservation areas is available from UK Government [\[See reference 34\]](#).
- Felling licence – administered by the Forestry Commission
- SSSI – fines for any activity that recklessly or intentionally harms the SSSI flora and fauna;

- Restrictive covenants – continue with the land despite changes in land ownership.

2.39 The existing Hedgerows Regulations 1997 prohibit the removal of countryside hedgerows, or parts of them, without first seeking approval from the LPA [See reference 35]. In addition, the Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 [See reference 36] state the requirements for hedgerow management, providing a consistent approach for their protection across the country. This includes the requirement for a two metre ‘buffer strip’ where no cultivation or application of pesticides or fertilisers is permitted, as well as a hedge cutting ban between 1 March and 31 August to protect nesting birds. As set out in the regulations, the Rural payments Agency (RPA) acts as the regulator in respect of the management of hedgerows on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Archaeological and heritage considerations

2.40 Above and below ground heritage / archaeology (designated and undesignated) provide a constraint to tree and hedgerow planting within Herefordshire. This issue is particularly apparent when attempting to retrofit trees within the historic core of Hereford City and the five market towns. Heritage features should be fully considered in any planting proposal within the county.

2.41 The historical significance and ecological benefits of hedgerows should also be recognised when preparing planting proposals. Replanting and hedge widening schemes need to be informed by decisions relating to archaeology and heritage. Proposals should also aim to conserve characteristic dry stone / limestone walled boundaries within the landscape.

2.42 The county currently includes many single species hedgerows. However, this hasn’t always been the case in Herefordshire. Furthermore, over the last 20 years hedge planting has typically changed from three species to a heritage mix making it difficult to identify the age of a hedge using species identification. From an archaeological perspective, hedgerow planting should follow historic land parcels, albeit on a case by case basis.

Constraints to the delivery of tree planting across Herefordshire

2.43 This section provides a summary of the constraints to the delivery of tree planting across Herefordshire. **Figure 2.12** illustrates the findings of public consultation when respondents were asked to identify the most significant barrier to the success of tree planting initiatives across the county.

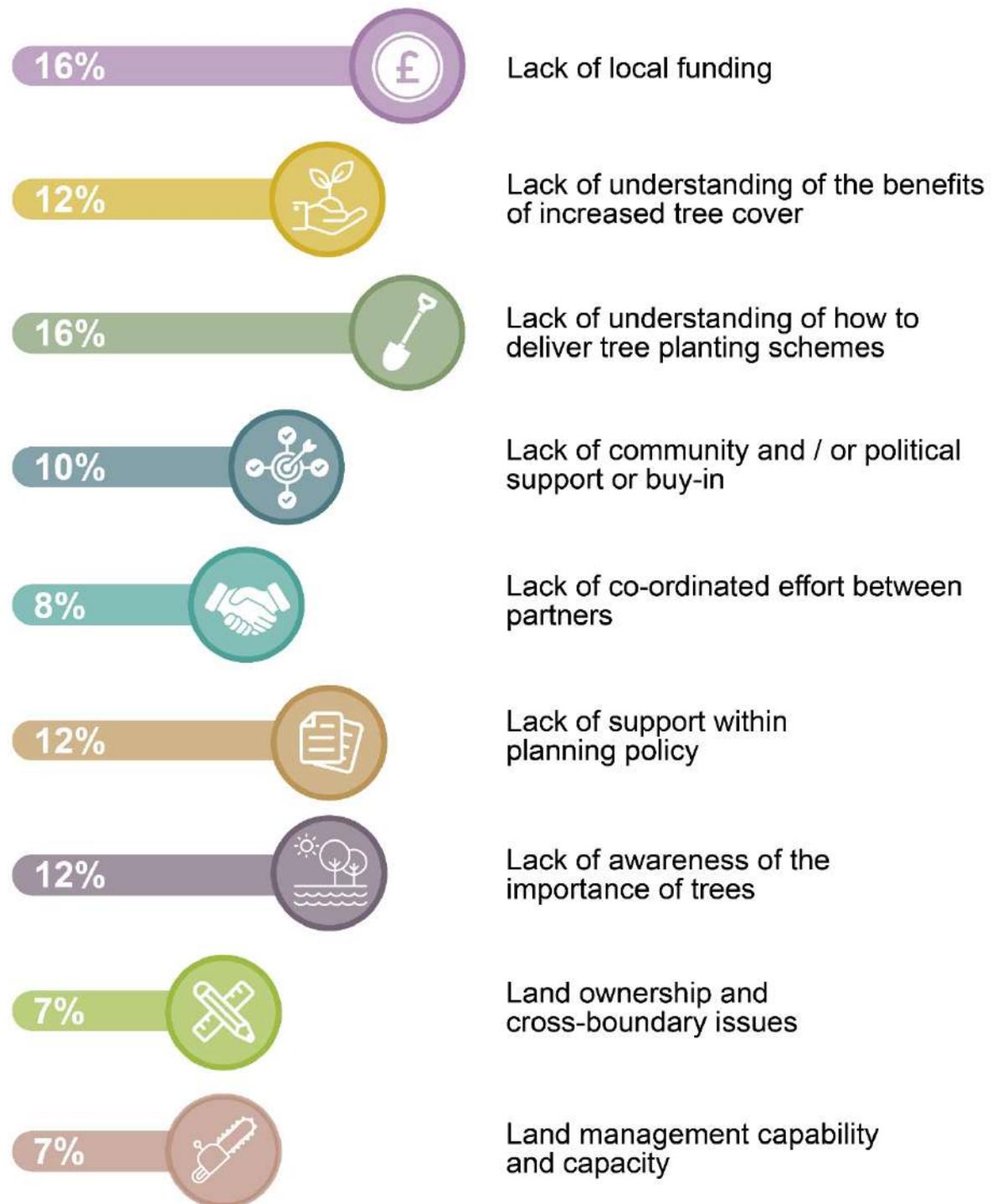
What is the greatest barrier to the delivery of increased tree planting within Herefordshire?

As indicated by **Figure 2.12**, the lack of a clear consensus regarding the most significant barrier to the delivery of tree planting initiatives implies that this is a multi-faceted issue across the county.

'Lack of local funding' and 'lack of understanding of how to deliver tree planting schemes' were the most common responses highlighted by the public within the public survey. Lack of support within the planning system as well as poor awareness of the importance of trees / benefits of increasing tree cover were also identified as barriers, albeit to a lesser extent. Land ownership and cross-boundary issues were regarded as barriers of less pressing importance within the county.

Some respondents provided further explanation, emphasising that funding opportunities, as well as limited skills / knowledge of planting establishment present key barriers. However, lack of community engagement, accessibility, as well as a streamlined approach to tree planting with clear targets, were also raised by many respondents.

Figure 2.12: Which of the following factors presents the greatest barrier to the delivery of increased tree planting within Herefordshire?



What is the greatest barrier to the delivery of increased tree planting within Herefordshire?

The engagement findings demonstrate a general consensus between public and stakeholder consultation regarding barriers to the delivery of increased tree planting. A summary of observations from technical stakeholders during the workshop are listed below:

- **Complex funding / grant processes:** Issues highlighted include the length of time required to gain approval, lack of publicity for funding pots and fear of 'claw back' on funding if a scheme fails. Difficulties in dealing with multiple agencies to gain grant approvals was also noted.
- **Lack of awareness of the importance and benefits of trees:** In particular, trees outside woodland are often less well valued. The time taken for trees to reach maturity often means that the people don't fully realise their benefits.
- **Risk averse approach to the retention of trees:** Trees may be unnecessarily felled due to concerns regarding liability.
- **Limited funding for long term management:** Funding is often focussed on tree planting and implementation rather than the full period of establishment management.
- **Lack of community and / or political support or buy in:** Tree planting initiatives are in competition with a number of competing priorities.
- **Pests and diseases (including deer and squirrel):** Reduce success rates of planting schemes.
- **Land ownership and cross boundary issues:** The availability of land for purchase and planting can form a constraint to delivery of woodland creation. The need to undertake detailed consultations to overcome land use issues at specific sites can also be time consuming.
- **Not all land within the county is suitable for tree planting due to the presence of valued habitats and protected landscapes:** The principle of 'the right tree in the right place' should be applied when designing / planning

tree planting schemes. The competing pressures for land use (development, agriculture and energy production) was also emphasised.

- **Lack of understanding regarding emerging initiatives:** This includes the use and application of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Woodland Carbon Code and Woodland Carbon Credits.
- **Extent of spatial constraints:** Often a key issue within urban contexts due to competing land uses. The presence of utility apparatus, service runs and the requirement for visibility splays often provide constraints to tree planting.
- **Lack of understanding of appropriate management and maintenance:** Decline and limited availability of skilled landscape managers and contractors to deliver establishment management.

Chapter 3

Summary of existing policy and targets

3.1 This chapter outlines relevant targets and provisions at the national and local level relating to tree, hedgerow and woodland coverage, with the aim of informing specific targets for the county. **Figure 3.1** provides a summary of policy context within Herefordshire. A detailed review of policy context relevant to treescape enhancements is included in **Appendix A**.

National context

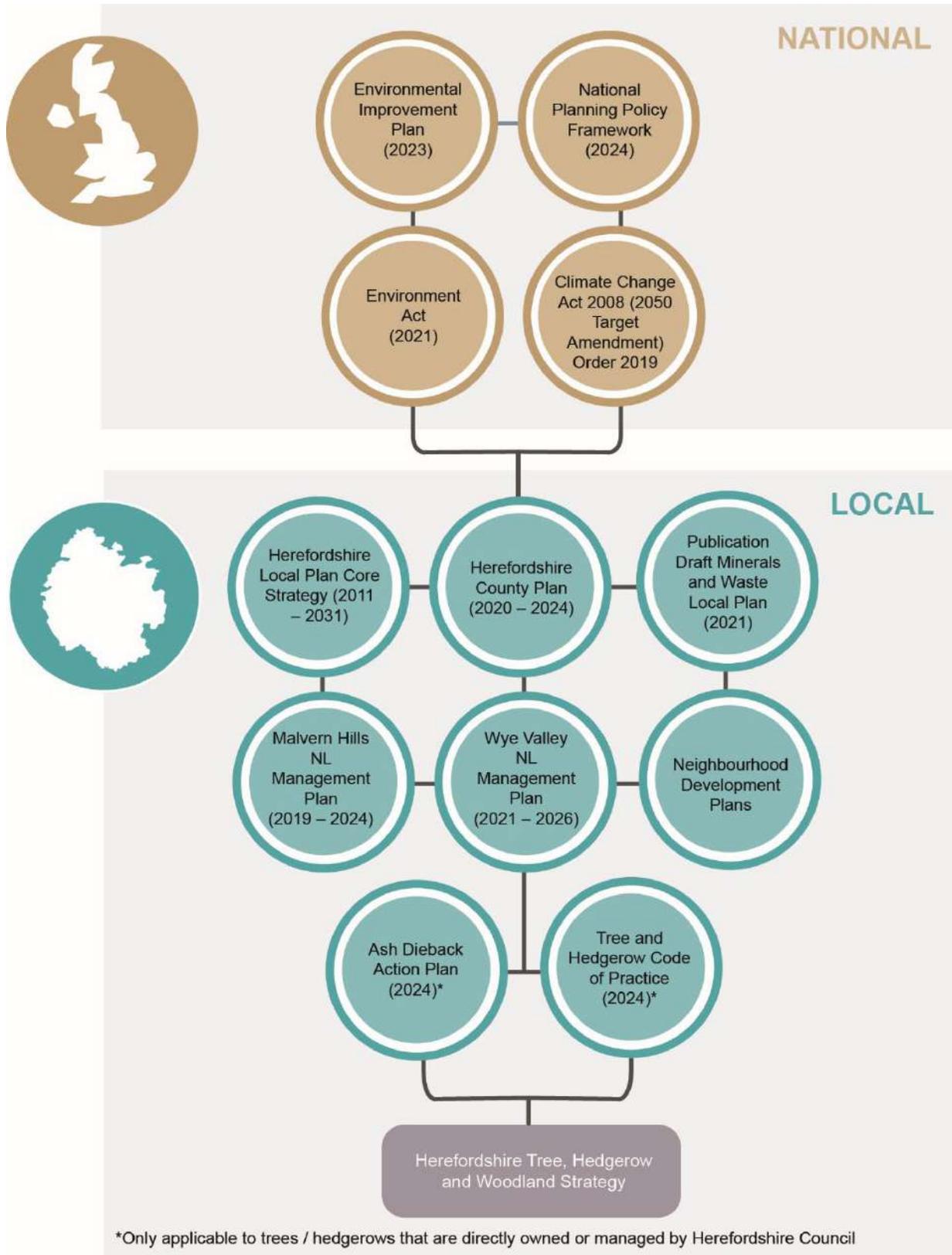
3.2 The principal drivers behind the delivery of tree planting at the national level include:

- Environmental Improvement Plan;
- National Planning Policy Framework (as amended in December 2024);
- Environment Act; and
- Climate Change Act.

Environmental Improvement Plan

3.3 The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) for England **[See reference 37]** provides an approach to engagement with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver key goals for improving the environment. Long-term environmental objectives focus on biodiversity recovery, climate resilience, and sustainable land use. These predominantly fall under **Goal 1: Thriving Plants and Wildlife**, which aims to: create more joined up space for nature on land; restore protected sites on land; and manage woodlands for biodiversity, climate and sustainable forestry.

Figure 3.1: Policy context



Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- Increase tree and woodland cover from 14.5% to 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050.
- Interim target to increase cover by 0.26% (34,000 ha) by 31 January 2028. This is part of a broader goal to expand woodland across the UK through urban tree planting and the creation of woodlands in rural areas, which will contribute significantly to carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement.

3.4 The Forestry Commission and Natural England issued a joint response [See reference 38] relating to their position on woodland creation following publication of the EIP. Specific reference is placed on ensuring that new woodlands comply with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) in order to promote environmental net gain and deliver a range of public and societal benefits. The Forestry Commission holds an open data portal with land sensitivity maps to ensure any new planting avoids important historic environment sites. In conjunction, the Forestry Commission is also in the process of developing opportunity mapping to identify suitable areas for woodland creation.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.5 At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) [See reference 39] emphasises the multiple benefits of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The document emphasises the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into planning processes, promoting not only the conservation of existing trees and woodlands but also the creation of new green spaces that enhance urban resilience to climate change. It recognises the multifaceted value of trees and woodlands in supporting biodiversity, alleviating flood risk, improving air quality, and enhancing the wellbeing of communities. The NPPF's approach helps ensure that future developments contribute positively to both the natural environment and the quality of life in urban areas.

Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- **Tree-lined streets and green spaces** (Section 12, Paragraph 136). This provision highlights the role of trees in urban design, stating that planning policies and decisions should ensure the incorporation of tree-lined streets and other green spaces, such as parks and community orchards.
- **Recognition of natural capital and ecosystem services** (Section 15, Paragraph 187). The NPPF places a strong emphasis on recognising the wider benefits provided by trees and woodlands, particularly in relation to natural capital and ecosystem services.
- **Strategic approaches to green infrastructure** (Section 15, Paragraph 181 and Section 15, Paragraph 199). This section promotes a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats, including trees and woodlands across wider geographical areas and in Air Quality Management Areas / Clean Air Zones.
- **Protection of ancient woodlands and veteran trees** (Section 15, Paragraph 193c). The NPPF sets strict criteria for developments that may impact ancient woodlands or veteran trees, emphasising that such habitats should not be removed or damaged unless there are “wholly exceptional reasons”, and compensatory measures are in place. This provision is critical for safeguarding irreplaceable habitats, which are essential for biodiversity, carbon storage, and heritage conservation.

Environment Act

3.6 Published in 2021, the Environment Act [[See reference 40](#)] includes significant provisions related to hedgerows, trees, and woodland, particularly in **Part 6 Nature and Biodiversity**, that reflect the UK’s commitment to enhancing biodiversity and addressing environmental challenges. Environmental target priority areas include air quality, water, biodiversity, resource efficiency and waste reduction, and under each, long-term targets are set out in regard to the natural environment and people’s enjoyment of the environment.

Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- **Protection and Enhancement of Trees:** One of the key components of the Act is the protection of trees, especially ancient woodlands. The Act strengthens measures to prevent illegal felling and introduces enhanced enforcement power for the Forestry Commission. This is critical for preserving the ecological value of trees and woodlands, which contribute to carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
- **Tree and Woodland Planting:** The Act promotes the expansion of woodland cover in England. Increasing tree cover is part of the wider government commitment to achieving net zero emissions and improving environmental resilience.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** The Act includes the strengthening of requirements in national planning policy on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This includes the planting of trees and creation of woodland areas, which helps integrate natural elements into urban planning and counters biodiversity loss.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS):** The Act establishes LNRS as a framework for identifying key areas for habitat restoration, including the planting of trees and the conservation of hedgerows. Reference is also made to the development of a Nature Recovery Network which seeks to provide an additional 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat amongst other plans for landscape-scale recovery for woodlands, peatland, and natural flood management [\[See reference 41\]](#).
- **Hedgerow Protection:** The Act recognises the importance of hedgerows as wildlife corridors and their role in supporting biodiversity. While the specifics of hedgerow protection are primarily covered under existing legislation, the Act complements these by emphasising the broader goals of habitat connectivity and biodiversity.

Climate Change Act

3.7 The Climate Change Act was amended in 2019 to include a legally binding commitment for the UK to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 [\[See](#)

reference 42]. The Act underscores the essential role of natural habitats, including woodlands, hedgerows, and peatlands, in carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement.

Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- In 2018, the Climate Change Committee advised that UK tree cover should be increased from 13% to 17–19% of the UK's land area as part of the Government's effort to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

England Trees Action Plan

3.8 Published by the Government in 2021, the England Trees Action Plan sets out the central role trees should play in achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- Reference to 'at least trebling woodland creation rates in England'. The plan states that England will have at least 12% woodland cover by the mid-century.

Local context

3.9 There are several key strategies and plans that underpin environmental considerations in Herefordshire's local context. These are outlined below.

National Landscape Management Plans

3.10 Just over half (58.5%) of the Malvern Hills National Landscape lies within Herefordshire. The Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 (currently being updated) outlines the management priorities for the Malvern Hills and surrounding areas, emphasising the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Similarly, the Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026 (currently being updated, with the new document set to be in place from 2026) outlines a comprehensive strategy for conserving and enhancing the landscape's natural beauty. The Wye Valley National Landscape is characterised by approximately 27.5% woodland cover. Both documents will be required to account of the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF).

Relevant published treescape planting targets

- Target 8 of the PLTOF requires a 3% increase in tree and woodland cover (combined) across the total land area of protected landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).
- Individual protected landscape organisations are working with relevant local partners to set their own individual contribution, which will be embedded in their management plan (currently being updated). The target for both the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes could therefore be more or less than 3% depending on what is agreed. Natural England are supporting this process to ensure contributions are fair and add up to the national total [\[See reference 43\]](#).

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 / Local Plan 2021-2041

3.11 The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 [\[See reference 44\]](#) is the primary document guiding strategic planning and future development in the county, ensuring that economic growth, housing, and infrastructure needs are

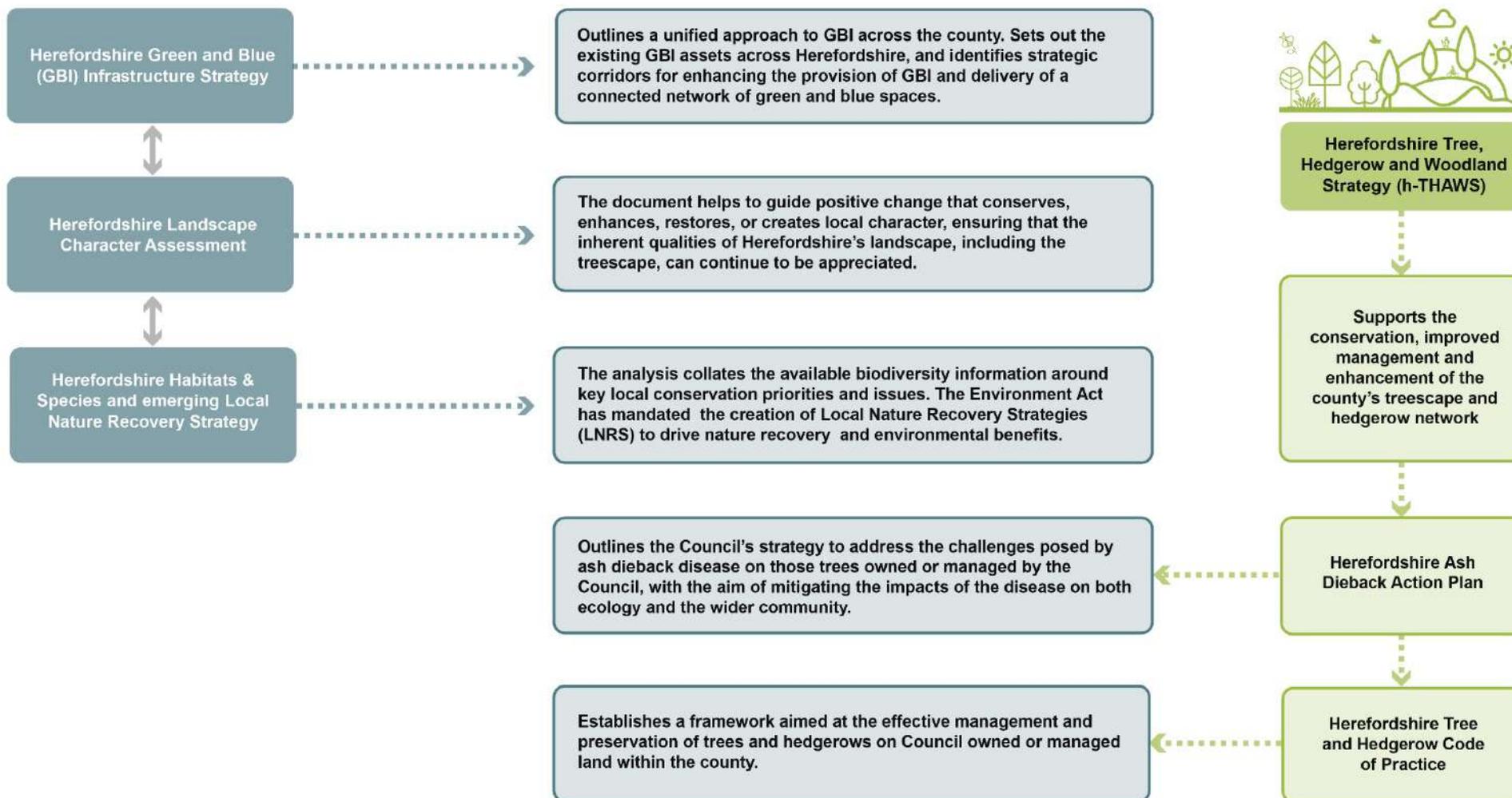
balanced with environmental sustainability. The document ensures that development within the county is not only economically and socially beneficial but also environmentally sustainable. By focusing on the protection and enhancement of hedgerows, trees, and woodlands, the document supports wider national and international efforts to address environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change.

3.12 The Council is in the process of updating this current Local Plan Core Strategy. The Local Plan 2021-2041 will set out the planning framework for the county for the period to 2041. **Figure 3.2** summarises the relationship between this Strategy and other existing evidence base and guidance documents produced by the Council.

Relevant provisions relating to the treescape

- A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy was produced by the Council as part of the Natural Environment Evidence to support the delivery of the new Local Plan, covering the period 2021-2041. The document recommends the inclusion of a robust tree policy which sets the expectation for both urban and rural tree planting within Herefordshire's emerging Local Plan.
- The GBI Strategy makes reference to a 20% overall canopy cover for the county, with targets for specific urban locations due to be defined as part of the future Tree and Woodland Strategy. It is also recommended that specific targets are also determined for Hereford and the market towns, in line with any plans for an Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard.

Figure 3.2: Linkages to other Council evidence base documents and guidance



Ash Dieback Action Plan

3.13 The Herefordshire Ash Dieback Action Plan [\[See reference 45\]](#) outlines the Council's strategy to address the challenges posed by ash dieback disease on ash trees directly owned or managed by the Council. With an estimated 500,000 ash trees in the county, which constitute a significant portion of the landscape and biodiversity, the document aims to mitigate the impacts of this disease on both ecological and community levels. The document aligns with national strategies, such as those established by DEFRA and the Tree Council, which promote sustainable tree management and biodiversity conservation. The Council's actions are intended to support wider governmental goals concerning climate resilience and ecological health. Additionally, the plan aligns with Herefordshire's broader ecological strategies, including the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice

3.14 The Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice [\[See reference 46\]](#) establishes a framework aimed at the effective management and preservation of trees and hedgerows on Council owned or managed land within the county. The document does not apply to any trees in private ownership. This document emphasises the critical role that trees and hedgerows play in supporting biodiversity, enhancing landscape character, and contributing to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration.

Herefordshire Local Transport Plan

3.15 The Herefordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2016-2031 consists of Strategy [\[See reference 47\]](#) and Policy [\[See reference 48\]](#) documents. Both documents promote the integration of green infrastructure within the county's transport network to support environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation. To minimise the environmental impacts of transport infrastructure and highway works, the document outlines several policies and strategies, many of which relate to the

implementation, maintenance and management of trees and woodlands within the county.

Herefordshire Highway Maintenance Plan

3.16 The Herefordshire Highway Maintenance Plan (2024) [See reference 49] sets out the system for inspection and repair of publicly owned highways overseen by the Council. The document discusses the importance of trees, shrubs and hedgerows adjacent to the highway network, as well as maintenance challenges. Recommendations include planting trees suited to the local climate, regular inspection of trees for signs of disease and damage, and the use of sustainable methods to control weeds and pests.

Relevant guidance relating to tree canopy coverage

3.17 An overview of national and local guidance relating to tree canopy coverage are provided in **Figures 3.3** and **3.4**.

Figure 3.3: Summary of national guidance relating to tree canopy coverage

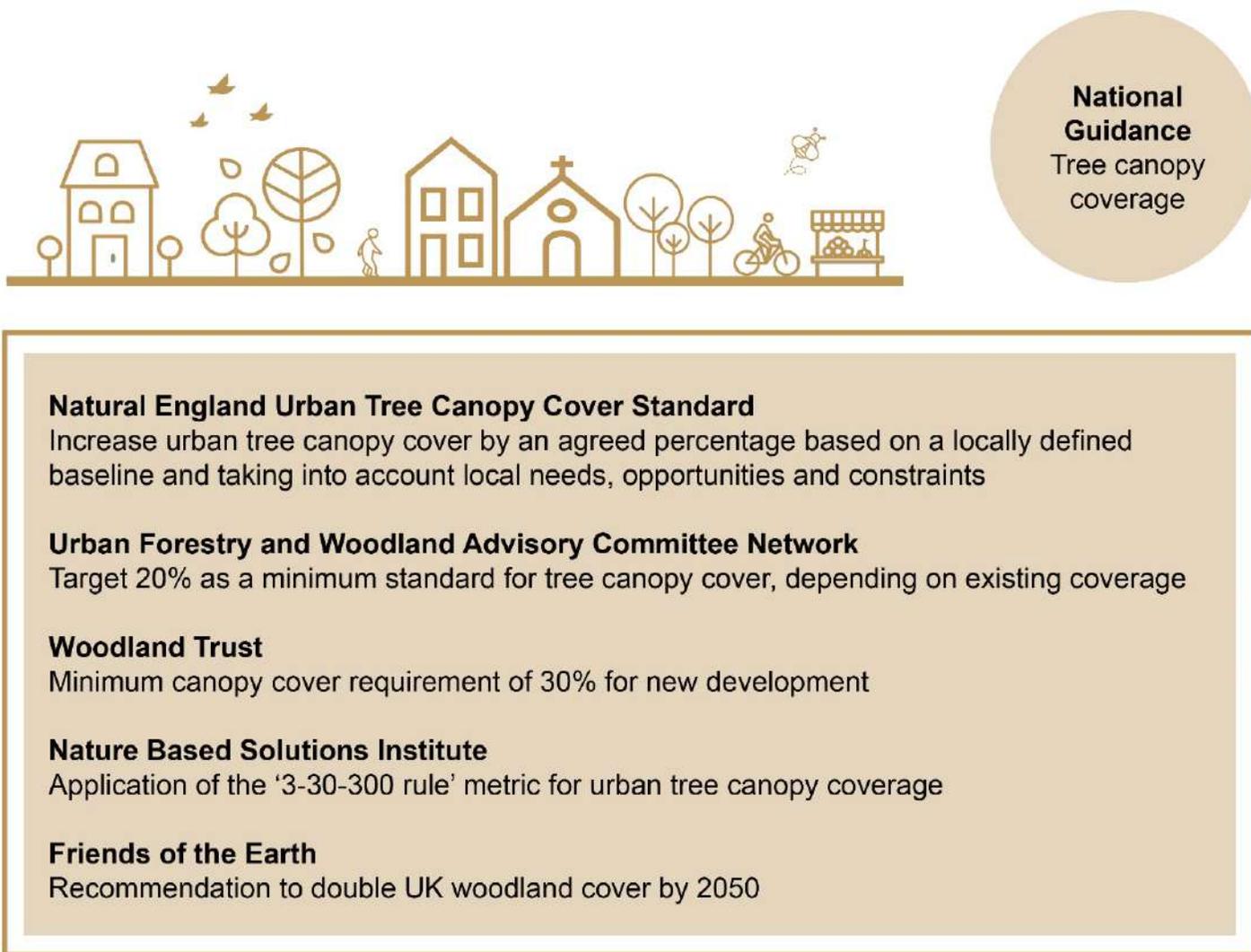


Figure 3.4: Summary of local guidance relating to tree canopy coverage



Natural England Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

3.18 Forming one of the five ‘headline standards’ in the Natural England GI Framework [See reference 50], the Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard aims to increase tree canopy cover in urban environments to an agreed local target percentage cover. A tree canopy standard recognises the wider range of ecosystem services which large, canopied tree species can provide, and moves beyond a narrow focus on the overall number of trees. The Natural England GI Framework recommends that the exact target should be set locally and identified based on an understanding of local needs and constraints.

3.19 The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework and its ‘headline standards’ are voluntary, but are designed to help meet national and local planning policy. At a local level, the ‘Descriptive Principles of GI’ (as defined by Natural England to underpin the GI Framework) were used to structure the Herefordshire GBI Strategy to guide the delivery of good quality GBI in the county.

3.20 The area-wide standard requires urban tree canopy cover to be increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline which takes into account local needs, opportunities and constraints. These include factors such as existing tree canopy cover, landscape character, other vegetation and habitats, topography and soils. The major development standard requires major residential and commercial development to be designed to meet locally set targets within the development site. It also requires new and existing trees to be incorporated into new developments and that all new streets are tree lined (as per existing requirements within the NPPF).

Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network

3.21 Research from the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee network suggests that towns and cities should aspire to increase overall tree canopy cover from their current baseline. It is recommended that a minimum standard for tree canopy cover is set for a local area, with evidence indicating that 20% ‘is a good aspiration’, depending on the existing coverage [See reference 51].

Woodland Trust

3.22 The Woodland Trust recommends a new long-term target to reduce inequalities in urban tree cover and improve tree equity, by increasing native canopy cover in England to 16%. This includes a minimum canopy cover requirement of 30% for new development [See reference 52]. The expansion of UK woodland cover from its current baseline of 13% to 19% by 2050 is also supported. In addition, standards to ensure woodlands are more accessible are also promoted. This includes the following principles [See reference 53]:

- Nobody should live more than 500 metres from accessible woodland of no less than two hectares; and
- There should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 hectares within four kilometres of people's homes.

Nature Based Solutions Institute

3.23 The '3-30-300 rule' metric for urban tree canopy coverage is promoted by the Nature Based Solutions Institute and sets a minimum standard for access to nature in urban areas for human well-being. This guideline aims to provide equitable access to trees and green spaces by setting the thresholds of at least three well-established trees in view from every home, school, and place of work, no less than a 30% tree canopy in every neighbourhood; and no more than 300 metres to the nearest public green space from every residence.

Friends of the Earth

3.24 Research and mapping analysis by Friends of the Earth [see reference 14] indicates that areas with the highest levels of social deprivation have far fewer trees than wealthier neighbourhoods. The study recommends the doubling of UK woodland cover by 2050 in recognition of the critical role of the treescape in addressing nature loss, climate adaptation and mental wellbeing. 2% of neighbourhoods in Herefordshire lie within the most deprived 10% of areas across England.

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

3.25 In support of the Council's declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust propose that the existing tree canopy cover baseline of '10-20%' in the county is increased by at least 50% by 2030. Specific emphasis is placed on the principle of the 'right tree in the right place', protecting existing trees and additional tree planting.

More Trees for Hereford Strategy

3.26 Produced in conjunction with the Herefordshire Tree Forum, this document supports the case for maintaining and increasing tree cover in Hereford City from an existing baseline of approximately 15% to a target of 25%. The protection and continued maintenance of the existing tree stock is acknowledged as the starting point for any expansion of tree canopy cover, with opportunities for future tree planting also supported. Guidance relating to the siting of trees within a range of contexts is provided; including publicly owned open space, highways, streets, privately-owned open space, schools and churches.

Chapter 4

The shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape

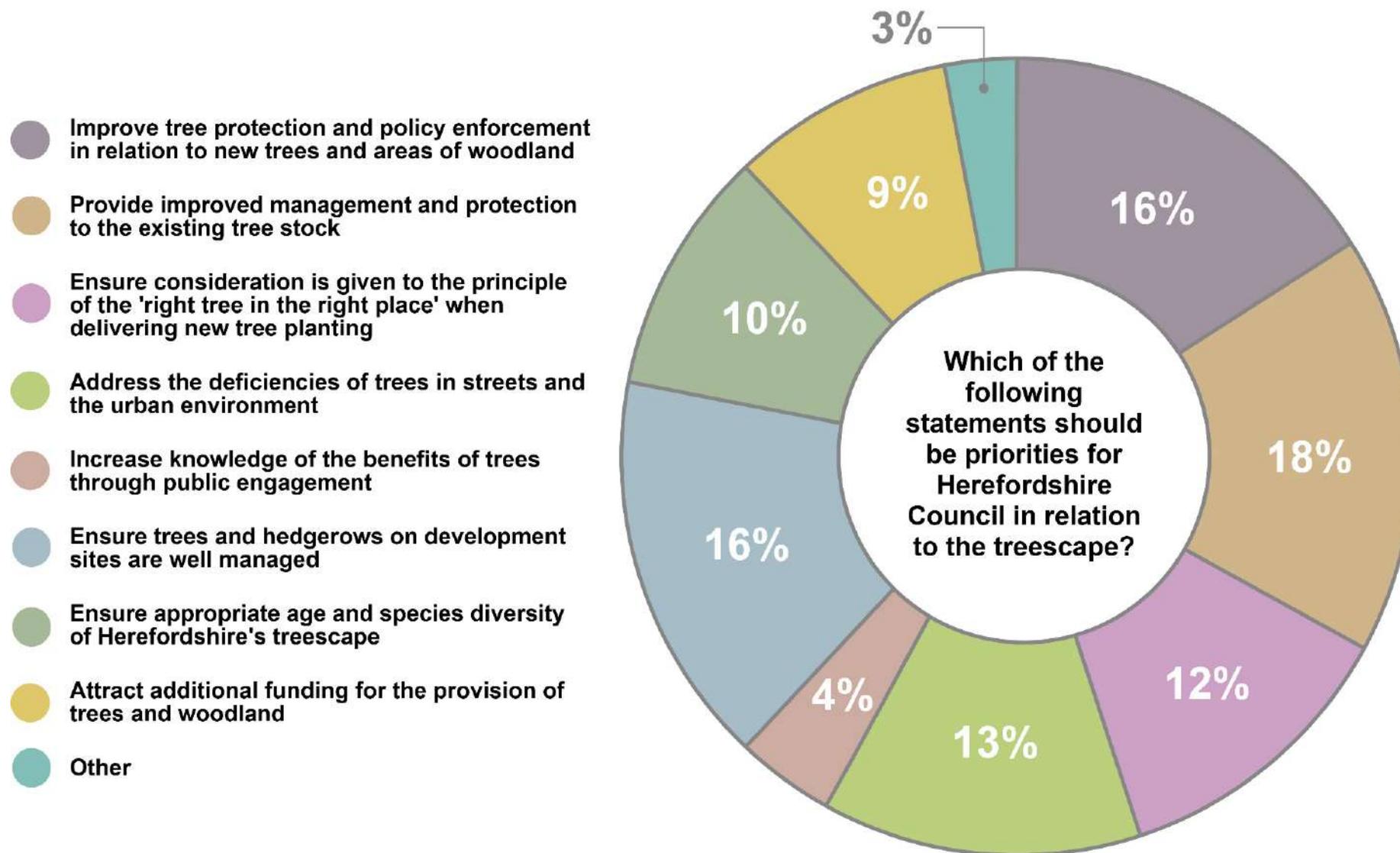
4.1 The shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape has been developed through a process of collaborative working to gain support at an early stage from interested stakeholders and the general public.

Development of the shared vision

4.2 The shared vision statement establishes the overall strategic direction for the Strategy, including the development of key supporting objectives. Developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders, the shared vision is for everyone within Herefordshire, with the aim of accelerating action. Public perception relating to priorities for the Council in relation to the treescape (see **Figure 4.1**) were also considered.

4.3 Developed to ensure alignment with the underpinning ambitions of the Herefordshire GBI Strategy, the shared vision has been produced to provide an overarching framework to guide investment and management of Herefordshire's treescape. The shared vision emphasises the need for bold and collaborative action to maximise the extensive benefits offered by trees and woodlands across the county.

Figure 4.1: Which of the following statements should be priorities for the Council in relation to the treescape?



What are the priorities in relation to Herefordshire's treescape?

As shown in **Figure 4.1**, there was no dominant response or overriding factor when participants were asked to identify their key priority in relation to Herefordshire's future treescape. However, issues relating to the management of existing trees and hedgerows (18%), including those delivered on development sites (16%), was recognised by a total of 34% of respondents. Closely linked to management, 10% of participants highlighted the importance of future measures to ensure appropriate age and species diversity of the treescape.

The need for improvements to tree protection and policy enforcement was recognised by 16% of participants. Support was also given to initiatives to address the deficiencies of trees in streets and the urban environment (13%), as well as the importance of adherence to the principle of the 'right tree in the right place' (12%). Only 4% of respondents considered that a key priority of the Council should be the delivery of increased public engagement to promote increased knowledge of the benefits of trees. Consideration should instead be given to enhancing public awareness of trees as a partnership objective within the Strategy.

Refinement of the shared vision

4.4 Stakeholder consultation was used as a platform to inform the development of the shared vision for the Strategy. Inputs from participants are summarised below.

Findings from stakeholder consultation to inform the shared vision

- Emphasise the distinctiveness of Herefordshire's treescape; including tracts of riparian woodland characteristic of the River Wye catchment as well as the network of traditional orchards;
- Differentiate between the approaches required to enhance the treescape within the range of urban and rural contexts within the county;
- Consider the inclusion of separate canopy cover targets for different settings within Herefordshire;
- Include clear language relating to connectivity as a mechanism to address habitat fragmentation;
- Request that the Strategy is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, forming a material consideration in the planning process; and
- Ensure sufficient reference is included to the protection of the existing treescape, coupled with woodland creation.

4.5 The shared vision was subsequently refined and finalised in responses to feedback received at the stakeholder workshop. The statement is outlined below, together with a summary graphic (see **Figure 4.2**).

Shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape

To create and sustainably manage a thriving network of trees, woodland, traditional orchards, riparian vegetation, wood pasture & parkland, species-rich hedges and hedgerow trees across the county. The treescape will connect across the urban and rural landscapes of Herefordshire, delivering multiple benefits for people, place and nature – now and into the future.

Figure 4.2: The shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape



Development of strategic objectives

4.6 The overarching vision is supported by a series of strategic objectives (see **Figure 4.3**) which will help guide the delivery of the Strategy and should be considered when making decisions regarding future tree planting. Informed by feedback from stakeholders, each strategic objective has been used to structure the action plan (see **Chapter 6**) and will form the basis for monitoring the future success of the Strategy.

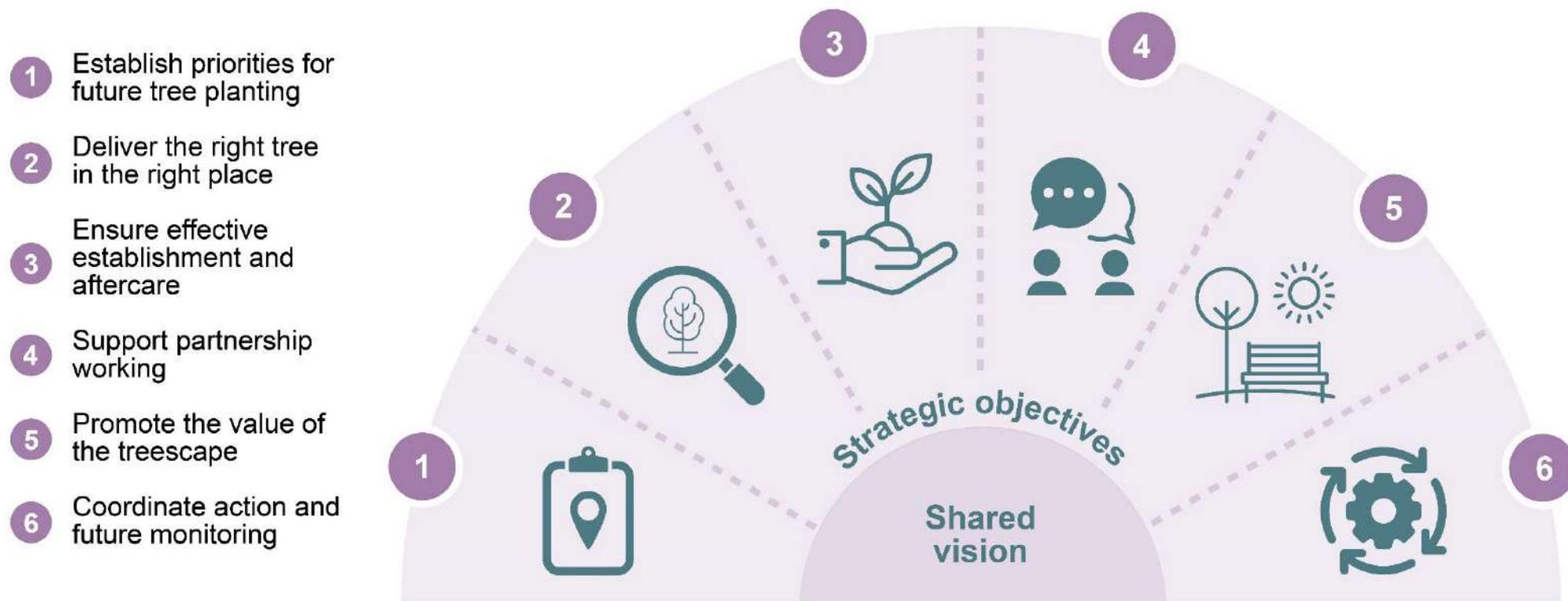
Findings from stakeholder consultation to inform the strategic objectives

- Include reference to the 'right tree in the right place' as a guiding principle of the Strategy.
- Target tree planting and management solutions in areas of greatest need to maximise benefits.
- Ensure linkages to national and local targets for tree planting, including aims for urban tree canopy coverage. Specific targets should be measurable and able to be reviewed annually.
- Planting proposals should include consideration of historic landscape character, designated and non-designated heritage assets and character of existing woodlands to inform the design and proposed species composition.
- The management of existing woodland cover should include reference to the UKFS, the technical standard for sustainable forest management.
- Support community involvement and partnership working. Include clear references to potential funding opportunities and delivery partners in order to promote collaborative working.

Strategic objectives to support the shared vision

- 1. Establish priorities for future tree planting:** Establish measurable tree establishment targets within both urban and rural contexts within the county.
- 2. Deliver the right tree in the right place:** Carefully select appropriate species which respond to local character and distinctiveness, support biodiversity, consider heritage constraints and embed resilience to future challenges.
- 3. Ensure effective establishment and aftercare:** Commit to maintenance and management to ensure the successful establishment, active management and ongoing monitoring of the treescape.
- 4. Support partnership working:** Work collaboratively at all levels, and across boundaries, to share knowledge and align with other supporting initiatives.
- 5. Promote the value of the treescape:** Lead by example by promoting the benefits of the urban forest and the rural treescape, including contributions to national and local policy relating to climate change and nature recovery.
- 6. Coordinate action and future monitoring:** Identify and secure ongoing funding opportunities for woodland creation, establishment and long term management.

Figure 4.3: Strategic objectives to support the shared vision



Chapter 5

Proposed targets and outcomes

5.1 This chapter sets effective targets and outcomes for the Strategy, set within the framework of the six strategic objectives of the shared vision defined in the preceding chapter. The outcomes are also framed in the context of local and national ambitions for the treescape, as summarised in **Chapter 3**. The targets aim to build on and make clear links with other relevant Local Plan evidence base documents, such as the Herefordshire GBI Strategy.

Proposed headline outcomes and targets organised by objective



1. Establish priorities for future tree planting

Increase the average canopy coverage in the county to 20% by 2041, with a 30% ‘stretch’ target for urban areas

5.2 Identify where and how tree canopy can be increased effectively, sustainably and collaboratively over time. This should be achieved through the establishment of an average canopy cover percentage target for the county, rather than a numerical target based on the number of trees planted (as this would not capture any tree losses). This approach aims to provide flexibility at the county scale, with the ability to respond to changes in national targets or priorities.

5.3 Tree canopy coverage should be increased to 20% by 2041 in accordance with Herefordshire Council’s overall target for the county and in accordance with the minimum standard recommended by the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network. To drive future ambition, an aspirational or ‘stretch target’ of 30% tree canopy coverage for Hereford City and the five market towns should also be considered to meet the ‘3-30-300’ rule, as recommended by the Nature Based Solutions Institute.

Deliver planting in areas of greatest need

5.4 Establish where more trees are required to help meet the range of individual ecosystem services needs and direct tree planting strategically to guide planting in

areas of greatest need to address environmental inequalities. This includes promoting equity of access to trees by prioritising an increase in tree canopy cover and weighting action to areas which fall below the county average. Specific emphasis should be placed on delivering tree planting in the six wards identified as currently comprising less than 10% tree canopy cover (Bobblestock, Leominster South, Leominster West, Red Hill, Whitecross and Widemarsh).

Adopt an urban tree canopy cover standard for development proposals

5.5 Due to the number of barriers and constraints in delivering trees within existing built contexts, future development is likely to form a major contributor to the delivery of new tree planting. The Council should therefore seek to adopt an urban tree canopy cover standard to ensure that canopy cover is increased as part of all major development within Herefordshire.

5.6 It is recommended that the standard includes reference to a percentage increase (not just an overall target percentage) to prevent potential limitations of a blanket standard such as prioritising woodland at the expense of a more species-rich mix of habitats. Proposals should include a minimum of 20% canopy cover, or at least a 15% *increase* in existing canopy cover, whichever is greatest. However, the wording must be such that if the development site has no existing trees that canopy cover is still increased and these sites are not excluded by their baseline being zero. As outlined within the NPPF (2024), all new streets within residential developments should be tree lined.

Implement a process for identification of new tree planting locations across Herefordshire

5.7 Proactively identify locations for new tree planting in order to have a bank of sites ready for consideration for each tree planting season. New planting sites should be identified as described below:

Chapter 5 Proposed targets and outcomes

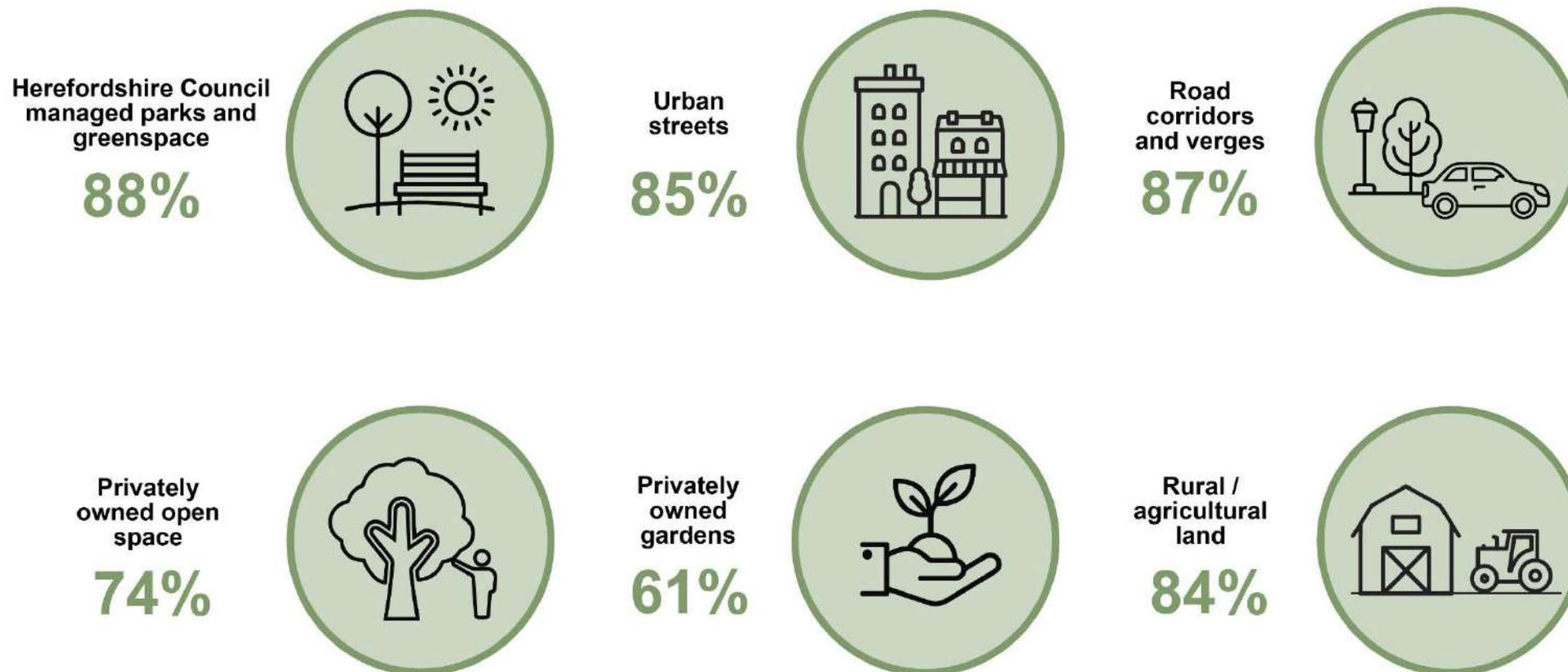
- **Databases / desktop assessments:** The Herefordshire Treescape Task Group should initially coordinate desktop assessments to identify sites in their land ownership, which may be available for planting, and check them against planning and infrastructure constraints. Support from the Council should be sought for the supply of licences for both national and locally held datasets.
- **Assessments of existing tree stock:** Completion of surveys of existing trees, to better understand stock, cover, distribution and gaps in coverage as well as health and condition, with emphasis on targeted ash tree surveys to understand where losses may arise and timescales. Localities with identified shortfalls in tree and hedgerow distribution should form a priority for future planting proposals.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS):** Consideration of opportunity / priority areas identified by the LNRS as part of the strategic approach to improve habitat connectivity and deliver multi-functional benefits, including work to increase woodland cover.
- **National Landscapes:** Alignment with proposals and future strategies proposed by the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes.
- **New development / Biodiversity Net Gain:** Opportunities should be explored for the Council to deliver enhancements to the treescape on Council-owned land as part of off-site compensation measures.
- **Partnership working:** Working with external partners to identify planting sites within the county, including sharing data from commissioned studies.
- **Analysis of other 'opportunity' mapping:** Data from groups such as Friends of the Earth / Terra Sulis and the Woodland Trust Tree Equity Score.
- **Public suggestions:** Members of the public are welcome to suggest sites, whether communicated directly, via councillors or the Herefordshire Tree Warden Network, for the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group to consider. Their suitability will then be assessed against relevant constraints and land ownerships.

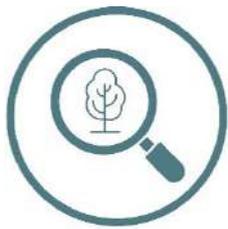
Which locations should form the focus for future tree planting?

The results of the public consultation revealed that 88% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that Council managed parks and greenspace should be considered as the focus of future tree planting (see **Figure 5.1**). However, there was no overriding response to this question, with 'road corridors and verges', 'urban streets' and 'rural agricultural land' also achieving positive responses from 87%, 85% and 84% of respondents respectively. Privately owned gardens (61%) and open spaces (74%) were viewed as less of a priority for future tree planting.

When asked to elaborate, many respondents emphasised the need to balance competing demands for differing land uses within the county. A perceived reduction in tree canopy cover in urban areas was also flagged by a number of respondents. However, the overarching response was a call for the 'right tree in the right place', including a balance of urban and rural planting to ensure the appropriate scale of planting can be achieved.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of respondents to the public consultation who strongly agree / agree that the following locations should be prioritised for future tree planting in Herefordshire





2. Deliver the right tree in the right place

Consider a range of factors when determining species selection and siting

5.8 Ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places by taking into account a range of different considerations. This includes factors such as existing habitats, soils, tree types, tree size, aesthetic / environmental concerns, competing land use demands, ongoing care and maintenance requirements and susceptibility to pests and disease. Tree species composition should be monitored in order to inform the sustainable management of the future treescape.

Deliver a climate resilient and diverse canopy cover to future-proof the county's tree stock

5.9 Plant using a diversity of species to promote the resilience of the tree population to future climatic changes, as well as minimising the overall impact of pests and disease. The harmful impacts of climate change within the county should also be reduced by prioritising the protection of existing trees and the planting of new specimens in areas with greatest urban heat stress.

Contribute to the development and delivery of Herefordshire's Nature Recovery Network

5.10 Deliver treescape enhancements in areas where trees can provide the greatest contribution to Herefordshire's Nature Recovery Network. This incorporates the creation of open wooded landscapes and mosaic habitats, including the specification of larger native broadleaved species (where space permits) to support biodiversity.

Chapter 5 Proposed targets and outcomes

Planting stock should ideally be a native species of local provenance that has been sourced and grown in the UK. The siting of new tree planting should also be considered in conjunction with ecological data so that the most appropriate sites are selected, without detriment to existing habitats. Landowners should be encouraged to release land for planting, where this doesn't conflict with existing priority habitat.



3. Ensure effective establishment

Ensure the protection and sustainable management of the county's existing treescape

5.11 Protect and manage the existing stock of trees, woodland and hedgerows to ensure no unnecessary loss of trees and provide resilience to climate change. Commit to work to retain the existing mature tree stock, wherever possible in both public and private settings. Trees should not be removed unless unavoidable. If removed, they should be replaced based not solely on numbers, but on the benefits lost.

Promote the use of best practice standards for the establishment of new tree and hedgerow planting

5.12 Adopt a strategic and collaborative approach to treescape establishment through the use of detailed standards and best practice to maximise planting success. Establishment support should ensure health and longevity, maximise ecosystem benefits and minimise failures (including potential disbenefits of trees). Tree works should ensure compliance with BS 5837 (the British Standard for Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction), BS 8545 (the British Standard for Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape), BS 8640 Soils for trees in hard landscape and BS 3998 (the British Standard for Tree Work). Note an update to BS 5837 is expected in 2025.

Ensure all woodland SSSIs are in favourable condition by 2041

5.13 Woodland management plans are encouraged for all sites designated as SSSIs to promote their improved management and protection.



4. Support partnership working

Develop a Herefordshire Treescape Task Group

5.14 Establish a Herefordshire Treescape Task Group to drive ongoing momentum and oversight to promote the delivery of the Strategy's shared vision and targets. The group should involve key local stakeholders, local councillors, Herefordshire Tree Wardens and external advisory organisations. The Council may help to facilitate the formation of the group and assist with secretariat functions in the long-term. Wider partners should also be invited to attend to contribute capacity and expertise to help progress key actions. The Herefordshire Treescape Task Group will play an active role in reviewing and updating the Strategy to ensure it remains robust and up to date. Acting as a strategic partnership, partners will develop and help deliver their own actions, facilitate funding bids, comment on national incentives / consultations and coordinate wider public awareness and educational opportunities.

Establishing strong working partnerships and support community involvement

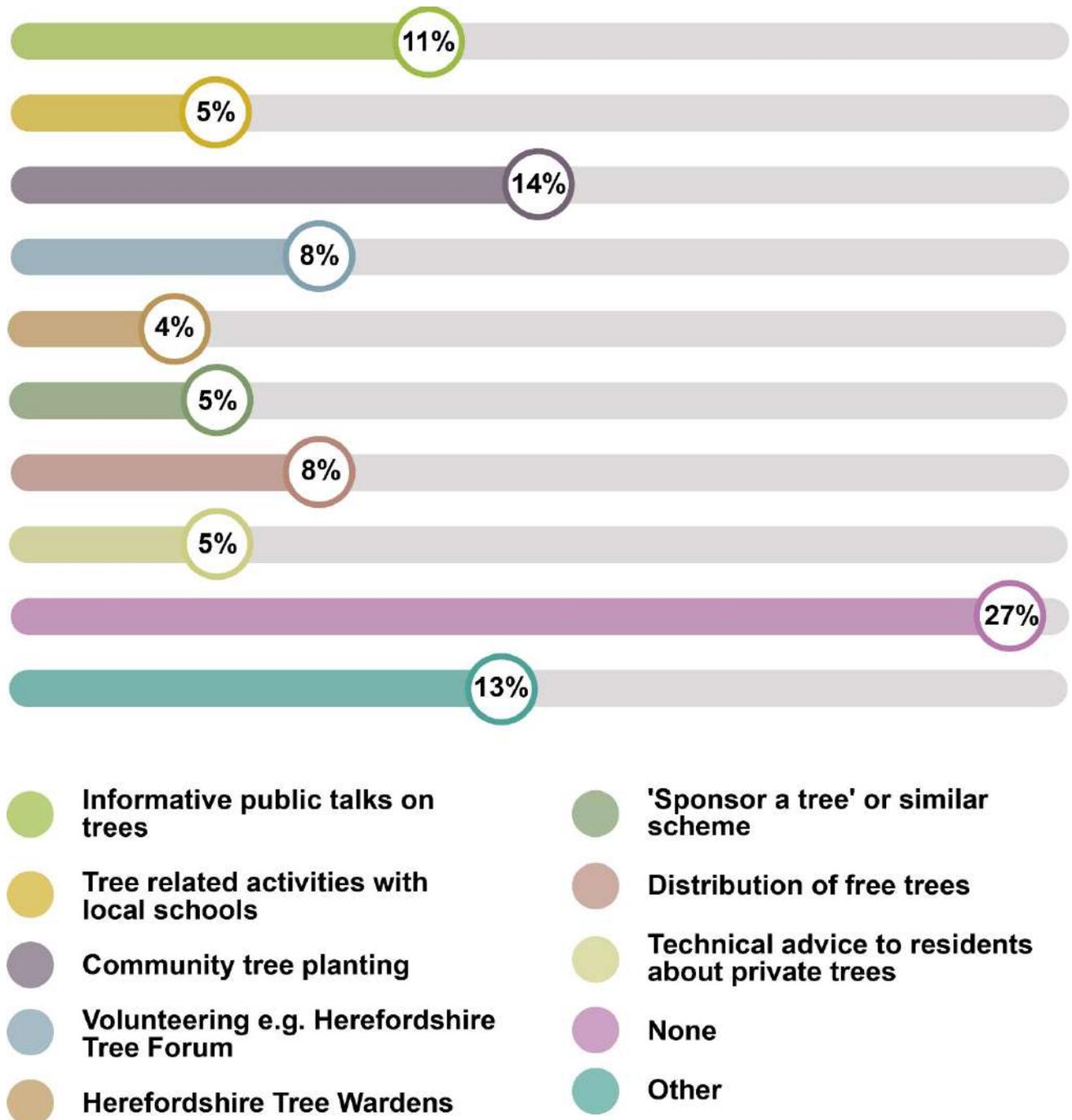
5.15 Support community involvement and continue to work closely with partners, landowners, volunteer groups and the general public in dealing with tree-related issues and planting opportunities. This should include encouraging, providing and recording opportunities for community engagement and activity. In urban locations with a number of constraints to delivery, collaboration with landowners and other stakeholders will be vital to achieve this goal.

Existing community initiatives relating to the treescape?

The results of the public consultation demonstrate the variety of existing volunteering opportunities available to Herefordshire's residents. One of the aims is to further encourage the involvement of individuals and communities in the delivery of the Strategy.

As identified by **Figure 5.2**, 73% of the respondents to this question in the public consultation survey regularly take part in community initiatives relating to the treescape. Of the participants taking an active involvement, community tree planting formed the most common initiative (14%), closely followed by 'other' (where regular watering of trees during the summer months was consistently highlighted). Other responses highlighted in the 'other' category include volunteering at a community orchard, delivery of hedge surveys and membership of local groups (such as Herefordshire Wildlife Trust). Informative public talks relating to trees were regularly attended by 11% of participants of the survey.

Figure 5.2: Percentage of respondents who regularly take part in community initiatives relating to the treescape





5. Promote the value of the treescape

Raise awareness, increase understanding and highlight the benefits of trees to Herefordshire's residents

5.16 Recognise the important role of local residents in tree planting and management by adopting the principle of community stewardship as a key approach to protecting the urban forest within Herefordshire. An improved understanding of the benefits of the treescape should be promoted to the general public, including the creation of increased opportunities to engage people in the value of trees, woodland and the natural environment.

Recognise the significance of traditional orchards and hedgerows within Herefordshire

5.17 Promote the planting, restoration and appropriate management of traditional orchards and hedgerows as distinctive landscape features across the county



6. Coordinate delivery and monitoring

Coordinate achievable actions to help deliver the shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape

5.18 The Herefordshire Treescape Task Group should adopt a coordinated approach to deliver actions and maximise funding opportunities to help achieve the ambitions of the Strategy. The action plan should also be used as a mechanism to deliver the vision of the Herefordshire GBI Strategy, including the relevant interventions identified in the Strategic Priority GBI Zones. Funding streams for new tree planting, management and maintenance should be explored in the context of a dynamic funding environment in which tree planting competes with many other priorities.

Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

5.19 Deliver a dynamic and accessible document that can be regularly updated and reviewed to ensure the monitoring of future progress.

Chapter 6

Development of the action plan

6.1 This chapter provides an action plan which sets out the collective measures required to meet the targets and outcomes outlined in the preceding chapter. These actions aim to achieve the shared vision for Herefordshire's treescape and its supporting objectives (see **Chapter 4**), as part of a county-wide Strategy for both urban and rural contexts. The actions outlined are not intended to be exhaustive and the Strategy encourages all partners, including local residents, to develop their own actions to contribute to the shared vision for the county.

6.2 The action plan is evidence based and structured to include measurable actions, timescales and delivery partners who will help coordinate delivery of the actions. Priority actions are also identified. The action plan promotes delivery of the Strategy from its inception and into the longer term (>5 years). It is intended to form a working tool that can be updated as actions are achieved and new actions emerge. The Strategy should be formally reviewed on an annual basis and updated every five years.

6.3 A range of different actions are identified and are intended to be taken forward by various partners, in conjunction with the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, when funding becomes available. The action plan includes **ongoing, short** (<1 year), **medium** (1-5 years) and **long term** (>5 years) actions to ensure momentum is maintained.

Proposed delivery partners

6.4 The Strategy recommends the establishment of a Herefordshire Treescape Task Group (**Action 4a**) to drive forward and promote the Strategy. This group should steer the delivery of the Strategy, in conjunction with key local stakeholders, local councillors, Herefordshire Tree Wardens and external advisory organisations (e.g. Natural England and the Forestry Commission). The Council may help to facilitate the formation of the group and assist with secretariat functions in the long-term. Engagement from representatives from a number of Council departments should also

be encouraged, where relevant. Wider partners (e.g. adjacent local authorities) should be invited to attend to contribute capacity and expertise to help progress key actions. The group will meet (at least) quarterly to review work to date and set priorities and actions going forward.

6.5 This Strategy has been developed through consultation with the public and multiple stakeholders. This sense of shared ownership of the Strategy should be continued through the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group as well as ongoing public consultation and engagement (e.g. **Actions 1b, 1d, 4c, 5a and 6g**). Where it is clear that a specific organisation / individual should be involved in delivery of an action, this is stated in the action plan.

Funding opportunities

6.6 Funding opportunities will change over the life-span of the Strategy. It is recommended that the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group (see **Action 4a**) maintains an up to date database of national and local funding streams (see **Action 6a**).

6.7 As well as relevant international, national and local funding streams, opportunities from privately funded schemes, joint ventures, crowd funding and corporate social responsibility should be explored. Potential funding streams at the national and local levels are outlined below.

Forestry Commission

6.8 The Forestry Commission provides access to several grants and other incentives available for woodland creation, maintenance, management and tree health.

6.9 Some of the opportunities are summarised below. It is recommended that the local Forestry Commission area office is contacted to find out further information.

- England Woodland Creation Offer: Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply to the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) for support to create new woodland, including through natural colonisation, on areas as

small as one hectare. Refer to the following documents for more information:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66977ccd0808eaf43b50d0c0/FC_Woodland_Creation_A5_April_2024_HP_V2_WEB.pdf and
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/england-woodland-creation-offer>

- Woodland Creation Planning Grant: Provides funding to prepare a woodland creation design plan for a minimum area of five hectares. Landowners, land managers and public bodies (other than Forestry England) can apply. Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-creation-planning-grant>
- The Woodland Carbon Code scheme for buyers and landowners: This is the quality assurance standard for UK woodland carbon projects empowering landowners, organisations and businesses to address climate change through the creation of woodland projects across the UK. Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-woodland-carbon-code-scheme-for-buyers-and-landowners>
- Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund: Programme reviewed at the start of each financial year.

Tree Council

6.10 The Tree Council supports community and school based tree, hedgerow and orchard projects. Information regarding their grant funding programmes is available at <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/>. Some of the current opportunities are listed below.

- The Network Rail Community Tree Planting Fund offers to deliver sustainable community tree planting projects that benefit local people and communities. Refer to: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/network-rail-community-tree-planting-fund/>
- The Orchards for Schools grant programme provides free tree packs (orchard and hedgerow mixes) to schools supported by resources and training. Refer to: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/orchards-for-schools/>
- The Branching Out Fund is a grant for community groups, schools, small charities and Tree Warden Networks seeking to establish trees, hedgerows and

orchards. Refer to: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/branching-out-fund/>

- The Tree Council Young Champions scheme provides opportunities for schools to apply for tree / hedgerow plants accompanied by relevant technology, in-school support and training. Refer to: <https://youngtreechampions.org/get-involved/projects/>

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

6.11 DEFRA provides funding opportunities for farmers, growers and land managers

- DEFRA family grants and incentives – to be announced.
- Environmental Land Management (ELM) grants and other funding are available to farmers, growers and land managers to manage land for the benefit of the environment. These include the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme and Countryside Stewardship. Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers>. Opportunities for Landscape and Nature Recovery grants should also be considered.
- The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme offers funding to farmers in National Landscapes. It funds projects that support nature recovery, mitigate climate change and protect/ improve the quality and character of landscape. Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes>.

Rural Payments Agency

- Woodland Tree Health Grants are available to provide funding to re-stock or improve a woodland following tree health issues. Additional information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/woodland-tree-health-grants-2025>

Woodland Trust

6.12 The Woodland Trust provides opportunities for landowners and farmers to plant woodland trees and hedgerows as well as encouraging schools and communities to plant trees.

- The Woodland Trust encourages schools and communities across the UK to plant trees by applying for free tree packs (different tree pack types are available; including for hedges, wildlife, urban trees, year round colour). This can be accompanied by 'Tree Tools for Schools' which is an online resource that provides everything needed to plan, plant, establish and care for a tree pack.
- The Woodland Trust works with land owners to plant woodland and hedgerows, covering a percentage of costs. Schemes include MOREwoods and MOREhedges. Refer to: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/trees-for-landowners-and-farmers/?fbclid=IwAR0hTX4q5R9ETIR6Z7mnR2HHGNVJBE0QFVEc4wvE9-74hj6gxzmC3dzbSwl>

National Landscapes

6.13 As well as DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (see above) grant / funding schemes are available for land in Herefordshire within the respective National Landscapes:

- The Malvern Hills National Landscape has a number of grant schemes which aim to support projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the National Landscape and help deliver the Management Plan. 'The Community Projects Fund' (formerly the long running Sustainable Development Fund) supports projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the area and 'Landscape Grants' support practical work and projects that help to enhance the landscape, biodiversity and countryside character of the Malvern Hills. More information is available at: [Grants & Funding – Malvern Hills National Landscape](#)

- The Wye Valley National Landscapes Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) supports projects that seek to conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape, land use and community (including social well-being and economic viability) within the Wye Valley National Landscape and adjoining area. The funding is open to community groups, voluntary groups, landscape conservation groups, land managers, schools and education organisations, businesses, charities and local residents. Additional information is available at <https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/aonb-fund/>

Other opportunities available

6.14 Some opportunities and initiatives available from other organisations are included below:

- The People's Trust for Endangered Species grant scheme aims to deliver new trees in old orchards and to help encourage the planting of community orchards with at least a few vigorous trees. Any owner or manager of an existing traditional orchard, or existing or new community orchard can apply.
- The Conservation Volunteers provide tree packs for schools and communities.
- CPRE Hedge Planting Days aim to deliver 2.5 kilometres of new hedgerow in Herefordshire with the help of volunteers including individuals and businesses looking to participate in charity days. Additional information is available at: <https://www.cpreherefordshire.org.uk/get-involved/booking-form-for-hedge-planting-days/>
- Trees for Streets runs the national online fundraising platform that manages local authority street tree sponsorship schemes. The organisation also supports and manages sponsorship requests from both residents and local businesses. The platform handles both individual sponsorships and community led crowdfunding where a number of trees are being funded. Refer to: <https://www.treesforcities.org/trees-for-streets>

Council obligations in relation to the treescape

6.15 The action plan does not list all the Council's standard obligations in relation to the treescape as it is assumed these will continue as part of ongoing Council responsibilities. Consideration of additional resource to administer Council work in relation to the treescape is also included within the action plan.

6.16 Council obligations and standard procedures include adhering to guidance included within the Herefordshire Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice (in relation to all trees owned or managed by the Council). This includes the following duties:

- Undertaking ongoing monitoring through regular surveys of trees under Council management or ownership with a priority to ensure public safety.
- Continuing to respond promptly, in a proactive manner to tree related enquiries and incidents within Council responsibility and providing advice when outside their responsibility (as appropriate).
- Ensuring that trees and hedgerows are fully recognised as material considerations within the planning process.
- Ensuring that trees and hedgerows on development sites are adequately protected from harm during construction through adherence to the principles of BS 5837.
- Continuing to enforce as appropriate against unauthorised work and damage to the treescape.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Herefordshire Ash Dieback Action Plan (on those trees owned or managed by the Council).

6.17 In addition to maintaining its own tree and hedgerow stock, the Council will continue to perform its regulatory role in relation to trees in conservation areas and to secure the protection of important trees at risk through the designation of TPOs in both urban and rural locations.

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

1. Establish priorities for future tree planting



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
1a	Priority Action. Record historical and future tree losses in urban areas and provide replacement trees (minimum of three new trees, based on BS 3936 – ‘standard’ tree or an equivalent number of smaller trees). Replant in-situ where possible or undertake compensatory planting in new locations, as appropriate.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with relevant support from the Council.
1b	Priority Action. Use the findings of the Woodland Trust’s Tree Equity Score (updated annually) to identify and map new tree planting sites which will positively address environmental inequalities by ensuring new tree planting is linked to local need and able to maximise the delivery of benefits. The Herefordshire Treescape Task Group to run an appeal for suggested tree planting sites and hedgerows suitable for restoration. The Council should ensure digital mapping publicly is made available to allow communities to interact and suggest locations.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with relevant support from the Council relating to data availability.
1c	Priority Action. Encourage suggestions from the public to establish a programme of targeted strategic annual tree and hedgerow planting. Specific consideration should be given to enhancing tree canopy coverage within the six wards identified as currently comprising less than 10% tree canopy coverage (Bobblestock, Leominster South, Leominster West, Red Hill, Whitecross and Widemarsh). Promote engagement of parish councils with the Strategy as part of development and enhancement objectives for their parish by setting parameters for tree planting through local neighbourhood development plan policy and masterplans.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
1d	Priority Action. Undertake digital mapping work (incorporating existing resources such as Forestry Commission opportunity / sensitivity mapping) to understand the potential to increase tree canopy coverage on private land. Liaise with services and infrastructure providers to understand constraints. Record findings in a database (with potential to provide opportunity and constraints mapping) which can be used to drive forward planting opportunities. Initial landowner engagement will be required, raising awareness of tree planting information available from the National Farming Union (NFU) [See reference 54] to gauge the enthusiasm and aspirations of landowners for increasing tree canopy cover.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group and in collaboration with landowners. Relevant support relating to data availability to be provided by the Council.
1e	Priority Action. Adopt a tree canopy cover standard for development proposals to ensure that canopy cover is increased as part of all major development within Herefordshire.	The Council.
1f	Explore opportunities for the establishment of dedicated Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Habitat Banks to increase and enhance the existing treescape network across the county.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
1g	Priority Action. Develop Urban Forest Management Plans for Hereford and the five market towns which set out how the treescape will be proactively and effectively managed, protected and expanded to meet the canopy cover target and deliver associated multi-functional benefits. Refer to the Urban Forest Management Plan Toolkit for information on how to develop an Urban Forest Management Plan. Available at https://ufmptoolkit.net/	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with support from local groups. External consultants may need to be appointed to assist with development of the plans. Service and infrastructure providers will need to be consulted as part of the Local Plan development process.

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
1h	Priority Action. Develop and maintain a collaborative digital database in which all evidence relating to the existing treescape baseline and identified new planting locations is compiled and updated. Use to monitor feasibility of tree planting targets as well as an impetus for positive change.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with relevant support from the Council relating to data availability.
1i	Identify priority locations for the siting of community managed orchards (this may form part of the Urban Forest Management Plans for Hereford and the five market towns) based on local need and community interest. This action will need to be delivered alongside Planning at a community level, to account for housing schemes which include orchards as part of the open space / landscape proposals.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with support from local groups and in collaboration with local schools.
1j	Work collaboratively to develop a focussed study to understand the coverage of traditional orchards across the county and recognise opportunities and priorities for their restoration and expansion. Explore the opportunity to expand the study to incorporate county-wide hedgerow networks, wood pasture and parkland landscapes (see also Action 1n).	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group including input from Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes, National Trust and local groups.
1k	Use the Woodland Trust's access standard for woodland (see Chapter 3) to help determine the location of new woodlands and guide the investment in existing sites.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with relevant support from the Council relating to data availability.

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
1l	<p>Priority Action. Working with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Officer, develop a partnership approach for the identification of sites for future tree planting. The treescape baseline digital database (Action 1h) should be used to understand connectivity and gaps in the network, in conjunction with the opportunity areas identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Officer at the Council.
1m	<p>Ensure successional planting is considered in new tree planting proposals to provide continuity of distinctive and valued features in the landscape (e.g. avenues, tree clumps, hedgerow trees) providing appropriate replacements when existing stock fails.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with input from land owners / estate owners, National Trust and Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes.
1n	<p>Develop a focussed study to understand the county's wood pasture / parkland landscape resource and recognise opportunities for restoration and expansion through tree planting / management. This action will utilise the National Trust's toolkit for creation of wood pasture systems [See reference 55] as a starting point.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with specific input from estate land owners, Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes, National Trust and local groups.

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

2. Deliver the right tree in the right place



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
2a	Priority Action: Update the baseline understanding of the existing treescape by reviewing the Bluesky National Tree Map of Herefordshire on an annual basis.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with relevant support from the Council relating to data procurement.
2b	Use the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group as a platform to encourage a network of data gathering and information sharing to consolidate the understanding of the existing treescape by all tree owners.	Collation of data by the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
2c	Use the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) online resources [See reference 56] and join online events to learn from specialists, connect with other individuals / organisations and improve knowledge and understanding of good practice relating to trees.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
2d	Priority Action: Use the Herefordshire Ash Dieback Action Plan to implement targeted surveys and provide guidance on priority areas for the management of affected trees owned or managed by the Council. Keep up-to-date with new and emerging research on ash dieback, including disease resilience and tolerance.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in conjunction with the Council.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
2e	<p>Priority Action. Develop a list of climate resilient species, focussed on the Herefordshire context for adoption by the Council. The list should reflect climate predictions and disease modelling. Emphasis should be placed on the use of species that reflect and perpetuate the character of existing tree populations, particularly in the rural landscape, and are compatible with soil type. The UK wide guide identifying tree species best suited for planting on farmland [See reference 57] should be used as the starting point for the development of this action. Urban tree planting has more scope to use species which are not characteristic of the existing townscape to create new distinctive and enhanced townscape character.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
2f	<p>Priority Action: Secure funding to deliver a 3-30-300 report for the county to further target specific treescape planting interventions, whilst supporting local policy requirements.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with assistance from the Council in relation to procurement.
2g	<p>Priority Action. Investigate opportunities for roadside hedge and tree planting to target air pollution in areas of need e.g. adjacent to schools. This should be undertaken in collaboration with the Council Highways Team and with consideration of safer streets schemes which tackle air pollution by restricting car travel at school drop off and pick up times.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in conjunction with the Council Highways Team, the community and local schools.
2h	<p>Develop and publish localised Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance which includes details relating to best practice tree pit design to promote appropriate planting and successful establishment of trees.</p>	The Council

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
2i	Explore the opportunity to re-open and expand the Black Poplar Project, in conjunction with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in consultation with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.
2j	Promote training opportunities for identification of pests and disease which threaten the treescape e.g. Observatree refer to https://www.observatree.org.uk/about-us/about-observatree	Interested individuals within Herefordshire Treescape Task Group and recruited volunteers.

 Ongoing
  Short term (<1 year)
  Medium term (1-5 years)
  Long term (>5 years)

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

3. Ensure effective establishment



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
3a	Priority Action. On an annual basis, monitor progress against the 20% average canopy coverage target for the county as well as the contribution to the 'stretch target' of 30% canopy coverage for Hereford City and the market towns. The National Tree Map data to be reviewed on an annual basis to measure progress against the canopy cover target.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in conjunction with the Council.
3b	Priority Action. Publicise and provide training (where necessary) to ensure the Code of Practice Statements included in the Herefordshire Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice are implemented and used effectively by Council Officers, contractors and sub-contractors. Undertake monitoring to ensure compliance.	The Council.
3c	Priority Action. As part of planning consents, use planning conditions to ensure developers provide landscape management plans detailing responsibilities regarding initial establishment and ongoing management of development sites. Undertake monitoring and inspections to ensure this is being carried out.	The Council and developers.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
3d	Council Officers to continue to provide guidance and advice through the planning process (from the pre-application stage through to maintenance on site) to ensure compliance of tree work against BS 5837 (the British Standard for Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction), BS 8545 (the British Standard for Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape), BS 8640 (the British Standard for soils for trees in hard landscape) and BS 3998 (the British Standard for Tree Work). Note an update to BS 5837 is expected in 2025.	The Council and developers.
3e	Priority Action. Update the Herefordshire Tree and Hedgerow Code to include a Code of Practice Statement to protect trees from irresponsible maintenance practices on surrounding ground, including inappropriate use of grass cutting machinery.	The Council
3f	Integrate tree biosecurity considerations into the principles of tree management within the Herefordshire Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice. Continually review Council working practices to minimise the chance of introducing and / or spreading pests and diseases within the county.	The Council.
3g	Explore opportunities for the promotion of the TPO process to the public to protect trees with high amenity or nature conservation value in Hereford, the market towns and rural villages.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
3h	Priority Action. Develop tree and woodland management plans for all Council-owned parks, open spaces and woodland sites to include a vision for the woodland and aims of management (e.g. for wildlife, education, access, carbon capture), issues / challenges and an action plan.	The Council and woodland site managers.

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

4. Support partnership working



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
4a	Priority Action. Establish the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group to promote the ownership of tree-related issues (e.g. highways, well-being and environment and economy) and opportunities (with inputs from relevant skilled expertise to take ownership of the action plan).	The Council to help facilitate the formation of the group and assist with secretariat functions in the long-term.
4b	Continue to provide training and promote the positive action of the Herefordshire Tree Warden Network to support tree cover retention and expansion.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group and local groups.
4c	Priority Action. Actively promote the delivery of tree-related activity, training, capacity building and volunteering opportunities through existing and new initiatives. Recruit volunteers to help administer the work of the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group. Encourage local schools and communities to get involved and take ownership of tree planting projects and aftercare.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with the local community and schools.
4d	Develop and formally approve a costed and resourced action plan, with actions reported on as part of statutory environmental reporting.	The Council, in conjunction with the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
4e	Utilise the Urban Forest Accelerator Toolkit, principally the '10 step guide for involving local communities', to develop community collaboration and plan tree planting activities.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with the local community.
4f	Ensure all local tree, hedgerow and woodland guidance documents are kept up to date. Review and update guidance documents published by the Council to reflect the ambitions of the Strategy, forming part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and acting as a current resource for developers and land owners.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group and the Council.
4g	Priority Action. Work with landowners and land managers to increase the number of woodland sites in active management. Promote traditional management techniques (e.g. coppicing) and management for biodiversity (uneven age structure with glades and rides).	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with land owners and Wye Valley / Malvern Hills National Landscapes.
4h	Research and apply for local and national awards (where appropriate) for community greening projects to seek recognition for delivered projects.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
4i	Consider the development of connections with the University of Herefordshire and other educational establishments to explore opportunities to link into their environmental research projects. Expertise should be used to accelerate the delivery of the Strategy (e.g. by assisting with compiling and managing data bases).	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
4j	Increase the number of publicly accessible woodland Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) to improve access and enhance biodiversity. Work towards one hectare of LNR per 1,000 of population in accordance with the 'headline standards' in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework.	The Council, in conjunction with the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.

 Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

5. Promote the value of the treescape



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
5a	Priority Action. Run campaigns targeted at neighbourhood and school communities located within areas of relatively low average canopy cover. Enhance awareness of the value of trees in the urban and rural landscape as part of a partnership objective. This includes the delivery of a range of funding opportunities available for local tree planting and management projects. Link to national campaigns where possible and encourage community ownership of initiatives.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group. Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and local groups to be consulted.
5b	Priority Action. Work with local businesses to raise public awareness of and promote the value of the treescape in the urban environment. Encourage resource contributions for tree planting and ongoing maintenance with the aim of delivering multi-functional benefits. Work with larger organisations to fulfil their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agendas.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with specific input from local businesses.
5c	Priority Action. Understand the requirements and make an application for Tree Cities of the World recognition for Hereford. This programme provides direction, assistance, and worldwide recognition for a community's dedication to its urban forest. Actions to be undertaken based on the application requirements.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in conjunction with the Council.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
5d	Develop a protocol in respect of sponsored tree planting to promote the value of the treescape.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, in conjunction with the Council.
5e	Priority Action. Promote the value of a connected hedgerow network for wildlife and ecosystem services, including the requirement for appropriate management. Proposals should be considered in relation to Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER), including how the pattern of enclosure has evolved over time.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, with specific input from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Officer, local groups and landowners.
5f	Expand the Colwall Hedgerow Survey into other areas of the county to explore opportunities for hedgerow reinstatement and restoration.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with specific input from local groups.
5g	Further raise awareness of and promote the value of the county's rich network of ancient woodland and veteran trees, with the aim of ensuring their appropriate management for longevity, biodiversity value and as part of successional planning. Explore the opportunity to collect data relating to the extent of veteran tree cover in Herefordshire, in conjunction with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. This data will supplement veteran tree data currently available for the Wye Valley National Landscape.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group with specific input from the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley National Landscapes, estate landowners, National Trust and local groups.

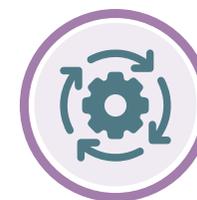
 Ongoing
  Short term (<1 year)
  Medium term (1-5 years)
  Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
5h	<p>Priority Action. Coordinate a public and stakeholder campaign to identify potential 'champion trees' (the tallest or those with the largest trunk circumference) of their type, and / or encourage people to nominate a favourite tree. This could be used to form a publicised tree trail (e.g. for Hereford City or a specific park) or to promote the value of trees in the landscape and townscape.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
5i	<p>Develop a focused study to record and document Herefordshire's culturally and historically significant trees, making information publicly available to promote local interest. Specific areas of interest include the trees at Hergest Ridge, the use of Scot Pines as drover markers, the Whiteleaved Oak on Malvern Hills (memorial to a memorial tree) and the Eardisley Oak. The county's pasture and parkland landscapes should also be included. To be undertaken in conjunction with Actions 1n, 5g and 5h.</p>	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group and local groups.

 Ongoing
  Short term (<1 year)
  Medium term (1-5 years)
  Long term (>5 years)

Action plan to deliver the Strategy

6. Coordinate delivery and monitoring



Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
6a	Priority Action. Develop and maintain an up-to-date database of international, national and local funding streams and opportunities.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
6b	Priority Action. Consider adopting the Strategy as Supplementary Planning Guidance, providing the document with material weight in the planning process. The Strategy should be published and accessible to the public and stakeholders via the Council website.	The Council.
6c	Priority Action. Once the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group is established, organise quarterly meetings to review work to date, set priorities and monitor future actions. Update the action plan annually to track progress against targets and add / amend actions accordingly.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
6d	Priority Action. Formally review the Strategy on an annual basis to identify progress against targets.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.

Ongoing
 Short term (<1 year)
 Medium term (1-5 years)
 Long term (>5 years)

Reference	Summary of action	Responsibility
6e	Priority Action. Organise an annual Herefordshire Treescape Task Group convention that discusses topics and research relevant to rural and urban treescapes within the county. To be undertaken with the purpose of reinforcing the Strategy's holistic coverage across Herefordshire.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
6f	Co-ordinate funding bids within the Herefordshire Treescape Task Group, including partnership bids across organisations to maximise the potential success of funding opportunities. Draw upon significant funding for tree planting through the Nature for Climate programme, Trees for Climate grant and Woodland Creation Acceleration Fund etc.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.
6g	After five years, update the Strategy to account for targets achieved and emerging actions. Undertake a public consultation exercise to understand public perception and priorities going forward. Review targets and outcomes.	Herefordshire Treescape Task Group.

 Ongoing
  Short term (<1 year)
  Medium term (1-5 years)
  Long term (>5 years)

Appendix A

Policy context

National context

Environmental Improvement Plan

A.1 The following ambitions and targets are of importance and relevance to the treescape:

- Restore or create more than 500,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat including peatland restoration and biodiverse woodland by 2042. Agroforestry, which integrates trees into agricultural landscapes, is highlighted in the EIP as a key approach to sustainable land management. By planting trees on farms, the document seeks to improve soil health, enhance water retention, and increase biodiversity. This practice is promoted through funding schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and the Sustainable Farming Incentive, which support farmers in adopting agroforestry techniques. The importance of agroforestry lies in its ability to balance productive agriculture with environmental conservation.
- Through the use of farming schemes, support farmers to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows a year by 2037 and 45,000 miles a year by 2050 in order to return hedgerow lengths in England to 10% above the 1984 peak (360,000 miles). The EIP recognises hedgerows as vital ecological corridors that support biodiversity by connecting fragmented habitats. It includes commitments to restore and extend hedgerows, particularly in agricultural landscapes, where they play a crucial role in reducing soil erosion, protecting crops from wind, and supporting a wide range of species. The EIP aims to ensure that hedgerows are not only preserved but also expanded to increase landscape connectivity and resilience to climate change. Since 2020, 2,500 miles of new hedges have been created under Countryside Stewardship.
- Protect ancient woodlands and continue to deliver the commitment to restore all 42,814 hectares of Forestry England's plantations on ancient woodland sites

Appendix A Policy context

(PAWS). In addition to new planting, the EIP emphasises the restoration and protection of existing woodlands. Ancient woodlands are prioritised for restoration because of their biodiversity value and their role in providing ecosystem services such as water regulation and carbon storage. Effective management of these areas, guided by the NPPF, is encouraged to maintain their ecological integrity and wider support of wildlife. This includes improving the condition of ancient semi-natural woodland and restoring PAWS.

- Implementation of green infrastructure interventions to be guided by the NPPF and Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. The EIP promotes the integration of trees and woodlands into urban environments as part of park creation / restoration. Tree planting in cities is seen as vital for improving air quality, reducing the urban heat island effect, enhancing residents' wellbeing and for delivering net zero targets. Urban trees are also a key component of the Government's strategy to create healthier, more resilient cities that can better cope with the impacts of climate change.

A.2 The EIP sets out the importance of protecting natural capital in both rural and urban landscapes to support biodiversity, improve ecosystem services, and contribute to the UK's climate change mitigation goals. By focusing on tree planting, woodland restoration, and the protection of ancient habitats, the EIP aims to enhance environmental resilience and ensure that ecosystems are able to continue to provide vital services such as carbon sequestration, water purification, and soil health. Furthermore, by promoting agroforestry and hedgerow expansion, the EIP aligns sustainable farming practices with biodiversity conservation, highlighting the importance of integrated land management approaches for achieving long-term environmental sustainability.

Climate Change Act

A.3 The Act includes reference to various natural habitats in climate change legislation, highlighting their central role in mitigating the climate crisis while delivering co-benefits for nature and public health. These strategies align with broader government goals for nature recovery and carbon reduction, as highlighted by Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

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- Woodlands are highlighted as significant carbon sinks, particularly mature and ancient woodlands, which not only store large amounts of carbon but also support biodiversity. The Woodland Trust reports that ancient woodlands hold 36% of the UK's total woodland carbon, despite covering only 25% of all woodland. Protecting and expanding these woodlands is vital for long-term carbon storage, with the carbon capture potential is expected to double over the next century.
- Hedgerows also play a key role in carbon storage and provide a range of environmental benefits, including acting as habitats for wildlife and enhancing biodiversity. Managed sensitively, hedgerows can contribute to carbon sequestration, albeit on a smaller scale than woodlands, and help preserve the cultural heritage of the UK's farmed landscapes.
- The Act's carbon budgets system ensures that the UK progresses toward its net zero target through phased reductions. These budgets, aligned with the protection and enhancement of natural environments, promote strategies such as the National Adaptation Programme, which aims to build climate resilience through the preservation and restoration of key natural habitats.
- Peatlands are recognised as the largest natural carbon stores, with restoration efforts crucial for maintaining their carbon sequestration ability. Integrated land management strategies, which combine woodland creation, hedgerow conservation, and peatland restoration, are seen as vital for achieving both climate and biodiversity targets simultaneously.

National Design Guide

A.4 The Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government's National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. The document forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance relating to design process and tools. The guide provides many tree related references, particularly for urban areas.

Local context

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy

A.5 The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 [\[See reference 54\]](#) is the primary document guiding strategic planning and future development in the county, ensuring that economic growth, housing, and infrastructure needs are balanced with environmental sustainability. A key document within this is the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2015. Several policies within the Core Strategy relate specifically to hedgerows, trees, and woodland, aligning with national environmental goals and the broader UK strategies on biodiversity, climate change, and natural resource management. Key policies on THAW include:

- **Policy HD2: Hereford City Centre** sets out that residents of new homes will be required to have access to public open space, and green corridors linking green areas.
- **Policy LD1: Landscape and Townscape** emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing the landscape character of Herefordshire. It requires that developments respect the natural assets of the area, including important trees and hedgerow networks, ensuring that new developments do not disrupt these valuable features but instead aim to reinforce them. This is aligned with national strategies promoting biodiversity and the protection of natural habitats.
- **Policy LD2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** states that developments must conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity, including ancient woodland and veteran trees. Hedgerows are identified as essential components of ecological networks, providing wildlife corridors and contributing to landscape connectivity. The protection of these features is critical in achieving the goals set out in national biodiversity strategies, such as those within the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- **Policy LD3: Green Infrastructure** stresses the role of green infrastructure, which includes woodlands and hedgerows, in providing ecosystem services such as flood management, carbon sequestration, and enhancing air quality. The integration of green infrastructure into developments is encouraged, reflecting broader UK objectives to promote climate resilience and environmental sustainability in planning.

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- **Policy SS6: Environmental Quality and Local Distinctiveness** describes that Herefordshire's environmental assets are to be protected to maintain the county's distinctiveness. This policy requires developers to demonstrate how their proposals will preserve or enhance natural features, tying into the wider commitment to sustainable development outlined in national policies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

A.6 The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy ensures that development within the county is not only economically and socially beneficial but also environmentally sustainable. By focusing on the protection and enhancement of hedgerows, trees, and woodlands, the document supports wider national and international efforts to address environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change.

A.7 The Council is in the process of updating this current Local Plan Core Strategy. The Local Plan 2021-2041 will set out the planning framework for the county for the period to 2041 and will cover issues such as housing provision, the economy, retail and town centres, strategic and community infrastructure and the environment.

Herefordshire County Plan

A.8 The Herefordshire County Plan 2020-2024 outlines several environmental priorities and strategic goals that relate to the treescape, aligning with broader national environmental strategies such as the 25-Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021.

- The document commits to reducing carbon emissions and improving biodiversity through sustainable land management in Herefordshire. The protection and enhancement of trees and woodlands play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and contribute to the county's aim to become carbon neutral by 2030. This is aligned with national goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Plan emphasises the importance of preserving natural habitats, which are vital for maintaining biodiversity and sustaining diverse ecosystems and species.

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- The document links tree planting and woodland management with natural flood management strategies. Trees and woodlands can reduce the risk of flooding by absorbing water and stabilising soils, which is critical given Herefordshire's low-lying land and associated vulnerability to flooding. This approach complements the broader national focus on nature-based solutions to environmental challenges, as seen in the UK Government's climate change and biodiversity policies.
- The Plan also aims to balance development needs with environmental protection, requiring new developments to consider their impact on local ecosystems, including hedgerows and woodlands. It aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which mandates that local planning must incorporate green infrastructure and protect valuable natural assets.

A.9 These issues are vital for maintaining Herefordshire's natural heritage, whilst supporting sustainable development and contributing to national environmental objectives such as biodiversity enhancement, flood risk mitigation, and carbon reduction.

Publication Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Herefordshire

A.10 The Herefordshire Publication Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) 2021 outlines key policies concerning hedgerows, trees, and woodlands, which are aligned with broader national strategies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the UK's environmental commitments.

- The document places significant emphasis on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. This is particularly critical for development proposals that might affect areas rich in biodiversity or those under designations, such as the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills (section 3.3.28). The management and protection of these areas align with national policies on conserving landscapes and heritage assets.
- Any mineral and waste development must follow strict ecological mitigation measures, which include buffers around sensitive habitats. These buffers are determined on a site-by-site basis, ensuring that vulnerable features, including

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woodlands and European-designated sites, are adequately protected (section 5.4.10). This approach ties in with national objectives to mitigate biodiversity loss and promote ecological networks.

- The MWLP also highlights the importance of maintaining and improving habitat connectivity, recognising that woodlands and hedgerows serve as ecological corridors for wildlife. This is a critical aspect of Herefordshire's strategy to enhance biodiversity and integrate with national initiatives such as the 25-Year Environment Plan, which calls for greater woodland coverage and stronger environmental protections.

Herefordshire Council Agricultural Development Supplementary Planning Guidance

A.11 The Agricultural Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (2022) identifies the planning policy issues that can be associated with proposals for agricultural development and sets out the requirements of such applications. The guidance highlights the potential detrimental impact of agricultural development on landscape character (including loss of key landscape features including hedgerow and trees) and the impact of ammonia and nitrogen deposition on ancient woodland. The importance of tree planting, along with other measures, to help slow the flow of surface water is emphasised.

Herefordshire Council Environment Directorate Highways Design Guide for New Developments

A.12 The Highways Design Guide for New Developments (2006) was produced to aid developers, designers and other professionals in preparing transport infrastructure related to new developments in the county. Guidance relating to the retention and planting of new trees is provided.

Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan

A.13 The document highlights the unique ecological value of the Malvern Hills, which arises from its geological diversity and traditional farming practices that sustain various habitats and species.

- The Plan stresses the significance of native woodlands and hedgerows as vital components of the National Landscape's biodiversity. These features provide critical habitats for wildlife and contribute to the overall ecological health of the area.
- The Plan aligns with broader national strategies aimed at halting the decline of nature. It includes a Nature Recovery Plan, which aims to restore habitats, improve biodiversity, and promote sustainable land management practices. This is consistent with initiatives such as the Environment Act 2021, which calls for enhanced biodiversity and ecological connectivity.
- The document advocates for sustainable agriculture and forestry practices that protect and enhance the landscape's natural beauty. This includes promoting agroforestry and the planting of trees within agricultural landscapes to improve both productivity and environmental benefits.
- The Plan encourages community engagement and participation in the management of natural resources, recognising the role of local residents and landowners in sustaining the hedgerows and woodlands. By fostering local stewardship, the Plan aims to enhance public awareness and support for conservation efforts.
- Trees and hedgerows play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and mitigating climate change effects. The document highlights their importance in building resilience against climate impacts while providing additional benefits such as improving air quality and enhancing landscape aesthetics.

Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan

A.14 The document is aligned with wider national and regional strategies concerning biodiversity and ecosystem services, following frameworks set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

- The Plan emphasises the need for habitat restoration and management to maintain healthy ecosystems. Specific initiatives are suggested for increasing woodland cover and enhancing existing forests, recognising their role in providing essential ecosystem services.
- The document outlines specific objectives for woodland management, including promoting sustainable forestry practices and increasing community engagement with tree planting initiatives. It highlights the significance of hedgerows as wildlife corridors and their contribution to the landscape's traditional and aesthetic value.
- The Plan advocates for collaboration between various stakeholders, including local authorities, community groups, and landowners, to foster a collective approach to land and woodland management. This aligns with the national emphasis on local solutions to conservation challenges.
- The document is contextualised within broader strategies such as the Welsh Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment," which stresses the importance of tree planting and woodland creation as key components of environmental policy. This integration supports national goals of enhancing biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts.
- The Plan includes provisions for monitoring the health and expansion of woodlands and hedgerows, ensuring that progress towards biodiversity goals can be assessed. This includes tracking changes in priority habitats and implementing adaptive management strategies as necessary.

Ash Dieback Action Plan

A.15 Key objectives and strategies of relevance to the treescape are listed below:

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- **Monitoring and Management:** The document emphasises proactive monitoring of ash tree health and strategic removal of diseased trees only when necessary. This is to prevent risks to public safety and property while maintaining the health of the broader tree population.
- **Community Engagement and Awareness:** A robust communication strategy is outlined to inform residents and landowners about their responsibilities regarding tree management and the risks associated with ash dieback. This includes guidance on identifying affected trees and the actions that should be taken.
- **Replanting and Recovery:** The document promotes the recovery of lost ash trees through replanting efforts. It aims to enhance the resilience of local woodlands by encouraging natural regeneration and planting diverse tree species to maintain the ecological balance and carbon capture capabilities of the region.
- **Funding and Resources:** The Council has allocated significant funding (£315,000) for the management of ash dieback, including tree removal, health surveys, and recovery planting. This investment highlights the prioritisation of tree health as a key component of local environmental strategy.

Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice

A.16 The Tree and Hedgerow Code of Practice establishes a framework aimed at the effective management and preservation of trees and hedgerows on Council owned or managed land within the county. This document emphasises the critical role that trees and hedgerows play in supporting biodiversity, enhancing landscape character, and contributing to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration.

- The Code outlines that hedgerows older than 30 years or those meeting specific criteria are considered important and are thus protected under legislation. Removal of such hedgerows requires a formal application, ensuring their conservation unless there are compelling reasons otherwise.
- The document encourages best practice in the management of both trees and hedgerows to maintain their health and ecological function. This includes appropriate pruning, disease management, and enhancing biodiversity through varied planting schemes.

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- The Code highlights the importance of trees and hedgerows as habitats for wildlife. It promotes practices that enhance the ecological value of these features, contributing to local biodiversity and aligning with national strategies for nature conservation.
- Strong emphasis is placed on engaging local communities in the management and planting of trees and hedgerows to foster a sense of ownership and raise awareness about the environmental benefits of these natural resources.
- The document links tree and hedgerow management to broader climate change strategies. By advocating for increased tree planting and maintaining existing vegetation, it supports the county's efforts to enhance climate resilience.
- The document highlights the responsibilities of landowners regarding the management of trees and hedgerows, including ensuring that overhanging vegetation does not obstruct public pathways or highways.

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Report produced by LUC

Report produced by LUC

Bristol

12th Floor, Beacon Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE
0117 389 0700
bristol@landuse.co.uk

Cardiff

1.12, 1st Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB
0292 254 0920
cardiff@landuse.co.uk

Edinburgh

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG
0131 326 0900
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

Glasgow

37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ
0141 403 0900
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

London

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD
020 7199 5801
london@landuse.co.uk

Manchester

4th Floor, 57 Hilton Street, Manchester M1 2EJ
0161 802 2800
manchester@landuse.co.uk

Sheffield

32 Eyre Street, Sheffield, S1 4QZ
0114 392 2366
sheffield@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment / Transport Planning
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