

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All												
REPORT TITLE Tree Planting Strategy Update													
REPORT OF Director of Recreation and Public Safety													
Investment, Place and Opportunity	DATE 10/11/2025												
SUMMARY OF REPORT <p>This report provides an update to the Council's work to manage the urban forest under its management.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report: No document that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Katy Knight</td> <td>David Houghton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Head of Leisure</td> <td>Tree Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Pancras Square</td> <td>5 Pancras Square</td> </tr> <tr> <td>London N1C 4AG</td> <td>London N1C 4AG</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Katy.Knight@Camden.gov.uk</td> <td>David.Houghton@Camden.gov.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>020 7974 7362</td> <td>020 7974 1567</td> </tr> </table>		Katy Knight	David Houghton	Head of Leisure	Tree Manager	5 Pancras Square	5 Pancras Square	London N1C 4AG	London N1C 4AG	Katy.Knight@Camden.gov.uk	David.Houghton@Camden.gov.uk	020 7974 7362	020 7974 1567
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020 7974 7362	020 7974 1567												
RECOMMENDATIONS <p>That the Committee note and comment on the report</p>													

Signed:



Oliver Jones

Date: 29th October 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the Council's tree planting strategy 2020-2025 and to present the draft of a new tree planting strategy.

2. Overview of the tree planting strategy 2020-2025

- 2.1. The tree planting strategy sets out the aims and goals to increase canopy cover from 22.9% to 26.6% by 2045. In total, there are eight aims with 34 goals to provide a holistic approach to tree planting in the borough. Funding of £2.04 million was secured in 2020/2021 to plant trees and pay for a tree planting officer to achieve the aims and goals of the strategy.
- 2.2. Below is a summary of the tree planting strategies main achievements. A more detailed breakdown of the aims and goals can be found in appendix A.

We committed to planting 600 trees per annum, of which a minimum of 250 trees had to be in new locations. Over 5 years this would see 3,000 trees planted, of which 1,250 would be in new locations. By the end of 2024/2025, we had planted 2,971 trees, 29 less than the target. The reason for this was there wasn't the need to remove and replace as many trees at the beginning of the programme. However, we have exceeded the number of new trees planted by planting 1,632 new trees, which is an increase of 30.5% on the new tree planting target. This has allowed us to increase our tree population and the benefits they provide for our residents.

- In addition to our tree planting efforts. We have recorded the number of trees planted by others internally (e.g. Community Infrastructure Projects) and externally (e.g. Trust for Conservation Volunteers & Camden Forest) on council land. Over the last 3 years, an additional 354 standard trees and 3,250 whips have been planted. Combined with our 2,971 trees, this brings the total of standard trees planted on Council land to 3,325 and 3,250 whips.
- Canopy cover in the borough has increased from 22.9% in 2016 to 24.6%¹. See figure 1 for a breakdown of canopy cover by ward.

¹ Canopy cover has been measured by Google Environmental Insights Explorer. The methodology used is different from our previous studies, which involved people categorising random points on aerial imagery of the borough. Where Environmental Insights uses artificial intelligence to calculate canopy cover from aerial imagery. It is important to acknowledge this difference in methodology because we are not comparing like for like and some discrepancies in accuracy will exist between the 2016 and 2023 data because of this.

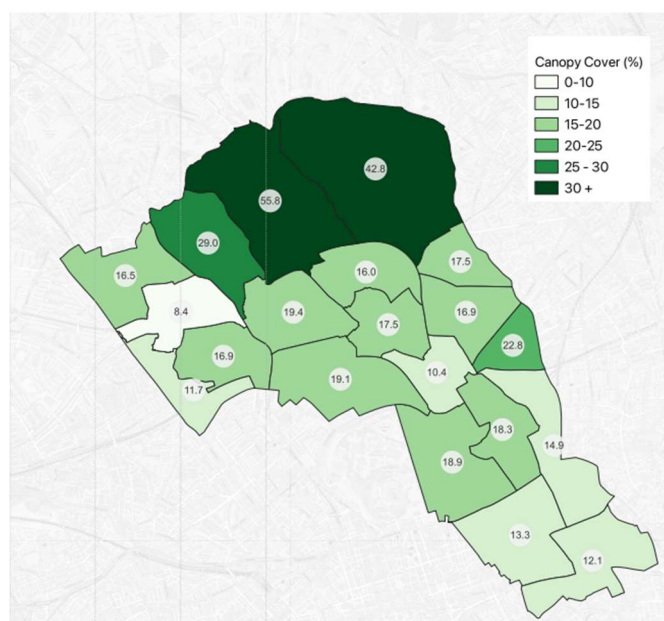


Figure 1: Map of showing canopy cover by ward in 2023.

- Improving the benefits the Council's trees provide for the public (see Table 1).

Measurement	2017	2023
Number of Trees	25,890	28,461
Replacement costs ²	£43.5 million	£36.4 million
Amenity Valuation (CAVAT)	Not measured	£1.2 billion
Total Carbon Storage	10,800 tonnes	13,600 tonnes
Annual Carbon Sequestration	207 tonnes/yr	231 tonnes/yr
Annual Pollution Removal ³	5 tonnes/yr	1.3 tonnes/yr

Table 1 Comparison of ecosystem services between 2017 and 2023.

² We are waiting to hear back on the difference in replacement cost between 2017 and 2023.

³ The calculation in 2017 included a wide range of pollutants, which has been reduced to NO₂, SO₂, and PM₁₀ as these are the only pollutants with UK social cost damage values.

- Improvements in tree planting and establishment have been created by moving away from using watering tubes in favour of water bags. The bags are reusable and more visible, so residents can participate in watering the trees.
 - We now use hessian instead of rubber ties to reduce the amount of single use plastic in our tree planting. The hessian will also biodegrade and snap preventing the tie cutting into the bark if it is not adjusted regularly.
 - Between 2021-2025, other organisations in the borough have contributed to tree planting and have planted 354 standard trees and 3,250 whips.
 - We have partnered with communi-tree to assist them in community tree planting on housing estates. They have planted around 260 trees on estates, which are cared for by young foresters. This is a programme where young people on estates are paid to care for the trees for the first three years.
- 2.3. The current tree planting strategy has been useful in focusing our efforts and communicating Camden's planting ambitions to a wide variety of audiences: internally and externally. Most of the aims and goals regarding the canopy cover and species diversity are still relevant and should remain the focus of any new strategy. Some of the previous objectives for maximizing benefits and better after care have now become integrated into our planting programme.

3. **Future Tree Planting Programme in Camden**

- 3.1. In preparation for the end of the 2020-2025 Tree planting strategy, Treeconomics were contracted to provide a tree planting opportunity mapping study to help inform the next planting programme. They found 18,000 potential locations to plant trees. These locations were found by analysing footway widths, locations of lamp posts and canopy cover against our tree planting specification (minimum size of tree pit, minimum footway widths and distance between trees).
- 3.2. The locations were then prioritised by tree equity, based on canopy cover, air pollution, flood risk and indices of multiple deprivation. The results were then thematically mapped and the colours numbered 1-10. Hot colours denote sites with the highest priority and cool colours the sites with the lowest priority (see Figure 2).
- 3.3. It is important to note, the report gives a strategic way to explore locations that we may be able to plant. The actual number of trees planted will depend on a site survey and trial pits.

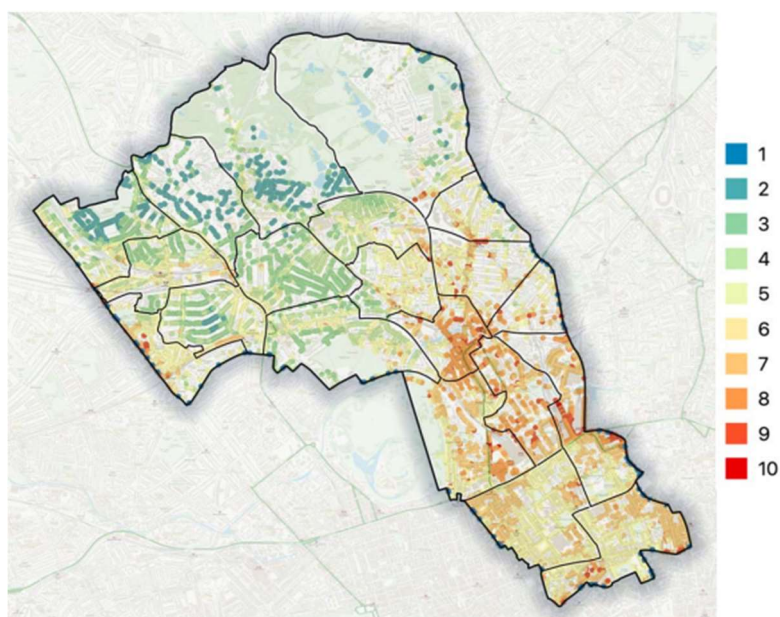


Figure 2: Potential planting locations along streets in Camden

- 3.4. A capital bid has been submitted to explore these new locations and to continue replacing trees we remove through our maintenance programme. We propose to explore 3,350 of the 18,000 potential sites with the highest priority over the next 5 years. Based on previous tree planting programmes, we are assuming a 75% success rate and estimate this will result in 2,500 new trees.
- 3.5. We will continue to replace trees removed through our maintenance programme, which is estimated to be 350 trees per annum. Over the next 5 years, we will replace approximately 1,740 trees.
- 3.6. In total, we are proposing to plant 4,250 trees over the next 5 years, 850 trees per annum, of which 500 trees will be in new locations. Our current planting target per annum is 600, so this will be a 41% increase in the number of trees we deliver per year. I believe this target strikes the right balance between the resources available to the council while contributing to our canopy target.
- 3.7. A draft of the new tree planting strategy can be found in Appendix B.

4. Finance Comments of the Director of Finance

The report provides an update to the Council's work to manage the urban forest under its management.

There are no significant financial implications resulting from this report.

5. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

Legal Services have been consulted and have no specific comments on the report

6. Environmental Implications

Tree planting has a positive impact on the environment and provides a range of benefits for residents. It is a key part of maintaining a healthy, resilient urban forest for now and the future.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Update on Tree Planting Strategy objectives

Appendix B – Camden Tree Planting Strategy 2026–2030 - draft

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