Wirral's Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy 2020-2030

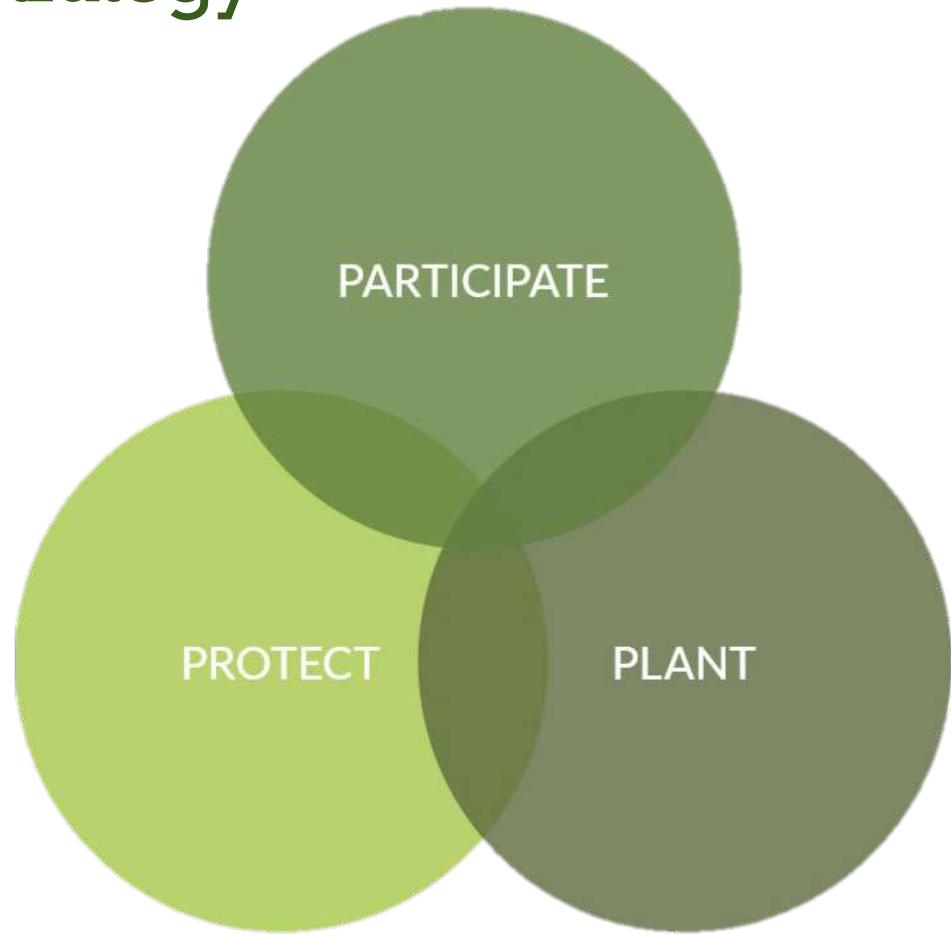Mike Cockburn , Mike Anders and Nicola Wallbank

Where is Wirral?

- Northwest England, Liverpool City Region.

- A peninsula, boarded by sea on 3 sides.

- Population approx. 320k.

- Overall administrative area: 25, 110 hectares.

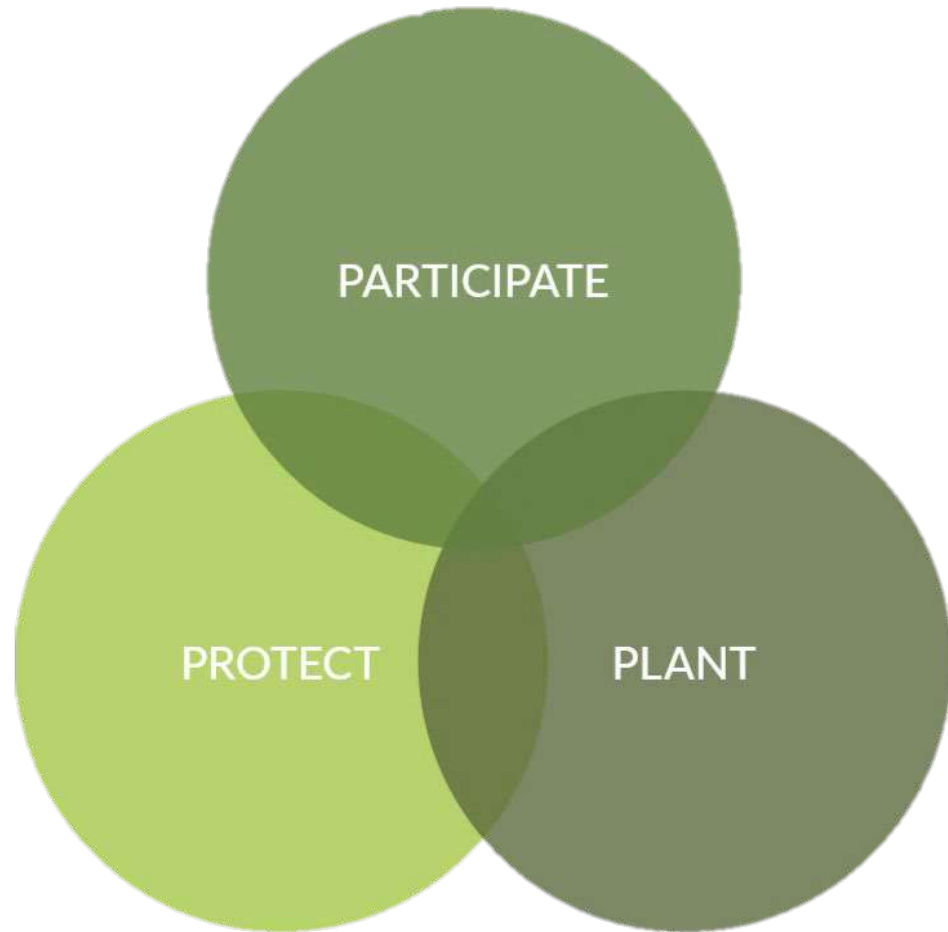- A place of many contrasts – deprivation/wealth, urban density/open land.

Overview of Wirral's Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

- Wirral declared an environment and climate emergency in 2019 and established subsequent policy and action plan in response.

- Range of environmental and biodiversity policies developed as part of the emergency response.

- Ten-year Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy launched in July 2020.

- The focus of our strategy is to actively protect and increase Wirral's *'green infrastructure'* and support carbon capture & resilience.

- Headline objective to double Wirral's tree canopy by planting over 210,000 trees in the next 10 years.
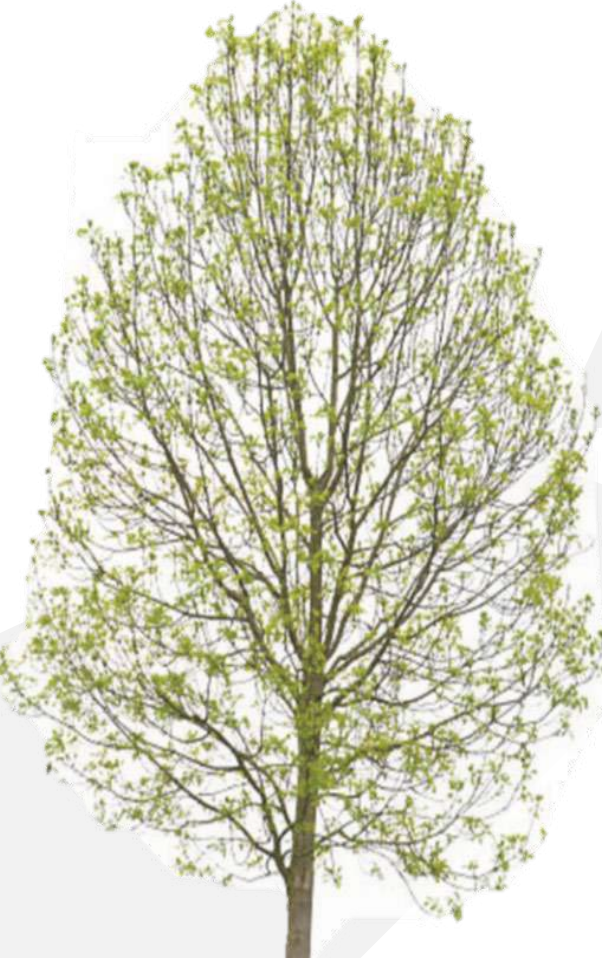
Wirral's Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

PARTICIPATE

PROTECT

PLANT

- The strategy was developed jointly with local, regional and national stakeholders.

- Joint advisory board established to drive the strategy's objectives and actions.

- Progress made in strategy's first year, over 23,000 trees planted.

- Landscape Manager – Tree Strategy position created and established earlier this year.

- Challenges for the postholder include identifying land, sourcing trees, coordinating planting and getting the public engaged and involved.

- We're on our way.

Strategy Delivery and Personnel

- Clearly strategic project management approach required to bring about such a material change to landscape character.

- Far greater range of skills needed than just another tree officer or campaigning position.

- Recruited for a Landscape Manager to deliver the ambitious aims of the tree strategy.

Design, new block planting extremely mundane for decades, really don't want to inflict this on large scale on the good people of Wirral.

Ecology, species fitness and resilience.

Bid writing, procurement and financial management.

Community engagement / what does the customer want …….
"you are not planting that outside my house"

Not that long ago…..

- We were in a bad position with trees…….
- No tree team, inconsistent and bureaucratic approach to risk management.
- Poor interdepartmental communication.
- Tragic tree related fatality and resulting coroner hearing.
- Need for urgent attention to legacy hazard trees.
- Formation of tree management and inspection team.
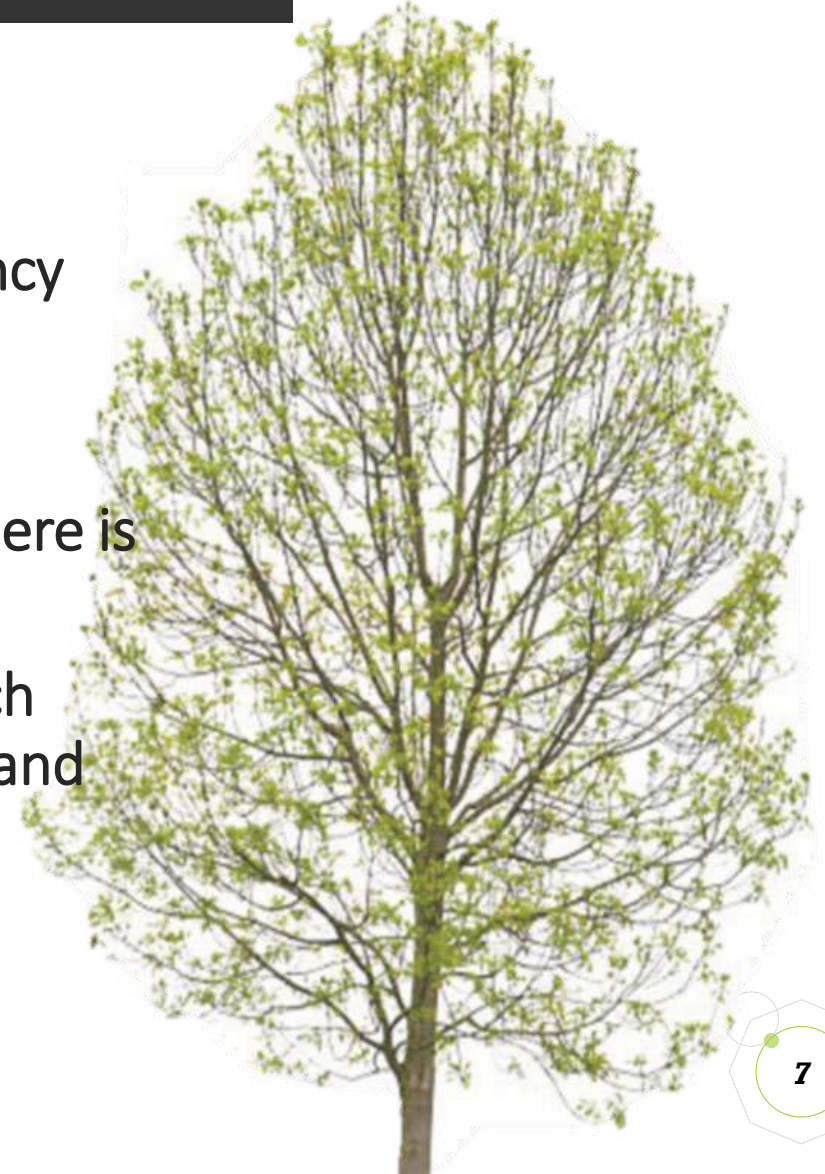- Investment in inspection regime and joint approach.

New maintenance contract

- Service quality improvements needed.

- Great deal of public concern caused by the swift emergency tree removal of legacy high risk trees.

- Lack of public trust in the supplier.

- Strategic relationship vital with new service supplier as there is a limited supply market.

- No industry standardised contracts therefore FM approach NEC3 Term Services used to provide corporate resilience and protection.

- Collaboration and innovative approach with supplier.

Community Engagement

Strategy Objective:
- Establish a robust partnership and community engagement programme to put the strategy into practice.

Strategy Action:
- Creation and implementation of a Community Engagement Policy and Action Plan

Community Engagement

Policy - Required to ensure quality and consistent engagement throughout the duration of the strategy allowing an inclusive and accessible platform for all communities to influence and take part in the delivery of the strategy.

Principles and Types of Engagement:

Involvement	**Information Sharing:** Where communities are informed but have no influence on outcome e.g., emergency health and safety works to Council owned trees.
	Consultation: Communities will be consulted on strategy actions and outcomes, and where possible, their views will have influence.
Participation	**Collaboration**: Where communities are actively involved in the delivery of outcomes e.g., tree planting delivered on Council owned land in partnership with communities.
Ownership	**Community Support**: Where communities lead on outcomes and the Council provides a supporting role only when invited to do so e.g., Council providing resource to community planting and/or campaigns

Community Engagement

Engagement Toolkit -

Information Sharing	Consultation	Collaboration	Community Support
• Social media posts, press releases (one view) & publications • Newsletters, letters & leaflets • Posters, fliers & banners • Event stalls & exhibitions • Public meetings, presentations & briefings • Council website updates	• Online questionnaires & feedback forms • Focus groups & workshops • Written consultation through letter or email • Events & exhibitions • Public meetings	• Events and activity days • Steering group meetings • Communication and marketing resource	• Provision of land • Financial contribution • Officer advice and guidance • Communication and marketing resource • Planting design guides

Community Engagement

Community Action Plan -

Priorities identified by focus group:

- Better communication channels

- Community planting projects

- Community Campaigns

- Citizen science projects

Year 1 Actions:

- Creation of online platform.
- 2021/22 Community planting programme
- Campaigns: - Ash Dieback Awareness
  - Meripilus Awareness
  - Tree Watering and Weeding
  - Value of Urban Trees

Beyond Year 1:

- Annual Community planting programmes and campaigns
- Identification of land for planting
- Establishment of tree nurseries on Wirral
- Citizen Science Projects: - Hedgerow mapping and quality assessment

  - Identifying trees our communities value
  - Tiny forest monitoring
  - Ecosystem service measurements

Thank You

WIRRAL