

Mini-Woodland Tree Planting Scheme

Cabinet	25 April 2024
Report Author	Tony Marmo, Head of Coastal & Public Realm
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Steve Albon, Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Coastal Services
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Reasons for Key	Not applicable
Previously Considered by	Not applicable
Ward:	Dane Valley Road - Dane Valley Ward Garlinge Recreation Grounds - Garlinge Ward Memorial Recreation Ground - Bradstowe Ward Northdown Park - Cliftonville East Ward St Peter's Recreation Ground - St Peter's Ward Tivoli Park - Salmestone Ward

Executive Summary:

Thanet District Council ("the Council") has agreed a carbon reduction plan which lays out the steps the Council will take to reach net zero by 2030. Any emissions the Council is still producing in 2030 will need to be absorbed by carbon sequestration projects such as mini-woodland creation to reach net zero.

The Council has investigated what land it owns that can be used for mini-woodland creation, to absorb these left over emissions. A total of 6 sites have been identified as suitable locations for the Mini-Woodland Tree Planting Scheme. The total size of the land to be used is 4 hectares, spread across the 6 locations.

There are funding opportunities available to the Council for progressing mini-woodlands but they often have short turnaround times to submit an application. In order to make these applications the Council needs to have confirmed the land being allocated for these projects.

Recommendation(s):

That cabinet approve that Council land in the following locations is used for Mini-Woodland Tree Planting Schemes, subject to external funding being identified and secured:

1. Dane Valley Road (1.2 hectares);
2. Garlinge Recreation Ground (0.5 hectares);
3. Memorial Recreation Ground (0.4 hectares);
4. Northdown Park (0.8 hectares);
5. St Peter's Recreation Ground (0.6 hectares);
6. Tivoli Park (0.5 hectares).

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report as the purpose of the report is to agree the locations of any potential Mini-woodland Tree Planting Schemes so that officers can begin the process of submitting bids for funding on behalf of the Council.

Any applications for funding will be reviewed and agreed by the Section 151 Officer in line with the external funding protocol. A further report shall be presented to Cabinet if and when funding has been secured, that seeks approval to accept and spend this funding.

Legal

There are no particular legal implications arising from the proposals in this report at this stage. The land proposed to be used for the planting of trees is all land owned by the Council. The proposals set out in this report if implemented will support the Council to achieve its ambitions in relation to carbon reduction.

Any grants awarded as a result of applications made in accordance with the proposals in this report may have grant conditions that should be considered by the Council's legal department.

Risk Management

Tree planting is important to manage carbon sequestration, but can create a number of risks to be managed:

- Planting the correct species at the right time of year
- Watering during prolonged dry weather
- Minimising disturbance from animals and visitors
- Tree failure is 5%-10%
- Tree disease
- Anti-social behaviour due to dense coverage

It is therefore essential that the correct species are planted dependant on the soil conditions and watered in the first 3 years to ensure appropriate establishment to minimise failure. The trees will also need to be inspected annually for diseases to minimise the spread between the planted area.

Once the mini-woodland has been established in 10-20 years time, there may be a requirement to ensure the area remains a safe open space. This can be created by raising the crown of trees to open up a sight line under the tree branches and/or creating walking routes through the woodlands.

Funding will be required to manage the purchasing of the planting, the 3 years of initial establishment and potential re-planting depending on the failure rates. There also needs to be consideration for longer term management of the mini-woodlands.

Corporate Priorities

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Priority three: To protect our environment

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Officers have undertaken an Equalities Assessment which has confirmed that a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for the recommendations contained within this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The carbon footprint of the Council was calculated last year and a carbon reduction plan was written which lays out the steps necessary to reach net zero by 2030. These steps focus on reducing the emissions the Council creates, such as changing to electric vehicles within our fleet and removing gas boilers from Council properties. Any emissions the Council is still producing in 2030 will need to be absorbed by carbon sequestration projects such as woodland creation to reach net zero.
- 1.2 The net zero action plan states the Council should investigate what land it owns that can be used for mini woodland creation, to absorb these left over emissions. The Council's Climate Change Officer secured funding from the Green Recovery Fund to carry out this assessment.
- 1.3 Mini-woodlands are simply miniature forests, brought into urban spaces. Where most trees in cities are on the border of parks, around playing fields, or lining streets, mini-woodlands present opportunities to create dense vegetation and bring the benefits of trees to local people.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 The assessment undertaken on the locations for potential Mini-Woodland Tree Planting Schemes has been completed. This has identified four hectares of mixed mini-woodland across six locations that will absorb approximately 1,140 tonnes of carbon over 30 years (285 tonnes per hectare).
- 2.2 The following sites are suggested:

Site 1: Dane Valley Road

This comprises two areas of plantable space. The proposed planting locations total 1.2 ha. It is currently a grassland buffer between agricultural and residential land.



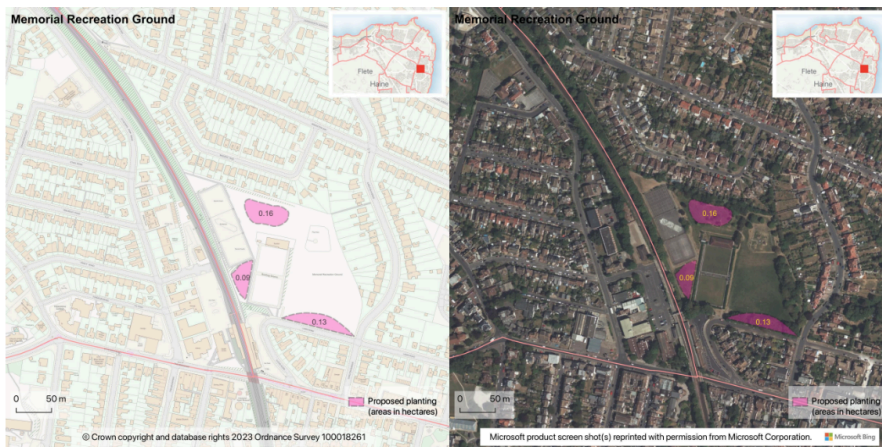
Site 2: Garlinge

The Garlinge site is situated in the eastern corner of Garlinge Recreation Ground, proposed planting totals 0.5 ha. It is currently open grassland, neighbouring several football pitches, and lends itself well to community engagement for planting.



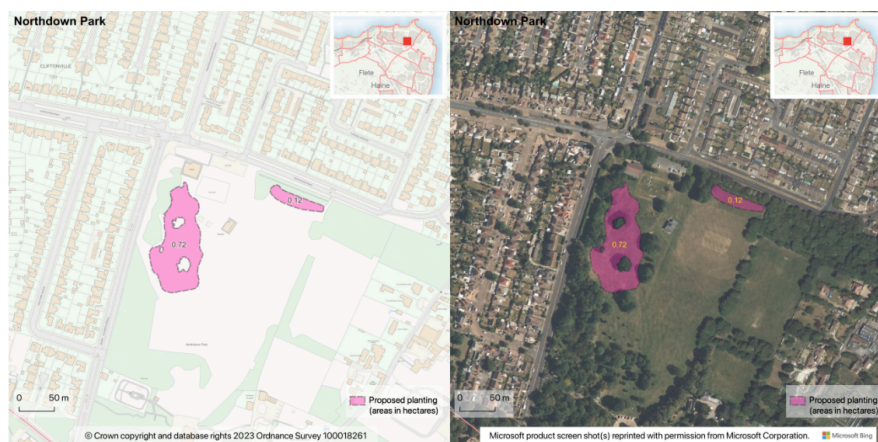
Site 3: Memorial Recreation Ground

This site has the potential to host 3 small mini-woodland planting areas, totalling 0.38 ha. It is situated in a high density residential area.



Site 4: Northdown Park

Northdown Park could host 0.84 ha of min-woodland across two planting areas. It is open space bordered by tree cover and interspersed with mature tree specimens.



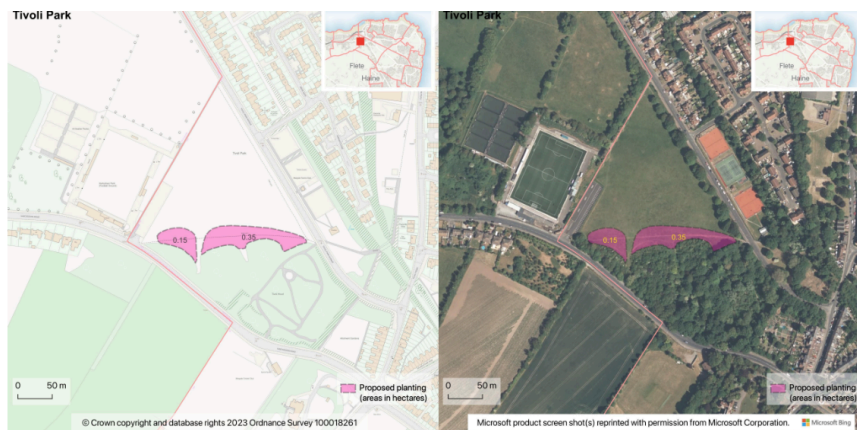
Site 5: St. Peter's Recreation Ground

Planting at St. Peter's Recreation Ground could cover 0.57 ha. The land is currently open green space bordered by existing tree cover. The larger compartment falls between private gardens and an existing row of trees and would require consultation with Thanet Wanderers prior to any planting.



Site 6: Tivoli Park

This site is currently open green space. Mini-woodland creation here is designed to enhance the existing woodland on each side of existing service access. In total, it will create 0.5 ha of min-woodland.



2.3 With the new Open Spaces Manager, the new Tree Officer and the Tree and Biodiversity Coordinator in place, these mini-woodland locations can now be progressed into a carbon sequestration project.

3.0 Next Steps

3.1 There are funding opportunities available to the Council for progressing mini-woodlands but they often have short turnaround times to submit an application. In order to make these applications the Council needs to have confirmed the land being allocated for these projects. Once the Council has approved the allocation of specific land for mini-woodland creation, more site specific plans can be created and costs established ready for funding bids.

- 3.2 Potential funding may be possible through a number of funding streams including KCC's Plan Tree Scheme, the Environment Agency, Southern Water, and community/memorial schemes.
- 3.3 The sites the Council creates mini-woodlands on will need to be closely looked after for three years with watering and other health care. Tree management strategies will need to be put in place to secure the health and longevity of the mini-woodland on a longer term basis.

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Annex

Annex 1 - Report on Tree Planting Opportunity Mapping and the Carbon Sequestration Potential of Pocket Woodlands [[Mini Woodland Report 2023.pdf](#)]

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Matthew Sanham (Head of Finance and Procurement)

Legal: Ingrid Brown (Head of Legal and Democracy & Monitoring Officer)