Tree Canopy Cover Targets

The Council is targeting 20% tree canopy cover for all residential proposals (excluding householders) and residential or commercial led mixed-use development. This will be judged on a site-by-site basis, and will reflect the individual scale, context and opportunities of the site. The target should be established prior to submission through pre application advice.

A higher canopy cover of 30% could be targeted where development is located on a large site incorporating large open space in a strategic location for the city's green-blue network.

Where development is within a dense, urban environment with a tight urban grain, a lower canopy cover of 10% will likely be acceptable.

The initial set of targets will be monitored to evaluate benefits achieved in terms of securing an enhanced urban tree canopy and adjusted as required.

Target: 20% Tree Cover

Most medium to high density sites should target 20% canopy cover, including larger sites with a mix of flats, colonies, and townhouses.

The targets should be met within street design, civic spaces, and parking areas, not solely within public open space and private communal greenspace. Layout should prioritize connectivity of new stands of trees, street trees and woodland.

Smaller ornamental tree planting within private front gardens will not normally be counted towards achieving the target.

Example area: Quartermile

A slightly lower canopy cover will be permitted in situations where it can be demonstrated that this leads to a higher overall quality of green space.

STRATEGIC SITES

DENSE URBAN SITES

30% Tree Cover

Larger sites located within or adjacent to Edinburgh's Strategic Green Blue Network, or its planned extension should target 30% tree canopy cover.

This should also include major new development areas subject to comprehensive masterplans or place briefs and incorporating large new green spaces. This could apply to both new high density flatted development, proposals with a higher proportion of houses and colonies or sites where lower densities are appropriate to context.

The target should be delivered as part of the strategic approach to landscape across the development. This includes the design of the street network and larger open spaces that form the wider landscape framework, alongside retained and enhanced landscape features.

Example area: Blackford

10% Tree Cover

In some sites, a 20% tree cover will not be possible. This could include smaller sites in existing high-density areas, with a fine urban grain of flatted development. Or it may be due to circumstances such as: the setting of historic assets, archaeology, wayleaves and easements, airport safeguarding, the need for other priority habitat types, open ground for recreation and sunlight, or to maintain views and public safety.

These sites should aim to achieve as high a tree canopy cover as possible, and this should be no lower than 10% canopy cover. The reasons for not achieving a higher tree canopy targets must be clearly outlined. There must be clear consideration of how best to create high quality green space on the site. A lower canopy cover be accepted and may be compensated for by other green-blue infrastructure to manage surface water e.g. rain gardens and green roofs.

Example area: Kings Stable Rd

The targets should be achieved by retaining existing tree cover combined with the future canopy spread of new tree and woodland planting.

Applicants should follow the method recommended in *Factsheet W7 - Tree Canopy* to calculate the existing and proposed site canopy cover and present their findings.

For applications for Planning Permission in Principle, capacity to achieve the relevant target may require to be shown through an illustrative masterplan.

Detailed calculations will be expected for all applications for full planning permission or approval of matters specified in conditions.

Planting Considerations

During layout design, sufficient space should be allocated above and below ground for specimen trees, street trees and woodland to grow to maturity.

Select species to reflect the intended location, ultimate height and spread and relationship to buildings, roads, and wider landscape design.

Include a mix of small, medium, and large stature, long-lived tree species to create townscapes of the future, host more flora and fauna and lock up carbon.

A diverse mix of native and non-native trees will provide the greatest resilience to plant pathogens and climate change, as well as visual and environmental benefits.

On larger sites, no more than 10% of proposed trees should be the same species, no more than 20% should be the same genus, and no more than 30% should be the same family.

Except for historic designed landscapes, avoid single species avenues. Instead use a mix of two or three tree species with similar form and habit.

Tree planting in open ground is preferable to tree pits as it provides better conditions for growth including space, soil water availability, nutrients, biota, and gas exchange.

The planting of street trees and trees in hard surfaces requires careful site planning and detailed design.

Proximity to underground utilities, street lighting, road signs, CCTV and parking need require careful consideration and design.

For brownfield sites, the feasibility of proposed tree planting locations may need to be demonstrated by ground radar survey or trial pits to expand on utilities searches and avoid subsurface constraints.

Use structural soils or underground cellular systems in hard surfaces to provide adequate underground rooting area and a load-bearing paved surface.

Safeguarding trees during construction

Protective barriers must be erected before work starts on site and remain until all construction activity is complete. Conditions and Tree Preservation Orders will be used to safeguard trees.

British Standard (BS) 5837 provides guidance on planning and implementing development work on a site with trees.

Trees with local heritage value *- the Corstorphine sycamore is a cultivar that originated in Corstorphine.*

Management and Aftercare

The ongoing management of existing trees and woodland and effective aftercare of new planting must be set out in a maintenance plan.

In specific cases, an arboricultural clerk of works may be required by condition to oversee construction activities.

New trees should receive 50 litres of water a week in spring and summer for the first three years after planting.

Consideration may be given to the use of Planning Conditions to secure the longevity of trees.

Any trees proposed for adoption by the Council will require a period of five years' establishment maintenance prior to handover.

Detailed requirements for tree planting plans, planting stock and ongoing maintenance are set out under Public Realm and Landscape Design.

Trees providing communal benefit *- Trees within communal gardens lining the footway at Meggetland*