

The Mersey Forest Plan refresh for 2025

Liverpool City Region LNP
June 2023

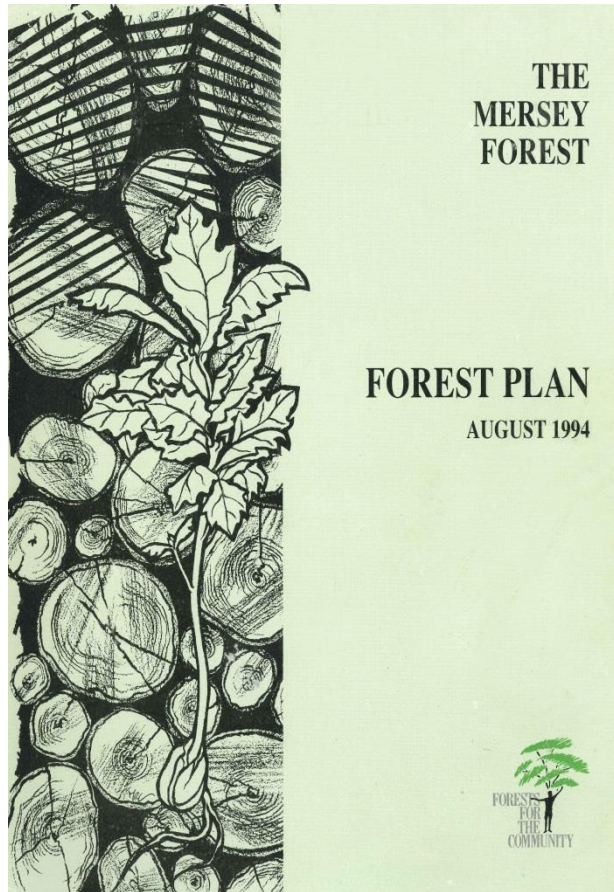


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The Mersey Forest Plan

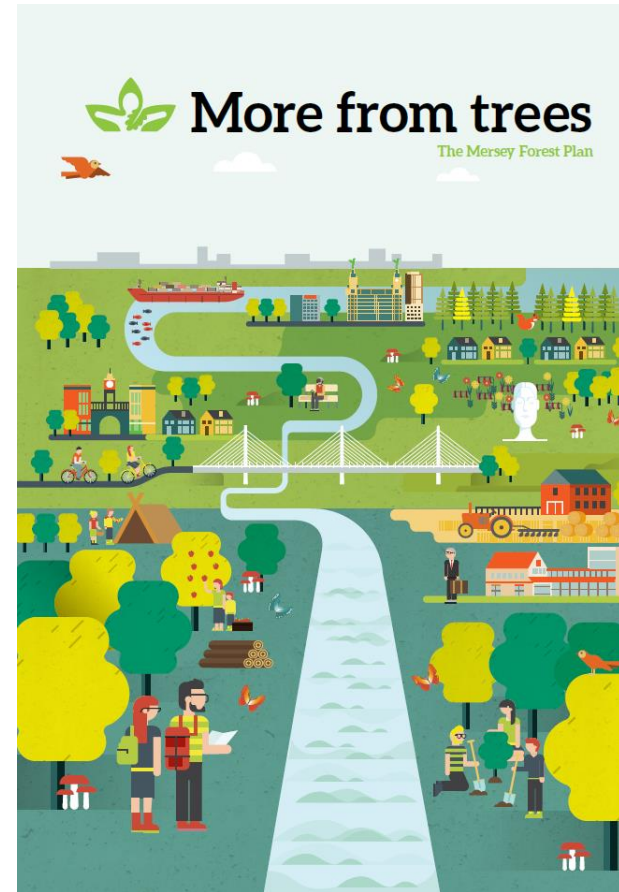
1994



2001



2014



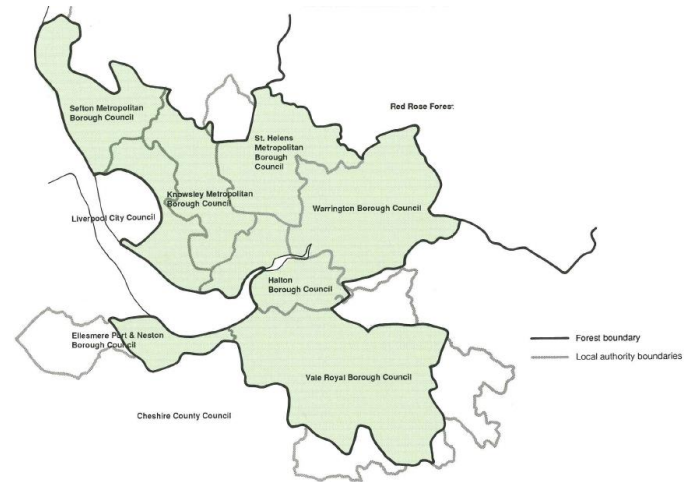
2025...

- Engaging wide range of partners
- Web-based, summary pdf
- Update vision & policies
 - Urgency, hope, ambition
 - Achievements
 - Changing strategic priorities
- Mapping portal

www.merseyforest.org.uk/plan

Changing boundary of The Mersey Forest

1994



923 km²

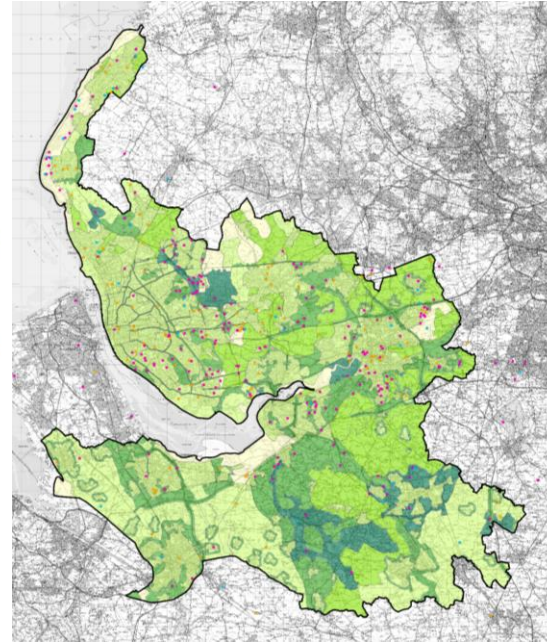
2001



1,062 km²

+140 km² (15%) from 1994

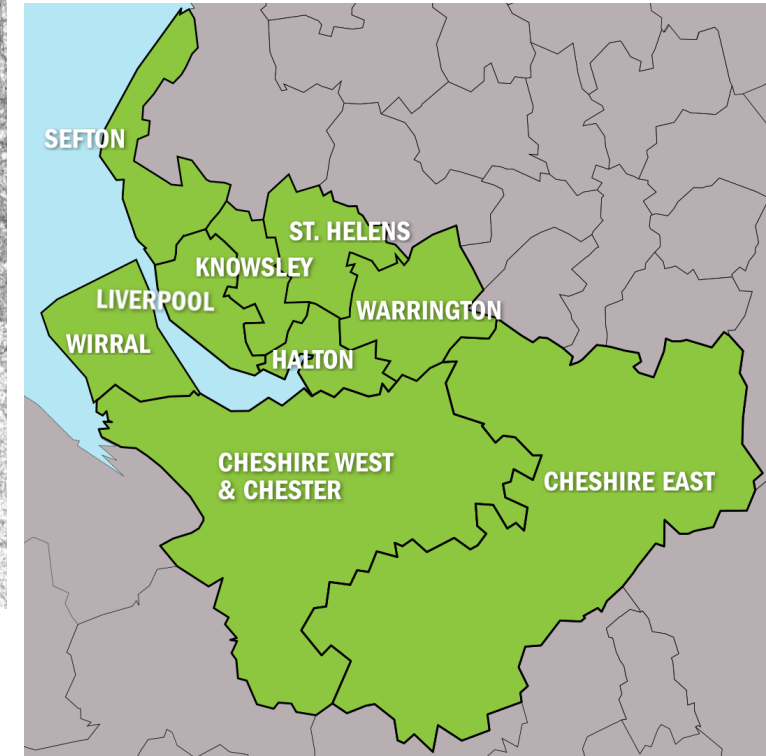
2014



1,370 km²

+308 km² (29%) from 2001

2025?



2,985 km²

+1,615 km² (118%) from 2014
3.2 x size of 1994 TMF

Uses of Plan by team & partners

- Guide work to achieve vision
- Develop funding bids
- Demonstrate importance of trees & woodlands
- Guide cross boundary working, in relation to LA duty to cooperate
- Contribute to local planning – can be material consideration (National Planning Policy Framework) & support development control process
- Guide delivery of tree/woodland actions within Green Infrastructure Frameworks, Strategies & Plans
- Could it be the tree/woodland part of LNRS? And provide a delivery mechanism for this?

2014 Vision >>

Our vision is to get 'more from trees' to help make Merseyside and North Cheshire one of the best places in the country to live.

We will work with partners, communities and landowners across rural and urban areas, to plant trees and woodlands, improve their management, and complement other habitats. This will increase woodland cover to 20% of the area. We will revitalize a woodland culture, and bring economic and social benefits through our transformed environment.

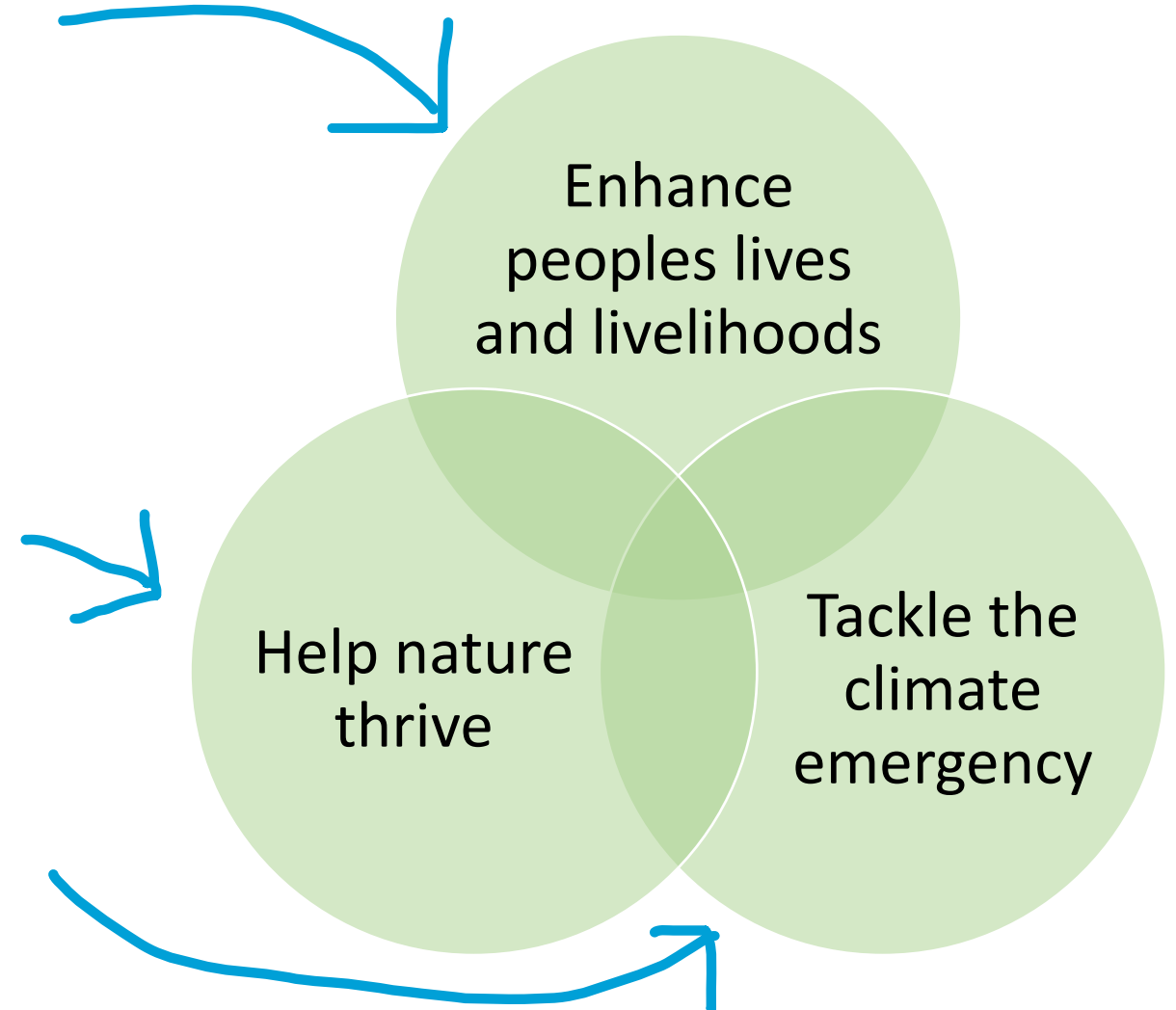
2025 Vision...

'More from trees': Cherished trees and woodlands covering 20% of Cheshire and Merseyside by 2050 and bringing hope – for climate, nature, and people.

'More with trees': Acting together to increase cherished tree cover to 30% of Cheshire and Merseyside; intertwining trees with people, nature, climate, and hope.

2014 WHY Policies >> 2025 WHY Objectives...

- The economy and tourism
- Woodfuel, timber and forest industries
- Access, recreation and sustainable travel
- Health and wellbeing
- Natural play and education
- Life-long learning, training, skills and jobs
- Culture, heritage and landscape
- PLUS food security/agroforestry, place making
- Wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems
- Climate change
- Flood alleviation and water management





TREES AND WOODS: AT THE HEART OF NATURE RECOVERY IN ENGLAND

Policy Paper



June 2023

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/trees-and-woods-for-nature-recovery/

Measure achievements against each objective

For existing & new trees/woods, over different periods (life of TMF, since last Plan, 1 year, 5 years)

- Schemes planted/yr, ha woodland established/yr, number of street trees planted, ha existing woodland managed, Funding secured by team, Gearing of funds (return on LA partner funding), Number of trees planted in TMF, % increase in woodland cover

• Enhance peoples lives and livelihoods

- % population meeting Woodland Access Standard – 500m of 2ha accessible wood & 4km of 20ha wood (Households within 500m of any accessible wood over 0.1ha)
- 3:30:300
- Accessible nature experience (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- Revised ANGSt targets
- Air purification (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- Noise regulation (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- Health & wellbeing stats? Insignificant at TMF scale?
- People supported to improve their wellbeing
- % people saying their environment has improved thanks to local forest projects
- % people saying they support the work of Forest Partnership
- Good quality walking/cycling networks created or reopened
- Number of visitors to woods? Not sure how measure
- Engagement events held
- No of schools worked/planted/with Forest Schools/outdoor learning?
- Economic valuation (Natural Capital/GI Val?)

• Help nature thrive

- Ha established in priority woodland areas in LNRS
- Ecological networks – where schemes connect existing woods
- Change in wildlife diversity? Record centre data? Woodland indicator species? Generalists & specialists?
- Other habitats created?
- Native species mix in schemes?
- Pollination (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- km hedgerow created / managed

• Tackle the climate emergency

- Carbon stored over life (30+ yrs), uptake/yr
- Ha established in priority areas for water – High NFM Potential (EA's Spatial prioritization of catchments suitable for NFM), quality, riparian
- Flood regulation / risk mitigation (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- Volume of water stored/held back? Measured flow in watercourses? Quality improved? Can we work with UU/EA to get suitable measures?
- Number of NFM interventions
- Planting in priority areas for urban cooling
- Cooling / local climate regulation (change in ecosystem service units using EcoservR toolkit)
- Neighbourhood cooling (using STAR tools)? Unlikely to be significant change seen across TMF. Could run STAR tools to show scenario where we meet planting targets for each area

<p>Vision</p>	<p>‘More with trees’: Acting together to increase cherished tree cover to 30% of Cheshire and Merseyside; intertwining trees with people, nature, climate, and hope.</p>			
<p>WHY Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence • Supporting text • Measure • Infographic • Photograph • Case studies & current projects • Evidence • National/local policies 	<p>Enhance peoples lives and livelihoods</p>	<p>Help nature thrive</p>	<p>Tackle the climate emergency</p>	
<p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar structure to objectives 	<p>WHAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish trees and woodlands • Manage trees and woodlands • Use of trees and woodlands 	<p>WHO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team • Partners • Communities • Landowners 	<p>HOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and policy • Funding and investment • Monitor achievements • Evidence based decisions • Communications 	<p>WHEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery Plan
<p>Guidelines</p>	<p>WHERE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicative tree & woodland cover targets & guidelines • Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St.Helens, Wirral 			

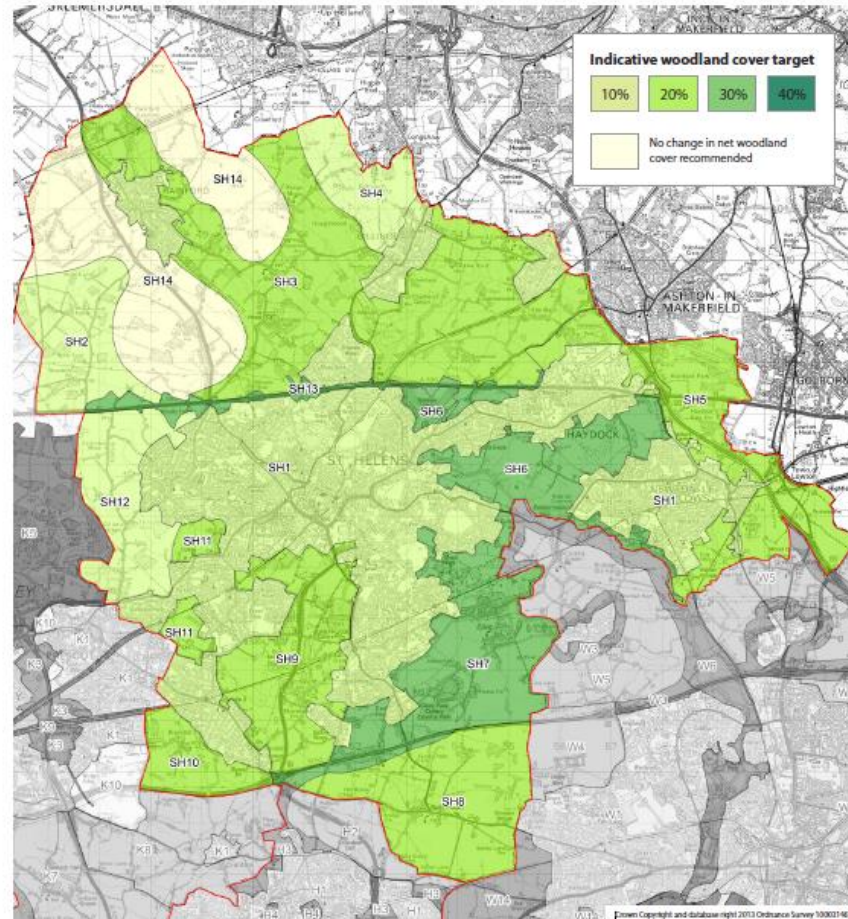
2014 WHERE Policies

St.Helens

St.Helens has a mixture of rural and urban areas. The maturing woodland in St.Helens has significant potential to support the regeneration of the town. Woodland on former colliery spoil heaps in the south of St.Helens, now collectively being termed as Bold Forest Park, could provide a recreation resource for much of Merseyside, with potential to serve neighbouring authorities. In addition, Sankey Valley, with links through Warrington and into Widnes, is a green infrastructure resource for local communities which can provide multiple functions. Rural diversification is a key issue being addressed by the Local Authority, the local business community and other partners.

Indicative woodland cover target (%) and policies

Visit merseyforest.org.uk/plan for an interactive version of this map.



SH1. Urban areas, settlements and employment sites:

Plant individual trees, groups of trees and small woodlands in appropriate urban areas, settlements and employment sites, such as school playing fields, open spaces, streets, highway verges and institutional grounds. Planting associated with development sites and derelict land should be either temporary or structural in nature, so as not to compromise redevelopment potential. Target planting to meet identified green infrastructure needs. Continue developing the greenway network.

SH2. Agricultural Mossborough: Enhance hedgerows and woodland blocks. Create shelterbelts along roads and field boundaries, but maintain the open landscape as a pink-footed geese feeding area. Diversifying the landscape will support hare populations, but planting should not impact on large grassland areas, or form a barrier to population movements.

SH3. North St.Helens landscapes of Arch Lane Slopes, Weathercock Slopes, Rainford Slopes, Carr Mill Dam and Old Garswood Park: Large woodland planting is inappropriate. Restore hedges and hedgerow trees, and plant copses, small woodlands, and shelterbelts within the existing field pattern, enhancing ancient semi-natural and parkland woodlands. Expand riparian planting along watercourses. Increase woodland density and size where appropriate and use to soften urban edges such as at Garswood. Diversifying the landscape will support hare populations, but planting should not impact on large grassland areas, or form a barrier to population movements.

SH4. Billinge Hill: Large woodland planting is inappropriate. Do not plant on the summit to maintain visibility and views. Expand existing woodlands and riparian woodland cloughs, and restore hedgerows and small woodlands near buildings on the lower slopes.

SH5. M6 Corridor and East St.Helens: Create an attractive gateway to St.Helens, with woodland planting by the M6 (especially western sections) and interchanges. Expand existing woodland (including at Haydock Park through planting blocks, copses, belts and hedgerows), and provide a setting for Haydock Industrial Estate, the identified location of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at the former Parkside Colliery, the urban edge (including Haydock and Newton-le-Willows), and other developments. Planting should complement grassland and wetlands.

SH6. Sankey Valley: Connect habitats including woodlands, glades, water bodies, hedgerows and valley slopes. Plant woodlands by existing valley clough woodlands (including ancient semi-natural woodland at Court Wood and at Red Brow Wood, just outside of this area by the Sankey Valley Industrial Estate), to screen developments, extend into residential and employment sites, and along recreational links between Bold Forest Park, Stanley Bank, and Sankey Valley, and into Warrington. Create significant woodland through the restoration of Wood and Lyme Pits.

SH7. Bold Forest Park north: Create a unified woodland structure and interconnect former colliery sites (including extending to Cronton Colliery in Knowsley) by restoring,

expanding, and planting woodland blocks, copses, shelterbelts and hedgerows to provide a significant and diverse recreational resource for St.Helens, Knowsley, Halton, and Warrington, buffer urban edges, and improve the M62 corridor. Diversifying the landscape will support hare populations, but planting should not impact on large grassland areas and wetlands, or form a barrier to population movements. Planting is inappropriate at Colliers Moss Common (including Bold, Burtonwood, Colliers, Parr and Sutton Mosses).

SH8. Bold Forest Park south: Plant woodlands, shelterbelts and hedgerows in balance with the open landscape to tie this area in with the rest of Bold Forest Park to the north. Reinstatement of fragmented woodland and hedgerows along roads and field boundaries, linking woodlands with hedgerows. Create smaller wet woodlands by water pits and field ponds. Diversifying the landscape will support hare populations, but planting should not impact on large grassland areas and wetlands, or form a barrier to population movements.

SH9. A570 Link Road: Enhance existing woodlands and link with reinstated hedgerows. Plant alongside roads and urban edges, such as to the east of Rainhill, and to improve the setting of Lea Green Economic Employment Zone. Diversifying the landscape will support hare populations, but planting should not impact on large areas of grasslands and wetlands, or form a barrier to population movements. Create links to Bold Forest Park.

SH10. Blundell's Hill and south-west of Rainhill: Large woodland planting is inappropriate. Enhance shelterbelts and hedgerows, including on the upper slopes of Blundell's Hill. Avoid planting along the M62 as it would reinforce the strength of this corridor. Plant woodland to soften the urban edge along the Rainhill ridge, but maintain the historic Rainhill skyline and views to the south. Plant wet woodland pockets to enhance distinctive water pits. Ensure planting complements grasslands.

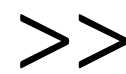
SH11. Big Dam and Rainhill Golf Course: Create cohesive open spaces by further planting on the golf courses and playing fields. Plant woodland in the south and west to soften urban edges. Planting should complement grassland and wetlands.

SH12. Agricultural land west of Eccleston: Restore hedges and hedgerow trees. There are limited opportunities for planting, but small woodlands, tree belts and copses by farms should complement grassland and wetlands.

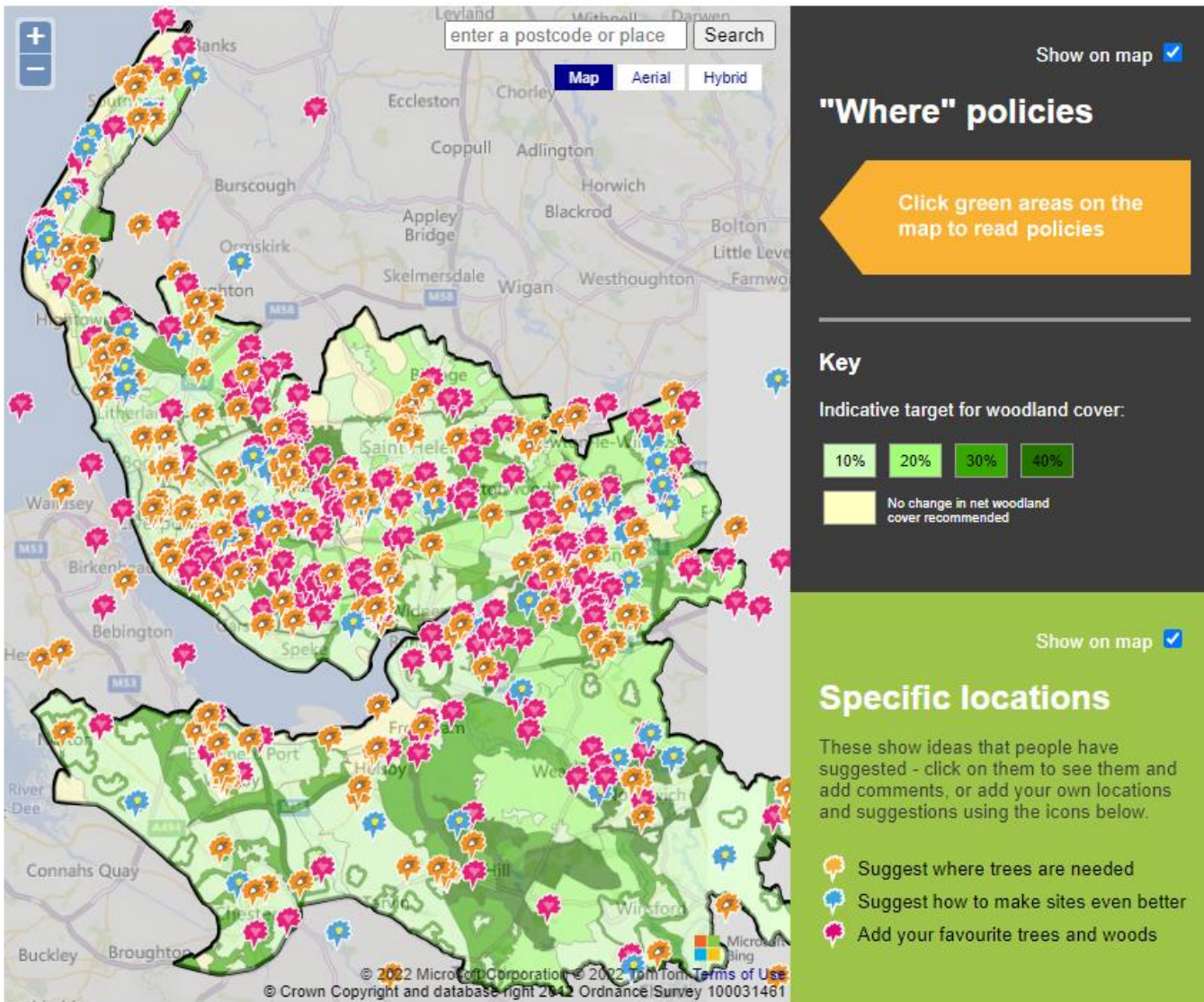
SH13. A580 Corridor: Plant woodland and shelterbelts to screen built development from the A580, especially in Moss Bank, Haydock and Windlehurst. Target planting at road junctions. Undertake limited planting to reinforce the estate and parkland woodlands, especially around the Old Garswood Estate. Planting should complement grassland and wetlands.

SH14. Agricultural mosses around Rainford: Woodland planting is generally inappropriate. Limit tree planting to the sensitive reinstatement of historic hedgerows within the open landscape, which should be maintained as a pink-footed geese feeding area. Plant small wet woodlands by water pits and buildings around Holiday Moss.

2014 Mapping



2025 Mapping



- Online, interactive, live “Tree Atlas” mapping portal
- Multiple layers from various sources, set out for the 3 objectives
- Help to
 - Showcase achievements
 - Target projects where needed
 - Inform planting & management decisions
 - Engage community
- Inform changes to “Where” guidelines – indicative tree & woodland cover targets

Potential Tree Atlas Layers – ~80 layers

General

- Local Authority Districts
- TMF Boundaries
- INSPIRE polygons (land registry parcels)
- Cables
- Overhead Lines
- Substations
- Towers
- Greenspace
- TMF Planting sites
- TMF Management Sites
- Roads
- Historic National Landscape Character Type
- National Character Areas
- National Forest Inventory 2020
- Tree Cover
- Indicative tree & woodland cover targets & guidelines
- Images envisioning what these could look like?
- Local Authority owned land
- Woodland ownership
- LA tree stock data
- LA land identified for tree planting opportunities
- Wards
- Woodland management plans

Climate

- National Soil Inventory
- Peaty Soils
- Local climate regulation opportunities
- Communities at Risk
- Flood Risk Areas
- Flood Storage Areas
- Flood Warning Areas
- Flood Zones 2 and 3
- Historic Flood Areas
- Working With Natural Processes (Riparian Woodland Opportunities)
- Water Network
- Water quality regulation opportunities
- Water flow regulation opportunities
- Images of carbon scanned trees within TMF?

Nature

- Grassland opportunity
- Heathland opportunity
- Mire opportunity
- Wetland/wet grassland opportunity
- Woodland opportunity
- Great Crested Newt Risk Zones
- Habitat Networks
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ecological Network Tool
- Nature Improvement Areas
- National Nature Reserves
- Priority Habitats
- Ramsar Sites
- SACs
- SPAs
- SSSIs
- Ancient Woodland

People

- Agricultural Grade
- Access Network
- Country Parks
- Doorstep Greens
- Millennium Greens
- National Parks
- Paths
- Accessible natural greenspace opportunities
- Air quality regulation opportunities
- Noise regulation opportunities
- LSOA IMD 2019
- Schools
- Orchards/Fruit trees
- Latest census data on demographics and health
- Further/higher education establishments
- Pins of where people like trees, want more, or better management
- Dot-art gallery – tree stories
- Treezilla?
- Sounds of the Forest?

