

Draft Consultation Plan: Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036

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Purpose

The consultation plan sets out how Cambridge City Council will engage stakeholders in the development of the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) 2026-2036. It follows a two-phase approach:

1. Internal consultation (Oct-Dec 2025): to test deliverability, identify risks, and ensure cross-service alignment.
2. Public consultation (Dec 2025-Feb 2026): to gather views from residents, community groups, businesses, and other stakeholders, to be delivered alongside the Biodiversity Strategy mid-period review.

Objectives

1. Check deliverability: ensure UFS policies and actions are realistic for services and partners.
2. Ensure alignment: integrate with Climate Change, Biodiversity, Local Plan, and Corporate priorities.
3. Raise awareness: promote understanding of the “urban forest” as shared city infrastructure.
4. Gather feedback: test public support for UFS aims, principles, and delivery approaches.
5. Encourage participation: foster stewardship, planting, and care for trees across the city.

Phase 1: Internal Consultation

Audiences

- City Services Group: Tree Team, Public Realm, Housing, Cemeteries & Crematorium, Flood Management, Biodiversity.
- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service: Development Management, Policy, Urban Design, Built and Natural Environment
- Cambridgeshire County Council: Highways, flood/drainage.
- Greater Cambridge Partnership: Transport schemes.
- Economy & Place Group: Commercial property, development, Climate.
- Corporate Hub: Sustainability, Finance, Legal and Communications.
- Communities Group: Engagement, Housing.
- City and County Councillors.
- Cabinet members

Methods

- Email invitation to Directors to cascade consultation to relevant Officers, with informative as to the relevant areas of the UFS to each group.
- Email invitation to partners, with informative as to the relevant areas of the UFS to each partner.
- Email invitation to Councillors.
- Targeted email invitation to Officers with known associations and interests the city urban forest, with informative as to the relevant areas of the UFS to each partner.
- Circulation of draft UFS & Topic Papers via SharePoint or email attachment for those without SharePoint access.
- Structured feedback via MS Forms survey and comments in SharePoint.

Outputs

1. Internal feedback report with recommendations.
2. Revised UFS for approval by the Director of City Services Group
3. Approval post internal consultation UFS draft for public consultation.

Timeline

- October 2025: circulation and briefing sessions.
- November 2025: internal consultation report finalised.
- December 2025: draft UFS ready for public consultation alongside the Biodiversity mid-period review

Phase 2: Public Consultation

Audiences

- Residents and community groups: citywide.
- Friends and Residents' Associations: e.g., FeCRA, Abbey People, RAs.
- Landowners and businesses: Colleges, developers, utilities, major employers.
- Environmental and civic groups: Cambridge Past Present & Future, Cambridge Nature Network.

Methods

Aligned with Climate consultation channels:

- Online hub (Engage Cambridge) with UFS survey
- Council website & social media (#CamTrees).
- Printed summary leaflet with QR code links.
- Libraries, community centres, warm hubs (leaflets, QR codes).

Survey Content

- Awareness and support for UFS vision, aims, and principles.
- Support for specific policies (Manage more, Protect more, Plant more, Engage more).
- Views on canopy equity, biodiversity, and urban cooling.
- Views on tree protection and planting.

Outputs

- Public consultation report ("you said, we did").

Appendix 2

- Final revised UFS.

Timeline

- December 2025: launch consultation with Biodiversity Strategy.
- December 2025 - Jan 2026: outreach activities and survey live.
- Feb - March 2026: review responses and final draft
- March 2026: final UFS to Cabinet, alongside Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategies.

Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Low participation from public	Multi-channel promotion (social media, libraries, RAs). Align consultation with Biodiversity Strategy to maximise visibility.
Misalignment across internal services	Two-phase approach: internal consultation first, followed by public.
Limited staff capacity	Use existing networks and Climate consultation channels. Coordinate with Biodiversity Officer and Comms Team.

Expected Outcomes

- UFS refined through internal and public input.
- Stronger alignment across Council services.
- Broader public awareness of the urban forest.
- Community, business, and landowner buy-in to shared stewardship.
- Final strategy ready for adoption in March 2026, alongside Climate and Biodiversity Strategies.