Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk.

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Urban Forest Strategy 2026–2036 v1 - draft

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
To be added to the Council's website once final approval has been given March 2026

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
The Strategy sets out Cambridge City Council's long-term approach to protecting, expanding and managing the City's tree canopy. Its aim is to secure the health, resilience and equitable distribution of the urban forest so that all communities benefit from cleaner air, reduced heat stress, enhanced biodiversity, climate resilience and improved wellbeing. It provides a clear framework of principles, aims, policies and actions, ensuring that trees are embedded in planning, infrastructure, climate and health decision-making. It is an extension, revision and continuation of the Citywide Tree Strategy that expires in 2026   **UFS vision**   To protect, expand and manage Cambridge's tree canopy, guided by principles of equity, need and environmental value, ensuring that the benefits of urban trees are accessible

across all communities and that the canopy we leave for future generations is healthier and more resilient than what we have inherited.

UFS principles

Five principles serve as the foundation of the Strategy, guiding the approaches taken to a deliver healthier, fairer and more resilient urban forest.

1. Awareness and Action:

A clear-eyed recognition of the challenges we face and a bold plan to address them. Understanding the problems of the past and those we still face, the resulting impact on ecosystem services and taking clear, innovative steps to redress the balance between the built and natural environments.

2. Climate Resilience:

Leveraging urban trees to cool neighbourhoods, capture carbon and reduce flood risk. Protecting and enhancing canopy cover to minimise the occurrence and impact of extreme weather events to minimise damage to the environment, well-being and the economy.

3. Intergenerational Equity:

Protecting and planting today with tomorrow in mind, building a green legacy for the future. Recognising the importance of trees, the time it takes for them to grow and the need for us to act now to benefits our future generations.

4. Public Engagement:

Encouraging community participation, education and shared stewardship of our urban forest. Educating the wider community on the benefits of trees but also how and where they could make their own contribution so taking responsibility in self-protecting the urban forest at a neighbourhood level.

5. Environmental Justice:

Ensuring that every resident, especially those in the most heat vulnerable areas, has access to shade, clean air and nature. With an uneven distribution of trees throughout Cambridge the proactive preservation of existing trees and new planting needs to be prioritised in areas with lower canopy cover.

UFS Aims

1. Increase canopy cover

To protect where appropriate and expand tree canopy across Cambridge, particularly in areas of low provision, enhancing climate resilience, reducing urban heat and contributing to long-term environmental improvement.

In line with the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the Strategy sets an aspirational target of achieving at least 20% by 2050 canopy cover across Cambridge, to be pursued through protection, public planting, private engagement and integrated policy.

Supporting Climate Resilience, Intergenerational Equity and Environmental Justice principles.

2. Improve the condition and longevity of existing trees

To proactively protect, manage and care for trees throughout their lives, recognising the long-term benefits of a healthy, mature tree population.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Intergenerational Equity principles.

3. Ensure equitable access to the benefits of the urban forest

To address disparities in canopy cover and environmental conditions by focusing efforts on communities that are underserved or most vulnerable to climate-related impacts.

Supporting Environmental Justice, Public Engagement principles.

4. Embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making

To ensure trees are considered at all levels of planning and design, from infrastructure and development to climate and public health policy.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Climate Resilience principles

5. Support biodiversity and habitat connectivity

To increase species diversity and strengthen ecological networks, recognising trees' roles in supporting wider urban biodiversity.

Supporting Climate Resilience, Intergenerational Equity principles.

6. Promote shared stewardship and community participation

To empower individuals, organisation sand communities to take an active role in the care and expansion of the urban forest.

Supporting Public Engagement, Intergenerational Equity principles

7. Build and maintain a strong evidence base

To use high-quality data and research to inform decisions, track progress and respond to emerging threats such as climate change and tree disease.

Supporting Awareness and Action principle

Strengthen the capacity and resourcing needed to deliver the Strategy

8. Build internal capacity, develop strategic partnerships and secure funding to deliver the Strategy

Build internal capacity, develop strategic partnerships and secure funding to ensure the urban forest Strategy can be effectively implemented over the long term.

Supporting Awareness and Action, Intergenerational Equity, Public Engagement principles

4. Responsible Team and Group
Tree Team (City Services, Public Realm).

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick all that apply)	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff
Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here): All people who live in, work in and visit the city, including: City Council tenants (housing estates and communal areas) Community groups involved in planting/ urban forestry projects Developers and landowners affected by new policy guidance Vulnerable residents in areas of low canopy cover and high climate risk (heat, air quality, flooding).	

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)	☒ Yes ☐ No
If 'Yes' please provide details below: Subject to approval to go to consultation at Cabinet in September the strategy will proceed to internal consultation to ensure feasibility. Consultees will include: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways) Greater Cambridge Partnership	

It will then proceed to public consultation in December/January.

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8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

- Canopy cover datasets (2008 & 2018) and ward-level analysis

- i-Tree Eco survey (2020–21) of ecosystem services

- Tree Equity mapping

- Tree audit data from Ezytreev (Council-managed trees)

- DiversiTree veteran willow survey (2025)

- Shadeways analysis (2023)

- Free Trees for Babies participation data

- National and local demographic data identifying vulnerable groups most at risk from climate impacts.

    o Tree Equity Score UK [Tree Equity Score UK](#)

    o Local studies analysing tree canopy with IMD

        ▪ [tree-canopy-cover-in-cambridge-between-2008-and-2018.pdf](#)

    o Govt IMD [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK](#)

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9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Children benefit from improved air quality, shaded walking routes to schools, and opportunities to engage in planting/education. Older residents gain health and wellbeing

benefits from access to shaded spaces, reduced heat stress, and opportunities for social connection.

[Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK](#) - children and older people are especially likely to be impacted by poor air quality so improvements are especially beneficial to them

Safeguarding: Planting projects involving schools/community groups will include safeguarding measures in accordance with Council policy.

Negative impacts: We do not advise seating directly beneath trees. While trees provide important general cooling benefits and shade, seating can create maintenance issues such as clearing honeydew, bird droppings, and fruit fall, as well as potential safety risks. For this reason, we recommend that cooling and shading benefits are enjoyed more generally within treed spaces rather than focused on seating provision beneath individual trees

(b) Disability

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Accessible green spaces with shade and improved air quality benefit people with physical and mental health conditions. Increasing urban tree canopy helps prevent heat-related illnesses, respiratory and heart diseases, obesity, and mental health disorders by cooling cities, cleaning air, and reducing stress. Planting programmes consider accessible design (e.g. avoiding obstructions to pavements/paths).

Creating shaded places help foster inclusive, age-friendly spaces where people can pause and recover. Shade not only protects humans from heat it also keeps pavement cooler for assistance dogs, making urban areas more accessible and comfortable for everyone.

Air quality and physical health

Trees and vegetation help capture and hold onto airborne particles, which improves local air quality and delivers measurable health benefits for nearby communities.
 [Forest Research – Improving Physical Health](#)

Mental wellbeing and stress reduction

Access to woods and trees supports health and wellbeing by reducing stress, lifting mood, and strengthening the immune system.
 [Woodland Trust – Health and Wellbeing](#)

Cooling, air quality, and overall wellbeing

Urban trees provide wide-ranging health benefits: they clean the air, lower asthma levels, reduce stress, and offer shade that helps protect people from heat and sun exposure.
GOV.UK – The Case for Trees

Potential barriers: None identified.

(c) Gender reassignment

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

No negative impacts identified specific to this group.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

Improved air quality, shade and reduced heat stress benefit pregnant people and those with infants. The "Free Trees for Babies" scheme provides positive symbolic and environmental benefits for new families.

No negative impacts identified.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate

No negative impacts identified.

(g) Religion or belief
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Many faith groups and beliefs value nature for spiritual reasons. No negative impacts identified.

(h) Sex
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Urban forest benefits are universal. Women are more likely to experience caring responsibilities and can benefit from safer, shaded routes for walking with children. '*In 2022, females on average made 18% more walking trips than males*' [Walking and cycling statistics, England: Demographic differences in walking and cycling - GOV.UK](#) No negative impacts identified.

(i) Sexual orientation
Positive: Engagement activities are citywide and inclusive and do not discriminate Community planting and stewardship events provide inclusive opportunities, fostering social cohesion across diverse groups. No negative impacts identified.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:
- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Low-income groups: Targeting of planting and protection in deprived wards improves environmental quality, access to green space, and resilience to heat and flood risks. Free schemes (e.g. Free Trees for Babies) ensure benefits are not income dependent.

Care-experienced individuals: The Strategy does not directly disadvantage this group. Community engagement programmes will be inclusive, offering opportunities for involvement regardless of background.

Intersectionality: Strategy recognises that residents in lower-income, ethnically diverse communities may face compounded disadvantages; canopy prioritisation explicitly addresses this. The Strategy targets canopy cover interventions toward areas where multiple disadvantages overlap (low income, ethnically diverse, health vulnerabilities), and by embedding inclusivity into planting, engagement, and policy frameworks.

10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

1. Equality impacts will be monitored through delivery of actions and KPI reporting (tree planting by ward, canopy change, engagement participation). We will specifically report on Free Tree for Babies given away and canopy cover correlations with the Index of Multiple Deprivation every 10 years.

2. Consultation feedback will be analysed for equality impacts, with adjustments made where barriers are identified.

3. Engagement materials will be reviewed for accessibility (plain English, translations where needed, digital and non-digital formats).

4. Draft strategy to Sept Cabinet for approval to go to consultation

5. Internal consultation October to December 2025

6. Public consultation (with the Biodiversity mid-period review) December to January 2026

7. March 2026 Cabinet for final approval

8. EqIA will be reviewed post public consultation (2026) and before final approval in March 2026.

11. Do you have any additional comments?

The Strategy actively supports environmental justice, ensuring equitable access to shade, clean air and green infrastructure across Cambridge. It seeks to reduce health inequalities linked to climate impacts and promote inclusive participation in stewardship of the City's trees.

12. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Matthew Magrath, Urban Forest Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Cllr Smart – Executive Councillor; James Elms – Director; Alistair Wilson – Project sponsor; Kenny McGregor, Jake Camilleri, Natalie Lambert - delivery; Helen Crowther – Equity & Community Power Manager & Graham Lewis Community Equity Officer

Date of EqIA sign off: 10/09/25

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: March 2026

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: Click here to enter text.

**All EqIAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at
equalities@cambridge.gov.uk**

Drafted by Matthew Magrath 04/09/25 v1

Modified following Equalities review and feedback 09/09/25 v1.1

Equalities review 09/09/25 v1.2; Equalities final review 09/09/25 v1.3

Sign off v2