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Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet 19/09/2013

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**22 AUGUST, 2013****REPORT OF URBAN FORESTRY STRATEGY 2013-2018****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Members approval to recommend adoption of the revised Urban Forestry Strategy.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet are recommended to adopt the Urban Forestry Strategy 2013-18, as attached at appendix 1.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 This is a resubmission of the report to the EPDC on the Urban Forestry Strategy. The original submission (13th December 2012), raised some issues which are addressed below.
- 3.2 The Council under Local Agenda 21 is required to show and demonstrate that climate change is being addressed at a local level. This involves the creation and adoption of a tree strategy to demonstrate how the Local Authority is tackling climate change through the maintenance and management of trees.
- 3.3 The original Urban Forestry Strategy was first produced and adopted by the Council in 2003. This version mainly addressed issues regarding tree inspections and risk assessment to ensure a continued tree stock. It was further updated in 2008 to provide a structure for compliance with the Council's legal responsibilities. The use of ICT for monitoring the tree populations is now of paramount importance including the provision of bespoke ICT system. The present revised strategy document updates any new requirements and includes

details from the 'Towns in Trees ii' document. It also re-enforces the Council's main aims and objectives to ensure a healthy tree stock in the District and its commitment to use ICT in the management of the tree stock.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

- (i) Place and Environment

5 Report Detail

5.1 As part of the original report sent to EPDC on the 13th December, 2012 the following concerns were raised:

Item 1

Concern was raised that trees surrounding properties could also block out light. The Urban Forestry Officer explained that trees could be pruned but if the height was reduced this could produce other problems with the tree becoming more dense at a lower level, causing future problems to not only the residents. But also by increasing the risk of part of the failing and causing harm to persons. This will also have an increase in ongoing maintenance costs as continued reduction works would be needed to reduce the risk factor.

Item 2

With regard to the national issue around ash dieback it was explained that trees were currently in their dormant period and it would not be known until the spring which trees were affected. The Forestry Commission and neighbouring authorities had so far not reported any major problems.

Item 3

The Urban Forestry Officer advised that with regard to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) Central Government had produced a tempo score sheet to assist in evaluating if a TPO should be issued. Concern was raised relating to the amount a resident had been quoted by a private contractor to inspect a tree at their property. If a TPO had been placed on a tree on private land, the Council did not assume responsibility for the tree, but would offer advice. Residents had the right to appeal against TPO decisions.

Item 4

The Environment Portfolio Leader expressed concern that there was no mechanism within the Strategy to enable elected Members to consider residents concerns with respect to trees after decisions being made by Officers. Members considered that trees could also have a detrimental affect on people's lives and accepted the principle of having clear guidance through the strategy. The current procedure of such issues going before the Appeals and Complaints Committee will now cover any such issues.

Item 5

The Environmental Services Manager advised that as no major changes were proposed it was agreed to consider the Urban Forestry Strategy for adoption at their next meeting.

6 Implications**6.1 Financial**

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

None

6.8 Equality & Diversity

None

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

7.1 Appendix 1 – Revised Urban Forestry Strategy.

Previous Consideration

The Urban Forestry Strategy has been previously adopted by Cannock Chase District Council. This is an updated strategy which is reviewed every 5 years (2013-2018).

Background Papers

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

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SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

Cannock Chase District Council jurisdiction includes the urban areas of Cannock and Rugeley, as well as varied semi-rural and rural areas including a substantial proportion of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Being lowland landscape one of the most important natural features are trees with a recorded 500% increase in plantation woodland since the 1920s.

Trees are the largest and oldest living Organisms in our environment, and whether growing as individuals, in groups and avenues or in woodlands, they have a significant impact on our quality of life. Trees and woodlands are dominant features of the landscape and environment of the district, collectively with Heathland forming one of its finest features.

Trees are not simply embellishments, but provide a range of important benefits for the public. Trees in the urban environment will be utilised the most both by amenity values and also from a visual aspect. This also brings in some of its own issues as they will in some cases be the only trees seen by the general public and will be the cause of some perceived problems.

Trees and woodland are recognised as an important way of mitigating the effects of climate change. Whilst their presence cannot halt climate change they can slow the rate and enable us and wildlife to adapt (Shaw et al.,2007)

This strategy sets out to ensure the benefits are brought to the forefront of peoples minds, to the greatest and most sustainable advantage, whilst ensuring any issues are promptly and appropriately dealt with.

The management of trees and woodland is governed by legal responsibilities and influenced by national, regional and Council policy. The first Urban Forest Strategy Cannock Chase District Council produced was in 2003, and it sought to recognise the long term commitment required to realise the Councils ambitions for environmental enhancement and protection. This was then updated in 2008 to take forward the initial ideas and processes to develop these policies and priorities to ensure trees and woodland continue to contribute to the benefit of those who live, work and visit the district. This new revised strategy will help to provide the aims, objectives and policies, which will establish Cannock Chase District Council's commitment and continued strategic direction for the protection, planting and maintenance of the trees and woodland within the authority. It will also help to enhance the councils vision to **'By 2021 Cannock Chase will be a place where people have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life and achieve economic prosperity'**

Although the Council will set out its policies and procedures within this strategy, there are some situations that can never be anticipated. Therefore whilst these policies will guide decisions they should not be considered absolutely prescriptive. Individual policy should not be considered in isolation, but all relevant policies should be taken into account when reaching a decision. These policies should further be considered in the context of wider strategic aim and priorities relating to individual areas.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Background

Trees, whether growing as individuals, groups or as woodlands, have a significant effect on our quality of life by providing direct and indirect benefits. All local authorities have a statutory duty to manage trees and woodlands in a safe condition, and to protect significant trees for their amenity and biodiversity value.

This document's origins lie in the recognition that long term commitments and consistencies are required if our ambitions for long term environmental enhancement and protection are to be realised. It follows on from the original Urban Forestry Strategy adopted in 2003, which sought to address issues of regular tree inspections and risk assessment.

This strategy has been reviewed and revised with due consideration to current international targets, Central governments commitments, regional and corporate policies, and to provide a structure for compliance with the Council's legal responsibilities.

This is part of a folio of documents, which form the holistic strategy. The folio will include:

- Document 1: Urban Forestry Strategy.
- Document 2: Asset Management Plans.
- Document 3: Operation Delivery: the processes and measures.

The strategy will contribute to the delivery of the broad range of Council aims, objectives and priorities on the environment, communities, health, and land use planning. It has been developed and influenced through consultation, and will enable the development of Asset Management Plans and real measures to check success and priorities at a local level. It will enable district wide priorities to be focused on local need and to prioritise the use of resources.

The structure of this strategy is to ensure that key council and national policies are considered and are core to the policies and priorities herein. Uniting the strategies has meant that the Corporate Vision and Priorities and Community Strategy have been linked to both "A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests" published in 2007 by DEFRA, providing the government's vision and priorities to 2050, and 'Trees in Town ii', published in 2008 providing the effectiveness of tree management in urban areas in England.

In recognition of the change that population growth will mean to communities and infrastructure, we need to ensure that stability and social cohesion continue and that growth will lead to a cleaner, greener, healthier and more prospective district.

Throughout the strategy the policies are set out along with key priorities for delivery. These are underpinned and influenced by the three objectives:

- 1: Asset Management and Standards
- 2: Community and Place
- 3: Sustainability and Natural Environment

Often the distinction between these objectives at a local level may become unclear as they will overlap, between sustainable tree and woodland management, and the perceived needs and requirements of the local residents, for instance, a woodland can offer community use, wildlife habitats and be a resource for raw materials. As well as providing a multitude of social and health benefits, to the local population, that may not be seen from the outset.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Impact of Trees

There is increasing public awareness of the benefits of and the need for trees as people place a higher priority on the environment in which they live. In urban areas this invariably means that there should be accessible recreational open space, and pleasant, tree-lined streets and squares. Trees also help to create vistas and focal points of interests, as well as helping to soften structures and buildings in the urban and rural settings. Cannock Chase District Council is predominantly located within a Green Belt (60%) and also within an ANOB. This requires Cannock Council to help create vistas and focal points for tourists and the local community to navigate through the urban areas of the Cannock District to the Chase Forests.

Benefits from Trees

Trees are essential to life; their value cannot be overstated, for without trees recycling Carbon Dioxide back into Carbon and Oxygen we could not survive. Many trees and woodlands in the district have been planted to provide beauty or screening. Whilst these are two excellent reasons for their use, they also serve many other purposes. The main benefits of trees can be grouped into social, environmental, and economic categories.

Social Benefits.

The strong ties between people and trees are most evident in community residents resisting to the removing trees. Trees and Woodland contribute immeasurably as part of the landscape and particularly in their own right in urban areas. They are beneficial to people's quality of life and sense of well being, reducing everyday stress, particularly important in today's environment.

Research has shown that hospital patients recover more quickly when able to enjoy the view of trees and the Mental Health Charity MIND, have expanded this to both physical and visual access to green spaces. There is now clear research from government bodies showing the correlation between people's well being and attitudes when placed in natural environments and surrounded by trees. This helps to show that although there are still some hesitation to embrace trees in full, without them the areas would have a completely different look and feel. In order to enhance the wellbeing of lives within Cannock it is important to also address the natural areas and trees around them.

The aesthetic value of trees also improves the appearance of our environment, giving variety of scale, form, colour, shape and distinction of areas.

Even though trees may be on private property, their size often makes them part of the community as well. Because trees occupy considerable space, pre-planning and consideration will be required if both the owner and their neighbours are to benefit. With proper selection and maintenance, trees can enhance and function on one property without infringing on the rights and privileges of neighbours.

Environmental Benefits

Trees influence the environment in which we live, by moderating climate, improving air quality, conserving water, and provide wildlife habitats.

Radiant energy from the sun is absorbed or deflected by leaves on deciduous trees in the summer and is only filtered by branches of deciduous trees in winter. The shade of trees protects from direct sunlight and so helps cool us in the summer months.

Trees can affect wind speed and direction, the more compact the foliage on the tree or group of trees, the greater the influence of the windbreak.

The downward fall of rain, sleet, and hail is initially absorbed or deflected by trees, which provides some protection for people, and property. Trees intercept water, store some of it, and reduce storm runoff and the possibility of flooding.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Temperature in the vicinity of trees is cooler than that away from trees and the larger the tree, the greater the cooling. By using trees in the urban environment, we are able to moderate the heat island effect caused by pavements and buildings. Emerging research suggests that trees are so effective at temperature buffering that an increase of 10% in our urban tree canopy and green space would offset ALL but the most extreme temperature rises predicted through global warming (Gill et al., 2007).

Air quality can be improved; leaves filter the air we breathe by removing dust and other particulates. Leaves absorb carbon dioxide from the air to form carbohydrates that are used in the plant's structure and function. In this process, leaves also absorb other air pollutants, such as ozone, carbon monoxide, and nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide; and give off oxygen.

By planting trees and woodlands especially Native trees we return to a more natural environment attracting, supporting and hosting birds and other wildlife albeit, that species more resistant to human disturbance colonise the area.

Economic Benefits

Individual trees have value (both social and monetary) increasing from the time they are planted until they mature. The variability of species, size, condition, and function makes determining their economic value as a real asset, difficult. Recent practices within the industry have been able to quantify the importance of trees both as a social resource and also as an economic asset.

Direct economic benefits are usually associated with energy costs. Heating costs are reduced when a home has a tree based windbreak, especially on the northerly side of a property. Trees on a southerly side will increase shading and reduce heat temperatures during the summer months. It has been well documented that properties with trees on the frontage or within the street scene directly outside will increase property prices. This can help to increase peoples wellbeing and aspirations, as well as helping to develop areas of social and economic neglect.

The savings in energy costs and the increase in property value directly benefit each homeowner.

The indirect economic benefits of trees are even greater. Lower stress levels of the local residents will help in reducing illness leave to local businesses. This helps to increase economic development and create sustainable businesses, as well as increasing the desire to live in local area. The Cannock area has some great outdoor areas. The Chase is a regional and national attraction, there are also many local nature reserves and parks and open spaces. The council as a whole is therefore showing its commitment to the local population to increase the benefits of the outdoors. In return studies have shown the benefits of outdoors help reduce illnesses of the local population. The trees and woodlands also help to clean and increase the air quality, which in turns help to reduce associated respiratory disease.

Communities also can save money if fewer facilities must be built to control storm water in the region. To the individual, these savings are small, but to the community, reductions in these expenses are often considerable.

An attractive, healthy and vibrant district, with healthy and well-maintained trees and woodland helps to attract investment, both socially and economic.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Tree Issues

People often live in close proximity to trees, particularly in urban areas. These trees are either their own or their neighbours', or quite commonly belong to the Council. Trees can cause inconvenience to residents when they grow near dwellings. A dilemma often occurs when the tree makes an important contribution to the local environment but also causes inconvenience to those living nearby.

With any population of trees there are a number of common sources of complaint including overhanging branches, shade, leaf/fruit fall, obstruction and physical damage etc. Many of these problems can be dealt with by careful pruning once the tree is established. However, sometimes the problem is a result of inappropriate species selection or development approval, made in the past and may be difficult or impossible to resolve in all parties' favour.

A very common concern for homeowners is potential foundation damage by tree roots. This type of damage only occurs in areas where the soil type is heavy, shrinkable clay, which is prone to fluctuations in volume caused by changing soil moisture levels. There has been a lot of concern about tree roots and foundations in recent years. Much of this is unsubstantiated and the incidence of proven tree root related claims against Cannock Chase District Council remains low despite the level of tree cover.

Conversely afforestation whether by planting or natural regeneration can in itself cause problems where trees need to be felled and not replaced inline with other Council objectives such as the conservation and enhancement of heath land within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Annex 1 sets out the Council's response and reaction to these issues when they affect trees and woodland in its ownership.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

The case for trees from English Heritage

In 2000, English Heritage as the Governments advisory body on heritage championed the 'Save our Streets' campaign. For Local Authorities as guidance to the way streets and public spaces are managed. The document entitled 'Streets for all', sets out to help identify the 'place' each Council will have, and help to keep and enhance the original feel, of those areas.

Although the document highlights the need for street furniture, it also includes the need for suitable tree planting within the public realm. This will include planting of trees within pavements where necessary, and the use of planting in open spaces. Each location will be dependant on its own location, as development within the UK and especially within Cannock Chase District Council has very distinct variations.

The council will take note of the recommendations listed within the report and actively roll them out where necessary throughout the borough.

This will include street tree planting where the pavement widths will allow, and where it is appropriate within the original design of the street. For instance street tree planting was carried out in the Edwardian, Victorian era and continuing up until the 40's. This is where pavements were wider and planners would include the use of grass verges outside of properties and along roads.

Later housing stock reduced the pavement widths, and would include open spaces on corners and between the side of properties and the pavement. These areas were identified as suitable tree planting sites in original designs.

The Council will look at its different areas, and where necessary draw up supplementary guidance on the different housing areas within the district and how best to manage and maintain its current tree stock.

The identification of different areas within Cannock Chase District, will also help to identify future possible planting locations and new planting. In a planned and cohesive approach allowing the right tree to be planted in the right place.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Trees in Towns ii

This research document brings together a single over view of all Local Authorities (LA's) within the UK, it is important to look at the implications of the recommendation for the district.

The original survey and report was conducted in 1992/92 undertaken by the Department of the Environment. The subsequent survey and report was published in 2005 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The report looked at tree population across the country and found that some areas had a significant deficit of trees compared to other areas. They also looked at age and condition. This strategy will draw all relevant information contained within that report to ensure that the councils tree stock is maintained.

The second part of the report looked closely at the policies and practice within Local Authorities. Although the report does not contain actual policies for LA's to follow, it does require Councils to look at policies to ensure they are fit for purpose and inline with common practice throughout the UK.

The report also makes assessments on the percentage of funding for trees as well as the need to carry out further research. Many of the new topics which will need addressing in future reports will also be based on canopy cover, age of trees and extra tree planting all to help mitigate against climate change and helping local wildlife exist within the urban environment.

It is part of Cannock Chase District Councils commitment to ensure that the Trees in Towns ii document is assessed properly and that its recommendations are followed as much as possible to show Cannock's commitment to both the local residents and also to central government on its commitment to helping the environment.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Types of tree stock within the local environment

Currently the Council has several distinct areas throughout the district. These range from amenity land to large parks to informal open spaces, nature reserves, housing, tenants properties etc. All of these areas of land have the potential and possible need for trees. Many of the areas already have trees planted within them, this brings value to the land. Not only in visual terms, also as a benefit to the local people, helping to act as shade, cover, colour and an area to relax. Although the need of trees have been referenced in many public documents. This District currently hasn't categorised the trees/woodlands as an asset under its land definition within the Council's Greenspace Strategy.

Parks – These areas will be of some of the highest usage areas. Cannock currently has 5 main parks within its district. All of which have a significant planting of trees, mainly large trees with large open canopies. Due to their locations and the size of the parks it is fully possible and justifiable to allow for the planting of large specimen trees. These trees will be allowed to grow to maturity with limited maintenance. This will just include the removal of lower branches and dead wood. Due to the size of land, it is possible to plant trees without impacting on neighbouring properties.

Informal Open spaces – These will include areas such as Hednesford Hills, which are areas where nature is encouraged. The Council will carry out on a light touch approach to the maintenance of the tree stock. We will also wherever possible promote natural regeneration of trees, to enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Open spaces – These are smaller areas, usually including paths and recreational play equipment. As these will mainly be in areas of housing stock, a different approach will be involved, as to the species selection and size of tree.

Nature Reserves – This includes nature reserves and some meadowland, and will include woodlands within the urban environment. Although there is the potential for conflict of interests, mainly from leaf fall and light loss, these areas are of high importance both to the wildlife and also to the local urban community. Often these areas will be highly used by people to get from one area to another, or by dog walking. They have a high importance to bring to life the importance of the countryside and also to help educate the public on the importance and benefits of the countryside.

Informal open spaces – These are mainly contained within the 1960's and 1970's designed areas. They often included in the development areas around corners or to the side of properties, areas of open spaces for people to enjoy, either via the virtue of having larger grass areas and from having large significant trees, which would be too large and dominate the rear gardens. It was thought that these areas would allow for large trees to grow and overhang nearby gardens.

Road verges – In some older developed areas within the district there are areas that are appropriate for the planting of trees within the pavement areas, which may also include wider verges for tree planting.

Communal housing areas – Many of our council properties built in the 1970's included large areas of communal land for the people to enjoy, these would have included specimen trees to be planted to add as a back drop and focal point to the buildings.

Housing properties – We have 6,000 properties under the council's ownership, many of which have trees in both front and rear gardens. Although these are the responsibility of the tenant, they also make up part of the Urban Forest.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Current tree population

Cannock Chase District Councils current tree stock comprises of trees within Parks and Open spaces; Nature reserves; Nature Reserves; AONB (Hednesford Hills); Communal Housing land; front and rear gardens and housing properties, and other council properties.

The Council has established a regime of inspecting trees which can be identified by their location. This has meant that we have a record of all 'single' trees, or those not contained within a woodland area. Currently the council has 22,157 single trees either within Parks and Open spaces or on all housing land including several in tenants properties.

The Council also has currently listed 458 groups of trees. These are trees listed within woodlands such as Milking Brook in Heath Hayes. Groups of trees are where it is deemed necessary under risk zoning to include them as a group. Although there is limited raw data on the groups, the areas and size will indicate that there will be more than 50 trees contained in each (likely to be over 100). Based on these two categories there are an estimated 22,900 currently managed and maintained by Cannock Chase District Council.

The Council, embarked upon the inspection, as a direct response from the HSE. Although the council is confident that all the trees under its direct control have been recorded, they will always be occasions where new trees are identified. To date, the council has carried out routine re-inspections to ensure that all of the trees under its ownership are kept in a healthy condition.

The need for continued re-inspection is necessary not only to understand where the council asset are but how best to manage them. It is also necessary within the current climate of risk mitigation to ensure all of the council assets are in a good and safe condition.

The Council will use this information gained from the tree inspections to determine an actual monetary value of its assets.

Currently the Council is very aware of the environmental benefits that trees bring and also the value that they bring to reducing climate change, and filtering pollutants.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Tree Species

The Council currently holds a listed 22,157 single trees. In order to ensure a continued tree stock is available for both current residents of Cannock District, there is also a need to ensure that there is continued tree planting to ensure that there is a continuation of trees reaching maturity.

To ensure this continuation, it is imperative that the Urban Forestry Strategy identifies the current tree stock both in terms of diversity, potential growth heights and potential life expectancy.

Although trees grow from seed to full maturity, in many cases this will take decades and even centuries. As trees get older the less noticeable they become in terms of growth. It is a perception of some people that trees will exist in their current form, when they first observe the tree. However, the cycle of trees is far from this, and every year a tree will continue to put on growth.

As trees will ultimately out live many of the locations in which they are planted, it is important to ensure that they are given as much space as possible to ensure that the future generations will enjoy the full benefits of the trees that we plant.

Currently there is a significant proportion of the tree stock made up of the faster growing trees such as Birch, Willow and Poplar. These also have a limited life span, often only being around 100 to 120 years. Although at this time this is currently acceptable, as we are still enjoying the benefits of the mature trees planted many years ago such as the Lime and Oak there has been limited planting to perpetuate the tree stock.

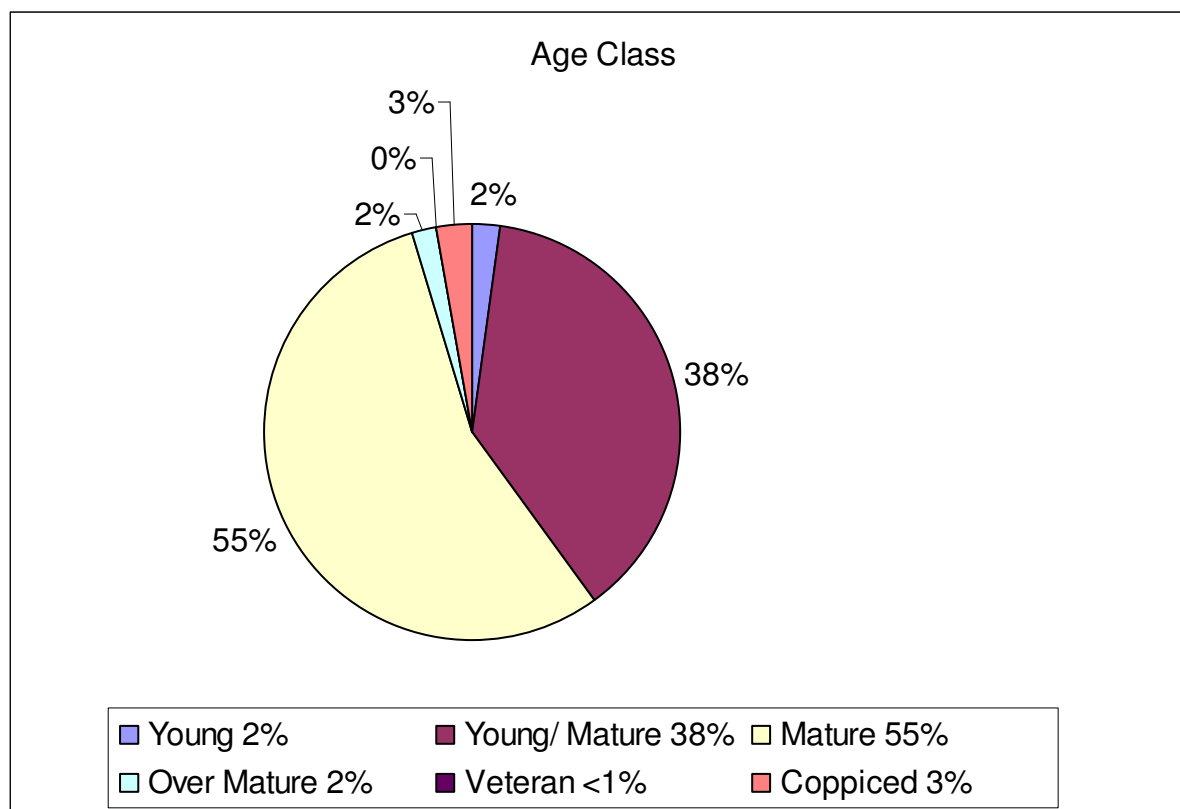
In all of the trees in which we have recorded there are 3,448 Betula species (Birch), 1,666 Salix species (Willow) and 1,210 Populus species (Poplar). This equates to a total of 6,324 tree or 28.5% of the total tree stock.

The Council only has 2,279 Quercus species (Oak), 864 Fraxinus species (Ash), 681 Fagus species (Beech), 547 Tilia species (Lime). These are considered to have a long life expectancy and should be promoted as future tree planting. Currently this only equates to a total of 4,371 trees or just 19% of the overall tree stock.

This 10% gap in the numbers of faster growing short lived species and the slower growing larger lived species means that the age class of the Urban Forest will be unbalanced (i.e. all the trees are either young or old). In total this inequality will be increased the more in depth the tree population is looked at. This will be more prevalent when contrasted between all hard wood species against the softer quicker growing species.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Age class and age maturity



The contrast of the age range of the current tree stock is also apparent in that there is a definitive over balance of adult tree (ie trees which have been established for some time, including maturing, mature, over mature and veteran trees). When set against the young trees (those who have been planted within the last 5 years).

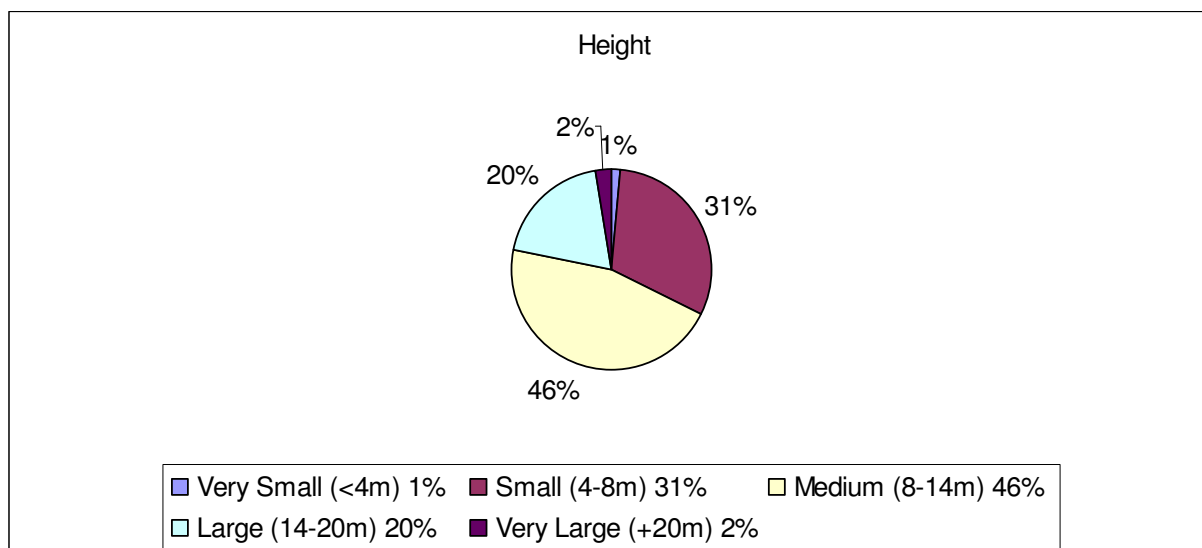
In total there is only 2% of the tree stock that has been planted and established in the last 5 years. This is against 98% of trees which have reached adult life. Given this imbalance the council is committed to look at all future tree planting to ensure that there is a balance of young trees and mature trees, aiming at achieving a ratio of 3 young trees to every 1 adult tree.

To achieve this, the overall tree planting will need to be in a proactive way ensuring that there is not an over balance, or rapid increase in numbers. This would be achieved over several years and will be part of a delivery package. This will need to include the help of local charities, organisations, land owners, government agencies and local people to help try to achieve this tree planting. Sites will also need to be identified, assessed and planting schemes designed to suit the soils, sites and natural environment.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Tree heights

The height of trees is extremely important factor when looking at the overall tree population. The height of trees help to enhance the amenity value of the local landscape, and encourage local wildlife. Wildlife is more likely to shelter in taller trees than those which are smaller and closer to the ground. The height of trees can also help to frame the landscape that people can associate with. It can also show the number of recently planted trees and how they are progressing from small tree to large trees.



As can be seen from the pie chart, there are a number of small trees (those which have not exceeded 8m) of 32% or just over 1/3 of the overall population. However, this does not always indicate new trees planted as some will only reach a height of 8m in full maturity.

68% of all trees are at a height that will bring some of the characteristics of helping to frame landscape settings, and able to sustain mature conservation values.

Effectively this means that the Council should not be reducing the height and spread of mature trees as this reduces the capacity of such trees to achieve these longer term objectives, e.g. there are 400 species of insect and moths associated with mature Oak trees.

Obviously as indicated in the previous section tree size, in terms of canopy spread tends to be associated with the larger forest type trees. However, these are only able to be planted on sites with sufficient room for the trees to develop naturally.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

Tree Preservation Orders

One way of ensuring the council's commitment to have trees listed and continued canopy cover within the District is by the use of Tree Preservation Orders. These are used where significant trees within private ownership are under threat of being removed. Its use is only limited to where significant trees are under threat of being removed, or where significant trees exist and bring amenity value to the wider public.

Tree Preservation Orders can be requested by anyone, who may or may not be the actual owners of the trees. The council will treat each case on its own merits and decide if an assessment of the tree(s) is needed.

If an inspection is deemed necessary, the council will carry out a full impact assessment of the tree (TEMPO). This is a nationally agreed form at which looks at the tree and its current condition, against its wider impact to others and to the local wildlife.

Cannock Chase District Council currently has over 700 active Tree Preservation Orders, covering single trees, groups of trees, woodlands and in limited cases areas of trees. Currently there are no records of the actual number of trees protected, however it can be assumed that the number of trees protected will be in the thousands.

Although this requires the tree owner to submit an application to carry out tree works, it does not stop people from having works carried out. The majority of the works to protected trees is acceptable and well within what would be considered acceptable tree management.

There are some works that would justifiably be refused, such as the removal of healthy trees, and significant crown reduction works, as these works would be deemed non-beneficial to the health and well-being of the tree.

The Council has a commitment through central government to continue to enhance the area through the administering and managing of Tree Preservation Orders. It is also a commitment of Cannock Chase District Council to continue its work to protect significant trees whose shape, form and species bring amenity value and benefit to the wider public and to the wildlife of the area.

The Council will also continue to review existing Tree Preservation Orders made in a systematic approach to update old Tree Preservation Orders, or amend or withdraw (where necessary) to ensure the Council is up to date under any current central government directive.

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Section 2.0

Corporate Vision

This strategy is guided by and intended to assist the Council in meeting its wider community objectives, taking its lead from the ***Council's Corporate and Performance Plan 2011-2014***, not least the Council's vision:

"By 2021 Cannock Chase will be a place where people have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life and achieve economic prosperity"

This strategy embraces the Council objective of ***enhancing their quality of life***, as well as ***achieving economic prosperity***. In particular the crosscutting contribution the service makes, ensuring that management arrangements allow effective service delivery.

The Urban Forestry Strategy has a direct correlation to all parts of this vision. This vision is the back bone of the benefits that trees bring as well bringing hope and prosperity to all of the residents of Cannock District. Less apparent though, is its potential positive impacts that sustainable and professional management of trees and woodlands can contribute to the rest. These are explained in the **Introduction** and **Objectives** herein. In turn these will ensure that the Urban Forestry Strategy will make a substantive contribution to the Council's corporate objectives, as expressed under the priority outcomes

People: Active and Healthy Lifestyles

Trees and woodlands help to clean the air quality to which people breathe, this has a direct impact on peoples health and lives. They can also help to attract people from their homes to explore the 'outdoors' and to help people living an active lifestyle.

Place: Improved living environment

A high quality natural environment will help in improving the living environment. This will be achieved by the development and increase in quality open spaces and also from 'greening' up the local urban environment. By creating wildlife corridors and softening buildings in the urban environment by tree planting, will have the benefit of improving the environment in which people live in.

Prosperity: Economic resilience

By creating green areas and urban tree planting will help to bring nature closer to the people of Cannock District. This will help to make this area an inspiration for people living in the area and will help to promote the interest from outside the district to invest in new businesses and residential properties.

Transformation: Changing the way services are provided to ensure value for money

The service is always in an evolving process, always striving to find new and innovative ways of managing the tree stock, engaging with the local communities, helping to promote a healthy lifestyle and outdoor use. Every tree has a value attached to them, be it monetary or socially. Although it is sometimes hard to demonstrate the monetary value that trees bring, we can demonstrate through modelling and robust processes the value that trees have and how they increase with age and maturity. A young tree planted will increase in value throughout the trees life, therefore it can be demonstrated that with minimal budget the overall tree stock will increase in value.

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Aim of the Urban Forestry Strategy

The Council's aim is:

“To maintain, improve and expand the quality of the existing tree and woodland cover, in a sustainable way.”

The Council will act to conserve and enhance the quality, role and diversity of the trees and woodland in the district by the establishment of regular tree inspection and maintenance, which fulfil the Council's legal responsibilities, and also enables it to respond to the concerns and actions of residents. Whilst the removal of trees shall be resisted, when it is necessary to do so replacements will be planted after taking into account the Council's objectives set out in this strategy.

The Council appreciates the value that trees bring to the wider population, both as an aesthetic value, wildlife value and helping to increase the health and wellbeing of its residents. The council will continue to maintain and enhance the tree cover to ensure the district is a healthy and prosperous place to live.

The Council will, wherever possible include new planting of longevity tree planting through the inclusion of hardwood species such as Oak, Ash, Beech, etc.

The Council will continue its main aim to increase the tree population within the district and ensure that there is diversity in size ranges and life expectancy classes (age and height).

The Council will commit to a tree planting programme to continue over the next 20 years with the aim to plant and record at least 20,000 new trees.

To achieve significant new tree planting, the council will commit to informing and educating the public on the benefits of trees and to show that areas where significant tree planting takes place, helps the health and wellbeing of the population.

The Council will also liaise with local groups, charities, organisations, land owners and local government agencies to identify suitable locations and funding for local woodlands and mass tree planting.

The inspection of trees will continue and will look at the inclusion of existing woodlands to confirm an exact number of held by Cannock Chase District Council.

There will be a need to continue and enhance the current pro-active tree inspection and maintenance programme.

Where inappropriate tree planting has taken place in the past, the council will look at possible removal of existing trees and planting of new suitable trees.

When opportunities do arise, new trees and woodland will be planted which is suitable to its location and maintains a diverse and healthy treescape.

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OBJECTIVE 1: ASSET MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS

“TO ENSURE THAT LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO TREES AND WOODLAND ARE FULFILLED.”

The Council will develop and maintain the processes and procedures necessary to provide tree and woodland management that fulfils its legal responsibilities. These will employ best practice and ensure that the highest possible service standard is provided.

Asset Management

Once removed from their natural woodland habitat and placed in the urban environment, the management of trees becomes markedly more intense and costly, particularly as customer needs and expectations increase.

Trees have long been the subject of legal dispute and recourse for many centuries. This has been increased in recent centuries, following an increase in living standards and an increase in urban housing stock density. This has led to the need for a robust tree management programme, which is contained in a sector which is highly regulated and frequently scrutinised.

When trees were an important resource in terms of firewood, tools and useful products, there were numerous laws on how much wood could be extracted and who owns it. Today, many of these old reasons for tree production have decreased and now play lesser importance on tree management. There are now new and other important reasons for tree production in the modern era. These should be addressed and promoted where possible.

It is also important to remember that although trees are considered an actual asset to the council which has not only a monetary value and environmental value, they can be cause of concern to the local residents in terms of the possibility of causing damage, injury to persons or properties and through the blocking of direct light and falling of leaves and fruit.

The Council has a duty of care which requires it *“to take reasonable care”* to maintain its trees and woods in a safe condition.

To meet its duties of care the Council will take appropriate action to lessen risk to acceptable levels to avoid liability. Much has been published explaining what a defensible tree management system should contain, which has been generated from legislation and precedence and the formation of best practice. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requires that an effective local authority system contains:

- An inventory of the tree and woodland stock within its ownership and responsibility.
- An overall assessment of the risks these pose.
- Risk assessments of individual trees based upon, but not exclusive to, their location, species, size, age and history.
- Pro-active system of regular inspection by a competent person, and a system of obtaining additional specialist advice when an inspection reveals defects and factors outside the experience and knowledge of the inspector.
- A system to enable people to report damage to trees and to trigger inspection.
- A method of recording and reviewing the systems, along with any remedial actions.
- Risk management plan.

The structure and detail of this strategy forms the Council’s risk management plan for trees and woodlands, continuing the work in recent years after the updating and implementing the original strategies. Management plans and schedules for parts of the tree and woodland stock will all help to promote the benefits trees have and the need to ensure there is a healthy tree stock for future generations to come.

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The introduction of a pro-active tree management system has optimised the use of resources and moved the Council towards achieving defensible risk management system for trees and woodlands. The aim of a pro-active contract has been to provide the best possible quality of tree population within the physical restrictions and resources available. So far this has been achievable even given current restraints. However, there is always a constant need for investment in our green lungs of the area, and to help promote Cannock as a green, vibrant and prosperous area.

Pro-active rotational management for each of the category of trees and woodlands has been based upon a risk assessment and prioritisation applying a target zone system developed in response to the HSE guidance. So far a more frequent tree inspections will be carried out on trees whose condition has given cause for concern. However, new developments are always being driven forwards and as such the service and inspection of trees needs to be kept fresh and allowed to amend and make changes in line with current legislation or under new thinking practices.

The Council will continue to look at new and existing inspection programmes and asset management systems. To ensure the residents of Cannock Chase District Council, receive not only the highest quality of tree cover, they will also be pro-actively maintained within current and future resources to ensure quality and value of the service

The prioritisation of resources will enable inspections to be concentrated to best effect. It will allow appropriate consultation and inspection to take place in advance of work scheduling.

For a pro-active tree strategy to be effective the Council will need to invest financially in the trees and woodlands to achieve a basic standard. The investment needed to achieve a pro-active attitude is higher than a reactive system, however a pro-active approach is of benefit long term as it helps to address future implications in a cohesive approach and which benefits the residents of Cannock as a whole, and not just individuals.

Pro-active management will be complimented by structured systems to respond to service requests. These should diminish as the benefits of pro-active management address the issues of real concern to the Council.

One way of addressing the value of trees is by allocating a monetary value upon each tree. This is calculated under the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) system. Where a value per tree can be calculated and set against current investment levels to ensure there is an equal and increase in the investment of trees against its maintenance and resource commitments.

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Standard of Service

As organisms of longevity and complexity, to manage trees in a sustainable way requires, a strategic operational approach. An understanding of the way pruning affects trees has evolved and the basic premise has not changed: all tree surgery is not for the benefit of the tree, other than to enable it to continue to co-exist in an artificial human environment. As trees do out grow most people living in local properties, any inappropriate works will result in constant future maintenance costs even after the previous issue has been addressed or removed. One key example of this is the reduction of trees, the new growth of the trees canopy will have a reduced weight loading, so there will be a constant need to carry out the same operation time and time again. As trees can grow for 100+ years, this one operation creates a future demand and effect on resources.

The management and maintenance of trees is therefore a complex and skilled task, often requiring different services and organisations to work closely together in order that trees are appropriately managed to minimise the risk they may pose and may be posed to them.

We will continue to ensure we are at the forefront of ideas and processes to manage and maintain our tree stock. This is achieved by the management of trees and continued planting and woodland creation. Also through the education, communicating and engaging with the local communities. This can be achieved by attending forums, volunteer working groups, 1 to 1 conversations, giving information out on the benefits that trees have in the local area. The need to have and plant trees in this district to help promote it from outside the district is of great importance to help enhance the economic prosperity.

The skills of tree and woodland management have been recognised as crafts and professions in their own right for millennia. As tree care has continued to evolve and greater emphasis has been placed on the social, amenity and environmental benefits so the knowledge and skill have changed. This continued development and training needs, will continue to shape the education and knowledge of current and future arboricultural specialists. The industry as a whole is continuing to evolve with new ideas and research being developed. There is a constant need from Cannock Chase District Council to help promote new ideas and educate the residents of new developments through continued training and education of their own arboricultural experts.

An important part of delivering an effective risk management system is ensuring that the tree managers have the prerequisite skills, with suitable qualifications and experience to meet the challenges that such a system presents.

Today, the trees of the district require different skills to those of the woodsman of the past. The complexity requires that the specific training of arboriculturist is integral to defensible tree and woodland management. This has been substantiated by industry best practice, peer review and confirmed in common law precedence.

The breadth of knowledge and skill is not only needed by those who undertake the works, pruning, planting and removing trees, but in this highly regulated industry, those who inspect the trees, respond to service requests and specifying works also must be appropriately qualified.

The letting of the Grounds Maintenance Contract, which includes the provision of arboricultural work, has enabled a high standard of workmanship to be maintained, to provide continual improvement and the flexibility needed to respond to service users.

The Council receives many enquiries each year concerning trees. The prioritising of existing resources and introduction of a response system continues to reduce the quantity, as well as the amount of time to handle each one. Nevertheless the current system is out dated and does not directly link Tree Management with service users.

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Arboriculture is an industry that lacks many of the peer review comparisons of the other parts of the Council. Whilst assessment against achievement of legal duty and response times to service request can be quantified there are many other facets of management that can be compared to establish the level of achievement at the Council.

As the management plans for each part of the service in this strategy are developed the measures necessary to evaluate the level of success and the resources necessary for that success will be implemented.

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OBJECTIVE 2: COMMUNITY AND PLACE

“TO IMPROVE THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT, THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE’S LIVES AND THEIR APPRECIATION OF TREES AND WOODS.”

Involving people in the decision making process for the planning, management and use of trees and woodlands will achieve greater community cohesiveness, and assist in the creation of sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods.

Community

Trees, woodlands and their associated green space provide a wide range of, well documented, benefits to people’s daily lives, whether it is at home or work.

When communities become involved in decision making and management they are more likely to feel a sense of ‘ownership’ for trees and woodlands, increasing their appreciation of them and therefore using them responsibly. Community use may take many forms from enabling general access, to formal provision for large numbers of people or recreation provision. Each site needs to be evaluated for its contribution to the community and its character and ensure that whatever use is agreed, this will form the bench mark to ensure a continued development and increase its quality of use to the local residents.

Tree and woodlands offer a variety of outdoor opportunities to people both, young and old, to enjoy themselves and learn. In an increasingly risk adverse society they can be a useful way of learning about risk.

The priority will be to provide high quality access near to where people live and work. To ensure woodlands and trees are used, as life long resource information about accessibility needs to be freely available. This should include recognition of the trees and woodland historic, archaeological, wildlife and cultural value.

This integrated community approach can only be achieved by partnership working, so links with existing partners should be strengthened and new ones established, providing advice and support for communities planning to create, maintain and use their own trees and woodlands.

The planning process can make a major contribution to this by undertaking assessment of existing and future tree and woodland need. Currently 94% of the population of the area covered by the Council has access to woods of 20 hectares or greater within 4km of their homes, one of the highest rates in the UK. However, only 25% of the population of the district have access to woodlands of 2 hectares or greater within 500m of their home. A further 14% already have such woodlands but they are not accessible. The Council should be working with partners to improve access and where there is a deficiency in woodlands plant new ones. With some improvements to the urban woodlands these targets could be readily met in much of the district.

Consultation

In recent years there has been a great deal of work and success in this area, particularly with regard to the removal of landmark trees and work in the urban woodlands. The structuring of work programs and advance consultation of residents and Councillors has led to greater confidence and understanding of reasons for undertaking works.

However, misunderstandings still persist and can result in confusion and problems. Greater public appreciation of management requirements needs to be achieved, with awareness of what constitutes appropriate management and the rationale supporting it.

Residents do become attached to trees and woodlands. As work tends to be carried out on a periodic basis, with several years between scheduled visits, the initial impact of the works can be cause for considerable consternation. The apparent permanence of the work can compound concerns when work is undertaken.

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Significant tree works are included in the cyclical and urban wood maintenance program. Exceptions to this should only extend to emergency works and where the trees present a significant hazard.

The consultation method will vary according to the site and neighbouring land use. Methods will include notification and explanation, invitation to participate in surveys, and public or site meetings. On historic/heritage woods sites such as Castle Ring, it is important to have notification of future works as indicated in an approved Management Plan and posted on site, as the public may not access to such documents.

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Place

The height of trees provides visual and physical features, which can be used to either separate or link areas, and bring seasonal change to an otherwise static urban landscape. They provide an attractive setting to existing and new residential and business development, helping to create a sense of place, and permanence in rapidly changing towns and villages.

The early and integrated approach to tree and woodland planting and management will provide a high quality and sustainable resource which will reflect local need and assist in the preservation of landscape character and distinctiveness.

Many communities are immediately identifiable by the landscape around their homes and businesses. For instance, within the Cannock Wards there are vast differences between the landscapes which are dependant upon the era of development.

In many of the older parts dating back to the Victorian and Georgian times, there was an understanding of creating visual focal points within the streets and framing houses between the street tree planting. The idea of this planting at the time, was not on the immediate impact but the future look and impact they will have later on in life.

We are now starting to see the benefits of their tree planting along streets. These will need to be kept looked after and enhanced over the coming years to ensure the ideas and look continues.

In other areas where there has been significant development from the 1960's and 1970's there was less planting within the streets to give a cleaner and open feel to the houses. It was seen that houses would stand out and that the planting of smaller trees in the front gardens and in rear gardens would help to enhance the character of the building. The estates of the 1960's and 1970's included more about open space with larger focal trees being planted on open spaces away from properties.

The latest part of development has significantly occurred within the Heath Hayes part of the district. This was achieved during the 1980' and 1990's, again having its own identity and feel. These areas make use of large open spaces for mass planting and the use of rural setting and interconnecting paths to help screen walkers from the houses and to bring the countryside closer to the urban environment.

With the reduction of garden sizes both front and rear, there has been less planting within properties. This has created a greater need from both local residents and the local wildlife to include larger open green spaces with mass planting to help screen properties and help users feel as though they are in the countryside.

These principles both old and new can also be seen through out Cannock Chase District Council and should be identified as different areas with differing needs. Some areas will require street tree planting, some will require focal trees on open spaces and some will require mass planting for screening.

It is part of this document to identify the different areas to ensure the correct type of tree planting is carried out. The Council must also ensure that where new developments take place, the area is looked at to ensure there is cohesion between the old and new.

It will also be necessary in new large developments to take on the needs of not only the inhabitants at the time, but also the local wildlife. Future thoughts of the area will need to be addressed to ensure that there is still a continued tree planting programme on each development to help enhance the area, properties and development. Where this is not achieved through the planning process the Council will seek commuted sums (CIL) to undertake and maintain tree planting.

This will not only help to endorse the commitments of helping the environment, it will also help to create outstanding housing stock for the future Cannock residents and put Cannock at the centre of places where people wish to live.

When scheduling tree work or replacement and new planting maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness will be an essential part of selecting the most appropriate action or tree species. In

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maintaining distinctiveness the opportunities for a more diverse and sustainable landscape are increased.

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OBJECTIVE 3: SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURAL**ENVIRONMENT**

“TO PRESERVE TREES AND WOODLAND WHICH ARE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO MAINTAINING A DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT, AND SECURE NEW TREE AND WOODLAND PLANTING.”

The Council recognises the importance of trees and woodland and shall preserve significant trees and woodland. The Council will resist the removal of healthy trees unless in conjunction with an agreed Management Plan. When necessary it will protect trees using Tree Preservation Orders and during development works.

The Council will ensure that new trees are planted where necessary, which are appropriate to the location. During development it will ensure new planting is included which will enhance the district and provide a diverse and sustainable environment. The Cannock Chase Local Plan (March 1997) states;

“Because of their overall value, it is important that trees should be retained and their planting supplemented wherever possible”.

Sustainability

In June 1992 the largest gathering of world leaders occurred in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and signalled the fact that environmental concerns have moved up the international political agenda. The central message of the summit is summed up in Article Four of the Rio declaration:

“In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.”

This means that international, national and local policy makers have to appraise their policies and practices to ensure they are sustainable. This process has become widely known as Local Agenda 21. The appraisals have now reached the local level in the form of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

Biodiversity is not just about special or rare species; it is about the variety of life, and includes all species of plant and animal, and the natural systems that support them. Bio-diversity has an important role in the development of local distinctiveness and sustainable communities.

The regular extension to the suite of legislation which provides structure to landscape management demonstrates this is an issue high on the political agenda and as yet has not been satisfactorily addressed. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 now requires an Authority to take into account and make policy with regard to its natural environment in a way that is sustainable.

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, in so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving bio-diversity.” (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Section 40)

The above act extends the duty of government and ministers set out in Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to all public authorities.

Incorporating the conservation of bio-diversity into relevant strategies, taking account of its links to environmental planning, and fulfilling the statutory obligations for the protection and enhancement of bio-diversity within forward planning and development control will assist the Council to make significant contributions to the protection and enhancement of the environment.

Cannock Chase District Council will commit to ensure that new planting of sites will have taken into account its own Biodiversity Action Plan and will ensure that any planting will help both the local residents and the local wildlife of the area.

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Climate Change

As far as possible measures to mitigate and adapt to the predicted effects of climate change will be incorporated into the strategy.

The existing trees and woodland will be managed for continuous cover. Based on Forestry Commission figures, woodland sequester approximately 200 tonnes of carbon per hectare when mature. In addition to this the significant shrub and herb layer maintained by the Council in urban areas will also assist the sequestration process.

This is a very small proportion of the Council's total annual carbon emissions (3,155 Tonnes estimated during 05-06), however it is more significant in terms of targets for reduction in carbon output. Opportunity through the Planning process could see further significant contributions and progress to carbon neutrality in accordance with the Nottingham Declaration.

The timber produce from managing the trees and woodlands could be used as carbon neutral fuel to power heating and or combined heat and power equipment for buildings owned and managed by Cannock Chase District Council, or by local large firms looking to reduce emissions.

The composition of trees and woodland adjoining residential areas will be changed. High water demanding species, and species prone to gale damage, shall be restricted in new planting schemes and replaced with more suitable species.

Natural regeneration of native species will be encouraged so the natural genetic variation will provide a buffer against climatic variation. Species sensitive to drought conditions such as Beech and Yew may form no more than 10% of planting, if it is seen that drought conditions are to continue. However, such trees have existed through a millennium and have changed and adapted to new conditions, this could happen again if the effects are limited over a long period of time.

As far as possible, Cannock will commit to the planting of trees and woodlands to help mitigate any future pressures resulting from Climate Change. The planting of new suitable species will be looked at when necessary to ensure there is continued forest canopy.

In order to accurately assess the amount of harmful gases absorbed by our trees and woodlands, the Council will actively look at current mathematical systems in order to calculate the tree cover. This information will be used in future decisions if it is seen that there is greater need to carry out further tree planting. It will also be used to drill down into specific site targets as part of the performance indicators for sites.

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Natural Environment

The green space network is a network of interlinked spaces in and around the towns, and between urban and rural areas. Trees and woodlands are a very important part of this, and continue to play a vital role in defining the district, not only the land owned by the council, but also other public bodies and private open space, including gardens.

Old trees and ancient woods are amongst our richest habitats. The highest levels of biodiversity are often found in woodlands that are actively and sensitively managed. Their diversity is even greater when they form part of a mixed landscape with proximity and access to other features such as ponds and lakes, grassland and even residential gardens.

The challenge in the future will be to maintain and enhance diversity. Planning and management needs to be conscious of providing a natural environment, which is resilient to climate change.

We can expect to see changes in the natural range of native wild plants and animals, which will alter the character of our woodlands. Some wildlife, particularly invasive, non-native species will need to be managed if they are not to have a detrimental effect on our woods.

Protecting water from pollution, by intercepting it before it reaches watercourses is a key element of landscape management. Strategically planted woodlands and trees (particularly the districts urban woodlands and street trees) can intercept air pollutants very effectively.

As part of an integrated and multi-functional land use this will require close working across the Council and with external partners and multiple landowners as we consider the impact and benefits to surrounding land use.

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Section 3.0

IMPLEMENTATION

In securing the long term sustainable development of the tree and woodland resource in the district, implementation aims to ensure that the right tree in the right place philosophy is widely understood and adopted, there is a transparent synergy with local, regional and national policy and the available resources are used where they can have greatest impact and benefit.

This strategy will co-ordinate, in a transparent and consistent approach to achieve the aim and objectives.

Key to implementing this strategy will be resources. Achieving the aim will require local interpretation and prioritisation via the updating of the "The site Management Plans" (The Plan), and from continued investment and resources from Cannock Chase District Councils. Where there is not a specific site management plan, trees will be treated like any other Council asset.

Decision making will be based upon assessment of local need, available resources and whole landscape consideration.

The Plan shall co-ordinate the priorities and the Council's available resources. The measures of success will enable delivery to be assessed and focussed as necessary.

The Urban Forestry Officer, along with the grounds maintenance and countryside service will be the primary officers for ensuring delivery. They will provide the expertise to manage and advise on trees and woodlands and the main issues which affect them, as well as managing the available resources to achieve the, Councils aims and objectives.

However, many different departments and agencies have an interest in the benefits of this strategy and can affect its delivery. The Plan will indicate where major contributions are sought from others and where benefits are likely to assist them in their own priorities.

The policies will assist the Council in making strategic and sustainable decisions on development and growth, economic planning, developing sustainable communities and direct asset management. Increasing the inclusiveness of local communities in these issues will be important, both for decision making, and also for active participation in management. Private owners and managers should be encouraged and advised of the wider importance of their trees and woodlands and be involved in partnerships, though this is currently restricted due to a lack of resources.

Partnerships will greatly assist the Council to identify and secure external funding and sponsorship, and contribute to achieving the aim and objectives of the strategy.

Measures of Success

Implementing this strategy will lead to greater activity in tree and woodland management. Equally it will increase appreciation and understanding of the importance of trees and woodlands.

To evaluate the impact of the strategy and decide how to act and revise the priorities a range of indicators of the present state, and trends over time are needed. These indicators should include trees: extent, condition, management, monetary value, use, and their contribution to quality of life.

As far as possible *outcome* indicators, relevant to the strategic objectives will be used (e.g. reducing the cost of insurance claims year on year, or reducing emergency call outs to damaged and failed trees), though trend based inputs (e.g. levels of investment) and outputs (number of trees planted or pruned) will have their place in monitoring.

Some of the measures will be quantitative, i.e. counting the numbers of service request or trees pruned or planted, however, experience has found that qualitative measures tend to provide richer data explaining why there is or is not service satisfaction and what actions have been positively received.

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Strategy Review

This strategy is an evolution of the 2008 to 2013 Urban Forestry Strategy and the previous 2003 Urban Forestry Strategy. It updates both strategies and reflects the Council's key responsibilities to manage its own tree stock; to protect trees of amenity value; and to secure new tree and woodland planting as the district grows.

There should be annual reviews of progress to facilitate budgeting and allocation of resources and more detailed reviews at five-year intervals where aim and objectives, and policies could be changed or adjusted.

A focus group should be set up by the Council, comprising of local residents to look at the overall work the council is doing to help achieve a healthy balance between the need to increase the councils tree stock and local issues with trees.

Section 4.0

POLICIES FOR COUNCIL TREES AND WOODLANDS

This part of the strategy sets out the Council's approach to the management of trees for which it is directly responsible. This work is largely confined to the urban area of the district, although these policies and priorities apply to all trees and woodlands owned and managed by the Council.

The Resource

Cannock Chase District Council manages around 22,157 individual trees and over 400 groups of trees, along with an estimated 80 hectares of woodlands. This brings people into close proximity to trees in the urban area on a regular basis, so there is a need to ensure that the environment is managed appropriately and sustainably.

Tree management encompasses the co-ordination of all maintenance operations to existing trees as well as new tree planting. The existing tree population is a valuable resource that requires more than just maintenance if it is to continue to provide the range of benefits that we expect. Management must include a long-term view of the tree resource, providing for the future as well as for today.

The aim for amenity tree management (Arboriculture) is 'sustainable amenity' for the benefit of the residents of the district and its visitors. This ideal can be achieved by the development of a tree population that has a wide diversity of species and a wide range of tree ages. These two points are fundamental in avoiding devastation by threats such as disease, climatic extremes or the slow decline of the population over time due to it being over-mature.

The intention is to inform the enquirer with what action is planned and when work is due to be carried out. Often a compromise will need to be sought where the tree in question causes inconvenience to someone whilst being of value in the surrounding area. Each individual case will be assessed on its merits.

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New and Replacement Planting

Trees as a living organism have a finite life expectancy. Whilst relatively long-lived, the stress and strain of the urban environment significantly shortens their lifespan. Tree surveys and inspections in the district have frequently revealed large numbers, which are not suitable for their location in the medium to long term.

Whilst the present strategy requires that each tree, which is removed, shall be replaced, the constraints on resources means this only happens at the higher profile locations. Currently year on year there is a net reduction in the number of trees.

Many of the problems encountered during the daily management of trees can be directly attributed to the inappropriate choice of species at the time of planting. Greatest long-term economic savings in tree management can be achieved by ensuring the philosophy:

“Right Tree in the Right Place”

This is followed every time a new or replacement tree is selected and planted. A tree requires space in which to grow, thrive and provide its many positive benefits. To do this any proposed site should provide adequate space for the tree in the long-term. Species selection must be with consideration to the trees likely ultimate size.

The constraints of the urban environment can make the enlargement of woodland and other habitats impractical. With planning and management of open space and gardens that border these sites effective buffers and extensions can be created.

This needs to be used appropriately, and to greatest sustainable benefit. The application of “Right Tree in the Right Place” framework will ensure new planting and natural regeneration are appropriately located and designed, and that woodland expansion is not to the detriment of protecting and restoring existing woodlands. The framework for tree and location selection is set out briefly in Annex 4 “Right Tree in the Right Place Framework”.

Maintaining and enhancing the existing trees and woodlands is a priority, but opportunities to increase the size and distribution of the resource is an essential part of sustainable growth. Not only does the planting of trees enhance existing open space, and streets but also new developments. New planting should endeavour to create green in the network of green spaces.

Tree planting is the principal area where community groups and residents can take active involvement in tree management. Such involvement at all stages should be encouraged as it significantly increases tree survival rates and provides greater sense of ownership. It is therefore also seen as an opportunity for assistance with the costs of planting through the potential sponsorship of trees.

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Section 5.0**COMMITMENTS FOR ALL TREES AND WOODLANDS**

The Council will adhere to the commitments listed above through the implementation of the Urban Forestry Strategy.

However, effective this is, there will be a significant need for the wider public to also acknowledge the need for trees and the benefits that they bring. Through doing this we all can enhance the area in which we live, work and promote the tourism of the Cannock Chase District

Many of the existing individual trees in the district are found in private gardens. Many landowners take a positive view of their influence over the quality of the landscape in the urban areas and countryside, taking advantage of grant aid schemes and sources of advice to implement positive landscape management and enhancement schemes. Unfortunately, there are some that for a number of reasons do not or cannot undertake such positive action.

There is great potential for further planting, schemes promoting tree planting in private gardens and streets that will improve the environment of the district.

As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to take steps to protect trees that it believes make an important contribution to the amenity of the district. This section sets out the Council's approach to the protection of privately owned trees.

The Resource

The Council has powers to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) and designate Conservation Areas within which all established trees are protected, and only in cases of potential threat that it will seek to legally protect trees by the use of a TPO. Resources rarely allow the proactive use of orders or the required updating and re-surveying.

The implementation of such statutory restrictions on the rights of a landowner is always a potential source of conflict and difficulty. However, many of our finest trees and woodlands would not be part of our landscape today if such protection had not been used.

Protection has not only been achieved through the statutory process. A substantial number of trees have been saved from inappropriate pruning or premature felling by the offer of expert advice from the Council's officers. Advice is offered to the owners of protected trees and other tree owners; this advice is offered free and is seen as a valuable part of tree protection. The quality of private tree care is very variable and ranges from owners who are completely indifferent, through motivated but poorly advised owners, to those who take great pride in their trees and are anxious to seek the best advice and engage quality contractors to carry out required work.

The Council are responsible for maintaining over 700 TPO's and 8 Conservation Areas. The pressure for development necessitates the pro-active use of TPO's, despite the limited resources. TPO's therefore tend to be used reactively when a threat to the condition or retention of a tree is known.

Use should be made of planning conditions and Section 106 CIL Agreements to ensure that funds are identified for enhancement and tree management. This should require that long-term management plans are produced, with an indication of the committed source and level of resources for that management.

One of the most frequent threats to trees, and the commonest reason for making a TPO, is proposed development of land upon which trees are growing. Plans are often submitted showing trees retained which are totally unsuitable for the proposal or in such poor condition that their retention is not appropriate.

Developers often assume that all trees on a site will have to be retained and consequently view trees as a hindrance rather than an asset. It is still common for planning applicants to fail to provide sufficient

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information to enable proper consideration of trees on a proposed development, which can mean more officer time is spent making detailed assessments of trees and other factors, at the public's expense.

The Council gives pre-application advice and supplementary planning guidance for developers, builders, architects, etc. Schemes are frequently amended to ensure that significant trees are properly retained often through a process of working with the applicant to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the conflicts that can arise.

It is common for tree protection constraints on development sites to be under estimated. In order to ensure a tree will be successfully retained, it is vital that the tree's root system is properly protected from direct and indirect damage such as ground compaction or contamination by reference to and the application of British Standard 5837: 2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction".

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Cannock Chase District Councils policies

In order to further achieve the highest standard of living within the Cannock Chase District area, there is a need to further sanction our commitments to the wider public by setting out our policies. These are designed as the back bone of the commitments which have been set out. Although we will always look to ensure there is an equal balance between the benefits of trees and the local residents, there will always be some situations which will require further decisions made. In these rare situations, it will be explained the policies to which the council adhere to and see for a way forward to both the councils commitment and also to alleviate local issues to residents.

In many cases residents request tree removal or pruning for minor season issues. Although at the time these can be of an in convince to people the overall benefit of the trees being in place out weigh the annual clearance of leaves and fruit from garden areas. As such it is recognised nationally that the removal of trees would not be appropriate in such cases.

The Council will however, prune back trees from buildings and structures to allow a clearance distance of 2 meters. As this is seen as a nuisance to people and can have a direct impact on peoples lives, and would be acceptable.

Policies for Council owned trees – Summary

- **Public Safety** – Public safety is of paramount to Cannock Chase District Council, when making decisions about the safety of trees throughout the District.
- **Arboricultural Standards** – The Council will ensure that all tree maintenance carried out upon its trees are to the very best standards and in accordance with British Standards (Currently British Standards BS 3998: 2010, British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work).
- **Tree related Nuisance** – The Council will carryout works to trees where it can be demonstrated that the work carried out will have a significant effect to reduce the nuisance without harming the tree(s).
- **Minor and Seasonal** – The Council will not carry out pruning works due to minor or seasonal nuisances such as sap dropping from tree(s), birds nesting or roosting in tree(s), leaf-falling and the dropping of fruit and flowers. However, it is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.
- **Television interference** – It is the Council's practice to suggest more careful siting of television receivers and will not prune or reduce the size of the tree(s) specifically to improve satellite television reception. However, it is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.
- **Light Obstruction** – The Council will not in general terms carry out crown thinning or crown reduction work to trees in relation to obstruction of light. However, it is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.
- **View Obstruction** – The Council will not carry out maintenance work or tree removal to reinstate scenic views. However, it is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.
- **Tree size and amenity** – Wherever there is space to allow a tree to grow to full size the Council will seek to plant the largest tree possible, notwithstanding the need to select trees for reasons of character, design, local importance, shape and wildlife importance, the council will adhere to the need for the right tree to the right site.

Further details on what will be considered and the action taken is addressed an annex 3.

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Policies 1

The Council will ensure that the tree and woodland populations are protected, developed and, where appropriate expanded, where not contradictory to Nature Conservation aims.

- Provide and maintain a computerised system of asset management that enables accurate analysis of the tree and woodland population; facilitates the management of resources and so enabling their prioritisation.
- Provide plans for the long-term management and development of the tree population as an essential component of the landscape.
- Supplement the Council's spending by seeking additional funding.
- Ensure that S106 CIL funding is appropriate to manage and maintain trees and woods handed over to the Council for the full term (currently 20 years).
- Realise any economic potential of trees and woodlands where this does not conflict with the other policies and priorities of the Strategy.
- Ensure that maintenance works make best use of resources by efficient work planning and the recycling of by-product material wherever possible.
- Work in accordance with current best practice.
- Preserve, protect and enhance community distinctiveness.

Policies 2

The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in accordance with its obligations, with particular attention for the safety of people and property.

- Clearly establish and maintain management plans for its tree and woodland population.
- Continue to survey all Council owned trees and woodlands, incorporating risk management on appropriate cycles.
- Undertake maintenance and remedial works, which fulfil the Council's obligations.
- Establish a process to review, improve and adapt these as needed.

Policies 3

The removal of trees and woodlands shall be resisted, unless there are sound arboricultural reasons or in accordance with approved management plans.

- There will be a presumption against the removal of trees, which are healthy, but subject to complaint, unless the basis of the complaint has an overriding justification and no alternative management practice can be implemented.
- Replace all trees which are removed, where possible

Policies 4

The Council will plant new and replacement trees and woodlands, using appropriate tree species where compatible with the conservation of other important habitats.

- Develop a tree-planting plan that sustains the tree and woodland tree population, with particular emphasis on the long-term replacement of mature and over mature trees.
 - Expand the urban tree and woodland population, particularly where new planting will help to improve value for people and wildlife.
 - Identify a specific planting budget so that the essential tree and woodland maintenance budget is not used up on planting, particularly where current funding does not allow tree planting due to a need to use special construction and surfacing.
 - There will be a presumption, that year on year that there is an increase in the urban tree
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and woodland population.

- Incorporate the principle of rotational tree removal in all park development plans.

Policies 5

The Council will encourage and enable greater awareness and better understanding of tree and woodland management, in order that community consultation and involvement is encouraged.

- Develop a robust and practical consultancy protocol, supported by sufficient resources to ensure successful implementation.
- Identify trees and woodlands of particular interest to local residents and ensure a method of consultation when major work is undertaken.
- Develop a protocol for communicating work need and to be a good neighbour ensuring work is undertaken in a manner sensitive to the wishes and aspirations of residents.
- Encourage public appreciation, recreational use and enjoyment, and community involvement in tree and woods management.
- Establish and support a voluntary urban tree warden scheme to work with officers in encouraging and enabling community involvement in tree plantings and management.

Policies 6

The Council will manage its woodlands in a fully sustainable manner, in accordance with the objectives and guidance set out in Woodland Management Plans.

- Develop woodland management plans for existing woodlands and plantations.
- Manage the woodlands on a fully sustainable basis.
- Maintain continuous tree cover.
- Identify potential new sites for woodlands and encourage their creation adjoining existing woodlands and where appropriate making full use of natural regeneration.
- Maintain and expand decaying woodland habitats, where safe to do so, essential for the functioning of woods ecosystems

Policies 7

The Council will ensure that the tree and woodland populations are protected enhanced and where appropriate expanded.

- To utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect trees and woodlands.
- To comment and advise on strategy and other initiatives which affect trees and woodlands.
- The council will require the standard of information relating to the trees and woodlands on development sites, together with the appropriate protection measures, as set out in detail in Supplementary Planning Guidance, to be submitted with planning applications.
- The removal of trees and woodlands shall be resisted, unless there are sound arboricultural or other reasons to indicate otherwise.

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Policies 8

The council will make Tree Preservation Orders in order to secure the retention of existing trees of amenity value on proposed development sites and other situations as a precautionary measure.

- The Council will continue to protect significant trees.
- Consent for works will be provided if the Council is satisfied that (1) the long term health and appearance of the tree is not impaired; (2) the works do not unjustifiably inhibit or prevent the full and natural development of the tree; (3) the work is necessary for the continued retention of the tree; (4) the work is consistent with good arboricultural practice; (5) in the case of woodland the work is consistent with sound woodland management.
- To maintain records of TPO's and complete the appraisal of older TPO's, where necessary revoke old ones and serve new orders.
- To develop and implement an Internet based system for inspection of and application for TPO's.
- Consider TPO's for all appropriate trees and woodlands on land no longer the responsibility of the Council.

Policies 9

The Council will consider and respond to tree work and planning applications in a manner, which ensures a sustainable, and high quality tree and woodland population is retained.

- To employ best practice and codes of practice which ensure efficient and consistent approach to considering and deciding upon planning applications.
- To consider prosecution when breaches of conditions, TPO's and Conservation Area regulation has occurred, if it could not first be resolved by positive action.
- Trees and Woodlands shall be a material consideration for planning applications; requiring the submission of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, including plans locating the trees and woodlands, as part of the planning application.
- When granting planning permission set conditions for the retention, protection, planting and care of trees and woodlands.
- Utilise commuted sums and Section 106 Agreements (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) to ensure the appropriate long term care of trees and woodlands.
- Utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect trees on development sites, and where extensions and changes are permitted on existing properties.
- There will be a presumption against the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any protected tree. The Council will not give consent to fell a protected tree or woodland unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement of the tree.

Policies 10

The Council will encourage new and replacement tree and woodland planting, using appropriate tree species where compatible with the conservation of other important habitats

- To promote tree and woodland planting where it is considered this will lead to amenity benefit.
- To encourage and support actions which will increase woodland cover in the district.
- The Council will expect all new site developments to contribute to the overall tree population, either through on-site planting schemes or through the donation of funds dedicated to planting, by the Council, in the locality.

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Policies 11

The Council will resist development, which it considers makes inadequate provision for the retention of trees and woodlands.

- To utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect trees and woodlands on development sites, and where extensions and changes are permitted on existing properties.
- To monitor and enforce planning powers and conditions where necessary.

Policies 12

The Council will encourage and enable greater awareness and better understanding of tree and woodland management, in order that community consultation and involvement is encouraged.

- Will promote good standards of tree and woodland care.
- Will encourage major tree owners, and those who own trees worthy of protection, to adopt best practices in their care of trees and woodlands.
- To encourage and involve members of the community, through tree warden and similar schemes and volunteering, to disseminate information and to take an active involvement in tree and woodland care.
- To prepare and circulate a Code of Practice for (1) Pre-application guidance and (2) Working on development sites where they're maybe an impact on trees and woodlands.
- The Council will follow a standard published procedure for the evaluation and making of Tree Preservation Orders.
- As part of its Conservation Area assessment the Council will identify and record all those privately owned trees of high amenity value.

Complaints procedure for Council owned trees

The Council will look at each case on its own merits and will decide on the best course of action in-line with the Councils' policies, budget requirements, best practice and future on-going maintenance costs. If it is decided that the Council will not carryout works to a tree, then there is a set complaints procedure that the resident can follow. This will include in the first instance a review of the case to see if the decision was made following the correct policies and reasons listed above. If the resident is still not happy with the outcome, a further complaint can be made to the appeals and complaints panel. The elected members will look at both the case and the reasons surrounding the case. They will then make an impartial decision based on the facts presented in front of them.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Targets 2013 to 2018

Action Plan 2013-2018

Action	Policy	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017	2017 2018
To purchase ICT system for Tree Management, including CRM, tree recording, risk assessment and contract management	1,2	✓				
To develop Annual tree planting programme to ensure tree replacement policy is achieved	2,3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To increase community involvement by development of the Tree Warden Scheme	1-6		✓			
To protect trees and woodlands as per statutory framework	1,2,3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To consult on revised Urban Forestry Strategy	1,5	✓				
To undertake tree risk assessment of all high risk zone trees	1,2		✓			
To undertake tree risk assessment of all low-medium risk Zone trees				✓		

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Annex 2: Risk Management Framework.

Following an incident in 2003, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), served an “*Improvement Notice*” on Cannock Chase District Council requiring it to introduce a system of regular tree inspection and remediation.

The system was introduced in 2004, based upon the prioritisation of the target and the likelihood, or otherwise, of part or whole of the tree falling onto it. To achieve this in a consistent, easy to apply and understand manner the Council adopted a risk assessment system developed in the USA, which has been applied across the world.

Targets, that is, people and property, which are likely to be harmed or damaged by trees, are ranked into four zones, according to their frequency of use and value. Each zone is attributed a rating of one to four (four being the highest risk). High risk targets are those with constant use, by many people, such as roads or homes. Lower risk targets are parts of open space infrequently visited, such as meadows or woodlands, away from boundaries or paths. This is called “Zonal Target Assessment”.

The target ratings are:

- 4 (Constant use, or permanently occupied structure)
- 3 (Frequent use)
- 2 (Intermittent use)
- 1 (Occasional use)

These form the three target zones:

- Red** Target ratings of 3 and 4
- Amber** Target rating 2
- Green** Target rating 1

Each tree is individually assessed for its condition and likelihood to fail by a suitably qualified and experienced tree inspector. The assessment of the defective part is rated according to its size:

- 4 (Greater than 75cm diameter)
- 3 (46 to 75cm diameter)
- 2 (16 to 45cm diameter)
- 1 (Up to 15cm diameter)

Its failure potential is similarly ranked:

- 4 (severe)
- 3 (High)
- 2 (Medium)
- 1 (Low)

The sum of the three scores is then calculated giving the risk rating for each tree. Those with the highest risk ratings receive remedial action to lessen the risk to acceptable levels. All trees rated at 9 or higher shall receive remedial works, which may require the removal of the tree, or more commonly pruning.

The survey is undertaken by visually assessing the tree from ground level. Arrangements can be made for even more detailed assessment by ultra-sonic testing or a climbing inspection. The data is collected on handheld computers, plotting the trees position on the Council's electronic mapping and basic database.

Integral to the system, and a core requirement of the HSE, is the re-inspection of trees on an appropriate cycle; this is based upon the target zones:

- Red** Annually
- Amber** Every three years
- Green** Every five years

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Similarly the Council is expected to constantly review, and if necessary, revise the system to account for the risk posed, legislative requirements and to ensure the Council's approach accords with good practice, such as British Standards.

As part of this review the Council is mindful of the guidance from the National Tree Safety Group produced in December 2011. This clarified the risk of a fatality as a result of a falling tree as 1 in 10,000,000.

As a result of this research two changes will be made to the risk assessment process.

Change 1: The Introduction of Groups.

Until the amendment was made every tree meeting the criteria of the process was individually logged and inspected. This has proven to be difficult to undertake and recommend remediation work by the inspectors where trees are in close proximity to one another, as the action is likely to have an impact on the group. The adoption of groups for appropriate trees also enables the Council to link its tree and woodland husbandry plans to the risk survey, making the two processes more closely aligned, as well as introducing efficiencies in both the surveying and work scheduling stages.

Change 2: Fluid Risk Zones.

Initially risk zones were developed based upon the distance a tree was from a target. As the survey has progressed it has become clear that some trees beyond this distance could potentially threaten the target.

To make the survey more robust, trees will be assessed based upon their size and position as to whether they could impact on the target. In reality this means some trees in a low risk zone will be rated at higher risk, whilst others closer to a target, due to their small size rated a lower risk.

Proposed Change 1

Rating and Ranking of Targets.

Closely linked to change 2, above, the rating of targets needs to be re-assessed. This will greatly assist the surveyors, and ensure that potential targets are given the weighting they deserve, and ensure resources can be directed to where they will have greatest benefit.

Proposed Change 2

Upgrading of Management Software.

The Council introduced a temporary tree database, which it stated would be replaced within 12 months of introduction (by 2005). To date this has not happened. The system does not have the flexibility needed to undertake the survey, review and scrutinise the data, provide a full history of the tree or schedule maintenance efficiently. A replacement database is currently being investigated and is anticipated to go "live" in 2013-2014.

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Annex 3: Policy for Service Requests.**Safety.**

Where there is a clear and foreseeable threat to personal safety of residents, visitors or property, directly related to the condition of a tree action will be taken to minimise that risk. Risks that are an indirect consequence of the tree (e.g. slippery leaves on pavement in autumn) will only be dealt with in extraordinary circumstances and when other options are not available. The unfounded fear of a tree **will not** result in action to prune.

Obstructing the Highway, road signs and streetlights.

Staffordshire County Council is responsible for trees on the highway pavements and verge; and ensuring private garden trees do not form an obstruction to roads and paths. They can be contacted on 0300 111 8000.

Where trees in parks and on other Cannock Chase Council land may affect the highway we will ensure that adequate clearance is maintained, based upon the class of road and types of vehicle which regularly use it.

Similarly the Council will endeavour to ensure its trees do not obscure road signs, signals and lighting. The purpose of street lighting is to illuminate the carriageway and paths. The Council will not normally take action to improve illumination of private property.

Television, Satellite, Radio and other Broadcasting and Receiving equipment.

A TV licence is a permit for an individual to operate a receiver; it is not a guarantee of getting reception, let alone good reception. Providers of terrestrial and satellite equipment both broadcasting and receiving cannot expect the Council to prune trees to improve or gain reception. In many cases it is possible to resolve issues of poor reception involving trees by finding an engineering solution. The Council will only consider requests to prune trees to improve reception where all the following criteria are met:

- Efforts to find an engineering solution to the problem have been exhausted and unsuccessful.
- The work required is consistent with good arboricultural practice and will not unduly affect the amenity or health of the tree
- The work required can be executed within current financial constraints

Loss of Daylight and affecting views.

Action will normally only be considered where the separation between the tree trunk and the window of the nearest habitable room (dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but specifically excludes WCs, bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways) is less than 6 metres for trees with a height of over 12 metres, or less than half the height of the tree for smaller trees, or where the separation between the edge of the canopy and window is less than 2 metres.

Where a situation falls within these guidelines cases will be prioritised according to proximity and account will also be taken of the orientation of the affected window(s). The results of any consultation exercise may modify decisions if it appears that any work would be by and large unpopular with the rest of the community.

Whilst the occupant of a property may wish to have a more expansive view across neighbouring land, there is no legal right to a view, and it should be remembered that trees and other vegetation are frequently planted as a screen, to obscure nearby properties, so increasing privacy and providing a more naturalistic environment. The Council will not normally take action to create or maintain a view.

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Petals, Leaves, Seeds, Twigs and Fruit.

Seasonal change affects trees and with it they shed petals, leaves, seeds, twigs and fruit. These are often carried freely on the wind and are largely outside the control of the Council. Clearing of leaves from gutters and pathways and weeding of self- set seedlings are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners shall be expected to carry out.

It is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.

Birds and other Wildlife.

Trees form a habitat for many animals and other plants, as a source of food, or providing shelter to nest or roost. If bird-droppings are an issue pruning is not a solution, as the birds will continue to roost or sit on the remaining tree branches.

It is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.

Honeydew.

Honeydew or sticky deposits are the excretions of aphids and other plant sucking insects. It is an almost pure sugar solution, similar to the plant sap from which it is derived. As with leaves, honeydew is not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance.

It is sometimes possible to improve the situation through general maintenance or planned maintenance. If it has been identified that this could be of benefit, then this work will be carried out at the appropriate time.

Root Damage and Subsidence.

Cases of direct root damage will be considered on an individual basis. A balance will be struck between the nuisance experienced by individuals and the benefits offered by the tree to the wider community.

Drain Blockage by Tree Roots.

Trees do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain, but they will exploit any existing fault. The removal of one tree will not prevent another tree or other vegetation from exploiting the same opportunity. The appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is to ensure that the drains are watertight. Accordingly, the Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council managed trees are blocking drains unless the removal of the tree is necessary to effect a safe repair i.e. trenching so close to the tree will cause the tree to become unstable or liable to wind blow.

Subsidence

Tree related subsidence damage is a complex issue and each case will need to be considered on an individual basis, although such cases in this district are very rare due to the absence of shrinkable soils. Where damage has occurred the Council will require that adequate assessment and monitoring is undertaken to demonstrate that the tree is involved and that such evidence be submitted in support of any request for action.

Requests for action based on an un-quantified possibility of damage occurring at an unspecified point in the future will not be considered.

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Reducing the Height of Trees.

This work is not recommended or considered appropriate for trees, except in exceptional circumstances. It is a destructive form of pruning, which can seriously weaken the tree, as the cuts seldom heal, leaving the tree exposed to disease and decay, which in turn creates a hazard. New growth is weakly attached, and prone to breaking, so far from eliminating a danger the heavily pruned tree it is more likely to become one. The new growth tends to be denser, and the tree quickly reaches and regains the original height, forming an ugly and disfigured tree.

Commenting on Officers decisions

The Council takes every enquiry on its own merits and will look at the age, condition and suitability of the tree in every case. This will then be judged against any possible works and inline with current industry standards and within CCDC policies. In essence the Council will ensure that the tree stock is kept in a healthy condition and any works carried out, will help to benefit the health of the tree, and ensure continued retention of the tree.

On some cases the works requested will be against industry standards or have a dramatic effect on the health of the tree, or where there will be continued future maintenance. In these cases the Council will seek to see if there is an alternative programme of works. The Council will therefore carryout any alternative works to the tree, this may be minor works and may not completely address all aspects of the original enquiry.

In cases where it is felt that the Council has not carried out appropriate works, or where the Council has not fully carried out works in line with its policies. Then there is a formal route through the Appeals and Complaints procedure. This is a formal process and detailed following a formal review of the officers decision.

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Annex 4: Right Tree in the Right Place Framework.**Landscape Impact**

- Consider the existing use of the space and would the presence of trees be positive.
- Establish the landscape type and what constraints this will place on species selection.
- Establish existing habitats and ensure that tree and woodlands would be complimentary to or adding value.
- Establish the history of tree cover and whether new trees or woodland would be appropriate.
- Establish if the area is subject to alternative management plan e.g. Heathland, Wetland.

Site Constraint

- Maintain local distinctiveness.
- Consider the presence of underground and overhead services.
- Meet the statutory safety requirements of access for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Assess impact on adjoining properties to ensure future potential problems can be minimised, particularly subsidence.
- Prioritise sites where there will be the greatest public benefit.

Species Consideration

- Select species known to thrive on the soil, particularly its type, compaction, nutrients and available water.
- Sufficient space for the tree at its ultimate size, unless, the tree is intended for controlling management such as coppicing or pollarding.
- Consider use of natural regeneration where appropriate.
- Where appropriate use native species.
- Ensure a diverse tree and woodland population is sustained.
- Consider the species tolerance to disease, and wind damage

Community Consideration

- Consider potential impact on neighbours.
- Consult with local community when introducing new large scale planting.

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Annex 5: Public Consultation.

As part of the Councils process of implementing this strategy, a full consultation was carried out to gain the views of the public. These views were formed from questions and areas for full comments, the results returned showed a large understanding of the benefits of trees and the need for trees in public areas.

The questions put within the consultation were varied and in keeping with what the Councils current policies. They were asked to see if the current practices were in keeping with current local views as well as keeping in line with national guidelines. Below is a list of the questions asked:

Question

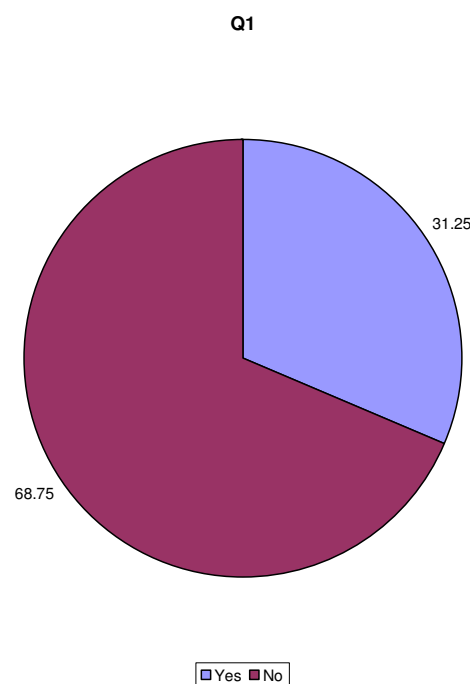
- A1** The Council is responsible for the care and management of its own trees; did you know the council has nearly 30,000 individual trees and several woods?
- A2** Before Reading this, did you know that the Council had previously adopted an Urban Forestry Strategy?
- A2a** If yes, how did you find out about the Urban Forestry Strategy?
- A3** Do you think the Council should prune trees?
- A4** Do you think the Council should remove trees?
- A5** Do you think the Council should only carryout works to trees, where they have a defect or pose a risk to persons?
- B6** Do you think we should be planting more trees in the parks?
- B6a** If yes, tell us more about any specific parks you have in mind:
- B7** Do you think we should be creating new woodlands and more natural tree planting in the parks and open spaces?
- B7a** If yes, where do you think we should be creating this and why?
- B8** The Council has several informal open spaces for instance on Norton East Road and small woodlands around the District, have you visited any of them?
- B9** The Council has several nature reserves for example Milking Brook in Heath Hayes, have you visited any of them?
- B10** What do you think the Council can do to encourage people to visit nature reserves, open spaces and woodland around the District?
- B11** Do you think the Council should increase the tree population for local wildlife and climate needs?
- C12** Do you think the Council should remove 'conifer trees' planted by the former tenant in the garden of an empty Council property for when a new tenant moves in?
- C13** The Council looks after trees that have been planted by the Council following a Regeneration Project in the front gardens of Council properties. Do you think we should plant more trees on Council housing estates?
- C14** The Council cares for trees on Council estates by arranging for a qualified Tree Officer to carry out a tree inspection. Do you think Council tenants should be made responsible, through the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement, to contact their landlord prior to removing or cutting down any tree planted in their front or rear garden?
- D15** Have you ever needed to contact the Urban Forestry Section?
- D15a** What was the reason for your contact?
- D15b** How useful did you find the feedback?
- D16** Do you know how to contact The Urban Forestry Section?
- D17** Do you think the Council should be promoting new planting of trees within the District?
- D18** Should the Council do more to promote the need for trees in private gardens?

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

From this the Council were able to extrapolate details and useful information to help shape and guide this strategy. In broad aspects the current views of the local public are still within national thinking and guidelines. This affirms and helps strengthen the Council's ideas that trees are of benefit, not only to the local wildlife, and also to the local communities who do value trees and the well being that they bring. More work is needed in the promotion of trees and helping to ensure the local community can fully appreciate the benefits of trees. Detailed below is a full break down of responses along with actions to be taken.

1) The first set of questions (A1 – A5), were asked in order to ascertain the current aims and objectives of the U.F.S, and formed an understanding of how well we have promoted the previous strategy.

A1) The Council is responsible for the care and management of its own trees; did you know the council has nearly 30,000 individual trees and several woods?

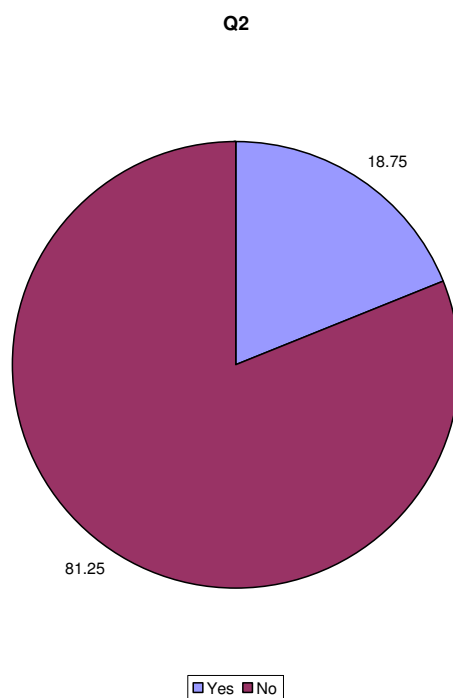


As it can be seen nearly 2/3 of the people did not know how many trees the council owns and manages. As a major public asset the benefits of trees and even what the council does and what they own is not properly promoted to the wider public. More thought and ideas will be needed to promote that the understanding the Council owns so many trees and that they are all managed and maintained on a regular basis.

Action: to evaluate the current trees stock as an asset and to proactively promote the Council as a leading figure in the protection and maintenance of trees. Showing that trees can coexist in the urban environment.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

A2) Before Reading this, did you know that the Council had previously adopted an Urban Forestry Strategy?

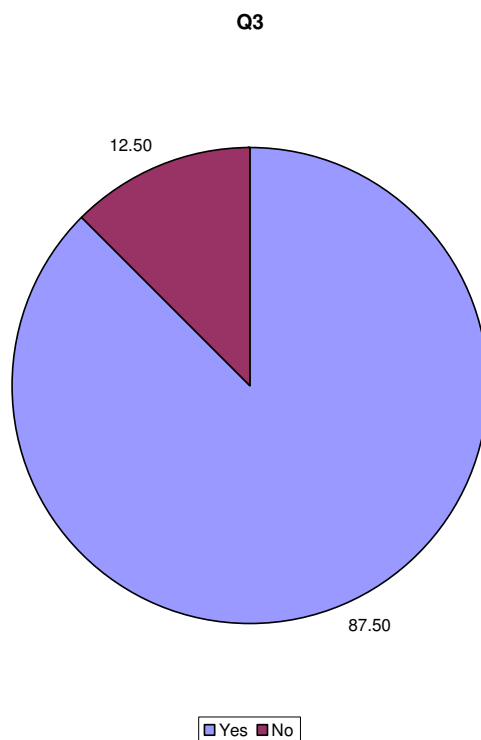


Over 80% of the returns didn't know that the Council has already adopted an Urban Forestry Strategy, this is of great concern as this is the guidelines that not only CCDC adhere to but also in line with national guidelines. Out of the 18% who knew about the Council's tree strategy, the majority only knew due to the consultation.

Action: More publicity will be needed in the future to show and demonstrate that the Council has a strategy to which it adheres to.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

A3) Do you think the Council should prune trees?

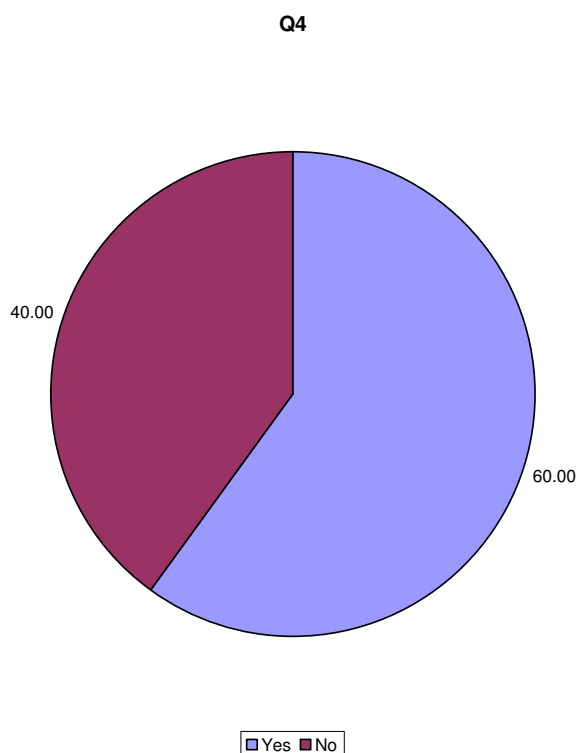


The majority of consultations agreed that trees should be pruned. This is in line with our current funding programme of carrying out routine maintenance on proactive basis. The returns also showed that they would only like to see pruning taken out to reduce hazards, increase health and safety and only a few suggested that trees should be pruned for ascetic reasons. Currently the Council will only prune trees where it can be demonstrated that there is either a hazard to the tree or that there are works needed in order to fulfil health and safety.

Action: to continue on the current pruning regime to work on trees on a health and safety basis or where there are visible or potential future hazards.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

A4) Do you think the Council should remove trees?

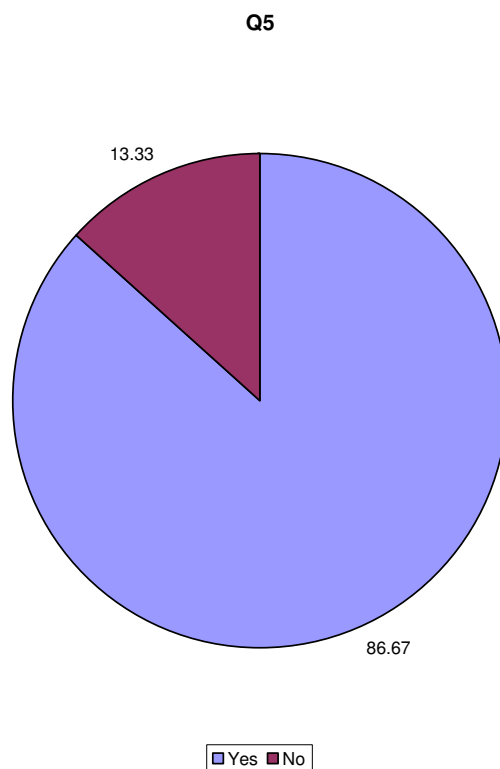


This was asked to judge the current reaction to the idea if trees should be removed and if so for what reason. 60% agreed that trees should as some point be removed, however all said that they should only be removed if they become a danger to persons or if they have a defect. Only one return suggested that trees should be removed in order to allow for future property developments. In total the Councils agrees that the currently policies of only remove trees when they pose a threat or for health and safety reasons are still within local current thinking.

Action: to continue with current polices of only removing trees that are dead, dying or dangerous.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

A5) Do you think the Council should only carryout works to trees, where they have a defect or pose a risk to persons?



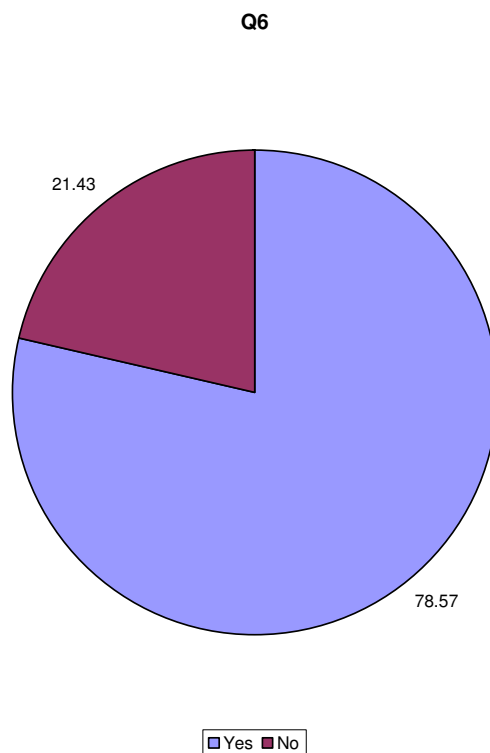
Only a few returns suggested that the Council should not allow any removal of trees and they should be left to nature. However, the majority of returns all agreed that public safety is important that trees should be allowed to be removed where they have a defect or pose a risk.

Action: to continue with current polices of only removing trees that are dead, dying or dangerous.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

- 2) The second set of questions (B6 – B11) were asked for trees within Parks and Open Spaces. We were looking at how the local population viewed and embraced the current public tree stock. This does not take into account trees on housing land or trees owned and managed by the Forestry Commission (such as the Chase).

B6) Do you think we should be planting more trees in the parks?

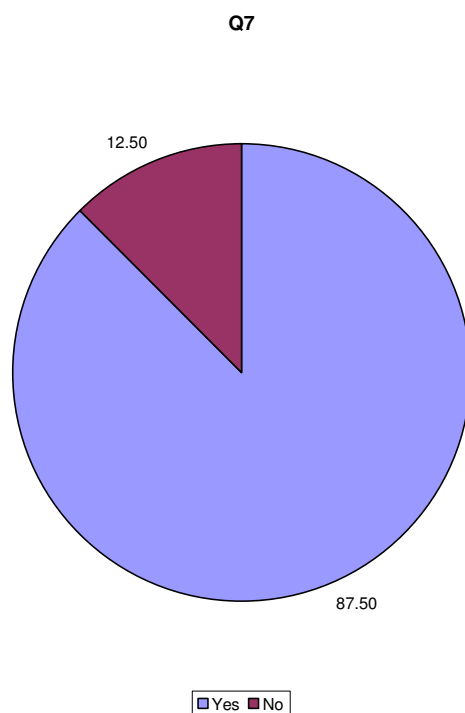


The majority of consulted agreed that more trees should be planted within open spaces. There has a high return showing that people would like further tree planting within the Heath Hayes area. Another area for further tree planting as indentified by the returns were within newly built developments. These are all within the Councils aims and objectives of promoting and looking at new areas for tree planting.

Action: to continue to look at and identify new areas for tree planting within the District, to focus on the Heath Hayes area and to indentify on new large scale planning applications areas for tree planting.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

B7) Do you think we should be creating new woodlands and more natural tree planting in the parks and open spaces?



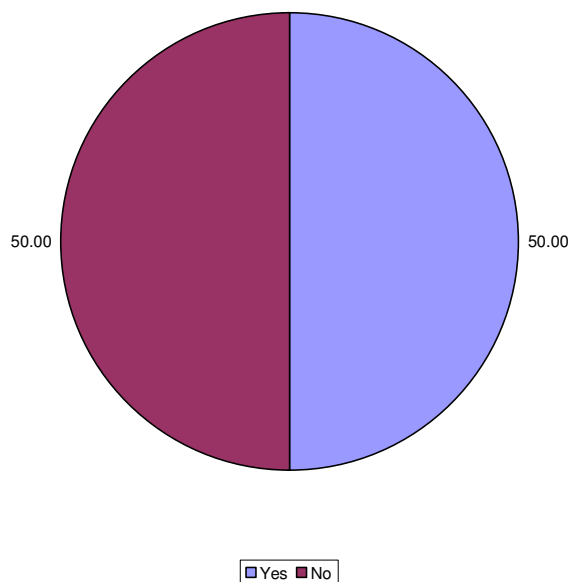
The vast majority of returns agreed that there is a need for the creation of new woodlands and more natural tree planting within parks and open spaces. The returns suggested that more input was needed to create new woodlands on land unsuitable for other uses such as derelict land or old colliery sites. Some suggested that this should be for the benefit of the local wildlife and to help tackle water flooding.

Actions: Where possible within new large planning applications to look at the possible creation of new woodlands. If funding is available to look at identifying sites fit for woodlands but unfit for any other uses.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

B8) The Council has several informal open spaces for instance on Norton East Road and small woodlands around the District, have you visited any of them?

Q8

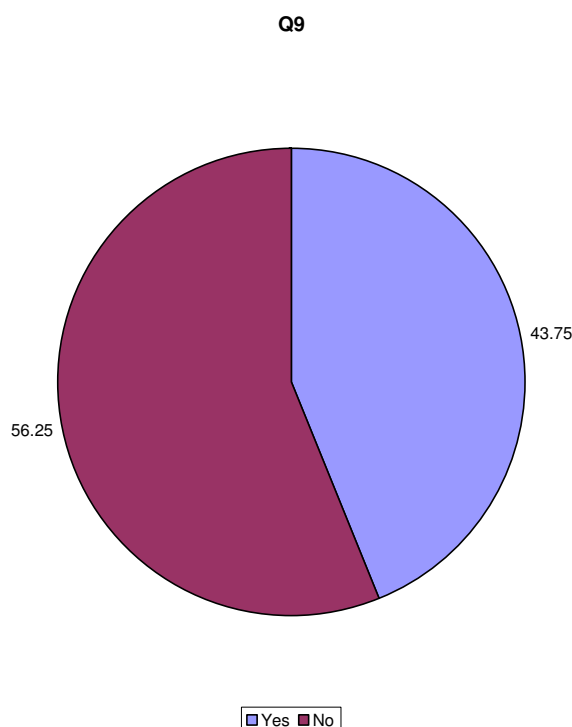


The results showed that although 50% of the population knew about the Council's other smaller open spaces, 50% of the population didn't know that they existed or that they were owned by the Local Authority. These small areas of land are of great benefit to the local residents who live near them. As it is suggested that not all residents knew about them or where they are shows that there is still more needed in order to inform the public about all the benefits and assets that the Council owns.

Action: to promote where possible all of the Council's open spaces. To look at producing maps for community notice boards of local open spaces, to produce larger plans showing all of the public open spaces for the general public to assess, look at including locations on the Cannock web site.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

B9) The Council has several nature reserves for example Milking Brook in Heath Hayes, have you visited any of them?

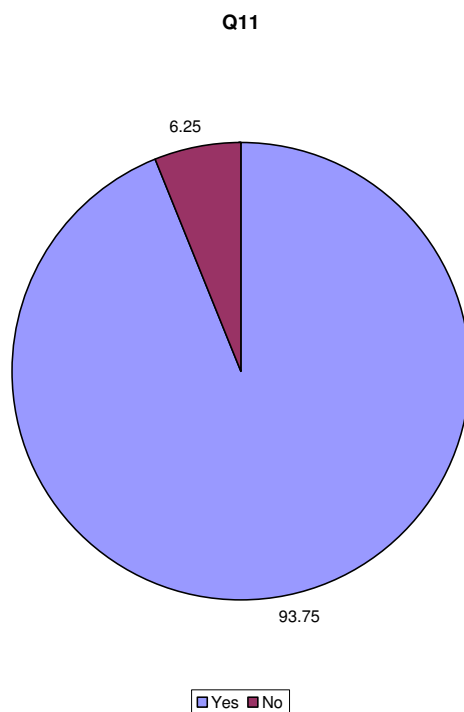


Although 43% knew that the Council owned several Nature Reserves, over 56% didn't know that either they existed or that they were publicly owned by the Council for the benefit of the local community. This is a great asset for the Local Authority to own and manage however, it is not fully appreciated or even known by the majority of people living within the Cannock area. It is likely that those living near to the nature sites will have better awareness of them, this still shows that more work will be needed in the promotion of these sites as a benefit for the people. By promoting these larger sites, this will help the Council to achieve its current aims and objectives of ensuring people lead an active and healthy lifestyle by walking and enjoying these public assets.

Action: to promote where possible all of the Councils Nature Reserves. To look at producing maps for community notice boards of the nature reserves within Cannock, look at including locations on the Cannock web site. To carryout more public events within the nature reserves.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

B11) Do you think the Council should increase the tree population for local wildlife and climate needs?



Over 90% supported the idea of increasing the tree population for local wildlife and climate needs. They all stated that trees should be planted to help the local wildlife, including bees and birds. Some recognised the over development on public land leading to a loss in trees. With some recognising that future climate needs will need future tree planting.

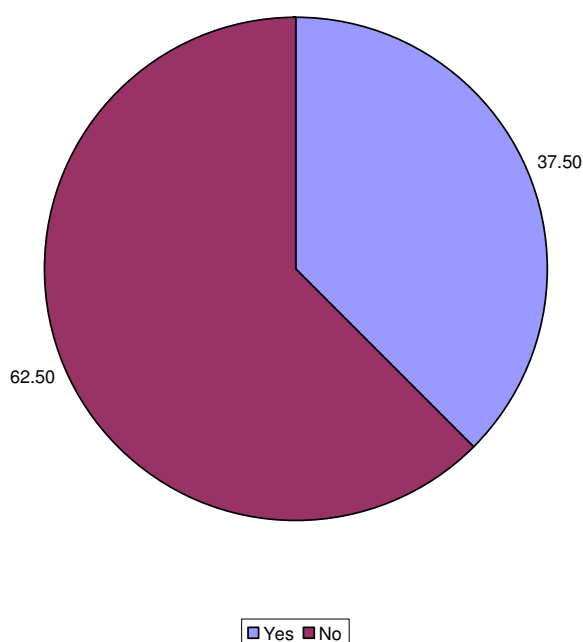
Action: To continue with the Councils current planting programme, also to look at future funding needs and set up a separate budget to demonstrate the Councils commitment to tree planting.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

3) Questions (C12- C14) were set towards the Council tree stock situated within Housing owned land and in rear properties. We currently have a large number of non listed trees in residents properties, which we will 'inherit' when tenants move out. Although this is a great source for future tree populations, they have to be weighed against current views. We were looking at gathering the current views of the public to see if there is more the Council can do to demonstrate that trees can exist within garden settings if the 'right tree, right location' is carried out.

C12) Do you think the Council should remove 'conifer trees' planted by the former tenant in the garden of an empty Council property for when a new tenant moves in?

Q12



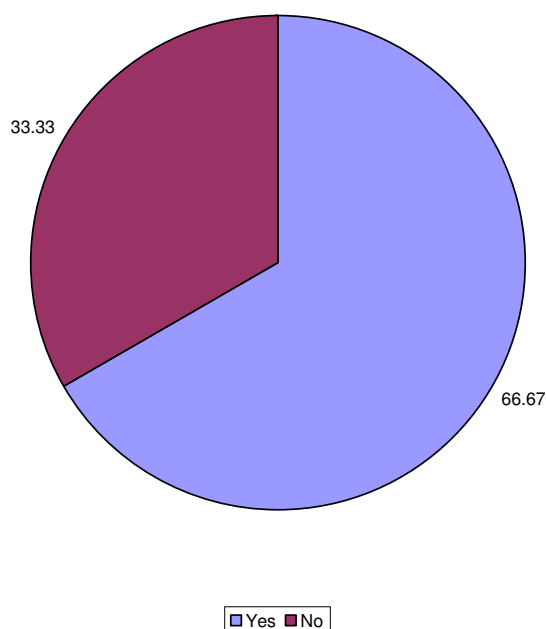
Over 60% agreed that 'conifer trees' or trees in general should not be removed between tenancy moves. Currently unless there are defects or health and safety reasons, the Council will not actively remove trees between tenancy moves.

Action: to continue with current practice.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

C13) The Council looks after trees that have been planted by the Council following a Regeneration Project in the front gardens of Council properties. Do you think we should plant more trees on Council housing estates?

Q13

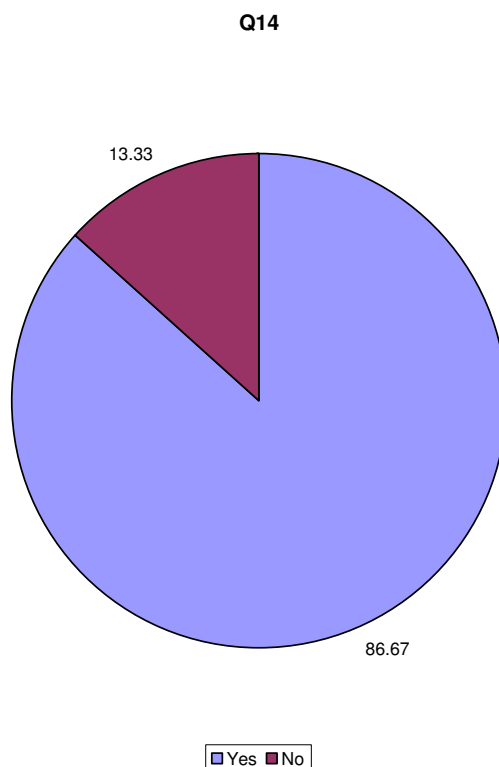


Again as in similar questions above, the majority of people (66%) agreed that more tree planting should be carried out on housing estates. We currently do not carryout planned tree planting on a regular basis on housing estates.

Action: To look at future tree planting and link this with the Housing department to identify new planting sites on estates and to raise funds for future tree planting.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

- C14) The Council cares for trees on Council estates by arranging for a qualified Tree Officer to carry out a tree inspection. Do you think Council tenants should be made responsible, through the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement, to contact their landlord prior to removing or cutting down any tree planted in their front or rear garden?



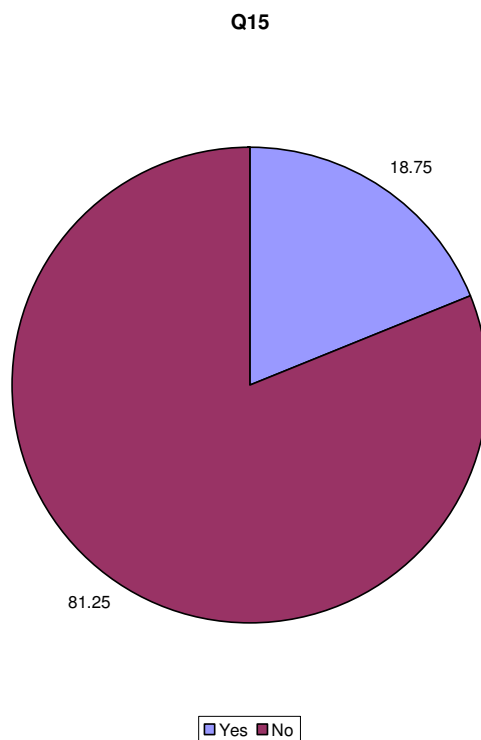
The majority of responses all agreed that tenants should be informing the landlord before removing trees. The reasons given were that the trees are important and that they should ask permission to stop unnecessary tree removal. Currently a tenant will have to apply for a tree to be removed. Once this is submitted, the tree officer will inspect the tree, firstly to make sure the tree is still in a safe condition and free from defects and is safe and healthy. Also it will be looked at against its surroundings and if seen that there will be significant future conflicts then this will also be looked at. If the tree is found to be in a good condition and 'sits well' in its current location not causing conflict, then the tree will be assessed using the same TEMPO form as with Tree Preservation Orders. If it is seen that the tree makes a contribution to the local landscape then the removal will be declined.

Action: to continue with current policy of tenants having to apply for permission to remove trees, and for an inspection to be carried out before a decision is made.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

- 4) The last set of questions (D15-D18) were based towards the Urban Forestry Section and to gather information on past experience and what if anything the section as a whole should be addressing.

D15) Have you ever needed to contact the Urban Forestry Section?

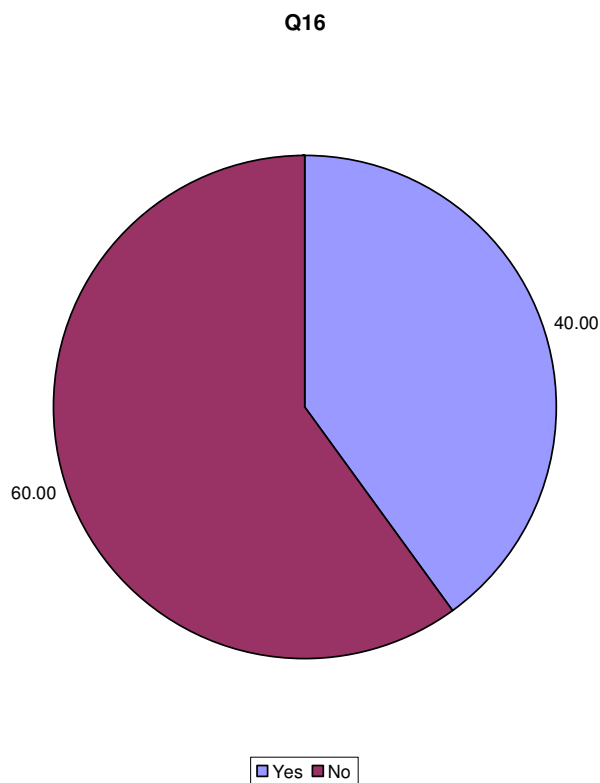


Only a small percentage have needed to contact the Urban Forestry section. Out of this small number, the reasons for contacting the section were in relation to overgrown trees near properties. The question was asked how useful did you find the feedback, there was no negative or neutral feedback. We can only summarise that the majority are happy with the section in its current form and happy with information given and the reasons why trees are pruned.

Action: To continue to develop the Urban Forestry Section to fit with peoples needs, and to be positive about the work we do and continue to be informative to the local residents of Cannock.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

D16) Do you know how to contact The Urban Forestry Section?

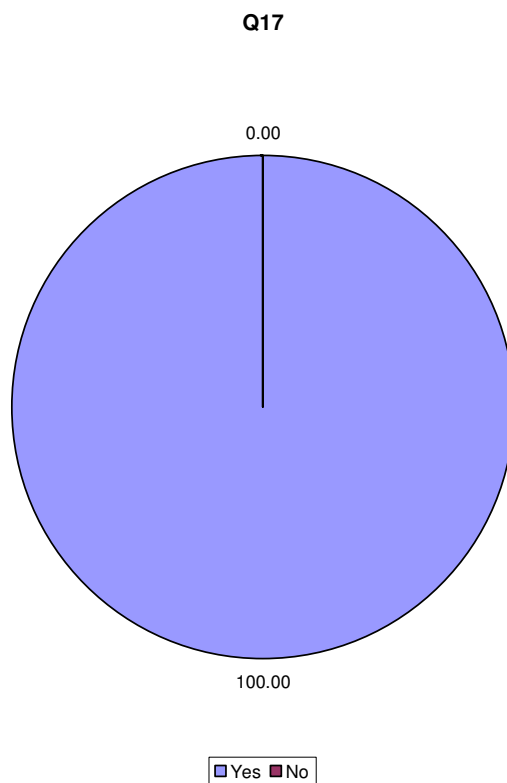


60% of the returns showed that they were unsure how to contact the section, although 40% knew how to contact the section, and this being a larger number of people who have actually contacted the Urban Forestry Section. More is needed to promote and ensure people know how to contact and where. This can be done through a variety of ways including the use of notice boards near open spaces, web site promotion and by giving out leaflets at public events.

Action: To look at and address the publicity of the section to make sure more people are aware of the section and how to contact when help or information is needed.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

D17) Do you think the Council should be promoting new planting of trees within the District?

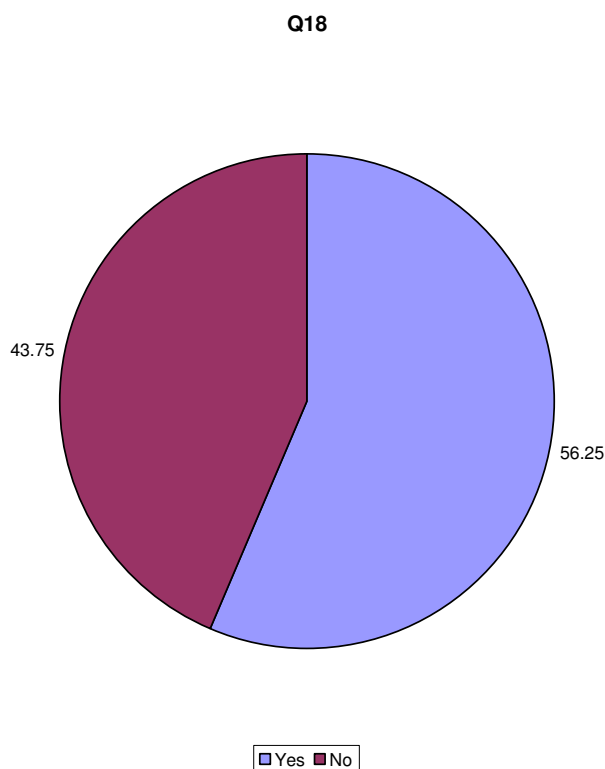


100% suggested that the Council should be doing more to promote new planting of trees within the District. This is good to know that trees are important to the local residents, and we should be doing more to show that we do plant trees on a regular basis to ensure there is a continued tree canopy cover within Cannock. More can be done to help this in some areas, as well as promoting and publicising what the Council has planted.

Action: To look at publicising better the good work we do in planting of new trees each year as well as using local residents to identify where future tree planting could take place. This could be through the use of the web site and residents being able to leave comments of where new planting can take place.

Urban Forestry Strategy, 2013 - 2018

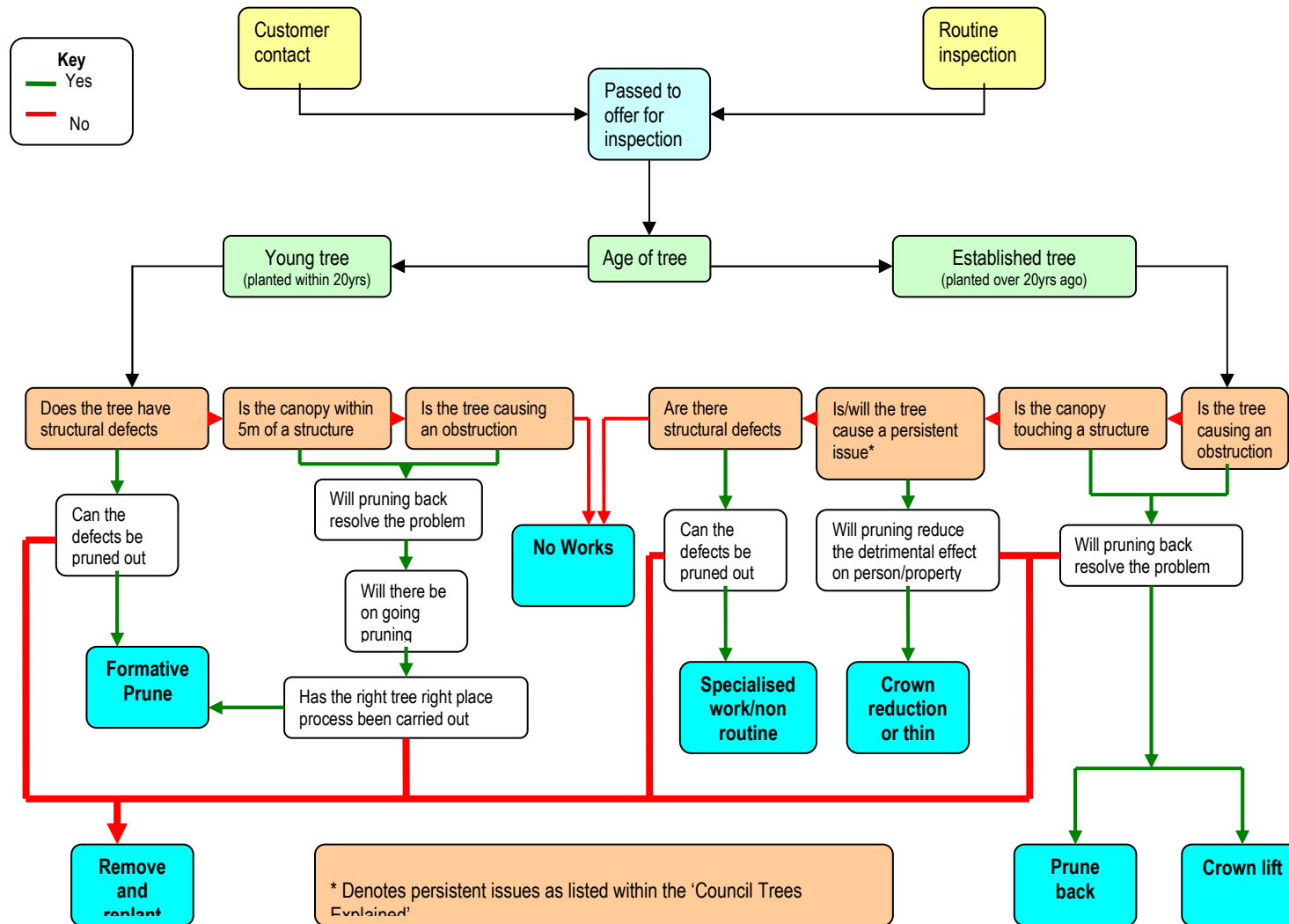
D18) Should the Council do more to promote the need for trees in private gardens?



Just over 50% suggested that the Council should do more to promote the need for trees in private gardens. The main force behind this is that although the Council are good custodians of trees, it is noticeable that many private properties do not take on board either the need for trees within an urban setting or unsure about the right tree in the right location. The Council can do more to help educate private residents on the benefits of trees as well as giving information on suitable garden trees. Future publicity events could even involve giving away saplings to residents to plant in garden areas.

Action: To continue to promote trees in the urban environment and to look at new ideas and help private residents to plant trees where possible in garden areas. To give information on trees and to help educate private residents on selecting the correct tree for garden areas to ensure future maintenance can be kept to a minimum 'right tree in the right location'.

Annex 6: Tree pruning practice.



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