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CABINET
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URBAN FORESTRY STRATEGY 2019-2024

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the revised Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2024 for approval and adoption.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the revised Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2024 for adoption.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council has a legal responsibility for the management of all trees on council owned land.
- 3.2 Cannock Chase Council is committed to high quality and proactive management of its tree stock. The Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2024 which replaces the previously adopted Urban Forestry Strategy 2013-2018 is fundamental to the effective working of the arboricultural services. It provides the framework which details the council's approach to the management and enhancement of its tree stock.
- 3.3 The Council, under Local Agenda 21, is required to demonstrate that climate change is being addressed at a local level. This involves amongst other things the adoption of a tree strategy to demonstrate how the Local Authority is tackling climate change through the maintenance and management of trees.
- 3.4 This Strategy also incorporates the principles of the Natural Capital Planning Tool (NCPT) which identifies that ecosystems and natural capital should be managed in a holistic way.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

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

- (i) **Improving Community Wellbeing** aims to tackle the long-term illness and obesity issues that we face as a Council. Ensuring quality public open spaces with healthy trees will act to address the view that the undisputed benefits of trees in the environment have on the physical and mental well being of our residents.
- (ii) **Promoting Prosperity** is interlinked with Community Wellbeing by having a safe and attractive environment promotes inward investment and attracts developers. The management and maintenance of trees provides several ecological benefits including reduced flooding/temperatures increases and air borne pollutants as well as directly employing staff to undertake the works required.

5 Report Detail

5.1 On a national level the Government recognises the value of trees and the need to plan for a sustainable future, particularly in urban areas. It encourages local authorities to produce long term plans for the care of their trees. Cannock Chase Council has a legal responsibility for the management of all trees on council owned land.

5.2 This Council is committed to the high quality and proactive management of its tree stock. The Urban Forestry Strategy spans 2019 – 2024 and details the council's approach on tree management and maintenance across the district as well as developing tree planting programmes and ensuring tree protection.

5.3 Trees provide a range of environmental, economic and social benefits. On a practical level trees help to mitigate and adapt to climate change and improve air quality. Generally they have a positive impact on those living and working in urban areas.

5.4 This Urban Forestry Strategy is aimed at providing the framework which details the council's approach to the management and enhancement of its tree stock. It outlines the mechanism by which the council will achieve its vision:

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

5.5 The Strategy has 12 policies and an Action Plan which sets out how the council will support the following commitments:

- Maintain the managed tree stock on council land, housing estates and woodlands on a proactive cyclical maintenance regime to ensure that trees are in a safe and healthy condition.
- Limit the removal of trees and woodlands to those circumstances where it is essential or advisable and to plant new and replacement trees where appropriate

- Create a varied and sustainable tree population
 - Undertake pruning works following best arboricultural practice
 - Carry out planned and emergency inspection and risk assessment of trees on council owned land
 - Use current legislation to protect those trees it considers threatened or that it values. Applications to carry out work on protected trees will be evaluated carefully before permission is given
- 5.6 The Strategy also aims to support the Government's 25-year Environment Plan and its 2011 White Paper 'The Natural Choice' in which the Government stated it wishes to be "the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it inherited...".
- 5.7 The Natural Capital Committee (Independent advisors to the Government) has responded to say that for the Government's plan to have any chance of succeeding there must be an adoption of a number of targets, some of which are outlined in Objective 3 of the Urban Forestry Strategy.
- 5.8 Consultation on the strategy has been undertaken both internally and externally and the feedback received incorporated in the Strategy as appropriate. The following summarises the measures proposed to promote community engagement and involvement in the UFS:
- Develop a robust and practical consultancy protocol
 - Identify trees and woodlands of particular interest to local residents and consult when major works are planned
 - Inform residents of the new strategy via press releases and the council's website

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Any financial implications arising from the adoption and implementation of the Urban Forestry Strategy will be met from the Parks and Open Spaces operational budgets.

6.2 Legal

The Council has a legal duty to ensure the safety of trees situated on Council land. Trees that are located on land that is not owned by the Council are the primary responsibility of the owner of such land.

The Council has powers to take formal action in cases where there is a breach of a Tree Preservation Order, and this can include a prosecution and the requirement for replacement planting of trees.

The Council also has an advisory role in considering the protection of trees included within an application for planning permission.

6.3 Human Resources

None identified within this report

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None identified within this report

6.5 Human Rights Act

None identified within this report

6.6 Data Protection

None identified within this report

6.7 Risk Management

Given the guidance from the Health and Safety Executive it is paramount that the Council constantly reviews and if necessary, revises its legally defensible tree management system to account for the risk posed and legislation requirements. In order to defend possible insurance claims the Council needs a robust defensible policy in the way it maintains and inspects its tree stock. To not do so could cause considerable reputational damage for the Council. The Strategy is introduced to minimise legal and reputational risk. It helps ensure that the council meets its statutory obligations in relation to the management of trees.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The UFS will be monitored so that the potential impact on any protected groups is identified and steps taken mitigate or remove them.

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2024

Previous Consideration
Urban Forestry Strategy 2013-2018 Cabinet 19 September, 2013
Urban Forestry Strategy 2008-2013 Cabinet 14 May, 2009
Background Papers
The NCC's 4th State of Natural Capital Report, (2017): www.gov.uk/government/publications/naturalcapital-committees-fourth-state-of-natural-capital-report

Urban Forestry Strategy

2019-2024

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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 provide significant amenity value in size and visual aspect. In some cases, the trees can be seen as problematic by the general public.

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 of trees are highlighted 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 in 2003, sought to recognise the long-term commitment required to realise the Councils ambitions for environmental enhancement and protection. This was then updated in 2008 and 2013 to take forward 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' priorities of Promoting Prosperity and Community Wellbeing 2018-2023.

Although the Council will set out its policies and procedures within this strategy, there are some situations that can not be anticipated. Therefore, whilst these policies will guide decisions, they should not be considered prescriptive. Individual policy should not be considered in isolation, but all relevant policies should be considered when reaching a decision. These policies should further be considered in the context of wider strategic aim and priorities relating to individual areas.

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.

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 supporting infrastructure, we need to ensure that stability and social cohesion continue, and that growth will lead to a cleaner, greener, healthier and more prosperous 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: Tree Management and Standards
- 2: Community and Place
- 3: Sustainability and Natural Environment

Often the distinction between these objectives at a local level are interlinked 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 obvious from the outset.

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 within an AONB. 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 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 when residents resist the removal of 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 is 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 Urban Forest 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 providing 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 trees as a 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 thereby reduce the possibility of flooding.

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 can moderate the heat island effect caused by pavements and buildings absorbing heat during the day and releasing it at night. 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, 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 certain species are more resistant to human disturbance and can 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 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. The savings in energy costs and the increase in property value directly benefit the homeowner.

It has been well documented that properties with trees on the frontage or close to public open spaces will have higher property prices. This can help to increase people's wellbeing and aspirations, as well as helping to develop areas of social and economic neglect. The trees and woodlands also help to clean and increase the air quality, which in turns help to reduce associated respiratory disease.

The indirect economic benefits of trees are even greater. Lower stress levels of the residents will help in reducing financial loss to local businesses. This helps to increase economic development and create sustainable businesses, as well as increasing the desire to live in a 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 six of which hold the prestigious Green Flag Award. The Council is therefore showing its commitment to the local population to increase the benefits of the outdoors. Communities also can save money if fewer facilities need to be built to control storm water in the region. To the individual, these savings are small, but to the community these reductions are often considerable.

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

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 too close to trees, made in the past and may be difficult or impossible to resolve in all parties' favour.

A 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 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.

Risk of Harm (RoH) from trees

The Council will follow latest guidance from industry standards and the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). Currently the guidance given is that the overall risk to the public from falling trees is extremely low, representing about a one in 10,000,000 chance of an individual being killed by a falling tree (or part of a tree) in any given year. In comparison the annual risk of cancer is assessed as 1 in 387, all forms of accidents are 1 in 4,064 and the risk from a lightning strike is 1 in 18,700,000. The risk of trees in the urban environment is low and does not represent a threat to people in their daily life.

The case for trees from Historic England

In 2000, Historic England as the Governments advisory body on heritage championed the 'Save our Streets' campaign. For Local Authorities this acted 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 vary as development within the UK and especially within Cannock Chase District Council has very distinct variations.

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 as tree planting opportunities.

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 the original design.

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. This is detailed in Section 4.0 Policies for Council Trees and Woodland and Annex 4 Right Tree in the Right Place Framework.

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 were conducted in 1992/93 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 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 are embedded into this Strategy and that its recommendations are followed to show Cannock Council's commitment to both the residents and to Central Government.

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. Many of the areas already have trees planted within them, which brings amenity value to the land, not only in visual terms, but also as a benefit to the local people, helping to act as shade, cover, colour and an area to relax.

Parks – These areas will be of some of the highest usage areas. Cannock currently has 6 premium parks within its District, all of which have a significant planting of trees, mainly large trees with large 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 conservation is encouraged. The Council will operate 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 – Most of the woodland owned or managed by Cannock Chase Council is to be found within designated nature reserves and a significant proportion of this is recognised as being of national importance for its wildlife. These areas not only support wildlife but are valued and much visited natural assets. Current estimates suggest that nature reserves managed by Cannock Chase Council receive in the region of 500 thousand visits per year.

Trees are a vital element within our reserves, but it is sometimes necessary to remove them for sound ecological reasons. For instance, Cannock Chase Council is currently restoring over 300 acres of open heath and pasture woodland on Hednesford Hills. This is bringing back rare wildlife and restoring a landscape that would have been typical of Cannock Chase in the medieval period, but we are unable to do it without regular tree removal.

Trees marked for felling will always be carefully selected and the Council are aware that its nature reserves support numerous legally protected and nationally scarce species. It is often necessary to manage trees in very specific ways in order to provide and maintain the exacting conditions necessary for the survival of a sites rare and threatened species. Some are found in just a handful of individual trees on a site that are able to provide the specialised habitat conditions required. Trees within the nature reserves will always be inspected by an experienced ecologist prior to removal or pruning.

Decaying wood supports over 90% of woodland organisms at some point in their life cycle and is a vital component of our nature reserves. Where safety considerations permit, we will endeavour to retain decaying wood in all its forms. Simply because a tree or branch has died, it does not mean that it is of no value for it continues to provide habitat for numerous living organisms. In fact, it may support more species as it naturally decays than when it was alive. There is probably no such thing as deadwood in a naturally functioning woodland ecosystem.

All the Councils principle nature reserves have detailed up-to-date management plans and are managed by a specialist Countryside Team who has extensive knowledge of wildlife conservation.

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 Councils 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.

Cemeteries – The Council manages and maintains three cemeteries and seven closed churchyards. The three main cemeteries are Cannock, Stile Cop and Wolseley Road Stile Cop facilitates both new and re-open burials. Cannock and Rugeley cemeteries are traditional cemeteries with trees surrounding the sites and grave sections located in the middle. Stile Cop has been developed to include trees within its grounds, utilising an existing woodland area at its far corner and mature Oak trees within its grounds. Tree planting has played a huge role in the development of this cemetery. Roadways and pathways are tree lined to break up the different burial sections allowing the trees to be leased for memorial purposes.

Current tree population

Cannock Chase District Council's current tree stock comprises of trees within Parks and Open spaces; 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 tenant's 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 data on the groups, the areas and size will indicate that there will be more than 50-100+ trees contained in each. Based on these two categories there are circa 25,000 currently managed and maintained by Cannock Chase District Council.

Tree Species

In order to perpetuate 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 for future generations.

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 misconception by some people that trees will exist in their current form. However, the life 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.

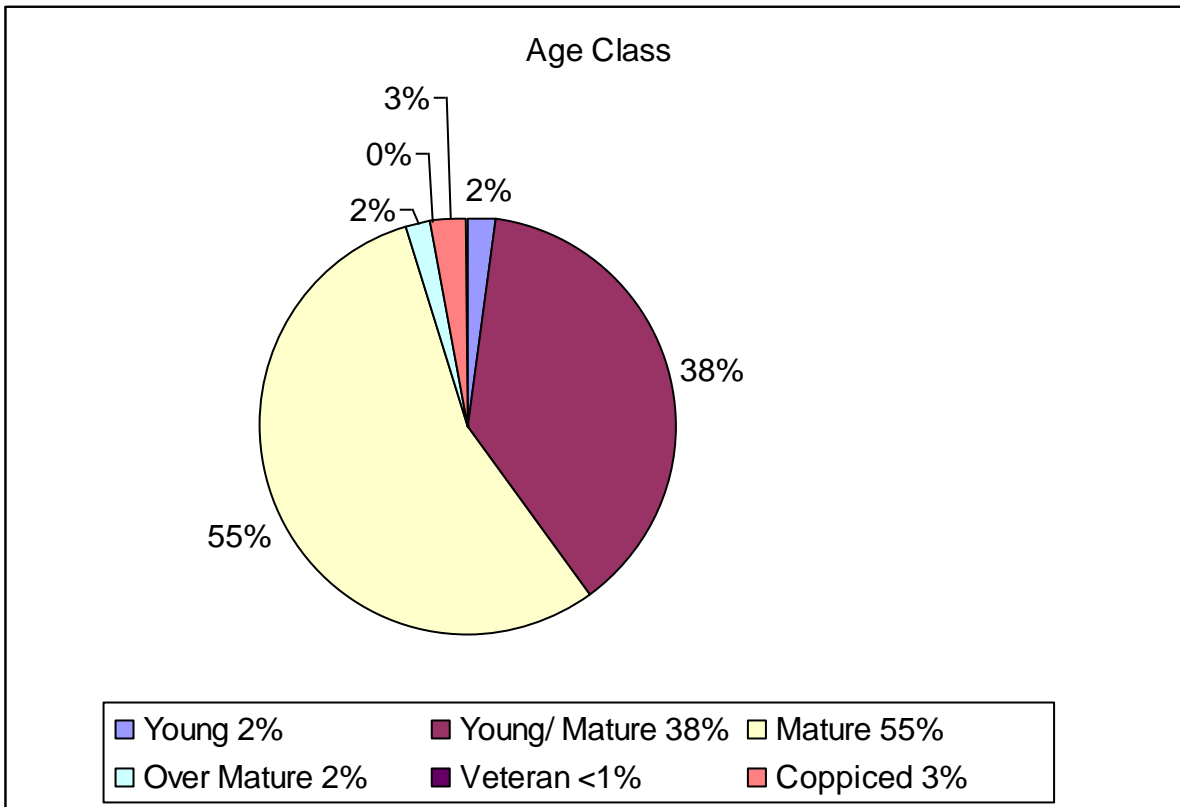
Currently there is a significant proportion of the tree stock made up of the faster growing trees such as Birch, Willow and Poplar. These also have a limited life span, often only being around 100 to 120 years. Although at this time this is currently acceptable, as we are still enjoying the benefits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

Of the trees 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 trees 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), and 547 Tilia species (Lime). These are considered to have 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).

Age class and age maturity

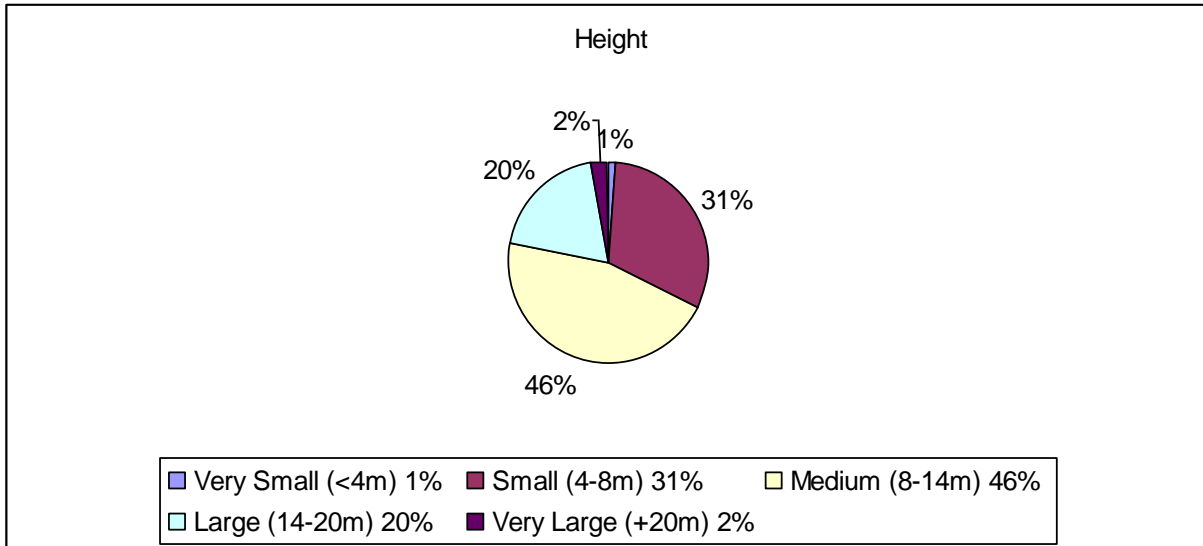


The contrast of the age range of the current tree stock is also apparent in that there is an over balance of adult trees (i.e. trees which have been established for some time, including maturing, mature, over mature and veteran trees). In total there is only 2% of the tree stock that has been planted 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.

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.

Tree heights

The height of trees is extremely important factor when looking at the overall tree population. The height of trees helps 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 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 a mature Oak tree.

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 enough room for the trees to develop naturally.

Tree Preservation Orders

One way of ensuring the Council's commitment to have trees listed and continued canopy cover within the District is using 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 process 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 is estimated that the number of trees protected will be in the thousands.

Although this requires the tree owner to apply 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 and update existing and new 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.

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 Plan**.

The Corporate plan focuses on identifying key priorities for the District over the next five years (2018-2023) using Promoting Prosperity and Community Wellbeing which are both interlinked with clean, green and safe public open spaces.

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 considering the Council's objectives set out in this strategy.

The Council appreciates the value that trees bring to the wider population, both aesthetically/ecologically as well as 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 and work.

The Council will, wherever possible include new planting of longevity tree planting through the inclusion of hardwood species such as Oak, 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 10,000 new trees i.e. 500 trees per annum.

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 trees owned by Cannock Chase District Council.

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

OBJECTIVE 1: TREE 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.

Tree Management

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

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

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 for concern to some residents in terms of the possibility of causing damage, injury to persons or properties, blocking of direct light and falling 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 advise 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.

The introduction of a pro-active tree management system has optimised the use of resources and moved the Council towards achieving a defensible risk management system for trees and woodlands. 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 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. A more frequent tree inspections will be carried out on trees whose condition has given cause for concern. However, with new housing developments the service and inspection of trees needs to be updated.

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 system 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 the District 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.

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 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. An example of this is the crown reduction of trees, as the re-growth of the trees canopy will have a reduced weight loading, so there will be an ongoing 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 conversation's, 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.

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.

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 Council receives many enquiries each year concerning trees. The prioritisation of existing resources and introduction of a CRM system continues to reduce the quantity and quality of information 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 and will need to be addressed.

Arboriculture is an industry that lacks many of the peer review comparisons unlike some 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 cannot 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 will identify the resources necessary to deliver that success.

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 residents.

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. This is currently only possible as part of the requests to work on TPO trees as there is insufficient resource to allow for advice to the public in general.

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% have woodlands close to them 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 with 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 a 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 a cause for concern. The apparent permanence of the work can compound concerns when work is undertaken as the areas look very different after the works.

Significant tree works are included in the cyclical and urban woodland maintenance programs. 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 have access to documents electronically.

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.

We are now starting to see the benefits of their tree planting along streets. These will need to be maintained and enhanced over the coming years to continue this theme.

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 later 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 area 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 tree stock at the time, but also the local wildlife. Future needs 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/new planting maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness will be an essential part of selecting the most appropriate action or tree species. In maintaining distinctiveness, the opportunities for a more diverse and sustainable landscape are increased.

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 Part 1 in 2014 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 must 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 Community Act 2006 now requires an Authority to consider and make policy about 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 Community 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 considered its own Biodiversity Action Plan and will ensure that any planting will help both the local residents and the local wildlife of the area.

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 produces 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.

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.

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. The Planning Department 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.

Natural Capital

Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water, and all living things. It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.

Examples of natural capital include: minerals; water; waste assimilation; carbon dioxide absorption; arable land; habitat; fossil fuels; erosion control; recreation; visual amenity; biodiversity; temperature regulation and oxygen. Natural capital has financial value as the use of natural capital drives many businesses.

A range of market-based instruments for ecosystem services – such as for carbon, water and nutrients – have been established to encourage better use and care of natural resources. This trend is set to accelerate. The concept of natural capital builds a bridge between the environment, economy, and community

Natural capital is the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water, and all living organisms. Some natural capital assets provide people with free goods and services, often called ecosystem services.

'Land' includes "any natural resource used to produce goods and services. This includes not just land, but anything that comes from the land. Land resources are the raw materials in the production process.

These resources can be renewable, such as forests, or nonrenewable such as oil or natural gas

Examples of natural resources

Fossil fuels (petroleum, natural gas, coal)

Minerals (diamonds, gold, copper, silver)

- Natural vegetation, forests, timber.
- Animals (salmon, whales, deer, etc.)
- Air, wind.
- Water, water power, wetlands, watercourses, lakes.
- Sunlight.
- Topsoil

The UK Government have recognised the detrimental impact of planning on the Environment over the last 30 years and have vowed to redress the damage caused by the scale and nature of development. It is therefore important to recognise this commitment in all our Planning/Greenspace development going forward. The Natural Capital Committee have identified a raft of goals that include;

Everyone, especially children, is better connected with their environment. People understand, enjoy and appreciate its benefits and can spend more time in green spaces. Wild species and habitats are thriving, and populations are restored and enhanced to levels that are sustainable into the future despite the challenges from climate change and increasing pressures from built infrastructure. The country makes a net positive contribution to the global environment, including being among the leading nations in terms of contribution to global environmental commitments and where they do not have an adverse effect on people, wildlife and habitats. All development and the use of renewable and non-renewable resources are managed in ways that result in an overall net increase in natural capital.

While the above list covers some of the most critical areas requiring action, there are others where specific and measurable goals should be developed, including but not limited to resource efficiency, waste, chemicals and the use of hazardous substances. These are important as with the goals above the list of potential investments below is recommended to the Government for more detailed consideration.

The list is not comprehensive but a starting point to achieve the goals.

1. Increase woodland by at least 250,000ha by 2040.
2. Restore peatland systems, particularly in upland areas, to favourable condition.
3. Restore natural hydrological processes including better habitat management, wetland creation, wildlife passages, channel restoration and natural flood management approaches as appropriate in river catchments.
4. Develop and implement a national network of conservation areas to provide bigger, better and more joined up habitats, including more nature reserves.
5. Significantly expand green spaces and outdoor recreation areas; especially in and around urban and well populated areas, and particularly within disadvantaged and under provided places.
6. Designate new national parks to protect and enhance natural capital and cultural heritage.
7. Use available information and approaches (such as natural capital decision support tools and markets) to target and allocate public funding for the environment so that it delivers better value for money.

8. Enable a more strategic natural capital investment approach to be taken at an area level. Developer (housing, business and industry) contributions are pooled and invested in priority natural capital improvements.

In addition, the Committee also advises government to include measures in the Plan to:

- Strengthen the nature conservation and land use management responsibilities of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Develop a major programme to enhance the capacity of public, private and voluntary bodies to incentivise citizen action to protect and improve their local environment;
- Secure a natural capital net gain principle within the spatial planning regime for housing and infrastructure.

In reality some of these measures are already carried out as part of planning processes but collectively they are not joined up and the report is saying that they should be and it is likely that the Government will introduce targets to ensure that this is the case.

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 Site Management Plans, and from continued investment and resources from Cannock Chase District Council. 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 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 Council's aims and objectives.

However, many different departments and agencies have an interest in the benefits of this strategy and can affect its delivery. The Council will liaise with 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 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.

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.

Strategy Review

This strategy is an evolution of the 2013 to 2018 Urban Forestry Strategy and the previous 2003- 2008 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.

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.

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 mean 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 must 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.

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 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. The Planning Department will ensure such advice is given and adhered to throughout the development phase

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".

Cannock Chase District Councils policies

These Policies are will set out how we will work on behalf of the Council although we will always look to ensure there is an equal balance between the benefits of trees and the local residents.

In many cases, residents request tree removal or pruning for minor seasonal issues. Although at the time these can be of an inconvenience 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 people's lives/properties 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 is to the very best standards and in accordance with British Standards (Currently British Standards BS 3998: 2010, British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work).
- **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 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.

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 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. Planning Applications with insufficient/inadequate Arboricultural Impact Assessments/plotting/root protection measures will not be registered
- The removal of trees and woodlands shall be resisted, unless there are sound arboricultural or other reasons to indicate otherwise.

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 effective 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 a pre-determined planning contribution of funds dedicated to planting, by the Council, in the locality.

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.
- 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.

SECTION 6.0

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Targets 2019 to 2024

Action Plan 2019-2024

Action	Policy	2019 2020	2020 2021	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024
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 annual tree risk assessment of all high-risk zone trees	1,2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To undertake tree risk assessment of all low-medium risk Zone trees every 3-5 years respectively	1,2			✓		✓

Annex 2: Risk Management Framework.

The current system was introduced in 2004, based upon the prioritisation of the target and the likelihood, or otherwise, of part or whole of the tree failing. To achieve this in a consistent 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, 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

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). 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. An integrated ICT Management system is therefore still required to manage the Councils asset and the risk associated with them.

Annex 3: Policy for Service Requests.

This Section sets out the circumstances where the Council will and will not prune trees.

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.

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 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, like 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 act in response to complaints that Council managed trees are blocking drains unless the removal of the tree is necessary to affect 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.

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.

Solar Panels

The inclusion of solar panels on building is increasing within the District and across the UK as a whole. CCDC recognises the importance of solar panels and the green energy that they supply. This cost benefit to the local area must be weighted up against the environmental and health benefit which trees also bring to the local community. For this reason, the design of solar panels must consider the location and growth of existing trees. CCDC will not carry out works to reduce or remove established trees for solar panels. In return we will assess all new planting areas and will design planting around existing solar panels as to not cause a concern.

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.

In some cases, the works requested, will be against industry standards and can have a dramatic effect on the health of the tree, or where there will be continued future maintenance. 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.

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 residents can follow. This will include in the first instance a case review by the relevant Manager/Head of Service to see if the decision was made following the correct policies. 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 to them.

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.

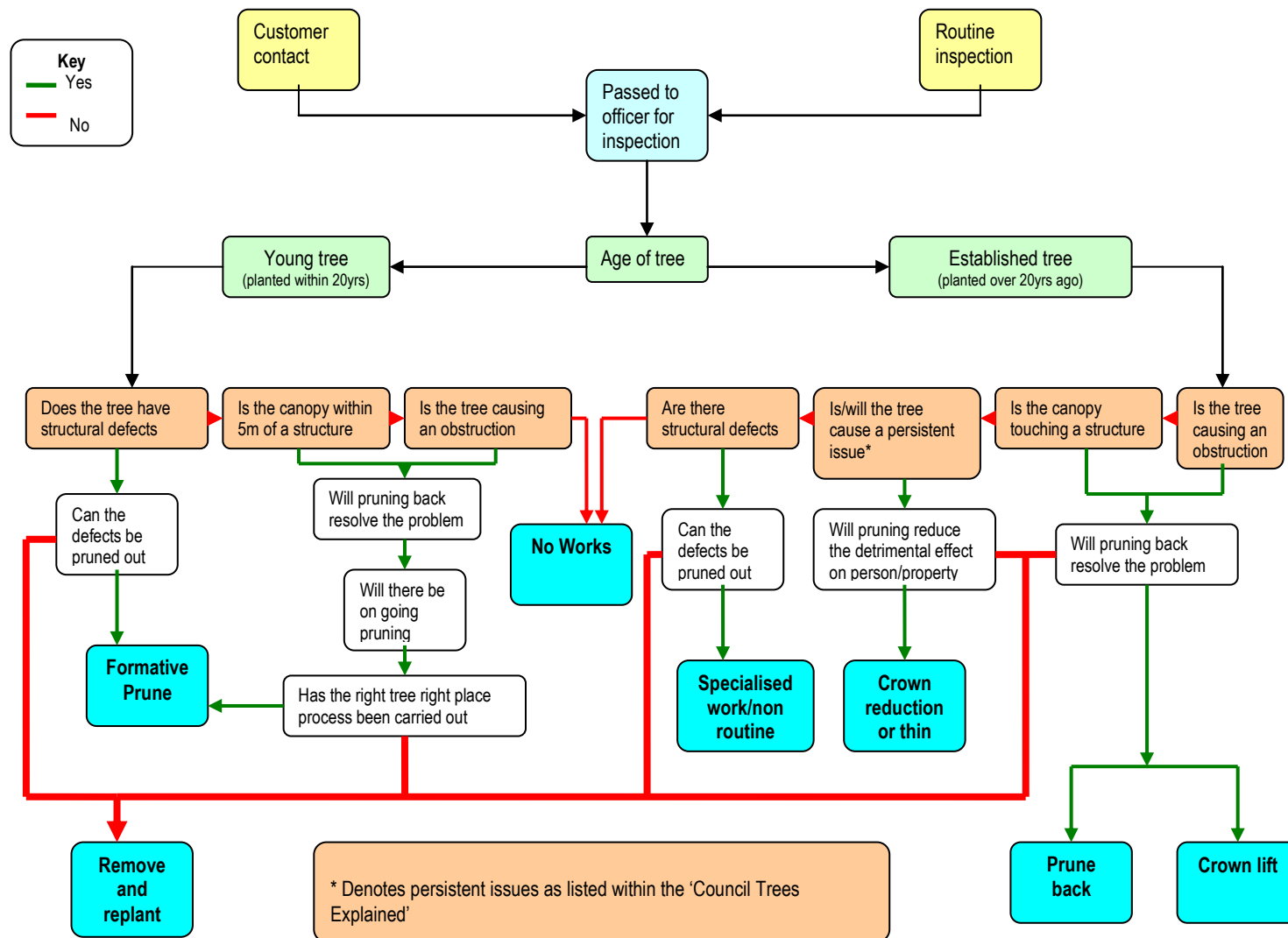
Species Consideration

- 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
- Consider species known to be drought tolerant.

Community Consideration

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

Annex 5: Tree Pruning Practice.



Annex 6 Results of Consultation

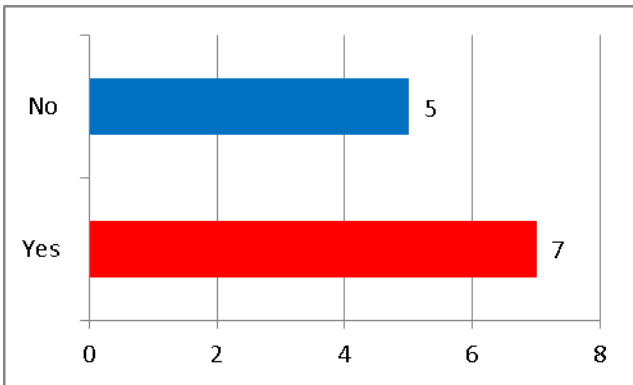
Urban Forestry Strategy Consultation Results

The consultation ran for 6 weeks from Monday 18 June to Friday 27 July 2018. 12 responses were received to the survey and 3 emailed written responses were received from: Cannock Chase Council Planning department, Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, and an elected Member.

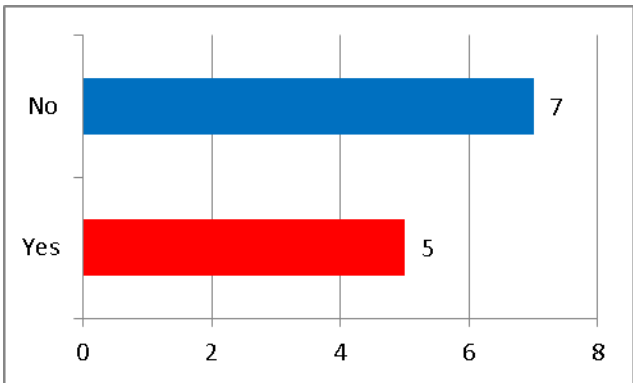
The results of the survey are below:

Tree strategy and policies

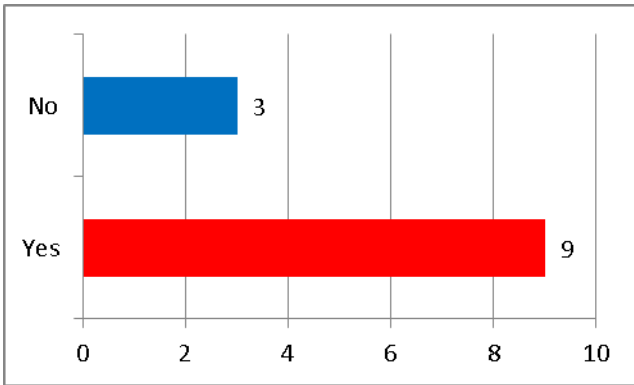
Q1 The Council is responsible for the care and management of its own trees, did you know that the council has nearly 30,000 individual trees and several woods?



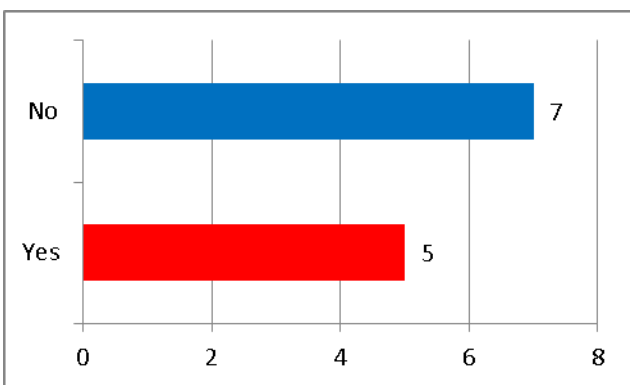
Q2. Do you know that the Council has previously adopted an urban forestry strategy in order to maintain its own tree stock, and how local residents should look after their trees?



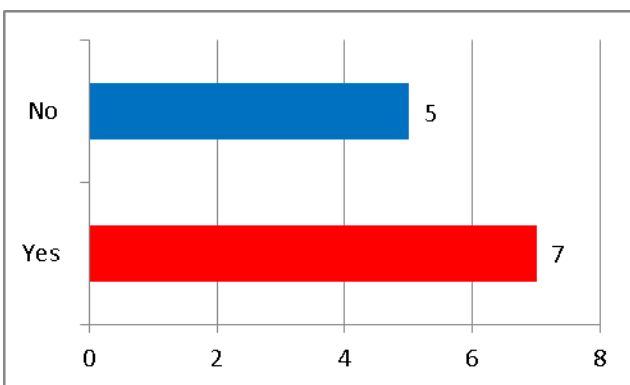
Q3. Do you know that the Council adheres to a set of policies, which outlines what the Council will and will not do?



Q4. Do you think the Council should prune and remove more trees?



Q5. Do you think the Council should only carry out works to trees, where they have a defect or pose a risk to persons?



Q6. Do you have any further comments on the above section?

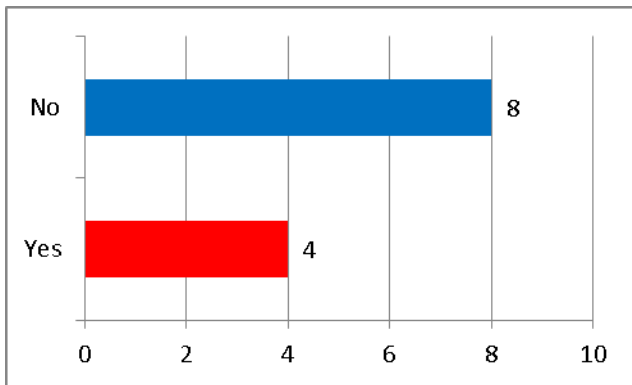
3 comments were received on this question:

- Further effort should be made, like posting out leaflets informing constituents about these matters. Trees should be encouraged not removed.
- Care and preservation of our resident trees is crucial policy and as a region we have a responsibility to protect our natural resources

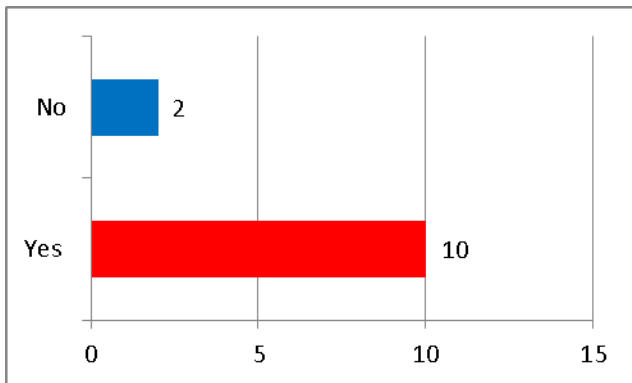
- The council should look at cases of tree nuisance whereby the tree is affected their quality of life (light/reception/leaf drop) where the council has planted trees in the past without any resident consultation.

Trees in parks and open spaces

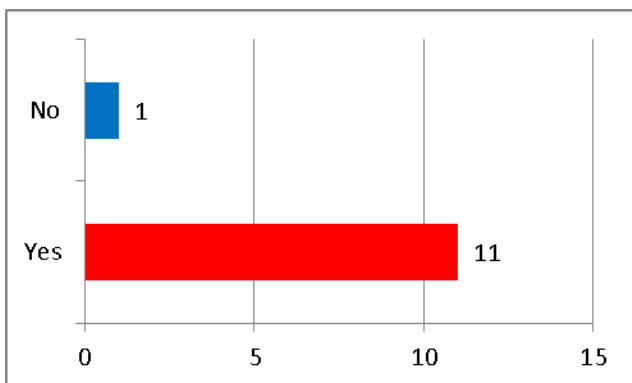
Q7. Do you think the parks have enough trees?



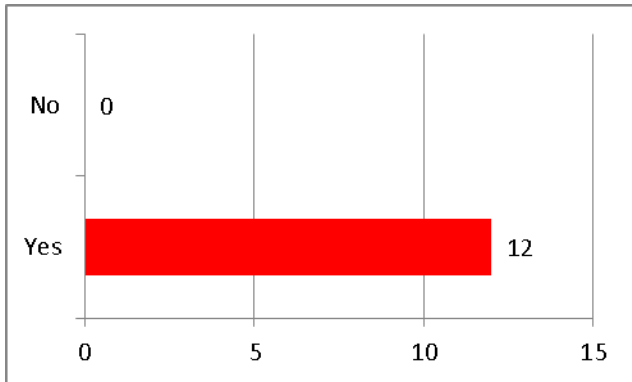
Q8. Do you think we should be planting more trees in the parks?



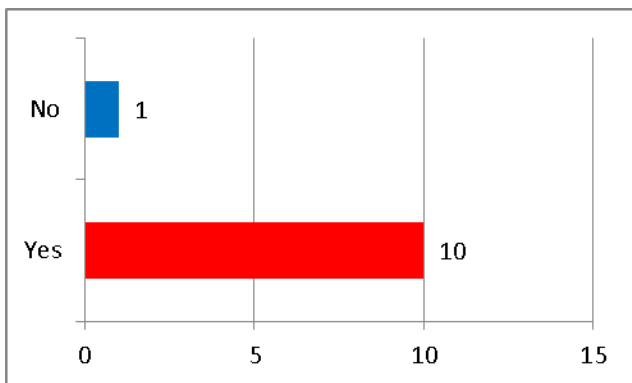
Q9. Do you think we should be creating new woodlands, and more natural tree planting in the parks and open spaces?



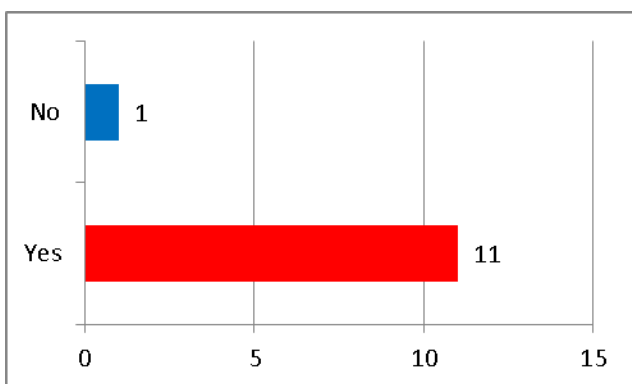
Q10. The Council has several informal open spaces and small woodlands around the District, have you visited them?



Q11. The Council has several nature reserves, have you visited them? 1 person did not respond to this question



Q12. Do you think the council should increase the tree population for local wildlife and climate needs?

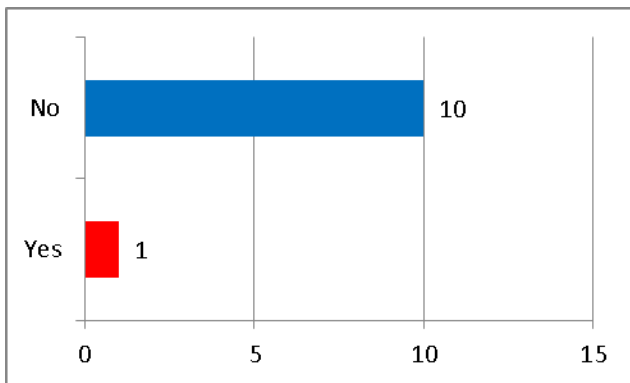


Q13. Do you have any further comments on the above section?

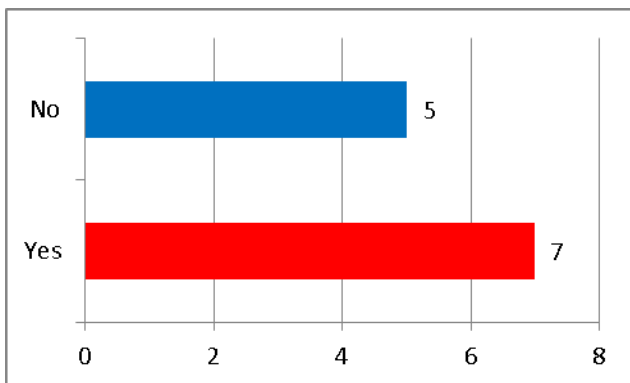
- I notice the council has sanctioned the loss of many trees for the new designer outlet. I am appalled that the rather large Oak trees which border my property in Heath Hayes have not been pruned or cut back in the twenty years we have lived here. We are very concerned as the large branches overhang our property and worry when there is a storm and fear for our house and possible damage. I would not wish to fell these trees but think once in a while some maintenance by the council would be greatly appreciated.

Council Properties

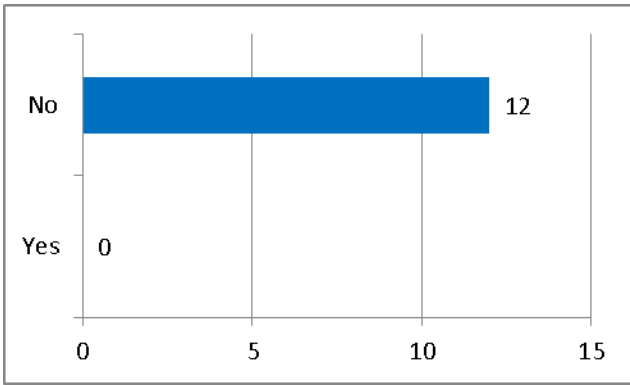
Q14. Are you a Council tenant?



Q15. The Council also manages trees in council houses, do you think we should include new planting to the front and rear gardens?

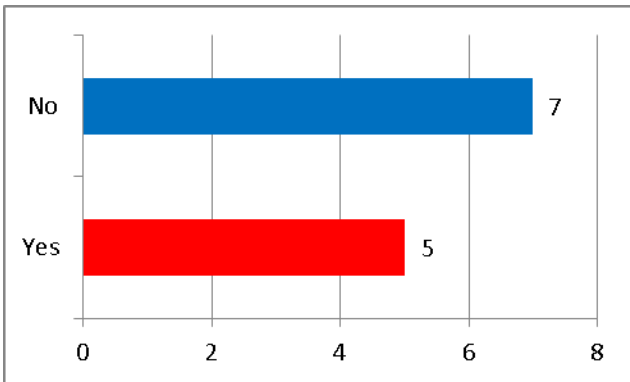


Q16. Do you think we should remove all trees in council houses when new tenants move in?

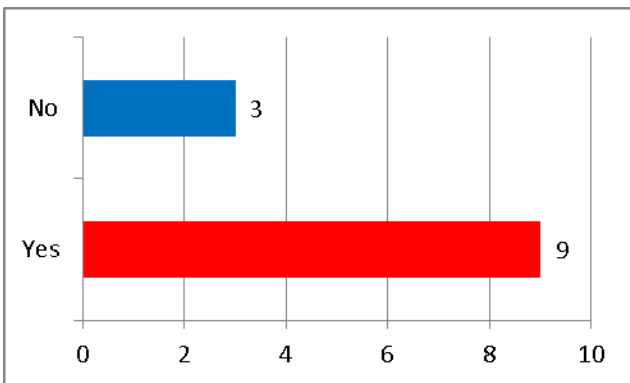


There was a 100% response that we should not remove the trees from council houses when new tenants move in.

Q17. Do you think we should allow tenants to decide how best to look after the trees, and allow the removal if they wish?



Q18. Do you think we should enhance housing estates by planting more trees?



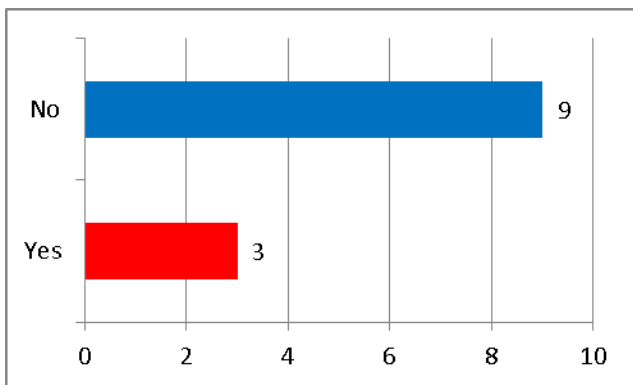
Q19. Do you have any further comments on the above?

- Trees which are maintained enhance an area and attract wildlife but must be planned carefully.
- I think the council should respect that trees aren't always of benefit, but can also be a nuisance.

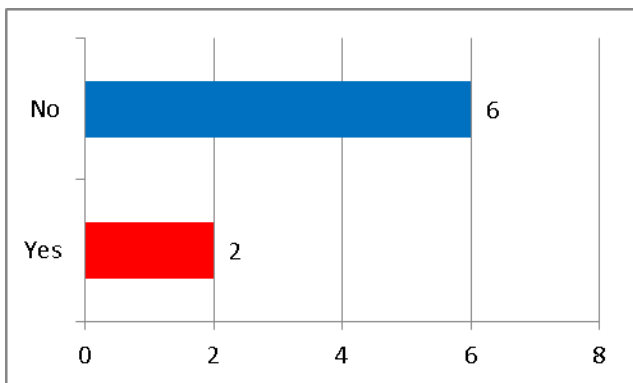
- I have put no because most people don't want trees in their garden as they don't want to be bothered looking after them. As for planting trees on estates – they only get vandalised which is such a shame.

The Urban Forestry Section

Q20. Have you ever needed to contact the Urban Forestry Section?

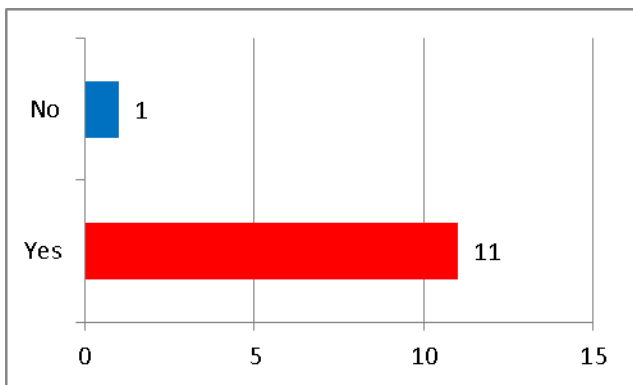


Q21. If so, have you found the information given useful?

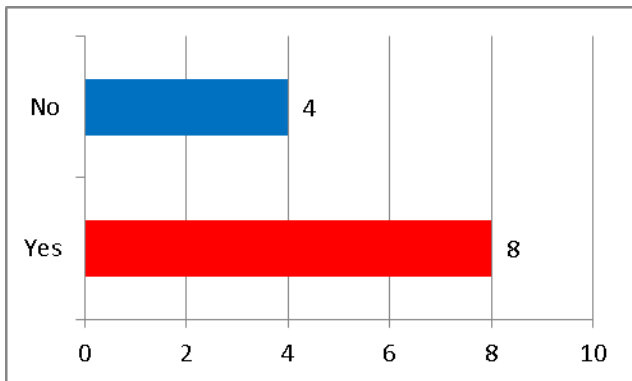


Only three people said they have contacted the Urban Forestry Section, however, six said they did not find the information given to be useful.

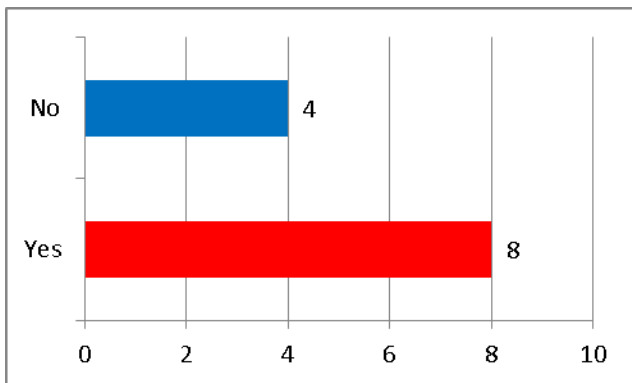
Q22. Do you think the Council should be promoting new planting of trees within the District?



Q23. Do you think the Council should be promoting new planting of trees within private gardens?



Q24. Should the Council do more to promote the need for trees in private gardens?



Q25. Do you have any further comments on the above?

- More trees and plants can help reduce the impact pollution has on the atmosphere. They will continue to do that and enrich our air for free. If we have a tip, we have more trees too.
- Promotion of planting trees in gardens should focus on smaller, more manageable trees.
- If people wanted a tree they will go out and buy them – and buy what they want.

Other Comments received and incorporated into the Policies

The general approach to tree management and protection has been second to none by council officers. Cannock Chase, in my opinion can be proud of the tree-dominated landscape right across the district. However, I do believe that there has to be a recognition and acceptance that in some cases that trees can be a nuisance or a problem for residents. To that end I would like to recommend that in areas where there has been communal planting in the past (with no input or consultation with residents) more weight is given to the impact on light levels, leaf litter and reception. One example is with an elderly residents' bungalow estate where the leaf drop resulted in several inches of leaf litter on gardens and public footpaths caused a safety issue and caused a drop in light levels to several properties. I believe in these instances more sympathy should be given on the side of the complainant. To compensate I believe that at least 2 or more trees are planted to compensate, should trees be felled as a result.

On the other hand with new tenants on council properties the existence of a tree or trees in a front or rear garden should be acknowledged upon agreeing the tenancy.

In all cases where trees are planned to be planted on council land in residential areas all residents should be consulted on the future impact of those trees.

Summary of AONB comments on the Draft CCC Urban Forestry Strategy

Agree with overall principles and the approach, but the focus is more on management of trees on Council land (which is both important and necessary), consequently could a little more emphasis also be placed on the importance of securing appropriate planting (and aftercare) in new developments. Need to ensure partnership working with like minded organisations but otherwise all of the objectives are supported.

Summary of Planning Comments

Objective 3 sustainability and natural environment. This refers to the 1997 Local Plan, which was superseded by the adopted Local plan Part 1 in 2014. One of the district-wide objectives in the adopted Local Plan Part 1 is 'providing well managed and appreciated environments' supported by policies CP (design), CP (social inclusion & healthy living), CP (biodiversity and geodiversity), CP13 (Cannock Chase SAC), CP14 (landscape character and Cannock Chase AONB) and CP15 (Historic environment). The NPPF paragraphs 109 – 125 also apply (the updated NPPF is due to be launched imminently so this may change and will need to be considered accordingly). The adopted Design SPD Trees and Landscape chapter also needs to be referenced.

Should include the Government's 25 year Plan and refer to Natural Capital.

Make better links with Corporate Priorities.