

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Fourth Draft

Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy

and

Action Plan

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'Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy' Fourth Draft

1. Introduction - Why a Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy?

Trees and woods have a key role to play in the future of the Kirklees district and the wider Leeds City Region. They offer many economic, social and environmental benefits, which combine to create a degree of 'synergy', where the benefits of the whole are greater than the individual parts. This leads to trees and woodlands being termed 'multifunctional', (something that does several different things or has several different uses), and in order to maximise the 'multifunctional' benefits, there is a need to protect and enhance the trees and woodlands in the Kirklees district. There is also a need to ensure that they are managed in a way that contributes positively to the 'Green Infrastructure' of the district and wider Leeds City Region.

The 'Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy' sets out to achieve the above, with a particular emphasis on practical woodland management and arboriculture. It concisely spells out the multifunctional benefits associated with trees and woodlands, that make them probably the most important and visible element of Green Infrastructure, helping to achieve many of the investment and regeneration priorities in Kirklees. It then goes on to explain how resources will be obtained and prioritised during what is currently the most severe recession since the Second World War. An inclusive, co-ordinated and partnership orientated agenda underpins the strategy and the practicalities of managing trees and woodlands in the Kirklees district.

The 'Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy' is supported by a separate and practically focussed Action Plan, which sets out the actions intended to deliver the aims, objectives and outputs.

2. Benefits of trees and woodlands

Green Infrastructure

'Green Infrastructure' is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features, which should be designed and managed as a resource with numerous uses (multifunctional), capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, allotments and private gardens; but the elements of 'Green Infrastructure' which normally make the most dramatic contribution to the landscape are trees and woodlands. The multiple benefits provided by elements of 'Green Infrastructure' such as trees and woodlands are termed 'Ecosystem Services' and some of their most notable contributions are outlined in the following section.

Attractive and distinctive

The Kirklees district has an attractive combination of urban and rural settlements, with a rich heritage and easy access to areas of outstanding and diverse natural beauty. Trees and woodlands contribute to this distinct character, making Kirklees a more attractive place to live, work and play. Trees and woodlands can also encourage developers and employers to relocate or invest in the Kirklees district, increasing property values by up to 20%.

Kirklees Council is working hard to regenerate Dewsbury; the town's recent past having been characterised by a sense of decline, reflected to an extent in the surrounding landscape.

Additional street trees and woodland creation, where the opportunities arise, would contribute to the regeneration of Dewsbury.

Employment

A major concern is the high level of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). There are real issues for many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in negotiating successful pathways into employment in adulthood.

Involving disenfranchised young people in planting trees and managing woodlands can play a vital role helping them develop a sense of empowerment, transferable skills and the social skills required to contribute to a team. For the young people who rise to the challenge, this can lead on to diplomas in amenity horticulture and environmental conservation.

The Kirklees district has an important place in the wider regional economy and Kirklees Council has played an active role in the development of the Leeds City Region. The Council has a positive reputation for its pioneering environmental work and leads on initiatives such as the White Rose Forest.

Health

Trees have numerous beneficial impacts on health.

- Tree leaves trap harmful particulates from air pollution, which play a negative role in health problems such as the increase in asthma and similar respiratory complaints
- A dense belt of trees can reduce noise levels by 6-8 decibels for every 30 metre width of woodland
- People recover more quickly from illness and need less medication if they look out on a wooded aspect
- Recreation in woodlands enriches people's health through physical activity and a better understanding and knowledge of the natural environment
- Offer shade and a reduction in heat during heat waves, which are predicted to increase in frequency through the 21st Century due to Global Warming

Climate change

It is commonly accepted that climate change is already having an impact on the World's environment. Possibly linked to this, Britain has experienced episodes of extreme weather in recent years, such as the floods which lashed West Yorkshire in 2007. Some urban areas within Kirklees are on flood plains, increasing their risk of flooding, but trees and woodlands planted in strategic locations can reduce the speed at which water runs off the land and in to the water system. They also contribute to soil conservation, reducing the amount of sediment washed away down stream.

Woodlands use more water than shorter vegetation, largely through interception of rainwater by their aerodynamically rougher canopies. Woodlands can also contribute to reduction in flooding by their soils holding back and delaying the passage of rain water to streams and rivers.

In addition Trees and woodlands offer shade and a reduction in heat during heat waves, which are predicted to increase in frequency through the 21st Century due to Global Warming. Trees also act as a carbon store and provide the world with oxygen that organisms including humans need. Each year one acre of woodland meets the oxygen needs of 18 people and absorbs as much carbon dioxide as a car produces in 26,000 miles.

There is potential to plant more trees across the Kirklees district, where this will not impact adversely on other important habitats, to help mitigate the impact of climate change. The Forestry Commission's new 'Carbon Code' should provide more reliable guidance than has been available to date regarding the development of forestry carbon sequestration schemes.

Bringing existing Kirklees woodlands into sustainable management in order to supply wood energy via biomass boilers would contribute to reducing the use of fossil fuels, while enhancing the biodiversity and amenity value of the woodlands.

Education

Trees and woodlands can be a valuable educational resource within the National curriculum for teaching topics including maths, English language, art and biology. Forest Schools have been established at a number of locations in Kirklees and build self esteem and confidence through regular visits to designated woodland sites. Children learn to appreciate nature, master tasks of increasing complexity and develop social skills.

Culture

Many trees and woodlands have significant cultural and social attachments, such as the English Oak of Sherwood Forest. The Sherwood Forest based legend of Robin Hood draws on numerous sources including the much older character from English mythology of Robin Goodfellow, who also features as Puck in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Nights Dream'.

The historic importance of woodlands in Kirklees is evidenced in place names such as 'Thick Hollins'. 'Hollin' is the dialect word for holly, from Old English 'holyn', or 'holegn', while the plural 'hollins' refers often to a group of trees. Holly was an important winter feed for cattle in the upland areas of Kirklees, until the practice died out in the 19th Century. This use was of value to the local community and probably contributed to the protection of woodlands such as Honley Old Wood, where holly can still be found in abundance.

Tan pits, bell pits, charcoal pits, cairn fields and ring cairns are among the numerous archaeological features found in Kirklees woodlands and linked to history, legends and place names. Such 'cultural capital' contributes to the rich tapestry of nonmaterial benefits obtained from trees and woodlands, which can be summarised under:

- Aesthetic
- Spiritual and religious
- Inspirational
- Sense of place
- Heritage

Biodiversity

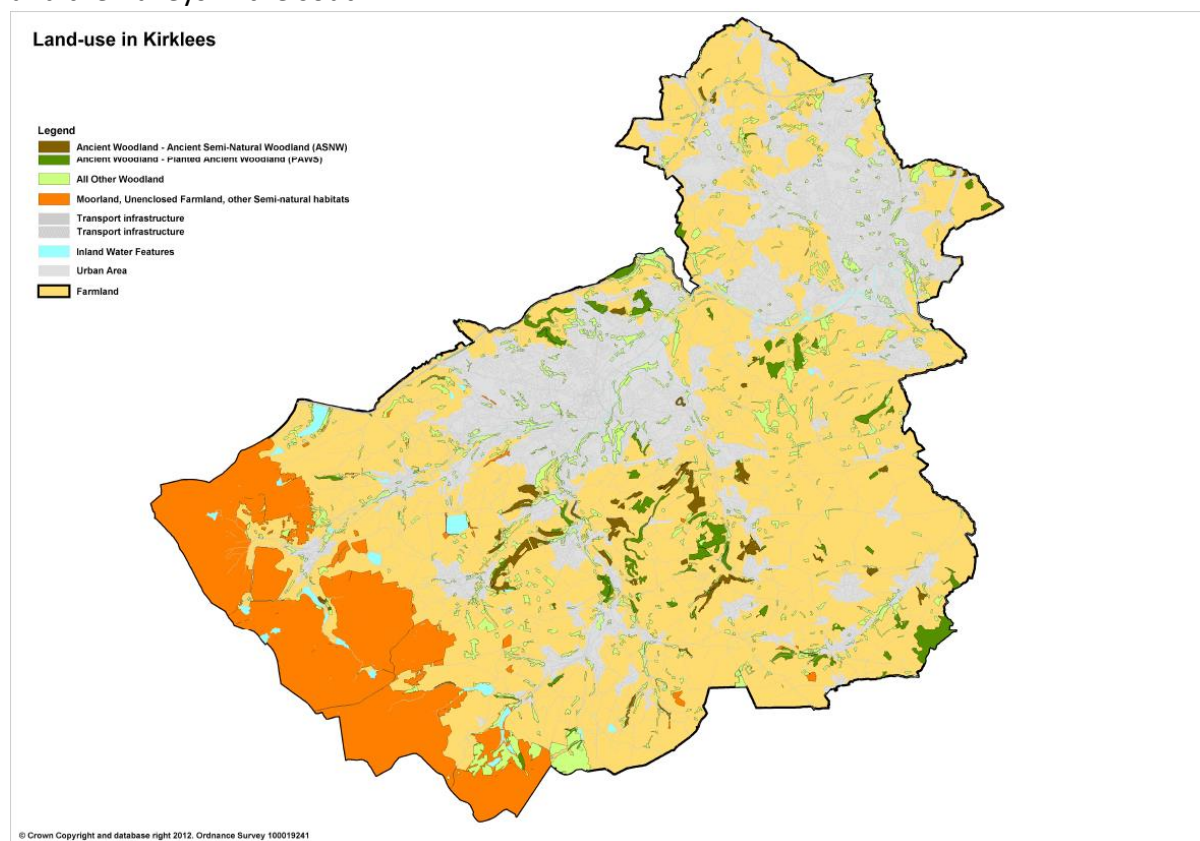
Trees, woodlands and associated habitats have a rich biodiversity. The historic decline in woodland cover caused a decline in associated wildlife and biodiversity. Increasing woodland cover and effectively managing existing woodlands would ensure a suitable habitat for woodland species such as the Spotted Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and Roe Deer.

Fellgreave Woods and Scammonden have been made much more accessible through voluntary sector involvement and private sector investment. There are, however, many other woodlands, particularly in the ownership of Kirklees Council, where access could be improved. In addition to increased use for informal recreation, such locations could be used more proactively for activities such as health walks, 'Green Gyms' and 'Forest Schools'.

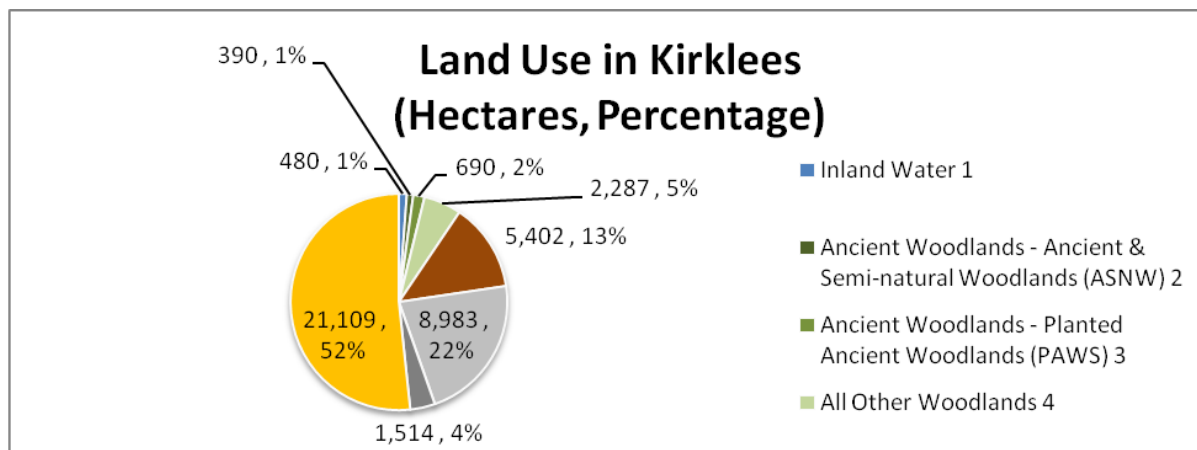
3. Woodlands

Woodland Cover

Following the last Ice Age, most of England was gradually colonised by woodland. After thousands of years of deforestation, however, by the end of the First World War this had declined to approximately 5%. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Forestry Commission and others over the last Century, today only 9.9 % of England is covered by woodland and commercial plantation forest, in comparison with the European average of 30%. The total area of woodland in West Yorkshire is below the English average at 16,041ha or 7.9%. The total area of land covered by the Kirklees district is 40,856ha and the Forestry Commission calculates that the total area of woodland within the district is 3,334ha or 8.2%. Kirklees Council owned woodlands (including Kirklees Council managed woods), total over 600ha, representing 18% of the woodlands in the district or 1.5% of the land cover, which is a notable contribution to wellbeing, but also a significant management responsibility. Kirklees falls into two distinct areas, focussed on Dewsbury and Batley in the north and Huddersfield and the Valleys in the south.



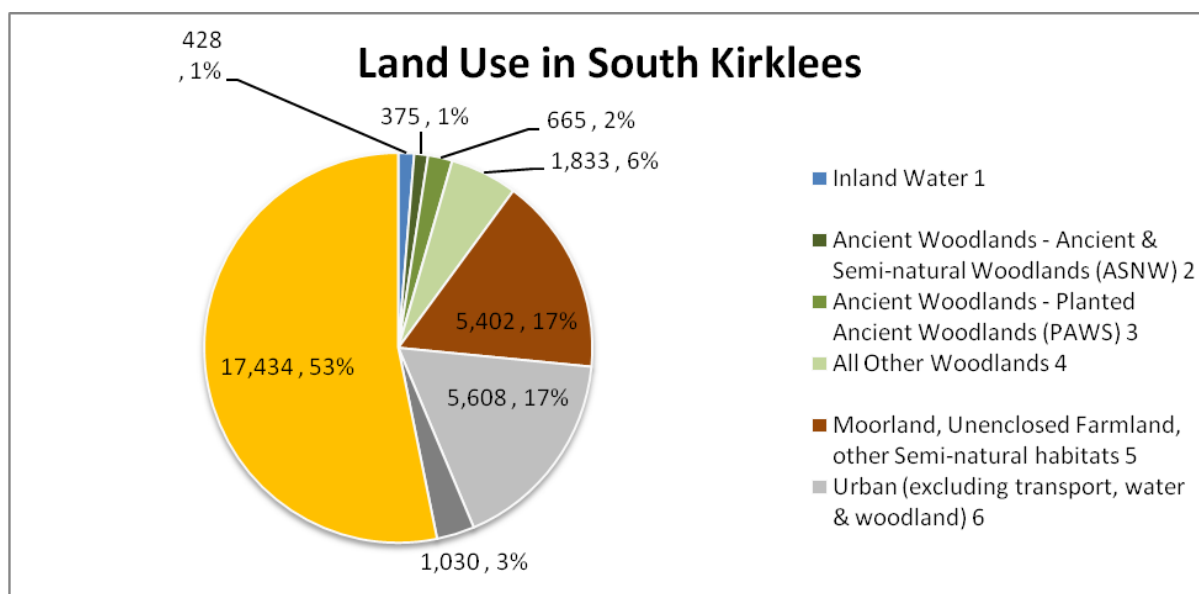
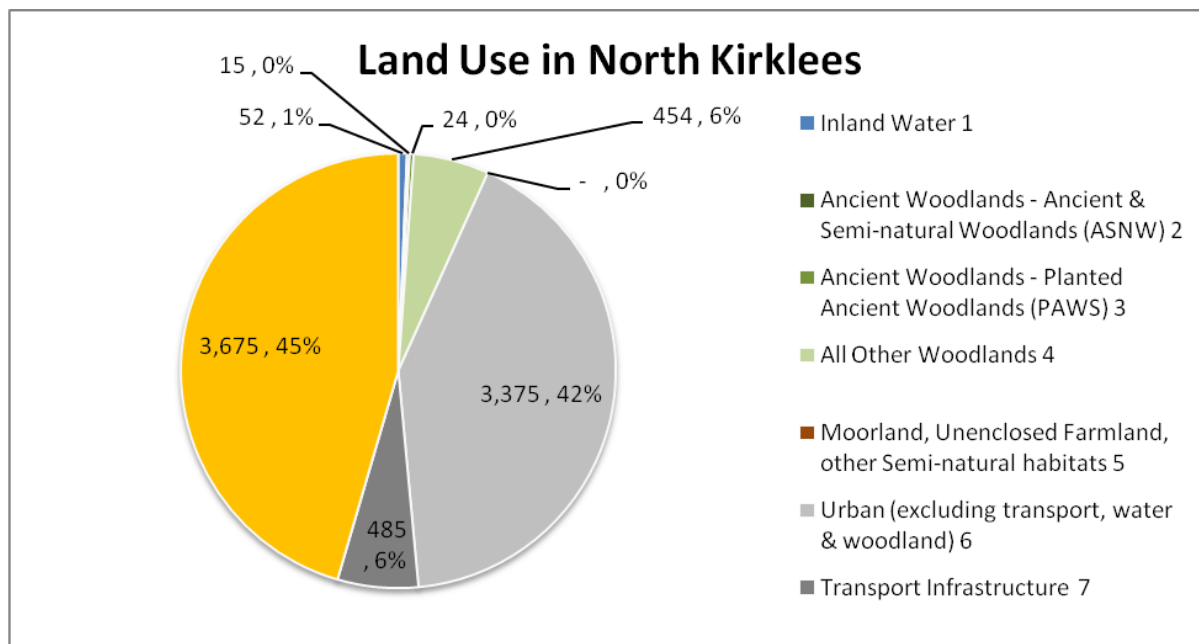
In South Kirklees there is 2,847ha of woodland or 8.7% woodland cover, while in contrast in North Kirklees there is only 487ha of woodland or 6% woodland cover. The size of woodland in South Kirklees is on average 3.5ha, while the woodland in North Kirklees is smaller and more fragmented at 1.9ha, smaller woodlands often being of lower value for both recreation and biodiversity. The contrasting woodland area to population ratios between South Kirklees and North Kirklees is even more obvious, with 12.4ha of woodland per 1,000 people in South Kirklees, compared with only 3ha in North Kirklees.



Ancient Woodland

Of the 3,333.82ha of woodland in the Kirklees district, 1,079.39ha or 32.4% is Ancient Woodland, covering 2.6% of the district. This 1,079.39ha of Ancient Woodland is far more extensive than any other local authority in West Yorkshire, Calderdale having the next largest area at 828.84ha and Wakefield the smallest at 506ha. Ancient woodland in England is defined as an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. Ancient Woodland is divided into ancient semi natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites. Both types of woodland come under the category ancient woodlands. The trees and shrubs in ancient woodlands may have been felled or coppiced many times since 1600, but if regeneration has been allowed, the woodland is still classed as ancient. The fact that ancient woodland may have been felled in the past means that the trees are not necessarily either old or ancient, but the woodlands are immensely valuable for numerous reasons including:

- Trees, shrubs, wildlife and soil communities are often little modified by human activities
- Wildlife communities are often richer than those of more recent woods
- Valuable archaeological remains e.g. Honley Woods and Fellgreave Woods
- Very high percentage of the rare and vulnerable wildlife in England
- Sometimes large, old trees providing refuges for specialist species such as lichens
- These woodlands are of crucial importance for the conservation of biodiversity



Ancient woodlands are descended from England’s primeval woodland and once destroyed they cannot be recreated.

Woodland Management

Most woodlands in the Kirklees district whether in private ownership or the ownership of the Local Authority are unmanaged. Consequently the trees are often of a uniform age structure and senescent, with little under storey or woodland edge habitat. Such unmanaged woodlands are unsustainable and not contributing as they could to recreation, biodiversity, landscape quality and sustainable woodland management.

There is a need to ensure that Council owned woodlands have up-to- date management plans in place and that these are reviewed on a regular basis. Such management plans will be essential if the Council is to both enhance the biodiversity value and realise the economic potential of woodland through management works leading to the marketing of timber and other woodland products.

Woodland Creation

The creation of accessible native woodlands will for the foreseeable future be reliant on external funding and the following need to be considered:

- There is needs based evidence for more trees in North Kirklees
- The community need to be consulted and actively involved to achieve ownership
- Planting up non woodland habitats of high biodiversity value is bad practice
- The importance of considering existing recreation use

4. Trees in the Wider Countryside

Hedgerow Trees

Hedgerow Trees are an important landscape and habitat feature, especially in South East and North Kirklees. The Council's ongoing survey work has suggested that these trees are declining and it would be beneficial to increase the number of native hedgerow trees as a means of improving the structural diversity of hedgerows and the associated biodiversity, which would also contribute to wider landscape diversity and an enhanced sense of 'place'.

Veteran Trees

Trees can live for centuries and such 'Veteran' trees can have important and historic significance. There is no centrally held data base or prioritisation for protecting such trees in Kirklees, but it could be done at modest cost by engaging communities across the district.

5. Street Trees

Existing Street Trees

Trees planted in pavements or road verges help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and improve the overall appearance of the street scene. There are, however, a small percentage of people who find such trees an inconvenience regardless of circumstances. This can be the result of the wrong species of tree in the wrong place and it can lead to some real problems, including:

- Aphid infestation and honey dew
- Falling branches
- Gutters blocked by leaves
- Interfering with TV reception
- Leaf and fruit litter on paths
- Lifting pavements
- Obstructing views

In addition, in recent years, some home owners have found themselves under pressure from insurance companies to remove nearby trees. The alleged risk of subsidence is usually over emphasised and without knowledge of specific trees and their locations.

Kirklees Council aims to approach the issues identified above in a sustainable manner to manage them to an acceptable level. Highway maintenance and utility installation are essential operations **and should be carried out in accordance with arboricultural best practise and guidance in NJUG 4 (BS 58367 is not relevant to Highways maintenance and utilities companies)**

New Street Trees

There is a legacy of under investment in tree planting within the Kirklees urban environment and the town centres of Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley have poor tree cover. A tree renewal programme to replace the ageing tree population, in addition to seeking completely new tree planting locations would have multiple benefits. This work would be achievable even in such financially constrained times by seeking external funding via grant aid and sponsorship such as the White Rose Forest 'Trees for Yorkshire' campaign.

When replacing older forest type trees it may be appropriate to select small short lived ornamental species, which both reduce maintenance costs and some of the problems identified above. The massive contribution that large trees make to the urban landscape should, however, be safeguarded where circumstances permit.

A cost effective means of addressing the shortage of street trees in streets where the houses have front gardens, would be to encourage residents to plant carefully selected species of trees.

6. Amenity Areas

Trees in Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces

These are among the most significant trees in Kirklees and make a profound impact on the appearance of the district and the experience of residents and visitors alike.

Community Orchards

Community orchards, as promoted by the charity Common Ground are an innovative way of encouraging interest in fruit production. The Council has supported the development of a number of such facilities and is expanding the number on green spaces and in school grounds.

7. Management

Tree Preservation Orders

Many trees are on private land and local authorities have a duty to protect significant trees , **groups of trees or woodlands** for their amenity value **using** Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). **Established trees located within a conservation area are also offered a degree of protection by the conservation area designation.** New TPOs are being made all the time in line with statutory duties and Kirklees Council receives hundreds of applications each year from people who wish to carry out work to protected trees. This is an important responsibility and free advice is given by the Council, which contributes to the general protection of the tree population. It's essential that the Council fulfills its obligation to the safety of people and property, but the removal of trees should be resisted unless there are **justified reasons under the TPO legislation** or sound arboricultural reasons, as such trees are of amenity value. **Where possible** any trees which are removed should be replaced at the same location or nearby if appropriate.

(A few amendments to make it more compliant with the TPO/Ca Reg's/amend technical inaccuracies)

Developments

A common issue relating to developments is that there is often little consideration of the initial and long term adverse impact to trees on or immediately adjacent to the site. These relate to direct issues surrounding tree removal, damage to tree roots, over hanging branches etc and to issues relating to shade, leaf litter, debris drop, fears the trees may break or fall. Kirklees assess a proposed development's impacts in relation to the above issues and ensures that proposed designs and construction methods comply with the British Standard, BS 5837 and Kirklees UDP/LDF, as appropriate.

Where tree removal is necessary, appropriate replacement tree planting will be sought to mitigate the tree loss and enhance local tree cover.

(I've rewrote most of this to ensure it doesn't have any adverse impact on our planning functions, service plan and integrated service strategy)

Tree Inspection

Council-maintained trees need to be inspected, and maintained as necessary, at least once every four years. Such proactive tree risk management would serve to reduce the risk of tree-related fatality, personal injury or damage to property. A computerised tree management system e.g. Arbortrack should be introduced as part of the MapInfo Geographic Information System, which would enable an up to date usable tree inventory to be instigated. Such a system could facilitate detailed analysis aiding:

- Identification of tree-deficient areas
- Monitoring of individual trees of concern – e.g. damaged by utilities contractors
- Assessment of any common diseases
- Prioritisation of recommended works on risk management grounds
- Production of ‘work lists’ and programming of tree maintenance
- Defending the council against litigation by providing evidence of proactive management

Local Distinctiveness

Maintaining a diversity of tree species, genetic variability and ages helps address devastating threats such as disease, climate change and extensive over maturity. Native and non-native trees can play an important role in Kirklees, but the priority should at all times be that the right species of tree is planted in the right place to benefit wildlife and maintain a distinctive sense of place.

Kirklees Council seeks to maintain and manage the existing tree and woodland stock based on current best practice and to increase the level of tree and woodland cover across the district.

The White Rose Forest

Kirklees Council is the lead body in this Leeds City Region wide partnership. The White Rose Forest provides the Council with the opportunity to learn best practice from other partners and to ensure that its projects are linked to others across the city region as a way of delivering the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The White Rose Forest’s Working Woodlands Group and the Woodland Creation Group can add value to the Kirklees Council’s work.

8. Aims and Objectives

Creating a Setting for Investment

Aim – We will protect, enhance and increase trees and woodland, as key elements of ‘Green Infrastructure’ in urban and urban fringe areas **and for their contribution to amenity and the aesthetics of the Kirklees area**, to help attract further economic investment, supporting the regeneration of the Kirklees district.

Objective 1

Increase the number of street trees across the Kirklees district through championing their incorporation into the design of new developments and by encouraging the establishment of links between existing sites by way of roadside corridors.

Objective 2

Increase the number of street trees within existing streets and roadside verges across the Kirklees district through championing additional tree planting whenever feasible, within the construction and requirements of the Highway network and by encouraging the establishment of links between existing sites by way of roadside corridors.

Objective 3

Protect the current stock of street trees at its existing level across the Kirklees district by management based on best practice and, where trees need to be removed through disease or decay, by replanting where permissible by the construction and requirements of the Highway network.

Objective 4

Protect the current stock of trees within and adjacent to both new housing developments and new commercial developments.

Objective 4

Work with business and industry, encouraging investment in high quality urban forestry as a key component of ‘Green Infrastructure’ to help attract further economic investment, by creating a landscape attractive to inward investment.

Objective 5

Increase the level of tree planting incorporated into the design of all new Public Open Spaces associated with new developments and to ensure that the diversity of species used is in line with the local profile of existing trees and woodlands.

Objective 6

Maintain the characteristic and make up of tree cover within existing Public Open Space and manage these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional tree planting to support the establishment of links between existing woodlands and amenity spaces.

Objective 7

Protect the current treescape across the Kirklees area, for the landscape value and public amenity it provides.

Climate Change

Aim – We will manage the effects of climate change more efficiently through maximising the contribution of trees and woodlands and be recognised as a national leader in this field, which has significant employment and skills growth potential in the short term (flooding and weather extremes etc).

Objective 1

Contribute to a reduction in the Kirklees district's net greenhouse gas emissions by actively managing Kirklees Council owned woodlands as a source of renewable energy.

Objective 2

Kirklees Council will work with other White Rose Forest partners to help develop projects for the 'Woodland Carbon Code' as a way of identifying the amount of carbon that can be sequestered by tree planting as well as funding from possible carbon financing

Objective 3

Help the Kirklees district adapt more successfully to changing climatic conditions by increasing tree and woodland planting in areas where it will contribute to reducing flood risk, where this does not impact adversely on other important habitats

Objective 4

Champion the direct benefits of urban tree planting towards reducing the urban heat island effect by ensuring that our towns such as Dewsbury and Huddersfield remain good enough for living and doing business.

Trees, Woods and People

Aim – We will encourage opportunities for healthier lifestyles through trees and woodlands as a key component of green infrastructure provision.

Objective 1

Motivate and inspire landowners, businesses, community and youth groups etc to enhance the tree cover of the Kirklees district.

Objective 2

Work with the NHS to address issues of ill-health by maximising the contribution of trees and woodlands, particularly in North Kirklees and other areas of health inequalities

Objective 3

Ensure that schools and colleges make more effective use of the Kirklees district's trees and woodlands as an educational resource, so that the future of our trees and woodlands are given a higher priority by all sectors of society

Objective 4

Enhance existing community understanding and engagement with trees and woodlands in the Kirklees district, to develop inclusive community involvement in the future management of trees and woodlands.

Objective 5

The archaeological and historic heritage should be appropriately surveyed, identified, conserved and enhanced as part of any new tree and woodland planting or management schemes.

Objective 6

Local distinctiveness and sense of place should be actively considered in any new tree and woodland planting or management schemes.

Natural Environment

Aim – Achieve maximum biodiversity and amenity gain for the Kirklees district region through appropriate tree and woodland planting and management that takes account of the needs of people, wildlife and habitats

Objective 1

Prioritise maintaining the character and make up of Ancient Woodlands in accordance with the National Vegetation Classification and managing these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional planting or natural regeneration.

Objective 2

Restore Planted Ancient Woodland sites as appropriate in accordance with the National Vegetation Classification and managing these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional planting or natural regeneration.

Objective 3

Manage existing secondary woodlands in line with current best practice and the most appropriate objectives for the site and circumstances.

Objective 4

Establish links between existing woodlands by way of tree planting or natural regeneration in intermediate areas where possible.

Objective 5

Veteran trees will be identified, and actively conserved if appropriate. [\(Omitted the TPO protection, if a any tree is not visible to the public it can not be protected by a TPO regardless of if it's a veteran. Even if a veteran tree was under a TPO because of the nature of this type of tree it would likely fall under an exemption from the need to make an application to work on it, \(a loop hole in the regs and nationally recognised problem\)](#)

Objective 6

The design and implementation of all new tree and woodland planting or management schemes should adhere to the National Vegetation Classification system, Forestry Commission and Landscape Institute best practice

Objective 7

All new tree and woodland planting or management schemes will be consistent with and further the established priorities for protected sites.

Objective 8

[Continue to serve tree preservation orders where necessary to preserve current and enhance future amenity.](#)

Sustainable Forestry

Aim – Achieve effective and efficient implementation of the priorities for the management of trees and woodlands in Kirklees identified in the strategy.

Objective 1

Gain a better understanding about the distribution, function and condition of trees and woodlands within the Kirklees district in order to facilitate better informed decision making about priorities for management.

Objective 2

High priority will be given to the management and protection of the Kirklees district's existing trees and woodlands.

Objective 3

Develop an active market and the sustainable use of traditional and innovative arboriculture and woodland products.

9. Glossary

Biodiversity

Biological diversity - "Biodiversity" - is the variety of life on earth. It is nature's variety of species, habitats and whole ecological systems. Human society's interaction with biodiversity shows whether our economic and social development is sustainable.

Community (vegetation)

A group of plants growing in a particular area, usually of distinctive character, and requiring certain physical conditions which satisfy them.

Climate

The total complex of weather conditions, its average characteristics and range of variations over an appreciable area of the earth's surface.

Ecology

The science of the mutual relationship of organisms to their environment.

Green Infrastructure

'Green Infrastructure' is defined by Natural England as "a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens".

Habitat

An area in which the requirements of a specific animal or plant are met.

Succession

A gradual sequence of changes or phases in vegetation over a period of time.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is about creating a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It encompasses environmental, social and economic goals.

Local Nature Reserves

Local authorities have the power to designate Local Nature Reserves in consultation with English Nature, under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

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11. Appendix 1

Policy Background

National Policy

UK National Ecosystem Assessment

The review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton, concluded that England's wildlife areas are fragmented and do not represent a coherent and resilient ecological network capable of responding to the challenges of climate change and other pressures. The review highlighted the benefits we get from nature, referred to as 'ecosystem services' and set out recommendations for reversing the decline in biodiversity and the quality habitats including woodland . The 'ecosystem services' approach has had a major influence on the Government's White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature' (2011).

The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature

Forests and woodlands must play a full part in achieving a resilient and coherent ecological network across England, but currently too many are fragmented and of poor quality. The Government's ambition outlined in the White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature' (2011) is for a major increase in the area of woodland in England, better management of existing woodlands and a renewed commitment to conserving and restoring ancient woodlands. The Government states how it also wants to enable planting more trees in towns, cities and villages.

National Planning Policy Framework

The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (2012), sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how the Government expects them to be applied. The NPPF includes how local planning authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and green infrastructure, plus specific policies for the protection of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and veteran trees.

Sub-Regional Policy

Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Leeds City Region

The 'Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy' (2010), identifies the importance of green infrastructure as a key benefit to economic development. The Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out 5 investment programmes:

- 1) Urban Green adaptation
- 2) Greening our economic potential
- 3) Carbon capture
- 4) Wood fuel
- 5) Rivers for Life

These 5 investment programmes all require the planting and management of trees and woodlands.

The main strategic project in the 'Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy' is 'Fresh Aire' (map) in which all the above investment programmes are to be interwoven. For Kirklees 'Fresh Aire' indicates that Dewsbury and the Lower Calder should be areas of green infrastructure investment.

Strategic Framework for Trees, Woods and Forests in Yorkshire and The Humber Region

The first three guiding principles of the Strategic Framework for Trees, Woods and Forests in Yorkshire and The Humber Region (2005), largely mirror more recent national and regional strategies:

- A high priority is given to the management and protection of the region's existing trees and woodlands.
- To increase progressively the overall tree and woodland cover in the region but to prioritise new planting in areas where the maximum public benefit can be achieved.
- The overall integrity, character and quality of the region's landscapes are actively maintained and enhanced by new tree planting and woodland management .

Kirklees Policy

Kirklees Council's Strategic Priorities

In everything Kirklees Council does it is committed to:

- Tackling inequality and ensuring fairness for all
- Working together to shape and deliver services that reflect the needs of our communities
- Ensuring the people of Kirklees get the best value for their money
- Protecting the environment by reducing carbon dioxide

These commitments are supported by four strategic priorities:

- Enhance life chances for young people
- Support older people to be healthy, active and involved in their communities
- Lead Kirklees out of recession
- Provide effective and productive services

Kirklees Integrated Investment Strategy

The 'Kirklees Integrated Investment Strategy' focuses in more detail on the strategic priorities and has key policies relating to the protection and active enhancement of green infrastructure. The 'Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy' will play a leading role in transforming the Integrated Investment Strategy policies spelt out on pages 9, 10 and 14 into action.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1999)

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the council's policies and proposals for the use and development of land and buildings. The plan was adopted on 1 March 1999 and constitutes the statutory development plan for Kirklees.

As a result of a direction issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, from 28 September 2007 some of the policies in the UDP continued to have effect. Policy NE9 concerning development proposals affecting trees is a 'saved' policy. It seeks to retain mature trees within the application site and sets out the considerations for protection of mature trees within approved developments, as set out below:-

NE9 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD NORMALLY RETAIN ANY MATURE TREES WITHIN THE APPLICATION SITE. WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS APPROVED ON SITES CONTAINING MATURE TREES NO CONSTRUCTION, INCLUDING CHANGES IN LEVELS, DRAINAGE WORKS AND THE FORMATION OF ACCESS ROADS WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE CROWN SPREAD OF THE TREES UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT SATISFACTORY PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THEIR CONTINUED VIABILITY.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states, however, that each council must prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace its existing statutory development plan. The LDF has the same function as the UDP in providing a policy framework for decisions about the use and development of land and conservation. The LDF is a different type of plan in that it is made up of a number of documents covering particular topics or areas to better suit local circumstances and local distinctiveness. The Council is in the process of preparing the LDF Core Strategy, which sets out how much new development there should be, broadly where it should be provided and policies to ensure that the

strategy is delivered in a sustainable way. On the 6th March 2012, the Council approved the core strategy for submission to the Secretary of State. This includes biodiversity policy SCS12 which aims to protect and improve the natural environment, including habitats and ancient and veteran trees, as follows:-

Policy SCS12 Biodiversity

The natural environment will be protected and improved to reverse the decline in habitats and species and achieve a net gain in biodiversity by seeking to:

- a protect and enhance Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Sites of wildlife or geological importance, Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance;
- b increase the number of Local Sites, the populations of Species of Principal Importance and the area of Habitats of Principal Importance;
- c maintain and enhance ancient woodland and retain ancient and veteran trees;
- d conserve and enhance the key habitat characteristics of the Biodiversity Opportunity Zones and the species relevant to these areas;
- e ensure development proposals retain and incorporate features of biodiversity and geological interest by taking opportunities to enhance these features and secure network connections between sites.

Additional LDF policies:

Policy SCS15 Design: makes reference to developments should protect and enhance their surroundings and protect amenity. Both would relate to the use of TPOs in relation to new developments.

Policy SCS Landscape: makes reference to the patterns of woodlands, trees and field boundaries

The wording of the above policy is as set out in the LDF 'Core Strategy Proposed Submission' document and may be subject to change.

Kirklees Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Every district in the country is required to produce a 'Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' (JSNA), the aim of which is to describe the future health and well-being needs of the local population. The population of Kirklees in 2010 was nearly 430,000, which is predicted to increase by over 12% to around 483,000 by 2030. Kirklees still lags behind the England average for life expectancy and the Index of Deprivation 2007 identifies Kirklees as the 12th most deprived district in England.

Overall Dewsbury is very deprived with many health inequalities across a range of conditions, personal behaviours and living and working conditions, experiencing the worst health in Kirklees. Batley also experiences much worse health than Kirklees overall.

Comparing health between the different localities in Kirklees is, however, only relative to the Kirklees district. Adults living in Denby Dale and Kirkburton may experience better health than the rest of the district, but in terms of life expectancy, it is well below the best in the country. The Locality has, however, higher levels of physical activity, which presumably contribute to the relatively longer life expectancy.

Ref: G/Country/Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy/Kirklees Trees and Woodlands Strategy Fourth Draft

Creating a Setting for Investment

Aim – We will protect, enhance and increase trees and woodland, as key elements of ‘Green Infrastructure’ in urban and urban fringe areas, to help attract further economic investment, supporting the regeneration of the Kirklees district.			
Objective	Actions	Agencies	Dates
<p>Objective 1 Increase the number of street trees across the Kirklees district through championing their incorporation into the design of new developments and by encouraging the establishment of links between existing sites by way of roadside corridors.</p>	<p>Ensure that provision of street trees is incorporated into the design of housing developments at the planning stage.</p> <p>Seek out funding for additional tree planting wherever possible</p>	<p>Planning, Landscape Architects</p>	<p>2012 – 2014</p>
<p>Objective 2 Increase the number of street trees within existing streets and roadside verges across the Kirklees district through championing additional tree planting whenever feasible, within the construction and requirements of the Highway network and by encouraging the establishment of links between existing sites by way of roadside corridors.</p>	<p>Seek out funding for additional tree planting wherever possible</p>	<p>Streetscene</p>	

<p>Objective 3 Protect the current stock of street trees at its existing level across the Kirklees district by management based on best practice and, where trees need to be removed through disease or decay, by replanting where permissible by the construction and requirements of the Highway network.</p>	<p>Inspection and management of existing tree stock and planned replacement of all removed trees either on the same site or nearby where a better location exists</p>	<p>Streetscene</p>	
<p>Objective 4 Work with business and industry, encouraging investment in high quality urban forestry as a key component of 'Green Infrastructure' to help attract further economic investment, by creating a landscape attractive to inward investment.</p>	<p>Increase woodland creation in the reclamation of derelict and underused land;</p>		

<p>Objective 5 Increase the level of tree planting incorporated into the design of all new Public Open Spaces associated with new developments and to ensure that the diversity of species used is in line with the local profile of existing trees and woodlands.</p>	<p>Ensure that provision of trees is incorporated into the design of housing developments at the planning stage.</p> <p>Seek out funding for additional tree planting wherever possible</p>	<p>Investment and Regeneration</p> <p>Landscape Architects</p> <p>Environment Unit</p> <p>Trees Planning</p>	
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<p>Objective 6 Maintain the characteristic and make up of tree cover within existing Public Open Space and manage these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional tree planting to support the establishment of links between existing woodlands and amenity spaces.</p>	<p>Inspection and management of existing trees and woodlands supported by the production of individual management plans for woodland areas and an overall Council Woodland Management Plan</p>	<p>Streetscene Voluntary Agencies, eg. Friends Groups</p>	
<p>Objective 7</p>	<p>Continue to administer existing tree preservation orders across the Kirklees district and serve new orders where necessary to preserve amenity.</p> <p>Continue to assess conservation area notifications in relation potential new tree preservation orders and serve new orders where necessary</p>	<p>Planning</p>	

Climate Change

Aim – We will manage the effects of climate change more efficiently through maximising the contribution of trees and woodlands and be recognised as a national leader in this field, which has significant employment and skills growth potential in the short term (flooding and weather extremes etc).			
Objective	Action	Agencies	Dates
Objective 1 Contribute to a reduction in the Kirklees district’s net greenhouse gas emissions by actively managing Kirklees Council owned woodlands as a source of renewable energy.			
Objective 2 Kirklees Council will work with other White Rose Forest partners to help develop projects for the ‘Woodland Carbon Code’ as a way of identifying the amount of			

<p>carbon that can be sequestered by tree planting as well as funding from possible carbon financing</p>			
<p>Objective 3 Help the Kirklees district adapt more successfully to changing climatic conditions by increasing tree and woodland planting in areas where it will contribute to reducing flood risk, where this does not impact adversely on other important habitats</p>			
<p>Objective 4 Champion the direct benefits of urban tree planting towards reducing the urban heat island effect by ensuring that our towns such as Dewsbury and Huddersfield remain good enough for living and doing business.</p>			

Trees, Woods and People

Aim – We will encourage opportunities for healthier lifestyles through trees and woodlands as a key component of green infrastructure provision.			
Objective	Action	Agencies	Dates
Objective 1 Motivate and inspire landowners, businesses, community and youth groups etc to enhance the tree cover of the Kirklees district.	Production of individual woodland management plans to be implemented in partnership and under licence by voluntary groups e.g. Friends groups etc.	Streetscene Voluntary Groups	
Objective 2 Work with the NHS to address issues of ill-health by maximising the contribution of trees and	Increase accessible woodland near to where people live; Plant the largest new woodland in Yorkshire at Dewsbury	The Woodland Trust White Rose Forest Parks and Open Spaces	2012/13 – 2013/14

woodlands, particularly in North Kirklees and other areas of health inequalities			
Objective 3 Ensure that schools and colleges make more effective use of the Kirklees district’s trees and woodlands as an educational resource, so that the future of our trees and woodlands are given a higher priority by all sectors of society	Develop a programme of training in ‘Forest School’ skills for teachers, parents and community groups	Loca Countryside Unit	2012/13 – 2013/14
Objective 4 Enhance existing community understanding and engagement with trees and woodlands in the Kirklees district, to develop inclusive community involvement in the future management of trees and woodlands.	Establish, develop and support an active network of ‘Friends’ groups linked to Kirklees Council owned or managed woodlands		
Objective 5 The archaeological and historic heritage should be appropriately surveyed, identified, conserved and enhanced as part of any new tree and woodland planting or	Apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for grant aid towards a ‘Community Archaeology’ project focussed on the extensive Ancient Woodland resource in Kirklees		

management schemes.			
Objective 6 Local distinctiveness and sense of place should be actively considered in any new tree and woodland planting or management schemes.	Raise awareness among landowners, businesses, community and youth groups etc of the benefits of trees and woodland.		

Natural Environment

Aim – Achieve maximum biodiversity and amenity gain for the Kirklees district region through appropriate tree and woodland planting and management that takes account of the needs of people, wildlife and habitats			
Objective	Action	Agencies	Dates
Objective 1 Prioritise maintaining the character and make up of Ancient Woodlands in accordance with the National Vegetation Classification and managing these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional planting or natural regeneration.			
Objective 2 Restore Planted Ancient Woodland sites as appropriate in			

<p>accordance with the National Vegetation Classification and managing these in line with current best practice, seeking to further enhance these areas by additional planting or natural regeneration.</p>			
<p>Objective 3 Manage existing secondary woodlands in line with current best practice and the most appropriate objectives for the site and circumstances.</p>			
<p>Objective 4 Establish links between existing woodlands by way of tree planting or natural regeneration in intermediate areas where possible.</p>			
<p>Objective 5 Veteran trees will be identified, and actively conserved if appropriate. (deleted TPO section)</p>	<p>Trees will be identified through the inspection process and recorded on appropriate IT database</p>	<p>Streetscene</p>	
<p>Objective 6 The design and implementation</p>			

<p>of all new tree and woodland planting or management schemes should adhere to the National Vegetation Classification system, Forestry Commission and Landscape Institute best practice</p>			
<p>Objective 7 All new tree and woodland planting or management schemes will be consistent with and further the established priorities for protected sites.</p>			
<p>Objective 8 Continue to serve tree preservation orders where necessary to preserve current and enhance future amenity</p>	<p>Serve new TPOs where necessary to maintain or enhance amenity in the Kirklees area</p> <p>Continue to assess conservation area notifications in relation marinating or enhancing amenity and serve new TPO's where necessary.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	

Sustainable Forestry

Aim – Achieve effective and efficient implementation of the priorities for the management of trees and woodlands in Kirklees identified in the strategy.			
Objective	Action	Agencies	Dates
Objective 1 Gain a better understanding about the distribution, function	Locate, Geographical Information Service (GIS) map and inspect all Council owned trees.		

<p>and condition of trees and woodlands within the Krklees district in order to facilitate better informed decision making about priorities for management.</p>	<p>Makes certification of Kirklees Council’s woodland resource a priority by producing and implementing management plans for all Council owned woodlands, to create a multifunctional sustainable resource, achieving the UK Forestry Standard.</p>		
<p>Objective 2 High priority will be given to the management and protection of the Kirklees district’s existing trees and woodlands.</p>	<p>Kirklees Council will fund and provide a corporate Forestry and Arboriculture Service.</p>		
	<p>Provide a sustainable cyclic programme of tree pruning for all trees and tree felling and dismantling for problematic trees.</p>		
	<p>Provide up to date education and training to all Forestry and Arboriculture employees and associated Parks and Open Spaces staff.</p>		

	<p>Implement all current national (and international where applicable) standards on tree care.</p>		
	<p>Rebuff the perception that trees will be reduced in height, felled or inappropriately pruned due to the inconveniences of light loss, loss of satellite and TV reception, overhanging of branches and seasonal leaf or fruit fall.</p> <p><u>Publish on the Council’s website criteria defining when trees will be subject to works and under what circumstances works will not be considered.</u></p> <p>Continue to carry out duties under the Tree Preservation Regulations.</p> <p>Continue to promote and advise on good management of protect trees and woodlands.</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning</p>	

<p>Objective 3 Develop an active market and the sustainable use of traditional and innovative arboriculture and woodland products.</p>	<p>Increase the use of wood in sustainable construction</p>		
	<p>Continue and enhance the recycling of all surplus wood from woodland management and arboriculture activities.</p>		
	<p>Seek to optimise production of wood fuel and fire logs from the Council's tree and woodland resource to help pay for management</p>		