

Policy Paper

Local Authority Tree Strategies

July 2016



WOODLAND
TRUST

Local Authority Tree Strategies



The Woodland Trust would like to see all local authorities produce a comprehensive Trees and Woodland Strategy as part of their Local Plan. At the same time, local authorities should also be adopting a robust Trees and Woodland Policy in their Core Strategies and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

A Trees and Woodland Strategy will help local authorities to meet their statutory biodiversity obligations as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (s.40; duty to conserve biodiversity) and to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (section 11; Conserving and enhancing the natural environment). Such a strategy will also support local authorities in maximising the wide range of benefits that trees and woods can deliver to their constituents – for health, amenity, climate change and water management. And it will save time in processing planning applications and enquiries as officers can refer directly to the strategy.

A Trees and Woodland Strategy should set out in detail how the trees and woodland policies contained within the body of a core strategy will be delivered. In other words, the strategy will set out the practical implementation of policy.

It is particularly important to have an up-to-date Trees and Woodland Strategy in place to help deal with the increasing threat of pests and disease, especially ash dieback. It should encompass both rural and urban environments, together with public and privately owned sites.

To help guide local authorities in producing trees and woodland policy and strategy, we have set out the following -

- a)** Our recommended wording for a Trees and Woodland Policy, together with good examples from adopted core strategies.
- b)** A checklist of content headings that we recommend should be included in any comprehensive Trees and Woodland Strategy, together with examples of strong exemplar strategies produced by local authorities.



WTML/Daniel Romani

Suggested Trees and Woodland Policy

Policy A1 – Trees and woodland

1. Development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances.
2. The planting of trees within new development shall be sought, to benefit wildlife and biodiversity, enhance landscape, public amenity and health. A target canopy cover of at least 20 per cent will be pursued through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development, ageing or disease on a 'two for one' basis and by new planting to support green infrastructure.
3. Detailed guidance on implementation of this policy will be set out in a Trees and Woodland Strategy.

We set out below some examples of positive exemplar policies adopted by local authorities –



North Somerset Council Core Strategy (Adopted April 2012)

Policy CS4: Nature conservation

North Somerset contains outstanding wildlife habitats and species. These include limestone grasslands, traditional orchards, wetlands, rhynes, commons, hedgerows, ancient woodlands and the Severn Estuary.

The biodiversity of North Somerset will be maintained and enhanced by:

- * seeking to protect, connect and enhance important habitats, particularly designated sites, ancient woodlands and veteran trees.
- * promoting native tree planting and well targeted woodland creation, and encouraging retention of trees, with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31

(Adopted October 2015)

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.

Bristol Local Plan (Adopted July 2014)

Policy DM17: Development Involving Existing Green Infrastructure

All new development should integrate important existing trees. Development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged trees or veteran trees will not be permitted.

Bristol City Council Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

(Adopted September 2012)

Trees – Policy background

The justification for requiring obligations in respect of new or compensatory tree planting is set out in Policies BCS9 and BCS11 of the council’s Core Strategy.

Trigger for obligation

Obligations in respect of trees will be required where either:

- new planting is required on public land to mitigate the impact of a development, or
- where trees covered by categories A, B and C of BS 5837 (Trees in relation to construction) are felled as part of a development, and replacement planting is required on public land.

Tree planting will either take place on open ground or in areas of hard standing such as pavements.

Where planting can take place directly into open ground the contribution will be lower than where the planting is in areas of hard standing. This is due to the need to plant trees located in areas of hard standing in an engineered tree pit.

All tree planting on public land is to be undertaken by the council to ensure a consistent approach and level of quality, and to reduce the likelihood of new tree stock failing to survive.

Level of contribution

The contribution covers the cost of providing the tree pit (where appropriate), purchasing, planting, protecting, establishing and initially maintaining the new tree. The level of contribution is as follows:

Tree in open ground (no tree pit required) £765.21

Tree in hard standing (tree pit required) £3,318.88

The “open ground” figure will apply in the following circumstances:

- where development results in the loss of council-owned trees in open ground,
- where development results in the loss of trees on the development site, and is unable to provide replacement tree planting on site.

In both these cases the council will provide replacement tree planting in the nearest appropriate area of open space.

The “hard standing” figure will apply in the following circumstances:

- where development results in the loss of council-owned trees in areas of hard standing,
- where new tree planting in hard standing is required to mitigate the impact of development (for example street trees required as part of highway improvements).

In the first of these cases the council will locate replacement tree planting in areas of hard standing as close as reasonably practical to the development site; and in the second of these cases the council will implement tree planting in specific locations identified through the planning approval process.

The number of trees required to compensate for loss of existing trees depends upon the size of the trees to be lost. This is set out in the following table:

Number of replacement trees	Trunk diameter of tree lost to development (cm measured at 1.5 metres above ground level)
Fewer than 15	0-1
15-19.9	1
20-29.9	2
30-39.9	3
40-49.9	4
50-59.9	5
60-69.9	6
70-79.9	7
80+	8

The following is a hypothetical example:

A development proposal results in the loss of two street trees, which have trunk diameters of 27cm and 33cm respectively. The tree with the 27cm trunk will require two replacement trees and the tree with the 33cm trunk will require three replacement trees.

The obligation will require the provision of five replacement street trees. Therefore the contribution will be $5 \times £3,318.88 = £16,594.40$

South Ribble Borough Council Local Plan 2012 – 2026 (Adopted July 2015)

Policy G13–Trees, Woodlands and Development

a) Planning permission will not be permitted where the proposal adversely affects trees, woodlands and hedgerows which are:

- i Protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO);
- ii Ancient woodlands including individual ancient and veteran trees and those defined in Natural England's inventory of ancient woodlands;
- iii In a conservation area; or
- iv Within a recognised Nature Conservation Site.

b) There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing tree, woodland and hedgerow cover on site;

c) Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, replacement trees will be required to be planted on site where appropriate at a rate of two new trees for each tree lost;

d) Tree survey information should be submitted with all planning applications, where trees are present on site. The tree survey information should include protection, mitigation and management measures;

e) Appropriate management measures will be required to be implemented to protect newly planted and existing trees, woodlands and/ or hedgerows.

Suggested Trees and Woodland Strategy content

INTRODUCTION

- Background
- The resource – area, distribution, type, designation
- Ancient woodland, ancient/notable trees and wood pasture
- The benefits delivered by trees and woodland
- Common complaints about trees and woodland

VISION

- Aim
- Delivery

Theme 1: Community, place and heritage

- Community woodland
- Place and design – street trees
- Heritage and culture

Theme 2: Sustainability, climate change and natural capital

- Sustainability and green infrastructure
- Climate change, pests and tree disease
- Natural Capital and Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES)

Theme 3: Planning

- Duties under NERC Act 2006 and NPPF
- National and local planning policy – trees and development
- Protecting trees - TPOs and conservation areas
- Developer obligations

Theme 4: Woodland management

- Wildlife and landscape – PAWS restoration
- Woodland creation and management - accessible woodland
- Wood products
- Certification
- Grants and funding

Theme 5: Council trees

- Street and trees in residential areas
- Parks and open spaces
- Woodland
- Urban woodlands
- Village and rural trees
- New and replacement planting
- Asset management and standards of service

IMPLEMENTATION

- Action plan
- Future strategy review

APPENDICES

- National policy
- Local policy (including Local Plan/ Core Strategy)
- Case studies
- Glossary



We set out below some examples of exemplar strategies produced by local authorities. Whilst none of these constitute a truly comprehensive version, they do contain useful pointers towards that goal.

Peterborough City Council – Peterborough Tree & Woodland Strategy (2012) – or search Tree & Woodland Strategy at peterborough.gov.uk

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Woodland Strategy (2010) – or search Woodland Strategy at solihull.gov.uk

Somerset County Council – A Woodland Strategy for Somerset (2010) or search Woodland Strategy at somerset.gov.uk

Darlington Borough Council – Tree & Woodland Strategy (2011- 2020) or search Tree & Woodland Strategy at darlington.gov.uk

Hartlepool Borough Council – Trees & Development Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2013) or search Trees & Development Guidelines at hartlepool.gov.uk

Northumberland County Council - ‘Growing Together’ - A strategy for the management of Northumberland County Council’s trees and woodlands (Nov 2010) or search Trees and Woodland Strategy at northumberland.gov.uk

Bournemouth Borough Council – Tree Strategy (2014 – 24) or search Tree Strategy at bournemouth.gov.uk

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council – Urban Forest Strategy (2013) or search Urban Forest Strategy at newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Lichfield District – Trees, Landscaping & Development Supplementary Planning Document (2016) or search Trees, Landscaping & Development SPD at lichfielddc.gov.uk



WTML/Nicoll Benvie



Cruseman Landscape Architecture



WTML/Margaret Barton

For further information, contact the Woodland Trust:



03437 705 564



governmentrelations@woodlandtrust.org.uk



The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL.
woodlandtrust.org.uk

The Woodland Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark. 8373 05/16