
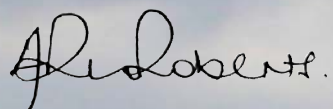




Wrexham County Borough Council
Strategy for Council Trees
2008-2013

Foreword

Councillor Aled Rhys Roberts
Leader, Wrexham Council



Trees define our communities, form our landscape, improve the quality of our air and are essential for much of our wildlife. Wrexham County Borough Council owns and manages many of the trees and public woodlands across our communities. We are committed to improving the quality of the environment of Wrexham and trees form a very important part of this work. We have undertaken in the development of this strategy, a strategic look at how we manage our trees and how we can develop and encourage a greater awareness and responsibility within our communities for their care. I hope you will take time to read the plan, it is formed as a result of consultation with the community, service users and the need to create a strategic long term approach for the management of council owned trees. We have consulted a wide range of people and have hopefully addressed their concerns in the strategy.

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1 Introduction

At the heart of most cities, towns or villages and in the surrounding land trees live and grow. Sometimes unnoticed (until removed) trees form a major part of our landscape providing numerous seen and unseen benefits to people and wildlife. This strategy has been written to recognise the significant contribution trees make to the well being of everyone living, visiting and working in Wrexham.

This strategy has been developed in accordance with Government and Arboriculture industry guidance. Its purpose is to improve the quality of the management of Council owned trees but is relevant to privately owned trees in some areas. It is designed to be a working guide for the public and council officers. A key aim is to bring together all departments responsible for trees ensuring our tree resource is managed in the best way possible. The Strategy also refers to general Planning Policy in relation to trees but is not Planning guidance itself so should be read in conjunction with the Wrexham Tree & Woodland Strategy January 2005 and the Unitary Development Plan. At the time of publication, the Wrexham Tree & Woodland Strategy was under review. Once completed it is envisaged that both Strategies will be merged to create an overall council Tree Strategy for both private and publicly owned trees.

2 Benefits of Trees

Trees **improve health and well being** by improving air quality through absorbing carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas contributing to climate change) and releasing oxygen. Each year a mature tree produces enough oxygen for 10 people and lock up carbon which is only released back into the atmosphere when they die or are burnt.

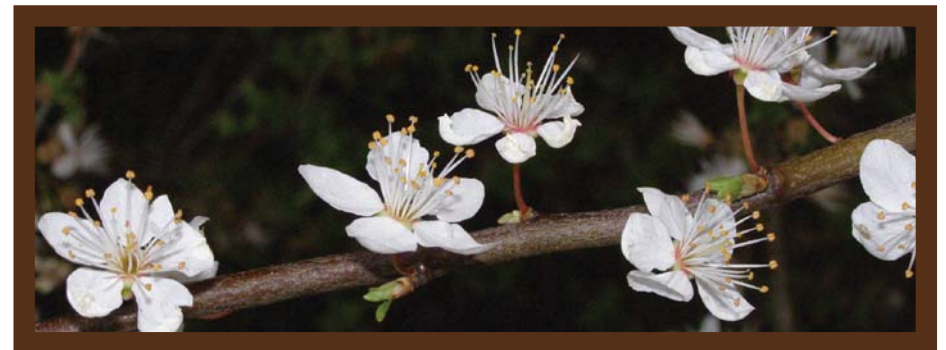
Government research has shown that 24,000 people die every year as a result of air pollution. Trees **remove harmful airborne particles** emitted from exhaust fumes which contribute to air pollution known to worsen diseases like asthma and bronchitis. Trees **protect against skin cancer**, the most rapidly increasing form of cancer in the UK by reflecting harmful sun rays and reducing exposure to the sun.

Trees help to **reduce stress**. Scientific evidence shows people feel less anxious and more relaxed in leafy or green areas. A stressed person's pulse rate can drop within 3 to 4 minutes of moving into greener more leafy surroundings. Studies have also shown that people driving along a tree or green lined road have lower stress levels than those who drive on roads without trees.

Trees **reduce energy costs** by as much as 10% per year. The need to use heating is reduced during the winter if trees are present by reducing the build up of cold winds and during the summer reducing the need to use air conditioning by **cooling air temperature** through shade, water loss through leaves and reflection of sunlight.

Trees reduce incidences of flash flooding and erosion by intercepting rain fall, reducing direct impact on bare ground, storing moisture and binding the soil through the root system. Trees **give privacy, reduce noise and screen unsightly views**. Evidence has shown just screening a source of noise can reduce its intrusiveness and thick belts of trees reduce noise significantly.

Trees can **help reduce crime**. Scientific studies have shown that contact with nature may help to reduce incidences of aggression or violence in inner cities. Residents living in greener areas report lower levels of fear, fewer incidents and less violent behaviour. Greenery has the ability to reduce mental fatigue, a precursor to violent behaviour.



Studies have revealed that in America, tree cover has a positive effect on house prices. Properties in tree lined streets are worth 6% more than similar areas without trees. Trees **improve landscapes** by softening the impact of buildings or structures by hiding or smoothing hard edges or gloomy colours or designs. The most well known benefit of trees is their ability to **support wildlife** from insects living on leaf tissue to bats roosting under bark or in the shelter of upward facing cavities of older trees. Trees **provide a sustainable source of employment** to those who look after them, prune, plant, care for or grow them. They provide **an accessible source of education** for schools and **bring communities together socially** when planting them.

3 Background

Wrexham County Borough Council manages trees which are predominantly located in public housing property, gardens/open space, schools, public open space, streets and parks. During the last 5 years the management of Council trees has undergone a number of changes and improvements including the creation of a tree surgery contract, the employment of an additional arboricultural officer and the installation of a specialist tree management computer package.

All Council trees are currently the responsibility of each Department, but the day to day management of all trees is provided under a service level agreement. The Arboricultural Manager is responsible for guiding the strategic management of trees whilst managing the day to day tree contract and Arboricultural Officer. Day to day inspections carried out as part of a corporate tree risk assessment and survey are carried out by the Arboricultural Officer. Both Officers regularly carry out site visits in response to enquiries from the public and requests from other Departments (see appendix 1 for department structure).

As an entirely separate function, which is mostly related to trees in private ownership, the Council has a separate Arboricultural Officer based in the Planning Department. The function of this post is to provide arboricultural advice and recommendations to Planning Officers in relation to trees on development sites, make Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's), to process and assess works applications and notifications for trees protected by TPO's and Conservation Areas and to assess applications for the height reduction of evergreen high hedges. Arboricultural planning advice and pre-application site visits is a service offered by the Planning Department's Arboricultural Officer. The Council's Ecologist, also based in the Planning Department, administers applications to remove protected hedgerows.

The Council employs a private contractor to undertake tree works and the contract is subject to tender every 3 years. Some departments have a separate budget for tree surgery work and inspections, although some may not have a specific tree work budget. The majority of trees are situated within the Environment Department's land such as in the Parks and open spaces, followed by trees on Housing and Education property. Other trees are situated on Economic Development land, Leisure, Social Services and Transport and Asset Management land. Exact tree numbers are currently being captured.

During the planting season (November-March), the section organises a number of County Borough wide tree planting events and schemes which involve a large amount of public consultation and increased public involvement. We have planted well over 2000 new urban trees during the last 5 years.

4 Key Legislation & Policy

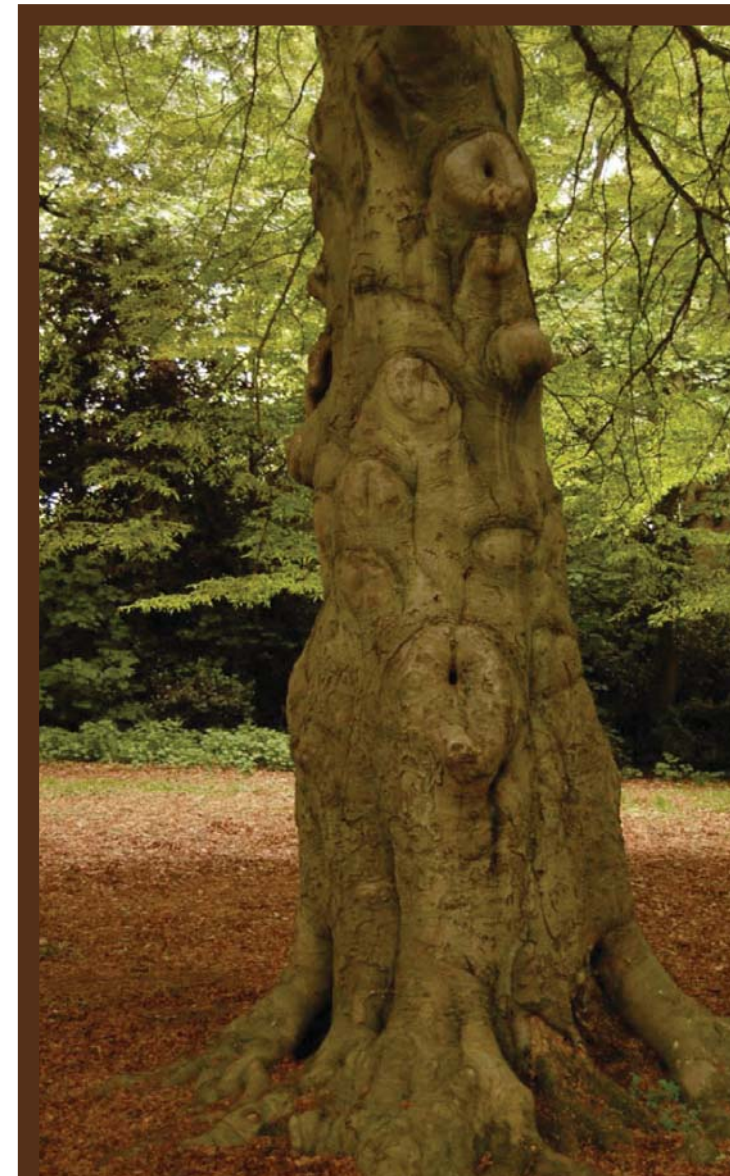
Acts and Regulations affect how the Council manages its own trees and how privately owned trees are dealt with. The following list offers brief guidance on relevant legislation.

Highways Act (Dangerous Trees) 1980 Section 154 of this Act gives the Council powers to deal with trees and vegetation considered to be a danger to highway users.

Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976
Gives power to the council to enter private land and deal with dangerous trees.

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Places a duty on employers and employees whilst carrying out their work duties to take reasonable steps to avoid incidences that would be harmful to themselves or other people.

Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations 1994, The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. Relate to the conservation and protection of wildlife and biodiversity, a very significant piece of legislation relating to the management of trees and the environment. The Police enforce 3 of the 4 Acts which can carry prison sentences for those prosecuted.



Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984

Details responsibilities and duties of landowners in relation to others accessing their land. A key Act in relation to the inspection of trees on Council land.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Town & Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999.

Places a duty on Local Authorities to protect trees and woodlands by using Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conditions when granting planning permission. Provides procedures for Local Authorities to administrate the Act and deal with applications for works to trees protected by TPOs and Conservation Area General Regulations 1992. This function is dealt with by the Planning Department.

Forestry Act 1967 (amended) and 1986

Primarily covers growing, maintenance, felling and replanting of trees as a timber resource applying to trees not situated in domestic gardens and public open space. Administered by the Forestry Commission.

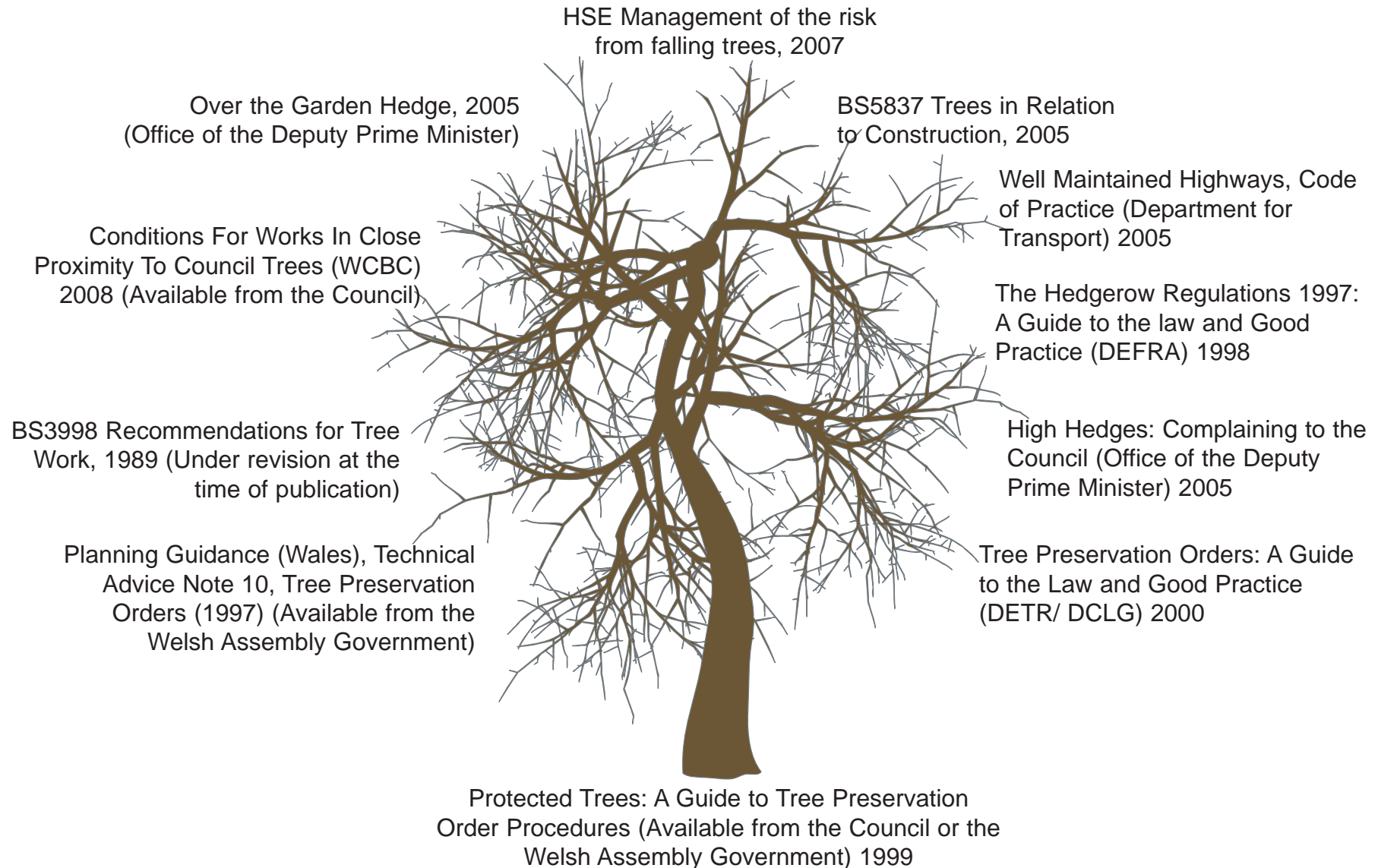
Part 8 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (High Hedges) 2003

Local Authorities judge on the height of evergreen hedges located on land adjacent to a complainant's property. The complainant is required to have taken initial steps to resolve a high hedge dispute amicably before involving the Council. The Local Authority is not required to mediate or negotiate between the complainant and the hedge owner but to decide whether the hedge is adversely affecting the complainant's reasonable enjoyment of their property. The Planning Department administers the Act.



Key Codes of Practice and Guidance

The following list of guidelines and standards issued by industry organisations and government are relevant to the management of both Council and privately owned trees.







5 Policy Context

Outlined below are a number of the more relevant local and regional strategies that support the aims and objective of the Tree Strategy.

Wrexham Community Strategy (Wrexham Refreshed) 2004

The Welsh Assembly has given Wrexham a statutory duty to work with partners in the delivery of the Community Strategy. It aims to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of people in the County Borough and contribute to sustainable development. Trees can help to deliver the following key objectives in this strategy:

-  To build social and physical environments that create the necessary conditions to protect, promote and support health and well being.
-  To encourage people to respect and enjoy their local environment and its biodiversity.
-  To ensure the natural environment supports the largest possible range of native animals and plants and is supported by sustainable agricultural and forestry land use.
-  To make careful use of resources with minimal amounts of waste and as little pollution as possible.

Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Strategy for Wrexham, 2005

Part of the strategy's vision is to create a healthier community by promoting and supporting healthier lifestyles. The strategy sets out a clear indication of how Wrexham County Borough Council and Wrexham Local Health Board and partners, aim to improve the health, social care and well-being of the population over the next three years. Planting trees and using good management practice will encourage people to take exercise in green areas supporting the aims of the above strategy. Trees and greenery also help to improve mental health and reduce distress levels.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996

The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan was formally adopted in February 2005 and covers the period 1996 -2011. It provides a framework for local decision making and the reconciliation of development and conservation interests in order that land use changes proceed coherently and with maximum community benefit. The following policies within the Unitary Development Plan are directly related to and support the Tree Strategy strategic aims:

Policy EC4 Hedges Trees and Woods

Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted. Tree Preservation Orders will be used to prevent loss, destruction or damage to trees which form notable features of the landscape or townscape. Certain hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerow Regulations, and the Council will use its powers under this legislation to exercise control over important hedgerows.

Policy EC6 & PS11 Biodiversity Conservation

Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported. Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature reserves where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced.



Policy EC7 Conservation Areas

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area.



UK Biodiversity Action Plan, 1994 / WCBC Biodiversity Action Plan 2002

Encourages Local Authorities to encompass wildlife as well as recreational and ornamental objectives when carrying out urban tree initiatives and mentions the need for a managerial adjustment to existing parks or green areas to meet the public's need for contact with nature. It also contains the following objective:

- ✿ To support the creation of community woodlands near population centres and continue to encourage urban tree planting and care.

Environment Strategy Wales, 2006

The strategy sets out principles and outcomes expected of communities, in particular:

- ✿ Individuals understand and are enabled to take responsibility for their environmental impact; changes are apparent in behaviour.
- ✿ The wider environment is more favourable to biodiversity through appropriate management and the quality and diversity of our natural landscape is enhanced.
- ✿ Wales has improved resilience to the impacts of climate change. A clear flexible programme of measures is in place to adapt to climate change.

Trees have a significant role in helping people to understand environmental issues. People can act in an environmentally responsible way through assisting with tree planting schemes where they can get involved and learn about trees. Through consultation, education and raising awareness people can be encouraged to recognise the benefits of having trees to aid in absorbing the impacts of climate change and improve the environment.

WCBC Tree & Woodland Strategy, 2005

A 10 year strategy to create high quality and sustainable local urban and rural landscapes using trees and woodland to maximise social inclusion and community benefits, supporting woodland based industries and the improvement of the environment. Some of the policies relevant to this strategy are outlined below:


- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Education | 2.1 Tree and woodland planting within the grounds of educational establishments will be promoted in order to maximise environmental awareness. |
| Social Integration | 3.1 Community involvement in the design, implementation and management of new local landscape projects will be encouraged to increase access to woodlands for all. |
| Economic | 4.6 Use woodlands to help create a higher quality visitor experience. |
| Environmental | 6.2 Promote tree planting to alleviate environmental pollution (air, soil and water) and increase tree and woodland cover. |
| Planning Guidelines | 9.2 Trees and woodland of high amenity value will be protected by the imposition of Tree Preservation Orders. |
| Landscape | 10.1 The conservation, through traditional management techniques, of veteran and orchard trees and hedgerows will be encouraged. |

WCBC Local Planning Guidance Notes

Local Planning Guidance Notes (LPGs) amplify planning policies contained within the Council's Unitary Development Plan. The following LPG notes contain guidance and policies relating to trees and are a significant consideration when the Council determines planning applications:


LPG No. 4 Conservation Areas

The key point relating to the Council's policy on trees in Conservation Areas is outlined below:


-  In order to protect the character and appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas, restrictions apply to works to trees, subject to certain size limitations and exemptions. Tree works require 6 weeks notice being given to the Council. If the Council believes the works would be to the detriment of the amenity of the Conservation Area, it may place the tree under a Tree Preservation Order. Subsequent tree works would then be the subject to the Tree Preservation Order application process.

LPG No. 7: Landscape and Development

Outlines the Council's requirements, when assessing the layout and design of the external environment and landscape with the design of buildings on development sites. Key points are outlined below:


-  Development must provide for landscaping of a site the subject of a planning application. A landscape scheme should be submitted for the Council's approval. Planning conditions will be used to ensure landscape schemes are implemented and maintained in accordance with approved landscape plans.





 Before any building or landscape design is begun a detailed site survey should be carried out including the position of existing trees and whether they are to be retained or removed, the location of screening factors, including trees, any proposed changes in landform, the position and general type of planting should be considered at an early stage by the applicant for outline planning applications. Full planning applications will require additional information to be submitted and to be taken into consideration.


LPG No. 17: Trees and Development


Outlines the Council's requirements, when considering planning applications, which could affect trees. Some key points of the guidance note are included below:

 Before submitting planning applications for land in close proximity to trees, or on which trees are growing, a developer should commission a detailed tree and land survey. Land and tree surveys should meet the requirements of British Standard 5837: Trees In Relation To Construction (2005).

 In the case of full planning applications it is strongly recommended that all sites with trees on or near them are first evaluated prior to trees being identified for removal or final layouts decided and finalised.

 An Arboricultural Implication Assessment should be produced and a Tree Constraints Plan, in accordance with clause 5 of BS 5837:2005 should be submitted at the planning application stage. This should include the specification and position of tree protective fencing and a schedule of remedial tree surgery works.

 Development located too close to the established canopy spread of trees or where the proximity of a dwelling would result in trees having an over-dominant and oppressive effect will not be permitted.

 The Council may place important trees on development sites under the protection of a Tree Preservation Order. Where Tree Preservation Orders are in existence or have been recently placed on trees on a site, the Council will expect the developer to consult with the Council's planning based Arboricultural Officer, before the submission of any proposed design or layout.

LPG No. 22: Sustainable Building

Outlines the Council's requirements for sustainable building, where there are 10 or more dwellings, a site of 0.5 ha or above when dwellings are not shown or when the proposed floor-space exceeds 1,000 square metres or when the floor space is not shown, 1 hectare. Key points relating to trees are shown opposite.



- ✻ Design site layouts for wind protection. The use of trees can shelter sites from the prevailing wind.
- ✻ Green wedges, buffers and links, which provide routes and networks with existing landscape features, should be supported and created within and around development sites.
- ✻ Provide a variety of new habitats within around sites, including woodland.

LPG No. 26: Landscape and Industrial Development





Outlines the Council's requirements for landscape and the environment issues to be considered on industrial development sites. Key points include:

- ✻ Plant oak and other large native tree species, and hedges. Always protect existing trees, shrubs and wild flower meadows (especially species rich grassland).
- ✻ Budget adequately for landscape work and ongoing maintenance.
- ✻ Don't replace valuable existing grassland, hedges, scrub, woodland or trees with "amenity" planting of low wildlife value.
- ✻ Plant areas unsuitable for development with native woodland species.
- ✻ Plant vacant land awaiting development with short term crops such as willow, poplar and sweet chestnut.
- ✻ Use hedgerows, including hedgerow trees instead of fencing.
- ✻ Use planting to soften car-parking and clutter and to enhance entrances.
- ✻ Link existing site features of nature conservation value with new planting and external areas and corridors of nature conservation value.

Woodland for Wales 2001

This sets out the Assembly Government's strategy for Welsh Woodlands, over the next fifty years. It highlights the fact that tree and woodland cover in Wales is 18% lower than the EU average. Guiding principles are to enhance and create wooded areas whilst providing social and community benefits, support to the economy and a contribution to a better quality environment for Wales.

A revised version of the strategy, which takes into account how Welsh trees and woodlands can help ameliorate the effects of climate change, was consulted on in 2008. At the time of writing, the revised strategy had not been adopted by the Assembly government. Some key priorities of the strategy are:

-  To provide opportunities for communities to have their say in the management of woods close to where they live and maximise their use for learning.
-  To find appropriate sites for new trees and woodland.
-  To conserve and enhance the biodiversity of woodlands, enhance landscapes of Wales and better integrate woodlands with other countryside management.
-  To promote health, through access to woodlands for all communities.



UK Forestry Standard

This sets out the criteria and standards for the sustainable management of all forests and woodlands in the UK. The Standard is employed by the Forestry Commission in the management of its own forests and private forests receiving grant aid have to be managed in accordance with the Standard.




6 Summary of Consultation

Consultation on a variety of tree issues has been carried out to help develop the Tree Strategy. This was in the form of a questionnaire advertised in the local press, internet and intranet of which copies were sent to various user groups including the Wrexham Disability Forum, the Housing Tenants Assembly and the Wrexham Youth Forum. A separate questionnaire was sent to the People's Voice. Over the consultation period we received a total of 760 responses.


Encouragingly, the responses provide strong support for the aims of the Tree Strategy. Results indicate a good existing awareness about the importance of trees and related environmental and social issues in the County Borough. The high number of responses over the short period of time hopefully indicates that the issues within this strategy are of high public interest. A brief summary of the results is outlined below (see appendix 2 for full results).


 80% agree that the following is important and should be done as much as possible.


"Retain and encourage suitable areas for wildlife in trees, such as leaving standing dead wood that isn't a safety hazard (dead trees or wood provides a good place for wildlife such as bats, insects and woodpecker)."

 90% agree that the following statement is a great idea if this helps wildlife.

"Plant native trees or trees likely to enhance the wildlife value of the area."

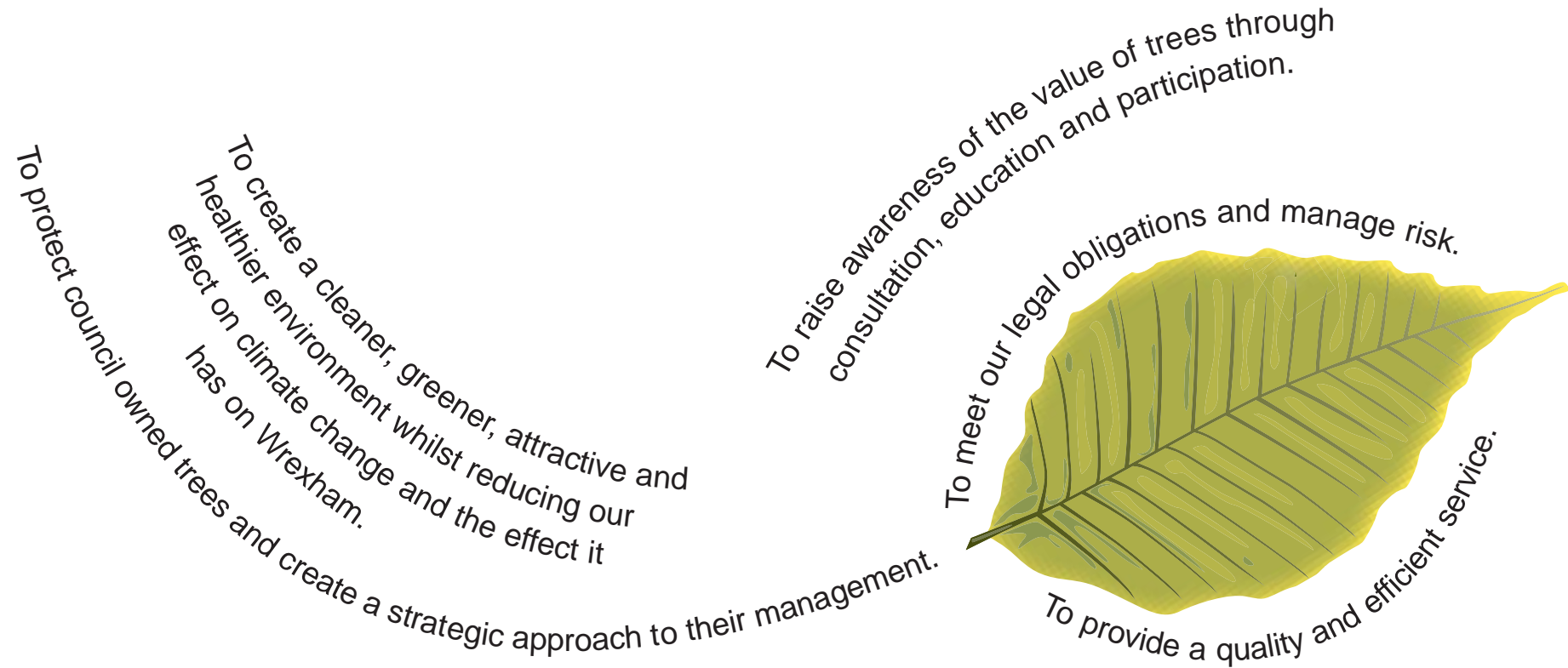
 75% of people think that trees make a considerable contribution toward making Wrexham a cleaner and more attractive environment.

 To help improve the quality of Wrexham's environment and reduce the impacts of climate change people want us to continue planting trees not just in open spaces but also in built up / urban areas (streets) where there is very little greenery or trees. Following closely they would like us to phase out the use of chemical sprays used for controlling weeds around trees and replace with greener alternatives such as composted bark chippings.

 The majority of people consulted would like to receive information from the council about trees via the Wrexham website.

7 Statement of Action

The following 5 aims and related policy are for council owned trees only. There is an explanation outlining the issues surrounding each aim and a policy statement. Following this is a table of Action Points to implement the policy, reference to parties involved in the process (partnerships) and target dates for completing the Action Points. For all planning tree policy please refer to page 4.



8 Aim

To protect council owned trees & create a strategic approach to their management.

Issues

Trees and woodlands support wildlife, improve the quality of our landscape and make a significant contribution toward well being, health and the local environment. Any loss, detriment or reduction in the tree population can therefore have a significant effect locally.

Trees are subject to many pressures that can limit their survival. For example, this may include damaging of tree roots by essential footpath repairs or construction of permanent or temporary buildings close to trees. Sometimes tree damage can go unnoticed because of a lack of awareness by workers of the consequence of their actions. In some circumstances trees can cause damage to structures by direct contact through root and trunk growth and by the desiccation of shrinkable soils leading to subsidence damage. These problems also need to be addressed.

The majority of publicly owned trees and woodlands in the County Borough are in the parks and open spaces, school grounds or housing areas owned and managed by us. Some of the woodlands have been managed and improved in the past, through the Forestry Commission woodland grant scheme. All the publicly owned woodlands would benefit from being entered into the new woodland grant scheme to allow strategic management and improvement of the woodlands for their recreation, conservation and landscape value.

Privately owned trees and woodland within the County Borough have a significant place in our landscape and any loss of some of these trees will have a negative impact on the quality of the local environment which is why certain trees are protected and preserved under the Town and Country Planning Act with Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas. There are over 400 Tree Preservation Orders in the County Borough and 21 Conservation Areas protecting trees.



Policy Statements

- T1 The Council will manage and protect trees in accordance with current arboricultural and planning practice and ensure Arboricultural Officers are supported in maintaining high levels of professional competence.
- T2 Where conclusive evidence is submitted by a qualified person, council owned trees causing significant damage to structures or property will have any necessary work carried out to prevent further damage.
- T3 All work to or around Council trees will be carried out in liaison with Environment Department Arboricultural Officers in accordance with the Councils "Conditions for work in close proximity to Council Trees" and Local Planning Guidance Note 17, Trees and Development.
- T4 The Council will retain, protect and encourage suitable habitat for wildlife in trees, woodlands and hedges.
- T5 Where they are not infringing the public highway, hedges on Council land will be pruned outside the bird nesting season and in accordance with current good practice guidelines.
- T6 The Council will manage it's publicly owned woodlands encouraging public access where this is appropriate whilst balancing the needs of recreation and conservation.

To protect Council owned trees & create a strategic approach to their management

| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| We will coordinate the management of tree services across WCBC Departments. | In place | Review annually | All Departments | Zero |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retain trees wherever possible. ● Pruning in accordance with current or best arboricultural practice using competent persons. ● Ensure work specifications for tree work are written by Arboricultural Officers or under their instruction. ● Provide training in basic tree pruning methods for Street scene staff. | In Place 2010 | Annual Work Checks Review 2009 | Environment External contractors Street scene | Staff time |
| Follow and use guidance set by the arboricultural profession, statutory nature conservation organisations and other relevant organisations. | In Place | Review annually | As above | Zero |
| Carry out sensitive or specialist pruning practices to retain and create wildlife habitat where safety allows. | In Place | Review annually | Other Departments External Contractors | Zero |
| Produce, distribute and implement guidelines for work in close proximity to trees. Form asset management planning liaison meetings. | January 2009 | Review August 2008 | Other Departments (Asset Management Planning). External Contractors | Staff time |
| Ensure consultation in place with the Planning Department for development affecting council trees. | 2010 | Review 2009 | Planning TAMS | Staff time |
| Enter publicly owned woodlands in the parks and open spaces into the Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme, where this is appropriate. | 2013 | Review 2010 | External Contractors Coed Cymru Officer (write plans) | Staff time woodland costs not identified, but will be supported by grant aid. |

9 Aim

Meet our legal obligations and manage risk.

Issues

Trees growing in public areas will always pose an element of risk which on the whole is accepted as part of daily life.

As a tree owner, Wrexham County Borough Council has a 'duty of care' to protect the public which essentially places a responsibility on the Council to inspect its trees and control any unacceptable risks it finds. Currently each department has been made aware of their legal responsibilities via the service level agreement, however they do not carry the expertise needed to fulfil them.

To manage risk in the best way possible the council will need to form a tree inspection & risk assessment programme from which a tree maintenance programme can be made.

In managing trees we are also managing wildlife. Under British and European Law legislation protecting wildlife always needs to be considered before we take any action.

Policy Statements

- T7 We will proactively inspect Council trees to identify and remove unacceptable risks.
- T8 Owners of any trees considered to be a legal nuisance or danger to the public highway will be requested to remove those tree/s or tree parts. In the event of no action, the Council will exercise its statutory powers under the Highways Act or Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act to alleviate the problem.
- T9 We will protect wildlife and the associated habitats in accordance with British and European Law.

Meet our legal obligations and manage risk

| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|--|--------|-------------|---|--|
| Complete a tree risk assessment survey to develop a tree inspection & assessment programme. Establish council tree population. | 2010 | Review 2008 | Other Departments | Staff Time 35% increase in tree work generated. |
| Create a maintenance programme for Council owned trees and implement. | 2012 | Review 2010 | Other Departments | Staff Time |
| As necessary adopt changes to British and European Law in relation to the protection of wildlife. | 2013 | Annually | CCW English Nature Environment Agency | Staff Time |



10 Aim

Create a cleaner, greener attractive and healthier environment whilst reducing our effect on climate change and the effect it has on Wrexham.

Issues

It is important to plant trees in Wrexham. If we stop our tree planting programme, this would lead to a gradual decline in the quality of our environment as older trees die off and are not replaced. Adding to the existing tree stock in partnership with the community, we have planted over 2000 new urban trees since 2002, providing greenery to many areas of the County Borough. As expected, some of these trees die because of a combination of difficult growing conditions, vandalism and time constraints on planning such large scale planting every year, however we endeavour to limit losses of newly planted trees by ensuring that establishment maintenance is carried out when necessary.

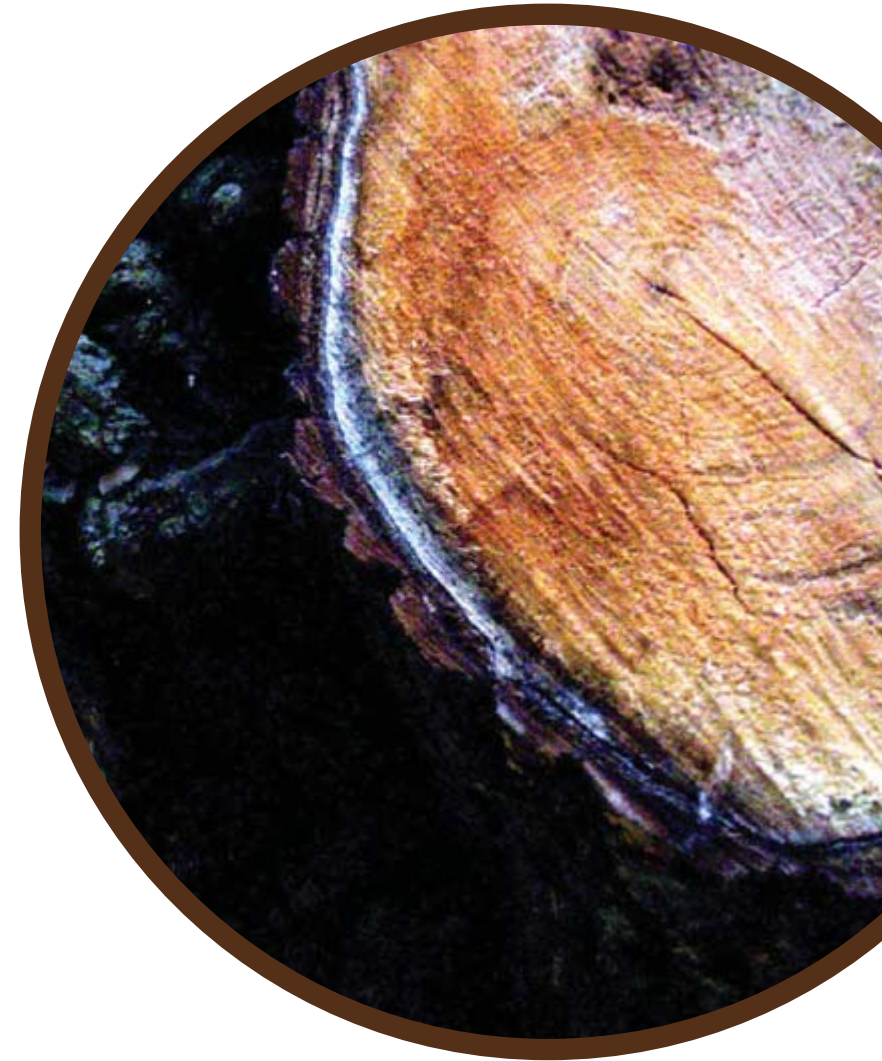
These schemes have concentrated on open space (parks and amenity areas), mostly missing more difficult areas like roadside verges and tarmac footpaths in urban built up areas where conditions are difficult and underground services are close by. This means areas where trees can contribute immensely to the overall quality of the environment have not been replanted or enhanced significantly in recent years. Other areas for new tree planting may include brownfield sites in council ownership where community woodland can be created.

Burning of fossil fuels not only increases the effects of global warming, but releases harmful particles into the air contributing to poor health conditions like asthma. Planting trees can help to absorb some of these harmful particles and reduce some negative effects of global warming such as intercepting rainfall and decreasing surface water run off.

We believe that with careful planning, education and consultation, trees can be planted to help reduce the impacts of climate change on Wrexham and improve the quality of the environment. We would like to ensure the number of trees planted can be established and maintained effectively in the more difficult areas, such as urban areas.

Policy Statements

- T10 Increase tree cover on public land within the County Borough through planned tree planting schemes, particularly in built up areas (Urban Streets).
- T11 Concentrate our efforts on replacement of felled trees in particular built up areas, if conditions are suitable.
- T12 Plant trees as effectively as possible to contribute toward absorbing CO2 in Wrexham and aim to actively reduce our CO2 and other harmful emissions.
- T13 Phase out the use of non recyclable materials for tree planting and use materials that are biodegradable, re-usable or recyclable.
- T14 Reuse or recycle wood chippings & logs.
- T15 Work to increase shade by planting potentially large growing trees in order to reduce the harmful effects of the sun.



Create a cleaner, greener attractive and healthier environment whilst reducing our effect on climate change and the effect it has on Wrexham.

| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| Plant 100 new standard size trees every 2 years starting in 2009, concentrating on parks, open space, schools and amenity areas. | 300 new standard trees by 2013 | Review 2010 & 2012 | Local Communities Schools Other Departments | Existing budgets Staff time |
| Start urban (street) tree planting on 2 year cycle starting in 2008. | 2008 2010 2012 | Review 2009 & 2011 & 2013 | Local Communities Street scene External Contractors | Existing budgets Staff time External funding |
| Organise at least 5 National Tree Week events over next 5 years in country and urban parks involving schools and community. | Annually | Review 2010 | Schools Local Communities Environment | Staff time |
| At least 80% of new trees planted to be of native provenance to British Isles. | On going | Review annually | Forestry Commission Wales Other Departments Groundwork | Existing budgets |
| Create a maintenance program for newly planted trees and provide training for staff carrying out the work. | 2010 | Review 2009 | Street scene External contractors | Existing budgets Staff time |
| Develop and adopt sustainable planting techniques to improve growing conditions and reduce maintenance requirements and promote to others. | 2008 2010 2012 | Review 2009 & 2011 | Street scene External contractors Planning | Existing budgets Staff time External funding |
| Prioritise site visits according to risk & location, car share where possible to reduce vehicle emissions. Allocate a non vehicle day once a week unless there is an emergency. (Record car free days as measure). | 94 no car days per annum 470 over 5 years | Review annually | Arboricultural Service | Zero Potential savings |

| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Phase out the use of chemicals to control weeds around council trees and promote to external bodies. | 2009 | Review 2008 | Street scene External contractors Planning | Potential savings |
| Assess the feasibility of engaging tree contractors operating under environmentally sustainable practices. Provide guidance of requirements for contractors to achieve this and assess the feasibility of this approach. | 2013 | Review 2011 | External contractors | Staff time |
| Investigate sources of external funding for tree planting and utilise. Aim for at least £15,000 by 2013. Seek to create Community woodland planting on sites in council ownership if the opportunity and funding arises. | 2013 | Review June 2010 | Forestry Commission Economic Development Trees for Cities Other No's Section 106 | Existing budgets External Funding |
| Reduce, reuse or recycle tree waste by composting woodchips and using them for projects including the Erlas Garden Project and weed control. Use biodegradable reusable and chemically untreated tree planting products and encourage external contractors to do the same via Planning Department. | In place On going | Review 2011 | External contractors Environment Planning | Zero |
| Replace trees felled on Council land in the nearest possible position to the removed tree during the nearest planting season. | Annually | Review annually in March | Environment External Contractors | Officer time Existing budgets External Funding |

11 Aim

To provide a quality and efficient service.

Issues

Trees can be perceived as a nuisance to some people who live close to them and the council receives a high number of tree enquiries each year. Common complaints include loss of light, leaves dropping and blocking gutters or pathways, overhanging or encroaching branches, loss of terrestrial or satellite TV reception or general concerns about tree safety.

In some cases trees can be pruned to address these issues, however it is not always possible because it would be harmful to the tree or is not good practice. In these situations this can leave the complainant feeling as if the Council is not assisting. To help address this issue, we will be creating guidance to outline how these issues will be dealt with. To improve the quality service of our service we will look at improving our communication with members of the public.

As part of managing Council trees we employ tree surgery companies who are invited to tender for a contract which encourages a competitive market and keeps our running costs under control. When applying, every company has to demonstrate a range of competencies, professional ability and meet strict health & safety standards. We aim to maintain this way of working, making improvements wherever possible to provide best value. We also aim to share our knowledge of competent contractors by producing a contractor list available for public use.

Policy Statements

T16 All requests for works to trees on council land will be assessed in accordance with current best practice and our guidelines, published on the internet.

T17 For Council owned trees, except for emergencies, enquirers will be contacted within 5 working days and informed of a decision within 4 weeks (28 working days). Emergency requests will be assessed within 24 hours of receipt.

T18 Subject to legislation or work programming, pruning of council owned trees or hedges will be carried out within 6 weeks of instruction to the contractor or in the case of an emergency within 24 hours.



To provide a quality and efficient service.

| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Maintain tree management records on a bespoke computer data base. | In Place | On going | Information Systems External contractors | Existing budget |
| Publish tree management (e.g pruning guidelines). | March 2008 | Feb 2008 | Environment | Staff time |
| Start to make services available on the internet starting with reporting a dangerous tree. | 2009 | Review 2009 | Information Systems Communications Unit | Staff time |
| Tender the tree contract on a 3 year cycle and review effectiveness. | Renewal Date 2008 | Review annually | Environment Finance & Performance Legal & Democratic Services External contractors | Staff time costs controlled |
| Use email or telephone where possible to reduce paper usage and improve response times. | In Place | On Going | Environment Information Systems | Staff Admin Savings |
| Provide weekend and out of hours emergency response for Council owned dangerous trees and trees causing an obstruction to the highway. (Not dangerous privately owned trees unless a threat to the highway). | In Place | On going | Environment Department (PCPPOS & Street scene) | Existing budgets |
| Respond to general enquiries within 5 working days of receipt and to reported dangerous trees within 24 hours during the normal 5 day working week. | In Place | On Going | Environment | None |

12 Aim

To raise awareness of the value of trees through consultation, education and participation.

Issues

Trees provide a great resource for education, recreation and enjoyment and are highly valued by the majority of people. This is evident when we carry out work to old or significant trees or when we plant new trees. On occasion, we are required to carry out work in an emergency, particularly during or after severe weather conditions. In these incidences our priority is to ensure public safety, therefore prior consultation may not be possible.

Currently education, consultation and raising awareness takes place when we carry out large scale planned tree works and tree planting where we think the public will have an interest. With the increasing awareness of the value of community involvement in public services we are aware of our need to keep people informed and involved.

The key method of delivering our aim is through tree planting schemes which improve the sense of ownership communities have and the feeling of making a contribution or difference. We also will continue to produce educational material available for the public via up to date resources like the internet but will also continue to use more traditional methods, such as leaflets.

Policy Statements

T19 Actively encourage communities to participate in tree planting projects.

T20 Actively promote awareness about trees through the available media.

To raise awareness of the value of trees through consultation, education and participation.

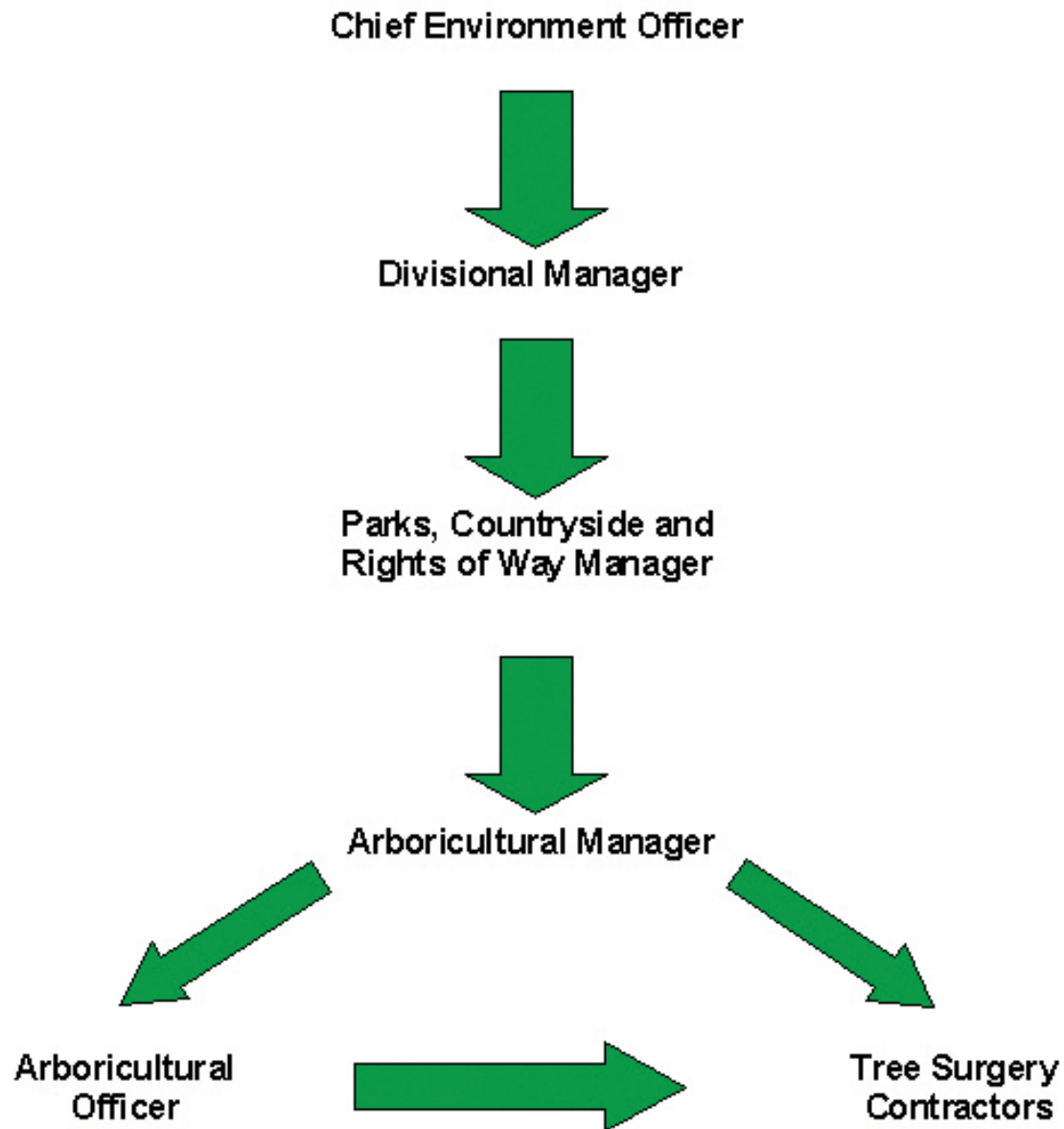
| Action Points | Target | Milestone | Partnerships | Costs |
|---|----------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Work with partners to encourage, support and involve communities and schools particularly during National Tree Week in parks, urban tree planting schemes and other tree related projects. | Annually | On going | Children & Young Peoples Service, Economic Development, Community Groups, Elected Members, Community Councils Treegeneration Forestry Commission Wales | Staff time Existing budgets |
| Inform the community of significant tree felling & planting schemes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updating local Councillors or Community Councils. ● Contacting people locally. ● Expanding the Tree Page of Wrexham website to incorporate bulletins of significant tree work, planting and other general advice. | In place 2011 | On going Review progress 2009 | Elected Members, Community Councils, Community Groups, Residents, Communications Unit, Information Systems | Staff time |
| Produce a series of educational information leaflets and fliers, to be available in paper form and or on the internet and update as necessary. | 2012 | Review progress 2009 | Information Systems Communications Unit Legal & Democratic Services | Staff time Existing budgets |
| Publish articles in local media and inform of up and coming major tree projects. | Annually | On going | Local Media Communications Unit External contractors | Staff time |

13 Monitoring and Evaluation

The strategy will be implemented using the aims and action points in this document. The 'Guidelines for the Public' document accompanying the Tree Strategy will be used to provide specific guidance for council officers and the public to follow in relation to the general day to day management of trees and enquiries.

The milestones in the Strategy will be used to measure our progress and an end of year annual review will be carried out and reported on the internet for each action point where necessary.





The response received has been extremely encouraging, demonstrating that trees are an important part of life to the people of Wrexham. Those consulted include housing tenants, schools, disability groups, youth groups, people requesting questionnaires through local media and answering our on-line questionnaire. In total we received 283 responses in 2 months. 183 of these were via our website, the rest coming from the variety of groups and people mentioned above. We also put a smaller list of questions to the People's Voice panel. From this we received 477 responses. Below we have written the results of both questionnaires:

We want to retain and encourage suitable areas for wildlife in trees, such as leaving standing dead wood that isn't a safety hazard (dead trees or wood provides a good place for wildlife such as bats, insects and woodpecker).

80% Think that this is important and should be done as much as possible.

12% Think dead trees look unsightly and should be removed.

8% Do not mind either way.

Less than 1% think it is unimportant and will not achieve anything.

Plant native trees or trees likely to enhance the wildlife value of the area.

90% Think this is important and a great idea if it will help wildlife.

4% Think this is unimportant, there are probably already enough existing areas for wildlife.

2% Are not sure.

2% Want to know why we need to enhance the wildlife value of an area.

1% Are against this idea completely and say trees should only be planted for beauty and not for wildlife value.

1% Want to know how will this help wildlife.

How much of a contribution do you think trees can make toward making Wrexham a cleaner and more attractive environment?

75% Trees make a considerable contribution.

20% They make some.

2% Did not answer.

2% Very little contribution.

1% No contribution at all.

We want to use trees to help improve the quality of Wrexham's environment and reduce the impacts of climate change. We asked you which of the following methods you think will contribute the most towards this. We have arranged your responses from most important to the least below:

- 1 Plant trees in built up / urban areas (streets) where there is very little greenery or trees. This will help to absorb harmful emissions, provide shade and provide a cool environment on hot days, it can also add financial value to property.
- 2 Phase out the use of chemical sprays used for controlling weeds around trees and replace with greener alternatives such as composted bark chippings.
- 3 Tree planting in public open space (parks, playing fields, small grassed areas) away from built up areas.
- 4 Phase out the use of non recyclable materials for tree planting and replace them with recyclable, reusable or biodegradable materials which will not go to landfill.
- 5 Use the highest quality trees and focus our resources on improving tree planting conditions and aftercare of planted trees to improve their chances of establishment.
- 6 Concentrate resources on finding alternatives to reduce the amount of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other harmful emissions our service emits. For example investigate the use of alternative fuels like bio-diesel for officer's vehicles, biodegradable chainsaw oil.

Officers are frequently asked to 'cut back' trees that are said to be causing a nuisance, leaves in gutters, loss of sunlight or overhanging branches.

44% Want us to prune trees, but only if they are physically touching the property (roofing, walls, fences, sheds etc).

29% Think if people have recently moved into a property they should have considered the effects of nearby trees before buying.

16% Think we should prune trees wherever the public complain the trees are a nuisance even if they are not touching property or doing any damage.

11% Think we should do nothing. The benefits of trees far outweigh the negative impacts trees have on people. If people live next to trees they need to accept that this is all part of living near them.

What sort of information would you like to receive or know about regarding trees?

We have arranged your responses from most important to the least below:

- 1 Who to contact for general tree enquiries.
- 2 How to report a dangerous tree.
- 3 General information about trees. For example, trees and the law or the benefits of trees, educational information.
- 4 Location of important and historical trees in the County Borough.
- 5 The main planned programmes of tree maintenance.
- 6 How to find a qualified and proficient local tree surgeon.
- 7 Number and location of trees planted in the County Borough.
- 8 I do not feel I need to know or receive any information.

How would you like to receive this information? We have arranged your responses from most important to the least below:

- 1 Web.
- 2 Press articles.
- 3 Leaflets.
- 4 Connect.
- 5 Local Councillor.
- 6 Other methods. Suggestions include at tenants meetings, via the estate office, on library notice boards, through media, TV and radio and through public awareness days.

People's Voice Survey Results

How would you like to access this information?

- 1 Web.
- 2 Connect magazine.
- 3 Leaflet.
- 4 Press articles.
- 5 Local Councillor/Community Council.

What sort of information would you like to receive/know about regarding trees?

- 1 How to report a dangerous tree.
- 2 Who to contact for tree enquiries.
- 3 Location of important and historical trees in the County Borough.
- 4 The main programmes of tree maintenance work for the year.
- 5 Number and location of trees planted in the County Borough.

Which of the following will contribute the most to improving the quality of Wrexham's environment and help in reducing the impact of climate change in our area?

- 1 Annual tree planting programme in public open spaces.
- 2 Reduce the amount of chemical sprays we use and replace with alternatives.
- 3 Plant native trees or trees likely to enhance the wildlife value of the area.
- 4 Improving the appearance of streets lacking greenery by creating avenues of street trees.
- 5 Retain and encourage suitable areas for wildlife on trees, such as leaving standing dead wood which isn't a safety hazard (dead trees can be a good home for woodpeckers and bats).
- 6 Use the highest quality trees and focus our resources on improving tree planting conditions and aftercare of planted trees.

What standards of service do you expect from the tree service?

- 1 Public Trees inspected regularly.
- 2 Public Trees managed/pruned appropriately.
- 3 Imminently dangerous dealt with, without public consultation.
- 4 Consultation undertaken for large scale planting/pruning or felling works.
- 5 Enquiries/Requests for service dealt with promptly and efficiently within 10 working days.

Useful Contacts

The Arboricultural Association (AA)

Ampfield House
Romsey
Hampshire
SO51 9PA
Tel: 01794 368717
E-mail: admin@trees.org.uk
Web: www.trees.org.uk

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

Enquiry Service
Countryside Council For Wales
Maes y Ffynnon
Penrhosgarnedd
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2DW
Tel: 0845 1306 229
Web: www.ccw.gov.uk

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

ISA UK & Ireland Chapter
148 Hydes Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands WS10 0DR
Tel: 0121 556 8302
email: enquiries@isa-arboriculture.org.uk
web: www.isa-arboriculture.org.uk

The Ancient Tree Forum

Ancient Tree Forum c/o Woodland Trust
Autumn Park
Dysart Road
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG32 6LL
Tel: 01476 581135
E-mail: ancient-tree-forum@woodland-trust.org.uk

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Customer Contact Unit
Eastbury House
30-34 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TL
Tel: 08459 335577
email: helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
web: www.defra.gov.uk

Royal Forestry Society (RFS)

102 High Street
Tring
Hertfordshire HP23 4AF
Tel: 01442 822028
email: rfshq@rfs.org.uk
web: www.rfs.org.uk

Department of Communities and Local Government

Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Tel: 020 7944 4400
email: contactus@communities.gov.uk
web: www.communities.gov.uk

Forestry Commission Wales (FCW)

Victoria House
Victoria Terrace
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 2DQ
Tel: 0845 604 0845
email: fcwales@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
web: www.forestry.gov.uk/wales

Tree Council

71 Newcomen Street
London SE1 1YT
Tel: 020 7407 9992
email: info@treecouncil.org.uk
web: www.treecouncil.org.uk