

# Peterborough Tree and Woodland Strategy



**DOCUMENT 1: POLICIES AND PRIORITIES 2012**

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## Schedule of Policies

### Policies for Council owned trees and woodlands

**General policies (CTWG);** applicable to all Council trees and woodlands.

- CTWG 1: **The Council will ensure that diverse tree and woodland populations are created, protected, managed and, where appropriate, expanded.**
- CTWG 2: **The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in accordance with its obligations to observe duty of care and the safety of both people and property.**
- CTWG 3: **The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in a way that demonstrates best practice, providing worthy examples for others to follow.**
- CTWG 4: **The removal of trees and woodlands shall be resisted, unless there are sound Health and Safety or arboricultural reasons.**
- CTWG 5: **The Council will encourage a better understanding of tree and woodland management and in so doing promote community involvement.**
- CTWG 6: **The Council will encourage an increase in tree cover by new and replacement planting, placing great emphasis on use of appropriate tree species.**

#### Street tree policy (ST)

- ST 1: **To endeavour to protect street trees from threats such as loss of verges and damage to same.**

- ST 2: **To place a priority on the replacement of ageing street trees; particularly where these adjoin major traffic routes. Planting will ensure the selection of the most appropriate species for the location.**

#### Woodland policy (CW)

- CW 1: **The Council will aim to achieve sustainable management of its woodlands as determined by guidance within a revised Woodland Management Plan.**

#### Urban Woods (UW)

- UW 1: **The Council will manage the urban woodlands towards sustainability in accordance with the objectives and guidance set out in a revised Urban Woodland Management Plan.**
- UW 2: **The Council will encourage community involvement, consult with residents when work is proposed and seek to address the problems of anti-social behaviour in urban woodlands.**

#### Village and rural tree policy (VT)

- VR 1: **The Council will preserve and enhance the distinctiveness of village and rural trees in its ownership.**

#### Landmark tree policy and priorities (LT)

- LT 1: **The Council will preserve and protect trees on the landmark register.**

## **Policies for Privately owned trees and woods**

### **General policies (PT) applicable to ALL Private trees and woods**

- PT 1: **The Council will seek to ensure that all trees and woodlands making a positive contribution to our environment are protected and where necessary managed to enhance that contribution.**
- PT 2: **The Council will respond to tree issues within planning applications in such a way that ensures the retention of good quality tree and woodland coverage or ensures its creation. Development will not be supported that would directly or indirectly damage existing mature or ancient woodland or veteran trees.**
- PT 3: **The outright removal of good quality trees and woodlands shall be resisted in the absence of sound arboricultural or technical reasons such as irrefutable identification of subsidence.**
- PT 4: **The Council will promote awareness and better understanding of tree and woodland management through use of community consultation and involvement.**
- PT 5: **The Council will encourage new and replacement tree and woodland planting, using appropriate tree species**

### **Tree and Development policies (TD)**

- TD 1: **The Council will reject development proposals with inadequate provision for the retention of trees and woods. The Council will encourage woodland creation and tree planting in all new developments.**

### **Protecting Private trees policies (PP)**

- PP 1 **There will be a presumption against the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or tree within a Conservation Area, worthy of TPO status (these may include ancient and veteran trees). The Council will not give consent to fell a protected tree or woodland unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement when subject to a TPO.**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Peterborough is set in eastern England, where the Fens meet the lowlands of the Midlands. This junction of landscapes provides a rich and diverse range of contrasting and distinctive landscapes including fenlands, clay lands, river valleys, gravels and limestone.

The eastern half of the unitary area is reclaimed high quality agricultural land on the flat fens. Originally the margins would have consisted of wet woods and carrs of alder, birch, ash and oak, edging onto vast tracts of brackish marsh, river plains and reeds.

To the west of the City the land becomes more undulating and forms the eastern extent of the Rockingham Forest character area. There are numerous ancient woodlands in this area, many of which are of high nature-conservation interest which are attractive landscape features in their own right. Fields and roads are bound with trees and hedgerows which link a patchwork of woods. These woods, the remnants of the Rockingham Forest, survive in western Peterborough.

Early settlements such as those found at Flag Fen and Barnack led to the clearance of the forest. Later as sea levels dropped and man drained the Fens so his impact on the treescape became even greater.

The rate of change has increased rapidly in the last two hundred years, resulting in the landscape developing into that which we see today. In the Fens there are a few very small remnants of wet woodlands; here the trees that line the roads linking the Fen communities form the main character.

There has been continuous settlement at Peterborough since 45 AD. Early settlement was based around the great abbey of St Peter.

The City itself is a dynamic environment. Through the nineteenth century the City's industrial heritage evolved with the great rail workshops. At the same time the brick industry so closely linked to the City until the 1980's was developing.

Associated with this industrial expansion was the growth of the City. In 1901 Peterborough had a population of 31,000, the last thirty years has seen this grow to 170,000. It is predicted to increase to 200,000 by 2020, so the challenges to maintain a sustainable environment will continue.

The older parts of the City, which accommodated the industrial growth of Peterborough from Victorian times to 1950s, have a structured layout with tree lined roads, formal promenading parks and open spaces. As the City rapidly grew through the 1970's to the present day this was replaced by the more naturalistic planting influenced by the garden cities.

Trees are the largest and oldest living things in our environment. Trees and woodlands are dominant features of the landscape and environment of Peterborough. Collectively they form one of its finest and important features.

They are not simply embellishments, but provide a range of important benefits for the public, although, in the urban environment this may also be the cause of some problems. Trees and woodlands are recognised as an important mitigant of climate change. Whilst their presence cannot halt such changes, they can slow the rate and enable ourselves and wildlife to adapt accordingly.

This strategy sets out to ensure the benefits of trees and woodlands are exploited to their greatest and most sustainable advantage, whilst ensuring problems are promptly and appropriately managed.

The management of trees and woodland is governed by legal responsibilities and influenced by National, Regional and Council policy. In 1998 the Council adopted its first and current Trees and Woodland Strategy. The first strategy sought to recognise the long term commitment required to realise the Council's ambitions for environmental enhancement and protection. This revision will take this forward to develop the policies and priorities to ensure trees and woodlands continue to contribute to the benefit of those who visit live and work in Peterborough.

**The strategy provides the objectives, policies and actions which will establish Peterborough City Council's commitment and continued strategic direction for the protection, planting and maintenance of the trees and woodlands within its authority. Sustainable systems of management will be promoted that will aim to:**

- Maintain or enhance the tree population
- Facilitate the removal of dangerous or potentially hazardous trees
- Promote biodiversity and conserve the tree/woodland eco-system
- Conserve veteran trees with significant ecological, historical and amenity value

- Establish a tree population with a balanced diversity of age class
- Optimise the use of timber and other products of tree management

## 1.1 Background

In 1993 Peterborough was designated as one of four Environment Cities. The City is now committed to creating the UK's Environment Capital. The Council therefore seeks to demonstrate its commitment to the environment through implementing appropriate works and taking account of best practice. All local authorities have a duty to manage trees and woodlands in a way that enhances safety and to protect significant trees for their amenity value.

This document's origins lie in the recognition that long term commitment and consistency are required if our ambitions for long term environmental enhancement and protection are to be realised. It follows on from the original Tree and Woodland Strategy adopted in 1998 and the work of the Tree and Woodland Strategy Councillor Group.

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

This is part of a folio of documents which will form the Tree and Woodland Strategy. The folio will include:

- Document 1: Policies and priorities
- Document 2: Trees risk management strategy.
- Document 3: Action Plan: Based on neighbourhood management plans that include woodlands, shelterbelts, open space and management plans.

The Strategy will contribute to the delivery of the broad range of Council aims, objectives and priorities on the environment, communities, health, and land use planning. It has been developed and influenced through consultation, and will enable the development of Neighbourhood Community Tree and Woodland Action Plans and measures to monitor success and priorities delivery at a local level. It will enable district wide priorities to be focused on local need and to prioritise the use of resources.

The structure of this strategy is to ensure that key Council and National policies are considered and are at the core of the policies and priorities herein. This document will contribute to delivering the broad range of Council aims and incorporate the four environmental strategic priorities associated with creating the UK's Environment Capital in conjunction with priorities on community and land use planning issues. In addition, the strategy has been linked to the "Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests" published in 2007 by DEFRA providing the Government's vision and priorities to 2050.

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

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

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

The distinction between these themes at a local level will not always be clear as they will often overlap because sustainable tree and wood management provides a multitude of benefits; for instance a wood can offer community use, wildlife habitats and act as a resource for raw materials.

## 1.2 The Resource

Surveys of the tree stock of Peterborough have been very limited. Estimates of the numbers of trees vary greatly. The most accurate figures relate to the Council's trees, with approximately 105,000 individual trees, predominantly on highway, parks and open spaces, and an estimated further 1,400,000 trees making up the Council's 280 hectares of woods.

More detailed surveys in other parts of the country suggest that trees in private gardens will exceed 100,000 and the Forestry Commission's estimate show 3% of the district is covered by woodland. The national average is 9%.

Peterborough's trees are not evenly distributed. The density of cover in the City varies greatly, with most trees being in the former Peterborough Development Corporation areas. A similar variance is found with more trees and woods to the west of the City, compared to the sparsely populated Fens to the east.

The principle reason for the uneven distribution is the availability of space. Many of the older areas of the City are characterised by high density housing with small gardens and less public open space. The closeness of the houses to the street leaves fewer opportunities for street tree planting, also, converting front gardens to hard standing and built development in rear gardens have led to significant reduction in planting opportunities. Such loss of space contributes to water run-off and has a negative impact on storm water capacity.

The reclamation of the Fens and the intensive agriculture has led to fewer sites for trees, than further west where there are still remnants of the ancient Rockingham Forest.

Of the 1,500 or so species of trees available and planted in the UK, around 30 are native. A significant proportion of the specimen trees in Peterborough are from a very small number of the available species, dominated by maple (*Acer*), lime (*Tilia*) and cherry (*Prunus*). In the urban woods a similar situation occurs with ash (*Fraxinus*), maple and birch (*Betula*) dominating.

Whilst it is well known that trees can live to a considerable age (200+ years). In the rapidly changing urban environment, life expectancy is greatly curtailed, with most trees living 60 to 80 years. The larger and older trees offer a sense of permanence and greater environmental and amenity importance. Peterborough's tree age demographic mirrors that of the properties nearby, with the vast majority of trees planted since the 1960's. Regrettably this results in the majority of the tree stock maturing at the same time which in turn decreases age diversity within the City tree stock and will subsequently increase management requirements.

### 1.3 Positive Impact of Trees

There is increasing public awareness of the benefits of, and the need for trees as people place a higher priority on the environment in which they live. In urban areas this invariably means that there should be accessible recreational open space, and pleasant tree-lined streets and squares.

#### Benefits from Trees

Trees are essential to life; their value cannot be overstated. Most trees and woodlands in cities are planted to provide aesthetic qualities or screening. Whilst these are two excellent reasons for their use, they also serve many other purposes. The benefits of trees can be grouped into social, environmental, and economic categories.

#### Social Benefits

The strong ties between people and trees are proven by the resistance of communities to the removal of trees. Trees and woodland contribute immeasurably as part of the landscape, particularly in their own right in urban areas, beneficial to people's quality of life and sense of well being, reducing everyday stress, which is particularly important in today's environment. In various locations trees pre-date the urban development around them and provide evidence of the history of those places, and thus are a valuable part of their heritage. In addition research has shown that hospital patients recover more quickly when able to enjoy the view of trees.

Their aesthetic value improves the appearance of our environment, giving variety of scale, form, colour and shape.

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

#### Environmental Benefits

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

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

Wind speed and direction can be affected by trees; the more compact the foliage on the tree or group of trees, the greater the influence of the windbreak.

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

Temperature in the vicinity of trees is cooler than that away from trees and the larger the tree, the greater the cooling effect. By using trees in the cities, we are able to moderate the heat-island effect caused by pavements and buildings.

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

By planting trees and woodlands we return to a more natural environment attracting, supporting and hosting birds, mammals, invertebrates and other wildlife.

**Economic Benefits**

Individual trees increase in value from the time they are planted until they mature. The variability of species, size, condition, and function makes determining their economic value difficult.

Direct economic benefits are usually associated with energy costs. Air-conditioning costs are lower in tree-shaded homes and offices. Heating costs are reduced when a home/office has a windbreak.

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

The indirect economic benefits of trees are even greater. Lowered electricity bills are paid by customers when power companies are able to use less water in their cooling towers, build fewer new facilities to meet peak demands, use reduced amounts of fossil fuel in their furnaces, and use fewer measures to control air pollution.

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

An attractive healthy and vibrant City helps to attract investment, healthy and well maintained trees and woodlands are an integral aspect to achieving this.

**Tree Problems**

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

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

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

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



## 2 THE VISION

The population of Peterborough is anticipated to grow to 200,000 by 2020 with 25,000 new homes. In the same period the number of jobs is expected to grow by 20,000. The Councils vision is to accommodate this growth in a way which is sustainable and will address many of the issues of social and economic exclusion, whilst maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment.

The drive to change often focuses on the targets of the numbers of homes and jobs often forgetting the essential ingredients that make Peterborough special for those already living and working in and around the district.

The overall purpose of this strategy is to provide the framework for a strategic approach to the management and enhancement of trees and woods:

**“A sustainable tree and woodland resource for a growing City.”**

Many of the issues affecting tree and woodlands are cross-cutting. There are strong links with other initiatives in urban design and land use.

Tree and Woodland protection and care is concerned with managing the risks and benefits to ensure the best and sustainable outcome.

### 2.1 Aim

The purpose of this document is to recognise the tree resource under the stewardship of the City Council and identify a standard for its management, which ensures its long term conservation and development for the people of Peterborough and future generations.

**The Council's aim is:**

**“To sustainably maintain, improve and expand the quality of the existing tree and woodland cover.”**

**“To expand the extent of woodland cover through opportunities created through sustainable external funding.”**

The Council will act to conserve and enhance the quality, value, role and diversity of the trees and woodlands in the City by the establishment of regular tree inspections and maintenance, which fulfil the Councils legal responsibilities and also enables it to respond to the concerns and actions of residents. Whilst the removal of trees shall be resisted, when it is necessary to do so replacements will be planted.

The Council are a lead partner in the Forest for Peterborough project led by Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), which states:

*“The Forest for Peterborough is a growing forest for a growing City, a patchwork of habitats which enable both people and wildlife to flourish across Greater Peterborough with a new tree for every resident in Peterborough – 170,000 trees”.*

So far the project has enabled a total of 5,000 native trees to be planted on land owned by the Council. Over the next 19 years of this project the Council will continue to look for opportunities that arise, through review of its land management practices, for new trees and woodlands to be planted which are suitable to their location and which allow the City to maintain a diverse and healthy treescape.

## 3 THEME 1: COMMUNITY AND PLACE

**Objective 1 To ensure that trees and woodlands are managed in a way that contributes to the aims and objectives of the Council.**

**Objective 2 To improve the local environment, the quality of people's lives and their appreciation of trees and woodlands.**

Involving people in the decision making process for the planning, management and use of woods will enhance feelings of ownership, community cohesiveness and promote the well being of neighbourhoods.

## 3.1 Community

When communities become involved in decision making and management they are more likely to use the resource with respect. Individual sites need to be evaluated for their contribution to the community and their recreational potential assessed.

Trees and woodlands offer a variety of outdoor opportunities for recreation and learning. The priority will be to provide high quality access near to where people live and work. To ensure woodlands remain valued as a life long resource, appropriate information needs to be freely available. This should include recognition of their historic, archaeological and cultural significance.

Partnership working promotes community involvement and so links to existing partners should be strengthened and new ones established by providing advice and support to communities with plans to create and maintain their own woodland. Partnerships can help support funding applications and could qualify for funding from organisations such as The Woodland Trust under the 'Morewoods' scheme. The proposed tree planting campaign to create the Forest Of Peterborough is another example of a productive partnership helping deliver the objectives of this Trees and Woodland Strategy.

The planning process can contribute to the community by examining the existing provision of trees and woodland relative to predictions for future needs. The process of Planning Gain through Section 106 Agreements can help site these needs. At present 9.2% of Peterborough's population has access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m of their home. This is in contrast to England where 14.5% of the population has access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m of their home. The Council will endeavour to work with a range of partners to improve access and where there is a deficiency in woods plant new ones. With some enhancements to the urban woods (shelterbelts) these targets could be readily improved for much of the City.

## Consultation

Greater public appreciation of management requirements needs to be achieved, with awareness of what constitutes appropriate management and the rationale supporting it.

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

A detailed and robust consultation protocol shall be developed, which meets the need to inform the community of the reasons for significant tree works and where appropriate, enable them to participate in the decision process.

Significant tree works are defined to be the cyclical and urban wood maintenance programs or where trees of significant amenity, landscape, historical or ecological value need to be removed. Exceptions to this should only extend to emergency works and where the trees present a significant hazard.

When larger scale tree planting takes place, the neighbouring community should be consulted. If there is more than one tree species available for selection then the public may be offered the opportunity to choose and the results of the consultation communicated to all participants.

The method will vary according to the site and neighbouring land use. Methods will include notification and explanation, invitation to participate in surveys, and public or site meetings.

## 3.2 Character

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

The early and integrated approach to tree and woodland planting and management will provide a high quality and sustainable resource which will

reflect local need and assist in the preservation of landscape character and distinctiveness.

Many communities are immediately identifiable by the landscape around their homes and businesses. For instance Park and Central Wards with their avenues of pollarded limes are characteristic of their Edwardian design, and similarly the Ortons and Brettons with their garden city naturalistic landscape of tree lined streets, neighbourhoods and land use zones separated by urban wood interconnected with open spaces, forming a green network.

Many villages are equally distinctive such as Thorney with its “estate” village and parkland landscape, or Barnack with its greens and tree lined streets. Trees also form a defining role within our rural landscape character.

When scheduling tree work or undertaking replacement planting maintaining and enhancing, local distinctiveness will be an essential part of selecting the most appropriate action or tree species. In maintaining distinctiveness the opportunities for a more diverse and sustainable landscape are increased.

## 4 THEME 2: SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

**Objective 3 To identify and preserve trees and woodlands which are recognised for their contribution to maintaining a diverse environment.**

The Council recognises the importance of trees and woodlands and shall preserve those of significance. When appropriate the Council will protect trees using Tree Preservation Orders if identified as under threat. Where considered appropriate, wider consultation, in excess of Trees Preservation Orders ‘A guide to the Law and Good Practice’, will be undertaken prior to confirmation.

**Objective 4 To secure new tree and woodland planting as part of the sustainable growth of Peterborough.**

The Council will ensure that new trees appropriate to the location are planted and that development proposals include this enhancement towards the goal of sustainability.

### 4.1 Sustainability

National and local policy makers have to appraise their policies and practices to ensure they are sustainable. This process is contained within Local Agenda 21 and constituent Biodiversity Action Plans. Biodiversity, the variety of life, including all species of plants and animals and their natural support systems, has an important role in the development of sustainable communities.

The Natural Environment and Rural Community Act 2006 directs that *“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, in so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving bio-diversity.”*

By incorporating habitat creation and conservation of bio-diversity, as detailed within the City Council’s Biodiversity Strategy, into relevant strategies, and linking these to environmental planning and statutory obligations for enhancement within forward planning and development control, the Council can reach set targets.

When undertaking works to trees, the Council must have due regard to the Habitats Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 which provide protection to species and habitats. Appropriate pre-work surveys and timing of operations will be employed to minimise ecological risk. Where appropriate specialist ecological advice will be sought.

## Climate Change

Measures to mitigate and adapt to the predicted effects of climate change will be incorporated into the strategy wherever possible, taking full account of "Climate Change Strategy for Peterborough".

The magnitude and rate of predicted climate change means that trees and woodlands will be significantly affected. Adaptation is therefore an important issue and should be addressed at the earliest opportunity. This is particularly important, because of the long time-frame associated with any management decisions made in tree and woodland management. By the 2080s, an oak tree planted now will be less than half-way through its anticipated life, whilst as a component of semi-natural woodland; it would still be at a juvenile stage. The difficulty for the council is ensuring that decisions made now, particularly over planting material, are appropriate to both the current and future climate.

Initially, the impact of climate change is likely to be most serious and apparent in southern England. Young and newly established trees, together with street trees and trees in hedgerows are likely to be the first affected. Mortality will increase and species suitability will change, therefore it is important to consider the planting stock in adapting to climate change.

Woodland networks will also provide the opportunity for both native fauna and flora to migrate as climate change progresses. It is well documented that trees offer significant benefits of removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. This CO<sub>2</sub> is bound and stored as carbon within the tree. This carbon will remain in the tree up to the point that it is felled. Carbon is held within the tree's foliage, roots, branches and trunks. It is estimated within forest research that each tree locks up 0.546kg of carbon annually, equivalent to 2kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. Research has also shown that woodland soils sequester a large amount of carbon, and plant matter is the single most important source of carbon in soil.

Peterborough is committed to creating the UK's Environment Capital. One of the key elements of this work is proactively working to achieve the Government's targets set out in the 2008 Climate Change Act which commits the UK to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, and CO<sub>2</sub> by at least 26% by 2020. The key mechanisms to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions are to reduce energy consumption through increased energy efficiency e.g. developing low carbon homes and moving to renewable energy sources. Peterborough City Council, as an organisation, has committed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 35% of 2008/09 levels by 2014 and is progressing various projects to achieve this goal. The produce from managing the trees and woodlands could be used as carbon neutral fuel to power heating and/or combined heat and power equipment for buildings. Whilst using locally produced woodfuel may go some way to supporting this target, it is not a project that is currently classed as 'in scope' within this target, however the authority is happy to explore this aspect further and open discussion with interested parties.

It is considered likely that the composition of trees and woodland adjoining residential areas will be changed. High water demanding species and species prone to gale damage will be removed and replaced with more suitable species.

Natural regeneration of native species will be encouraged so that the natural genetic variation will provide a buffer against climatic variation. Species sensitive to drought conditions such as Beech, Silver Birch and Yew will form no more than 10% of planting.

## 4.2 Natural Environment

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces, designed and managed as a multi-functional resource, delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits. Trees and woodlands are a very important part of this and play a vital role in defining Peterborough as an Environment City. These benefits are further expanded within the Green Grid Strategy.

In June 2011 The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature – Environment White Paper CM8082 was published. This details the Government's aspirations to protect and improve our tree resource. Clear commitment to manage, conserve and enhance these assets are detailed within the paper. This strategy aims to assist delivery of the policy emphasis within the White Paper.

Trees and woodlands, especially old trees and ancient woodlands, are amongst our richest habitats. The highest levels of biodiversity are often found in woodlands that are actively and sensitively managed. Their diversity is even greater when they form part of a mixed landscape in close proximity to other features such as ponds, grasslands and even residential gardens. Hedgerows linking woodlands act as wildlife corridors and so greatly promote the extent and range of wildlife. In order to protect this ecological asset an evaluation will be given to the sensitivity of the species and habitats identified to ensure public access remains appropriate, without harming the biodiversity interest.

The challenge in the future will be to maintain and enhance diversity. Planning and management needs to be aimed at providing a natural environment which is resilient to climate change. Climate change will impact on the range of native wild plants and animals and hence the character of our woods. The presence of some invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed will need to be addressed.

Woodlands protect ground water from pollution and lessen the likelihood of flooding by intercepting rain before it reaches watercourses. Strategically planted shelterbelts intercept air pollutants. To realise integrated and multifunctional landscape management the Council will need to work closely with external partners and a variety of landowners.

## 5 THEME 3: ASSET MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS

### Objective 5 To ensure that legal responsibilities are met

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

#### 5.1 Asset Management

Trees growing in an urban environment require a more intense and therefore expensive management regime than would be required for their survival within woodlands. In addition to this, consideration needs to be given to the expectations of the public.

Trees have been the subject of disputes and litigation for several centuries, this leading to the formation of a highly regulated industry accommodating concerns of damage to property, personal injury and lack of daylight.

The Council has "a duty of care to maintain its trees and woodlands in a safe condition".

To meet this duty the Council will take appropriate action to lessen risk and so minimise exposure to liability. The Health and Safety Executive states within 'Management of the risks of falling trees 2007 (SIM 01/2007/05)' that an effective Local Authority system contains:

- An inventory of the tree and woodland stock within its ownership and responsibility.
- An overall assessment of the risks these pose.
- Risk assessments of prominent individual trees based upon their location, species, size, age and history.
- Pro-active system of regular inspection by a competent person and a system of obtaining additional specialist advice when inspection reveals defects and factors outside the experience and knowledge of the inspector.
- A system to enable people to report damage to trees and to trigger inspection.

- A method of recording and reviewing the systems along with any remedial actions.
- Risk management plan.

The structure and the folio of documents that form this strategy will form the Council's risk management plan for trees and woodlands, continuing the work of recent years in updating and implementing the original strategy, management plans and schedules for parts of the tree and wood stock.

The introduction of a pro-active tree management system will optimise use of resources and move the Council further towards achieving a defensible risk management system for trees and woods. The aim of a pro-active contract is to provide the best possible quality of tree population within the physical restrictions and resources available.

Pro-active rotational management for each of the category of trees and woods will be based upon risk assessment and prioritisation. The frequency of tree inspections will be based on the findings of individual tree hazard inspections or risk zones set up within the City. It is highly probable that the City may need to be divided into risk zones that quantify risk e.g. school playgrounds are very high risk and thus will require more frequent inspection to a low risk zone such as a minor road.

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

For a pro-active tree strategy to be effective the Council will need to invest financially in the trees and woodlands to achieve a basic standard.

Pro-active management will be complimented by structured systems to respond to service requests. These should diminish as the benefits of pro-active management manifest themselves, delivering greater efficiency and economy savings.

## 5.2 Standard of Service

As organisms of longevity and complexity, in order to manage trees sustainably, a strategic operational approach is essential. As understanding of the way pruning affects trees has evolved, the basic premise has not changed: all tree surgery is not for the benefit of the tree, other than to enable it to continue to co-exist in an artificial human environment.

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

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

The complexity of tree stock within Peterborough requires well trained Arboriculturalists as an integral part of a defensible tree and woodland management service. This has been substantiated by industry best practice, peer review and confirmed in common law precedence.

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

The re-letting of the Tree Management Contract has enabled the standards of workmanship to be assured, to provide continual improvement and the flexibility needed to respond to changes in service emphasis.

The City Council received over 2000 enquiries per year, concerning trees, when the 1998 strategy was first produced. The prioritising of existing resources over recent years has reduced this number per annum and limited the amount of time to handle each one.

## 6 COUNCIL TREES

Tree management directs maintenance operations to existing trees as well as operations to promote the establishment of new planting, incorporating a long term view of how best to care for this resource.

### 6.1 General

The City Council's tree stock can be found in eight principle categories.

- **Street Trees:** Planted in pavements or road verges. These help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and improve the overall appearance of the street scene.
- **Residential Areas:** Growing within and around housing estates. Planted by the original Parks Department or the Peterborough Development Corporation to enhance the local environment.
- **Parks and Open Spaces:** These are frequently the trees of greatest local significance and provide maximum visual amenity for both residents and visitors.
- **Woodlands:** These are some of the remaining pockets of the original Rockingham Forest that once covered the area. Grimeshaw Wood, an ancient woodland site and Local Nature Reserve in Bretton, is one such woodland which is an unusually valuable wildlife and amenity resource within the urban fringe.
- **Urban Woods:** Formerly classed as shelterbelts they were mostly planted alongside the parkways and in areas that separated the new townships. They provide visual amenity and habitat for wildlife.
- **Village and Rural Trees:** The villages have a unique character, much of which is achieved by their content of historic trees, as well as those growing within the surrounding countryside.

It is hoped that the use of a True Works monitoring system will assist the Council in monitoring customer concern, reacting to and prioritising works and the way these works are undertaken. It can lead directly to improvements in consultation and communication. This software may also help monitoring budgets, while positively affecting new woodland management plans, and form an integral part of the street tree and village tree cyclical management programs.

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

As documents 2 and 3 in this strategy are produced, the measures necessary to evaluate the level of success will be developed, and the resources necessary for that success will be identified.

- **Other Sites:** The Council own and maintain numerous other sites such as schools, allotments, cemeteries and crematoria. Many such sites contain trees of local importance.
- **Landmark Trees:** Individual specimen trees that by virtue of their age, size, location, heritage or biodiversity value offer considerable benefits. This justifying their value to be maintained as a separate entity.

Whilst the City Council has undertaken broad surveys of trees in its ownership, to date no definitive records exist of their location, condition or work requirements. It is the Council's intention to introduce a tree database system that records details of tree numbers within Council ownership, their locations and condition. This would go some way in fulfilling its Health and Safety responsibilities and promoting the pro-active element of the contract which to date has only been implemented for certain street trees.

In March 2011 a partnership agreement was signed with the newly formed Enterprise Peterborough. This long-term (23 year) strategic partnership will mean that Enterprise Peterborough will be responsible for delivering arboricultural services within the Unitary Area. Not only will they be responsible for dealing with all enquiries related to Council owned tree stock, they will play a lead role in the delivery of the Trees and Woodland Strategy through creation of the risk management strategy and management plans. This new contract aims to deliver pro-active management of the City's tree stock.

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

### **Council tree and woodlands general policies (CTWG)**

**These policies and priorities apply to all trees and woodlands managed by the Council.**

#### **Policy CTWG 1**

**The Council will ensure that diverse tree and woodland populations are created, protected, managed and, where appropriate, expanded.**

Priorities:

CTWG 1.1: To provide and maintain a computer system which enables accurate analysis of the tree and woodlands, facilitates the management of resources and enables their prioritisation.

#### **Policy CTWG 2**

**The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in accordance with its obligations to observe duty of care and the safety of both people and property.**

Priorities:

CTWG 2.1: To set out risk management plans for the tree population.

CTWG 2.2: To survey all Council owned trees and woodlands, incorporating risk management.

CTWG 2.3: To undertake maintenance works in support of duty of care.

#### **Policy CTWG 3**

**The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in a way that demonstrates best practice, providing worthy examples of management for others to follow.**

Priorities

CTWG 3.1: To provide plans for long term management and development of trees and woodlands as essential components within the landscape.

CTWG 3.2: To ensure the best use of resources is made during the planning of operations.

CTWG 3.3: To supplement the Council's spending by seeking additional funding from external sources where ever possible.

CTWG 3.4: To realise any economic potential of trees, and woodlands, or materials generated from them, where this does not conflict with the other policies and priorities of the Strategy.



CTWG 3.5: To develop a pest and disease control strategy in conjunction with neighbouring Council's where appropriate.

#### Policy CTWG 4

**The removal of trees and woodlands shall be resisted, unless there are sound Health and Safety or arboricultural reasons.**

##### Priorities

CTWG 4.1: The removal of healthy trees in response to complaints shall be resisted unless the complaint has an overriding justification and no alternative management practice can be implemented.

#### Policy CTWG 5

**The Council will encourage a better understanding of tree and woodland management and in so doing promote community involvement.**

##### Priorities

CTWG 5.1: To identify trees and woodlands of particular interest and develop a method of consultation with local residents and Parish Councils on works to be undertaken.

CTWG 5.2: Continue to support a voluntary urban tree warden scheme to work with officers to encourage community involvement in tree planting and management.

CTWG 5.3: Develop a practical consultation protocol supported by sufficient resources to ensure successful implementation.

#### Policy CTWG 6

**The Council will encourage an increase in tree cover by new and replacement planting, placing great emphasis on use of appropriate tree species.**

##### Priorities

CTWG 6.1: To develop a planting plan that sustains the tree population, with emphasis on the long-term replacement of mature and over mature trees.

CTWG 6.2: Allocate a percentage of the total tree budget to fund the replacement of dead or inappropriate trees.

CTWG 6.3: As and when the prospect arises, to work with other organisations to secure additional funding streams for the management of tree stock.

## 6.2 Street Trees

The City has approximately 14,000 street trees which have to survive in a difficult roadside environment. Utilities demand space, as do road signs and streetlights. The limited space is made all the more challenging because of polluting car emissions, road salt, oil and other contaminants. Against the odds trees can and do survive, albeit with a limited life expectancy.

The character of Peterborough's street trees varies considerably, from the older Victorian planting in roads like Broadway, the inter-war developments such as Dogsthorpe, to the newer developments built by the Peterborough Development Corporation. The Victorian areas contain large old trees, many of which are managed as pollards. Today there is access to a wider range of smaller ornamental trees that are suitable for restricted sites.

Many of Peterborough's streets have tree populations that are over-mature. Such trees are vulnerable to climatic change, disease and damage. As time progresses this over-mature population of street trees will be disappearing as individual trees deteriorate and have to be removed. In these areas new trees could be introduced between the mature specimens to ensure that there will be continuous future tree cover.

As a result of the 1998 Tree and Woodland Strategy a survey was undertaken to plot the approximate location of all street trees. Resources have prevented this work progressing further to-date. Cyclical maintenance is currently limited to the re-pollarding of Victorian pollarded Lime trees within the urban area on a bi-annual basis, and the removal of epicormic growths annually. The program is divided into the City wards. Several are selected to receive attention each year.

## Street tree policy (ST)

### Policy ST 1

**To endeavour to protect street trees from threats such as loss of verges and damage to same.**

#### Priorities

ST 1.1: To develop a robust cyclical management plan in conjunction with the risk management strategy and a detailed resource analysis.

ST 1.2: Work with and monitor the activities of utility companies in order to minimise accidental operational damage to trees.

### Policy ST 2

**To place a priority on the replacement of ageing street trees; particularly where these adjoin major traffic routes. Planting will ensure the selection of the most appropriate species for the location.**

#### Priorities

ST 2.1: To plant new and replacement street trees in appropriate sites, giving priority to streets where trees are currently standing or have been in the past.

ST 2.2: In streets where tree planting is not possible in pavements or verges, to encourage residents to plant trees in their front gardens.

## 6.3 Trees In Residential Areas

A large proportion of public sector housing in the City was built by the Peterborough Development Corporation. Extensive planting of both trees and shrubs took place on small open spaces in close proximity to these properties using a limited range of stock.

Quick growing species were often chosen and planted to provide rapid temporary greening of the new areas with extensive shrub beds and group planting of trees. Many trees were planted at high densities, either without consideration of the future growth potential or with the intention that they would either be thinned or that there would be high failure rates.

Present management concentrates on dealing with complaints from residents. These generally stem from the large number of trees planted within a restricted area in close proximity to housing.

It is estimated that there are over 50,000 individual trees in North and South Bretton, Orton Waterville, Paston and Ravensthorpe alone. Currently cyclical management of these trees has not been achieved.

### Residential area tree priorities (RA):

RA 1: To develop a robust cyclical management plan in conjunction with the risk management strategy and a detailed resource analysis.

RA 1.1: To commence a removal, and where suitable, replacement program of trees that, in the judgment of a qualified arboriculturist, are clearly of a size and species inappropriate for their location.

RA 1.2: Where replacement planting of any persuasion is inappropriate, to plant new trees nearby instead of the location that has been cleared.

## 6.4 Parks and Open Spaces

Trees are fundamental to the structure of parks and very important contributors to the environment of the area. The nature of different parks and green spaces is very variable. For example, Central Park has a declining tree population displaying over maturity in comparison to Bretton Park with younger but neglected stock now in great need of selective thinning. The latter is now urgently required to prevent very high losses over the next ten years. For this reason management has to be planned on a site by site basis.

Certain newer areas of Peterborough contain large open spaces of short grass and minimal structure planting. These areas are ideal for enhancement. Research within The Woodland Trusts "Trees or Turf" report aims to demonstrate that management of woodlands could be markedly cheaper than maintaining some types of grassland. By creating small woodlands on such amenity grassland opportunities for wildlife can be promoted in addition to landscape enhancement.

Since 1998 several parks have been surveyed and essential works carried out. These include Central Park, Itter Park, Stanley Recreation Ground and Cherry Orchard Recreation Ground. There are approximately 30,000 individual trees on these sites.

#### **Park and open space tree priorities (POS):**

- POS 1.1: To develop a robust cyclical management plan in conjunction with the risk management strategy and a detailed resource analysis
- POS 1.2: To ensure that trees are fully integrated within management and improvement plans for Parks and Open Spaces.
- POS 1.3: To commence a replacement program that incorporates a diverse range of tree species and where appropriate, to re-establish historic landscapes.

## **6.5 Woodland**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are amongst the least wooded areas in the UK. The total area of woodland, of 0.1ha and over, is 12,325ha. This represents 3.6% of the county land area. A considerable proportion of this is ancient semi-natural woodland which represents a valuable wildlife and landscape resource.

The City Council owns six ancient woodlands, managing Grimeshaw Wood (including Highlees Spinney), Pocock's Wood in Bretton and leasing the others to Nene Park Trust and Woodland Trust. These areas amount to approximately 27 hectares and have attracted the designation of Local Nature Reserves.

The typical composition of local ancient woodland is Oak, Ash and Field Maple, traditionally managed as coppice with standards for timber production. Such management ceased early last century and many woodlands have now become neglected or replaced with softwood plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Peterborough contains 78 hectares of wet woodland habitat across 73 sites. Of these, the majority are less than 1 hectare in size. Wet woodland is nationally and locally rare. It is a priority habitat within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plan owing to a rich diversity of habitat. Opportunities to create new wet woodlands will be sought in accordance with the wet woodland audit completed within 2004 by a partnership of organisations including the Forestry Commission and the City Council.

A new woodland management plan is required that will detail work prescriptions for the next 20 years, and long term objectives to sustain them for the next 50 years. Neglect over the last 75 years, in addition to close proximity of new urbanisation, has taken its toll.

The management plan would set a strategy ensuring preservation of integrity and that operations would be sensitive to matters of ecology and sustainability. In drawing this up extensive consultation would be required with local and regional groups. The plan would not only conform to the UK Forestry Standard but also assist with further applications for grants from the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

#### **Woodland policy and priorities**

##### **Policy CW 1:**

**The Council will aim to achieve sustainable management of its woodlands as determined by guidance within a revised Woodland management Plan.**

Priorities:

CW 1.1: To produce a Woodland Management Plan for all woodland owned by the City Council. This plan would demonstrate the following desires:

- To maintain continuous tree cover and manage the woods towards sustainability.
- To make provision for public access.
- To maintain woodland boundaries, combat fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour.
- To improve the range of habitats within the woods.

- To increase biodiversity and control invasive species.
- To preserve the historic features in the woodlands.
- To increase the amount of standing and fallen deadwood (where this does not compromise safety.)
- To provide educational opportunities.
- Restore coppice interspersed with standards.
- Encourage suitable natural regeneration.
- Encourage community involvement where appropriate.
- To attempt to plant trees of local provenance.

## 6.6 Urban Woods

The areas originally classified as shelterbelts were planted by the Peterborough Development Corporation in the 1970's and 80's as part of the landscape master plan. As time has passed the function of this planting has shifted and today the title of Urban Woodlands is more appropriate. These woodlands cover a total area of 250 hectares and have approximately 400 miles of boundary alongside roads, residential, commercial and industrial premises.

These trees are a mix of planted natives, those naturalised and shrub species that are characteristic of a woodland setting. The mix is predominantly made up of fast growing species which continue to mature. Components of the Peterborough Development Corporation management plans were implemented, but the time has come for a new management plan to direct operations in the light of the current urban woodland content and condition in 2012. Such a revision would support an application to the Forestry Commission under the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

Limited active management is now badly affecting these urban woodlands, their quality and ability to fulfil two of their intended functions, notably to act as visual and sound deadening barriers. Neglected woodlands become difficult to manage in a sensitive or cost effective manner.

### Policy UW 1:

**The Council will manage the urban woodlands towards sustainability in accordance with the objectives and guidance set out in a revised Urban Woodland Management Plan.**

#### Priorities:

UW 1.1: To produce an Urban Woodland Management Plan for all woodland owned by the City Council with the following aspirations:

- To manage the woodlands on towards sustainability.
- To manage the woodlands to provide continuous woodland cover.
- To maintain and enhance landscape amenity.
- To increase biodiversity and maximise wildlife habitats.
- To provide opportunities for improved access and recreation, where appropriate.
- To protect and preserve archaeological and cultural features.
- To include measures that can assist with adaptation to climate change, as well as to maximise capacity for carbon sequestration.
- To identify potential new sites for woods and encourage their creation adjoining existing woods and, where appropriate, making full use of natural regeneration.
- Replacement trees to be established by natural regeneration and enrichment planting.

- To attempt to plant trees of local provenance.

#### Policy UW 2:

**The Council will encourage community involvement, consult with residents when work is proposed and seek to address the problems of anti-social behaviour in urban woodlands.**

Priorities:

- UW 2.1: Produce a protocol for communicating details of tree works proposed and to be a good neighbour ensuring that operations are undertaken in a manner sensitive to the wishes of residents.
- UW 2.2: To encourage public appreciation, recreational use, enjoyment and community involvement.
- UW 2.3: Introduce measures to control vandalism, unauthorised tipping, the dumping of waste and litter and resident encroachment.

## 6.7 Village and Rural Trees

Many of the trees in the villages and rural areas are privately owned. In spite of this the Council still has responsibility for a significant proportion which total approximately 5000. These trees being approximately up to 200 years old are amongst the oldest managed by the Authority.

Locally, Elm was one of the most important trees. When Dutch Elm Disease struck this dominant hedgerow tree was lost. Considerable areas of relatively denuded landscape have not been replaced, particularly within areas of more intensive farming. To this day there remains reliance upon Elm regeneration that exists within a continual state of growth followed by disease related decline. Planting of Ash or Oak would lessen dependency within the landscape upon this regeneration.

Distinctive village scenes can be maintained and enhanced by planting trees that originally generated such landscapes. The use of native species will be prioritised within locations where appropriate i.e. rural verges. In certain village locations the use of non native stock may be considered where site restrictions or the surrounding landscape dictates.

Age related risks of village trees and their close proximity to property necessitates frequent inspections to be followed by a programme of works based upon the findings, this followed by production of cyclical management plans. To date only a small proportion of trees alongside rural roads have been identified and inspected. It would be wise to bring these trees into cyclical management without delay so that the City Council can demonstrate duty of care.

In recent years Parish Councils and Tree Wardens, on several occasions, successfully obtained funding for trees within their wards. These trees have typically been planted on village greens and verges, in response to the village community's desire. Where possible the Council has helped facilitate these requests by offering suitable planting locations and the commitment to manage those trees planted on Council owned land.

#### Village and rural tree policies and priorities (VR):

##### Policy VR 1:

**The Council will preserve and enhance the distinctiveness of village and rural trees in its ownership.**

Priorities:

- VR 1.1: To develop a robust cyclical management plan in conjunction with the risk management strategy and a detailed resource analysis.
- VR 1.2: To replace all trees which are removed in these areas and attempt to expand tree cover if appropriate.
- VR 1.3: To re-plant using suitable native trees except where this would result in loss of familiar vernacular.

## 6.8 New and Replacement Planting

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

Whilst the present strategy requires that each tree which is removed be replaced, the constraint of resources means this only happens at the higher profile locations.

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

**“Right Tree in the Right Place”**

is followed every time a new or replacement tree is selected and planted.

This will compliment the planting specifications which ensure healthy trees are established, failures minimised, and defects which could affect the mature condition of the tree removed at the time which is most cost effective.

A tree requires space in which to grow, thrive and provide its many positive benefits. To do this any proposed site should provide adequate space for the tree in the long-term. Species selection must be with consideration to the tree's likely ultimate size.

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

Peterborough's most limiting resource is space. This needs to be used appropriately, and to greatest sustainable benefit. The application of "Right Tree in the Right Place" framework will ensure new planting and natural regeneration are appropriately located and designed, and that woodland expansion is not to the detriment of protecting and restoring existing woodlands. The framework for tree and location selection is set out briefly in Appendix 2 "Right Tree in the Right Place" framework.

In some parts of the City the constraint of sufficient public space means a low number of trees. Often in these areas there are prominent privately owned sites. The Council has historically offered a limited financial support, via its natural environment grant scheme, to enable residents to plant such trees where these would have a direct benefit to the local environment.

Maintaining and enhancing the existing trees and woods is a priority, but opportunities to increase the size and distribution of the resource is an essential part of Peterborough's sustainable growth. Not only does the planting of trees enhance existing open space, and streets but also new developments. New planting should endeavour to expand green infrastructure.

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

**New and replacement tree priorities (NRP):**

Priorities:

NRP 1: To develop a detailed "Right Tree in the Right Place" framework for guiding tree selection on existing Council sites as well as for observation within the planning process.

NRP 1.1: The Council will plant appropriate new and replacement trees to ensure that the current extent of tree coverage is maintained or expanded.

NRP 1.2: To incorporate aftercare into all maintenance programmes.

NRP 1.3: Formulate a planting program with greatest priority given to appropriate sites in deprived communities, key transport corridors and gateways, large open spaces with little existing natural vegetation and finally areas within new developments, in this order.

NRP 1.4: Recognise local distinctiveness when selecting and planting trees.

NRP 1.5: Encourage community involvement, commemorative and sponsored planting schemes on Council land.

NRP 1.6: Use planning conditions and Section 106 Agreements to secure tree planting and subsequent establishment operations.

## 6.9 Other Sites

The City has many other trees within school grounds, churchyards, cemeteries, crematoria and other premises.

Schools contain a significant number of prominent trees offering a huge educational resource. There are significant opportunities for planting new trees within these sites and encouraging children to be involved in the planting and aftercare of these trees. External funding may be available to assist such project, e.g. from The Woodland Trust who offer free tree packs for schools.

Whilst there has been an assessment of the trees at schools, a cyclical management program is still limited. There are approximately 4,000 trees on education sites managed by the Council. Initial work needs to be extended so as to bring all trees into a management program. Several school sites have now obtained Academy status, which will become self governing. It is intended that at the point of transfer these schools will be required to continue to comply with the policies contained within this strategy.

Trees within churchyards, cemeteries and crematoria are highly prominent, enhancing the distinctiveness of their location as well as being part of the local history. Bretton Crematorium was built in ancient woodlands and so the trees very much set the tone, especially being situated next to Pococks Wood.

Many of these trees are amongst the oldest trees in the City and those that carry the greatest level of risk. It is therefore essential that they are entered into a schedule for cyclical works.

### Other site priorities (OS):

Priorities:

OS 1: To develop a robust cyclical management plan in conjunction with the risk management strategy and a detailed resource analysis.

## 6.10 Landmark Trees

Trees and woodlands offer a sense of permanence in a rapidly changing City. In many instances, such as within Bretton, they are the indicators of an area's past, particularly the ancient woodlands and veteran trees that are retained within the City's landscape.

These trees and woodlands, as well as being prominent features also, by virtue of their age and size, can represent the highest degree of risk. They need space to survive and can be especially vulnerable to changes in their growing space. It is therefore important that they are identified and carefully managed to ensure their risk is minimised.

Since 1998 a register of landmark trees has been maintained. All the trees on this register are inspected annually. At the moment it extends to the trees which have been surveyed in the last six years and contains approximately 200 trees. The biggest constraints on extending the register are the amount of the tree stock which has been surveyed in that time, and the ability to survey trees on the register.

### Landmark tree policy and priorities (LT):

#### Policy LT1:

**The Council will preserve and protect trees on the landmark register.**

Priorities:

LT 1.1: To continue to survey trees and woodlands so as to find and register all landmark trees.

LT 1.2: To extend the resources available to ensure that all landmark trees can be adequately maintained.

## 7 PRIVATE TREES

Many notable trees within the City grow in private gardens. The majority of land owners take a positive view of their trees and most larger landowners are aware of the grant aid schemes and sources of advice to pay for maintenance works. There is potential for further planting and schemes to promote this in order to assist with greening of the City.

As a Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to protect trees of greatest amenity value. This section sets out the City Council's approach to the protection of privately owned trees.

### Private tree and woodland general policies (PT)

#### Policy PT 1

**The Council will seek to ensure that all trees and woodlands making a positive contribution to our environment are protected and where necessary managed to enhance that contribution.**

##### Priorities

PT 1.1: To utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect trees through Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area status.

PT 1.2: To comment and advise on strategy and other initiatives which affect trees and woodlands.

#### Policy PT 2

**The Council will respond to tree issues within planning applications in such a way that ensures the retention of good quality tree and woodland coverage or ensures its creation. Development will not be supported that would directly or indirectly damage existing mature or ancient woodland or veteran trees.**

##### Priorities

PT 2.1: To be guided by best practice for a consistent approach to assessing planning applications.

PT 2.2: To consider prosecution when planning conditions are breached or there are breaches of TPOs or the requirements of Conservation Area regulations.

PT 2.3: Trees and Woodlands are to be given significant consideration within planning applications, requiring submission of surveys in accordance with British Standard 5837: 2005 "Trees In Relation to Construction- Recommendations".

PT 2.4: When granting permission set conditions for the retention, protection, planting and care of trees.

PT 2.5: Utilise commuted sums associated with Section 106 Agreements to fund the establishment of tree cover.

PT 2.6: To utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect good quality existing trees threatened by new development, including proposals for changes to existing properties.

#### Policy PT 3

**The outright removal of good quality trees and woodlands shall be resisted in the absence of sound arboricultural or technical reasons such as irrefutable identification of subsidence.**

##### Priorities

PT 3.1: To protect trees of amenity value.

#### Policy PT 4

**The Council will promote public awareness and better understanding of tree and woodland management through use of community consultation and involvement.**

##### Priorities

PT 4.1: To promote good standards of tree and woodland care.

PT 4.2: To encourage owners of notable trees that are worthy of protection to adopt best practices for tree care.

PT 4.3: To continue to support a tree warden scheme to reach and encourage volunteers and educate same with active involvement in trees.

#### Policy PT 5

**The Council will encourage new and replacement tree and woodland planting, using appropriate tree species.**

##### Priorities

PT 5.1: To require developers to submit details of tree species and numbers within their proposals.



- PT 5.2: To promote tree and woodland planting where it is considered this will enhance general amenity.
- PT 5.3: To encourage actions that will increase woodland in the locality.

## 7.1 Trees and Development

The significance of the London–Stansted–Cambridge–Peterborough (M11) Growth Corridor means there will be major investment in housing, community facilities and infrastructure. This brings with it opportunities for innovative and strategically planned tree and woodland enhancement. It is essential that trees and woodlands are recognised as an essential part of the design and fabric of growth.

Accommodating the predicted growth in Peterborough’s population and economy provides significant opportunities for a strategic approach to tree and woodland planting. There are a number of initiatives to enhance the natural environment. They all offer opportunity to increase the tree and woodland cover of Peterborough as part of the mosaic of green space and habitats. However as each has its own agenda and priorities, efforts should be made to ensure that they are coordinated and complimentary.

The scale of development which will need to take place in coming decades will facilitate significant funding for the creation of attractive and green residential and business environments. Developers have a valuable role as the key player in the majority of land use changes. They need to respect the existing trees and where appropriate incorporate tree planting within new developments.

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

One of the most frequent threats to trees, and the most common reason for making a TPO, is the proposed development of land upon which trees are growing. Trees however offer considerable benefits to a development site, including a diversity of landscape, maturity, provide vital habitat for wildlife, improve air quality and provide shade, which assists in energy conservation. In order to decide which trees are suitable for retention developers and the City Council will be required to undertake a balanced assessment approach, as provided within British Standard 5837: 2005 “Trees In Relation to Construction - Recommendations”.

The Council gives pre-application advice and guidance for stakeholders such as developers, builders and architects. Schemes are frequently amended to ensure that significant trees are properly retained often through a process of working with the applicant to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the conflicts that can arise. Consideration in the future will be given to the creation of a Supplementary Planning Document in respect to trees and development as part of the Local Development Framework process.

### Tree and Development policies (TD)

#### Policy TD 1

**The Council will reject development proposals with inadequate provision for the retention of good quality trees and woods. The Council will encourage woodland creation and tree planting in all new developments.**

Priorities:

- TD 1.1: To utilise and enforce planning powers to retain and protect existing trees within new development as well as trees threatened by proposed changes to existing properties.
- TD 1.2: To monitor and enforce planning conditions of consent, where necessary.

## 7.2 Protecting Trees

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

The implementation of such statutory restrictions on the rights of a landowner is always a potential source of conflict and difficulty. However, many of our finest trees and woodlands would not be part of our landscape today if such protection had not been used. Equally it is noted that the creation of "Friends of" groups may have also safeguard some of these assets.

The resource of privately owned trees within the City is a significant asset to its population. Not only do these trees often form some of defining characteristic of our townscape and countryside equally they provide an essential element of the City's Green Infrastructure, providing microclimates, wildlife habitats, connectivity of habitats etc.

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

### **Statutory Protection**

Under the Forestry Act 1967(as amended) permission from the Forestry Commission to fell growing trees is often required. This permission is granted via a Felling licence. Typically an application would be required where trees above a certain stem diameter above ground level or more than 5 cubic metres of timber is felled within a given calendar quarter.

In conjunction with its duty, as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, the Council will incorporate policies relating to Trees and Woodlands within its Local Development Framework. Policies protecting trees exist within the Core Strategy and Planning Policies Development Plan documents.

There are over 350 TPOs and 29 Conservation Areas. The pressure for development necessitates the pro-active use of TPOs, however the limited resources makes this generally impractical, and TPOs therefore tend to be used reactively when a threat to the condition or retention of a tree is known.

Since 1998 the Council has prioritised and reviewed many of the older TPOs. This process has now halted due to the lack of resources.

The work on trees protected by a TPO or in a Conservation Areas places a duty on the tree owner to be granted permission from the Council prior to undertaking the work. The Council has a duty to respond to these requests within 8 or 6 weeks respectively.

### **Protection through Advice**

Free advice is provided by the City Council and is seen as an important area of work contributing to the general protection of the tree population. When it is sought in conjunction with planning and TPOs this makes the process more efficient and therefore provides a cost effective service.

There are, unfortunately, many people willing to offer tree advice which is inaccurate, and may have serious consequences for the tree and its owner. Arboriculture is an established technical discipline where qualifications at various levels are available. Research is carried out to further our knowledge of trees and their care, good advice is available and should be sought from reliable sources. Tree owners should be aware that research has resulted in updated and substantially changed tree management in the last 20 years. Consequently, any person offering advice should keep their knowledge up to date, through membership of an appropriate professional body.

Also of concern is the number of people who carry out tree surgery work whose technical abilities are poor. This can lead to low standards of work, which are not in the interests of the tree or its owner. Reputable companies, capable of working to recognised standards of work (such as "British Standard 3998, 2010, Recommendations for Treework"), are few in the City area, this factor alone results in many trees being unnecessarily damaged by unsuitable and unsympathetic "pruning".

The Arboricultural Association produces a list of contractors and consultants who have been examined and found to reach recognised standards. However, whilst the list continues to grow, the numbers are at present fairly limited and not well spread geographically. The Council is unable to recommend contractors owing to the need for detailed assessment and potential legal liabilities on the Council. Advice leaflets directing residents to seek the services of a competent contractor/consultant are however offered along with useful guidance provided by the Arboricultural Association.

## Private protecting trees policies (PP)

### Policy PP 1

**There will be a presumption against the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or tree within a Conservation Area, worthy of TPO status (these may include ancient and veteran trees). The Council will not give consent to fell a protected tree or woodland unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement when subject to a TPO.**

Priorities:

PP 1.1: The Council, where appropriate will continue to protect significant trees.

PP 1.2: No objection or consent for works will be provided if the Council is satisfied that:

- The long term health and appearance of the tree is not impaired.
- The work does not unjustifiably inhibit or prevent the full and natural development of the tree.
- The work is necessary for the continued retention of the tree.
- The work is consistent with good arboricultural practice.
- The work is consistent with sound woodland management.

PP 1.3: Consider TPOs for all appropriate trees on land which is no longer the responsibility of the Council.

PP 1.3: To maintain records of TPOs and complete the appraisal of older TPOs. Where necessary revoke old Orders and serve new ones.

## 8 IMPLEMENTATION

To secure the long term health of the region's trees and woodlands the philosophy of the "Right Tree in the Right Place" must be widely understood. This will enable national, regional and local policy to be implemented to best effect.

Key to supporting this strategy will be resources. Delivery of the direction will require local interpretation and setting of priorities, the latter to be based upon assessment of local need, available resources and whole landscape consideration.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation, and therefore, whilst these policies guide decisions they should not be considered totally prescriptive. Individual policy should not be considered in isolation; all relevant policies should be taken into account when reaching a decision.

Allied to this document is the need for a supplementary Action Plan to co-ordinate the priorities and available resources.

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

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

Partnerships will greatly assist the Council to identify and secure external funding and sponsorship, and contribute to achieving the aim and objectives of the strategy. The English Woodland Grant Scheme and the 'Big Tree Plant' administered by the Forestry Commission could be approached in the making of applications for funding.

### 8.1 Measures of Success

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

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

Outcome indicators relevant to the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Reducing the cost of insurance claims year on year.
- Reducing the number of emergency call-outs to damaged or failed trees.

### 8.2 Strategy Review

This strategy is an evolution of the 1998 Tree and Woodland Strategy and reflects the Council's key responsibilities to manage its own tree stock, to protect trees of amenity value and to secure new tree and woodland planting as the City grows.

There should be annual progress reviews to facilitate budgeting and allocation of resources. Monitoring will consider the extent and rate of progress towards achieving the priorities. More detailed reviews at five year intervals could examine policies, aims, objectives, and provide the opportunity for change or adjustment as required.

## 9 APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Operational Guidelines

#### Daylight Loss

Action will normally only be considered where the separation between the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 6m for trees with a height of over 12m, or less than half the height of the tree for smaller trees, or where the separation between the edge of the canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2m.

A 'habitable room' means a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but specifically excludes WCs, bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways.

Where a situation falls within these guidelines, cases will be prioritised according to proximity, and account will also be taken of the orientation of the affected window. Further consultation may modify initial decisions. Opinions expressed by the community will be taken into account and hence will influence operational instructions.

#### Direct Root Damage

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

#### Drain Blockage

Trees do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain, but they will ruthlessly exploit any existing fault. The removal of one tree will not prevent other vegetation from exploiting the same opportunity.

The Council's presumption is that the appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is to ensure that the drains are watertight. Accordingly, the Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council managed trees are blocking drains.

#### Honeydew

As with leaves, honeydew is not readily controllable by pruning. Certain trees such as Lime are more prone to producing this than other species and in many respects it may be best to tackle honeydew with a routine cleansing response.

Pruning will not normally be regarded as correct response to honeydew and will certainly not be the sole method of alleviating such problems.

#### Leaves, Seeds and Fruit

Leaves and seeds are carried freely on the wind and are beyond the control of the Council. The presumption is that residents will be prepared to remove saplings, clear leaves from pathways and gutters and remove small twigs that have landed within their gardens. Pruning will not normally be undertaken to attempt to reduce the fall of leaves, seeds or fruit.

#### Obstruction of the Highway

The Council will seek to maintain adequate clearance of the highway relative to the type of traffic using that route. Complaints about low branches over the highway will be investigated and dealt with promptly.

#### Obstruction of street lights and road signs

The Council will endeavour to ensure that trees under their management do not obscure road signs or prevent street lamps from illuminating the highway.

The purpose of street lamps is to illuminate the public highway and where adequate illumination of the highway is present, the Council will not normally take action to improve the levels of illumination of private property.

#### Safety

Where there is a clear and foreseeable threat to the personal safety of residents or to property emanating directly from the condition of a tree, action will be taken to minimise that risk.

Indirect risk such as leaves making pavements slippery will only be dealt with through pruning in unusual circumstances and where no other options are available.

The presentation of unfounded fear of a tree will not normally result in action to prune the tree.

### **Subsidence**

Tree related subsidence damage is a complex issue and each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Where damage has occurred, the Council will require that adequate assessment and monitoring is undertaken to demonstrate that the tree is involved and that such evidence be submitted in support of any request for action.

Requests for action based on an unquantifiable possibility of damage occurring at an unspecified time in the future will not be considered unless there other overriding reasons to take action.

### **Television and other radio equipment**

There is no right to good reception and in many cases it is possible to resolve issues of tree related poor reception by finding an engineering solution. The Council will only consider requests to prune trees to improve reception after all the following conditions have been met:

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

## **Appendix 2: Right Tree in the Right Place Framework.**

### **Landscape Impact**

- Consider the existing use of the space and question whether the presence of trees would be a positive addition.
- Identify the landscape type and what constraints this will place on the selection of species.
- Examine existing habitats so as to assess their compatibility with additional trees and woodlands and therefore the latter's ability to add value.
- Establish the history of tree cover to determine whether new additions would be appropriate.

### **Site Constraint**

- Maintain local distinctiveness.
- Assess the impact of planting on vistas.
- Consider the presence of underground and overhead services.
- Meet the statutory safety requirements of access for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Assess impact on the nearest buildings to be sure that future potential problems can be minimised, particularly subsidence.
- Prioritise sites in relation to where greatest public benefit can be realised.

### **Species Consideration**

- Select species known to thrive on the soil type, its compaction, nutrients and available water.
- Consider space available relative to size of tree at maturity unless the tree is destined for controlled management such as coppicing or pollarding.
- Select the largest growing species the site will reasonably accommodate.
- Consider use of natural regeneration where appropriate.
- Where possible use native species.
- Maintain diversity within the tree population.
- Consider the species' tolerance to disease and wind damage.
- Consider the use of fruit tree planting as a productive and attractive feature.

- Consider potential nuisance of fruit fall in the autumn, slippery paths and associated requests for service to deal with problems.

**Community Consideration**

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

**Appendix 3: References**

Arboricultural Association 2005, "Tree Surveys: Guide to Good practice"

British Standard 3998 "Tree Work"

British Standard 5837 "Trees in Relation to Construction"

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

DEFRA 2007, "A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests"

Department of Environment 1973, Circular 90/73 "Inspection, Maintenance and Planting of Roadside Trees on Rural Roads"

Department of Environment 1975 Circular 52/75 "Inspection of Highway Trees"

Department of Environment 1978, Circular 36/78 "Trees and Forestry"

DETR 2000, "Tree Preservation Orders, Guide to the Law and Good Practice"

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Health and Safety Executive 2007, "Management of Risk from Falling Trees"

Forestry Commission, "The case for trees".

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Peterborough City Council 1998, "Tree and Woodland Strategy"

Peterborough City Council 2005, "Growing the Right Way"

Peterborough City Council 2006, "Climate Change Strategy"

Peterborough City Council 2006, "Management of Ancient Woods"

Peterborough City Council 2006, "Peterborough Open Space Strategy"

Peterborough City Council 2007, "A Place for People to Grow"

Peterborough City Council 2007, "Urban Woods Management Plan"

Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Woodland Trust "Space for People"

Woodland Trust 2002, "Woods for People"

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