# Fylde Council Tree & Woodland Strategy:

## sustainable management of the borough's urban forest.

2016-2032

# Contents.

# Introduction.

**"***Urban forestry is the sustained planning, planting, protection, maintenance, and care of trees, forests, greenspace and related resources in and around cities and communities for economic, environmental, social, and public health benefits for people*…"

(Deneke, F. 1993. Urban Forestry in North America: Towards a Global Ecosystem Perspective)

Trees are one of our most enduring living assets. Unlike other features of the landscape and built environment, trees accrue value as they age, increasing in stature, majesty and functionality over time. Their longevity takes them into the fourth dimension, so trees need space for decades, not just years. They are now recognised as being valuable to society by delivering multiple benefits across a range of areas.

And yet they are often overlooked and under-valued. Ironically, at a time when scientific research is bringing the vital importance of trees to the forefront, other forces are working to remove them from our towns and countryside.

Large trees in the built environment are especially out of favour, yet we now know it's these trees that have the greater functional value for society. Public realm planting, for so long an important component of the urban forest, giving character and a unique sense of place to areas, is now subject to non-replacement policies, meaning that without intervention even our Conservation Areas could be depleted of street trees.

The north west of England is low on woodland cover, with Lancashire having even less than elsewhere in the region.

The Strategy aims to look after the trees we have, encourage the planting of new trees and woodlands through the Planning system, and direct the planting of the "right tree in the right place". The overarching goal of this document is to drive sustainable management of Fylde's urban forest. In doing this, other aims will be achieved. Synergies exist between Fylde Council's goals and those that will be driven by the Strategy, because the benefits produced by trees coincide with Fylde Council aims:

- **Value for Money**
- **A clean and green borough**
- **A vibrant economy**
- **A great place to live**
- **A great place to visit**

## Theme One: our objectives.

1. To preserve the trees we already have using Planning-based documents and tree management policies robustly based on technical standards and industry guidance.

2. To increase the borough's urban forest through planning policies, conditions, tree planting and community engagement.

3. To secure the "*right tree in the right place*" so that trees are future-proofed and will not be removed prematurely.

4. To address a trend towards non-replacement of street trees.

# Theme Two: The strong case for Trees.

### 1.0 The benefits of Trees

"*Trees make places work, look and feel better. As well as playing a role in climate-proofing our neighbourhoods and supporting human health and environmental well-being, trees can also create conditions for economic success*."

(Trees in the Townscape – a guide for decision makers'. Trees and Design Action Group 2012)

### 2.0 Trees as Green Infrastructure

This is defined by government as:

*"A network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. As a network it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments, and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls."*

The trees growing on green spaces deliver a range of important benefits:

- **Economic benefits** including flood management and alleviation to reduce the risk of flooding and increasing the draw of the area to local visitors and tourists as well as enhancing property values.
- **Environmental benefits** including climate control through air cooling in summer months, provision of habitats and migration routes for wildlife, reduction of surface water flooding and filtration of pollutants.
- **Social and cultural benefits** including outdoor areas for recreation, transport, education and relaxation.

### 3.0 Eco-system services

Ecosystem services provide the link between ecosystem assets on the one hand and the benefits received by society on the other. People benefit from both the materials that ecosystems provide (such as the harvesting of timber from woodland) and from the outcomes of natural processes (such as the benefits from clean air that has been filtered by an ecosystem.

Ecosystem services that contribute to human well-being are classified into:

- **Provisioning services** – products such as: food (crops, meat and dairy products, fish and honey); water; fibre (timber and wool); and fuel
- **Regulating services** – benefits such as: water purification; climate regulation; noise and air pollution reduction and flood hazard reduction
- **Cultural services** - non-material benefits, for example: through cultural heritage; recreation or aesthetic experience.

Trees feature strongly in both green infrastructure and the delivery of eco-system services. In April 2016, new government guidance to local authorities was issued, containing much that is supportive of the need for a tree strategy. The guidance recognises the importance of green infrastructure –" *Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits, notably eco-system services, at a range of scales, derived from natural systems and processes, for the individual, for society, the economy and the environment. Green infrastructure should, therefore, be a key consideration in both local plans and planning decisions where relevant*."

(*planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/green-infrastructure/*)

**4.0 Climate Change – carbon sequestration and adaption**

**"***Trees have an important role in helping society to adapt to climate change, particularly in the urban environment. Tree and woodland cover in and around urban areas will be increasingly important for managing local temperatures and surface water. Large tree canopies are particularly beneficial. Guidelines should be followed by all concerned parties both to ensure that we continue to maintain and plant trees in urban areas***."**

('Combating climate change: A role for UK Forests Forestry Commission 2009)

Climate change is now an accepted fact. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its Fifth Assessment Report in 2014 –

"*It is virtually certain that there will be more frequent hot and fewer cold temperature extremes over most land areas on a daily and seasonal timescales, as global mean surface temperature increases. It is very likely that heat waves will occur with a higher frequency and longer duration. Occasional cold winter extremes will continue to occur. Extreme precipitation events over most of the mid-latitude land masses and over wet tropical regions will very likely become more intense and more frequent*."

('Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers' IPCC 2014)

Trees are chiefly important in climate change adaptation, as identified in the Forestry Commission document quoted above, but also in mitigation, since they absorb the primary greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. Figures from the Forestry Commission suggest that trees play a small but important role in climate change mitigation by acting as carbon sinks – places where carbon dioxide is taken from the atmosphere by trees and then stored until the trees are felled or decay naturally. This is most pronounced when trees are young and growing. It stabilises as they mature.

**5.0 Climate Change – trees and flooding**

Severe flooding after storm events in northern England during late 2015 resulted in CONFOR and Forest Research publishing a report in March 2016 entitled **'Forestry and Flooding'**. From this emerged the following summary points:

- The National Flood Resilience review should examine the case for greatly enhanced tree planting in those areas severely affected by flooding in December 2016 and January 2016;
- The UK government should recognise that in addition to reducing flood risks, tree planting can deliver a wide range of other benefits, including strategic timber supply, reduced carbon emissions, enhanced biodiversity and greater recreational opportunities;
- The Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and other agencies as appropriate should identify, as a matter of priority, where tree planting in upland river catchments in the UK would be most beneficial to reduce future flood risks;
- The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, as part of the National Flood Resilience Review, should work with HM Treasury to identify financial mechanisms (grant schemes and fiscal measures) that could be used to encourage increased tree planting in those target areas selected by the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

Fylde is not an upland area and is unlikely to experience the kind of flash flooding that Cumbria underwent in December 2015, but the report emphasises the fact that trees, especially woodlands, are important in helping us adapt to extreme weather. Much of Fylde is reliant upon a grid of drainage systems, and increased tree cover can better enable those systems to cope with storm water runoff by delaying its entry into the system.

**6.0 Trees and Health**

Clear links between trees and both mental and physical health have been established, beginning with early research during the 1980s**.**

Researchers in the 1980s such as Rachel and Stephen Kaplan first drew attention to the importance of natural environments, especially trees, for our state of mind and physical recovery from ill health.

In 1989 the Kaplans advanced “Attention Restoration Theory” (ART), which asserts that spending time in nature serves to restore our ability to concentrate and reduces stress. This built on the earlier work by Roger Ulrich, whose long –term study of patients in recovery from surgery between 1972 and 1981 proved a link between the shortened recovery times and general sense of wellbeing in patients who had a view of trees from their hospital bed compared to those who did not. The clinical benefits of a stronger connection to the natural environments included reduced stress, faster recovery times and decreased use of strong painkillers.

In a 1991 study by Terry Hartig and his associates (Mang and Evans), stressed individuals who took a forty-minute walk in an urban nature area dominated by trees reported improved emotional states and performed better at a proofreading task than equivalently stressed individuals taking a walk in an urban setting without trees.

A 1997 study by R. Miller found that employees who could look out their office windows and see trees and nature were happier at work.

In 1985 M.J. West discovered that prison inmates with views of nature had fewer health-related stress symptoms, such as digestive complaints and headaches, than prisoners with views of buildings or prison walls

These findings can be linked to Biophilia Hypothesis, which suggests that there is an instinctive and innate bond between human beings and nature. While this may seem somewhat remote, it is being taken seriously in places such as England's second city: Birmingham has declared itself the UK's first Biophilic City, joining others internationally such as Singapore, Wellington NZ, Portland Oregon, Washington DC and Milwaukee. (http://biophiliccities.org/). The subject is treated in an extensively - referenced Forestry Commission document, **'Promoting wellbeing through the environment: the role of urban forestry'.**

**6.1 NHS Forest**

The NHS Forest promotes the enjoyment and creation of woodland and green spaces for the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and communities. Their website advises

"*Access to greenspace, particularly including trees, reduces cortisol (stress) levels, increases physical activity and speeds recovery if you have been ill. The NHS Forest makes the simple connection between health and the environment*."
(http://nhsforest.org/)

**6.2 Woodlands and Dementia**

In June 2015 Forestry Commission Scotland published a Research Note entitled 'Forests as places of mental wellbeing for people with dementia'.

"*Initial results from the study found that a pilot programme of activities, led by Forestry Commission Scotland rangers in an urban woodland setting, provided an overwhelmingly positive experience for people with early-stage dementia, by offering meaningful experiences that contributed to well-being and feelings of self-worth. The woodland environment also provided a 'library' of resources and stimulation. The programme helped people with early-stage dementia remain active and connected within the community, enabling them to maintain their independence for as long as possible, and provided support for carers. Such programmes can be seen as a new and innovative way of engaging with people with early-stage dementia, which could complement therapeutic interventions*."

**6.3 Asthma**

In the United States, which has seen the incidence of childhood asthma increase by 50% since the 1980s, particularly in socio-economically deprived areas, a 2009 study by Columbia University concluded "*Trees may help prevent asthma, either by encouraging outdoor play or through an effect on air quality*"

**6.4 Cardio-health**

The University of Chicago published a study in June 2015 on the positive effects of the City of Toronto's large urban forest. They reported that

"*People who live in neighbourhoods with a higher density of trees on their street report significantly higher health perceptions and significantly lower cardio-metabolic conditions. We find that having ten more trees on a city block on average, improves health perception in ways comparable to an increase in annual personal income of £10,000 higher median income or being ten years younger*."

**6.5 Children and Trees**

Exposure to woodlands and the natural play enjoyed within has been is beneficial to children. The Woodland Trust lists four developmental gains from the interaction between children and trees:

- Imaginative, unconstrained play
- Building self-esteem and confidence
- Developing outdoor skills
- Learning about wildlife and the environment

(Woodland Trust: 'Trees can benefit your children too' 2012)

The relationship between outdoor play children's access to nature was highlighted earlier through a study by Natural England. The altered relationship with natural places between generations was quantified – "*Children spend less time playing in natural places such as woodlands, countryside and heaths than they did in previous generations. Less than 10% play in such places compared to 40% of adults when they were young*."

But the demand for such places is still present – 81% of children would like more freedom to play outside, and 85% of parents would like their children to be able to play in natural spaces unsupervised.

(Natural England 'Childhood and Nature: a survey on changing relationships with nature across generations' 2009)

Outdoor play among trees develops children's motor skills.

In 2004 Fjurtoft in Norway compared play in playgrounds by children aged 5 to 7 years with play in outdoor 'open environments'. Children who played in a natural outdoor environment had significantly better motor fitness, balance and coordination than their peers who played in playgrounds. Further studies with preschool children in Norway and Sweden found that children who played in natural environments (among trees, rocks and uneven topography) showed greater motor fitness gains over a year

(Leeds University/PCT 'Tackling obesity through the healthy child programme: a framework for action' 2009)

**6.6 Trees and Social Cohesion**.

Published in 2005, Forest Research's Social Research Group published '**Trees & Woodlands: Nature's Health Service**. This made similar connections between trees and wellbeing, but also makes a salient point – "*Woodlands are inexpensive places to visit, an important factor when considering health inequalities and social exclusion*"

Access to trees, woodland and green spaces is therefore of wide-ranging benefit and transgresses socio- economic groups. They encourage social cohesion by removing exclusivity in leisure. If the woodlands are in walking distance, they can be enjoyed at zero cost.

**7.0 Economic Benefits from trees.**

Research carried out by Kathleen Wolf PhD, a social scientist at the University of Washington DC, Seattle, points to trees being important for place perception, footfall, shopping experiences and economic regeneration. Her view is summarised by the term "*trees earn their keep*". Shoppers expressed preferences for places where trees were present and associated these shopping areas with higher product value, product quality and merchant responsiveness. Study participants indicated that they were more likely to spend longer periods of time and would travel greater distances to visit a retail district having trees. These findings cut across demographics, with respondents from different localities and incomers reporting similar attitudes.

Interestingly, it was noted in the study that business owners have difficulty accepting this and rate tree benefits lower than shoppers do despite that fact that,

" *Research suggests that investing in trees across a central business district, including areas undergoing revitalisation, can bring more people to shop and that they may spend more during their visits*."

(Article: "*The Urban Forest"* published in *'Communities and Banking'* Federal Reserve of Boston Spring 2013 edition)

There is a transparent link therefore to the introduction of tree planting schemes in Fylde Council's Regeneration schemes. An outcome of the strategy should be to encourage the afforestation of town centres through Regeneration projects because they are particularly relevant to the objectives of economic regeneration schemes.

From the above, it is clear that trees have an important role to play in society and that they are capable of delivering an array of benefits across many areas. They are essential to sustainability of the borough.

## **Theme Three**: Fylde's urban forest.

**1.0** Fylde's urban forest encompasses trees in many contexts and includes trees in private ownership, the public realm, highways, and blocks of woodlands in the rural areas. An aim of the strategy should be to encourage sensitive management of all the trees and woodlands in the borough and strive for a no net loss approach.

**1.1** The contribution of privately-owned trees to enhancing the public realm cannot be overlooked: about two thirds of all the trees we experience in the built environment are in private properties. (Source: Trees in Towns II)

**2.0 Key areas in Fylde**.

**2.1 Lytham**: One of the larger and more affluent settlements, Lytham has a renowned population of trees associated with the gardens of detached properties and the street tree planting in the wider grass verges. The contribution of privately-owned trees in older, large properties cannot be underestimated and probably helped give rise to the epithet "leafy Lytham". The combined effect of private trees and those in the public realm can create a quality of place that is difficult to achieve elsewhere.

**2.2** Lytham is characterised by larger trees - wych elms, London planes, sycamores and holm oaks. In key public open spaces such as Lowther Gardens, pines are predominant. Despite the coastal location, there is a normal range of tree genuses in all but the most exposed parts

**Wych elm at Hastings Court**.

**2.3** Lytham's Woodlands: Lytham is distinct in having some sizeable urban woodlands. These are in in separate ownerships, but all were captured in a prescient 1951 Tree Preservation Order that has ensured they remain almost intact despite the advance of development.

**2.4** Street trees in Lytham have historically been an important feature of the town and are still strongly in evidence in such places as the Lytham Avenues Conservation Area. The dimensions of these trees buck the current trend towards smaller stock, with many forest-sized species being present, but owing to a Lancashire County Council policy of non-replacement they are a diminishing resource.

**London planes in Lytham Avenues.**

**2.5 St Annes- on- Sea:** The neighbouring settlement of St Annes on Sea is closely associated with Lytham and the two are linked by Clifton Drive, an arterial highway that was once tree-lined. This avenue of trees is now depleted but some remain in the part that falls within the Lytham Avenues Conservation Area. St Annes itself shares some of the benefits of privately-owned trees seen in Lytham, and the influence of the St Annes Conservation Area is clear in locations such as St Annes Road East, where the low-density housing allows the retention of large trees in generous front gardens.

**2.6** St Annes lacks the accessible urban woodlands that are found in Lytham, though two (formerly one but now divided by highway creation) exist on its eastern boundary at Mellings Lane and are in community/local stakeholder ownerships and management.

**2.7 Kirkham:** The largest settlement in the east of Fylde Borough, Kirkham has seen considerable expansion since the 1990s and is currently the subject of new, major developments that extend the town to the west of the A585 and into open countryside.

**2.8** Public open spaces in Kirkham often feature mature trees of high value. Some years ago these spaces were devolved onto Kirkham Town Council, which now manages them. Many of the older trees on these open spaces are TPO'd.

**2.9** While the nucleus, which is a Conservation Area, has few trees, the last period of expansion in the 1990s embraced some areas of former agricultural land south -west of the old town, most notably the St Georges Park development. Many large areas of trees, woodlands and ponds were retained in this scheme, and these were supplemented by well-designed landscaping schemes that continue to offer high visual amenity and a quality of place today.

**Old and newer tree planting at St George's Park, Kirkham.**

**3.0 Rural Fylde:** The countryside around Fylde features a number of scattered small settlements with limited formal open spaces but many areas of woodlands, often associated with former estates and country houses.

**3.1** Two rural villages, Singleton and Thistleton, have Conservation Area status. In both, privately-owned trees are major contributors to the ambience of the area, and Singleton especially has a large and highly-valued woodland, which is managed for the community by stakeholders of the Singleton Trust.


**Singleton Estate woodlands.**

**3.2** Other significant woodlands are found at Weeton, where the army base provides a large deciduous woodland, and Clifton, where the Grade II listed Clifton Hall stands in shelter of eight hectares of woodland.

**3.3** The whole of Fylde features small areas of mainly deciduous woodlands however, all of which are considered Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat in the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

**4.0 Arterial highways** throughout the rural area are planted with “woodland buffers”. The effect of these highway tree planting schemes is to deliver a strong identity to the borough. Tree-lined roads create a sense of arrival to the area and the verdant atmosphere they bring attaches to Fylde so that it is experienced and remembered as a “green” place.

**4.1** This overview reveals Fylde’s urban forest to be a composite product, with contributions made by rural woodlands, private houses, street trees, landscape planting, community woodlands and dense buffer planting along major highways. It is this composite that the Urban Forestry Strategy seeks to protect, increase and enhance.

**4.2** The SWOT analysis table below is designed to provide a shorthand view of the issues facing the borough’s urban forest.

**Table One: Strengths and Weaknesses.**

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| • Apparently large existing urban forest.<br>• Good levels of community involvement (Witch Wood, Lytham Hall).<br>• Politically receptive environment for tree planting.<br>• Good soils and climate for trees.<br>• Significant woodland attached to heritage assets (eg Lytham Hall.)<br>• Strong history of TPO deployment.<br>• Fylde's streamlined TPO system.<br>• Statutory controls available to influence tree management, protection and planting.<br>• Large resource of rural woodlands<br>• Accessible urban woodlands (Witch Wood, Green Drive, Lytham Hall, Mill Hill Wood etc.)<br>• Emerging local plan.<br>• Large open space resource.<br>• Legacy from 1990s developments of high-quality landscaping.<br>• Perception of Fylde as a 'green' borough. | • Urban forest not objectively quantified.<br>• No asset - value derived for the urban forest.<br>• Landscaping currently seen as a 'tick-box' matter.<br>• Poor enforcement of landscaping.<br>• Rural woodlands are often unmanaged and inaccessible. Fall below Forestry Commission thresholds for funding.<br>• TPO caseload requires constant updating.<br>• TPO enforcement record poor.<br>• No TPO enforcement policy.<br>• Stronger policies for tree protection need deriving.<br>• Open spaces are in varied ownerships - council, town council, parish and private.<br>• Many open spaces lack significant trees.<br>• Difficult to quantify and harness positive feeling about trees.<br>• No data exists about the borough's urban forest. Management of an unknown asset is difficult. |

**Table Two: Opportunities and Threats.**

| Opportunities | Threats |
|---|---|
| • Emerging local plan.<br>• Tree strategy opportunity to embed tree protection policies in local planning.<br>• Adopt tree management policies for public realm trees.<br>• Identify suitable sites or areas for tree planting or woodland creation.<br>• Review TPO caseload and update GIS. Make pro-active TPOs.<br>• Build on volunteer bases such as Witch wood and Lytham Hall.<br>• Recruit town and parish councils in tree planting and protection.<br>• Enrol Fylde in the Tree Council's tree warden scheme.<br>• Raise general awareness of the importance of trees to society.<br>• Increase the biodiversity interest in the borough.<br>• Create tree-lined avenues in key areas – build a sense of arrival<br>• Build partnership links with Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and other relevant agencies.<br>• Explore using S106/CIL funds to finance woodland creation.<br>• Continue to plant trees through Regeneration schemes.<br>• Promote woodland creation generally through policy/strategy<br>• Support Forest Schools where appropriate.<br>• Encourage tree sponsorship from local business and individuals.<br>• Secure tree and woodland planting through planning | • Absence of tree strategy.<br>• Trees and tree issues not always viewed seriously.<br>• Pre-emptive felling in development applications.<br>• Forestry Commission undergone repaid funding re-structure.<br>• Withdrawal from European Union/loss of European Structural Investment Funds and FC funding.<br>• County Council non-replacement policies for street trees.<br>• Lack of County Council level support for tree planting.<br>• Future-proofing tree species against a changing climate.<br>• Development pressure.<br>• Inadequate tree protection in development proposals.<br>• Risk aversion – fear of large trees.<br>• Trend to plant only small/medium-sized trees in new landscaping.<br>• Insurers and lenders prejudiced against trees near property.<br>• Biological hazards – introduced diseases and plant pests. |

| | |
|---|---|
| conditions or unilateral undertakings where possible.<br>• Increased outdoor recreational opportunities.<br>• Future-proofing Fylde against climate change.<br>• Public health benefits. | |

## Theme Four: enhancing the urban forest.

**1.0 Open spaces:** opportunities exist to increase tree cover in Fylde. Across the borough unplanted open spaces exist, many of which could accommodate tree planting.

**Unplanted grassed areas in St Annes**.

**1.1** These green spaces are in varied ownerships. Fylde Borough Council disposed of many high-quality green spaces to the town and parish councils some years ago but continue to own several in Lytham and St Annes and provide tree management to Kirkham Town Council.

**1.2** Open spaces may also belong to social housing associations or in cases where landscaped area were adopted by a management company, be in private ownership.

**1.3** In regard to St Annes, Fylde Council owns several large sites that have scope to accommodate group of trees or even small woodland planting schemes. These sites are managed by the council's Parks Team.

**1.4** Kirkham Town Council owns many high-quality green spaces many of which feature mature trees. Tree Preservation Orders apply to several of these sites.

**1.5** A drawback of the devolution of green spaces to town and parish councils is that they lack in-house expertise on tree matters. This can result in tree mismanagement and incorrect response to requests for tree removals.

**Action Point: it will be an aim of the tree strategy to:**

- **Encourage and aid new tree planting through partnership working with other agencies.**
- **Provide trees to such bodies through a donorship scheme if appropriate.**
- **Work with, and provide expert arboricultural advice, to town and parish councils.**
- **Use the tree preservation order mechanism to prevent removals of trees on green spaces.**
- **Invite town and parish councils to adopt the strategy.**

**2.0 Highway verges**: throughout the borough trees are planted formally in grass verges and along arterial roads as buffer planting. The aggregate of these trees makes an important strategic contribution to the borough's urban forest.

**2.1** Since 2005, Lancashire County Council Highways have operated a non-replacement policy for all street trees. Individuals, or district councils etc, are allowed to replace trees like-for- like but at their own cost. The outcome of this is an absence of coordinated street tree replanting. Ultimately it will result in a depleted street tree resource.

**2.2** Lancashire County Council Highways will no longer adopt new trees in the highway. Any that are planted must be done so under licence from LCC and all liabilities must devolve upon to tree donor.

**2.3** The loss of street trees has become noticeable and has a negative impact across the borough. This impact is crosscutting: public amenity, quality of place, property values, biodiversity, and climate change resilience are all threatened by this approach.

**Mythop Ave Lytham: non-replacement (and bad management) of street trees.**

**2.5** In 2017 and 2018, Fylde Council undertook a replacement street tree planting scheme on Clifton Drive, Lytham St Annes. Thirty-four new trees were planted and the scheme was universally well-received. These restored the tree-lined boulevard effect to Clifton Drive.

**2.6** There is scope and justification to extend such schemes, where necessary, to other areas.

**Action Point: an aim of the tree strategy is to redress the loss of street trees in the borough. This will be achieved through:**

- **Financing replacement trees from a dedicated tree planting budget.**
- **Planting the "right street tree in the right place" to design-out problems.**
- **Resisting the loss of street trees.**
- **Use of the TPO system on Highways trees where appropriate - eg Conservation Areas.**
- **Resisting street tree felling to permit dropped kerbs.**
- **Requiring tree-lined frontages to new developments.**

**3.0 Woodlands:** woodlands are valuable for their eco-system services and as potential for emergent biomass markets. Accessible woodlands also important in providing outdoor recreation and contribute to social cohesion and social capital, providing benefits to public health while doing so.

**3.1** Large-scale woodland creation is problematic since development land is at a premium in the settlement areas and in the rural area most agricultural land is Grade 2 Best and Most Versatile.

**3.2** Owing to the recognised high value of woodland, the strategy supports new woodland creation and appropriate extensions to existing woodlands where landscape character assessment supports this.

**Action Point: an aim of the strategy is to encourage the sensitive management of existing woodlands and support the creation of new ones. This will be achieved through:**

- **Extending protection to woodlands using proactive tree preservation orders.**
- **Liaising with the Forestry Commission on felling licence applications.**
- **Using the planning system to prevent woodland losses to development.**
- **Exploring the use of developer contributions for woodland creation.**
- **Partnership working with community groups to assist in woodland management and exploring funding opportunities.**
- **Setting up a council approved contractor scheme.**

## Theme Five: protecting the urban forest.

**1.0 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990**. The means to protect trees in enshrined in planning legislation, and they are considered material to all planning applications. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty to consider trees and tree protection in their functions.

**1.1** At Part VIII Special Controls, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 prescribes a "*General duty of planning authorities as respects trees*".

Section 197 defines a duty in respect of trees:

***Planning permission to include appropriate provision for preservation and planting of trees.***

**1.2** The council is therefore obliged by statutory legislation to consider the welfare of trees in planning applications and to use planning conditions to secure new tree planting in development.

**1.3 Tree Preservation Orders:** Section 198 (1) of the TCPA 1990 empowers local planning authorities to deploy what is probably their most influential tree protection mechanism, the Tree Preservation Order, (TPO).
*If it appears to a local planning authority that it is expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area, they may for that purpose make an order with respect to such trees, groups of trees or woodlands as may be specified in the order*

**1.4** S198(5) allows local planning authorities to make TPOs protecting trees that are yet to be planted under the type of planning conditions cited at S197. This is a strong facility and yet is seldom used. Its adoption as a means to safeguard newly-planted trees will be a function of the Strategy.

**1.5** All TPOs were affected by Statutory Instrument 2012 No 605 – the "2012 Regs". The main change arising from this was the removal of provisions under section 199 and section 201. This means that all tree preservation orders are effective from the date they are served.

**1.6** These provisions provide local planning authorities with both a duty and broad powers to protect trees in development applications and to secure new tree planting through planning conditions. Fylde Council enjoys the facility of being able to issue TPOs rapidly owing to delegation of powers.

**1.7 Conservation Areas:** Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 extends "blanket" protection to trees in Conservation Areas. This was amended by further legislation, Statutory Implement 1999 No 1892: **The Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999.**

**1.8** The provisions do not apply to all trees. S210 (e) exempts those with a stem diameter below 75mm when measured at 1.5 metres from the ground. The LPA cannot require a replacement tree. For this a TPO is necessary.

**1.9** The penalty structure for an offence under the Conservation Area regulations is the same as for those applying to tree preservation orders and S211 makes reference to offences as defined under S183 of the TCPA, so the same criteria apply as to TPOs. No replanting condition can be enforced through Conservation Area regulations.

**2.0 National Planning Policy Framework 2018:** provides a strong policy background for tree protection in local planning. It identifies three objectives of sustainable development: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

**2.1** The NPPS states at 2. (9) "*These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework*."

**2.2 Fylde Council's emerging local plan to 2032** has been written to comply with the objectives of the NPPF. The tree strategy and an ensuing supplementary planning document arising from this strategy will underpin the local plan. Objective (2) of the plan is *" To maintain, improve and enhance the environment."*

**2.3** Policies relevant to tree planting and landscaping are as follows: GD7 subsection (L) achieving Good Design in Development, and policy ENV (1).

**2.4** Broadly, the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 supports tree and woodland retention and protection in developments - particularly at ENV (1) (b) - and requires from developers a commitment to tree and landscape planting to minimise the impact of development and increase/enhance the borough's urban forest.

**3.0** Technical Guidance on all aspects of urban forestry issues is available from many reliable sources and in the case of the British Standards Institute is accepted internationally.

**3.1 British Standards** are available in the following areas relevant to urban forestry:

- BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.
- BS3998:2010 – Tree Work – Recommendations.
- BS3996:1992 Part1 – Nursery Stock specification for Trees and Shrubs
- BS8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations.
- BS3882:2015 Specification for Topsoil.
- BS42020 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.

**3.2 Other technical references important to tree protection (not exhaustive):**

- Trees and Design Action Group's (TDAG) documents, "**Trees in the Townscape – a Guide for Decision Makers**" and "**Trees in Hard Landscapes – A Guide for Delivery**" set a benchmark for urban forest management and urban tree planting. The combined effect of these two documents is to show urban foresters the importance of knowing and managing their resource holistically and to help design-out some of the urban tree issues that lead to premature removals.
- **Utility Trenching – NJUG4:** Street trees and trees along adopted highways endure multiple assaults that often bring about an early demise. Among these, trenching for services is foremost, since it involves digging at proximity to trees and root damage is an inevitable consequence. While no statutory requirement exists to prevent this, industry guidance has been produced that provides a code for utility operators to adhere to. This is known as **National Joint Utilities Guideline 4** – abbreviated to NJUG4. NJUG4 does not prevent root damage, because in practice this is extremely difficult to avoid, but it seeks to minimise it.
- **Building Control – NHBC 4.2:** Foundation design on new buildings is regulated by the council's Building Control team. They will ensure that designs meet the requirements set out in the National House Building Council's guidance as per section 4.2. Where large trees, which have a high water demand, are present, it is important to ensure that appropriate foundations are specified to prevent tree-related subsidence leading to removals.
- **The LTOA Joint Mitigation Protocol.** A pro-active approach to tree-related subsidence claims led the London Tree Officers Association to drive forward an agreed mitigation approach when insurers handling subsidence claims sought tree removals. This is a means to secure an agreed way forward where subsidence claims involve the removal of trees and introduces a replacement system to mitigate for tree removals. Tree-related subsidence is uncommon in Fylde and the council appears to have no history of claims, but the strategy will adopt a JMP – approach where appropriate.

**Action Point: the strategy will commit Fylde Council to the production and adoption of a supplementary planning document that will reference but will not be limited to the following urban forestry issues:**

- **Submission requirements; BS5937:2012 surveys; tree protection; provision for future growth of trees; and adherence to Root Protection Areas.**
- **Proactive use of TPOs for street trees in Conservation Areas and woodlands of biodiversity value; and a TPO enforcement policy.**
- **Deployment of TPOs for trees in landscaping schemes.**
- **Woodland creation through developer contributions.**
- **Provision of green space for trees in development layout.**

## Theme six: landscaping in new development.

**1.0** Landscaping schemes are integral to the success of new developments and are important in the delivery of new tree planting for the borough. It is essential that the council has a mechanism to secure the submission of high-quality tree planting in new developments and which influences the palette of trees towards those that the borough desires.

**1.1** Tree planting, in combination with other as aspects of landscaping, should be seen as a fundamental aspect of the design process. It should never be thought of as an afterthought, once a development footprint is secured, whereby any surplus or incidental part of a site is deemed 'somewhere to put some landscaping'. If this approach of design is followed, then it is usually obvious that trees and landscaping was considered as an afterthought and performs poorly.

**1.2** Early discussion should take place with the Council to establish the nature, role and objectives of landscaping in the context of the particular development. The Council as a whole views tree planting and landscaping in general as an important and essential aspect of place making i.e. contributing significantly in defining the character of a place.

**1.3** The council too often sees a narrow range of tree species in landscaping schemes. These are most often those of only medium lifespan and typically comprise a familiar trio of pioneer species – cherry, birch and rowans being typical. These species do not offer strong visual amenity and owing to their modest ultimate size do not make a strong contribution to outward visual amenity.

**1.4** Currently, the council has no set requirements for the quantity or species of new trees to be planted in new development. Soft landscaping plans are commented on individually by the Tree Officer or Landscape Architect and changes often suggested. Occasionally the changes meet some resistance.

**1.5** It is vital to the borough that tree planting in new developments not only succeeds in design terms but equips Fylde with a diverse, attractive and resilient urban forest that anticipates a changing climate.

**1.6** Tree planting, in combination with other as aspects of landscaping, should be seen as a fundamental aspect of the design process. It should never be thought of as an afterthought, once a development footprint is secured, whereby any surplus or incidental part of a site is deemed 'somewhere to put some landscaping'. If this approach of design is followed, then it is usually obvious that trees and landscaping was considered as an afterthought and performs poorly.

**1.7** Early discussion should take place with the Council to establish the nature, role and objectives of landscaping in the context of the particular development. The Council as a whole views tree planting and landscaping in general as an important and essential aspect of place making i.e. contributing significantly in defining the character of a place.

The Council would expect developers to explain the role and purpose of their tree and general landscaping proposals early in the design process. This will be seen as an integral part of the overall design approach and of equal importance to the design and layout of the constituent buildings on a site. The built form of a development, the public and semi-public spaces included (i.e. landscaped spaces that are privately owned, but form part of and are integrated with the street scene), should be designed together. This approach should be evident from any design and access statements submitted as part of a planning application.

**1.8** In considering the appropriate form of development for a particular site, an analysis of the character, in which the development would be located, will be expected. This should be sufficient to show how the development will respond to its immediate and wider setting. The opportunity should be taken to significantly increase overall cover in locations where there is a clear absence of trees. The development of the site should, as a result, offer an enhanced level of landscaping to the benefit of the locality. In the case of new residential development in a less well defined context, for example a green field site, extensive tree planting will be required to create the character of the 'garden suburb'. In the case of higher density development of a more urban character, selective tree planting, to form specific focal points, or small groups appropriately located, would be appropriate.

**1.9** In granting planning permission for development, where landscaping and trees are part of the approved scheme, a condition usually requires that the landscaping be maintained for a minimum of 10 years. This condition has the objective of ensuring that the approved landscaping scheme has sufficient time to mature. It is also a requirement that any of the landscaping that fails within the timescale requires replacement. The Council will monitor landscaping schemes and will require developers, or the appropriate responsible party, to replant trees and landscaping as required by the condition.

**2.0 Regeneration Schemes and re-development:** In so far as regeneration is achieved by way public realm enhancement schemes, it has been the policy of the Council to include tree planting, where possible, within the street or adjoining public or private land. The budget for this particular aspect of tree planting is an integral part of the overall scheme cost and accounted for at the scheme design stage. Where appropriate, the Council will work with partners to achieve tree planting schemes from a variety of sources including through commuted payments associated with the granting of relevant planning permissions.

**2.1** A number of sites are often redeveloped, where they have a prominent profile. An obvious example would be where a development site fronts a major highway or other public space. In such situations, the provision of tree planting, in combination with other aspects of site layout, building design can result in an enhancement of the site and broader locality with which it will integrate. In such situations, the Council will require significant landscaping, including trees planting, since the site will have significant public prominence and profile.

**2.2** Tree planting in the context of 'new development' offers the opportunities to provide for increasing levels of cover, enhancing and adding to the 'urban forest' of the Borough. This not only helps to mitigate the impact of the development for the reasons set out within the strategy as a whole but significantly enhance the character of particular localities

**Action Point: the tree strategy commits the council to the production of a supplementary planning document (SPD) that will address the following aspects of new landscaping:**

- **The function of trees in landscaping schemes.**
- **Tree planting, species selection, sizes, support methods and location – ie right tree in the right place.**
- **Aftercare and maintenance, monitoring and management.**
- **The provision of tree-lined streets for high levels of public amenity.**
- **Tree pit size and design.**

## Theme Seven: managing trees on public open spaces:

**1.0** As mentioned at Theme Four 1.1, there is a loose network of public open spaces in varied ownerships across Fylde borough. Many contain trees of some kind. In the case of Kirkham Town Council, these spaces contain large and important trees and even large areas of woodlands

**1.1** As tree owners, borough, town and parish councils often received request from residents to prune or even remove these open spaces trees for what may be considered no-material reasons.

**1.2** Typical examples of these are concerns around shading, views, television reception, leaf litter, insects, droppings from roosting birds, and a perceived ( ie responding merely to the stature of the tree) fear that the tree is a hazard.

**1.3** Since an objective of the tree strategy as given at Theme One (1) is to preserve the trees we already have, it is important to equip Fylde Council and other tiers of local authority wishing to adopt the strategy, with a range of tree protection policies that will drive sensitive management of the borough's open spaces trees.

**1.4** To this end, the following tree management policies are provided. These policies accord with the council's approach to trees in tree preservation orders – ie they serve to prevent unnecessary tree felling, and where tree pruning is carried out, will ensure that the work done adheres closely to best practice for tree work as set out in **British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – recommendations.**

**1.5** This approach will be recommended to other public bodies owning trees – for example registered social landlords and management companies.

**Action Point: Fylde Council's tree management for parks and open spaces will focus on a hierarchy of priorities as follows:**

- **Tree Risk Management to acquit the council's duty of care.**
- **Management to prevent or abate actionable nuisance to property.**
- **Formative pruning or other necessary tree works.**
- **NB: non-essential tree work will be avoided during bird nesting season.**

**2.0 Tree management policies: (TMPs)** the strategy contains a suite of sixteen policies to assist council staff dealing with the issues.

| Enquiry | Council response (TMP No) | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| Overhang to private property | **1. Affected resident may remove under common-law rights ** Check protected status**** | No legal obligation on tree owner to remove overhang. |
| Tree in contact with building. | **2. Council will undertake pruning to provide clearance in line with work priorities.** | May give rise to an actionable nuisance claim. |
| Tree blocking drain | **3. Usually occurs when a drain is already broken. Once repaired the problem should not recur.** | Householders are usually responsible for the maintenance of the drains within their property. |
| Tree restricting light into property. | **4. The council cannot manage its trees to prevent or alleviate shading.** | No "right to light" exists. |
| Tree restricting a view. | **5. The council cannot manage its trees to provide views.** | There is no legal right to a view. |
| Leaf litter/leaves on footpath/ leaf problems. | **6. Annual event that cannot be mitigated by pruning. The necessary pruning would be harmful to the tree stock.** | Seasonal, and can be addressed by sweeping. |
| Insect residue, "sticky sap" complaints. | **7. This is an aphid secretion occurring temporarily during Summer and cannot be cured by pruning. The council will not fell a tree for this reason.** | There is no feasible remedy for this temporary natural phenomenon. The council will avoid planting the species – limes and sycamores – associated with it. |
| Tree shedding blossom or wind-borne seeds over property. | **8. The council will not prune or fell a tree for this reason. Flowering amenity trees are valued for their ornamental quality.** | There is no feasible remedy for this temporary natural phenomenon compatible with urban forestry practices. |
| Tree is a bird roost and bird dropping are a nuisance. | **9. Bird droppings may be a nuisance but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree.** | Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other related wildlife law). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tree is shedding fruit/berries/nuts/other detritus. | **10. The council will not prune or fell a tree for this reason.** | Natural and temporary phenomenon; fruit is the product of the tree's flower. |
| Tree bears poisonous berries ( eg a yew tree) | **11. The council will not fell a tree because the berries are toxic.** | There is no history of poisoning from trees. |
| Tree is host to wasps or bees or other nuisance animal – eg squirrels. | **12. The council will not fell or prune a tree for this reason.** | Bees are protected species and advice should be taken before considering their removal. Wasps may be dealt with by other means. |
| Tree interfering with overhead telephone lines | **13. The council will not fell a tree for this reason but may undertake pruning in line with its other priorities.** | Tree can be retained by sensitive management if worthy. |
| Tree is considered too big. | **14. The council will not fell or reduce a tree for this reason.** | Large trees are important for the borough's urban forest and for climate change; tree size is not linked to hazard. |
| Tree and personal medical issue – eg allergies. | **15. The council will not fell or prune a tree for this reason.** | Trees are important to the borough and to other residents who may value them. |
| Trees and anti-social behaviour. | **16. The council will consider these on merit and consult/verify the problem before responding.** | ASB problems are often temporary or mobile. Once lost the trees have gone permanently. |

**2.1** By adopting these policies, the council enables the protection of publicly-owned trees. Efficiencies are gained by removing pressure from council officers who currently deal with these on a case-by-case basis and are often obliged to refer to the Tree Officer for advice. The policies can be made available to Contact Centre staff as a first response.

**2.2.** It is accepted that circumstances will arise where a departure from policy is deemed appropriate (eg a disabled person whose life quality of life is improved by television.) This should be by exception.