



SANDWELL
WEST · MIDLANDS

**URBAN FORESTRY
TREE STRATEGY**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

URBAN FORESTRY TREE STRATEGY

Strategic Statements

1. To maintain and enhance the Boroughs existing Urban Forestry tree stock in accordance with good Arboricultural and forestry practice.
2. To ensure appropriate distribution of trees throughout all the 6 Towns of Sandwell.
3. To deliver the management of Sandwell's Urban trees in a more neighbourhood focused approach by selecting two neighbourhoods within each of the six towns of Sandwell each year, for comprehensive tree works.
4. To develop a tree inspection regime to limit the potential risks posed by hazardous trees to meet the Council's legal obligations.
5. To make use of statutory legislation when appropriate to make safe any hazardous trees located on land not managed by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
6. To ensure appropriate resources are made available to manage the Boroughs Urban Forestry tree stock.
7. To work with Education and Lifelong Learning and Local Schools to encourage educational projects relating to trees the Urban Forest, wildlife and the environment.
8. To provide tree planting advice and opportunities to local communities. Contribute to protecting and improving the natural environment of Sandwell.
9. To meet the policy objectives set out in Sandwell's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
10. To meet Sandwell Metropolitan Council's obligations and liabilities in relation to grants paid out to site based woodland establishments as part of the Forestry Commission Woodland Grant settlement and Millennium Forestry Programmes. These liabilities are based upon successful establishment of woodland over a ten year period.

URBAN FORESTRY TREE STRATEGY

Introduction

The Urban Forestry Tree Strategy identifies the priorities for the management and maintenance of Sandwell's Urban Tree Stock. This strategy is designed to be a document that will be continually amended as both new legislation and current guidance notes emerge. It is therefore a document that guides arboricultural works in Sandwell.

The strategy sets out the vision for the provision of the Boroughs tree stock over the next 10 years. It will aid the council public and private landowners whether directly or indirectly involved in the management of trees in Sandwell to enable decisions to be reached on a consistent manner.

The Department of the Environment report "Trees in Towns" (HMSO 1973) recommends local authorities produce a framework for taking a strategic overview of the status and conditions of trees within their areas by the production of a tree strategy.

Prior to the commencement of compulsory competitive tendering Sandwell did undertake a count and brief identification of a proportion of the tree stock at that time. This information will provide the basis for further work.

There is now a need to undertake a detailed analysis of tree stock in the Borough. This strategy provides the framework to undertake this work.

Lack of appropriate inspection regimes, limited financial and human resources have lead to an increase in complaints and requests for tree works.

Additionally over the past 10 years or so Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council along with other Black Country Unitary Authorities has maximised its use of the major grant schemes involved in funding Woodland Establishments and Management i.e. Forestry Commissions Woodland Grant Scheme and the Millennium Forestry Programme managed then by the National Urban Forestry Unit. This has left Sandwell with ongoing obligations and liabilities in relation to grants received, many of these liabilities are based upon successful woodland establishments. As a consequence these arrangements are still in place, grants are at risk if woodlands are not successfully established, these grants can be reclaimed from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council as an Authority.

Management Objectives for Trees in Sandwell

- Sandwell Council is committed to creating a healthier environment and achieving the best quality of life for its residents. Urban trees provide one of the ways for “greening” the environment.
- Develop a good quality tree stock to help us conserve nature and provide green lungs for filtering out pollution and production of oxygen.
- Encourage the planting and care of trees in Sandwell.
- Encourage a wide range of wildlife through good tree management.
- To identify the location of and to map using G.I.S./G.P.S all urban trees under the responsibility of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
- To identify the condition of the tree stock and to minimize risks.

Aims of Strategy

- To protect and enhance the Urban Forest of Sandwell.
- To promote good tree care through education and demonstration of good arboricultural practices.
- To reduce/eliminate the threat of hazard trees to the residents, visitors and structures of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
- Propose positive improvements to the future management of Sandwell's Urban Forest through planned maintenance.
- To promote the tree planting/replacement strategy.
- To raise public awareness to the benefits and issues concerning trees in Urban environment.
- To identify and correctly assess the threats and conflicts of Sandwell's Urban tree population and to introduce a risk limitation policy.
- To identify all the key players involved either directly or indirectly in the Urban Forest of Sandwell to achieve the aims of the strategy.
- To increase both the diversity of tree species within Sandwell to avoid devastation through disease and the age structure of the trees to avoid decline through natural processes within the same timescales with the introduction of the tree planting policy.
- To protect and enhance the wildlife of Sandwell which are dependent on the existing and future tree stock of Sandwell for shelter and food.

Scope of the Strategy

The strategy covers the following areas of tree management:-

- Highways and street trees
- Trees on housing land
- Schools and educational sites
- Trees in parks and green spaces
- Millennium – Urban Forestry planting sites
- Trees adjacent public highway – private ownership
- Trees and development sites
- Hazard trees and inspections (regular inspections) policy documents
- Trees buildings and subsidence
- Pest and diseases affecting trees
- Best practice in the management and maintenance of urban trees
- Highway works and street trees)
- Utility works and trees)
- De-icing Salts – Herbicide applications and Trees
- New planting policy – Right tree right place
- Trees T.V. / Satellite reception
- Trees – light – leaves – honeydew drop
- Trees – footway crossing
- Private trees – Tree Preservation Orders

Summary of Value of Trees in our Environment

Trees and Human Health

Air pollution is acknowledged to increase the risk of Heart Attack, Strokes and Cancer, as well as triggering allergies.

Trees are very effective in producing oxygen and filtering out harmful pollutants such as Lead, Carbon Monoxide and Nitrogen Dioxide. The cooling and shading effects of trees also reduce rates of ozone smog. In addition to providing cleaner air, trees filter out harmful UV rays and contribute to noise reduction.

One of the Government's stated aims is to encourage people to walk or cycle to work, by making pedestrian and cycle routes more attractive is one way to reduce pollution and improve Health. Planting trees along streets and cycle routes is a simple way to achieve this aim.

Trees and quality green spaces also play a tangible role in reducing the stress of urban living. Studies have shown hospital patients to recover more quickly if they have a green view from their windows.

Environmental Benefits

These are the key to increasing biodiversity in Urban areas, tree lined streets provide wildlife corridors between local nature reserve and people's doorsteps by creating habitats for a variety of wildlife.

Trees also play an important role in locking up the carbon emissions which contribute to Global Warming, while housing departments which are sheltered by trees are less prone to extremes of temperature, hence more energy efficiency.

People, Enjoyment and Urban Treescape

Trees can be used not only to enhance the aesthetic value of our urban towns, but to increase residents sense of pride in their neighbourhoods, particularly where the community is involved in planting and maintenance of trees.

Trees need to be acknowledged as part of our heritage providing a living link with the past and tree planting as part of civic design is a Great British tradition, providing a legacy which is dynamic and locally distinctive.

Social and economic effects of greening are well understood, tree planting today is providing once more a highly effective regeneration tool, residence property prices are often higher in leafy areas, tree planting is also more likely to be attractive to business and developments investments.

Management Of Trees on Council / Or Adopted Land

The Urban Forestry Unit maintains trees within the following areas:-

All trees are maintained to industry best practice especially current British Standard for Treework BS 3998 1989 Treework.

No pro-active tree risk assessments are carried out on mature trees within, Sandwell's tree stock .

Detail of Sandwell's Current Tree Stock

- **Highway and Streets**

Trees are to be found planted within pavements and roadside verges – and are of highest priority in terms of management, assessment and regular inspection.

- **Housing Sites – (open plan and garden trees)**

Trees are to be found in and around housing estates and within Council owned/managed properties.

There is approximately 214.4 hectares of green space current maintained under the Grounds Maintenance contract which is likely to have trees of various species and sizes which will require ongoing management and maintenance.

In addition there is approximately 21,000 council owned houses that are likely to have trees of various species and size in either front or back gardens, and in some sometimes in both, that require management and maintenance.

- **Cemeteries and Crematoria**

Located within the existing Cemeteries and large Crematoria site in West Bromwich, some of the more condensed tree populations are to be found in older cemetery sites.

- **Schools and Social Service Homes**

Trees contained within sites under the Control of the L.E.A. which currently maintained by the authority but financed by each individual school or social service site.

- **Parks and Green Spaces**

Arguably the most prominent and significant trees within the Borough, contained within places of resident usage for relaxation and social gathering.

- **Woodlands and Plantations**

These sites vary from semi natural woods to the recent plantings as part of the Black Country Urban Forestry Initiative or Millenium Forestry programme.

HIGHWAYS AND STREETS

An Introduction

There are 20,000 trees that fall within highways and streets, currently maintained by the Urban Forestry Unit on behalf of the Council.

Highway and street trees deserve special attention, as they are one of the most prominent trees within the landscape.

Regular inspection of highways and street trees is essential to maintain a landscape environment of safe healthy trees therefore fulfilling our statutory obligations.

Most of our tree lined streets have trees which are either nearing maturity or have outgrown their location and as such there is a need to plan ahead for their eventual removal and replacement. This needs to be linked to a full tree and condition survey of the Borough's highway and street trees being implemented.

Within the planning process for the removal of older or trees in inappropriate location, consideration needs to be given to which species of tree are best suited for the site, linked to the understanding of a rise in the last 10 years or more of insurance claims in which trees are implicated.

Objectives

1. To maintain and enhance the current highway and street tree stock for as long and safely as possible in order to perpetuate the character and appearance of the Borough.
2. To identify and eliminate in a timely fashion any tree on or adjacent to the highway deemed to be in an hazardous condition.
3. To carry out routine regular inspection of all highway trees to fulfil our statutory obligations.
4. To protect all highway and street trees from works that are potentially harmful.
5. To continue to identify areas currently devoid of trees and undertake appropriate planting.

6. To locate and survey all trees upon our highways and streets to enable a more pro-active tree management regime to be implemented with public safety being a priority.
7. To give careful consideration the future species planted upon our highways and streets giving particular attention to distance from properties, ultimate size of tree species and its environment.
8. Record and Establish an updated computerised database of all trees.

Parks and Green Spaces

The authority has a great variance of tree species age composition and size structure in its overall parks and green spaces tree population. Trees are an integral part of the structure and makeup of the various parks and green spaces throughout the Borough. What is now required is a full survey and condition assessment to be undertaken upon all trees and long term management plans for the management and enhancement of trees in parks to be included in future refurbishment of these establishments.

Each site is unique and has a character all of its own, future management plans must reflect this and the continued use of both large native and ornamental/exotic trees need to be used in future plantings with careful consideration to achieve a balanced and pleasing tree scene to users and visitors to our parks.

Trees are dynamic living structures and as such will age and decline, there already exists trees within our parks of over 100 years old, regular routine tree assessment regime needs to be in place and workable to ensure that we comply with our legal obligations to the health and safety of users and visitors to our parks and green spaces.

Objectives

1. To incorporate a regular routine tree inspection regime into our parks and green spaces strategy.
2. To maintain and enhance for as long and safely as possible the current tree population.
3. To establish appropriate long term management plans aimed at achieving the continuity of tree cover within parks and green spaces, plans must be specific to each site.
4. To continue to plant and maintain ornamental and exotic tree species for all year round interest and to encourage recreation.
5. To plant and maintain large native trees in the interests of nature conservation and wildlife within our parks and green spaces.

Housing Open Spaces and Garden Trees

At present no current up to date records exist of exact number of trees or their location and conditions on land under the management responsibility of Housing Direct. Large scale tree planting was undertaken on many housing estates some 25 or more years ago with totally inappropriate species to be planted in close proximity to residential properties. There exists many enquiries regarding problems arising out of such plantings caused by shading effect of trees, leaves and the perceived threat of subsidence to their properties.

Present management techniques attempt to address some of these issues once an estate is targeted for maintenance, however financial resources does not allow for replacement of lost trees on a one for one basis with a more appropriate tree species.

A new threat to the tree scene of housing estates and council properties are through homes and land being sold under the right to buy, at present no system is in place to protect trees on land once sold off. Trees on estates and gardens contribute enormously to the overall urban forest.

Objectives

1. To continue to maintain and enhance the housing tree stock through planned management and maintenance.
2. To continue to identify trees of inappropriate species or planting locations, undertake removal action and to plant with more appropriate species in appropriate location.
3. To use where appropriate large native forest type tree, ornamental and exotic tree species in planting schemes.
4. To survey the current tree stock on housing land including trees in front and back gardens and to assess it's condition, putting in place a routine regular tree inspection regime and to incorporate all relevant information in a user friendly tree management computerised data base.
5. To make Tree Preservation Orders (T.P.O's) to protect significant trees on council land for sale.
6. To consult with all its residents on proposals effecting the tree scene within their location.

Schools and Educational Sites

There are currently 122 schools and 4 residential establishments that are under the property management of Education and Life Long Learning, all schools and sites have their own delegated budgets. The exact number, location and condition of trees within these sites are currently unknown, however some of the schools have inherited large tree planting schemes aimed at providing windbreaks for school field, others have recent millennium forest woodland planting schemes.

Because of the high use of these sites a formal assessment and routine inspection of all trees upon each specific site needs to be implemented together with ongoing management and maintenance of existing trees. At present the current financial liability to undertake inspection and works that may be required rests with each individual school and educational site.

Objectives

1. To survey and assess the current condition of all tree stock on school and educational sites to promote a safer environment for users and visitors.
2. To advise each individual school on their roles and responsibilities for health and safety site inspections.
3. To develop in partnership with schools appropriate regular inspection regimes for trees on grounds under their control.
4. To promote the educational and environmental value of trees.
5. To maintain and enhance the current tree stock by the use of appropriate forestry or arboricultural practices.

Bereavement Services

There are a considerable number of mature trees within the 6 cemeteries and 2 crematoria under the control of the authority which are now requiring a full condition and assessment survey as they are at a potential conflict with visitors and structures within such sites. A great number of these trees would by now have reached a stage where they have outgrown their current position and would be a need for removal and appropriate tree replacement actions to be drawn up.

Objectives

1. Adopt a planned maintenance and management of existing trees within cemeteries and crematoria.
2. Develop and implement a regular routine tree hazard assessment inspections to ensure the health and safety to users and visitors to our establishments.
3. Improve the character and appearance of the cemeteries and crematoria by the removal of older trees and the replacement with more appropriate species.
4. To maintain and enhance where appropriate larger mature native tree species for the benefit of nature conservation and wildlife.
5. To protect cemetery and crematoria structures from damage being caused directly by the action of trees.

Woodlands and Plantations

There are a number of woodlands and plantations across the authority at differing stages of both age and development. What is now required is a strategic long term management plan for each site specifically. Nature Conservation and Recreation should ideally be the main focus of such plans alongside the health and safety of users and visitors to such sites. The management of such sites would need ideally a forestry and woodland officer experienced in the restoration and management of semi-natural woodlands.

Objectives

1. To encourage community participation in woodland management and habitat creation.
2. To encourage the retention of standing deadwood within it's woodland and plantations where it can safely be achieved.
3. To ensure and develop management plans for all woodlands and plantations that are specific to the needs of that particular site.
4. To create a diverse population of mixed age and tree species within these sites and to encourage the use of native tree species in future plantings schemes.
5. To create a safe environment for recreational users of woodlands and plantations.
6. To bring into maintenance and continue to maintain woodlands and plantations to further the aims of conservation, education and recreation.

APPENDIX ONE

ACTION PLAN

Action Plan

The following tables set out a series of recommended actions relating to specific tree designations of management areas. The tables include the following headings.

- ❑ **Key Issues** – The key issues relate to what are considered necessary to provide an improved level of service to existing and future users, also to the improvement in the management, health safety and future landscape of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
- ❑ **Timescale** – There are a number of timescales included within the action plans. The overall timescale of the strategy relates to the period 2003 to 2013.
 - Short term refers to within 5 years
 - Medium term refers to within 8 years
 - Long term refers to within 10 years

Those specific or generic key issues which have been graded as short term should be considered as having the highest priority within the strategy and action plan.

- ❑ **Recommended Action** – In principle objectives on one particular tree designation area should be viewed within the overall strategy of seeking to improve the service delivery and management of Sandwell's Urban Forestry. Whereas the generic action plan – recommendations are applicable to trees management across all areas.
- ❑ **Partners** – Includes the various partners that will be needed to bring about any of the proposed improvements to the delivery of service or management of the Urban Forestry either individually or as a whole. There is a need for the Council as one of the major stakeholders to foster these partnerships throughout all stages of the strategy.
- ❑ **Resources** – Highlights the known funding sources, projected costs and implications to established budgets that will need to be drawn upon to implement the proposed actions within this strategy.

These may of course change over the next 10 years and the Council, along with its partners should seek to obtain funding from future available sources of funding.

- ❑ **Policy Objectives** – These link into either specific or general policies recommended within the strategy for adoption by the Council. These policies are what is believed to be in the interests of protecting Sandwell’s Urban Tree Stock, its residents and visitors.

- ❑ **Outcome** – Highlights the principal outcomes of implementing the proposed recommended actions be it specific or generic to each tree management area or linked into legislative / statutory obligations or government recommendations.

Urban Forestry – Action Plan

ONE

Key Issues	Time Scale	Recommended Action	Partners	Resources	Policy Objectives	Outcome
Utility works in proximity to trees	Short Term	Representation on Highway Authority Utilities Committees (HAUC'S) Sit on committee. Committee Representation	Highways Direct Utility Reps	Staff Hours, Allocation	P23	Protect existing Highway Trees from Damage, Health and Safety of Highways
Operational Tree Management	Short to Medium Term	Use of external contractors in management terms of pruning/tree removal. To develop-update current tree pruning documentation in line with current best practice.	External Contractors Specialist Arboricultural	Revenue S.R.B. N.R.F.	P1	Reduction in backlog of tree work requests. Best Value.
Subsidence claims handling	Short to Medium Term	To introduce a subsidence claims handling system	Risk Management	Risk Management Budget Allocation, Revenue Budget, Staff hours allocation	P21	Effectively handle claims
Management & maintenance of trees in front and back gardens of council owned properties	Short Term	Transfer of the management of existing budget to Leisure Direct Undertake tree condition survey within the six towns	Housing Direct	Existing budgets	P1	More Customer focused service proactive management One stop shop approach – better customer commitment and service

Key Issues	Time Scale	Recommended Action	Partners	Resources	Policy Objectives	Outcome
Location, assessment and scale of Sandwell's urban tree stock	Short Term and Cost £15,000 £60,000	Purchase appropriate software package. Employ external company to undertake data capture in order or priority. Highways Parks and Green Spaces Housing Cemeteries and Crematoria Woodlands and Plantations	Town Councils Risk Management Other Council Service Areas External Consultants	Capital Revenue	P1, P5, P11,P13	To enable a pro-active tree management plan to be designed and to aid in pro-active tree inspections to meet general policies. Occupiers Liability Act 1957. Highways Act Circulars 90/73 36/78
Management and maintenance of trees borough wide	Short Term £15,000 £20,000	Incorporate into software package Regular tree inspections	Town Councils Risk Management All Council themes service areas	Additional requirements for full time tree inspector and externalisation of highway tree inspections capital revenue risk management	P1, P5, P11	Comply with statutory legislation demonstrate risk management in respect of trees best value.
Legal protection of trees in private ownership	Short/Long Term £	Review existing tree preservation orders, revoke out of date orders, serve new ones Use existing Codes of Practice where applicable, develop new Codes of Practice for tree protection	Environment Direct, Planning Section Forestry Commission Association N.A.T.O. R.T.O.G ^S I.S.A. External Consultants Landscape Group	Staff Time allocation Revenue	P13, P14,P15, P16,P17	Comply with T.P.O. legislation
Resource emergency tree work	Short	Set up of separate Central Budget for Emergency Work	All Service Areas	Additional Financial Resources	P29,P11	Allow planned maintenance to be finance
Trees on development sites	Short Term	Introduce/Develop a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Trees and Development within the Borough	Planning Highways Landscape Architects	Officer Time	U D Policies N C 1,3,4,5-7 P18,P19, P20	Protection of existing trees long term future of trees

Urban Forestry – Action Plan

TWO

Key Issues	Time Scale	Recommended Action	Partners	Resources	Policy Objectives	Outcome
Customer care & service delivery	Medium Term	Consult with Local Councillors, Shareholders in major tree work operations	Town Councils Local Resident Groups, Customer Care Unit	Staff Hours Allocation, Revenue Budget	P9, P26	Improve communication and information link best value
Establishment of council approved contractor list	Medium Term	Advertise for appropriate tree work contractor list to circulate to private residents and in-house use on large scale tree works.	Contractor Assessment Unit	Revenue/ Capital S.R.B. N.R.F.	P8	Ensure value for money, quality works for private local users Best Value
Tree species selection	Medium Term	Draw up a list of appropriate species of trees for planting across all Council Service Areas. Identify possible new sites for planting	Town Councils All Service Area	Town Managers/ Supervisors Revenue Budget, Staff Hours Friends Groups Local Volunteers Landscape Architects Forestry Commission B.T.C.V. English Nature R.S.N.C.	P3, P4 , P5, P10, P12	Reduce costs or future claims for trees related damage. Enhance Tree Scape
Call Out Procedure, tree related emergencies	Medium Term	To review and amend current Ad Hoc call out system and to consider a 24 hour 365 day system	Internal	Revenue Budget, Staff Hours allocation	P29	More responsive and co-ordinated service

Urban Forestry – Action Plan

TWO – Continued

Key Issues	Time Scale	Recommended Action	Partners	Resources	Policy Objectives	Outcome
Dissemination of information	Medium/Long Term	Produce a series of information on trees and further utilise existing literature	Schools B.C.T.V. Forestry Commission Arboricultural I.S.A.	S.R.B. N.R.F. Staff hour's allocation. Revenue Printing	P25,	Best Value Improve residents understanding of trees and the environment
Recycling Wood Waste	Medium Term	Explore possibilities of setting up a timber station or recycling policy for Wood Waste	B.T.C.V. Black Country Groundwork, Sandwell Valley, Environment Direct	Capital S.R.B. N.R.F.	U D Policy	Agenda 21 Strategy

Urban Forestry – Action Plan

THREE

Key Issues	Time Scale	Recommended Action	Partners	Resources	Policy Objectives	Outcome
Trees on former council owned land	Long Term	Make appropriate (T.P.O'S) Tree Preservation Orders on trees of High Amenity Value	Housing Direct Environment Direct	Staff Hours Allocation	P13, P14	Enhance the tree stock by protection
Management and Maintenance Plans	Long Term	Develop site specific management plans for all sites	Countryside Rangers, External consultants, Groundwork Black Country Town Councils Forestry Commission All service area B.T.C.V	Revenue S.R.B. N.R.F. H.L.F. Staff hours allocation Additional funding	P5, P24, P27	Secure Long Term future of Urban Tree Stock
Training	Long Term £2,000 per annum	Officer and Staff Training as appropriate. Commit Officers and Staff to long term C.P.D.	Internal / External Trainers	Training Budget Officers and Staff hours allocation	P5,P26	Enable the service to be delivered appropriately qualified staff. Best Value

APPENDIX TWO

**DELIVERING THE URBAN FORESTRY
TREE STRATEGY**

Delivering the Urban Forestry Tree Strategy

The Urban Forestry Tree Strategy will be delivered by way of the following proposals:-

The introduction of a service delivery strategy that is more Neighbourhood focused. This will be based on the 6 Towns approach with 2 neighbourhoods in each town selected for appropriate tree maintenance each year.

However this will be dependant upon the scale of problems and associated tree work required to complete the program in the two neighbourhoods.

Each town committee will be kept informed and updated upon the actions within a neighbourhood in their town.

The suggested criteria for selecting neighbourhoods for action are:

- Geographical distribution of mature tree stock (based on current knowledge).
- Customer /service user requests
- Customer / service user complaints
- Type and known condition of tree stock
- Recognised deprived areas of the Borough – where as an improvement in quality of Urban tree stock can improve quality of life.
- Condition of highways / housing infrastructure.

Areas will be surveyed prior to any works being undertaken with the following service areas being given priority.

- Highways Network
- Housing Estates
- Parks and Green Spaces

Issues that will be addressed at each visit will be

- Diseased, dead, dying trees
- Problematical trees
- Tree causing shade, excessive leaf litter
- Trees disrupting infrastructure

This will allow for appropriate consultation and survey work to be carried out in advance of any work programmes. This will be undertaken by either Customer Care Service and/or by Placement of Advanced notices

In the remaining neighbourhoods only emergency works, annual work (tree planting, young tree maintenance and removal of basal (epicormic) growths will be carried out.

Requests for tree works – by either elected members town committees, petitions, residents for tree works in the remaining neighbourhoods will have to be considered on merit and then each request prioritised.

Particular attention to areas of high usage by both pedestrian and vehicular traffic will be given at each neighbourhood. Areas to include - Highways, Parks and Green Spaces and Housing Sites. Particular attention at each visit will be given to the following:-

- Diseased, dead, dying trees
- Problematical trees
- Tree causing shade, excessive leaf litter
- Trees disrupting infrastructure

This approach will hopefully address areas of previous neglect and best utilize existing resources both internal and external.

The use of external contractors working in partnership with Sandwell would undertake large scale pre-programmed pruning and removal operations.

It is envisaged that a large amount of work will be required during the initial years of implementation of this service delivery strategy, this will hopefully stabilise once the priority areas and backlog of request for work have been addressed.

A new full time tree inspector will implement the continual assessment of trees in an identified structured manner in line with pre-determined sites and frequencies.

To work in tandem with other themes of the Council in the redevelopment of areas of Sandwell where trees are to play an important part.

By working with external bodies on tree related issues and where required in the development of management plans.

By working with external consultant tree specialists in the development of the Boroughwide Tree Survey and mapping exercise.

By working in partnership with other internal service areas to develop a Generic Tree Risk Assessment System.

By working in partnership with our internal Countrywide Ranger Service in the Management and Maintenance of Woodlands and Plantations.

Externalisation of Highway Tree Safety Inspections once, which will identify any highway, related tree problems.

Development of a Tree Management Plan

It is proposed to develop a tree management plan that will lead to the following management improvements.

- It will eliminate in a timely manner any tree deemed to be hazardous, high risk trees will be given priority.
- Introduction of a tree inspection regime based upon current knowledge of tree stock within the Borough.
- Introduce a user friendly tree management computer data base package to enable the accurate analysing of the current tree population.
- To seek external expertise to undertake the initial data capture of Sandwell's current tree stock in order of priority areas outlined earlier.
- To rigorously follow and adhere to maintaining trees only to industry guidelines and best practice to actively seek external funding/partnership in order to undertake effective tree maintenance/management programmes.
- To produce long term management plans for the removal of mature/problematical trees and replacements with more suitable species.
- Survey the existing tree stock in order to establish potential problem areas.
- To ensure that any trees removed are replaced on a one for one basis.
- To ensure that the species selected are suitable for the chosen site.
- Identify and separate a specific tree planting/maintenance budget so as not to effect essential existing maintenance budgets.
- Reduction in claims against the Council by a more pro-active management.
- To identify tree related problems where ever possible before they become subject of a claim.
- To demonstrate good tree management and house keeping to defend Sandwell MBC potential claims.

Developing a Tree Management Plan

1. Assessment of tree species most occurring in recurrent/regular complaints.
2. Identify areas of mature tree stock – which can be then linked into risk management tree inspection regime.
3. Identify areas depleted of trees in order to target planting policy/schemes at.
4. Identify areas which are dominated by a particular tree species in order to target for improvement to increase species diversity.
5. To identify areas dominated with species of trees commonly associated with subsidence claims in areas known to have shrinkable clay sub-soils.
6. To identify areas of mature tree stock which have outgrown their location to enable a more pre-planned tree removal/replacement programme to be drawn up.
7. To assist in monitoring street trees damaged by highway works.
8. Assist in the setting of budgets for tree maintenance programmes.
9. To enable the easier storage and retrieval of information on trees for insurance purposes.
10. To link Management Plans into the Forestry Commissions Woodland Inventory.

APPENDIX THREE

GENERAL POLICIES

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
1	The Council will work towards adopting pro-active tree management	The Council are required through various legislation and Government guidance to ensure its trees are regularly inspected and maintained by competent persons
2	The council will not undertake work upon trees (unless for emergency reasons) known to be sites of active bird or bat roosting/nesting until such time is deemed appropriate	The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 affords protection in law
3	The Council will require (where appropriate) that in the event of a tree removed for the establishment of a footway crossover, that an adequate replacement tree to be planted within the locality	Street trees are often the most significant trees in a locality providing many beneficial, social and environment benefits
4	The Council will actively seek to plant and maintain new trees along main transport corridors and streets priority will be given to areas currently devoid of trees	To enhance routes into and out of the borough and contribute to air quality improvement conforming to PPG 13 Transport PPG 22 & 23 & 24 planning policy guidance
5	The council will through structured survey's and planned management seek to replace any of its aging tree stock or any trees deemed to have outgrown their location on a like for like basis unless this is deemed inappropriate	To maintain public safety and protect structures from potential damage that trees may cause
6	The Council will endeavour to protect all trees from threats such as verge removal, actions of statutory Undertakers, and other forms of excavations	To ensure the health and safety of its tree stock, maintaining public safety.

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
7	The Council will resist the removal of rare or unique trees without justification.	Rare or unique will be based on the species of tree and the area of location
8	The Council will continue to advise private residents and private sector business of their responsibilities for trees within their ownership/ responsibility	The Council are required and empowered under various Acts of legislation to deal with trees, which appear to be hazardous, in the interests of public safety.
9	The Council through its offices will consult will all interested parties of any proposed major tree works. If in the event of a majority dissenting against the professional recommendation made by officers of the council, the matter will be referred to Elected Members for a final decision.	To ensure Best value service through public consultation, routine work will not be subject to consultation.
10	The Council will encourage whenever possible the planting of native trees	To enhance local wildlife habitats and increase bio-diversity
11	The Council will (where appropriate) prune or fell trees that are diseased or have become hazardous	To prevent significant losses, and to protect the urban tree stock
12	The Council will endeavour to respond positively to requests made by residents of the borough for tree planting	Improve urban treescape and perpetuate Sandwell's urban forest
13	The Council will endeavour to inspect all trees on council owned sites before transfer into private ownership and where appropriate protect these trees using tree preservation	To protect trees of amenity value that contribute to the overall trees treescape character of that area

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
14	<p>The Council will, in regard to the use of the Tree Preservation Orders continue to use in a flexible manner as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serving T P Os on trees of significant amenity value as resources allow ● Serving T P Os after receiving requests to carry out works in conservation Areas (if it appears appropriate or necessary). ● In appropriate circumstances serve T P Os when becoming aware of works in progress that could damage amenity trees. ● Serving T P Os on highway trees in appropriate circumstances ● Not serving T P Os if this seems appropriate 	<p>The Council will base its justification on the sites importance the arboricultural proposals and the level of data provided to the Council.</p>
15	<p>The Council will not normally give consent to work on trees or woodlands protected by a Tree Preservation order if it appears this will be detrimental to the long term health and appearance or is not in accordance with good arboricultural or forestry practice</p>	<p>The loss or damage to trees is considered Unacceptable because the impact upon the general amenity and character trees provide in the urban environment.</p>
16	<p>The Council will normally resist the lopping, topping or uprooting of any trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.</p>	<p>The Council encourages that all trees within the borough of Sandwell are protected and maintained in line with current best practice</p>

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
17	The Council will normally require the replanting of any felled trees that were protected by a Tree Preservation order	To enhance the contribution made by trees in private ownership to the overall urban forest.
18	The Council will not normally allow any proposed development which it considers makes inadequate provision for the retention of trees natural features, wildlife habitats or ponds and watercourses	The Council seeks to promote development in accordance with natural ecological processes and nature conservation as outlined in Sandwell's U D P Policy N°
19	All applicants for the development of land with existing trees will be required to provide a full Arboricultural Implication Study, undertaken by suitably qualified and /or experienced arboriculturist	In order for the Council to consider and process in a timely manner development applications where trees are a material consideration
20	The Council will normally expect all new site developments to contribute to the overall treescape by the provision of a suitable landscape scheme or through the donations of fund to enable the planting of trees by the Council	The Council seeks to improve the quality and diversity of the treescape scene within the Borough of Sandwell

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
21	<p>Subsidence Claims</p> <p>The Council will require the provision of expert arboricultural evidence to determine the appropriate course of action in relationship to trees and subsidence of low-rise buildings. This will be of particular importance when it comes to determining the appropriate course of action in respect of tree pruning, tree felling and replacement, application of any growth suppressants, the insertion of geotextile root barriers or drainage and foundation excavations in proximity to trees. The arboriculturist should detail all relevant vegetation parameters as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The species of tree • Its age • Condition survey and past pruning history • Tree root survey • Dimensions (i.e. height, crown spread, diameter) • Distance to property and the section damaged if this is further away • Amenity value • Recommendations for management (a clear distinction should be made between “for engineering” or for “arboricultural” reasons). <p>The Council will require detailed information from a qualified structural engineer should a building suffer damage. Of particular importance will be: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age of the property • The depth of foundation • Extension history • Drainage construction and condition • Spatial arrangement and amplitude of damage <p>Monitoring results to determine movement cycles and patterns in relation to tree growth and time of year.</p>	<p>The Council takes very seriously its duty to maintain a green environment in which people can live, however this duty must naturally extend to owners faced with financial loss and inconvenience as a result of the effects or potential effects of trees on low rise buildings, and in order for the council to effectively consider any potential, genuine claims</p>

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
22	<p>Pre – Purchase Mortgage Reports</p> <p>In the event that large trees are present, the authority will require that the trees are assessed and considered by consulting arboriculturist familiar with the pre-purchase professional environment.</p> <p>Reports need to be assessed and considered by the appropriate expert to rationalise guidance in line with accepted good practice in terms of trees and safety, distances to structures, underground services, etc. It will not be acceptable to implicate or speculate on the possibility of future damage if the building has no claims or other movement history.</p> <p>The preliminary reports should identify key issues to allow “the trail of suspicion” to be followed by additional reports and/or other experts.</p> <p>In the event that trees are implicated which are growing within the public highway and or protected by Tree Preservation Order and or in designated Conservation Area, then detailed reports and a full analysis will normally be required.</p>	<p>To enable the Council to effectively consider the potential effects its trees may have on low-rise buildings and mortgage applications.</p>
23	<p>The Council will continue to manage work carried out by Utility/Statutory Undertakers via Highways Direct tree works management system. Any works undertaken by such companies in the vicinity to trees will be required to comply with the specification for the re-instatement of openings in highways. Officers of the Urban Forestry Unit will play a role in inspecting a proportion of utility works in proximity to trees within the Borough of Sandwell</p>	<p>The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 – section S1-10 which specifically refers to NJUG10 Guidelines for the planning, Installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees</p>

Policy N°	Policy	Justification
25	The Council will produce and make available to the public upon request occasional leaflets and advisory notes about trees and tree related matters	To council wishes to inform the public of current tree related issues to achieve a better understanding of trees in our urban environment.
26	The Council through its Urban Forestry officers will continue to provide tree related advice to members of the public	The provision of an accessible service to residents of Sandwell.
27	The Council will endeavour to ensure that all woodlands within its scope of control, have up to date management plans in place	To protect and enhance woodlands for nature conservation and recreational and educational benefits
28	The Council will not normally top or remove trees solely for the reception of TV or satellite signals	The Council recognizes the need to maintain trees to industry best practice.
29	The Council will continue to provide an out of hours emergency service on an as and when required basis	To effectively respond to all types of tree emergencies that may arise within Sandwell from time to time.
30	The Council will resist the removal of healthy trees solely in response to seasonal problems associated with trees in the urban environment.	The Council recognizes the contributions trees make to the environment.

APPENDIX FOUR

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

LEGISLATION GUIDANCE

Within the General Policies the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 will apply. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has a duty of care as owners or Managers of trees within its jurisdiction to anyone visiting that land.

- Highways Act 1980
Sandwell as a highway authority under Part 4 Section 41 Highways Act 1980 as a statutory duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense.

Under part 9 Section 130, as a statutory to “assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority.

We are further obliged to take note of Government Circulars.

- Circular 90/73 – Inspection, maintenance and planting of roadside trees of rural roads. This advises the local authority on the need for maintenance inspection and road safety in relation to trees for which we are responsible.
- Circular 52/75 Inspection of Highway trees.
This advises the authority of the need to inspect trees within the highways.
- Circular 36/78 – Trees and Forestry
This circular consolidates advice to local authorities in respect to trees and forestry, including having staff available with appropriate technical knowledge to carry out the inspection and maintenance of the tree stock.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5 – 8
Gives protection of habitat and wildlife that trees provide for that wildlife – means that it may constitute an offence to fell or prune trees when it contains nesting birds, bats or certain fungi.
- Habitat Regulations 1994
Which prohibit loss or damage to certain habitats or species.
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Sections 197 – 214 and Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999.
- Planning and Compensation Act 1991

- Forestry Act 1967 as amended by the 1979 Forestry Act relates to all living trees and the felling of live trees for sale is controlled by the means of felling licences.
- Tree Preservation Order – A Guide to the Law and Good Practice 2000
- Association of Metropolitan Authorities Highways AMA Circular 14/96 “Street Trees and Highway Works” Advisory note which identifies the nature of the problem and sets out a range of practical steps that can be taken to ensure the continuing viability and health of trees in the street scene.
- Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance – Code of Practice for Maintenance Management.
- NJUG 10 refers to National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) publication No 10 guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees.
- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991
Although not specifically covered, tree work is affected by means of traffic control, public protection measures, excavations.
- Roots and Routes – Guidelines on Highway Works and Trees Draft Guidance 1999.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that non-employees (members of the general public) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety by the way in which SMBC undertakes tree work operations.
- Circular 5/94 Planning Out Crime (Section A5 and A6 Street Furniture)
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
The Act gives local authority discretionary powers in respect of dangerous trees in private ownership.
- Plant Health Act 1967 (Plant Health Contingency Plan)
Deals with current plant health orders and control of pests and diseases.

- SANDWELL'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

As a committed authority to creating a healthier environment and achieving the best quality of life for the people of Sandwell.

- Agenda 21. Sustainable Development
Rio do Janeiro summit 1992 Article 4
- BS 3398 1989 Treework
- BS 5837 1980 Trees and Development

Planning Policy Guidance in Urban Forestry

PPG1 General Policy and Principles

PPG3 Housing

PPG6 Town Centres and Retail Development

PPG9 Nature Conservation

PPG12 Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance

PPG13 Transport

PPG17 Sport and Recreation

PPG21 Tourism

PPG22 Renewable Energy

PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control

PPG24 Planning and Noise

APPENDIX FIVE

**INTERNATION, NATIONAL
FUNCTIONS OF TREES**

International Context

It was at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio De Janeiro 1992 in which a wide ranging document – Agenda 21 was the conclusions of the conference, it sets out broad areas of action to achieve sustainable development, included area was the conservation and management of resources, climate change, biodiversity and forest management.

National Context

The U.K. Government response to issues of sustainable development was set out initially in the 1990 publication This Common Inheritance which has been developed into Sustainable Development the U.K. Strategy.

Amongst calls for action in Agenda 21 is for local authorities and local people to work together in partnership towards achieving sustainable developments. This process known as Local Agenda 21.

Sandwell's Environmental Policy contains the following statement:-

We must protect the natural environment and make sure that everyone can enjoy it as this is vital to maintaining a good quality of life. Areas of natural environment are also essential if we are to keep a wide variety of plants and animals in Sandwell.

Sandwell assurances to its residents and visitors within its environmental policy are:-

- Protect and Improve the natural environment of Sandwell
- Develop good quality open spaces to help us conserve nature and provide areas for recreation.
- Encourage the planting and care of trees and shrubs
- Encourage a wide range of wildlife in Sandwell.

Key Functions of Trees

- Filters for pollution of fine particles – which increases the severity of chronic diseases i.e. asthma, bronchitis.
- Remove gases such as carbon monoxide (CO) nitrogen dioxide (NO²) and sulphur dioxide (SO²) known causes of respiratory problems and increase sensitivity to allergens.
- Release oxygen back into the atmosphere for us to breathe.
- Increase the value of properties by up to 18%.
- Reduces the rate of ozone by providing a cooling and shading effect.
- Increases the rate of recovery of hospital patients by providing a greeny environment and view.
- Reduces noise pollution; a major cause of stress.
- Provides shade against harmful ultra-violet radiation linked to skin cancer and reduces heat-induced stress amongst people and animals.
- Provide habitats for wildlife bringing nature into the Urban environment, closer to peoples homes.
- Aid in land reclamation to attract external investment, provide soil stabilization, prevent erosion.
- Soften the landscape of towns making them greener and more attractive.
- Can define the Seasons of the year, giving a sense of time.
- Can bring together and create a closer community links by allowing people to work together for the benefit of the community.
- Can form part of the educational curriculum for local schools.
- Can aid youth development by involvement in community planting and maintenance projects.
- Can be sustainable and renewable resource providing woodchips, timber and fuel wood.