

# URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

## NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2013



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## **OUR VISION**

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is pleased to present its strategy for management and improvement of the urban forest of Newcastle under Lyme.

Our tree cover is crucial to the wellbeing of the borough in terms of landscape, local air quality and microclimates, nature conservation, biodiversity, economic development and human health.

We recognise that all trees are constituents of the forest and that the forest needs managing as a holistic entity. We will gain a wider recognition of the quality of our urban forest, and will create an environment to encourage further investment in the borough.

By working to improve and increase the forest area of the borough, essentially our whole environment, we will reap the rewards in terms of a richer and more valuable living space. By managing the forest in a more commercial fashion we will create an environment for future generations of which we can all be proud.

This strategy recognises the long-term nature of tree management, with targets up to the year 2050, with a programme of short and long-term targets to achieve our goals. The strategy will be subject to constant review and renewal. Ultimately, following a long timescale, reflecting the life-span of the tree population, we will achieve a larger, intensively-managed urban forest of which we can all be proud.

We believe this to be a bold and progressive initiative that will lead the way in urban tree management in these times of increasing environmental pressures and predicted climate change. This is one of the borough's many strategies aimed at meeting these pressures head on for the benefit of the population as a whole.



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**THE BOROUGH OF NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME  
URBAN FOREST STRATEGY  
FOR NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME**

**WHY DO WE NEED TREES?**

Trees are utterly essential for human life. There are many quoted reasons for having trees in towns including landscape benefit, nature conservation, provision of shelter, encouraging investment in business etc. But more importantly they convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. It is trees that keep us alive.

Global warming is at the top of the agenda throughout the globe and we are all now aware of the harmful effects of deforestation across the world. Whilst the primary forests in the third world continue to be harvested it is essential that the more privileged populations do their bit to prevent harmful climate change. Local Authorities throughout the world are actively planting trees and managing those they already have to ensure the safety and continued wellbeing of the human population.

Figures have been available for many years on measured quantities of oxygen released by trees and it has been determined that a single mature tree could produce enough oxygen itself to keep 10 people alive. If that tree were to be felled and replaced with new, smaller trees, 2,700 trees would need to be planted to maintain the effects the old tree had on the environment.

In the last two decades there has been very significant reinforcement of the need for action on a worldwide scale to protect and conserve trees. In 1994 “Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy” was published as Britain’s response to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development; the “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro. An important recommendation of the Earth Summit was that individual countries should prepare strategies and action plans to implement the agreements.



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The following UK initiatives relate to trees and woodlands.

- Agenda 21 - a comprehensive programme of action to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development for the 21st century
- The Climate Change Convention - a framework for action to reduce global warming
- The Biodiversity Convention - protecting the diversity of species and habitats
- A Statement of Principles - for managing, conserving and sustainable development of the world's forests
- Local Nature Partnerships – A key commitment in the Natural Environment White Paper to bring together local people and organisations to get the most out of the natural environment
- Biodiversity Duty – to raise the profile of biodiversity so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies and decisions made by public authorities.

Trees have a significant part to play in achieving the above programmes.

For its part, the UK Government is committed to improving the management and conservation of forests and encouraging the expansion of the UK's tree cover. It is also encouraging the planting, management and protection of trees important to amenity.

## **WHY DO WE NEED TO MANAGE OUR TREES**

Trees are living plants. They grow, they mature, they become sick and they die. When trees start to decline they can start to become a risk. The urban and suburban environments, and indeed the farmed landscape, are not natural environments. The countryside has been shaped by thousands of years of tree clearance for agriculture. The built environment has developed over a small number of years. Trees left within the built environment have many pressures to cope with including reduced rooting space, vandalism, changed local climates, greater susceptibility to disease, and generally shorter life expectancies.

Complacency is a big challenge to tree survival. Planting schemes from Victorian times have left us with leafy lanes and glorious parks and gardens. Trees have now matured and there is resistance to making significant changes to these environments as they are so pleasant at the moment. However, in many of these locations trees are all of a similar age and in order to ensure their continuance some will need to be removed to make way for younger trees and to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the rich environment of many parts of the borough.

Whilst trees are essential for human survival, they can also create their own problems. The pressures suffered by trees such as those described above can render them hazardous in several

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ways and management of the tree resource ensures that trees remain in a safe condition. Management is targeted to areas of greater risk, for example where trees are next to houses, roads, play areas etc. Management also helps to keep natural sunlight filtering into homes, minimising discomfort, minimising nuisance, improving sight lines at road junctions and even improving the chances of better TV reception! Structured and planned tree management ensures the survival of trees for maximum benefit, whilst at the same time minimising the less favourable effects of nuisance and annoyance to people.

## **THE NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME URBAN FOREST**

The Newcastle under Lyme Urban Forest is a new concept. The Urban Forest has always existed but it has not been viewed as such before. The urban forest is defined as all of the woodlands, trees and open spaces within the borough, viewed as a single entity rather than as separate collections of trees and woodlands. To satisfy the needs for good environmental management Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is moving away from the concept that each individual tree is to be protected in its own right, and now recognises the importance of the holistic view of the forest as a whole. This strategy is concerned with the improvement and management of the urban forest as a whole.

We are fortunate in Newcastle in having a higher than average covering of trees. Woodland cover for Staffordshire in general is between 6 and 8% and within Newcastle the percentage appears a little higher than this. Formal surveys over the next few years will give us a more reliable figure. Our borough is essentially a collection of small urban areas with an extensive rural fringe. The agricultural landscape is well endowed with trees and there are numerous small woodlands across the borough. Previous clearance of wooded areas for industry is being reversed with the planting of many former mining sites and the creation of country parks such as Birchenwood and Apedale.



An idea of the density of tree cover in the borough can be seen in the aerial photograph at Appendix IV

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Within the last thirty years Dutch Elm Disease has had a profound influence on the landscape of Newcastle under Lyme. Few elm trees remain and where the English elm is regenerating in the hedgerows it is succumbing to disease again when it reaches around 8 cms stem diameter. As such these once prominent trees have become little more than a hedgerow component. Other diseases, including the newly-arrived Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) have had, and will continue to have an impact on tree cover within the borough and this confirms the need for a strong and robust woodland strategy.

Traditional response to disease and decline of tree populations has been largely ad hoc with the planting of standard trees with stakes in parks and open spaces. More recently woodland style planting with forestry “whips” and transplant trees has taken precedence, utilising native broadleaf species wherever possible. This style of planting is easier to establish, less prone to vandalism and is, on the whole, a more cost-effective form of planting. However, this places a greater need on thinning plantation areas following vigorous growth in order to maintain healthy woodland.

In general tree management has been reactive and whilst this does deal with problems as a whole the sense of direction is lacking. Structured, planned, proactive management by all land owners in the urban forest will ensure an end to decline, an improvement to the urban forest, greater numbers of trees and a reduction in complaints.

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE URBAN FOREST

### Woodlands

There are a large number of woodlands throughout the borough both in public and private ownership. Several woodlands are thriving due to good management or good fortune and many demonstrate a good diversity of species and tree ages with healthy natural regeneration. However, where management is lacking there are signs of decline setting in, especially in woods dominated



by sycamore, willow and poplar, which out-compete other species. In such woods diversity is being lost and the structure and longevity of the wood as a whole is being compromised. Where relatively new plantations have been established there has been a lack of maintenance and necessary thinning works have been neglected. In these woodlands the wind is starting to have an effect with trees falling and being “hung-up” or leaning on other trees. Where responsive tree works have been undertaken arisings from the work are generally left on site. Whilst this can have benefits for nature conservation it can lead to unsightliness and further neglect, including the encouragement of further illegal dumping of rubbish. Woodlands have not received priority attention in the past as they are generally less frequented by people and carry a lower degree of perceived risk. There is, however, now a need to rescue woodlands from decline.

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## Parks

There is a diversity of parkland types in Newcastle under Lyme, from the informal, such as Bathpool Park, to the highly ornamental gardens in Brampton Park.

The formal urban parks in particular demonstrate even-age structures with good populations of mature trees. Some have little evidence of recent plantings and now require active management to create more uneven age structures, enabling space for new trees to be planted for future generations. To avoid the prospect of trees all becoming old and starting to die off at the same time (and the cost implications that go with it) it is now time to commence a programme of selective thinning, felling and replanting. A survey in 2012 of Clough Hall Park in Kidsgrove has highlighted the problem of tree decline over a large scale, and this may be the first park to trial large-scale structured tree surgery works during the course of this strategy.



## Highway Trees

Highway trees are maintained by Staffordshire County Council. Whilst Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council carries out other grounds maintenance operations on the highways, such as grass cutting on a contract basis, the County Council maintain the trees themselves. There is close co-operation between the tree officers of the two authorities with a keen shared interest in developing the management of the tree population. Funds for maintenance are limited and tree work tends to concentrate at present on the areas most in need from the point of view of public safety. In the absence of major tree-planting over the last few decades there is a problem with an ageing tree population and annual reduction in numbers of trees. Leafy suburbs could, in future, become devoid of trees without an active programme of management.

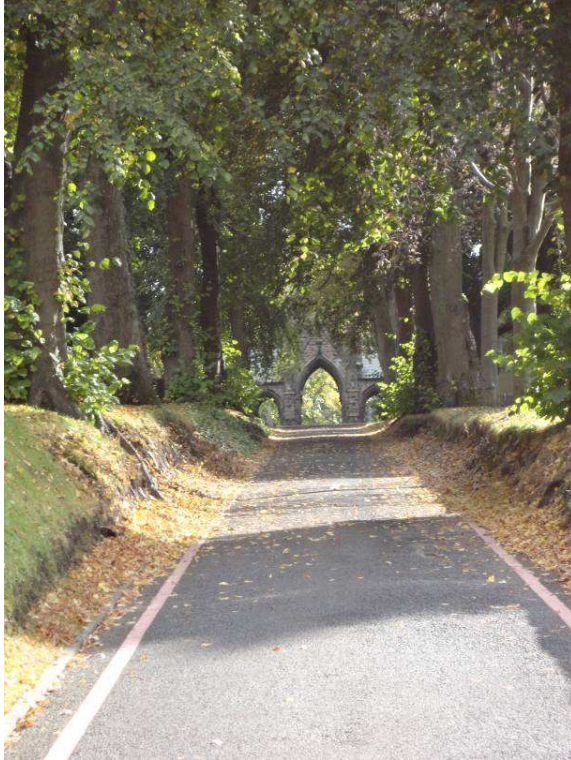
Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Councils are exploring jointly some options to deal with this problem, involving shared resources, but there is much more planning to be done. Ultimately it is intended that both authorities will work in accordance with the aims, objectives and targets laid down in this strategy.



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## **Cemeteries and Church Yards**

As well as municipal cemeteries, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is tasked with the maintenance of closed churchyards, where churches have requested this. Closed churchyards are those that are no longer used for new burials. Traditionally the cemeteries have been well tended and well planted with trees. However, there has been non-intervention in even-aged tree



populations, such as that in Newcastle Cemetery where the trees have been left to grow. Newcastle Cemetery will commence a three-year planned tree-maintenance programme in 2012, concentrating initially on hazardous trees and those overhanging other properties around the boundaries.

Cemetery trees carry their own problems, including the casting of dense shadow over graves and memorials, which can be distressing to those visiting the graves. The Newcastle Crematorium site has been subject to generous levels of tree-planting mainly as memorial trees, but over time there comes a problem of managing those trees and negotiating to remove selected specimens, which are currently memorial trees. A review of planting strategy within the crematorium site is intended, again to anticipate future problems arising from tree growth.

## **School Sites**

Education land is the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council although Local Management of Schools means that most school sites now manage their own tree stocks with their own contractors. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council intends to take this strategy to the schools to encourage future initiatives and the better management and planting of more trees, in liaison with Staffordshire County Council.

## **Aspire Housing**

Aspire Housing is a major land-owner in Newcastle under Lyme, and they have a large population of trees. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Aspire Housing have a close working relationship and are currently exploring possibilities in joint working with regards to increased efficiency in relation to strategic tree management in open spaces. Currently Aspire has a strategic approach via tree-planting programmes to support the neighbourhood planning process and have been successful in attracting external funding sources leading to significant numbers of trees being planted on Aspire and Newcastle Borough Council land. Aspire are currently undertaking a full inventory of all trees upon their land within the borough of Newcastle under Lyme.

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### **Trees in Private Ownership**

The bulk of Newcastle under Lyme's urban forest lies within land ownership other than that of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council or Staffordshire County Council. Where sites are maintained by the Parish Councils we intend to work with them to promote the strategy. Much of the urban forest lies on domestic properties.

All trees, regardless of ownership, provide a local amenity, and a degree of protection is available to conserve tree cover. The Town and Country Planning Act assists with the management of the urban forest through Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and the protection of trees in the Conservation Areas. However, whilst TPOs can protect threatened trees they cannot be used to stimulate good management. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will seek to promote tree planting and management on private land, largely through the Development Control process and other partnership initiatives.

### **Public Attitudes**

There is now a significant environmental awareness amongst the people of Newcastle and we have had active participation in community initiatives, both directly and in partnership with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and other organisations. Resident involvement in management is increasing throughout the borough, with input from residents via the Locality Action Partnerships (LAP), and various residents associations and Friends groups etc. There remains, however a mixed perception of and reaction to trees with some hostility and indifference as well as appreciation and support.

There is keen awareness of the disadvantages of trees, and the annoyance of falling leaves, lack of sunlight below tree canopies, honey-dew problems and the physical damage to property that can be attributed to trees, often incorrectly. Newcastle Borough Council receives around 15 to 20 requests for tree work every week. It is acknowledged that a level of distress and frustration can affect some residents as a result of living close to trees and this is being tackled with an increased efficiency in responsiveness to requests. It involves a considerable input of time and resources to respond to each public request and it is evident that the reactive management, dealing with small numbers of trees in each request is an inefficient way to manage such requests. Through this strategy it is intended that a more proactive style of management will anticipate future problems before they become an issue and that the level of complaints and requests for service will decrease



## URBAN FORESTRY

Urban forestry is a simple concept. It aims to manage the urban forest in much the same way that a forester would manage a rural forest. The forester is less concerned with preserving every individual tree but more concerned with the health, vitality and productivity of the forest as a whole. The forester recognises the need to remove trees for the benefit of the forest, both to space trees out and to make way for new planting. The forester recognises that it is his or her job to ensure that future generations enjoy the same forest in the future. The rural forester may be concerned with timber production or other forest products and this commercial aspect can have a role in the urban forest as well. Investment in the forest can encourage the maximisation of income from timber or woodchip sales etc, which can be used to stimulate further initiatives and further tree planting.

## THE URBAN FOREST STRATEGY IN LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This strategy is guided by the existing policies of the 2003 **Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan**. The Local Plan, which complements the **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan** is currently being revised and will be replaced by a **Local Development Framework** in the near future. Several of the policies contained within the Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan are still extant. Those relevant to this strategy document are:

- H7 – Protection of Areas of Special Character
- N10 – New Woodland – Considerations
- N12 – Development and Protection of Trees
- N13 – Felling and Pruning of Trees
- N14 – Protection of Landscape Features of Major Importance to Flora and Fauna
- B10 – The Requirement to Preserve or Enhance the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area
- B15 – Trees and Landscape in Conservation Areas
- N8 – Protection of Key Habitats
- N9 – Community Woodland Zones



As part of the **Local Development Framework**, Newcastle's **Core Strategy** contains specific aims and policies, specifically: Strategic Aim 15: Protect and improve the countryside and the diversity of wildlife and habitats throughout the plan area; and Policy CSP4 – Natural Assets. This strategy also complements the **Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy**, which is aimed at driving improvements to urban parks and biodiversity.

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Finally, all policies and strategies are informed by the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, which sets out to achieve sustainable development through the planning process.

## WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY?

To drive positive change in the face of decreasing resources we need a plan. This will both drive the initiative and provide justification for actions in the face of challenge or opposition.

## ACTION PLAN

'Protect', 'Care', 'Plant' and 'People' are the guiding principles that Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will apply to the trees, woodlands, and hedges for which we have responsibility.

The Newcastle under Lyme Urban Forest Strategy has the following broad set of objectives:

- **Protect**
  - Objective 1: Retain and protect existing woodland
  - Objective 2: Retain and protect existing hedgerows
  - Objective 3: Protect and enhance existing trees and groups including street trees
  
- **Care**
  - Objective 4: Care for woodlands areas to promote structured, uneven-aged and sustainable environments for multiple uses, with an emphasis on recreation, amenity and nature conservation.
  - Objective 5: Care for trees, and hedgerows to promote healthy growth and development
  
- **Plant**
  - Objective 6: Plant more woodlands and hedgerows
  - Objective 7: Plant more trees, tree groups and street trees
  
- **People**
  - Objective 8: Consultation with public and interest groups over major schemes and initiatives.
  - Objective 9: Listen to public opinion and manage Newcastle Borough Council-owned trees in the interests of good neighbourliness and human comfort

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The key elements of the Strategy, to achieve these objectives are:

- To involve members of the community in the selection, planting and protection of trees through programmes of education, promotion and consultations;
- Work towards minimising conflicts with the built environment and to provide protection to and from tree growth;
- To develop streetscape designs and strategies suited to the nature of the local community and built environment;
- To implement a priority based program for the continual rejuvenation of trees within the whole of the urban forest.
- The Strategy should provide clear guidelines for the management of tree populations from field/forest to street level.
- provide a summary and overview of the current condition of the tree population;
- compile prioritised plans on a site by site scale for the development and improvement of all areas of the urban forest in the short, medium and long term;
- examine traditional problem areas for tree planting and recommend innovative solutions to minimise problems with future plantings;
- develop a species selection database of generally available stock suited to local conditions and local characters within the area;
- prepare innovative recommendations for dealing with the ageing tree populations in specified areas, working closely with Staffordshire County Council to cover all Council-owned land, Aspire Housing and other land owners, as appropriate;
- ensure consultation with residents regarding capital works projects and other major proposals planned by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council;
- recommend methods and frequency of tree inspections to ensure public safety and health of the tree population.

Our objectives have given rise to a set of specific targets, which are to be achieved by 2050.

The targets are further guided by a series of Policy Statements which are set out in Appendix III.

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**TARGETS**

**TARGET DATE**

**1. Management of Existing Trees and Woodlands**

- Review the current IT arrangements and assess the suitability of the Council's Tree Management System to developing needs 2014
- Implement a programme of planned arboricultural maintenance across all Council-owned sites, to reduce the need for reactive working 2015
- Liaise with Staffordshire County Council and with Aspire for a commonality of approach with regard to strategic tree management on open space 2016
- Review Call-Centre operations with a view to setting up one contact centre for all tree matters relating to Newcastle, Staffordshire County Council and Aspire 2016
- Enter into discussions with Staffordshire County Council and Aspire with reference to shared workloads for more efficient and productive tree management in the borough 2016
- Obtain grant-aid and undertake a full inventory of Council woodlands leading to production of a Newcastle woodland management plan 2017
- Update and review the existing inventory of all Council-owned trees and set up a programme of reinspections 2018
- Achieve growth in sustainably-managed tree cover to 5% over the life of the strategy 2050

**2. New Tree Planting**

- Tree-planting to be incorporated into major arboricultural projects (e.g. major tree surgery schemes in parks), ensuring replanting takes place following major felling schemes 2014
- Preparation of a planting strategy on Council-owned land, to ensure Planned tree-planting, together with selective tree-removals to enable new trees to establish 2017
- Increase tree-cover in the borough in suitable areas, whilst conserving other natural habitats in the borough, as appropriate 2030

### 3. Publicity and Marketing

- Annual programmes of work to be taken to Locality Action Partnerships, formal residents associations, Parish Councils etc for information and consultation in advance of commencement 2014
- Review the disposal arrangements for arboricultural arisings and look at ways of maximising income or recycling opportunities for urban forestry produce 2016

### 4. Environmental Awareness

- Community Management Team at Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council promoting the plan and ensuring that volunteer groups are all aware of the background and importance of the strategy 2014
- Promote this strategy at every opportunity and incorporate into the statutory local plan 2018

### 5. Operational Management

- Review resourcing for in-house working arrangements, taking all due account of woodland surveys, management plans and available budgets 2016

### Monitoring

This strategy and the implementation of targets will be subject to a set of Annual Reports, which will report on progress and will reassess final target dates, as required. The reports will also enable modification and changes to targets as circumstances may dictate.

A formal review will be undertaken in 2020 to enable an assessment of our success and to produce a second phase to enable any changes to policy and to continue the strategy into the future.



## **RESOURCES – NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

At the time of writing, the general economic climate is poor and available resources for tree work by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council are limited.

The Streetscene section is responsible for organising work to Borough Council-owned trees along with all other grounds maintenance and cleansing operations. Careful planning has ensured the optimisation of service delivery across the board on limited resources. With reference to trees, the qualified tree team operate during the winter months and move onto other duties, such as grass-cutting during the summer season. The team has at their disposal a full range of machinery, vehicles, tools and safety equipment necessary for efficient operation.

This strategy will set the foundation for a full assessment of tree and woodland condition and a review of working arrangements, largely from within existing revenue and capital budgets. In particular, however, it will look at the potential for income generation, for example with reference to timber and firewood sales and recycling to enable further funds to be put into the system, to enable further works, more tree-planting etc. It will also look at the potential for providing tree management and maintenance services to other customers and developing a business plan for the council's tree team.

We will also look into sources of external funding, as per the resource intentions laid out in the Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan. External funding is already being accessed and potential funding streams include:

- English Woodland Grant Scheme, administered by the Forestry Commission.
  - this is used to help fund tree-planting schemes and is increasingly used for woodland management and improvement. Grant aid is also available for drawing up woodland management plans.
- Natural England land management grants for nature conservation areas
- English Sports Council – for sporting initiatives in woodland areas etc
- UK National Lottery – for major initiatives and partnership ventures
- The Tree Council – Funds available for schools and community groups
- Possible sponsorship from local businesses
- Developer contributions through the planning process
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Groundwork
- Woodland Trust – Planting packs for communities



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- Charitable Organisations

In addition, for schemes on private land, Newcastle Borough Council can offer limited assistance by way of grant-aiding through the Community Chest.

From this strategy Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will seek to undertake long-term planning and management of the urban forest that will incorporate the addition of external funding wherever possible to optimise tree-cover, improve the natural environment and, hopefully, stimulate further economic growth. The Council will seek to engage with and consult stakeholders over the planning and management of the urban forest with the aim of working cooperatively with our residents and partners to achieve our goal of a clean, safe and sustainable borough.

## **VOLUNTEERING AND PARTNERSHIPS**

In addition to attracting external funding, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to working with the voluntary sector to stimulate local interest and involvement in environmental and countryside issues.

We already work with various groups. Examples of current schemes are:

- Conservation Volunteers, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- Porthill Dingle Fishing Club
- St Georges Church
- Prince's Trust volunteers
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Forest of Mercia
- Status Grow
- Restart (ex offenders)
- ESG (long term unemployed)
- Newcastle Day Care services
- Elite
- Clough Hall Park Friends
- Bathpool Park Friends
- Kidsgrove Youth Parliament
- The Acre Allotment Association
- Basford Allotment Association
- Park Road Allotment Association
- Dimsdale Allotment Association
- Ickey Picky Friends Group
- Thistleberry Friends Group
- Lyme Valley Friends Group
- Chester Road Friends Group

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- Bateswood Country Park Group
- Wolstanton Residents Group
- Bradwell Residents Group
- Unpaid Workers (probation services)
- BAC O'Conner (Rehabilitation centre)
- Keele University Students
- Knights Solicitors Environmental volunteers
- Loggerheads Pickers and Planters

In addition to the above we also work with over 20 local schools and we are adding new groups as projects are set up.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council facilitates a whole range of work initiatives from one off projects to regular light maintenance works carried out in our parks and open spaces. Every event is logged, risk assessed and a record kept of what was done, how many volunteers were there etc. The total number of hours worked by individuals not paid by the council doing community enhancement projects during 2012/13 is 7765.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is also intending to work with the Tree Council to start a Tree Warden Scheme to involve local people in the care of trees in their area.

Assistance given by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council includes:

- Newcastle Borough Council (Green Grant Scheme/Planting Assistance Scheme)
- Green Grants
- Planting Assistance Schemes – provision of transplant trees and whips, bulbs etc.

Similarly, at Aspire Housing volunteers and community groups have been involved in several initiatives and this has contributed to low vandalism rates for newly-planted trees

## **REFERENCES**

British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work'

The national standard for tree surgery work is defined in British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work'. This standard is often quoted by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and should be the basic standard followed by all tree work contractors.

British Standard 5837: 2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction' -

There is often a conflict between maximising the development potential of a site and retaining existing trees. Consequently, construction activities throughout the country account for the loss of many trees each year. The retention of suitable existing trees is highly desirable, often enhancing the quality of the development and facilitating its integration into the surrounding landscape. It is important, however, to ensure that retained trees and new dwellings exist compatibly, well beyond the completion of the development. If trees are to be retained effectively, measures to protect them need to be thorough and should be understood by all parties involved in the construction process (i.e. from architect to site operative).

The national standard for selecting, preserving and retaining trees within new development is B.S. 5837 : 2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations' This standard forms the basis of advice the Council provides to its own planning officers and other planning authorities. The Council is committed to promoting best practice when managing and integrating trees in association with new development.

### Tree Planting

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council undertakes all tree-planting work in accordance with the relevant section of its own work specifications. These specifications accord with the following standards :-

- B.S. 3936 : 1992 Nursery Stock
- B.S. 4043: 1989 Transplanting Root-balled Trees
- National Plant Specification

When designing new native woodland planting, the Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will normally specify stock produced from seed collected from the appropriate Forestry Commission seed zones. Where the primary aim of a new tree planting scheme is to conserve or enhance nature conservation nursery stock should be produced from seed collected from local sources, if such seed is available.

However, this aim will be kept under review due to the pressures predicted in the urban environment, such as temperature increases due to climate change, which could affect choice of species.

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## CONTACTS

If you have an enquiry relating to trees, please contact the appropriate section of the Council or Staffordshire County Council as detailed below : -

### **Management of trees on highways, schools and other County Council sites**

[contactus@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 111 8000

### **Management of Trees in Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces**

Streetscene (Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)

Email: [Streetscene@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:Streetscene@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

Tel: 01782 717717

The Streetscene Tree Maintenance Unit is responsible for providing contracting services for tree surgery, planting and woodland maintenance

### **Management of Tree Preservation Orders/Trees in Conservation Areas/Hedgerow Regulations and landscape design and management**

Landscape Development Section (Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)

Email: [landscape@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:landscape@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

Tel: 01782 717717

### **Management of Trees in and around Aspire Housing Areas**

Aspire Housing

Email: [enquiries@aspirehousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aspirehousing.co.uk)

Tel: 01782 615599

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## APPENDIX I TREE ASSESSMENT FORM

**General Details** Amenity Value: Input Required Risk: Input Required

Tree No :  Alternative Tree Code :   
 Log Date :  Logged By :   
 Location Details :   
 Site Name :   
 Tree Tag No. :  Label Type :   
 Description :   
 GIS Risk :   
The UID is system generated - so do not enter a value for new records, the field will be automatically populated once the record is saved.

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**Tree Map**

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**Tree Details and Tree Inspection Records**

Species :   
 Age Class :   
 Year Planted :   
 Height (m) :  Crown Height (m) :  Spread (m) :   
 DBH (cm) :  Planting Year Accuracy :   
 Form - Symmetry :  Form - Stems :   
 Vitality :  Physiological Condition (Vigour) :   
**Condition Assessment**    
 Select Assessment Date Condition Issues Overall Condition  
 Next Insp Date :

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**Tree Environment**

Slope :  Aspect :   
 Exposure :  Surface Type :   
 Adjacent Landuse :   
 Adjacent Services :   
 Context :   
 Amenity Type :   
 Routine Management :   
 Additional Features :   
**Designations & Constraints**    
 Select Type Reference Category Note  
 Threats To The Tree :   
 Threats Posed By The Tree :   
Enter TPO details in the Miscellaneous Details panel below

---

**Amenity Value Parameters**

Location Suitability :  Form - Rating :   
 Visual Area Tree Coverage :  Importance in Landscape :   
 Life Expectancy :  Special Factors :   
Data for all fields should be entered. The sail area of the tree is calculated from the mandatory crown and height data entered in the Tree Details panel. The Form Rating in the Tree Details panel must also be entered.

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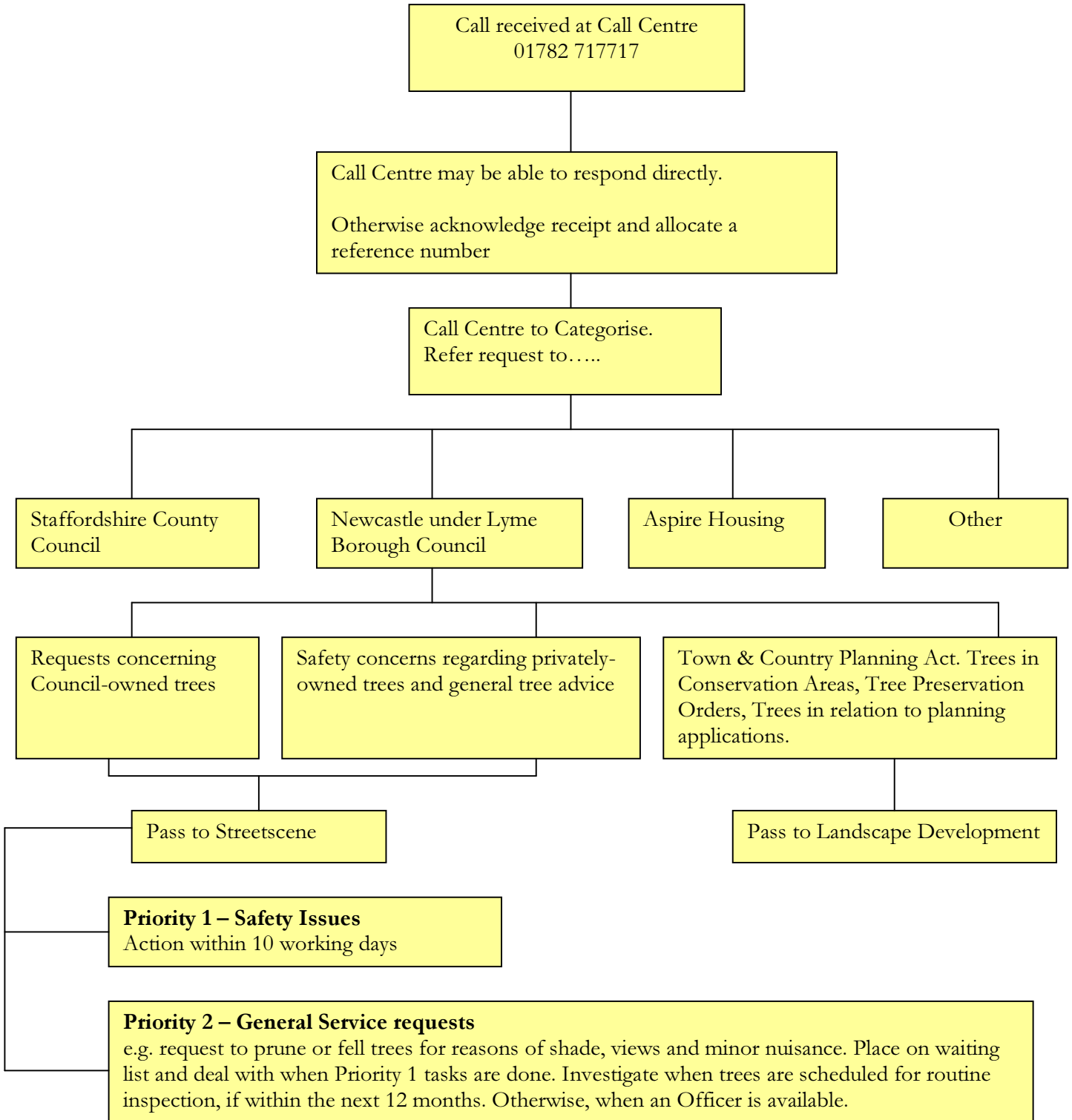
**Event Details**

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**Miscellaneous Details**

APPENDIX II

CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGEMENT (CRM)  
PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO TREE REQUESTS



## APPENDIX III

### POLICIES RELATING TO TREE AND HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT IN NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

The following policy statements have all been produced specifically as part of this strategy to help deliver its aims. They do not relate to statements of policy laid down in other corporate documents, although they are intended to complement all existing corporate strategy.

#### 1. Trees, hedges and woodlands – General Policies

**T1** Healthy trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected, retained and enhanced. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will discourage any tree felling or pruning that is unnecessary. Essential work would include removing hazards, complying with legal requirements such as the highways legislation, routine management that is in the interests of the tree-stock/urban forest, and to allow approved development or redevelopment works to proceed. We will also take steps to ensure that where trees are being retained on development sites, they are protected from unnecessary removal or damage above or below ground through the planning process.

**T2** Trees, hedges, and woodlands will be managed to ensure healthy growth and development.

Appropriate tree management is needed to ensure that trees, hedges and woodland are properly cared for through the various stages of their growth and development and to enable all trees to thrive. As part of that management, maintenance work will be needed to trees, hedges and woodland from time to time to retain them in a healthy condition and ensure optimum conditions for growth. Younger trees and plantations need careful and more intensive management, to help them develop into healthy mature trees in future years.

We also need to take care of our veteran trees to ensure that they are not removed prematurely and that they pose no danger to the public. Programmed work to trees in accordance with agreed management plans is intended.

**T3** Tree stocks in the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme will be increased with particular attention given to locally native species, or exotic trees where appropriate and promoting a mix of tree species of different ages, including juvenile and veteran trees, to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.

Opportunities will be taken to plant more trees in Newcastle. There is a particular need to increase the area of woodland where there is space to accommodate woodland and where circumstances allow. However, we will ensure that other valued wildlife and habitats are not lost or damaged by woodland planting. Individual trees and tree groups are also of great value including trees of more exotic or ornamental species, tolerant of local environmental conditions.

### **Policies for Trees on Council Land**

**CT1** A Risk Management Strategy for Trees has been developed by the Borough Council enabling trees to be subject to regular health and safety inspections.

Owners of trees have a duty of care and are legally obliged to carry out regular inspections to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. As a responsible land owner Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council intends to introduce a system of regular inspection and monitoring of its trees.

**CT2** No tree or woodland will be felled or pruned without adequate justification.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will not carry out felling or pruning that cannot be justified. Management and maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with policies T1, T2, & T3. Trees do require work from time to time for example to reduce risk and liability, or to ensure that people are not deprived of a reasonable right of enjoyment of public or private property. Groups or plantations of young trees need to be assessed regularly whilst they are growing and selected trees will need to be removed to make way for the remaining trees to develop.

**CT3** All requests for works to trees or woodlands on council land must be assessed and authorised by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's Tree Management Team with reference to the current accepted procedure, practice and policy.

The Tree Management Team is based within Streetscene and works in partnership with landscape officers in the Landscape Development section.

**CT4** Individuals or organisations requesting tree work will be informed of the outcome within 4 weeks (28 working days) of receipt. Agreed tree work will be programmed into work schedules and the individual/organisation will be informed of the likely implementation target. Applicants will be informed of any delays.

The Tree Management Team will be responsible for informing the public about the outcomes of requests for tree work, giving reasons for refusal if necessary. The Team will be responsible for ensuring compliance with any legislation or restrictions affecting trees in their ownership. There may be circumstances where work has to be done at a certain time of year. Many tree species are more vulnerable to pruning for example when sap is rising or when in leaf. It may be necessary to avoid tree work at certain times to prevent disturbance to other vegetation or to wildlife, for example roosting bats or nesting birds.

**CT5** All work to council trees or woodlands will be carried out by the Tree Management Team, although at times statutory undertakers may prune trees back from power lines, although Newcastle Council will agree works and grant appropriate permissions.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to ensuring that our trees are properly cared for and that tree felling and pruning is carried out to a very high professional standard.



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**CT6** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will plan and implement programmes for tree planting where resources allow to complement its annual programme of tree removals.

Except in the case of plantation thinning, replacement planting is desirable to ensure continuity of the tree stock. A single young tree will take many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature tree and in some locations it may be possible to plant several replacements. Replacement trees do not have to be in the exact same spot as the felled trees and other locations may be more practical and appropriate.

Street trees are currently maintained by Staffordshire County Council Highways Department and deserve a special mention as they are crucial to the landscape character of the town and very much affected by this strategy. The borough's streets offer a very unnatural environment for trees, which need special care and protection. This can be costly. Streets are where most of our services cables, pipes and overhead wires are found, together with junction boxes, letter and telephone boxes, street lights, signs and access chambers. The presence of this equipment above and below ground makes it difficult to find large enough spaces to plant trees. In residential areas verges have often been surfaced with tarmac and many people have driveways. When mature street trees are felled it is often impossible to remove the tree stump without damaging services and this means it can be very difficult to plant a replacement tree in the same place. Locations for new street trees need to be selected with great care and Newcastle Borough Council is keen to encourage new planting as a planned part of any new road schemes. Major development or redevelopment offers us our best opportunity for planting new street trees. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will work with Staffordshire County Council to ensure that street trees are replanted wherever possible.

**CT7** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council will work towards preparing phased Tree Management Plans for its trees and woodlands.

The Tree Management Team will use the results of regular tree inspections to compile an inventory of our tree stock and to plan management work. Tree work that is programmed and budgeted for in advance is more cost effective than waiting for problems to be reported. However the need to respond to individual and emergency situations is acknowledged, for example when trees suffer storm damage.

**CT8** New tree planting will ultimately be in accordance with Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's proposed design guidance.

We will be working on design guidance for use by everyone involved with tree planting operations, from design to specification, implementation and establishment care. Whilst this guidance may not cover every single individual circumstance it is intended to draw attention to basic principles for selecting suitable trees for particular locations and for proper planting and care from the outset.

**CT9** Tree planting and establishment will be carried out in accordance with good horticultural and arboricultural practice as defined by BS 4428:1989, BS 3998:2012 and BS 7370:1991 and other good practice guidance promoted by government agencies and professional institutions.

3.11 We are committed to achieving a very high standard of workmanship and setting a good example to others.

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### **Additional Policies for Trees on Private Property Adjoining Council Land or Highways**

**CTA1** A Risk Management Strategy for Trees has been developed by the Borough Council. This may include inspection of trees on privately owned land that are adjacent to and/or overhang Council property or highways, where a concern has been reported to the Council.

Owners are responsible for trees on their property and have a duty of care to others. Best practice advice suggests regular inspections by owners to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has introduced a system of regular inspections and monitoring of its trees. We will encourage other landowners to do likewise. We will consider whether neighbouring trees are likely to pose any threat to members of the public using Council property, if we receive reports that a tree or trees are giving rise to concerns.

**CTA2** Owners of any trees that are a potential nuisance or danger to the public or to public property will be asked to carry out remedial work. In the event of failure to carry out work we can use statutory powers to implement essential works and recharge the costs to the owner.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has powers under The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and in common law to ensure that members of the public are not put at risk when using Council land or facilities and to avoid risk to its own property. Similarly, Staffordshire County Council can use similar powers to ensure the safety of the highway under the Highways Act.

**CTA3** Owners of trees that are a potential nuisance or danger will be offered advice in the event that the trees in question have protected status.

Where trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders or within a Conservation Area owners will be advised whether a formal application or notification for the tree work will need to be submitted. Certain works to trees are exempt from tree protection provisions.

### **Additional Policies for Trees on Private Property Maintained by the Borough Council.**

Policies CT1 to CT9 will apply to trees on land where the Council has entered into an agreement with a private owner, except where the terms of the agreement specifically require otherwise. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council maintains land by agreement for example in churchyards, where the Council is not the owner of the land.

Where applicable we will take into account the presence of Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area status and will apply policies as appropriate. Legislation requires us to advertise proposed work to TPO trees on Council land. Scheduled Ancient Monument consents, Church Faculties or other restrictive covenants must also be adhered to.

### **Policies for Trees Protected under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Legislation.**

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**TPO 1** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will protect trees and woodlands that are of acknowledged amenity value, that are visible to the public, that are in reasonable health and condition and/or where there is a discernible threat, using the powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act and related legislation.

All Local Planning Authorities have a duty enshrined in the Town and Country Planning legislation and in National Government guidance to protect trees and woodlands of amenity value. Trees and woodlands can best be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) although there are certain circumstances where a TPO cannot apply. Trees within designated Conservation Areas also enjoy a degree of protection since any work to the trees must first be notified to the Local Planning Authority. In making Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas, Local Planning Authorities must follow the procedure prescribed in the legislation. There is opportunity for individuals and organisations to object to the proposals if they wish. We will make every effort to inform and advise owners whose trees are affected by Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas.

**TPO 2** Trees and woodlands included within Tree Preservation Orders or within Conservation Areas will be protected where possible from harmful operations. We will encourage owners to maintain their trees in a healthy condition to enhance local amenity.

Trees and woodland will be retained wherever appropriate. Trees will also be protected from unnecessary removal or pruning and from damage to any part of the tree above or below ground. Management works that promote better and healthier tree growth and development will be encouraged and applications for appropriate and timely works will be supported.

**TPO 3** No tree or woodland will be felled or pruned without adequate justification.

We will not support felling or pruning that is unnecessary. Trees do require work from time to time to reduce risk, liability and nuisance or to ensure that individuals are not deprived of a reasonable right of enjoyment of public or private property. Groups or plantations of young trees need to be assessed regularly whilst they are growing and selected trees will need to be removed to make way for the remaining trees to develop. The circumstances where we consider that pruning or felling would be acceptable are outlined in the Tree Management Guidance. This general guidance is expected to cover all but the most unusual or extreme cases.

**TPO 4** The Borough Council will ensure that the tree protection legislation is properly enforced and will take steps to investigate reports of unauthorised tree work. Where an offence has been committed and there is clear and sufficient evidence to do so, the Council will consider prosecution.

Councils have powers under the Town and Country Planning legislation to prosecute offenders who damage or destroy protected trees in contravention of the law. This includes damage to the tree trunk, limbs and canopy above ground and also the tree roots below ground.

**TPO 5** All applications or notifications for works to protected trees or woodlands will be processed and authorised by the Landscape Development section in accordance with statutory requirements and delegated powers.

The Tree Management team based within Streetscene works closely with landscape architects based in the Landscape Development Section. The Tree Management team are able to provide

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technical and specialist arboricultural and health and safety advice, to inform decisions about protected trees.

### **Policies for Hedges on Council owned land and Private Property.**

**H1** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council wishes to protect hedges that are of acknowledged amenity, archaeological or nature conservation value, that are visible to the public, that contribute to the character and value of the local landscape and that are in reasonable health and condition. It will use the powers available under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, and negotiation through the planning process.

**H2** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's hedges will be protected where appropriate and managed in a healthy condition, in the interests of local amenity and wildlife.

Hedges will be retained on Council land wherever possible. We will encourage tenants and private home-owners to do likewise. Young hedgerows will be managed to ensure that they develop into healthy mature hedges in accordance with good practice. We will take steps to ensure that established and mature hedgerows are protected from unnecessary removal or damage to any parts above or below ground. As well as providing an attractive boundary, hedgerows are of very significant nature conservation value.

**H3** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will increase stocks of traditional, locally native hedgerows where appropriate and will encourage the inclusion of hedgerow trees.

Opportunities will be taken to plant more hedgerows in Newcastle using predominantly locally native species, of local provenance particularly in countryside locations, to reinforce local countryside character or adjacent to sites of nature conservation value. In certain urban locations hedges of exotic or ornamental species may be more suitable and will still contribute significantly to amenity and wildlife.

**H4** The planting of hedges of Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis "Leylandii"*) will be discouraged in accordance with national guidance on hedging.

Leyland Cypress hybrids will not normally be specified for use as hedging on council property. Regular maintenance of these types of hedges in accordance with the guidance will be encouraged.

**H5** Hedgerows on Council land will be managed to promote healthy growth and development and to maintain the hedge as a stock proof and effective boundary, whilst preventing any obstacle or risk to the public or to property. We will encourage private owners to do likewise.

Hedge growth can sometimes pose problems for the public or for property for example by preventing maintenance of buildings or by obstruction of pavements, paths and vehicle accesses. Appropriate management will usually include regular clipping. Where privately owned hedges obstruct council property or highways we will ask owners to remove the obstruction. If necessary the Council will implement the work and recharge it to the owner. For some hedges there may be a need for other works, for example hedge laying, provided the work is appropriate to the particular type, function and species composition of the particular hedge.

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**H6** The Council's Risk Management Strategy for Trees will include provision for our hedges to be subject to regular health and safety inspections.

**H7** Established or mature hedges on Council land will not be grubbed out without adequate justification. We will resist unnecessary hedge removal.

**H8** Requests for work to hedges on council property will be assessed and authorised by the Tree Management Team with reference to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and government (DCLG) best practice guidance.

**H9** Individuals or organisations requesting work to hedges on council property will be informed of the outcome within 4 weeks of receipt. If it is appropriate to do so, agreed work will be programmed in to work plans. Applicants will be advised of any delays.

Hedge clipping is a seasonal operation. Hedges are attractive to wildlife and particularly to birds during the nesting season (March to August). In accordance with current wildlife legislation hedgerow maintenance may not always be possible at this time of year.

**H10** All hedgerow removal notices will be processed and authorised by the Landscape Development Section in accordance with statutory requirements and delegated powers. Landscape officers will assess the hedgerow(s) in accordance with the legislation and associated guidance

**H11** Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will ensure that the Hedgerow Regulations are properly enforced and will take steps to investigate reports of unauthorised work. Where an offence has been committed and there is clear and sufficient evidence to do so, the Council will consider prosecution.

The Council has powers under the Environment Act 1995 and Hedgerow Regulations 1997 to prosecute offenders who damage or destroy hedges in contravention of the law.

**H12** Hedge planting and establishment will be carried out in accordance with good horticultural practice as defined by current British Standards (4428:1989; 3998:2012; 7370:1991) and other good practice guidance promoted by government agencies and professional institutions.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to meeting its conservation and wildlife objectives, achieving a high standard of workmanship and setting a good example to others.

APPENDIX IV

AERIAL VIEW, SHOWING TREE COVER IN THE BOROUGH OF NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME

