

TREE AND WOODLANDS STRATEGY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sustainability

1.1.1 In June 1992 the world's largest gathering of world leaders was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. That meeting signalled the fact that environmental concerns have moved up the international political agenda. The central message of the summit is summed up in Article Four of the Rio declaration:

“In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it”.

1.1.2 This means that international, national and local policy makers have to start re-appraising their policies and practices to ensure that they are sustainable. This process has become widely known as Local Agenda 21. These have now reached the local level in the form of Biodiversity action plans. Biodiversity is not just about special or rare species; there is a need to ensure that all species thrive throughout the town and countryside.

1.1.3 The Authority supports the work of the Biodiversity Steering Group and the production of local action plans and is committed to act to conserve and enhance biodiversity throughout the Warwick District Council area.

1.1.4 The release of this strategy is a small part of that process.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Warwick District Council seeks to ensure that its commitment to the environment is followed through with actions. The production of this document is an action in that plan.

1.2.2 This document's origins lie in the recognition that long term commitment and consistency are required if our ambitions for long term environmental enhancement and protection are to be realised. This strategy follows on from the Interim Tree Policy adopted in March 1995 and now forms part of the Leisure and Amenities Business Plan.

This draft strategy builds on that initial work and as such some of the background details are not revisited within this strategy. It is intended that the strategy should be reviewed every five years and it is hoped that it will continue to develop with each review. The strategy seeks to establish a point of reference for the public, councillors, officers and professionally interested people to enable informed discussion and to establish a clearer more structured approach to the issues affecting trees in the area.

1.3 Why a Strategy?

1.3.1 Warwick District includes the urban areas of Warwick, Leamington, Kenilworth and Whitnash and a rich, varied rural area. A variety of landscape types and qualities exist, one of the most important, natural elements of the local environment is trees. Trees, whether appearing as individuals, groups or as woodlands, have a significant effect on our quality of life by providing direct and indirect benefits. All local authorities have a duty to protect significant trees for their amenity value and most, Warwick District Council is no exception, manage a large number of trees both directly and indirectly.

1.3.2 In view of the benefits that we receive from trees and the Council's responsibility for tree management and protection it is fitting for the Council to set out its approach to these issues. The purpose of this strategy is to address fundamental issues by laying down the basis of management practices to ensure all those involved are working to the same basic principles.

This will result in an overall improvement in the standards of tree work/management which will in turn result in a healthier tree population.

The definition of this Tree and Woodland Strategy is:-

“A plan for the overall management of all the trees and woodland throughout Warwick District, both those on public and private land, within Warwick District's responsibility, and for giving guidance to the management practices which lie outside the responsibility of Warwick District Council, both now and in the future”.

1.3.3 Warwick District Council is committed to a Tree and Woodland Strategy which will:-

“Initiate and review action to ensure that the District's trees and woodlands are adequately protected and cared for so that their extent, quality, biological diversity and contribution to the character and appearance of the area can be sustained and enriched for the benefit and enjoyment of the residents and visitors to the district”.

1.4 The Importance of Trees

1.4.1 Trees are essential to life and their value cannot be overstated. As they grow they:-

- Contribute immeasurably as part of the landscape or particularly in their own right in an urban setting in contributing to people's quality of life and sense of wellbeing;

- Release oxygen for us to breathe;
- Absorb carbon dioxide (thereby reducing the greenhouse effect);
- Filter air and absorb other pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxides, carbon monoxide, smoke, dust, ash and noise;
- Provide varied habitats for wildlife;
- Create aesthetic value improving the appearance of our environment, giving variety of scale, form, colour and shape;
- Provide shelter and comfort;
- Reduce noise levels;
- Reduce everyday stress, particularly important in today's environment;
- Provide shade from the sun and make areas more attractive to live and work;
- Positively affect property values and help to attract investment;
- Provide valuable timber resource.

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

1.5 Tree Problems

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

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

1.5.3 A very common concern for home owners is potential structural damage by trees either directly or indirectly. This type of damage occurs in areas where the soil type is heavy, shrinkable clay which is prone to fluctuations in volume caused by changing soil moisture levels. There has been a lot of concern about tree roots and foundations in recent years. Much of this is unsubstantiated and the incidence of proven tree root related claims against the District Council remains low despite the level of tree cover and much of the area having variable soil types. The number of claims are,

however, increasing as are the applications by potential home owners/mortgage companies requesting works to trees outside properties, to prevent/cure subsidence. The opposite of subsidence 'HEAVE' may occur where trees are removed.

- 1.5.4 We are fortunate to have large areas of mature trees across the district especially in North Leamington. Unfortunately in this situation the level of inspection and maintenance increases.

2.0 TREES ON COUNCIL LAND

2.1 Council Owned Trees and their Management

- 2.1.1 This part of the strategy sets out the District Council's approach to the management of trees for which it is directly responsible. This work is largely confined to the urban area of Warwick District, namely the 4 main towns of Warwick, Leamington, Kenilworth and Whitnash, but also includes those on rural parish land.
- 2.1.2 Tree management encompasses the co-ordination of all maintenance operations to existing trees as well as new tree planting. The existing tree population is a valuable resource which requires more than just maintenance if it is to continue to provide the range of benefits that we expect. Management must include a long term view of the tree resource, providing for the future as well as for today.
- 2.1.3 There are FOUR major elements of the District Council's tree population:
- 1. Street Trees**
These are the trees planted in pavements or road verges along the District's streets. They help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and improve the overall appearance of the street scene.
 - 2. Woodlands**
Warwick District Council owns approximately 260 acres of ancient semi-natural woodland, which includes Kenilworth Common, Crackley Wood and Newbold Comyn. Local Nature Reserves open to the public and are a valuable amenity resource.
 - 3. Trees in Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces**
These are commonly the most significant trees in the area and have a profound effect on its appearance and, consequently, upon the leisure experience of users of the open space as well as for visual amenity for the District's residents and visitors alike.

4. Housing Area Trees

These are the trees found in and around housing estates. The trees were planted by the original Parks Department or the Developers in residential areas to enhance the local environment and landscape.

- 2.1.4 As a result of tree maintenance being subject to competitive tendering the need for a comprehensive inventory of trees was realised. Technology was available, unfortunately time was not. However, prior to the re-letting of the GM tender in 1998, the District Council began what it hoped would be a comprehensive survey of all its trees in preparation for the inclusion of tree maintenance into the works schedule. Members have already supported the idea of a computerised tree management system, which will form part of an integrated Grounds Maintenance package. It is intended that the introduction of a Geographic Information System (already in place in some departments), linked to a computer package for GM Management will enable an up to date usable tree inventory to be instigated.
- 2.1.5 Due to the proposed inventory an Arboricultural contract was introduced within the specification. However, due to the continuous high level of requests for work through perceived or real problems with trees and the limited staff and financial resources, little of the pro-active element of the contract has been implemented. The current contract is for 5 years with a possible 2 year extended option.
- 2.1.6 The introduction of a pro-active based contract/contracts system will optimise use of resources. The aim of a pro-active contract is to provide the best possible quality of tree population within the physical restrictions and the resources available.
- 2.1.7 It is proposed to introduce new rotational management based on the authority being split into four areas. Each area receives priority once every four years with urgent or annual work being carried out in the non-priority areas. This enables our resources to be manageable and concentrated to best effect and should ensure that all trees that need it, receive appropriate maintenance within a four year cycle. This will allow appropriate consultation and survey work to be undertaken well in advance of the work programme. In the three non-priority areas annual work (such as young tree maintenance and basal growth removal) and urgent works will be carried out. It is anticipated that a large amount of tree work will be required during the first four year cycle. This will stabilise when the backlog of essential work has been cleared.
- 2.1.8 More frequent tree inspections will be carried out on trees whose condition has given cause for concern. Some trees may be inspected as frequently as two or three times a year if necessary so as to be able to identify Fungal pathogens that appear at different times of the year. Ideally, annual

inspections should be carried out on all Council owned trees. However, with the existing resources, this is impracticable.

2.1.9 In order for a pro-active tree strategy to be effective the Council will need to invest in the trees and woodlands in order to achieve a basic standard.

2.2 The Overall Aim:

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

2.2.2 The District Council receives thousands of enquiries per year concerning trees. The intention is to inform the enquirer what action is planned and when work is due to be carried out. Often a compromise will need to be sought where the tree in question causes inconvenience to someone whilst being of value in the surrounding area. Each individual case will be assessed on its merits.

2.2.3 Policies for General Tree Management

Policy 1 The Council will ensure that the tree population continues to be protected, developed and expanded where appropriate.

Policy 2 The Council will aim to provide a sustainable, high quality tree population. Where appropriate, native species will be planted to maximise habitats for wildlife. Where possible planted trees will be derived from local indigenous tree stock.

Policy 3 The Council will aim to encourage and enable better understanding of the management of trees in order to promote greater community ownership and awareness.

Policy 4 The Council will aim to maintain the highest possible standards of tree care and management in order to act as an example of Best Value and good Practice for others to follow.

Policy 5 The Council will endeavour to fulfill their obligation to ensure the safety of people and property.

Policy 6 The removal of trees should be resisted unless there are sound arboricultural reasons.

Policy 7 The Council will support the process of natural regeneration on appropriate sites.

2.2.4 Actions for General Tree Management

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
1.1	Introduce a tree management computer system direct wide. This will enable accurate analysis of the tree population, with facilities for contract management, resource management and access to past work schedules for Insurance Claims.	1999 Ongoing
1.2	Continuation of Inventory and production of plans.	Additional income required
2.1	Seek to expand the tree cover, particularly where structure planting will help to improve their appearance and value for people and wildlife. Identify a specific planting budget so that the essential maintenance budget is not used up on planting.	Additional resource
2.2	Develop a tree renewal/planting plan that provides a major boost to the local tree population, with particular emphasis on the long term replacement of mature and over mature trees.	Ongoing
2.3	Seek to supplement our own spending on new trees by investigating additional funding, including sponsorship, grant aid and adoption to allow greater investment in the tree population.	Additional resources
3.1	Establish and support a voluntary tree warden scheme to work with officers in encouraging and enabling community involvement in tree plantings and management.	Additional resource
3.2	Revise and re-issue information leaflets for residents on tree care issues.	Sept 1999
3.4	To identify trees and woodlands of particular interest to local residents and ensure a method of fully consulting with	Ongoing

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
	residents on all work to be undertaken on the tree and woodlands in question, be it minor or major works.	
4.1	Revise specification for tree work to be introduced after 1999, with G.M. contract.	Ongoing
4.2	Ensure that maintenance works make best use of resources by efficient work planning and the recycling of by-product material wherever possible.	Ongoing
4.3	Seek to develop and implement an effective tree management programme for trees, woodlands and hedgerows	Additional resources needed
5.1	Clearly set out Health and Safety requirements for the tree population.	Ongoing
5.2	Survey trees with the aim of incorporating Risk Management.	Additional resources needed

2.3 Street Trees

All trees in the highway are the responsibility of Warwickshire County Council. Trees along motorways and trunk roads are the responsibility of the Department of Transport. Within the highways agency area the Amenities Officer arranges for maintenance of all highway trees, for reasons of safety only, on behalf of the Engineers who are the actual agent. The work forms part of the grounds maintenance contract and is recharged to the Engineers. The County Council's funding is strictly for ensuring the safety of highway trees, and does not include cosmetic tree surgery work, and no replanting.

2.3.1 The District has an unknown quantity of trees. The roadside environment is a tough place for a tree to survive. There is often intense pressure for space from underground cables and pipes, traffic, buildings, street lights, road signs, etc. In addition, the limited space is often polluted by car emissions, road salts, oil and other pollutants that challenge the tree's survival. Despite all of this, trees can and do survive, albeit with a more limited life-expectancy and with varying degrees of success.

2.3.2 The character of the street tree population varies considerably in different parts of the area, from the older Victorian planting in North Leamington, through the inter-war developments such as Queensway/Kingsway to the newer, sub-urban areas such as the Sydenham Estate and Woodloes, Warwick and soon to be Hatton development. Victorian areas such as North Leam have large, old trees selected from a limited range of forest

type species. Many of these have managed as pollards in the past although this type of management has not been practiced in the district for some many years except in certain cases where it would be of benefit to the tree or prevent its premature loss. Today we have access to a wider range of small, ornamental trees suitable for restricted sites and indeed trees to suit any of the varied sites the district has to offer.

2.3.3 Many of our most notable tree-lined streets have tree populations that are over-mature, such as Binswood and Beauchamp Avenues. Such trees are vulnerable to climatic variations (such as drought), disease and damage. An over-mature population of street trees tends to erode gradually over a number of years as individual trees decline and have to be removed. In these areas new trees cover in future years. Northumberland Road has been interplanted and is a good example showing that the over-mature Horse chestnuts have not been removed and the new planting has suffered as a result.

2.3.4 In planning for the replacement of older forest type trees it is tempting to consider using small short lived ornamental species which do not have the same scale and habit, thereby reducing maintenance costs. However, the massive contribution that large trees make to the character of the environment must be safeguarded to maximize available space.

2.3.5 Policies for Street Trees

Policy 8 The Council will place a priority on the replacement of ageing street tree populations, particularly where these adjoin major traffic routes, planting large growing trees where appropriate.

Policy 9 The Council will seek to plant new street trees in appropriate sites with priority given to sites where street trees are currently or have in the past been located.

Policy 10 The Council will endeavour to protect street trees and the growing environment from threats such as: loss of and damage to verges, the activities of statutory undertakers and others excavating near trees.

Policy 11 The Council will consult with all interested parties of proposed major tree work programmes including pollarding/replacement. If majority local opinion opposes the professional recommendation, the issue will be taken to Members for final decision. (Minor routine work will not require consultation).

2.3.6 Actions for Street Tree Management

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
8.1	In streets with front gardens and few trees, encourage residents to plant trees and consider the provision of carefully selected trees, free of charge, where these would have a direct benefit to the local environment.	No resources currently available
8.2	Seek to supplement our own spending on new trees by the development of personal and corporate tree sponsorship schemes.	2000
8.3	Introduce a tree renewal programme to replace an ageing tree population with new trees.	Additional resources
12.1	Seek to release funds for planting in circumstances where currently funding does not allow tree planting due to a need to use special construction and surfacing i.e underground service protection, tree grills, guards, etc.	Environmental enhancement schemes
12.2	Develop a method of consulting with residents of forthcoming work to street trees to enable community input and understanding i.e. local press, site notices, leafleting, etc., outlining clearly what work is to be undertaken and where this is to take place.	Ongoing
12.3	Advise Local Councillors of work to be undertaken, outlining clearly what work is to be undertaken and where this is to take place.	Ongoing
12.4	Work with and monitor undertakers/utility companies to ensure that damage to trees during their work is kept to minimum. Liaise with representative from Engineering department, with respect to National Joint Utilities Guidelines.	Ongoing

2.4 Woodlands

2.4.1 There are a number of ancient semi natural woodlands and secondary woodland and newly planted woods within the Warwick district area. The District Council owns seven woods managing five out of the seven under partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust under 25 year management agreement. These are Leam Valley, Oak Wood and Blacklow spinney and Knowle Hill, Kenilworth Common, Crackley Woods. They have all been designated local nature reserves and have management plans in place and a programme of works agreed which is being carried out through volunteer and contracted involvement. This gives the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust the opportunities to display best practice of management in pursuit of a number of objectives.

The other two northern enclosures in Warwick are an integral part of the St. Marys Lands and Warwick Racecourse. This is under a management review and once completed a management plan and possible Local Nature Reserve designation should be achievable. The final woods is Oakley Wood and is a semi natural woodland and is the location of our crematorium facility. A recent acquisition of 7 acres additional wood which is also under review and an overall plan is being drawn up and will take into account the natural woodland character.

2.4.2 The composition of the typical ancient woodland of the area is oak, birch, hazel and holly traditionally managed as coppice with standards to provide wood for local area. Such management ceased early in this century and many woods have since become neglected and over planting of exotics has added to the decline and felling and commercial timber plantations replaced natural woodland.

2.4.3 Many of the woods within Warwick District are now managed with nature conservation objectives as a priority. Those managed by Warwickshire Wildlife have started to re-introduce coppicing as a form of management thus enhancing bio diversity.

The future management of woodlands must address the problems of neglect which have afflicted many woodlands nationally over the last 75 years or more. IT MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MULTI PURPOSE OBJECTIVES WHICH WOODLANDS TODAY MUST FULFILL.

2.4.4 Policy for Woodlands

- Policy 12** The Council will ensure its woodlands have an up-to-date management plan in place and review existing on a regular basis.
- Policy 13** The Council will ensure that its woodlands are managed with nature conservation and bio diversity as part of the main objectives. Intervention will only happen when there is a valid conservation reason for it.
- Policy 14** Natural regeneration will be supported on appropriate sites.
- Policy 15** Where appropriate the Council will ensure dead and fallen wood is left on site unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for its removal and will provide log piles pruning and coppicing to encourage the bio diversity of the site.
- Policy 16** The Council will encourage community involvement with Woodland Management, through our joint partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and any other appropriate bodies.
- Policy 17** The Council will realise any economic potential of woodland through the marketing of timber and other woodland products where this does not conflict with Policy 13.
- Policy 18** The Council will encourage expansion of the urban woodland in appropriate locations ensuring layout and selection of species reflects the local woodland character.
- Policy 19** The Council will manage woodland to fulfill its obligation as owners to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.

2.4.5 Actions for Woodland Management

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
14.1	Liaise with appropriate environment groups such as the Wildlife Trust for support with woodland management.	Ongoing
14.2	Review the plans that exist and continue to update.	Ongoing

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
14.3	Investigate additional sources of funding for managing woodland open to the public, eg Lottery.	Ongoing
17.1	Arrange woodland open days/events for residents, to promote care and understanding of woodlands. In conjunction with W.W.T.	Ongoing
18.1	Explore the possibility of creating a Timber Station on Council land for recycling wood waste.	Additional resource
19.1	Seek alternative sites and funding for the expansion of woodlands.	Additional resource
20.1	Survey Council owned woodland edges and woodland paths annually for Health and Safety purposes.	Ongoing

2.5 Parks and Open Spaces

- 2.5.1 Trees are fundamental to the structure of parks and green spaces. The trees in parks and open spaces are not only important to regular visitors, they are very important contributors to the overall environment of the area. They are a high resource that requires active management if it is to prosper and bestow the benefits we would hope for.
- 2.5.2 The nature of tree populations of different parks and green spaces is as variable as the character of the sites themselves. At one extreme there are the older parks, with a declining, mature population of trees including a number of rare and interesting specimens. At the other extreme are the newer parks, with a developing but neglected tree population. For this reason the management of park trees has to be planned on a site by site basis, seeking a balanced tree population and a character for each.
- 2.5.3 Some parts of the district contain large open spaces with much short grass; some structure tree planting has been carried out over the last 20 years thus creating copses, these areas are now in need of woodland management bearing in mind the sensitive nature of such areas. Creating and Managing small wooded areas can create opportunities for wildlife whilst improving the landscape and creating a place of real value for local residents.

2.5.4 Policy for Parks and Open Space Trees

- Policy 20** The Council will seek to establish new areas of woodland which offer multiple benefits to residents, wildlife and the landscape.
- Policy 21** The Council will seek to create a varied and sustainable tree population in Council parks at the same time continuing to manage the existing trees/copses.
- Policy 22** The Council will seek to continue and develop long term management plans for parks and open spaces to prevent decline.
- Policy 23** The Council will continue, where appropriate, to plant ornamental trees.
- Policy 24** There will be a presumption against the removal of trees which are healthy but subject to complaint, unless the basis of the complaint is an overriding justification and no alternative management practice can be implemented.

2.5.5 Actions for Parks and Open Space Tree Management

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
21.1	Seek alternative sites and funding for tree planting.	Ongoing
22.2	Survey all parks and open spaces to prioritise replacement planting of declining tree populations. Replace trees with a variety of tree species to ensure diversity and sustainability.	Ongoing
23.3	Tree management in major parks and green spaces to be integrated into overall Parks management plans.	Leisure and Amenities Business Plan 1999.

2.6 Housing Trees

- 2.6.1 A large proportion of the public housing sector was built in line with the new town concept, extensive planting of both trees and shrubs was carried out. These were in garden areas and on public open space within the estates using a wide range of species.

2.6.2 Quick growing species were often chosen and planted to provide rapid temporary greening of the new areas with extensive shrub beds and group planting of trees. However, as much of the district is founded on variable soil types there has been some difficulty with building subsidence, exacerbated in many cases by the presence of large trees nearby with a high water demand. Many trees were planted close to houses, either without consideration of the future growth potential or with the intention of them being removed in thinning operations at a relatively early stage. This thinning work was never carried out on the scale required.

2.6.3 Present management deals with the issues arising out of complaints from residents. These complaints generally stem from the large number of trees planted within a restricted area, adjacent to properties.

2.6.4 Policy for Housing Trees

Policy 25 The Council will endeavour to fulfill its obligation to ensure the safety of people and property.

Policy 26 The Council will endeavour to consult residents on the regular proactive tree management where appropriate.

Policy 27 There will be a presumption against the removal of trees which are healthy but subject to complaint unless the basis of the complaint is an overriding justification and no alternative management practice can be implemented.

Policy 28 The Council will introduce an element of Risk Management within the contract system to ensure that high risk trees are removed.

2.6.5 Actions for Housing Trees

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
26.1	Clearly set out Health and Safety requirements for the Council's tree population within the strategy.	Ongoing
26.2	Survey trees with the aim of incorporating Risk Management into the strategy and contract system.	Ongoing
26.3	Remove large, vigorous trees and replace with more appropriate species, possibly in an alternative location, where problems cannot be alleviated in any other way.	Additional resources required

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
27.1	Introduction of a rolling maintenance programme for tree management	New contract December 1999

2.7 Copses/Shelter Belts

2.7.1 COPSES/SHELTER BELTS are the areas of land alongside the road system and adjacent developments, which have been planted with a mix of naturalised and native tree and shrub species to provide a 'parkland' like setting. These areas are now maturing and are performing their designed function of screening and sheltering extremely well. Current management is roughly based on management ideals drawn by consultants at the time. The broad principles are those of woodland management e.g. thinning, coppicing and selective felling. While management has taken place it has not been carried out strategically. Management must be carried out on a rotational basis to ensure that serious neglected areas do not occur. Areas that become neglected are difficult to manage in a sensitive or cost effective manner.

2.7.2 The COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS provide important wildlife corridors and habitats throughout the city area and link open spaces with blocks of woodland and the rural areas. The District Council will ensure that any revision of the management plan for COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS will include the principals of wildlife protection and provision of wildlife corridors.

2.7.2 Policy for Copses/ Shelter Belts

Policy 29 The Council will seek to continue the woodland management principles with the aim of maintaining the designed function of screening roads and development and providing wildlife habitats.

Policy 30 The Council will endeavour to fulfill their obligation to ensure the safety of people and property.

Policy 31 There will be a presumption against the removal of trees which are healthy but subject to complaint, including the over thinning of COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS in front of commercial properties.

Policy 32 The Council will endeavour to consult with all residential properties of proposed work.

Policy 33 The Council will realise any economic potential of COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS through the marketing of timber and other woodland products.

Policy 34 The Council will seek to address the problems of vandalism to COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS.

Policy 35 The Council will seek to address the problem of fly tipping in COPSES/SHELTER BELTS.

2.7.3 Actions for Copses/ Shelter Belts

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
30.1	Review existing management plans and specification for work to COPSES/SHELTER BELTS	Ongoing
30.2	Plantations will be managed to promote the growth of the final tree population which will be much smaller in numbers than the original planting density.	Ongoing
30.3	Work to COPSES/SHELTER BELTS to be carried out on an eight year cycle. Edge Coppicing, adjacent to pathways, to be carried out on a four year cycle.	Additional resources required
31.1	Edges adjacent to roads and footpaths will be managed to maintain the woodland nature of the belts while eliminating any intrusion into the highway.	Address in new contract December 1999
32.2	COPSE/ SHELTER BELT edges to be surveyed with the aim of incorporating Risk Management into the strategy.	Ongoing
32.1	Additional funding to be sought if additional maintenance work is requested	Additional resource
33.1	Letters to be delivered to all residential properties adjacent to the proposed work area.	Ongoing
34.1	Explore the possibility of creating a timber station on Council land for recycling and marketing wood waste.	Additional resource
35.1	Seek to adopt a standard approach for responding to vandalism to COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS where the damage can be traced to specific persons.	Ongoing
36.1	Seek to adopt a standard approach for	Ongoing

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
	responding to fly tipping in COPSES/ SHELTER BELTS where the damage can be traced to specific persons.	
36.2	Contact Environmental Services to confirm action is to be taken over fly tipping problems.	Ongoing

3.0 TREES ON PRIVATE LAND

3.1 Tree Protection

- 3.1.1 This part of the strategy sets out the District Council's approach to the protection of privately owned trees in the area. As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to take steps to protect trees which it believes make an important contribution to the amenity of the area.
- 3.1.2 The greatest proportion of both the urban and rural tree population is privately owned. The quality of private tree care is very variable and ranges from owners who are completely indifferent, through motivated but poorly advised owners, to those who take great pride in their trees and are anxious to seek the best advice and engage quality contractors to carry out required work.
- 3.1.3 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Council has powers to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and designate Conservation Areas (CAs) within which all established trees are protected. It is usually only in cases of potential threat that a local authority will seek to legally protect trees by use of TPO. Resources rarely allow the proactive use of orders and desirable updating and re-surveying. The implementation of such statutory restrictions on the rights of a land owner is always a potential source of conflict and difficulty. However, it is undoubtedly true that many of our finest trees and woodlands would not be part of our landscape today if such protection did not exist.
- 3.1.4 Protection has not only been achieved through the statutory process. A substantial number of trees have been saved from inappropriate pruning or premature felling by the offer of expert advice from the Council's officers. Advice is offered to the owners of protected trees and other tree owners, this advice is offered free and is seen as a valuable part of tree protection.

3.1.5 So, tree protection can be thought of as having two elements:

- 1 Protection by the use of statutory tools such as TPO
- 2 Protection by the provision of advice

3.2 Statutory Protection

3.2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes it a duty of the Local Planning Authority:

- (a) “To ensure whenever it is appropriate that, in granting planning permission for any development, adequate provision is made by the imposition of conditions for the preservation or planting of trees”.
- (b) “To make such orders (Tree Preservation Orders) under Section 198 as it appears to the authority to be necessary in connection with the grant of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise”.

3.2.2 Warwick District Council’s Local Plan (adopted April 1995) contains a number of policies relating to Trees and Woodlands.

District-Wide Policy ENV24

Tree Preservation Orders will be made where trees are known to be under threat yet merit retention due to their quality or to the contribution which they make to the surrounding environment

Trees often make a special contribution to the character and appearance of the District. Tree Preservation Orders protect the amenity value of trees which are under threat from being felled, topped, lopped, uprooted or willfully damaged. The Council will therefore continue to make such Orders in appropriate cases.

The Planning Acts provide protection for trees in Conservation Areas; owners must notify the Council of their intention to carry out work to such trees. If the Council wishes to further protect trees, a Tree Preservation Order can be made. If trees are damaged or removed in breach of the protection, powers exist to ensure the planting of replacement specimens.

District-Wide Policy ENV25

A long-term tree management programme will be developed to ensure that the District retains a healthy tree stock for the future. The private sector will be

encouraged to develop the broadleaf tree stock in the District through planting schemes on appropriate sites

District-Wide Policy ENV26

Tree-planting schemes will be undertaken where appropriate. Native trees and shrubs will be used in all such schemes. In the case of street trees, planting and replacement schemes will be undertaken using species appropriate to the location

Effective management of trees enables a healthy tree population to be sustained, for landscape, amenity, wildlife and recreational value. Generally, there is a commitment to retain trees, unless there is an important reason for their removal, for example, if a tree is dead, dying or dangerous or causing a legal nuisance. Management of trees often involves felling and replacement of over-mature trees or the thinning-out of crowded trees.

Warwickshire is a county where there is a general need to increase the broadleaf tree stock, as there has been comparatively little planting of this type, which will help to redress the deficiency partly created through the effects of Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's. The Council will therefore encourage the private sector to undertake such broadleaf planting on appropriate sites throughout the District and the District Council will undertake planting schemes where appropriate and where resources permit.

The Council supports the creation of the new Forest of Arden.

The amenity of many streets in the towns of the District and elsewhere is enhanced by the numbers of trees in the highway verges and pavements. The Council is continually looking at ways of protecting and enhancing the amenity of trees in the urban area. The local community is often involved in replanting schemes, undertaken if trees are unsuitable for the location, over-mature or dangerous.

3.2.3 Warwick District Council will also be guided as appropriate, by Department of the Environment Circular 36/78 "Trees and Forestry", Department of the Environment "Good Practice Guide for Tree Preservation Orders 1994"(and as amended) and the Tree Preservation Orders Draft regulations – A Consultation Paper issued by the DETR in June 1998, although the revised Regulations, if implemented, would affect how TPO matters are handled.

3.2.4 Whilst the most common form of statutory tree protection is the Tree Preservation Order (TPO), equally important are Conservation Areas (CA)

within which all established trees are protected. The District Council currently has over 300 TPO and 25 CA. New TPOs are being made all the time in line with its statutory duties. The District Council receives hundreds of applications each year from people who wish to carry out work to protected trees. Applications are administered by the Council's Development Control section (DC) who seek advice and a report from the Leisure and Amenities Business Unit, GM and Arboricultural Section.

- 3.2.5 The title "Tree Preservation Order" suggests to the layman that the tree or trees are "preserved" for all time. This is not the case and is, of course, impossible; trees have a finite life and will require attention at some time in their life, especially in urban areas or near properties etc. The TPO ensures that the local authority, as an independent party, has a measure of control over the fate of the tree to ensure that only appropriate works are carried out and that, where appropriate, the tree is replaced at the end of its life.

3.3 Trees on Development Sites

- 3.3.1 One of the most common threats against trees (and therefore a common reason for making a TPO) is the proposed development of land upon which trees are growing. It is common for plans to be submitted showing trees retained which are totally unsuitable for the proposal or in such poor condition that their retention is out of the question. Schemes are frequently amended to ensure that significant trees are properly retained often through a process of working with the applicant to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the conflicts that can arise.
- 3.3.2 Developers are often quick to assume that all trees on a site will have to be retained and consequently often view trees as a problem rather than an asset. It is common for planning applicants to fail to provide sufficient information to enable proper consideration of trees on a proposed development site. This usually means that an officer's time is spent making detailed assessments of trees and other factors, at the public's expense. The Council gives pre-application advice and guidance for developers, builders, architects, etc.
- 3.3.3 It is common for tree protection constraints on development sites to be underestimated. In order to ensure a tree will be successfully retained it is vital that the tree's root system is properly protected from direct and indirect damage such as ground compaction. The protected zone will usually be large enough to ensure that no disturbance occurs within the crown spread of the tree as a minimum, the distances can vary according to local ground conditions, tree species and health.

3.3.4 The Planning Business Unit is responsible for enforcing and monitoring the statutory protection of trees on private land, and relies on the professional and technical support from Leisure and Amenities.

3.4 Protection through Advice

3.4.1 As indicated above, advice is given free by the District Council and is seen as an important area of work contributing to the general protection of the tree population.

3.4.2 There are, unfortunately, many people willing to offer tree advice which is inaccurate and may have serious consequences for the tree and its owner. Arboriculture is an established technical discipline where qualifications at various levels are available, research is carried out to further our knowledge of trees and their care; good advice is available and should be sought from reliable sources. Tree owners should be aware that research has updated and substantially changed tree management in the last 20 years. Consequently, any person offering advice should keep themselves up to date, usually through membership of an appropriate professional body such as the Arboricultural Association and/or by subscription to the Tree Advisory Trust's research notes and reading list.

3.4.3 Also of concern is the number of people who carry out tree surgery work, whose technical abilities are poor. This can lead to low standards of work which are not in the interests of the tree or its owner. Reputable companies, capable of working to recognised standards of work (such as "British Standard 3998, 1989, Recommendations for Tree work"), are few in the District. This factor alone causes many trees to be unnecessarily damaged by unsuitable and unsympathetic "pruning".

3.4.4 The Arboricultural Association produces a list of contractors and consultants who have been examined and found to reach recognised standards. However, whilst the list continues to grow, the numbers are at present fairly limited and not well spread geographically. More local assessment and advice is required. The current local contractor list is regularly reviewed and updated.

3.4.5 Policies for Tree Protection

The consent to do works to trees is under the Town and Country Planning legislation and there is a public amenity issue involved which means that on occasions a number of factors need to be balanced.

The decision notices are issued by the Planning Business Unit and there is right of appeal against the Council's decision. Trees are only one factor when assessing the appropriateness of development on a

particular site, and there may be cases where to enable a scheme of wider public benefit to proceed that the trees the subject of a TPO are removed.

Policy 36 The Council will:-

- (i) promote tree planting where it is considered that this will lead to significant amenity benefit;
- (ii) seek to protect trees of amenity value; and
- (iii) promote good standards of tree care and woodland.

Policy 37 The Council will give consent for works to a tree or woodland protected by a Tree Preservation Order provided it is satisfied that:-

- (i) the long term health and appearance of the tree will not be impaired; and
- (ii) the works will not unjustifiably inhibit or prevent the full and natural development of the tree; or
- (iii) the work is necessary to its continued retention and consistent with good arboricultural practice; and
- (iv) in the case of a woodland, the proposed work is consistent with the principles of sound woodland management.

Policy 38 There will be a presumption against the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Council will not give consent to fell a tree or woodland protected by a TPO unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Generally, any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement of the tree.

Policy 39 The Council will resist development which it considers makes inadequate provision for the retention of:

- (i) trees; or
- (ii) natural features, particularly wildlife habitats such as woodlands, hedgerows, ponds or watercourses; or

- Policy 40** The Council will continue to protect significant trees by the use of Tree Preservation Orders.
- Policy 41** Applicants for the development of land with existing trees will normally seek the provision of a trees impact study including all dimensions and condition.
- Policy 42** The Council will usually expect new site development to contribute to the overall tree population through on-site planting or through the donation of funds dedicated to the planting of trees by the District Council in the locality.
- Policy 43** The Council will encourage all major tree owning organisations to adopt best practice in the care of their trees, especially where those trees contribute to the character of the District.

3.4.6 Actions for Tree Protection

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
37.1	Carry out a reappraisal of older TPOs and where necessary revoke out-of-date orders and serve new ones.	Additional resource required. Ongoing.
38.1	Establish and promote a list of vetted and approved local Tree work contractors for distribution to the public.	Continually revised.
39.1	Seek to involve all members of the community in the protection of trees through dissemination of information and positive encouragement.	Ongoing.
40.1	Continue to liaise with land/tree owning organisations and offer advice on the management of their trees in order to encourage them to adopt the best practice in tree management.	Ongoing.

3.5 Rural Trees/Hedgerows

- 3.5.1 The County of Warwickshire is one of the least wooded in the country with only 4% of the land area under woodland. In the Warwick District a considerable proportion of the woodland is “ancient semi-natural woodland” and represents a valuable wildlife and landscape resource.

- 3.5.2 Woodland and hedgerow loss in the District has occurred since the Second World War, mainly due to extension of agricultural fields. More recently new legislation under The Environmental Act 1995 and The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 has been brought in to help protect certain hedgerows from removal made March 1997 in force from June 1997.
- 3.5.3 There are many significant woodland features in the district including Waverley and Ryton. There are a number of other very important woodlands which are of value in their own right.
- 3.5.4 Most land in the rural area is privately owned. Many landowners take a positive view of their influence over the quality of the landscape in the countryside, take advantage of grant aid schemes and sources of advice to implement positive landscape management and enhancement schemes. Unfortunately, there are some that for a number of reasons do not or cannot undertake positive action and consequently, the landscape under their control often declines or reflects purely economic interests as primary.
- 3.5.5 Dutch Elm Disease (DED) took a significant toll of trees in the area in the 1970's particularly in the most intensive agricultural areas where Elm was the dominant hedgerow tree. Considerable areas of relatively denuded landscape have not been repaired and still rely on Elm regeneration that will, inevitably succumb to the disease. The only real solution to the problem is new planting with native species such as Ash and Oak. Unfortunately, intensive agricultural systems do not easily enable new, rural tree planting without considerable financial incentives.
- 3.5.6 DED remains a concern even today. The regrowth from the old Elm stumps and root suckers has become a significant feature in some places and this regrowth is now often at an age and size where it is becoming attractive to the Elm Bark Beetle which spreads the disease. Losses of Elm in recent years have increased and over the next few years considerable loss of regenerating Elm will once again deplete the tree population of our countryside.
- 3.5.7 There are a small number of Elms which have survived the disease and exist today, usually as relatively isolated specimens. It is not known whether this indicates that these specimens are in fact resistant or if they have escaped infection due to their location. There is ongoing research into this question and the development of a resistant genetic strain of native Elm. Inevitably, such research takes many years to show practical benefits.

3.6 Woodland

- 3.6.1 The majority of woodlands in the area are predominantly ancient woodland having been in existence since at least the 16th century when maps were first produced. These woods are described as ancient semi natural woodland because some form of active management will have taken place in the past.
- 3.6.2 The traditional and most common form of management of woodlands in the area was the system known as coppice with standards. This involves periodic cutting back of the woodland understorey (coppicing) to produce smallwood material for hurdle fencing, thatching spars, etc, larger trees (standards) were retained at wide spacing and were grown on to produce timber for a variety of uses. This historic form of management has produced woodlands of tremendous value for nature conservation with a wide number of species being supported in the variety of micro-habitats created.
- 3.6.3 Nationally, as well as locally, traditional woodland management has declined since the First World War, mainly due to increasing labour costs, overseas supplies and the introduction of plastics and other materials. The loss of market for traditional woodland products has resulted in little or no management works being carried out. This has left woods neglected, the wildlife habitats that depend on the management system suffer, as does the age structure of the wood making it a vulnerable landscape feature.
- 3.6.4 Some traditional management is carried out by conservation volunteers on a number of sites in order, primarily, to retain the conservation value of the wood. This work helps to keep the basic skills in use and also acts as an example to other woodland owners interested in bringing their woods back into management which benefits wildlife.
- 3.6.5 Commercial coppice management is relatively rare in the area, although there has been something of a resurgence of interest in coppice products (for example, hurdle fencing and thatching spars). However, the market is underdeveloped and in some instances under supplied, probably a lack of coppice managed in rotation. Neglected coppice can take up to three years to produce useful material following post neglect cutting.
- 3.6.6 As indicated above the District Council owns several woods, which are leased or managed by others i.e. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Woods give the District Council opportunities to display best practice of management in pursuit of a number of objectives. The Council's management objectives are landscape, nature conservation and access. Other objectives such as timber production are limited and are usually only pursued when the other criteria are met.

3.6.7 Many of the woods in the area are of significant interest both nationally and locally. As such several have been identified as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This indicates that some form of protection already exists i.e. prior to carrying out management operations on a SSSI or NNR. The consent of English Nature is required if they do not already manage the site.

3.6.8 The remaining areas of woodland are secondary woods generally having been planted since the first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps in 1876. These woodlands can have high landscape value and provide new habitat and useful links between existing sites. Most of these woods are in private ownership and not accessible to the general public. Main reasons for planting include timber production, recreation (sporting), amenity and wildlife habitats.

3.7 Old Trees - Parkland and Pollards

3.7.1 Warwick District has few old trees and the areas of parkland and old trees in the district are important. Many old trees are found within the hedgerows. Ancient trees are known to support highly diverse communities of invertebrates and lichens. The most important trees are over 200 years old. New trees can be established but will not have any great interest for many, possibly, hundreds of years.

3.7.2 Information on the old trees in the district is limited, and needs to be increased. It is likely that the number of these trees has declined through neglect in appropriate management or removal. Pollarding is essential in extending the lifespan of old willow pollards which may disintegrate without active pollarding. Old trees are prone to damage through changes in and use, particularly, conversion of surrounding grassland to arable. In addition their wildlife value is reduced by the removal of deadwood from within the crown or fallen branches.

3.7.3 To be able to monitor this important resource a survey of these trees needs to be carried out.

3.7.4 Policies for Rural Woodlands and Trees

Policy 44 The Council will encourage and support actions that will increase woodland cover in the area and will continue to take an active roles in encouraging and commenting on Woodland Grant applications to the Forestry Authority.

Policy 45 The Council will not normally grant planning permission for any development which would result in the loss of, or would be detrimental to, any areas on ancient or semi natural

woodlands/ hedgerows or other established woodland areas or areas of tree cover of landscape or wildlife value.

- Policy 46** The Council will aim to lead by example in the establishment and management of multi-purpose woodland.
- Policy 47** The Council will encourage all major woodland owners to adopt best practice in the care of their woodlands, especially where those trees contribute to the character of the District.
- Policy 48** The Council will promote the proper management of old pollard trees by provision of advice and grant aid for maintenance.
- Policy 49** The Council will promote the planting of trees and hedges to link existing woodland to provide wildlife corridors. This will assist the protection of biodiversity in the area. The 'Warwickshire Tree Scheme' offered by Warwickshire County Council is a commendable example of a scheme that encourages native tree and hedge planting in the Warwickshire Countryside. It has recently celebrated the planting of 1 million trees.
- Policy 50** The Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines provide the greatest level of detail that we have at present on the character of Warwickshire's landscape. This document offers a clear understanding of the landscape and its character within the district and at County level, and will be used in formulating any future decisions.

4.3.5 Actions for Rural Woodlands and Trees

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
45.1	Publicise examples of existing woodland management undertaken and the existence of woods which can act as examples of good practice.	Ongoing.
45.2	Consult all interested individuals and organisations to discuss current concerns and opportunities over woodland management/ hedgerow removal or retention.	Ongoing.
47.1	Secure closer liaison with the Countryside Commission, Forestry	1998.

ACTION	PROPOSED ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION
	Commission other organisations in order to discuss the targeting of grants.	
47.2	Continue to offer advice and assistance to Parish Councils concerning trees.	Ongoing.
47.3	Continue and where possible improve on the Council's tree and hedgerow planting schemes.	Ongoing.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

COPPICE	The production of shoots from a cut stump (called Stools) which have been cut before.
COPPICING	Is the operation of felling and regenerating shoots from the stool. Copping can usually be repeated many times and is a useful means of regenerating broadleaf species at short intervals.
POLLARD	Similar in practice to coppice, cutting off shoots at 2-3 metres above ground or back to previously pollard points.
POLLARDING	Is the operation of cutting and regeneration of shoots at 2-3 metres above ground level. Cutting operations usually carried out in rotation of 3-5 years.
BASAL GROWTH	Any shoot or growth arising from the base of the tree, its roots or graft union arising from dormant or adventitious buds.
SUSTAINABILITY	Making sure the people who come after us can enjoy opportunities and options as good as we have now.
BIODIVERSITY	The variety of life on earth or any given part of it.