



Meeting	Health and Environment Policy Committee
Date and Time	Wednesday, 2nd March, 2022 at 6.30 pm.
Venue	Walton Suite, Guildhall, Winchester

Note: *This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. In line with relevant legislation and public health guidance the following arrangements apply. Members of the public should note that a live audio feed of the meeting will be available from the councils website (www.winchester.gov.uk) and the video recording will be publicly available on the council's YouTube channel shortly after the meeting.*

For members of the public who are unable to utilise this facility a limited number of seats will be made available at the above named location however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting. Please note that priority will be given to those wishing to attend and address the meeting over those wishing to attend and observe.

AGENDA

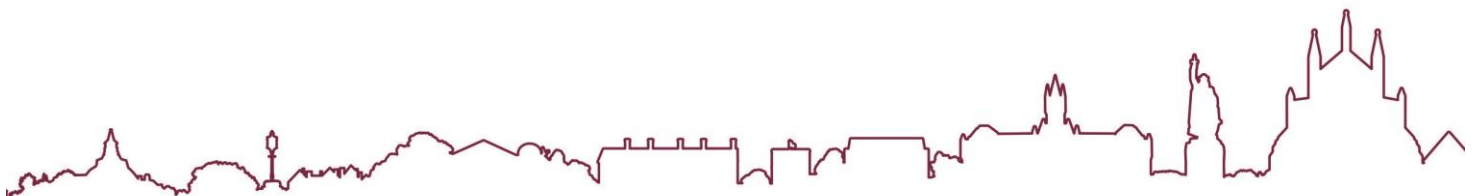
PROCEDURAL ITEMS

- 1. Apologies and Deputy Members**
To note the names of apologies given and deputy members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed members.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any disclosure of interests from Members and Officers in matters to be discussed.

Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and/or prejudicial interests in accordance with legislation and the Council's Code of Conduct.

If you require advice, please contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer, prior to the meeting.

- 3. Chairperson's Announcements**
- 4. Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)
Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2022.



BUSINESS ITEMS

5. **Public Participation**

To receive and note questions asked and statements made from members of the public on matters which fall within the remit of the Committee.

NB members of the public are required to register with Democratic Services three clear working days before the meeting

(contact: democracy@winchester.gov.uk or 01962 848 264).

Members of the public and visiting councillors may speak at this Committee, provided they have registered to speak three working days in advance. Please contact Democratic Services **by 5pm on Thursday, 24 February 2022** via democracy@winchester.gov.uk or (01962) 848 264 to register to speak and for further details.

6. **Review of Meadowside and Winchester Sport and Leisure Park provision (HEP023)** (Pages 13 - 22)

7. **Carbon Neutrality Programme - Housing/Property policies/actions (HEP024)** (Pages 23 - 34)

8. **Carbon Neutrality Programme - Carbon Offsetting (HEP021 and Presentation)** (Pages 35 - 66)

9. **Draft Tree Strategy (HEP022)** (Pages 67 - 138)

10. **To note the Work Programme for 2021/22** (Pages 139 - 140)

Lisa Kirkman
Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer

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22 February 2022

Agenda Contact: Claire Buchanan, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01962 848 438 Email: cbuchanan@winchester.gov.uk

**With the exception of exempt items, Agenda, reports and previous minutes are available on the Council's Website www.winchester.gov.uk*

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson: Ferguson (Liberal Democrats)

Vice-Chairperson: Cramoysan (Liberal Democrats)

Conservatives

Kurn

Pearson

Warwick

Liberal Democrats

Fern

Tippett-Cooper

Westwood

Deputy Members

Brook and Cook

Laming and Radcliffe

Quorum = 4 members

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

Representations will be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes, subject to a maximum 15 minutes set aside for all questions and answers. To reserve your place to speak, you are asked to **register with Democratic Services three clear working days prior to the meeting** – please see public participation agenda item for further details.

People will be invited to speak in the order that they have registered, subject to the maximum time period allowed for speaking not being exceeded. Public Participation is at the Chairperson's discretion.

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live on the Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution for further information, which is available to view on the [Council's website](#).

VOTING

- apart from the Chairperson, every Member has one vote when a matter before the meeting requires a decision.
- in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson may exercise a casting vote and that vote may be exercised in any way seen fit.
- a Member may abstain from voting, or vote differently from how they may have indicated during the debate, without further explanation.
- the way each Member voted will not be recorded in the minutes, unless a motion to have a Recorded Vote has been passed.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 19 January 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Ferguson (Chairperson)

Cramoysan
Fern
Kurn

Pearson
Tippett-Cooper
Westwood

Deputy Members:

Councillor Cook (as deputy for Warwick)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality), Tod (Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery) and Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Warwick

[Audio and Video Recording](#)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Cramoysan be appointed Vice-Chairperson of the committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson made no announcements.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30 September 2021 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Four members of the public spoke regarding various agenda items, with two of those speaking at this point on the agenda, as summarised briefly below.

Emma Back (on behalf of Sports Arts and Leisure Trust (SALT))

Paid tribute to late Councillor Lynda Murphy and her dedication to climate change. Reference was made to the management of open space scoping report, with particular reference to biodiversity, community tree planting and the application to the Woodland Trust for free tree packs available to charity groups. In addition, she considered there should be greater protection of open space (including small pockets of land) and emphasised its importance to the community and the carbon footprint. Reference was also made to the larger tracks of recreational land which were under threat of development over the longer term that also required protection and referred to potential legal protection with 'Fields in Trust' for consideration.

In response, the Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing advised that he was confident the council would seek to support and encourage community tree planting. The conflicting priorities between various areas of the council in respect of the protection of open space was recognised and officers would feedback regarding the potential use of Fields in Trust at other sites.

Ian Tait

Spoke with reference to the electric vehicle strategy and was speaking for taxi drivers in the district. It was noted that to date, only one fully electric taxi was operating in Winchester. It was considered that the lack of rapid vehicle charging points was an issue with only one being available which was currently undesignated for exclusive taxi use. In conclusion, he stated that whilst he welcomed the Air Quality Briefing Update paper, he considered that there were benefits to having discussions with taxi drivers, to enable them to emphasise the issues faced.

In response, the Chairperson advised that as the newly appointed Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Williams may wish to attend the Taxi Drivers' Forum going forward and expressed thanks to Mr Boardman for becoming the first taxi driver to operate from a fully electric vehicle and supporting the agenda for climate change.

6. **CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - ENERGY POLICIES/ACTIONS (HEP016)**

Bill Gunyon (on behalf of WinACC Renewable Energy Action Group) spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Bill Gunyon

Welcomed the agenda item in renewable energy. He made reference to the topic of the local plan and made observations on the districts overall energy agenda for the short and long term and considered that the question that would be asked by the review team was 'What is the scale of renewable energy generation that you wish the local plan to encourage?'. He suggested that the 2030 target for local energy generation within the carbon neutrality action plan, was in need of review for input into the local plan process and confirmed that WinACC were due to publish an energy plan shortly to submit evidence for this view and were keen to assist where possible.

In response, the Service Lead: Community and Wellbeing thanked Mr Gunyon for his comments which he advised would be addressed when the plan was updated.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the report which set out the progression towards reducing carbon emissions for energy and the challenges in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions. Officers provided an update on key issues and specific areas of the programme including the local plan, the collaborative work carried out with Hampshire County Council, community energy generation and the local electricity bill.

Members asked a range of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing and officers, as summarised below.

- From a planning prospective, there had been a shift in Government priorities from onshore to offshore wind farms. However, it was recognised that currently there was more potential in terms of solar opportunities in the district.
- In relation to the local electricity bill, the most up to date figures of the level of support were now available with 445 councils (including 79 local authorities), 727 local and national organisations and 291 MP's in support.
- It was recognised that in order to achieve and progress the local energy generation 2030 target, specialist external consultants and advice from other local authorities and partners would need to be explored further.
- The committee requested targets and timescales against the activity actions contained in the report and it was noted that a road map regarding the district's carbon footprint would be developed to incorporate metrics, key points and identify priorities.

During debate, members welcomed the report and recognised the need for continued engagement with the community to educate, raise awareness and inform of the incentives of community energy schemes and targets.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the community team for the report which was welcomed by the committee and emphasised that as well as looking at renewable energy generation, it was also important that the council continued to work on schemes to reduce energy consumption.

In addition, the Chairperson also noted that while the committee was generally supportive of the proposal to use council owned land for renewable energy generation schemes, it recognised that to generate the amount of renewable energy required, it would probably be necessary to work with other partners.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be received and noted;
2. That the comments of the committee in relation to the following points be noted, as set out above:
 - a. The principle of using council-owned land for renewable energy generation;
 - b. The opportunity for the Local Plan to promote and encourage increased renewable energy generation across Winchester district; and
 - c. The potential for community energy schemes to succeed in Winchester district.

7. MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE - SCOPING REPORT (HEP017)

The Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing introduced the report which set the scene for papers that would come forward to the committee at subsequent meetings in respect of the management of open space for consideration.

Members asked questions which were responded to by the Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Clarification of the maintenance of grass verges, planting and the biodiversity of areas – it was reported that this matter would be discussed with the natural environment and landscapes team for inclusion within the ‘Management of open spaces of ecological importance’ report due to be considered by the committee in September 2022.
- Clarification of land protection measures for open space pockets of land areas
- Ecology issues surrounding rivers and re-wilding opportunities in open spaces.

- That the proposed All Member Briefing regarding the Biodiversity Action Plan scheduled to take place in early 2022 include details of how verges are being managed.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the community team for the report which was welcomed by the committee, noting that the two future reports should take into account the requirements of the new Environment Act.

RESOLVED:

1. That the comments of the committee set out above be noted: and
2. That the following reports related to the management of open space be added to the committee work programme on the dates as stated below:
 - (a) Draft Tree Strategy – March 2022
 - (b) Management of open spaces of ecological importance – September 2022

8. **FUTURE OF WASTE AND RECYCLING (HEP020 AND PRESENTATION)**

Sarah White spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Sarah White

Welcomed the contents of the report and presentation and the opportunity to see further improvements to door step recycling and standardisation and consistency in practices around the country in relation to waste and recycling collections. She queried the timescales to achieve the aims and aspirations referenced within the presentation and the various other recycling facilities available for materials such as hard and soft plastics, which were limited and in short supply. She suggested working with supermarkets to encourage them to provide recycling bins for plastics in areas north and south of Winchester, the promotion of recycling for charities, and also utilising car park areas to install an increased number of recycling bins to enhance recycling ability and options ahead of the Environmental Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs White for her comments which were addressed during the discussion of the report thereon.

Councillor Tod introduced the report which set out the progression towards reducing carbon emissions for energy and the challenges in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions. He made reference to the background and direction of travel that the council were adopting in respect of how the waste management system would achieve and respond to the Environment Bill to deliver significant performance improvements.

The Service Lead: Environmental Services gave a presentation setting out the current position, the changes being introduced to waste and recycling for Hampshire, its impact on the Winchester and the next steps going forward at this early stage.

The committee asked a range of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Service Lead: Environmental Services and other relevant officers present. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Ability to achieve and improve recycling rates
- Working with partners to encourage recycling provision at supermarkets, increase recycling bin provision for plastics and other materials
- Producer responsibility for packaging waste.
- Short term solutions such as the formation of a communications network to engage and encourage residents in recycling opportunities for household waste
- Reducing carbon and increasing energy generation
- Financial risks of the strategy

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked everyone present and summarised the following points as the outcome on behalf of the committee:

- (i) That the direction of travel of the strategy be supported.
- (ii) The need to ensure that the carbon impact of future decisions and actions be considered.
- (iii) The need to work with the partnership to develop actions as soon as practical to ensure readiness to respond to the Government's requirements.
- (iv) That the interim measures required i.e. between now and the Government's new arrangements coming into force need to be carefully considered. Possible actions included: the consideration of food waste collection, a communications strategy to encourage more recycling, reduction and reuse of waste materials which could be formulated and promoted across the partnership. Including support and encouragement of private and commercial recycling companies and trade waste operators.
- (v) The need to actively engage and work in partnership with businesses and voluntary groups across the district in order to help people increase recycling effectively as part of the communications strategy, and for this work to start now in advance of the changes coming into force.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and presentation be received; and

2. That the comments of the committee, as set out in (i) to (v) above, be noted by Cabinet.

9. **AIR QUALITY BRIEFING UPDATE (HEP019 AND PRESENTATION)**

The Service Lead: Public Protection introduced the report and gave a presentation setting out an update on the state of air quality within the Air Quality Management Area and the wider district, the latest impacts of the Covid pandemic on air quality and provided insight into the potential future approach for Air Quality Management by the council.

The committee then proceeded to ask a range of questions of the Service Lead: Public Protection and others present. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Encouraging use of the green waste collection service and engage with residents to raise awareness regarding the impact of bonfires and the use of domestic wood and coal burning stoves in partnership with surrounding local authorities.
- Winchester air quality supplementary planning document.
- In response to points raised by Mr Tait during public participation, the Service Lead: Public Protection confirmed that he would arrange to discuss matters with Mr Boardman and clarified that there was only one rapid vehicle charging point in Winchester currently. This was due to installation costs and the current low demand for its use by the taxi community. However, it was noted that there were proposals to install an additional rapid vehicle charging point unit at the new Sport and Leisure Centre.
- Operational costs to maintain the air quality management process

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked those present and welcomed further papers regarding the air quality action plan coming forward for consideration at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and noted; and
2. That the comments of the committee be noted by the cabinet member.

10. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

RESOLVED:

That the work programme for 2021/22 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 10.25 pm

Chairperson

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REPORT TITLE: REVIEW OF MEADOWSIDE AND WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK PROVISION

2 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Clear, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Susan Robbins Tel No: 01962 848 461 Email srobbins@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to Policy Committee on the performance of the Winchester Sport & Leisure Park (WSLP) since its opening in May 2021 and Meadowside Leisure Centre (MLC) from April 2021. The report provides the figures for use and types of activity undertaken; it does not cover finance or building/facility issues which are reviewed in accordance with the council's contract management framework procedures and monitoring arrangements. Further as part of this contract management the WSLP Advisory Panel, held in public, has the opportunity to review detailed performance reporting as presented by Everyone Active.

The update also provides information about recent data on physical activity levels in the district and the Sports Development and Health and Wellbeing Plans agreed between the council and Everyone Active.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Policy Committee are asked to note the performance of Everyone Active and the range and quality of sport and leisure provision at the council's leisure centres.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 Everyone Active is contracted to operate both Winchester Sport & Leisure Park and Meadowside Leisure Centre on the council's behalf. The council manages this contract in accordance with the council contract management framework, using existing staff in the Communities and Wellbeing team. The council's Health Improvement Manager takes a lead in the development of the Sports Development and Health & Wellbeing Plans and a contract manager will be appointed to oversee the detailed contract management. This includes supporting the WSLP Advisory Board that meets quarterly and the contract monitoring meetings which are monthly.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Background

- 2.1 The Winchester Sport & Leisure Park (WSLP) opened its doors on 29th May 2021 with operator Everyone Active (EA). A massive achievement during the ongoing COVID pandemic at the time. EA also took over operational management of Meadowside Leisure Centre in September 2020.
- 2.2 Over this period both centres have continued to be affected by the restriction measures brought in by government to help stop the spread of COVID-19. This has included closures; partial opening; restricting the numbers that take part in some activities; and operating pre-booking systems.
- 2.3 Within this context EA has been able to perform strongly which (anecdotally) shows that people are taking a greater interest in the health and wellbeing as a result of the pandemic, with working from home perhaps affording them greater opportunity to take up physical exercise.
- 2.4 In October 2021 Sport England released the latest [Active Lives data](#) report. This shows the activity levels of adult's aged 16+ from May 2020 – May 2021.

Table 1: Winchester district active lives data

<u>May 2020 - May 2021</u>		Active (150+ minutes a week)		Fairly Active (30-149 minutes a week)		Inactive (under 30 minutes a week)	
		Population Total	Rate (%)	Population Total	Rate (%)	Population Total	Rate (%)
All adults (aged 16+)	Respondents						
National	172,970	27,847,500	60.9%	5,300,600	11.6%	12,549,800	27.5%
Hampshire	6,615	1,035,300	63.3%	200,500	12.3%	400,000	24.5%
Winchester	492	73,600	71.7%	9,400	9.1%	19,700	19.2%
Compared May 2019 - May 2020			1.2% Increase		1% Decrease		0.2% Decrease

- In comparison to the level in the previous period (May 2019-2020) our activity levels have increased by 1.2%
- A decrease in fairly active people by 1%%
- Inactivity has decreased by 0.2%
- Overall, adults in Winchester are becoming more active.

2.5 If we were to compare this to our surrounding LA's (see below) we are ranked 2nd in adults taking part in 150+ minutes a week, and in the top three of local authorities with the lowest inactivity rates.

Table 2. Hampshire Local Authority active lives data, May 2020 - 2021

Winchester vs Hampshire Authorities	Respondents All adults (aged 16+)	Active (150+ minutes a week)		Fairly Active (30-149 minutes a week)		Inactive (<30 minutes a week)	
		Population Total	Rate (%)	Population Total	Rate (%)	Population Total	Rate (%)
Winchester	492	73,600	71.7%	9,400	9.1%	19,700	19.2%
Basingstoke	522	94,200	66.3%	15,100	10.6%	32,900	23.1%
East Hampshire	472	73,500	72.4%	11,300	11.1%	16,800	16.5%
Eastleigh	432	64,000	58.5%	18,800	17.1%	26,700	24.4%
Fareham	549	58,600	60.4%	11,100	11.4%	27,300	28.2%
Gosport	470	41,500	60.0%	9,300	13.5%	18,300	26.5%
Hart	469	55,100	70.4%	6,900	8.8%	16,300	20.8%
Havant	449	57,200	55.0%	13,100	12.6%	33,700	32.4%
New Forest	439	95,100	62.8%	17,700	11.7%	38,700	25.5%
Rushmoor	484	45,000	59.7%	7,400	9.9%	22,900	30.4%
Test Valley	455	72,100	69.9%	13,900	13.5%	17,200	16.7%

Winchester Sport & Leisure Park and Meadowside Leisure Centre Performance

2.6 The council has a number of performance measures against which EA reports to demonstrate how well the WSLP and MCL are being used and managed. A WSLP Advisory Board has been established under the contract obligations to meet in public and report on performance against these measures, but also to hear about the sport programmes, club development and health programmes that demonstrate the ways in which people are supported to and are able to participate in different physical and healthy activities. The first meeting of the Advisory Board was held in November 2021 and the second in February 2022.

2.7 Membership of the Advisory Board comprises of:

- a) Nominated Cabinet Members
 - b) Relevant Ward Councillor(s)
 - c) Representative of the University
 - d) Representative of the Pinder Trust
 - e) An officer from Winchester City Council
 - f) A representative from the management contractor
- 2.8 The Shadow Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing has also been invited to sit on the Board
- 2.9 Performance of WSLP and EA is monitored through a series of contract Key Performance Indicators in accordance with the council's contract management framework:
- a) Centre Attendance
 - b) Fitness Membership
 - c) Swimming Membership
 - d) Swimming Lessons
 - e) Concessions
 - f) Accidents & Incidents
 - g) Utilities
- 2.10 A full overview of performance against these indicators and the delivery of activities and programmes is given in the presentation attached at Appendix 1. Everyone Active will give this presentation to the committee at its meeting.
- 2.11 In summary for WSLP in June 2021, the full first month after opening, the number of visitors was 51,893 and full membership was 2,515. When River Park Leisure centre closed in December 2020 total visits was 19,786 and membership was 1,850. In January 2022 full membership was 6,132. Total visits from May 2021 to December was nearly 380,000.
- 2.12 With regard to visitor numbers, and the activities they participate in, the following tables provide a breakdown from both Winchester Sport & Leisure Park and Meadowside Leisure Centre.
- 2.13 Table 3: WSLP Quarterly use figures

	Q1: April – June 2021 (partial from 23 May)	Q2: July-Sept 2021	Q3: Oct to Dec 2021	Total Year to date
Health & Fitness	32,442	75,578	65,850	173,870
Swimming	21,486	70,604	56,376	148,466
Dry-side activities	240	4,236	4,753	9,229
Outdoor/other	2,441	19,075	26,582	48,098
Total Visits	56,609	169,493	153,561	379,663

Average monthly total membership*	3,943	5,242	5,736	5,102
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2.14 * *Health & Fitness and Swim Only membership*

2.15 Meadowside Leisure Centre (MLC)

2.16 Table 2: MLC Quarterly use figures

	Q1: April – June 2021	Q2: July-Sept 2021	Q3: Oct to Dec 2021	Total Year to date
Health & Fitness	5,585	6,579	5,591	17,755
Swimming	0	0	0	0
Dry-side activities	3,066	3,444	3,266	9,776
Outdoor	4,155	4,267	3,600	12,022
Total Visits	12,806	14,290	5,038	32,134
Average monthly membership	306	299	395	333

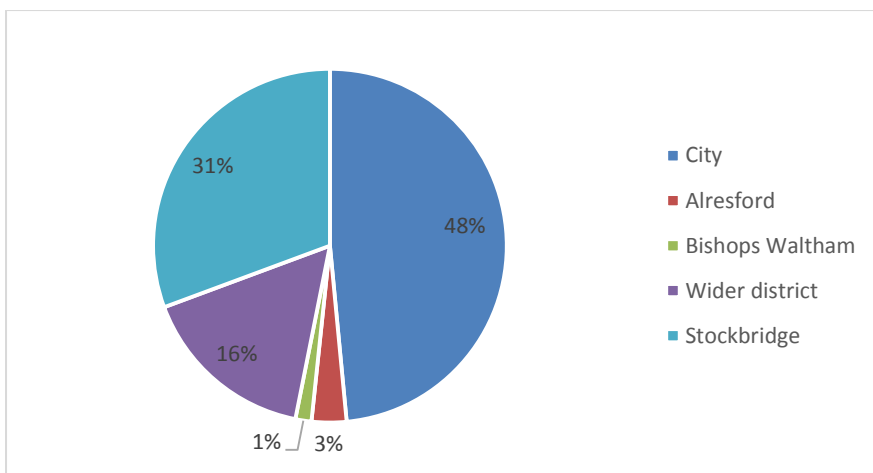
2.17 The dip visitor figures for December 2021 this is due to COVID restriction being re-introduced couple with traditionally a quieter month for people participating in physical activity. Figures for January 2022 show that total visits returned to 5,607 for the month.

2.18 An important investment has been made to improve the facilities at MLC through a £175k refurbishment, opened in October 2021, to provide an all-new 50-station gym floor, a new group cycling and virtual studio to add to the centres two five-a-side floodlit pitches and a three-court sports hall. It is too early to assess the impact of the improvements as usage figures look comparable to pre investment. However this covers a December traditionally a quiet month.

2.19 Reach and inclusion

2.20 The users of WSLP are drawn from across the district with a nearly even split between people coming from the city and those from market towns and the wider district.

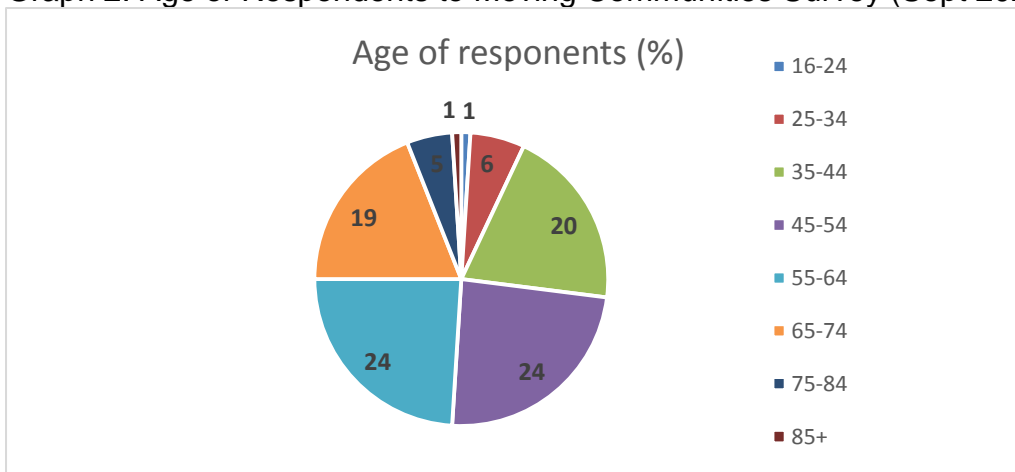
2.21 Graph 1: Location from of where WSLP users come.



2.22 In September 2021 WSLP users were surveyed as part of the Moving Communities monitoring and evaluation tool launched by Sport England. There were 192 respondents

2.23 Nearly half (48%) of respondents were aged between 45 and 64; and quarter were aged 65 and over.

2.24 Graph 2: Age of Respondents to Moving Communities Survey (Sept 2021)



- What is the geographical draw of residents to each centre from across the district and what % of users are coming from outside the district (if it is possible to measure that).

2.25 The types of activity respondents participated in was:

- 55% swimming / pool based
- 25% group exercise
- 15% fitness / gym

2.26 Concessions

2.27 Both WSLP and Meadowside offer concessions to support a range of people to access the facilities at a reduced rate. This includes for the armed forces

and blue light service. Take up of these concessions for the period May to December 2021 were:

- a) WSLP 107,626 = 27% of total visits
- b) MLC 2,938 = 7% of total visits

- 2.28 Transition of the 50+ Club has gone well, and the sessions are busier than ever and the Club has over 600 members.

Sport Development and Health & Wellbeing Plans

- 2.29 Both of the Sport Development and Health & Wellbeing plans contribute towards the 'Living Well' priority within Winchester City Council's Council Plan (2020-2025), with the vision to support all residents to live healthy and fulfilled lives. They also consider the five key outcomes set within the Government's '*Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*' and the five 'big issues' identified within Sport England's latest strategy '*Uniting the Movement*'.

- 2.30 WSLP and MLC have their own bespoke plans, but both report on the following areas;

- a) Children and young people
- b) School sport
- c) Adults & older people
- d) COVID recovery
- e) Long-term health conditions (inc. exercise referrals and classes)
- f) Disability groups
- g) Women & girls
- h) Sports clubs & volunteering
- i) Talent development
- j) Community events
- k) Competitions
- l) Staff training & development

- 2.31 Within each area, is a set actions of which are monitored through KPIs consisting of;

- a) No. of people
- b) Total throughput
- c) No. spaces available
- d) Take up %

- 2.32 The council and EA meet monthly to review each plans to ensure data is collected regularly, these are also discussed in the Contract Monitoring meetings.

- 2.33 Here are a few examples of progress over the past eight months since both plans were launched in June 2021.

Health & Wellbeing Programme	Data (June 2021 – January 2022)	
Exercise Referrals	90	No. of Participants
Steady & Strong class	149	Throughput
Pulmonary Circuits class	91	Throughput
Assisted Circuits class	198	Throughout
Neuro-fit class	95	Throughput
Cardiac Rehab* *Started December 2020	42	Throughput

Sports Development Programme	Data (September 2021 – January 2022)	
Gymnastics & Trampolining	133	No. of Members
Pre-school Gymnastics	28	No. Members
Junior Gym	183	Throughput
Walking Netball	282	Throughout
Disability Football	96	Throughput
Low-level Circuits	479	Throughput

2.34 Quotes from members

“The Centre is magnificent. We are lucky to have a Centre like this in our town. There are lots of activities to engage in” - Mo

“I take part in Winchester Gold Circuits on a Saturday. I really like my Hydrotherapy pool instructor. The water is very warm. I really look forward to coming” - Lucy

2.35 Performance issues and complaints

2.36 An important aspect of the performance monitoring is also ensuring that the required quality and customer services standards are met. This includes responding to complaints such as access to information and ability to book session, cleanliness, faults and defect and landscaping maintenance. EA monitor complaints and respond appropriately the majority of which with two days. EA also undertake customer / user feedback surveys to gather information about what is working well and areas for improvement.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3.1 This is an up-date report so no options were considered.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Other Background Documents:-

Winchester Sport& Leisure Park Advisory Board – meeting 2 November 2021.

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=416&MId=2889&Ver=4>

APPENDICES:

None

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REPORT TITLE: CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - HOUSING/PROPERTY POLICIES/ACTIONS

2 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management

Contact Officer: Andrew Kingston Tel No: 01962 848 240 Email akingston@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This paper considers progress made towards reducing carbon emissions within council owned homes, new home developments, carbon neutrality initiatives relating to private sector housing and the challenges faced in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the committee notes:
 - a. The progress made to date in relation to the Housing theme of the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan as set out in sections 3 to 6;
2. That the committee considers and provides comment on:
 - a. The challenge of funding retrofit works across all Council homes
 - b. The balance between achieving very high energy standards to New Homes against the opportunity of delivering more homes if unit costs were lower
 - c. The option of setting a higher rent charge for new homes as set out in section 5.7.
 - d. The limitation on the council's ability to drive change across Private Sector housing;

- e. The balance between the opportunities presented by the emerging Local Plan to include policies to ensure carbon neutrality sits at the heart of the Plan whilst ensuring the Plan remains affordable and deliverable.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 CAB3334 dated February 2022 set out significant levels of investment from the Housing Revenue Account to fund works to existing homes and to build new homes. This includes:
- £15.7m to fund “retrofit” works to council homes over 10 years
 - £250m to fund the delivery of 1000 new homes which are as close to net zero carbon as possible over the same period.
- 1.2 The above report also included proposals for an additional surveyor to support the delivery of repair and void programmes including the retrofit programme included within this report.
- 1.3 The HRA also include provision for a dedicated Retrofit Coordinator post approved which was first approved in February 2021. As set out below, it took until January 2022 to secure an appropriately qualified officer to fulfil this role, due mainly to the very competitive market for such skills and experience currently.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 2.1 Background.
- 2.2 The council’s Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) was approved on 23 December 2019 and identified the biggest source of carbon emissions, one of which was Property/Housing.
- 2.3 Housing is one of the key themes (along with transport and energy) of the CNAP and currently is responsible for 26% of the district carbon emissions (Greenhouse gas emissions in Winchester District: Part IX Estimates and trends (2005-2017) – 2022 by Bob Whitmarsh, on behalf of WinACC).
- 2.4 This paper provides an update on progress with the core retrofit and New Homes programmes. It also comments on work to address carbon emissions for private sector housing and the emerging thinking in relation to the new Local Plan policies and how these will need to contribute to the carbon reduction agenda.
- ## 3 Council Homes
- 3.1 As at the end of January 2022, the average SAP rating of the council housing stock was 70.16 (Band C) .The following table sets out the SAP band distribution within the stock

SAP BAND	Prop. Nos	% Rounded up
A	34	1
B	226	4
C	2891	57
D	1876	37
E	28	1
F	6	0
G	1	0
Total stock count	5062	100

- 3.2 The council housing stock average is on a par with the national average for the social sector of 69 and 70 for local authority and housing association stock respectively. The council stock compares well to the average of 65 for owner-occupied and privately rented domestic dwellings and also to the average SAP rating of 66 for all English dwellings. (Source: English Housing Survey, Headline Report 2020-21 (published 9 December 2021 www.gov.uk))
- 3.3 The estimated cost of full retrofit across the stock is £100m but will very much depend on the nature and extent of the final measures installed and the prevailing demand and supply pressures for materials and labour.
- 3.4 A cabinet report 'Making Homes Carbon Neutral' (CAB3293) was presented to cabinet on 10 March 2021. The recommendations focused on a fabric first approach and within the following area of works.
- Additional wall and floor insulation to 100 properties subject to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below and focused mainly on void properties.
 - Additional funding (£150,000) set aside to support match funding opportunities, bids for major retrofit programmes.
 - Additional funding to address energy efficiency of communal areas in sheltered and communal housing schemes, including the installation of solar photovoltaic panels where appropriate.
 - Membership of the 'Net Zero Collective' partnership.
- 3.5 Recommendations also included establishing a Member, Tenant and Officer Panel to access progress with national trials, review funding options and to bring forward proposals for a long term programme to replace gas heating systems in council homes.
- 3.6 A skills gap was identified within the current Property Services staff structure with a need to employ a qualified and competent Retrofit Coordinator.

- 3.7 The 'Making Homes Carbon Neutral' programme is initially targeted at properties that become void with an EPC rating of Band D and below in order to bring as many properties as possible up to an EPC C rating and above.
- 3.8 The immediate priority is to improve wall, floor, and ceiling and loft installation in empty properties. Wall cavities will be inspected to ensure any existing measures are fit for purpose or replaced. Heating systems, windows and doors will be only upgraded if they are beyond economic repair or parts are obsolete. Monitoring equipment will be installed to review how carbon emissions are reduced.
- 3.9 The commencement of void improvement works has been delayed due to procurement and legal concerns in respect of a potential challenge of awarding the additional works to the incumbent voids contractor without a competitive exercise being undertaken. To mitigate the risk an EU notice was issued advertising of the council's intentions with no challenges received.
- 3.10 On 4 January 2022, a new Retrofit Coordinator with the relevant competency skills, qualifications and TrustMark accreditation was recruited to the new post. The officer is producing a risk assessed retrofit strategy with a planned and interactive approach to deliver the retrofit programme.
- 3.11 Two council Swedish Houses in Bramdean have undergone full retrofit works through a pilot scheme. The works included new roofs, windows, doors and heating and extensive insulation works. EPC and thermal works were carried out pre-works. Temperature, humidity and a measure of how much energy is being used per hour (kWh) will be monitored for a year.
- 3.12 A second Swedish home trial at Cheriton is due to start in the spring subject to ecology issues being resolved.
- 3.13 85% of sheltered housing and communal areas now have new LED lighting. Energy audits of the highest carbon emitting sheltered sites is due to be commissioned with appropriate mitigating measures brought forward.
- 3.14 Officers are working with Net Zero Solutions and the National Energy Foundation to produce a sustainable and long-term retrofit plan to ensure the council are de-carbonating its housing stock in a sustainable, efficient and affordable way.
- 3.15 It is important that tenants are taken on the retrofit journey with officers and contactors and understand the benefits of the Carbon Neutrality works. Timings of void work, loss of rental income and increased housing register times will be important to tenants and to the council's Tenant representative group 'Tenant and Council Together' (TACT).
- 3.16 Natural gas is quickly becoming an unsustainable option for all so it is therefore proposed to carry out a fundamental review of what the Council is prepared to offer its residents in terms of heating, and hot water solutions.

Some of the possible options are already set out and discussed in CAB3293 (para.16.4 (a) –(c).

- 3.17 It is reasonable to assume that the grid will become decarbonised over time, but it is difficult to give a concise conclusion on the future of the grid given the uncertainty in the industry and lack of clear direction from the government. Although the government announced in January that gas companies should allow hydrogen intake into their systems by 2023 (with a target for 100% hydrogen by 2030) there is clearly a big difference between being “hydrogen ready” and the capacity to supply hydrogen in the volumes needed.

4 Private Sector Housing Contribution to the Carbon Reduction Plan

- 4.1 The City Council has less direct influence in relation to private sector housing. However, a number of initiatives have been implemented across the private housing sector to both increase energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions across the district, including.

- LEAP (Local Energy Advices Partnership) partnership agreement with Agility ECO to promote the initiative. The free energy and money saving support scheme service is offered to fuel poor and vulnerable households. The LEAP service is available to owner occupiers, private households and social housing tenants who meet the set criteria. The scheme is promoted on the council website and since April 2021 Leap figures for Winchester are:
 - (i) 17 referrals, 10 in-depth energy advice calls, 2 home energy visits and 2 in-depth calls.
- LAD1a the council as part of a partnership with Portsmouth City Council and other local authorities entered into an agreement to promote the installation of energy efficiency carbon reduction measures across the district under LAD 1a /1b. To include funded Solar Photovoltaic Panels, solid wall insulation to owner occupiers and the insulation of park homes insulation for both external wall and underfloor insulation. LAD 1a ended on 31 August 2021. Outcomes include:
 - (i) 25 owner occupier insulations (8 Park Home external wall and underfloor insulations).
- The LAD 1b programme is running until March 2022 with 226 applications received to date. 55 installations completed of which 30 were solar PV panels.
- LAD 3 funding runs from January 2022 to March 2023, and will support on-gas D to G rated households with air sourced heat pumps, insulation measures and solar PV panels.

- Winchester Area Superhomes – This an initiative that is being run by Winchester Action on Climate Change in partnership with the National Energy Foundation and Petersfield Climate Action Network and funded by the Energy Redress Scheme. The initiative is to create a new service that supports homeowners across Winchester District to transform the energy performance of their properties by retrofitting and so reduce their carbon emissions, as energy use in the home is responsible for around 20% of direct carbon emissions. Their target is to turn 25 or more existing homes in the Winchester District into SuperHomes show homes that have had home energy retrofits and support another 125 homes to be assessed and starting retrofits. The project will provide help with some costs for homeowners on low and middle incomes. This will include some of the survey and design costs, plus a proportion of the cost of installing solar panels. All homeowners will be helped to apply for any available government grants, such as the Renewable Heat Incentive.

4.2 The Private Sector Housing team obtained a detailed energy spreadsheet from Absolar using known and modelled EPC data for the entire district which details that many private households are living in homes with low energy efficiency ratings of E, F and G.

4.3 The figures for each band across the entire private sector stock are:

Band E	8071
Band F	2460
Band G	524

4.4 Government statistics detail that in Winchester the percentage of dwellings across the various tenures with an EPC Band C or above are.

Tenure	Percentage
Owner Occupier	34.25%
Private Rented	36.83%
Social Housing	61.71%

4.5 Although the government aims to increase EPC ratings across the private sector it is generally acknowledged that the scale of setting higher energy efficiency standards is significant

4.6 The Private Sector Housing team in liaison with the newly appointed Retrofit Coordinator and the Climate Emergency Team will actively monitor available funding streams and initiatives through partnership engagement with Portsmouth City Council and Agility ECO and other bodies which present themselves. To endeavour to improve the energy efficiency of the private housing stock and to reduce carbon emissions within the private housing

stock to help achieve the council's ambition to be a carbon neutral district by 2030.

5 New Homes Contribution to the Carbon Reduction Plan

5.1 The New Homes Delivery Programme continues to build to meet the council's objective to provide all new affordable housing at highest thermal efficiency levels to help achieve the councils net zero carbon target.

5.2 The Council adopted a revised Housing Development Strategy in March 2021 which set out its ambition to build 1000 new homes in the next 10 years. One of the key priorities was "to address the climate emergency by designing new homes to deliver as close to net zero carbon as possible".

5.3 In order to move towards the highest levels of energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions, and the subsequent reduction in energy costs for residents all new homes built by the council will,

- Close the "performance gap" between design and built performance
- Install low carbon heating systems such as air source heat pumps and ensure no further gas connections are made to new homes
- Ensure the highest levels of fabric efficiency and air tightness to minimise the energy required to heat and run a home.

5.4 To achieve this standard all new homes are designed to Passive House or AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) standard which are considered to be the most reliable way to meet the council's objectives. This ensures the new homes are ready to achieve net zero carbon when the electricity grid is fully decarbonised.

5.5 The Energy Saving Trust description of passive houses "refers to buildings created to rigorous energy efficient design standards so that they maintain an almost constant temperature. Passivhaus buildings are so well constructed, insulated and ventilated that they retain heat from the sun and the activities of their occupants, requiring very little additional heating or cooling." It is estimated that a passive house will require 90% less energy to run than a typical dwelling of the same size.

5.6 Current programme examples include:

- (i) Winnall Flats – 76 new homes on site and being built to Passive House low energy building standard. Designed to require minimal heating, with photo voltaics as a renewable energy source and solar shading to prevent overheating
- (ii) Witherbed Lane – submitted to planning at Passive House standard.

- (iii) Southbrook Cottages – planning consent granted for 6 flats, build contract being tendered for a Passive House Plus standard (which means it produces as much energy through renewable sources as the occupants consume throughout the year)
- (iv) Whiteley - 54 homes to be bought “off the shelf” from a developer that will be independently certified to ensure they meet AECB energy efficiency standard (as offered by the developer).
- (v) Woodman Close – 5 homes designed to the AECB standard and currently awaiting a planning decision
- (vi) Corner House – pub purchased by the council for conversion to flats – designed to meet the enerphit retrofit standard. Planning application to be made in 2022
- (vii) Dyson Drive – Planning submission planned for March 22 for 8 homes at passive house standard.

5.7 There is a clear cost to developing to the energy efficiency standard the council is aspiring to through the development strategy, with build costs estimated to be at least 20% above the costs of developing in accordance with current building regulation standards. One option for improving the viability of council developments would be to charge an 80% affordable rent for highly energy efficient properties rather than the current policy of charging at 70% of market rent for new homes. The very low energy costs for tenants of new homes provides an immediate financial advantage compared to older social housing, although this is obviously offset by the higher rent charge in many cases.

6 Local Plan

- 6.1 Officers updated the Committee on the emerging Local Plan and its contribution to the Carbon agenda at the January 2022 meeting, particularly on its potential impact on energy generation/usage.
- 6.2 The Strategic Planning team is currently building on the ideas that were outlined in the Strategic Issues and Priorities (SIP) document and the feedback from the consultation on the Carbon Neutrality topic. Officers are still at the early stages of formulating some potential Local Plan policies for this topic. The consultation results highlighted that there was support for a Strategic Policy on climate change and adaptation issues along with the need for a number of other Development Management policies.
- 6.3 There is clear potential for the new Local Plan to be framed around the concept of carbon neutrality being a defining issue, encouraging/forcing developers/architects to really think about carbon issues and climate change issues right at the start of the design process. Officers will seek to strengthen this point in the new Local Plan that well-designed places and buildings come

about when a rigorous design process evolves into a design proposal - not the other way around. This was one of the key messages from the Local Plan Design workshops that took place at the end of last year.

- 6.4 Clearly, the new Local Plan will have a key role to play in achieving carbon neutrality, starting with the sites that are proposed to be allocated for new development (where they are located) and potentially the 'fabric first' approach, the use of building materials, site layout and the orientation and actual position of the buildings on the site. Officers are keen to strengthen the policy on energy hierarchy that is based on the order of preference – buildings should be designed to minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency, utilise renewable energy, utilise low carbon energy and only utilise other energy sources as a very last resort. Allied to this other potential policy areas that are currently being explored are whether to include a policy on matters such as overheating (in terms of the building itself and the impact of a building/surfacing used/planting has on the surrounding ecosystem which is a key area that needs to be considered in terms of global warming). The Local Plan can also be used to strengthen the point that the design process really needs to think about how it will promote and provide the opportunity to actively encourage more sustainable ways of travelling rather than being directed, as it seems to be at the moment, towards people using their private motor vehicle. The option of having a policy that potentially encourages developers to design buildings in a more flexible way that can allow people the opportunity to work from home (in terms of the building itself and having access to fast fibre internet) and a policy on renewable energy are also being considered.
- 6.5 The design process and climate change issues will need to go hand in hand (i.e. it is not an afterthought). The biggest challenge that the Local Plan is demonstrating to an Inspector that any policies that have any cost implications are all accounted for and they can, along with all of the other requirements (e.g. affordable housing), stack up financially. Consultants have therefore been appointed to undertake a Local Plan Viability Assessment.
- 6.6 The team is also mindful of what the government is suggesting with the proposed changes to the Building Regulations and what building energy efficiency standards we could include in the new Local Plan now that the Code for Sustainable Homes has been abolished. This is more challenging as the government wants to use the building regulations to improve energy efficiency so Officers are, in discussion with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, exploring different ideas on how we can address this in the Local Plan as this does come at a cost and how far we can push this issue in the Local Plan. Linked to this ensuring that staff have the resources and the expertise that would be needed to assess any information that was submitted with a planning application on climate change and adaptation issues.
- 6.7 It is really important that the policies included in the new plan promote the Council's carbon neutrality ambitions. Whether or not there should or should not be thresholds for any of the potential policy ideas that are currently being

explored. The Council will need to be mindful about making sure that the Plan is “viable”. There will undoubtedly be some difficult decisions on what the priorities should be. A balance needs to be struck before a landowner says “I don’t want to sell my land” and the Plan is at risk of being determined as unviable/found to be ‘unsound’.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 7.1 Retrofit programmes across the country are still in the early phases and subject to technology review and assessment. Whilst heat pumps are seen as a potential solution, they remain expensive to buy and install. It is important at this stage that all options remain under review and officers will continue to work with and support national research programmes.
- 7.2 The New Homes Development Strategy has determined to build to high energy standards. The option of building to a lower standard in order to improve viability and reduce unit costs has been discounted although is still included as a point for consideration by the policy committee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

[CAB3203 - Carbon Neutrality Action Plan dated 23 December 2019](#)

CAB3293 - Making Homes Carbon Neutral dated 10 March 2021.

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

None

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REPORT TITLE: CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME – CARBON OFFSETTING

2 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Hannah Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Contact Officer: Alex Eburne Tel No: 01962 848 538 Email aeburne@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This paper explores the different carbon offsetting options that the council could use to net off its residual emissions and achieve its ambition of achieving its carbon neutrality targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee notes:
 - a. The high likelihood that there will be a need to offset remaining emissions in order to achieve our council carbon neutrality target by 2024;
 - b. That further work is undertaken to provide a more accurate estimate of the amount of offsetting that would be required to reach our carbon neutrality target;
 - c. The important role for the council in facilitating opportunities for others to offset their own carbon emissions across the district; and
 - d. That the Oxford Offsetting Principles propose a best practice approach to offsetting, to ensure that it is aligned with net zero targets.
2. That the committee endorses the following approach:
 - a. First maximise the delivery of carbon reduction measures throughout the council's operations and the district before using offsets to reduce carbon emissions.
 - b. Explore and select a portfolio of different offsetting options at both a

council and district-wide scale, generating offsets locally within the Winchester district if possible, instead of elsewhere in the UK or in another country:

- i. Renewable energy generation: continue investigating the feasibility of its land and assets for investment in renewable energy generation on council land.
 - ii. Woodland creation: maximise the carbon sequestration potential of trees throughout the district by mapping the areas with potential for woodland creation.
 - iii. Carbon offset fund: the opportunity to establish an offset fund to support net zero carbon development.
- c. Adopt approaches to address the local emissions that it does not have direct control over by:
- i. Mobilising – encouraging and incentivising businesses and communities to develop and invest in renewable energy and Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs)
 - ii. Facilitating – working with existing action and energy in businesses and communities and supporting them to develop renewable energy and NETs.
 - iii. Convening – creating powerful partnerships between local communities and other organisations such as voluntary groups and businesses with the purpose of creating renewable energy and NETs.
 - iv. Explore the Authority Based Insetting framework further to determine its relevance and the actions it could take in order to stimulate greater investment in carbon saving projects locally.
- d. That an offsetting policy be brought to Cabinet for approval.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 There is a high likelihood that there will be a need to offset remaining emissions in order to achieve our target of being a carbon neutral council by 2024. The way in which this will be achieved is yet to be determined, but it will have a cost implication. Options could include:
- a) Devising a portfolio of offsetting options which meet the council's needs; considering our budget, geographical location, unique risks and opportunities, and mitigation targets;
 - b) Solar-farm development; and
 - c) Mapping the areas of council owned land with potential for woodland creation.
- 1.2 Costs are unclear at this stage, but initial modelling suggests that the solar farm option appears likely to be cost-neutral and may even generate a small revenue income. Woodland creation would have cost implications. For example, the standard cost for a tree sapling and guard is roughly £3.60. As set out in section 2.31, with a site of roughly 25 acres (10 hectares) in size, around 1600 trees could be planted per hectare bringing the total cost for trees and guards to £57,600. Further costs of £7,000-£11,000 would be needed for fencing to protect the site from grazers and deer. It is important to note that these cost estimates are indicative and will vary on a case by case basis. There are, however, funding streams which can be accessed to meet part of the cost of this and thereby reduce the overall cost to the council. There are grants available for the creation of woodland such as the Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG) and the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO).
- 1.3 The report identifies work that would be required to underpin delivery of the recommended offsetting approach across the wider district. This requires further research into the options, but is likely to include:
- a) Creation and management of a district-wide carbon offset fund; and
 - b) Exploration of the Authority Based Insetting framework.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 2.1 In June 2019, the council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to the aim of making its own activities carbon neutral by 2024 and the district carbon neutral by 2030. The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) sets out a comprehensive list of actions that will help address nearly all the council's carbon emissions by 2024 and contribute to reducing emissions district wide by 2030. These actions focus around reducing carbon emissions

across three priority sectors of transport, energy and property/housing, and then offsetting any remaining carbon.

- 2.2 Carbon offsetting is practiced by many businesses, public sector organisations and government, but there is no unifying definition which explains what it means. For the purpose of this report, carbon offsetting is defined as *'the practice of reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions to balance ongoing greenhouse gas emissions, in order to achieve claims such as climate neutrality or net zero'* (Environment Agency, 2021). Carbon offsets are most commonly used in net-zero emission scenarios to account for processes that are exceptionally difficult, or impossible, to decarbonise completely through carbon reduction alone with current technology.
- 2.3 With over 300 local authorities declaring a climate emergency and many setting net zero targets, local authorities are now considering carbon offsets for the first time as a means to achieve their goals. While avoiding and reducing emissions remains the priority, the ability to achieve net zero by 2030 will be extremely difficult without a form of offsetting due to the scale of technology and investment required. Carbon offsetting offers a means for councils to bridge the gap to zero (i.e. residual emissions), and provides a necessary stopgap while industrial sectors such as transport develop technologies and infrastructure that are truly zero-carbon.
- 2.4 The council's residual emissions can be tackled through a transparent, well-defined policy of carbon offsetting. However, early emissions forecasting produced for the CNAP indicated that, whilst carbon reduction measures could contribute to a 2/3 reduction in council emissions by 2024 (based on 2019-20 baseline emissions), roughly 1500 tCO₂e of residual emissions would be likely to remain (see Background Document No. 7).
- 2.5 Due to the significant level of uncertainty as to the cumulative effect of the carbon reduction measures outlined within the CNAP, it is difficult to predict at this stage what scale of offsetting might be required to achieve the district-wide carbon neutrality target.
- 2.6 We have researched the work of other councils on offsetting, considered examples of good practice and looked at other policies, strategies and evidence related to this complex subject. Section 2.12 expands on some of the best practice identified.
- 2.7 To gain a better understanding of the potential level of residual emissions across the district, it is recommended that further work is undertaken to provide a more accurate estimate of the amount of offsetting that will be required to reach our carbon neutrality target. This should be incorporated within the scope of the Decarbonisation Roadmap work that the council will commission in the coming months and will help the council to plan and select carbon offsetting options accordingly.

Types of carbon offsets

- 2.8 Offsets can be generated through a variety of different activities. In most cases, offset activities are undertaken as discrete projects ranging in scale from very small (i.e. reducing 10s-100s tonnes of CO₂e per year) to very large (i.e. thousands of tonnes of CO₂e per year).
- 2.9 Carbon offsetting mechanisms can be divided into two types: emissions reductions and emissions removals. Appendix 1 shows a classification system and explains the five different types of carbon offsets (type I-V).
- 2.10 Emissions reductions (type I-III) - Many offsets available today are generated through emissions reductions. This mechanism uses offset projects to slow the rate of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions entering the atmosphere but not remove any GHG from the atmosphere. See Appendix 1 for an explanation of type I-III offsets.
- 2.11 Emissions removal (type IV & V) - Offsets can also be generated through activities that remove GHG directly from the atmosphere and store it in geological, terrestrial, ocean reservoirs, or in products. There are many approaches to GHG removal. These encompass a variety of options for storing carbon, ranging from biomass and soils, to oceans and geological reservoirs, to long-lived products such as timber buildings or cement. See Appendix 1 for an explanation of type IV-V offsets.

Carbon Offsetting Best Practice

- 2.12 While approaches to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the UK are relatively well documented and understood, those which enable offsetting of residual emissions have been less thoroughly explored. One of the most comprehensive reports assessing Carbon Offsetting in the UK to date was conducted by the Environment Agency (see Achieving net zero: A review of the evidence behind potential carbon offsetting approaches - Background Document No.3.). The study reviews the scientific evidence base relating to a variety of carbon reduction and removal approaches which could be implemented across the UK for carbon offsetting purposes. However, beyond this report, there is a noticeable absence of guidance around implementing offsetting in net zero scenarios, particularly for local authorities.
- 2.13 An initial scoping exercise into local authority best practice around carbon offsetting was conducted using Climate Emergency UK's Climate Action Plan Explorer (<https://data.climateemergency.uk/>). The exercise identified that carbon offsetting is a key component within the majority of council's carbon reduction/net zero pathways and features extensively in council climate action plans across the UK. Examples of local authority carbon offsetting projects and case studies are included throughout the later sections of the report. It is important to stress, however, that carbon offsetting remains a complex, contentious and often time-confusing topic within local governments across the UK. Across Hampshire, this has also been voiced within discussions with the Hampshire Climate Change Officers Group (HCCOG). With a distinct lack

of support and guidance available, particularly from central government, many local authorities are left to rely on support from external consultants to determine what offsetting options they should pursue. Horsham District Council, for example, is working with a consultant in 2022 to produce an offsetting strategy and methodology (see Progress updates on becoming a carbon neutral council - Background Document No.5.).

- 2.14 The 'Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting', released in September 2020, provide one of the first attempts to define best practice for offsetting to ensure that it is aligned with net zero targets (see Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Offsetting - Background Document No.6.). Organisations are encouraged to subscribe to four principles when using carbon offsets:
1. Cut emissions, use high quality offsets, and regularly revise offsetting strategy as best practice evolves.
 - a. Emissions should be reduced as much as possible through energy efficiency measures before any residual emissions are compensated for by using offsetting.
 - b. Use high quality offsets that are verifiable and correctly accounted for; have a low risk of non-additionality; have a low risk of reversal of that carbon back into the atmosphere; and do not create negative unintended consequences.
 - c. Maintain transparency by disclosing current emissions, accounting practices, targets to reach carbon neutrality, and the type of offsets employed.
 2. Shift to carbon removal offsetting (type IV & V)
 - a. Users of offsets should increase the portion of their offsets that come from carbon removals, rather than from emission reductions, ultimately reaching 100% carbon removals by 2050 to ensure compatibility with the Paris Agreement goals.
 3. Shift to long-lived storage offsets (type V)
 - a. Invest in scaling and improving the technologies that enable long-lived storage. Short-lived storage offsets (type IV) help buy time to reduce emissions and invest in long-lived storage, but they are not a long-term solution for achieving balance between sinks and sources due to the higher risk of carbon being re-emitted.
 4. Support the development of net zero aligned offsetting.
 - a. The market for high-quality offsets that use carbon removal with long-lived storage is immature and in need of early-adopters to support its evolution.
- 2.15 When selecting carbon offsets, it is recommended that the council recognises/notes the Oxford Offsetting Principles which propose a best practice approach for offsetting to ensure that it is aligned with net zero targets.

- 2.16 In line with Oxford Offsetting Principle 1, it is recommended that the council first maximises the delivery of carbon reduction measures throughout its operations and the district before using offsets to reduce carbon emissions. The introduction of carbon offsets should not replace, nor detract from, the rollout of carbon reduction measures across the council and district; offsets must only be used to remove residual CO₂e emissions that are left over. At this stage it is unclear exactly what level of residual emissions will remain. For that reason, it is not proposed to determine a maximum level of emission that could be offset, but instead to focus on the principle of offsetting as a last resort.
- 2.17 It is important to note that the council will need sufficient time to prepare, implement, and develop robust and verifiable offsets. Waiting until 2024 or 2030 before introducing offsets may limit the viability and effectiveness of options available to the council. It is therefore recommended that the council should determine its offsetting strategy now, so that there is sufficient time to develop viable offsetting initiatives.
- 2.18 To expand on Oxford Offsetting Principle 2, a strong consensus is forming that carbon offsetting approaches which *reduce* emissions elsewhere (type I-III) will not be scientifically compatible with true 'net zero' in the long term. This is because with reduction type offsetting projects, there will always be net GHG emissions into the atmosphere. This does not, however, mean that carbon offsetting projects which reduce emissions should be entirely discounted. In fact in the short term they will play a useful role in accelerating the rate of GHG emission reductions, particularly as emissions removals technologies are still in the early stages of development and will take time to be scalable.
- 2.19 In addition to the four principles, as a local authority, it is important to note the additional benefits arising when carbon offsetting solutions are generated within the Winchester District administrative boundary instead of elsewhere in the UK or abroad. This ensures that any social, economic, or environmental co-benefits associated with offsetting projects will be retained locally for the benefit of the local citizens. Investing in an offset project overseas offers no social or economic return within the local region. This is covered in more detail in section 3.1-3.4.
- 2.20 **Options for offsetting council emissions**
- 2.21 There are a range of potential offset practices that could be established by the council to offset its predicted 1500 tCO₂e of carbon emissions in 2024. These will have a cost implication, but the council will have to meet this cost if it wants to achieve its carbon neutral ambition by 2024. These offsets either reduce emissions (i.e. renewable energy generation) or physically remove emissions from the atmosphere (i.e. negative emissions technologies).

- 2.22 It is important to stress that all the approaches reviewed in this report have strengths and weaknesses with regard to their potential to be used for offsetting residual carbon emissions. No 'silver bullet' offset solution has been found. The council should explore and select a portfolio of different offsetting options rather than one singular option.

Renewable energy generation (type I)

- 2.23 The Climate Change Committee is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 which advises the UK and devolved Governments on tackling and preparing for climate change. It has indicated through the UK's 6th Carbon Budget, approved by Parliament in 2021, that the UK will need to double its onshore wind capacity and increase its solar capacity six fold in order to achieve net zero by 2050 (see Background Document No 2.). In order for the Winchester district to achieve its own carbon neutral targets, a significant increase in local renewable energy provision will be required. As a local planning authority, Winchester City Council has a key role in the development of renewable generation. However, it can also play a more direct role in enabling renewable energy projects as a landowner, developer or purchaser of power.
- 2.24 The council is currently reviewing the potential for developing large-scale renewable generation projects on its own land (see previous committee report HEP016). A particular focus has been given to ground mounted solar farms, due to the significant planning constraints associated with the development of new onshore wind turbines. In terms of utility-scale solar, there is significant potential to address most of the council's residual carbon emissions (~1500 tCO₂e) as well as potentially target some of those emissions across the wider district.
- 2.25 It is important to note that the carbon savings from a large-scale renewable energy installation will decrease year on year as both yield reduces and the UK decarbonises its electricity generation system. Because the CO₂e savings from renewable technologies are measured by the amount of grid electricity they displace, as the grid decarbonises, more renewable energy generation is needed to offset the same amount of CO₂e emissions. There is also potential for long-term revenue generation, as well as complementary activities alongside solar installations such as the growth of wildflowers, tree planting, grazing of sheep, nitrate mitigation and biodiversity net gain.
- 2.26 There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to identify, plan, and deliver a large-scale solar farm on council land. The council will continue investigating the feasibility of its land and assets for investment in renewable energy generation on council land. However, at this stage it is uncertain whether the council will have a large-scale solar farm fully installed and operational by the target deadline of 2024. Therefore the council will need to explore how to provide other carbon offsetting alternatives in case it cannot meet its offsetting requirements through large scale solar farms.

Emissions removals / Negative Emissions Technologies (type IV & V)

- 2.27 This section focuses on three different types of Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs):
- a) nature-based solutions,
 - b) technological solutions, and
 - c) hybrid solutions.
- a) *Nature-based solutions (NbS)*
- 2.28 There has been growing interest in the potential of NbS as an offsetting option to help meet net zero targets reflecting the importance of natural ecosystems as sinks for GHGs. There are a large variety of NbS available for consideration (see Appendix 2 – Summary of nature-based offsetting solutions). The Environment Agency’s report (see Background Document No. 3.) gives a detailed overview of each of the potential carbon offsetting approaches.
- 2.29 Woodland creation is one of the most established and well known NETs, reflected by the creation of the Woodland Carbon Code (<https://www.woodlandcarboncode.org.uk>). This is an independently verified code for calculating the amount of carbon sequestration produced by woodland creation projects in the UK. CO2 sequestration will mainly occur through photosynthesis, resulting in carbon storage in above- and below-ground biomass. In addition, carbon will be sequestered in soils by the transfer from biomass through litter fall, dead roots and leaching from roots. Planting trees provides an inexpensive and effective way to sequester carbon from the atmosphere and bring the council and district closer to its council and district target. Woodland creation can also provide a range of co-benefits for biodiversity, flood risk mitigation, and recreation.
- 2.30 The council has already committed to using tree planting as a way to offset its carbon emissions. Indeed, the CNAP sets out aims to:
- a. Collaborate with partners and landowners to identify up to 100 hectares of land to support additional tree planting and/or creation of grassland and wetland habitats; and
 - b. Develop a programme of rewilding starting with planting at least 100 trees annually on council land.
- 2.31 In order to explore this offsetting option further, a Masters student at the University of Southampton undertook some research to show how the council could best undertake an offset project using tree planting in the district. The work suggested that the council identify and/or purchase 200 acres (~80 hectares) of land that can be used for mixed planted trees and wildflower grassland. However as it is unlikely that a single parcel of land equating to

200 acres will be found in the district, costs were calculated for separate groups of 25 acres, with different species used in each area to maximize diversity. The study calculated that, over the full 200 acres, the project could sequester 500 tCO₂e per year after 5 years, and nearly 1500 tCO₂e per year after 15 years.

- 2.32 In terms of reaching the 2024 carbon neutrality target, planting trees alone does not provide a viable option. As outlined in the work above, planting 200 acres of trees will likely sequester all 1,500 tCO₂e/year of council residual emissions, but only after 15 years of planting. The challenge is that nature-based sequestration projects require significant scale and time before they begin to sequester meaningful amounts of carbon, relative to the districtwide footprint and energy avoidance projects such as solar PV. A decision would need to be made to implement alternative NETs in order to offset the remaining emissions by 2024 if the council desires official recognition of becoming a carbon neutral council.
- 2.33 Nevertheless, it is strongly encouraged that tree planting should form a key part of the council's offsetting strategy to reach net zero across the *district* by 2030, tree planting should begin as soon as possible as the establishment of trees and the early growth needed to reach the point of peak carbon sequestration takes several years (typically around 10 to 30 years). It is recommended that the council maximises the carbon sequestration potential of trees throughout the district by mapping the areas with potential for woodland creation. It should also play a key role in leading tree planting initiatives throughout the district, and organising/encouraging the uptake of community-based tree planting.

b) Technological solutions

- 2.34 Technological carbon removal solutions, such as bioenergy carbon capture and storage (BECCS) and direct air carbon capture and storage (DACCS), were initially considered in the preliminary stages of this report. However, these technologies are in early stage of development, and there is insufficient evidence to provide realistic estimates of their carbon removal capabilities. It is extremely unlikely that technological solutions will be available for widespread application by 2024 or 2030. While technological approaches must not be discounted, it is recommended that they are deployed in the future once these technologies become more readily available.

c) Hybrid solutions

- 2.35 Hybrid solutions utilise technology to supplement the natural CO₂ removal processes from natural solutions.
- 2.36 A carbon capture garden, for example, is a green area that after being treated with dolerite, calcite and compost, can sequester up to 85 tCO₂/ha/per/year. It also provides the option to function as allotments, an educational area or community space amongst other usages. The carbon capture garden can also

be treated with biochar; this soil amendment product can be used to boost soil carbon sequestration further and promote soil health as a co-benefit.

- 2.37 Another example of this approach for noting is Green City Solutions' CityTree that uses a vertical installation of moss integrated into a bench to absorb as much carbon as 275 trees in only 3 sq. m of space.

Options for offsetting district-wide emissions

- 2.38 The offsetting of carbon emissions at a district level is not the council's responsibility. However, the development of offsetting mechanisms is something in which the council can play a leading role, though not alone. All businesses, organisations, community groups and individuals will need to take responsibility for offsetting their own emissions.

Carbon Offset Fund

- 2.39 An option is for the council to set up a carbon offset fund to support net zero carbon planning policies. In order to set up a carbon offset fund, the council would need to adopt a planning policy which requires new developments to achieve the maximum carbon savings possible on-site through highly efficient building fabric and on-site renewables. Developers would then be required to pay into a fund to offset any residual carbon emissions from the development. The council would need to develop and publish a price for offsetting carbon (i.e. price per annual tonne of carbon) based on either a nationally recognized carbon pricing mechanism, or the cost of offsetting carbon emissions. Currently developers provide prices from £95 per tonne in the London Plan to over £200 in Southampton. The council could establish a dedicated offset fund or administer the funds through the Section 106 legislation and policy if appropriate. In either case, the funds should be ring-fenced for the sole purpose of delivering carbon reduction and sequestration projects across the district, with the overall effect being net zero carbon development.
- 2.40 The council could follow a similar model to Southampton City Council's Offset Fund. Southampton City Council requires developers to contribute to a carbon offset fund for regulated emissions for a one year period. The offset fund is then used to support energy efficiency and carbon reduction programs for vulnerable communities within the district. At Southampton, Council Offset Fund monies are available to support vulnerable, fuel poor households to install energy efficiency measures that will result in a carbon saving. Households can access the funding through the council's local affordable warmth advice and support service, Southampton Healthy Homes, delivered by the Environment Centre (tEC) – an experienced environmental charity based in Southampton who also undertake fuel poverty work on behalf of Southampton City Council.
- 2.41 Throughout the UK, several local authorities are either in the process of setting up, or have already set up carbon offset funds, so there is a wealth of experience to draw upon should Winchester decide to set up its own offset fund. In addition to Southampton City Council, these include: several London-

based authorities; West of England Authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset); Greater Manchester Combined Authority; and Milton Keynes. There is also interest from other neighbouring Local Authorities to work in collaboration on this such as Portsmouth, Southampton, Test Valley, and Basingstoke.

2.42 A carbon offset fund is an option that the council is already considering: the council states in its Carbon Neutrality Action Plan that it aims to introduce the use of Section 106 obligations to pay for carbon neutral initiatives and offsetting following review of the Local Plan. During the recent Local Plan Consultation on the Strategic Issues and Priorities, respondents were asked to answer the following questions about carbon offset funds:

- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “A carbon offsetting fund should be used as a last resort”.
- If you agree with the establishment of a carbon offsetting fund, how should this money be used?

The results of the Local Plan Consultation have been analysed and there was very little support for the establishment of a carbon offset fund, even though it was stressed that it would be a last resort measure. It is also important to stress that it could be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that a carbon offset fund can pay for the wholesale decarbonisation of the region. The reality of course is that all this activity is achieving is compensating roughly for the additional carbon emissions from new development, NOT reducing pre-existing residual emissions. Within current practice, there is also an acknowledgement that 1:1 carbon savings will be unlikely to be achieved, so whilst a developer might pay a contribution calculated to offset 50 tonnes of CO₂, it will be rare that the offset projects funded will actually save 50 tonnes CO₂. Should the council opt to pursue this option, it would be important to consider how to maximise the offsetting delivered on-site and avoid creating an opt-out for developers.

Other opportunities

2.43 In order to reduce residual emissions across the wider district, other offsetting projects such as renewable energy installations and NETs will need to be deployed. The council will not act alone in developing offsetting options, but it has an important part to play in helping others tackle the emissions that it does not have direct control over, by:

- Mobilising – encouraging and incentivising businesses and communities to develop and invest in renewable energy and NETs
- Facilitating – working with existing action and energy in businesses and communities and supporting them to develop renewable energy and NETs.

- Convening – creating powerful partnerships between local communities and other organisations such as voluntary groups and businesses with the purpose of creating renewable energy and NETs.

Some work is already under way that demonstrates how this might be achieved by others:

- Third Party Solar - the council has been working with Marwell Zoo and Biffa to install solar PV panels on the roofs of their buildings. The panels are expected to save 19t CO₂e each year at Marwell and 11t CO₂e at the Biffa depot through the reduced demand for electricity from the national grid
- Community Energy - in collaboration with Community Energy South, Hampshire County Council is providing support to establish new community energy groups and projects throughout the county. Hampshire County Council was successful in a bid for over £205,000 to support expanding this across other districts across the county including the Winchester District
- LoCASE – The Low Carbon Across the South and East programme is supported by the European Regional Development Fund to provide a free business support programme in the South and East. The aim is to help businesses to become more competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions. The Partnership consists of local authorities and universities across four Local Enterprise areas which are SELEP, Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3 and Solent.

2.44 Authority Based Insetting is a project that commenced in March 2021. It is led by Anthesis with the funding and support from 13 local authorities across the UK: Blackburn with Darwen Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, Cheshire East Council, Horsham District Council, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Oxford City Council, Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council, Shropshire Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Trafford Council, Wandsworth London Borough Council, and West Sussex County Council.

The ABI project set out to develop a mechanism that that will help UK Local Authorities to:

- a) Make more projects happen: Stimulate greater investment in carbon saving projects locally, within their borough
- b) Enable better reporting: Quantify and report the carbon impacts in a robust and consistent manner and 'set the standard' for UK local authorities on this topic.

2.45 Building on the principles of traditional 'insetting' – carbon reduction or removal projects co-ordinated and run by a business within its value chain –

ABI shifts the focus of the carbon saving from a value chain into the geographic boundary of a local authority. ABI applies relevant principles and learnings from traditional offsetting, including the use of credits to raise finance. However, it also seeks to retain insetting's potential to connect local stakeholders and generate mutual benefits (see Appendix 3).

- 2.46 Unlike traditional offsets, which are recommended to be only used as a last resort, ABI can be used concurrently with other direct emissions savings activities. This is because ABI is ultimately a means by which more direct emissions savings can occur (see Appendix 4 which shows how ABI can be used in a local authorities route to decarbonisation). The ABI Concept Framework was published in November 2021 (see Background Document No. 1.).
- 2.47 It is recommended that the council explores the ABI framework further to determine its relevance and the actions it could take in order to stimulate greater investment in carbon saving projects locally. Anthesis is committed to continuing the progression of the ABI framework and will be developing a second phase of the project which will be focused on how to put ABI into practice.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Out-of-boundary investments (i.e. carbon offset credits and schemes)

- 3.1 Traditional offsetting options such as carbon offset credits and schemes were also considered as an option for Winchester City Council. Traditional offsetting typically involves purchasing a tradeable unit from an offsetting scheme, known as a carbon offset credit, which represents an emission reduction of one metric tonne of CO₂, or an equivalent amount of other GHGs. Although they can be stored and traded like a commodity, they are not material things; offset credits are not literally 'tonnes of carbon' but stand in for them. The purchaser of an offset credit can 'retire' it to claim the underlying reduction towards their own GHG reduction goals. There are two classes of carbon credit - compliance or voluntary.
- 3.2 Several projects are readily available that offer high quality certified offsets. One such project is offered by Carbon Footprint Ltd, an organisation that Winchester City Council uses to calculate its organisational carbon footprint. Carbon Footprint Ltd operates within both the voluntary offset market and the compliance offset market, and offers a diverse portfolio of offset projects to choose from, both in developing countries and the UK. Carbon Footprint Ltd produced a carbon footprint appraisal report for Winchester City Council which assessed WCC's GHG emissions between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020. The report recommended Winchester City Council support 'the UK or Kenya tree planting programmes (both buddied with a reduced deforestation project in the Brazilian Amazon) as a way of 'contributing to projects which reduce GHG emissions through sequestration and prevention of forest burning, as well as providing income and livelihoods to local communities in Brazil and Kenya'. They also highlighted that it would help

meet the council's internal goal of planting 100 trees annually. If the council was to offset their emissions in this way, Carbon Footprint would be able to certify WCC as a 'Carbon Neutral Organisation'.

- 3.3 In order to calculate the estimated costs of purchasing offsets from Carbon Footprint Ltd, the calculator provided on their website was utilised (<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/carbonoffsetprojects.html>). For these costs, it is assumed that Winchester City Council has roughly 1500 tCO₂e of residual emissions that will need to be offset by 2024. The estimated costs to offset 1500 tCO₂e range from £9,000-£19,350 (see Appendix 5).
- 3.4 Whilst carbon offset schemes may provide a cost effective way to offset residual emissions, it is recommended that the council does not pursue this type of offset. As discussed in section 2.19, there are additional social, economic and environmental benefits from prioritising carbon offsetting solutions that are generated within the administrative boundary of the council. The majority of offsetting schemes, however, operate in developing countries detached from the sphere of influence of many organisations that purchase offset credits. Moreover, the offsetting schemes available in the UK are limited. The only UK-based offsetting schemes available are nature-based, for example, the Woodland Carbon Code and the Peatland Code. The demand for offsetting in the UK is increasing, pushing up the price of UK based certified offsets. Ultimately, investing in a carbon offset scheme outside of the Winchester District will not generate the positive co-benefits that would otherwise be stimulated by offsetting measures based within the district. We also expect that local resident taxpayers will object to the council investing their money in an offset scheme if it offers no social or economic return within the local region.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

HEP016 – Carbon Neutrality Programme – Energy Policies and Actions

Other Background Documents:-

1. Anthesis (2021). Authority Based Insetting: A Concept Framework – <https://www.anthesisgroup.com/authoritybasedinsetting/>
2. Climate Change Committee (2021). Sixth Carbon Budget – <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>
3. Environment Agency (2021). Achieving net zero: A review of the evidence behind potential carbon offsetting approaches – <https://www.gov.uk/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-reports/achieving-net-zero-carbon-emissions-a-review-of-the-evidence-behind-carbon-offsetting>

4. Green City Solutions. The CityTree – <https://citytree.co.uk/city-tree/>
5. Horsham District Council – Progress updates on becoming a carbon neutral council = <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/carbon-reduction-action-plan/progress-updates-on-becoming-a-carbon-neutral-council>
6. University of Oxford (2020). The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting – <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/reports/Oxford-Offsetting-Principles-2020.pdf>
7. WCC Carbon Neutrality Action Plan - <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/no-listing/carbon-neutrality-action-plan>

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Summary of nature-based offsetting solutions

Appendix 2 - A visual comparison of ABI compared to traditional offsetting and insetting

Appendix 3 - Diagram showing a potential route to decarbonisation for a local authority using ABI

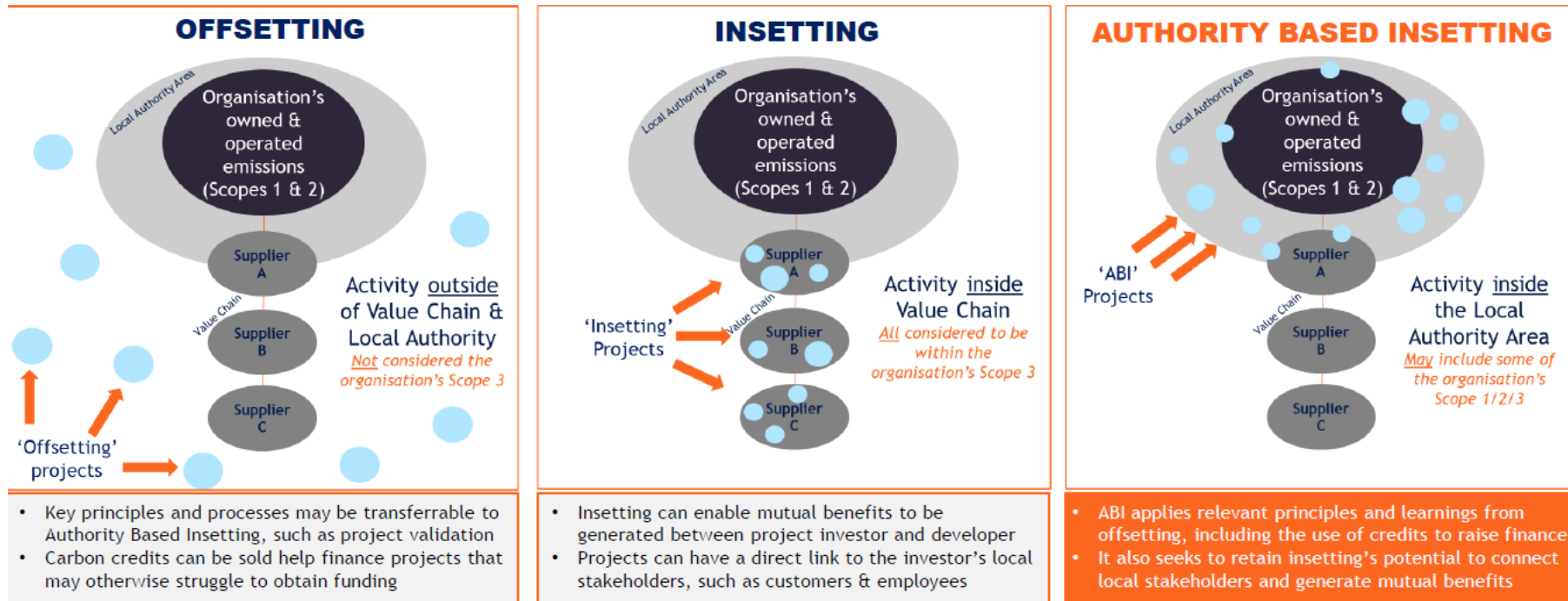
Appendix 4 - Example selection of offsetting schemes provided by Carbon Footprint Ltd

Appendix 1 – Summary of nature-based offsetting solutions

Approach	GHG emission reduction or removal?*
Upland peat restoration	Reduction and potentially removal
Lowland peat restoration	Reduction and potentially removal
Woodland creation	Removal
Grassland management	Removal
Freshwater wetlands – flood plain restoration	Removal
Freshwater wetlands – constructed wetlands	Removal
Saltmarsh restoration	Removal
Seagrass restoration	Removal
Kelp restoration	Removal
Agricultural soil management practices - arable land	Removal and reduction
Agricultural soil management practices - pasture land	Removal and reduction
Hedges and trees outside woodland	Removal
Enhanced weathering	Removal
Biochar	Removal

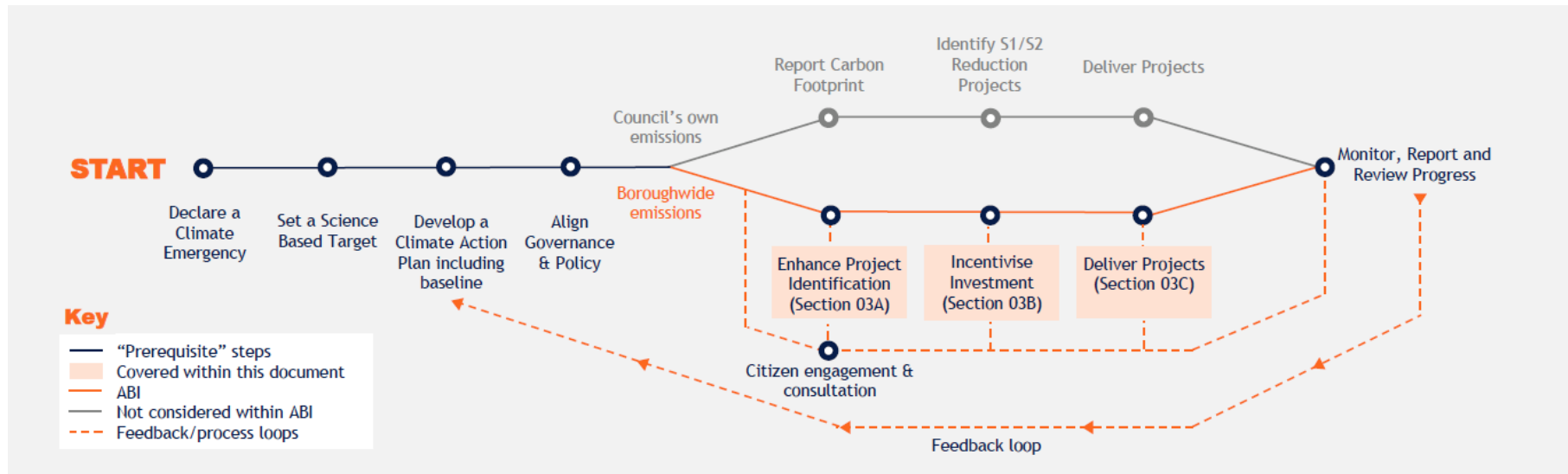
Beechener, G. et al (2021). Achieving net zero: A review of the evidence behind potential carbon offsetting approaches [Online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-reports/achieving-net-zero-carbon-emissions-a-review-of-the-evidence-behind-carbon-offsetting>

Appendix 2 – A visual comparison of ABI compared to traditional offsetting and insetting



Anthesis (2021). Authority Based Insetting: A Concept Framework [Online]. Available from: <https://www.anthesisgroup.com/authoritybasedinsetting/>

Appendix 3 – Diagram showing a potential route to decarbonisation for a local authority using ABI

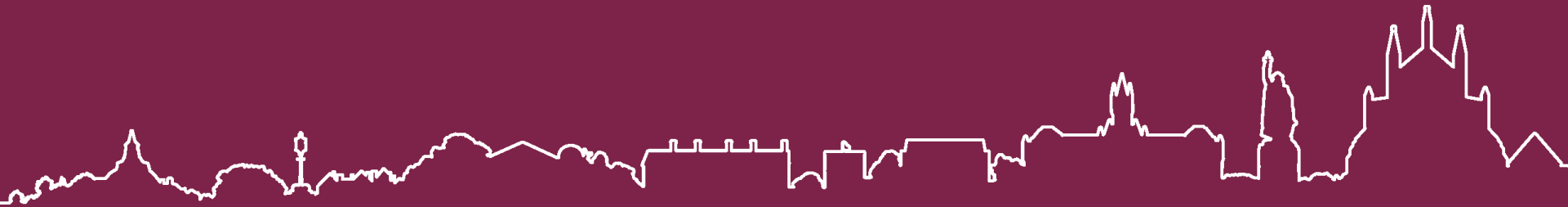


Anthesis (2021). Authority Based Insetting: A Concept Framework [Online]. Available from: <https://www.anthesisgroup.com/authoritybasedinsetting/>

Appendix 4 – Example selection of offsetting schemes provided by Carbon Footprint Ltd.

Offset project	Details	Price per tonne CO2	Price for 1500 tCO2
UK Tree Planting	Funding supports the planting of trees in a UK region of your choice. The project mainly plants in school locations, helping to educate children and support wildlife habitats whilst sequestering carbon emissions. For each tCO2e offset, one tree is planted in the UK and an additional tCO2e is offset through a VCS Tree Budding project to guarantee the emission reductions	£12.90 incl. 20% VAT per tonne	£19350 incl. 20% VAT
Reforestation in Kenya	Funding supports the planting of native broad leaved trees in the Great Rift Valley, and supports its developing community. For each tCO2e one tree is planted and an additional tCO2e is offset through a VCS Tree Budding project to guarantee the emission reductions.	£9.50	£14250
Community Projects	Funding supports a carefully selected range of projects from within developing countries that have strong additional benefits beyond reducing carbon emissions. These include health benefits, saving low-income families money and reducing deforestation. All projects in this portfolio are certified to the Gold Standard and include efficient household cook stoves and clean drinking water projects.	£8.00	£12000
Global Portfolio	Funding supports VCS certified carbon reduction programmes across the world via a range of projects that include carbon avoidance, clean and renewable energy generation. Many are within developing countries, where they also provide additional social benefits.	£6.00	£9000

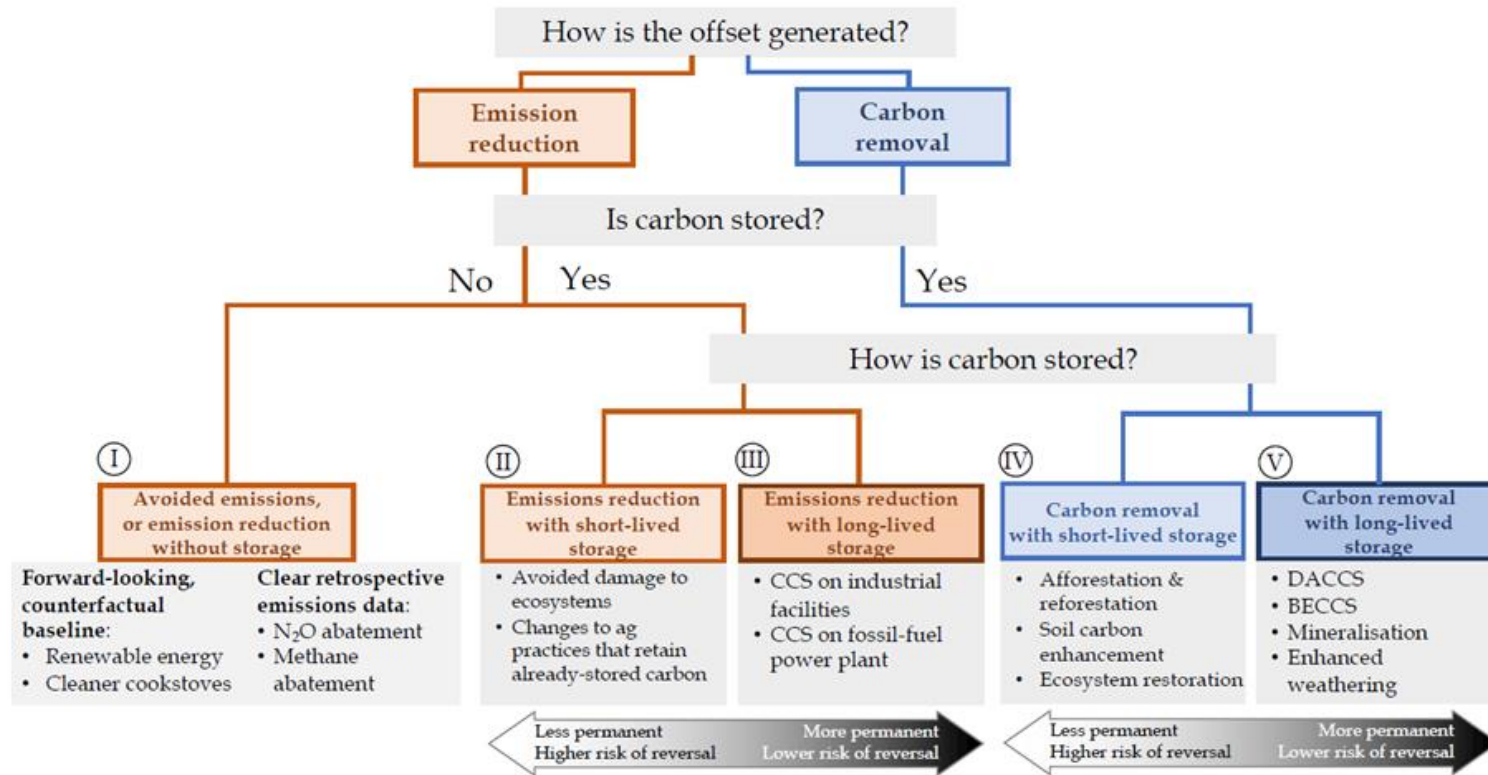
HEP021: Carbon Neutrality Programme – Carbon Offsetting



TYPES OF CARBON OFFSETS

A simplified classification system that shows the five different types of carbon offsets:

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Allen, M., Axelsson, K., Caldecott, B., et al. (2020). The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting [Online]. Available from: <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/reports/Oxford-Offsetting-Principles-2020.pdf>

TYPES OF CARBON OFFSETS

Emissions reductions (type I-III).

 **Type I** - avoids emissions altogether (e.g. renewable energy generation)


 **Type II** - avoids damage to natural and semi-natural ecosystems, thus preserving the carbon stored within them (e.g. avoiding deforestation).


 **Type III** – stores carbon that was averted from emissions (e.g. Carbon Capture and Storage)




TYPES OF CARBON OFFSETS

Emission Removals (Type IV-V)

 **Type IV** – short-lived carbon storage, often uses nature-based solutions to remove carbon (e.g. afforestation, ecosystem restoration etc.)

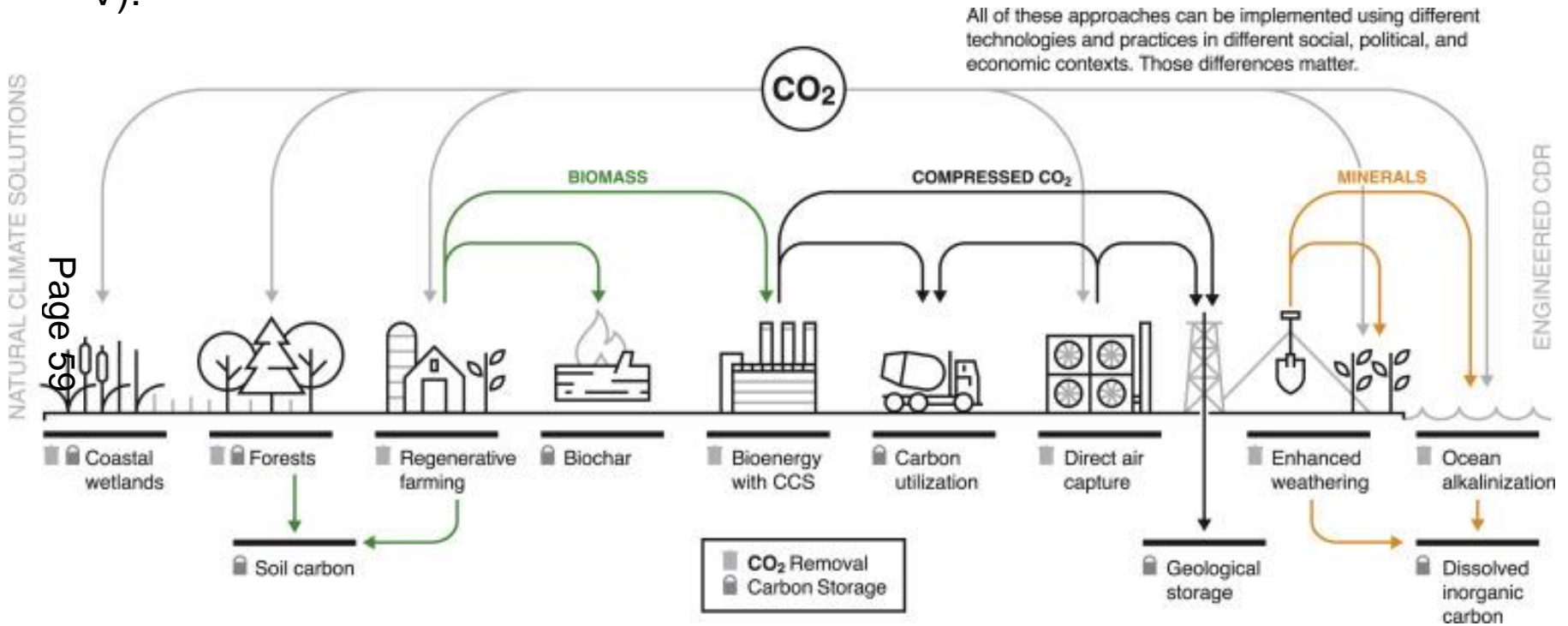
Page 58  **Type V** - long-lived carbon storage, often uses technologically-mediated processes to remove carbon (e.g. BECCS, DACCS).

 Type V are less commonly available as the technology is at an early stage of development and there is insufficient evidence to provide a realistic estimate of their carbon removal capabilities.



CARBON REMOVAL TECHNOLOGIES

The different types of carbon removal technologies ranging from natural climate solutions (Type IV) to engineered alternatives (Type V):

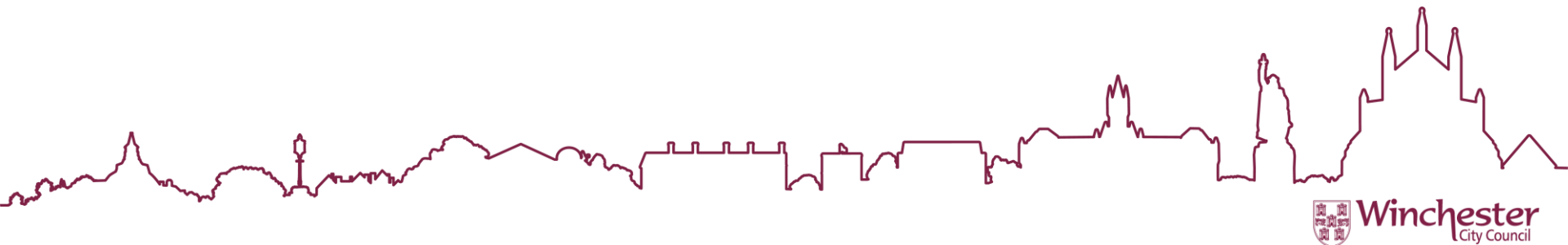


Morrow, D.R. et al (2020). Principles for thinking about carbon dioxide removal in just climate policy. *One Earth*, 3(21): 150-153.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332220303596>

OPTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL TO OFFSET ITS EMISSIONS

Renewable Energy Generation (Type I)

- Significant potential to address most of the council's residual carbon emissions
- Potential for long-term revenue generation and other complementary activities (e.g. wildflower growth, tree planting, sheep grazing, BNG, Nitrate mitigation).
- Further work required to identify, plan, and deliver large-scale solar farm(s) on council land.




OPTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL TO OFFSET ITS EMISSIONS

Woodland creation (Type IV)


- One of the most established and well known offsets reflected by the creation of the Woodland Carbon Code
- It is estimated that 1 ha of woodland can sequester between 300-500 tCO₂ over a 100-year lifespan.
- Can also provide a range of co-benefits for biodiversity, flood risk mitigation, and recreation.
- In terms of reaching the 2024 carbon neutrality target, planting trees alone does not provide a viable option.
- However, tree planting should form a key part of the council's offsetting strategy to reach net zero across the district by 2030.

OPTIONS TO ENABLE OTHERS IN THE DISTRICT TO OFFSET THEIR EMISSIONS

Carbon Offset Fund

 Developers required to pay into a fund to offset any residual carbon emissions from the development.

 Funds ring-fenced for purpose of delivering carbon reduction and removal projects across the district (Type I-V).


 Several LAs are either in the process of setting up, or have already set up carbon offset funds


 Local Plan consultation indicated little public support of carbon offsetting funds even as a last resort measure.





OPTIONS TO ENABLE OTHERS IN THE DISTRICT TO OFFSET THEIR EMISSIONS

Other opportunities – ‘Soft’ levers

 **Mobilising** – encourage and incentivise businesses and communities to develop and invest in carbon offsets (e.g. renewable energy, tree planting)





 **Facilitating** – work with existing action and energy in businesses/communities and support them to develop carbon offsets.

 **Convening** – create partnerships between local communities and businesses to identify and create carbon offsetting opportunities.

 **Collaboration** - explore the Authority Based Insetting framework further to stimulate greater investment in carbon saving projects locally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Policy Committee notes:

-  The high likelihood we will need to offset residual emissions in order to achieve our council carbon neutrality target by 2024
-  Further work should be undertaken to provide an accurate estimate of quantity of offsetting required to reach our target.
-  Important role for the council in facilitating opportunities for others to offset their carbon emissions across the district
-  The Oxford Offsetting Principles propose a best practice approach to offsetting to ensure that it is aligned with net zero targets.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee endorses the following approach:

- First maximise the delivery of carbon reduction measures throughout the council's operations and the district before using offsets to reduce carbon emissions.
- Select a portfolio of different offsetting options at both a council and district-wide scale, generating offsets locally within the Winchester district if possible (incl. renewable energy generation, woodland creation, carbon offset fund).
- Adopt approaches to address the local emissions that it does not have direct control over by mobilising, facilitating, convening, and collaborating.
- An offsetting policy to be brought to Cabinet for approval.



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REPORT TITLE: DRAFT TREE STRATEGY

2 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Hannah Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Contact Officer: Susan Croker Tel No: 01962 848419 Email scroker@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Policy Committee at the meeting in January 2022 agreed that the council's draft Tree Strategy should be brought to the Committee in March 2022 for consideration.

This paper introduces the Winchester City Council Tree Strategy (draft) which will be taken to Cabinet in summer 2022 for approval and asks members to provide comment.

The Tree Strategy sets out how the City Council will address both its legislative and managerial duties in relation to trees, in order to protect and enhance the district's tree stock in a sustainable and appropriate manner, whilst recognising its value to people and places. It is the first time the council has produced a tree strategy and it has been written for a wide audience including residents, arboricultural contractors, councillors and council officers. Its main purpose is to agree a set of policies by which the council will manage its tree stock and its statutory function in relation to trees. Once the policies have been agreed, consideration will be given to how we best present this information to the various audiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee review and provide comment upon the Tree Strategy (Draft) as shown in appendix 1, and in particular consider and comment on:
 - a. The overall approach of the document;

- b. The guiding principles outlined in the report under section 4, which aim to provide a consistent and equitable approach to tree management;
 - c. The procedures identified under section 7 – The council's own tree stock;
 - d. Section 8 – Undertaking works on council owned trees; and
 - e. All policies identified in the report.
2. That officers will take account of the Committee's comments in finalising the Tree Strategy which will be taken to Cabinet later in the year.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 The draft Tree Strategy reflects an approach that aims to be delivered within existing budgets and resources. Having an agreed set of policies by which the council will manage its tree stock and its statutory function in relation to trees; setting out how work will be prioritised and providing information on when it will be undertaken, will help to more effectively manage the competing demands for limited resource across the areas identified in the Strategy.
- 1.2 Staffing resources currently includes a two year fixed term contract which was created to tackle a backlog in the tree surveying programme and associated works. It is likely there will be a need to continue with a significant tree surveying programme beyond the initial survey programme and consideration of the options for the most efficient way to resource this will need to be given at the appropriate time.
- 1.3 There will always be uncertainty around the amount and type of work generated through the council responsibilities for the management, protection and care of its trees. An increase in tree related work is likely to occur going forward, in light of the changing climate and weather patterns including storm frequency. Whilst we have some discretion regarding when works are to be undertaken, any works which are deemed essential will require immediate resourcing. This will place pressure on the capacity to carry out all the team's functions and duties and will require reprioritisation or deferral of work especially any that is not statutory or contractual obligations.
- 1.4 In addition, the impacts of climate change and diseases such as Ash Dieback are not currently quantified but are likely to require additional survey work.
- 1.5 Therefore there may be a need to review the longer term resourcing of the tree team but any additional financial implications will be brought before Members through the appropriate channels.

2 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	By adopting the policies in the tree strategy, this will provide a clearer understanding of future work priorities and therefore budgetary needs.	
Exposure to challenge	The tree strategy will help manage our exposure to challenge as it provides clarity on the council's priority in relation to trees.	Once the principles and policies have been agreed, the council will adapt how it communicates these messages to various audiences.
Innovation	The tree strategy is the first	The tree strategy will

	document of its type to have been produced by Winchester City Council.	provide a basis for how we adapt our tree service going forward.
Reputation	The tree strategy demonstrates the council's commitment to managing its assets and legislative duties.	
Property	This strategy demonstrates how the council is meeting its liability under the Occupiers Liability Act and minimising exposure to legal challenge.	The tree strategy allows the council to manage its tree stock in an effective and risk appropriate manner, whilst supporting the climate emergency work.
Community Support	The tree strategy will undergo a wider consultation/engagement process following consideration by HEP.	
Timescales		The document will go to Cabinet July 2022.
Project capacity	The tree strategy is being written within existing resource. However, there will be a need to seek external support in the production of the document. This will be funded by existing budgets.	

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 3.1 At the Health and Environment Policy (HEP) Committee meeting in January 2022, it was agreed that the emerging Tree Strategy (Draft) should be presented to the HEP Committee in March for comment.
- 3.2 The Tree Strategy sets out how the City Council will address both its legislative and managerial duties in relation to trees, in order to protect and enhance the district's tree stock in a sustainable and appropriate manner, whilst recognising its value to people and places.
- 3.3 The council's legislative duties include making and enforcing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), determining TPO applications; assessing applications relating to trees in conservation areas, commenting on development management applications for tree works and supporting strategic planning processes.

- 3.4 The council's managerial responsibilities relate to approximately 32,000 trees which are on council owned land.
- 3.5 The council has many practices and processes for managing and responding to tree issues, so there is a need for a single document which consolidates all these and sets out the council's position and policies in one place. How this information will be made available to various audiences will be considered as part of the work to promote the Strategy and its use once approved.
- 3.6 This strategy will be the main point of reference for all works in relation to trees which come under the remit of the City Council, including trees owned and managed by the council and those in private ownership where the council has a role in their safeguarding or management. It is purposely detailed to allow members, officers, contractors, land owners and the public access to information when considering work on trees and to better understand how the council undertakes its responsibilities in relation to tree ownership and management.
- 3.7 Whilst there is no national guidance in relation to writing tree strategies, this document does reflect industry best practice and legislation. In addition, tree strategies produced by other authorities have been reviewed and used to inform Winchester City Council's tree strategy.
- 3.8 This strategy complements other work that responds to the climate emergency declared by Winchester City Council in June 2019 and forms part of a suite of plans developed in response.
- 3.9 Members are asked to consider the report and the attached Tree Strategy (Draft) and provide comments and feedback. Please note the document is not in its final format, and the look and feel of the document will alter.

4 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 4.1 Alternative option: To not produce the Tree Strategy (rejected). Whilst the council has a number of operational practices and procedures relating to trees, these have evolved over the years. Our existing working practices are based on experience, technical knowledge, legislation and engagement with residents and others. There is a need to bring these together in a single document which can be accessed by others and which states the council's position on a range of work areas.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

HEP017 – Management of Open Spaces – Scoping Report; 19 January 2022.

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Winchester City Council Tree Strategy 2022 (Draft)

Annex i to Appendix 1: Tree Strategy 2022 appendices.

Winchester City Council

Tree Strategy (Draft)

July 2022

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1. Introduction

This strategy sets out how Winchester City Council will address both its legal and management duties in relation to trees, in order to protect and enhance the district's tree stock in a sustainable and appropriate manner, whilst recognising their value to people and places.

Whilst the council has many procedures and processes for managing and responding to tree issues, there is a need for a single document which clearly sets out the council's position and policies. This tree strategy will be the main point of reference for all works in relation to trees which come under the remit of the City Council, including trees owned and managed by the council and those in private ownership where the council has a role in their safeguarding or management.

This tree strategy is part of suite of plans developed in response to the climate emergency declared by Winchester City Council in June 2019. Increasing tree coverage is an inexpensive and effective way to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and it is estimated that one hectare of woodland can sequester between 300 and 500 tonnes of CO₂ over a 100-year lifespan. The magnitude of carbon sequestration, however, will be influenced by factors such as tree species and age, growth rate, spacing of trees, soil type, and woodland management practices.

The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan includes ambitions to:

- a. Collaborate with partners and landowners to identify up to 100 hectares of land to support additional tree planting and/or creation of grassland and wetland habitats; and
- b. Develop a programme of rewilding starting with planting at least 100 trees annually on council land.

The principles and policies set out in this document also support the council's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2021. Woodland and trees are one of the priority habitats identified in the BAP and many of the key species within the BAP rely on woods and trees to survive. Therefore by supporting and delivering the tree strategy, the council will be helping to deliver the aims and objectives identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

A glossary of words included in this strategy can be found in the Appendix.

2. The need for a tree strategy

The benefits provided by trees are significant, not only as a valuable timber resource but also due to the social, environmental and economic benefits they provide within the built and natural environment. Their role in helping to regulate the climate is well documented. The value of trees is recognised within the England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024, national and regional Biodiversity Action Plans and the Winchester City Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2021. Key benefits provided by trees includes:

- Mitigating climate change by acting as carbon storage and sequestration.
- Cooling the urban heat island effect.
- Improving air quality by reducing airborne and particulate pollution.
- Mitigating flood alleviation, storm water management and wind turbulence.
- Masking noise pollution and improving water quality
- Aiding the restoration of contaminated land and soil protection.
- Enhancing landscape character and providing cultural and historical interest.
- Providing health and wellbeing benefits.
- Providing amenity, shelter and aesthetic value.
- Providing ecological and biodiversity benefits.

For a further understanding of the value of trees please see appendix i.

Winchester City Council is required from both a legal and management perspective to protect and enhance the districts tree stock. This includes health and safety requirements; occupiers liabilities, planning related legislation and wildlife and protected species legislation. For a detailed list of relevant legislation and guidance please see appendix ii.

Whilst the council has a number of operational policies and procedures relating to trees, these are not easily accessible to the public or others. This tree strategy brings together all existing policies and procedures for the first time, across both the council's management and legislative roles.

3. The aim of the tree strategy

The aim of this tree strategy is to ensure a healthy and thriving tree cover across the Winchester district, with a diverse age and species range, thereby helping to maintain and enhance the district's valuable landscape character for the benefit of all.

This strategy was approved in 2022 and demonstrates that Winchester City Council is committed to managing its own tree stock in a sustainable and appropriate manner. This includes maintaining the existing canopy cover across the district and where possible increasing this, with a particular emphasis on trees which provide high amenity and/or biodiversity benefits in the long term.

The document is purposely detailed to allow members, officers, contractors, land owners and the public access to information when considering work on trees and to better understand how the council undertakes its responsibilities in relation to tree ownership and management. Consequently the document is divided into sections with corresponding policies attached and there are a number of appendices which will be updated as and when required.

4. Guiding principles

4.1 The appropriate management of the existing tree stock

Whilst tree planting is often seen as a key delivery mechanism for responding to the climate emergency, the management of our existing tree stock is the council's first priority. It takes many years for a tree to begin to remove carbon from the atmosphere (anecdotal evidence suggests around 20 years) and therefore focusing on our existing tree stock is paramount if we are to help address the climate emergency now.

In order to appropriately manage the existing tree stock Winchester City Council will strive to:

- Achieve a diverse age range from young to ancient or veteran trees;
- Achieve a diverse range of species – both native and non-native;
- Undertake a long term programme of planting and felling works;
- Plant and encourage the right tree in the right place for the right reason;
- Achieve biodiversity and carbon gain through tree planting ie tree planting will be undertaken on sites where there is little existing biodiversity and/or carbon sequestration such as amenity grassland.
- Increase the net tree canopy cover across the district;
- Base decisions on the needs of both existing residents and visitors as well as future generations.
- Only undertake works on trees owned and managed by the council which are deemed essential i.e. works where there is a clear arboricultural reason and it is in the interests of the health and survival of the tree to undertake the works or where there is a high risk of injury to persons or damage to property caused by a structural failure or defect. Works which have no arboricultural justification but rather aim to mitigate an inconvenience such as restricting light, or overhanging branches on neighbouring property will not be undertaken.
- Employ qualified and professional tree officers to oversee the work on behalf of the council;
- Use qualified and professional contractors to undertake practical tree works;
- Ensure the council operates a cost effective works programme, including the use of a tree framework agreement, investing in appropriate IT systems and budgeting for tree works to ensure the work can be delivered within existing resources;
- Take account of risk to both people and property.

4.2 The appropriate management of the existing tree stock not owned and managed by the city council.

Whilst the council has no direct responsibility for the management of trees under private ownership, it does have a responsibility through its regulatory function. This includes:

- Protecting important trees and woodlands which are potentially under threat through the use of Tree Preservation Orders and responding to applications for works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and those in Conservation Areas;
- Responding to planning applications submitted to the council which potentially have an impact on existing trees and ensuring that works are undertaken in accordance with industry standards such as BS3998 (2010) and BS5837 (2012); and
- Enforcing planning obligations where appropriate and issuing tree planting notices as required.

Details of how the council will deliver its responsibility in relation to its regulatory function are detailed later in the report.

5. Delivery

Responsibility for the delivery of this plan sits primarily within the Natural Environment and Recreation team at Winchester City Council. However, officers will work closely with other teams including Housing, Legal, Development Management, Planning Enforcement, Strategic Planning, Estates and Parking and external bodies such as Hampshire County Council and the Forestry Commission. For a list of contacts both within and external to the council please see appendix iii.

6. Scope

6.1 Geographical area covered

This strategy covers the whole of the Winchester district including the South Downs National Park (SDNP), as the City Council currently helps manage the South Downs tree stock through a Service Level Agreement with the National Park. This strategy therefore has regard to the purposes of the National Park ie *“To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area. To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area. To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public”*.

6.2 Types of vegetation covered.

This strategy covers only trees and high hedges. It does not cover shrubs, other hedges or other vegetation. The definition of a tree is:

“A woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground”.

7. The council's own tree stock

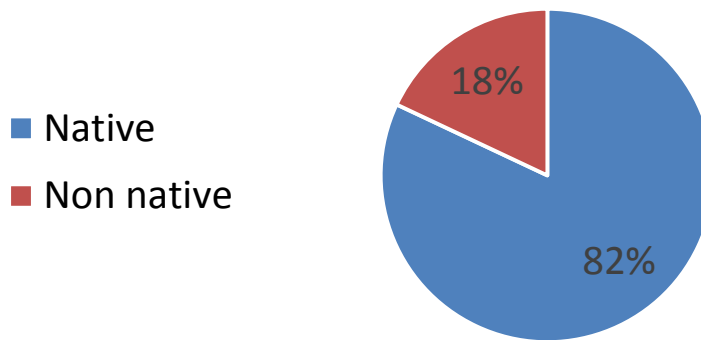
7.1 Introduction

The council owns and manages c32,000 trees throughout the Winchester district. The tree stock comprises:

- At least 13,000 individual trees; and
- 232 groups of trees and woodlands.

The most common species of trees on council land are maple, ash, beech and lime (see appendix iv), with the majority of species classed as 'native' (see graph 1)

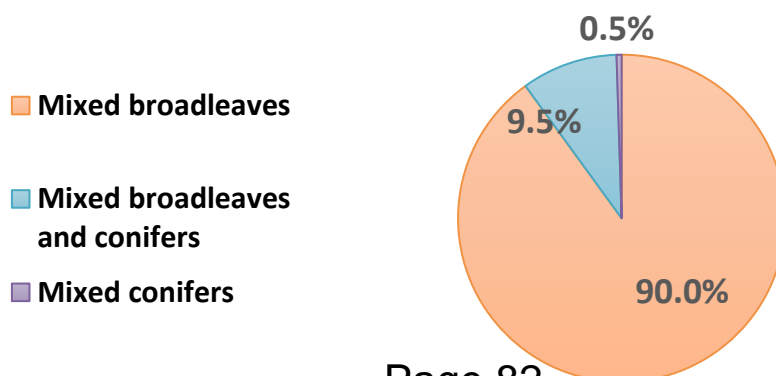
Graph 1: Breakdown of native vrs non native trees on WCC holdings



There are some more unusual species on City Council land including locust, sweet gum and the Indian bean tree. We also have over 80 elm trees, many of which have been planted in recent years and are resistant to Dutch elm disease, which killed many of the elms in the 1960's and 70's.

Our two largest woodlands are located at Whiteley and Otterbourne and both have public access. Most of the woodlands are mixed broadleaves with only one woodland being mixed conifer (see graph 2 for a breakdown of woodland type).

Graph 2 - breakdown of woodland types on WCC land holdings.



The majority of individual trees are found in public parks and open spaces, woodlands, in the grounds of council-owned properties, council tenant's gardens, car parks, sports and recreation grounds, play areas, cemeteries and sewage treatment works.

7.2 Council tree inspection procedures

7.2.1 Introduction

Winchester City Council has a duty of care to manage the risks that council trees may pose to anyone who passes or comes within close proximity to a council-owned tree.

The Health and Safety Executive advises that this duty of care should be “*reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable*” when managing the risk posed by council trees. Therefore the council must consider the many benefits trees provide, the risk they pose (i.e. aim to achieve a level of risk which is acceptable and/or tolerable) and the costs of managing the risk, when exercising its duty of care. It is important to note the council cannot, and should not, seek to remove all risk posed by trees, as this would not be reasonable, proportionate nor reasonably practicable.

Policy 1 – Duty of care

The council will consider the many benefits trees provide, the risk they pose and the costs of managing the risk, when exercising its duty of care.

7.2.2 Risk

Trees are natural living structures. Consequently they occasionally shed branches or fall. This is usually because the tree has died, has an obvious structural defect or has been unduly impacted by severe inclement weather conditions.

When considering risk, the council will assess two key elements:

1. The likely risk of a tree, or parts of a tree, actually failing; and
2. The likelihood that the tree (if it were to fail) would cause injury to person or damage to property.

It is important to note that the risk posed to life and property in the United Kingdom by a failing tree is extremely small. See

https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/7086/Commonsense_management_of_trees.pdf

Policy 2 – Assessing risk

When considering risk, the council will assess two key elements:

1. The likely risk of a tree, or parts of a tree, actually failing; and
2. The likelihood that the tree (if it were to fail) would cause injury to person or damage to property.

7.2.3 Tree Survey Programme

In order to meet its duty of care, the council has an on-going tree survey programme in which a suitably qualified and experienced officer regularly undertakes site visits to assess the existing tree stock.

The frequency of visit depends on an initial assessment of risk, taking account of the two key elements identified in Policy 2. The council uses a Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) which is an internationally recognised approach when making risk management decisions and works on the premise of ensuring that risks from trees are as low as reasonably practicable.

All trees owned and managed by the council have been allocated a usage category as follows:

- High usage – e.g. where trees could cause significant structural damage or risk to life i.e. users of busy highways/footways or static targets such as dwellings, parked cars, commercial premises, public parks and play areas. This can include large mature trees within striking distance of public highways or ancient or veteran trees/large trees with known defects.
- Medium usage – e.g. where members of the public are passing under trees or near trees at infrequent intervals. This category can include trees of any size or age. Examples include trees located on large open spaces or sports grounds, sewage treatment works or permissible rights of way through woodland.
- Low usage - e.g. areas where there are members of the public passing under or near to trees at very low intervals. This includes trees located in woodlands, in fields away from the highway or property or where members of the public are prevented from entering.

The level of usage will then determine the frequency in which the trees will be surveyed, as part of an on-going survey programme (see Policy 3 for the frequency of inspections depending on usage categories). This is the standard timeframe of inspection. However, if a defect is found, monitoring may occur more frequently.

Policy 3 – Frequency of council tree inspections

The council will undertake tree inspections at the following maximum intervals:

- Trees in high usage areas – once every three years
- Trees in medium usage areas – once every five years
- Trees in low usage areas – once every ten years

Work to trees outside the programmed maintenance plan will only be undertaken when a hazard is clearly identified or there is reasonable probability that the tree will present a hazard in the near future. In addition to the rolling programme of planned works, some works will arise from unplanned events such as severe weather conditions or insurance claims. Trees that threaten public safety and property will always be given the highest priority. This may lead to plans for essential works being postponed.

7.2.4 Inspection methodology and recording

The procedure for undertaking initial tree inspections will comprise a 'walk over' inspection at ground level, checking each tree's structural condition and vitality and identifying any obvious defects or fungal pathogens. Officers will assess whether any arboricultural works are necessary to reduce or minimise risk posed by the tree to people or property in the context of risk posed, their amenity value and environmental benefit.

In the event that defects are identified which cause concern over the structural integrity of the tree or its declining health, a more detailed inspection of the tree will be carried out to ascertain the structural condition of the tree.

7.2.5 Recording tree inspections

All tree inspections will be recorded on specialist software, along with any arboricultural works considered necessary to reduce the risk. The council will operate a 'negative reporting' procedure whereby only those trees which require work will be recorded in detail.

Policy 4 – Tree inspection protocols

The council will undertake a 'walk over' inspection at the first stage and if defects are identified a more detailed inspection of the tree will be carried out.

All tree inspections will be recorded on specialist software, along with any arboricultural works considered necessary, using a 'negative reporting' procedure.

8. Undertaking works on council owned trees

8.1 Introduction

To ensure best value, the council has a tree framework agreement with six contractors (commenced 2021 for 2 years with a possible extension for a further 2 years). These contractors undertake the majority of the tree works on council owned trees, on behalf of the Winchester City Council.

Tree works are given one of four priorities.

8.1.1. Priority 1 – Urgent.

Urgent tree works are those which are required to mitigate a problem which is causing or likely to cause a high risk of injury to persons or damage to property in the immediate timeframe. Where a tree has been reported to pose an immediate danger to life or property, the council aims to respond within 90 minutes of notification and assess the tree. Urgent works include (but not limited to):

- The tree is snapped or blown over;
- The tree is rocking and the roots are damaged;
- The tree is uprooted and leaning against another tree or building;
- A large branch is hanging off the tree or a dead branch is extending over private property or car parking areas;
- A fallen tree or branch is blocking a road, foot way or access to a property;
- The tree has landed on a car;
- Flood prevention; and
- Where a tree poses an immediate threat to life or property because of storm damage or unforeseen circumstances.

8.1.2. Priority 2 – High priority.

These are works which remove a hazard but are not an emergency as defined above. In these cases it may be appropriate for the council to reduce or prune the tree to decrease the level of risk posed by the tree. The response time for priority 2 is up to one week and include (but not limited to):

- A dead or dying tree;
- Tree with poor extension growths or sparse crown;
- Soft or flaking bark on the main stem or primary stems of the tree;
- Fungal fruiting brackets on tree;
- Splits and cracks;
- Included bark union with a high risk of separation;
- Tree with an over-extended heavy limb with high risk of failure and high target area;

- Crown lifting or removal of epicormic growth over a highway or footway or growth obscuring the highway;
- Watering and mulching drought affected trees; and
- Removal of major deadwood over pedestrian areas or highways.

8.1.3. Priority 3 – Medium priority

These are works which either manage an issue or which help extend the lifespan of the tree. The response time is within 3 months and include (but not limited to):

- Removal of epicormic growth over open space;
- Crown reduction or localised reduction due to structural defects;
- Crown lifting over open space;
- Mulching; and
- Adjustment of tree ties and stakes to ensure the tree is not restricted as it grows.

8.1.4. Priority 4 - Low priority

These are works which will not be undertaken unless under exceptional circumstances. This includes (but not limited to):

- Major crown reduction, localised reductions or topping;
- Felling;
- Removal of minor deadwood;
- Crown thinning; and
- Cutting back from overhanging private property or car parking, particularly if the work aims to alleviate issues such as fruit fall, leaves, bird droppings, satellite reception, light, restricted views, pollen and honey dew.

Policy 5 – Priority of tree works

The council will undertake works in terms of priority as follows:

Priority 1 – Urgent tree works which are required to mitigate a problem which is causing or likely to cause a high risk of injury to persons or damage to property in the immediate timeframe.

Priority 2 – works which remove a hazard but are not an emergency as defined above.

Priority 3 – works which either manage an issue or which help extend the lifespan of the tree

Priority 4 – works which will not be undertaken unless under exceptional circumstances and include major works, felling, removal of minor deadwood, crown thinning and cutting back from overhanging private property or car parking.

8.2 Felling of trees owned and managed by the council and replacement tree planting

Due to the high number of trees that Winchester City Council owns and manages there will be occasions when the felling of a tree cannot be avoided. The decision to remove a tree is never taken lightly and tree officers often monitor the tree's health before ordering its removal.

The majority of trees are felled as they have become unsafe due to storm damage, vandalism, are causing structural damage to an adjacent built structure, have significant decay pathogens or have died and there is no other viable or cost effective options but to remove the tree. However, trees will also be felled where it is arboriculturally appropriate to do so such as selectively thinning a group of trees or where it provides long term benefit to a retained tree.

Where a tree is felled, the council seeks to plant a replacement tree either on the same location or an alternative location, as part of its on-going tree planting programme.

In addition, the council will continue to seek opportunities for natural regeneration, as this can potentially be more effective in delivering biodiversity, carbon and landscape benefits. However, as always with trees, the location of any new trees must be carefully considered and the trees must be managed in the first few years to maximise their chances of surviving. Therefore any tree planting or natural regeneration will be carefully planned, communicated and managed and the council will prioritise effective replacement over high numbers of new trees.

Policy 6 – Tree felling and replacement planting

The council will only fell trees where absolutely necessary or where there is a clear arboricultural reason to do so.

Where a tree has been removed, the council will seek to plant replacement trees at a minimum of 1:1 ratio either on the same location or an alternative location.

Any tree planting or natural regeneration will be carefully planned, communicated and managed and the council will prioritise effective replacement over high numbers of new trees.

8.3 Works to trees owned and managed by the council

The maintenance of trees is an important management operation. This includes pruning, crown lifting; crown reduction; crown lifting, crown thinning, tree felling or topping of a tree(s).

However, the council receives a high volume of requests for tree works annually from residents and others within the district. It is not possible or appropriate to agree

to the majority of these requests as they are non-essential, and it is only where the works requested are deemed essential that they will be undertaken.

If anyone is concerned about a tree and wish to contact the city council, they should complete an online enquiry form at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/trees> which will be passed to a tree officer for assessment.

8.3.1 Essential works

Where there is a clear arboricultural reason or where there is a high risk of injury to persons or damage to property caused by a structural failure or which cannot be mitigated in any other way, the council will remove the nuisance under its duty of care.

Policy 7 – Essential works to council owned trees (Priorities 1-3)

The council will remove tree material where:

- a) It is causing structural damage to a dwelling, garage or boundary wall;
- b) There is a high risk of injury to persons;
- c) There is potential damage to property caused by a structural failure, which cannot be mitigated in any other way;
- d) A tree is causing an obstruction to the highway, an established private drive or where essential maintenance works are required.
- e) There is a benefit to the tree ie through formative pruning, general pruning and selective thinning of a group of trees for the betterment of the retained trees.

8.3.2 Non-essential works

Whilst the council recognises that people can be impacted by trees, it is not appropriate nor possible to undertake many of the works requested.

Due to the need to help reduce the impacts of climate change and to support the climate emergency declared by the council, the council will only undertake works which are essential. Whilst non-essential work can be beneficial for individuals, any works to trees can put the tree at risk as it:

- Creates wounds which are potentially damaging to the health of the tree and may allow the ingress of disease or decay in to the tree thereby harming the long term health and wellbeing of the tree;
- Reduces photosynthetic material from the tree's canopy, which has a detrimental effect on the trees ability to carry out its biological functions such as compartmentalising pruning wounds;
- Leads to the development of new dense leaf, bud and twig regrowth exacerbating issues such as blocked light, sap and leaf fall;

- Leads to new buds being formed which do not form a strong union with attached branches which requires ongoing future management to reduce the risk of branch and stem failure;

In addition, non-essential work can:

- Damage the pleasant appearance of trees and reduce the trees public visual amenity value and wildlife provision.
- Be costly and reduce the amount of budget available for the council to spend on essential maintenance.
- Remove material which can be of high ecological value such as ivy and dead wood. However this will only be retained where it does not pose an unacceptable level of risk to life or property.

When the council receives a request for works to its trees which is not essential, it will consider the request. However, as the council has no legal obligation to undertake non-essential tree works and due to the issues identified above, the majority of these works will not be undertaken. This includes cutting back from overhanging private property or car parking, particularly if the work aims to alleviate issues such as fruit fall, leaves, bird droppings, satellite reception, light, restricted views, pollen and honey dew. See appendix v for further information.

8.4 Common Law Right to undertake works on Winchester City Council trees.

For works which are non-essential, those who live adjacent to council trees do have a common law right to remove material from a tree that is up to or over the boundary of their property, as long as they do not commit a trespass or enter the land of the neighbour (the case of Earl of Lonsdale v Nelson 1823 and Lemmon v Webb 1894).

The person who undertakes the work takes responsibility for ensuring that the tree does not become unsafe at any point in the future, due to their actions. If the tree does become unsafe, the person who undertook the work could be liable for damage should the tree fail or die as a result of the works undertaken to it. The council monitors all its trees and works undertaken by a third party.

In addition, the person undertaking the work has a duty to dispose of the wood in an appropriate manner such as through a waste recycling centre and to not dump the cut wood on the tree owner's land, as this could be seen as fly tipping, which is liable to prosecution. The council advises that any works are undertaken by a competent arborist.

Therefore if a neighbour wishes to undertake pruning works and is legally entitled to do so in accordance with their common law right, they are able to do this as long as they:

1. Do not trespass on city council property to undertake the works;
2. Only remove material up to the boundary of the property from inside their own property.
3. Take responsibility for ensuring that the tree does not become unsafe at any point in the future, due to their actions;

4. Dispose of the cut material in an appropriate manner and not fly tip the cut material on city council owned land;
5. Apply to the Local Planning Authority if the tree is located within a Conservation Area or is protected by a tree preservation order;
6. Will not carry out the proposed works until the Local Planning Authority has granted consent; and
7. Do not remove, damage or wilfully destroy any council owned trees.

However it is important to note that the owner of a property neighbouring the council tree has no legal right to cut off or remove any part of the tree that does not overhang their property and are not permitted to enter council land to carry out the works. In addition, if tree is in a Conservation Area or protected by a Tree Preservation Order, this common law right does not apply. See section 11 for further information on protected trees.

Policy 8 – Common Law Right to undertake works on Winchester City Council trees.

If a neighbour wishes to undertake pruning works and is legally entitled to do so in accordance with their common law right, they are able to undertake the works as long as they:

- a) Do not trespass on city council property to undertake the works;
- b) Only remove material up to the boundary of the property from inside their own property;
- c) Take responsibility for ensuring that the tree does not become unsafe at any point in the future, due to their actions;
- d) Dispose of the cut material in an appropriate manner and not fly tip the cut material on city council owned land;
- e) Apply to the Local Planning Authority if the tree is located within a Conservation Area or is protected by a Tree Preservation Order and will not carry out the proposed works until the Local Planning Authority has granted consent; and
- f) Do not remove, damage or wilfully destroy any council owned tree.

All works must be undertaken in accordance with British Standard 3998 (2010).

8.5 Tree roots and structural damage to built structures including drains

The roots of trees grow and move through the soil in various ways depending on tree species, soil type and local conditions. Shallow or surface roots can cause damage to footpath surfaces or other light structures by radial root growth or soil desiccation.

Where a hazard from tree roots occurs and the council has been notified, a tree officer will respond and if necessary, the information will be passed to the council's insurers, who will undertake an assessment of the impact and make any

recommendations. Tree felling will only be considered when all other options including engineering solutions have been considered and/or rejected. A replacement tree will be planted where possible.

Where roots of a council tree have entered a council owned property, the tenant should contact the council's Housing team in the first instance. If the property is privately owned, the owner is recommended to contact their property insurers who should contact the council on their behalf once they have undertaken their own assessment of the alleged structural damage.

Although the homeowner has a Common Law right to cut the roots back to their boundary (see section 7.5), it is essential that consideration is given to the stability of the tree and how this might be affected. Anyone undertaking tree root reduction works may be liable for damage if the tree fails in the future. If the tree is protected by its location within a Conservation Area or is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the home owner must apply to the Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council before undertaking the proposed root reduction works, as the Common Law right is not applicable. Home owners are advised to speak to their home insurers before carrying out any tree root reductions

Damage to drains is often unpredictable and therefore tree roots should not automatically be assumed to be the cause. Underground services are often damaged by other means such as heavy lorries or previous site construction. The damage cannot be fully diagnosed until the drains have been surveyed by an appropriate person who is experienced and qualified to do so.

Policy 9 – Tree roots and damage to built structures including drains

The council will inspect footways within its ownership where reported tree roots are causing a trip hazard and carry out necessary repairs. A tree will only be removed and a replacement tree planted when all other options including engineering solutions have been explored.

If it is alleged that council tree roots have entered a property or a properties' drains, the council will expect written technical reports from an appropriate expert who is suitably qualified and experienced within their field of expertise before engaging the services of the council insurers.

8.6 Council trees and poisonous berries

There may be trees located within council open spaces which produce poisonous berries, such as the yew tree. As this a natural occurring process there is no reasonable solution to reduce the exposure of the general public to the berries. In addition, yew trees are very striking trees and can make a significant contribution to the historic setting of the character of the built environment. Therefore yew trees will

be retained on city council land. However, if homeowners, tenants and farmers have concerns about unsupervised young children or livestock being exposed to poisonous foliage or berries they are advised to contact the council. See appendix iii for contact details. If the poisonous berries and foliage are within a council tenant's garden, the council will inspect the site and make an informed decision on the risk associated with the presence of the vegetation.

Policy 10 – Poisonous berries and foliage

Winchester City Council will only fell or prune trees within its parks and open spaces which have poisonous berries or foliage, if after investigation, there is an unacceptable risk to young children, vulnerable adults or livestock. Parents or guardians are advised to supervise their children and vulnerable adults at all times whilst accessing any open space/parks.

If the poisonous berries and foliage are within a council tenant's garden, the council will inspect the site and make an informed decision on the risk associated with the presence of the vegetation.

8.7 Tree safety

The council is aware some residents may feel apprehensive about the size of a tree and/or worried that a tree might fail. However it is important to note that trees are not dangerous just because they are large, tall or move in the wind. Tree movement in high winds is natural and one of the ways they are able to withstand strong winds. However if someone is concerned about the health of a council owned tree they should contact the council. Things to look out for are:

- The presence of fungal fruiting bodies (brackets or mushrooms) on near the tree;
- Large cavities or decay in the main stems or branches;
- Large dead limbs'
- Loose bark;
- Lifting of the ground at the base of the tree; and
- The tree changes dramatically it how it looks.

The council will inspect a tree and take appropriate action if concerns are raised. In addition, the council undertakes a frequent and regular survey programme of all its trees (see section 6.2.3 for further details).

Policy 11 – Tree safety

The council will only prune or fell trees that it owns or manages if there is a clear arboricultural or safety need.

The council will investigate and inspect any tree that is suspected of being dangerous due to defects and take appropriate action.

8.8 Ivy on trees

Ivy (*Hedera helix*) is a native species which provides important habitat to a wide range of wildlife, acts as a food source for a range of species and provides cover for birds, bats, mammals and insects. Ivy often grows on tree stems and branches and should not necessarily be of concern. However, it can restrict the full structural assessment of a tree and increase the sail area of the trees canopy, adding weight and stress to the upper parts of the tree.

Therefore ivy will only be severed at the base of the trees where necessary and will be left in situ to die back as this will reduce the impact of any loss of cover/habitat for biodiversity and help prevent sun damage to newly exposed parts of the tree.

Policy 12 – Ivy on trees

Ivy will only be severed at the base of a tree where there is a clear need ie:

- Where it restricts the full assessment of parts where a significant defect is suspected;
- Where ivy growth is so prolific it increases the sail area; or
- Where it affects the growth of the inner crown of a tree to an unacceptable level.

Once severed, ivy will be left in situ to die back.

8.9 Communicating when tree works are due.

The council recognises that the majority of residents of Winchester value trees and that people are concerned when work is undertaken to trees without any communication from the council. Therefore when significant works are needed the council will publicise these through a variety of means including direct contact with neighbours impacted by the works, site notices, keeping councillors informed and updates via the council website.

However, it is not always possible nor appropriate to communicate all works, due to the volume of works undertaken and the need to focus resource on managing the tree stock directly.

Policy 13 – Communicating when tree works are due

Where works are minor, i.e. works to trees under 15cm at diameter at breast height; cyclical pollarding of trees; removal of epicormic growth or crown lifting; there will be no public/member communication.

Where works are urgent such as the removal of fallen trees or trees deemed

likely to immediately fail, the works will be carried out without public engagement, although local ward members and relevant Cabinet members will be informed.

Where tree works are non-urgent but have a significant impact on the local landscape or street scene, the council will aim to inform local residents and ward members and erect site notices prior to undertaking the works.

8.10 Unauthorised works to council trees

Due to the importance of trees, the council can, and do, take appropriate legal action under the Criminal Damage Act against third parties who damage or fell its trees without the council's consent.

To report vandalism or unauthorised tree works to the council please contact the tree team. Telephone 01962 848301 or email naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk

Policy 14 – Unauthorised works to council trees

The council will investigate all known acts of unauthorised trees works to council trees and seek prosecution where appropriate.

8.11 Tree works and wildlife protection

Trees are significantly important for wildlife and many species will breed, feed or shelter in trees. Birds and bats in particular can be impacted by works to trees and it is essential the council takes appropriate account of all wildlife legislation when undertaking works to trees.

Council tree works will meet criteria and best practice under relevant legislation and guidance including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (Habitat Regulations). For details on the procedures the council will undertake to ensure biodiversity is protected and enhanced, please see appendix vi.

Policy 15 – Tree works and wildlife protection

Prior to the commencement of works to council owned and managed trees, the wildlife/habitat potential of the trees will be considered and appropriate checks made. Further advice, surveys, measures and/or relevant licences will be sought when appropriate. In some cases work may need to be postponed to minimise impacts on protected species.

Wherever possible habitat features such as cavities, dead wood, water pockets, log piles and standing dead trees (among others) will be retained in situ as valuable niche habitats for wildlife. The presence of protected and other species will be a material consideration during the tree inspection process.

In addition, tree owners should be aware of the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and in particular to Sections 1 and 9. These make it an offence to:

- Kill or injure any wild bird or any wild animal listed on Schedule 5;
- Damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird (when the nest is being built or is in use);
- Damage or destroy any place which certain wild animals use for shelter (including all bats, dormice and certain moths);
- Disturb certain wild animals occupying a place for shelter (including all bats, dormice and certain moths); or
- Pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8.

Tree owners are advised prior to commencement of any works to consider whether such birds, animals or insects may be nesting or using the tree(s), and to ensure appropriate checks are made to ensure they do not contravene the legislation.

8.12 Green waste from council tree works

The council will seek to ensure all waste arising from tree works is reused or recycled by the tree contractors. They will also seek to re-use on-site wood products including bark chip for mulching around newly planted and young trees and shrub beds.

Where situations allow, such as areas in woodland or large groups of trees located away from the public highway or footpaths, logs from works will be left on site as habitat piles. Secondary and primary branches will be chipped to create wood chip mulch which will be composted and used for mulching around the bases of newly planted and established trees or on footpaths. Larger logs will be sent to paper manufactures or the national grid for the energy production.

Policy 16 – Green waste from council tree works

The council will seek to ensure all waste arising from tree works is reused or recycled.

9. Other tree management issues

9.1 Pests, disease and biosecurity measures

Due to warmer winter conditions currently being experienced and the increase in the movement of plants and soil across borders, the risks of importing pest and diseases is increasing. Many of British native trees are under threat from pests and diseases imported on trees, shrub, plants, soils, wood packaging, vehicle tyres or soil on foot ware. Current key threats include Chalara Dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) which is throughout the district and the oak processionary moth which severely affects oaks.

It is important that all tree owners are vigilant and the council will continue to prevent or minimise the introduction, establishment, spread and impacts of tree pests and diseases, including:

- Learning to recognise and report pests and diseases of concern to the Forestry commission using the Tree Alert online portal;
- Adopting good biosecurity practice to avoid the spread of organisms from place to place e.g. sterilising tools, footwear etc; or
- Not bringing soil or plants back from abroad.
- Only purchasing locally grown trees and shrubs;
- Reporting any notifiable pest and disease by means of the appropriate mechanisms and follow industry standard biosecurity measures as required;
- Asking contractors working on land owned or managed by Winchester City Council to sterilise equipment before and after use.

The forestry commission has published a link to aid tree owners to identify tree pest and disease at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/identify-a-tree-pest-or-disease-overview>.

Policy 17 – Pests, disease and biosecurity

Winchester City Council will be vigilant and continue to prevent or minimise the introduction, establishment, spread and impact of tree pests and disease.

This includes

- Learning to recognise and report pests and diseases;
- Adopting good biosecurity practice;
- Not bringing soil or plants back from abroad.
- Only purchasing locally grown trees and shrubs;
- Reporting any notifiable pest and disease by means of the appropriate mechanisms and follow industry standard biosecurity measures as required.

- Contractors working on land owned or managed by Winchester City Council to minimise the potential for contamination by sterilising equipment before and after use.

9.2 Ash Dieback (ADB).

Ash trees are a common tree located throughout the Winchester district. Winchester City Council owns c.1,200 individual ash trees across the district. However there are huge numbers of ash trees located within council and private woodlands and estates across the district.

Many of the ash trees across the district have been colonised with ash dieback which is caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (formerly known as *Chalara*). The disease can infect ash trees of all ages and once an ash tree is infected, the disease restricts the flow of water and nutrients, leading to the trees rapid decline and potential death. Ash dieback is now widespread across the UK and current estimates suggest that it could lead to the loss of 95% of the ash trees by 2030. This disease will have a dramatic effect on the landscape within the Winchester District as it is predicted that the effects of ash dieback on the local landscape will be greater than Dutch elm disease. However, it is not possible to predict the landscape or ecological impacts of the loss of ash trees at this time.

Ash dieback is spread through the movement of diseased ash plants and logs/unsawn wood from infected trees. A ban was applied on all movement of ash trees and seeds in October 2012, however prior to that there were high volumes of ash (*F. excelsior*) imported to the UK every year either.

If your ash tree becomes infected with the disease you must notify the Forestry Commission at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-a-specific-tree-pest-or-disease#tree-pests-in-alphabetical-order>,

The City Council is identifying and managing the risk associated with ash dieback via the production of an Ash Dieback Recovery Plan which will be available in the winter of 2022. Where trees with ash dieback have been identified, the council will consider removing the infected trees where appropriate and to restock using suitable replacement trees. However, the council will not automatically remove infected ash unless there is a strong arboricultural or risk need.

If you are concerned about an ash tree on land owned by Winchester City Council please report the issue by contacting the Winchester City council at naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk or telephone 01962 848301.

Policy 18 – Ash dieback.

Winchester City Council will not automatically remove infected ash trees. However, the council will undertake a more frequent inspection routine to monitor the trees health by means of cyclic tree inspection and risk zoning

Where infected dying or dead ash trees pose a high risk to life or property they will be removed.

Where the City Council receives a tree works application to fell **protected** ash trees that are potentially infected by ash dieback, a full arboricultural justification will be required by means of a professional arboricultural report or confirmation from the Forest Research Tree Health Diagnostic and Advisory Service that the trees are infected. Application and documentation for felling will be in accordance with the requirements of policy 20. (Determination of tree work applications for trees subject to protection from a Tree Preservation Order).

Winchester City Council will not support the removal of healthy ash trees without full arboricultural justification. The potential for an ash tree to become infected will not be a material consideration.

Winchester City Council will use planning conditions to ensure replacement trees of suitable species and size are planted where protected ash trees are removed.

Winchester City Council will plant replacement trees on land it owns or manages where infected ash trees are removed.

9.3 Tree planting, natural regeneration and establishment

The council is committed to delivering a regular and effective tree planting programme across its whole land holding which includes parks and open spaces, cemeteries, historic formal gardens, recreation grounds and housing land including tenants/communal gardens and open spaces. However, it is also important to note that whilst trees have biodiversity and carbon sequestration benefits, so do other habitats such as wetlands and permanent species rich grassland. Therefore trees will only be established where they add benefit in terms of biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

As part of the ongoing maintenance of the existing tree stock, some trees will need to be felled and the council will look to replace every tree lost with at least one new tree. In addition to planting, the council will continue to seek opportunities for natural regeneration, as this can potentially be more effective in delivering biodiversity, carbon and landscape benefits.

However, as always the location of any new trees must be carefully considered prior to establishment. In particular planting should only be undertaken on sites where it achieves carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancements such as amenity grassland.

In addition all new trees should be managed in the first few years, with some form of management throughout their lifetime. The council will look to maximise the survival of all newly established trees. However, it is important to note this can be costly and resource intensive as newly established trees will often require watering in the first few years of their life, regular checks, protection for pests and weeds, formative pruning etc. In fact, the greatest cost of tree planting is the work needed to maximise their chances of survival once they have been placed in the ground.

Therefore any tree planting or natural regeneration will be carefully planned, communicated, funded and managed. Therefore when undertaking planting, the council will undertake the work in accordance with best practice and consider a range of factors including location, soil type, proximity to buildings and structures.

With regard to species selection, this will be determined by the site constraints and conditions and potential future issues such as global warming, pests and diseases. Therefore planting will not be limited to native tree species which are becoming increasingly vulnerable to pest and diseases and climate change. Instead, the council will plant a greater range of species including non-native trees, to ensure the trees in the district are more resilient to change.

Furthermore, due to the need to limit nitrates leaching from the soil and entering the water system, to provide biodiversity net gain and to support the climate emergency, the council will seek opportunities where appropriate to undertake larger planting schemes.

Prior to undertaking tree planting the council will inform ward members and relevant local residents of tree planting where necessary.

Policy 19 – Tree planting, natural regeneration and establishment

The council will undertake a regular tree planting/natural regeneration programme in accordance with best practice. In addition, it will seek opportunities for larger scale planting programmes where appropriate.

When considering new planting the council will consider:

- Location.
- Existing tree cover, habitat type and land use.
- Species type.
- Soil type and condition.
- Presence of services including underground and overground wires.
- Proximity to buildings and structures.
- Funding, cost of planting and maintenance requirements.

9.4 Tree related subsidence and heave

Subsidence and heave is a complex interaction between the soil, built structure, climate and vegetation that occurs on highly shrinkable soils such as the clay soils found in the south of the district. Damage occurs to the built structure when the soil supporting all or part of the structure dries out and/or re-hydrates, resulting in the built structure moving, causing structural cracking or differing floor levels.

Trees have a large root system and can contribute to soil drying out, particularly in heavy clay soils, although it does depend on the species and size of tree and

surrounding area. However, other factors can cause or exacerbate subsidence such as:

- Natural seasonal soil moisture changes;
- Localised geological variations;
- Lack of flank wall restraint;
- Over-loading of internal walls;
- Internal alterations reducing the load bearing capacity of the original building;
- Installation of replacement windows without proper support;
- Loft conversions;
- Settlement;
- Land slippage.
- Leaking drains or water supply.

Therefore if a council owned tree is cited as causing subsidence and/or heave, Winchester City Council will need to see clear evidence that the tree is a causal factor in the damage to a built structure. This is expected to include:

- Root Identification report
- Geotechnical report
- Soil Analysis report
- Arboricultural report
- Engineer's Report
- Level monitoring report for a period of 1 year.
- Drain and water supply survey

Any claims made against the council for tree related damage or subsidence will need to be supported by strong expert evidence that demonstrates on the balance of strong probabilities, that the tree(s) is a causal factor in the property subsidence. Where necessary the council will obtain expert advice to verify the submitted evidence.

The legal onus is on the complainant to prove the tree(s) is the cause of the damage to the built structure. Property owners are advised to contact their property insurer if they believe their property is suffering from tree related damage or subsidence.

The policy below relates to council owned trees only. For trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area, please see sections 10 and 11.

Policy 20 – Tree related subsidence and heave

Where a tree is owned or managed by the council, the council will only agree to the removal of the tree(s) once it has been established (on the balance of strong probability and through the provision of sufficient expert evidence) that the tree(s) is an influencing cause of the alleged damage to the adjacent built structure.

10. Existing policy regarding tree protection and development management

Trees are protected through a range of mechanisms which are detailed below.

10.1 Winchester City Council Local Plan

The Winchester Local Plan contains numerous policies some of which directly relate to the trees and their protection. It is therefore essential that anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their location, woodlands and important hedgerows should consult this document as early as possible. For a link to the current Local Plan please see appendix vii

10.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and corresponding guidance

This provides information for anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their locality, woodlands and important hedgerows. Again it is essential that anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their location, woodlands and/or important hedgerows should consult this document as early as possible. For a link to the NPPF please see appendix vii.

Policy 21 – Existing policy regarding tree protection and development management.

Any development works which impact on trees, woodlands and important hedgerows must have regard to the Winchester City Council Local Plan and all national guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Statutory Tree Projection - Trees and Development Management

11.1 Introduction

Under the UK planning system, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to consider the protection and planting of trees and their setting, when assessing applications for proposed development. Winchester City Council tree officers act as consultees to the planning case officers, thereby providing expert advice and recommendations in line with all relevant legislation and guidance.

Trees that have taken many decades to mature can be easily damaged within minutes by construction activities. Soil compaction, soil disturbance; trenching and contamination can damage and kill tree roots which in turn impacts negatively on the tree, often leading to its early demise. Soil structure surrounding the roots is also at risk from compaction (such as from vehicle access) and contamination (i.e. spillage of substances toxic to tree roots) which can have further long term impacts on tree health. Damage to stems and branches from construction plant creates wounds to the tree which create opportunities for decay pathogens to colonise trees, thereby reducing their safe useful life.

Trees often do not recover from damage caused by construction activities and even if the development does not directly remove a tree, it can often die subsequently, following development, therefore the early provision of physical protection from construction activities is vital for the preservation of trees.

11.2 Trees in relation to development management

The potential affect on trees, whether statutorily protected by a Tree Preservation order/Conservation Area or not, is a material consideration that is taken into account in dealing with planning applications. Where trees are statutorily protected, it is important to contact the Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council and follow the appropriate procedures before undertaking any works that may affect trees or their roots.

Therefore it is essential that from an early planning stage of the proposal, an applicant or land owner must take into account any trees which are directly or indirectly impacted by a proposed development. This includes trees/woodlands/ groups of trees within the redline boundary and trees which fall just outside the red line boundary but are on a neighbouring property. Consideration must be given to the tree itself and its root protection area. This can be achieved by a adhering to BS5837 (2012) and undertaking an Arboricultural impact assessment carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced Arboricultural consultant. .

The types of tree protection works which need to be considered if a tree is impacted by development includes (but not exclusively):-

- Tree protection fencing to create construction exclusion zones;

- Ground protection;
- Installation of special surfacing to prevent soil compaction;
- Arboricultural works to access site and facilitate proposal;
- Pre-start site meeting;
- Inspection of fencing and ground protection measures specified and agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and
- Tree planting programmes including tree canopy net gain.

Therefore where an application is potentially impacting on trees, an applicant or landowner is required to submit the following documents to the council, to allow for a full and proper assessment of the proposed works.

- An arboricultural impact assessment
- An arboricultural work method statement
- A tree protection plan including details of ground protection, low impact foundations low impact surfacing, drains and utility service runs.

Failure to provide the necessary documents at application is likely to result in a delay to your application, a request for additional information to be supplied by the applicant/landowner and even refusal of a planning application.

Any documents submitted in relation to trees and development are expected to reflect the guidance confirmed within *BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* (or any subsequent revisions).

In addition all planning applications for development must be in accordance with the 1APP local requirements list which can be found at

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/1app-local-list-documents/>

Please note: The removal of protected or unprotected trees, groups of trees and woodlands will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and good practice recommendations. Where consent to remove trees for development is given, it is likely the council will request a ratio of one replacement tree to one felled for trees where the felled tree has a diameter at breast height (DBH) smaller than 30cm. and three replacement trees for every one felled where the DBH is greater than 30cm.

11.3 Key areas for applicants to consider

When submitting a planning application which has the potential to impact directly or indirectly on trees, an applicant should ensure:

- *Development proposals demonstrate that ground protection measures are in place prior to any work starting on site.* This is key to protect the soil within areas where new tree planting is to be undertaken;
- *That all suitable opportunities to maximise opportunities for trees and woodlands are identified and incorporated into the development.*

- *The development design makes allowances for future growth of root systems, stem and canopies for retained trees.* This is to reduce the number of issues and conflicts arising post construction in relation to existing trees.
- *New tree planting must follow the premise of “right tree in the right place”.* Any new tree planting must allow for sufficient soil volumes and space to allow trees to establish and grow to maturity including the root systems, stem and canopies.

Policy 22 – Trees in relation to development management

The Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council requires any planning applications submitted for development which may affect trees directly/indirectly be completed in accordance with the 1 APP local requirements, the Winchester City Council Local Plan and the NPPF and all other relevant guidance and legislation.

In addition the following supporting documentation must be submitted in accordance with the recommendations confirmed within BS5837 (2012).

- Full tree survey to assess all trees on off the site that may be affected by the proposal.
- An Arboricultural impact assessment
- An Arboricultural work method statement
- A tree protection plan including details of ground protection, low impact foundations low impact surfacing, drains and utility service runs.

The Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council will assess submitted development proposals that may affect trees health against the prevailing planning policies, supplementary planning documents and neighbourhood design statements.

The Local Planning Authority will use Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees which are under threat from development, but will not use Tree Preservation Orders solely to prevent development.

The removal of protected trees, groups of trees or woodland will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation. Where protected trees are subject to felling, new suitable replacement trees of an appropriate number, species and size will be planted in an appropriate location to mitigate their loss.

With regard to tree planting, opportunities at the planning stage of the development for new planting will be considered and incorporated into the schedule of works where feasible, including achieving a net gain in tree canopy cover.

The chosen tree species for all new tree planting must be site appropriate and there must be adequate soil volume and sufficient space for the trees to potentially reach full maturity.

The Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council will take into account the ultimate mature size and canopy spread of the retained trees that are on and near

the proposed development site. Consideration will be given to the needs of the tree(s) in regard to the available space and the relationship to the proposed built structure, when assessing applications. This is to avoid future pressures on the tree(s) for reduction or removal due to leaf debris, nuts and seeds, bird fouling or light and shading issues.

11.4 Utility operations near trees and planning applications.

Utilities operations near trees will be managed in line with the guidance set out by the National Joint Utilities Group (Volume 4: Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees (Issue 2, 2007)). If utility companies and their contractors fail to carry out works in accordance with this guidance, Winchester City Council will issue planning enforcement stop notices to cease work immediately and may consider prosecution if protected trees have been damaged.

Policy 23 – Utility operations near trees and planning applications

If utility companies and/or their contractors fail to carry out works in accordance with all relevant guidance, Winchester city Council will issue planning enforcement stop notices to cease work immediately and may consider prosecution if appropriate.

11.5 Ancient woodland and ancient trees in relation to development management.

There is Standing Advice produced by Natural England and the Forestry Commission on planning decisions in relation to ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees.

Any applicant should take account of this Standing Advice when looking to undertake any works which may impact on ancient woodland or ancient trees themselves or on the tree roots, soil, seed bank, historical value, environmental and/or ecological benefits that the tree provides.

Ancient or veteran trees take many years to develop and are irreplaceable once damaged. Ancient woodlands, ancient trees and veteran trees provide irreplaceable habitats for fungi, and soil microorganisms plus ground flora, bats, birds and other wildlife. Development and construction activities can have a highly detrimental impact on the health of an ancient woodland or trees, and the wildlife they support. See appendix ii for a link to the Standing Advice.

12. Statutory Tree Protection– Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s)

12.1 TPO’s – Introduction

Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, Section 198, the council has a duty to protect individual trees, groups of trees, woodlands or areas by means of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). However it can only be applied to trees which are deemed to have sufficient amenity value.

A Tree Preservation Order may be placed on a tree because of:

- A request to undertake work on trees in a Conservation Area which are deemed to have a detrimental impact on the tree’s health and amenity value.
- Potential threats from development.
- Information provided by members of the public, neighbours and others
- Information provided by City Council Members and officers.

Once a potential need for a tree(s) to be protected has been raised with the council, officers will assess whether it is expedient in the interests of amenity to make a provisional Tree Protection Order. Whilst it is legally acceptable to TPO any tree, the council does not consider this to be appropriate and will only protect trees which are considered to be under threat either now or in the future from felling or unsuitable management and which are of sufficient amenity value.

All new TPO’s will be confirmed within 6 months of issue.

The Secretary of State has produced Planning Practice Guidance which explains the legislation governing Tree Preservation Orders and tree protection in Conservation Areas, and this can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>

A Tree Preservation Order is a legal document that prohibits:

Cutting down; topping; lopping; uprooting; wilful damage and/or wilful destruction of trees without consent from the Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council.

Policy 24 – The placing of TPO’s on trees

Winchester City Council will protect individual trees, groups of trees, woodlands or areas by means of a TPO where trees are deemed to have sufficient amenity value and where there is a perceived threat to the tree either now or in the future, where possible.

There are 4 types of TPOs:-

- *Individual TPO* - This relates to individual trees and there is no limit on the number of individual trees that can be included within a TPO.
- *Group TPO* - This relates to trees in a group which can be of any number of trees. There is also no limit as to the number of groups that be included in the TPO.
- *Woodland TPO* - This safeguards the woodland as a whole and includes all present and future trees within the area. It can be of any size or number of trees and there is no limit to the number of woodlands that can be included within the TPO.
- *Area Orders* - area orders are used to protect individual trees dispersed over an area. Authorities may either protect all the trees within an area defined on the orders map or only those species which are expedient in the interests of amenity. The area category is intended for short term protection in an emergency.

12.2 How to find out if your tree is protected by a TPO

Before carrying out work on a tree the owner/contractor must check to see if it is protected. It is a criminal offence to cut down, uproot, wilfully destroy a tree, top, lop or wilfully damage a tree in a way that is likely to destroy it or causes or permits such activities. The penalty for undertaking unauthorised work to a protected tree can be unlimited fines and custodial sentence if the offence is deemed significant.

To find out if a tree is protected by a TPO please go to the Winchester City Council website - www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/trees and follow the links.

It is important to note that a TPO does not prevent works to a tree. Assuming the works are reasonable and the person undertaking the works has the appropriate permission in advance from the local planning authority at Winchester city council, the works can be undertaken.

12.3 Applying to undertake works to trees protected by a TPO

All works to trees protected by a TPO must have the approval of the Local Planning Authority at Winchester City Council. To apply for approval applicants can:-

1. Download an application form at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/winchester-1app-forms>. Please use Form No 26.
2. Submitting an application through the planning portal at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/trees>
3. Request a hard copy of the application form by contacting the tree team at Winchester City Council on 01962 848301 and naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk.

It is essential an applicant provides all the necessary information when submitting an application for works to a tree protected by a TPO. In particular, the applicant MUST provide the following:

- Completed and dated application form, with all mandatory questions answered.
- Sketch plan showing the location of all tree(s);
- A full and clear specification of the works to be carried out;
- A statement of reasons for the proposed work; and
- A tree report by a tree professional (arboriculturist) or other to provide evidence in support of statement of reasons where required by the standard application form.

Failure to supply sufficiently precise and detailed information may result in an application being rejected or delayed. In addition the council is not obliged to accept incomplete, vague or ambiguous applications and if the information is not acceptable the application will be returned to the applicant.

If an applicant is unsure of the works required, we recommend they contact a reputable tree consultant before applying to the Council. A list of consultants approved by the Arboricultural Association can be found at www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional.

Unfortunately due to legal and resourcing constraints it is not appropriate nor possible for a City Council tree officer to provide advice.

12.4 Process for applications received by Winchester City Council

Assuming that all the necessary information is provided, the application will be validated within 5 days of receipt and the applicant will receive notification that the application has been validated. If the tree owner has appointed an agent to act on their behalf, the confirmation letter will be sent to the agent along with an orange notice that must be displayed for 21 days at the site where the proposed tree works are to be carried out. In addition all relevant neighbours and the Local Parish Council will be notified of the application and will be given the chance to comment on the proposal.

In addition the council publishes a weekly planning list of all planning applications including TPO applications in the local newspaper.

The City Council also keeps a register of all applications for consent under each Tree Preservation Order. This register is available to the public at <https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>

The council will normally determine a tree works application within 8 weeks of it being validated, unless an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant for more complex cases.

The Local Planning Authority may determine tree works applications as follows:

- *Refusal:* If the Local Planning authority is minded to refuse a tree works application the Council will make contact with the application prior to the decision being issued.
- *Grant consent unconditionally*
- *Grant consent, but with conditions such as to regulate the standard of work, or planting of a replacement tree.*

Where the Local Planning Authority refuses a tree works application the tree owner has a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Details of how to appeal a decision are in the decision letter.

Consent for tree works approved by the Local Planning Authority is valid for 2 years from the date the decision notice was issued.

Please note, the Council have the power to take legal action against anyone contravening a Tree Preservation Order under Section 210(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which provides that anyone found guilty of these offences is liable, if convicted can lead to unlimited fines and/or a custodial sentence.

12.5 Process if a tree protected by a TPO is dead or dangerous

If your tree (which is protected by a TPO) is dead or you consider it dangerous, consent is not required but the council should be given five days' notice before any works are carried out, unless it is an emergency. In these situations we still advise that you notify the council as soon as possible to minimise any negative repercussions. However, we strongly recommend that photographs of the dead or dangerous tree are taken prior to its remove and forwarded to Winchester City Council as soon as possible.

It should be noted that the five day notice is an exemption to trees protected by the Town Country Planning Act 1990 - Tree Preservation Order (2012) regulations, and it is only permitted under this notice to carry out tree works on a protected tree where it is urgently needed to remove an immediate risk of serious harm. Where a breach is suspected the onus will be on the tree owner to prove that the tree(s) was exempt from protection due to the risk of serious harm it posed before removal.

If there are dead branches within the canopy of a protected tree, Planning Authority consent is not required to remove these. However, when considering dead wood, tree owners, their agents and authorities should consider whether the deadwood is providing habitat for protected wildlife species and therefore protected under other

legislation. Once again, it is advisable to photograph dead branches before they are removed to evidence that there has not been a breach of a TPO.

The council has the power to take legal action against anyone contravening a Tree Preservation Order under Section 210(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which provides that anyone found guilty of these offences is liable, if convicted to an unlimited fine and/or a custodial sentence.

Please see section 8.3 for details of subsidence related applications for works to trees that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Policy 25 – Tree works applications for trees protected by a Tree Preservation Orders

Tree works applications for trees protected by a TPO which contain all necessary information will be validated within five days of receipt by the City Council.

Winchester City Council will not accept incomplete, vague or ambiguous tree works applications for trees protected by a TPO.

The council will carefully assess each tree works application in regard to the submitted proposals including the potential impact on the local landscape, the setting and character of the area, the public visual amenity value and health of the trees. The application will be assessed against local planning policy and a decision made as to whether the proposed tree works are justified.

Winchester City Council will not consent to tree works that will have a detrimental effect on the tree(s) health and visual public amenity value without full arboricultural justification.

The council where necessary will use conditions when granting consent for tree works to ensure that:

- All consented works are in accordance to good arboricultural and forestry standards;
- New replacement trees are planting where consent is given to fell trees.

Decisions for TPO tree works applications will be issued within 8 weeks.

13. Statutory Tree Projection –trees located in Conservation Areas

13.1 Introduction

There are 37 Conservation Areas in the Winchester District. All trees which have a stem diameter of 75mm or above at 1.5m above ground level are automatically protected in a Conservation Area, and cannot be pruned or removed without first giving Winchester City Council 6 week's written notice

Conservation areas are designated for their 'special architectural and historic interest'. They vary in character, form and size from a small group of buildings to a large part of a town, but their designation means that they are all worthy of protection as areas of special merit.

13.2 How to find out if a tree/s are protected by a Conservation Area

Before carrying out work on a tree in a Conservation Area, the owner/contractor must check to see if it is protected. It is a criminal offence to cut down, uproot, wilfully destroy a tree, top, lop or wilfully damage a tree in a way that is likely to destroy it or causes or permits such activities. The penalty for undertaking unauthorised work to a protected tree within a Conservation area can be up to an unlimited fine and/or a custodial sentence if the offence is deemed serious.

To find out if a tree is protected by a Conservation Area notice, please go to the Winchester City Council website - www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/trees and follow the links.

13.3 Applying to undertake works to trees protected by a Conservation Area

All works to trees protected by a Conservation Area must have the approval of Winchester City Council. To apply for approval applicants can:-

1. Download an application form at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/winchester-1app-forms>. Please use Form No 26.
2. Submitting an application through the planning portal at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/trees>
3. Request a hard copy of the application form by contacting the tree team at Winchester City Council on 01962 848301 or naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk. Tree works application forms can be

downloaded at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/winchester-1app-forms>

4. Email Winchester City Council providing the following information
 - a. A sketch plan showing the precise location of the tree(s);
 - b. A full and clear specification of the works to be carried out.
 - c. A statement of reasons for the proposed work

If you are unsure as to what work you would like to carry out and would like to seek help, we recommend you contact a Tree Consultant before applying to the council. A list of consultants approved by the Arboricultural Association can be found at www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional

Applications or notifications that are complete will be validated within five days of receipt. The applicant or agent will be notified that the council has received the notification. As there is no requirement for the council to consult on works to be undertaken to trees in the Conservation Area, the council will not notify neighbours and the Local Parish Council of the proposed works. In addition, there is no requirement to display an orange notice.

However, the council will publish a weekly list of all planning applications received and this will include proposed tree works in Conservation Areas. This can be located at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/weekly-lists/weekly-lists-2021>

The Local Planning Authority keeps a register of all applications for consent under each Conservation Area Notification. This register is publicly available and a copy of the register may be viewed at <https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>

If your tree is dead or you consider it dangerous, consent is not required but the council should be given five days' notice before any works are carried out, unless it is an emergency. In these situations we still advise that you notify the council as soon as possible to minimise any negative repercussions. However, we strongly recommend that photographs of the dead or dangerous tree are taken prior to its removal and forwarded to the council as soon as possible.

It should be noted that whilst the five notice is an exemption to trees protected within a Conservation Area, it is only permitted under this notice to carry out tree works on a protected tree where it is urgently needed, to remove an immediate risk of serious harm, as soon as practicable after works become necessary

If you have dead branches in your protected tree, local Planning Authority consent is not required to remove these. However, where safe to do so, it is advisable to retain dead wood, as it provides a valuable biodiversity habitat. Landowners, their agents and other authorities are advised to photograph dead branches or whole trees which are dead or dangerous, before they are removed, to record they have not breached tree protection within the Conservation area. Landowners, their agents and other authorities are encouraged to contact the tree team at Winchester City Council prior to removing the deadwood on 01962 848301 or by email: naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk.

The council has the power to take legal action against anyone contravening Tree protection within a Conservation Area under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which provides that anyone found guilty of these offences may be liable to an unlimited fine and/or a custodial sentence.

13.4 Determination of Conservation Area notifications.

Winchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority will determine Conservation Area notifications within six weeks of receipt, using one of three options:

- Raise no objection and allow the proposed tree works to go ahead.
- Raise an objection and make a Tree Preservation Order to stop the proposed works from going ahead. Where the Local planning Authority decides to raise an objection and is considering serving a TPO the council's Tree Officer will liaise with the tree owner or agent before proceeding.
- Not respond. Once the six week period following receipt has elapsed, the applicant is able to undertake the works.

Policy 26 – Trees in Conservation areas.

Tree work applications for trees protected by a Conservation Area which contain all necessary information will be validated within five days of receipt by the City Council.

The Local Planning Authority will not accept incomplete, vague or ambiguous tree works applications for trees protected by a Conservation Area Notification. (For clarification complete application or notification means all of the requirements detailed in section 17.1).

The Local Planning Authority will carefully assess the submitted proposals for each tree works application, focusing on the potential impact on the local landscape, the setting and character of the Conservation Area, the public visual amenity value and health of the trees. These will be assessed against local planning policy and consideration will be given to whether the proposed tree works are justified.

Where the Local Planning Authority raises an objection to the proposed works, the Local Planning Authority will inform the applicant and give the applicant the chance to withdraw the application before serving a Tree Preservation Order to stop the proposed tree works from going ahead.

The Secretary of State has produced Planning Practice Guidance which explains the legislation governing Tree Preservation Orders and tree protection in Conservation Areas, and this can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>

14. Statutory Tree Protection - Enforcement

14.1 Introduction

Under the planning legislation, the council has powers to take action against people who carry out unauthorised works to protected trees without consent from the Local Planning Authority under Section 210(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see section 10 and 11 above).

With regard to enforcement in relation to development management, the council may respond to any complaint or an alleged breach to protection or a potential non-compliance of tree protection conditions.

14.2 Enforcement Tree Planting Notices

Winchester City Council shall place conditions on each development management application and/or TPO application requiring the planting of a suitable replacement tree, if a tree has been felled legitimately as part of the application. If this condition is breached, the council can enforce the replanting of a tree through a Tree Replacement Notice, as advised by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 207 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

The landowner has the right of appeal to the Secretary of State via the Planning inspectorate to the Tree replacement notice as per the procedure laid out in the Planning Practice Guidance publication which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>

If the landowner fails to plant the replacement trees as instructed by Winchester City Council, the council shall plant the replacement tree(s) and recover the cost of the planting from the landowner.

Policy 27 – Enforcement where there has been a breach to tree protection

The council will consider any complaint or alleged breach to the protection of a tree or a potential non-compliance of tree protection conditions.

Where there is sufficient evidence of a breach, provided that it is in the public interest to do so, the council may initiate criminal prosecution proceedings.

Where replacement trees have not been planted, the Local Planning Authority will issue Tree Replacement Notices to enforce replacement tree planting.

As well as the enforcement powers under the planning legislation, Winchester City Council as a landowner is able to take action under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 Chapter 48 against third parties that fell or cause wilful damage or destruction to a council tree.

15. Areas of dispute

15.1 Neighbour disputes relating to tree works applications and Conservation Area notifications.

The council has no authority or delegated powers to intervene in a dispute between neighbours over trees.

It is possible to apply for works to trees not under your ownership. However, if consent is given by the Planning Authority for the works, the applicant must still gain permission from the landowner/owner of the tree in order to enter the neighbouring property and undertake the consented works.

15.2 High hedges

The Local Planning Authority has powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to consider unresolved complaints relating to third party evergreen high hedges. The Local Planning Authority Enforcement team at Winchester City Council undertake this service. The powers only apply:

- To evergreen or semi-evergreen hedges more than two metres high.
- Where the height has an adverse effect on the reasonable enjoyment of your domestic property.
- Where the complainant has taken reasonable steps to settle the dispute themselves. Making a formal complaint should be a last resort.
- Where the complaint has paid a fee to the council to have a formal complaint considered. The fee is non-refundable even if the complaint is upheld.

For more information please contact the Planning Enforcement team on 01962 848 480 or email enf@winchester.gov.uk.

To submit formal complaints in regard to a high hedge go to <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement/high-hedges>

15.3 Mediation

Before contacting the Local Planning Authorities Enforcement team, neighbours are encouraged to amicably resolve the problem between themselves. However if an amicable solution cannot be achieved mediation may be an option. A mediation service may be found at <http://www.winchestermediation.org/>

Policy 28 - Disputes

Winchester City Council will not intervene if there is a dispute between neighbours over high hedges or trees unless they submit an appropriate application to the Planning Enforcement team. Prior to this the council encourages neighbours to seek mediation to resolve issues directly.

15.4 Dangerous trees in private ownership.

The council has discretionary powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to undertake works to trees in private ownership if they are imminently dangerous i.e. pose an imminent threat to life or property such as

- A tree developing a pronounced lean and there is imminent risk of whole tree failure.
- A tree which has snapped and is leaning on another tree or structure.
- A tree rocking under wind loading from the effects of root severance or decay.
- A large hanging branch which is liable to fall and cause harm to life and property.
- A large split which is likely to lead to a risk of failure.
- A tree which has failed and requires removal.
- A tree with extensive decay within its main stem.

Where the tree owner can be identified, under the provisions set out in Sections 23(2) and 23(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976, the council can serve notice on the tree owner to carry out specified safety works within a period of not less than 21 days. If the specified safety works are not carried out, the council has the power to enter the land, carry out the works and reclaim any reasonable costs incurred from the landowner. Where the owner cannot be identified or is unwilling to carry out the specified tree works, the council has the power to enter the land and carry out works to alleviate the risk and to then place a charge against the property for the costs of the tree works.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 does not provide for the council to become involved with private trees causing a nuisance to a neighbouring property by causing shade, blocking views or dropping leaves, flowers or fruit etc. unless the trees are imminently dangerous.

Please note: The council will undertake work to alleviate the hazard arising from privately owned trees only as a last resort as set out in the Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976.

Policy 29 – Dangerous trees in private ownership

Winchester City Council may use its discretionary powers in relation to dangerous trees in private ownership if the tree poses an imminent threat to life or property and will look to claim any costs incurred.

16. Forestry Commission Felling Licences

16.1 Introduction

Felling licences are required for large scale tree felling and replanting and are issued by the Forestry Commission. The need for a felling license is separate to the need to apply for works protected by a TPO or Conservation Area Notification.

When applying for a felling licence, the guidance states:

“In any calendar quarter you may fell up to 5 cubic metres (m³) of growing trees on your property without a felling licence (providing that the trees are not protected), as long as no more than 2m³ are sold”.

If you wish to fell more than the above allowance you will need to apply to the Forestry Commission for a felling licence. The Forestry Commission can be contacted at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-felling-getting-permission>

To fell trees without the Forestry Commissions permission is a criminal offence, and offenders may be prosecuted for breaches of a felling licence.

17. Ancient and Veteran Trees

17.1 Introduction

Ancient trees are exceptionally valuable from a biodiversity, cultural and historical point of view and are almost irreplaceable habitats. Very few trees of any species become ancient.

Veteran trees may not be particularly old but have decay pockets, deadwood, bark and splits that are habitats for a wide range of wildlife and fungi. Veteran trees vary in size - a tree does not have to be large to be classed as a veteran.

All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate

When left to age, trees reach their full canopy extent and then naturally die back to smaller trees. As they do so they drop branches, which break down and are reabsorbed back into the soil, allowing the tree to take up the nutrients again. It is this process which allows a tree to live for many years.

It is said that an oak spends 300 years growing, 300 years living and 300 years dying

Both ancient and veteran trees are particularly important from a biodiversity cultural and historical interest due to their age, size and condition. Typically they are trees which have been coppiced or pollarded over the years and are usually found in woodland, parkland (particularly Historic Parks and Gardens), cemeteries, hedgerows and along riverbanks. Therefore their correct management is essential.

17.2 Management of Ancient and Veteran Trees

Veteran trees require specialist management to ensure that they are correctly maintained for their ecological and environmental benefits. It is important the management on any ancient or veteran tree should only be carried out if it is absolutely necessary.

Not only should the tree itself be carefully managed, but also the surrounding environment where the ancient or veteran tree is located.

It may be necessary to carry out the following:

- Restrict access beneath the crown spread of the tree by the use of fencing
- Remove competing vegetation such as grass.

- Remove hard surfacing
- De-compact the rooting area of the tree using air injection
- Apply appropriate nutrient to promote healthy tree growth
- Irrigate on a regular basis especially during prolonged dry spells.
- Mulch with a well-rotted woodchip mulch under the tree to beyond its canopy spread to a minimum area equal to its root protection area
- Dead wood management for ecological/ biodiversity reasons
- Create decaying wood habitats;
- Propping of low long branches to stop branch failure.
- Carry out appropriate tree surgery in accordance with good arboricultural practices for the management of ancient or veteran trees
- Write a management plan

Veteran trees should be checked at regular intervals and works carried out to trees only if deemed necessary and following consultation with the Natural Environment Team/council Arboriculture Officers. Further information for the management of ancient or veteran trees can be found at

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/75035>

Policy 30 – Veteran and Ancient trees.

Although Winchester City Council does not own or manage many veteran and/or ancient trees, where they exist, the council will undertake their management in line with best practice and national guidance.

Appendix i – the benefit of trees.

The benefits provided by trees are significant, not only as a valuable timber resource but also due to the social, environmental and economic benefits they provide including;

- Mitigating climate change by acting as carbon storage and sequestration.
- Cooling the urban heat island effect.
- Improving air quality by reducing airborne and particulate pollution.
- Mitigating flood alleviation, storm water management and wind turbulence.
- Masking noise pollution and improving water quality
- Aiding the restoration of contaminated land and soil protection.
- Enhancing landscape character and providing cultural and historical interest.
- Providing health and wellbeing benefits.
- Providing amenity, shelter and aesthetic value.
- Providing ecological and biodiversity benefits.

Interesting facts about the benefit of trees

- Flowering bulbs such as bluebells have evolved their growth cycle to be in sync with the Oak tree's growth cycle to ensure they get enough light to flower.
- A diverse woodland structure from mature, veteran trees through to the microorganisms in the soil are all essential. Although trees within a woodland sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the ground flora including wild flowers and bulbs also play an enormous part in sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Our most important woodlands are ancient woodlands which means they have been continually wooded since at least 1600AD. Some ancient woods link back to the original wildwood that covered the UK around 10,000 years ago, after the last Ice Age.
- Research has shown that if you can see a tree from your sick bed you are likely to need less drugs and have shorter hospital stays than those who see only a brick building wall. Ulrich (1984)
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/6143402/>
- Trees release scents and aromas that elicit a positive emotional response contributing to wellbeing
- Aspirin comes from Willow bark
- Taxol which is used in the treatment of some cancers comes from yew trees.
- Quinine is the basic ingredient for many anti-malarial drugs and is obtained from pine tree bark.
- Trees Increase value of property by 5-18 per cent (Forestry Commission – the Case for Trees [2008])
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718033/eng-casefortrees.pdf;
- Woodchip and bio-fuel are a by-product of tree works;

- Trees and woodlands carry out a natural process of photosynthesis that sequesters (absorb) carbon dioxide from the earth's atmosphere and converts the gas into carbon which is stored within the trees structure until they die or are burnt. Trees and woodlands release oxygen back into the earth's atmosphere as a by-product of carbon dioxide absorption and photosynthesis.
- As trees grow larger, higher amounts of carbon dioxide are absorbed from the atmosphere and converted to stored carbon. Trees and woodlands are long term store houses of carbon and are known as carbon sinks that will continue to store carbon when the trees are converted into long lasting wood products.
- Tree foliage slows the volume and speed with which rainfall enters drainage systems – reducing flash flooding.
- The urban built environment within town centres is much warmer than rural areas. Brick, concrete and tarmac absorb and store heat from the sun known as the island effect. Trees can provide a cooling affect in the order of 1-10 degrees Centigrade within urban settings and can reduce localised extremes in temperatures – by cooling in the summer and warming in the winter (Forestry Commission – the Case for Trees [2008])
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718033/eng-casefortrees.pdf
- Even when a tree dies, if it is left in situ it has its ecological uses by providing habitat for boring insects, support fungi and slowly releasing its nutrients back into the soil as it decomposes.

Appendix ii – Detailed list of relevant legislation and guidance taken into account by Winchester City Council when undertaking its tree duties.

Relevant legislation relating to the council’s management of its own trees and duty as a planning authority:

- Climate Change Act 2008
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 (COSHH)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides
- Environment Act 2021
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA)
- Forestry Act 1967
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- Highways Act 1980
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Occupiers’ Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005

Relevant guidance documents:

- Chapter 8 code of practice for signage lighting and guarding of street works and road works on all highways
- HSE Sector information minute. Management of the risk from falling trees 2011.

International Policies

- 1 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit. Rio de Janeiro, 1992
- 2 Agenda 20/30 -Sustainable Development Summit 2015
- 3 The Kyoto Protocol – Green Bonds

National policies

1. The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development 2005. (<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/what/principles/>).
2. Strategy for England's Trees Woods and Forests. DEFRA, 2007
3. The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature 2011
4. UK Natural Ecosystem Assessment 2011
5. Woodland Carbon Code. More details can be found at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2018/uk-forests-and-climate-change/carbon-sequestration/>
6. The Government urban tree planting challenge. A copy of the urban tree planting may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission>
7. Woodland Carbon Guarantee
8. National Planning Policy Framework 2021
9. Planting of new woodlands. Details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-woodland-overview>
10. How to avoid the impact of development activities on ancient woodlands and veteran trees (including semi ancient woodlands and wood pastures. of new woodlands. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>

Local Polices

11. Winchester City Council Local Plan.

Part 1 can be found at:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2011-2036-adopted/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-march-2013-local-plan-review-2006/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-2013>.

Part 2 can be found at:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2011-2036-adopted/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-march-2013-local-plan-review-2006/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-2013>

12. South Downs National Park Local Plan 2019. A copy of this plan may be found at: https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SD_LocalPlan_2019_17Wb.pdf

Supplementary Planning documents and Statements

13. Winchester Districts Landscape Character Assessment 2004. A copy of the Landscape Character Assessment may be found at this address: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/landscape-countryside/landscape-character-assessment>

14. High Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document 2015. Further reading of this document can be viewed at:
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents-spds/high-quality-places-spd-adopted>
15. Neighbourhood Design Statements. Copies of the Winchester Local Area Design Statements may be found at these addresses:
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/village-design-statements>
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans>
16. Winchester City Council Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2019. A copy of the plan may be found at: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/climate-change-and-energy/carbon-neutrality-action-plan>
17. Winchester City Council Nutrient Neutrality Position Statement 2020. Details of this statement may be found at:
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/wcc-position-statement-on-nitrate-neutral-development>
18. Winchester City Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2021. A copy of this plan may be found at: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/landscape-countryside/biodiversity>

Appendix iii – A list of useful contacts (as of January 2022).

Winchester City Council tree team:
 Telephone on 01962 848301
 E mail naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk

On line reporting service that is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week
<https://iweb.itsvision.com/portal/f?p=1030:login:::NO:RP:UID:BCCCL9AHR2LD8259KCC868YE04000B7F01006BA4>

You may also write to the tree team at Winchester City Council at:
 City Offices
 Natural Environment and Recreation Team
 Colebrook Street
 Winchester
 Hants
 S023 9LJ.

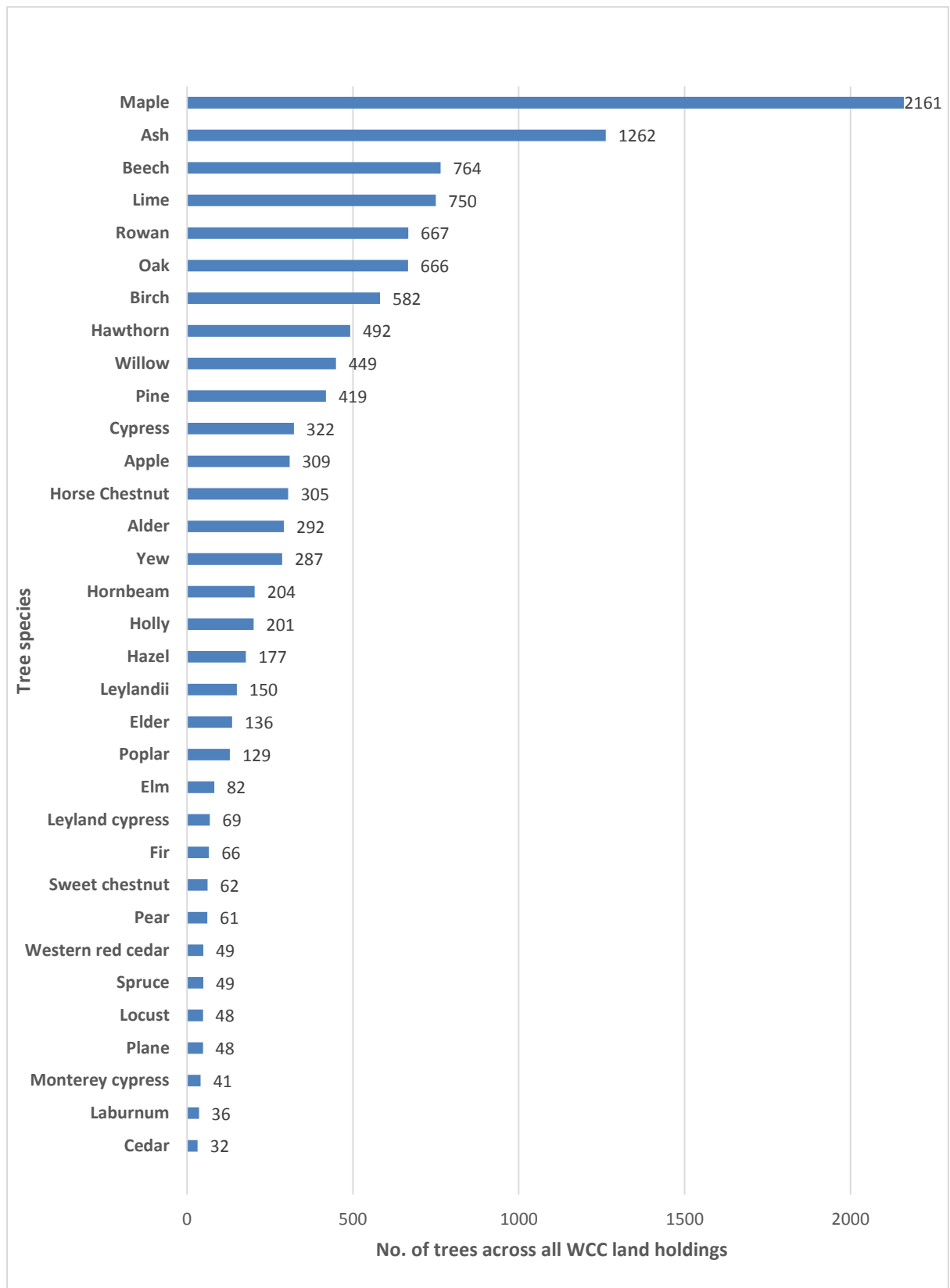
In case of a tree emergency the out of hours number is 01962 865407.

Other contacts: **(Please note these numbers and links were up to date as of early 2022)**

Winchester City Council Tree Team	Telephone 01962 848301 E mail naturalenvironment@winchester.gov.uk
Winchester City Council Customer Services	Telephone 01962 840222 E mail www.winchester.gov.uk
Winchester City Council Housing services	Telephone 01962 848400 E mail HHub@winchester.gov.uk
Winchester City Council Planning	Telephone 01962 484 549 E mail planning@winchester.gov.uk
WCC – Planning Application Forms and Guidance	www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/winchester-1app-forms/
South Downs National Park Authority	01962 848 185 Email sdplanning@winchester.gov.uk
SDNP – Planning Application Forms and Guidance	https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-applications/apply/
WCC - Planning Applications	

	www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/winchester-1app-forms/
Hampshire County Council Highways	Telephone 0300 555 1388 E mail roads@hants.gov.uk
Police (Hampshire) Non Emergencies	101
Arboricultural Association	Telephone 01242 522152 Web address https://www.trees.org.uk
Forestry Commission	Telephone 0300 067 4000 Web address https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission E mail nationalenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk
Hampshire Bat Group	Telephone 0345 1300 228 Web address www.hampshirebatgroup.org.uk/contact
Ancient Tree Forum	www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum
The Woodland Trust	www.woodland-trust.org.uk
Environment agency	Telephone : 03708 506 506 E mail enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Appendix iv– Chart showing most common tree species found on WCC holdings.



19.

Appendix v – Further details explaining why non-essential works will not be carried out unless under exceptional circumstances.

1. Council tree causing shading, blocking a view or impacting on satellite reception

Whilst the council recognises the importance of television and satellite reception, the concerns with shade and blocking a view, requests for pruning works to reduce the concerns are not advised. Regrowth from any pruning works carried out to trees with a view to improve light levels is a short term solution, as the tree often grows back with a more dense crown than before pruning. Pruning or crown reduction and topping of a tree creates new growth at the pruning points, creating weak branch attachments which render the tree branch or stem to future failure.

Leaves, twigs and buds are vital components for photosynthesis as well as absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releasing oxygen in to the atmosphere, and offsetting the effects of global warming by providing shade. Topping or pruning of the tree has the potential to considerably reduce photosynthetic material from the tree's leaves within its canopy, thereby having a detrimental effect on the trees ability to carry out its natural biological functions. This in turn leads to a weakness in the tree's ability to create energy to compartmentalise pruning wounds as the potential size of the resultant wounds could predispose the wounds to decay thereby harming the long term health and wellbeing of the tree, which will reduce the tree's safe useful life expectancy

Therefore crown reduction, crown lifting, crown thinning, tree felling or topping of a tree(s) are not deemed essential works and therefore will not be undertaken.

It is therefore advised that anyone who has reception issues should consult the service provider to discuss viable alternative solutions.

2. Tree leaves, blossom, nuts, fruits, berries and debris.

Although they can be an inconvenience, falling leaves and debris are not regarded as a 'nuisance' in law and works to remove them are deemed non-essential.

The production of leaves and autumn leaf fall blossom, nuts and fruits are part of the natural biological process trees carry out every year and cannot be avoided by pruning. Leaves, twigs and buds are vital components for photosynthesis as well as absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere and offsetting the effects of global warming by providing shade.

It is also important to note that the council does not provide a service to clear leaves from private properties and it is the landowner's responsibility to manage any concerns they have with debris.

3. Honey Dew.

Honey Dew is a natural seasonal problem that is caused by greenfly and other leaf feeding insects feeding on the sap from tree leaves. Certain species of lime and sycamore are prone to colonisation by the greenfly. As the greenfly feed of the sap

they excrete a sweet sugary sticky waste that then becomes colonised by a black sooty mould. Any item or property placed under the tree or near the tree can become colonised with black sooty mould. Unfortunately it is not possible to remove or discourage the aphid or other leaf feeding insects. Pruning the tree is non-productive as pruning induces new leaf growth which is rich in sweet sap and therefore increase the amount of sap available to the aphids and potentially increases the problem.

Where property or parked cars have affected by black sooty mould, warm soapy water will remove the mould if undertaken as soon as possible.

4. Bird Droppings.

Whilst bird droppings from birds in trees may be a nuisance, the problem is not sufficient to justify the removal or pruning of trees. This will not mitigate the nuisance and only result in new leaf growth and the birds remaining in the tree.

The removal of bird droppings can be achieved using warm soapy water.

5. Council trees, pollen and medical complaints.

Tree pollen can cause discomfort for some residents living or working near the trees. As flowering of the tree and the production of pollen is a natural reoccurring event there is no solution to remedy this. Pruning or felling of the tree will have a short term benefit and will have a detrimental ecological effect on the local insect pollenating insects. Therefore felling or pruning to ease medical complaints is not deemed as essential works.

Appendix vi – Procedures the council will undertake to ensure biodiversity is protected and enhanced

- *Birds -*

The council and/or its contractors will check trees for nesting birds during the nesting season (c. March – September). This will include checking any visible nests to see if they are 'in use' and watching the trees (particularly any holes or crevices) for any signs of birds entering carrying food or nesting material. If evidence of active nests or breeding birds are found then the works will be postponed until the nests are no longer in use (i.e. any eggs have hatched and young fledged or there is sufficient evidence to suggest the nest has naturally failed/been abandoned). If, despite best efforts an active nest is found after work has started a 5m buffer around the nest will be created, and the works within the buffer area will be reconvened once the nest is no longer in use.

- *Bats -*

An initial ground level assessment will be done by the Council/or its contractors to identify any potential roost features (PRFs) such as woodpecker holes, rot holes, cracks in stems or branches, partially detached bark, hollows or cavities. Where a PRF is identified this will need to be inspected further (potentially above ground). Following inspection, if a PRF is still considered suitable for roosting bats then a suitability qualified ecologist must be contacted and further surveys and/or measures may be required. In the event of a bat roost being discovered during tree works, all works will stop immediately. The contractor will report the bat roost to the City Council who in turn will contact a licenced bat ecologist and Natural England. Their recommendations will then be followed accordingly.

- *Dormice -*

Hazel dormice are known to be present at two Council sites including Dean Copse, Knowle and Topfield, Kingsworthy. At these locations mitigation licences are held to allow works to proceed lawfully. If tree works are proposed at these sites, or sites within close proximity to areas where dormice are known to be present, then the council ecologist must be informed to ensure the works are in accordance with the licence, legislation and best practice guidelines. If a dormouse or a dormouse nest is discovered during tree works, all works will stop immediately. The contractor will report this to the council who will act accordingly.

- *Badgers-*

The council and/or its contractors will check for evidence of badger setts (holes) within 10m of any tree works or 30m of any work which requires digging with machinery. If a potential impact on a badger's sett is identified then the contractor will report this to the council and appropriate action will be taken. This may require further surveys and a licence from Natural England.

- *General -*

In addition to taking account of protected species, it is important that the biodiversity benefit of trees is enhanced where possible. Consequently possible habitat features such as cavities, dead wood, water pockets, log piles and standing dead trees will be retained where appropriate.

Appendix vii – Links to the current Winchester City Council Local Plan and NPPF

Local Plan

The Winchester Local Plan contains numerous policies some of which directly relate to the trees and their protection. It is therefore essential that anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their location, woodlands and important hedgerows should consult this document as early as possible.

Part 1 can be found at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2011-2036-adopted/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-march-2013-local-plan-review-2006/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-2013>.

Part 2 can be found at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2011-2036-adopted/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-march-2013-local-plan-review-2006/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-2013>

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

The National Planning Policy Framework provides information for anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their locality, woodlands and important hedgerows. Again it is essential that anyone wishing to undertake development which may impact on trees and their location, woodlands and/or important hedgerows should consult this document as early as possible. For a link to the NPPF please see appendix vii This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>.

A copy of the NPPG can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Appendix viii – Glossary

Aesthetic appearance - the pleasant or positive appearance of a tree or group of trees.

Ancient and veteran trees – A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate.

Arboricultural – the cultivation, management and study of individual trees.

Ash dieback – a serious fungal disease of the European ash, characterised by the progressive death of the tree's branches.

Bark union – where two or more stems grow into one another.

Biodiversity – the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat.

Biosecurity – procedures or measures designed to protect the population against harmful biological substances.

BS5837 - The British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (2012), details the steps that should be taken to ensure that trees are appropriately and successfully retained when a development takes place

Canopy cover – the area of leaves, branches and stems of trees covering the ground when viewed from above.

Carbon neutral – making or resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Common Law right – a system of laws based on customs and court decisions rather than on written laws made by a parliament.

Compartmentalise – divide into discrete sections or categories

Crown lifting – Removal of the lowest branches.

Crown reduction – crown is reduced in height and/or spread whilst maintaining the tree's natural shape as far as practical

Crown thinning – Removing a small percentage of secondary and small branches to produce a uniform density of foliage around an evenly spaced branch structure.

Cyclical pollarding - After the initial heading cuts are made on certain species of tree, this particular pruning technique is normally carried out on a regular cycle of 4-5 years, leaving a clean framework for future growth until the process is again repeated.

DBH - Diameter at breast height, or DBH, is a standard method of expressing the diameter of the trunk or bole of a standing tree. DBH is one of the most common dendrometric measurements.

Decay pathogens - Decomposition or rotting, the breakdown of organic matter, usually by bacterial action, resulting in the formation of other substances

Dutch elm disease - Dutch elm disease is a highly destructive disease of several species of elm (trees in the *Ulmus* genus). It is caused by two related fungi, *Ophiostoma novo-ulmi* and *Ophiostoma ulmi*, although almost all cases are now caused by *O. novo-ulmi*. The fungus is spread from tree to tree by elm bark beetles.

evergreen or semi-evergreen - The Act applies to trees or shrubs that keep their foliage all year (evergreen) and to those that keep at least some live foliage for the year (semi-evergreen)

extension growths - As the shoots extend from the buds in spring, we recognize in the process of extension growth a continued upward growth of the tree.

Felling - the process of cutting down trees (to fell is to remove the tree)

flood alleviation - the technique or practice of preventing or controlling floods with dams

Fungal fruiting - Fruiting bodies are fungal structures that contain spores. They come in many sizes, shapes, and colors, all of which aid in identification of the specific fungus

latent buds - a bud often concealed that may remain dormant indefinitely but under certain conditions develops into a shoot.

lateral branches - a branch descended from a brother or sister of a person in the direct line of descent.

Stem - the main body or stalk of a plant or shrub, typically rising above ground but occasionally subterranean.

Mitigating - having the effect of making something bad less severe, serious, or painful.

mitigation licences - You need a mitigation licence if your work will have impacts on European protected species (EPS) that would otherwise be illegal. This includes: capturing, killing, disturbing or injuring them - on purpose or by not taking enough care.

mulching - a material (as straw or bark) spread over the ground especially to protect the roots of plants from heat or cold, to keep soil moist, and to control weeds. mulch. verb. mulched; mulching

native & non-native - Native: a species that originated and developed in its surrounding habitat and has adapted to living in that particular environment. ... Non-native: a species that originated somewhere other than its current location and has been introduced to the area where it now lives (also called exotic species).

natural regeneration - Natural regeneration is the process by which woodlands are restocked by trees that develop from seeds that fall and germinate in situ. ... Seedling establishment of some species has been observed by following the growth and survival of tree species growing after silvicultural operations to promote natural regeneration.

biodiversity net gain - Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework - The NPPF sets out the Government's intention to provide local communities with the tools they need to energise their local economies, meet housing needs, plan for a low-carbon future and protect the environmental and cultural landscapes that they value.

Organisms - The definition of an organism is a creature such as a plant, animal or a single-celled life form, or something that has interdependent parts and that is being compared to a living creature.

particulate - relating to or in the form of minute separate particles.

perennial plant - A perennial plant or simply perennial is a plant that lives more than two years. The term is often used to differentiate a plant from shorter-lived annuals and biennials.

Photosynthesis - where the tree turns sun light in to sugars for energy to carry out its natural biological functions.
photosynthetic material

primary stems - Primary growth of stems is a result of rapidly-dividing cells in the apical meristems at the shoot tips. Apical dominance reduces the growth along the sides of branches and stems, giving the tree a conical shape.

Processionary - The species is notable for the behaviour of its caterpillars

Pruning - Pruning is a horticultural, arboricultural and silvicultural practice involving the selective removal of certain parts of a plant, such as branches, buds, or roots.

public visual amenity value – the appearance a tree has from the public domain (ie roads, footpaths, large blocks of flats etc) and the value this brings to the lives of those who see it.

radial root growth - the ability to grow in girth by the formation of wood, bast and cork. The more technical term for radial growth is secondary growth, which distinguishes the process from primary growth taking place at the tips of stems and roots during plant elongation.

epicormic growth - Epicormic growth is a plant response to damage or stress. It is the growth of new shoots from epicormic buds that lie dormant beneath the bark. ... Plants which respond in this way are often referred to as resprouters.

root protection area - A root protection area is usually a calculated area of ground that lies immediately under a tree and just beyond the extent of its crown. It is intended to help avoid damage to the tree's rooting system.

sail area - The area of a tree's aerial part that intercepts wind, broadly varying with wind direction, leafiness etc.

sap - Filled with nutrients and minerals, sap is the blood of a tree. It carries energy out into the branches when new buds are forming

sequestration - Biological (or terrestrial) sequestration involves the net removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere by plants and micro-organisms and its storage in vegetative biomass and in soils. On this page, we deal with the main natural carbon dioxide sinks in Manitoba: Soils. Grasslands.

soil compaction - Soil compaction occurs when soil particles are pressed together, reducing pore space between them

soil desiccation - The roots of all vegetation can take moisture from the soil. In a clay soil this may result in drying and shrinkage of the soil and subsidence in the ground which may cause damage to buildings.

sparse crown - These crowns are below the general level of the canopy. They receive no direct light. Crowns are generally short, sparse, and narrow.

structural condition - A structural condition assessment is the process of collecting observations and data and systematically using them to evaluate and assess the condition of an existing structure

structural integrity - Structural integrity is an engineering field that helps ensure that either a structure or structural component is fit for purpose under normal operational conditions and is safe even should conditions exceed that of the original design.

Topping - This pruning practice is the reduction of tree size by heading back many or most large, live branches without regard for tree health or structural integrity. Topping manages height and spread but leaves behind woody stubs that cause decay, weak branch attachments, and increased likelihood of failure.

tree canopy - refers to the part of a city that is shaded by trees. The tree leaves and branches covering the ground is our tree canopy.

Tree pit design - The hole in the ground in which a tree is planted. In the urban context the pit may represent the whole of the root volume available to the tree when mature.

Uprooting - To pull something, (especially a tree or plant) out of the ground.

Veteran and Ancient trees – A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate.

Water pockets - pocket (as in rock) where water may gather especially : a water hole in the bed of an intermittent stream occurring typically as a bowl at the foot of a cliff over which the stream leaps when in the flood stage.

Wilful damage/destruction - The intentional and malicious destruction of or damage to the property of another.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE – SCHEDULED ITEMS OF BUSINESS ETC

2 MARCH 2022					
	BUSINESS	LEAD OFFICER	COMMITTEE DATE		STATUS/COMMENT
	Carbon Neutrality Programme – -Housing/Property policies/actions	Gillian Knight/Andrew Kingston	2 March 2022		HEP024
	Carbon Neutrality Programme – Carbon Offsetting	Steve Lincoln/Alex Eburne	2 March 2022		HEP021
	Review of Meadowside and Winchester Sport and Leisure Park provision	Susan Robbins	7 December 2021	2 March 2022	HEP023
	Draft Tree Strategy	Susan Croker (Ivan Gurdler to present)	2 March 2022		HEP022

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Other reports are provisionally listed to come forward to the Health & Environment Policy Committee during 2021/22 or 2022/23 are as follows: (Meeting date to be confirmed)

	Enforcement Policy	Date TBC
	Local Plan Update	Date TBC
	Review of Health & Wellbeing provision	July 2022
	Movement Strategy - Emerging actions	July 2022
	Carbon Neutrality Annual Report and Action Plan	July 2022
	AQMA Annual Update	Date TBC - for 2022/23 work programme

Agenda Item 10

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