

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

DRAFT (4)

Project Team

Rob Greenland – Arboriculturist

Janet Young - Technical Support Officer (Arbor)

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability

In May 2002 Brighton & Hove City Council published its sustainability strategy for the City. This document remains an important part of our commitment to formulating a local 'Agenda 21' plan which our Government committed itself to at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Article 4 of the Rio declaration states "In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it". This means that national and local policy makers need to re-appraise their policies and practices to ensure that they are sustainable. This has now reached the local level in the form of local biodiversity action plans.

Background

Brighton and Hove is comprised of some 8,380 hectares with a large resident population squeezed between the South Downs and the English Channel. The conurbation is dominated by the substantial chalk downland situated to the north and the exposed coastline to the south. These factors, particularly the coastal exposure, have a considerable effect on species selection for the planning and management of the local treescape.

This document's origins lie in the recognition that long term commitment and consistency of policy are required if the Council's ambitions and the public's expectations for environmental enhancement and protection of the treescape are to be realised. The strategy seeks to establish a point of reference for the public, councillors, officers, professionally interested bodies and individuals enabling informed discussion and the establishment of a clear, structured approach to the arboricultural issues of the City.

Why a Strategy?

A definition of this strategy is "A plan for the overall management of all trees and woodland in Brighton and Hove, both now and in the future".

The City Council is committed to a Tree and Woodland Strategy that will initiate and then continue to review action to ensure that the City's trees and woodlands are adequately protected and cared for. The adoption of a strategy will ensure that species selection and numbers, quality, biological diversity and contribution to the character and appearance of the City can be sustained and enriched for the benefit of the residents and visitors to Brighton and Hove.

The strategy is intended to guide positive change over an extended period of time as an alternative to ad hoc decisions and activities made in isolation. It is also intended to ensure trees gain the recognition and protection they deserve for providing, individually and collectively, one of the most visually apparent contributions to the environment. The successful management of a tree population is, by its very nature, a long-term process and this strategy reflects this, emphasising the need for a review at five-year periods.

The Overall Aim

The aim for amenity tree management (Arboriculture) is “sustainable amenity” for the benefit of the residents of Brighton and Hove and its visitors. This can be achieved by the development of a tree population that has a wide diversity of species and a wide range of tree ages. These two points are fundamental in avoiding devastation by threats such as Elm Disease and climatic extremes as in the tree losses caused during the hurricane force winds of both October 1987 and January and February 1990 or the slow decline of the population due simply, to old age.

The Arboricultural Service receives several thousands of enquiries per year concerning trees and related subjects, most asking if a particular problem can be resolved or requesting advice. The intention is to be able to fully inform enquirers what action is planned and when work is due to be carried out. At times a compromise will need to be sought where the tree in question causes inconvenience, whilst remaining of high value to the surrounding area. Each individual case will be assessed on its merits.

The Importance of Trees

Rarely will anyone be found who will argue against the principle of planting or maintenance of trees in general as they add, immeasurably, to our 'Quality of Life'. However, it is worthwhile revisiting some of the reasons why we have an almost 'primal' need for trees in our environment and some of the benefits that they bring.

For many years residents and visitors alike to Brighton and Hove have enjoyed the investment that our forefathers made in the area. Principally, our Victorian and Edwardian forebears were great tree planters but would not have lived to see the full fruits of their investment. We have had this privilege and as guardians of the treescape are duty bound to pass on this resource to future generations in at least as good a condition as we inherited it and, if possible, better.

- ◆ **Noise:** Trees (and other plants to a lesser extent) help to create noise barriers. Individually the leaves act as barriers to sound waves, absorbing some noise and reflecting some of the rest back. Branches and twigs can also alter the nature of the noise so that it becomes less troublesome, if not strictly speaking quieter, by scattering the sound waves within the canopy.
- ◆ **Visual Amenity:** Trees improve the appearance of our environment with their rich variety of scale, form, colour and shape with the added benefit of seasonal change. Too often in the modern office environment, with air conditioning and sealed windows, seasonal change can pass by almost unnoticed and the changing picture of urban trees can help to keep our senses in touch with the seasons. The screening that trees provide when planted near to large buildings or less attractive structures is also well documented and appreciated.
- ◆ **Education and Scientific:** The educational and scientific value of trees cannot be underestimated. In particular there is the priceless gene pool that Brighton & Hove maintains with its internationally renowned collection of Elm (*Ulmus*) species, varieties and cultivars forming the 'National Collection of *Ulmus*'. Trees can also be a valuable educational resource in terms of ecology and the wider environment. Their very presence often nurturing a sense of community and place for those outside the formal educational process.

Existing urban and woodland tree cover and new individual and woodland type plantings can contribute directly to the balancing of carbon emissions while also providing visual amenity and potential wildlife habitat.

- ◆ **Wildlife:** While the wildlife benefits that woodland trees provide are well known, more such benefits are now recognised and documented for the urban environment and these are becoming acknowledged by the general public. Often in the harshest urban environment, trees will provide the sole source of food and shelter for a number of invertebrates. These in turn attract birds which also rely on trees for nest sites, nesting materials and on the seeds produced for food. Trees will often provide important roosting sites for a range of Bat species. The local Elms, so important to the City provide host plants for the White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly and for specific types of Lichen which are reliant solely on, now rare, Elm species.
- ◆ **Recreation:** Trees help to relieve everyday stress by the presence of colour, scale and assumed longevity in areas of passive and active recreation. This presence is growing in importance in fast paced modern lifestyles within the urban environment. There have been proven links between plants and illness recovery rates and the presence of greenery has been found to help counter the frustration that leads to vandalism in urban environments (Hodges 1988).

- ◆ **Carbon:** Trees are extremely carbon efficient. Their presence in the urban environment reduces the consumption of fossil fuels for heating in the winter and for air conditioning in the summer, thus assisting in the reduction of greenhouse gasses.
- ◆ **Timber:** Deforestation accounts for about 30% of the total global carbon emissions (Houghton 1989). Britain remains one of the primary importers of tropical hardwoods with timber in general being the fourth largest import into the U.K. Currently we produce only some 10% of our own timber requirements.
- ◆ It is estimated that, at best, this country could raise this up by 25% without significant changes in land use. While the City enjoys some 504 hectares of woodland, the collective urban tree resource has to date produced little in the way of timber requirements. However, small markets are beginning to open up alongside the existing firewood markets. Urban woodland plantings to offset Carbon balancing have taken place at Stanmer (Millennium Wood) and at East Brighton Park and sites for new woodland are being identified locally.

Local timber where viable, is sold to achieve best value while non-saleable material is mechanically 'chipped' and the material stored and redistributed as mulch to aid water retention around tree bases and on shrub/flower borders. Well-rotted chippings are used as a soil improver for planting projects. Local Elm material has also been used to reconstruct elements of the Tudor war ship, 'Mary Rose', carved marine themed 'bollards' at Brighton seafront, paddles for waterwheel restoration at Cobham Mill, wheel hubs for re-construction of old farm wagons and in strengthening local sea defences thus avoiding the purchase of some tropical hardwood.

- ◆ **Oxygen:** During daylight hours trees produce a high volume of oxygen, In addition, the leaf itself has a considerable ameliorating effect on atmospheric pollutants, especially those particulates, from vehicle exhaust emissions, which have been linked with asthma and other respiratory problems.
- ◆ **Economy:** Trees help to make the City more attractive for living and working. They positively affect property values and help to attract investment.
- ◆ **Temperature:** Reduction of temperature extremes is a benefit that is of increasing importance in these times of global warming. Temperature rises in the global climate are relatively small and slowly accumulative and trees take time to mature to the stage where their benefits can be obtained. It is therefore imperative that decisions on planting are taking in

time for us to realise these benefits. The most significant impact on summer cooling, without further detriment to the environment, is likely to come from large 'shade' trees evenly distributed throughout the urban area. (Heisler 1986). The tall canopies of mature trees serve to block the sun, while the evaporation of water through the leaves cools the surroundings. The shade produced gives protection from solar radiation with its associated heating and skin cancer concerns.

Tree related problems

General

Trees have not evolved to live within the harsh urban environment we choose to live in and living in such close proximity to trees under these artificial circumstances invites problems. To overcome these difficulties a wide variety of skills are required, not always arboricultural, often diplomatic and in many ways similar to methods in dealing with inter-neighbour disputes. It is acknowledged that trees can cause inconvenience to residents, particularly when they grow near to dwellings and that they do pose a potential threat which, following the Great Storm of October 1987, many people are all too well aware of. All tree owners, including local authority Arboriculturists, are required to make informed decisions concerning the amenity value and the structural soundness of their trees. Poorly-made decisions could result in trees being either unnecessarily felled or pruned which is both expensive and detrimental to the amenity they produce. In the worst scenario, an uninformed decision may result in death, injury or damage to property should a tree collapse.

Trees and People

In any population of trees there are a number of common sources of complaint and concern. These include overhanging branches, shade, leaf fall, fruit, etc. Many of these problems are seasonal and short term in their nuisance value. Others can be dealt with by careful pruning without detriment to the tree's value. Often the problem is a result of inappropriate species selection made in the past or, more recently, poorly placed apparatus eg Aerial Dishes masked by tree growth and may be complicated or impossible to resolve without some form of compromise.

Trees and Property

A common concern for property owners is the potential for structural damage by tree root action. This type of problem is relatively uncommon in the east of the city as most of the soils found are not readily affected by moisture deficit. To the west, in Hove the soil structures are more diverse and

more major problems such as subsidence and heave are experienced more often. Most frequently, though, lighter structures such as boundary walls and footpaths become displaced due to physical root action directly under inadequate foundations. Such incidents will also directly involve the Council's Insurers and have a financial implication. The Highways Department also have a high involvement as root action can also damage or displace the infrastructure of the highway, lifting footways and displacing kerbs.

TREES ON COUNCIL LAND

Council-owned trees and their current management

This part of the strategy sets out the City Council's approach to the management of trees for which it is directly responsible.

Tree management encompasses the co-ordination of all maintenance operations to existing trees as well as new tree planting. The existing tree population is a valuable resource which requires more than just maintenance if it is to continue to provide the range of benefits that we expect. Management must include a long-term view of the tree resource, providing for the future as well as for today.

There are four major elements of the City Council's tree population:-

- ◆ Street trees – these are the trees planted in pavements, the highway or roadside verges along the City's streets. They help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and improve the visual amenity of the street scene.
- ◆ Woodlands – Brighton & Hove City Council owns some 504 hectares of urban woodland open to public access. These are situated almost in their entirety to the east of the City. The size and species range of all woodlands are considerable and includes the large Stanmer Estate, areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to small spinneys and copses. Many of the woodland tracts are contained within Local Nature Reserves.
- ◆ Trees in parks and open spaces – these are commonly the most significant trees in the City and have a profound effect on the appearance, visual amenity and the wider leisure experience of users of these open spaces.
- ◆ Housing areas – Trees growing in and around housing estates, flats complexes, individual tenancies and some associated woodland. These were originally planted in City owned residential areas to enhance the local environment and landscape. In common with other areas there has been a serious diminution of the tree stock by ad-hoc felling with little or

no replacement planting carried out. These areas have endured the lowest tree populations in the City and have had low Arboricultural Service involvement in previous years. They potentially represent some of the most suitable areas for tree planting in the City with the potential for making a significant increase in tree cover while benefiting the visual amenity for the local populace. Currently the Arboricultural Service has a limited management role on behalf of the Housing Department, inspecting trees and carrying out works where Health and Safety issues are identified.

- ◆ Education sites – Not currently in Arboricultural remit of maintenance or financial responsibility. (See later entry)
- ◆ Cemeteries- Not currently in Arboricultural remit of maintenance or financial responsibility. (See later entry)

Management of the tree population in these areas is not carried out directly by the Arboricultural Service and most are not under any structured Arboricultural management, this situation has led to a serious decline in the health and numbers of trees on sites within these categories. It is suggested that ultimately all aspects of tree management and financial responsibility for this should be moved within the Arboricultural Service with appropriate physical and financial resources identified to met the increased monitoring and maintenance requirements of these areas.

Trees in the streets of Brighton and Hove have been surveyed and are in place in a Tree Management database (Arbortrack). It is intended that the recent purchase of a new 'grounds position system' (GPS) for Arboricultural mapping will continue to be used to record information and be used for the effective management of the tree stock. The surveying of all trees in parks and open spaces has commenced and will continue until recording of all stock is accomplished.

Present highway tree pruning management is based on a rotational system with each area receiving regular pruning on a set frequency (Currently 2, 3 or 4yrs). Trees in parklands and open spaces are subject to frequent arboricultural inspections that dictate the levels of maintenance and its frequency. This enables resources to be effectively managed and concentrated to best effect, ensuring that all trees receive the appropriate maintenance while allowing consultation and survey work to be undertaken well in advance of the work programme.

Frequent tree inspections and effective record keeping should be carried out on trees whose condition gives cause for concern. High frequency inspections should be carried out on all Council-owned trees to ensure public safety. Following recent court rulings this has become more important; an incident in a Birmingham school resulted in a £160,000 fine for the local

authority that failed in this duty with officers facing the threat of civil action. This has resource implications for the Arboricultural Service, as there will be a significant commitment of time and technical support to achieve this.

Policies for general tree management

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

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

In assessing this, balance will need to be maintained to ensure that the essential mixed species planting, historically accepted in Parks is maintained to prevent local monoculture and extend colour, form and interest.

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

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

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

Policy 6 The removal of trees should be resisted unless there is sound Arboricultural reason or silvicultural practice to indicate otherwise, i.e. disease, safety reasons, structural damage or planned thinning operations and no alternative management practice can be implemented.

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

Actions for general tree management

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Introduce a tree management computer system to enable accurate analysis of the tree population,	'Arbortrack' In place 2004	On-going

	<p>with facilities for contract management, resource management and access to past work schedules for insurance claims.</p> <p>Draft plans for the long-term management and development of the tree population as an essential component of the landscape.</p>	2006	On-going
	<p>Seek to expand the urban woodland, particularly where structure planting will help to improve appearance, value for people, benefits for wildlife and assist the Council's Carbon balancing intentions</p> <p>Continue with tree planting plans that provide additional methods of enhancing the local tree population, with particular emphasis on the long-term replacement of mature and over-mature trees and the restoration of continuity in the highway environment. Eg Local Businesses and Community Involvement both physical and financial.</p> <p>Seek to supplement the Council's own spending on new trees by investigating additional funding, including sponsorship, grant aid and through the 'Tree Trust' to allow greater investment in the tree population.</p>	<p>2000 Millennium Wood (3000+ trees & 2005 East Brighton Park (900 trees)</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2000 2006</p>	<p>2000 2005</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Current</p>
	<p>Ensure that maintenance works utilise best use of resources by efficient work planning and the recycling of by-produce material wherever possible.</p> <p>Seek to develop and implement an effective tree management programme for trees, woodlands and hedgerows located on Education sites, Housing land and in Cemeteries.</p>	<p>2004</p> <p>2009</p>	On-going
	Endorse the need for a fully resourced 'One stop shop' to meet Arboricultural requirements in all of the City's concerns		
	Survey all trees with the aim of incorporating risk management.	2000	

Street trees

The City has approximately 13,000 highway trees. The roadside is a harsh environment for trees to survive and there is often intense pressure for space from underground cables and pipes, traffic, buildings, street lights, road signs, etc. In addition, this limited space has poor soil and is often contaminated by car emissions, road salts, oil and other pollutants that challenge the tree's survival. Despite all of this and with the right species selection, trees can and do survive to compliment the local environment, albeit with a shortened life expectancy.

The character of the street tree population varies considerably in different parts of the area, from the older Victorian planting in roads like The Drive, through the inter-war developments with little tree cover such as the Roedale area to the newer, suburban areas featuring 'ornamental' plantings in Patcham, Woodingdean and Mile Oak.

Many of the original plantings were large trees selected from a limited range of forest-sized species known to withstand pollution and for their tolerance to the local poor soil and climatic extremes. Today we have access to a wider range of smaller ornamental trees and larger trees with more suitable characteristics for roadside and other restricted sites.

Many of our most notable tree-lined streets have tree populations that are over-mature. Such trees are vulnerable to climatic variations (such as drought), disease and damage. An over-mature population of street trees tends to erode gradually over a number of years as individual trees decline and have to be removed. This generally affects the older areas of the City. In these areas new trees should be introduced, where practicable, between the mature trees to ensure that there will be continuous tree cover in future years as removals occur. Similarly tree lined streets that have experienced tree losses and resultant loss of continuity of planting should be re-planted to restore the visual impact originally intended.

In planning for replacement of older forest-type trees the temptation to consider using only small short-lived ornamental species should be avoided if specific site conditions do not dictate otherwise. Although such action may appear to reduce initial maintenance, such trees do not have the same scale and habit and therefore impact provided by larger trees. Therefore, the significant contribution that large trees make to the character of each area must be safeguarded to maximise available space.

Policies for street trees

- Policy 8 There will be a presumption against the removal of trees which are healthy but subject to complaint, unless the basis of the complaint has an overriding justification, no alternative management or engineering practice can be implemented or

that Statutory and Health and safety requirements are unable to be met

- Policy 9 The Council will place a priority on the replacement of ageing street tree populations, particularly where these adjoin major traffic routes, planting large growing trees where appropriate.
- Policy 10 The Council will seek to plant new street trees in appropriate sites with priority given to sites where street trees are currently or have in the past been located.
- Policy 11 The Council will endeavour to protect street trees and the growing environment from threats such as loss of and damage to verges, the activities of statutory undertakers and others excavating near trees.
- Policy 12 The Council will consult with all interested parties on proposed major tree work programmes where appropriate.

Actions for street tree management

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	The Arboricultural Service will develop open discussion with the Highway officers to develop new techniques for planting trees in streets and protecting those existing.	2007	On-going
	Advise ward councillors of potentially controversial work to be undertaken, outlining clearly what work is to be undertaken and where this is to take place.	2007	On-going
	Work with the Highway Engineers' to monitor statutory undertakers/utility companies to ensure that damage to trees during their work is kept to a minimum.	2007	On-going
	Consider individual areas and streets to reflect their landscape character and improve the management regime.	2007/8	On-going

Woodlands

Historical development

There are a number of semi-natural woodlands within Brighton and Hove together with secondary woodland having been planted at various times after the first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps of 1876. All these woodlands have a high landscape value and provide habitats for wildlife and passive recreational facilities for visitors. While the Council's prime management objectives are landscape, nature conservation and recreation opportunities, other objectives such as timber production are considered secondary.

The main woodlands at Stanmer represent the historical development and extension of semi-natural Beech, Ash and Yew originally restricted to the deeper more fertile soils found at the head of combes or the base of slopes of the South Downs. Little remains of these original woodlands although subsequent plantation woodlands have acquired many of their characteristics.

The single most important landscape changes locally again involved Stanmer Park when, between 1760 and 1820, the building of Stanmer House was complemented by the laying out of Stanmer woods. It is probable that the existing woodland was cleared and replanted at that time although parts of the woodlands have taken on the character of the semi-natural woodland they replaced. Following the hurricane force winds of 1987 these woodlands were severely damaged and extensive clearance and replanting were carried out in the following few years.

Many of the woods in the Brighton and Hove area are now managed with nature conservation objectives as a priority and are designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR). While commercial coppicing is not viable locally, there has been a resurgence in products gained from the practice. Those areas 'managed' by Conservation groups including the City's Countryside Service have re-introduced coppicing both as a form of tree management and wildlife habitat restoration. The future management of woodlands must address the problems of past and present neglect with under-funding that has affected much woodland nationally over the past 75 years or more. It must also take into account the multi-purpose objectives which woodlands today, are required to fulfil.

Some traditional management is carried out by conservation volunteers on a number of sites in order, primarily to retain the conservation value of the wood. This work helps to keep the basic skills in use and also acts as an example to other woodland owners interested in bringing their woods back into management which benefits wildlife.

Woods give the City Council opportunities to display best practice of management in pursuit of a number of objectives. The Council's management objectives are landscape, nature conservation and access.

Other objectives such as timber production are limited and are usually only pursued when the other criteria are met.

Policies for woodlands

- Policy 13 The Council will ensure its woodlands are open, as safe as is practicable and available to the general public as a major City amenity.
- Policy 14 The Council will ensure that its woodlands are managed with nature conservation and biodiversity as part of the main objectives. Intervention will only happen when there is a valid conservation reason for it.
- Policy 15 Natural regeneration will be supported on appropriate sites.
- Policy 16 Where appropriate, the Council will ensure dead and fallen wood is left on site unless there is sound conservation, management constraint or safety reasons for its removal and will provide log piles from pruning and coppicing to encourage the natural biodiversity of the site.
- Policy 17 The Council will encourage community involvement within its woodland management through supervised community projects.
- Policy 18 The Council will realise any economic potential of woodlands through the marketing of timber and other woodland products where this does not conflict with Policy 14.
- Policy 19 The Council will encourage expansion of multi-purpose urban woodland in appropriate locations ensuring layout and selection of species reflects the local character.
- Policy 20 The Council will manage woodland to fulfil its obligation as owners to ensure safety of people and property whilst accepting that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.
- Policy 21 The Council will not normally grant planning permission for any development which would result in the loss of, or would be detrimental to, any areas of ancient or semi-natural woodland or other established semi-natural woodland, copses, spinneys or other areas of tree cover considered of landscape or wildlife value.

Policy 22 The Council will promote the planting of trees and hedges to link existing woodland to provide wildlife corridors. This will assist with the protection of biodiversity in the area.

Actions for woodland management

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	<p>Survey and map all of the City's urban woodland</p> <p>Review the plan for Stanmer woods and other secondary woods and produce individual woodland management plans.</p> <p>Adopt a 'Minimal Chemical' policy for woodland maintenance.</p> <p>Investigate additional sources of funding for managing woodland open to the public, e.g. Forestry Commission and other Woodland Grants.</p>	<p>Available on Cadcorp</p> <p>2007</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Explore ways of bringing Arboricultural/Sylvicultural interests closer to the public to promote understanding. e.g. Arboricultural Open days.</p>		
	<p>Expand the plantings in the Arboretum situated in the Woodland Garden to restore area of 'windthrow' damage</p>		
	<p>Re-survey the Arboretum situated in the Woodland Garden to give current working data to allow vital maintenance and promotion of this 'hidden' asset to the public.</p>		
	<p>Seek alternative sites and funding for the expansion of woodlands, copses and spinneys.</p>		
	<p>Survey Council-owned woodland edges and woodland paths annually for health and safety purposes.</p>		
	<p>Determine the most effective measures for the prevention of 'Fly-tipping'</p>		

Parks and Open Spaces

Trees are fundamental to the structure of parks and green spaces. The trees in parks and open spaces are not only important to regular visitors but are highly important contributors to the overall environment of the area. They are a high value resource that requires active management if they are to prosper and bestow the benefits expected.

The nature of tree populations of different parks and green spaces is as variable as the character of the sites themselves. At one extreme there are the older parks, such as Preston Park, with a declining mature population of trees including a number of rare and interesting specimens but which has been subject to high numbers of newly planted trees. At the other extreme are the newer parks, such as William Clarke Park with its lack of structure due to its immaturity. For this reason, the management of park trees must be planned on a site-by-site basis, seeking a balanced tree population and a specific Arboricultural character.

Some parts of Brighton and Hove contain large open spaces with frequently cut grass and little else. This 'manicured' form of maintenance often has some isolated structure tree planting and little else to compliment it and such areas are ripe for enhancement. Creating small wooded areas and group plantings can create opportunities for wildlife whilst improving the visual landscape appeal and create a place of real value for local residents.

Policies for parks and open spaces trees

- Policy 23 The Council will take the opportunity to establish new areas of urban woodland which offer multiple benefits to residents, wildlife and the landscape as sites become available.

- Policy 24 The Council will create a varied and sustainable tree population in Council parks.

- Policy 25 The Council will develop long-term tree management plans for parks and open spaces to prevent decline.

Actions for parks and open space tree management

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	GPS Survey all parks and open spaces to prioritise general maintenance and replacement planting of declining tree populations and to identify areas for additional or new planting. Replace trees with a variety of tree species to ensure diversity, sustainability and interest.	Street tree locations completed 2009	

	Tree management in major parks and green spaces to be integrated into overall parks management plans.	2009	
	Establish a regime for high frequency safety inspections and record keeping.		Current

TREES ON HOUSING SITES

A large proportion of the public housing sector in Brighton and Hove were built by the then Brighton Corporation. Original tree planting on these sites was very limited and has been significantly eroded by ad hoc felling. In areas such as Whitehawk the majority of highway trees were lost to the Council's own redevelopment of the area and in Moulsecoomb, those trees planted as part of the original 'model' estate have been lost to insufficient management and funding. Housing areas now have the lowest density of tree stock in the City with many sites appearing bleak and uninviting. Recent helpful discussions with the Arboriculturists and Housing Managers have resulted in a simplification of the process in dealing with Health and Safety problems on tenanted housing sites but there are still many issues that require resolution in order to bring tree management in line with the main tree population.

Policies for trees on housing

- Policy 26 The Council will endeavour to consult residents on regular proactive tree management where appropriate with appropriate funding identified.
- Policy 27 Where possible any tree that is removed will be replaced as appropriate, on a ratio of 1 to 1 with appropriate funding identified.
- Policy 28 The Council will introduce a single management system for all trees on housing sites with appropriate funding identified.

Actions for tree management on housing sites

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Clearly set out health and safety		

	requirements for trees on housing sites.		
	Introduce a fully resourced maintenance programme for tree management in line with the main tree stock of the City.		
	Include Housing tree stock in a 'One Stop Shop') for all tree problems with cemeteries and Education sites.		
	Work to encourage tenants of flats complexes etc to become a 'Tree Warden' for their area increasing local liaison and ensuring frequency of inspection		
	Produce a 'Teaching Programme' and Information Pack for Housing tree wardens		

TREES ON EDUCATION SITES

Most of the schools in Brighton and Hove were built by the County education authority and were managed by East Sussex County Council until Local Government Reorganisation in 1997. Following the establishment of Brighton and Hove City Council the responsibility for grounds maintenance of school properties moved to Brighton and Hove. The council prepares and tenders a contract for grounds maintenance including parks and other open areas; this contract is monitored and supervised by a Facilities Support Manager. All maintained and Voluntary Aided schools within the city are given the opportunity to buy in to this contract if they wish to do so and the vast majority take up this opportunity. The exception to this are the schools covered by the grouped schools PFI contract where it is the PFI provider who is responsible for maintaining the grounds and trees.

The selling of school playing fields is closely controlled by legislation and very difficult to achieve. Both the Department for Children Schools and Families and the councils own Children's Trust Board are reluctant to change the pattern of school playing fields as they contribute enormously to the health and well being of children and young people and provide an excellent resource for schools. Where development of school sites is necessary to provide additional school accommodation every effort is made to limit the number of trees that are lost. If trees have to be removed as part of the development replacement trees are planted. In cases where development is proposed in-house that includes an element of tree loss, advice is sought from external consultants regarding mitigation measures.

Present day management (and consequently budgets) of schools and their grounds has been devolved to Head Teachers. Head Teachers have to prioritise funding where it is most needed in terms of educational needs,

health and safety needs etc. This can lead to grounds maintenance issues being dealt with on a reactive rather than proactive basis, dealing mostly with issues arising out of complaints from adjacent residents or the site users. Trees in open areas that die from natural causes or other reasons are sometimes not replaced which has led to a slight reduction in the tree population on these sites. However this situation is improving with many schools now taking advantage of initiatives such as 'breathing spaces' being promoted by the BBC and planting young trees on their sites to enhance the curriculum and encourage biodiversity. The Arboricultural Service has no specific remit in this area but is willing to work with schools and the local authority to ensure continuing good management of trees on these sites.

TREES ON PRIVATE LAND

Tree Protection

This part of the strategy sets out the City Council's approach to the protection of privately owned trees in the area. As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to take steps to protect trees which it believes make an important contribution to the amenity of the area.

The greatest proportion of both the urban and rural tree population is privately owned. The quality of private tree care is very variable and ranges from owners who are completely indifferent, through motivated but poorly advised owners, to those who take great pride in their trees and are anxious to seek the best advice and engage quality contractors to carry out required work.

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Council has powers to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and designate Conservation Areas (CAs) within which all established trees are protected. It is usually only in cases of potential threat that a local authority will seek to legally protect trees by use of a TPO. Resources rarely allow the pro-active use of orders and desirable updating and re-surveying. The implementation of such statutory restrictions on the rights of a landowner is often a potential source of conflict and difficulty. However, it is undoubtedly true that many of our finest trees and woodlands would not be part of our landscape today if such protection did not exist.

Protection has not only been achieved through the statutory process. A substantial number of trees have been saved from inappropriate pruning or premature felling by the offer of expert advice from the Council's Arboricultural Officers. Advice is offered to the owners of protected trees and all other tree owners; this advice is offered free and is seen as a valuable part of tree protection.

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

1. Protection by the use of statutory tools such as Tree Preservation Orders
2. Protection by the provision of unbiased Arboricultural advice

Statutory protection

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

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

In support of Brighton & Hove City Council's duty as set out in the 1990 Act, it will incorporate improved policies relating to trees and woodlands within its Local Plan through the review process. Current Local Plan policies are as follows:-

- QD16 The City Council will not normally grant planning permission for any development which would result in the loss of, or would be detrimental to, any areas on ancient or semi-natural woodlands or other established woodland areas or areas of tree cover of landscape or wildlife value.
- QD16 The City Council will continue to make Tree Preservation Orders on individual trees and groups of trees which it considers contribute to the landscape or local amenity and are at risk.
- QD16 The City Council will not normally grant consent for the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order except where Health and Safety is or may be imminently compromised.

The Local Plan will be enhanced by the provision of a tree Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). It is also intended that this supplementary guidance be the subject of:

- (a) public consultation
- (b) a Council resolution confirming the status of the SPG

The importance of trees and woodlands within the City is further emphasised in the City's wildlife strategy: 'Wildlife for People' 1998 (ref sections 5.4, 5.4.2 and 7.1.1).

Brighton & Hove City Council will also be guided as appropriate by Department of the Environment Circular 36/78 "Trees and Forestry" and Department of the Environment "Good Practice Guide for Tree Preservation Orders 1994" (and as amended).

While the most common form of statutory tree protection is the Tree Preservation Order (TPO), equally important are Conservation Areas (CA) within which all established trees are protected. The City Council currently has over 400 TPOs covering thousands of trees and some woodland and 33 CAs. New TPOs are being made all the time in line with the City's statutory duties. The Arboricultural Service receives and processes approximately 135 applications each year from people who wish to carry out work to protected trees and 225 Section 211 notifications from people who wish to notify their intention to carry out work to trees within Conservation Areas.

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

Trees on development sites

One of the most common threats against trees (and therefore a common reason for making a TPO) is the proposed development of land upon which trees are growing. It is common for development plans to be submitted showing trees for retention which are totally unsuitable for the proposal or are in such poor condition that their retention is not viable. The TPO ensures that schemes are frequently amended to ensure that significant trees are properly retained, often through a process of working with the applicant to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the conflicts that can arise.

Developers are often quick to assume that all trees on a site will have to be retained and consequently often view trees as a problem rather than an asset. It is common for planning applicants to fail to provide sufficient information to enable proper consideration of trees on a proposed development site. This often results in a waste of officer time spent making detailed assessments of trees and other factors, at the public's expense. The Council gives pre-application advice and guidance for developers, builders,

architects, etc. The Supplementary Planning Guide (1) 'Trees in Relation to Construction' has been produced by the Arboriculturists to support this role.

It is common for tree protection constraints on development sites to be ignored or underestimated. In order to ensure a tree will be successfully retained, it is vital that the tree's root system is properly protected from direct and indirect damage such as ground compaction and storage. The minimum size of the protected zone will usually be large enough to ensure that no disturbance occurs within the crown spread of the tree although these distances can vary according to local ground conditions, tree species and health. The protection of trees in such situations should be enforced by adherence to the minimum criteria of "BS: 5837 Recommendations for Trees on Development sites " or as otherwise directed.

Protection through advice

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

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

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

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

Policies for tree protection

- Policy 29 The Council will:-
- i) promote tree planting where it is considered that this will lead to significant amenity benefit
 - ii) seek to protect trees of measurable amenity value; and
 - iii) promote good standards of tree care and woodland management.
- Policy 30 The Council will give consent for works to a tree or woodland protected by a Tree Preservation Order provided it is satisfied that:-
- i) the long-term health and appearance of the tree will not be impaired; and
 - ii) the works will not unjustifiably inhibit or prevent the full and natural development of the tree; or
 - iii) the work is necessary for its continued retention and consistent with good arboricultural practice; and
 - iv) in the case of a woodland, the proposed work is consistent with the principles of sound woodland management.
- Policy 31 The Council will not give consent to fell a tree or woodland protected by a TPO unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Generally, any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement of the trees.
- Policy 32 The Council will resist development which it considers makes inadequate provision for the retention of trees or natural features, particularly wildlife habitats such as woodlands and hedgerows.
- Policy 33 The Council will continue to protect significant trees by the use of Tree Preservation Orders.
- Policy 34 Applicants for the development of land which include trees will normally seek the provision of a 'Tree Impact Study' to include all dimensions, condition and suitability for retention of trees on the site. This must comply, as a minimum, with B.S.5837 (Trees in relation to Construction) and to guidance given in Statutory Planning Guide no1.
- Policy 35 The Council will usually expect new site development to contribute to the overall tree population either through on-site planting or through 'Section 106' agreements, these funds to be

retained by the City Council for the planting of trees in the locality.

Policy 36 The Council will encourage all major tree-owning organisations to adopt best practice in the care of their trees, especially where those trees contribute to the character of the City.

Actions for tree protection

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Continue the re-appraisal of older TPOs and where necessary revoke out-of-date orders, area orders and serve new ones.		
	Establish a list of validated tree work contractors for distribution to the public.		
	The Council will adopt a standard procedure for evaluation and evaluation and making of TPOs.		

SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The City's woodlands and the adjacent countryside contain a number of sensitive archaeological sites at risk from colonising woody vegetation and potentially ill-conceived maintenance operations. A number of tumuli in Pudding Bag and Seven Dials on the Stanmer estate indicate Bronze or Iron Age activity and the numerous dewponds testify to the medieval development of extensive sheep grazing in many areas. Currently, varying maintenance regimes are carried out on these sites of interest but a strategic plan is required to ensure that damage is kept to a minimum.

Policy for sites of archaeological interest

Policy 37 The Council will seek to maintain and protect its local archaeological heritage by appropriate operational maintenance.

Actions for sites of Archaeological Interest

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Develop a maintenance strategy with The Countryside Service to co-ordinate works to avoid damage by tree colonisation and root disturbance of archaeological remains, by		

	clearance of all woody and dense vegetation		
	Incorporate the guidelines set out in the Forestry Commission's leaflet 'Forests and Archaeology Guidelines'		
	Ensure liaison when appropriate with other custodians of sensitive sites e.g. Countryside Service, ESCC Archaeologist and local archaeological groups		

VETERAN AND ANCIENT TREES

Britain is a stronghold of ancient trees often of extraordinary age. Many are hundreds or even thousands of years in age and are scattered through the countryside in ancient wood pastures, woodlands, churchyards and parks. They have witnessed countless historical events, weathered storms, countered diseases, survived natural disasters and human threats. In addition small areas of ancient semi-natural woodland still exist which are one of the most important and valuable parts of our living environment. Apart from occasional islands of exceptionally old trees (such as Fontainebleau), the situation in the UK differs drastically from the rest of Europe. Awareness of the value in ancient and veteran (a veteran being a tree that has been accelerated through the ageing process by stress and physical damage) trees in this country has been slow and these important symbols of our cultural and natural history still do not have strong protection under law. With the growth of the 'blame culture' these trees are often removed through ignorance, purely and simply because they are old, with little or no other consideration

Brighton and Hove has few veteran trees in its parks and open spaces following removal as part of the Dutch Elm Disease campaign, the storms of '87' and other safety issues. However, significant trees still exist in certain locations in our older established woodlands under varying levels of arboricultural management. Notable examples of veteran elms exist in The Royal Pavilion Gardens and the Coronation Garden at Preston Park. As such these are virtually unique in the British Isles. Ancient beech trees grace the ride sides in parts of the Stanmer estate woodland, while a venerable old yew tree, guards the churchyard in Stanmer Village.

Ancient trees are known to support highly diverse communities of invertebrates and lichens together with nesting birds and bats colonising the frequent cavities contained within the trees' systems. The most important trees are over 200 years old with some around 500 years and many Yews have ages far in excess of these periods, in some cases up to one or more thousand years.

It is likely that the population of these trees has further declined through neglect, inappropriate management or removal. Old trees are prone to damage through changes in land use, particularly conversion of surrounding grassland to arable and premature felling as a result of unsympathetic and ill-informed tree health surveys. In addition, their wildlife value is dramatically reduced by the removal of dead wood from within the crown and removal of fallen branches (although in some cases the removal of dead wood may be necessary following a risk assessment).

Information on old trees in the City is limited and needs to be increased. A survey to establish the location of such trees and individual assessment to determine their condition is vital to the establishment of a successful management regime and should ensure the survival of these trees for the maximum term of their life.

Policy for Veteran and Ancient Trees

Policy 38 The Council will introduce a management regime to retain trees in the above category for historical/visual interest and as habitat for the diverse wildlife that is dependant on such trees. It aims to extend the useful life of each individual tree while protecting users of the land on which the tree stands.

Actions for Veteran and Ancient Trees and Woodlands

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Map locations of individual Veteran/ Ancient trees.		
	Carry out a risk assessment on each tree linked to future maintenance		
	Carry out survey to determine wildlife/plant dependency/association		
	Agree a short-term maintenance regime to bring individual trees to an agreed standard		
	Carry out long term maintenance to ensure this standard is maintained		

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF ULMUS (ELM)

History

Brighton & Hove has traditionally enjoyed a high population of Elm trees. These were originally planted in large numbers by the Victorians and

Edwardians due to their suitability to maritime conditions, their resistance to salt winds and tolerance of the thin chalk soil typical of much of this area.

In the 1950s Mr Ray Evison, the then Director of Parks & Gardens and an internationally renowned plantsman, collaborated with many of his counterparts throughout Europe to introduce a diverse selection of Elms which were planted in parks and open spaces throughout the area. This initiative provided a major green amenity which, together with the successful containment of the non-virulent form of elm disease, prevalent at that time, helped shape the local treescape enjoyed today.

In the early 1970s, a programme for the control of the, newly introduced, virulent form of elm disease was adopted by the then Brighton and Hove Borough Councils. The two councils worked closely together to fight the disease and the result is the retention of some 15,000 prime Elms in the City - including 103 cultivars and varieties which together form the bastion of the species in Southern England.

These Elms were granted full 'National Collection' status in 1998 by the National Council for the Conservation of Parks & Gardens.

The Elm Disease connection

The Arboricultural Service continues to contain elm disease in the City while also seeking to extend the range of cultivars and varieties as they become available. To this end, seeds from a number of locally unknown cultivars have been obtained from The Moreton Arboretum in America. These have been successfully propagated at the Council's Stanmer Nursery facility. Similarly a number of new varieties and cultivars have been obtained from liaison with Butterfly Conservation

Expanding the National Collection

A number of cultivars bred in North America for their resistance to elm disease have been recently purchased and planted in the City so that their suitability can be monitored. Negotiations are currently taking place between the Council and a major nursery to grow English Elm with other varieties and cultivars on our behalf, so that this endangered species can be replanted in the City.

The Arboricultural Service remains committed to containing elm disease and extending the range of plant material to expand the National Collection.

Policies for The National Collection of Ulmus (Elm)

Policy 39 The Council will continue to give the highest priority to its internationally renowned commitment to control and eradicate

Elm Disease in the City while supporting, where possible, other local Elm Disease control Programmes.

Policy 40 The Council will promote the National Collection of Ulmus as a City asset.

Policy 41 The Council will endeavour to use every opportunity to increase the content and environmental value of the National Collection.

Actions for The National Collection Of Ulmus (Elm)

Action No	Proposed Action	Implementation	Completed
	Endorse the continuation of the highly successful Elm Control Programme		
	Promote the National Collection, educating local residents and visitors through information via tourist information, libraries, etc		
	Design a 'City Elm Walk' leaflet		
	Design a local 'Champion Trees' leaflet		
	Establish a significant English Elm population within the City		