

Proposed Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy

Consultation Questionnaire

Please reply by Friday 29 September 2017



Background to consultation

Trees and woodlands in Cheshire West and Chester help to create a quality of place and life that attracts people to live, study, visit and work in the area. As part of our green infrastructure, trees provide the backdrop for our towns and city. Our trees and woodlands are an essential feature of the Cheshire landscape with the “story of the place” intimately linked to the historic forests of Modrum and Mora that once covered the area.

Trees and woodlands set the scene for economic development. They help underpin property prices, adding between 8 and 15% to house prices. The borough’s trees and woodlands are part of our ecological networks, a vital recreational resource, help reduce air pollution and are a valuable asset for improving health and wellbeing. They contribute to reduce flood risk and are a carbon sink, a sustainable fuel resource for local use.

Cheshire West and Chester Council owns over 500 hectares (ha) of woodland and approximately 28,000 trees. Using the Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit, the total economic value of the woodland and trees owned by the authority is over £7bn. - a significant asset for the borough.

We want to secure the long-term management of Cheshire West’s trees and woodlands to provide all of these benefits for our communities and future generations.

What we are consulting on

The Cheshire West and Chester Tree and Woodland Strategy is currently at the draft stage, and we would welcome your views on the strategy.

How your views will be used

Your views about the strategy will be considered by Cheshire West and Chester Councillors and council staff, and used to feed into the final Cheshire West and Chester Tree and Woodland Strategy.

A report on the results of the consultation will be made publicly available on the Council’s website in Autumn 2017. These results, together with other information, will be considered by the council.

How to share your views

The consultation period closes on Friday 29 September 2017. There is a range of ways to express your views:

- Complete the online survey
- Complete this survey and post it back to the address below
- Email: Mail@merseyforest.org.uk
- Telephone: 01925 816217
- Write to: **Research and Intelligence Team, Cheshire West and Chester Council, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE.**

How to complete this questionnaire

- Please refer to the full draft strategy document, as each question references the page number containing more information which may help you answer the question. The draft strategy is available on the consultation web page or call the telephone number above for a printed copy.
- Please read the questions carefully as sometimes you are asked to cross (X) one box and sometimes you can choose more than one answer
- If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer, please feel free to leave them blank.

Completing the questionnaire is voluntary and all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence. No information will be released that could identify an individual or organisation.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services.

Council information is also available in audio, braille, large print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a British Sign Language interpreter, please email us at: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Telephone: **0300 123 8 123**

Textphone: **18001 01606 275 757**

Email: **equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

Web: **www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

Section 1: Corporate plan objectives

Cheshire West and Chester's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 sets out the authority's ambitions for a "thriving" borough. The Plan has ten objectives, based on priorities for thriving communities, businesses and residents.



The Tree and Woodland strategy helps to deliver several of these objectives:

Corporate Plan Objective	Contribution of the Tree and Woodland Strategy
Cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods in the country	Well managed trees and woodlands in our neighbourhoods help to create sustainable places to live and support quality of place and quality of life. A clear statement of management priorities ensures residents are informed about management regimes for trees and woodlands.

Vibrant and healthy communities, with inclusive leisure, heritage, and culture.	Trees and woodlands provide a wide range of health benefits, from filtering air pollution to providing places for leisure and recreation.
Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents	Trees and woodland are a major asset for the Authority which, if well managed, can yield a wide range of benefits for communities, residents, and businesses.
A well connected and accessible borough	Woodlands provide some of the most popular places for recreation in the borough and are key notes in the active travel network.
A great place to do business	The quality of place is an important influence on inward investment. Management of woodlands supports a range of businesses and helps to deliver low carbon energy, reducing the council's carbon footprint.
All our families, children and young people are supported to get the best start in life	Using woodlands for education and health programmes has been shown to reduce inequalities.

Q1a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the draft strategy could help achieve corporate plan objectives?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q1b. Do you think that there are any other ways in which the strategy could help achieve Cheshire West and Chester's corporate plan objectives? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Q2b. Do you have any further suggestions as to how trees located outside of an area of woodland should be categorised? If yes, please give details in the box below. (Please see pages 9 and 10 in the full draft strategy)

Within the strategy document we have provided some data about the tree stock and woodlands. Some key issues arising from the analysis of the data include:

- The age profile of the trees is heavily weighted to older trees - there is a lack of younger trees to replace older trees as they start to die or need removal.
- The Lime tree is the most common tree identified in the last tree survey. Ash is the fifth most abundant tree, and is likely to come under attack from *Chalara fraxinea*. This will require careful management, taking note of national guidance and experience from other areas.
- Council owned trees are concentrated in the urban areas of the borough.

The data used for this analysis is now in need of updating to improve the quality of decision-making about the tree and woodland assets.

Q3. Do you have any comments about the tree data and the story it tells about the trees owned by Cheshire West and Chester? If yes, please give details in the box below. (Please see pages 20 to 22 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Section 3: Economic benefits of trees

In recent years there has been an increasing focus on developing methods to place a value on the services and benefits provided by trees and woodlands. Putting a value on these assets owned by the council enables informed decisions to be made about future funding and management of trees and woodlands to safeguard the asset and ensure that the benefits provided are sustained in the long term.

Results of a desk top valuation of the council's trees and woodlands show that there are significant benefits in terms of the economic performance of the area (GVA and support for property value) – please see the table below. The wider economic benefits are the most significant, with the health and wellbeing benefits the single most important benefit.

Benefits	Benefit Monetisation		
	GVA value	Land and property value	Other economic value
1. Climate change adaptation and mitigation	£194,189	n.a.	£5,183,783
2. Water management and flood alleviation	£1,496,542	n.a.	n.a.
3. Place and communities	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
4. Health and wellbeing	£888,303	n.a.	£7,412,487,294
5. Land and property values	n.a.	£83,540,393	n.a.
6. Investment	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
7. Labour productivity	£50,411,648	n.a.	n.a.
8. Tourism	£105,412,972	n.a.	n.a.
9. Recreation and leisure	n.a.	n.a.	£18,435,642
10. Biodiversity	n.a.	n.a.	£448,636
11. Land management	£5,335,908	n.a.	n.a.
Total economic value of benefits	£163,739,564	£83,540,393	£7,418,119,713

Q4a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this type of tree valuation is useful for demonstrating the importance of trees and woodland? (Please see pages 22 and 23 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4b. Do you have any comments about this valuation method? For example, suggestions as to how we can make more use of this data or an alternative valuation method? If yes, please give details in the box below. (Please see pages 22 and 23 in the full draft strategy).

Section 4: Tree stock and biodiversity

In line with UK Forest Policy, Cheshire West and Chester Council will aim to achieve no net loss of woodland, by restocking or enabling planting off site of any area of woodland felled and replacing any urban trees that are routinely felled.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Cheshire West and Chester's position on new planting, restocking and replanting of trees? (Please see pages 24 and 25 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In line with the UK Forest Standard Guidelines, conservation of biodiversity should be an essential part of Cheshire West and Chester's Tree and Woodland Strategy. Biodiverse woodlands and urban forests are not only more resilient to a range of external factors such as pest, diseases and climate change, but provide a wide range of green infrastructure benefits.

Q8b. Do you have any further comments about this policy? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Policy 3 – To raise awareness of the value of trees as part of our green infrastructure through consultation, education and participation

Issues

By providing accurate information about the benefits provided by Cheshire West and Chester’s trees and woodlands, it will be easier to raise the awareness of their importance to a broad range of audiences. We are also able to start to quantify these benefits in monetary terms, to be able to compare different types of investments and their returns.

Q9a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this policy? (Please see pages 32 and 33 in the full draft strategy for more details)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9b. Do you have any further comments about this policy? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Q11b. Do you have any further comments about the action plan? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Section 7: Risk management zoning

Risk management zoning enables the limited resources available to be targeted at places that are likely to have the greatest risk of harm or damage to people or buildings.

Appendix 1 in the strategy document sets out a risk assessment system developed in the USA, which has been applied across the world. Targets, that is, people and property, which are likely to be harmed or damaged by trees, are ranked into four zones, according to their frequency of use and value. Each zone is attributed a rating of one to four (four being the highest risk).

High risk targets are those with constant use, by many people, such as roads or homes. Lower risk targets are parts of open space infrequently visited, such as meadows or woodlands, away from boundaries or paths. This is called “Zonal Target Assessment”.

Q12a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed targeted approach to the surveying of the authority’s trees? (Please see Appendix 1 on pages 40 and 41 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

Q12b. Do you have any further comments about this approach? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Section 8: Cheshire West and Chester Council Tree Query Priority Ranking System

This sets out the urgency of responses to tree management issues, starting with the top priority, dealing with trees that are causing an immediate risk to safety.

Q13a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed ranking system for tree enquiries? (Please see Appendix 2 on page 42 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13b. Do you have any further comments about this approach? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Section 9: Systematic management of Cheshire West and Chester Council owned trees

Regular and systematic cycles of tree management have been shown to be cost effective in reducing the need for expensive, reactive management.

The cycle of management of the council's trees outside woodlands, across highways, street scene, green space etc. follows the risk zoning map in that the areas with greatest risk (large trees in areas of greatest public use/proximity to buildings) form the basis for a planned programme of regular tree management activity.

The steps for the Tree programme are:

- Tree risk and management assessment based on risk zoning system
- Added to database
- Work specification
- Work programme developed / updated
- Scheduled works undertaken
- Database updated.

Q14a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed systematic management system? (Please see Appendix 3 on pages 43 and 44 in the full draft strategy for more details).

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Q14b. Do you have any further comments about this system? If yes, please give details in the box below.

Section 10: About you

Completing this section is voluntary and all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence. No information will be released that could identify an individual or organisation.

Q15. In what respect are you completing this questionnaire? Please select all that apply

- I am a resident of Cheshire West and Chester
- I am an elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council
- I am a local Town or Parish Councillor
- I am a representative of a voluntary or community organisation
- I am a member of a local group with a specific interest in trees and woodland
- I work for an organisation with a specific interest in trees and woodland
- I work for an organisation with a statutory responsibility for trees and woodland
- I am an expert in the subject of trees and woodland
- I work for a Developer
- Other – please state below

Q16. If you are responding on behalf of a group or organisation, please name it in the box below. You do not have to complete the rest of this section.

Q17. Please tell us your postcode

Q18. Are you.....?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Q19. Which age group do you belong to?

Under 16

Please provide the signature of a parent / guardian

16 - 29

30 - 59

60+

Prefer not to say

Q20. Do you have a long term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Please select one option only.

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Q21. If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? Please select all that apply

Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair

Visual impairment

Hearing impairment

Learning disability or difficulty

Mental Health issue

Long standing illness or health condition

Other, please specify

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return this form to the following address: Research and Intelligence Team, Cheshire West and Chester Council, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE. Please ensure we receive your response no later than Friday 29th September 2017.