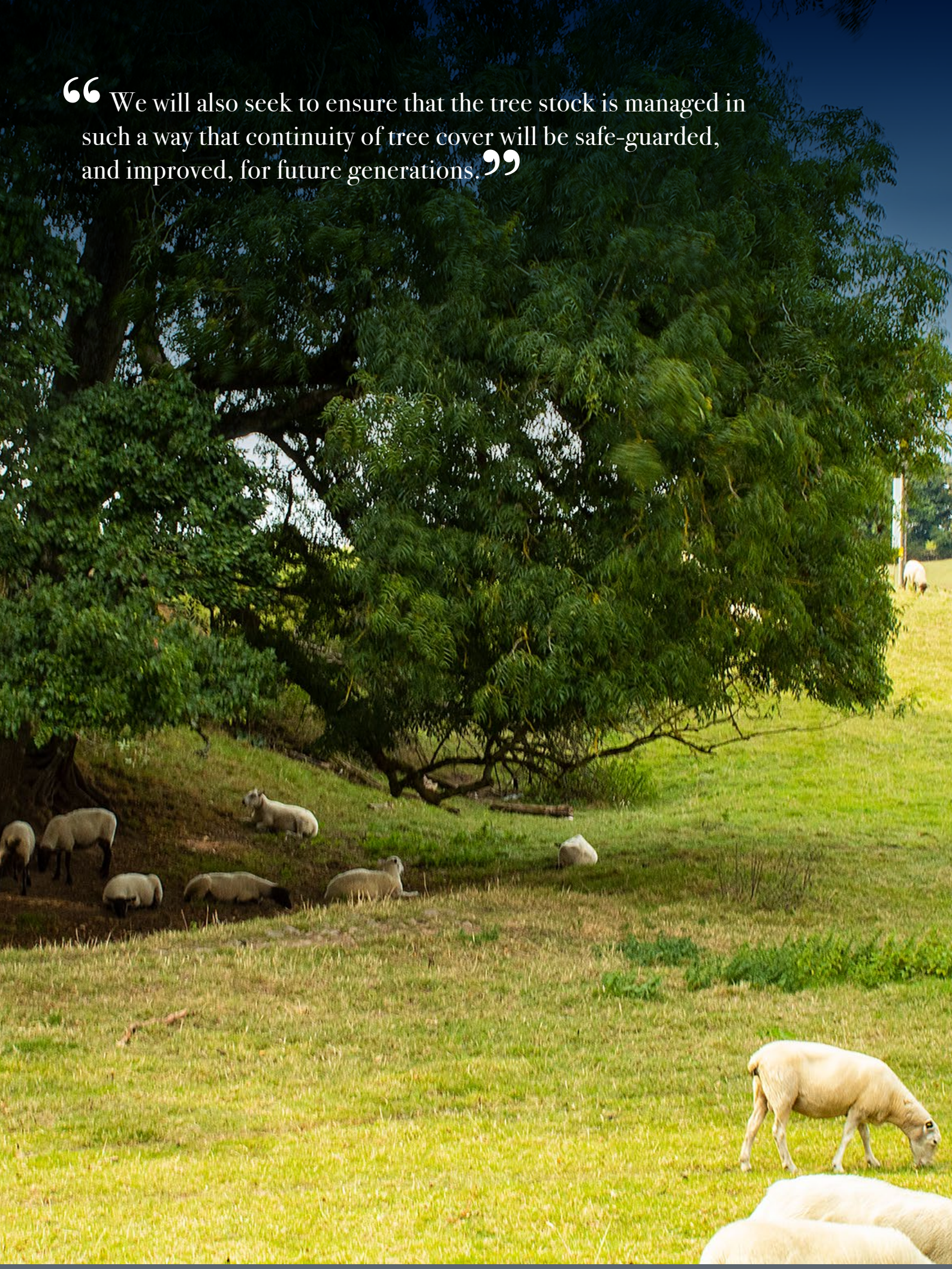
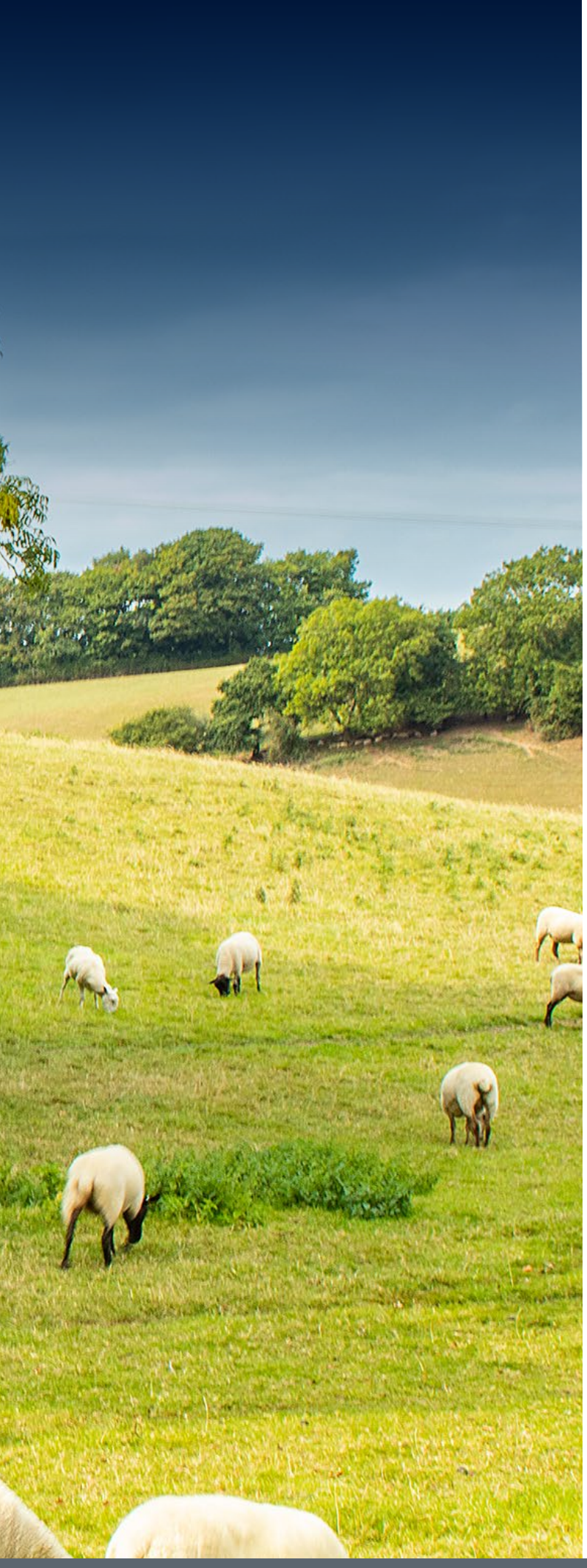
THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

WORKING TOGETHER
FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

TREE STRATEGY
2024-2039



“We will also seek to ensure that the tree stock is managed in such a way that continuity of tree cover will be safe-guarded, and improved, for future generations.”



We are delighted to introduce a Tree Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan which provides a framework for the sustainable management of the trees up to 2039 (15 years).

Trees and woodlands are an essential part of the Vale's Green Infrastructure and help identity and define the character of communities and areas where we live, work and play.

Like all local authorities, we have a duty to protect our natural heritage and recognise our trees as a valuable asset. It is widely accepted that trees and woodlands, particularly those around our towns have a vital role to play in promoting healthy communities. We manage large numbers of trees both directly and indirectly, ensuring their protection and enhancement to offer the many benefits they provide both individuals and our communities now and for future generations to come.

In addition, responding to the Climate emergency is a key priority for the Council and we have sought to build on a firm foundation of work that has been undertaken over a number of years to address the challenge of climate change in the Vale of Glamorgan.

This commitment is reflected in our Corporate Plan, covering 2020-2025, which includes a Wellbeing Objective focused specifically on the environment. Detail on how we will take forward specific work to address climate change is also set out in our Annual Delivery Plan.

Therefore, a great deal of activity has taken place, or is planned, to tackle climate change in our area, This Tree Strategy will help inform and develop future opportunities to prevent tree loss, increase tree stock and increase canopy cover across the Vale and aid the Council in achieving its objectives.

This Strategy has been subject to consultation and the Council has listened to the views expressed. As a result, several changes have been made to the Plan throughout the consultation process. As Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services, and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places we would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the development of this important document.

Cllr. Mark Wilson
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Cllr Bronwen Brooks
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2019, the Vale of Glamorgan Council joined the Welsh Government and other Local Authorities across the UK in declaring a Climate Emergency in response to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report into the impact of global warming.

In addition to this in July 2021, the Council declared a Nature Emergency following the `State of Nature 2019` National Biodiversity Network (NBN) report that found that 8% of tree species found in Wales (523) are threatened with extinction from Britain, 17% (666) are threatened with extinction from Wales and 73 have already become extinct.

The Council have delivered this Tree Strategy as trees, woodlands and hedgerows have a vital role in addressing climate extremes and the loss of biodiversity. This strategy will look at how we protect, manage and increase our tree canopy cover to build resilience, address climate change and biodiversity loss as trees are integral to our environment and have a key role in tracking climate change.

Trees are a cost-effective way to improve the environmental quality within our towns and villages, delivering physical, social wellbeing and economic benefits, as well as mitigating biodiversity loss, climate change, carbon storage, air quality, storm water management and improving amenity value.

The annual benefit of the eco-system service provision of our current urban tree stock has been estimated at £2.05m, with a replacement structural value of a £126m.

In considering trees and planning for the future, we will need to ensure that trees are recognised as public assets, rather than liabilities. The Council will focus its efforts on actively protecting and increasing tree cover on its land, with a commitment to increase canopy cover by 7.5% over the next 15 years, ensuring that the right tree is planted in the right place.

> “The Council’s commitment to both the Climate Emergency and the Nature Emergency will mean that all actions and polices of the Council will need to take into consideration the impact on both the climate and biodiversity within the Vale of Glamorgan.”

WHY DO WE NEED A TREE STRATEGY?

Trees and Woodlands form an important part of both the urban and rural landscapes of the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council takes pride that it has responsibility for an area with many landscapes where trees are an important part of the environment.

> “Over recent years research has shown the many benefits trees bring to social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being, with improvements to local air quality, reduced summer temperatures, increasing water retention and thus reducing localised flooding caused by ‘run off’ and improving mental health and well-being.”

With climatic conditions clearly changing and more frequent extreme weather events predicted, protecting, managing and enhancing our existing tree asset and setting targets to increase the tree canopy cover, is essential.

The Council is responsible for many thousands of trees. However, town tree canopy cover for the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole is 13% compared with the Welsh average 16.3% with a varied picture of canopy cover and tree management practices in different areas of the Vale. Tree cover has continued to decline and there is a disparity between areas, particularly within deprived areas, as highlighted in the Natural Resources Wales Report *`Town Tree Cover in the Vale of Glamorgan`*.[1]

There are challenges in retaining current urban tree canopy cover or increasing this cover generally. This is due to footway damage that has been caused by existing trees and constraints on space available, including underground utility apparatus in urban environments, restricting opportunities to plant new trees and making it expensive. Many of the urban trees have suffered from reduced levels of maintenance, leading to structural weaknesses and tree health issues.

Trees add to the landscapes of our towns, villages and countryside creating visual interest through their shape, bark, leaf colours, flowers, fruit and seeds. They mark the passing of the seasons and are bastions of history, reflecting civic pride and the

culture of the past. The ancient churchyard Yew, the parkland Horse Chestnuts and the Victorian planted avenues of Plane and Lime and hedgerows planted with a variety of native tree and shrub species were all planted or allowed to grow on by our ancestors.

When added together with our local green spaces, river corridors, road verges, railway lines, allotments and gardens there is a significant green network within our towns and villages that has the potential to be good for both people and wildlife. Ensuring that our green networks are protected and managed with increased tree cover where appropriate is essential for future generations.

In looking forward the Council and other organisations, communities, businesses and individuals need to plan for the future so that we can have a more significant, varied and better managed treescape in the Vale of Glamorgan.

This Strategy, which is supported by an action plan, sets out the strategic framework for the management of trees across the Vale of Glamorgan for the next 15 years to 2039. It has been prepared with reference to local, regional and national policies and guidance and will complement the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy being developed for the Vale of Glamorgan.

13%

Town tree canopy cover for the Vale of Glamorgan

The Green Infrastructure policy will inform where maximum gains can be developed, enabling the Council to achieve its future aims and objectives.

Through appropriate management of existing trees and targeted tree planting programmes, the Council will seek to reverse the trend of the continuing loss of tree canopy cover.

The Council will protect and enhance the tree stock while remaining sympathetic to the interests of residents. We will also seek to ensure that the tree stock is managed in such a way that continuity of tree cover will be safe-guarded, and improved, for future generations.

The tree lined streets and parks are an attractive feature of the Vale of Glamorgan and have helped enhance the quality of life for generations. The continued maintenance and enhancement of trees is a key priority to ensure that the area remains an attractive and pleasant place for the future.

The Tree Strategy will develop and evolve as and when new data and information is obtained and as such the Strategy will develop further when the Council has developed a Green Infrastructure Strategy *(approx. 2025)*.

16.3%

Welsh average of tree canopy cover in towns

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN
TREE STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Tree Strategy covers trees growing on public land and adopted highway managed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, as well as trees on private land where they are affected by national and local policies such as Tree Preservation Orders.

The Strategy's guiding PRINCIPLES are to:

- Commit to protect and care for our tree stock.
- Commit to work to retain existing mature tree stock, wherever possible in both public and private settings.
- Commit to identify suitable locations across the Council's land holding where additional tree planting can be accommodated, without detriment to the existing habitats.
- Commit to ensure that trees that are lost are replaced in greater numbers by planting a minimum of 2 trees for every one removed within the urban environment and develop a sliding scale of mitigation based on the extent of tree loss.
- Commit to plant a minimum of 1500 trees annually, which will include a minimum of 500 standards *(2m tall trees)*, in predetermined targeted areas (right tree, right place), across the Council estate.
- Commit to develop tree planting schemes/natural regeneration.
- Commit to ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place.
- Commit to increase urban street canopy cover within the built adopted Highway year on year.
- Commit to a net increase in canopy cover in urban areas on Council owned land by 7.5% by 2039.

All the above would have to be quantifiable and measurable to evidence targets were being met and this would need financial provisions.

Objectives:

- Protect and enhance the current tree stock.
- Ensure that the Council has an accurate database of its tree stock.
- Raise awareness of the Council's tree stock and the environmental and social benefits it provides.

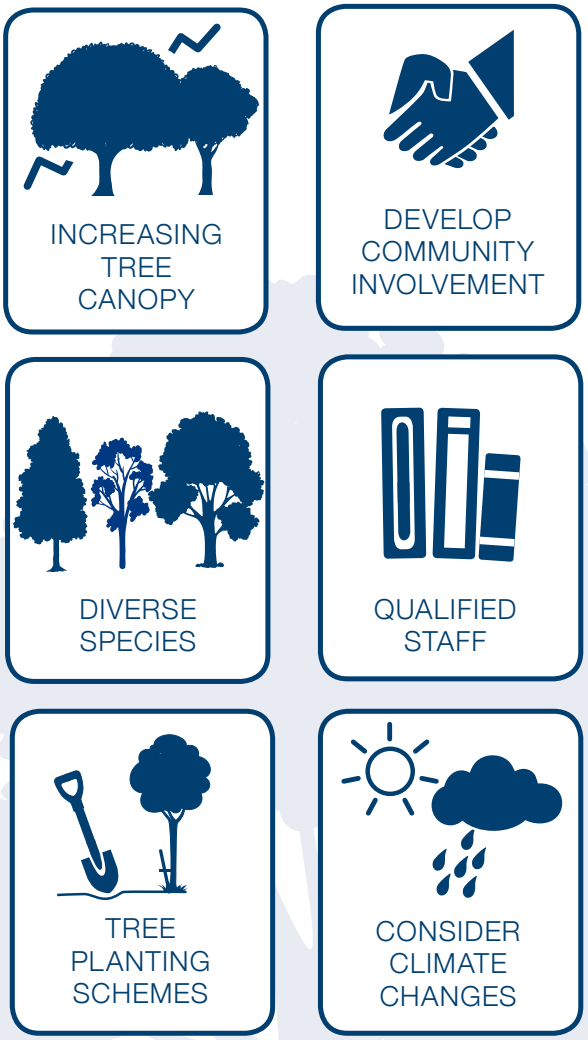
> "We will protect, maintain and enhance our tree population for the multiple benefits to the environment and the people living, working and visiting the Vale - now & for future generations to come."
>
> *Mission Statement*

- Ensure that all tree related decisions and activities are made in a consistent and structured way across all Council departments.
- Develop community involvement and continue to work closely with community groups, businesses and other land-owning organisations in dealing with tree related issues, including opportunities for grant aided funding.
- Increase tree planting and natural regeneration on Local Authority land and influence tree planting on new developments and private land through the planning system and the provision of grants.
- Prioritise increasing canopy cover in areas identified in the i.Tree survey with less than 10% cover.
- Prioritise tree planting in urban areas with the highest levels of deprivation.
- Establish a healthy and diverse tree population maintaining tree numbers and canopy cover and expanding wherever possible.
- Take into account the current and future changes in climate and manage the tree stock accordingly.
- Ensure that there is diverse species coverage to increase resilience and mitigate against future tree disease.
- Ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place.
- Deal with queries relating to trees from stakeholders in a consistent and effective manner.
- Protect the Council from any third-party risks associated with trees.
- The Council will continue to engage / closely work with community groups and relevant stakeholders to progress active participation projects (with such groups being: Penarth Tree Forum, Replant Rhoose, Replant Llantwit and Barry Action for Nature).
- Ensure all operational staff have received Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) training. (https://www.qtra.co.uk/)

The Strategy is intended to be a live document, with measurable aims and objectives. It is a statement of the Council's policies and procedures in relation to trees and their management.

This Strategy will be subject to a bi-annual review, particularly in the event of changes in environmental, cultural or social needs. The future Green Infrastructure Strategy will inform where maximum gains can be developed, enabling the Council to achieve its future aims and objectives.

Objectives:



The Strategy will also look at how we as a Council can influence and encourage developers to safeguard and retain existing trees and to plant trees as a matter of priority, particularly in new housing developments or major infrastructure projects.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 contains well-being goals that public bodies, including local authorities, must work to achieve. One of the seven well-being goals is to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecological resilience.

More recently, the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** has put in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales's natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up manner.

The planting and sustainable management of urban trees clearly meets with these Acts and the Welsh Government's overarching goal of taking care of the environment.

The Council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 to ensure that members of the public and employees are not put at risk because of any failure by the Council to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. A Risk Assessment is required under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. There is a need to inspect trees in or near public places, or adjacent to buildings or working areas to assess whether they represent a risk to life or property, and to take remedial action as appropriate.

The Welsh Government published **Woodlands for Wales** in 2018, updating an earlier version from 2001. The Strategy sets out an ambition of increasing woodland cover by 2,000 ha per annum and for tree cover to increase elsewhere as well as the following aims:

- Woodlands and trees are used more creatively in the green infrastructure in and around urban areas to provide people with better quality, easily accessible green space.
- Local authorities and others further develop their programmes of urban tree planting and woodland management and use the i-Tree Eco or similar tools to quantify the structure and environmental effects of urban trees and calculate their value to society.
- Communities are more involved in the decision making and management of woodlands and trees so that they deliver well-being benefits to more people.
- More people of all ages and backgrounds benefit from accessible woodland and trees as settings for education, learning and play, leading to an improved understanding of woodlands and trees and the wider benefits they provide in terms of our environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being, and more sustainable.

In March 2020, the First Minister for Wales announced the **National Forest for Wales** which would be a connected ecological network running throughout Wales and will play an important role in protecting nature and addressing biodiversity loss. The ambition is to create new woodlands and to maintain and restore ancient woodlands.

In November 2020, 14 sites were identified across Wales as the start of the National Forest. Grant aid was provided in 2021 to stimulate new woodland planting, due to the success of the pilot scheme Welsh Government opened a new round of funding in June 2022, under The Woodland Investment Scheme (TWIG), it is anticipated that will continue in future years.

I-Tree Eco – 2021

The Natural Resources Wales **'Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities'** was set up to provide baseline information for every local authority and suggest ways forward that would help increase the tree cover. The Report for the Vale of Glamorgan was published in 2017. The Report shows a decline in both tree cover and the number of mature trees in the Vale in the period 2009 – 2013. Clearly setting goals for increasing tree cover and identifying opportunities on both public and private land are recommended as ways of responding to the loss and the need to redress it.

The Council has since commissioned an i.Tree survey of the Vale *(see Appendix 1)* to provide an update picture of canopy cover in 2021/22. The Survey shows that the Vale's current urban canopy cover is 13%, a slight increase on the previous report carried out and the rural areas having 14% canopy cover. This Survey provides vital background evidence for this Strategy.

The Council has devised this Strategy so that it focuses on local needs and demand but which also helps deliver the wider aims at a regional and national levels in relation to trees, nature and climate.

The national, regional and local policy documents that have assisted in the development of this Strategy are at Appendix 1.

THE VALUE OF TREES

Trees provide a range of benefits that can be both direct and indirect. These benefits can be broken down into environmental, cultural, social, economic and health and wellbeing.

Reducing Air Pollution

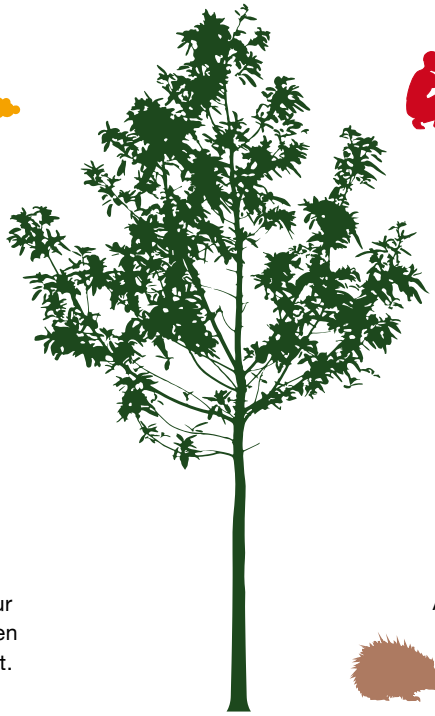
Street trees improve air quality by absorbing pollutants and intercepting harmful particulates.

Fighting Climate Change

Increasing tree cover in towns and cities by just 10% can keep surface temperatures at current levels despite climate change.
(University of Manchester)

Improving Image

Street trees improve the image of our neighbourhoods and make them even better places to live, work and invest.



Building Communities

Getting residents involved in caring for their trees helps them re-connect with their neighbours.

Boosting Health

Research shows that children who live in tree-lined streets have lower rates of asthma.
(Columbia University, USA)

Benefiting Wildlife

As well as being great for people, street trees also offer much needed habitat for wildlife too.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Tackling climate change and reducing air pollution

Trees can help reduce overall exposure to air pollutants harmful to human health, such as nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) through absorption or interception. Trees can also reduce local temperatures which reduces the rate at which some pollutants (e.g. ozone, O_3) are formed. With appropriate species selection and planting design trees and hedges can decrease air pollution by trapping dust and absorbing air pollutants such as ozone and particulates. This is especially important along busy transport corridors shared by vehicles cyclists and pedestrians.

It is estimated that the Vale of Glamorgan's urban forest removes **36 tonnes** of airborne pollutants each year, including NO_2/NO_x (nitrogen dioxide/oxides of nitrogen), O_3 (ozone), SO_2 (sulphur dioxide), CO (carbon monoxide) and PM (particulate matter) (for further information on sources and health implications of these pollutants, see iTree report). Ozone is removed in the greatest quantity, with over **24 tonnes** removed per year.

The annual removal of airborne pollutants by trees in the Vale of Glamorgan's urban forest is valued at **£212,481** per year.

This Tree Strategy will feed into the Vale of Glamorgan Council's climate change challenge plan. This Plan sets out the Council's commitment to achieving net zero by 2030 as a Council and net zero by 2050 as a country. *Project Zero Challenge Plan* (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk).

Carbon Storage & sequestration

Reducing CO_2 emissions could help reduce the impact of climate change. CO_2 can be removed from the atmosphere by trees and stored within their woody components. These trees can continue to isolate carbon throughout their lifetime. In the UK it is estimated that trees remove four million tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year.

It is estimated that the Vale of Glamorgan's urban forest stores a total of **57,314 tonnes** of carbon and sequester **1,977 tonnes** annually. 1 Tonne of CO_2 is equivalent to 85% of the average annual mileage (6,800 miles) for a small petrol car in the United Kingdom.

Producing Oxygen

The process of photosynthesis in plants including trees takes in carbon dioxide and this results in the release of oxygen purifying the atmosphere.

Mitigation of climate change

Trees provide natural shade in hot weather, shelter from prevailing winds and reducing the need to use energy for air conditioning and heating.

Trees and Flooding

As well as protecting and enhancing the urban environment trees and green spaces can provide complimentary benefits to surface water management.

These benefits are mainly through:

- Transpiration – through their leaves trees evaporate water into the air and thus reduce water in the soil around their roots.
- Interception – reducing the amount of water that reaches the ground by absorbing rain through leaves.
- Increased infiltration and attenuation of water – tree roots, and the soil in the planting pits, increase the capacity of the ground to hold water by keeping the soil structure open. The retained water can be used by the tree or will infiltrate into the surrounding ground.
- Phytoremediation – using plants to turn harmful chemicals into less harmful substances e.g. trees taking in carbon monoxide from vehicle exhausts, storing the carbon and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere.

A variety of engineering techniques are available to manage surface water but planting with a range of tree pits and planters can collect and slow down the flow of water in heavy storm events.

Future maintenance is also an important issue that needs to be considered to ensure trees remain healthy and continue to deliver surface water management benefits. Trees can also assist in managing erosion along slopes adjacent to rivers or roads. For guidance, please refer to the SuDS manual (section 19). *See link - Item Detail* (ciria.org). Depending on the scale of wider works associated with a planting scheme, tree pits could be part of a wider SuDS scheme requiring SAB approval. In which case the entire SuDS strategy would have to be in accordance with the Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems in Wales, available here.

Trees in the Vale of Glamorgan's urban forest intercept an estimated 78,438m^3 of rain fall per year, this saves £135,838 in avoided sewerage charges.

Benefitting Wildlife

Trees play a vital role in our urban ecosystem, providing many benefits for wildlife. Birds, bats, mammals and invertebrates use trees, scrub and hedgerows as roosts, nesting sites and feeding areas, while deadwood associated with these habitats is valuable for a variety of organisms such as bacteria, insects, lichens and fungi which help decompose the deadwood. The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) and the Councils Biodiversity Forward Plan aim to conserve and enhance our natural environment to protect these species and habitats and leave a legacy for future generations. The NRAP consists of a series of plans for priority habitats and species which are considered to be under threat locally and nationally. There are several woodland and plantation sites within the Vale that are important in biodiversity terms with many designated as Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Importance for Nature Conversation and so forth,.

Any planned work on trees or woodland on Council land will take account of the NRAP/ Biodiversity Forward Plan / Environment (Wales) Act and will work towards helping the Council meet its aims and objectives. This consideration will also be given when providing advice, guidance and planning recommendations provided to private landowners.

Cultural & Social Benefits

Trees are important for setting the context for everyday living, for providing a link to the past and for marking the passage of time through seasonal changes. In many locations they can be distinctive and local landmarks.

Landscape value and features are important to cities with trees and hedges adding to this value by providing physical features such as historical boundaries, rides and woodlands. Trees have an architectural and place-making role. On a local level they can improve the quality of our environment by screening, enhancing the sense of scale, reducing glare from buildings and hard surfaces, directing pedestrians, slowing vehicular traffic. They bring colour and character to our urban and rural areas.

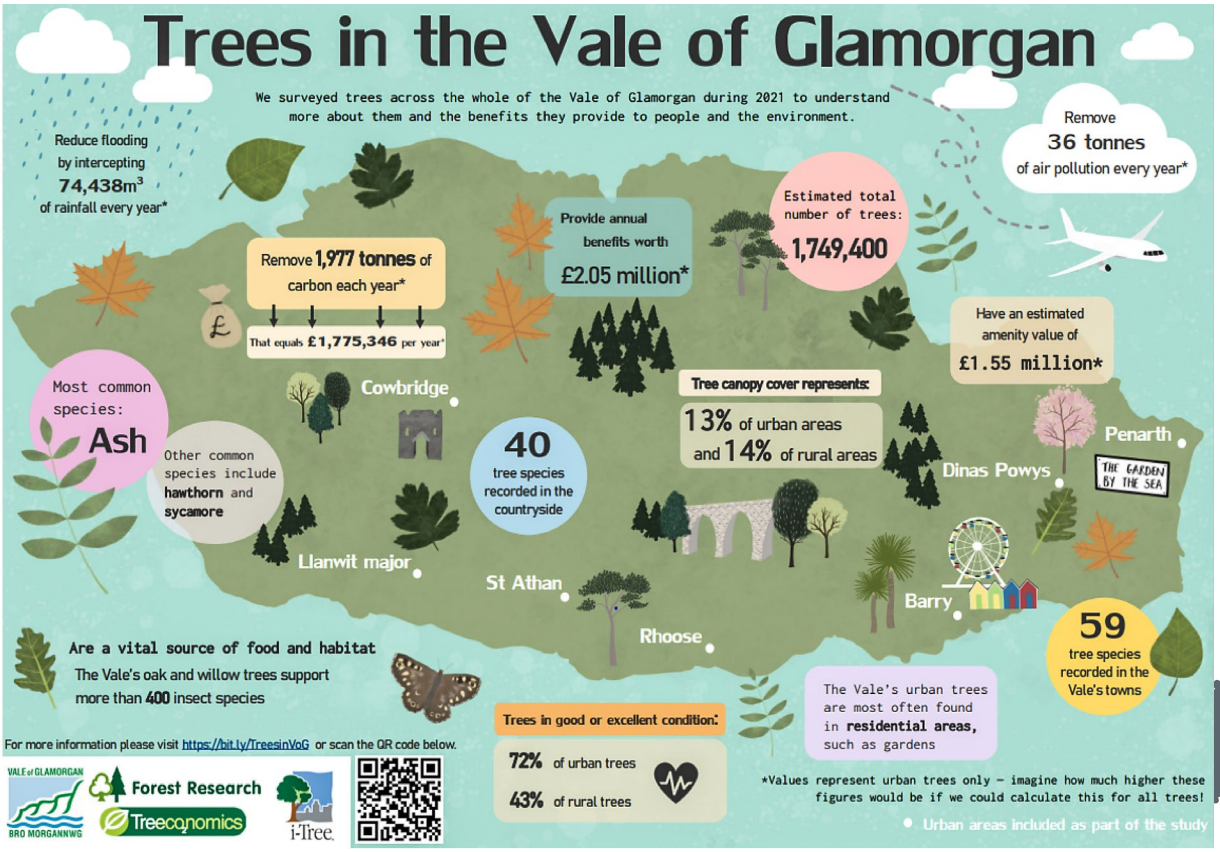
- Providing amenity, aesthetic value and historical continuity. Many of the Victorian centres of towns in the Vale are notable for their street trees whilst in parks and churchyards there are many veteran trees. Maintaining this heritage requires good tree management and a programme of continued planting to ensure continuity.
- Marking the changing seasons with leaf changes, leaf fall and floral displays
- Symbolising community focal points
- Encouraging walking and cycling through the creation of more attractive routes
- Social cohesion – from campaigning to save threatened trees, being involved in the active management of urban and rural green spaces and carrying out tree planting
- Local identity where trees form an important part of our immediate landscapes.

Health and Well Being

International studies and research have identified that urban trees provide ‘breathing spaces’ in cities, decrease respiratory problems by ‘capturing’ airborne pollutants, provide environments that encourage walking and cycling, reduce traffic speeds and generally help to reduce stress. The Nature Conservancy report ‘Funding Trees for Health’ demonstrates these benefits.

- Reducing skin cancers by providing shade from harmful ultra-violet radiation.
- Reducing stress and illness by providing psychological refreshment and a sense of wellbeing through softening the built environment, creating character and a sense of place and permanence.
- Releasing scents and aromas that provide a positive emotional response contributing to health and well-being.
- Being outdoors more in the environment thanks to the shade of tree cover.

The Environmental Benefit of Trees within the Vale of Glamorgan



Economic Benefits

Our trees can make the Vale of Glamorgan a more attractive place to live, work and play and thus contribute to inward investment in new and expanding enterprises and more jobs. Good quality landscaping has been found to contribute up to 20% in the value of properties.

- Potential to increase property values.
- Providing a sustainable source of graded timber and mulch.
- Providing a sustainable source of woodchip for biofuel.
- Providing a sustainable source of compost (leaf litter)
- When planted strategically trees can reduce fossil fuel emissions by reducing fuel costs for heating and cooling buildings.
- Reducing flooding severity frequency due to impact on surface water runoff.
- Economic value by decreasing health budget spend.
- Urban amenity trees within the Vale have an approximate value of £1.55m.

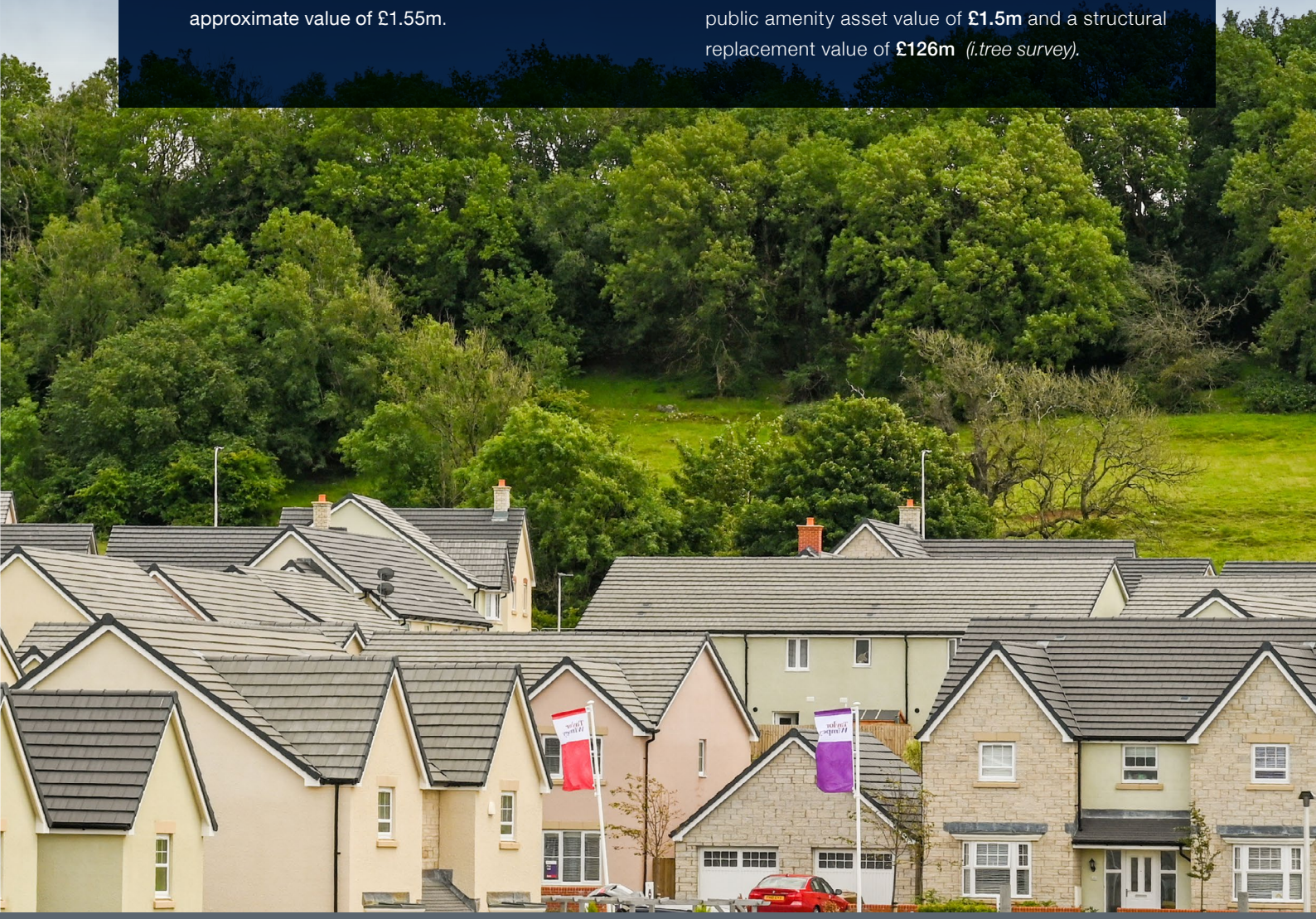
Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT)

CAVAT provides a method for managing trees as public assets rather than liabilities. It is designed to be a strategic tool to aid decision-making about the tree stock as a whole and to be used where the value of a single tree needs to be calculated in monetary terms. The Council uses CAVAT as a method for use in decisions concerning individual trees or groups.

In summary CAVAT delivers:

- A monetary value for amenity trees based on tree size having a trunk formula valuation method adjusted for tree health and function.
- It adjusts valuations for human population density to account for all potential beneficiaries.
- The system using the 'Full Method' can be used to give compensation values for damaged public trees.
- The 'Quick Method' has informed urban forest succession planning and resource allocation.

The Vale of Glamorgan's urban forest has an estimated public amenity asset value of **£1.5m** and a structural replacement value of **£126m** *(i.tree survey).*



TREES IN OTHER LOCATIONS

Woodlands

In the Vale of Glamorgan there are approximately 2,231 hectares of broadleaved woodland and 427 hectares of coniferous woodland found throughout the county, canopy cover within urban areas is 13% and rural areas 14%. In some areas woodlands occur in urban settings and provide important spaces for people and wildlife. Research undertaken by Plantlife has shown that many of our woodlands are undermanaged or unmanaged leading to a loss of wildlife due to over shading and invasive species such as Rhododendron.

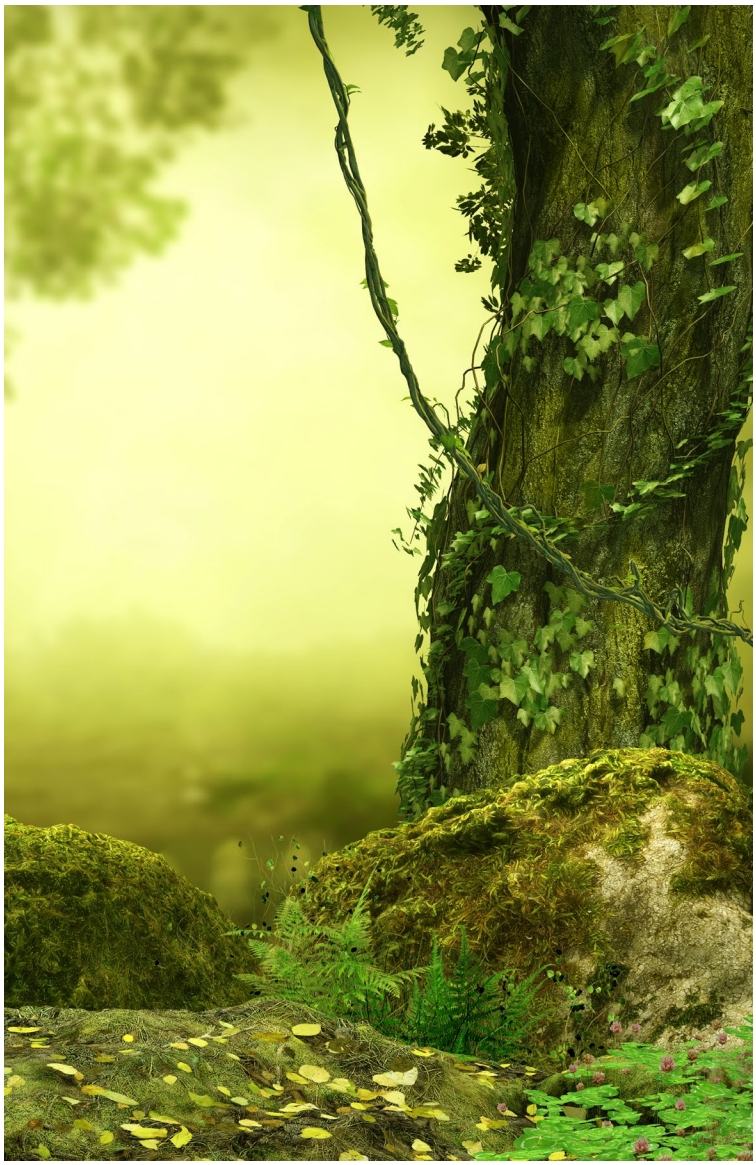
There are important groups and areas of woodland in the Vale some of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. Such areas include the Barry Woodlands complex, Hensol Wood, Porthkerry Woodlands, Leckwith Woodlands.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands

Ancient woods are those which have been continuously wooded since 1600 and are home to more threatened species than any other habitat in the UK. A closely-knit network of plants and animals, some of which are rare and vulnerable, has developed and are dependent on the stable conditions which these ancient woodlands provide. Therefore, if tree species change, they may become threatened and vulnerable to climate change. It is the closest we have to natural woodland in the UK and is an irreplaceable part of our heritage. Many have been left to develop naturally but most have been altered in some way with additional planting.

Mixed woodlands and Conifer plantations

Mixed woodlands include both broadleaved and coniferous trees to varying degrees. It may have been that previous owners have planted specimen trees to add to the interest of a woodland or that conifers were used as a nurse crop for broadleaved trees and never completely removed. Some mixed woodlands will occur on ancient woodland sites and the aim should be to progressively remove the conifers in favour of the broadleaved trees.



> “Conifer plantations contain only conifers and often in a monoculture i.e., all the same species. Only three British native trees are coniferous - Scots Pine, Yew and Juniper. So, these plantations are made up of non-native species that are grown for timber or wood pulp.
> In the Vale there are areas of coniferous woodlands. Like the mixed woodland they are often planted to replace broadleaved trees but have also planted on heathlands and other poor-quality land.
> The aim should be to return these to their former state wherever possible.”

Veteran trees

Veteran trees are usually in their second or mature stage of life and have exceptional cultural, landscape and nature conservation value. Veteran trees are identified by signs of aging. They may have started hollowing out and have patches of decay, broken branches or flaking bark that provide holes, cavities and crevices in the trunk and large limbs which are especially important for roosting and nesting bats and birds. However, decay and other physical defects can pose a danger to the public and this must be managed as appropriate.

Orchards

There are many orchards in the Vale of Glamorgan with several craft cider and perry makers. More recently there has been increased interest in the development of Community Orchards and the planting of fruit trees in urban and peri-urban areas where people can help themselves. Community orchards have been planted at Porthkerry Country Park, Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, Wenvoe, White Farm, Barry, with other orchards across the Vale.

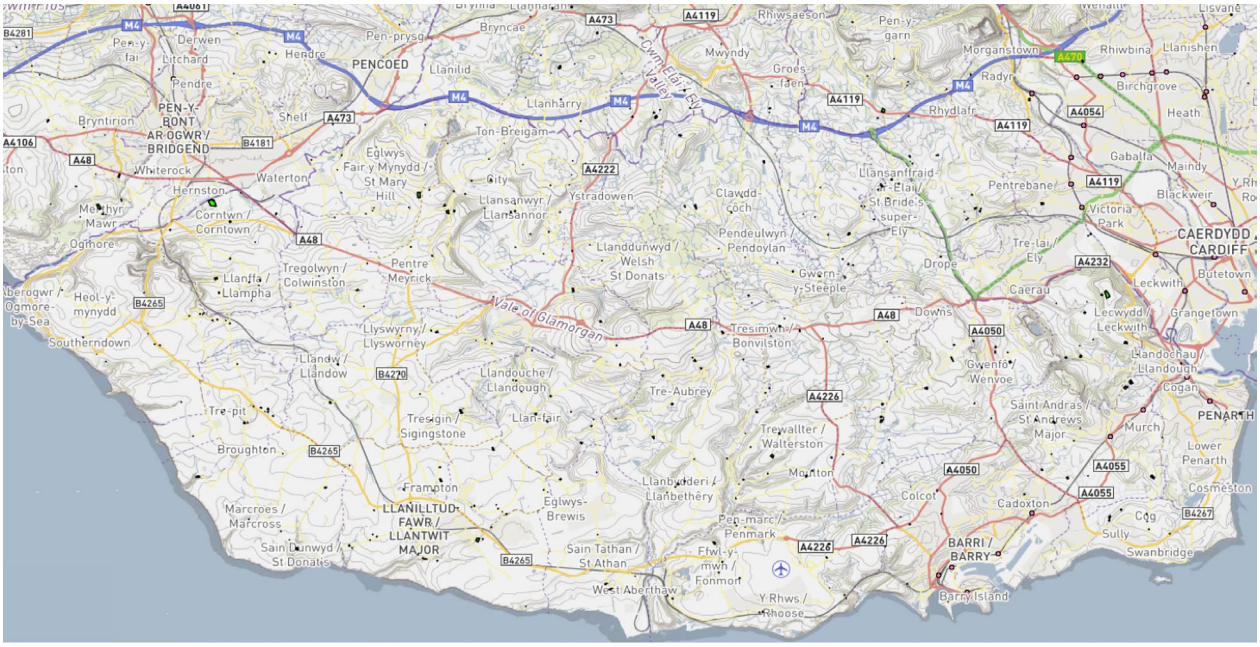


Fig 1- Orchards in the Vale of Glamorgan.

KNOWING WHAT YOU'VE GOT

Understanding our tree population

Before we can consider the future of the Council's tree stock we need to know what we have now and consequently our inventory needs to cover all Council owned land. We also need to be aware of trees, woodlands and orchards elsewhere.

Trees can be considered in terms of individual tree numbers and species. However, to supplement the inventory data an iTree canopy survey has been undertaken to supplement the data in the NRW tree report for urban areas within the Vale. Latest estimated figures indicate that canopy cover in urban areas within the Vale was 13.4% in 2009 and down to 12.3% in 2013.

The recent I.Tree survey carried out in 2021/2022 has indicated a canopy over 13% in urban areas and 14% canopy cover in rural areas. However, this falls below WG target of 20%.

The i.Tree study highlights areas of good and poor tree cover and identifies areas for future tree planting allowing assessment of the required level of investment to deliver improvements to the environment and the health of its residents. The Study will provide the Council with information policy makers can use to take full account of trees in future decision making.

Canopy cover targets

The Vale will commit to increasing canopy cover by 7.5% on the Council owned estate by 2039. Connectivity will be integral to all future works. The number of new trees that can be planted is governed by several factors including availability of planting land, funding etc.

POLICIES, GUIDELINES & ACTION PLANS

The Strategy aims to ensure responsible proactive management, maintenance and protection of its tree population.

The Council will prioritise the maintenance and protection of existing trees to maximise the benefits of these assets.

By promoting the benefits of trees and their management requirements, the Council will assist the community in active participation projects including the Friends Tree Initiative, a Tree Warden Scheme and tree planting initiatives. Details of such initiatives will be promoted on the Council's website and other media.

It is generally recognised that large trees, particularly in our towns bring considerably more benefits than smaller trees. Finding room for large trees can be a problem in many locations, especially in residential or urban streets. The Right Tree, Right Place approach is intended to allow any trees planted to reach full height and maturity and remove the requirement for regular pruning, which is very resource intensive, as well as to minimise any later nuisance impact.

Additionally, the Council will explore financial options to increase tree planting in urban areas to increase the canopy cover. This will include working with partners who may be able to access additional funding for trees not available directly to the Council.

> "The Council will utilise a tree management and associated GIS database system to manage the tree population by ensuring they are incorporated into a cyclical program to meet statutory obligations, resources, and service demands."

The Council will implement a system to manage the risk posed by trees. As part of this process the Council already ensures that its trees are inspected on a regular basis and a proactive management regime and reactive maintenance arrangements are in place to deal with residents' concerns. This Strategy will further promote the updating of the Council's systems to ensure they meet the legal requirement placed upon the Council.

As part of these statutory obligations the Council is required to have a proactive programme of inspection. The Council will put in place a plan that ensures each individual tree in the Vale is inspected every three years. Where remediation work has been identified works will be prioritised dependant on the level of risk. Further information is detailed in the Appendix 2 Tree risk management strategy.

At present trees that are removed are replaced on a two for one basis, the Council's Parks, Gardens and Country Parks, usually acting as the receptor sites. Where highway trees have been removed, they are normally replaced off the highway estate, however, if resources are available trees will be replaced within street locations where suitable.

This Strategy seeks to identify planting opportunities closer to the highway, wherever possible, particularly in areas where tree cover is low. The Council has a rolling programme of preparing management plans for its parks and other green spaces. Management plans may serve a variety of needs such as maintaining health and safety risk assessments, providing work programmes prioritising resources, seeking funding and applying for and retaining the valued Green Flag accreditation.

A voluntary Friendship Tree scheme has already been established, in some parks, to encourage and enable

community involvement in tree and woodland management. This Strategy seeks opportunities for expanding this role by exploring the appetite for a Vale wide tree 'friends' scheme. The Strategy also seeks to increase involvement in tree planting programmes across its schools and within local communities.

Like all living organisms, trees are subject to decay at some point in their lifespan. However poor the physical condition of a tree, remedial action is only necessary where there is a clearly quantifiable risk to life or property. This might mean removing part of the tree, the whole tree, or for example, reducing the level of public access in the vicinity.

> "Risk is related to the location of the tree. It reflects the intensity of use of the immediate surroundings of the tree and the proximity of the tree to people, buildings or other structures *(targets)*."

THE TREE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that tree inspection procedures are in place and that they are undertaken only by staff or others who meet the requirements of competence.

The tree assessment programme has four stages;

1. Assessment of risk;
2. Assessment of hazard;
3. Prescription for remedial action and
4. A plan for the recording and re-inspection process.

As part of the Council's statutory obligations, it has a proactive program of tree inspections. The Council will put in place a Plan that ensures each individual tree in the Vale is inspected every three years, where remediation has been identified works will be prioritised dependant on the level of risk.

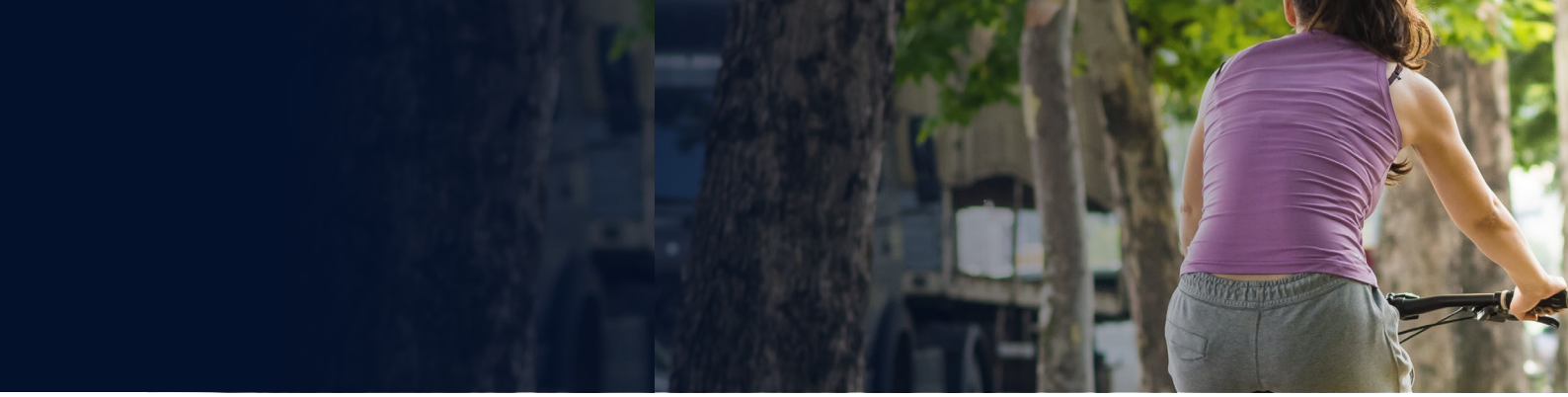
When prescribing work the Council also recognises that in addition to the risk assessment, there is a need to carry out an ecological assessment to protect bats, birds and other protected species.

It is imperative for safe delivery that competent arboricultural professionals are integral to the Plan and the carrying out of duties in relation to this. This will ensure accurate, efficient and informed decisions with duty of care being met in all circumstances where possible.

The Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) *(Ellison, 2005)* Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (qtra.co.uk) is accepted within the arboricultural industry as an appropriate risk assessment tool to assist either in reaching decisions regarding the future management of a tree identified to have significant faults, or to identify the appropriate interval between, or intensity of, tree inspection regimes. (Appendix 2)

QTRA is not intended to be predictive but instead estimates the probability of the risk of harm to the public, property or vehicles (over a period of one year). This is estimated in terms of the likelihood of the event that a tree or tree part fails and that this event coincides with the occupation of the "target" zone (the area likely to be impacted were a tree to fail), by a pedestrian, vehicle or property.

The Council has invested financially in developing the necessary skills of staff to undertake QTRA surveys and this will be rolled out to key staff within all departments, to ensure a generic approach to tree assessment across the Council.

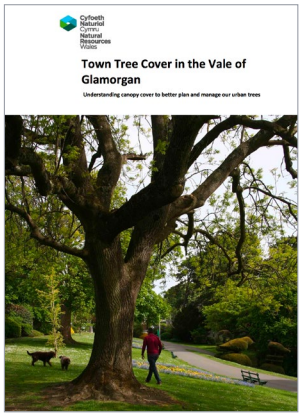


Highway Trees

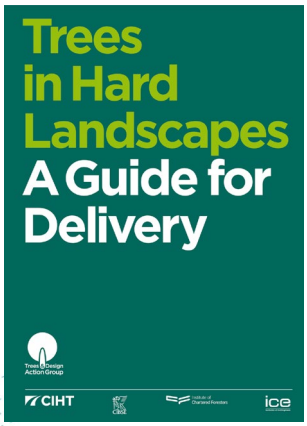
The Council, is responsible for maintaining its local highway network in a condition that is safe for users. In addition to this safety duty, the Council is required to comply with all necessary ecological and environmental legislation in managing and enhancing the street tree population within the urban environment.

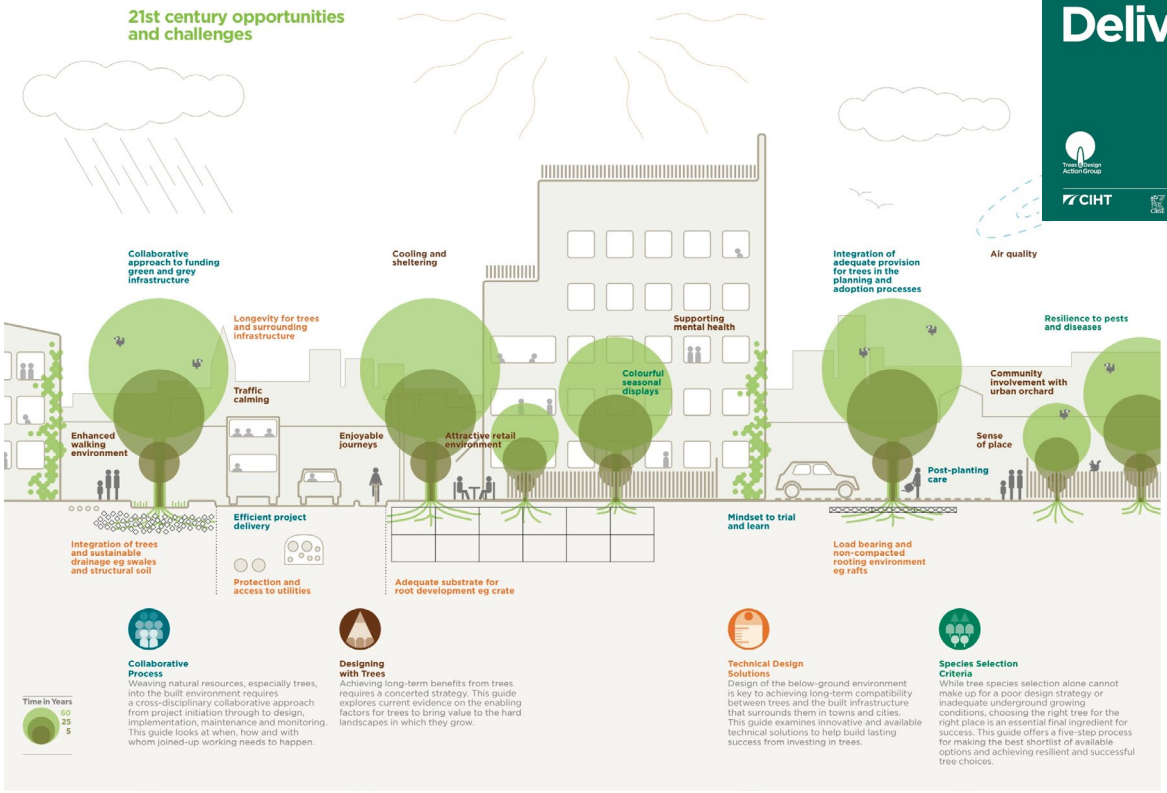
Trees bring with them both benefits and liabilities that can, on occasions, lead to conflict. Many of the liabilities and their associated costs are estimated by highway and tree managers, who deal with customer concerns, whilst the benefits can sometimes be seen as difficult to quantify. Trees growing in pavements, or hard surfaces, grow in relatively harsh conditions and their roots can result in deformations of the surface.

A Natural Resources Wales study found that the Vale has lost 471 street trees during 2006 to 2013.
Town Tree Cover in the Vale of Glamorgan (naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)



For examples of typical detail requirements for a tree set in a Highway footpath see: “Trees in Hard Landscapes, a Guide for Delivery’
https://www.tdag.org.uk/trees-in-hard-landscapes.html





In order to redress this balance and recognising that street trees offer benefits opportunities to plant trees will be pursued in street locations, particularly in areas where trees have been removed, subject to available resources.

When planning any future planting on the highway, careful consideration will be given to the species, available space, location and constraints of a particular site. Planting will prioritise larger growing shade providing trees, scaling down to smaller ornamental trees where larger trees are not suitable. The Council will also look to establish a diversity of tree species to mitigate against pests and disease that can threaten entire species.

Housing (Communal Land) Trees

Vale Homes provide services to over 4000 council tenants, making the Council, the largest landlord in the Vale. Individual tenants are responsible for trees in their gardens. Trees on communal housing land, are the responsibility of the Council.

Future planting in communal housing land will reflect the need for a variety of species and the need to provide an attractive environment. Future tree planting, in these areas, will involve discussions with neighbourhood housing officers to ensure the local community are consulted, aware and supportive.

Parks and Gardens

There are many parks and gardens throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. From urban parks in Barry and Penarth to rural parks across the Vale as well as playing fields to local nature reserves and country parks. Parks contain a high proportion of large, mature, high asset value trees and provide habitats that increase biodiversity levels in the area as a whole. The Council is committed to the quality management and enhancement of these important assets.

Careful consideration will be given to future tree planting at these sites to ensure a mix of species and ages of trees.

Leckwith Woods and the two Country Parks, Porthkerry and Cosmeston Lakes contain high proportions of large, mature, high asset value trees and provide habitats that increase biodiversity levels in the area as a whole. In light of this and the numerous other benefits trees provide the Council is committed to the high-quality management of this important asset and understands proactive management can provide all levels and ages for our residents and visitors.

> “Parks and Country Parks will also continue to offer a memorial and sponsored tree service, where the purchaser can choose and purchase a tree from an approved list of trees.”

Education

Trees on education sites have historically been dealt with by each individual school. Discussions will be held with schools with the aim of incorporating education sites into the Council's inspection program to ensure statutory obligations in regarding to trees are met. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision regarding this will, remain with the schools governing body.

The 21st Century Schools Officer will liaise with Planning department and Ecologists with regards to future schemes, this will ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place, this will ensure that the project will be of maximum educational value.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries come under the control of the individual churches/chapels, the Church in Wales, Community Councils and the Council. Cemeteries can contribute enormously to biodiversity as the long running 'Caring for Gods Acre' charity has proved plus they often contain interesting and ancient trees.

> "We will work with all interested groups and partner organisations to develop community involvement in tree planting schemes, whether it is on Council estate, private land or within the private sector. This will help create a sense of ownership for newly planted trees, developing a sense of pride."

Council owned Commercial sites

The Council owns and operates commercial sites which will be reviewed on an annual basis to ascertain opportunities to increase canopy cover. Any new commercial development will incorporate new plantings, such as the transport hub at the Docks office, Barry.

Working in Partnership

To achieve the ambitious Vision set within this Strategy, the Council will work with communities, landowners, private sector, and other partnership organisations, to help ensure future success.

The Council is committed to building on and developing communication with all interested bodies, building on existing community support and volunteer engagement that currently exists.

We will work with all interested groups and partner organisations to develop community involvement in tree planting schemes, whether it is on Council estate, private land or within the private sector. This will help create a sense of ownership for newly planted trees, developing a sense of pride.

ACTION PLAN

How we will increase our canopy cover

The iTree Eco-survey has identified sites where new tree planting is both possible and most beneficial to improve canopy cover, air quality, flood prevention and habitat quality. It will not be possible to deliver target canopy cover on just Council owned land alone so other ways could be investigated.

These include:

- Use of planning conditions and obligations in Development Management
- Working with community partners on funding bids through mechanisms such as LNP
- Working with other bodies / individuals such as the Woodland Trust, NRW, landowners / farmers and organisations such as Penarth Civic Society, voluntary organisations and third sector.
- Working with private businesses, Community Councils, Public Health Board and Housing Associations.
- Giving advice, encouragement and raising awareness.

Tree planting - what we will do

There are many factors which need to be considered when planting urban trees involving both species selection and the actual growing and living conditions for the trees in the future. If trees merely survive, rather than thrive, then they will not provide the many benefits we plant them for such as their ecosystem benefits and aesthetic qualities.

A detailed action plan is attached at Appendix 3 that details the Councils approach to implementing the Tree Strategy.

Replacement planting

Replacement planting, particularly in urban areas is essential to ensure continuity of our tree stock and canopy cover, the Council recognises the fact that a single young tree takes many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature tree and that one replacement does not give the same benefit, nor does it have an immediate effect on the canopy cover.

If there is a need to remove trees the Council will ensure that an appropriate replacement take place in line with the table below, this will help us achieve our tree canopy cover target by 2039.

We will generally replace trees in the same location, but in some circumstances a nearby location may be more practical and appropriate i.e. right tree, right place. However, if trees are removed within woodlands we will allow natural regeneration to take place.

We will commit to a rolling programme of street tree replacement for age diversity. Redevelop existing tree pits where feasible to restore avenue planting subject to available funding and the specific case.

Trunk Diameter of existing tree (cm)	Number of replacement trees
Up to 39.9	2
40 to 49.9	3
50 to 59.9	4
60 to 69.9	5
70 to 79.9	6
80 plus	7

Local Provenance tree stock

The importation of tree diseases on stock meant for planting within the UK plus the acknowledgement of the importance of conserving local genetic distinctiveness in native species has meant that there is now an increasing and largely unmet demand for what is known as local provenance tree and shrub stock.
These are plants which have been grown from seeds, berries, nuts, fruit and occasionally grafts or layers of local trees and shrubs and then grown on locally. They are ideally suited to local conditions. The Woodland Trust and Llais y Goedwig are working to establish community tree nurseries and some other charities and private companies are now also starting to supply local provenance material.

Future tree planting

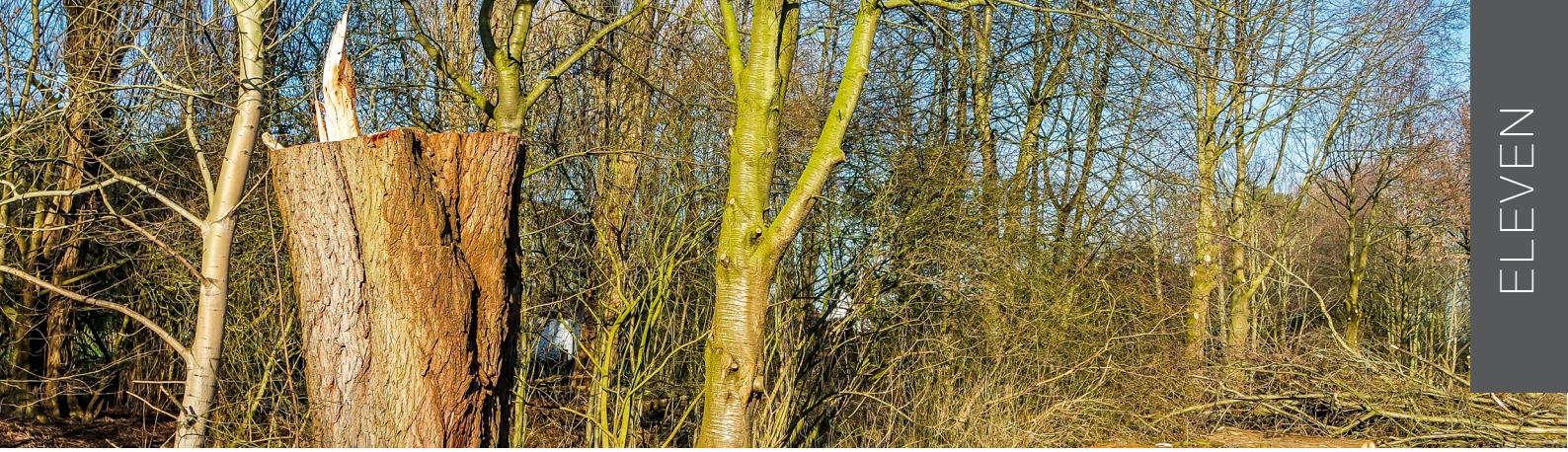
Climate change means that the range and distribution of trees, tree pests and diseases will change over time. Increasing temperatures may allow more non-native trees to survive over a wider area, but reduce the suitability of some native tree species, especially in urban areas across the Vale. This presents challenges for how we manage our existing tree stock and our future planting programmes:

- Consideration of the future climatic suitability of new trees as the climate in Wales, especially given the long- life span of many trees
- Consideration of how our existing tree stocks may be affected by changing climatic conditions and potentially greater frequency of extreme weather events.
- Impact of pests and diseases – how to build resilience in our existing tree stock and reduce the risks to new planting.

Whilst trees will be affected by climate change, they are part of the solution to how we mitigate and adapt to the challenges that climate change presents. There are many factors which we need to consider when planting urban trees, woodland trees and hedgerows, involving both species selection and the actual growing and living conditions for the trees in the future.

Natural Regeneration

Natural regeneration is where nature is left to its own devices. The removal or reduction of grazing pressure on grasslands will result in the development of taller vegetation. Depending on the availability of nearby seed sources, scrub will soon develop followed by young trees that then result in new woodland. Natural regeneration works best near or next to existing woodland where species can spread through natural methods in the natural regeneration area.



OTHER TREE ISSUES

Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) can be placed on single trees, groups of trees and even whole woodlands. If a TPO is in force Council approval must be sought before carrying out any work to the trees covered. Unauthorised work to a tree (either protected by a TPO or a tree within a conservation area) is a criminal offence **Trees and Hedges** (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Conservation Areas

All trees with a stem diameter of 75mm or more (measured at 1.5 metres above natural ground level) are protected in a Conservation Area. Anyone intending to carry out any work to a tree in a Conservation Area has a requirement to notify the Council. If there are concerns that the work may be damaging to the amenity of the area, consideration will be given to issuing a Tree Preservation Order.

What type of trees can be covered by a TPO?

Any tree may be covered by a TPO as there is no minimum size, but bushes or shrubs of any size cannot be protected. TPO's protect trees that make their local surroundings more attractive. Protected trees should normally be visible from a public place, but in some cases other trees may be protected.

Applying for work to a protected tree

If you wish to undertake work to a tree within a Conservation Area or a tree covered by a TPO, you should complete the application form for tree works. The form and guidance can be assessed from the planning section of the Vale of Glamorgan website **Planning and Building Control** (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

How do I find out if a tree has a TPO or is in a Conservation Area?

The Council's website contains an interactive map. Locate the site you are interested in and then select the Environment and Planning category on the map. You can then select 'conservation area' or 'tree preservation order' to see if the site contains protected trees. See link - **Trees and Hedges** (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Felling Licences

Under the Forestry Act 1967 (as amended) the volume of growing timber which can be felled in each calendar quarter without a Felling Licence is restricted. The controls are administered by Natural Resources Wales and subject to certain exemptions, prevent the felling of trees not covered by a TPO, within a Conservation Area or other restrictions.

Occasionally the Felling Licence controls overlap with the TPO and Conservation Area legislation and it is necessary for officers from each organisation to liaise with each other. When carrying out work to trees on its own land the council must have regard to the Felling Licence controls and seek consent from CNC/NRW.
See link - Natural Resources Wales / Apply for a felling licence

Biosecurity

The increase in the number of pests and diseases affecting trees and woodlands makes biosecurity very important. Human activity is the key factor in the spread of tree pests and diseases present in the soil (i.e. mud) or on plant material.
See link - Information Portal » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)

Arboriculture Officers, Parks and Open Spaces operatives and Countryside Rangers follow Forestry Commission guidance on biosecurity to reduce the risk of spread. This guidance recommends ensuring clothing and equipment is cleaned regularly to avoid spreading material from site to site, sourcing trees from trustworthy nurseries that supply UK grown healthy stock and ensuring vehicles are kept free of mud and debris. Members of the public visiting woodland will be encouraged to follow biosecurity measures that are relevant to the risk and in accordance with best practice advice.

As well as being irresponsible and illegal, the tipping of garden waste in the countryside increases the risk of tree pests and diseases. There is also a risk of spreading invasive plants.

Trees in an urban environment

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

With any population of trees there are several common sources of complaints including overhanging branches, shade, leaf/fruit fall, obstruction and physical damage, etc. Some of these problems can be dealt with by regular management by the appropriate landowner. (See Appendix 4 for FAQ's).

Damage and vandalism

Damage to trees, both deliberate and through ignorance, is common. Criminal damage includes cutting down or lopping or topping, snapping saplings, setting fires beneath trees and various other attempts to kill Council trees. Some damage to trees is through ignorance for example by failing to maintain trees or leaving on stakes, ties metal grilles etc. or through the fixing of decorative lights which are not loosened on a regular basis.

Damage related to highway use and maintenance, causes compaction of rooting areas, branches can be torn branches by high vehicles, the installation of driveways cutting across verges or through contamination from salt in grit or hydrocarbons. Enforcement action will be taken against anyone who damages Council trees.
The council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.

Pests and diseases

Climate change is changing and extending the range of pests and diseases and this will affect the UK as new pests and diseases become more common in this country. In the 1970's Dutch Elm disease was introduced into the UK and is one of the most well-known examples of a 'new' pathogen dramatically changing the look and makeup of our urban forest.

The following are some of those currently present in the Vale or which could pose a threat in the

> "The importation of trees, along with their associated soil and packaging materials, from across Europe and elsewhere continues to bring threats and these imported pests and diseases are already having an effect on the tree population of the Vale."

future: Ash dieback, Dutch elm disease, horse chestnut leaf miner. With other diseases spreading in to parts of the UK such as acute oak decline (in the Midlands), sweet chestnut blight (most in southern England but outbreaks elsewhere), Asian longhorn beetle (southern England), Gypsy moth (southern England).

> “Horse Chestnut is affected by Bleeding Canker (*caused by Pseudomonas syringae pv. aesculi)* and Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner, both of which have been highly significant in the Vale, as well as much of the UK.”

The Council will only purchase new trees for planting from nurseries which work in accordance with strict bio-security polices and will use, wherever possible trees raised entirely in the UK.
Currently the main threat to our native oaks in the UK is from Acute Oak decline.

Ash dieback is also a significant issue which is a threat throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. Ash is the predominant tree species within the Vale and it is expected that there will be up to an 80% loss of the species.
See link - Notifiable pests - UK Plant Health Information Portal (defra.gov.uk)

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (Trees)

Part of this Strategy is to recognise the importance of trees as a material consideration in planning decisions. Awareness will continue to be raised with private owners, managers and developers of the importance of their trees and woods and the many benefits they provide our communities. Having a suitably qualified tree officer within the planning department to assess applications will help address the risk posed to trees through development.

Loss or damage through development

Demolition and construction can damage trees in a variety of ways. This may be through direct loss to make way for the development, a reduction in space for retained trees' future growth and spread, direct damage due to compaction of soil, severing roots or branches or from spill of chemicals or the use of fire. Infrastructure and service installation can also be damaging due to open trenching. For new trees, the presence of pre-existing or new utility provision must be carefully considered if future conflict is to be avoided.
The Councils tree stock and canopy cover will be increased by 7.5% by 2039 to give greater species and age diversity to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.

The Council will use its powers to prevent unnecessary damage to trees within all construction/development and pursue enforcement action where appropriate if trees are damaged or destroyed.
The council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.

Works in the vicinity of trees

The Council's specialist tree lead will be advised when works are to be carried out in the vicinity of retained council owned trees on development sites and as part of general works of highway, including by statutory undertakers, to enable the trees to be evaluated both before and after works. Any unacceptable damage caused to trees will be pursued.
The council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.

Permitted Development Rights

Where a planning application is needed, there is the opportunity for trees and hedges to be considered and protection sought if needed. If development is 'permitted' this means that no planning application is needed and there is no third party to assess removal or the potential damage to trees.

Probably of most relevance to our urban trees is maintenance and improvement of the highway by

Highways department, repairs to services by utility companies and small extensions or alteration to dwellings or commercial buildings.

Work associated with installation and repair of utility services

Street trees are very vulnerable to damage which can cause at best, loss in vigour and at worst, death, both of which may take several years to become evident. It also poses a health and safety risk if trees are made unstable (severing of major roots) and work just covered over. Such works undertaken in the vicinity of trees will follow National guidance document written by the National Joint Utilities Group.

See link - http://streetworks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/V4-Trees-Issue-2-16-11-2007.pdf

Highway Improvements

Raising the awareness of the impact of improvements on the existing tree stock encouraging suitable tree surveys to be undertaken and appropriate arboricultural advice to be obtained prior to developing and finalising proposals to minimise impact and protect trees where possible.

Specification, planting & maintenance

Unless a tree reaches maturity and is healthy, it cannot deliver its full benefits. Many of the trees in urban areas across the Vale are merely ‘surviving, not thriving’ wasting the time and finance invested in their purchase and planting.

To ensure that the trees we plant reach their potential they need to be correctly sourced, planted, established and then maintained. Poor planting with trees planted too deep, in tree pits with inappropriate surfacing or small soil volumes either kills or stunts the trees.

Poor establishment maintenance (particularly insufficient watering), tree guards, stakes and grilles left in place so damaging to bark and stems and a lack of thinning of plantations also reduces the value our tree stock.

As mentioned above a limited palette of trees species reduces species diversity and also the landscape value. Correct species choice for the final setting of the mature tree is essential at the initial design stage.

For all planting and maintenance works we will be guided by:

BS 3998:2010 Tree work: Recommendations

BS 8545:2014 Trees: From nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations

BS 3936-1:1992 Nursery stock: Specification for trees and shrubs.

TREE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1.	Trees in Council ownership will be inspected for safety, on a cycle between one and three years according to size, targets, condition and survey recommendation for each tree. This information will be recorded on the Council's data base.
2.	Tree inspections will only be undertaken by people who are qualified, experienced and competent to undertake the Quantified Tree Assessment (QTRA) survey method.
3.	The Council will prioritise tree work according to the individual tree's health & safety risk, taking into account current available resources. Tree works will normally be completed in safety priority order.
4.	The Council will not carry out works to trees, or fell them, unless it is necessary to do so. When works are carried out, the reasons for the work will be documented and recorded.
5.	The Council accepts the right of householders to remove overhanging branches, (subject to compliance with Tree Preservation Orders and/or Conservation Area status) and where required will assist householders to identify a suitable arboriculture contractor who can carry out works to the appropriate standard.
6.	For non-emergency tree-related safety issues the Council will aim to carry out a tree inspection within 20 working days of receipt of the enquiry and the customer notified thereafter within 10 working days of what action the Council intends to take.
7.	The Council will make safe any unacceptable carriageway obstruction due to street trees owned by the council affecting the safe passage of highway users.
8.	The Council will undertake work to a tree in Council ownership to maintain (where reasonably feasible) a minimum 5.05m height clearance over the carriageway.
9.	The Council will undertake work to a Council owned tree to maintain a minimum (where reasonably feasible) 2.4m height clearance over a footway.
10.	The Council will undertake work to a tree in is ownership to ensure that it does not unduly obstruct the streetlight zone of illumination.
11.	The Council will undertake work to a tree in its ownership to ensure that it does not unduly obstruct traffic signals or street signs.
12.	Where trees are potentially impacted by vehicle crossover applications, the Council's Tree Manager will be consulted by the highway department. A site visit may be necessary to make a decision on whether the tree has amenity value and should remain, or whether removal and replacement would be the best and most sustainable solution. Any costs associated with tree removal and replacement of a tree is to be borne by the applicant, with these costs being calculated by using the CAVAT value of the individual tree.
13.	The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree simply because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.
14.	The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce leaf fall or remove fallen leaves from private property.

15. The Council will not prune or remove trees in cases where they cause a reduced amount of light to fall on a property.

16. The Council will not prune or fell a Council tree to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees or remove bird droppings from private land.

17. The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce the nuisance of fruit/berries or nuts or remove such fallen fruit from private land.

18. The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce honeydew or other sticky residue from trees.

19. The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce the release of pollen.

20. The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to prevent perceived interference with TV / satellite installation / reception.

21. The Council will not prune, fell or cut the roots of a Council owned tree to prevent roots entering a drain. Tree roots will not normally penetrate an unbroken drain. If a drain is already broken, tree roots may penetrate it. The simple remedy is to repair the drain.

22. In the event that a Council tree is causing damage to property, the Council will aim to respond within 10 working days and, if appropriate, remedial works will be undertaken. For emergency tree incidents, it will aim to attend within 2 hours of its report to assess the situation and start the process of making the site safe.

23. The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to improve the view from a private property.

24. The Council will endeavour to maintain its tree stock and increase current tree numbers by planting. The Council will look to increase and improve its tree cover within available resources as part of an annual tree planting programme, paying particular attention to those with the least canopy cover. With the target of increasing the canopy cover by 7.5% by 2039.

25. The Council will endeavour to maintain newly planted trees appropriately to ensure they have the best chance of establishing. (Right Tree Right Place) *see link* - 7111_fc_urban_tree_manual_v15.pdf (forestresearch.gov.uk)

26. The Council will manage its tree stock sympathetically according to good arboriculture practice, striking a balance between public safety and biodiversity, following guidance (BS 3998).

27. Where practicable, all arisings (logs, branches etc.) from tree works in high amenity areas will be removed and used in an environmentally sustainable manner. In woodland situations however standing dead wood, logs and chippings may often be left on site, where this can be done safely, to enhance biodiversity and increase wildlife habitats.

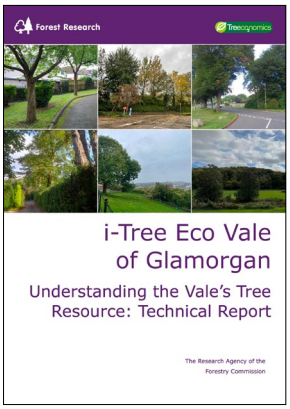
28. Where a Council owned tree or woodland is associated with criminal activity and/or anti -social behaviour, measures to alleviate the problem will be implemented on a site-by-site basis in consultation with the Police, Communities and citizens.

29. The Council will ensure that all demolition, construction and development, near to trees complies with BS:5837 (2012) “Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations” and that the most recent National Joint Utilities Group “Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees” are followed where carrying out works in root protection areas cannot be avoided.

APPENDIX 1

LINKS TO DOCUMENTS INFLUENCING THIS STRATEGY

- **Blue Green Urban** - Resource Centre - Download Literature - GreenBlue Urban
- **Blue Green Urban** - Street tree cost benefit analysis 2018 - https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=e3b2f81b62d80129JmltdHM9MTY4ODY4ODAwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYjk1M2RkMi1mMzQ3LTZjMDYtMDEwNS0yZWQyZjlyYzZkZDMmaW5zaWQ9NTE4OA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3b953dd2-f347-6c06-0105-2ed2f22c6dd3&psq=gbu+street+tree+cost+benefit-analysis+2018&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9ncmVlbmJsdWUuY29tL2diL3JIc291cmNlLWNlbnRyZS9zdHJlZXQtdHJlZS1jb3N0LWJlbmVmaXQtYW5hbHlzaXMv&ntb=1
- **The Environment (Wales) Act 2016**.
  See link - Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (legislation.gov.uk)
- **National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)** - National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) | GOV.WALES
- **NJUG Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees** - National Joint Utilities Group (streetworks.org.uk)
- **NNSS-GB non-native species secretariat** - Information Portal » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)
- **NRW South Central Wales Area Statement** https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/south-central-wales-area-statement/?lang=en
- **Natural Resources Wales.**
  See link - Natural Resources Wales
- **NRW – Town and tree cover in the Vale of Glamorgan** - Town Tree Cover in the Vale of Glamorgan (naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)
- **Suds legislation Wales.**
  See link - National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) | GOV.WALES
- **The SuDS Manual (C753F)** - Item Detail (ciria.org)
- **TDAG –** Trees and Design Action Group.
  https://www.tdag.org.uk/our-guides.html
- **The Planning (Wales) Act 2015.**
  See link - Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)
- **The Right Tree in the Right Place for a Resilient Future (Forest Research)**
  7111_fc_urban_tree_manual_v15.pdf (forestresearch.gov.uk)
- **Vale of Glamorgan Biodiversity Action Plan.**
  See link - Biodiversity Action Plan (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **Vale of Glamorgan Biodiversity SPG**
  Biodiversity-Development_SPG (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2025**
  'Working together for a brighter future'
  See link - Corporate Plan 2020-2025 (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026 Planning Obligations SPG** - Adopted July 2017 (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **Vale of Glamorgan Council – Supplementary Planning Guidance, Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows & Development.**
  See link - Final Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Development SPG 2018_Compressed (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.**
  See link - 150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf (futuregenerations.wales)
- **Woodlands For Wales** - Strategy Welsh Government.
  See link - Woodlands for Wales: strategy | GOV.WALES
- **Vale of Glamorgan I.Tree survey**
- **Vale of Glamorgan I.Tree Summary report**



APPENDIX 2 Tree Risk Management

THE QUANTIFIED TREE RISK ASSESSMENT (QTRA) METHODOLOGY

The Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) (Ellison, 2005) is generally accepted within the arboricultural industry as an appropriate risk assessment tool to assist either in reaching decisions regarding the future management of a tree identified to have significant faults, or to identify the appropriate interval between, or intensity of, tree inspection regimes.

QTRA

Is not intended to be predictive but instead estimates the probability of the risk of harm to members of the public, property or vehicles (over the period of one year) . This is estimated in terms of the likelihood of the event that a tree or tree part fails and that this event coincides with the occupation of the "target" zone (the area likely to be impacted were a tree to fail), by a pedestrian, vehicle or property.

Risk of harm within the methodology is estimated as the product of the likelihood that the target area is occupied, the size of the part most likely to fail (expressed as a fraction of the maximum size of part) and the likelihood that the tree or tree part will fail. Within the methodology these factors are referred to as the Target Value, the Impact Potential (Size of Part) and the Probability of Failure. The resultant value for risk of harm is called the Risk Index.

Pedestrian usage within the system is calculated in terms of the number of seconds the area beneath a tree is occupied as a fraction of the total number of seconds available. QTRA assumes a typical pedestrian would take 5 seconds to pass beneath a tree.

An assessment of the stem and crown structure of each tree is undertaken to identify the size of the part within each tree considered as posing the highest risk of failure.

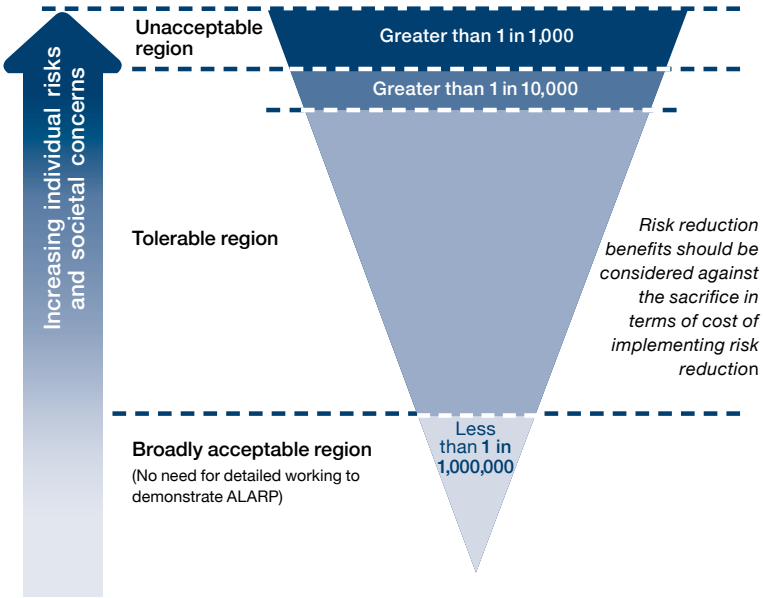
An estimate of the likelihood of failure of the part most likely to fail is then made. In the case of the three trees subject of this report, the most significant risk being assessed is whole tree failure onto neighbouring private, third part property (fences, parked cars and gardens).

The risk of harm estimated using QTRA is the key system output and should be interpreted with reference to the Tolerability of Risk framework (HSE, 2001). Briefly, this recommends that risks identified as higher than 1/10,000 should be considered as unacceptable, with appropriate management introduced to reduce risks to within a region that can be considered to be tolerable (between 1/10,000 and 1/1,000,000) . Risks lower than 1/1,000,000 should be considered to be broadly acceptable and resources should not be allocated to reduce these further. Based on this framework, the Risk Index values should be read as follows:

1/1 – 1/10,000 – Manage immediately

1/10,000 – 1/1,000,000 – Apply scheduled management (may include regular re-inspection).

1/1,000,000 – Does not currently require risk management.



Source: The Tolerability of Risk Framework from QTRA Practice Note (adapted from HSE Framework for Tolerability of Risk (TOR)

APPENDIX 3 Action Plan

5 YEAR ACTION PLAN *(to be reviewed)*

	Action	Corporate Plan Objective	Well Being Objective	Time	Lead Dept	Other Partners	Funding
1)	Ensure that all sections of the Council are aware of legal obligations with regards to trees. • Write to all sections of the Council with regard to trees on their sites • Offer an internal service of inspection. Costs based upon size of the site and number of trees	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	December 2024	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Recharge for work undertaken for other departments
2)	Set up a dedicated electronic system to record findings and plot Council owned trees	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	Completed by end 2024	Neighbourhood Services & Transport		Existing resources
3)	Produce a schedule for tree inspections based upon size, age and position of tree	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	April 2026	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Additional Resources required.
4)	Highway & Park trees plotted and recorded on new electronic system and inspected	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	Completed by 2027	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Additional resources
5)	All remaining Council estate trees plotted and recorded on new electronic system and inspected.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	Completed by 2028	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Additional resources
6)	Progress 3 yearly tree inspection programme, on all trees.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2024, completed by 2027	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Existing resources
7)	Enable all relevant inspecting officers to assist in the inspection of the Council's tree stock and aid in the identification of tree issues as part of their inspections.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2024	Neighbourhood Services & Transport		Existing resources and addition funding for staff training
8)	Adopt C.A.V.A.T as a tree evaluation model to be applied as policy to aid decision-making around potential tree removals	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	April 2024	Neighbourhood Services & Transport		Existing resources
9)	Identify locations for tree planting /natural regeneration across the VOG working with other departments.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2025	Place, Neighbourhood Services & Transport All departments	Various partners Private sector organisations (notably developers), land owners.	Existing Resources

	Action	Corporate Plan Objective	Well Being Objective	Time	Lead Dept	Other Partners	Funding
10)	Plant a minimum of 1500 trees, which will include a minimum of 500 standards, in predetermined targeted areas (right tree, right place), across the Council estate, annually.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	Annually	All departments		Additional resources required, through internal and external sources
11)	Look at potential Council land to develop a community tree nursery of approximately 2Ha in size	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	December 2024	All departments	Various partners Private sector organisations (notably developers)	External funding
12)	Look to develop a local tree nursery in partnership with third party organisations.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	December 2026	Places, Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Various partners Private sector organisations (notably developers), land owners.	Addition funding and externally sourced funding
13)	Draft trees, woodlands and Hedges SPG to reflect the climate emergency	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2024	Place	Planning Department	Part of the ongoing LDP process.
14)	Launch a web page for the Council's internet site giving information on trees throughout the Vale.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	April 2025	Neighbourhood Services & Transport Corporate Communications	Corporate Communications	Existing resources
15)	Actively seek funding streams through third party organisations, external grant funds and internal grant funding opportunities to assist with planting more trees on Council land and to increase the town tree canopy.	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	On-going	Neighbourhood Services & Transport Planning	Various partners Private sector organisations (notably developers)	S106 / CIL etc.
16)	Launch a voluntary friends of Trees Scheme	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	September 2025	Neighbourhood Services & Transport Corporate Communications	Stakeholders (including Town and Community Councils) Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Existing resources
17)	Review the tree strategy every 2 years	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2026	All departments	Stakeholders (including Town and Community Councils) Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Existing resources

	Action	Corporate Plan Objective	Well Being Objective	Time	Lead Dept	Other Partners	Funding
18)	To increase canopy cover by **7.5%** across the Council estate over the next 15 years	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2039	All departments	Stakeholders (including Town and Community Councils) Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Additional funding required
19)	I.Tree survey to be repeated, to ensure that targets have been achieved.		To protect, enhance and value our environment	2032	Countryside & Environmental		Additional funding required
20)	Incorporate the tree strategy into the Green Infrastructure plan		To protect, enhance and value our environment	2024	All departments		Existing resources
21)	Develop a tree sponsorship scheme	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	To protect, enhance and value our environment	2027	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	Stakeholders (including Town and Community Councils) Education, Social Services, Housing, Estates, Countryside, Highways	Additional funding required

APPENDIX 4 Frequently asked questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, INCLUDING THE COUNCILS POSITION:

1. **The tree looks dangerous and moves in the wind.**

   The Council has a qualified tree expert who will inspect any tree following an enquiry or in line with the Tree Risk Management Strategy following routine inspections. Our inspection will determine its condition and safety. Trees have a natural movement in windy conditions with flexing of the trunk and movement of branches being quite a normal response.

2. **The tree has not been pruned for a long time. It is too tall and needs to be pruned.**

   Trees across the Vale are regularly assessed, and any safety or maintenance related works are reported at this time. The Council does not reduce the height of trees as a matter of course, as this can stimulate rapid re-growth and/or cause defects in the tree's structure and exacerbate the original reported issue.

   The Council will prune highways trees as necessary also ensure that encroaching branches are pruned where they are obstructing roads and footpaths, hiding streetlights, road signs and other street furniture, so as to maintain vehicular and pedestrian safety on the highway.

3. **Tree branches encroaching a garden/boundary.**

   When tree branches or roots encroach on to neighbouring land they are legally regarded as a nuisance. Under the terms of law the tree owner is not obliged to cut back the branches overhanging their neighbours' garden unless damage is being caused. However, the owner of the adjacent land has the legal right to 'abate the nuisance' by cutting the branches or roots encroaching on other property.

   Where requests are made to prune trees that overhang a boundary each instance will be assessed on its merits. As a general policy, the Council will only undertake work where a tree's branches touch or are very close to an occupied building and consequently could cause physical damage.

4. **Shading and Blocking Views**

   Householders have no right to light from across a neighbour's land. Likewise, there is no right to a view, and a view obstructed by the growth of trees cannot legally be regarded as a nuisance.

   Where requests are made to prune trees to increase light levels, as a general policy the Council will not undertake pruning simply to allow more light to a property.

   An individual's tolerance of shade or their need for light is a subjective and personal matter whilst some people prefer shade there are those that have desire for sunlight. Many people are aware of the ancient and prescriptive right to light, but this only relates to loss of light over a considerable period of time in certain specific circumstances. Where trees are concerned there is no 'right to light'.

5. **TV/Satellite Reception.**

   There is no legal right to television reception. Existing trees on neighbouring land which interfere with television reception, especially with satellite transmissions, are unlikely to be regarded as a nuisance in law. The Council will not carry out tree pruning simply to improve television or satellite reception, where the trees in question would not otherwise require pruning.

   In the vast majority of cases, interference can be reduced by an engineering solution such as the relocation of the aerial or by the use of "booster boxes", which often improve the reception significantly.

6. **Pollen and Allergies**

   Whilst some kinds of tree pollen are known to bring on in sufferers the symptoms of hay fever this is not considered justification for either the pruning of Council trees, or their removal.

7. Leaf fall

The Council does not carry out a public leaf collection service. Although complaints are sometimes received about the problems caused by leaves falling from trees, the loss of leaves from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning. The maintenance of gardens and gutters is the responsibility of the landowner and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from Council owned trees. Where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves gutter guards may be fitted to provide a low maintenance solution.

8. Fruit, berries and nut fall

There are certain locations where fruit trees are not desirable, for example where soft fruit would make the pavement slippery or where anti-social behaviour could encourage fruit being thrown at houses or cars. When considering the 'right tree for the right place, the Council takes account of the likelihood of such problems. Equally, where fruit trees are established but where there is a significant anti-social behaviour problem the Council will consider phased removal and replacement in extreme cases.

9. Sap/ honeydew -The tree is making a sticky mess on my car or garden.

Honeydew is caused by greenfly (aphids) feeding on the tree, which excrete a sugary sap. Often the honeydew is colonised by a mould, which causes it to go black. This is a particular problem with tree species such as lime and sycamore.

Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to remove the aphid which causes the problem and pruning the tree may only offer temporary relief. Any re-growth is often more likely to be colonised by greenfly thereby potentially increasing the problem. Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem. Where new trees are planted we try to choose trees that are less likely to cause this problem. Where honeydew affects cars, warm soapy water will remove the substance, particularly if you wash the car as soon as possible.

10. Bird droppings

Bird droppings may be a nuisance, but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree. Even when branches are pruned, the bird will often just move to another branch. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other related wildlife law). Warm soapy water will usually be sufficient to remove the bird droppings.

11. The tree is causing damage to my drains

Tree roots will not normally penetrate an unbroken drain. If a drain is already broken, tree roots may penetrate it. The simple remedy is to repair the drain.

Tree roots can cause damage to paving, lawns and the foundations of light structures such as garden walls, conservatories, etc

Again, where a neighbour's tree is causing problems, an owner is within their rights to cut back roots to the boundary of their property, unless it is protected by a TPO or is within a Conservation Area. However, appropriate advice must be sought from a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant to minimise the risk of undermining the future health and stability of the tree that may lead to liability for any future damage caused.

We will not normally fell or prune a tree that is implicated in direct damage to structures. There is no need to reduce the transpiration of the tree so it is not necessary to prune or remove the tree to remedy direct damage. If there is a risk of branches of a Council owned tree impacting the superstructure of a building, we will remove or prune the relevant branches.

12. The tree is covered in ivy and is killing it

Ivy is a climbing plant abundant as a groundcover shrub in many rural types of woodland. It has a variety of conservation benefits and forms an integral part of woodland's habitat. In the urban environment there is a need to balance three main considerations for its retention: tree safety, conservation and aesthetics.

In some situations, it may be considered unsightly and more importantly can create problems for efficient management by obscuring potential defects and fungal fruiting bodies. It also increases the weight of a tree's crown and the 'sail' effect during the wet, windier, winter months, when deciduous trees have shed their leaves. As a general policy the Council undertakes the removal of ivy from trees only where it is considered necessary to aid visual tree health assessment.

13. I have a big tree near my property. I am worried about the damage the roots may be doing to my house. What should I do?

Tree roots may potentially cause damage to built structures in two ways:

Direct damage – this is caused when the physical expansion of tree roots or stem lifts paving stones or cracks walls etc. Due to the weight of a house no amount of physical expansion will affect it, but garden walls and small structures such as garages or outbuildings might be at risk.

Subsidence - is the downward movement of the ground supporting the building. Damage occurs because the movement is often uneven, causing cracks in walls, floors, and ceilings. The main cause of subsidence in the UK is the shrinkage in dry weather of clay soils which expand and contract with changes in their moisture content." (source - ABI)

Trees are rarely the prime cause, particularly the only cause, of subsidence. Trees and other significant vegetation can worsen the effects of subsidence because they extract moisture from the soil through their roots. This results in "indirect damage" to buildings by trees. Other factors such as damaged drainage and poor build quality can also cause subsidence.

Non-cohesive soils such as sand and gravel are not shrinkable, as their volume does not alter with a change in moisture content, and so structures on these soils should be unaffected by subsidence attributable to indirect damage by trees.

Heave takes place when previously dehydrated soil takes up water and swells. This can happen after the felling or removal of vegetation.

Subsidence is more common in Victorian and Edwardian houses as their foundations are shallower. This makes them more susceptible to damage from any seasonal movements in the ground.

Modern building standards mean that the risk to newer buildings tends to be isolated and they should not subside due to trees that were in existence at the time they were built.

Buildings naturally shrink and swell in response to changes in temperature and humidity, leading to minor cracks where walls and ceilings meet.

New homes and recently built extensions often experience cracking as the structures settle under their own weight. If you suspect your property has suffered from subsidence damage, contact your insurer as soon as possible.

If it is believed that a council-owned tree has contributed to the subsidence, your insurers will make contact with the Council and any other relevant parties to ascertain whether there is a legitimate claim. The insurer is responsible for producing detailed reports to corroborate the claim. For legal reasons we cannot comment on any claim made against the Council. Please direct any suspected claims to your Insurer and not the Council.

The VoG Council has committed to signing up to a specific subsidence protocol for dealing with subsidence-related tree root claims called the Joint Mitigation Protocol (JMP). This aims to improve the way and speed that subsidence claims are dealt with by councils and insurers. It also enables an agreement on whether the tree should be removed, pruned to reduce its water uptake, or left as it is, all depending on the proven damage to the house and also the value of the tree.

The principal aim of the JMP is to reduce the number and cost of tree root claims to local authorities, and to minimise the needless loss of mature trees. The benefits of these cost reductions will be enjoyed by both the local authority and insurers alike, but crucially not at the expense of losing from the town's skyline one of its most recognisable assets, its trees.

See Appendix 5 for more detail of the JMP.

14. Can I have new trees planted outside my house/in my street?

Tree planting will be incorporated into the cyclical program to ensure newly planted trees are distributed where they are most needed, where resources are available. The planting season is normally from October to the beginning of March each year.

15. How can I tell if my tree is safe?

Advice should be sought by a professional qualified arboriculturalist. You can find qualified arborists on the Arboricultural Association website https://www.trees.org.uk/Registered-Consultant-Directory

The Council unfortunately will not generally get involved in private matters unless there is an issue of public safety but will offer general advice in the best way to resolve any issues residents may be experiencing.

16. What do I do if I think someone is carrying out work on a protected tree or intends to do so?

You can check the Vale of Glamorgan website interactive map available at website to see if the tree is protected through a Tree Preservation Order or is within a Conservation Area. Trees and Hedges (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Locate the site you are interested in and then select the Environment and Planning category on the map. Then you can select 'conservation area' or 'tree preservation orders' to see if the site includes any protected trees. You can also check the planning history of the site to see if permission has been granted for work to a tree.

If you believe unauthorised work is being carried out, **contact the Council call centre immediately on 01446 700111. All queries regarding potentially unauthorised works will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.**

17. My neighbours have a high hedge. What can I do about it?

The High Hedge Regulations were made by the Welsh Assembly Government in December 2004 and came into force on 31st December 2004. The regulations apply to evergreen and semi-evergreen hedges of over two metres in height.
See link - Trees and Hedges (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

The legislation provides for those who feel that a neighbour's hedge is hindering the reasonable enjoyment of their property to submit a formal complaint to the Council. The Council will then investigate the matter and may, if considered appropriate, serve a notice on the hedge owner requiring them to reduce the hedges height.

In most cases, it is possible for neighbours to agree on a course of action without formal complaint being necessary. This is certainly the preferable approach for all concerned. If you are unable to reach agreement with your neighbour, try contacting a local mediation service, the mediation process is essential before making a formal complaint to the Council.

APPENDIX 5

TREES, BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

The potential of indirect (subsidence) and direct root damage to property within urban settings with trees in close proximity to buildings and structures can on occasion escalate to potential claims, although dependant on various factors, trees can co-exist with a structure or building without any detrimental effects.

How the Council respond to tree related claims

The Council will challenge non substantiated claims or enquiries that do not meet the criteria set in policy and documents therein.

In response to claims the Council has adopted the guidance documents below which ensure responses in dealing with claims in relation to trees and damage to property in an efficient and cost-effective process. This will provide a consistent response dealing proactively with claims and enquiries in relation to trees and vegetation.

> “It is the enquirers and claimant’s responsibility to substantiate with evidence any damage to property, the council will consult with appropriate colleagues and professionals in consideration of the enquiry and claims to evaluate and conclude ”

Residents who have concerns in regard to damage to property in relation to trees and vegetation would be advised to discuss with their insurance providers on such matters.

Contact the company that you have building insurance cover with. They will make contact with the council and any other relevant parties to ascertain whether there is a legitimate claim. The insurer is responsible for producing detailed reports to corroborate the claim. For legal reasons we cannot comment on any claim made against the council. Please direct any suspected claims to your Insurer and not the Council. The Tree Service will not have any direct contact with the claimant.

Joint Mitigation Protocol

A method agreed with multi-industry partners and L.T.O.A. *(London Tree Officers Association)* for the process and investigation of root tree induced building damage with benchmarked timescales for responses and standards of evidence.

This will be Council procedural guidance in dealing with all enquiries and claims regarding subsidence damage to buildings in which a Council owned tree is alleged to be implicated. The JMP aims to improve the way and speed that subsidence claims are dealt with by councils and insurers.

The Protocol is intended to reflect the spirit of the Civil Procedure Rules and aims to ensure that before the commencement of any proceedings:

- Pre action contact and exchange of information are encouraged
- Improved quality evidence and information is presented in support of the claim
- Both parties have provided sufficient clear evidence and information regarding their position on the matter
- Each party has had the opportunity to consider the evidence and information
- Each party can accept or reject the claim or each other’s position at the earliest possible stage
- Each party can modify its own position at the earliest possible stage
- The time period between notification and completion of co-operation or rejection of the claim is reduced
- The issue of tree removal / reduction / replanting is completed on a non-adversarial and ecologically friendly basis
- There is an opportunity for both parties to meet informally without prejudice to liability and resolve disputed cases

Evidential Requirements for Council Owned Trees

(see the table below)

Date of Submission	31-03-2008	Interim	Summary	☐
Statutory Authority	Any Town Council			
Property Owner	A.N.Other			
Damage Address	Address: 2 The Avenue Any Town SX1 5PH			
Area of Damage	Stepped cracking to front lounge, entrance hall stairs, plus front two bedrooms.		**Category per BRE 251** 3	
Site Plan To include all relevant vegetation and significant drain layout. Plan to indicate position of rooms	Attached. Drainage to rear not detailed as remote beyond any potential significance.			
Photographs These are indicative and are not a complete record of the full extent of the damage	Attached – showing general situation, policyholder's hedge and Local Authority street tree			
Arboricultural report	Not obtained			
Details of Statutory Authority Third Party Vegetation	One - Street tree within pavement to front right of house			
Details of Policyholder Vegetation	Beech hedge 2m high 3m from corner of house			
Details of Other Third Party Vegetation	None			
Root Analysis	Plane (confirms subject tree) 1.5m below fdn			
Foundation depth	750mm below ground level			
Subsoil	Clay - see attached analysis			
Factors indicating clay shrinkage	Pattern of damage shows rotation towards the street tree Timing of damage - started late summer, not now progressive Attached site investigation data indicates desiccation to 3.00M as shown by the soil suction profile, compares with root profile to 2.70M			
Date damage discovered	September 2007			
Monitoring	Not obtained. All evidence obtained clearly demonstrates influence of the street tree			
Drains	None to front of property			
Estimated cost of repairs	**Protocol Mitigation**	**Delayed / Rejected Mitigation**		
Investigation	£ 800	£ 1,400		
Substructure	Not anticipated	£ 8,300		
Superstructure	£ 6,800	£ 7,400		
Alt Accn	Not anticipated	Not anticipated		
Fees & Expenses	£ 1,900	£ 2,100		
Total	£ 9,500	£19,200		
Mitigation Request	Immediate removal of street tree			
Comments (use this box to add further engineering comments if required or advise if engineering report attached)	Customer's beech hedge not considered relevant and all roots sampled were Plane			

Source: London Tree Officers Association Joint Mitigation Protocol: Submission of Evidence (Appendix A)

Joint Mitigation Protocol Evidential Requirements for Council Owned Trees

Maximum Timeline in	Building Insurer (or their representative) visits the property & assesses if cause of damage is subsidence and if council tree or other factors are likely to be implicated. If the tree, then the Tree Controller/Risk Manager is identified.
7 days	Building Insurer (or their rep.) writes to Tree Controller within 7 calendar days of identifying Tree Controller seeking: 1. Contact details of the individual/department responsible for control of the tree, along with any reference, to assist communication regarding tree management and liability. 2. Contact details of their liability Insurer if appropriate. 3. The value of the tree (low, medium or high) as determined by the Tree Officer.
21 days	Within 14 calendar days of receiving the correspondence referred to above, the Tree Controller/Tree Officer will respond to the Building Insurer (or their rep.) giving responses to questions 1, 2 & 3 above.
81 days	Within 60 calendar days of receiving the value of the council tree, the Building Insurer (or their rep.) will submit either: a) A letter confirming withdrawal of the case, on the basis that the site investigation has not implicated the council tree in the damage, and that the file should be closed. b) A **"Submission of Evidence"** based on the tree's CAVAT value with the requested mitigation (pruning/felling). Low Value Trees - may be removed & replaced. Medium Value Trees - make an important contribution to the area. High Value Trees - make an extremely important contribution to the area. **Low Value Trees:** 1. Report on damage to building. 2. Plan & profile of foundations. 3. Plan of site showing location of building in relation to all trees and significant vegetation in vicinity of site. 4. Trial pit cross section to underside of foundation depth plus borehole through base of trial pit to a minimum depth of 3m (explanation to be provided if borehole unable to reach 3m depth). Borehole log to be provided. 5. Root ID from beneath underside of foundation. **Medium Value Trees:** All of the above plus: 6. Soil moisture content readings at 0.5m centres, starting at the underside of the foundation, down to 3m depth of B/H. 7. Liquid limit test results at underside of foundation and approx 2m depth 8. Plastic limit test results at underside of foundation and approx 2m depth. 9. Soil plasticity calculated from LL – PL. 10. Control borehole to 3m depth with log, with same tests as above, if it is possible to locate such a borehole on the site and remote from the influence of any vegetation. If impossible then explanation needed. 11. Oedometer or suction test results at underside of foundation & 1.0m centres down depth of 3m borehole **ONLY** when there is **NO** control borehole. If there is a control borehole then other tests listed are sufficient. 12. Shear vane test results at 0.5m centres, starting at the underside of the foundation, down to 3m depth of borehole(s). 13. CCTV & hydraulic testing to drains (excluding Water Board owned) located within 3m distance of area of subsidence damage. If unable to water test due to no access/blind entries/etc then give reason. 14. Crack monitoring is required on a maximum of 2 month frequency and is to be set up ideally at time of first visit by building insurer representative or within 7 days of 1st visit. Send all available readings with Submission of Evidence. **High Value Trees:** All of the above **EXCEPT crack width monitoring**, plus: 15. Control borehole (if possible) & point of subsidence borehole, each to 5m depth (not 3m as for medium value). 16. Level monitoring commencing at outset of claim for a relevant period (max. 12 months) using a deep datum (if possible) to 8m depth, otherwise use deep manhole. 17. Particle Size Distribution Analysis to BS 1377 Part 2 test 9.0 on a single soil sample taken from a 1m zone below the underside of foundation (Only if drains are present within 3m of the site of damage).

Source: London Tree Officers Association Joint Mitigation Protocol: Submission of Evidence (Appendix A)

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