

- ii. *Existing features of landscape or nature conservation value should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme.*
- iii. *The proposed landscaping scheme should consider the character of the site, site constraints, function, diversity of existing and proposed landscaping, soil type, ecological value and resilience based on the location of the site.*
- iv. *New tree planting as part of a proposed landscaping scheme will be selected, planted and established in accordance with current best practice guidance within the relevant British Standard and shall have regard to guidance in the Council's Trees and Development SPD*
- v. *Provision of the planting of hedgerows, shrub planting and other soft landscaping to include specimen trees with a mature height of 15-20 metres within both hard and soft landscaped areas.*
- vi. *The proposed landscaping shall make a positive contribution to the streetscape and integrate with the built development and where applicable, adjoining developments.*
- vii. *Trees within adoptable areas shall be incorporated as part of the infrastructure planning and design stage in accordance with current best practice and shall have regard to the Council's guidance in the Trees and Development SPD ensuring sustainability and longevity.*
- viii. *The proposed landscaping should not lead to significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites of Portholme (SAC) and the Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA/Ramsar), as a result of surface run-off into the River Great Ouse.*

Retention of trees

- 8.34 The aim is to retain and where possible increase overall tree canopy cover in the borough to meet a number of challenges we will face in the future, namely the impact of climate change, ecological threats on the health of our existing native and non-native trees and increasing pollution.
- 8.35 This means preserving and increasing our mature tree stock which plays the most important role in factors such as carbon storage, particulate pollution absorption, storm water retention, neighbourhood improvement, ecological value, urban heat island effect, natural health improvement zones, traffic calming and amenity. Many of these benefits can now be valued through natural capital accounting which is the process of calculating the monetary value of natural capital such as trees, soils, minerals, water bodies and air.
- 8.36 The borough has a number of woodland sites, some of which are ancient woodland and contain historic hedgerows. Several of the sites are recognised as being of national importance and are identified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and sites of local importance such as County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Individual trees and also small groups of trees can also have a positive impact on the environment for both the natural environment and for human health related benefits of being near and being able to see trees.

- 8.37 Ancient trees have been mapped by the Woodland Trust, however their records do not provide an exhaustive list. Veteran trees also have an important purpose providing habitat for a range of wildlife especially fungi and invertebrates.
- 8.38 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council has the power to serve Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate to ensure the treed landscape is protected.
- 8.39 Developers should provide a detailed tree survey as part of a planning application. This should be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard and the Council's Tree Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), including an assessment of ancient and veteran trees. Where trees are proposed to be removed, it should be demonstrated in the planning application the reasons for the removal and any proposals for replacement trees. Where appropriate, replacement trees or mitigation measures will be sought through the imposition of planning conditions.
- 8.40 Development proposals should ensure that proposed building works will not encroach into tree exclusion zones and that retained trees are protected during construction in accordance with the relevant British Standard. These measures should be outlined in the planning application.

Policy 39 – Retention of trees

In considering proposals for development all of the following criteria will apply:

- i. Applicants shall consider opportunities to retain trees of high amenity and environmental value taking into consideration both their individual merit and their contribution as part of a group or broader landscape feature. Existing trees on and immediately adjacent the development site shall be recorded following guidance in the relevant British Standard.*
- ii. Development applications shall provide details as to how the retained trees, hedges and hedge banks will be protected prior to, during and after construction.*
- iii. No building, hard surfacing drainage or underground works will be permitted that does not accord with the principles of the relevant British Standard unless, exceptionally, the Council is satisfied that such works can be accommodated without harm to the trees concerned or there are overriding reasons for development to proceed.*
- iv. Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland (including from indirect impacts such as increased visitor pressure), unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.*
- v. The Council will protect existing trees through the making of Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.*

Hedgerows

- 8.41 Hedgerows are a familiar feature in the countryside and are also used extensively in the urban area along property boundaries. They are useful in providing windbreaks, privacy between dwellings and for providing habitats for many different species, particularly for bird nesting and butterflies. Hedgerows can also prevent soil loss, regulate water supply, reduce flooding and act as carbon storage.
- 8.42 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 are applicable to particular types of hedges and there are set procedures outlined in the regulations to follow to ensure their protection. While there are separate regulations, hedgerows still provide a valuable resource in the countryside as well as providing a feature in the landscape and should be considered as part of the development of a site. This is recognised in their inclusion as a habitat of ‘principal importance’ to biodiversity under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 8.43 As part of a planning application, the landscaping scheme shall provide details of the existing hedgerows on the site, including an assessment of their health.

Policy 40 - Hedgerows

Any hedgerows should be retained on development sites, unless there are overriding benefits that justify their removal. Where removal is deemed necessary, details addressing the criteria under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended) shall be submitted to demonstrate the validity for removal and details of the replacement hedgerows. Replacement hedgerows shall be of an equal scale, native and species- rich and should be provided where possible, elsewhere on the development site.

Where there are gaps in the existing hedgerows on the site, the development should provide for additional hedgerow planting.