

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



- 9.77 At present there are three Candidate Sites within Fareham. Candidate sites have records of large numbers of waders or brent geese. However, the large numbers have been recorded fewer than three times from 2006/2007 to present day. Further surveys are necessary to determine the classification (i.e. Low Use, Primary or Secondary Support etc.) of the site using the agreed survey methodology contained in the SWBG Guidance on Mitigation and Off-setting Requirements.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Why this policy is needed

- 9.78 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are under increasing threat from pollution, disease and the pressures of the developing world. As a result, over the last 100 years the tree canopy in our towns and cities has significantly declined.
- 9.79 The loss of trees, woodlands and hedgerows in our built environment reduces liveability. Balancing our Borough's growth, whilst protecting the environment, maintaining vibrant public spaces, creating recreational opportunities and fostering economic growth is an increasing and on-going challenge.
- 9.80 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows contribute to the environment in many ways; they improve the quality of the air removing dust particles and harmful gas emissions such as carbon dioxide. In urban areas they help to reduce the heat island effect, reduce soil erosion and flash flooding by slowing down and capturing fast flowing water. In addition, trees, woodlands and hedgerows help to improve biodiversity and provide landscape character whilst also adding a sense of place in our communities. These benefits all help to improve the health and wellbeing of people and in turn improve the quality of life for those who live and work in Fareham.
- 9.81 The challenge will be to constantly increase awareness of the long-term benefits of trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the urban environment. As Fareham continues to urbanise, this need increases, as does our obligation to enhance the quality of life in Fareham by delivering high quality and well-maintained green infrastructure.
- 9.82 The Council has a Corporate Tree Strategy⁹⁶ in line with section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which provides guidance to developers on the protection, enhancement and creation of high quality and well-maintained green infrastructure within the Borough. The Council is also working on an update to the current 2012-2017 Strategy a draft of which should be available soon.

Policy NE6: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Development will be permitted which:

- a) Retains protected trees, hedgerows and woodland and non-protected trees, hedgerows and woodland, particularly those which have high amenity value; or
- b) Where there is clear justification for their removal, provides for the suitable replacement (in terms of number, species and size) of trees, woodland and hedgerows; and

⁹⁶ <http://www.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/treestrategy.pdf>



c) In either case and where practicable, provides for new and suitable trees, woodland and hedgerows.

The removal of protected trees, groups of trees (including veteran trees), woodland (including ancient woodland) or hedgerows will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

How this policy works

- 9.83 All trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the Borough provide benefits in terms of habitats, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as being important to the character and amenity value of the Borough's urban and rural landscapes. There is a presumption against the loss and damage to trees, woodland and hedgerows. Where there is clear justification for their removal, the Council will seek replacement and/or a contribution for a suitable number, species and size where appropriate.
- 9.84 The loss of Veteran Trees, Ancient Woodland and other protected trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permissible in exceptional circumstances and any proposed loss will be considered on a case by case basis. The applicant must demonstrate clear and robust reasoning for any proposed loss, setting out why any loss is unavoidable and justified. The loss of any protected trees, woodland and hedgerows should be compensated for by the replacement of an appropriate number, species and size and in an appropriate location. This should be done in consultation with the Council's Tree Team.
- 9.85 Where development proposals affect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, applicants shall be required to submit their development proposals with an ecological and/or arboricultural survey.
- 9.86 To prevent damage to tree roots and branches, developers will be required to provide tree protection prior to and during the site clearance, demolition and construction phases.
- 9.87 Where appropriate, the Council will seek opportunities for the planting of new trees, woodlands and hedgerows in suitable locations. This can be included as part of a development's proposal to achieve net gains for biodiversity or to enable the development to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change such as through a reduction in the urban heat island effect. Any new planting should be suitable for the site conditions, use native species where appropriate and be informed by and contribute to local character, and enhance or create new habitat linkages. The Ecological Network Map produced by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) which covers the whole of Hampshire, highlights areas where additional planting could help improve habitat linkages and biodiversity.
- 9.88 Appropriate costed ongoing maintenance specifications and plans will be necessary to protect any newly planted and existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows; and ensure they establish successfully and thrive so their long-term benefits can be delivered.