



The Woodland Trust
Kempton Way
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6LL

November 2024

Pendle Local Plan (Fourth Edition) – Regulation 19 Response

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity and wants to see a UK that is rich in native woods and trees, for people and wildlife. We aim to achieve this by restoring and improving woodland biodiversity and increasing people's understanding and enjoyment of woods and trees.

We own over 1,275 sites across the UK, covering over 23,580 hectares, and we have around 500,000 members and supporters. The Trust is recognised as a national authority on woods and trees, and the benefits and value that they deliver for climate, nature, and society.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Pendle Local Plan (Fourth Edition) Publication Draft.

Note: we consider all the policies to be legally compliant and sound unless otherwise stated in the response.

Policy DM01 – Climate change resilience

We welcome point 2 of this policy which says that developments should safeguard and, where possible, restore natural features which make a positive contribution to the capture and storage of greenhouse gases such as mature trees, woodland and hedgerows. We would welcome an expansion of this text to compel developers to a) protect and retain mature trees on developments and b) plant new trees on developments. This could be done through introducing a district-wide tree canopy cover target and/or a canopy cover target for new developments.

Policy DM02a – Flood risk

We welcome point 8 of this policy which says that natural flood management schemes will be supported where there is evidence they are safe and will help to slow the flow of storm water from upper catchments. Trees act as excellent natural flood protection in a wide variety of circumstances, including alongside water courses. Where flooding is an issue in an area, we would encourage developers to consider planting trees to help manage these flood risks.

Policy DM04 – Biodiversity Net Gain

We welcome this policy and the requirement that development proposals in Pendle will be required to achieve at least 10% measurable biodiversity net gain against the baseline conditions of the site. We also welcome that the council will consider developments that aim to achieve biodiversity enhancements above 10% of the baseline conditions more favourably as a means to encourage developers to aim higher.

The Woodland Trust encourages councils, where possible, to include higher targets for BNG in local plans to increase the chances that a net gain of at least 10% will be secured across the entire local authority, given the possibility that some sites may not be able to deliver net gain within the local authority area or that initiatives intended to deliver BNG may end up falling short in practice.

We would also recommend setting tree canopy cover targets on developments sites to help enable the BNG policy to be effective.

We also welcome the inclusion of wording in this policy that declares that any development within a defined wildlife corridor will not be permitted where it would prejudice the corridor's character or purpose. We would also recommend an addition to this policy that no development is permitted within wildlife corridors entirely unless sufficient mitigation is set out.

Policy DM05 – Ecological Networks

We welcome the reference in this policy to the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). For the LNRS to be successful, they must be embedded in local plans and other local authority policies.

Again, we would recommend that additional wording is included in this policy to declare that where adverse impacts are possible to an ecological network, sufficient mitigation is set out to ensure the harm to the network is minimised.

Policy DM07 – Trees and hedgerows

In the protected trees and ancient woodland section, we would strongly recommend a larger buffer is introduced. 15 metres will not be sufficient to avoid a significant impact on ancient woodland, and 5 metres will not be sufficient to avoid impact to individual veteran trees either. The Woodland Trust recommends a buffer of at least 50 metres to minimise the impact of development on ancient woodlands and veteran trees.

In line with the NPPF paragraph 186c, development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees should not be permitted.

In the new and replacement planting section, we would strongly recommend a canopy cover target on new developments. This could be met by either retaining existing trees or by planting new ones. The Woodland Trust recommends that local authorities implement a minimum of 30% tree canopy-cover target on new developments and that local authorities

act to increase tree-canopy cover on existing developments where it is currently below the English urban average of 16%.

We welcome the preference for native species outlined in point 15.

We strongly support the requirement that either two replacement trees are planted for every tree lost, or a sum of £500 excluding VAT will be payable for every tree lost and not replaced. We believe that this ratio is key to ensuring that overall tree canopy cover is not reduced across the local authority and that Pendle is able to achieve its BNG aims.

Policy AL01 – Housing site allocations

We consider that any policy **is not legally compliant or sound** unless areas of ancient woodland are excluded from development sites and housing site allocations, with appropriate buffers specified, and reserve the right to oppose this policy if it later becomes apparent that mapped or unmapped ancient woodland is present within any site boundaries.

We would also note that Pendle has a Tree Equity Score (TES) of 79 district-wide, making it a priority area for tree-planting. The Tree Equity Score assesses equitable access to trees in urban neighbourhoods, creating a 'score' calculated by taking into account an area's existing tree canopy cover and other factors such as the health, income, air quality and surface temperature during heatwaves of an area. Scores range from 0 to 100, with neighbourhoods with a score of 69 or below considered highest priority for increasing canopy cover through tree planting and protection. Some neighbourhoods in Pendle have lower Tree Equity Scores, with a handful having scores as low as 64, making them some of the highest priority neighbourhoods in the UK. In particular, the below site allocations are in high priority TES areas (TES in brackets):

- Ref P237: Land at former Barnsey Shed, Long Ing Lane, Barnoldswick (69)
- Ref P326: Barkerhouse Road, Nelson (67)

In these areas, there is a need for increased tree canopy cover and urban tree-planting. We would strongly recommend that the local authority introduces tree canopy cover targets for these site allocations in particular to help incentivise tree-planting in the areas that need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this submission draft. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues further.

William Ward
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