

**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER**

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 17th SEPTEMBER, 2020

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TREE PLANTING ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To discuss proposals to increase the Council's efforts in planting trees on Council owned land.
2. To inform Committee of funding opportunities.
3. To discuss and propose the need for a Tree & Woodland Strategy for Pendle.
4. To agree the proposed tree planting annual target.

RECCOMENDATIONS

1. That the land listed in appendix 1 of the report be designated for tree planting.
2. That the Pendle Tree & Woodland Strategy be adopted by the Council.
3. That further updates and changes to the Pendle Tree & Woodland Strategy be delegated to the Planning, Economic Development & Regulatory Services Manager.

REASONS

1. To increase the amount of woodland and tree cover in the Borough.
2. To develop a corporate approach to the management of our trees and woodlands.
3. To ensure that the Pendle Tree & Woodland Strategy remains relevant and can adapt to changes in policy at both local and national levels and current scientific knowledge.

ISSUE

Tree Planting

1. In July 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and in response set up the Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG).
2. At the meeting of the CEWG on the 9th December it was resolved that the Principal Environment Officer be tasked with identifying Council owned land suitable for tree planting.

3. The proposed annual target for tree planting is 3,100, over the duration of the Climate Emergency Declaration (2030). This is based on the findings of the Committee on Climate Change which indicates an additional 50,000 trees are required per annum across Lancashire to achieve the Government's net zero emissions target.
4. Using a combination of Google Earth Pro, land ownership information from Estates and mapping data from the proposed site allocations in the upcoming Local Plan part II, the Principal Environment Officer has mapped available and suitable sites.
5. A list of sites and maps can be found in appendix 1. Should all sites be accepted for tree planting we would have 30.84 hectares allowing around 102,800 trees to be planted.
6. The proposals would create two new woodlands in excess of five hectares on the sites of Hard Platts and land to the west of Alkincoats Park.
7. Some sites maybe controversial with residents and may require some communication works prior to planting. These include:
 - Hard Platts
 - Ringstone Crescent
 - King George V
8. Different approaches to planting maybe required for different sites. For instance, sites where vandalism may occur may require more substantial trees to be planted or a phased planting scheme to limit damage. This will have implications on the price of the trees, establishment and maintenance costs.
9. The Council does not own any suitable sites within the West Craven Area or the outlying villages.

Funding

10. The Council allocates some budgets for tree planting. These are:

Tree Planting Budgets – FY 2020/21	
Area Committee	Budget (£)
West Craven	300
Barrowford & Western	390
Brierfield	330
Nelson	910
Colne & District	880

11. These budgets are generally used to replace trees that have been felled and equates to around 15 standard trees (this includes the cost of the tree and planting by the EAG) per annum. As such, there is no dedicated budget for woodland creation and woodland management on PBC owned sites
12. Grants to Local Authorities are available for planting schemes. These include:

- **Urban Tree Challenge Fund** – A Government funded grant scheme that funds 50% of planting and establishment costs for 3 years. The fund is open

to anyone. The planting site must be urban or peri-urban with public access. The minimum that can be applied for is a block of 150 trees with the maximum being an area of 0.5 hectares. Multiple applications can be submitted by the same organisation but not for the same site. This scheme is also open to other stakeholders.

- **Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant Scheme** – For larger scale projects, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme maybe a better option. This can bring in up to £6,800 per hectare for the creation of new woodland. At this point in time there are also further grants to maintain the woodland for ten year on completion of the planting and establishment phase.

13. Our volunteers can also access further funding streams such as:

- **Woodland Trust Tree Packs** – Available only to volunteers and community groups but quite often planted on our land. These are generally packs of up to 420 whip sized trees (covers around 1000m²) but some groups have been successful in receiving several packs of a period of a few years.
- **Tree Council Grants** – These are grants for schools and community groups for between £300 and £1000 funding up to 80% of the costs of planting trees and orchards.
- **Lancashire Environment Fund** – Three main grant schemes from £1000 to £30,000 to fund up to 80% of costs of the project.

14. The Council has committed £30,000 over financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 to the River Ribble Catchment Trust's Lancashire Woodland Connect Scheme. This project aims to plant 10 kilometres of new or restored woodland along the Rivers Ribble, Lune, and Wyre Catchments (this includes Pendle Water, Colne Water and their tributaries). The Catchment Trust will work with us to secure planting on private land throughout the Borough. There will also be the possibility that they plant trees on our land. A service level agreement is being developed at the time of writing this report.

15. During the lockdown period the Principal Environment Officer applied for funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund to plant trees on Chatburn Park Drive greenspace, Brierfield and King George V Playing Fields, Colne.

16. On the 9th September the Principal Environment Officer was informed that the application had been successful and the Forestry Commission will fund the planting of 1,100 trees (750 at King George V and 350 at Chatburn Park Drive).

Other Financial Implications

17. Some of the sites that are in our ownership and suitable for tree planting are currently leased out on grazing licenses. As a result, should these sites be allocated for tree planting there would be a loss of income from these sites. This equates to a £3,320 per annum.

18. Where the public have access to the planted sites, they are located next to highways or property we will need to enter them into our tree risk management systems. With the agreement with our insurance company the risk assessments take place every five years on our high occupancy and medium occupancy sites. No budgets are set aside for this work however, funding was sought through the Risk Management Working Group. The cost of surveying the high occupancy sites in 2019 was £5,911.25. The

quotation for surveying our medium occupancy sites due to be carried out this year is £7,209. Funding for this assessment has yet to be secured. Where the risk assessments identify issues that need to be dealt with the work is carried out using existing budgets where possible. These include parks, greenspace and cemetery budgets and some small tree maintenance budgets that are allocated to each of the Committee Areas. This generally does not meet the level of budget required for the amount of work that is found. With the creation of new sites there is the potential that these costs will increase once the plantations become established.

Tree & Woodland Strategy

19. The Principal Environment Officer was tasked by the Chief Executive with developing a Tree & Woodland Strategy for the Council. The draft document can be found in appendix 2. The document is designed to be a live document that can be updated as required. It is likely that the Environment Bill, should it get Royal Assent and the England Tree Strategy that is being developed on consulted on by DEFRA will have implication for our policies.
20. It is envisaged that that the Tree & Woodland Strategy will complement the Tree Risk-Benefit Management Plan that is currently in draft form. These documents will also complement the Local Plan.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

- The development of the Tree & Woodland Strategy would become Council Policy on the management of its tree stock.

Financial:

- Some income to the Council from various grant funding.
- The Council would lose £3,320 per annum in grazing license income should the proposals be accepted.
- Further finance would be required for risk-benefit management of some of the new sites and future management of the planting schemes. In the 2011 document Trees or Turf? Produced by the Woodland Trust this was estimated at £1,065 per hectare per year for woodland managed in greenspace. For those area that have no public access the cost could be as low as £350 per hectare per year.

Legal:

- The planting of trees will contribute to our obligations under section 40 of the Natural Environments and Rural Communities Act 2006 being the duty to conserve biodiversity.

Risk Management:

- The planting of trees adjacent to highways, properties or where the public has access will have implications on the risk-benefit of the management of trees. In some cases, these issues will be able to be 'designed out'. Where this is not possible the proposed planting sites will be added to our normal risk management procedures.

Health and Safety:

- All activities associated with trees and tree planting are adequately risk assessed.

Sustainability:

- Adopting the proposed sites will substantially increase tree cover within the Borough.
- The planting of trees will help with the Council's desire to be carbon neutral.

- On certain sites the trees will help reduce atmospheric pollution caused by road traffic.

Community Safety:

NONE

Equality and Diversity:

NONE

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – List of proposed sites and maps.

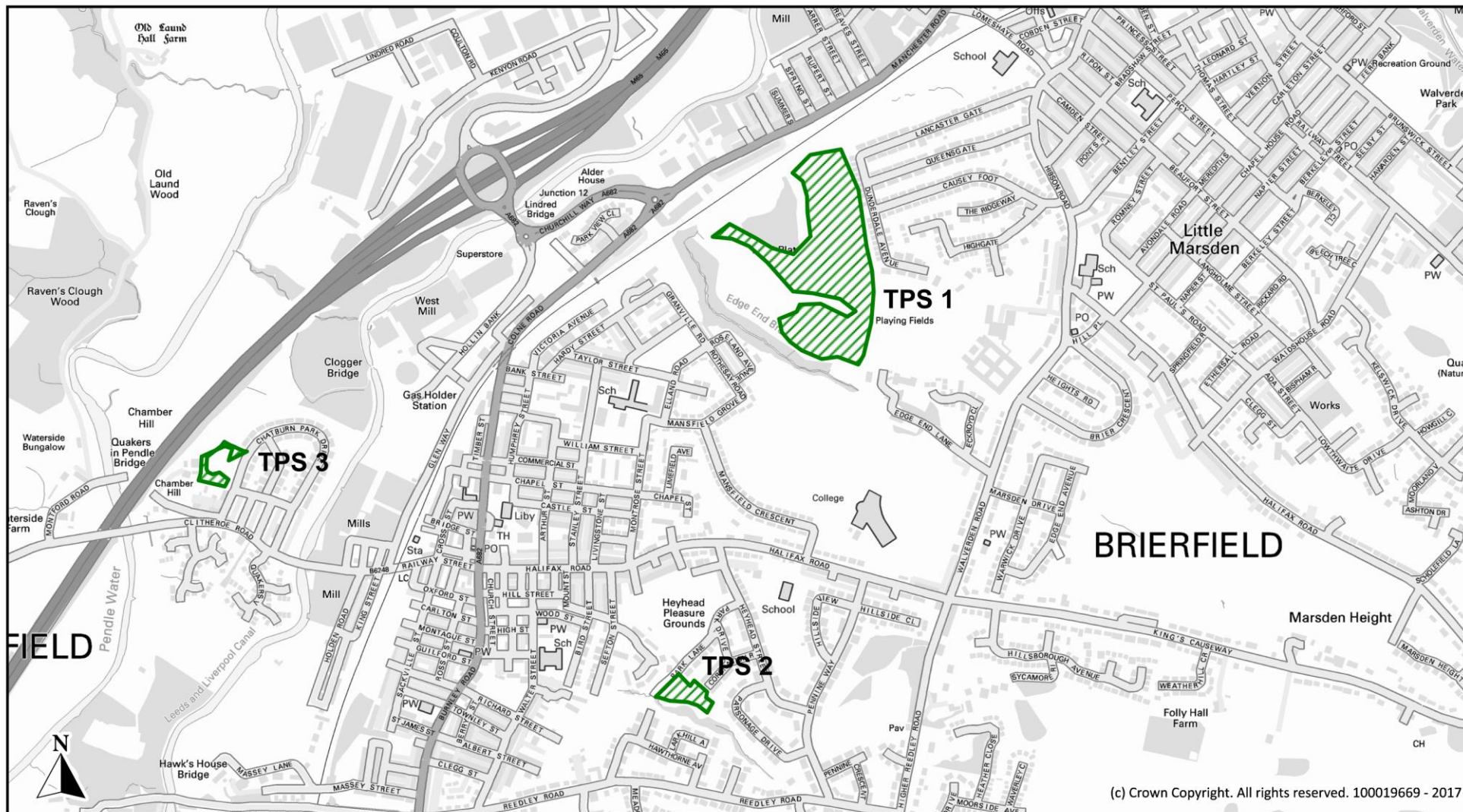
Appendix 2 – Draft Tree & Woodland Strategy.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – List of Proposed Sites & Maps

Number	Site Name	Size (ha)
TPS 1	Hard Platts	5.26
TPS 2	Land adjacent to Park Lane, Brierfield	0.36
*TPS3	Chatburn Park Drive Open Space	0.10
TPS4	Land adjacent to Carr Hall Road	2.58
TPS5	Pasture Lane, Barrowford	2.20
TPS6	Marsden Park	0.68
TPS7	Ringstone Crescent	2.35
TPS8	Land adjacent to Alkincoats Park	5.38
TPS9	Langroyd sites	9.55
*TPS10	King George V, Colne	1.46

* Included in the 2020/21 tree planting plan



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Description

Potential Tree Planting Sites - Brierfield

Scale
1 : 1,000

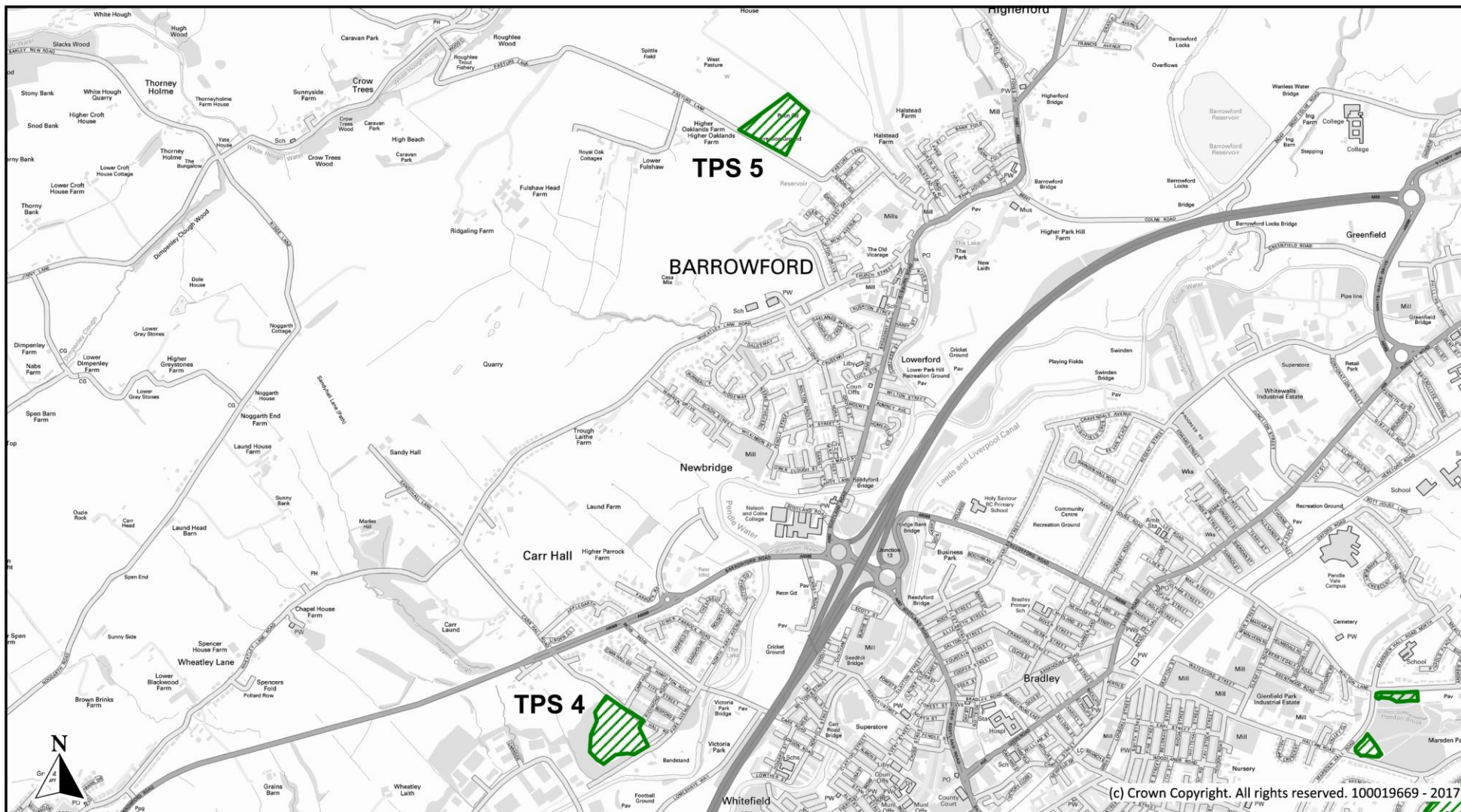
Drawing No.
1

Drawn By
LJ

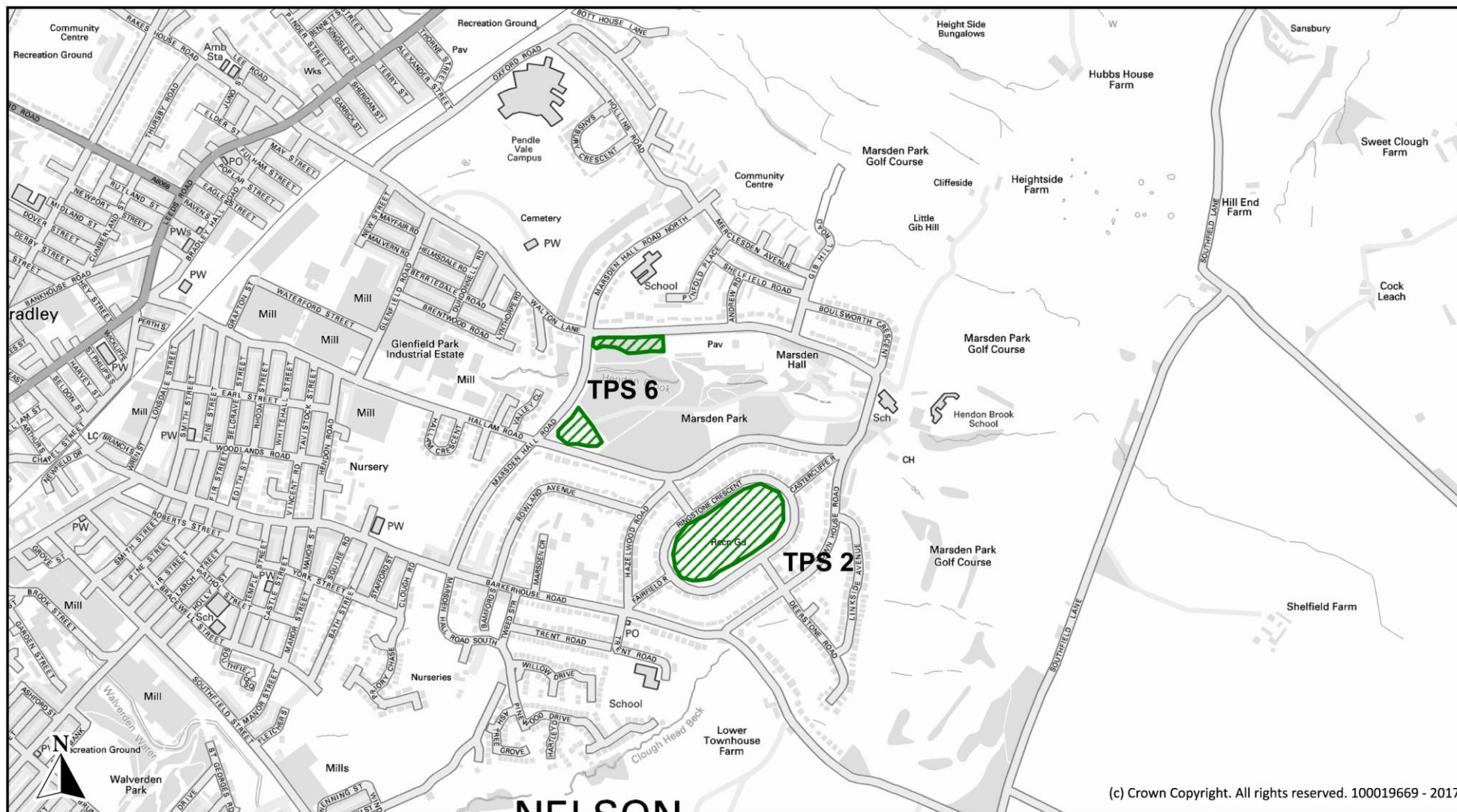
Date
29th January 2020



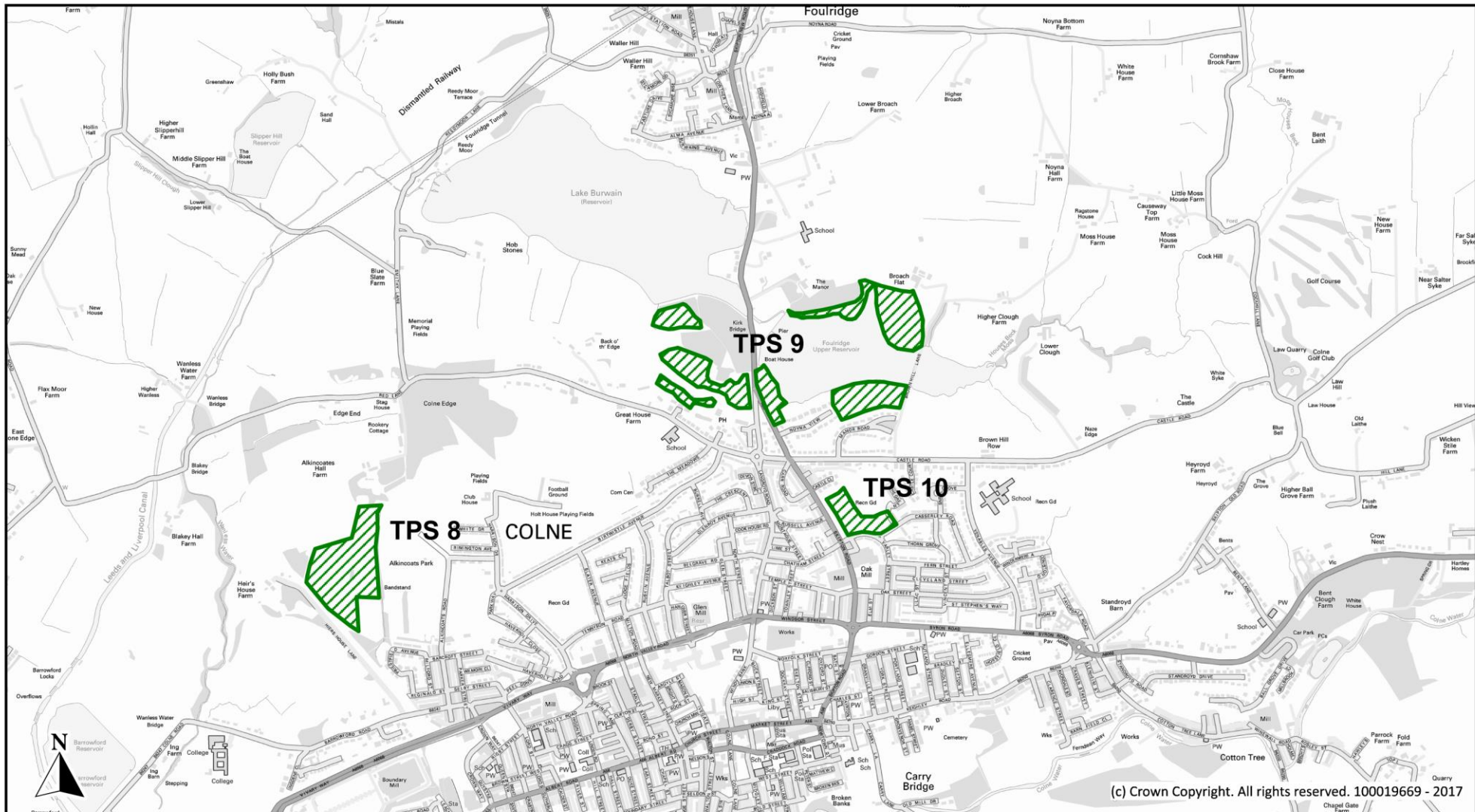
Planning, Building Control
& Licensing Services
Town Hall, Market Street,
Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 7LG




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Description			
Potential Tree Planting Sites - Nelson			
Scale	Drawing No.		
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Drawn By	Date		
LJ	29th January 2020		



Description			<div><div><div><div>Borough of</div><div>Pendle</div></div></div><div>Planning, Building Control & Licensing Services</div><div>Town Hall, Market Street, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 7LG</div></div>
Potential Tree Planting Sites - Colne			
Scale NTS		Drawing No. 1	
Drawn By LJ	Date 29th July 2020		

Appendix 2 – Draft Tree & Woodland Strategy

Pendle Tree and Woodland Strategy

Introduction

Trees and woodland coverage are of local value and global importance. They can help us to expand ecological networks, provide a sense of place and enhance conservation and regeneration, they also help to mitigate more widely against climate change helping to promote healthy communities.

Purpose of the Strategy

The Pendle Tree and Woodland Strategy outlines the Council's position on the protection and improvement of the trees and woodland within the Borough. It also outlines the main themes of the Council's work in relation to trees and woodland. The Pendle Tree and Woodland Strategy will inform future policy documents that may affect these landscape features. This document should also be read in conjunction with the Council's Tree Risk-Benefit Management Plan.

Objectives

The overarching objective of the Pendle Tree and Woodland Strategy is to leave these landscape features in a better, more resilient condition than what we already have. The Council recognise that trees are important for the communities, adapting to climatic change and supporting a diverse natural environment. As a result, the Pendle Tree and Woodland Strategy has 11 themes each with their own particular objectives.

1. Protect and restore existing trees and woodland

The Council will seek to protect all trees and woodland in its ownership. In addition to this, the Council will restore and improve any woodland in its ownership. We will seek to protect all trees of merit and woodlands throughout the Borough using our powers to create Tree Preservation Orders and Planning Policy.

We will seek to identify Veteran and Ancient Trees and ensure that they are protected for the valuable habitats and resources that they are.

2. Prevent tree pests and diseases

We will ensure that our tree related activities prevent the spread of pests and diseases by:

- Ensuring that we procure our trees from reputable suppliers that supply UK grown stock or have high standards of biosecurity controls.
- Ensure that staff and contractors work hygienically when carrying out tree related operations.

3. Increase our tree cover

We will seek to increase the tree cover of Pendle by:

- Undertake assessment of our current tree cover to establish base lines.
- Identifying and planting trees on land owned by the Council where practicable.
- Work with partners, private landowners and developers to identify planting opportunities and encourage tree planting on private and development land.

4. Invest in our trees and woodlands

We will continue to invest in our trees and woodlands by:

- Setting aside budgets for tree planting and maintenance.
- Identify and apply for additional sources of funding.
- Allocating staff time for tree planting projects.
- Manage our trees and woodlands to the highest possible standards.

5. Set the example

We will set a good example to others by:

- Taking a proactive approach to managing our trees and woodland.
- Ensuring that our staff and contractors are appropriately trained and work to the highest possible standards.
- Set Key Performance Indicators with regard to tree planting.
- Communicating our successes and being honest about our failures.
- Producing an annual report.

6. Promote Natural Regeneration

Out of our sites that we allocate for tree planting, we will allocate some site sites for natural regeneration projects. These sites will have minimum interference and will be closely monitored for progress.

7. Trees and development

Trees will be a feature of development where appropriate. Developers will be encouraged to plant trees in amenity areas and as part of the street scene.

8. Support Street Trees

Pendle Borough Council manage street trees on behalf of their owner, Lancashire County Council (LCC). Pendle will encourage LCC to maintain and/or increase its street tree provision throughout the Borough.

Where new developments are proposed, street trees will be required to be a pivotal part of the scheme.

9. Encourage Partnership Working

We will encourage partnership working by:

- Working with organisations such as The Woodland Trust, River Ribble Catchment Trust and others to deliver the aims of this policy.
- Working with our neighbours in Yorkshire and Pennine Lancashire Area to create larger wildlife corridors and expanses of woodland.
- Work with volunteers to help us achieve our tree planting goals and gather data.
- Improving community empowerment and resilience through active engagement in woodland management.
- Promoting cooperative woodland creation and management as part of an integrated land management approach.
- Linking into wider public health agendas to maximize opportunities for improving health and wellbeing

10. Promoting public access and appreciation

We will promote public access and appreciation of trees and woodlands by:

- Encouraging and promoting public access to woodlands for recreation and to help improve quality of life.
- Encourage links with tourism – e.g. Aitken Wood and Sculpture Trail.
- Deliver small scale events that link in with larger scale national events such as National Tree Week.

11. Promoting skills and education

We will promote arboricultural skills and education by:

- Providing opportunities for volunteers to get involved with our tree planting schemes and the management of our woodlands.
- Install interpretation at relevant woodland sites.
- Work with our partners in the education sector to promote tree and woodland related resources that link in the National Curriculum.
- Ensure staff that work with trees and in our woodlands are trained to a high standard.
- Ensure that our Landscape Maintenance apprentices have a good understanding of arboriculture and silviculture as part of their training.