

**Working Towards a**  
**New Woodland Strategy 2012 – 2050**  
**for Bradford District**

Public Consultation Draft



## Introduction

Bradford District is mostly rural and alongside its people it is undoubtedly our most valuable asset. By 2020 there will be more of us living in the district, wishing to work, find somewhere to live and places for recreation and relaxation. How we as a Council work with our community to make the best use of our natural resources to create both wealth and a quality place to spend our lives is our greatest collective challenge.

How we rise to meet this challenge is perhaps as important as the end result: two key principles have emerged over the past 20 years that inform how we respond. Firstly, economic development, indeed, any development must be sustainable. We know nature does not have an infinite capacity to provide resources or soak-up human pollution and that we have a moral obligation to ensure that our use of resources is not at the expense of future generations. Secondly, community participation in planning and decision making is central to meeting the challenge. The state alone at national or local levels does not have the capacity to solve every problem.

It is with this in mind that the Council, as custodians of the majority of the woodland in the district and the body responsible for planning is opening up a community consultation on a new strategy for trees and woodlands in the District. The decisions that we take now will determine whether or not future generations are handed an environment that is better or worse than the one we inherited. It is possible for us to hand on more woodland with richer biodiversity, greater productivity and more resilience to climate change than our inheritance. Equally, it is possible for us to duck our responsibilities and squander the future.

“Working Towards a New Woodland Strategy 2012-2050” sets out a Vision and key Aims of a woodland strategy, it describes briefly the woodland heritage, the benefits provided and the needs and contribution of our communities. It also looks at the key challenges we face and the policy context that influences our direction. Finally, the strategy will set out the practical steps that can be taken to delivery our vision and aims.

How we achieve our vision and fulfil our aims is the basis of the consultation. I would urge anyone with an interest in the District’s woodlands to comment and make practical suggestions that will help us create a great place.

Ian Bairstow  
Strategic Director  
Environment and Sport

## Contents

Introduction	
About the Consultation	4
About the Strategy	5
Aspiration, Vision and Aims	6
Bradford District Woodlands	7
Benefits of Trees and Woodlands	9
Our Community	11
Changing and Challenging Times	13
How does the Woodland Strategy Fit	15
Delivery Plan	19
References	20

## About the Consultation

The consultation period will run until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012. There are a number of ways to participate and respond:

Complete the on-line questionnaire at:

[http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/the\\_environment/plants\\_animals\\_and\\_wildlife](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/the_environment/plants_animals_and_wildlife)

or,

Email your views and thoughts to [woodlands@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:woodlands@bradford.gov.uk)

or,

Write to:

Ian Bairstow  
Strategic Director Environment and Sport  
City Hall  
Bradford  
BD1 1 HY

You can also join the

Tree and Woodland Forum at [www.bradfordparks.ning.com](http://www.bradfordparks.ning.com)

and

Invite a speaker to lead a discussion at your local group: [woodlands@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:woodlands@bradford.gov.uk)

When the consultation is completed comments and ideas will be reported to the Council's Environment and Waste Management Oversight and Scrutiny Committee and incorporated in the final draft.

**Contact:** Bob Thorp, Tree and Woodland Manager 01274 43 4826

## About the Strategy

### Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the strategy is twofold:

- To provide long term direction for the planning and management of the public woodlands owned and managed by the City of Bradford MDC.
- To set out how the Council will work with other partners and stakeholders to improve the quantity and quality of all woodlands across the district

Public and private woodlands provide many benefits to citizens, visitors and businesses as well as being a vital component of our natural environment or “green infrastructure”. Protecting and enhancing the district’s woodlands against the background of climate change and the pressures of population growth within the context of a complex policy and regulatory framework is a challenge for all woodland owners and managers.

The Council is in a unique position as the single largest woodland owner and planning authority to shape the quantity and quality of the district’s woodland over the next 50 years. The Council will be able to lead improvement in two ways: firstly, through the standards it sets for the management and maintenance of public woodlands and, secondly, through the development of co-production models between the Council, local communities, private land owners and businesses who share an interest in trees, woodlands and their produce.

### Who is it for and how will it be used

The strategy will inform and orientate how the Council manages its trees and woodlands to support its strategic objectives. It will:

- Ensure that we work towards meeting national agendas and local corporate strategies and targets;
- Provide guidance and direction to managers and staff;
- Provide a mechanism for participation and scrutiny by others;
- Set challenging targets and a process of evaluating our success;
- Inform and shape operational delivery plans;
- Inform and shape woodland based projects and partnerships;
- Support external funding applications

## Aspiration and Vision

Our over-arching aspiration is to:

*“Create high quality, sustainable public woodlands that meet the needs of people and the natural environment.”*

### Our vision

Over the next 50 years the Council will challenge itself to create a district where all our citizens, visitors and investors are able to enjoy and benefit from a richly wooded landscape. Council woodlands will support and enable wealth generation, an improved quality of life, greater and more resilient biodiversity, whilst also playing a role in mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration and substitution.

The Council will increase the size of its woodland estate by identifying planting opportunities within its land holding. These new woodlands will help to strengthen and reconnect older woods into a wider mosaic of natural spaces and green infrastructure. The quality of the woodland estate will be lifted through attainment of the internationally recognised Forestry Stewardship Council certification.

Central to the creation of a larger, quality woodland estate will be the development of “co-production” models of benefit delivery. The Council, local communities and private landowners will work together to plan, implement and monitor woodland improvement.

Giving a high priority to caring for the natural environment will make the whole district a better place to live and work.

## Aims

**Create a sustainable resource:** provide a tree and woodland resource on public and private land in places where they can contribute sustainable, environmental, economic and social benefits for the district now whilst safeguarding resources for future generations.

**Challenge Climate Change:** ensure that the Districts trees and woodlands are adapted to the impacts of climate change whilst helping to mitigate its impact.

**Enhance Biodiversity:** encourage and support the preservation and protection of biodiversity, including protection of air, soil and water resources.

**Contribute to Quality of Life:** ensure that all members of the community living, working and visiting the district have opportunities to access high quality woodlands for recreation, relaxation and education.

**Benefit Business:** encourage and support woodland based enterprises that contribute to wealth and employment creation in the district.

## **Bradford District Woodlands**

The woodlands of any area are shaped by the landscape and by the activities of its people. It often comes as a surprise to learn that Bradford District is mostly rural in character. Two thirds of our 370 sq. kilometres comprises open moorland, agricultural grazing land, woodlands and greenspace. By contrast the remaining third is the former industrial City of Bradford and the major towns of Keighley, Shipley, Ilkley and Bingley where most of the population (77%) live.

The landscape character is diverse, ranging from a small part of the Yorkshire Dales limestone country to the millstone grit of the South Pennine uplands, linked to the intermediate Southern Pennine Fringe and the low lying coal measures of Yorkshire, Notts. and Derby. The lasting impression of any one travelling through the District will be of a largely upland landscape cut through by the river valleys of the Wharfe and Aire as they descend eastwards to the sea<sup>1</sup>

It is the upland character of the district – its famous moorlands captured in the novels of the Bronte sisters or the song “Ilkley Moor baht 'at”, and – the industries associated with woollen manufacture that have led to an area relatively low in “woodland cover”. Overall, the area taken up with woodland was 4.2% in 2003, compared with Surrey (22%) at one end of the spectrum and Lincolnshire (3%) at the other and a national average of 10%.<sup>2</sup>

Our woodlands are also more than groups of trees and should be understood as rich and complex habitats for hundreds of species of plants and animals: from microorganisms (bacteria, fungus), through insects, amphibians to birds and large mammals. Some of Bradford District's woodlands are ecologically significant and vital to the support of some species.

Bradford Council is the single largest woodland owner in the District (see map) with 111 sites (74 woods, 37 parks) totalling 857 hectares (590 woodland, 267 parks) managed as woodland. In 2003 a further 703 hectares of woodland was owned by a wide range of private or charitable owners, however, planting schemes by the Council, Forest of Bradford and other land owners and community groups are believed to have increased the amount of woodland cover in the district to a figure in the range of 5 -10%.

These woodlands obviously vary in character and quality from the just planted to the ancient. Some, such as, Middleton Wood in Ilkley are designated as ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) with rich and important biodiversity, others are commercial plantations - new trees on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) that were cleared at some point. Others are newly planted woodlands in reclaimed land of Greenfield sites and have yet to become fully established. Typically, many of District's woods are “remnant” woodlands surviving on land of little value for other activities such as farming, housing or industry. In some instance the woods have been sites of quarrying and mining.

### **Urban Forest**

Outside of the District's woods thousands more trees grow in parks, streets, private gardens, riverbanks, hedgerows and in private gardens. These trees can be thought of as the “connective tissue” linking woods in to a wider “urban forest”. This network supports

biodiversity by providing a much larger more diverse habitat without which woods and their natural communities would be cut off and find it difficult to either migrate or expand.

Native trees of the district includes, oak, ash, birch, holly, alder, rowan and hawthorn, however, many other varieties have migrated to the area or been planted to create rich and diverse treescape.

**This section to include a district map showing public and private woodlands with some annotated examples.**

**Middleton Woods:** (area) is a regionally important oak wood famed for its rich show of bluebells. The greatest threats to this type of ASNW are a combination of climate change, people pressure and invasive species.

**Judy Woods,** (area) has native oak woodland, an extensive area of 19<sup>th</sup> C. beech plantation and reclaimed mine workings. (check Judy Woods blurb)

**St Ives Country Park Estate,** (area) former home of the Ferrands, woods range from ASNW, PAWS from the 1940s and woodland planted in the last 10 years. St Ives retains park land trees.

**Rivock Edge** (area), is the single largest expanse of trees in the district and example of commercial private forestry created on what was previously blanket bog moorland.

**Northcliffe Park,** (area) has two large areas of woodland within the park itself: Old Spring Wood to the north and Northcliffe Wood to the south are both important ASNW.

**Jargon Buster**

**ASNW:** ancient semi-natural woodland, a place that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600.

**PAWS:** plantation of ancient woodland site, a place where the wood has been cleared and replanted with a new commercial crop or has re-grown naturally. Many ASNW woodlands were cleared during WW1 and later replanted with conifers for timber.

**Biodiversity:** the range of different plants and animal species that are live in an area of land. Old, undisturbed sites such as ancient woodlands will have more species than new woodlands.

## Benefits of Trees and Woodlands

Human-kind's relationship with trees and woodlands stretches back to the dawn of time and is infinitely complex and fascinating. Our towns and cities would certainly be grim and desolate places to live without street, park and garden trees breaking up the hard, "built environment". There is also now a growing understanding in society that the natural environment or "green infrastructure", including trees and woodlands is vital to the sustainability and quality of life for our communities, cities and the planet as a whole.

The story of our district during the 200 years from the start of the industrial revolution in the 1700s is one where society drew heavily on natural resources and systems. Fields and woods made way for houses and factories; woodlands were exploited for materials; moorland was lost to grazing and streams, rivers and air heavily polluted. Since the Earth Summit (1992) thinking has focused on how we can manage the natural environment so that it can provide "ecosystem services" that benefit human society but without destroying them in the process.

### Some of the key benefits of trees and woodlands.

**Flood Regulation:** trees and woods in upland areas, along river courses, in flood plains and in urban areas intercept and slow rainfall through the district.

**Temperature Regulation:** carefully planted urban trees and woods can provide shade from the sun's heat in summer and reduce the wind-chill effect in winter both reducing the demand for air conditioning and heating. The total effect of the urban forest is to reduce "urban heat island" effect. Bradford University School Management Campus has been credited with an innovative design that helps reduce UHI and create a sustainable environment<sup>3</sup>.

**Air Quality:** trees along highways actively filter out fine dust from car exhaust and some gasses.

**Carbon Capture:** high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> are understood to be the cause of climate change. Trees and woodlands convert carbon dioxide in the air into wood, leaves and fruit. Over time woodlands build up huge stores of carbon.

**Fuel:** trees can be grown in "short rotation" for fuel or biomass. Bradford City Hall and a growing number of buildings are heated during the winter from sustainably grown and produced woodchip or pellets. Renewable biomass is a viable alternative to fossil fuels in some places and can help to combat climate change.

**Timber and paper:** commercial forests managed sustainably can provide renewable sources of timber and pulp for construction, furniture, paper and card etc. Esholt, St Ives, Cottingley and Rivock are examples of commercial forest plantations.

**Food and fodder:** apples grow on trees and many trees have been used as cattle fodder – holly was a traditional fodder in Pennine areas and is still reflected in place names like "hollins". These uses are not significant in the district today but community orchards are becoming popular and more productive nut bearing trees such as walnut may become a feature of our area.

**Biodiversity:** the entire urban forest provides a habitat to support many species. The loss of biodiversity reduces the resilience of natural systems and makes them less useful to human society. The loss of pollinating insects, such as bees, could be catastrophic to food production.

**Quality of life:** living on a tree lined street or being close to a park with trees or a woodland provides better opportunities to get outside for exercise and relaxation. Woodlands host formal and informal sporting and recreational activities everyday, including: archery, orienteering, horse riding, walking, jogging, mountain biking, bird watching or just meditating in a quiet spot.

**Education:** many schools across the district are finding that the use of outdoor classrooms in woodlands and other natural environments can engage children in learning activities in new ways. The Forest Schools network has many active practitioners teaching young people about woods, natural systems and how we can benefit from them.

**Place to invest:** an urban environment rich in good quality trees creates a more attractive place in which to invest and work. The forestry sector also creates new jobs and businesses in existing and new markets from sawn timber to biomass, charcoal to fungus or tourism and sporting activities.

### **Jargon Buster**

**Sustainability:** using natural resources today in ways that do not threaten future use.

**Natural Environment, Green Infrastructure:** soil, water, air, plants, insect, bird and animal resources.

**Eco-systems services:** key services are: “supporting” (e.g. nutrient cycling, soil formation), “provisioning” (e.g. food, freshwater, materials, fuel); “regulating” (e.g. climate and flood); “cultural” (e.g. aesthetic, spiritual, educational).

**Urban Heat Island Effect:** built environments absorb heat from the sun during the day and then release it at night. Vegetation such as trees help cool the city by creating shade and through “trans-evaporation” - movement of water from soil through to leaves.

## Our Communities

Bradford District is fortunate to have a broad community of interest participating in the ownership and management of its woodlands. In the private sector there are significant commercial plantations at Rivock Edge and Cottingley whilst there are many other smaller private woods. A number of woods are also either owned or managed by the voluntary sector and local communities, such as, Forest of Bradford, Woodland Trust and Heaton Wood Trust. Community participation in woodland management has been developed and supported by the Council through a network of Friends groups for 20 years.

Bradford Council recognises that local communities have a vast knowledge and experience of their woodlands and that these communities are also able to bring skills learned through life and work from many different areas to the management of local woods. Bradford Council is able to supply professional expertise and resources to the management partnerships.

### Mini Case Study

**Friends of Bierley Wood:** the FoBW were formed in late 2009 with the objective of improving Bierley Hall Wood and its three fishing ponds. The woodland suffered from litter, anti-social motorbike use, illegal grazing, unsustainable fishing and water pollution. The sheer presence of a group of local people committed to tackling these issues began to have immediate effect. Ward Councillors made funds and materials available to enable paths to be upgraded, seating installed and pond edges rebuilt. Much of the work has been undertaken by the Friends themselves. Perhaps the biggest success, however, has been the self-organisation of the angling club, which had attracted over 200 members in the first year and provided the funds to undertake restocking.

**Heaton Woods Trust:** the trust grew out of Heaton Township Association in 1978 to protect and improve Heaton Wood. With support from Bradford Council, White Rose Forest and the private sector and voluntary sectors the Trust's members have created an award winning woodland.

**Yorkshire Wildlife Trust & Scouts:** responsibilities for managing Low Wood, Riddlesden are split between Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Scouting Association. Both groups hold the wood on pepper corn leases from the Council but work in partnership to increase the biodiversity value (maintaining native oak) of the wood, whilst also, in the case of the Scouts, providing a place where young people can enjoy and learn about natural woodlands.

**Whafedale Naturalists:** Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits under the careful management of the WN has become a haven for a wide variety of flora and fauna, some of which is not generally found in the area. The groups works to maintain and monitor the range of micro habitats on the site.

**Friends of Northcliffe:** although the group began in opposition to a proposal to defend the Council's woodland from the development of a car park in 1990, both have gone on to work together in partnership to improve the park and woods.

### Friends of Bradford Parks and Woodlands

Bradford Council works in partnership with 17 Friends groups with hundreds of members. Friends work to protect and improve their local park or woodland. Four groups are based around woodland sites with the others based on parks, many of which have woodlands within them, such as, Cliffe Castle and Bowling Park.

## Voluntary Sector

The voluntary sector plays a key role in protecting and improving woodlands in the District. The Forest of Bradford, Bradford Community Environment Partnership (BCEP), Bradford Environmental Education (BEES), Whafedale Naturalists, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Groundworks and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) all participate in either specific projects or long term management.

## Council organisation and workforce

Bradford Council maintains a Tree and Woodland service within the Department of Environment and Sport. The service is responsible for the day to day management of the public tree and woodland estate and works alongside communities and Friends groups to maintain our woodlands.

The Tree Team in Regeneration protect the districts trees and hedges through Tree Preservation and High Hedges legislation. Regeneration also prepares the District's Local Development plans that identify the areas of the district that will be designated for different types of land use.

## Changing and Challenging Times

Woodland owners, managers and communities face five strategic challenges: sustainability, climate change, natural environment, economy and quality of life. Solutions to all of these challenges to the creation of quality woodlands have to be found against a background of national deficit reduction in the short term and population growth in the longer term.

### Sustainability Challenges

The strategic challenge for woodland management has been internationally agreed as:

*'The stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems'<sup>4</sup>.*

There are two sides to the challenge of sustainability. Firstly, how to ensure that there is at least as much useful woodland, if not more in Bradford in 50-100 years than there is today. Secondly, how to create sustainable organisations whose focus is to deliver the benefits of woodlands in the District. Woodlands that are capable of providing multiple benefits (fuel, biodiversity, timber, recreation, carbon sequestration etc) require higher levels of sustained investment and careful management.

### Climate Change Challenges

The strategic climate change challenge for the District is one of how to ensure that existing and new woods are *adapted* to the changing climate and also able to play a role in *mitigating* climate change. The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Adaptation Study<sup>5</sup> forecast that in the period to 2050 average temperatures would increase and average rainfall will decrease resulting in drier soils; winters will be wetter with less snow and summers drier. Weather events such as high winds and heavy bursts of rain increase the risks of damage to trees and flash floods.

Adaptation and mitigation measures focus on building “resilience” at both the woodland and the landscape scales. Creating more woodland is generally held to be a good thing with the challenge becoming one of understanding and agreeing what is the optimal area of woodland cover that is achievable and where that woodland is best planted to create the greatest benefit in terms of carbon sequestration, fossil fuel substitution through use of local biomass and materials, flood alleviation or local climate control. There is very little land in the district that does not have competing possible uses, whether housing, farming, commercial or recreational development.

At the woodland scale creating resilience is problematic as management options are limited – unless there is scope for large scale harvesting and replanting with species thought more suitable to the changing climate, most woods are locked in to past planting or management decisions. New woodland planting offers greater opportunity to plant species more suited to the climate - for example, it may be preferable to plant oak from central and southern France rather than “native” stock or find new species for biomass.

## **Natural Environmental Challenges**

The strategic challenge for management of the natural environment is one of how to meet the future needs of society for eco-system services, particularly *provisioning* of fuel and materials or *regulating* by sequestering carbon or flood alleviation and at the same time ensuring that neither woodland biodiversity nor adjacent eco-systems are degraded or depleted.

The story of the last 250 years is one where human society has developed often at the expense of the natural environment, through habitat loss, fragmentation, conversion (agriculture, urbanisation), over exploitation of resources, pollution, introduction of invasive species and climate change. Population growth and rising expectations will drive human demands for land, energy, food and resources and will create strong financial pressure on landowners and managers to change land-use<sup>6</sup>.

## **Quality of Life**

High quality natural environments and natural features in urban landscapes are known to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. People are healthier and have greater feelings of wellbeing if they can access greenspace where they can walk, jog, ride or just observe the natural environment. We also know that many children enjoy and benefit from outdoor play and education. The strategic challenge for managers is how to create and maintain quality natural spaces that offer opportunities for leisure, health and education for a growing number of people. This is partly about designing sustainable urban areas that incorporate natural features and also making the district's countryside and its benefits accessible to the whole community and valued.

## **Economic Challenges**

The strategic economic challenge is twofold, firstly, how to ensure that wealth and employment creation can take place without damage to the natural environment and, secondly, how can the sustainable use of eco-system services be used to create new investment and employment opportunities.

There is a tension between economic development and protecting the greenbelt and greenspaces: the district is mostly rural and this countryside is a valuable asset. There is a strong presumption in favour of the preservation and protection of existing natural features of the landscape in the Local Development Framework and a readiness on the part of local communities to defend their greenbelt. Commercial forestry operations and increasing commercial visitor activities can also be seen to be in conflict with other uses - for example, an increasing use of biomass boilers in the District could create new green businesses and jobs along the "supply chain" from the "stump to the boiler" but would also see more activity (felling and restocking) in some woodland. Increasing visitor numbers and activities in woodlands may bring people in to the District and support employment for local for residents but may not be welcome by local communities who value "peace and quiet".

## **How Does the Woodland Strategy fit with other strategies and policies?**

### **Government Policy**

*“The time has come to disperse power more widely in Britain today” Coalition Agreement 2010*

The Coalition Government promises radical changes to the way things are done. The emphasis generally is on creating a new settlement around the roles and responsibility of the state and those of communities and individuals. In the future the size and cost of the public sector is destined to be reduced whilst its relationship with citizens will be transformed as, so called, dependency is discouraged and responsibility is encouraged. There is a degree of political consensus around this settlement with differences confined largely to the eventual size of individual areas of public provision and the speed of implementation.

### **The Future of the Public Forest Estate in England.**

The importance of publicly owned and managed natural environments to people in England was demonstrated by the widespread and rapid response to the Government's proposals put forward in: *The Future of Public Forest Estate in England* (ref *The Future of the Public Forest Estate in England*, 2011, Defra, Forestry Commission). The proposal was widely viewed as a diminishment of the public sector land holding with a reduced role for the Forestry Commission that was not acceptable to many people. The consultation was prematurely ended in February 2011 and an Independent Panel commissioned to analyse the public response and bring forward conclusions.

Although, the Forestry Commission does not own any wood in Bradford District both private and local authority woodland are subject to regulation and support delivered by the Forestry Commission. The eventual approach the Government takes to the future of the public estate and the Forestry Commission will influence how local woodlands are managed.

### **A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests**

The aims set out in *England's Trees, Woods and Forests* inform and guide subordinate regional and district strategies, including the operational priorities set by regional Forestry Commission Conservancies. The strategy has five broad aims:

- ✧ Optimise the environmental, economic and social benefits of trees and woods now and for future generations.
- ✧ Create resilient trees and woods support biodiversity and mitigate climate change.
- ✧ Protect and enhance water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscape and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland.
- ✧ Increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life.

- ✧ Develop competitive and sustainable woodland products and eco-system services where this will deliver identifiable public benefits, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

### **The Natural Choice (White paper)**

In June 2011 the Government produced The Natural Choice, a white paper that sets out the “long term direction of travel” for the management of the natural environment in England. The Government's stated ambition is “*to ensure that the benefits of high quality natural environments are available to everyone. We want this to be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it inherited.*” The White Paper draws on the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) 2011 and Making Space for Nature, both of which highlight the depletion and fragmentation of ecosystems and human society's dependence on them. The White Paper sets out key measures in three thematic areas:

#### **Reconnecting Nature**

- Creation of Nature Improvement Areas
- Biodiversity Offsetting
- New Local Nature Partnerships
- Phasing out peat

#### **Connecting People and Nature for better quality of life**

- Green Area Designation
- Better Urban Green Spaces
- More Children experiencing nature by learning outdoors
- Strengthening local public health activities
- New environmental volunteering initiatives

#### **Capturing and improving the value of nature.**

- Natural Capital Committee
- An annual statement of green accounts for UK Plc.
- A business-led Task Force

### **Localism Bill 2011**

Although, not directly aimed at management of the natural environment or woodlands the Localism Bill will have implications for how these resources and services are delivered. The “general power of competence” proposed for Councils (a legal capacity to do anything an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited), amending the rules on “predetermination” in areas such as planning, a “community right to challenge” and run services or buy assets of “community value” could have far reaching implications. In respect of planning, the abolition of regional strategies, the introduction of “neighbourhood development plans”, the community “right to build” and reforms to the way local plans are made will change the context within which decisions about the natural environment and wood management are made<sup>7</sup>.

## Regional Government and Strategy

The coalition government has abolished regional government and strategies. However, Bradford is a founding member of the Leeds City Region Partnership and works with other local authorities to improve the quality of life of all those living and working in the LCR. Bradford is also a founding member of the White Rose Forest partnership. Both the LCR and the WRF recognise and advocate the need to work in wider partnerships to preserve and enhance the “Green Infrastructure” or a functional natural environment, including trees and woodlands<sup>8</sup>.

**Climate Change Plan for Humber and Yorkshire 2009 – 2014:** sets out a vision for the region in a changing climate and identifies priority areas for action. The plan recognises that the adaptation of the green infrastructure and natural resource across the region can build resilience and help to mitigate the various impacts of climate change<sup>9</sup>.

**The Strategic Framework for Trees, Woods and Forests in Yorkshire and the Humber Region** (July 2005). Set out priorities for action including, improving knowledge and understanding of the value of trees and woodlands; improvement of skills and business expertise in the forestry sector; increasing woodland creation; protection existing woodland; increasing access to woodlands near to where people live; increasing sustainable productivity of timber and biomass etc; planting to alleviate flood risk<sup>10</sup>.

## District Plans

### Big Plan 2008-2011

The Big Plan sets out the ambitions and plans of the Bradford District Partnership<sup>11</sup>. The plan embodies the principles of Sustainability (living within environmental limits) and Cohesion and Inclusion (extending community participation). The Big Plan embodies international, national and regional concerns and commitments, specifically to the creation of:

A greener environment which makes best use of natural resources, and

A more sustainable environment which has a positive effect on climate change

**Corporate Plan 2009-2012:** sets out the Council's strategic delivery priorities and key actions. SDP 14 Contributing to a more sustainable environment plans to improve the efficient use of natural resources and increase the use of renewable energy. The District Environment Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Programme detail how the strategic objectives are to be delivered<sup>12</sup>.

### Local Development Framework, Landscape Character SPD 2008

The Local Development Framework for Bradford is replacing the Revised Unitary Development Plan. The LDF is a set of documents that will inform and guide landscape (spatial) development of the district. The Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document (2008) aims to protect and enhance the character, appearance and features which are important to the landscape and encourage an integrated approach to development that includes consideration for landscape. The Council recognises that the inherent

characteristics of a landscape are vital factors in giving it local distinctiveness, and that in order to maintain this distinctiveness these characteristics must be retained and enhanced wherever possible. Trees, groups of trees and woodlands form part of the inherent characteristics of the landscape and there is a strong presumption that these features will be preserved and strengthened. However, the value given to other landscape features, such as, moorland places limits on how much land ultimately could be reforested<sup>13</sup>.

## **Delivery Plan**

This section will detail the practical steps the Council will take to deliver its Vision and fulfil its Aims. If you have any ideas or suggestions please refer to the section “About the Consultation” at the front of this draft for links to the questionnaire and other ways to tell us about your ideas.

## References

---

- <sup>1</sup> Local Development Framework for Bradford, Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document, : October 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees – England, 2001, Forestry Commission.
- <sup>3</sup> [http://www.rics.org/site/scripts/press\\_article.aspx?pressreleaseID=568](http://www.rics.org/site/scripts/press_article.aspx?pressreleaseID=568)
- <sup>4</sup> RESOLUTION H1 General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe, Helsinki (Finland), Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (1993). The UK Government adopted the Statement of Forest Principles at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and agreed to the Resolutions of the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe.
- <sup>5</sup> Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Adaptation Study.
- <sup>6</sup> Hails, C. et al, Living Planet Report 2008, WWF, Switzerland. Also UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) (2011) and Lawton (2010) Making Room for Nature.
- <sup>7</sup> Localism Bill, Communities and Local Government, June 2011
- <sup>8</sup> Growing with the Leeds City Region, Partnership Strategy 2009-2012, WRF and, Leeds City Region, Green Infrastructure Strategy – Vision Report, LRC, 2009.
- <sup>9</sup> Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Partnership, 2009.
- <sup>10</sup> The Strategic Framework for Trees, Woods and Forests in Yorkshire and the Humber Region (July 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> The Big Plan for the Bradford District 2008-2011, Our Sustainable Community Strategy.
- <sup>12</sup> City of Bradford MDC Corporate Plan 2009-2012
- <sup>13</sup> [http://www.bradford.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/14DE1C6F-66CE-4FD1-8831-B12267A40D51/0/LandscapeCharacterSPD\\_October2008.pdf](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/14DE1C6F-66CE-4FD1-8831-B12267A40D51/0/LandscapeCharacterSPD_October2008.pdf)