



LPP9 Farm Forestry

Policy Objective

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- a) Facilitate a more consistent, efficient and effective planning process for tree farms.
- b) Facilitate the establishment, management and harvesting of plantations consistent with the Code of Practice for Timber Plantations in Western Australia (the Code), as amended.
- c) Support and encourage the development of Agroforestry in the Shire for its combined economic, environmental and social benefits and its greater contribution to sustainability in rural areas.

Policy

Background

There is potential for commercial timber and associated products in the Shire, but the choice of species is restricted to well defined ranges due to soil type and rainfall. Another emerging plantation industry is the establishment of carbon plantations to create carbon offsets through the establishment and management of plantations dedicated to that purpose.

These carbon plantations are not subject to harvesting and may be left in place for 70 years. The accumulated carbon dioxide in these plantations is 'traded' with entities that have an obligation to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions profile (such as vehicle manufactures and petroleum companies). Carbon dioxide sequestered by these plantations needs to be certified under The Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standards of the Commonwealth Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

The environmental benefits of such plantations include lowering of water tables (and salinity levels), improved biodiversity (including habitat linkages), improved soil conservation and reduced sediment loads in waterways. Also, from a local government perspective, additional road construction and maintenance is not required as the plantation may never be harvested.

However, carbon plantations do generate areas of concern particularly from a local government perspective. After the initial planting and other than annual firebreak maintenance, nothing is returned to the local community. There is essentially no production of food from the land which once was carrying livestock and/or being used for cropping. There is the real potential that extensive areas planted to carbon plantations exacerbate population drift and rural re-population.

At this stage the Shire has not taken a position in regard to limiting or controlling carbon plantations as a land use, this policy governs plantations that are harvested such as Blue Gum and pine plantations.

The active management of plantations is critical to ensure that fire, weed and vermin issues are kept to a manageable level. These matters (and others) are addressed by the Code

Farm Forestry and Agroforestry operations are defined as 'Tree Farm' by the Scheme. A 'Tree Farm' is a permitted land use in the "Rural" zone. The Scheme requires Development Approval to be granted by the Local Government prior to the establishment of a plantation.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

"Agroforestry" - Land used commercially for tree production and agriculture where trees are planted in blocks of more than one hectare.

"Farm Forestry" - Any commercial tree production on farmland.



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“Plantation” - A stand of trees of 10 hectares, or larger, that has been established by sowing or planting of either native or exotic tree species selected and managed intensively for their commercial and environmental value. A plantation includes roads, tracks, firebreaks and small areas of native vegetation surrounded by plantations. Implicit in this definition is the recognition that plantations will be harvested.

“Plantation Management Plan” - A plan that details the establishment and tending procedures for a plantation in a manner consistent with Part A of Appendix 1 of the Code; Protocols for management Plans.

“Transport Strategy” - A plan and/or agreement outlining the transport arrangements related to the subject property and the surrounding local and district road system for transporting harvested or processed product from the site of production prepared in a manner consistent with Part B of Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Code; Plantation Timber Haulage Notification to Local Governments.

Local Planning Policy No.9 – Requirements

Exemptions from Development Approval: Nil

General Requirements

- a) In assessing an Application for Development Approval that proposes a Plantation, Council is to have regard to the development control provisions of this Policy and the following criteria as appropriate:
 - i) the provisions of the Code, as amended;
 - ii) the need to encourage farm forestry in locations where it is significant to the State, regional and local economies;
 - iii) the benefits of farm forestry in addressing land degradation, including soil erosion, water logging and salinity;
 - iv) the role of farm forestry in protecting water quality and preventing adverse effects on groundwater recharge;
 - v) any loss of high quality, productive agricultural land;
 - vi) the impact on the natural environment and on visual amenity; and
 - vii) the compatibility of farm forestry with adjacent land uses.
- b) Compliance with the Code (as amended) is required. The Code which sets out goals and guidelines for specific areas, including management plans, planning and design, plantation roads, weed and pest control, waterway protection, drainage, harvesting, fire prevention and control, research and development, safety and investment. All plantation applications will be required to meet the minimum standards as outlined in the Code. All applications will be assessed having regard for the general principles of the Code.
- c) The preparation and submission of a Plantation Management Plan to accompany applications in accordance with the protocol of the Code. Appendix 1 of the Code provides a detailed description of matters to be addressed so will not be replicated in this policy (e.g.. establishment and maintenance plan, fire management plan, weed control, vermin and insect control, planting details, native vegetation management etc).
- d) The preparation and submission of a Transport Strategy as part of the Application for Development Approval. The Transport Strategy is to include the following information:
 - i) area of land to be planted to trees and subsequently to be harvested;



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- ii) anticipated season/s and year/s of harvest;
- iii) anticipated tonnage of product at harvest;
- iv) whether trucked product is likely to be in the form of logs or chips or other;
- v) anticipated haul routes on local and district roads;
- vi) proposed destination of haulage; and
- vii) proposals for upgrading/rehabilitation or making financial contribution towards the upgrading/ rehabilitation of the local and district road system.

The transport strategy is to be updated and presented to the local government for final approval a minimum of eighteen (18) months prior to harvesting commencing.

- e) The local government may require a report on the general pre-condition of the main haulage roads and payment of a bond to cover any potential road damage.
- f) The local government will require the preparation and submission of a Fire Management Plan as part of the Application for Development Approval. The fire management plan is to be prepared by an experienced fire professional in accordance with the Guidelines for Plantation Fire Protection, as amended.
- g) In order to reduce the potential for conflict between farm forestry practices and areas of sensitive land uses, Council will not approve the development of Tree Farms within:
 - i) 500m of the Townsites of Hopetoun, Munglinup and Ravensthorpe.
 - ii) 250m of the Townsite of Jerdacuttup.
 - iii) 500m of areas zoned 'Rural Residential'.
 - iv) 250m of areas zoned 'Rural Small Holding'.

Notwithstanding the separation distances stated above, Council may consider reducing the separation distance where it can be demonstrated that the planting of trees closer to sensitive land uses will address pre-existing environmental damage, such as salinity.

The proponent is to demonstrate in this case that the plantation can be operated without adverse impact on the amenity of residents in the adjoining areas.

- h) All plantations shall be setback:
 - i) 50 metres for permanent water or greater ephemeral streams (intermittent);
 - ii) 30 metres for ephemeral streams and margins of water supply Variation to these setbacks can be considered following referral to the department of Water for advice.

Agency referrals.

- iv) Where a property subject to an Application for the establishment of a Tree Farm adjoins land managed by the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions as part of a designated Nature Reserve, Conservation Area or National Park, the Application is to be referred for comment to the Department.
- v) Applications that use Main Roads WA controlled highways for access will be referred to Main Roads for comment.
- vi) Applications in close proximity to waterways will be referred to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for comment prior to determination.



DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX		
Custodian: Chief Executive Officer		Decision Maker: Council
Compliance Requirements:		
Legislation: Local Government Act 1995 S5.39 Contracts for CEO and Senior Employees Local Government Act 1995 Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019 section 22 – s5.39A, 5.39B & 5.39C Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 (Administration Regulations) Regulation 18A amended, 18C and 18D deleted, 18FA to 18FC inserted		
Industry:	Forestry	
Organisational:	Shire of Ravensthorpe Local Planning Scheme No.6 Shire of Ravensthorpe Local Planning Strategy	
Document Management:		
Risk Rating: Medium	Review Frequency: 2 Years	Next Due:
Version #	Decision Reference:	Description:
a	OCM 20/12/18 – Item 10.2.1	Major Revision to Planning Scheme Policies
b	OCM 15/09/20 – Item 15.1	Policy Reconfirmed – No Amendments.
c	OCM 19/07/22 – Item 12.1.2	Comprehensive Policy Manual review.
d	OCM 17/12/2024 Item 12.1.2	Policy Reconfirmed – No Amendments
e	OCM 15/12/2025 Item 12.1.1	Comprehensive Policy Register Review