



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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| Name and date of Committee | COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2020 |
| Report Number | AGENDA ITEM No. 10 |
| Subject | NOTICE OF MOTION – TREE PLANTING |
| Wards affected | All |
| Accountable member | Cllr James Mills, Leader of the Council Email: james.mills@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Accountable officer | Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Summary/Purpose | To consider the Motion proposed by Councillor Alex Postan and seconded by Councillor David Harvey at the meeting held on 31 July 2019 and referred to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Development Control Committee. |
| Annexes | None |
| Recommendation | That the Council agrees that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting be incorporated within a revitalised sustainability checklist. |
| Corporate priorities | To protect the environment and meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents. |
| Key Decision | No |
| Exempt | No |
| Consultees/ Consultation | Climate Action Working Group |

1. BACKGROUND

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Alex Postan and seconded by Councillor David Harvey, at the meeting of the Council held on 31 July, 2019:

“In support of Cllr McRae’s recent motion that directs this Council towards a carbon neutral future and taking heed of the findings of extensive research, I believe that we have the ability to instigate a practice whereby we, both as a community or as individuals, can take action to absorb and capture CO2 from the atmosphere by planting trees.

Accordingly, this Council will require its permanent staff to draft a planning condition to mandate substantial planting of trees, shrubs and forestation in all significant developments. The expectation is that by the start of 2020 this condition could be a standard attachment to all permissions approved.”

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Council decided to refer the motion to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Development Control Committee for further consideration.
- 2.2. Having given consideration to this request, Officers are doubtful that the desired objective could be achieved by way of a planning condition. However, efforts have been made to identify an appropriate mechanism by which to drive this request forward.
- 2.3. In June 2019, in considering a previous Notice of Motion regarding climate change, the Council established a cross party working group to assist in the formulation of its plans to become carbon neutral by 2030 and to encourage others in the District to follow its example. The working group was tasked with reporting back to Council by January 2020 and its report appears at agenda item no. 9 for this meeting.
- 2.4. The working group identified the development control process as one of the key ways in which to advance the Council’s environmental objectives and expressed support for the production of a revitalised sustainability checklist. The Business Manager, Development Management, has suggested that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting could form part of this revised checklist.
- 2.5. It is envisaged that the Climate Change Action Group will become the principal forum for considering the development of a Carbon Action Plan for the Council and a wider reaching Climate Change Strategy and it is recommended that the Council agrees that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting be incorporated within a revitalised sustainability checklist to be developed by that group.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. Not applicable

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The proposals within this report will have a direct, positive impact with regard to carbon reduction and wider, positive benefits towards climate change mitigation and adaptation across the District.

7. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

7.1. The Council may approve, amend or reject the Motion as proposed or adopt the recommendation set out above.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1. None