

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 11 APRIL 2019
COUNCIL OWNED TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY
REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER CUSTOMER SERVICES
(Contact: Christine Cushway, Tel: (01285) 623241)

The decisions on this matter will be resolutions.

1. PURPOSE

To consider the Policy for the Management of Trees Owned by the Council and make recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider the Policy for the Management of Trees Owned by the Council (2019) (attached as Appendix A to the report) and make comments to Cabinet as appropriate.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Due to changes in the Environmental Services Team the management of the Council owned trees was taken on by Property Services in 2017. However without existing resource and experience in the management of trees growth budget provision was made for a part time Tree Officer to be employed as part of the team within Heritage and Design, Publica.

3.2 One of the first tasks that this post is progressing in addition to managing trees and works is to record all trees on Council land to ensure there is an accurate record of trees, their species, condition etc, works required and any priority for works.

3.3 Under legislation the Council has a duty to manage its trees and ensure they are safe. Trees are located on numerous Council owned sites including offices, depots and a number of sites open to the public from public open space within residential areas to Kilkenny Country Park. It is therefore essential that trees are managed appropriately and that there is consistency to the approach taken on tree management.

3.4 The tree management budget is £43,200 per year. However additional s106 funding held by the Council and obtained for this purpose can be allocated should additional health and safety works be identified.

3.5 The Tree Officers in Heritage and Design, Publica are now responsible for managing the trees owned by the Council and are supported by the Estates Team with regard to land and therefore tree ownership issues. This work includes undertaking tree condition assessments, producing tree site management plans, preparing site management specifications, appointing appropriate tree contractors and ensuring that the works are undertaken in line with the specifications and contracts.

3.6 The Tree Management Policy (2019) attached at Appendix A, sets out a proposal for the management of the trees to provide a consistent approach when dealing with requests and

complaints from the public. Officers are seeking to obtain approval to this policy for the management of trees under all Councils ownership.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

4.1. Cabinet could agree not to have a management policy but this would lead to an inconsistent approach and more Officer time spent on dealing with individual requests and justification.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is already a budget for tree management; this report does not recommend a change to that budget.

6. RISKS

6.1. If the Council's trees are not correctly managed they could become a safety risk for which the Council would be liable.

6.2. Without this policy it is likely that an inconsistent approach to tree management will result and the public will be unclear where the Council will or will not take action.

7. REASONS

To ensure that trees owned by the Council are managed in a sustainable and safe manner to provide an environmental resource and to enhance the landscape and townscape of the District.

Jon Dearing
Group Manager- Customer Services

(Author Christine Cushway, Tel (01285) 623241; Email: Christine.cushway@publicagroup.uk and Sophia Price, Tel: (01285) 623205; EMail: Sophia.price@publicagroup.uk)

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