

	REPORT TO CABINET TO BE HELD ON 14 JUNE 2016	
	Key Decision	YES
	Forward Plan Ref No	
Corporate Priority All	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Cllr Andrew Jenkinson

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR (NE) – 16/131

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT: TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION (S):

Cabinet is recommended to approve the adoption of a new Tree and Woodland Strategy for the period 2016-2030.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To ensure that the Council has adequate plans in place to manage trees and woodlands within the Borough, in line with residents views.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS

All risks are identified in the attached risk matrix.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The new Tree and Woodland Strategy is attached at Appendix One. This strategy will enable the Council to effectively protect and manage its tree stock, it identifies key legislation, introduces a risk based approach to tree management and sets out clear procedures in respect to tree works.

2.0 CORPORATE AIMS/PRIORITIES AND THE COMMUNITY PLAN

2.1 Contributes to People and Place aims within the Corporate Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 3.1 The importance of trees is widely recognised. They play an important, though often undervalued or even unnoticed role in our everyday lives. They are often taken for granted and their subtle benefits can be underestimated.
- 3.2 Trees make a major contribution to the Borough's appearance. They relieve the general conformity of large urban areas and can soften the harsh appearance of building lines. They contribute to the character and attractiveness of the entire Borough and are of great importance to key landscape designations such as the North York Moors National Park, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the Heritage Coast etc. They are also important to the ecological viability and biodiversity of the area.
- 3.3 Trees and woodlands also impart a number of significant benefits to our communities. These include:
- Environmental benefits such as the production of oxygen, absorption of pollutants, managing erosion and intercepting storm waters.
 - Economic benefits by acting as windbreaks and enhancing property values.
 - Social benefits including education, wellbeing and opportunities for recreation.
 - Community benefits as part of the area's cultural heritage.
- 3.4 The management of trees is governed by a number of pieces of legislation including the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, the Town & Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 and various Habitats Directives.
- 3.5 Yet the very nature of trees can represent a liability to the Local Authority and steps must be taken to proactively inspect and manage tree stock to reduce the potential risk of harm to persons or property.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Full consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders to support the development of this strategy.
- 4.2 Public consultation took place via the Council's website between 29 March 2016 and 24 May 2016. In total, 139 responses were received as part of this consultation and these are detailed in Appendix two of this report.
- 4.3 Consultation was also undertaken with Elected Members through the Sustainability Working Group.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The strategy seeks to build on the strengths of previous work undertaken by the Council and sets out a clear approach to the management of the Council's tree and woodland stock until 2030. This includes a range of objectives to protect and enhance street scene trees, woodlands, trees in parks and open spaces, trees on private land and also encourages the involvement of the community at all stages.
- 5.2 The importance of trees to the local environment and community is well recognised and the strategy sets out a number of clear, practical guidelines for tree works which will ensure that the strategic aims are met and that trees will continue to benefit and enhance our Borough for years to come.
- 5.3 The strategy introduces a risk based approach to the inspection and management of the Council's trees using the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment Framework (QTRA). This framework applies established and accepted risk management principles to tree safety management. By quantifying the risk from tree failure as a probability, QTRA enables the Council to manage the risk in accordance with widely applied and internationally recognised levels of risk tolerance. QTRA further provides a decision-making framework which considers the balance between the benefits provided by trees, levels of risk they pose, and costs of risk management. This framework is widely used by over 200 local authorities, landowners and consultants throughout the UK.
- 5.4 Adoption of this strategy will ensure that the Council continues to meet its obligations under law to manage its tree and woodland stock.
- 5.5 Whilst the Borough Council has a wide and varied tree stock on its own land, it is important to recognise that significant areas of woodland within the Borough are found on private land. The Borough Council should lead by example and embrace best practice in the management of its own tree stock and encourage other landowners to do the same.
- 5.6 The strategy sets out a number of key actions and subject to approval by Cabinet, these will be delivered to the following timescales:

Action	Timescale
Implement a cyclical inspection regime prioritising trees in high risk locations	December 2016
Undertake a review of all Tree Preservation Orders.	April 2020
Commence regular inspections of newly planted trees.	On-going
Introduce and promote a voluntary Tree Warden scheme.	April 2018
Create a guide to enable Customer First to answer basic tree related questions.	December 2016
Expand the Commemorative Tree Initiative to include non-urban sites.	April 2017
Create an accurate database for all Council owned trees or groups of trees.	On-going

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

(a) Policy

6.1 There are no new policy implications that arise from this report.

(b) Financial

6.2 There are no new financial implications that arise from this report

(c) Legal

6.3 There are no new legal implications that arise from this report

(d) Equalities and Diversity

6.4 There are no new equalities and diversity implications that arise from this report.

(e) Staffing Issues

6.5 There are no staffing implications that arise from this report.

(f) Planning, Environmental, Health and Safety, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder

6.6 The provision of a well maintained, well managed tree and woodland stock contributes to protecting the environment and promoting sustainability. The strategy sets out a new framework to managing the Council's tree stock which will ensure the authority meets its health and safety obligations.

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Background Papers: None

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS, PLEASE CONTACT PAUL THOMPSON ON 01723 232323 OR E-MAIL paul.thompson@scarborough.gov.uk

Risk Matrix

Risk Ref	Date	Risk	Consequences	Mitigation	Current Risk Score	Target Score	Service Unit Manager/ Responsible Officer
1		The Council does not adopt a Tree and Woodland Strategy	The Council has no strategic framework in place with which to manage the Council's trees and woodlands	Adoption of the Tree and Woodlands Strategy	C3	A1	Operations, Transport & Countryside Manager
2		The strategy does not reflect local needs and priorities.	The Council adopts a strategy which does not reflect local needs and priorities.	The Strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with SBC officers and Members and with our external public and private sector partners to ensure it is robust and fit for purpose.	C3	A1	Operations, Transport & Countryside Manager

Glossary of Terms

Risk	An event which may prevent the Council achieving its objectives
Consequences	The outcome if the risk materialised
Mitigation	The processes and procedures that are in place to reduce the risk
Current Risk Score	The likelihood and impact score with the current mitigation measures in place
Corporate Objectives	An assessment of the Corporate Objectives that are affected by the risk identified.
Target Risk Score	The likelihood and impact score that the Council is aiming to achieve
Service Unit Manager	The Service Unit or Officer responsible for managing the risk
Action Plan	The proposed actions to be implemented in order to reduce the risk to the target score

Risk Scoring

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
			A	B	C	D
		Likelihood				

Likelihood:

A = Very Low
 B = Not Likely
 C = Likely
 D = Very Likely
 E = Almost Certain

Impact

1 = Low
 2 = Minor
 3 = Medium
 4 = Major
 5 = Disaster