

## TREE STRATEGY AND TREE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

### Executive Summary

As anticipated by the Core Strategy and Natural Woking Strategy, officers have produced a Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework encourages Local Authorities to produce a tree strategy. These strategies support local authorities in maximising the wide range of benefits that trees and woodlands can deliver to their constituents – for health, amenity, climate change, air quality and water management.

Tree management policies have been produced to complement the Tree Strategy, to provide a succinct and transparent approach to tree management and the decision making process in relation to trees.

### Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

#### RESOLVE That

- (i) the Tree Strategy (Appendix 1 to the report) and Tree Management Policies (Appendix 2 to the report) be approved;
- (ii) the Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies be published on the Council's website; and
- (iii) the Green Infrastructure / Arboricultural Team, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, be delegated authority to approve future updates to the Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies to reflect new information.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.
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**Background Papers:** None.

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## Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies

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## **Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework encourages Local Authorities produce a tree strategy. These strategies support local authorities in maximising the wide range of benefits that trees and woodlands can deliver to their constituents – for health, amenity, climate change, air quality and water management.
- 1.2 Tree management policies has been produced to complement the Tree Strategy, to provide a succinct and transparent approach to tree management and the decision making process in relation to trees.

### **2.0 Draft Strategy and Management Policies**

- 2.1 The Tree Strategy (see Appendix 1) sets out how the Council will work with its partners to ensure a high quality approach to tree management. It reflects the Council's aims and objectives to promote a healthy and diverse tree stock. It also discusses the benefits of trees within the urban landscape to ensure that future developments consider trees as part of design.
- 2.2 The Strategy discusses how trees mitigate the localised effects of climate change, filter particulate pollution and how, through appropriate planting and management, they can increase the health and wellbeing of the local community. These benefits have helped to shape our guiding principles and better reflect the Tree Management Policies (Appendix 2), they have also helped to set our aims and objectives as an arboriculture service.
- 2.3 The Tree Management Policies document has been produced as a guide of best practice which will provide a concise and consistent approach to tree management. It acts as an extension to the Strategy as it details how we deal with tree related enquiries and it gives our stakeholders an understanding of how we manage the Woking Borough tree stock.
- 2.4 The Management Policies take our current working practices and formalise these into one concise document. The document highlights questions that the Council faces on a daily basis to ensure our management processes are unified and our decisions are appropriately considered. It delivers an overview on our current health and safety inspection regimes and our tree planting principles.
- 2.5 The two documents together seek to secure positive outcomes for the relationship between trees and people. This is achieved by increasing awareness of the Council's management decision making amongst its stakeholders; conserving existing species diversity and trees of importance; and creating opportunities for tree replacement and the retention of trees in the urban environment.
- 2.6 Some habitats require very specific and sensitive tree management to ensure that they are maintained appropriately. For example, heathlands, in which we need to manage the ingress of trees to maintain the habitat's important flora and fauna. Officers are currently reviewing management of the Council's countryside greenspace assets, including heathlands and wetlands; options for future management policy for these sites will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this autumn.

### **3.0 Next steps**

- 3.1 Subject to the above, there is the potential to publish and promote the final documents during National Tree Week, starting on 24 November 2018.

## Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies

### 4.0 Implications

#### Financial

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the proposed Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 4.2 A Councillor briefing took place on 6 September 2018, as detailed under Consultations.
- 4.3 No additional training requirements arise from these documents. Training on tree related matters will continue to be run in-house as required.

#### Community Safety

- 4.4 There are no Community Safety implications associated with the proposed Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies.

#### Risk Management

- 4.5 There are no risks associated with the proposed documents. An impact assessment has been completed which shows the positive impacts of producing a Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies.

#### Sustainability

- 4.6 The documents will contribute towards the delivery of a sustainable Woking Borough, in particular to implementation of the Core Strategy and Natural Woking Strategy.

#### Equalities

- 4.7 There are no inequalities concerns associated with the proposals. An impact assessment has been completed which shows the positive impacts of producing a Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies.

#### Safeguarding

- 4.8 There are no safeguarding implications.

### 5.0 Consultations

- 5.1 The draft documents have been consulted with our environmental partners Serco, with relevant Woking Borough Council services (Neighbourhood Services, Green Spaces Development, Planning and Planning Policy, Flood Risk and Drainage Engineers, New Vision Homes).
- 5.2 The Climate Change Working Group has been consulted and the documents were discussed at its meeting on 19 June 2018. A number of changes to the documents were discussed including the need for a section detailing that alternative habitats (such as heathlands) may need alternative tree management.
- 5.3 A briefing for Councillors took place on 6 September 2018, giving the opportunity to learn more about the proposed documents, discuss and ask questions. Feedback from this event has informed the attached draft documents.

REPORT ENDS