

REPORT TO CABINET

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Open | | Would any decisions proposed : | | |
| Any especially affected Wards | Operational | Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide | YES | |
| | | Need to be recommendations to Council | NO | |
| | | Is it a Key Decision | NO | |
| Lead Member: Cllr E Nockolds E-mail: cllr.elizabeth.nockolds@west-norfolk.gov.uk | | Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr I Devereux | | |
| | | Other Members consulted: E & C Panel | | |
| Lead Officer: Richard Fisher E-mail: Richard.fisher@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 782080 | | Other Officers consulted: Chris Bamfield Nathan Johnson Stuart Ashworth Chris Durham Claire Thompsett | | |
| Financial Implications NO | Policy/Personnel Implications YES | Statutory Implications YES | Equal Impact Assessment NO | Risk Management Implications YES |

Date of meeting: 29/06/2018

TREE & WOODLAND STRATEGY

Summary:

This strategy highlights the immense value of the Borough's urban forest to the wellbeing of its residents and the substantial contribution it makes to the Borough's sustainable future.

Considerable progress has been made to put systems in place to manage the Borough's trees and woodlands, particularly the steps that have been taken to fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of health and safety. The new strategy builds on these achievements.

The focus for the ten year period of this new strategy is consolidation of the Council's trees stocks in particular making provision for the long term renewal in the light of the ageing nature of the tree stocks

The tree stock must be carefully managed to provide a degree of resilience to both imported pests and diseases and the climate change.

The expansion of the urban forest will be a priority to ensure that the ecosystem services can be maintained to meet the needs of a growing population. However, this will be carefully planned and targeted. The aim to increase canopy cover towards the national average will be over a period of at least ten years.

Development in the Borough presents both challenges and opportunities for its tree cover. The Council will seek to ensure suitable trees are retained on development sites and commensurate and appropriate provision is made for

new tree planting and green space.

It is hoped that both stakeholders and residents of the Borough will appreciate that the urban forest requires careful management to thrive and provide the considerable benefits of which it is capable. The Council's policies and priorities contained in this strategy represent a commitment to sustainable management of the Borough's trees for both the existing and future generations.

Recommendation: To adopt the Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the long term effective management of the Borough Councils tree stock.

1. Background

1.1 This report sets out the first ever draft Tree & Woodland Strategy, attached at Appendix 1. The Aims of the strategy are set out in section 3.1 of the draft and detailed below:

- To maintain and enhance the tree population of the Borough.
- To increase the tree canopy cover across the Borough with particular reference to urban areas with low canopy cover.
- To protect and consolidate the historic trees and woodlands within King's Lynn.
- To maintain and maximise the ecosystem services provided by the Council's trees.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that the Council's tree stocks are resilient in the light of threats from introduced tree pests and diseases and climate change.
- To promote biodiversity and conserve tree and woodland ecosystems.
- To conserve and protect ancient woodland and ancient trees with significant ecological value
- To fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of its tree stocks. The systems of health and safety checks on trees that have been developed will be maintained. The aim will be to keep risks presented by trees as low as it is reasonably practical to do so.

1.2 It is best practice for the council to have a tree and woodland strategy in place, to set out how the council will manage the risk from trees to meet its legal duty of care in a reasonable manner. It also sets out a framework for the proactive management of our tree stock to maximise

the benefits to local communities and manage potential conflicts/threats in the future

1.3 The council's first Tree & Woodland Strategy and agreed maintenance regime and inspection practices will assist in safeguarding the council against any future litigation and will set out guidance for the council's approach to tree related enquiries & complaints. It will also address tree replacement and planting programmes to ensure that tree cover in the borough is maintained and increased, along with other issues such as climate change and the influx of new diseases.

1.4 The new Tree & Woodland Strategy links to the Corporate Plan:

- Provide important local services within our available resources
- Work with our communities to ensure they remain clean and safe
- Celebrate our local heritage and culture
- Stand up for local interests within or region

1.5 Once the Tree & Woodland Strategy is adopted it will:

- Ensure that our resources are used correctly and in the right areas
- Inform members of the public of the council's policies for tree & woodland management
- Build resilience for our current tree stock in light of current threats – climate change, new pests & diseases etc.
- Identify areas for new planting to grow the borough's tree cover

2. Environment & Community Panel

2.1 The Environment & Community Panel considered the draft Tree & Woodland Strategy in its meetings of the 4th July 2017 and 13th February 2018. Overall, the draft strategy was well received.

2.2 Various issues were brought up during these two meetings:

- There appears to be a lack of trees in the more rural areas of the borough – grass verges etc. most of the verges around the borough are owned by Norfolk County Council (NCC) but it may be possible to investigate small parcels of borough land for additional planting.
- Comments were made in regard to tree planting and the planning process – as a part of this strategy we would seek CIL & S106 contributions in usual way.
- Some comments were received about the current process for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) – TPOs are outside of the scope of this draft strategy.
- Councillors asked if this draft strategy could be forwarded to Parish Councils – it was explained that this would form part of the public consultation process

3.0 Public Consultations

3.1 The council circulated the draft tree strategy from the 1st March 2018 to the 1st April 2018 with stakeholder groups including:

- All Parish/Town Councils
- KLACC
- Local heritage groups
- Norfolk County Council
- Environment Agency
- RSPB
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Natural England

3.2 Where possible, this feedback has been integrated into the final draft.

4.0 Options Considered

4.1 The option to carry on without a Tree & Woodland Strategy was discounted because:

4.2 This Tree and Woodland Strategy will help the borough meet our statutory biodiversity obligations as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (s.40; duty to conserve biodiversity) and to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (section 11; Conserving and enhancing the natural environment). Such a strategy will also support the borough in maximising the wide range of benefits that trees and woods can deliver to their constituents – for health, amenity, climate change and water management.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

5 Risk Management Implications

5.1 The Council's current Tree Officer works 3 days in Planning and 2 days in Public Space and is the only specialist employed with regard to tree related matters. Resources to implement the Strategy are therefore limited and there is a risk of raising expectations. However, the aim is to also raise the profile of our urban & rural tree stock and maximise opportunities for planting that could be lost. The Tree & Woodland Strategy will also provide clearer guidance to officers when dealing with tree related issues.

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|---------|--------|
| Name of policy | Tree Strategy | | | | |
| Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function? | New | | | | |
| Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations | To ensure the long term effective management of the borough councils tree stock. Non-Statutory | | | | |
| Question | Answer | | | | |
| <p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> | | Positive | Negative | Neutral | Unsure |
| | Age | | | ✓ | |
| | Disability | | | ✓ | |
| | Gender | | | ✓ | |
| | Gender Re-assignment | | | ✓ | |
| | Marriage/civil partnership | | | ✓ | |
| | Pregnancy & maternity | | | ✓ | |
| | Race | | | ✓ | |
| | Religion or belief | | | ✓ | |
| | Sexual orientation | | | ✓ | |
| | Other (eg low income) | | | ✓ | |
| Question | Answer | Comments | | | |
| 2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another? | No | | | | |
| 3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently? | No | | | | |
| 4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination? | No | | | | |
| <p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p> | No | Actions: | | | |
| | | Actions agreed by EWG member: | | | |
| Assessment completed by: Name | Richard Fisher | | | | |
| Job title Arboricultural Officer. | Date 20 th July 2018 | | | | |

