



Report of: Head of Environmental Services

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Furey & Councillor A Yates

Contact for further information: David Jones

**(E-mail: David.Jones@westlancs.gov.uk)
(Extn: 5254)**

SUBJECT: TREE POLICY

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider and approve the proposed Tree Policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 That the report be noted and any agreed comments to be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

2.2 That the Tree Policy included attached as Appendix 1 be approved to progress to Cabinet.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

3.1 That any agreed comments from the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered.

3.2 That Cabinet approve the Tree Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3.3 That delegated authority be given to the Head of Environmental Services in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the Tree Policy during the lifetime of this document.

3.4 That the Tree Policy is reviewed and updated with new national legislation, including Biodiversity Net Gain, updates to the Climate Change Act 2008 or local policy, such as the update to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that is published.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 In November 2020, the Council adopted a new 'Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2030' to assist in the delivery of the Council's aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030 at the latest, to be committed to climate action in other areas and to progress towards a low carbon West Lancashire.

4.2 The Strategy identified seven key priority areas for action, they are:

1. Delivering a carbon neutral Council,
2. Sustainable procurement,
3. Transport and travel,
4. Residential buildings,
5. Commercial activity,
6. Community action and the
7. Natural environment.

The Tree Policy will directly assist the Council to implement Priority 7. Natural Environment, and action: Protect and Promote Green Infrastructure. The key objectives are to introduce tree planting schemes and delivering the right trees to the right places.

4.3 The proactive introduction of a Tree Policy will clearly set out the parameters of the management and maintenance of the Council's tree stock.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

5.1 The Tree Policy will provide greater clarity and transparency to customers on tree management and a clear direction on the service provided.

5.2 The Tree Policy will support the customer when making a request for tree services and provide relevant information on the tree assessment process.

5.3 The Council work to British Standards BS3998 Tree Work Recommendations and BS5837 trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. This is used to identify dead, dying, and diseased trees that require maintenance or removal.

5.4 A tree replacement programme will be implemented with the Tree Policy. For every tree that is removed, it will be replaced with either saplings or tree whips that are native species to the UK in locations that have been approved.

5.5 A planned and robust tree management and maintenance inspection programme is being developed as part of this Tree Policy. This is currently being progressed through the procurement process and will enable the tree service to deliver a new long-term structured approach to the management and maintenance of Council owned trees in the borough.

5.6 It is recognised that there may be occasions where tree works are carried out that fall outside the parameters of the Tree Policy. Any work undertaken will be at the discretion of the authorising Officer.

- 5.7 The Tree Policy is accompanied by Frequently Asked Questions and will be published on the Council's website. This section of the policy will be reviewed and refreshed as necessary. Appendix 2

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability implications associated with this report and in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. However, consideration has been given to ensuring this compliments the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan and has been developed in conjunction with the Council's Environmental Sustainability Team.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are financial implications directly associated with a tree planting replacement programme and there is some capacity within existing resources. However, there are a number external funding schemes / grants that are available for replacement trees. This will be explored by the service to meet the requirements of the Tree Policy.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT / PENTANA

- 8.1 A formalised Tree Policy and the management, and inspection programme developed in relation to tree stock in the West Lancashire, will result in a more efficient and effective service. The Tree Policy will subsequently mitigate future risks. The risks have been added to Pentana for monitoring.

9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.
- 9.2 There are long term benefits to health and wellbeing when spending time around trees, woodlands, and open spaces to improve our mental health and offering relief from the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. The Tree Policy will support the benefits.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix 3 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Tree Policy

Appendix 2 – Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Minute of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Cabinet only)