

Meeting: Green Sub Committee

Date: 05 September 2023

Title: Update on Tree Management Policy Review

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Service: Environmental Services &
Safer Neighbourhoods

Directorate: Environment

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

To provide members of the Green Sub Committee with information on the Authority's approach to reviewing the existing Tree Management Policy.

2. Background

On 20 July 2023, Council agreed to undertake a review of the Authority's current tree management policy and refer the policy to the cross-party Green Sub-Committee for consideration before it goes to Cabinet.

3. Information

3.1 Legislation

We have a statutory duty to ensure we manage our tree stock in line with legislation and guidance. Details of such legislation are listed in North Tyneside Council's existing Tree Management Policy.

As an employer, we must follow advice from competent and suitably trained individuals to ensure our decision-making process is sufficient and robust in protecting the safety of others.

In addition, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 stipulates we must do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.

3.2 Tree Management Policy

The Tree Management Policy was first introduced in 2009. The Policy was reviewed in February 2010 and again in January 2016. The most recent review was undertaken in 2022 to take into consideration Climate Change (Section 4.7), where it was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 24 January 2022.

The Policy provides a strategic framework for the proactive management of the local tree population. The policy details, how we actively maintain our tree stock and our operational approach to what actions are deemed suitable and appropriate in line with legislation, guidance and best practice.

3.3 Current Context

In line with continuous improvement, the Authority is currently in the process of undertaking a full review of our approach to tree management. As part of this review, an independent tree management specialist has been commissioned to carry out a review of the Authority's approach to the management of trees.

The review will be carried out over the coming months and will provide professional and competent advice in relation to our current systems and operations, and make recommendations, where appropriate, for changes to be made to enhance our current approach.

Importantly, the review may necessitate the need for any recommended changes to be reflected in our existing tree management policy. It is therefore important to complete this operational review prior to reviewing the tree management policy.

4. **Recommendations**

The operational review is anticipated to take approximately 7 months. Following this, a review of the existing tree management policy will be undertaken and presented to committee members for scrutiny next year.