

Subject:	Tree Management Policy	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Corporate Scrutiny Cabinet	Date:	10 th February 2013 12 th February 2013
Report of:	Parks and Open Spaces Manager	Portfolio Holder:	Operational Services and Development Control
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Corporate Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Tree Management Policy.
1.2	All future minor amendments to the policy to be delegated to the Parks and Open Spaces Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To consult with the Policy Scrutiny Committee regarding the newly proposed Tree Management Policy and approve for recommendation to cabinet that it is adopted and implemented.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
 - **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- Operating a tree service without the policy means that it would continue to be open to the challenges and shortfalls as described in paragraph 5.3.
 - Loss of potential income if aspects of tree work as identified in the policy are not recharged.
 - Risk to public safety if planned management is not seen as a key part of tree management.
 - Operating an in-house tree team requires considerable investment in to training and equipment to ensure the range of work can be undertaken safely. This has an impact on the medium term financial strategy.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Parks and Open Spaces team employ staff trained in aspects of arboriculture work and provide an in house tree service.
- 5.2 This team carries out work on trees owned by RBC only. The work is prioritised based on safety and consists of work generated via service requests and work identified on site by team members throughout the preceding year. We currently do not carry out proactive surveys to identify necessary tree work which would then form the basis of our annual tree work programme.
- 5.3 There is currently no policy which guides managers or customers regarding all aspects of the arboriculture service provided by the council. This can lead to poor decision making, inequalities of advice, inefficient planning, potential increased risk due to the reactive nature of work programming, increased time dealing with unnecessary service requests, unsatisfied customers due to a lack of clear information and challenges being made to decisions of appropriate action.
- 5.4 All tree work is currently carried out at the council's expense. We no longer carry out private tree work acting as contractors, as has happened many years ago, due to limited resources and the need to focus on our own tree stocks. This however was a previous source of income generation.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising will be contained within existing budget resources.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 No additional comments to add

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 The tree management policy has been developed to ensure fairness when dealing with service requests and provide guidance for all parties. The policy provides information and guidance on: The Importance of trees, Planned Management, Service Requests ,Tree Preservation Orders, Privately owned trees, High Hedges, Memorial trees, Tree Planting, Pests and diseases, Financial and Legal Implications.
- 8.2 The Health and safety at Work Act 1974 places a legal duty upon the Council to provide a safe place of work for employees and safe premises for visitors. To be able to ensure this happens it is important that a Health and safety management system, appropriate to the service and operations carried out, is adopted. This policy details a planned management system consisting of survey work as well as service requests to ensure risk is minimised.
- 8.3 The subject of charging for tree works that only benefit an individual or household, which would otherwise not be considered necessary was discussed at a community consultation event on 15th September 2013 and out of all issues addressed on that evening this was the item which received the highest number of positive responses (95%) to support this proposal.
- 8.4 Staff have been consulted regarding changes to the parks and open spaces service and charging for tree work as per the above principles was also supported.

- 8.5 The policy was taken to management team on 25th November 2013.
- 8.6 The policy has been circulated for comment to Team Leaders and the Parks Technical Officer within the Parks and Open Spaces Team.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 To ensure the health and safety of employees and visitors, ensure a fair and clear decision making process and provide clear information regarding our responsibilities, it is proposed that the Tree Management Policy be adopted and implemented.

No background papers