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| ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | Agenda Item No. 6 |
| 22 MARCH 2012 | Public Report |

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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TREES AND WOODLAND STRATEGY- POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the updated Trees and Woodland Strategy for the Committee to consider prior to referral to Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee receives and endorses the updated Strategy and the measures outlined within it, which replaces the existing 1998 Strategy.
- 2.2 That the Committee refers the Strategy to Cabinet for endorsement prior to its consideration by Council as part of the major policy framework.
- 2.3 That the Committee supports the need for additional resources allocated within the Medium Term Financial Strategy to deliver the strategy.
- 2.4 That the Committee agrees to receive copies of the proposed Tree Risk Management Strategy and annual progress reviews.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Strategy in particular most directly contributes to the 'Creating the UK's Environment Capital' priority of the Sustainable Community Strategy via the Cleaner/ Greener agenda. Progress on delivery of the Strategy will be used to give a more detailed picture of the breadth of the actions taken by the Council to deliver this priority.
- 3.2 In addition, the Strategy will assist in delivering National Indicator 160 by helping deliver positive conservation management to woodlands that have local site designation.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 1998 Peterborough City Council adopted its Trees & Woodland Strategy. Since then this has proven to be a robust and successful document, providing the Council's basis for managing its own trees and giving guidance for the control and implementation of protection for privately owned trees.
- 4.2 The review of this Strategy commenced in 2005 by the then Trees and Woodland Team. A working group was convened in 2006 of Officers and Councillors to develop the Strategy. Owing to the comprehensive nature of this review, high work load and restructuring of departments this work was not completed until 2010. The findings of the review formed the basis of the first draft that was presented, by Peterborough City Services, to Environment Capital Scrutiny in the November of that year.
- 4.3 Following consideration of this draft and a separate meeting with interested members, further changes were made prior to the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee endorsing the Trees

and Woodland Strategy for wider consultation in January 2011.

4.4 Operations Directorate proceeded to undertake this public consultation in the summer of 2011.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 The key issue which the Committee need to consider is if the revised draft Strategy provides the objectives, policies and actions which will establish the Council's commitment and continued strategic direction for the protection, planting and maintenance of the trees and woodland within its authority. A key element of change within the Strategy is moving away from a reactive service to one that ensures that its resources go towards a pro-active defendable system for managing tree risk and ensuring high standards of asset management.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Strategy can only be partially delivered within existing Council resources. The extrapolation of priorities and the financial implications in complying with Strategy have been summarised in Appendix B. In response to these budgetary requirements additional budget was allocated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of £744,000 in 2012/13, £735,000 in 2013/14, and £727,000 in the following three years 2014 to 2017. It is considered that this allocation of funding will initiate the implementation of the strategy and that there will be the need to annually review the ongoing resource implications that will be informed by inspections and delivery of works undertaken the previous year. Additionally, opportunities will be explored to offset the cost of managing the Council's trees and woodland by seeking external funding or other changes to landscape management practices which are less expensive.

6.2 The successful implementation of the Strategy would help the Council facilitate compliance with its duty of care to maintain its trees and woods in a safe condition. In addition it demonstrates the City's worthiness of Environment City status and will directly contribute to Peterborough's Environment Capital aspirations. The Strategy will also deliver associated positive effects to quality of life, the economy and cultural heritage.

6.3 This report has implications throughout the authority area where the Council is a landowner manager. It will impact on all wards and will hopefully influence and inform emerging Community Action Plans.

6.4 The Strategy identifies a standard for the management of the tree resource in the stewardship of the Council, which ensures its long-term conservation and development for the people of Peterborough and future generations.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation was undertaken between 31st May 2011 and 11th July 2011. The Strategy was available on the Council website during this period. In addition relevant organisations were consulted. These include:

- *Cambridgeshire Bat Group*
- *Buglife*
- *Campaign To Protect Rural England*
- *Forestry Commission*
- *Friends of Stanley Recreation Ground*
- *Froglife*
- *Langdyke Countryside Trust*
- *Natural England*
- *Opportunity Peterborough*
- *Peterborough Environment City Trust*
- *Peterborough Conservation Volunteers*

- *Peterborough Local Access Forum*
- *Peterborough Civic Society*
- *Phoenix Residents Association*
- *Environment Agency*
- *Plantlife*
- *Peterborough Primary Care Trust*
- *RSPB*
- *The Wildlife Trust*
- *The Woodland Trust*
- *Greater Peterborough Partnership*
- *Nene Park Trust*
- *Burghley House Preservation Trust*
- *The Walcot Estate*
- *Milton Estates*
- *Friends of the Earth*
- *BTCV*
- *Enterprise Peterborough*
- *Trees for Cities*
- *Parish Councils*
- *Councillors*
- *Council Officers. This includes Legal, Recreation, Transportation, Landscape Architect, Neighbourhoods, Economic and Community Regeneration, Climate Change, Emergency Planning and Wildlife Officer.*

A total of 245 consultation responses were received. These comments and observations have been incorporated, where appropriate, within the revised Strategy presented. A summary of the consultation comments is included within Appendix C.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 To refer the Strategy to Cabinet for endorsement prior to consideration by the Council as part of the major policy framework.
- 8.2 To receive copies of the proposed Tree Risk Management Strategy and annual progress reviews detailed within the Strategy.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1
 - Peterborough Tree and Woodland Strategy June 1998
 - Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (including Rural Vision Strategy and Environment Capital Manifesto)

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A : Draft Trees and Woodland Strategy- Policies and Strategies
- 10.2 Appendix B: Extrapolation Of Priorities And The Financial Implications In Complying With The Trees and Woodland Strategy
- 10.3 Appendix C: Consultation Comments

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