

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | Agenda Item No. 6 |
| 4 NOVEMBER 2010 | Public Report |

Report of the Commercial Services Director

Contact Officer – James Cooper, Trees & Landscape Management Officer
Contact Details - (01733) 425341

PETERBOROUGH TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy which provides direction for the care of Peterborough's trees and woodlands. It updates the 1998 Strategy and accommodates the changes that have taken place over the last twelve years, including the influences of the Biodiversity Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee scrutinises the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy and endorses it for wider consultation.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Trees are the largest single item within the landscape and therefore have an impact. Woodlands are an invaluable resource and a superb educational opportunity and thus contribute to the agenda for learning and awareness of environmental issues. The SCS contains the priority for:

“Making Peterborough cleaner and greener so that we become the UK's greenest city with attractive neighbourhoods surrounded by thriving biodiversity”.

Directives within DEFRA have the stated aims of **“Helping to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life”** and **“Supporting a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change”**.

Supporting the findings and issues within the draft Strategy links to National Indicator 197 (Improved local biodiversity - active management of local sites) the rationale of this indicator being to “assess the performance of Local Authorities with regard to local sites and promoting them for educational purposes”.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The first issue for Members to consider is the proposal to move away from response based reactive works to a programme of inspections which will be followed by tree works based upon those findings; this also demonstrates our duty of care.
- 4.2 The next key issue is to look at the development of the right tree in the right place framework and the consideration of options to eventually reduce overcrowding within residential areas. This will be followed by a programme of replacing existing, inappropriate space demanding trees, with smaller alternatives.
- 4.3 The draft Tree and Woodland Strategy is attached at Appendix 1.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are financial implications associated within the current draft to which reference is made within the text of the strategy, notably planned inspections and programmes of works as directed by the findings of the inspections.
- 5.2 Environmental implications include the potential loss of habitat, diminution of biodiversity and depletion of trees and woodlands lost through neglect, overcrowding or senility through carrying on with current practices and emphasis on response based works to the detriment of planned works. The latter allows for promotion of habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.3 Pre-determined programmes for works to trees and woodlands demonstrate that the duty of care has been given due consideration and this includes minimising damage to property from falling trees as well as that to foundations from subsidence.
- 5.4 Trees and woodlands are very much city wide and a major feature within all Wards of Peterborough.
- 5.5 Care of and selection of trees carries with it implications for community safety with considerations of potential tree collapse and shading of street lights.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 To date consultation has been confined to interdepartmental colleagues directly associated with the care of trees and open spaces and those with a planning related logistical responsibility. External consultation with associations, Ward Members, Parish Councils and community groups will commence post approval of the initial draft.

7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 7.1 That Members consider and support the findings and issues addressed within the document, acknowledging the idea of time related alterations to the overall landscape.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Following completion of the consultation and consideration by the Committee the Strategy will be referred to the Cabinet for a decision.
- 8.2 Officers will continue to work on an allied action plan with options for tree works subject to availability of funding.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 9.1
- Peterborough Tree And Woodlands Strategy, June 1998
 - Peterborough Open Space Report, June 2006
 - Biodiversity Strategy, June 2004

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy