

TREE POLICY

Report by Director – Infrastructure & Environment

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

24 November 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from members for the adoption of a new Tree Policy that outlines the Local Authorities responsibilities regarding trees in its ownership.
- 1.2 This report outlines a proposed Tree Policy that seeks to clarify SBC's responsibilities regarding trees, which are owned and maintained.
- 1.3 The policy was outlined at a Members Briefing on 4 October 2022. The presentation set out the aims and objectives of the policy and what the aims and objectives are for all stakeholders and customers.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council approves the Tree Policy for adoption and publication.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There has been a lack of clarity with regards written process and policy on operational tree work.
- 3.2 The policy seeks to set out the Local Authority's responsibilities and a consistent approach to advice and actions on their own tree stock and, also outlines the Council's responsibilities and obligations in this regard.

4 DRAFT TREE POLICY

- 4.1 The key issues the policy seeks to address and provide an operational response to are:
 - Biodiversity, improving our air quality and health and wellbeing, the policy set out benefits of managing our tree resource.
 - Managing our tree resource through pro-active surveys and maintenance regimes. This includes risk assessment on SBC owned and maintained trees.
 - Privately owned trees - sets out a consistent response to common enquires with regards trees in private ownership and customer advice to our Call Centre teams.
 - Neighbour nuisance advice on regular concerns regarding neighbouring trees.
 - Advises on Roadside/Highway trees and how we respond to enquiries.
 - Legislation and trees in Scotland.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The Policy sets out the Council's current system of tree risk assessment on its own trees. The proactive approach and implementation of any recommendations within the assessment minimise the potential for tree or limb failures, thus helping to ensure longevity of trees within Council ownership.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This has meant developing policies and delivering actions which will ensure the benefits of climate change action are shared widely.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

5.4.1 Ensure Healthy life of trees via pro-active management of our local natural resources.

5.4.2 The policy seeks to raise awareness of biodiversity and climate change at a local level.

5.4.3 The policy plays an important part in education and awareness of our natural resource.

5.5 **Climate Change**

The climate change checklist is attached to this report.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

It is anticipated the policy will have a neutral impact on the rural environment.

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or Delegation attached to this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Name - John Curry

Title – Director – Infrastructure & Environment

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Simon Wilkinson	Tree Officer - 5148

Background Papers: [insert list of background papers used in compiling report]

Previous Minute Reference: [insert last Minute reference (if any)]

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