

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 3 APRIL 2018

Recommendations from the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2018:-

TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) setting out the amendments proposed to the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy following comments received through the consultation. It was recognised that the most important addition to the draft strategy was the clarification of the inspection regime for trees which was more clearly stated in Policy 1.

Policy 1 indicated the areas where the Council would carry out tree work (such as in instances of pedestrian safety, decay or structural damage to the tree) and in particular the frequency of tree inspections which would be on a three year rolling programme. For the avoidance of doubt an example was given: a tree inspected in the spring in the first year could be inspected again in the autumn in the fourth year.

In addition to the frequency of tree inspections it was noted in Policy 3 that 300 trees would be planted annually and a monthly tree felling list would be produced.

The Committee noted that tree planting would be a potential response to mitigating air quality issues in Hatfield Business Park and Comet Way.

Members felt that some of the comments in the consultation were not fully taken on board and that the recommendations of the tree scrutiny sub-group concerning issues in Policy 2 had not been incorporated into the draft strategy.

Policy 2 outlined where the Council would not carry out tree work, for example in instances to increase the amount of sunlight reaching a property, to improve mobile phone reception or alleviate problems caused by natural phenomena such as leaves or algae.

Some Members expressed regret at what was in their view the excessive focus on trees at the expense of the Borough's residents and the failure of the Committee to take on the views of the tree scrutiny sub-group.

Following discussion the Chairman moved that the Committee agree Recommendation 2.2 in the report that the Strategy be recommended for adoption to the Cabinet and this was lost (4 voting for and 5 against).

The Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) highlighted to Members that the critical safety regime would not be implemented if the strategy was not adopted.

Members agreed that the safety regime needed to be implemented.

It was suggested by the Head of Planning that the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy be adopted by the Cabinet apart from Policy 2 which would be subject to further discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

In the interim, the Head of Planning suggested that the current policy, which detailed areas where the Council would not carry out tree work, would be used until the discussion by the Committee on Policy 2 had taken place and a recommendation made to the Cabinet.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED:  
(unanimous)

- (1) That Policy 2 of the Tree and Woodland Strategy be subject to further discussion at the next meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) That, with the exception of Policy 2, the amendments proposed to the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy as the result of the comments received through the consultation be accepted.
- (3) That the amended draft Tree and Woodland Strategy, less Policy 2, be recommended to the Cabinet for adoption.