

# ***Report to the Cabinet***

***Report reference: C-048-2023/24***

***Date of meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024***



**Portfolio:** Regulatory & Technical Services  
(Cabinet Portfolio Holder Cllr K Williamson)

**Subject:** EFDC Tree Policy (Updated) 2024 – 2029

**Responsible Officer:** M Thompson/Interim Service Director  
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## **Cabinet Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- 1. Cabinet agrees to adopt the proposed updated overarching tree policy for a 5-year period.**

## **Executive Summary:**

The updated EFDC Tree Policy 2024 – 2029 (appendix A) defines EFDC's approach to the management of trees owned by District Council and the publicly owned highway under the stewardship of Essex County Council. We want to promote responsible tree management and provide clear guidance on responsibilities and expectations for residents within the district.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The current policy, Trees, Information, Objectives and Policies was last reviewed in 2008 and does not reflect our approach today.

The current policy does not include a review plan to reflect changing priorities and practices.

## **Other Options for Action:**

N/A, The Council's current strategy was entitled "Trees, Information, Objectives and Policies" was introduced in August 2008 and requires updating.

## **Report:**

1. The Council has a responsibility to maintain Council owned trees within the district.
2. The Council's tree stock is the largest natural asset the Council owns and manages. Its' trees are the single biggest positive contributor to biodiversity, air quality and climate change mitigation in the district.
3. Trees are the common element that features across all its many and varied landscapes from the miles of tree lined streets and roads, parks and gardens, churchyards and cemeteries to woodlands and other sites managed for nature conservation. It should be noted that the Forest known as Epping Forest is managed by the City of London Corporation and is not covered by this policy.

4. EFDC carry out reactive tree maintenance as required on behalf of Essex County Council, regarding certain trees assets considered to be part of the public highway. This does not include trees assets located on Essex Property and facilities (EPF sites), or tree assets owned by the local Town and Parish Councils.

### **Scrutiny Comments**

The Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 noted and endorsed the report for the next Cabinet meeting.

### **Resource Implications:**

None

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council has a duty of care to take reasonable management measures to avoid foreseeable injury or harm in the case of trees wherever possible, where the public are using its land.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Trees are effective in improving the quality of the environment, by modifying local climate and by controlling air pollution. An environment enriched with trees improves human health and lowers stress levels. Trees are also important for wildlife and can have historic and sentimental value. Trees are the single biggest positive contributor to biodiversity, air quality and climate change mitigation in the district.

**Consultation / Scrutiny Undertaken:** The draft policy has been circulated to

Planning Directorate

Legal Services

Insurance Officer

Housing Directorate

### **Background Papers:**

Trees, Information, Objectives and Policies 2008

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: EFDC Tree Policy 2024 – 2029

### **Risk Management:**

A Tree Policy for the Council will help ensure a consistent approach to managing the trees on Council land that fall within the Council's responsibility whilst contributing to the Council's Climate Change initiatives.

The Council has a legal duty to take reasonable mitigating actions to avoid foreseeable death, injury or damage to property from trees on Council land for which it is responsible for.

Failure to adopt this Policy could increase the risk of death, injury or damage to property and Trees that are in an obvious state of disrepair, and are classed as Dead, Dying or Dangerous must be managed in a prudent and timely manner to provide a safe environment for all.

### **Equality:**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and there is no significant impact, there is a positive impact.