

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2021/22
Decision No.
2297

Record of Decision by Executive

Tuesday, 21 September 2021

Portfolio	Planning and Development
Subject:	Council Tree Service Review
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priority:	Dynamic, prudent and progressive Council; Protect and enhance the environment

Purpose:

This report sets out the results of the detailed review of the Council Trees Service and provides options for the future delivery of the service.

The Council is facing considerable financial pressures, worsened by the impact of COVID-19. Alongside this, our Trees Service had experienced a number of budget overspends.

Therefore, a review of the Council Trees Service was recently conducted, with the aim of identifying what options could be available to reduce the cost of the service whilst continuing to offer a good quality tree management function.

A Systems Thinking (Vanguard) approach was applied to the service, alongside legal and financial analysis and comparisons with the approaches adopted by other local Councils.

The results of the review and proposals for the future provision of the service are outlined in this report, alongside a proposed level of expenditure which reflects the increasing stock of trees that the Council now actively manages as well as incorporating options identified to reduce areas of spend.

To mitigate any future overspends it is also proposed that a full review of the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document for the Borough of Fareham, excluding Welborne (SPD), takes place to allow the Council to recover the cost of tree maintenance when adopting land. The Executive is invited to note that an increased maintenance contribution for adopting land containing trees which will require active management by the Council upon adoption will be introduced with immediate effect.

Options Considered:

The comments of the Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel were taken into account by the Executive in considering this item.

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive approves:

(a) the new approach to Council-owned trees, which includes:

- Stopping good neighbour works.
- Changes to Tree Planting.
- Changes to the Inspection frequency of Council managed trees.
- Responsibility for low height tree works being brought in house.
- Reduction of other planned tree works.
- Individual proposals for funding of Strategic Planning Sites being brought to future Executive meetings for consideration.
- Engagement with local communities and the building up of a volunteer resource.

(b) a full review of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document for the Borough of Fareham, excluding Welborne (SPD) be conducted; and

That the Executive notes:

(c) that an increased maintenance charge will be sought where land is being adopted which contains trees which the Council will need to actively manage upon adoption, of £500 per tree.

Reason:

The number of trees owned and/or maintained by the Council has risen significantly during the last ten years which has been creating a financial pressure. The proposals will help ensure a well-managed and safe tree stock that is financially sustainable.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Tuesday, 21 September 2021