

<b>Committee(s):</b> Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee	<b>Date:</b> 7 March 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Draft Tree Management Strategy for Consultation	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Greg Campbell, Director of Environment & communities	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Alan Marsh, Arboricultural Assistant Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: alan.marsh@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For decision</b>

### **Summary**

Brentwood Borough Council has a substantial stock of trees within its ownership, and it is essential for a strategy to be adopted by the authority to promote environmental sustainability and have a clear direction for tree maintenance for the future. This strategy must be made available to the wider public to give a greater understanding of the benefits of trees and the impact they will have on our future generations and climate.

### **Recommendations**

**Members are requested to:**

- R1. Agree the draft Tree Strategy for consultation.**
- R2. Report back to the Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee following consultation on the Draft Tree Management Strategy.**

### **Main Report**

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. Brentwood Borough Council is committed to maintain and enhance the landscape features that are trees and woodlands within its ownership and take legal responsibilities which may cover privately owned trees such as conservation areas, Tree Preservation Orders and Anti-social behaviour (high hedges).
2. The Council is committed to the borough reducing carbon output and to being carbon neutral by 2050. Trees offer a significant benefit to the environment if they are managed and nurtured in a proactive planting and maintenance programme.

3. The tree strategy will be developed in collaboration with Planning, Housing, Street Scene internally and external partners and stakeholders to ensure a harmonious strategy is established.
4. The strategy will be developed to give a clear understanding of the Council's commitment to Social, Environmental, Safety, Responsibility, Maintenance and a planting programme for the future.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

5. The Council employs, at present, one Arboriculturist who maintains, manages and oversees the tree management service. This however does not include consideration of or work to those trees where there is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO's). These are dealt with through our planning department
6. This strategy will seek to put in place a proactive direction to increase where possible proactive work and deal with urgent issues that arise. It is important to note that not all trees in the borough on public land are the responsibility of the local council. A large proportion of trees are highway placed trees that are under the responsibility of either ECC or privately owned parcels of land or woodland. Therefore, it does not always follow that trees on what appears common or public land are the responsibility of the council
7. Good tree management understands the stock and therefore Brentwood Council will continue to review its trees and woodland in a proactive managed way. This survey work will identify ownership, species and condition to allow the authority to be aware of any issues and safety threats that may place the council at risk
8. The council could be under increased financial pressure following the tree survey, especially if a large volume of council owned trees require attention. This budget pressure will need to be managed and following the review of trees a clear management plan will need to be developed in order to work through the actions required.
9. Once this tree management plan has been developed a financial plan and budget will be drawn up to ensure the Council can manage its stock effectively and where possible in a proactive manner
10. The strategy will also tackle the need for new planting initiatives and in so doing the Council, where possible, will seek grant funding for new planting initiatives or carbon credit payment if any schemes qualify. Further the Council will maximise the use of volunteers including Brentwood Environmental Business

Alliance (BEBA) to help manage and maintain wooded areas to improve the environment in which we live.

## **Consultation**

11. Our Arboriculturist has developed a draft strategy for consultation which is set out at Appendix A. This strategy tackles the issues identified in this report and more. The strategy will be undertaken on social media to reduce the effects on the environment, however hard copies will be made available on request or where necessary.
12. In doing so the Council will engage and consult with the groups listed below, although this is not an exhaustive list, and more groups or associations will be added. It is intended to bring back a further draft Tree Management Strategy for consideration to a future Environment Enforcement & Housing Committee that will take on board responses to the consultation for agreement by this committee.
  - a) Housing
  - b) Planning
  - c) Residents
  - d) Essex County Council
  - e) Thames Chase Community Forest
  - f) Shenfield Conservators
  - g) Natural England
  - h) Arboricultural Association
  - i) Forestry Commission

## **References to Corporate Plan**

13. Protecting the Environment – Introduce innovative carbon reduction and absorption schemes

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Manager – Finance (Deputy S151)**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk**

14. The cost of the survey is being met from existing resources. Other investment is being met from within existing budgets.
15. The action plan determined from the survey will require financial support that can be aligned with the Council's budget setting process. Any works that cannot be met from existing budgets and are deemed a significant risk will be met from earmarked reserves.

**Legal Implications**

**Name & Title:** Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

**Tel & Email:** 01277 312705/amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

16. The Council has a duty of care to ensure that the trees that do belong to the council are of kept in an acceptable condition. Legal advice on any particular matter that may arise will be sought as required.

**Economic Implications**

**Name/Title:** Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)

**Tel/Email:** 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

17. There are no direct economic implications. Improving the environmental quality of the borough can have indirect economic benefits, which the eventual adoption of a Tree Management Strategy would assist with.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices to this report**

Appendix A: Draft Tree Management Strategy for Consultation