

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 November 2016
Subject:	Review of Tree Safety Management Policy
Report of:	Head of Finance and Asset Management, Simon Dix
Corporate Lead:	Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Corporate Tree Safety Management Policy was last updated in July 2012 and is now due for review. The strategy has been updated to reflect the introduction of a new risk management system which zones the trees for the periodic inspections whilst ensuring the authority meets its 'duty of care' obligation for the safe management of trees.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the updated Tree Safety Management Policy.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Council has over 5,000 trees on land in its ownership and is required to have a tree safety management plan and inspection regime to ensure the risk of falling trees and branches is managed to reduce the risk of injury or damage to property.

Resource Implications:

The authority was unable to resource the previous tree safety management policy given the bi-annual inspection requirements. The updated policy zones the trees by risk and reduces the number the periodic inspections required therefore reducing the resources required.

Legal Implications:

The Council has a 'Duty of Care' under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the occupiers' liability legislation to ensure a risk management plan is in place to ensure reasonable steps are taken to minimise risk.

Risk Management Implications:

The authority doesn't have sufficient resources to meet the current bi-annual inspection regime required within the 2012 policy therefore the approval of this new policy will ensure the authority is able to meet its obligations and reduce the possibility of litigation claims.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The inspections are contracted to Ubico with defined areas of inspection to be completed within specific timescales. This is managed by the property team on a weekly basis during the winter inspection period using the Public Sector Software system (PSS).

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The 2012 Tree Safety Management Policy (TSMP) was introduced to ensure the authority met its obligation under a 'duty of care' to ensure the risk of falling trees and branches we managed to minimise the risk.
- 1.2 The current TSMP was last fully approved by Members in October 2012.
- 1.3 The authority has over 5,000 trees upon land that it owns and leases. The responsibility is with the authority to ensure these trees are managed to reduce the risk to properties and the public.
- 1.4 The current policy requires all trees to be inspected every two years which the authority is unable to meet with its current resources.
- 1.5 The policy takes in to account guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the National Tree Safety Group.

2.0 REVISED TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 2.1 The responsibility of tree management transferred to the Asset Management section in July 2015 and in November 2015 investment was made in the Trimble GPS plotting equipment to accurately plot the trees within TBC ownership. A software management system that operates on the Trimble to maintain its playgrounds and trees was introduced at the same time (PSS).

The introduction of this system allows for Asset Management to accurately monitor the findings ensuring the risks are mitigated.
- 2.2 The draft Tree Safety Management Plan for 2016 onwards is detailed at Appendix A.
- 2.3 Since November 2015 the property team has sourced and developed software and equipment that was fundamental in implementing an inspection programme that minimises the risk of litigation for the authority.
- 2.4 Since June 2016 the property team has visited Council owned sites throughout the Borough to ensure all trees have been scored within the scoring matrix for the periodic inspections. This will enable the property team to give clear instructions with regard to the inspections to be completed by the contractor.

- 2.5** The draft TSMP introduces a scoring matrix to zone all the trees taking into account their maturity and location. Mature trees located next to occupied buildings or high pedestrian/traffic areas are considered higher risk than those located within a wooded area with no access. The scoring matrix scores the trees within five zones, with zone 1 requiring inspection every five years and zone 5 requiring inspection every year.
- 2.6** If the revised TPS is approved by Executive on 23 November 2016, it is the intention that it will be replacing the existing TPS with immediate effect.
- 3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 3.1** None.
- 4.0 CONSULTATION**
- 4.1** The Ubico ground maintenance team is the contractor that completes the inspections and the internal audit team were consulted during the drafting of the revised Policy.
- 5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 5.1** Current Tree Management Plan 2012.
- 6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 6.1** None.
- 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 7.1** None.
- 8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 8.1** None.
- 9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 9.1** The Tree Management Plan was drafted around current resources whilst ensuring the authority meets its 'duty of care' obligation for the health and safety of it residents.
- 10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 10.1** None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: A – Tree Management Plan.