

Appendix B

Summary of Consultation Responses

Objectives

Comment – A consultee suggested that additional objectives should be included which cover preserving the health of trees through proactive maintenance (including that contained within the BS3998 standard) and recognising the environmental importance of trees.

Answer – The scope of the policy states that we will ‘...ensure that we safeguard and maximise the benefits that trees provide.’ Any proactive maintenance regimes are an operational matter and so are not included in detail in the policy document.

Comment – A consultee felt that the policy did not focus strongly enough on the third objective ‘to retain the amenity and character of the area’.

Answer – The essence of the policy is that the Council will not carry out unnecessary works to trees on its land which will have the result of maintaining the amenity and character of the area.

Tree Issues

Comment – A consultee highlighted the fact that there is no reference to diseased trees and how they will be controlled e.g. Ash Die Back.

Answer – The draft policy has been amended to include a section on disease control.

Comment – A consultee commented that new tenants moving into SDC properties may require assistance with works to trees they have inherited from the previous occupant.

Answer - As this is an operational matter it is not included in detail in the policy document however trees will be looked at on a case by case matter and support may be offered by the Housing Tenant Services team.

Comment – A consultee felt that the statement ‘We will not prune or fell a Council owned tree because it is perceived to be too big or too small for its location’ is against the amenity and character objective.

Answer – The policy allows for works to trees that are ‘too big or too small for its location’ where other issues exist.

Comment – Consultee stated that there was a need for greater clarity regarding council owned trees over hanging private property including legal rights to remove branches. They also thought that reference should be made to tree safety in respect of removal of dangerous lower branches from Council owned trees in areas of increased risk i.e. those in play parks.

Answer – The policy includes a section on trees causing shade, overhanging or encroaching on private property and a section on trees causing obstruction or interference. As the policy is specifically for the maintenance of trees on Council owned land either by the Council itself or by its contractors it does not include information on third party rights and responsibilities. With regards to areas of increased risk, the policy states that the Council will prioritise identified risks to ensure that the most serious are attended to first.

Comment – A comment was made that the policy does not reference interference to electricity wires.

Answer - The draft policy has been amended to include reference to electricity wires.

Tree planting and replacement

Comment - A consultee commented on the lack of clarity in relation to ‘appropriate locations’ for new trees. They were concerned that without proper consultation residents and businesses may be adversely affected by the planting.

Answer - Decisions arounds planting of new trees on Council owned land will be taken on a case by case basis. As this is an operational matter it is not included in detail in the policy document however, full consideration of any potential impact will be given to any proposed planting sites.

Comment – A consultee commented that this section of the policy appears weak, not committing to the details of future tree planting scheme including numbers and species of trees.

Answer – Whilst the Council is committed to maintaining and increasing the districts tree canopy, this is subject to identifying suitable sites, suitable species and associated consultation prior to progressing tree planting schemes. Site assessments will be carried out in conjunction with the Council’s Asset Management Plan.

Comment – A consultee supported the commitment to increasing tree cover in the district for the benefit of people and the environment.

General Comments

Comment – A consultee made reference to the safeguarding and management of trees on Brayton Barff.

Answer – The Council is currently undertaking a separate piece of work in relation to woodland management.

Comment – A consultee said ‘This is a very clear and useful policy document. It will be helpful in making clear the Council’s role and position on tree management especially in relation to the community’s expectation on what the Council can / will and cannot / will not do.’

Comment – A consultee supported the focus of the policy stating ‘...the benefits of trees and tree cover are highlighted and trees will only be managed when they are causing a significant demonstrable nuisance and not for frivolous reasons.’

Comment – A consultee stated that in the past, third parties had been given permission to carry out works to trees on the Council’s land and asked if the policy also applied to works being carried out in the future by third parties in these cases.

Answer – The policy is specifically for the maintenance of trees on Council owned land either by the Council itself or by its contractors.

Comment – A consultee commented that they would like to see more vigorous protection of trees including those close to the highway and on proposed development land.

Answer - The policy is specifically for the maintenance of trees on Council owned land either by the Council itself or by its contractors. The policy does not cover matters relating to construction or planning matters as this is covered under separate guidance and legislation.

Comment – A consultee commented that the draft policy does not contain a statement on how often the trees owned by Selby District Council will be inspected for their safety.

Answer – The frequency of inspection is determined by a number of factors including locations, species and age. Trees that are considered to be higher risk in terms of

proximity to the highway will be inspected more frequently than those in a lower risk location but the frequency will still be determined by the species.

Comment – A consultee commented that there is no mention in the document about root damage to highways caused by trees managed by SDC.

Answer – The draft policy has been amended to include a section on root damage to highways.

Comment – A comment was made that there is no reference in the policy to cycle-ways.

Answer – Where the term ‘highway’ is used in the policy it is intended in its wider sense – encompassing footpaths, roads, cycle-ways and other similar public routes.