

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee (Pre Decision Calling In)
Date	15 June 2016
Present	Councillors Craghill (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Brooks, Dew, Jackson and Wells
Apologies	Dr J Dickinson and Mr A Hagon
In Attendance	Cllrs Ayre, D'Agorne and Kramm

4. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or discloseable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

5. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, however Mr Bill Eve, Chair of Edible York, had not been able to attend the meeting.

Councillor Kramm addressed the Committee. He suggested that Policy Statement 14 (Tree Replacement) should be strengthened to include the following guidelines.

- When replacing lost trees, the replacement should be planted in the same location or immediate area, taking into account a number of specific factors.
- Important to choose all species with suitability and sustainability in mind and to minimise conflict with both structures and people.
- Larger native and specimen trees should be considered by the council where space allowed for unrestricted root development and full crown development.

He advised Members that the policy should include an approved list of species and drew Members attention to an example taken from Sheffield City Council's Tree Management Strategy.

6. Pre-Decision Called-In Item - Arboricultural Policy for the Management of Public Trees & Woodland

Members considered a report that provided the background to the pre-decision call-in of the Arboricultural Policy for the Management of Public Trees and Woodland and a report to the Executive Member setting out the draft Arboricultural Policy. Members were asked to consider the reasons for call in together with submissions made and decide if they wished to make any specific comments/recommendations to the Executive Member on the draft policy before he made his decision at a future decision session.

Cllr D'Agorne was in attendance to address the committee to confirm the reasons why he, Cllr Kramm and Cllr Craghill had called in the item for pre-decision scrutiny. He expressed his support for bringing all City of York Council practices together in one clear statement and made the following suggestions:

- Need to extend to include or cross reference policy for trees on private land where the council had influence or planning control.
- Need to add an overarching "policy statement" endorsing the objective of increasing overall tree cover and enhancing diversity of species and age profile, with a process for reviewing progress and setting targets in consultation with interested bodies.
- Recognition that trees contribute to mitigating climate change and air pollution – suggestion that the council should require 2 semi mature replacement trees for each mature tree felled
- Inclusion of a supplementary planning document in the Local Plan spelling out objectives for tree cover and a broader Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Strategy.
- Promote best practice by utility operators with more proactive training, awareness raising and collaborative working
- Need to be clear about longer term strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing tree cover and age profile in the city centre and in existing and new developments and amenity areas.

The Council's Operations Manager – Public Realm (Strategy and Contracts) and Arboricultural Manager welcomed Members' interest

in the Arboricultural Policy for the Management of Public Trees and Woodland and stressed the importance of having this document published in order that officers could respond effectively to any complaints and enquiries from the public or other organisations. Also so that that councillors had the relevant information to enable them to react to any enquiries from members of the public too. Officers advised that they would look at some of the points raised by Councillors Kramm and D'Agorne from an operational point of view.

Members discussed the report and policy. They acknowledged the need to make the policy as robust as possible without making it overly prescriptive as this would take away scope for flexibility and could delay the implementation of the policy.

The agreed there was a need for a broader strategy with respect to tree cover, whether this be as part of the Local Plan with a possible Supplementary Planning document or by other means, and called on the Executive Member to take this forward.

With regards to Policy Statement 6 it was suggested that the first bullet point needed clarifying to state that the council would not prune, cut roots or remove trees *unless* the encroachment was *severe and excessive* and that the third bullet point should read "maintain" rather than "increase" natural light to show that it required the retention of existing natural light.

Members expressed their broad support for the policy position set out and asked that officers take account of the specific comments expressed by Cllr Kramm, Cllr D'Agorne and scrutiny members with regard to the draft policy statement and the need for a broader strategy.

- Resolved: (i) That the committee's general support for the Arboricultural Policy for the Management of Public Trees and Woodland be noted.
- (ii) That the views put forward by Cllrs Kramm and D'Agorne and scrutiny members during discussion be noted by officers and taken into consideration by the Executive Member when making a decision on the policy.

Reason: To enable the called-in matter to be dealt with efficiently and in accordance with the new pre-decision call in arrangements.

Councillor Craghill, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.15 pm].