

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (People and Places) (Introduced by the Executive Member (People))	Executive Cabinet	3 June 2010

## TREE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To present a tree management and maintenance policy which relates to trees situated within Council owned land.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the aforementioned policy be adopted as Chorley Councils Tree Management and Maintenance Policy.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Chorley Councils Tree Management and Maintenance Policy aims to give clear guidance on how the tree stock will be managed. It demonstrates a system of inspection for all trees across the Borough; the system has been produced by exploring best practice in terms of inspection frequencies and apportionment of trees within risk zones.
- The policy will also provide clear guidance when handling service requests which relate to Council owned trees. In addition it will allow us to provide service users with a number of options when responding to service requests.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

- This implementation of this policy will help to ensure the Council fulfils its legal responsibly under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957.
- The value of trees cannot be underestimated; this policy will ensure that the trees we are responsible for are maintained to the highest standard for the benefit of all.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- The implementation of a Tree Inspection Policy is a relatively new development. Liability for land owners has been in place for over 60 years, but high profile cases have highlighted the need for robust inspection procedures. The likelihood of incidents is very low and it was considered to balance cost of implementation of the policy against risk factors when developing the policy, but as a Council we should ensure that the safety of visitors to our open spaces is considered.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	X
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	X

## BACKGROUND

9. Chorley Council has management responsibility for numerous sites across the Borough. The majority of these areas have unrestricted access and a vibrant tree stock. As Landowners we have a legal responsibility to ensure that visitors to these sites are reasonably safe. This is a very broad piece of legislation and covers numerous areas. However one of the risk areas is around trees. In the event of a litigation claim for injury or damage to property the Council would have to demonstrate it had managed the risk by regularly inspecting the condition of the trees and have instigated works to those trees which posed a risk.
10. The introduction of regular inspections of our tree stock will identify defects and faults. As a consequence these defects will need to be addressed to fulfil our responsibility as discussed above. It is likely that for the first two years expenditure on trees will increase significantly and there will be a need to review of how we utilise our existing budget on trees to ensure it is targeted at areas where there is the greatest risk.
11. A budget has been identified for the works which is set at £35,000. This budget has been historically used for non – urgent service requests. Going forward all service requests will be balanced against potential risk to ensure that Council budgets are targeted at the greater risk areas. In addition to this a recent procurement exercise has taken place to create a select list of tree contractors, therefore all works identified will be subject to a tendering process to ensure best value.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	x	Customer Services	x
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	x	No significant implications in this area	

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

13. The report identifies that the Council currently spends circa £35k on tree maintenance, much of which will need to be used on the priorities once the tree stock is inspected. The likelihood is that some backlog work will need to be undertaken and once the scale of this is known, I will report this to Members and where funding might be found. The policy is adopted to prioritise work where there is a health and safety risk may mean some customers are not dealt with immediately which may result in an increase in calls to our contact centre and possible complaints, but these will be dealt with as part of our day to day business.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Martin Walls	5250	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2010	***

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Tree Management and Maintenance Policy	April 2010		Attached