

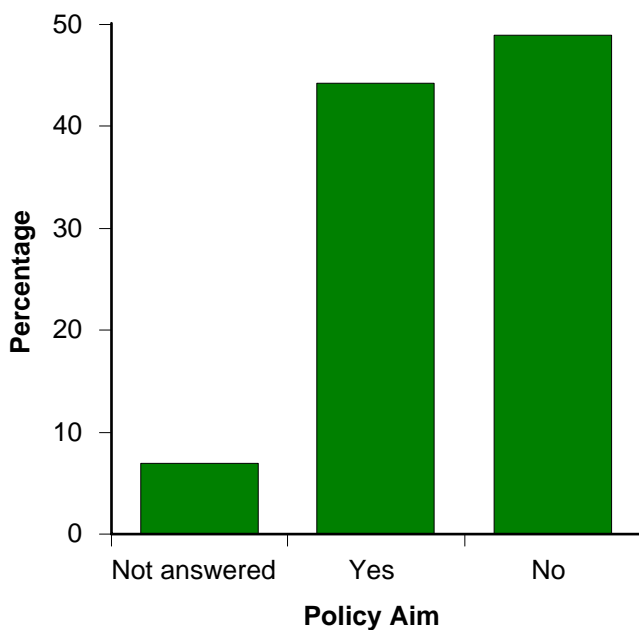
Tree Policy Consultation Summary

Working with the Council's Consultation Officer 151 questionnaires were sent to residents associations, friends groups, key stakeholders, Councillors, and relevant conservation organisations. Staff within the Planning Department and the Tree Team were also consulted. Letters were sent on the 8th November 2007 with a deadline of 12.00 noon on Monday 17th December 2007. The consultation had frequent front-page publicity on the internal and external web sites and 16 respondents used the online survey as a technique to reply. A press release was issued in the early days of the consultation and information was placed on the countywide consultation tracker information system.

43 responses were received which equals a high 28.5% response rate. Below are the results from the consultation process:

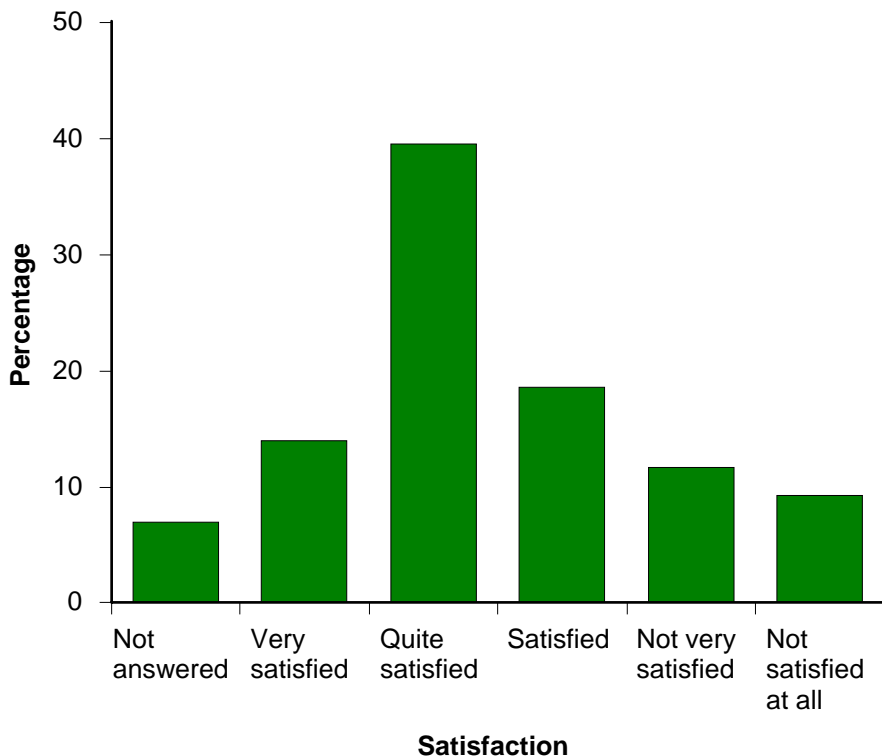
1) Do you think anything needs to be added or removed from the aim?

“to ensure the tree stock is retained in the most proactive manner whilst ensuring the health, safety and well being of the public and property”



48.8% responded saying that nothing needed to be added or removed from the aim.
44.2% responded saying that the aim needed to be changed.

2) How satisfied are you with the content of the Tree Policy?

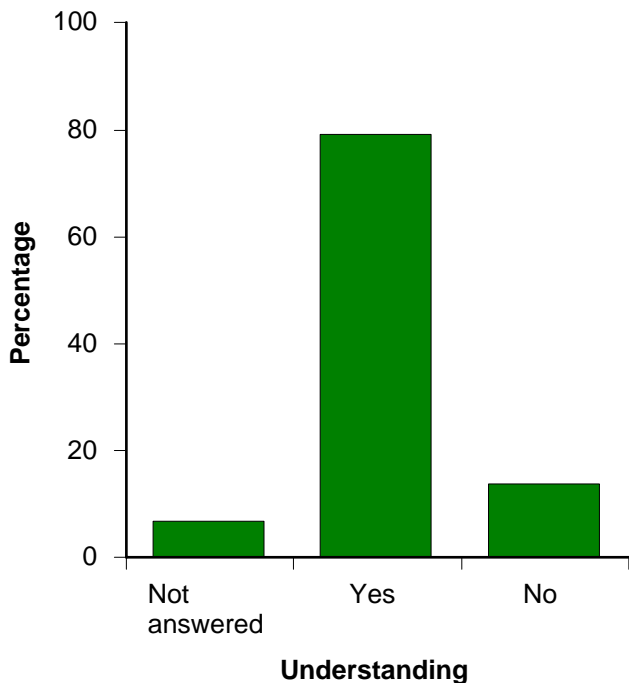


53.5% were either very satisfied or quite satisfied

18.6% were satisfied

20.9% were either not very satisfied or not satisfied at all

3) Did you find the Tree Policy easy to understand and follow?



79.1% responded saying that the policy was easy to understand

14% responded saying that the policy was not easy to understand

	Main points raised through the consultation process	Response to comments
1	Amend the aim	Will amend to include comments from consultation
2	Be more specific and adopt a Policy on a street by street basis for trees.	Not possible due to the number of streets in Oxford with trees.
3	What is needed is consultation with local residents who will be affected by the "major tree works", as well as councillors. Clearer explanation of the process for informing the public is required	The Parks section will inform the public via notices and informing Ward Councillors.
4	Seek second opinions from Conservation Officers, Planners or third party especially when trees are in a sensitive area. The practice of the Parks Department and especially the Arboricultural Officer should be subject to independent review by a reputable tree-friendly agency. It is essential for some "independency" to be introduced into the working of the present situation; the Draft Tree Policy largely regularizes the existing disputed practice, but it is precisely that practice that is disputed.	The Arboricultural Officer is qualified in the management of trees and therefore a second opinion is not required. If the Arboricultural Officer requires a second opinion it will be sought.
5	More commitment for replacing trees not only after felling but also after vandalism. Commitment to increase the number of trees in the city with planting programmes. Seek external funding for planting possibly through planning gains. Clear policy required on how residents can give a tree for memorial. A new policy is required that aims to replace every tree that is felled, encourages and provides advice to residents to plant appropriate trees, and the publication of educational materials about the value of trees. Replace on a two for one basis. Encourage community woodlands.	Agreed. Trees should be replaced and stock increased. This is now included in the policy.
6	High Hedges to be included as a reason for pruning.	This cannot be included as this policy has been written for the management of Council owned trees and not private disputes.
7	More emphasis required on Conservation areas, biodiversity and the environment.	Agreed. More information on this has been included in the policy.
8	A system for monitoring the success of the policy must be implemented.	Agreed.
9	Section required regarding waste management and how timber will be disposed.	Agreed. More information on this has now been included in the policy.
10	Links to National and Local Policy / initiatives required particularly in relation to sustainability, biodiversity and conservation. Avoid harm to bats, birds and wildlife.	Agreed. More information on this has now been included in the policy.

	Main points raised through the consultation process	Response to comments
11	Private land and developed land needs to be included within this policy.	This cannot be included as this policy has been written for the management of Council owned trees and not private land.
12	An indication of what type and level of disease will mean that a tree is likely to be recommended for felling. Not all diseases automatically mean a tree is unsafe and needs felling.	The policy will now include definitions of Dead, Dying and Diseased trees
13	Include environmental benefits not just human benefits.	Agreed. More information on this has now been included in the policy.
14	The Policy shows scant awareness of the above importance of trees. What is needed is a thoroughgoing understanding of the positive value of trees, why they are an essential part of well being in Oxford, and why they should be strongly protected.	The Policy does recognise the importance of trees and wishes to see the stock retained and enhanced. The policy is written to ensure that works are only undertaken to trees when necessary and when trees are removed they are replaced. This is now included in the policy.
15	It is proposed that insurers have the last word on felling with regard to subsidence claims. But insurers invariably err on the side of caution. At the very least, the Council needs to establish an external reference point – one that will be able to assess the situation from a more objective standpoint. With regards subsidence adopt the guiding principals of the LTOA risk limitations strategy and develop a localised policy to reduce tree loss through insurance claims.	This section will be reworded to ensure clarity within the policy. The Council will adhere to the advice supplied by their insurers and their consultants with regard to what, if any, works are required to trees providing that there is evidence of ALL three of the following conditions: physical damage, presence of live roots & seasonal movement. If all of these are not present no work will be undertaken.
16	The “Procedure” document (Appendix 1) needs to state the precise grounds on which felling can be justified. Without a system of traceability of both individual “contractors” and by the Council’s Arboricultural Officer, there can be no proper accountability. It is plainly unacceptable that no appeal should be allowed against any decision made by the Arboricultural Officer.	This procedure is used only when works have already been highlighted. Works are only highlighted as per the Tree Policy. The public will be informed via notices and Ward Councillors of proposed tree works and if they wish further details regarding the proposed works this will be available from the Arboricultural Officer.
17	The Council’s Arboricultural Officer should be required to give precise figures of the number of trees felled every year, for precisely which reasons, together with the numbers of trees planted.	As stated in the Policy the Authority has recently embarked on a survey of all trees in the City. This survey is to check the condition of the stock and create a database of all trees holding an accurate number and locations. This Database has been designed to ensure we know exactly how many trees we have and how many are felled or worked on each year.

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18	There is clearly something wrong in a situation where the bulk of the Council's money in relation to trees is employed in tree destruction rather than in replanting or education	The Council is not 'employed in tree destruction' rather the management and maintenance of the City's trees in the most proactive manner whilst ensuring public safety is paramount.
19	Greatest resources to be allocated to the most important trees in the stock.	This does happen.
20	Tree Stock should be managed for the benefit of the trees and not just health and safety.	Agreed. The policy addresses this.
21	Retain dead standing timber where safe to do so	Agreed. The policy addresses this.
22	Introduce a Tree Warden Scheme	Currently the Council does not have the resources to manage this scheme. The Authority will continue to work with local groups with regard to trees.
23	Remove that no action will be taken on trees for: blocking light/leaf drop/perceived threat/medical conditions	This section has been amended however trees will not be felled for these reasons.
24	The document is unclear. Technical jargon should be replaced with plain English. Spelling and Grammar to be checked.	Definition page has been included.
25	Definitions required for the technical terms.	As above.
26	Explain the role of the tree survey contractor, the survey and the Arboricultural Officers role in more detail.	Agreed. More information on this has now been included in the policy.

