



Report of^[x1]: Environment Scrutiny Committee
To^[x2]: City Executive Board
Date^[x3]: 11th. June 2008
Item No^[EM4]:
Title of Report ^[x5]: Tree Management Recommendation



Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report^[x6]: To inform Executive Board of the recommendation made by Environment Scrutiny Committee on the Council's tree management policy.




Key decision^[x7]: No


Board Member^[x8]: Cllr. Timbs

Scrutiny Responsibility^[x9]: Scrutiny Committee B




Ward(s) affected^[x10]: All

Report Approved by:
 James Pownell – Legal Services
 Andy Collett – Finance
 Paul Spencer – Environmental Development
Environment Scrutiny Committee ^[EM11]



Policy Framework^[x12]: Corporate Plan priority to tackle climate change and promote environmental resource management.



Recommendation(s)^[x13]: Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend to Executive Board that the tree management policy is amended so that Councillors are always reminded when tree cutting works will take place, even when permission has been granted via the planning process.

1. Tree Management


1.1 At its meeting on the 14th April 2008, Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a report back from Executive Board on the response to the recommendations made on the Council's tree management policy.



- 1.2 The Committee was pleased that the recommendations it made on the policy were all accepted. However, members were concerned that Executive Board has said it will only be possible to give information on tree works being undertaken by council officers.
- 1.3 The Committee has two specific issues it would like Executive Board to consider. Firstly, councillors should be informed when city council officers are carrying out tree works, even when officers are working as contractors for a third party. Secondly, councillors would like to be informed when tree works are to happen when permission is granted through the planning process. Often there is a time lag between permission being granted and work starting on the development. The Scrutiny Committee believe it is important the councillors are informed of tree works so that constituents can be kept up to date on work in their local area.
- 1.4 Therefore, Environment Scrutiny Committee recommends that the tree management policy is amended so that Councillors are always reminded when tree cutting works will take place, even when permission has been granted via the planning process. Further details are set out in the minutes from the meeting, attached at appendix 1 to this report.

2. Comments from the Executive Director (City Services) – Tim Sadler

It seems reasonable to notify ward members where we are carrying out work for ourselves or under contract.

Where we are not carrying out the work we would not be notified so would not reasonably know that work permitted through the planning process is about to commence.

3. Comments from the Board Member

John Wade, Parks Manager, has given his consent that Area committees will be notified in advance of any tree work in their area. The exception is when a tree is found to be in a dangerous condition and immediate action must be taken without warning. I support the report to CEB

Name and contact details of author^[x14]:

Andrew Davies, Scrutiny Officer, Oxford City Council

Tel – 01865 252433

Email – adavies@oxford.gov.uk



Appendix 1

Minutes from Environment Scrutiny Committee – 14th April 2008

82. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD

2. Recommendation on Tree Management Policy: Members raised two issues in relation to this. First of all, when will the advice leaflet on tree planting for members of the public be produced? Andrew Davies agreed to contact the portfolio holder about this.

Secondly, members were concerned that the part of the recommendation which read 'it be noted that it will only be possible to give information on tree works being undertaken by Council officers' might mean that Councillors were not always informed when tree cutting was being carried out. This is particularly the case when trees are cut down so that developments granted planning permission could start. Often this work takes place some time after permission was granted. Councillors said that they had always asked to be advised when tree cutting was taking place and this should be included in the tree management policy.

Resolved to ask the Executive Board to clarify the tree management policy on this matter so that that Councillors are always reminded when tree cutting works will take place.