



**Oxfordshire County Council**  
**Equality and Climate Impact Assessment**

July 2021

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## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment and Place – Implications across all directorates
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	The Tree Policy for Oxfordshire
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Revision to existing policy
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>The revised Tree Policy sets out a clear ambition to contribute to addressing the Climate Emergency in Oxfordshire through tree planting. Trees are a critical component of adaptation to climate change.</p> <p>The new Policy outlines a commitment by the County Council to implement a proactive tree inspection programme to ensure that existing and established trees across the County Council estate are able to fulfil their full life expectancy.</p> <p>Increasing canopy cover, specifically within urban areas, mitigates extremes of rainfall, wind and drought and reduces excessive heat both outdoors and inside buildings. More trees will increase shade and quantity of leaves from deciduous trees which may be perceived to have an adverse effect on some individuals or dwellings. This is offset by the direct and indirect benefits provided by trees and increased canopy cover. Tree cover tends to be lower in more deprived areas, and we will need to prioritise addressing this disparity.</p> <p>Overall, the proposed policy revision either has a positive impact or no impact to all groups and assessments within this document.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Andy Lederer, Principal Officer - Arboriculture
<b>Authorised By</b>	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	26/1/2022

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>For the majority of the last 30 years, Oxfordshire have focused on maintaining existing trees on a reactive basis. Driven by budgetary constraints and concerns associated with risk, there has been minimal investment, overall, in the County Council's tree-scape, which includes Highways, PRow, Schools, Estates, Facilities and other land holdings where the County Council have a responsibility for trees. The most significant omission has been tree planting.</p> <p>Trees provide a multitude of climate, biodiversity, amenity, societal, health and wellbeing benefits. They take a significant time to establish and with the realisation of the Climate Emergency that was declared in 2019, the need for a drastic change to address the need for increasing canopy cover and provide proactive tree care for the County Council's streetscape is now essential for the long-term benefit of existing residents and future generations of Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Whilst the council has an existing tree policy, it does not fulfil the ambition and priorities of the Fair Deal Alliance. The existing policy was maintenance and management focussed, mainly related to Highway trees. The new document is broader in scope as well as being much firmer with its policy and bolder in requirements and long-term ambition.</p>
<p><b>Proposals</b></p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The new 'Tree Policy for Oxfordshire' outlines a clear priority change to a 'presumption in favour of trees' to directly enhance and improve the landscape and streetscapes of Oxfordshire. The new Policy has been created and framed in a clear and concise document to enable the County Council's vision and ambition to be easily shared, understood and implemented. It is a central component of the Council's Climate Adaptation response, and has the potential to improve wellbeing and health of residents.</p> <p>The main aims of the new policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To protect and maintain the trees across Oxfordshire and in particular, trees the County Council are directly responsible for.</li> <li>(b) Set the platform to increase canopy cover across Oxfordshire and specifically for areas the County Council are directly responsible for (Highway, Public Rights of Way (PRow), Schools, Estates &amp; Property) by increasing the number of trees to address the current and future climate adaptation and environmental needs.</li> <li>(c) Ensure that existing trees and the potential space for new tree planting are considered front and foremost in streetscape designs and take appropriate priority against other infrastructure needs.</li> <li>(d) Increase the diversity of tree species to deliver climate adaptation.</li> </ul>

	<p>(e) Support and enable local communities to identify the potential for increasing canopy cover within the existing streetscape.</p>
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>By investing in regular, proactive tree inspections, the County will be able to maintain an existing and established tree stock that provide more benefits to the residents of Oxfordshire than newly planted trees. Planting and maintaining trees provides direct and indirect benefits to the community, as well as contributing to addressing and improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flood alleviation;</li> <li>• climate adaptation;</li> <li>• landscape resilience;</li> <li>• carbon sequestration;</li> <li>• noise and air pollution;</li> <li>• wildlife corridors (both urban and rural);</li> <li>• health and wellbeing;</li> <li>• speed reduction.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Currently, no tree planting is undertaken by the County and only the Highway trees are managed under a proactive tree programme, leaving the County Council at significant risk across all other County Council land / property that have trees and remain the County Council's responsibility.</p> <p>Continuing in the same way of disproportionate management and not replacing trees that are removed has long-term implications for public amenity, biodiversity and climate change within Oxfordshire as well as putting the County Council at significant risk from litigation.</p> <p>Doing nothing is not an option and does not support the commitments outlined in the Fair Deal for Oxfordshire.</p>
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### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				



### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Providers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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<sup>1</sup> If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC and CDC aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Energy use in our buildings or highways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Our fleet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Staff travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Purchased services and products (including construction)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Maintained schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

We are also committed to enable Cherwell to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Oxfordshire by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

<b>Climate change impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner</b> (*Job Title, Organisation)	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Four years from adoption of Policy</b>
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	<b>Principal Officer - Arboriculture</b>
<b>Authorised By</b>	