



**Oxfordshire County Council**  
**Equalities Impact Assessment**

Verge and Vegetation Management Policy

24 January 2023

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## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Highways and Operations – Highway Maintenance
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service, or proposed service change).	<b>Highway Verge &amp; Vegetation Management Policy</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Existing Policy
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>This policy encompasses Oxfordshire County Council’s corporate vision, objectives and embraces the nine priority themes of the Council. The policy is also informed by the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan, the Energy Strategy, and the Carbon Management Plan. The priority themes include Putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work and improve access to nature and green spaces.</p> <p>The policy does not discriminate or disadvantage any individuals or groups within the community</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Paul Wilson
<b>Authorised By</b>	Sean Rooney
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	12 January 2023

## 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>This policy encompasses Oxfordshire County Council’s corporate vision, objectives and embraces the nine priority themes of the Council. The policy is also informed by the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan, the Energy Strategy, and the Carbon Management Plan. The priority themes include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.</li> <li>ii. Improve access to nature and green spaces</li> </ul>
<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>Environment and Place has been reviewing its operational policies to ensure they in line with the recently adopted Local Transport Plan, Climate Policies and Corporate Priorities.</p> <p>It was identified that the polices related to vegetation and verges required updating, and a new policy is proposed. To note vegetation was originally within the councils Tree Policy but it was removed from this following in recent update to that policy.</p> <p>Best practice carried out by other local authorities and evidence-based recommendations from local expert groups such as <a href="http://www.plantlife.org.uk">www.plantlife.org.uk</a> &amp; HERO (Healthy Ecosystem Restoration Oxfordshire) have been used to help shape a new policy.</p> <p>Further work on management and biodiversity information on our verges and vegetation is needed to provide full confidence they are being managed in an effective and efficient way from both a highway and environmental perspective. If this further work enables / identifies opportunities to further enhance the proposed policy, then this will be updated at the appropriate time.</p>
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p>	<p>The proposed updated and refocussed policy better aligns with the current Strategic Plan and supports the delivery of action to ameliorate the Climate and biodiversity Emergency and sustainable transport network.</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>The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan was recently adopted, and this updated policy will support the ambition and commitments made in respect of active travel by ensuring footpaths and cycle paths are kept accessible and not restricted by grass and vegetation growth.</p> <p>It will also contribute to the value of Green Infrastructure by protecting and enhancing green areas of the highway.</p> <p>The new Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement (the Policy Statement) supports and strengthens the ambition to include a policy focus on environmental resilience and nature recovery, by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier Count.</p> <p>Although no formal consultation has been required for this project, engagement has taken place with internal stakeholders including the OCC (Oxfordshire County Council) Environment and Ecology, land and Highway Records and Highways Operational Teams. External engagement has also taken place with both East and West Hendreds Parish Councils, local adjacent landowners, and Local OCC Members.</p>
<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>This is the first time that the policy has been amended for several years as the process of Highway Verge Maintenance has been undertaken in a similar manner for some time, however, with more focus on Climate and the natural environment changes needed to be made to the way verges and vegetation are managed</p>

### 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"/>	The proposals will enable and encourage local communities to manage area of highway verges and promote biodiversity	N/A	N/A	
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposals will enable and encourage local communities to manage area of highway verges and promote biodiversity	N/A		

### 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>Staff</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Providers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased amenity and wellbeing to those in the vicinity of impacted areas			

<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 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>April 2025</b>
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	<b>Head Of Service Highway Maintenance</b>
<b>Authorised By</b>	<b>Sean Rooney</b>