

5. **A Policy for the Maintenance of City Council Owned Trees in Public Open Spaces**

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene:

- a. presented a policy for the maintenance of Council owned trees in public open spaces for comments prior to consideration by Executive
- b. explained that the proposed policy related only to trees growing on land owned by the City Council, or for which it had responsibility such as parks, gardens, amenity grass areas and common land
- c. outlined the aim of the policy which was to have in place a system that cared for City Council owned trees so as to:
 - prioritise public safety
 - protect property appropriately
 - ensure that all trees were looked after appropriately, having reference to their species, age, condition and setting
- d. explained that the policy made clear the value of trees, the intention to work to recognised industry standard as default, to abide by legally required practices, to replant where there were tree losses, the need to educate people that they were an organic asset that had a life cycle and to promote the importance of trees in the City
- e. invited members questions and comments:

Question: Councillors were often contacted by residents asking why trees had been removed. Could a note setting out the reasons for removal of the tree be displayed on the stump for information?

Response: This suggestion would be considered by Officers.

Question: How did the Council ensure that proper care was provided to maintain new trees that had been planted?

Response: Every new tree that was planted had a watering package attached to it to advise the contractor how the tree should be looked after. The number of trees planted and the number of trees that had survived was tracked each year. If a tree died the contractor was required to plant a new tree to replace it.

Question: Was there a map or chart available that explained how many trees there were across the City and where they were located?

Response: The Council did have a database that mapped and provided information on the trees in the City. The database was still being updated but would eventually contain information on all of the trees in the City.

Question: Would the database be shared with the public?

Response: At the moment the database was only available to Officers. Consideration would be given as to whether it was possible to make the information available to the public.

Question: How was biodiversity being addressed?

Response: The Council planted as many trees as possible each year. Consideration was given to the resilience of the tree species that were planted to plan for the future.

Question: Was there a strategy in place to grow new saplings in areas that were densely populated?

Response: There were areas within the City that were not designed with trees in mind. The Council did plant as many trees as possible in as many areas as possible. Biodiversity net gain was now a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% improvement on green areas.

Question: Councillors were often contacted by residents requesting to remove trees. How should Councillors respond in these instances?

Response: The resident should contact the Arboricultural Officer who would consider each case on its own merit.

RESOLVED that the policy for the maintenance of Council owned tree in public open spaces be supported.