

Date: Thursday 21 March 2024 at 4.30 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Stockton-on-Tees,
TS18 1TU

Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair)
Cllr Paul Rowling (Vice-Chair)

Cllr John Coulson
Cllr Jason French
Cllr Barbara Inman
Cllr Alan Watson

Cllr Richard Eglington
Cllr Shakeel Hussain
Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on
Thursday 22nd February 2024 (Pages 9 - 16)
- 5 Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed
Recommendations - Tree Asset Management**
Progress report for the previously completed Tree Asset
Management review. (Pages 17 - 28)
- 6 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work
Programmes 2023-2024 & 2024-2025** (Pages 29 - 36)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday 22 February 2024.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Richard Eglington, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Alan Watson

Officers: Stephen Bowerbank, Graham Clingan, Reuben Kench, Neil Mitchell (CS,E&C); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Emma Zenaj (Stockton Parent Carer Forum)

Apologies: Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

1	<p>Evacuation Procedure</p> <p>The evacuation procedure was noted.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>
3	<p>Minutes</p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on 25 January 2024 for approval and signature.</p> <p>AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
4	<p>Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility</p> <p>The fourth and final evidence-gathering session for the Committee’s ongoing Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility focused on external bodies associated with this scrutiny topic, the experiences of other Local Authorities in managing outdoor play provision, and the views of Stockton Parent Carer Forum on the Borough’s existing offer.</p> <p>Led by the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Head of Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure, and supported by the SBC Strategy & Greenspace Development Manager and the SBC Care For Your Area (CFYA) Asset Manager, a presentation was given which covered:</p> <p>EXTERNAL BODIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Play England</u>: The national children’s play charity for England, Play England had published 10 principles for designing successful play

spaces – these advocated movement and physical activity, the stimulation of the five senses, provision of good places for social interaction, allowed children to manipulate natural and fabricated materials, and, crucially, offered children challenge (all guiding principles which SBC would endorse). Play England were previously more active in terms of officers on the ground, though now tended to focus on the provision of strategic advice.

- Association of Play Industries (API): The lead trade body in the play sector, API represents the interests of manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safer surfacing. It also promotes best practice and high-quality play provision within the play industry.
- RoSPA: The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health & Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas be inspected annually by an independent qualified body such as RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). SBC commission RoSPA to carry out annual inspections of existing play areas and safety surfacing, assessments of life-expectancy of equipment / areas, post-installation inspections of new sites, and play value assessments. Regarding the latter, the overall site, ambience, and suitability / value of equipment and features for the age groups for which the site is designed were all considered, with a rating then given for each of these three elements – the aim was for a minimum grading of ‘good’.

The Committee was informed that RoSPA had recently been commissioned by SBC to conduct an updated play value assessment of the Borough’s existing outdoor play spaces (with a view to the results of this being available in March 2024). Outcomes would be shared with Members once received, though any delay in submission may mean the Committee has to make recommendations subject to RoSPA’s findings.

Officers also drew attention to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which aimed to ensure that all those who were disabled had the same access to public services (and by implication, public parks and playgrounds) as those who were not disabled. Successful play spaces should, as far as was reasonably possible, offer the same quality and extent of play experience to disabled children and young people as was available to those who were not disabled, whilst accepting that not all equipment could be completely accessible to everyone.

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

SBC officers had contacted other Local Authorities for views / experiences around this scrutiny topic. Feedback was relayed which demonstrated the differing approaches to the provision of outdoor play areas, including:

- Barnsley: No consideration of rationalising spaces thus far, but, since 2018, any new play spaces that were required within new housing

developments as part of the planning process would not be adopted (these would need to have a management company in place to maintain / inspect and repair). Any Section 106 off-site contribution raised from any new development would go to support existing play spaces for refurbishment or replacement.

- Wakefield: Looking at a current proposal to remove five play areas, all of which were on tarmac surfacing, and three of which were of poor play value. The Council was looking at reducing its play area provision, not so much for financial reasons, but more around compliance and quality of what it was actually providing.
- Leeds: Increasing its provision, but also removed a couple of areas in consultation with ward members and residents. New provision was installed where there had never had a play area and the Council had obtained a commuted sum. Where possible, the Council liked to refurbish existing play areas before building new.

In addition, links to a selection of publications by several other Local Authorities were included for the Committee's perusal. This included reports on the impact of aging play equipment and the protection of play provision (Brighton & Hove City Council), a play area investment plan and considerations around inclusive play (Newcastle City Council), public consultation for proposed investment in facilities (Walsall Council), and examples of two play area strategies (Burnley Council and Rochdale Borough Council).

Ahead of the Committee's forthcoming informal 'summary of evidence' session (which would follow the completion of the review's evidence-gathering phase), some suggested principles / discussion points were outlined which Members could reflect upon prior to the formulation of draft recommendations in March 2024. These potential options for the future provision of outdoor play spaces across the Borough were based on two overriding factors – firstly, SBCs current revenue budget did not allow it to maintain existing formal play parks to the standard it desired, and secondly, that the Borough had an unequal distribution of play facilities, and the Council should work to 'balance' provision to allow as many people as possible to benefit from play. Members were also reminded of the importance of informal play and the integration of the natural environment in terms of designing play spaces.

Committee discussions began with the decision of Barnsley not to adopt new play areas required within new housing developments as part of the planning process, with Members noting concerns that had previously surfaced around the use of management companies to maintain / inspect and repair a site (as well as other wider issues). Officers observed that this arrangement was not necessarily something that they would propose, though some spaces within the Borough did already involve management company oversight.

Continuing with this theme, it was suggested that the alternative situation of

Councils assuming responsibility for future inspection / maintenance of a play area (requiring a 25-year lump-sum to cover maintenance) could be seen as a good deal for the developer who was able to pass long-term financial liabilities to a Local Authority. Shifting attitudes around play area expectations may lead to more sustainable provision, though ensuring the correct standard of any equipment was vital, irrespective of who was ultimately responsible for the provision of a specific play space.

Referencing the Council's desire for the Borough's play areas to receive a 'good' rating, the Committee referred to previous evidence that had shown a raft of sites falling short of this minimum aim when last assessed. Members commented that the forthcoming RoSPA assessments may assist in understanding the costs of improving any below-standard provision – this information may, in turn, play a factor in what the Committee recommended regarding future prioritisation of sites.

Members spoke of problems with vandalism within play areas resulting in the need for equipment to be replaced, as well as the popularity / use of a site being enhanced by parking availability. Officers noted that links with walking / cycling routes were also beneficial, and that whilst it would be challenging to address all inequalities which may / may not impact on play space use / access, factoring-in the ease of which people could get to / from sites should form part of a future strategic view of the Borough's offer.

The Committee further probed the definition of 'easy access' by pointing out the fact that some people did not have the ability to travel to larger 'destination' sites and therefore valued the provision of smaller play areas that were closer to their place of residence. Officers added that a focus on developing new / existing large-scale provision may be hindered by surrounding environmental restrictions, and that a balanced approach may well be needed to ensure the greatest access possible for the Borough's residents.

Looking ahead to next month's debate on potential draft recommendations for this review, Members concluded that the development of a Council play strategy, setting out principles for future decisions around outdoor provision, may be a useful outcome in determining any change to the existing offer. Given that revenue considerations were clearly critical, the Committee also expressed a need to see more detail around existing cost pressures (daily / weekly / monthly / annual) of inspecting / maintaining current sites.

STOCKTON PARENT CARER FORUM

The Co-Chair of the Stockton Parent Carer Forum was in attendance to provide views on the Borough's existing outdoor play offer.

A brief overview of the Forum was initially given which noted that most Local Authority areas included a designated group which provided a voice for parents and carers with special educational needs (SEN) children. The Forum had around 1,800 individuals listed on its database (a small amount

given the total number across the Borough who had a child with SEN), received some funding to aid its activities, and was run entirely by volunteers (there were no paid roles). The hub was based at Newtown Community Resource Centre, and if a family was struggling, the Forum was often the first port-of-call to assist them and help the breaking down of any barriers. From a strategic perspective, its role was to ensure consideration of the Forum's voice in the development of services / facilities.

Regarding outdoor play areas, the Forum began working with SBC around three-and-a-half years ago when public focus on the Borough's play offer had sharpened. Work with the Council was initiated in order to reflect views and influence plans, with issues around accessing the larger 'destination' sites and a lack of changing places / accessible toilets raised (the latter being a real area of concern, with families noting that provision of a disabled toilet did not necessarily make a site accessible due to the complex needs of a child / young person). Visits were also undertaken to some of Stockton-on-Tees' existing play areas, as well as Daisy Chain park (an exclusive offer for SEN children) – the types of play / equipment that were more appropriate for the Forum's members, how play was different for children with SEN, and how equipment could be made more accessible, were all explored.

A highlight for the Forum, and a good example of an accessible space, was the newly refurbished Victoria Park in Thornaby (an area visited by Members in December 2023 as part of the Committee's evidence-gathering for this review). Wynyard Park also had positive features in terms of layout and sensory experiences, and Norton (Tinkers Yard) was also liked. Whilst it was difficult to pinpoint what a 'perfect' park was for a child with SEN, allowing families to make their views heard was important. What was evident was that families were compelled to use some spaces outside the usual busy times (as this was an easier situation to manage), and did travel within and outside the Borough (e.g. Thirsk, Northallerton, Picton) to use facilities that were more accessible for their child/ren.

Picking up on the positives in relation to Victoria Park, the Committee asked what made the Forum's families warm to this site – the mix of provision for different age-ranges, risk and challenge, and sensory considerations were all subsequently praised. It was, however, noted that the toilet facilities at this site were run by Thornaby Town Council, and were only open when a representative was present.

The key issue of changing areas was discussed, with officers noting that plans for Preston Park and the new Stockton waterfront park would both include such facilities. Members suggested that future developments for new / existing outdoor play spaces could / should incorporate or utilise other nearby offers like coffee shops (enabling toilets / changing places). Seeing a play area as part of an overall collection of facilities within a designated location (rather than in isolation) was a concept supported by the Committee, something which local enterprise may wish to get involved with through the opening of their own establishment or by possibly sponsoring a play space.

	<p>Referencing the notion that some play spaces were too busy / noisy for families with SEN children, Members asked if quieter areas would help. The Forum Co-Chair felt that decisions on whether and when to access play areas were taken on an individual basis depending on family circumstance / need, but that many looked for somewhere quieter / smaller during peak times (e.g. school holidays) – this may not be as inclusive a space, though. When thinking about accessibility, it was important to consider how SEN children and their families tended to be viewed by wider society, and the fact that it required a high degree of confidence to go into a public space if they had previously had a negative experience.</p> <p>Reflecting on the perspectives of these families, the Committee commended the Forum for shining a light on the value of smaller provision which some may regard as less important compared to the larger, busier play spaces – indeed, this emphasised the significance of neighbourhood sites such as Victoria Park (Thornaby). That said, Members were still keen to know the extent to which so-called ‘doorstep’ provision was accessed – the Forum agreed to attempt to ascertain this for the Committee.</p> <p>Concluding this item, the Forum was thanked for its previous input on play area provision and the Co-Chair was asked to reflect this back to families. For their part, the Forum expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to be part of the Committee’s work and to highlight the variety of challenges faced by its members, some of which impacted their ability to access spaces that others took for granted.</p> <p>AGREED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the information presented be noted. 2) further detail around existing cost pressures (daily / weekly / monthly / annual) of inspecting / maintaining current outdoor play sites be provided. 3) Stockton Parent Carer Forum attempt to ascertain the extent to which the Borough’s ‘doorstop’ play spaces were being accessed.
<p>5</p>	<p>Chair’s Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024</p> <p><u>Chair’s Update</u></p> <p>The Chair drew attention to the forthcoming SBC Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2024 which would consider plans for the 2024-2025 scrutiny work programme. It was being proposed that next year’s reviews focused on supporting the Council’s transformation agenda – as such, it was likely that the Committee’s previously scheduled review regarding vaping would no longer be undertaken.</p> <p><u>Work Programme 2023-2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the current Crime and Disorder Select</p>

	<p>Committee Work Programme. The next meeting was scheduled for 21 March 2024 where the first update on progress of the agreed Action Plan following the Committee's previous review of Tree Asset Management would be presented. Following the formal agenda, an informal 'summary of evidence / draft recommendations' session in relation to the ongoing Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision was scheduled to be held.</p> <p>AGREED that the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024 be noted.</p>
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Crime and Disorder Select Committee

21 March 2024

PROGRESS UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS – TREE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Summary

Members are asked to consider the evidence and assessments of progress contained within the attached Progress Update on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations in relation to the review of Tree Asset Management (see <https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/202302231630/Agenda/att44329.pdf> for the final report).

Detail

1. Following the Cabinet consideration of scrutiny reports, accepted recommendations are then subject to a monitoring process to track their implementation.
2. Two main types of report are used. Initially this is by means of Action Plans detailing how services will be taking forward agreed recommendations. This is then followed by a Progress Update report approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan (unless requested earlier). Evidence is submitted by the relevant department together with an assessment of progress against all recommendations. Should members of the Select Committee agree, those recommendations which have reached an assessment of '1' are then signed off as having been completed.
3. If any recommendations remain incomplete, or if the Select Committee does not agree with the view on progress, the Select Committee may ask for a further update.
4. The assessment of progress for each recommendation should be categorised as follows:

1	Achieved (Fully)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.
2	On-Track (but not yet due for completion)	The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.

3	Slipped	<p>The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.</p> <p>An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.</p>
4	Not Achieved	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.</p> <p>An explanation for non achievement of the recommendation would be provided.</p>

5. To further strengthen the monitoring process, from August 2020, the Progress Update report will also include references on the evidence of impact for each recommendation.
6. For progress update reports following the completion of a review, the relevant Link Officer(s) will be in attendance.
7. **Appendix 1** (Review of Tree Asset Management) sets out the recommendations for this Committee and is supplemented by **Appendix 2** (Tree Preservation Orders – A Simple Guide). Members are asked to review the update and indicate whether they agree with the assessments of progress.

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APPENDIX 1 PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Tree Asset Management
Link Officer/s:	Dale Rowbotham / Mark Nozedar
Action Plan Agreed:	March 2023

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) refreshes its tree and woodland management policy and procedures, and as part of this:
	a) Reaffirms its mandatory (minimum) service requirements and where work is prioritised (e.g. high-use public areas).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport • Communications
Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	Publication of the key message that essential maintenance works to maintain public safety of trees and woodland is our high priority, with other service requests itemised with an appropriate priority rating and timescale.
Agreed Success Measure:	Communications plan to disseminate information from revised policy.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	The team have produced a draft of the refreshed policy with changes being made prior to completion of final draft. At that stage the relevant governance process will begin to make the draft current policy. This element of the action plan had slipped due to delays in the service review of 2023, which also delayed the recruitment of the business support officer. The business support officer was a key element to free up time of the principal tree and woodlands officer.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Once introduced as policy residents will have a detailed understanding of service requirements of the authority and how work is prioritised.
	b) Reflects within it the realistic cycle of essential maintenance of the Borough’s tree stock (and that this be updated as and when required).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport

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Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	Maintenance timescales reflective of the current service availability will be delivered within the policy
Agreed Success Measure:	Realistic timescales regarding SBC tree stock maintenance are clearly visible within the revised policy.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	The team have produced a draft of the refreshed policy with changes being made prior to completion of final draft. At that stage the relevant governance process will begin to make the draft current policy. This element of the action plan had slipped due to delays in the service review of 2023, which also delayed the recruitment of the business support officer. The business support officer was a key element to free up time of the principal tree and woodlands officer.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Once introduced as policy residents will have a detailed understanding of maintenance timescales of the authority.
	c) Emphasises a key message throughout this review regarding the planting of the correct species of tree in the right places (helping to minimise future maintenance requirements and revenue costs).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	The revised policy will highlight that the planting of the correct species of tree relevant to the appropriate area is vital in ensuring future maintenance requirements are aligned with resource.
Agreed Success Measure:	Key links to the Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy 2022-2032 and detail on how we will identify the right tree based on area.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	The team have produced a draft of the refreshed policy with changes being made prior to completion of final draft. At that stage the relevant governance process will begin to make the draft current policy. This element of the action plan had slipped due to delays in the service review of 2023, which also delayed the recruitment of the business support officer. The business support officer was a key element to free up time of the principal tree and woodlands officer.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	This is currently happening and positive links between a number of departments and the arboriculture team continue to grow. This approached, highlighted in the policy, will ensure residents are aware that future tree planting will not impact the ongoing maintenance of the rest of the tree stock.
	d) Ensures the updated policy and procedures are published on relevant Council platforms, with an appropriate communications plan to

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PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

	ensure the local population can read its content and understand what future service it can expect.
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport • Communications
Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	Revision to ensure a 'readable' policy and work with the corporate communication team to ensure publication of key messages along with links to the policy within relevant areas of the corporate website.
Agreed Success Measure:	Communications plan to disseminate information from revised policy.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	The team have produced a draft of the refreshed policy with changes being made prior to completion of final draft. At that stage the relevant governance process will begin to make the draft current policy. This element of the action plan had slipped due to delays in the service review of 2023, which also delayed the recruitment of the business support officer. The business support officer was a key element to free up time of the principal tree and woodlands officer. Communications are aware of the requirement to disseminate the information, and this will be dealt with in line with the council's communications plan and platforms.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Communications contacted to plan dissemination. Communications plan to follow upon completion of final draft to policy.
	e) Utilises both print (e.g. Stockton News) and electronic mediums to raise awareness of the current issues around tree management within the Borough, including responsibilities in relation to trees on private land.
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport • Communications
Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	Ensure a full communications plan is in place to start once formal approval of the revised policy has been achieved.
Agreed Success Measure:	Communications plan to disseminate information from revised policy.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	As above, communications plan will be drafted upon final draft of policy being approved.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Effective communications of policy and key information.

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PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

Recommendation 2:	Tree Preservation Order (TPO) planning procedures be reiterated to all SBC Ward Councillors and relayed to residents periodically via the Council's multiple communication mechanisms (emphasising the enforcement action that can be taken if processes are not followed).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport • Planning
Date:	August 2023
Agreed Action:	Development of an easy read document, incorporating some key Q&As, relating to Tree Preservation Orders and potential enforcement action which can be shared through members bulletins. A more detailed webpage to supplement the easy read document to be proposed alongside.
Agreed Success Measure:	Easy read document specific to TPOs and updated information on corporate website to provide more detailed information.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	Due to the delays in the service review being complete and the knock-on delay with recruitment this was not complete until early 2024. An easy read document has been drafted and agreed with the arboriculture team and planning (see Appendix 2) and is ready to be made available to all SBC ward Councillors. A revised process in works approvals has also been approved and has been introduced in order to speed up decisions relating to residents work requests to TPOs.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	The easy read will ensure residents will have access to some of the most regular questions received by the authority on TPOs and the introduction of the new authorisation process will help speed up resident requests.

Recommendation 3:	Regular engagement continues between the SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service and other relevant Council departments (in particular the SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure Team) regarding environmental projects and tree planting maintenance.
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	October 2023
Agreed Action:	Continue to meet and review projects and funding opportunities. Key links already in place between Tree and Woodland Management Service and the Environment Leisure and Green infrastructure team, planning team will look to be strengthened for shared project deliveries.
Agreed Success Measure:	Successful delivery of environmental projects and tree planting, whilst ensuring maintenance is not impacted.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	The work on this action started during the scrutiny process and was further strengthened after the process when plans were being developed for the winter tree planting schedule. Greater relationships have also been developed with

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PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

	planning and insurance with a lot more dialogue happening between the teams. This has resulted in additional improvements being made to TPO authorisations and also inspections relating to insurance claims.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	1 (Fully Achieved)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Ongoing maintenance pressures of the council's tree stock is not being added to by ensuring the correct species of tree is planted. Responses to residents requests are being provided a lot quicker whilst also freeing up officer time.

Recommendation 4:	A detailed business case be produced for consideration by SBC management regarding a potential reinforcement team within Grounds Maintenance to undertake smaller scale routine maintenance, thereby allowing the existing Tree and Woodland Management Service specialist staff to focus on more technical operations.
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	May 2023
Agreed Action:	A detailed business case paper to be prepared for discussion at CMT.
Agreed Success Measure:	Report to CMT.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	Due to the team not being fully staffed and the service review was still ongoing this report has yet to go to CMT. However due to the heavy rain seen last year staff were deployed onto this work as they were unable to undertake grass cutting works. It is now anticipated that the report will be prepared for CMT in April/May 2024.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	3 (Slipped)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	

Recommendation 5:	Corporate funding be sourced for an ash tree survey to be undertaken as soon as possible to establish the potential extent of the looming arrival of ash dieback within the Borough, along with a plan on how this will be managed (including anticipated resource requirements).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	June 2023
Agreed Action:	Source external quotes from industry specialists to undertake an ash dieback survey on SBCs ash tree stock. Engagement with Tees Valley colleagues

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

	<p>around the potential of a combined approach or combined funding opportunities will also be investigated.</p> <p>Once all information has been received a report for CMT consideration will be prepared and presented.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<p>A number of quotes for a complete SBC ash dieback survey.</p> <p>Evidence of discussions / meetings with Tees Valley colleagues around the potential for joint working.</p> <p>Report to CMT.</p>
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	<p>Quotes were requested by the arboriculture department for an ash idea back survey, the disease was being continuously monitored within the borough. Although this was an issue the council was very aware of, the impact of the disease within the borough, to date, has not materialised. Due to the minimal impact this has had on the tree stock it was felt that this survey and consequent funding was not required at this time.</p> <p>The team continue however to discuss this issue with colleagues in the tees valley and will be monitoring the impact moving forward.</p>
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	4 (Not Achieved)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Ash dieback is not as much of an issue in the borough of Stockton, compared to other areas.

Recommendation 6:	Consideration be given to strengthening administrative support to the SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service to enhance communications between the team and Ward Councillors / residents regarding tree management enquiries / complaints (particularly around the responses to issues raised and plans / timescales to address them).
Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	January 2025
Agreed Action:	Proposed service review within community services and transport will be used to identify and propose additional areas of administrative support for the arboricultural service.
Agreed Success Measure:	Successful implementation of proposed service review to provide administrative support to service.
Evidence of Progress (March 2024):	Recruitment for a business support officer role was completed in 2023 with a member of staff in post in November 2023. Courtney Burrell was successful in applying for the role and is now an established member of the grounds maintenance and arboriculture department. A new shared mailbox has been put in place so that all tree requests can be sent to one place. This is working well and is helping with the response times to emails. By freeing up officer time

APPENDIX 1
PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Tree Asset Management

	this is allowing the service to look at ways in which the service can take advantage of digital solutions and improve service delivery.
Assessment of Progress (March 2024): (include explanation if required)	1 (Fully Achieved)
Evidence of Impact (March 2024):	Emails are now responded to a lot quicker and officer time is more effective in improving the service.

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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Tree Preservation Orders

A Simple Guide

What is a Tree Preservation Order ?

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by the Local Planning Authority to protect specific trees, groups of trees, or woodland in the interests of amenity.

A TPO protects one or more trees, of any species, that make a significant positive impact on their local surroundings. A TPO makes it a criminal offence to carry out any of the following works to a protected tree, without permission:

- Cut down or remove
- Uproot
- Top, lop or prune
- Wilfully damage or destroy

What are the Tree Owner's Responsibilities ?

As with owners of 'unprotected' trees, TPO'd tree owners are responsible for maintaining their trees and no statutory rules are set on how often they are maintained or to what standard.

It is important, a tree owner ensures their trees are safe especially when adjacent to highways or areas the public use frequently. All tree owners have a duty of care to ensure that their trees are safe and it is important that any trees, regardless of them being TPO'd or not, are inspected regularly with necessary maintenance carried out to make sure they remain safe and healthy.

The Council does not have a shared responsibility for maintaining TPO trees. However, the Local Planning Authority can regulate and encourage good tree management by determining applications when a tree owner submits a Tree Works application.

Arboricultural advice and advice from competent contractors and consultants or the authority will help to inform tree owners of their responsibilities and options.

Is a Tree Protected?

If you are not sure whether a tree is protected or within a conservation area, contact Stockton Council's planning department at planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk and confirmation may be provided.

Owners will be made aware of a Tree Preservation Order at the time it is made. Subsequently, owners should be made aware of a TPO on a tree within the curtilage of the property or being within a conservation area during the conveyance process when purchasing a property.

What permissions to I need for works to a protected tree.

To receive authorisation for work to a protected tree, an application would need to be submitted to the Council. This helps to ensure that good tree management, enhancing the lifespan and amenity value provided by protected trees.

This would contain details of the works you intend to take, which is then considered by the Local Planning Authority. Those works would then either be given consent with or without conditions or

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an application may be refused. If the works are refused it is likely because they would have an unacceptable effect on either the health of the tree or the amenity of the area.

There are some exemptions to the application procedure, such as if work must be carried out in an emergency because there is an immediate risk of serious harm, or if the tree is dead, or for removing dead branches.

Exemptions for works to trees should always be requested in writing before arranging emergency tree work. Photographic evidence or a site inspection would normally be required before the LPA agrees to exempt work.

Making an Application for Tree Works

Stockton Council accept tree works applications via their website (planning portal).

An application must provide a full, clear and detailed specification for work that is intended to be carried out to the tree. We would also encourage guidance is obtained from a professional tree surgeon or arborist per British Standard 3998 (Tree Works Recommendations).

The process for viewing Tree Work applications is the same as for viewing planning applications, and these are available to be viewed on the SBC website.

Trees in Conservation Areas

Although Conservation Areas are protected for their historical and architectural value, trees make a special contribution to their overall appearance. The legislation therefore offers a blanket protection to all trees within a conservation areas which have a stem diameter greater than 75 mm (3 inches) when measured at 1.5 metres (5 feet) above ground level.

In those cases, a tree owner within a conservation area would need to submit a Tree Works application before proceeding. The process is however more streamlined and will consider if the specified works can proceed or whether the trees would warrant a TPO.

Unauthorised Tree Cutting

If you cut down, uproot or wilfully destroy a protected tree, or wilfully damage (including cutting roots) top or lop a tree in a manner likely to destroy it, or its amenity, you could be fined up to £20,000 for each offence.

In determining the amount of the fine, the court will take into account the actual or likely financial benefit arising from the offence.

In addition, you would normally also be required to plant a replacement tree if the tree was removed or destroyed.

Reporting Unauthorised Work to a Protected Tree

Please contact Stockton Council to report unauthorised work tree works, this can also be completed online at <https://planningforms.stockton.gov.uk/>

The Council will then begin an investigation and determine the appropriate course of action.

**CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE
Work Programme 2023-2024**

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
29 June (1.00pm) (informal)	Scrutiny Training	Scrutiny Team
27 July	Overview Report: Adults, Health and Wellbeing	Marc Stephenson
21 September	Safety of Staff in the Night-Time Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Monitoring: Progress Update – Bonfires on Public Land	Marc Stephenson Sharon Cooney
19 October	Monitoring: Progress Update – Fly-Grazed Horses Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Scope and Project Plan 	Stephen Donaghy / Dan Heron / Stuart Hodgson Neil Mitchell
9 November	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (Community Services, Environment and Culture) 	Neil Mitchell / Graham Clingan / Andie Mackay / Steve Bowerbank
21 December	Monitoring: Progress Update – Bonfires on Public Land Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (Regeneration and Inclusive Growth) 	Marc Stephenson Chris Renahan / Simon Grundy / Antony Phillips
25 January	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (Regeneration and Inclusive Growth) 	Iain Robinson / Mike Smith
22 February	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Bodies • LGA / Other Local Authorities • Stockton Parent Carer Forum 	Neil Mitchell / Graham Clingan / Steve Bowerbank Emma Zenaj

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2023-2024

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
21 March	Monitoring: Progress Update – Tree Asset Management	Dale Rowbotham / Mark Nozedar
21 March (informal – after formal meeting)	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of findings / draft recommendations 	Neil Mitchell

2023-2024 Scrutiny Reviews

- Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility
- Access to and Impact of Vaping

Monitoring Items (scheduled / to be scheduled)

- Fly-Grazed Horses (Progress Update) – TBC
- Tree Asset Management (Progress Update) – Mar 24

Other Information Sources / Updates

- **Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP):** The SSP is the local community safety partnership and works together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) – meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be accessed via <https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1144&Year=0>. Every three years, the SSP undertake a Crime and Disorder Audit and, following public consultation, produce a Community Safety Plan which sets out how agencies within the Partnership intend to achieve targets in crime reduction. The latest version is the [Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy 2022-2025](#).
- **Serious Violence Duty:** The Duty (Aug 22) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet> and associated guidance (Dec 22): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/efforts-to-tackle-serious-violence-and-homicide-stepped-up?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=66d44b4c-9d22-4f1d-aed7-517818847183&utm_content=immediately
- **Martyn’s Law:** ([The Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Draft Bill](#)) has recently (May 23) been published, which will introduce new requirements for those responsible for certain public premises or events to take protective security measures to mitigate against terrorist attacks. Also known as Martyn’s Law, this will likely have a number of implications for Councils. Further details can also be found on [the Home Office’s Martyn’s Law factsheet](#). The LGA has recently (Apr 23) published [a case study highlighting how Manchester Council](#) has embedded the principles of Martyn’s Law into their licensing process.
- **Modern Slavery:** The anti-slavery charity Unseen has recently (May 23) [published its Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline data for 2022](#). Figures show the number of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK more than doubled to record levels last year, with a particularly sharp increase in alleged exploitation

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2023-2024

in the care sector. [New modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence guidance for local authority commissioners of adult social care](#), produced by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab in tandem with the LGA, was published in October 2023 - it provides advice on to how to set up effective local systems to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in adult social care. The LGA has established a modern slavery network for council officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery – the network meets quarterly via Teams and aims to share good practice and discuss current issues.

- **Youth Offending:** *Turnaround* is a voluntary youth early intervention programme led by the Ministry of Justice. The programme provides multi-year grant funding to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) across England and Wales until March 2025, enabling them to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. The eligibility criteria for *Turnaround* includes; children involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) – ranging from coming to notice for repeated involvement in ASB up to and including receiving a Civil Order for ASB. The Ministry of Justice is encouraging all community safety teams to engage with their local YOT Manager or Management Board to discuss a referral pathway for eligible children so they can be offered support via *Turnaround*.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** The [ASB Action Plan](#) (updated in May 23) includes a proposal to develop relevant metrics for local partners to report on. However, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issued a recent (Aug 23) press release expressing concern that [Councils were not doing enough to help victims of ASB](#). The Ombudsman has also produced a [learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour](#) document which includes scrutiny questions for Councillors.
- **CONTEST:** In July 2023, the Government published its [updated counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST](#), which judges that risks from terrorism are rising. In related matters, SBC rolled-out mandatory staff training around the Prevent and Protect duty at the end of April 2023.
- **Fire & Rescue:** [State of Fire & Rescue 2022](#) - His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England. Arson and deliberate fire setting remain a significant issue for Cleveland Fire Brigade with Cleveland being the arson capital of the UK – in October 2022, Cleveland Fire Brigade [appealed for everyone to become a FireStopper in a new bid to reduce arson and violent attacks on Firefighters](#).
- **Shoplifting:** Police to treat shoplifting like organised crime (BBC online article published in October 2023): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67191793>.
- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991:** The Government has added the XL Bully breed type to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 in England and Wales. From 31 December 2023, breeding, selling, exchanging, advertising, rehoming, gifting, abandoning, and allowing an XL Bully dog to stray will be illegal, and these dogs must be muzzled and on a lead in public. From 1 February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless the owner has a Certificate of Exemption. [Defra has published further information about how to prepare for the ban which will be updated regularly](#), and they will continue engagement with stakeholders.
- **Licensing:** [Legislation has been introduced into Parliament to amend the Licensing Act 2003](#) so that it is easier to get changes to licensing hours for special events or occasions, such as significant sporting events, through Parliament. The Bill is more concerned with parliamentary process than the contents of the Licensing Act itself. The Local Government Association (LGA) understands this legislation has Government support, so is likely to complete its parliamentary stages and become law.

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2023-2024

- **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs):** In collaboration with the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC), the LGA will soon be issuing a survey to councils to gain a better understanding of the cost and pressures in organising DHRs. The research will inform the future of DHRs going forwards.

- **Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland:** Further information on the office of the PCC can be found on via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/> - this includes engagement with the **Cleveland Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**. Access to PCP agendas and papers can be found via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/the-work-of-cleveland-police-and-crime-panel/>.

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

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25 April	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Final Report Cleveland Fire Brigade: Annual Update (TBC)	Cllr Clare Gamble / Cllr Steve Nelson / Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Reuben Kench / Neil Mitchell
23 May	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Scope and Project Plan 	TBC
20 June	Monitoring: Action Plan - Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC 	Neil Mitchell
25 July	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC 	
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24 October	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC 	
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20 February	Overview Report: Adults, Health and Wellbeing (TBC)	
20 March		

2024-2025 Scrutiny Reviews

- Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

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CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

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