

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 23 January 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment
SUBJECT: Castlefields Tree Strategy
WARDS: Castlefields, Windmill Hill

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the endorsement of the Castlefields Tree Strategy, the key actions being:
- a. To promote the value and benefits of trees to the local community;
 - b. To promote the management of trees in accordance with good arboriculture practice;
 - c. To ensure that the tree and woodland coverage within the Castlefields Action Area is sustained for future generations;
 - d. To ensure that new development schemes within the Action Area make provision for retaining the best of the existing trees, and replace any trees felled to a minimum 2:1 and, where feasible, 3:1 ratio.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The Strategy, as a document purely reinforcing the best practice principles already promoted by the Council borough-wide, be endorsed by the Board and published as a document available to the public ;**
- (2) The recommendations contained in the Strategy be endorsed by the PPB, conveyed to all Services and followed by all Council activities in the Castlefields Action Area;**
- (3) The PPB approve a public launch of the document.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

The Tree Strategy has been prepared under the umbrella of the Castlefields Regeneration Programme which has been ongoing since 2003. Its preparation was a recommendation of the Biodiversity Appraisal for the Action Area carried out in 2005, which noted the particular threat to tree coverage posed by the physical regeneration projects.

The strategy has been prepared by environmental consultants, The Environment Partnership (TEP), in full collaboration with the Council's Landscape Services, the Major Projects Department and the two main Registered Social Landlords who have responsibility for tree management in the Action area, CDS Housing and Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT). Endorsements for the Strategy are also being sought from CDS and LHT, which will appear at the front of the Strategy on publication.

Recognising the value of the area's extensive landscaped setting, the Strategy has served to document and raise awareness of the environmental value of trees and woodland. Castlefields' natural assets provide an attractive and interesting setting, with known social and health benefits being derived from them.

****Appendices are available in the Members Room****

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy has focused on the purpose and rationale of existing legislation and policy at a National, Regional and Borough level, particularly the Borough's Natural Assets Strategy, and applied it to the Castlefields Action Area specifically.

The Strategy will be a supporting document for the regeneration programme, providing advice and guidance to all of the partners.

It will form part of the existing portfolio of documents guiding development within the Action Area, accompanying the Borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP), The Masterplan and Delivery Strategy prepared by Taylor Young (September 2003), The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the area, which was adopted by the Council in Sept 2005 and the Design Palette prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP, 2005).

The Strategy reiterates the Council's corporate policies towards its natural resources and contributes to all of the five strategic themes in the Community Plan. It has been prepared in accordance with the key Urban Renewal objective to 'enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment in Halton' as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2006-2011.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The actions proposed in the Strategy can be undertaken within the Council's existing budgets, by making use of external sources of funding and through enforcement of standard planning conditions for development proposals.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The actions proposed in the Strategy will improve access to safe and attractive open spaces that everyone, including young people, can enjoy healthy lifestyles within. Thus, objective A of this Priority will be helped to be achieved: - "To ensure all children and young people in Halton enjoy a healthy lifestyle that helps them to achieve physical and emotional well being.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

No implications

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Castlefields' trees and wooded areas provide an attractive and interesting setting for work and leisure, with known social and health benefits towards raising the quality of life for local people.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The actions of the Tree Strategy will improve the management and maintenance of the landscaped areas and open spaces, thus helping to achieve this Priority objective C: - "To create and sustain better neighborhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe and valued by the people who live in them, reflecting the priorities of residents.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Endorsement of the Tree Strategy will improve the management of trees and woodland in Castlefields, enhancing existing open spaces and creating new areas and improving the neighborhood generally. Thus this priority objective B will be helped to be achieved: - "To support and sustain thriving neighborhoods and open spaces that meet people's expectations and add to their enjoyment of life".

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to endorse and publish the Strategy would result in a reduced appreciation of the value of the area's trees and wooded areas. Tree loss may occur which might otherwise have been avoided and adequate replacement schemes may not be implemented where tree loss is unavoidable. Ultimately the Strategy will help to maintain the sustainable tree population across the Action Area that is important for

the economic, environmental and social well being of the area and its residents.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The will be general equality and diversity benefits through a well-managed natural environment across the Action Area.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Castlefields Masterplan and Delivery Strategy	5 th Floor Municipal Building, Widnes	Andrew Denton
Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area SPD	5 th Floor Municipal Building, Widnes	Andrew Denton
Castlefields Biodiversity Appraisal	5 th Floor Municipal Building, Widnes	Andrew Denton
Halton's Natural Assets Strategy	Pico Farm Depo	Paul Oldfield