

Cabinet report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Policy and Programmes

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Wards affected: All

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South Oxfordshire District Council

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse policy for planting trees on council land 2021

Recommendation

That Cabinet members approve the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse policy for planting trees on council land.

Purpose of Report

1. To introduce the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Policy for Planting Trees on Council Land for approval by Cabinet.
2. The contact officer is Harry Barrington-Mountford, Head of Policy and Programmes for South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWDC).

Corporate Objectives

3. Protect and restore our natural world and action on the climate emergency

Background

4. This joint policy was produced to address the community's interest in planting trees on council land, supporting them to do so, and to set out how the councils will protect,

plant and manage trees on council land, helping the districts to achieve their carbon neutral targets.

5. A working group with officers from across the council, including from planning, property, parks, and policy teams, developed this policy, providing their specialist insights. Outlines of the policy were shared and discussed at South CEEAC on 7 June 2021 and Vale CEAC on 14 June 2021. Final versions of the policy were shared with CEAC/ CEEAC members and South and Vale Cabinet members in September 2021. In-depth conversations on the policy were also held with one of South's tree champions and the Cabinet member for climate emergency and environment.

The Policy for Planting Trees on Council Land

6. This policy outlines how South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will protect, plant and manage trees on the land they own, and how the community will be supported with their tree planting initiatives. The Councils seek to increase tree cover and to protect trees on land they own, helping to achieve their respective carbon neutral targets.
7. The policy has five principles which outline how the councils will aim to protect, plant and manage trees on council owned land. These principles are: planting, caring and maintenance, supporting biodiversity, planning and development, and community.
8. The end of the policy sets out how groups can apply to plant trees on council land, including a link to the application form.

Climate and ecological impact implications

9. This policy addresses the climate emergency by seeking to increase tree cover and protect trees across the districts. Trees sequester carbon and by increasing tree planting and tree protection, this policy will help the district councils to achieve their carbon neutral targets.

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications from this policy.

Legal Implications

11. A legal agreement for community groups that have been approved to plant trees on council land has been produced by the legal team and will be managed separately from this policy.

Risks

12. None

Other implications

13. None

Background Papers

None