

Record of Decision

Ash Dieback Financial Allocation

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 17 September 2019

Decision

- (i) that the risk and cost of Ash Dieback is managed via a phased and triaged approach and the Director of Corporate Services be requested to allocate £200,000 from the Insurance Reserve, so as to mitigate the risk to the public and third party property and ensure that Torbay Council is not subject to legal claims and likely prosecution; and
- (ii) that the Interim Director of Place be requested to ensure that when reviewing the Council's Tree Risk Management Strategy, a specific section is included on Ash Dieback and other emerging biological threats due to climate change, and that it includes a plan of how the Council can work towards further mitigating the loss of trees and what processes are available to replenish lost tree stocks going forward, also that when reviewing the Council's Climate Change Strategy links with the revised Tree Risk Management Strategy and carbon capture be included within the document.

Reason for the Decision

To ensure that funding is allocated to undertake the removal of Ash Trees within Torbay Council Land that are diseased and pose a serious risk to people, property or traffic.

Implementation

The decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 30 September 2019 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

The submitted report provided details on a proposal to allocate funding of up to £200,000 from the Council's Insurance Reserve to enable the Council to undertake the removal of Ash Trees within Torbay Council Land that are obviously diseased with Ash Dieback and pose a serious risk to people, property or traffic.

Trees on private land within Torbay are not the responsibility of Torbay Council, but are the responsibility of the landowner who like Torbay could face significant fines and prosecution if their trees are not kept in a safe condition and cause harm to persons, traffic and infrastructure. Guidance will be made available for private landowners explaining that if the tree is on their land it's their responsibility.

The report also highlighted that a communications strategy would be developed to ensure that the reasons for the removal of the trees is clearly understood, as it is not always obvious that the trees are diseased as Ash Dieback mainly affects the tree canopy which can only be seen from above, and also measures that would be undertaken to replace the trees, including further details of a bid to inspire communities to rebuild flourishing treescapes for the future for which

Torbay was one of the priority areas. The Council's Tree Risk Management Strategy would also be updated to reflect the emerging issues impacting on trees and action to be taken to replenish lost trees in the future. It was also suggested that links be made with the Tree Risk Management Strategy and revised Climate Change Strategy, which would also include reference to carbon capture.

Councillor Morey proposed and Councillor Steve Darling seconded a motion which was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

20 September 2019

Signed: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 18 September 2019