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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY 2011-2020**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Nick Wallis,  
Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Richard Alty, Director of Place**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with the opportunity to view the final version of the Darlington Borough Council Tree and Woodland Strategy 2011–2020.

**Summary**

2. Attached as **Appendix 1** is the Darlington Borough Council Tree and Woodland Strategy, which has been developed over the past 18 months in consultation with various organisations and the Economy and Environment Committee.
3. The key aim of the strategy is *“to proactively manage and enlarge the tree population of the Borough of Darlington in order to protect our historical heritage of trees and provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations.”*
4. The delivery of the action plan within the Tree Strategy in these extremely difficult financial times will require resources to be available both financial and staff.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Members adopt the Tree and Woodland Strategy.

**Reasons**

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
  - (a) The need to provide a robust policy framework with regard to the Council’s management of trees.
  - (b) To protect the historical heritage of trees that provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations.

**Richard Alty  
Director of Place**

## Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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LCD

S17 Crime and Disorder	There will be limited, if any, impact on crime and disorder as a result of this strategy.
Health and Well Being	Trees are a vital part of providing a healthy environment for residents of the Borough.
Carbon Impact	Trees provide a positive impact in offsetting the impact of carbon emissions.
Diversity	Policies within the Tree and Woodland Strategy will be applied universally across the Borough and will not unfairly discriminate against any individual.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Groups Affected	The strategy affects all parts of the community.
Budget and Policy Framework	<p>The strategy lays down the policies of how the Council will manage its trees, which will be within the existing Budget Framework.</p> <p>The policies build on those within the original strategy and do not make any changes to the existing Council Policy Framework.</p>
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Tree and Woodland Strategy will contribute to delivering the Greener theme within the Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	This strategy has no impact on the Council's efficiency programme.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council adopted the first Tree Strategy for Darlington in 2000, however since 2000 things have moved on. People are beginning to place a higher priority on the environment in which they live, which in turn has increased public awareness of the benefits provided by trees.
8. The Borough of Darlington covers an area of almost 200 square kilometres and has a population of 100,800 of which approximately 90% live within the town of Darlington. The area outside of the town is dominated by a rural landscape with agriculture being both the historic and current primary industry. The town however became one of the focal points of the industrial revolution, being the birthplace of the railways. This brought to Darlington both prosperity and a sudden growth in development within the structure of the town that is characteristic of Victorian landscapes.
9. It is thanks to these Victorian forebears that Darlington has a living legacy of urban street trees, historic parks and wooded cemeteries that is the envy of many other towns.
10. The strategy sets out the aim *“to proactively manage and enlarge the tree population of the Borough of Darlington in order to protect our historical heritage of trees and provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations.”* The strategy sets out the policy framework in local, regional and national context.
11. The policy sets out how the Council will manage its trees overall with particular regard to:
  - (a) Street trees
  - (b) Trees in woodland
  - (c) Trees in parks and open spaces
  - (d) Trees in disused churchyards and cemeteries
  - (e) Trees in Council housing area
  - (f) Trees on private land
12. Finally the strategy has an action plan for a five-year period, which will continue to be refreshed on an annual rolling basis.
13. The Council will continue to remove only trees that are dead, diseased or dangerous, or can be proven to be linked to structural damage caused to buildings. The general presumption will continue to be the Council are against the removal of trees that are healthy, however on occasions there may be some overriding justification where no alternative management practices can be implemented when this is not practicable. The removal of any tree will only be carried out after a thorough review. If following this process it is agreed to remove a healthy tree then it would be a requirement from the complainant to pay all costs associated with removing the tree and also for a replacement tree of a suitable species to be planted in an appropriate location within the vicinity of the tree to be felled.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

14. Consultation on the Tree and Woodland Strategy has taken place with:
  - (a) Relevant officers in Council departments
  - (b) Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee on two occasions, April 2010 and February 2011
  - (c) Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership
  - (d) Durham Wildlife Trust
  - (e) Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
  - (f) Zurich Municipal
  - (g) Durham Biodiversity Partnership
  - (h) Parish Councils
  - (i) Friends Groups
15. The outcome of that consultation is attached as **Appendix 2** and has helped inform the final document.