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Submitted to **Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2019 Consultation**
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About You

What is your name?

Name:

Angela Cook

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

On behalf of:

How can we contact you?

Email:

[REDACTED]

Telephone:

Address:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Additional Documents

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT 2019 CONSULTATION

Response to Local Plan seeking change to Policy NE5

Q. 2.11 Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Supplementary Guidance with regard to the proximity of structures and infrastructure close to trees needs significant amendment. Currently it is unduly restrictive on development, and does not take into account all the different parameters in BS:5837 2012.

Policy NE5 – Trees and Woodlands and its associated supplementary guidance needs to be substantially reviewed as it is not fit for purpose, placing overly restrictive policy and guidance which serves to significantly restrict development across the city, rather than promoting a more flexible approach to tree management. The reading of the policy asserts that no development will take place if there is an impact on trees, but does not define impact. The extent of the impact will depend upon how trees will respond to the impact. Such an approach applied within the built up confines of a city, with established trees is entirely unworkable. There will undoubtedly be a requirement for tree management on both brownfield and greenfield sites, however it should be guided by appropriate mitigation strategies. British Standards (BS:5837 2012) on this subject does not include the concept of the zone of influence.

Local builders and developers have had or are facing severe difficulties engaging with this policy and in particular the details within the Supplementary Guidance. A main area of concern is in relation to 8.4.2 "Proximity of Structures and Infrastructure to Trees", which relates to their zone of influence. Strict application of this guidance would have serious implications for the wider delivery aspirations in relation to existing sites and allocations contained within the LDP. The zone of influence concept means that the height of a tree becomes the overriding important criteria and not the root protection area, or other important factors.

The current zone of influence guidance means that developers are even unable to allocate garden ground to land that sits within the circumference equal to the height of a tree even if that tree is not within the developer's own ground and thereby outwith his control.

Development proposals offer the opportunity to work with existing trees to promote sustainable tree management and supplementary landscaping and planting arrangements to ensure any potential loss is appropriately mitigated. I therefore reiterate that this policy needs to be reviewed and it would be beneficial to have input and advice from a third party arboriculturalist. Unless some degree of flexibility is provided, there is a danger it will lead to more measures being adopted by individuals, such as felling unprotected trees on sites prior to lodging planning applications. This is a situation that needs to be avoided, therefore a serious review of this policy and guidance needs to happen.

The current policy has significant potential to negatively affect economic development in the city in and accordingly it should be removed from the Supplementary Guidance.

Additional Files

If you have further information you would like to provide you may upload it here.:

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