

BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Management Policy for Trees in Council Ownership 2011

This policy is designed to be a framework for the management of trees owned and managed by Broxtowe Borough Council. It sets out the guiding principles for managing trees and to assist and influence arboricultural decisions in relation to pruning and removal of trees.

Objectives of the Policy

1. To assist with the management of existing and new trees to maximise their value.
 - landscape enhancement
 - biodiversity
 - physical environmental benefits
2. To guide residents, green space users, staff and contractors on the sustainable management principles and maintenance regimes for the borough's tree stock.
3. To set out guidelines on the timescale for implementing tree work.

Objective 1 - The value of trees in the environment

Trees enhance the quality of the environment and form an integral part of its shape, colour and diversity. They are essential to our health and wellbeing, not only in reducing some of the adverse impacts of the urban environment, but enhancing our enjoyment of the borough.

Landscape Enhancement

Trees form an important component of the landscape. They provide form, colour, texture and movement, changing with the seasons. Trees can be important local landmarks giving a sense of continuity and place. They can help provide privacy, frame the appearance of buildings and screen eyesores.

Biodiversity

Trees, particularly indigenous species, can provide valuable support to a range of wildlife. Trees can provide food, shelter, nesting and roosting sites, particularly for invertebrates, birds and bats.

Physical Environmental Benefits

In urban areas, trees help to modify the climate by providing shade from the sun, reducing wind speeds and reducing the extremes of temperature. They are important in reducing air pollutants and helping to absorb noise.

Objective 2 - Tree Management Principles and Maintenance Regimes

Requests for Work to Trees

The Council receives many requests for tree work every week. These are recorded and passed to the Tree Officer. The table below indicates how the work is prioritised and the timescale for undertaking the work. Once the work has been assessed and the appropriate level of work determined, an instruction is passed to the Council's tree team or nominated contractor to complete the work within a relevant timescale.

Category	Description
1	Tree poses serious threat – hazardous tree/fallen tree etc.
2	Tree causing or likely to cause physical damage – to property etc.
3	Work to allay a potential or future threat – dying/diseased tree etc.
4	Work to manage a legal nuisance e.g. blocked access
5	Routine maintenance - thinning/lifting/reduction etc.

Timescale for Undertaking Work

Category	Description
1	Immediate
2, 3, 4	Within one month. This excludes trees that may be subject to an insurance claim where it needs to be proved beyond reasonable doubt that the tree is responsible for the damage.
5	In line with good arboricultural practice. Target time within 5 months of receiving initial request

In addition to the work categories described above, the Council receives many requests that are not considered to be a legal nuisance. Work to address the following issues is not undertaken unless it forms part of routine maintenance:

- Effects on TV reception (either satellite or terrestrial television)
- Effects on solar panels
- Obstruction of views
- Minor or seasonal 'nuisances' such as:
 - Honeydew (dripping sap)
 - Bird droppings
 - Leaf, fruit or flowers fall

Whilst the Council appreciates these problems, they are judged a relatively minor inconvenience when considering the many environmental benefits of having trees.

It should be noted that residents must not undertake work to Council owned trees without the permission of the Borough Council.

Removal of Council Owned Trees

The Council will not remove trees unless one of the following reasons exists:

- i. Trees that are considered dead, dying or dangerous. Trees deemed to be in this category should have been professionally assessed and a judgement made based on a detailed inspection of the trees condition.
 - Dead tree – a tree that has no, or minimal growth present within the crown.
 - Dying tree - a tree that is in the process of irreversible decline.
 - Dangerous tree – biological and/or mechanical defects are noted, and the likelihood of failure is deemed high.
- ii. Removal of trees to benefit adjacent trees, for example trees in groups on parks/open spaces that are being suppressed by adjacent trees.
- iii. Trees that are proven (beyond reasonable doubt) to be the sole cause of subsidence to property.
- iv. Occasionally, exceptional circumstances may arise that are not covered by the previous points. In such circumstances the environment portfolio holder and/or the Director of Environment or his nominated deputy will assess the tree and a decision will be made as to whether the tree should be felled.

Trees will not be removed for the following reasons:

- i. To increase light penetration to properties.
- ii. To improve views.
- iii. To alleviate any of the situations listed in the non-legal nuisance category described previously.

Objective 3 - Timescale for undertaking routine maintenance work

The process for assessing work and the relevant timescales are detailed below. This is intended to provide guidance as to the standards that the public can expect. The timescales are, however, subject to weather conditions, budget constraints and existing workloads. Trees that pose a serious threat or are causing physical damage will be dealt with in line with the timescales indicated previously.

If a site visit is necessary and if the resident is at home, the Tree Officer will advise as to whether work will or will not be undertaken and the relevant timescale. If the resident is

not at home, the Tree Officer will leave a card (attached) detailing the date of the visit, what had been identified and what work, if any, was proposed. The Tree Officer will not undertake repeat visits to trees when the request is to investigate minor or seasonal 'nuisances'.

Operation	Timescale
Enquiry received and assessment made by Tree Officer. Some requests may not require a visit by the Tree Officer and will be added direct to the work list.	Up to 3 weeks
Works scheduled and issued to tree team or contractor. Work grouped into geographical batches and allocated in packages rather than as one-off jobs.	Up to 8 weeks
Tree contractor/Broxtowe Borough Council Tree Team complete works	Up to 10 weeks
Total	21 weeks (5 months)

Policy approved by the Borough's Cabinet on 19 April 2011 and updated at Cabinet on 27 November 2012.