



Housing Service Tree Management Plan

2025

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1. Scope

- 1.1 This document sets out Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Housing Service approach to the management of tree population on housing land this includes trees in gardens of council owned properties, this is to enable effective management and enrichment of the Council's tree resource.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this Management Plan are to:
- Ensure that the management of the tree resource contributes to making the Housing land open spaces, communal gardens and properties attractive, healthy, and safe for people who live, work and visit
 - Ensure that trees effectively enhance the landscape of Housing land
 - Ensure efficient management of the Council's Housing land trees and reduce risk
 - Promote awareness of the importance and value of trees and the role they have in ensuring a sustainable environment

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The quality of people's homes is influenced by the spaces around them. There are increasing recognition that well-designed, well-managed green spaces within neighbourhoods are crucial to contributing to people's quality of life. Trees are widely acknowledged to form an important aspect of the provision of green space.
- 3.2 The Council own and manage approximately 1,200 properties, throughout the borough, with many properties benefitting from green space areas and trees.
- 3.3 The ownership of these trees results in the Council incurring a range of legal responsibilities and liabilities in relation to regular inspection, ongoing management, and tree maintenance. Consequently, a suitable Tree Management Plan for the Housing Team, with accompanying processes in place is in place to support the Housing Team in managing trees on Housing land.
- 3.4 It is recognised that tree management is a safety priority and therefore, is not a chargeable service.
- 3.5 The Tree Management Plan will apply to all Housing sites (and gardens) owned and managed by the Council, which benefit from tree growth.

4. Our Approach

- 4.1 The Council will comply with all legislation, best practices, and health and safety guidance in relation to the management and checking of all trees for which it is legally responsible.

- 4.2 The Council will adopt an effective system for managing trees containing the following elements:
- A risk-based approach incorporating periodic checks of Council owned trees on Housing land carried out by a competent person
 - Appropriate corrective action where trees have been identified to be damaged, dead, or present a specific health and safety risk
- 4.3 The Council will actively manage its tree stock against:
- Risk of personal injury and death through falling trees
 - The risk of property damage from subsidence
 - Personal injury claims through trips and falls on footways disturbed by tree roots
- 4.4 The Housing Team will carry out an inspection regime of all trees using competent and adequately trained personnel who are trained to map and carry out tree related risk assessments.
- 4.5 The Housing Team will not fell trees unnecessarily but will take appropriate action if they constitute a health and safety risk.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 The Housing Team will carry out a periodic programme of tree surveys based on the National Tree Safety Group's guidance on 'Common Sense approach to Tree Management', and, where required carry out remedial work or felling of trees.
- 5.2 The Housing Team will generally not carry out pruning or removal of trees as a result of any of the reasons below:
- Blocking out sunlight
 - Too large/tall
 - Dropping leaves in gardens
 - Sap falling onto paths or cars
 - Overhanging gardens
 - Affecting TV reception
 - Fruit falling from trees
- 5.3 The Housing Team will consider pruning of trees under the following circumstances:
- Overhanging roads (less than 5.2 metres height)
 - Overhanging footpaths and/or signage (less than 3 metres height)
 - Touching an adjacent structure
 - Disturbing vehicular sight lines
 - Affecting stability or causing damage to structures

- 5.4 This work will be carried out in a programmed approach on a risk basis.
- 5.5 The Housing Team will consider removal of trees in the following circumstances:
- Diseased
 - Dead
 - Dying
 - Structurally unsafe
 - Preventing access (when pruning will not suffice)
 - Significantly damaged
 - Potentially hazardous to health
 - Outgrown space allocated (when pruning will not suffice)
 - Affecting the stability of structures
- 5.6 Trees identified as showing signs of disease or having defects will be subject to a more regular health check, and additional safety checks in the event of high winds or storms.

6. Responsibility

- 6.1 Responsibility for reviewing the Tree Management Plan will rest with The Property Services Manager.
- 6.2 Responsibility for the implementation of the Tree Management Plan will rest with the Estates Team Leader.
- 6.3 Tree surveys to be carried out by a suitably qualified nominated contractor/consultant or qualified officer.
- 6.4 The Housing Team will carry out identified minor tree pruning on schemes that pay a grounds maintenance service charge with existing service charge arrangements. If major tree works or felling is required, the Council will employ a competent contractor to carry out the work or carry out the work.
- 6.5 Trees within void properties will be assessed at void stage and appropriate works carried out.

7. Financial

- 7.1 The Housing Team will make available a tree management budget to cover annual programme of tree surveys, felling and pruning of trees.
- 7.2 Where hazardous trees have been identified, works will be carried out as a matter of urgency, irrespective of budget implications.

8. Replacement Planting

- 8.1 The Council aims to replace trees that have been removed or lost as a result of storm damage, disease and decline, and tree and hedge removal.
- 8.2 To help maintain, build, and enhance the Boroughs canopy cover, and the myriad of benefits that trees provide, a standard replanting ratio of 2:1 is targeted. This also helps in accounting for potential failure rates in tree establishment.
- 8.3 When considering that to plant, taking into consideration the reason for the trees loss and other appropriate constraints posed to help ensure that the proposed replacements have an appropriate safe useful life expectancy.

9. Procedure

- 9.1 The Housing Team's tree management programme is designed to provide an efficient and cost-effective tree management regime whilst highlighting potential health and safety threats.
- 9.2 An initial assessment of all sited will take place over a 5-year period.
- 9.3 The survey will be in the form of a basic visual tree inspection from ground level in accordance with the training that the surveying officers have received.
- 9.4 Any potential hazards observed at high level will be passed to a specialist contractor for further aerial investigation.
- 9.5 Where potential hazards are identified on third-party trees, the landowner will be issued with a letter.
- 9.6 If the landowner does not indicate intention to carry out remedial action, the case should be referred to Council's Legal Team for advice and guidance.

10. The Tree Inspection Programme

- 10.1 The tree inspection programme will involve the assessment of all trees on the Council's Housing land and will include front and rear gardens, non-service charge payers properties and open space areas.
- 10.2 The inspection will include:
 - an assessment of hazard
 - an assessment of level of risk
 - a prescribed course of action

10.3 These assessments will be undertaken by suitably trained Council staff or Arboriculture consultants.

10.4 Sites identified as low risk will be re-assessed within a 5-year period.

11. Recording of Inspection

11.1 All visual tree assessments will be recorded on Asset Management.

12. Determining Remedial Action

12.1 Any potential hazard once recorded, will be referred to a nominated competent person for recommendation.

12.2 A record of proposed action, and action taken, must be documented on the housing management systems.

12.3 The priority for implementing remedial action will depend on both the assessment of the risk and likelihood.

12.4 In a high-risk area, trees which show obvious signs of imminent collapse or are otherwise seriously hazardous should be dealt with immediately based on the best available advice. Remedial action in the other risk areas must be implemented without unreasonable delay and in accordance with the risk, likelihood, and consequence of any danger to persons or property.

13. Competence

13.1 Staff or contractors undertaking the initial assessment of hazard should have some experience of tree work and must have received a minimum of one day's training in the recognition of tree defects.

13.2 Staff or contractors determining the appropriate remedial action must have good basic forestry or arboriculture experience and, as a minimum, a four-day training in tree assessment at an approved Arboriculture Training Establishment.

14. Emergency Procedures

14.1 If, in the course of inspection a trained member of staff discovers a tree that, in their opinion, poses a serious health and safety risk and requires immediate emergency action, then that member of staff should carry out the following emergency procedures:

- Evacuate the anticipated fall zone
- Contact immediate supervisor
- Cordon off anticipated fall zone
- Ensure no-one enters the cordoned off area

- Co-ordinate any traffic management
- Contact the Police if public footpath or highways are within the anticipated fall zone

14.2 Each vehicle used for grounds maintenance works and tree inspection is carrying a first aid kit.

14.3 Each team is equipped with a full list of A&E addresses within the areas that the Council operate.

15. Related Policies and Procedures

15.1 Climate Change Delivery Plan.

15.2 Council Asset Policy.

15.3 Oadby and Wigston Borough Tree Strategy.