

Policy	Tree management policy
Date adopted	July 2022
Date of next review	July 2025
Version	1
Responsible board	Homes board
Responsible officer	Head of neighbourhoods

Our policy is

To value our tree stock on land owned by us and recognise the immense potential for human and environmental benefits associated with a healthy and sustainable tree population. Our policy is to ensure a consistent approach to managing our tree stock and minimising risk to customers and the business

It applies to

All trees situated on land owned by us, including those in communal areas and individual customer's gardens. Our employees, partners, customers, and so to any external organisation supported or engaged by us.

Because we want to

Provide a value for money service to customers which enables customers to enjoy their gardens and all our communal, green, and open spaces.

Provide advice and guidance to customers on the principles of managing our tree stock.

Provide a planned schedule of tree maintenance from the outcome of our tree surveys to ensure trees are safe and we are in line with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and Conservation Areas.

We will

Primarily retain ownership and take responsibility for the care and maintenance of all trees on our land. We will use our best endeavours to identify trees which we are responsible for, ensuring they are safe and well maintained and do not endanger the safety of people or cause damage to homes or property. However, we may introduce a service charge, as per the details in section 7.2.

Have a planned maintenance schedule on any tree situated on our communal land and those reported by customers within the boundary of our homes. Make sure all trees on our land enhance the quality of life, the environment of social housing, providing colour, contrast, and diversity to the surroundings.

Notify customers in advance if we are planning to undertake tree inspections or works that require access to their homes including any adjoining properties. Following the inspection, we will notify customers of the outcome and detail any works required and timescales to undertake such works.

Guidance

For urgent tree works or ad-hoc inspections where the tree poses a risk to the property's residents, we will attend within 24 hours to carry out any necessary tree safety works.

If a customer wishes to undertake work to a tree or plant a tree in their garden, permission must be obtained, and we will provide the necessary advice and guidance prior to any works and check any TPO/Conservation details and if required are approved.

Where works are undertaken to a tree which is located on land that forms part of a leasehold agreement, the leaseholder will be consulted and will be charged according to the terms of their lease.

Instances will occur where a tree, on land owned or managed by us, is found to be affecting our property or our customers. Any impact on either will be considered when undertaking the risk assessment and inspection prior to ordering any works.

Appendix 1 provides details of the circumstances for when we will not undertake tree maintenance and other relevant information.

Making sure we do what we say

We will hold a register of communal trees and those reported to us that are in the boundary of homes owned by us. We will ensure this is maintained detailing dates surveys and inspections that have been and are due to be carried out.

Other things to bear in mind

This policy also links to our Neighbourhood Management, ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour), Alterations and Permission and the Aids and Adaptions Policies.

We will look to recover the costs of managing this service by the introduction of a service charge where it meets the guidance for such charges.

We will look at this again

In three years' time unless anything changes.

Appendix 1

Tree Management - We undertake scheduled surveys of our communal tree stock and those homes where customers have reported a tree in the boundary of their home. This allows us to plan a maintenance schedule based on recommendations and priorities.

Safety - Where there is a clear and foreseeable risk to the safety of residents, visitors or to the property that is related to the condition of the tree, action will be taken to minimise the risk. Once a tree is reported, we will inspect it as soon as possible, make a decision if any work is required and how quickly this work needs to be carried out.

Cutting down trees - Will only fell a tree if it is deemed necessary or for business reasons and will not fell trees while only considering a customer's personal needs and reasoning. We will always try to keep trees, wherever possible.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO's) and Conservation Areas - TPO's enable Local Authorities to protect important trees. They can be placed on any tree, group of trees or woodland that has significant communal value. Any work on trees that have TPO's, including felling must have a TPO application, Arboriculture Report and any other relevant documentation submitted to Planning and Regeneration at Local Councils which will be granted or refused. The process takes approximately eight weeks, following submission.

We do not undertake works to trees, either communal or in customer gardens, where the tree is causing a nuisance in relation to:

- ◆ Blocking out sunlight
- ◆ Size - we will not prune or fell a managed tree because it is "too big" or "too tall." A tree is not dangerous just because it may be considered too big for its surroundings. We will however consider the trees species and its locations as a factor in felling the identified tree.
- ◆ Dropping leaves in gardens
- ◆ Telephone or other utility cables.
- ◆ Sap falling onto paths or cars
- ◆ Overhanging into gardens
- ◆ Affecting TV reception
- ◆ Fruit falling from tree

The main pieces of legislation and regulation relevant to this policy include:

- ◆ Environmental Protection Act 1990
- ◆ Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981; 1985; 1991
- ◆ Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999
- ◆ Forestry Act 1967
- ◆ Health and Safety at Work, Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
- ◆ Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003: Part 8 2005.



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