

STREET TREE MAINTENANCE POLICY STATEMENT

Street tree maintenance includes the inspection, pruning, removal and replacement of trees.

Pruning

Pruning is carried out to in accordance with good arboricultural practice to:

1. alleviate, in as far as it is practical any loss of daylight to dwellings and associated problems.
2. achieve sufficient height on the carriageway side to allow statutory vehicle height.
3. reduce, where possible, shadow caused by trees obscuring street lighting
4. keep the trees in a safe and healthy condition.
5. enable the tree to grow into the desired shape and form.
6. reduce the risk of tree related subsidence damage to buildings by limiting the tree's foliage area and subsequent water demand.

All street trees are subject to a planned management programme and are inspected and/or maintained at least once every 3½ years. The larger growing trees, such as London planes and Limes, in close vicinity of houses are pruned to control their size and growth on a three yearly cycle. Other street trees are pruned as necessary on instruction by the Arboricultural Officer.

Removal Policy

Street trees should only be removed for the following reasons:

1. If the tree is dead, dying, diseased, dangerous or interferes with the safe use of the public highway.
2. As a result of an approved highway improvement scheme.
3. As a result of an insurance claim where evidence has been presented implicating the tree and no other practical steps are available to resolve the problems.

STREET TREE PLANTING POLICY STATEMENT.

The Council recognises the value of street trees in the urban environment and is committed to a programme of planting to provide trees for the future. Trees should be planted wherever possible in accordance with the criteria and guidelines listed below.

Planting Location

The following criteria are used to determine planting locations in streets.

Trees should normally be located:

1. So that they do not unduly obstruct the footpath or pavement, normally the footpath should be at least 1.8 metres wide.
2. Along the line of party walls so that they don't stand directly before windows or gates.
3. So that they are not less than 8 metres apart along the street.
4. So that they do not obstruct or interfere with from street lights, road signs and other equipment, such as "pay & display" machines, cycle stands and bus shelters.
5. So that they do not foul or damage overhead cables or underground services or structures.
6. So that they do not obstruct sight-lines for road users at junctions, pedestrian crossings and traffic light.
7. So that they do not obstruct vehicle entrances, crossovers and garages

Policy on Species

Generally, it is considered that trees should be of suitable size and species and appropriate to the street scene and site conditions.

Borough it is not practical to give a list of 'suitable' species. Some species may well be appropriate for one site but not another. However certain factors should be taken into consideration which may well limit the choice of species on any given site.

These include:

1. Trees should be of such size that they do not cause undue light restriction, encroachment or subsidence problems.
2. Trees with excessively large, sticky or prolific fruits should be avoided wherever they are likely to cause a nuisance.

3. Trees with poisonous fruits, bark or wood should be avoided.
4. Hazardous trees, e.g. trees with large spines on the trunk, or which are known to shed branches easily should be avoided.

Residents often express specific preferences for species and their views will always be considered, provided they meet with the above requirements. However, the final choice of species is at the direction of the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Arboricultural Officer.

Consultation

The majority of residents welcome trees, shown by the large number of planting requests received annually. However opposition is sometimes experienced from certain individuals who are for various reasons opposed to trees in the vicinity of their property. All new planting schemes should involve prior consultation with local residents, businesses and other relevant stakeholders.

Planting Priorities.

Except where monies are allocated for specific projects, resources will normally be allocated in the order set-out below:

1. Replacement of dead trees and existing tree stock.
2. Requests from residents; Individual requests will be prioritised taking into account the number of trees already in the street, including those in front gardens and land adjacent to the highway. Typically the fewer trees visible from the highway the higher priority the street would have for planting.
3. Streets without trees. New planting schemes will be prioritised according to the guidelines set out above and the relative amenity importance of each street.