

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

2023



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Forward

The purpose of this document is to set out Trafford Council's management policy for trees growing on Council-owned land and private property. The Tree Management Policy 2023 has been updated to reflect best practice that have been incorporated into current working practices. The policy also reflects the climate and environmental challenges that Trafford now encounters and how we must go about ensuring that trees continue to contribute to the Council's overall corporate aims which is to make Trafford a place with a focus on better health, better jobs and a greener future.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Trees help create a green environment and the presence of trees in Trafford makes it feel more natural, improving its visual and physical quality. Although tree population numbers are a useful measure of the tree cover within any area, it is the healthy leaf area which delivers a tree's benefits. For this reason, it is also important to remember that there is a 20-to-100-year lag between planting a tree and the delivery of its full range of benefits making planning and maintenance of trees even more important.
- 1.2 Trees also assist in mitigating against climate change in many ways including removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, encouraging walking, and cycling through the creation of more attractive routes and providing shade in hot weather. Many other benefits of trees include sequestering and storing carbon and form a vital role for habitats and biodiversity to thrive.
- 1.3 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan: 'Our Green Future' introduced plans and supporting investment for the creation of a Northern Forest, recognising that planting more trees provides not just new habitats for wildlife – it also helps reduce carbon dioxide levels and can reduce flood risk.
- 1.4 These challenges are set within the context of a vision for Greater Manchester to be a clean, carbon neutral, climate resilient city region. Greater Manchester's Tree and Woodland Strategy 'All Our Trees' provides an overarching framework of strategic objectives and principles to be reflected in the local plans, tree policies and strategies of GM local authorities including Trafford.
- 1.5 Trafford's Tree Management Policy is therefore closely aligned with the draft environmental policies of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – GM's plan for homes, jobs and the environment up to 2037.
- 1.6 During 2018, City of Trees, a key partner for Trafford Council, undertook the largest 'i-Trees Eco' survey to date, surveying trees across GM in random plots (200 per local authority area) in order to provide the evidence, base for 'All Our Trees'.
- 1.7 The i-Trees survey for Trafford involved measurements from more than 31,000 trees relating to the species, height and diameter of the trunk and also tree condition. In addition, records were added to allow for trees in groups and avenues to build up a picture of the structure and composition of Trafford's urban forest. The survey revealed that Trafford has an estimated 31,389 trees on or near the highway, which benefit more than 226,600 people and which, in addition:
 - Cover an area equivalent to 175.8ha with a total leaf area of 874.1ha
 - Intercept around 11,607 cubic metres of rainwater every year, equivalent to an estimated £17,600 in avoided stormwater treatment costs
 - Filter an estimated 7.9 tonnes of airborne pollutants each year, worth more than £135,000 in avoided social damage costs
 - Remove an estimated 263 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year, estimated to be worth over £62,600
 - Store 11,908 tonnes of carbon worth over £2.8million
- 1.8 With this context in mind it is therefore important to plan and have an agreed Tree Management Policy in place that manages and maintains both Trafford's existing tree stock and that of the future.

2.0 THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES

- 2.1 Trees play an especially important role in enhancing our quality of life in the urban environment. They screen unsightly structures and activities, give privacy and soften the hard lines of buildings. Trees also bring colour and contrasts into the urban environment.
- 2.2 Not only do trees have a visual quality, but they also enhance the environment in less obvious ways. It is recognised globally that trees not only help with flood prevention but, they improve air quality by acting as natural air filters removing dust, smoke and fumes from the atmosphere by trapping them on their leaves, branches and trunks.
- 2.3 Trees are also an effective sound barrier and can limit noise pollution with research also showing that trees also help to reduce the stress of modern life.
- 2.4 Trees in themselves benefit the environment and the landscape, but they are also an integral part of the ecosystem, providing benefits to wildlife and biodiversity. Trees, especially older or veteran trees and those in groups or woodlands, provide habitats for native ground flora and fauna.
- 2.5 Trafford is a green and leafy suburb, with trees forming an integral part of that identity. Whether the trees are privately owned or Council-owned it is important that these trees are looked after and protected to maintain Trafford's image, whilst trying to embrace a culture of having the 'right trees in the right place'.

3.0 TRAFFORD COUNCIL TREES

There are five main categories that make up the Council's tree population: -

- 3.1 **Highway Trees:** These are the trees planted in pavements or road verges along the Borough's streets. These trees are some of our most important trees due to their daily interactions with the public and require a particular approach to management to ensure they remain healthy and continue to exist alongside the highway and private properties without incident, as far as we reasonably can.
- 3.2 **Woodlands:** The structural diversity of established woodlands makes them important wildlife habitats. Over half of Trafford's 45 sites of Biological Importance are or contain woodland. Six of these woodlands are Ancient Woodlands – in existence since before 1600 – and are irreplaceable as reservoirs for rare plants and animals. The value of Ancient Woodland for nature conservation and as an historic resource that cannot be underestimated. They also have potential as the nuclei around which Trafford's woodland resource can expand upon.
- 3.3 **Plantation Woodlands:** The Council owns approximately forty hectare of woodland which was planted mainly in the 1970's and 1980's. Much of this plantation is in fragmented blocks of mixed species planting. Most of these sites have been historically managed by the Mersey Valley / Bollin Valley Rangers, however the Tree Unit now manage all the Mersey Valley sites.
- 3.4 **Trees in parks and on open spaces land:** These trees are amongst the most significant trees in Trafford and have a profound effect on the appearance of their respective sites. These urban tree trees improve the leisure experience of users in the parks and open spaces as well as contributing significantly to the visual amenity for Trafford's residents and visitors alike.

- 3.5 **Trees located on Council-owned managed sites:** These trees are on Council-owned land which where individual departments are the tree owners. These sites include (but are not restricted) to, schools, social service sites, asset management sites, allotments, and cemeteries.
- 3.6 **Privately Owned Trees:** These trees that are growing on land that is no managed by Trafford Council. Examples of these private tree's groups include (but are not restricted to); privately owned residential trees, privately owned trees on commercial sites and trees growing on National Trust land.

4.0 COUNCIL OWNED TREE MANAGEMENT

4.1 Tree Management – Highway Trees

- 4.1.1 Trafford Council has implemented a 3 yearly, safety inspection programme for the trees located along the highways of Trafford. All of the highway trees in Trafford have been grouped in to 12 phases of inspection, with 4 phases of trees being inspected every financial year by qualified Tree Officers.
- 4.1.2 All Tree Officers working at Trafford are expected to be suitably qualified and trained in accordance with arboriculture standards and have experience in undertaking tree inspections.
- 4.1.3 Each highway tree will typically receive a safety inspection every three years but if the condition or position of the tree is such that the inspector feels more frequent inspections are needed, then, that tree may be adjusted to more regular inspection such as annual or bi-annual – depending on the recommendation.
- 4.1.4 After each inspection of the tree, maintenance works may or may not be allocated to the tree depending on whether they are required. The rationale for undertaking maintenance work on highway trees, has its foundations with the Highways Act 1980. Under the act, Local Authorities are obliged to make sure that the highway is free from obstruction and is safe. To that end, highway trees are pruned to set heights over roads and footpaths, dead / diseased wood is removed from trees, branches are pruned away from street furniture and general pruning works are undertaken where needed to maintain a tree's shape.
- 4.1.5 Many of our highway trees, whilst large in stature, have received a good level of historical maintenance work, where side branches have been removed as the trees have grown, creating trees that have grown in a very upright fashion. This means that some of our highway trees require very little in the way of maintenance because they are already high enough over the highway and away from street furniture. We recognise that we cannot fight nature and stop a tree from growing, but ongoing implementation of the safety inspection programme will ensure the highway remains free from obstruction.
- 4.1.6 All information noted during the safety inspections are recorded on hand-held devices by the inspectors and uploaded to the Council's tree database to create a record specific to that inspection.

4.2 Tree Management – Parks and Open Space

- 4.2.1 All trees in parks and on open space land are inspected every 5 years with trees along heavily used areas, such as play areas being inspected every two years.

- 4.2.2 Trees identified as requiring more frequent inspections, either due to their health or location, will be highlighted for more frequent inspections.
- 4.2.3 Due to the vast numbers of trees in parks and on open space land, the Council are only able to undertake works to trees that are considered to be dead, dying, or dangerous.
- 4.2.4 Following the survey of a park or an area of open space, all of that information is uploaded from hand-held devices into the Council's database. From here a package of work can be created to undertake any identified works and tendered out and shortly afterwards to be completed by contractors.

4.3 Tree Management – Woodlands and Plantation Woodlands

- 4.3.1 Woodlands by their very nature are often more restricted in terms of access. The footpaths generally denote areas where people would be likely to walk as opposed to the wilder areas that are generally very dense in flora.
- 4.3.2 Woodlands provide settings for important trees such as veteran trees and trees that have died naturally and are left as standing dead trees. Veteran trees and dead trees create an important ecosystem, so it is important to strike the balance of risk vs the benefits.
- 4.3.3 Woodlands are inspected every 5 years and are limited to visual inspections along the footpaths to identify any potential risk to the public.

4.4 Trees Located in Council-Owned Management Sites

- 4.4.1 These trees can be in Schools, on Asset Management Sites (leased or otherwise) Allotments, Cemeteries, Social Service sites and other independently managed sites.
- 4.4.2 The budget holder within the Council for each respective site is classed as the 'Tree Owner' and as such has a duty of care to manage any trees within their site.
- 4.4.3 These trees may be managed in different ways by each respective department, dependant on the access to the site and resources. The Tree Unit will often undertake inspections and surveys on behalf of the relevant managers and in some cases have service level agreements to manage the trees on those sites.

5.0 ASSOCIATED TREE PROBLEMS

5.1 Carriageway Obstruction due to trees

- 5.1.1 A Council is obliged to ensure that vegetation is managed to a safe and suitable height over the carriageway to ensure that vehicles do not come in to contact with the foliage / branches.
- 5.1.2 If the tree is privately owned, then it is the landowner's responsibility to ensure that the foliage is pruned to a suitable height – under the Highways Act (1980). If this work has not been carried out following a formal request by the Council, then the Council will use their available powers to try and resolve the issue and may charge the owner accordingly.

5.2 Installation of a Dropped Kerb

- 5.2.1 The request will initially come from the Highways Team in One Trafford who deal with all vehicle crossing requests.
- 5.2.2 The site will be inspected by an Officer and if the tree is a tree that has been identified for removal on a Tree Replacement Programme or the tree is unsuitable for long-term retention in its current position, then the costs for removing and replacing that tree will be given to the Highways Team and added to the total cost for installing the dropped kerb. If the benefits of retaining the tree outweigh the application to drop the kerb, then the tree will be retained.

5.3 Pavement Obstruction

- 5.3.1 We want to encourage sustainable modes of transport wherever possible, so where reasonably practical we aim to maintain a minimum 2.5m height clearance over a footpath associated with a street, road, or highway. This helps our streets to be accessible for pedestrians and cyclists alike.
- 5.3.2 Any work necessary to prevent an obstruction to the width of a footpath associated with the highway due to the presence of a Council-owned tree is considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.3.3 If a privately-owned tree's branches or an unclipped hedge is causing an obstruction, it is the landowner's responsibility to deal with this issue, as stated under the Highways Act (1980). If we are made aware that a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction, the Council will ask them to deal with the matter. If it is necessary for the Council to undertake the work, the owner will be charged accordingly for the Council's costs.

5.4 Road Sight Lines

- 5.4.1 To ensure the safety of our commuters we will undertake work to a Council-owned tree to maintain clear sight lines (where feasible) at junctions and access points in accordance with the national standards for visibility. These standards vary depending on the class of the road and the speed limit in force.
- 5.4.2 If a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction, it is the landowner's responsibility to deal with this issue, as stated under the Highways Act (1980). If this work is not undertaken, the Council will investigate how to ensure the issue is resolved and will charge the owner accordingly.
- 5.4.3 The shoots that grow from the base of some of the trees, like Lime trees for example, are called epicormic growth. This is growth is removed from Council-owned trees on an annual basis up to a height of 2.5m.

5.5 Street Lighting Obstruction

- 5.5.1 We aim for all our streetlights to be adequately lit, contributing to an increased perception of safety for pedestrians when travelling at night.

- 5.5.2 When the Council installs new street lighting, due consideration is given to the impact this will have on existing trees, avoiding any conflict where possible. Similarly, when new trees are planted, they are positioned so that future problems do not occur.
- 5.5.3 As a highway authority, Trafford Council have powers under the Highways Act (1980) section 154 to ensure that foliage doesn't overhang the highway so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of vehicles or the light from a public lamp. If a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction, it is the landowner's responsibility to deal with this issue, as stated under the Highways Act (1980). If this work is not undertaken, the Council will ensure the issue is resolved and may charge the owner accordingly.

5.6 Drains

- 5.6.1 If a sewer or drainpipe is in good condition and has been properly constructed, then it is extremely unlikely and unusual for tree roots to initiate damage to drains. However, a previously damaged drain will leak moisture into the soil and if there are any trees or shrubs in the vicinity, their roots will exploit the moisture gradient and follow it to the source. The roots will penetrate via the fault and finding ideal moisture and nutrient conditions will proliferate within the pipe compounding any damage. The presence of tree roots within the drains, therefore, is probably due to a long-standing fault in the system and cannot be considered as evidence of damage to the pipework by roots.
- 5.6.2 Although the removal of a tree may appear an obvious treatment, as previously mentioned, the roots of other trees or shrubs will also take advantage of the locally moist conditions and will produce further blockages. Similarly, a programme of mechanical or chemical root pruning will not affect a long-term solution because the roots will re-grow.
- 5.6.3 It should be feasible for the damaged pipes to be excavated and repaired, thus removing the locally moist conditions arising from the defect within the pipe, preventing any tree roots in the location from penetrating the drains.
- 5.6.4 If you are concerned about the condition of your drains, we advise you to contact your water and sewage company. You may also need to advise your insurance provider.

5.7 Overhead Telephone Lines

- 5.7.1 Large trees in the city provide many benefits for the surroundings, such as reducing exposure to harmful UV rays, alleviating flood risk and storing carbon. Therefore, we will not normally prune or fell a Council-owned tree to remove or reduce interference from telephone lines.
- 5.7.2 It is common for phone wires to be threaded through a tree's canopy (private and Council-owned) and uncommon for the wires to be damaged by this. If you are concerned about this issue, your telephone service provider may be able to suggest an alternative cable-related option. Please note that the external overhead phone line will usually be owned by BT Open Reach and they will usually conduct any necessary repairs.

5.8 Trip Hazards

- 5.8.1 Sometimes the roots of large, well-established trees contribute to making the pavement uneven. The benefits that large trees provide are considerable, so appropriate action will be considered. The Arboricultural Officer will liaise with One

Trafford Highways Department to establish an appropriate course of Action. There are several ways this problem can be resolved, such as;

- Building up the pavement and surrounding areas
- Relaying the surface of the pavement to mitigate the unevenness
- Root pruning to allow the pavement to be adequately repaired – assuming the root-pruning will not have an adverse effect on the tree.
- Installing a root barrier or constructing a build-out around a high-value tree
- Removal of the tree as a last resort once other alternative solutions have been exhausted.
- Add the tree / road for attention as part of a tree removal and replacement scheme which is designed to phase out trees that have been highlighted as unsuitable for long-term retention.

5.9 Tree-related Subsidence Property Damage

- 5.9.1 If you are concerned that your property has suffered subsidence and that a Council-owned tree has played a role in that damage, then we would advise you to discuss this with your property insurer to agree an appropriate course of action.
- 5.9.2 Should you, or those acting on your behalf wish to make a claim for damages or make formal representation of your concern about future damage, alleging the Council-owned tree is causing (or may cause) to your property, we would again advise that you contact your property insurer.

5.10 Bird Droppings

- 5.10.1 The presence of birds is a vital part of the biodiversity within the city. All wild birds' species, their eggs and nests are protected by law (wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). When managing trees, we would always try to harm nesting birds or their nests.
- 5.10.2 Birds are an indicator of established trees with a healthy canopy providing the full range of benefits described earlier in the document. Bird droppings can be annoying, but they cannot be easily prevented, and pruning will make little difference to the problem. Although it may look unsightly, it would be very rare for bird droppings to damage the paintwork of cars.
- 5.10.3 Undertaking pruning or felling to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees would not be undertaken outside of the Council's cyclical pruning and maintenance programme.

5.11 Blossom

- 5.11.1 As the season change and spring approaches, many trees flower and blossom which is a natural occurrence and part of a tree's life cycle. Pruning Council-owned trees would have no impact on the amount of blossom they shed; therefore, no action is required to be taken. Roads, streets and highways are swept as part of regular cleaning cycles.

5.12 Crime and antisocial behaviour

- 5.12.1 Studies show that trees can act to reinforce perceptions of safety in a space and leafy neighbourhoods are often seen as desirable. However, if areas become neglected and

overgrown, they can have the opposite effect, encouraging criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. The Council's ground maintenance plans attempt to combat this, keeping places well-maintained and helping to increase a sense of ownership, pride and security in the local neighbourhood.

- 5.12.2 If a tree is associated with criminal activity and / or antisocial behaviour, steps to reduce the problem will normally require the co-ordination of a number of different agencies. The act of pruning or felling trees to remedy these problems is not the solution. The situation may require a more considered approach to tackle the underlying issues that have caused the problem. Therefore, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.13 Fruit, Berries, Seeds and Nuts

- 5.13.1 Many of the Council's trees bear fruit, berries, seeds or nuts throughout the year, providing a source of free food for people and wildlife alike. These resources, as well as the many benefits trees already provide, make these trees extremely valuable assets. However, it is proven that this asset is contributing negatively to an area, by encouraging antisocial behaviour, then action can be taken to deal with these issues.

- 5.13.2 If a significant anti-social behaviour problem persists then the Council may consider removal and replacement with an alternative species. Other than this, the value of these trees is greater than their perceived nuisance and no pruning will be undertaken outside of the Council's safety inspection programme.

5.14 High Hedges

A link for information on the Council's procedure for high hedges can be found [here](#).

5.15 Leaves

- 5.15.1 The loss of a tree's leaves in Autumn is part of the natural cycle, with the transitioning of colours providing visual amenity for residents and passers-by. In anticipation of this, the Council aims to dispatch additional services for street cleaning during the autumn months. No pruning or felling will be undertaken to alleviate the amount of leaf fall on a property. The maintenance of a property's gutters is the sole responsibility of the landowner. Residents may find that fitting a gutter guard to regularly blocked gutters provides a low-maintenance solution.

- 5.15.2 Pruning Council-owned trees would have no impact on the number of leaves that are shed in the autumn; therefore, no action is required to be taken. Roads, streets and highways are swept as part of regular cleaning cycles.

5.16 Trees Blocking Light

- 5.16.1 Living close to trees provides many health benefits such as filtering pollution, reducing flood risk, and providing protection against harmful UV rays. Therefore, we do not prune outside of our maintenance programme or remove a council-owned tree to improve natural light into a property, including solar panels.

- 5.16.2 If natural light is being blocked by a high hedge then action may be taken to reduce this problem under the High Hedges Act – information of which can be found [here](#).

5.17 Personal Medical Complaint

5.17.1 There is a wealth of evidence that links the benefits trees provide to the improvement of physical and mental health and well-being; this includes physical improvement of air quality, reducing the likelihood of contracting bronchial conditions such as asthma, and the intrinsic value trees add to a neighbourhood. With this in mind, we will not undertake pruning or felling of a Council-owned tree where a request has been made to do so, on the grounds of a personal medical condition. Our tree population is a valuable asset in ensuring the good health of all residents.

5.18 Pollen

5.18.1 Pollination is a natural part of the life cycle of trees and is absolutely essential for the reproduction of the Borough's fruit-bearing trees. Pollen is naturally found in the atmosphere and therefore the pruning or felling of individual trees will not be an appropriate remedy to the complaint of a tree or trees creating excessive hay fever-type symptoms. As this document has discussed already, the benefits urban trees bring to the improvement of air quality far outweigh the negatives and it is for these reasons we do not undertake pruning or felling to remove or reduce the release of pollen.

5.19 Poisonous Berries

5.19.1 We prioritise the health and well-being of all our Borough's residents and that is why we take the potential exposure to poisonous foliage or fruit seriously. If ingested, the berries and fruits of some trees – such as yew trees – can be extremely harmful and any case deemed to be a threat to our residents will be investigated and the appropriate action taken.

5.20 Sap or Honeydew

5.20.1 Sap or honeydew is caused by greenfly feeding on the tree's leaves which then excrete a sugary sap. Some trees, such as Lime trees are more prone to attack by greenfly, which may be more common following a mild winter. Sap or Honeydew is a seasonal and natural occurrence; pruning offers only a temporary and limited relief and may increase greenfly colonisation in the future. The sap or honeydew only lasts for a few weeks and the worst is over by the end of spring.

5.20.2 We do not prune outside if the inspection and maintenance programme or fell trees due to issues with sap or honeydew.

5.20.3 When new trees are planted, we try to choose trees that are less susceptible to this problem.

5.20.4 Where honeydew affects cars, warm soapy water will remove the substance, particularly if you wash the car as soon as possible. The honeydew is basically a weak solution of natural sugars and contains no corrosive elements likely to damage paintwork.

5.20.5 Pruning Council-owned trees would have no impact on the number of leaves that are shed in the autumn; therefore, no action is required to be taken. Roads, streets and highways are swept as part of regular cleaning cycles.

5.21 Tree Next to a Building Site

5.21.1 If a tree is located next to a proposed building site, there is no requirement from the Council to prune or fell it, regardless of whether planning consent has been approved. Development for housing or business can benefit from proximity to trees, which provide many benefits, such as filtering pollution, reducing flood risk, providing protection against harmful UV rays, improving an area's attractiveness and increasing property values.

5.22 Tree Touching a Building

5.22.1 Living or working close to trees provides many health benefits: filtering air pollution, reducing flood risk, cooling, providing protection against harmful UV rays and improving the image and desirability of the space.

5.22.2 If a Council-owned tree is encroaching on a building, action may be taken to resolve the issue if the tree is not due for attention as part of the Council's safety inspection programme within that financial year. This will usually involve the reduction of the length of the lateral branches to give clearance to the building. However, in exceptional circumstances it may sometimes be more appropriate to remove the tree; this would only occur when the wrong species has been chosen for a confined site.

5.22.3 If the offending tree is growing on private land, then this is regarded as a civil matter and the Council has no powers to intervene. You will need to come to an agreement with your neighbour and perhaps agree to split the costs of any tree work.

5.23 Tree Overhanging Property

5.23.1 We do not undertake pruning or felling work to Council-owned trees on highways to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches, provided they pose no risks to residents.

5.23.2 Under common law, whether the tree is private or Council-owned, a neighbour can cut back branches to their boundary line to abate a 'nuisance', but advice should be taken from a professional and competent person to ensure that the resulting pruning works do not cause the tree to become unstable or ultimately die.

5.24 Tree Size

5.24.1 The bigger the tree the more benefits it provides for its surroundings. However, it is important to note that sometimes, particular types of trees are better suited to a space than others, which is why we employ the Right Tree in The Right place method when planting new trees across the Borough. Whether an individual tree is considered too big or too small is subjective and may not take in to account the relative benefits that the tree is providing. Many residents love large trees that may have become a landmark for their entire area. Ultimately, the Borough's trees belong to and are for the benefit for all the citizens of Trafford. For our existing tree stock, no work will be undertaken to either prune outside of the Council's maintenance programme or fell based on size alone.

5.25 Vandalism

5.25.1 In accordance with our Right Tree, Right Place Policy, we generally plant larger trees, which are more resilient and less susceptible to vandalism. Tree guards are used to offer further protection until the tree is established, usually 3-5 years after planting. By

coordinating with our partner organisations, we actively promote tree-planting across the Borough and get behind community-led initiatives.

- 5.25.2 We encourage residents to get involved in caring for trees that are planted in their neighbourhood. This often increases a sense of community ownership and pride, which helps to reduce the instances of vandalism. We also encourage our residents to report any incidents of vandalism so that appropriate legal action can be taken where necessary.

5.26 Right to a View

- 5.26.1 In terms of UK law there is no legal right to a 'view', so any request to remove or prune a Council-owned tree to improve the view from a private property would not usually be considered. Living close to trees provides many benefits; filtering air pollution, reducing flood risk, providing protection against harmful UV rays, and improving the overall image and desirability of the space.

5.27 Wild Animals, Insects and pests

- 5.27.1 A healthy tree canopy provides a range of social, economic and environmental benefits for the surrounding area. Trees improve biodiversity, acting as havens where nature can seek refuge and flourish in otherwise unfavourable urban habitats. In the case of bees, it is important to remember that they are a protected species, expert advice should be sought on how best to deal with them. Beekeepers will often help to remove a swarm.

5.28 Dispute over trees between neighbours

- 5.28.1 If you have good reason to think a neighbouring tree poses an imminent risk, perhaps due to fungal decay or storm damage, you can ask the Council to inspect the tree to determine if the situation is a matter of urgency.
- 5.28.2 The Council has devolved powers under the Highways Act (1980) and the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act (1974) to intervene if a tree poses an imminent danger.
- 5.28.3 Please note that Councils have no powers to intervene or mediate in disputes between neighbours about trees growing on their boundaries. We will not become involved unless there is imminent danger and the neighbour who owns the tree cannot or will not reduce the danger. If we have to intervene on safety grounds, we will always seek to recover our costs from the tree's owners.
- 5.28.4 The Council has no authority to intervene in a dispute between neighbours regarding trees growing in a neighbour's garden. However, if the problem is due to a high hedge, information can be found [here](#) on the Planning web page.

6.0 ENQUIRIES AND RESPONSES

6.1 Responses to public enquiries

The responses to the various enquiries regarding trees, depends very much on the urgency of the response required. The below table is designed to act as a guide on the given enquiry, but these timescales could also be subject to review or change depending on circumstances:

Enquiry Type	Response Time
Emergency – Tree or part of a tree in danger of failing or has already failed.	A tree officer will be sent to inspect the site within 2 hours to assess.
Non-emergency safety issue – concern that a tree may pose a danger	A tree officer will be sent to assess the potential risk within 2 working days of receiving the enquiry.
Enquiry not requiring an inspection – information required.	We will aim to provide information on Council policy / procedures within 12 working days from receiving the enquiry.
Concerns about Damage to property – resident feels the tree has caused / is causing damage to property.	Form to be supplied to the customer to provide details of concerns to the Council's Insurance team within 28 working days from receiving the enquiry.
Insurance Report required – Report is required by the Council's Insurers to progress an insurance claim.	Report to be provided for the Council's Insurance team within 28 working days of having received the request.
General enquiry – general tree enquiry / pruning request complaint in relation to naturally occurring phenomena – blocked light, falling leaves etc	A general enquiry asking for a tree to be inspected regarding an issue in relation to natural phenomena – i.e., tree is blocking light, tree requires pruning, trees is dropping leaves will be inspected and replied to within 60 working days from having received of receiving the enquiry.

7.0 REMOVAL OF TREES

- 7.1 Mature trees are a valuable part of the urban landscape. Once they are removed it can take decades before another tree can reach a similar size. Also, mature trees are an important habitat and valuable to conservation. A single tree can be the home to many different species including insects, birds, fungi, mosses and lichens. An English Oak has around 400 species of insect associated with it. When a mature tree is felled, a valuable habitat is lost. The tree needs to be at least 80 years old before it reaches its potential for Biodiversity.
- 7.2 The larger a tree, the greater its contribution to improving air quality by, for example, removing dust from the air and producing oxygen. Mature trees are local landmarks and may have historical significance. They may be the last remnants of what was once open countryside or woodland which some of our older residents remember from their childhood.
- 7.3 Because of these special values, the removal of mature trees should be given careful consideration. These trees will take a lifetime to replace.
- 7.4 Dead, Dying and Dangerous Trees**

Trees identified as dead, dying or dangerous will be highlighted and removed. The timescales in which the tree will be removed, will be decided by the officer as to how urgent the removal is – often based on the observations of the death of the tree and the location of the tree.

7.5 Tree Removal and Replacement Programmes

- 7.5.1 Whilst Trafford is blessed with a mature urban tree population, it has long since been recognised that proactive management of these trees will help to create a safe and stable tree population to be enjoyed for generations to come.
- 7.5.2 Undertaking a tree-removal and replacement scheme is a nationally accepted method of managing avenues of trees and has been successfully implemented on many occasions both within the Borough and countrywide. The scheme is based on the premise that trees have a finite life expectancy, which is significantly reduced in residential areas due to the obvious constraints of the urban environment. The majority of the Borough's trees were planted around the same time, are subject to similar conditions, and are restricted in the main to a small number of species including London Plane, European Lime, Ash, Sycamore and Beech.
- 7.5.3 The even age distribution of the Borough's tree stock would suggest that most of the trees will reach maturity and old age at around the same time with the resulting considerations of public safety, financial burden, loss of amenity and environmental deficit should a large number of mature trees be removed in a short time frame. Such consequences would be unacceptable, and therefore, a strict retention only policy for the Borough's trees would in the long term be incorrect.
- 7.5.4 The long-term goal is for the Tree Unit to create a sustainable tree population, uneven in age distribution and diverse in species. This will ensure that the tree stock will be robust against outbreaks of disease with the environmental and aesthetic benefits retained.
- 7.5.5 The proposed schemes are a method of prioritising certain trees for removal replacing these with more suitable species, ensuring the retention of appropriate individual mature trees, keeping the tree lined aspect of the road and involving local residents in the long-term planning of their immediate environment.
- 7.5.6 Trafford has approximately 1500 mature trees located on the highway (approximately 60 roads) that have been highlighted as trees that are classed as 'unsuitable for long-term retention.
- 7.5.7 These include trees that have outgrown their locations and generally speaking have become unsuitable. In some instances, these trees are restricting the width of the public footway, are causing damage to adjacent properties, the trunks and / or limbs are creating an obstruction in the carriageway and therefore present a certain level of risk that needs to be managed.
- 7.5.8 The Council will write to residents immediately affected by the proposals to removal and replace trees to gain their thoughts on a proposed scheme. Once we have received all of the consultation returns, we assess all of the feedback, and we will only progress if the significant majority of residents are in favour.
- 7.5.9 The removal of trees can be subjective, and we cannot expect that everybody is going to be entirely happy in every situation. The process is designed to allow people to give us feedback and as far as we can, tailor the scheme to suit as many people as possible.
- 7.5.10 Trafford Council has a good track record of delivering these schemes with an excellent response rate on consultations, therefore leading to a positive outcome.

7.6 Self-Funding Tree Removal and Replacement

7.6.1 There are trees along roads that have been highlighted for attention as part of tree-removal and replacement programmes. Tight resources mean that the Council cannot always implement a scheme along a road as soon as it would like to.

In some circumstances, residents can bring forward the replacement of a tree outside their property by offering to cover the costs of the following: -

- Removal of the tree.
- The removal of the stump.
- The reinstatement of the immediate area around the stump back to grass / tarmac.
- The replacement planting of two extra heavy standard replacement trees.

7.6.2 The replacement of the tree can only proceed following approval from the Tree Unit and a consultation with immediate neighbours indicating that the significant majority of residents are in favour of the proposed removal and replacement taking place.

7.7 Trees Causing Damage to Property

7.7.1 Trees tend to cause concern where they are very close to buildings. A common enquiry about trees is when people are concerned that the roots are undermining their property. It is rare for the direct action of roots to damage a house. However, they may affect lighter structures like garden walls, flagged or tarmac drives.

7.7.2 Trees may cause more serious damage if they are growing on shrinkable clay. However, this type of clay is more uncommon here than in the south of the country. The effect is variable and dependent on the type of clay soil, species of tree, rainfall, and distance between the tree and the property. This is a complex relationship, and all cases will need to be investigated thoroughly to ensure that it is the tree, which is causing the problem and not some other factor.

7.8 Tree Removal and Replacement for Vehicle Crossings

7.8.1 When a resident wishes to open their driveway on to the road or increase the width of their access to their driveway from the road by dropping the kerb, on occasion a nearby tree may be in the way of that proposal or could certainly be affected by the adjacent works.

7.8.2 Where this is the case, our Tree Unit can offer advice on how to construct a crossing whilst retaining the tree. This may be in the form of remedial pruning work to the tree to mitigate any root damage, or potentially re-designing the crossing to accommodate the tree.

7.8.3 Where a tree is quite obviously directly in the way of a proposed application to drop the kerb for access to a driveway, and that tree is a tree that is suitable for long-term retention, then the Tree Unit may deny the request to remove the tree.

7.8.4 If the tree is quite obviously in the way of a proposed application to drop the kerb for access to a driveway, and that tree is displaying characteristics that would lead us to believe that the tree is unsuitable for long-term retention, then the Tree Unit will provide a price to remove the tree and re-plant two replacement saplings to be included in the bill payable by the applicant wishing to proceed with the crossing.

7.8.5 Examples of characteristics we may look for when deciding as to a tree's long-term suitability may include but are not limited to: -

- structural weaknesses
- tree health
- damage to adjacent property
- damage to the carriageway
- restriction of the footpath
- obstruction by limbs or the trunk in the highway

8.0 PRIVATE TREES

- 8.1 There are trees in the Borough that are not in our ownership that we have control over. This occurs in two instances, firstly where trees are protected and secondly, where trees are affected by planning applications.
- 8.2 Where trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area, prior consent from the Council is required under the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 before works can be carried out. Carrying out work without consent from the Council is a criminal offence. Further detail on the Council website can be found [here](#).
- 8.3 An application to work on trees must be made for working on TPO trees. The form can be filled out on the Planning Portal and a decision usually takes 8 weeks. The process can be tracked on our website using the reference number.
- 8.4 If works are to be undertaken to trees in a Conservation Area, we require 6 weeks written notice of the works. This can take the form of an application on the Planning Portal or via email. During this time, we consider whether the tree/s is/are worth of a TPO. Once the 6-week notification period has expired, the works may legally continue, even if you have not received a consent letter from the Council
- 8.5 Where a planning application is received, and trees are within influencing distance it is likely that we will ask for further Arboricultural information. On large sites with a large number of trees we may ask for an Arboricultural Impact Assessment compliant with BS5837:2012 'trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. On smaller domestic sites a full AIA might not be appropriate and in this instance, we would ask for a Tree Protection Plan that is still compliant with BS5827:2012.
- 8.6 Where there are disputes involving trees in private properties and the tree is not in an imminently dangerous condition, a Council cannot involve itself in what is essentially a private matter between two landowners.
- 8.7 In this situation you are strongly advised to consult a professional Arboricultural contractor or consultant on how best to cut back an encroaching tree from a neighbouring property. A link to approved contractors and consultants is provided by the Arboricultural Association [here](#).
- 8.8 It is important to discuss any concerns or intentions regarding a neighbouring tree with the landowner themselves. They may not be aware of the problems their tree is creating for adjacent neighbour's and could be willing to help find a solution with you.
- 8.9 The Arboricultural Association offer a useful summary [here](#) on how to approach a situation where a neighbouring tree has branches or roots that are encroaching on to your property.
- 8.10 Trees on privately owned land may also become dangerous. There is a duty of care to ensure that any situations brought to the Council's attention are remedied.

Usually, after negotiation with the owner this situation can be resolved. If this is not possible the Council has certain powers to ensure the tree is 'made safe'.

- 8.11 The council can use its powers where appropriate to make safe hazardous trees on private land that may pose an unreasonable risk to another privately-owned property, following the procedures outlined within the Miscellaneous Provisions act section 23/24 1979.
- 8.12 The Council can also use its powers in emergency situations to make safe trees that are imminently dangerous and use its powers where appropriate to make safe hazardous trees on private land, that may pose an unreasonable risk to the highway following the procedures outlined within the Highways Act 1980 under section 154 and 149.

9.0 TREE PLANTING

- 9.1 From time-to-time trees have to be felled and we understand that these trees need to be replaced, or the tree population will continue to decline.
- 9.2 It is important to ensure that for every tree removed, two are re-planted in the nearest suitable location from where the original tree was removed. This will increase the probability of one reaching maturity and if more than one survives, then tree population increases.
- 9.3 It is also important to be mindful that many replacement trees are much smaller in size as we understand better the interaction forest species trees have down narrow avenues with narrow footpaths. A smaller, more ornamental tree may be better suited to a narrow side street and a larger, forest species of tree may be better suited in a wider grass verge.
- 9.4 The size and scale of replacement planting should reflect both the trees removed and the situation. For example, in a large open space it may be more appropriate to plant 20 feathered trees rather than two larger standard size specimens. By contrast, if a specimen tree that was individually important in the landscape has been felled, replacement with a more established tree may be more appropriate.
- 9.5 Consideration of costs should also be made. Smaller trees are cheaper and usually establish better but have a less instant impact. As a rule, the larger a tree is, the more expensive it is to buy and plant but has the instant impact the public expects in many situations.
- 9.6 Trafford Council also recognise the need to diversify the types of tree genus we plant around the Borough. Certain diseases affect specific species of trees and therefore a diverse tree population with a staggered age range will create a robust tree population for generations to come.
- 9.7 Trafford Council will always endeavour to plant native trees wherever possible. Native trees are not always ideal candidates for planting down narrow streets; however, it may be more practical to plant native trees in wider verge areas and in parks to ensure that these trees continue to play an important role in the ecosystem for native flora and fauna.

10.0 TREE ADOPTION

- 10.1 For a number of years now, Trafford Council has successfully run a Tree Adoption Scheme. The Tree Adoption Scheme enables residents and any interested parties to pay for the planting of a tree or a number of trees in a given, suitable, location.
- 10.2 From adopting a tree to be planted outside your property, to adopting a number of trees to be planted in a park or an open space, the Tree Adoption Scheme gives people the opportunity to get involved with creating a robust tree population for the residents of Trafford.
- 10.3 Details on how you can get involved with Trafford Council's Tree Adoption Scheme can be found [here](#).