

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

AUGUST 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 and will be the key reference point for the management of Trafford's tree stock for the next 5years. 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 and to help contribute to the Climate Emergency declared by Trafford in November 2018.

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	The Importance of Trees.....	3
3.0	Trafford Council Trees.....	3
4.0	Council-Owned Tree Management.....	4
5.0	Associated Tree Problems.....	6
6.0	Enquiries and responses.....	15
7.0	Removal of Trees.....	16
8.0	Private Trees.....	19
9.0	Tree Planting.....	20
10.0	Tree Adoption.....	21
11.0	Looking After Trees.....	21

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 (25YEP): 'Our Green Future' now refreshed as the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23) introduces and outlines goals, objectives, 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 Places for Everyone – 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 significant 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 six main categories that make up the tree population across Trafford. Five of these categories are the responsibility of the Council to manage and maintain with private trees being the responsibility of the individual landowner: -

- 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 **Established 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 Team now manage all the Mersey Valley sites. Significant sites within Trafford that contain trees considered as being in woodland or in open spaces (not all in the control of Trafford) include Moss sites such as Carrington Moss, Turn Moss, Sale Water Park, Urmston Meadows and Dunham Massey National Trust site.

- 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 assessed as requiring more frequent inspections then, that tree may be adjusted to more regular inspection such as annual or bi-annual – depending on the outcome of an assessment and agreed 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.
- 4.1.6 It is recognised that we cannot fight nature and stop a tree from growing, but ongoing implementation of the tree safety inspection programme will ensure the highway remains free from obstruction. The increased frequency of inspection should allow more frequent pruning work to be identified should it be required.

- 4.1.7 To reinforce the tree safety inspection regime there are also inspections undertaken by highway safety inspectors as part of the Highways Act obligations. Any hazards and problems associated with the safe use of the highway in accordance with the Highway Safety Policy 2022 will be fed into the tree team to assess and determine the best course of action to deal with tree roots and any other associated obstructions. Highway adjustments are also undertaken as part of the highway safety inspection by the highway inspectors to mitigate any risks associated with tree roots lifting the footway causing trip hazards.
- 4.1.8 All information noted during the tree 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 in parks and open spaces 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 prioritises 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 – Established Woodlands and Plantation Woodlands

- 4.3.1 Woodlands by their very nature are often more restricted in terms of access. The footpaths 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 versus the benefits.
- 4.3.3 Woodlands are inspected every 5 years and are limited to visual inspections along the footpaths within and surrounding the woodlands to identify any potential risk to the public.

4.4 Trees Located in Council-Owned Management Sites

- 4.4.1 These trees can be located within Schools, on Estate Management Sites (leased or otherwise), Car Parks, Allotments, Cemeteries, Social Service sites and other independently managed sites but with land that is owned by the council.
- 4.4.2 These trees historically have been managed in diverse ways by each respective department as the trees have been seen as integral to the management and upkeep of those sites as a whole. Some council sites are fenced off and require approval for access due to the nature of those sites. Site managers particularly in schools and

leased out buildings can also independent inspections of such trees which is often the case with schools as they have become an academy.

- 4.4.2 The Council's Tree Team is commissioned and undertakes inspections and surveys on behalf of the individual departments and site managers and in some cases have service level agreements (SLA) to manage the trees on those sites.
- 4.4.3 It is recognised that there is a risk to the council by not having a recognised inspection regime for all of its tree stock on land other than highway and in parks and open spaces where there is more control and easier access to the site and the land. As part of this updated management policy all respective departments and site managers for council sites that contain trees will be required to have in place an SLA agreement with the Council's Tree Team to ensure trees are managed in a robust process in accordance with this management policy.

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 and or any branches. (This includes the annual removal of low growth known as epicormic growth which is removed on an annual basis)
- 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 and does not obstruct the free passage of vehicles in the carriageway– 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 for the work that is needed on those private trees to keep the public safe.

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, and the crossing installation cannot be approved.

5.3 Pavement Obstruction

- 5.3.1 We want to encourage sustainable modes of transport wherever possible, so where 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 There are many trees within footpaths that form part of the public highway that were planted when footway design standards and required widths were quite different from that required today. Some trees that were planted prior to the Highways Act 1980

therefore often in some older housing estates have now grown in stature would be classed as causing obstruction to modern day standards.

- 5.3.3 It is also recognised that the size of some of the older tree stock in some of our older housing estates and walking routes may in some instances be causing problems for prams, wheelchair users and modern-day mobility equipment.
- 5.3.4 It would be detrimental to the current highway tree stock and the benefits that they provide in terms of the climate and ecosystem if the council were to apply modern day footway width standards as a means to determine and remove trees to ensure free passage of modern-day society. Hence there is no minimum width standard that can be applied as causing an obstruction and stipulated in this policy in such areas.
- 5.3.5 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 would therefore have to be assessed and considered on a case-by-case basis. (or within the scope of our tree replacement schemes as detailed in section 7.7.)
- 5.3.6 Any trees planted in new developments or in older footways to be refurbished will be assessed and planted to the required minimum standard to ensure a minimum width of 1.2m is available within the footway. Where there are older trees in a proposed refurbishment then consultation with residents will be undertaken to determine the appropriate solution, but the council will always strive to provide the minimal widths were practical and possible as part of its footway maintenance programme in consultation with the tree team.
- 5.3.7 If a privately-owned tree's branches or an unclipped hedge is causing an obstruction in the footway, 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 to ask the landowner where the tree is located to deal with the matter. If it is necessary for the Council to undertake the work using powers under the Highways Act, 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, (upon notice) the Council will / (can) investigate how to ensure the issue is resolved and will / (may) charge the owner accordingly using the appropriate powers.
- 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 to ensure sight lines and clear visibility for road users are maintained.

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 and road users when travelling at night.

- 5.5.2 When the Council installs replacement street lighting, 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 It is again recognised that where there are larger mature trees in and around lamp columns particularly in older housing areas the larger trees can impact on the disbursement of light. This is more of an issue in the summer months when the deciduous tree stock is in full leaf. Combined with the presence of private trees in adjacent gardens this can have a further impact but is often again in the later hours of the summer evenings.
- 5.5.4 As with pavement obstruction the severe cutback of mature trees to improve lighting in some instances will have negative impacts on the tree and the climate benefits they provide to the environment. Any major pruning to mature trees in and around lamp columns will be assessed on a case-by-case basis but will always strive to provide the minimum lighting standards where there are lights in tree lined streets.
- 5.5.3 As a highway authority, Trafford Council have powers under the Highways Act (1980) section 154 to ensure that foliage does not 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 to lighting equipment, 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 using the relevant powers and may charge the owner accordingly.

5.6 Damage and Blockage to 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 the 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 of that damage, their roots will exploit the moisture gradient and follow it to the source. The roots will penetrate the drain via the fault and finding ideal moisture and nutrient conditions will proliferate within the pipe compounding any damage. The presence of tree roots within any drains, therefore, is due to a long-standing fault in the system and cannot be considered as evidence of damage to the pipework by adjacent council trees and their roots.
- 5.6.2 Although the removal of a tree may appear an obvious treatment in order to prevent future damage reoccurring, 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 and seek for the moisture once again.
- 5.6.3 It should be feasible for the damaged pipes to be exposed with the surrounding areas to the drains being excavated thus enabling the drain to be repaired. This will remove the locally moist conditions arising from the defect within the pipe, preventing any tree roots in the location from penetrating the drains in the future. This is the repair process that the council has to undertake when similar blockages occur on the highway causing gullies to back up thus allowing the tree to remain in place and flourish.
- 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 any environment 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 or other overhead communication cables that are installed.
- 5.7.2 It is common for telephone or other communication 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 / communication 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 but with the expansion of communication networks by other providers there may be other owners that may need to be contacted 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 Tree Officer will consult 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 uneven surface.
 - 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 Property Damage

- 5.9.1 If you are concerned that your property has suffered subsidence or damage and you believe that a Council-owned tree has played a role in that damage, then such concerns can be reported to the council where an appropriate discussion and or response can be given in the first instance.
- 5.9.2 There can be many contributory factors associated with damage to property hence if there may be other trees and associated hedges in the vicinity that is not on council land can be also contributing to any property damage these may also need to be considered. Hence in all instances of potential damage we would advise you to discuss this with your property insurer to agree an appropriate course of action.
- 5.9.3 Should you, or those acting on your behalf wish to make a claim for damages or make formal representation of your concern about any damage or future damage, alleging the Council-owned tree is causing (or may cause) to your property, we would advise that you contact your property insurer in that instance in order to determine the appropriate way to progress any potential claim.

5.10 Bird Droppings

5.10.1 The presence of birds is a vital part of the biodiversity within Trafford. All wild birds' species, their eggs and nests are protected by law (wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

5.10.2 **When managing trees, we would always try to ensure that NO harm or disturbance occurs to 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 within the policy 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 exceedingly rare for bird droppings to damage the paintwork of cars. Bird droppings should, however, be cleaned or removed from cars as soon as practical to alleviate those perceived concerns as dried bird droppings become harder to remove and this is often what causes the damage.

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 seasons 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 reducing the effects that blossom causes when they shed; therefore, no action is required to be taken. Roads, streets and highways are swept as part of regular cleaning cycles that help deal with the effects of the blossom.

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 in isolation 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 tree species extremely valuable assets. However, if it can be proven that these particular tree species and the food that they provide is contributing negatively to an area, by encouraging antisocial behaviour for instance or causing a problem with use of a footway or access, then appropriate 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

The tree policy and associated inspection and maintenance as contained in this document is only dealing with the management and maintenance of trees. Further 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 of the tree, with the transitioning of colours providing visual amenity for residents and passers-by. In anticipation of this, the Council undertakes additional sweeping of the streets with an annual leaf clearance programme during the autumn months.

5.15.2 Leaf fall can differ each season depending on the ambient temperatures and the tonnage of leaves that is collected is in the region of 2000 tonnes of leaves each year. The leaf fall programme runs from October to February with additional sweeping resources deployed during this time.

5.15.3 Due to the volume of leaves that can fall in a short space of time there may be residual leaves that continue to fall and will remain on the highway and also some highway trees can have leaves that fall on private property. In some of the leafier areas where there are private trees in gardens adjacent to the highway there can also be additional tonnages of leaves due to private trees which the council will remove from the highway. Overall, the tonnages that can potentially fall within private land is offset by the tonnages falling from private trees onto highway.

5.15.4 Also due to leaves potentially presenting problems with blocking gullies and drains during rainfall the council looks to discourage residents from blowing leaves from private property onto the highway and encourage residents where possible to push leaves away from gullies that front properties in an effort to alleviate any potential surface water gathering in the highway.

5.15.3 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.

5.15.3 Pruning Council-owned trees would have no impact on the number and volume of leaves overall that are shed in the autumn and winter periods; therefore, no action is required to be taken. Roads, streets and highways are swept as part of an enhanced regime and continuous regular cleaning cycles that deal with leaf fall during autumn and winter.

5.16 Trees Blocking Natural 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.

5.17.2 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 for the whole community in ensuring the ongoing good health of all residents.

5.18 Pollen from Trees

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.

5.18.2 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 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 amount of sap or honeydew emitted from trees therefore, no action is required to be taken.

5.21 Trees 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 Trees Touching a Building or Property

- 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 or property, 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 or property. 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 agree to split the costs of any tree work.

5.23 Trees Overhanging Property

- 5.23.1 Under common law, whether the tree is private or Council-owned, a resident or 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.
- 5.23.2 The Council do not undertake pruning or felling work to council-owned trees that are on highway or council land that encroach into private property to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches, provided they pose no risks to residents.

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.

5.24.2 Whether an individual tree is considered too big or too small is subjective and may not consider the relative benefits that the tree is providing. Many residents love large trees that may have become a landmark for their entire area. The Borough's trees belong to and are for the benefit for all the citizens of Trafford.

5.24.3 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. Where a large tree is causing risk to residents then this will be investigated and assessed as part of the regular tree inspection process and highway safety inspection process when it is causing potential issues within a highway.

5.25 Vandalism to Trees

5.25.1 In accordance with our Right Tree, Right Place Policy, we 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.

5.26.2 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.

5.27.2 In the case of bees, it is important to remember that they are a protected species and expert advice should be sought on how best to deal with them. Beekeepers will often help to remove and relocate a swarm or a bees' nest.

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 across 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 comparable size. Also, mature trees are an important habitat and valuable to conservation. A single tree can be the home to many varied 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 on highway and any other council land will always be given careful consideration as these trees will take a lifetime to replace.
- 7.4 Removal of trees on private land by private individuals or developers should also take account of the impact the loss of that tree would have. There are certain controls that the council has in terms of protecting privately owned trees such as those in a conservation area and those with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This is something that the council has separate procedures for and more information can be found here and in Section 8.

[Tree preservation orders \(trafford.gov.uk\)](http://trafford.gov.uk)

- 7.5 The Council works closely with the Woodland Trust and City of Trees to ensure that trees on other private land including Green Belt and in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is managed within the law and more information on the laws that apply to trees can be found here:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

7.6 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 tree officer as to how urgent the removal is – often based on the observations of the nature of the death of the tree and the location of the tree.

7.7 Tree Removal and Replacement Programmes

- 7.7.1 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.
- 7.7.2 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.

- 7.7.3 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.
- 7.7.4 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 and replaced in a short time frame. Such consequences would be unacceptable for the long-term management and maintenance of the tree stock and for the environment, and therefore, a strict retention only policy for the Borough's tree stock would not be in the long-term interests of the Borough as a whole.
- 7.7.5 The long-term goal is for the Council 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.
- 7.7.6 The proposed planting 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.
- 7.7.7 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.
- 7.7.8 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.
- 7.7.9 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.
- 7.7.10 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.
- 7.7.11 Trafford Council has a good history of delivering these schemes with an excellent response rate on consultations, therefore leading to a positive outcome.
- 7.7.12 Trafford will review the retention and replacement programmes on an annual basis as there are known problems associated with diseases and impacts associated with certain tree species such as Ash and Lime tree population.

7.8 Self-Funding Tree Removal and Replacement

- 7.8.1 There are trees along roads that have been highlighted for attention as part of tree-removal and replacement programmes. Limited 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.

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

7.9 Trees Causing Damage to Property

7.9.1 Trees tend to cause concern where they are very close to buildings or property. 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 and flagged or tarmac drives.

7.9.2 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.

7.9.3 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 associated with the property and not some other factor.

7.10 Tree Removal and Replacement for Vehicle Crossings

7.10.1 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.

7.10.2 Where this is the case, the Council's Tree Team 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.

7.10.3 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 Team may deny the request to remove the tree.

7.10.4 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 Team 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.

7.10.5 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 some 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, which may pose an unreasonable risk to the highway following the procedures outlined within the Highways Act 1980 under section 154 and 149.
- 8.13 Where trees are removed from private land or Council-owned land on a large scale, there may be a need to apply to the Forestry Commission for an approved felling licence. This would be applicable more for developments or highway changes. Should you feel that trees have been removed on a large scale illegally or require further information on felling licences this can be reviewed on the Forestry Commission's website: [Forestry Commission - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

9.0 TREE PLANTING

- 9.1 From time-to-time trees have to be removed (felled) and we understand that these trees need to be replaced, or the tree population will continue to decline.
- 9.2 The Council therefore has and will continue 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 a significant role in the ecosystem for native flora and fauna.

- 9.8 The Council will also endeavour to apply the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (BNG 4.0) as its biodiversity accounting tool that can be used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain when undertaking tree planting proposals. Biodiversity Metric 4.0 can be used or specified by any development project, consenting body or landowner that needs to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and/or intertidal habitats. BNG4.0 is promoted by Central Government and Natural England and will contribute to addressing the climate emergency declared in November 2018.

[Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain)
[Natural England Access to Evidence](#)

10.0 TREE ADOPTION

- 10.1 For a number of years, 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](#).

11.0 LOOKING AFTER TREES

- 11.1 The council recognises the importance of trees and also how the community value them in their neighbourhoods hence the Council would also encourage the community to support looking after and caring for those trees where they are able and willing.
- 11.2 The council has now removed the use of glyphosate in its parks and open spaces and also has reduced the use of glyphosate in highways for weed control. Spraying around trees is also now ceased. If therefore members of the community wish to take care of a tree's immediate surroundings by weeding and plant flowers and take care of a tree pit then please contact the council here [Weed control \(trafford.gov.uk\)](https://www.trafford.gov.uk/weed-control)
- 11.3 There is some especially useful advice on caring for trees in the following link that the council follows but is also useful advice to those planting a tree in their own land to ensure that they have the best start in life and hence contribute positively to the environment throughout their long and healthy lives.

[How to Care for Your Trees - Plant Trees - Woodland Trust](#)