

## **Lichfield District Council Leisure and Parks Tree Management Procedures**

### **Background**

During 2006 and 2007, Lichfield District Council identified a need to improve the way inspected and managed its tree stock which currently is estimated to be over 30,000 trees.

The council commissioned a specialist to inspect its entire tree stock and set out the parameters for future management and maintenance with recommended works that would ensure that the trees were as safe as reasonably practical.

Since then the council's parks team have all been trained so that they are capable of completing basic tree inspections and how to operate and complete data fields on Arbortrack. Arbortrack is the council's tree management system and it keeps a record of all the council's trees and any historical data relating to each tree.

### **Core policy points:**

The Council will:

- continue to inspect and manage its tree stock based on the methodology set out below so that it can ensure its trees are as safe as is reasonably practical
- continue to train all parks staff to a basic level of tree inspection so that they're on hand to carry out inspections whenever this is needed
- act upon its tree inspections and carry out any works that needs doing within a reasonable timescale
- treat all complaints and enquiries in the same manner, by visiting and inspecting the trees and providing advice/feedback set out in this policy
- consider completing works to trees where there is a threat to public safety or could cause damage to property, or where light is blocked to such an extent that it may cause mental health difficulties for vulnerable neighbours or is a conduit for anti-social behaviour
- not consider completing works if the complaint or enquiry is about leaf fall and litter, overhanging branches, blocking light to gardens, fruit or seeds falling, blocking views or is causing nuisance because of wildlife, like birds or squirrels, or sap
- consider completing works to trees that are diseased but will take into account national guidance as well as considering the overall impact on works across the district. If diseased trees are found to be a widespread issue then further advice and guidance will be sought from Cabinet and or a Scrutiny Committee



<b>Category</b>	<b>Inspection Regime</b>	<b>Tree Locations</b>
<b>Very high risk</b>	Ad hoc lay inspections	Such trees will be found only in red areas
	Annual basic inspections	
	Expert inspections no longer than five years apart (in accordance with BIS draft recommendations)	
<b>High Risk</b>	Ad hoc lay inspections	Such trees will be found only in red and green areas
	Biannual basic inspections	
	Expert inspections no longer than five years apart.	
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Ad hoc lay inspections	Such trees will be found in all areas
	Three yearly basic inspections	
	Expert inspections no longer than seven years apart.	
<b>Low risk</b>	Ad hoc lay inspections	Such trees will be found in all areas
	Five yearly basic inspections	
	Expert inspections no longer than ten years apart.	
<b>Nil risk</b>	For trees which have been removed or which have fallen completely and are to be left for wildlife habitat.	

### **Responding to Complaints**

The Council will always respond to complaints and queries about trees and there are potentially several responses that we might provide; all being dependant on the tree, its condition, its location and the nature of the request.

But we recognise that one person's opinion of a tree might be very different to another person's. In consequence, and given a limited budget, we will our presumption is that we will not undertake works to trees unless it is necessary to do so.

If we receive complaints or queries then we follow the process detailed below:

1. Check that the tree is ours on Arbortrack and the councils GIS database – if not owned by us advise the complainant accordingly. No further action.
2. If the tree is ours then confirm its status on Arbortrack and check the following: Is the tree subject to a TPO or is it in a Conservation Area, are any works planned, is it being monitored, has this person made previous enquiries.
3. If the complaint or request is about dropping leaves, overhanging branches, blocking light to gardens, causes fruit to fall, blocking views or is causing nuisance because of wildlife or sap then advise the customer that we don't carry out works to trees for these reasons and refer a note to the Arbortrack schedule.
- 3a If the complaint is about over hanging branches and the tree is not protected by a TPO or in a conservation area, we will advise the customer that they are able to complete this work

themselves. We will also advise them if the trees are protected and what procedures they need to follow if they are.

- 3b If a complaint continues we might allow the customer to carry out works to a tree at their own expense as long as the works are specified in advance and agreed with the council. There is no guarantee for this and the council's Arboricultural Officers can provide us with the appropriate technical advice on any specifications put forward.
4. If complaint relates to the poor condition of a tree and which might threaten public safety or cause property damage or cause a vulnerable person health problems because it blocks light to living areas, or is a conduit for anti-social behaviour then the tree will be inspected by parks staff and referred to the manager. If the manager agrees, then action as necessary. If reported as dangerous and parks staff/managers are uncertain then refer to Arboricultural Officers for a re-inspection.
5. All complaints and queries will be logged on Arbortrack against each tree.

### **Recording**

All works including basic, expert and detailed inspections, removals, complaints and decisions to be recorded on Arbortrack.

Trees planted to be recorded with details as to initial maintenance programme undertaken.

### **Budgeting**

Any works for trees in parks will be managed using a 3 quote system. The parks team has a limited budget set aside to maintain all its trees and maximising these resources is essential.

There will be times when emergency works are needed and in these circumstances the councils Operational Services department or a contractor that has provided a day rate for works will be used.

### **Arbortrack licence**

The Arbortrack license will be paid from the Parks revenue budgets.