

TREE POLICY

In September 2015 the Community Services and Licensing Committee resolved to adopt a Policy setting out the Council's approach to the management of its tree stock. The aim of the Council's Tree Policy is:

- to ensure that the Council complies with its Duty of Care requirements in respect of tree management
- delivers a consistent service across the Authority
- ensures value for money in respect of tree works
- protects trees from unnecessary works

Tree works are generated as a result of periodic tree inspections and, following requests from residents, to address nuisance issues. In order to manage resident's expectations in respect of tree works, the Tree Policy sets out what works the Council will and will not undertake, these works include:

- Tree survey and inspection ✓
- Health and safety works ✓
- Damage to property ✓
- Redevelopment/woodland maintenance/neighbourhood redesigns ✓
- Shading issues X
- Telecommunication issues X
- Overhanging branches X
- Solar panels (where they were installed after the trees were planted) X

Following the adoption of the Tree Policy, Officers have been in a position to give more robust, informed, responses to residents requesting that unnecessary works be carried out on trees. This has resulted in a reduction in reactive tree works, and will enable resources to be directed towards a more proactive tree inspection and management programme.

In response to advice received from the Council's insurance company, the Council has now adopted a targeted approach to tree inspections. In order to exercise its Duty of Care in respect of trees, the Council has entered into framework contracts with two local arboricultural companies in respect of tree works and tree safety inspections. These contracts have been made available to Parish and Town Councils within the District in order to assist them in the management and maintenance of their tree stocks, an initiative which has been well received.

The proactive, targeted, tree inspection programme is likely to generate more remedial tree works initially but, in combination with the approach set out in the in the Tree Policy, will result in a healthier tree stock in the future. In the long term this should result in financial savings.