

TREE MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

The trees in our parks and open spaces and even privately owned trees when visible to the general public offer great values and benefits to the whole community. Beyond just the fact that they brighten up our urban environment they also filter air pollution, and solar radiation and have a cooling effect thus helping combat climate change. Trees also provide valuable habitat and food resources for the wildlife that shares our built environment. As a borough council our overall aim is to provide the best service possible for and on behalf of the people of east Staffordshire. This policy is in line with our corporate policy theme “to provide a cleaner, safer, healthier and happy environment in which our population live and work”.

When requested to perform works to any of our tree stock on our parks or open spaces where they may be adjacent to or in close proximity of privately owned properties highways or footpaths. Our first consideration would be the impact on the community as a whole rather than the perceived benefit to an individual. To this end it is our policy not to prune trees if requested to improve the ingress of light onto a property (except in the case of the high hedges act) or to improve a view. We also do not prune trees to aid television signal reception or to prevent honeydew falling onto parked vehicles or leaves /seeds falling onto properties. We will always give priority to tree work were it is a health and safety issue and only perform work after careful consideration the decision to prune or fell is never taken lightly.

Whenever a tree is cut producing a wound a pathway for the ingress of decay fungi is provided so there needs to be good justification before any work is specified. All requests will be considered and any perceived benefits weighed against the impact on the tree. All work will be performed by contractors on our select list of contractors and be in line with current industry best practice. The standard of work will be to British standard 3998 “recommendations for tree work”. When there is no alternative we will carry out works to comply with our legal requirements regarding clearance over roads and footpaths and were vegetation grows over into a neighbouring property.

It is our aim to conserve our existing tree stock as long as is reasonably practicable with the minimum of intervention consistent with our duties to provide public safety and our obligations under the occupier's liability act. Where trees are felled on our sites as part of any remedial works they will be replaced at a minimum of one for one. If it is not practical or desirable to replant near to the felled tree then another more suitable site will be found, the purchase of replacement trees is made from the regular maintenance budget. Any wood produced from our arboricultural operations will be sold on as either firewood or as product for crafts people any income produced will go to the purchase of replacement planting stock. This is to both supplement the purchases made from our regular tree works budget and to conserve our budgetary capabilities for remedial works.