Doncaster Council

Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands

Version History

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Trees are long-lived community assets, which are essential to our health and well-being, not only in enhancing our enjoyment of the street scene, but by reducing some of the adverse impacts of urban environments. However, they can also cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or property damage.

This policy document aims to implement the broad aims and actions set out in Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands of the Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was adopted by Doncaster Council in 2014, to ensure that Doncaster's urban forest helps contribute to high quality urban environments and to establish a clear, consistent and structured approach to how Street Scene will maintain trees on Doncaster Council owned land.

2.0 SCOPE

The scope of the policy extends to all trees and woodland under the direct management of Street Scene (i.e. on parks, open spaces and highways) and to those where Street Scene is acting as a managing agent (e.g. for other Council departments or schools under a service level agreement).

This policy does not cover protected trees, which are administered by Doncaster Council's Planning department, or trees on land not owned by Doncaster Council.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This policy has been designed for the following purposes:

- to implement the principles of Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands of the Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014-2028;
- to act as a source of information about the management of public trees within the borough;
- to provide a risk management framework for Doncaster Council's trees and woodland;
- to provide a policy framework to guide decisions by Street Scene Officers that affect trees on Doncaster Council land; and
- to support the main vision of the Council to find new ways of working to develop public services in a way that ensures all of Doncaster's people and communities benefit with an improved quality of life in Doncaster .

4.0 REVIEW PROCESS

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored by the Council's Tree and Woodlands Officer annually and will be reviewed every five years to take account of changes in industry best practice, Council policy, legislation and legal judgments relating to tree risk management and emerging asset data about the composition of the urban forest. Further details on the monitoring and review of the document can be found in section 14.0.

5.0 THE BENEFITS OF TREES

Trees, wherever they stand, make a valuable contribution to the quality of life for Doncaster's residents. The urban forest is one of the most visible parts of the green infrastructure network and provides a multitude of benefits for society.

Air cleaning: trees produce oxygen, intercept airborne particulates, and reduce smog, enhancing a community's respiratory health;

Climate change: trees sequester carbon (CO2), reducing the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere;

Water filtration and retention: trees capture and slow rainfall, which reduces storm-water runoff and reduces flood risk, and their roots filter water and recharge the aquifer;

Reducing climate extremes: the evaporative cooling from trees in summer reduces urban temperatures, and trees can trap warm air in their canopies and release it back into the environment in the evening;

Reducing wind speeds and noise: trees filter wind and noise passing through their canopy, reducing their impact;

Aesthetic and visual amenity benefits: without trees, the built environment would be a sterile collection of concrete, steel and tarmac;

Improving liveability and quality of urban life: trees provide a link to nature and the changing seasons and contribute to human physical and mental health and relaxation; and

Biodiversity: trees provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

The research establishing the many tangible contributions of trees to health and wellbeing also shows clearly that benefits are strongly related to size, with the largest trees providing the greatest benefits. It is important, therefore, that trees, particularly large canopied species, are not unnecessarily lost from the landscape, or have their capacity to provide benefits reduced by unnecessary, harmful pruning.

6.0 TREE RELATED PROBLEMS

The Council receive many enquiries each year raising concerns about trees on its land. Whilst we recognise that the removal or pruning of trees is sometimes necessary, requests are frequently based on unfounded fears or a misguided belief that trees need to be regularly pruned. Trees that are free from defect have the ability to withstand the stresses created by stormy and other adverse weather conditions. Occasionally, a few trees fail, whether in part (a branch) or in full (uproot) but, through a programme of regular inspection, those trees that pose an unacceptable risk of harm to persons or property can be identified and given appropriate remedial work to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

In order to conserve and sustain the public tree resource and maximise the benefits that it can provide it is essential that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions on tree pruning and removal are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and its enjoyment by local communities.

Within Doncaster there are a number of recurring sources of complaint or concern, including:

- tree size;
- overhanging and low branches;
- epicormic growth;
- shading and loss of light;
- loss of a view;
- interference with TV and satellite reception;
- falling leaves, twigs, blossom, fruit and nuts;
- sticky deposits from honeydew;
- physical damage to structures such as buildings, walls, footpaths and driveways;
- root encroachment and moisture depletion subsidence damage; and
- damage to drains or pipes.

7.0 TREE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

POLICY 1 – MANAGING TREES

All trees on Doncaster Council land will be managed proactively through routine inspections at a frequency proportionate to the risk that they pose to identify potential hazards and to specify and prioritise any tree maintenance work required to keep any risk of harm or damage as low as reasonably practicable.

The principle aim of this policy is to put in operation a reasonable, defensible and proactive tree management system that conserves and enhances the tree population on land for which Doncaster Council is responsible and makes efficient use of available resources.

Nothing in life is entirely safe. People assess risks and make decisions about them constantly in everyday life.

The risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is actually extremely low – in the order of 1 in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use (Health and Safety Executive, 2007). However, it is not generally perceived in this way by the public, particularly following any tree failure incident, and, all too often, pressure is applied for unnecessary pruning or removal of healthy trees in order to be seen to be 'doing something'. To put this risk of harm into perspective, table 1 illustrates the risk of death from a range of hazards.

Table 1: Risk of an individual dying in any one year from a range of hazards source: British Medical Association, 1987)

Activity	Risk of an Individual Dying in Any One Year
Smoking 10 cigarettes a day	1 in 200
Influenza	1 in 500
Road accident	1 in 8,000
Playing football	1 in 25,000
Accident at home	1 in 26,000
Accident at work	1 in 43,000
Struck by lightning	1 in 10,000,000

Doncaster Council is responsible for many thousands of trees growing in its woodlands, parks and open spaces, cemeteries, housing estates, industrial estates and alongside the highway and has a legal 'duty of care' to consider the risks posed by its trees to users of its land and neighbours and ensure that the risk of harm to persons and property is as low as 'reasonably practicable'. The legal framework **does not** require the elimination of risk altogether - to do so would create an unacceptable loss of the many benefits that trees provide.

The Health and Safety Executive (2007) considers that "*for trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate*".

In order to limit the risk of significant harm from tree failure all trees under the management of Street Scene are being recorded and mapped on an electronic tree management system and will be cyclically inspected, at a frequency determined by the type and number of targets within falling distance (see section 9.0).

POLICY 2 – MAINTAINING TREES

All tree work operations specified and carried out on trees on Doncaster Council land will be undertaken in accordance with arboricultural best practice and the pruning or felling of trees on Council land will be resisted, unless there is a sound reason and no alternative solution can be found.

Tree maintenance work is sometimes desirable, or necessary, to improve tree structure, limit inconvenience or maintain safety. However, all tree pruning has an impact upon the health and structure of a tree and there needs be sound justification for it. Necessary tree work will be identified during cyclical proactive inspections (see section 9.2) and prioritised for completion according to urgency, with safety issues given the greatest weighting. General tree enquiries or requests for service may be made through the Council's contact centre. However, where a routine survey has been completed, or is due, on a tree within 18 months of the date of an enquiry no further action may be taken until the next routine survey, unless works necessary, to maintain safety are identified.

In order to conserve the public tree resource, and maximise the benefits that it provides, our first consideration when assessing trees will be the impact on the community. For example, we don't usually do any work that will benefit an individual but will result in a loss to the community. Additionally, because of the limited funding available for tree work we need to carefully manage the need for tree pruning and will always give priority to health and safety issues, such as :-

- unsafe trees;
- trees touching / damaging buildings; or
- trees obstructing footpaths, roads, street-lamps or road-signs.

This means that there will be requests for pruning or other work on trees that are not considered a priority and will normally be declined. Whilst it is not possible to anticipate every situation, the tables at Appendix B will be used to guide decisions on whether tree pruning or removal will be carried out and to ensure that requests for works to trees on Council land are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly.

All tree work will be completed in line with current British Standards (BS3998: Tree Work – Recommendations). We will not do any work that exceeds these recommendations, except where there is no alternative to comply with legal requirements. Further guidance on tree pruning operations can be found at Appendix C.

POLICY 3 – PLANTING TREES

Every opportunity will be taken to plant new trees to expand our urban forest and woodland estate on appropriate sites throughout the borough, and planting practice will seek to ensure that all transplanted trees achieve independence in the landscape and reach their full genetic potential.

The planting of trees is essential to produce a diverse urban forest that will be resilient to climate change and pest and disease outbreaks and to help maintain tree canopy coverage and the range and magnitude of environmental benefits that Doncaster's urban forest provides.

Doncaster Council will continue to plant trees on its land as part of its winter works programme, more specifically between November and February, and we will seek to plant twice as many trees each year as we remove.

To achieve this we will, wherever possible:

- plant replacement trees at minimum heavy standard size on a one-for-one basis for every tree we remove in the course of routine arboricultural operations;
- plant replacement trees at a rate proportionate to the trunk diameter of a felled tree (see section 12.0) where the removal is undertaken for other reasons;
- require the funding to plant replacement trees at the appropriate replacement rate where acting as managing agent;
- look for opportunities to secure additional funding to plant new trees and groups of trees at appropriate nursery stock size in suitable locations, particularly in areas with low tree canopy coverage; and
- look for opportunities to expand our woodland estate at appropriate locations using both natural regeneration and transplants.

When selecting new trees, we will follow the principle that the ‘right tree’ is planted in the ‘right place’ and in a way that allows each tree to thrive in the landscape and reach its full genetic potential (size). Careful species choice will seek to create a robust tree resource by encouraging diversity through use of a wide range of native, naturalised and exotic tree species and cultivars, except in rural areas, ancient semi-natural woods, green belt or nature conservation sites where priority will be given to local provenance, native species.

Woodland planting has been shown as a cost effective way of managing land and woodland creation can attract grant funding. Any new woodland planting proposals will be considered carefully for their long term implications, particularly with regard to cost, to avoid developing a burden on already limited resources and so consideration must be made of long term funding for such sites, for example through timber production.

POLICY 4 – THE WOODLAND ESTATE

Any management we undertake in our woodland estate will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with the multipurpose objectives of biodiversity, recreation, access, education, geodiversity and landscape value, and helping to offset the impacts of climate change.

Our woods vary hugely. Some sites are much more valuable and sensitive (ecologically, culturally and/or visually) than others and the amount and type of management undertaken needs to reflect this. However, we also recognise that our woods must deliver an income from sustainable harvesting of wood products, such as timber and biomass, to support management and improvement works across the whole estate.

Doncaster Council's woodland estate provides free public access and we will seek to ensure that sites are safe and welcoming for visitors through carrying out regular safety inspections of infrastructure (e.g. car parks, boundary fenestration, paths and signs).

Woodland sites perform a range of qualitative functions. Whilst each wood will contribute to more than one function, knowing the priority objective for each site helps to create a decision hierarchy when setting work priorities in woodland management plans, which will be produced for every site.

Amenity Woods: those whose principal asset is as a visual or other amenity within a local situation;

Community Action Woods: those associated with a particular community and require the involvement and active engagement of the community to be successfully managed;

Conservation Woods: those designated as, or located adjacent to, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR), or non-designated woods identified from field work as having particular wildlife interest that should be maintained or enhanced through active management;

Landscape Woods: those that are prominent in the wider landscape and their contribution to that landscape overrides other management considerations;

PAWS (Planted Ancient Woodland Site) Restoration Woods: ancient woodland sites that are currently dominated by non-native species but have the potential to be reverted to semi natural woodland; and

Productive Woods: those which, by merit of species composition, infrastructure, location or accessibility can be managed principally to produce timber on a long term, rotational basis and hence contribute to the financing of other woodland activities and services where income generation is not possible.

A cornerstone of our woodland management strategy is the network of key managed woods. A key managed wood is defined as one "*whose objectives will only be achieved through active woodland management and which is therefore a priority for the attention of the Council*".

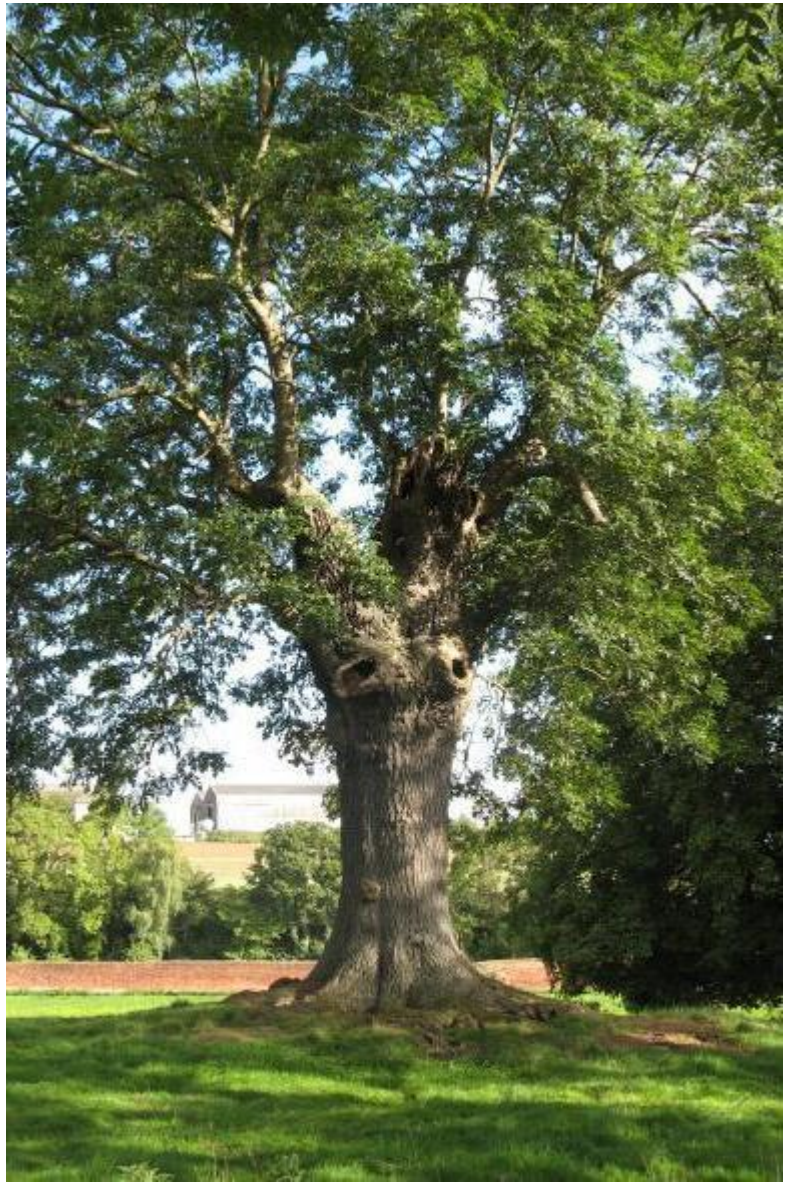
Whereas some woods can achieve their defined objectives passively (e.g. the woods of the Don Gorge that contribute enormously to the gorge landscape and are also important for wildlife and public amenity, but there is little silvicultural management that could be proposed that will enhance this status), a key managed wood will fall short of its aims unless it is actively managed. These key managed woods offer the best opportunity for delivery of overall woodland objectives by the quickest possible means, and will help support management of the remaining estate through income generation and are, therefore, the main focus of management.

The majority of silvicultural management will be through thinning. Whilst these works will provide an income, we must also recognise opportunities to exploit the commercial potential of single-species, non-native plantations in some of our woods, which have the potential for a greater economic return for reinvestment in woodland management and infrastructure improvements. Therefore, in some situations, we will undertake clear felling or select felling (and restocking) where the landscape impact will be limited.

Woodland often provides appropriate conditions for species of open ground habitats that are threatened in the wider landscape, so we will seek to restore and maintain existing rides and glades and, where appropriate, create new ones to enhance biodiversity and enjoyment for visitors.

Many woodland sites are relatively undisturbed and conserve historical or cultural features, such as remnants of charcoal and saw pits, historic boundary ditches and more modern buildings (e.g. ice houses). We will seek to protect these features and, where appropriate, provide interpretation for the benefit of visitors.

Conserving existing veteran trees is of great importance for biodiversity and a habitat priority in the Doncaster



Biodiversity Action Plan. A veteran tree is a tree that is "*of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition*". One of their key values is the amount and variety of deadwood they provide which is, in turn, an important resource for rare fungi and insects. We will manage our woods to protect and nurture veteran trees, for example by removing vigorous plantation trees that are overshadowing them.

POLICY 5 – PROTECTING TREES

Doncaster Council will seek prosecution of and/or compensation from any person or organisation responsible for causing malicious damage to or removing any council owned tree(s) or for the theft of timber from its land.

Ideally we would like there to be no incidences of damage to trees on Doncaster Council land. However, the perceived value of trees varies greatly amongst Doncaster's residents and communities and the public tree resource is being placed under increasing pressure as a reaction to real or perceived problems related to trees (e.g. perceived fear of tree failure or blocking of sunlight) and increased contact with human activity (e.g. land development and installation of utility services).

Malicious damage includes the unauthorised pruning or felling of a mature or semi-mature tree or the wanton vandalism of a newly planted tree on Council owned land, and may constitute criminal damage. In addition, with the increasing popularity of woodburners the theft of timber from our woodland estate is becoming an increasing problem.

We encourage local communities to report incidents of vandalism or illegal felling or pruning of Council trees. Incidents should be reported to South Yorkshire Police on their non-emergency number: 101 and then reported to the Council's tree team via the contact centre.

We will investigate all incidents of alleged damage or theft to us and make a reasoned decision whether it merits further action. In making this decision, the decisive issue is whether the damage has unacceptably affected the wider public amenity. Where appropriate, we will calculate a monetary valuation for the amenity of a damaged tree (see section 10.0) or for stolen timber to assist in making a decision and to support any prosecution.

Even though a successful prosecution cannot remedy the damage caused it can have an important deterrent effect and we will publicise incidents to increase public knowledge as a deterrent to others.

UTILITY SERVICE MAINTENANCE AND INSTALLATION

Utility companies have a statutory right of undertakers to carry out works within the public highway in order to provide and maintain their apparatus. There is no need for damage to be caused by the installation and maintenance of utilities if work is properly planned, taking account of the presence of trees. However, there have been several instances of work leading to extensive root damage to trees.

We cannot unreasonably withhold permission for utility maintenance work but expect that the National Joint Utility Group (NJUG) guidelines are followed in all work around trees. All statutory undertakers have voluntarily signed up to this industry code of practice.

If a tree is damaged by utility works to a degree that can be remediated without tree removal then the utility contractor will be pursued for the full costs of remedial works.

If a tree is damaged to a degree that requires removal then the contractor will be pursued for the full costs of remedial works including tree and stump removal and replacement planting at a rate proportionate to the trunk diameter of the damaged tree (see section 12.0).

POLICY 6 – TREE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

All staff employed in the inspection and maintenance of trees on Doncaster Council land will be appropriately trained and all work will be specified and undertaken in accordance with current arboricultural best practice.

Doncaster Council makes every effort to ensure that the tree work it carries out is of the highest standard and complies with current industry best practice. Maintaining an appropriately qualified and competent tree inspection and maintenance team is critical to the defensibility of the tree risk management plan. All our staff employed for the purpose of inspecting, managing and maintaining trees on Doncaster Council land are trained and competent to carry out all arboricultural operations relevant to their role. These competencies are kept up to date through regular training and updating of qualifications.

All woodland (silvicultural) work will be specified and carried out to comply with the UK Forestry Standard and Forest Industry Safety Accord guidelines. All contractors working in Doncaster Council woodland sites will be vetted through the procurement process.

POLICY 7 – PRIVATE TREES

The Council will aim to inform private tree owners of their legal responsibilities with regard to their trees and will, where appropriate, use its statutory powers to implement works to privately owned trees in the interests of public safety.

As well as its legal ‘duty of care’ to consider the risks posed by trees on its own land, Doncaster Council has responsibilities under the Highways Act, and powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act and in common law, to ensure that members of the public are not put at risk by trees on privately owned land.

Where concerns are raised about the safety of a privately owned tree, a site visit will be made and an individual tree risk assessment carried out. Where clear and present signs of immediate instability (i.e. uprooting or other structural failure) are found the tree owner will be notified and advised what remedial work is necessary and given a timescale for completion.

Where defects that are not imminently hazardous are found or suspected Doncaster Council has no powers to intervene, but will seek to advise tree owners of their duty of care with respect to trees on their land.

Whilst it is not possible to anticipate every situation, table B1 at Appendix B will be used to guide decisions on what action Street Scene will take following allegations of dangerous trees on privately owned land and whether the Council will seek to recover its costs from the land owner.

8.0 COMMON LAW RIGHTS

In the English legal system, 'Common Law' refers to laws that have been developed through precedent set by similar court cases, as opposed to being created through legislative statutes. Under English Common Law, property owners have a right to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto their property. The following advice is given for someone wishing to exercise their Common Law right with respect to the encroachment of Council owned trees:

- you can only consider removing those parts of the tree from the point where they cross the boundary of your property and have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a tree that does not overhang your property;
- legally, you do not own the encroaching branches, although, Doncaster Council does not require, nor expect, to have these returned and you should make appropriate arrangements to dispose of them yourself (e.g. in your green bin);
- you are strongly advised to consult a professional arborist for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are such that you could do the works with hand secateurs or similar;
- there is no legal right of access to Doncaster Council land to undertake tree work;
- unauthorised persons are not allowed to use a chainsaw or other power tools and equipment in parks or public open spaces; and
- before you consider doing any works to a tree you should find out if it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area (section 13.1) as you will need to get consent from the Local Planning Authority for any works if the trees are protected.

Failure to follow the above guidance when pruning a Council owned tree may be classed as malicious damage and may result in enforcement action.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 QUANTIFYING RISK

In order to make proactive inspections of all Council owned trees as efficient and effective as possible, an inspection method, known as Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA), has been adopted.

According to the method's author and developer, QTRA and tree safety management is in essence:

"*A matter of limiting the risk of significant harm from tree failure whilst maintaining the benefits conferred by trees. Although it may seem counterintuitive, the condition of trees should not be the first consideration. Instead, tree managers should consider first the usage of the land on which the trees stand, which in turn will inform the process of assessing the trees*."

The QTRA system applies established and accepted risk management principles to tree safety management. Firstly, the targets (people and property) upon which trees could fall are assessed and quantified, thus enabling tree managers to determine whether or not and to what degree of rigour a survey or inspection of the trees is required. Where necessary, the tree or branch is then considered in terms of both impact potential (size) and probability of failure. Values derived from the assessment of these three components (target, impact potential and probability of failure) are combined to calculate the probability of significant harm occurring.

The system moves the management of tree safety away from labelling trees as either 'safe' or 'unsafe', thereby requiring definitive statements of tree safety from either tree surveyors or tree managers. Instead QTRA quantifies the risk of significant harm from tree failure in a way that enables tree managers to balance safety with tree value and operate to a predetermined limit of reasonable or acceptable risk.

In terms of acceptable risk, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggests that the threshold of acceptable risk should be set at 1/10,000 per annum for members of the public who "*have a risk imposed on them in the wider interest*".

On the basis of this, Doncaster Council has adopted 1 in 10,000 as its threshold of acceptable annual risk of death or significant harm from any particular tree hazard. It is the intention of this policy to implement a system of proactive inspection of trees (see section 9.2) to identify those with a risk of harm greater than 1 in 10,000 and use current resources to reduce those risks to an acceptable level through appropriate tree maintenance practices.

9.2 PROACTIVE TREE INSPECTION

Tree surveys and inspections will be carried out only by trained, competent and qualified Tree Officers using the following inspection hierarchy:

Level 1: Routine Tree Survey
A basic proactive or reactive visual inspection

Level 2: Individual Tree Risk Survey
A thorough ground-based inspection of defects identified or suspected during a 'routine tree survey'

Level 3: Detailed Tree Inspection
Performed to provide detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets or site conditions

Explanation of the proactive tree inspection processes and outcomes is set out at Appendix A.

As well as identifying trees with a risk of harm greater than 1 in 10,000, proactive inspections also allow Tree Officers to identify emerging issues and specify appropriate remedial works to remove a potential structural weakness, obstruction or actionable nuisance before it develops, and to actively monitor the tree stock for the presence and spread of pests and diseases (see section 11.0).

9.3 RISK ZONING

For a programme of proactive tree inspections to be manageable and cost-effective, most resources need to be focussed in areas where there is potentially most risk to people and property. One of the greatest benefits of QTRA is that it enables an informed overview of the risks associated with

a tree population to be carried out as a desktop exercise before a survey of the trees.

This initial 'target' analysis is achieved by placing sites within common categories of target value and occupation as set out in table 2. Large sites (e.g. parks) may contain two or more different risk zones dependant on nearby targets. Each tree is visited at the frequency determined by the allocated risk zoning of its location, or at an increased frequency where dictated by an individual tree risk survey.

Table 2: Risk zoning for pro-active tree inspection

Risk Zone Categories	Example Target Criteria	Inspection Frequency
High Risk Zone	○ major infrastructure including 'A' class roads, strategic distributor roads, busy junctions prone to standing traffic and land adjacent to railways and motorways; and ○ areas of high density pedestrian use including town centre pedestrianized areas and car parks, busy parks and children's playgrounds.	18 months
Moderate Risk Zone	○ principle 'B' class roads; ○ medium density pedestrian use; ○ sheltered housing and open-plan housing estates.	3 years
Low Risk Zone	○ other classified and rural roads; ○ low density pedestrian use; ○ enclosed housing estate gardens; and ○ industrial estates.	5 years
Very Low Risk Zone	○ unsurfaced roads; ○ isolated green spaces; ○ woodland paths/tracks.	5-10 years

10.0 TREE VALUATION

The Town and Country Planning Act introduced the concept that trees have a public amenity value. However, it does not prescribe how their value should be estimated.

Street Scene has adopted the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) methodology, which is widely used in UK arboriculture as a valuation tool for amenity trees, and will use it to assess the value of a tree following malicious damage in support of a prosecution or claim for compensation. CAVAT has also been designed to allow integration with computerised tree inventories to express the value of a tree population as a whole and analyse how the value of the tree stock changes over time, and in particular how that relates to investment. Used in this way it will enable the effective demonstration of productive and cost effective use of financial resources, and provide an argument to safeguard the budget for continued tree planting and management.

CAVAT quantifies a tree's value as a general public asset, focusing on the wider benefits of trees to communities, rather than pure visual amenity or as the property of the Council. It calculates a value for the tree expressed in monetary terms as the cost of replacement; i.e. how much would need to be spent on new planting to give effective compensation for the loss of a tree, or a number of trees, based on the size of trunk area of a damaged tree. That value is modified primarily by how strongly a tree contributes to public amenity using:

- national population figures;
- a tree's townscape and visual importance; and
- other factors, including life expectancy and health.

CAVAT requires a significant amount of knowledge of the growth of trees and species' differences to value a tree reliably. All staff undertaking tree valuations will be appropriately trained and competent for the task.

11.0 PESTS AND DISEASES

At a time of growing concern about the increasing threat of tree pest and disease epidemics worldwide, the Dutch Elm Disease (DED) outbreak of the late 1960s and early 1970s is a salutary reminder of the potentially devastating impact of a major tree disease outbreak, having resulted in the

demise of an estimated 30 million elm trees across Britain by 1985. DED is still endemic in the borough.

We will actively monitor our tree stock for the presence and spread of tree pests and diseases and report the presence of any significant or new pest/disease outbreaks to DEFRA and the Forestry Commission in order to identify and put in place a programme of preventative and remedial work. Sanitation felling to halt the spread of pests and diseases will only be undertaken where supported by the current advice of the appropriate Government agency. Any diseased tree which poses an unacceptable risk to persons or property will be removed in accordance with policy guidelines.

12.0 TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Where trees are removed in the course of risk management or routine arboricultural operations replacement planting will be undertaken on a one-for-one basis, with new trees normally specified at heavy standard nursery stock size, as defined by British Standard 3936 Nursery stock - Part 1: Specification for trees and shrubs.

The number of replacement trees required to compensate for the removal of trees for other reasons, such as a road improvement scheme or as a result of root damage from utility works, will depend upon the size of the tree(s) being lost and is set out in table 3.

Table 3: Replacement Tree Planting Requirements

Trunk Diameter of Felled Tree (cm measured at 1.5 metres)	Number of Replacement Trees
Less than 19.9	1
20-29.9	2
30-39.9	3
40-49.9	4
50-59.9	5
60-69.9	6
70-79.9	7
80+	Determined by Amenity Valuation (section 11.0)

The number of replacement trees set out above is based on the planting of heavy standard nursery stock. However, replacement tree numbers may be reduced proportionately for the use of larger nursery stock.

All nursery stock planted on Council land will be sourced from reputable growers and meet high biosecurity standards. All plants supplied should be free from pests, diseases and physiological disorders. All imported trees and shrubs should have spent at least one full growing season on a UK nursery and have been subjected to a full pest and disease programme. Evidence of this control programme together with an audit trail will be required.

13.0 CONSTRAINTS ON TREE MANAGEMENT

There are a number of legal constraints that must be complied with when planning and undertaking tree work, which includes:

13.1 PROTECTED TREES

Trees that have been protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) under the Town and Country Planning Act require the submission of a formal application to the Local Planning Authority relating to any proposed tree work. It is a criminal offence to prune or fell a tree that is subject to a TPO without having first obtained consent. Doncaster Council is not exempt from this requirement and where trees on Council land are subject to a TPO an application for consent to carry out work has to be advertised nearby for 21 days prior to consent being granted, except for emergency work.

Where a tree is not protected by a TPO but stands within one of the borough's 46 Conservation Areas, the person wishing to carry out tree work is required to provide the Local Planning Authority six weeks written notice of intent prior to carrying out the work. Whilst Doncaster Council does not require consent to prune or fell trees on its own land within a conservation area we must ensure that tree work does not have an adverse impact on the '*special character and appearance of the conservation area*'. To do this, we will always consult the Local Planning Authority prior to undertaking tree removal, except in an emergency.

13.2 FELLING LICENCE

Under the Forestry Act 1967 it is an offence to fell trees in Great Britain without prior Forestry Commission approval in the form of a felling licence. Unless a licence application is for thinning only (with no other felling) the Forestry Commission will usually attach conditions to the licence to ensure that restocking is undertaken and maintained. Doncaster Council is not exempt from this requirement and must obtain a felling license prior to undertaking woodland management works, except for emergency safety work.

13.3 BIRDS

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to kill, injure or take wild birds, their young, their eggs or nests and, for bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, to disturb them whilst building or using a nest. For this reason, Doncaster Council will only consider removing or pruning coniferous tree species or undertaking woodland management outside of the bird nesting season and will not undertake any tree work where active bird nests are identified during pre-start checks.

13.4 BATS

Bats are a European Protected Species and all species are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site is a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment or fine. Trees in Doncaster Council ownership with signs of potential roost features will be subject to assessment by an Ecologist before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England has been consulted.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS, ACTIONS AND MONITORING

This document implements the aims and eight headline principles set out in Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands of the Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014-2028 to trees on Council land and specifically describes the way that Street Scene will manage Doncaster's public tree resource around the central tenet of 'reasonable risk management', to maximise the benefits that trees provide, keep the risk they pose within acceptable limits to ensure that Doncaster's people and communities derive benefit with an improved quality of life, and to provide value for money.

14.1 ACTION PLAN

Immediate Priorities (2018/2019):

- embed proposed changes in tree management practices into service delivery and the Doncaster Growing Together project;
- continue work to record and map all trees on parks & open spaces and highways land in the electronic tree management system;
- complete 'risk zoning' for all trees recorded in the electronic tree management system (section 9.3);
- prepare, prioritise and publicise the first tranche of the routine tree survey programme for service areas where tree mapping is complete (section 9.2);
- prepare and prioritise risk management and proactive tree works schedules identified from routine tree survey data; and
- identify any shortfalls in training needed to implement this plan.

Five-year Priorities (2019-2023):

- complete work to record and map all trees on parks & open spaces and highways land;
- complete the first tranches of the routine tree survey and proactive tree works programmes and expand to other areas as mapping is completed;
- initiate service level agreements for tree management with other Council departments and institutions (e.g. schools) and start recording and mapping trees;
- complete broad condition assessments of public woodland estate and review / prepare management plans (policy 4); and
- complete an assessment of tree canopy coverage across Doncaster and a valuation of the public tree stock (section 10.0).

14.2 ANNUAL MONITORING

The effectiveness of the plan will be monitored annually against the following targets and results published on the Council's website:

- progress on implementing the action plan (section 14.1) in line with published timescales;
- the percentage of tree work undertaken by Street Scene as an emergency;
- the percentage of routine tree surveys completed before the specified inspection date;
- the percentage of reactive tree surveys completed within 24 hours (emergency) and 12 days (other enquiries) of receipt;
- the percentage of tree work undertaken by Street Scene as planned systematic work;
- the number of trees removed and replacement trees planted;
- the percentage of newly transplanted trees receiving systematic maintenance until independence in the landscape;
- the percentage of sites in the public woodland estate under positive conservation management;
- the number of enforcement incidents on Council owned trees;
- changes in the composition of the public tree stock.

14.3 FIVE YEAR REVIEW (2023)

The Tree Risk Management Plan and tree management policies will be reviewed in light of:

- changes to Council policy;
- changes in industry best practice;
- changes in QTRA methodology;
- changes in legislation, legal judgments and emerging case law relating to tree risk management;
- a review of training and competence of council staff engaged in tree inspection;
- annual monitoring data;
- a review of asset data relating to the public part of the urban forest; and
- a review of the action plan (section 14.1).

APPENDIX A – GUIDELINES ON TREE INSPECTION

A.1 Hierarchy of Tree Inspections

Type of Inspection	What Doncaster Council will do	Customer advice
A.1.1 Level 1 Routine Tree Survey	A limited visual assessment to identify obvious defects or specified conditions and identify any necessary tree management works. This is the fastest and least thorough form of assessment intended for managing large populations of trees carried out as either a walk-over or drive-by inspection.	Outcomes of the inspection: ○ remedial works are identified and prioritised in accordance with Appendix B1; or ○ an 'individual tree risk survey' is scheduled where defects that are not imminently hazardous are identified or suspected; or ○ necessary tree management work [as set out in Appendix B2] is identified, specified and prioritised for completion.
A.1.2 Level 2 Individual Tree Risk Survey	A thorough ground-based inspection using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) process, which is recognised professionally and by the courts in the UK. The use of simple tools (mallet, binoculars, probes, spades) may be required. Only limited information may be gained on specific internal, below ground or upper crown factors but, for the majority of tree assessments, provides adequate information to guide tree management. A risk assessment is completed and used to compare the risk associated with a tree and the broadly acceptable level of risk (section 9.1) and to inform management options to reduce any 'risk of harm' to acceptable limits.	Outcomes of the inspection: ○ the investigation is concluded and routine surveys will continue at the frequency determined by risk zoning if a risk is assessed as <1/10,000; or ○ remedial work is specified where a risk is assessed as >1/10,000 and such work can reduce the risk to an acceptable level; or ○ a further individual tree risk survey is scheduled to view the tree in a different season (e.g. in leaf or out of leaf, or during the fruiting season of a suspected decay fungus); or ○ an increase in the frequency of routine tree surveys is specified to monitor the progression of a defect or suspected decline in health; or ○ a 'detailed tree inspection' is scheduled where further, detailed examination is required to confirm the presence, absence or significance of a suspected defect.
A.1.3 Level 3 Detailed Tree Inspection	Performed to provide detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets or site conditions. These assessments are generally more time intensive and expensive and Specialised equipment is often required for advanced assessment. Advanced assessment techniques may include; aerial inspection, detailed target analysis, detailed site evaluation, decay testing, health evaluation, root inspection, tree stability monitoring and load testing. Where appropriate this inspection may be carried out by an independent Arboricultural Consultant.	Outcomes of the inspection as for 'individual tree risk survey'. Detailed tree inspections are normally only performed on trees that have particularly special value (i.e. a high amenity, landscape, ecological, cultural or heritage value) and with the approval of the client.

APPENDIX B – GUIDELINES ON TREE MANAGEMENT

B.1 Management to Abate a Risk

Tree Issue	What Doncaster Council will do	Customer advice
B.1.1 Dangerous tree on Council land	We will aim to complete a tree inspection within 2 hours of receipt of an enquiry. If a tree in Council ownership is in such a condition that it poses an unacceptable risk of harm to people or property and is considered to be an emergency situation, urgent action will be taken to make the tree safe. EMERGENCY tree work requiring an immediate response to remove a hazard will be completed within 24 hours.	Doncaster Council operates a 24hr emergency call-out service. An emergency is defined as a tree that is in immediate danger of collapse or causing an obstruction requiring urgent attention. If a tree's condition could be described as any of the following, it may warrant urgent attention: o it has snapped or blown over; o it is rocking at its base - roots are damaged ; o it has uprooted but is held up by another tree or structure; o a large branch (>50mm diameter) has broken off and is hung up within the tree; o it is blocking a road, footpath, or access to a property; o it has fallen onto house or car. Emergency tree work will aim to remove the immediate hazard with a follow-up inspection to assess if further work is required.
	We will aim to complete a tree inspection within 2 hours of receipt of an enquiry. If a tree in Council ownership is identified as potentially dangerous, but the risk of harm to the public or property does not currently exceed the threshold of acceptable risk adopted by Doncaster Council (section 9.1) the customer will be notified of what action is considered appropriate. HIGH PRIORITY tree work requiring a response to remove a hazard that is not showing clear and present signs of immediate instability will be completed within 13 weeks.	Doncaster Council has a legal duty to maintain its trees in such a way that their condition does not pose unreasonable risks to people or property. We take this duty of care extremely seriously and, where a tree is identified as posing a risk of harm that is approaching the threshold of acceptable risk (see section 9.1), management to reduce the risk might be justified. A tree's condition could be described as posing a risk to people or property that does not require an emergency response if it is: o dead; o dying - few leaves in summer or dieback in the crown; o losing bark; o root damaged (but not rocking at its base); o affected by mushrooms or other fungi growing on or near the tree; o affected by old splits and cracks in the trunk or large branches; o losing larger branches which are falling from the tree. Trees in this category will be made safe by pruning or felling, whichever is the most cost effective approach to reduce the risk of harm below the threshold of acceptable risk.

Tree Issue	What Doncaster Council will do	Customer advice
B.1.2 Dangerous tree on private land	If a tree in private ownership is in such a condition that it poses an unacceptable risk of harm to highway users the land owner will be contacted and instructed to make the tree safe. In the event of failure to carry out work, Doncaster Council may use its statutory powers to implement essential works and recharge the costs to the land owner. Where defects that are not imminently hazardous are identified or suspected the owner of the tree will be informed within 14 days of inspection of what works they are responsible for to make the situation safe. Where a tree in private ownership has failed in whole or in part and is obstructing a public highway Doncaster Council will use its statutory powers to implement essential works and recharge the costs to the land owner.	All tree owners have a legal duty of care to ensure that trees under their control do not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to others. Doncaster Council has responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980 (section 154) to ensure that trees located close to a highway on private land do not pose an unacceptable risk to highway users, and legal powers of enforcement to ensure that the required action is undertaken and to recover all reasonable costs in discharging its duties from the tree owner. Doncaster Council operates a 24hr emergency call-out service. An emergency is defined as a tree that is in immediate danger of collapse or causing an obstruction requiring urgent attention (see section B.1.1).
	If a tree in private ownership is found to pose an unacceptable risk of harm to non-highway land the land owner will be contacted and instructed to make the tree safe. In the event of failure to carry out work, Doncaster Council may use its statutory powers to implement essential works and recharge the costs to the land owner. Where defects that are not imminently hazardous are identified or suspected the Council has limited powers to intervene and will not normally take further action.	All tree owners have a legal responsibility to ensure that trees under their control do not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to others. It is expected that private parties will take care of their own responsibilities and hence the Council should not be considered as the first point of contact in attempting to resolve concerns about the danger posed by trees in private ownership. If you are concerned over the condition of a privately owned tree and its perceived risk, you should contact the owner and make them aware of your concerns. If the owner has been made aware of the perceived risk, but no solution can be found, or the owner is unknown, Doncaster Council has powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (sections 23 &; 24) to intervene. However, the powers given in the Act to require a private individual or for the Council to make safe a tree are discretionary and will only be used if there is an imminent risk of serious harm to persons or property. In this instance a person who wishes to notify the council of a dangerous tree where there is an imminent threat to public safety is expected to make a formal notification in writing. The Council can intervene under the Act if an owner of such trees fails to act in a reasonable timescale and will seek to recover the costs from the landowner or where a land owner cannot be traced the person who notified the council of the dangerous tree may be liable for the Council's reasonable costs.

B.2 Non-risk Abatement Tree Management

Tree Issue	What the Council will do	Customer advice
B.2.1 Overhanging / obstructing branches	We will aim to identify branches causing, or about to cause, an 'actionable nuisance' during routine tree surveys and proactively prune a tree to achieve a clearance of 2-3metres from an adjacent property or other infrastructure. We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to alleviate overhanging branches that are not causing an 'actionable nuisance'.	The Council has no legal obligation to prune a tree on its land to prevent branches spreading over a neighbouring property boundary, unless an 'actionable nuisance' is being caused. An 'actionable nuisance' is a nuisance that could give rise to action in the courts – i.e. where a tree is causing, or there is an immediate risk of it causing, actual damage. In contrast, whilst a tree branch that overhangs the boundary, for example, may be perceived as a nuisance by the neighbouring property it is not actionable in law. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
	We will aim to identify branches causing, or about to cause, an obstruction of an adopted highway, footway or public right of way during routine tree surveys and proactively prune a tree to achieve a vertical clearance of 5.3metres above a highway and 2.4metres above a footway or public footpath. Where a privately-owned tree is reported as causing an obstruction to an adopted highway, footway or public right of way we will notify the owner of the tree to remove the obstruction. .In the event of failure to carry out work, Doncaster Council may use its statutory powers to implement essential works.	Doncaster Council has duties and powers under the Highways Act 1980 to prevent obstruction of an adopted highway, footway or public right of way. If it is necessary that the Council undertakes remedial work on a private tree then the owner will be charged in full for the Council's costs.
	We will aim to identify branches causing, or about to cause, obstruction of traffic signals, street signs, streetlights or sightlines during routine tree surveys and proactively prune a tree to ensure that it does not unduly obstruct street furniture or sightlines. Where a privately-owned tree is reported as causing an obstruction of traffic signals, street signs, streetlights or sightlines we will notify the owner of the tree to remove the obstruction. In the event of failure to carry out work, Doncaster Council may use its statutory powers to implement essential works.	Doncaster Council has duties and powers under the Highways Act 1980 to prevent obstruction of traffic signals, street signs, streetlights or sightlines. If it is necessary that the Council undertakes remedial work on a private tree then the owner will be charged in full for the Council's costs.
	We will **not** normally fell a tree in Council ownership to alleviate obstruction of CCTV cameras and will only undertake pruning works sufficient to clear an obstruction.	Doncaster Council expects installation engineers to take account of existing trees and their future growth before they install their apparatus.

B.2.2 Epicormic growth	We will aim to clear epicormic growth from trees adjacent to busy roads and in high amenity areas annually as part of our routine tree maintenance programme. We may **not** routinely clear epicormic growth from trees on Council land where it is not causing an obstruction.	Epicormic growth is the twiggy shoot growth from the base or up the stem of trees and can cause an obstruction where it is close to footpaths, driveways or roads.
B.2.3 Tree size	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership just because it is perceived to be 'too big'. However there will be certain circumstances in which this might change. We may undertake overall crown reduction of a tree in Council ownership to reduce a specific risk assessed as >1/10,000 by an individual tree risk survey and we will aim to cyclically re-pollard all trees with an established pollard framework on a five year cycle unless specified otherwise by a specific management objective (e.g. veteran tree management).	A tree is not dangerous just because it may be perceived to be overgrown or too big for its surroundings. The Council has no legal obligation to restrict the size of trees growing on its land. Indeed, it is only on very rare occasions that a tree can truly be said have outgrown its location and the biggest trees have been shown to provide the greatest benefits. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
B.2.4 Shading and loss of light	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to improve natural light to a property or garden. However, it is accepted that in some cases trees can cause excessive gloom and we **may** consider management works where: o the distance between the base of a tree and the window of the nearest principal habitable room is less than 6 metres for trees with a height over 12metres, or less than half the height of the tree for smaller trees; o the separation between the edge of the canopy and the vertical plane of the window is less than 2metres; o more than 50% of the main amenity area does not receive unobstructed sunlight in summer. All such works will be subject to the availability of finances and will be LOW PRIORITY works to be completed within 52 weeks.	Contrary to popular belief, there is no general right to light with regard to trees and vegetation in English law. In addition, whilst pruning may help improve light in the short-term the flush of quick, extra growth associated with pruning can exacerbate the problem in the long-term. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act, 2003. Investigations are undertaken by the Local Planning Authority, for more information refer to the Council's website: http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/environmental/hedges A 'principal habitable room' means a frequently used room by the occupants of a dwelling for general daytime living purposes. Kitchens, bathrooms, toilets, corridors and halls are specifically excluded.
	We will **not** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to improve light attenuation by domestic solar panels.	Whilst Doncaster Council recognises the need for renewable energy sources, the magnitude and range of benefits provided by trees are considered to far outweigh those provided by domestic solar panels and the installation of solar panels will not be at the expense of other environmental assets (i.e. trees). If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.

B.2.5 Loss of view	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to improve the view from a private property. A site inspection will **not** be made for this reason. However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we **may** consider pruning or felling a tree to restore an important public viewpoint or where there is potential to bring about significant public benefit and/or enhance the local landscape or townscape.	There is no legal right to a 'view'. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
B.2.6 Trees affecting reception	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to prevent interference with TV or satellite, telephone or broadband reception as there is no legal right to TV, satellite, telephone or broadband reception. A site inspection will **not** normally be made for the above reason. However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we **may** consider pruning or felling a Council-owned tree to improve signal reception of a telecommunications mast where it will bring about significant public benefit and no alternative solution is available.	The Council has no legal obligation to prune trees on its land to help improve television / satellite television reception or to improve signal reception of a communications mast. In addition, whilst pruning may help improve reception in the short-term the flush of quick, extra growth associated with pruning can exacerbate the problem in the long-term. In most cases the problem can be resolved by relocating a mast, aerial or satellite dish, or alternatively using a signal booster. Residents are advised to contact their satellite or TV provider for specialist advice. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. Where a Council-owned tree is pruned or removed to improve telecommunications signal reception replacement planting will be required at a rate given in section 11.0.
B.2.7 General / minor nuisances	We will **not** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to reduce falling leaves, twigs, sap, or blossom from trees or remove fallen natural debris from private land. A site inspection will **not** be made for these reasons.	Trees are naturally shedding organisms and the Council has no legal obligation to fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of our control. Tree blossom usually heralds the start of spring and is a natural occurrence, which cannot be avoided by pruning. The loss of leaves / foliage from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning. The cleansing of surfaces (e.g. paths, lawns, gutters or cars) affected by falling leaves, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings and weeding of self-set seeds are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out. The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the owner/occupier and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from council owned trees. Where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves owners/occupiers may wish to fit gutter guards to provide a low-maintenance solution. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.

B.2.7 General / minor nuisances (continued)	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to reduce falling fruit, berries or nuts, or remove fallen fruit or germinating seedlings from private land. A site inspection will **not** normally be made for this reason. However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we **may** consider measures to reduce a problem where fallen fruit is leading to significant anti-social behaviour problems.	Fruit trees such as apple, cherry and pear have the double benefit of spring blossom and autumn fruit. This makes fruit trees good for wildlife and a source of free food. Where fruit trees are established but there is a significant anti-social behaviour problem we may consider phased removal and replacement with alternative species at the rate set out in section 11.0 where finances are available. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
	We will **not** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to reduce the emission of honeydew or other sticky residue from trees. A site inspection will **not** be made for this reason.	Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem caused by aphids (e.g greenfly) feeding on the tree, which excrete a sugary sap. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to remove the aphids which cause the problem and pruning the tree may only offer partial and/or temporary relief. Re-growth is often more likely to be colonised by greenfly thereby potentially increasing the problem. Some trees, such as limes, are more prone to attack by greenfly and in some years greenfly are more common especially following a mild winter. Often the honeydew is colonised by a mould, which causes it to go black. Where honeydew affects cars, warm soapy water will remove the substance, as long as this is done promptly. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. Where new trees are planted we try to choose species and varieties that are less likely to cause this problem.
	We will **not** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees, or remove bird droppings from private land. A site inspection will **not** be made for this reason.	Bird droppings may be a nuisance, but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree. Warm soapy water will usually be sufficient to remove the bird droppings as long as this is done promptly. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. In addition, nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other related wildlife law). Further guidance on wildlife protection can be found in sections 13.3 and 13.4.

B.2.7 General / minor nuisances (continued)	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, flies, spiders or wild animals. A site inspection will **not** normally be made for any of the above reasons. However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we **will** undertake felling or pruning as required as part of a control programme where a serious risk to public health is identified and supported by the current advice of the appropriate Government agency.	If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. Many species of insect, including many threatened or endangered species, live in or around trees and pose no threat to the health of people and animals. However, some exotic species do, such as the presence of Oak Processionary Moth. We will actively monitor our tree stock for the presence and spread of tree pests and publish details of current pest and disease threats in the borough and action plans for their management on our website.
B.2.8 Poisonous trees	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership due to a theoretical risk of accidental poisoning from trees bearing poisonous fruit or foliage. A site inspection will **not** normally be made for the above reason.	The view expressed by the National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) is that the vast majority of (the fortunately rare) significant overdoses related to poisonous trees occur in individuals who self-harm and there is a very low risk of accidental toxicity. Similarly, the Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) has indicated that, in relation to Yew, even in the worst case scenario of exhibiting severe signs of toxicity (e.g. vomiting and diarrhoea) a dog is likely to make a full recovery following ingesting berries. In relation to livestock, the movement of plant seeds around in the air due to weather patterns is a natural phenomenon and the Council has no obligation to prevent, or take measures to prevent, the seeds or leaves of trees on its land from spreading onto neighbouring land if the species is not listed as an injurious weed under the Weeds Act 1959 (e.g. sycamore or oak). Consequently, the onus is on the livestock owner to minimise any risks (e.g. fence off areas where seeds and/or leaves fall and supply extra forage, especially where pasture is poor). The Council considers that, in the vast majority of cases, the removal of a tree would be a disproportionate response to the actual risk posed in terms of the theoretical risk of accidental poisoning. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
B.2.9 Personal medical complaint	Requests to undertake work to a tree in Council ownership because of a personal medical condition will be treated on a case-by-case basis and on advice from a qualified medical practitioner. A site inspection may be required depending on advice given by the complainant's medical practitioner.	If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.

B.2.9 Personal medical complaint (continued)	We will **not** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to reduce the release of pollen. A site inspection will **not** be made for the above reason.	Whilst we recognise that hay fever can be a debilitating problem, research has shown the positive effects that trees have on physical and mental well-being, particularly in urban environments. Not all tree species are wind pollinated and the natural movement of pollen around in the air due to weather patterns is a phenomenon that is beyond the Council's control, meaning that trees immediately adjacent to properties may not be the pollen source. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0.
B.2.10 Moisture Depletion Subsidence Damage	We will **only** prune or remove a tree in Council ownership where submitted evidence clearly implicates a tree in moisture depletion subsidence damage and no alternative solution is available.	Tree induced moisture depletion subsidence damage is a complex issue. Whilst we recognise our responsibilities for the trees in our ownership, there will be a presumption against the removal or pruning of a tree based on a speculative and unquantified possibility of damage occurring at some unspecified point in the future. We vigorously defend claims of tree-related subsidence damage and require that the claimant and/or their representative supplies sufficient evidence to establish that the vegetation is responsible. The burden of proof lies with the claimant and should you wish to make a formal claim for damages or to formally notify us of your concerns about future damage you will have to supply supporting evidence. If you believe that your property is suffering subsidence damage due to the action of trees in Council ownership (or that you are concerned about potential damage) then you should first contact your property insurer. You should discuss your concerns with your insurer to agree an appropriate course of action. Should you, or those acting on your behalf, wish to make a claim for damages, alleging that a Council owned or maintained tree is causing subsidence damage to your property, then you should submit it to the Council's Insurance Team: http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/insurance We will expect any insurance claim against a tree on Council land to be supported by the following evidence: o description of type of damage; o indication of seasonal movement; o levels and distortion survey; o visual evidence of damage; o depth of foundations demonstrated from excavated trial holes; o analysis of soil type under foundation; o presence and identification of tree roots. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. **You should also be aware that the cutting of roots can seriously affect the structural stability of a tree**.

B.2.11 Root encroachment and damage	We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership just because roots have encroached onto adjoining land. A site inspection will **not** normally be made for the above reason. However there may be certain circumstances in which this may change and we **will** prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to resolve a direct damage issue where submitted evidence clearly implicates a tree and no alternative solution is available.	Tree roots naturally exploit surrounding ground for moisture and nutrients essential to keep the tree healthy and to keep it stable. Tree pruning is unlikely to reduce root presence and may actually worsen the problem in the long-term as many tree species readily produce shoots from their buried roots as a way to regenerate and this is often stimulated by stresses, such as pruning. Numerous tree species (including Cherry and Poplar) are also likely to produce vigorous root suckers as a response to being felled. Poisoning a stump to prevent such suckering is not always successful since application of herbicide onto a stump face often only affects the stump and the upper roots. It is often possible to rebuild or repair garden walls and repair paths to take account of adjacent trees by, for example installing a section of railing in a wall or using a bridging foundation, and by selectively pruning roots and re-laying a path with flexible materials such as asphalt, gravel or resin-bonded gravel to provide a smooth surface. If you believe that your property is suffering damage due to the action of trees in Council ownership then you should first contact your property insurer. You should discuss your concerns with your insurer to agree an appropriate course of action. The burden of proof lies with the claimant and should you wish to make a formal claim for damages or to formally notify us of your concerns about damage you should supply supporting evidence. Should you, or those acting on your behalf, wish to make a claim for damages, alleging that a Council owned or maintained tree is causing direct damage to your property, then you should submit it to the Council's Insurance Team: http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/insurance If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. **You should also be aware that the cutting of roots can seriously affect the structural stability of a tree**.
	We will **not** prune, fell or cut the roots of a tree in Council ownership in response to root presence in drains or an unquantified possibility of future drain damage occurring because of the presence of trees.	There is no evidence to suggest that tree roots can actively penetrate an intact pipe or drain, but they can find their way into drains through existing faults and increase damage. The presence of tree roots in a drain is usually symptomatic of an underlying problem requiring repair of the broken pipe. The removal or pruning of a tree will not prevent other vegetation from exploiting the same opportunity. If you are concerned about the condition of your drains then you are advised to contact your water and sewerage company. If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. **You should also be aware that the cutting of roots can seriously affect the structural stability of a tree**.

B.2.11 Root encroachment and damage (continued)	We will work with the Highways authority to make safe an unacceptable trip hazard in a public highway or footpath caused by the growth of a tree in Council ownership. We will **only** undertake root pruning when other options for correcting a conflict between roots and infrastructure are deemed not practical or not proportionate.	Trip hazards in a footway measured at an up stand greater than 20mm should be reported to the Highways authority for inspection via 736000.
B.2.12 Pest and disease control	We will actively monitor our tree stock for the presence and spread of tree pests and diseases and report the presence of any significant or new pest or disease outbreaks to DEFRA and the Forestry Commission in order to identify and put in place a programme of preventative and remedial work. Sanitation felling to halt the spread of a pest or disease will **only** be undertaken where supported by the current advice of the appropriate Government agency.	The scale of devastation caused by Dutch Elm Disease is well known and affected trees are still a common sight around the borough. Climate change and global trade are also increasing the range of pests and diseases that affect the tree species growing around Doncaster and modern transport links often facilitate their rapid spread.
B.2.13 Crime and anti-social behaviour	Where a tree in Council ownership is associated with criminal activity and/or anti-social behaviour, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a site-by-site basis. We will **not** normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership just because it is associated with anti-social behaviour.	Where a tree is associated with criminal activity and/or anti-social behaviour steps to reduce the problem will typically require the coordination of a number of agencies including the Police. Just pruning or felling a tree is **not** always the answer to the problem.
B.2.14 Third party nuisance - private tree	The Council has no authority to intervene in a dispute between neighbours.	The Council **cannot** provide a mediation service so you should try to resolve a dispute between yourself and your neighbour amicably or seek advice from a solicitor or Citizens Advice - https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/ If you wish to exercise your 'Common Law right' to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto your property you should refer to the advice given at section 9.0. If the nuisance relates to the height of a hedge then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act, 2003. Investigations are undertaken by the Local Planning Authority, for more information refer to the Council's website - http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/environmental/hedges

APPENDIX C – GUIDELINES ON TREE PRUNING OPERATIONS

C.1 Tree Pruning Techniques

Pruning Technique	Description and Associated Risks	What Doncaster Council will do
C.1.1 Crown Lifting	The removal of lower branches to achieve a stated vertical clearance above ground level or other structure. The excessive removal of low branches can lead to the development of poor stem / crown balance, where a tree may become top heavy, and may result in large wounds around the main stem, which could potentially allow the development of extensive decay and reduce the long term integrity of the tree's main supporting structure.	Crown lifting is undertaken as routine tree maintenance to prevent obstruction of a highway or footpath, or interference with buildings and other infrastructure, or to reduce shading where it has been identified as necessary by a routine tree survey. It is specified to comply with the following parameters: ○ the number and size of pruning wounds will be limited and well-spaced; ○ the reduction of branches to lateral/secondary growth rather than their complete removal will be prioritised, especially in mature trees; ○ the remaining crown height should be at least two-thirds of the tree's overall height; ○ no more than 15% of the tree's original unpruned crown will be removed when cutting back branches to the stem(s); ○ the vertical clearance will be stated in the work specification; ○ trees situated along public highways will be maintained to a minimum clearance height of 2.3metres over a footpath or paved area and 5.2metres over carriageways; and ○ extensive crown lifting will be phased over a number of years, where possible, with a view to providing some opportunity for physiological and biomechanical adaptation to the resulting wounding and branch removal.
C.1.2 Crown Thinning	The removal of some secondary branch growth to create a less dense crown without altering the shape of the tree. The amount of branch wood that can be removed without harming the tree is minimal. In addition, rubbing and crossing branches can act as natural braces and hold multiple crown parts together and their removal can increase the likelihood of crown failure.	Doncaster Council does **not** routinely undertake crown thinning. Where it is specified it will comply with the following parameters: ○ the estimated percentage of crown to be removed will not exceed 20% (1 in 5 branches); ○ pruning cuts will not normally exceed 4cm in diameter; and ○ rubbing and crossing branches that are acting as natural crown braces will be identified and retained.
C.1.3 Targeted Pruning	The removal or shortening of individual branches to increase clearance from buildings or infrastructure (e.g. overhead cables) or the removal or shortening of branches that would otherwise probably fail. The amount of branch wood that can be removed without harming the tree is minimal.	Targeted pruning is undertaken as routine tree maintenance to prevent contact with buildings and other infrastructure where it has been identified as necessary by a routine tree survey. It is specified to comply with the following parameters: ○ the number and size of pruning wounds will be the minimum required for the purpose; and ○ the work specification should state the feature and the clearance to be achieved.

C.1.4 Crown Reduction	The overall reduction in the height and/or spread of the crown of a tree by means of a general shortening of peripheral twigs and/or branches, whilst retaining the main framework of the crown. Crown reduction alleviates biomechanical stress by reducing both the leverage and the sail area of a tree, and can allow retention of a tree in a confined space. However, it results in a large number of wounds and the loss of a large proportion of the tree's foliage-bearing structure, which can affect photosynthetic performance and the maintenance of natural defences against dysfunction and decay. It can also stimulate vigorous to rapidly restore the height and sail-area of the crown so that the hazard of a weak stem or root system is re-established quickly. The sail effect is compounded by the high density of shoots or production of unusually large leaves. Also, individual new branches may tear away from their attachments or snap if they become heavy or crowded. Crown reduction can also visually affect the tree, losing its natural shape.	Overall crown reduction may be specified **only** to reduce a specific risk assessed as >1/10,000 by an individual tree risk survey. Where it is specified it will comply with the following parameters: ○ the extent of crown reduction will be determined on the basis of the management objective (i.e. the reduction in loading) and on an assessment of the ability of the tree to withstand the treatment (i.e. the characteristics of the species and the physiological condition of the individual tree); ○ the crown will be reduced in proportion to its original shape, maintaining the natural shape and form of the species, unless there is a specific need to alter the shape of the crown, e.g. for biomechanical integrity; ○ pruning cuts will not normally exceed 10cm in diameter; and ○ the specified end result will be stated either as the tree-height and/or branch-spread which are to remain or as clearance from another structure (in metres) as appropriate to the management objective.
C.1.5 Crown Retrenchment	A form of crown reduction that emulates the natural process to reduce the size of the crown structure and encourage rejuvenation of a smaller, vigorous crown in fully mature trees. Crown retrenchment is a crucial stage of the natural aging process of a tree, whereby the tree retains its overall biomechanical integrity by becoming smaller through the progressive shedding of branches. This is naturally prompted when the roots are unable to support new peripheral shoot extension.	Crown retrenchment pruning is undertaken as routine maintenance wherever necessary to prolong the safe life of fully mature trees in line with the following parameters: ○ pruning is planned over a longer time frame and a detailed pruning specification identifying the specific functional unit of the tree's crown to be worked on is produced to guide works; ○ the percentage of crown affected is limited to a maximum 10% of a tree's leaf area at each pruning operation; and ○ the removal of dead wood is only carried out where a risk to public safety has been identified by individual tree risk survey and no solution to retain it is possible or proportionate.
C.1.6 (Re-)Pollarding	The practice of regulating tree size and shape by removing the entire crown of the tree on a cyclical basis. To be done correctly, it should be started when the tree is young. However, in many cases pollarding is necessary following topping of an established mature tree to manage poorly attached sprout re-growth.	Pollarding will be undertaken as routine tree maintenance **only** on trees with an established pollard framework in line with the following parameters: ○ all regenerated sprouts/shoots are removed right back to their base, without cutting into the pollard head (the swollen tissue below the origin of the buds) over the entire pollard, except where this would be damaging to the tree (e.g. a veteran pollard with low vigor); and ○ pollarding is carried out on a five year cycle, unless specified otherwise by a risk assessment or specific management objective (e.g. biodiversity).

C.1.7 Topping	Topping is the removal of most, or all of the, crown of a mature tree by indiscriminately cutting through the main stem(s) and should not be confused with pollarding. It destroys the tree's natural shape, introduces decay, encourages the development of a weak branch structure and can kill some species.	This is an unacceptable practice and Street Scene **does not** top trees on Doncaster Council land.
C.1.8 Crown Cleaning	The removal of dead, dying or diseased branches, pruning stubs, snags, broken branches, rubbing / crossing branches, unwanted epicormic shoots, climbing plants and debris. The formation of dead wood is part of the natural system of tree life and is not be considered to be a negative thing that has to be removed to maintain healthy tree growth, and it is an essential habitat for a large number of organisms. Rubbing and crossing branches can act as natural braces and hold multiple crown parts together and their removal can increase the likelihood of crown failure. In addition, epicormic growth can develop within the crown as a reaction to heavy pruning or to a decline in the tree's health resulting from a number of causes, including root damage and the impact of pest and disease, and can, therefore, be an important source of food and energy for the tree.	Where deadwood removal or crown cleaning is specified the following parameters will be considered: ○ the specification will clearly identify what work is to be carried out; ○ dead wood removal will only be specified where a risk to public safety has been identified by a routine or individual tree risk survey; ○ cuts into live wood will be avoided when removing dead branches and stubs to avoid damage to the branch collar and callus tissue; ○ rubbing and crossing branches that are acting as natural crown braces will be identified and retained; ○ only a proportion (up to a maximum 20%) of epicormic growth that is supporting tree growth and sustenance should be removed; and ○ dead branches and climbing plants identified for removal will be assessed for wildlife habitat.
C.1.9 Stem Cleaning	The removal of epicormic growth, the twiggy shoot growth that develops from adventitious buds under the surface of the tree's bark. It often grows from the base or stem of the tree, developing more readily on some species such as lime and sycamore, and can cause an obstruction where it is close to footpaths, driveways or the road. It may also be appropriate to remove epicormic growth for aesthetic reasons.	We will remove epicormic growth as routine tree maintenance in accordance with the following parameters: ○ basal and stem shoots will be removed on up to one occasion annually where they are causing an obstruction or are unsightly in a high amenity location; ○ shoots may only be removed otherwise where they are obstructing access for tree inspection or management or contributing to biomechanical loading; and ○ all shoots will be removed back to, but not into, the branch collar leaving no projections or exaggerating the size of the wound.

C.1.10 Formative Pruning	A proactive approach to tree management, which encourages the formation of good stem and branch structure, by improving the orientation and spacing of branches and removing any potential weak structures while a tree is young. It is also better for the tree creating, smaller wounds with a low physiological impact and lower risk of fungal ingress and can reduce the need for pruning later on.	Formative pruning is undertaken as routine maintenance on all young trees once they are established in the landscape. All pruning is carried out using only hand tools, such as sharp secateurs, loppers and handsaws in accordance with the following parameters: ○ remove or reduce competing leading shoots to leave one strong, dominant leader; ○ remove rubbing, diseased, dead, congested or weak branches along with epicormic and basal growth on the main stem; ○ thin out main lateral branches to be spaced to at least 45cm apart to alleviate a tight grouping of branches; and ○ remove low branches pointed in undesirable directions (e.g. towards a road).
C.1.11 Root Pruning	The severing of roots from a tree in order to address conflicts with infrastructure (e.g. direct damage to footpaths and road kerbs) or dwellings (e.g. to allow installation of a root barrier to prevent indirect damage). Since this practice results in the loss of roots, both tree health and structural stability may be affected.	We will only undertake root pruning when other options for correcting a conflict between roots and infrastructure are deemed not practical or not proportionate. Where specifying root pruning for this reason, a tree assessment will be conducted prior to pruning and the following parameters considered: ○ tree condition – trees in poor condition, trees with evidence of past damage by construction activity, or trees that are leaning; ○ tree species – some species do not respond well to root disturbance (e.g. beech); ○ site conditions – soil conditions affect the potential for recovery and structural stability loss; ○ the tree's "mechanically active root plate" – no roots shall be cut within a distance of 3x the diameter of the tree trunk, due to stability concerns; ○ size of root – the final wound should be as small as possible to achieve the goal and be free from ragged torn ends; ○ time of year – avoid root pruning during times of the year when wind loads on trees are greatest or root regeneration is weakest; ○ mitigation works – crown pruning prior to or following root pruning may be necessary in cases where the potential for structural failure may increase substantially because of root pruning; ○ the method of excavation – removal of the soil around the roots by hand or utilizing an 'air spade' so the roots can be seen before pruning (a "root pruning trench"); and ○ aftercare of roots – once exposed, roots should be covered to prevent desiccation and the root pruning trench filled with top soil to encourage root re-growth.

C.1.11 Root Pruning (contd.)	The severing of roots from a tree as a result of root damage (e.g. following utility trenching)	If, following root damage, a tree has been assessed as being suitable for retention, we will aim to prune exposed damaged roots: ○ within 24 hours of the time they have been damaged, where a root is greater than 2.5cm in diameter measured at the edge of excavation; ○ back to the edge of excavation, or 2.5cm behind the entire damaged portion of the tree root if a damaged root extends beyond the edge of excavation into undisturbed soil; and ○ so that the final wound is as small as possible and free from ragged torn ends.