

## Camden Council's Tree Policy for Council Owned Trees

December 2015

1. This policy is intended to define the borough's approach to the management of Council owned trees and ensure they are safe and sustainable. The case for trees and the contribution they make to the quality of our environment include:
  - Improving air quality, micro-climate characteristics and mitigating the 'urban heat island' effect
  - Providing aesthetic, mental health and social benefits
  - Providing a sense of place, continuity and belonging
  - Contributing to the urban design and character of the borough, including flood mitigation.
  
2. The following statements constitute Camden Council's Tree Policy for Council Owned Trees. It provides clear guidance for officers to implement and ensure that the Council meets its duty of care, legal, health and safety obligations and the sustainable management of the Council's tree stock:

### Policy 1 – General

All agents, partners and contractors of the council will be required to comply with these policies.

### Policy 2 - Public Safety

The Council will manage trees to ensure that it meets its legal responsibilities, for example Duty of Care, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Managing Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Highways Act 1980, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, Working at Height Regulations 2005 and Occupiers' Liability Act 1984.

Public safety is of paramount importance when making decisions about trees and the Council has in place programmes for the regular inspection and maintenance of its trees. The Council will take into account the guidance given by The London Tree Officer Association's (LTOA) 'Risk Limitation Strategy' and the National Tree Safety Group's 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees' in its work to achieve this.

Community safety - Consideration will be given on a case by case basis for additional pruning over and above the tree maintenance schedule where serious obstruction of CCTV coverage by trees has occurred. Primarily this will address community and public safety priorities where critical factors apply. The welfare of trees and the maintenance of our tree stock will be of paramount importance when considering the extent of any additional tree works for CCTV coverage. The Tree Service will assess and advise on tree related issues prior to CCTV projects being progressed.

### Policy 3 – Arboriculture Standards, Maintenance and Biodiversity

The Council will ensure all Council tree work is carried out according to BS3998: 2010 British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work, and BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

All tree work will be conducted in line with policy and legislation requirements relating to wildlife. This includes the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and Statutory Notices under the Plant Health (Forestry) order 2005. Camden's Tree Policy will contribute to the Council's duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, as required under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and advocated in the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan.

Planning applications for development on Council land where trees are affected should be accompanied by a BS5837:2012 (Trees in relation to demolition, design and construction) survey.

Relevant local, regional and national planning policy and guidance which relates to trees include the following, and proposed development will be assessed against the following policies:

- LDF policy: CS14, CS15, DP22, DP24, DP25 and Camden Planning Guidance 1 (Section 6 - Landscape design and trees)
- London Plan Policy 7.21(Trees and woodland) and the Trees and Woodland Framework
- National Planning Policy Framework (Chapter 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)
- Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) which places a duty on the local authorities to include appropriate provision for the preservation and planting of trees

#### Policy 4 – Tree Removal

Trees will only be felled for sound arboriculture reasons such as:

- Dead, dying or dangerous
- Proven to be causing significant structural damage (in order to protect the Council's interests and to speed up the processing of claims the Council will manage and process subsidence claims for trees in accordance with the LTOA's Risk Limitation Strategy, the Joint Mitigation Protocol and a risk based approach where appropriate
- Considered by the Tree Service to be inappropriate species for the location
- When removal is required as part of an agreed management plan, or as an overall agreed improvement project. For example where a scheme has a robust project plan and there has been both public and Member engagement, or have been subject to the appropriate Planning process

Where a tree/s is identified for removal an advanced notice/s will be placed on the tree to inform the public, except where urgent and emergency work applies.

#### Policy 5 – Tree Planting

The Council will plant trees within its annual tree planting programme with regard to the 'right tree for the right site', and with the aim of achieving age and species diversification in its tree stock. Species selection will include native species of value to wildlife in in line with Camden's Biodiversity Action Plan.

Camden's policy is to replace and where possible, increase the Council's tree stock. To achieve this, the Council funds the planting of approximately 400 trees per annum. In addition we continuously work to secure additional external funding for tree planting.

#### Policy 6 – Tree Pruning

The following reasons will not constitute grounds for the pruning or removal of trees by the Council. However, if it is possible to improve the situation through general maintenance, this work will be carried out at the appropriate time as part of the cyclical maintenance regime:

- Obstruction of light, and or view
- Aphid honeydew, leaf-fall, the dropping of fruit and flowers
- Renewable energy systems such as solar panels or wind turbines
- To improve satellite/digital television reception
- Roosting birds in a tree and or their droppings
- Where a tree is perceived to be too large
- Allergies associated with trees, for example pollen and seed dispersal
- Someone willing to pay for the removal and replacement of a tree/s
- Causing disturbance to pavements or kerbs (in such cases an engineering solution will be sought).

The Council carries out tree pollarding programmes on a two and three year basis for trees mainly within parks, housing estates, street properties and streets. The pollarding programme mainly relates to areas of the borough that are prone to tree related subsidence, but it is also used as a tree management technique in certain circumstances at the direction of experienced, qualified tree officers.

#### Policy 7 – Decorative Lights and Decoration

Decorative lights in trees require permission from the Tree and Public Lighting sections. A procedure is available on application from the Tree section. It should be noted that trees require maintenance on a regular basis, and unless any decorative lighting has been removed in line with the procedure, the Council, or the tree contractor will not be responsible for damage caused to the equipment during tree work operations, including emergency works, or any related costs.

#### Policy 8 – Damage to Council Owned Trees and Compensation

The Council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to, or removal of any council owned tree/s to the value as calculated by the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) used by the Council.

3. This policy will be revised in line with changes in the management of the Council's tree stock, related legislation and industry guidance documents.
4. The Tree Service can be contacted on 020 7974 4444, or [treesection@camden.gov.uk](mailto:treesection@camden.gov.uk). For issues relating to private trees, the tree and landscape officers can be contacted on 020 7974 4444, or [planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk). For further information concerning tree management and planting in Camden, please see the Council's trees web page: [camden.gov.uk/trees](http://camden.gov.uk/trees).