



Date agreed	Committee	Minute number	Renewal date
19 th February 2024	Environment	623/23	February 2027

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Buckingham Town Council recognises the amenity and environmental value of trees, including as a means of carbon sequestration. This policy aims to establish guidelines for the sustainable management of trees to ensure safety, enhance the overall well-being of residents, promote environmental sustainability, and maintain a healthy urban treescape.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Town Council has committed to an annual Tree Planting event to meet the objective within its [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#): Food & Land - to promote sustainable land management, including tree planting to help absorb carbon & water.
- 1.2. Whilst the majority live and grow without incident, some specimens pose challenges and risks that need to be managed. This policy outlines how we intend to increase the number of trees across Buckingham, how we intend to manage the tree stock effectively, and how we reduce the risk that certain trees pose to the public.
- 1.3. The Town Council is only responsible for trees located on land owned by the Town Council. This tree policy does not cover trees in private ownership which are outside of the parish and Buckingham Town Council's control. Trees in private ownership are the responsibility of the private landowner. The policy also does not cover [Tree Preservation Orders](#).
- 1.4. The overall aim of the tree policy is to ensure that our tree stock is retained, enhanced and increased in the most proactive manner whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the public and property.

2. Management of the Council's Trees

- 2.1. Buckingham Town Council's Estates Manager is responsible for a rolling inspection programme of the Council's trees. Tree management software is used to ensure that a robust tree management schedule is in place. Tree inspections are undertaken on a yearly basis by the Estates Manager, allowing for monitoring and management of the tree stock. Basic pruning is undertaken by the Town Council staff and any more complicated tree work will be done by specialist tree contractors, i.e. if climbing is required.

- 2.2. This information is held on a database of trees and plotted on a mapping system. The programme assesses the trees' condition and health whilst highlighting any work that may be required to ensure the tree is retained in the best possible condition.
- 2.3. If a tree is highlighted to be dead, dying, diseased or dangerous and is posing an unacceptable risk to public safety, it will be identified for pruning or felling and either the in-house team or a specialist contractor employed to undertake the work.
- 2.4. The decision to prescribe work to a tree is calculated on a risk basis by the Estates Manager.
- 2.5. In conjunction with the inspection programme, the Town Council will maintain a rolling maintenance programme carrying out cyclical works and works highlighted by the Greenspaces Team or Estates Manager. This rolling programme helps to reduce avoidable risks and issues.
- 2.6. Felling and or pruning will not be undertaken for the following reasons:
 - Blocking light
 - Television or satellite signals
 - Residents do not 'like' the tree
 - Leaf, sap or fruit drop
 - Unproven allegations of subsidence or direct damage
 - Construction of dropped kerbs or new driveways
 - Perceived threat
 - The tree's size; 'its got too big'
 - The tree ' moves in the wind'
 - Bird droppings
 - Aphids

The above is not an exhaustive list but is representative of a number of customer enquiries.

- 2.7. Further to an inspection, the Estates Manager may agree to undertake a variety of pruning operations to remedy complaints provided that the long-term health, appearance, or potential development of the tree is not affected.
- 2.8. As part of good arboricultural management, the removal of trees will be carried out when it will benefit the long-term development of adjacent better-quality trees i.e. woodland and copse management. Furthermore, formative pruning may be carried out following the Estates Manager (or qualified contractor's) inspections, for example:
 - Removal of crossing, weak or competitive branches
 - Crown balancing
 - Dead wooding
 - Crown lifting
 - Crown thinning
- 2.9. All arisings from tree works where possible will be used in a variety of situations on site or within the town including: mulches for shrub beds, habitat piles or dead standing timber where suitable.

3. Wildlife and Conservation

- 3.1. Tree works shall be carried out whilst ensuring adherence to all wildlife and conservation laws are adhered to including:
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1995)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004
 - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 4 Tree Management Policy 2018-2021
 - The Town and Country Planning (Trees) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
 - The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007
 - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997
- 3.2. The Council recognises the different levels of risk represented by a hazard tree when it is located in different sites and will manage them appropriately.
- 3.3. Higher levels of risk will be acceptable in locations where there is a lower footfall e.g. middle of a woodland area as opposed to a highway situation. This will allow the retention of veteran trees without undue risk whilst encouraging bio-diversity and habitat retention.

4. Communication

- 4.1. If significant tree works are planned and where possible the Town Council will communicate with the public and Councillors as to what and why any arboricultural work is being carried out. In some instances site notices will be used.
- 4.2. In the event of emergency health and safety work that must be carried out immediately (e.g. storm conditions), an Officer will notify Councillors and other stakeholders retrospectively.
- 4.3. Felling is the last resort and will only be carried out when deemed necessary by the Qualified Officer. However, public safety is paramount and for this reason the public will be informed of tree works, via Councillors and notices, but will not be consulted for approval.

5. Subsidence

- 5.1. When the Town Council receives a subsidence claim the Town Councils insurance company, supported by the Town Councils Estates Manger and possibly with an Arboriculture Consultant will manage all claims relating to subsidence. When investigating claims of subsidence and damage to properties from a tree owned and maintained by the Council, the onus will be on the claimant to provide evidence that the tree is the cause each case is looked at individually.
- 5.2. The claimant or their building insurers may have to submit a structural engineers report demonstrating that on balance of probability the tree is the cause of the damage. This will enable the Town Council to review the evidence and determine the appropriate course of action.

5.3 The Council will challenge unwarranted claims based on insufficient or inaccurate evidence. A successful claim will not necessarily result in the tree being felled. Options include remedial work to the tree such as heavy repeated crown reductions to prevent further damage.

6. Replacement Trees

- 6.1. It is the Council's policy that every effort is made to plant more trees than are felled and ensure that over the years the Town retains its tree stock for future generations. However it is recognised that it is not always practical or prudent to replace a tree in the same location or with the same species that was previously planted.
- 6.2. The Town council will always aim to plant the 'right tree in the right place' to ensure the longevity and suitability of the tree stock.
- 6.3. The Council will work proactively to manage or facilitate replacement tree planting, which may include but not be limited to, working with the community and Buckingham Tree Wardens, considering annual planting schemes, including memorial trees, community woodlands.