

# **Tree Management Approach**

## **Purpose and Objectives**

This document sets out the Council's approach to the sustainable, safe and responsible management of trees across parks, green spaces, allotments, cemeteries, closed churchyards and other land managed by the Council.

It aims to:

- Protect public safety through proportionate, risk-led inspection and maintenance.
- Safeguard and enhance canopy cover, biodiversity and climate resilience.
- Preserve amenity, heritage and landscape character, including veteran and notable trees.
- Support the Council's commitments on climate, nature recovery and net zero.
- Provide transparent standards for inspections, works, planting, community engagement and data management.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and good practice.

## **Scope**

This document covers all trees on land managed by the Council within:

- Parks and Green Spaces
- Council Housing Sites
- Cemeteries & Closed churchyards
- Other land owned or managed by the Council

It excludes highways and privately owned trees.

## **Legal and Policy Context**

The Council will manage trees in accordance with applicable legislation and good practice, including the Health and Safety at Work Act, Wildlife and Countryside Act, Town and Country Planning Act, Forestry Act, Environment Act, Occupiers' Liability Act and relevant British Standards (BS 3998:2010, BS 5837).

## Risk Management and Inspections

Principles: Proportionate, risk-based, and documented.

All trees are formally inspected on a rolling three-year inspection cycle using the THREATS methodology. THREATS stands for:

**T** = Targets: Identify people, property, and infrastructure that could be affected by tree failure.

**H** = History: Review past works, failures, and site conditions influencing tree stability.

**R** = Risk Features: Assess structural defects, decay, cavities, cracks, and root plate condition.

**E** = Environment: Consider soil type, drainage, exposure, wind loading, and site changes.

**A** = Age and Species: Factor in species-specific characteristics, growth habit, and life stage.

**T** = Tree Condition: Evaluate vitality, crown density, leaf cover, and signs of stress or disease.

**S** = Safety Priority: Assign a risk rating and prioritise works based on likelihood and consequence.

Inspections are recorded and documented within the MyTrees tree management system. Information such as THREATS observations, GIS mapping, photographs, and recommended actions are recorded.

## Works Specification and Prioritisation

Works follow BS 3998:2010 and ecological constraints. Priorities are set by the tree inspector in the form of a Safety Action Date (SAD) but generally fall within one of the following categories:

- Emergency (within 24 hours)
- Urgent Safety (within 28 days)
- Programmed A (within 3 to 6 months)
- Programmed B (within 6 to 12 months)
- Routine Planned Work (12 months plus)
- Cyclical Planned work

## **Planting, Canopy and Succession**

Our Approach: Right tree, right place, right reason. Tree planting is delivered subject to available funding via Green Spaces Action Plans (GAPs), rewilding, replacement planting, community schemes.

## **Biosecurity, Pests and Diseases**

Biosecurity protocol: clean tools, source bio secure stock. Monitor pests and diseases annually (e.g., ash dieback, oak processionary moth).

[www.stalbans.gov.uk/tree-pests-and-diseases](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/tree-pests-and-diseases)

## **Ecology and Veteran Trees**

Retain and buffer veteran trees where safe; retain deadwood away from high-risk targets; pre-works wildlife checks.

## **Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards**

Plan works around services/interments; respect memorials; obtain faculty consent where required.

## **Communications and Engagement**

Website updates for major planting; GAPs public engagement with Herts CMS; volunteer days for larger schemes.