



# **Tree Strategy**

## **Good Practice Guide 2 Tree Management Guidance**



**July 2009**

## **Good Practice Guide 2**

### **Tree management Guidance**

1. Purpose of the guide
2. Introduction
3. Management programs for council trees
4. Dealing with requests for work to trees managed by the Council
5. Consultations regarding works to Council managed trees
6. Dealing with Tree Preservation Order applications and Conservation Area Notifications
7. When can trees be felled?
8. When can trees be pruned?
9. Tree management guide
10. Summary
11. More information...

## **1. Purpose of the guide**

These guidelines are intended as a supplementary note to accompany the Tree Policy and aims to demonstrate in a transparent manner how the Council acts in caring for our own trees and our dealings with private trees protected by legislation. We outline High Peak Borough Council's approach to tree management and describe in broad terms, situations where we are likely to consider pruning, felling or other forms of tree appropriate. The types of tree work that are normally considered acceptable as good practice within the authority are described in more detail on Good Practice Guide 1 –Tree work.

## **2. Introduction**

Work to trees is often necessary to ensure they are maintained in as healthy and attractive condition as possible. The guidance identifies typical situations where the different types of tree work are applicable, though each tree will always be assessed on its merits. Work to our trees will be carried out by an approved specialist arboricultural contractor or Parks staff and will be in accordance with current UK and EEC legislation, guidance, British Standards and Codes of Practice, where they apply.

## **3. Management programs for council trees**

Trees in urban areas require careful management. Tree management should include regular prioritised inspections and programmed maintenance work. This maintenance may include the removal of some trees, pruning of others and replacement planting, with the aim of maintaining the overall tree cover in a safe and healthy condition.

The Council has an Arboricultural Officer based within Parks section who is responsible for inspection and management of council trees. The management of council owned trees is based on a combination of regular inspections and maintenance of some trees and in response to requests for tree inspection and maintenance works. The aim is to gradually move towards a situation where most trees in council ownership are recorded and included within a prioritised inspection and maintenance regime, however resources are limited and this may take some time to fully achieve.

## **4. Dealing with requests for work to trees managed by the Council.**

Requests for tree inspections and work from the public are received made directly to the Arboricultural Officer or via the call centre. Other requests for inspections of trees are received via other High Peak Borough Council Officers and Councillors, High Peak Community Housing, Derbyshire County Council, utility companies amongst others. All requests are recorded and prioritised according to urgency; with safety issues give the greatest weighting.

Response times to request vary dependent on the number of requests received at any time. The aim however is to undertake most inspections within 4 weeks of the request and the enquirer advised of the decision within 2 weeks of a visit. Where longer response times are anticipated the enquirer will be informed. Any tree works required will be programmed dependent on their urgency, appropriateness and availability of resources. Some tree works may be recommended for inclusion within existing programs of works.

All tree works recommended will be guided by the policy and the Good Practice Guides. However if an individual is unsatisfied with the decision and following further discussion with the Arboricultural Officer an agreement cannot be reached a formal complaint can be made using the Council's existing procedures. The case will be investigated by the appropriate Business Manager. Appeals against decisions on highways trees may be made to Derbyshire County Council.

## **5. Consultations regarding works to Council managed trees**

The aim of the tree policy is to set a standard and guidelines that the council will work to when managing trees the policy has been subject to consultation within the Council, its partners and the public. However where there are tree works that are considered to be of particular public interest or where there are special circumstances and the proposed works deviate from standards outline in the policy additional consultation may be undertaken. Generally pruning works within the guidelines set out in this Good Practice Guide and Good Practice Guide 1 – Tree Work, it is considered that these are unlikely to be contentious and rarely will require additional consultation. The felling of prominent mature trees is more likely to be of public concern.

Where mature trees are to be felled as part of an improvement program for example to thin out a mature stand of trees, improve the species composition of a group or to allow improvement programmes to go ahead and there is no immediate concern that the trees are unsafe consultation will be undertaken. Notices will be placed in the locality of tree or trees, ward Councillors will be informed as will appropriate local groups, such as Friends of Parks, Parish Council's and Amenity Societies. The responses of interested parties will be considered prior to works commencing.

Where trees are posing a hazard and felling is the only practical solution it will not generally be practical to undertake a public consultation. However where the tree is in a prominent location and timescales allow notification of the Council's intention to fell the tree and the reasons why it is necessary will be made public by placing notices on the tree and contacting the local ward Councillors and appropriate resident and local public groups, such as Friends of Parks, Parish Councils and Amenity Societies.

When to undertake consultations will be at the discretion of the Arboricultural Officer in consultation with the Parks Manager.

## **6. Dealing with Tree Preservation Order applications and Conservation Area Notifications**

When dealing with privately owned trees which are protected by the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 the Council will follow the statutory procedures and timescales for dealing with applications and consultation. The right of appeal in relation to these trees is also a statutory matter therefore differs from dealing with the Council's own trees.

When the council receives applications to undertake work to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order it has 8 weeks to make a decision and in the case of Conservation Area notifications it has 6 weeks from the date they are received. These applications are entered on a registrar which is available for the public to view and the applications are circulated on a weekly list of planning applications.

To prevent works proceeding in a Conservation Area the Council must make a Tree Preservation Order in respect of the tree or trees in question. The Council is only likely to undertake this action where appropriate trees works cannot be agreed with the applicant and the trees in question are of sufficient amenity to warrant inclusion within a Tree Preservation Order. When a Tree Preservation Order is made the tree owner has the right to object to the order, if the objections cannot be resolved with the Arboricultural Officer the matter will be referred to the Development Control Committee before the Tree Preservation Order is confirmed.

When an application to undertake works to a tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order is refused the applicant is informed of their right of appeal to the Secretary of State and an inspector will visit the site to assess the case. The council must abide by the Secretary of State's decision in such cases.

Applications to undertake works to protected trees will be dealt using the same guidelines as for Council trees as outlined in this guide and GPG1 – Tree Work.

## **7. When can trees be felled?**

High Peak Borough Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary and pruning solutions will always be considered first. Each case will be carefully judged on its merits. Tree felling will not be permitted for mature trees of high amenity value unless there is very clear justification for the work. There may be cases where the value of the tree, in terms of amenity value, cultural importance or biodiversity may override the reason to fell. Conversely where a tree is of limited amenity value or a relatively young specimen the justification for felling will not need to be as vigorous as for a mature tree of high amenity.

The table at section 9 gives guidance on common situations where felling may be considered.

## **8. When can trees be pruned?**

Pruning, particular heavy pruning, should not be carried out if it is not necessary since any cutting can weaken the tree and allow decay organisms to enter exposed and vulnerable tissue. Pruning of a healthy tree may cause it to respond by producing vigorous new growth and in certain species the harder the pruning then the more vigorous will be the regrowth. Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger ones and substantial pruning can be very damaging particularly in species which are not naturally tolerant of cutting. Tree pruning will not be permitted where the tree is of high amenity value and there is no justification for the work. Work will also be resisted if the tree has been pruned during the previous 2 years, unless there are special circumstances agreed by the Arboricultural Officer. As with felling, each case will be carefully judged on its merits.

The table at section 9 gives guidance on common situations where pruning may be considered and the type of pruning that is likely to be advised.

## **9. Guide to tree management**

The intention of the following table is to provide a guide to the types of pruning that will be acceptable to resolve common issues that arise in relation to trees. It also gives guidance of when trees may be considered for felling. It is impossible to be entirely prescriptive or to consider in detail all situations that may arise but it outlines the Council's general approach and will act as the basis of all day to day decisions in response to requests for tree work.

The types of tree pruning recommend are describe in GPG 1 which should be read in conjunction with this guide.

## 9. Guide to tree management

Common reasons for tree work		Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.1	Risk reduction		Pruning	Felling
9.1.1	Removal of hazards or reduction of risks. For example the removal of dead or diseased material, broken branches and storm damage to make a tree safe, or to re-shape and balance the crown.	<p>The two main hazards from trees are from falling branches or the risk of the stem or root plate failing and the whole tree collapsing. Dead and dying trees can be a hazard as the branches become brittle and are more prone to failure. How the level of risk is assessed is detailed at GPG5.</p> <p>Dead trees provide a valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife and should therefore not be automatically felled and an assessment of each tree needs to be made. The pruning of the tree to reduce risk will be considered in the first instance. In informal areas, with low occupancy dead and dying trees may be rendered into a safe condition by reducing the branch structure.</p>	<p>A variety of pruning may be appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of deadwood /crown cleaning</li> <li>• Crown reduction</li> <li>• Removal of selective branches.</li> </ul> <p>In some cases 'topping' may be appropriate if the stem can be retained safely for its biodiversity and wildlife value.</p>	<p>If the risk assessment indicates that the tree is an unacceptable risk.</p>
9.1.2	Trees causing a legal nuisance	<p>A "legal nuisance" is one that is actionable in law and a tree cannot be a "legal nuisance" to its owner. Examples include physical damage to another owner's property caused by roots or branches. Structural problems must always be carefully investigated and private owners will be expected to provide proof that a particular tree is causing damage to the property.</p>	<p>Any or occasionally a combination of the following dependent of circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown thinning</li> <li>• Crown lifting</li> <li>• Crown reduction</li> </ul>	<p>Felling only considered as a last resort if the nuisance is severe and cannot be addressed by pruning and alternative solutions have been considered.</p> <p>Also if the tree is relatively young and has a high growth potential and the nuisance is likely to be recurring.</p>

	Common reasons for tree work	Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Risk reduction (continued)</b>		<b>Pruning</b>	<b>Felling</b>
9.1.3	Trees giving rise to justifiable fears about the risk of crime or trees which have provided access and/or cover for criminal acts, vandalism and harassment for local residents.	The management of trees in instances such as this may be one of a variety of solutions considered.	The type of work that will be required for this type of case will vary greatly with circumstances.	Felling will only be acceptable as a last resort and where other solutions have been considered.
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Good maintenance and aesthetics</b>		<b>Pruning</b>	<b>Felling</b>
9.2.1	Structural or formative pruning to improve crown shape and branch structure. Usually to avoid future more harmful pruning in the future or loss of tree.	<p>Usually works for this reason are undertaken to young or semi-mature trees, however in some cases structural pruning may be undertaken to more mature trees to restore the crowns of trees that have been badly pruned in the past or to remove weak structural points in the tree which may become a hazard.</p> <p>Pruning for purely aesthetic reasons such as to balance the shape of the crown will only be undertaken in formal areas and only be a very light removal of the crown area usually less than 15%.</p>	<p>Usually one of the following types of pruning will be specified dependent on the circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative pruning</li> <li>• Restoration pruning</li> <li>• Selective branch removal</li> </ul>	Only if tree is of a very poor form and of low amenity value and pruning cannot achieve a desirable result.
9.2.2	Disease prevention and control	<p>From time to time diseases may affect a proportion of the tree population which require control. In such instances it may be necessary to fell diseased trees for the benefit of the general population</p> <p>In these cases the guidance of appropriate bodies such as the Forestry Authority and Arboricultural Association will be followed</p>	Removal of infected limbs	Felling of diseased trees as appropriate and in accordance with guidance.

	Common reasons for tree work	Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.2	Good maintenance and aesthetics (continued)		Pruning	Felling
9.2.3	<p>Woodland /group management</p> <p>Thinning, coppicing and other similar operations being undertaken as part of an approved management plan to maintain woodland and promote good Sylvicultural or Arboricultural practice.</p>	<p>The felling of trees to thin out a small copse or woodland is necessary for the overall maintenance of the group</p> <p>This work type of work essential during the establishment to reduce the number of young trees in a woodland or group. This is done gradually allowing the best trees to flourish and encouraging healthy growth and development. Sometimes tree removal from mature stands may be necessary to promote regeneration and improve the age structure. Sometimes it is necessary to selectively thin groups of trees to remove non native or evasive species to benefit the group as a whole in the longer term.</p>	Removal of lower limbs of trees	If the removal of selective trees will benefit the health, structure or biodiversity value of the group as a whole
9.2.4	Wildlife habitat improvement	<p>Occasionally it may be necessary to fell trees to promote particular habitat, for example to prevent loss of moorland, meadowland or unimproved grassland to encourage native tree species or ground flora.</p> <p>Other maintenance practices such as hedge laying and the creation of deadwood habitats may be appropriate to improve the biodiversity value of wooded areas.</p>	<p>The type of pruning will be dependent on the circumstances and should be justified. Innovative techniques such as cornet pruning may also be used</p>	<p>The felling of trees must be clearly justified for each situation and the wildlife value of the trees also taken into account.</p>

	Common reasons for tree work	Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Good maintenance and aesthetics (continued)</b>		<b>Pruning</b>	<b>Felling</b>
9.2.5	Removal or pruning to allow authorised development or redevelopment.	<p>It may sometimes be necessary to fell trees to permit development to take place. Every effort will be made to retain trees on development sites in accordance with current planning guidance and GPG 3.</p> <p>Where trees are removed replacement planting will normally be required as a condition of the planning consent.</p>	Pruning will only be allowed in accordance with the guidance in GPG 1 & 3.	Only allowed in accordance with approved scheme and planning guidance when alternative options have been considered.
<b>9.3</b>	<b>Prevention of damage</b>		<b>Pruning</b>	<b>Felling</b>
9.3.1	Trees physically in contact with buildings and roofs or where trees are restricting access for repairs and maintenance of property, or authorised construction work.	When assessing planning applications the proximity of trees to proposed buildings will be a consideration. However in some cases planning consent may be granted where it will be necessary to prune trees to allow construction.	Crown or selective branch reduction or lifting as appropriate.	Felling only considered as a last resort if the obstruction cannot be address by pruning or if the tree has a high growth potential and would be inappropriate for long term retention in that location.
9.3.2	Trees in close proximity to walls and fences which are causing damage.	<p>As trees grow the increasing girth of the stem and roots can displace walls and fences. Also the movement of branches may cause damage.</p> <p>In some cases it is possible to realign walls/fences or to create a bridge over the root buttress or gap in the boundary to accommodate the tree. Solid boundary structures may also be replaced with hedges.</p>	Removal or reduction of selective branches or crown lifting.	<p>If the tree is a relatively young tree with a high growth potential and damage is foreseeable and unavoidable as it grows.</p> <p>Where the wall or fence has been made unsafe or is likely to become so in the near future and alternative remedies are not possible.</p>

	Common reasons for tree work	Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.3	Prevention of damage (continued)		Pruning	Felling
9.3.3	Trees growing close to and likely to obstruct or interfere with above ground service equipment such as street lighting, CCTV, overhead cables and road signs.	<p>Tree branches may obstruct or become entangle with services equipment such as electricity lines, telephone cables or street lighting and signage.</p> <p>Utility service providers have statutory authority to clear their operational equipment where this is the case the council will liaise with them to agree the most sensitive pruning regime possible.</p>	<p>Any or occasionally a combination of the following dependent of circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown lifting</li> <li>• Crown reduction</li> <li>• Selective branch removal</li> </ul>	<p>If a relatively young tree with a high growth potential is in the immediate proximity of the equipment and regular and harmful pruning will be required to retain it in that location.</p> <p>If it is a mature and important amenity tree only if alterative solutions cannot be found such as pruning or relocation of the service in question.</p>
9.3.4	Trees growing close to and likely to obstruct or interfere with underground services such as drains, electricity, telephone cables and gas mains.	<p>If drains are damaged and are leaking water tree roots may be attracted to the moisture source and proliferate in the drains causing blockages. These can often be removed and the drains repaired without the need to remove the tree or undertake drastic root pruning.</p> <p>Damage to underground cables is rare but access to these for maintenance sometimes requires excavation in the vicinity of the tree roots. Also damage may occur during the installation of new services in close proximity to existing trees. The guidelines of NJUG 10 should be followed where these works are required.</p>	<p>Root pruning should only be undertaken where it is unavoidable and specified in agreement with the Arboricultural Officer.</p>	<p>Felling will only be allowed where essential works to services are required and access cannot be achieved without damage to the root system that will undermine the future health and stability of the tree.</p> <p>In some case where a young tree with a high growth potential has established in close proximity to an underground service access point such as a manhole.</p>

Common reasons for tree work		Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.4	Highway safety		Pruning	Felling
9.4.1	Obstruction to the public highway or growing low over footpath, public right of way or access to property, gardens or open spaces where the public have access.	<p>The Highways Authority can enforce the pruning or removal of a tree, including privately owned trees, obstructing the highway.</p> <p>Guidance recommends that a minimum clearance of 2.1m should be maintained over public footpaths and 5.2m above the carriageway of adopted highways.</p>	Crown lifting or selective branch reduction.	Felling only considered if the obstruction is severe cannot be address by pruning.
9.4.2	Obstruction to highway sightlines	The Highways Authority can enforce the pruning or removal of a tree, including privately owned trees, obstructing sightlines at road junctions.	Crown lifting or selective branch reduction.	Felling only considered if the obstruction is severe cannot be address by pruning, or where a young tree will clearly be an ongoing problem.
9.4.3	Root and buttress damage to footpath surfaces and causing a trip hazard	<p>Tree roots which grow under footpaths can cause the surfaces to lift and in some cases where this is severe cause a tripping hazard.</p> <p>In many cases it is possible to lift the surface and remove the soil displaced by the roots and relay the surface to provide a satisfactory result. It may also be possible to raise the levels over the root system to accommodate the roots.</p>	Root pruning should only be undertaken where it is unavoidable and specified in agreement with the Arboricultural Officer	Felling will only be considered where the repair is essential and all other solutions have been considered and a satisfactory result cannot be achieved without damage to the root system that will undermine the future health and stability of the tree.

Common reasons for tree work		Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.5	General nuisance		Pruning	Felling
9.5.1	Trees blocking daylight from habitable rooms and gardens to a severe and unreasonable degree	<p>The seriousness of this effect is as variable as the perception of it. Various factors can affect the light reaching a property or garden including the aspect and other obstructions.</p> <p>Pruning will normally only be carried out where the trees are significant contributory factor and there is a reasonable chance that pruning will improve the situation. The effect of restricting light can sometimes be reduced by crown thinning the tree. Although this will not increase the amount of light to the maximum level possible, it is usually a satisfactory compromise.</p> <p>Shading of habitable rooms of property will be given more weight than the shading of the garden.</p>	In most cases crown thinning but occasionally crown lifting or reduction dependent on circumstances.	Felling for this reason will normally only be acceptable where there is a dense group of trees and some trees can be removed to benefit the growth of the group as a whole.
9.5.2	Trees causing a general nuisance which prevent the reasonable enjoyment of the home and garden.	In addition to shading large trees can cause a number of other common complaints such as leaf fall, dropping of small twigs, seeds, berries etc. Also insects and birds associated with trees can be a cause for concern, honeydew a sticky substance produced by aphids tends to adhere to surfaces below the tree and sometimes attracts wasps, also bird droppings can be an issue where the tree tends to attract large numbers of birds.	<p>Any or occasionally a combination of the following dependent of circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown thinning</li> <li>• Crown lifting</li> <li>• Crown reduction</li> <li>• Removal of dead wood</li> </ul>	Felling for this reason will normally only be acceptable where there is a dense group of trees and the removal of some will benefit the group as a whole.

	Common reasons for tree work	Comments	Tree work solution normally advised	
9.5	General nuisance (continued)		Pruning	Felling
9.5.2	Trees causing a general nuisance which prevent the reasonable enjoyment of the home and garden.(continued)	The same principles apply; pruning will normally only be carried out where the trees are significant contributory factor and there is a reasonable chance that pruning will improve the situation		
9.5.3	Trees affecting with the reception of terrestrial, satellite and digital television signals	<p>Interference with signals is worse when the leaves are on the trees and in bad windy and rainy weather satellite and digital reception is more sensitive to interference than television reception.</p> <p>In most cases, the situation can be significantly improved or solved by careful pruning or the relocation of the aerial. Boosters are also available which can improve the reception significantly. These options are far cheaper and less destructive than the felling or pruning of a tree.</p> <p>There is no legal right to TV reception and interference is not at present a legal 'nuisance' as defined in law.</p> <p>Pruning will normally only be carried out where the trees are significant contributory factor and there is a reasonable chance that pruning will improve the situation</p>	<p>If works can be undertaken within guidelines in GPG 1 the following may be considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown lifting</li> <li>• Crown reduction</li> <li>• Selective branch removal</li> </ul>	Only if there are other reasons for removing the tree.

## 10. Summary

- The council will endeavor to respond to all requests for tree inspections within 4 weeks and provide a decision within 2 weeks of the visit by the Arboricultural Officer.
- Work to council managed trees will following the guidelines set out in section 9 of this document and be prioritised dependent on urgency, appropriateness and availability of resources.
- Public consultation will be undertaken at the discretion of council officers and generally only when the felling of prominent mature trees is being considered and safety is not an overriding issue.
- All applications to undertake work to protected trees will be considered following statutory guidelines and within the statutory timescales.
- Pruning only with acceptable limits and to specifications outline in GPG 1.
- Where appropriate a pruning solution will always be attempted in the first instance and felling only consider if this fails.
- Request for pruning will be resisted if the tree has had some work done in the last 2 years.
- The amenity and importance of tree will be taken into account when considering the justification for works

## 11. More Information

### For Further information contact

Arboricultural Officer  
High Peak Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Hayfield Road  
Chapel-en-Le Frith  
SK23 0QJ  
Tel: 0845 129 7777  
Email: [monicag@highpeak.gov.uk](mailto:monicag@highpeak.gov.uk)

### Other useful contacts

Arboricultural Association	Tel: 01794 368717 <a href="http://www.trees.org.uk">www.trees.org.uk</a>
Bat conservation Trust	Tel: 020 7627 2629 Bat Helpline: 0845 1300 228 (local rate) Website: <a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a>
British Standards	020 8996 9001 <a href="http://www.bsstandards.co.uk">www.bsstandards.co.uk</a>

Department of Communities and local government (DCLG)	020 7944 4400 <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	01773 881188 <a href="http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk">www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk</a>
International society of arboriculture	0121 556 8302 <a href="http://www.isa-arboriculture.org">www.isa-arboriculture.org</a>
Natural England (Derbyshire Office)	Tel: 01629 816640 <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>
The Tree Council	0207 407 9992 <a href="http://www.treecouncil.org.uk">www.treecouncil.org.uk</a>
Woodland Trust	01476 581135 <a href="http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk">www.woodland-trust.org.uk</a>

### Useful Documents

High Peak Borough Council – Have your Say – Complaints <a href="http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/consultation/complaint.asp">http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/consultation/complaint.asp</a>
National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) Publication No:10 - Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees. (Currently under review)
Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures Available from DCLG website <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>
Tree Preservation Order Appeals: How the Process Works Available from DCLG website <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>
Tree preservation Orders a Guide to law and Good Practice Available from DCLG website <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>