



## **TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Date of Adoption 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

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### **1. Introduction**

This Tree Management Policy sets out the Council's formal approach to the management, care and maintenance of trees within its ownership or responsibility. The policy provides a clear framework for decision-making to ensure that trees are managed in a safe, sustainable and proportionate manner, balancing public safety, environmental value, amenity, biodiversity and statutory responsibilities.

This document establishes when tree pruning and other interventions are considered appropriate, the criteria used to determine when intervention is or is not required, the standards to which works must be undertaken, and the Council's approach to identifying, prioritising and managing risks associated with its tree stock.

### **2. Objectives of the Policy**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Protect public safety by managing foreseeable risks associated with Council-owned trees.
- Maintain and enhance the health, longevity and amenity value of the Council's tree stock.
- Ensure that tree works are justified, proportionate and based on sound arboriculture principles.
- Promote consistency, transparency and accountability in tree management decisions.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, standards and best practice guidance.
- Support biodiversity, climate resilience and wider environmental objectives.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all trees that are owned by, or for which responsibility rests with, Tickhill Town Council.

Trees on private land are outside the scope of this policy, except where statutory powers or duties apply.

### **4. Legislative and Policy Context**

Tree management activities will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- Highways Act 1980
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (including Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas)
- British Standard BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work – Recommendations

## **5. The Council's Tree Management Principles**

The Council will manage its tree stock in accordance with the following principles:

- Trees are valuable assets that provide significant environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Trees should be retained wherever reasonably practicable and managed to promote long-term health and stability.
- Intervention will only be undertaken where it is necessary, justified and proportionate.
- Decisions will be based on professional arboriculture assessment and evidence.
- Risk will be managed to a tolerable level rather than eliminated entirely.

### **5.1 New Tree Planting and Care Guide**

Protection:

All new trees to be protected with a spiral tree guard around each new tree to prevent damage and a stake and soft tree tie to support the tree and prevent leaning or breakage.

Mulching:

A biodegradable hessian mulch mat should be placed around the base of the tree with additional mulch appropriate for the species of tree.

The mat should be secured with pegs to keep it in place.

Ensure mulch type and depth are appropriate for the tree species.

Maintenance:

Care should be taken when cutting grass or vegetation around the base of new trees to avoid damage, if strimming, the strimmer should not be used too closely or come into contact with the tree.

Weed Control:

During the tree's dormant period, glyphosate may be applied to the ground around the tree to control weeds, taking care not to contact the tree itself.

## **6. Tree Pruning and Intervention**

### **6.1 When Tree Pruning Is Considered Appropriate**

Tree pruning or other interventions may be considered appropriate where one or more of the following apply:

- To address an identified and significant risk to public safety or property.
- To remove dead, dying or dangerous branches where they present a foreseeable hazard.
- To maintain statutory clearances over highways, footways, cycleways, street lighting, signage or buildings.
- To facilitate access for essential services or Council operations.
- To manage tree health by removing defective, diseased or damaged material.
- To comply with legal obligations or statutory notices.

Pruning will not be undertaken solely to address issues such as shading, leaf fall, fruit drop, bird activity or perceived inconvenience, unless there is a demonstrable and reasonable justification.

## **6.2 Criteria for Determining When Intervention Is Not Required**

Intervention will generally not be required where:

- A tree is healthy, structurally sound and does not present an unacceptable level of risk.
- Issues raised relate to normal and expected characteristics of trees.
- Minor defects are present but are unlikely to result in harm within a reasonable timescale.
- The risk posed is considered tolerable when balanced against the benefits provided by the tree.

## **6.3 Standards for Tree Works**

All tree works shall:

- Be specified and supervised, where appropriate, by a suitably qualified arboriculture professional.
- Be undertaken in accordance with BS 3998:2010 and any subsequent revisions.
- Follow industry best practice and recognised arboriculture techniques.
- Avoid unnecessary or excessive pruning that could compromise tree health, structure or appearance.
- Take account of wildlife legislation, including nesting birds and protected species.

## **7. Tree Risk Management**

### **7.1 Risk Management Approach**

The Council adopts a risk-based approach to tree management. This recognises that while trees can present hazards, the overall risk is generally low and must be balanced against the significant benefits trees provide.

The aim is to identify and manage foreseeable and significant risks to a level that is reasonable and proportionate, rather than to eliminate all risk.

## **7.2 Hazard Identification**

Tree-related hazards are identified through:

- Planned, systematic tree inspections.
- Reactive inspections following reports from the public, Council officers or partner organisations.
- Inspections following severe weather events.

Hazards may include structural defects, decay, instability, deadwood, pest or disease impacts, or conflicts with surrounding infrastructure.

## **7.3 Risk Assessment and Prioritisation**

Identified hazards will be assessed by a competent arboriculture professional, taking into account:

- The nature and severity of the defect.
- The likelihood of failure.
- The potential consequences of failure, including the presence and frequency of targets.

Risks will be prioritised so that:

- High-risk trees or defects are addressed promptly.
- Medium-risk issues are managed within a planned timeframe.
- Low-risk issues are monitored through routine inspection cycles.

## **7.4 Monitoring and Review**

Trees with identified defects that do not warrant immediate intervention will be:

- Recorded within the Council's tree management system.
- Subject to increased monitoring or re-inspection as appropriate.
- Reassessed if site conditions, tree condition or usage levels change.

## **8. Tree Inspections and Surveys**

### **8.1 Inspection Frequency**

Tree inspections will be undertaken at frequencies appropriate to the level of risk and location, for example:

- High-use or high-risk locations (such as St Mary's Car Park): typically, every 12–24 months.
- Moderate-low use areas (such as the green space/community orchard\*): typically, every 24–36 months.

Additional inspections will be undertaken following severe weather events or where specific concerns are raised.

## **8.2 Competence and Qualifications**

All tree inspections and surveys will be undertaken by suitably qualified and competent arboriculture professionals. This includes individuals who:

- Hold relevant arboriculture qualifications.
- Have appropriate training and experience in tree inspection and risk assessment.
- Maintain professional competence through ongoing training and development.

## **9. Records and Data Management**

The Council will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of:

- Tree inspections and survey findings.
- Identified defects and risk assessments.
- Recommended and completed works.
- Monitoring and re-inspection requirements.

These records support transparency, accountability and informed decision-making.

## **10. Review of the Policy**

This Tree Management Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current, effective and aligned with legislation, best practice and the Council's wider policies and objectives.

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This policy provides the framework for consistent, professional and proportionate management of the Council's tree stock, ensuring public safety while safeguarding the long-term value of trees for the community and the environment.

\*Where Community Orchard is referred to throughout this document this is the temporary name given to the land to the North of Scarborough Close which will be re-named following public consultation.

## **Appendix A**

## Guidelines on Tree Inspections

<b>Level 1 - Routine Tree Inspection</b>	
<p>A basic visual inspection to identify any obvious defects or problems with the tree.</p> <p>This is the fastest and least thorough form of inspection intended for managing large populations of trees carried out as a walk-over inspection and can be carried out by council members and staff.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes of the inspection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No further action until next scheduled level 1 inspection.</li> <li>• Tree work is identified, prioritised and planned</li> <li>• A level 2 inspection is scheduled where a possible issue is noticed but that no imminent danger.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 - Individual Tree Risk Inspection</b>	
<p>This is a more detailed inspection of a single tree carried out from the ground using a recognised method called Visual Tree Assessment (VTA), which is accepted professionally and legally in the UK. Simple tools such as a mallet, binoculars, probes, or a spade may be used.</p> <p>While this inspection cannot always fully assess internal decay, roots, or the very top of the tree, it usually provides enough information to decide how the tree should be managed.</p> <p>A risk assessment is completed to compare the level of risk posed by the tree against what is considered acceptable, and to decide what action (if any) is needed to reduce the risk.</p> <p>This inspection should be carried out by an independent arboricultural consultant.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes of the inspection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the risk is very low (less than 1 in 10,000), no further investigation is needed and routine Level 1 inspections continue, <b>or</b></li> <li>• If the risk is higher than acceptable, tree work is specified to reduce the risk, <b>or</b></li> <li>• Another Level 2 inspection is planned for a different season (for example, when the tree is in leaf or when fungi may be visible), <b>or</b></li> <li>• Level 1 inspections are carried out more often to monitor a developing issue, <b>or</b></li> <li>• A Level 3 inspection is arranged if more detailed investigation is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 - Detailed Tree Inspection</b>	
<p>This inspection provides detailed information about specific parts of a tree, defects, nearby targets, or site conditions. It is more time-consuming and costly and usually requires specialist equipment.</p> <p>Because of this, Level 3 inspections are normally only carried out on trees with high value (such as important landscape, ecological,</p>	<p><b>Outcomes of the inspection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the risk is very low (less than 1 in 10,000), no further investigation is needed, and regular Level 1 inspections will continue according to the risk-based schedule.</li> <li>• If the risk is higher (more than 1 in 10,000) and can be reduced, remedial work will be carried out to bring it down to an acceptable level.</li> </ul>

<p>cultural, or heritage trees) and only with the client's approval.</p> <p>This inspection should be carried out by an independent arboricultural consultant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If there is concern about a defect getting worse or a decline in health, Level 1 inspections will be done more often to keep a closer watch.</li></ul>
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Policy Approved by: Full Council

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