

# PROPOSED NEW BRENT STREET TREE POLICY

## Policy A: Tree Maintenance

The council has a proactive tree inspection and maintenance programme in place. The aim is to identify issues and deal with them before they escalate into complex problems that require greater attention and expense.

Tree maintenance involves ensuring the borough's street trees are in good health and continue to thrive. Tree maintenance is also related to the risk trees face or the risk they may pose to houses, residents and / or highways. Examples of tree maintenance techniques the council uses include regular inspections, pruning, tree removal and pollarding (removing a large number of branches).

The council aims to only remove or pollard trees that pose a greater risk. Tree pollarding for example can damage trees and reduce their lifespan.

### ***Key elements of our tree maintenance policy include:***

- To carrying out regular inspections to identify problems early and take preventative action i.e. removal of growth from the base of trees before pathways are blocked
- To keep trees unless there are good arboricultural, environmental, or risk-related reasons not to do so
- To encourage a wide range of trees species through our maintenance, management and planting programmes
- To undertake short rotation pollarding on certain trees that are growing very close to buildings
- The proactive management of our trees will be based upon maintenance cycles ranging from 2, 3, 4, or 5 yearly depending on age, distance from property, species, health and other arboricultural factors
- The council will not remove or prune trees for the following reasons:
  - To reduce leaf fall and sap production
  - To reduce activities of birds or invertebrates
  - To change natural light levels
- When planning our tree planting and maintenance works we will take account of the spread of artificial light from street lights

## Policy B: Subsidence

Subsidence is an identified problem across London, due to the "London Clay" soil in which building foundations rest. This type of soil is prone to move when it dries and when it rains. Buildings across the capital can therefore suffer subsidence even with no trees.

We know that trees take water out of the soil. In some circumstances this can cause the soil to shrink further, causing more soil movement. This can add to subsidence risk.

If we do not recognise these risks in our maintenance works we would leave the council open to increased claims, charges of negligence and subsequent costs.

***Key elements of our subsidence policy include:***

- The maintenance programme of works will take on board the potential for subsidence. This will determine the type and frequency of the work undertaken
- The Council will identify street trees for removal and replacement, where this is thought to be in the best interests of the Council and its stakeholders. Appropriate replacement trees will be planted

## **Policy C: Planting**

When planting street trees the borough has to consider amongst other things the space available both above and below ground, the nature of existing or proposed buildings, future management of different tree types and the current presumption of an increasingly warmer climate.

***Key elements of our proposed street tree planting policy include:***

- We will ensure all tree planting work complies with all arboricultural and Highways Legislation, which controls invasive works in the urban environment
- The Council will continue to plant trees which are in keeping with the landscape character, and good arboricultural practice

## **Policy D: Customer Engagement**

People like to have trees in their street; they soften the landscape, are attractive in the summer and provide habitats for birds. Because of this we understand that removing trees can cause upset, so communicating our decisions regarding tree management is important. The council could choose to make decisions in isolation but we feel this would not be in keeping with our role to engage with and respond to the needs of the community we serve.

***Key elements of our proposed policy relating to customer engagement include:***

- To introduce a 'Sponsor a Tree' scheme to encourage and improve residents understanding of tree management. The scheme will also promote greater community ownership of local trees
- Where trees which appear healthy are identified for removal, we will inform local residents of the impending removal, and the reason for the removal
- We will publish our arboriculture maintenance programmes on our website each year
- We will consult with partners to reduce any potential conflict between our trees and street lighting and CCTV cameras

## **Policy E: Environmental Policy**

Our Environmental Policy in relation to street trees reflects our commitment to ensuring the management of our street trees takes into account environmental impacts for our present and future generations. There is some overlap here with our customer engagement policy.

### ***Key elements of our proposed street tree environmental policy include:***

- The Council will endeavour to protect street trees and the growing environment from threats such as loss of or damage to verges, the activities of statutory undertakers and others excavating near trees, and damage from overuse of road de-icing salt
- The removal of healthy street trees to facilitate off street parking will not be considered
- The Council will continue to encourage our contractor to re-use, recycle and compost tree clippings waste, old trunks and felled trees
- We will seek section 106 monies from large developments, ensuring that schemes contribute to the environmental improvement of their urban context. Where developments require the removal of street trees, we will work with the developer to ensure they are replaced with species appropriate to the changing urban environment
- When choosing tree species and planting regimes, we will have regard to the Borough's Air Quality Action Plan, ensuring that tree species positively affect air quality
- The Council will aim to provide a sustainable, high quality tree population that:
  - meets the Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan;
  - play a part in adapting to or mitigating climate change, and which is durable under climatic extremes; and
  - is kept refreshed as trees age and die off naturally
- Where appropriate we will plant suitable native species to meet biodiversity requirements. However, consideration will be given to suitable species based on the latest climate change models that are more adaptable to predicted future climates

## **Policy F: General Tree Management**

### ***Key elements of our proposed general tree management policy include:***

- The Council will keep its records and management system up to date, to enable accurate analysis of the tree population and to store and maintain an inventory