



Part 2

Trees - East Lindsey

Part Two

Tree Management Guidelines | August 2010

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1.0 Background

These Tree Management Guidelines are part two of 'Trees East Lindsey' and are intended as a supplementary note to accompany the Tree Policy (part one). They do not override the need to gain any necessary permissions or legal consent. The guidelines outline the Council's approach to tree management work and describe in broad terms, situations where we are likely to consider pruning, felling or other forms of tree management work for our own trees. They will also be referred to by the Council when considering applications or notifications for trees protected by legislation and generally in giving advice.

1.1 The guidelines also describe the types of tree work that are normally accepted as good practice within the Authority. Work to trees is often necessary to ensure that they are maintained in a healthy and attractive condition. The guidance identifies typical situations where the different types of tree work are applicable, though each tree will always be assessed on its own merits. All work to our trees will be carried out by specialist arboricultural teams and will be in accordance with current UK and EU legislation, guidance, British Standards and Codes of Practice.

1.2 The Business Manager for Street Scene has responsibility for monitoring performance in tree management. This will ensure that the Council acts in accordance with its own policies and guidance and makes progress with the implementation of tree management programs. We will retain records and monitor the nature and extent of tree work, producing an annual report. By monitoring the numbers of trees felled, replaced, pruned and included within management programs, we will be able to demonstrate that our commitments are fulfilled.

1.3 The Council will act in an even-handed manner, in our dealings with private trees protected by legislation and in caring for our own trees. We will also ensure that the requirements of nature conservation policies and other legislation are met. Council trees will be assessed before pruning or felling takes place to ensure that there are no breeding birds, bats or other wildlife likely to be harmed.



2.0 Management programmes for trees

- 2.1 Trees as living organisms are constantly growing and changing. For Health and Safety reasons, trees in urban areas require careful management. Tree management should include regular inspections and programmed maintenance work, which may include the removal of some trees, pruning of others and replacement planting of trees.
- 2.2 The aim is to maintain the overall tree cover in a safe and healthy condition. Young trees and woodland plantations require a high degree of care to ensure proper establishment, particularly in the first 5 years. Young trees require careful watering in dry seasons especially the first summer after planting. They also require feeding, weed control, pest control and replacement of those that die.
- 2.2 The Council has a Tree Management Team based within Street Scene and this team is responsible for a regular inspection and management program for Council trees. This management approach will be gradually phased into operation and should reduce the numbers of individual complaints and requests for tree work. The Council will also encourage private landowners to follow this approach.

3.0 Reasons for felling trees

3.1 The Council will seek to avoid the felling of trees unless it is absolutely necessary. Each case will be carefully judged on its own merits. Tree felling will not be permitted for individual trees of important amenity value unless there is very clear justification for the work. Replacement trees will usually be planted, though this need not necessarily be in exactly the same place as the felled tree. The following are situations where felling is often necessary:

- **A dead, severely damaged or dying tree that is an identified risk to people's safety or property.** However trees that may take many years to decline and die may be able to be safely retained by pruning, this is where a risk assessment may be required. Old or 'Veteran trees' are particularly worth retaining even when dead, for their historic, amenity and wildlife value.
- **A tree causing an obstruction to a public highway, public right of way, access to property or footpath.** This is where the obstruction cannot be overcome by pruning the tree or other reasonable measures.
- **A tree that is shown to be a major contributor to soil shrinkage and serious structural damage to buildings and other structures.** This is where pruning or other remedial action would not provide a solution. Damage to light structures such as walls, sheds and pavings is generally relatively minor and removal of the tree would not normally be acceptable. Structural problems must always be carefully investigated. Private owners will be expected to provide proof that a particular tree is causing damage to property before removal of the tree would be considered.
- **Trees that in the judgement of a qualified arboriculturist are clearly of a size and species inappropriate to their location.** Examples include large poplars, willows or conifers close to properties and large forest trees which completely over-shade a small garden or which extend over the house. Older trees and some species/varieties e.g. conifers, do not respond well to crown reduction, therefore in these cases pruning would not provide a solution.

- **Thinning of trees to prevent overcrowding or removal for habitat improvement and landscape restoration in accordance with a management plan.** In woodlands and groups, thinning work is usually essential during the establishment period to reduce the number of trees, allowing the best to flourish. Growing trees for quality timber requires several thinnings or selective felling over a number of years. Some important habitats such as flower rich grassland and heathland will naturally develop through scrub into woodland, without continuous management. Removal of trees may be necessary to maintain or increase this fragile environment, for the reason of biodiversity, in accordance with a management plan. The siting of commercial plantations, copses and shelterbelts may be considered incompatible in the landscape and removal would have clear landscape benefits.
- **Removal to allow authorised development. It may sometimes be necessary to fell trees to permit authorised development (including where planning permission is given) to take place.** Every effort will be made to retain trees on development sites in accordance with current planning guidance (see also British Standard 5837 2005 'Trees in relation to construction').



4.0 Reasons for pruning trees

Pruning trees other than hedges, 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 will usually cause it to respond by producing vigorous new growth. In certain species the harder the pruning then the more vigorous the re-growth will be. Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger ones and substantial pruning can be very damaging particularly in species that are not naturally tolerant of cutting. Pruning should be carried out to a professional standard, e.g. to British Standard BS 3998: 1989 'Recommendations for Tree Work'.

The following situations are where pruning will be considered:

- **A tree that is obstructing a public highway or public right of way.** Generally a minimum clearance of 2.4m should be maintained over pavements and 5.0 metres over major highways.
- **A tree that is causing soil shrinkage and structural damage to property, where it is considered appropriate to restrict the size and moisture demand of the tree.**

- **Trees restricting access to property for maintenance or in physical contact with buildings, roofs or other structures.** Generally creating a clearance of 1.5 metres should be adequate and not require repeating too often as the tree grows. Allowance will be made where branches are likely to contact structures in windy or wet weather, or when in full leaf.
- **Trees interfering with street lighting, highway signage or other service equipment.** Generally this will be the responsibility of the Lincolnshire County Council Highways where trees are within the highway. Contractors may carry out work for electric and telephone utilities to ensure safety of the infrastructure. Private owners are responsible for ensuring that their trees do not cause interference.
- **Trees obstructing Council-monitored CCTV surveillance cameras.** Pruning will be the minimum necessary to maintain visibility without detriment to the health of the tree.
- **Trees needing formative pruning to shape or train them during the early years.** Most street and many garden trees, require the removal of lower branches when small to develop a single clear stem or trunk. This work avoids the need to remove or lop large limbs or stems later, that are causing an obstruction. Small diameter wounds heal more quickly so that decay is less likely to develop.

- **Removal of dead, diseased or damaged branches.** A small percentage of branches may die in a healthy tree through natural causes e.g. wind, frost and insect damage or by **shading**. Generally these branches are small, however, where large this may indicate more serious disease or damage that requires further investigation. Following severe storm damage it may be necessary to shorten exposed branches or reduce a tree's crown to improve safety.
- **Trees blocking daylight from habitable rooms or small gardens to a severe and unreasonable degree.**



5.0 Acceptable types of pruning for trees



General information

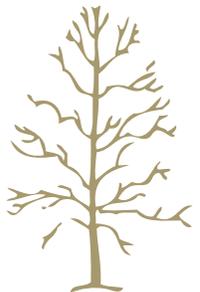
For most trees requiring pruning, one of the common operations described below or a combination will be suitable. The term 'Crown' is used to describe the entire branch system of a tree indicated in the adjacent diagrams.



Crown Lifting

This essentially means pruning or removing lower limbs to give more clearance between the ground and crown.

- Prevents low branches obstructing paths, drives etc.
- Useful for allowing more light into gardens
- Note: removal of too many branches at one time can alter the natural balance of a tree and affect growth.



Crown Thinning

This reduces the density of the tree's crown without changing the shape and form of the tree. Thinning reduces the amount of foliage and is described in terms of percentage of total leaf area (usually not more than 30%)

- Allows crossing and rubbing branches to be cleared
- Can allow more light through the crown in some species.



Crown Reduction

The tree crown is reduced by shortening branches, usually carried out all round the crown to maintain a balanced shape.

- Useful for preventing branches contacting buildings, roofs and guttering.
- Increases light to gardens and windows
- Improves the safety of damaged trees
- Note: many healthy trees respond vigorously to this work and may resume original size within a few years, often denser than before.

6.0 Pruning operations for exceptional circumstances

Root Pruning

Cutting tree roots is highly undesirable and can affect the Health and Safety of a tree. Root pruning is a very specialised operation that should only be undertaken with the support and supervision of an arborist or an arboricultural officer. Pruning of buttress or other major roots can make the tree unstable. Utilities guidelines (NUJG) advise not cutting roots over 25mm (one inch) in diameter when excavating near trees. Severance of more than 30% of a tree's root system is quite likely to cause slow dieback and eventual death of a mature tree.

Lopping

This involves the cutting of large branches or stems and is not generally favoured by arboriculturalists. Occasionally it may be necessary to lop a large limb because of disease or damage, in this case it may be better left with a long stub to slow the progression of decay into the main stem and prolong the safe life of the tree.

Pollarding

This involves cutting the main stem or pruning all the branches from a tree at a certain height, usually between 2 and 5 metres above ground level. Since ancient times pollarding has been a traditional method for harvesting fodder or small wood and then allowing re-growth. It should normally be commenced when the tree is still young and then repeated at regular intervals through the life of the tree. It is now essentially a method of controlling the growth of the tree and to restrict the size of its crown. Pollarding is traditional in some localities and for certain species, however it can be detrimental to the appearance and health of individual trees (see Topping). There is a case for pollarding some veteran trees to allow them to be retained without compromising public safety. Many ancient trees are in fact pollards, though locally these are rare.



Coppicing

This is a similar practice to pollarding, but in this method the tree is cut back close to ground level to promote multiple stem re-growth. Whilst this is generally used to promote stem growth for commercial harvesting it can also be a useful practice for amenity and for conservation; for example coppicing willows along riverbanks to help bank stability and for wildlife habitat. Hedges may also be coppiced to allow replanting of gaps if the stems are too large for traditional hedge-laying.

Topping or heading cuts

This is the practice of cutting large, upward growing stems or branches to reduce the height of a tree. It is often done to unsuitable points, where decay will later develop. Vigorous re-growth is likely to develop from these points but with a weak attachment. For this reason it is not an acceptable practice and this is where 'crown reduction' is usually recommended.



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