



BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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# Tree Management Policy

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Brackley Town Council (BTC) is responsible for some of the trees across the town and surrounds. These trees provide a valuable amenity and enhance the look of the town, its parks and surrounding areas and are managed to promote biodiversity and climate mitigation. The Town Council has a duty to inspect these trees and ensure it meets all its legal obligations which include maintaining public safety and knowing the location and condition of the trees for which it is responsible.

## 2. Inspection programme

- 2.1 Brackley Town Council will carry out inspections of all individual trees that it is responsible for as part of a rolling five year inspection programme. These inspections will be carried out in order to establish the condition of the individual trees and to identify any urgent remedial treatments required and to help structure a planned maintenance regime. The management of trees will be in line with professional recommendations as identified in the tree survey.

## 3. Type of Maintenance

- 3.1 The Town Council carries out two types of tree maintenance each year, reactive maintenance and planned maintenance. Reactive maintenance is carried out in response to reports of problems with trees. The Town Council will respond to urgent reports within 48 hours.

Tree maintenance will only be carried out if necessary and in line with the following criteria:

Safety	Significant risk to the public Dead trees located near properties or roads
Tree Health	Work which will prolong life and encourage the development of a good tree structure
Nuisance	Dangerous, diseased, damaging property or to comply with the Highways Act 1980 S.154

Tree maintenance will not be carried out where the problem relates to:

Natural Characteristics	Shade, Leaf, blossom, pollen or seed distribution Television reception View
Overhanging vegetation	which is not causing damage or a risk to health & safety

#### 4. Criteria

**Right to light** – where trees within an urban environment are blocking light into a property there is no legal “right to light”. The tree owner is not by law obliged or required to carry out work to the tree for the benefit of levels of light. This is the position adopted by the Town Council.

**Television and Satellite Reception** – The council will not prune or remove trees due to poor TV or satellite reception. In most cases relocating the aerial or satellite dish or having a booster to improve the reception can significantly improve the situation. *Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the provision of a written report from an aerial engineer who has tried relocation or a booster, will pruning be carried out upon payment by the applicant of the sum quoted by the council.*

#### 5. Felling and Pruning of trees

5.1 Trees are an important part of the environment and provide enjoyment, visual attractiveness and important wildlife habitats. The Town Council will not fell or prune any tree without good reason. The Town Council will avoid felling trees unless it is absolutely necessary and each case will be carefully judged on its merit.

5.2 The Town Council will carry out surveys to check for nesting of birds and the presence of bats or bat roosts prior to any tree management or maintenance work, It is unlikely that any felling or work would be carried out, unless in exceptional circumstances, between the end of March and the beginning of September.

Felling may be considered where a tree is:

- Dead, dying or diseased
- A danger to public safety
- Causing obstruction to a public highway, right of way or access to footpath
- A major contributor to serious structural damage to buildings or infrastructure
- Clearly of a size and species inappropriate to their situation

Any proposals for the removal of trees will take full account of all the relevant legislation.

Pruning can weaken the structure of trees and should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. The Town Council may undertake pruning of trees where:

- Tree branches cause an obstruction by growing low over a public highway, public right of way, footpath or access to a property and over gardens or open spaces where the public has access.
- A tree may be contributing to structural damage to adjacent buildings
- A tree restricts repairs and maintenance to property or infrastructure
- Trees are growing close to and likely to obstruct/interfere with street lighting, CCTV and other equipment.
- Trees require pruning to shape or train them during their early growing years
- Dead or diseased material is being removed in order to make the tree safe or to shape and balance the crown.

In all other cases trees will be left to grow naturally and their condition monitored as part of the inspection programme.