Tree Management Policies

[MONTH] 2025

v1.0

Executive Summary

This Tree Management Policy provides a structured approach to managing trees on council-owned land. It aims to balance public safety, ecological sustainability, and community interests while ensuring the responsible use of resources. The policy aligns with SKDC's Tree and Woodland Strategy, supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, and public well-being.

These policies apply to trees owned or managed by SKDC in public spaces, parks, highways, communal areas, and tenanted properties. Clear guidelines are set for tree pruning and removal requests relating to amenity and nuisance issues, risk management, the respective responsibilities of tenants and the council regarding trees on tenanted property, wildlife conservation considerations. The policy does not cover privately owned trees, which remain the responsibility of landowners, or councils' obligations to protect trees under planning legislation.

Tree management decisions will consider long-term environmental benefits, aligning with national and local climate policies to enhance urban greenery and wildlife habitats. By setting clear guidelines for pruning and removal requests relating to amenity and nuisance issues, and by clarifying responsibilities for tenants, these policies aim to promote harmonious relationships between people and trees and foster enthusiasm for the various objectives of the adopted Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Regardless of the management context, all tree work will be prioritised based on risk, ensuring public safety while preventing unnecessary interventions that could reduce tree health and canopy cover. This ensures that council resources focus on essential tree works (e.g., safety-related pruning) first, rather than minor nuisances such as seasonal leaf fall.

Regarding risk management, a zoning system ensures inspection frequency aligns with occupancy, providing a balance between resources allocation and legal obligations.

This policy ensures that SKDC meets its duty of care, maintains a healthy urban tree population, and upholds best practices in arboriculture. It enables efficient decision-making that reflects public interest, legal obligations, and environmental stewardship.

Tree Management Quick Reference Guide

Frequently Asked Questions

The following quick reference guide has been written with the public and the Council's social housing tenants in mind. The Council's commercial tenants should note that the answers provided below for social housing tenants may not apply to their situation, and they are advised to consult the main body of text and their lease agreement for answers to tree-related queries.

Ownership and responsibilities:

Q: I have an enquiry or concern about a tree, but I don't know who the owner is and who to contact about it.

A: Land and tree ownership is a complex subject. SKDC is responsible for several public open spaces across the district, but many are also managed by parish/town councils or private entities. SKDC has a stock of social housing, but this is not always easily identifiable. Contact details for SKDC are provided below.

Trees located on highway verges and within streets are likely to be the responsibility of the highway's authority. Lincolnshire County Council can be contacted by phone or via its website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Trees located on embankments or disused railway tracks are the responsibility of Network Rail or may be in private ownership.

See paragraph i(c) for further details.

Q: I have an enquiry or concern about a tree on private land. Can SKDC help?

A: SKDC will not normally get involved with privately owned trees. If you are concerned about the condition of a privately owned tree, you should contact the owner to make them aware. Discretionary powers are provided to the council under section 23 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Please contact our customer services team if you are concerned about the safety of a tree in your neighbourhood (customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk, 01476 406080, out of hours/emergency: 01476 406040)

See paragraph i(c) for further details.

Q: SKDC have placed a Tree Preservation Order on a tree I am concerned about. Who is now responsible for this tree?

A: A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) does not change ownership or responsibility for a tree. The landowner remains responsible for the tree's maintenance and any associated risks. However, any works on the tree, including pruning or removal, require formal

consent from SKDC. This policy document does not cover planning (i.e. TPO) related issues.

Tree Pruning & Overhanging Branches:

Q: Will the council prune a tree because its branches overhang my property?
A: The council will only prune trees under its ownership or management and will only prune overhanging branches if they create a significant risk, such as obstructing access, street lighting, or are causing property damage. Otherwise, you may trim branches back to your boundary if the tree is not protected (e.g., by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area). All tree work will be prioritised, so if budgets are limited and higher-priority issues remain outstanding, your request may not be addressed immediately – even if it aligns with policy.

Q: Can I request tree pruning for general nuisance (leaves, sap, blossom, etc.)?
A: No, seasonal issues like falling leaves, sap, or bird droppings are considered natural and not a reason for pruning and this policy document does not support pruning for these reasons. Regular garden maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner.

Q: Can I request tree pruning for interference with a TV or satellite signal?
A: No, whilst pruning may improve reception temporarily, trees are likely to regrow to their original size, making this an unsustainable long-term solution. This policy document does not support pruning for this reason.

See Part 1 for further details.

Shading & Loss of Light:

Q: A council tree is blocking sunlight to my property. Will it be pruned?
A: The council will only consider pruning in the following cases:

- The tree is taller than 12m and less than 5m from the nearest habitable room.

- The tree is shorter than 12m but is closer than half its height to a habitable room.

- An independent survey confirms severe shading as per Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidelines.

Trees will not be pruned to improve sunlight for solar panels. All tree work will be prioritised, so if budgets are limited and higher-priority issues remain outstanding, your request may not be addressed immediately – even if it aligns with policy.

Q: Are hedges causing shade issues covered by this policy?

A: Yes, if they are owned and managed by SKDC. Where a privately owned evergreen hedge more than 2metres in height is the cause of the issue the council may have powers under the Anti-social Behaviours Act 2003 to require appropriate action by the hedge owner, but the application and assessment process is not covered by this policy. For further information regarding complaints about privately owned hedges please refer to the SKDC's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (2023) or the planning enforcement web page.

See Part 1, paragraph 1.3 for further details.

Tree Roots & Damage

Q: What if tree roots from a council tree are damaging my property?

A: If you believe tree roots are causing structural damage, a professional report from a qualified structural engineer or arboricultural consultant is required before the council can investigate.

Q: Can I cut tree roots that extend onto my property?

A: Yes, if the tree is not protected, you may prune roots within your boundary. However, improper pruning can affect tree stability, so professional advice is recommended.

See Part 1, paragraph 1.8 for further details.

Wildlife & Conservation

Q: Does the council consider wildlife when pruning or removing trees?

A: Yes. Non-essential tree work is scheduled outside of bird nesting season (March–August). For tree work that is considered essential, checks for nesting birds will take place prior to the work commencing and specialist ecological advice will be sought where necessary. Trees will be checked for potential bat roost features prior to work commencing.

See paragraphs 1.9, 2.7 and 4.13 for further details.

Trees on Tenanted Property

Q: Who is responsible for trees in SKDC tenanted properties?
A:

- **SKDC is responsible** for work at height, tree health and safety, and major pruning/removal.

- **Tenants are responsible** for routine maintenance like clearing leaves and trimming small branches.

Q: Can I plant a tree in my SKDC tenancy garden?
A: Written permission is required before planting a tree to ensure it is suitable for the location.

See Part 2 for further details.

Reporting Tree Issues

If you need to report a tree issue, you can contact SKDC via:

- **Website:** www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback

- **Email:** customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk

- **Phone:** 01476 406080 (office hours) / 01476 406040 (out of hours emergencies)

For more detailed policies, visit our website or request a full copy of the Tree Management Policy.

Contents

i. Introduction

a. Context

This policy document has been created in the context of the South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) Tree and Woodland Strategy. The vision of this strategy is defined as follows:

Healthy Trees, Healthy South Kesteven: Strengthening our tree assets through protection, enhancement, and growth, ensuring resilience and vitality in perpetuity

b. Scope

This document describes how South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) will manage trees on land under its ownership or management; it does not cover trees which grow on land which is not owned or managed by SKDC (this includes private land, and land owned/managed by other district councils, Lincolnshire County Council or parish/town councils located within the South Kesteven District).

Trees that are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) or which grow within Conservation Areas are dealt with by the relevant legislation and administered by the Development Control Service of SKDC.

SKDC's policies and processes relating to the tree-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act (2003) and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 are covered in a separate policy document.

The four management contexts covered by this policy are:

1. Trees under SKDC management (impacts to the public)
2. Tree on SKDC tenanted property
3. Trees is closed churchyards/graveyards
4. Management of tree related risk

The Policy refers exclusively to trees and hedges and does not include shrubs or other vegetation. For the purpose of this policy, a 'tree' is a woody perennial plant, typically (in its natural form, without management as coppice stool or low pollard) having a stem or trunk which can attain a height of 6m or more, and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

Low-level domestic hedges are outside of the scope of this policy. A hedge – a managed feature consisting of woody perennials that forms a continuous screen – will only be covered by the policies in this document if any part is over 2m high and 1m wide.

c. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the management of our trees are derived from relevant aspects of the Tree and Woodland Strategy and can be summarised as follows:

1. **Resilience**
   Ensure that all decisions regarding tree management prioritize long-term sustainability, fostering resilience to climate change, diseases, and pests. Tree planting, maintenance, and removal must align with broader ecological goals, promoting species diversity and longevity.

2. **Biodiversity Enhancement**
   Encourage the management of diverse tree species that support a wide range of wildlife.

3. **Social Cohesion**
   SKDC will manage its trees in a way that fosters a positive relationship between people and their local environment. We aim to increase public appreciation for the benefits that trees bring, while actively working to minimize any disbenefits, such as shading, leaf fall, or root-related issues.

4. **Public Safety and Risk Management**
   Maintain a proactive tree inspection and maintenance regime to manage risks posed by dead, dying, or hazardous trees. Ensure that public safety is a priority in urban areas and spaces frequently used by the community.

5. **Ecosystem Services and Climate Change Mitigation**
   Recognize, protect and, where possible, enhance the ecosystem services provided by our trees, such as carbon sequestration, air quality improvement, flood mitigation, and urban cooling.

6. **Amenity and Landscape Value**
   Preserve and enhance the aesthetic and cultural value of council-owned trees. Trees should contribute positively to the local landscape character, providing shade, beauty, and well-being benefits to residents and visitors alike.

7. **Tree Health**
   Wherever possible, avoid (or reduce the frequency and/or extent) of works which the potential to have a detrimental impact on tree health, or which are likely to increase the risk from pests, diseases, and environmental stress.

8. **Legal Compliance and Best Practice**
   Adhere to all legal requirements and follow best practices in arboriculture and woodland management. This includes compliance with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), conservation area guidelines, and health and safety regulations.

Management in accordance with these guiding principles generally requires a proactive approach to tree care. However budgetary constraints limit the financial resources available for the management of SKDC trees. As a result, the council must make strategic decisions on where and how funds are allocated, prioritising essential services and projects that deliver the greatest public benefit. This means balancing the council's aspirations for tree management with many other competing priorities.

Regardless of the management context or the policies set out in this document – which define SKDC's position on various tree related issues – work can only be carried out if appropriate resources can be allocated. All proposed tree work will therefore be assigned a priority rating. For example, safety-related work, such as the removal of dead or dangerous branches, will take precedence over non-essential interventions, such as pruning to address nuisance issues like leaf fall or shading. This approach ensures that the council addresses the most critical risks while managing resources efficiently.

To support transparency and continuous improvement, SKDC will monitor and report on its performance against each priority rating. This will enable the council to objectively demonstrate its commitment to managing trees in line with the principles set out in the T&W.
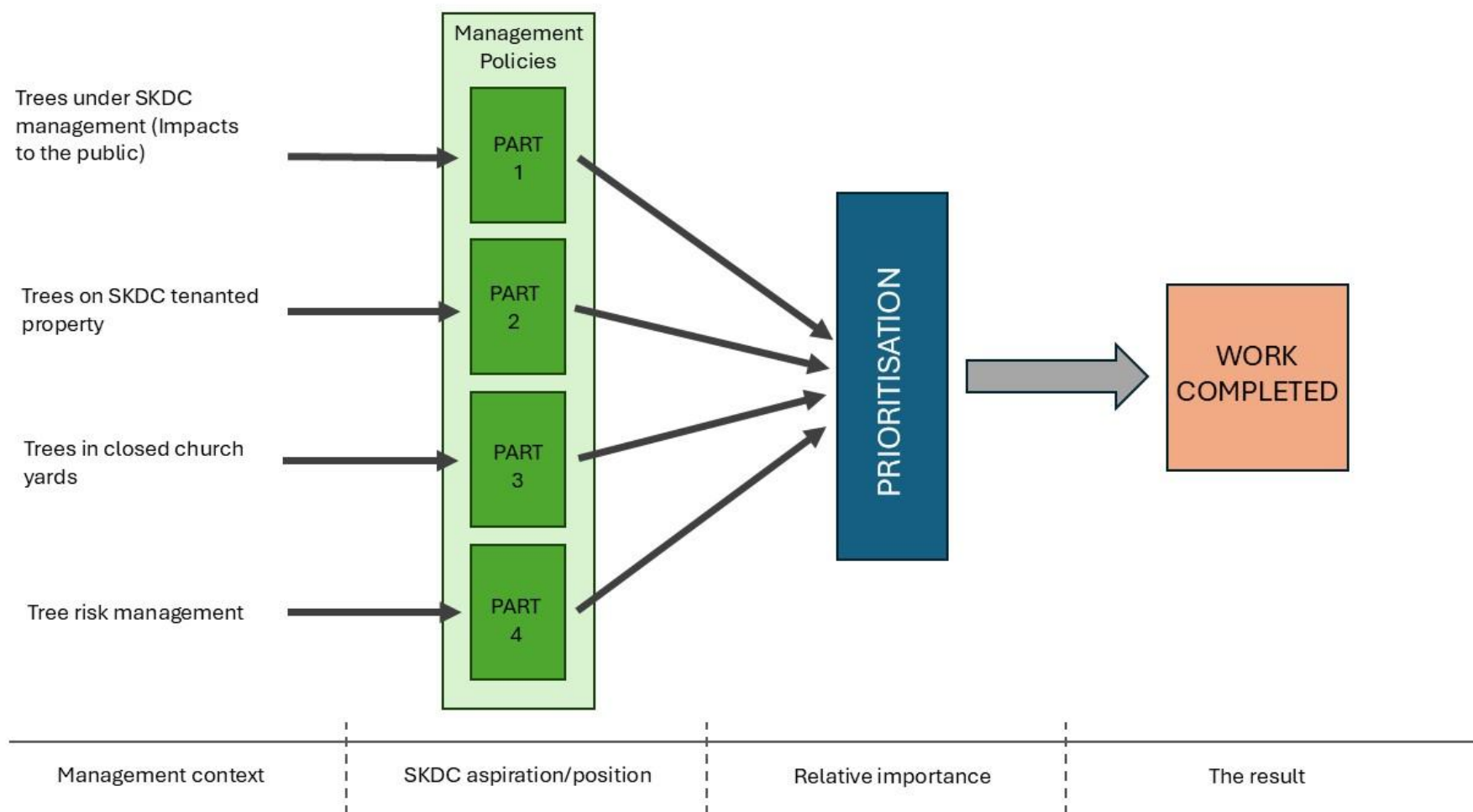
Figure 1. *A diagram illustrating how tree work completed by SKDC results from the application of policies across different management contexts, followed by a unified prioritisation process that determines which work is undertaken*

PART 1: Policies for pruning and removing council managed trees (relating to amenity and nuisance issues)

Introduction

Pruning of council managed trees can benefit our rate payers by reducing the number and extent of conflict issues which arise, such as overhanging branches, interference with property, or obstruction of light. As well as benefitting humans, properly managed pruning can also benefit trees and ecosystems, by extending their safe useful life expectancy and support their ecological benefits.

Decisions about pruning must consider the council's limited resources and the need to prioritise works that address public safety or structural stability. The policies in this section aim to balance the aesthetic and practical benefits of pruning with responsible stewardship of public funds and are focused on tree work required for reasons other than risk management. Policies relating to the council's duty of care in respect of trees will be addressed in Part 2 of this document.

Whenever the council undertakes pruning it should be assumed that the extent of work undertaken will be the minimum required to resolve the issue to the council's satisfaction (which may not always be to the complainant's satisfaction). All arboricultural operations undertaken on council managed trees will be done in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 recommendations wherever possible, to ensure the negative impacts to the tree(s) are minimised. The work will always be done in accordance with the Arboricultural Associations Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture, to ensure that the work is undertaken using a safe system of work.

1.1. Overhanging Branches

When the branches of trees located on council managed land overhang a boundary, they can cause obstructions to access (e.g. on footpaths or highways), visibility (e.g. at junctions, or of road signs), or lighting (e.g. streetlights), create a risk of damage to property or simply encroach on somebodies' private property.

1.1.1. Obstructions

Obstructions to access, visibility or lighting can create hazards. Where these hazards result in an unacceptable risk to people or property and remedial pruning would reduce the risk to an acceptable level, this will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed.

1.1.2. Risk of Damage

If overhanging branches create a significant risk of damage to a property (e.g. if they touch walls, roofs, windows or gutters) this will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed.

1.1.3. Substantial Nuisance Issues

Substantial nuisance refers to an issue that goes beyond minor inconveniences. For example, if regular gutter blockages caused subsequent water damage to a structure, or if seasonal debris was so extreme that it caused excessive maintenance burdens or attracted pests. In these situations, pruning will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed. Please note that a moderate amount of leaves falling in autumn is natural and is not usually seen as actionable.

1.1.4. Encroachment

Where branches simply overhang a boundary and do not result in any of the issues described in 1.2.1 – 1.2.3, the council will not undertake any pruning.

Provided that the tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order or situated in a Conservation Area, adjacent landowners have a common law right to prune back overhanging tree branches to their boundary. This work should be arranged and paid for by the adjacent landowner. Any works should be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

1.2. General and Minor Nuisances

Trees can cause a variety nuisance issues, whether they overhang the boundary or grow adjacent to it. The following are examples of minor nuisance issues that are considered to be normal and acceptable consequences of living near trees. In such cases, the council will not normally fell or prune trees to alleviate concerns raised by neighbouring properties.

- falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings.
- insects associated with trees (spiders, wasps, flies etc).
- reduction or increase of moisture to gardens.
- suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens.
- leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs.

- the build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.

Routine seasonal maintenance tasks such as clearing gutters and paths, weeding seedlings from garden borders, and cleaning surfaces affected by sap, blossom, or bird droppings are the responsibility of property owners and are considered part of normal property upkeep.

1.3. Shading and Loss of Light

While trees are often perceived to block light to nearby properties, the extent of pruning or tree removal needed to noticeably improve this would frequently lead to significant impacts to local amenity, biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services. Therefore, and as part of our commitment to protect trees, pruning work to improve light levels and reduce direct shading will not normally be considered. However, we will consider acting (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:

- If the height of the tree is more than 12m and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5metres.
- If the height of the tree is less than 12m and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree (or where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2 metres).
- If an objective assessment of shading undertaken by a chartered surveyor, based on the methodologies outlined in the Building Research Establishment Report 209 (Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice), which included measurements of the vertical sky component and sun availability, and a sun path analysis, showed that pruning was justified.

A 'habitable room' is a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but not a WC, bathroom, utility room, landing or hallway. Where vulnerable people who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected, there will be flexibility to look at some form of intervention. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is detrimental to the health of vulnerable people, further consideration will be given to the management approach. This assessment will take into account the quality and importance of the tree(s) in question, as well as the benefits and impact to the wider community.

The Council will not prune or fell a tree under its management to improve natural light to a solar panel. While we recognize the importance of renewable energy sources like solar panels, trees provide numerous environmental benefits, including carbon sequestration, improving air quality, supporting biodiversity, and mitigating the urban heat island effect. These benefits are vital in our collective efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Property owners are encouraged to consider the placement of solar

panels with respect to existing trees, as trees are an essential part of a sustainable environment.

1.4. Loss of a view

Trees will not be pruned to improve private views. The Council will only undertake pruning to restore or maintain important public viewpoints, or where pruning would deliver a significant public benefit by enhancing the local street scene or landscape character.

Requests for such pruning will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the potential impact on local amenity, biodiversity, and the overall landscape value.

1.5. Loss of reception

Trees can sometimes grow to interrupt reception to nearby television aerials and satellite dishes. Whilst pruning may improve reception temporarily, trees are likely to regrow to their original size, making this an unsustainable long-term solution. Repeated pruning operations not only place a strain on council resources but can also harm the health of the tree.

As such, the removal or pruning of trees to improve television or satellite reception will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where there is a compelling public interest or where no reasonable alternatives exist. Property owners are encouraged to explore other solutions such as repositioning their aerials or satellite dishes to avoid interference or switching to cable or internet-based services.

1.6. Apprehension and overbearingness

Large trees adjacent to dwellings and private gardens can sometimes cause apprehension. Complaints that trees are 'too big' are common, but such concerns are often not supported by arboricultural evidence that the tree poses an unacceptable risk to people or property. A tree is not dangerous simply because somebody perceives it to be too large for its surroundings. Likewise, a tree swaying in the wind is not necessarily a hazard. The flexibility of a tree's branches and structure is a natural mechanism to withstand wind and prevent breakage. The council will only undertake tree work where there is clear and objective evidence that the tree poses an unacceptable risk to people or property.

In some cases, the size of a tree may be perceived as overbearing by nearby residents, even where there is no concern about risk of failure or injury. While the Council acknowledges that the presence of large trees can be concerning for some, tree work will not normally be undertaken solely because of a tree's size or its perceived overbearing nature, unless there are other compelling reasons to intervene.

1.7. Medical Issues

A range of personal medical complaints, from allergies to mental health impacts, can be attributed (rightly or wrongly) to trees. We will not normally prune or remove council managed trees when the request is based on a personal medical complaint. However, if a medical professional provides documented evidence that the presence of a tree is causing a significant detriment to the health of a resident, the council will consider the management approach taken with the trees in question. This may include exploring alternative solutions to mitigate the impact on the resident's health before considering pruning or removal.

1.8. Tree Roots

Trees exist above and below ground, and so do the issues arising from them. Tree roots can grow far beyond the canopy spread of their parent tree and do not recognise lines on plans, which means that it is not uncommon for roots to grow across ownership boundaries.

1.8.1. Encroachment

The presence of roots is unlikely to be affected by pruning, or even by felling so the council will not undertake any tree work if the issue relates solely to encroachment.

As with branches that grow across ownership boundaries, landowners have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area. Landowners are encouraged to seek professional advice when pruning roots, as improper pruning can harm the health or stability of the tree and may result in legal consequences if a protected tree is affected.

1.8.2. Direct Damage

Forces exerted by the outward (longitudinal) growth and thickening (radial growth) of roots are relatively weak. As a result, roots tend to grow around obstructions presented by manmade structures, rather than displace them. However, large structural roots located near the base of a mature trees can exert enough force to damage pavements or smaller structures.

It is unlikely that council managed trees will be located close enough to boundaries to cause this type of damage. If issues do arise, the council will assess the situation on a case-by-case basis and explore appropriate mitigation measures where necessary. Possible mitigation measures may

include the installation of root barriers, re-surfacing of pavements, or localized pruning of structural roots, if appropriate.

1.8.3. Indirect Damage (Subsidence)

Tree roots can cause damage to structures indirectly through problems associated with shrinking and swelling subsoils. If an allegation is made that a council managed tree has caused, or is likely to cause, damage to a third-party structure through subsidence, the council will only consider acting if the allegation is supported by a report produced by a professional in a relevant field (e.g. arboricultural consultants, structural engineers, geotechnical engineers). The report should reference relevant industry guidelines relating to foundation design, the investigation and monitoring of subsidence, and tree work recommendations (i.e. NHBC standards and BS3998:2010). In cases of suspected subsidence, evidence of ongoing monitoring, such as crack monitoring or soil testing, may be required to substantiate claims before any remedial action is considered.

1.9. Prioritisation

In accordance with the prioritisation principle discussed in section i) c) and illustrated in figure 1, work required as a result these scenarios will be assigned one of the category ratings described in Section 4.10, summarised below as follows:

	Priority category	e.g.
Safety related	Safety group 1	Imminent hazard with severe consequences likely
	Safety group 2	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
	Safety group 3	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
General Management	General Management group 1 – damage	Work required to prevent damage to a structure
	General Management group 2 – obstruction	Work required to maintain access
	General Management group 3 – visibility	Work required to maintain site lines and light splays
	General Management group 4 – nuisance	Work required to resolve a nuisance issue
	General Management group 5 – proactive management	Work required to deliver other social, environmental and economic benefits

1.10. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

The Council recognizes the important role that trees play in supporting local wildlife and biodiversity. Many species of birds, bats, insects, and other wildlife rely on trees for shelter, food, and nesting. Pruning or removing trees can have a significant impact on these species, particularly during sensitive times of the year. As such, the Council is committed to ensuring that all tree management activities are carried out in accordance with relevant wildlife protection laws and best practice guidelines. For further details please refer to section 3.13.

1.11. Replacement trees

The Council is committed to increasing tree canopy cover across all towns and villages within the district so that rate payers may benefit from the ecosystem services, amenity and economic benefits that trees provide. In addition to our annual planting programme of new trees and woodlands, where it is appropriate, the Council will plant replacement trees for those it has removed.

PART 2: Policies relating to trees on SKDC tenanted property

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Purpose of the Policy

Trees on tenanted properties play a crucial role in enhancing the local environment, supporting biodiversity, and contributing to the overall wellbeing of local people. However, they must also be managed to ensure safety, mitigate risks, and maintain a harmonious relationship between tenants, neighbouring properties, and the wider community.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities and management approach for trees located on land rented by tenants of SKDC. These policies may be referenced in tenancy agreements and related guidance documents.

2.1.2. Scope

This policy establishes the framework for how trees on tenanted properties will be managed, including:

- The respective responsibilities of SKDC and tenants regarding tree maintenance, protection, and care.
- Procedures for tenant requests regarding tree work, including pruning, removal, or planting.
- Guidance on the protection of trees during the start and end of tenancy agreements.
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and environmental goals, including wildlife protection and conservation.

This policy applies to all trees located within the boundaries of SKDC tenanted properties, and trees located within communal areas adjacent to tenanted properties which are managed by SKDC, or agents acting on its behalf.

In this section of the policy document the terms 'tenants' and 'tenancy agreements' (or similar) apply to both housing and commercial tenants, unless otherwise specified. Where a policy applies exclusively to one group, the terms 'housing tenants' or 'commercial tenants' will be used explicitly.

2.2. Responsibilities of SKDC

2.2.1. Maintenance of Council-Owned Trees

SKDC will be responsible for any tree located in a communal area or shared space.

For trees located within private areas of domestic tenanted properties, SKDC will only be responsible for tree maintenance or management that:

- Involves 'work at height' (as defined by HSE).

- Requires specialist equipment, the use of which usually requires proper training or certification (e.g. chainsaws).

- Carries significant risk to health or safety.

- Requires technical knowledge or training, such as applying specific pruning methods (e.g. crown reduction).

Examples of tree maintenance and management that SKDC will be responsible for include:

- Removing deadwood from upper branches (over 3m from ground level).

- Felling or dismantling a tree (over 5m tall, measured from ground level).

- Crown thinning, lifting, or reduction requiring work above 3m from ground level.

- Removing roots that threaten property structures.

Housing tenants will be informed of their responsibilities for tree maintenance within their property boundaries at the start of their tenancy by reference to this policy, and any exceptions or specific conditions will be clearly outlined in the tenancy agreement.

For tenants of commercial property, SKDC may place greater maintenance responsibilities on tenants than those described above.

SKDC retains the right to inspect and act on any tree within the boundary of tenanted land if it is deemed hazardous or poses a risk to public safety, or if the tree is (or is likely to) cause structural damage to the property.

2.2.2. Routine Inspections and Maintenance

Any tree(s) located on land owned or managed by SKDC that are outside of a tenanted property will be managed in accordance with the policies set out in Part 4 of this document.

Trees located within private areas of domestic tenanted properties (e.g. private back gardens) and within commercial property will not normally be formally inspected by the council. See paragraph 2.3.3 and part 4 for further detail.

2.2.3. New Tenancy Agreements

SKDC will strive to ensure that when tenants move into a property the outdoor space will be handed over in a condition that reflects the standard the Council expects tenants to maintain. Prior to the start of a new tenancy, SKDC will inspect and carry out any necessary work on trees to ensure they are safe, well-maintained, and free of any hazards. Tenants will be provided with guidance on their responsibilities for ongoing garden and tree maintenance, including any specific requirements related to the condition of trees. This ensures a clear understanding of maintenance expectations from the outset of the tenancy.

2.2.4. Support During Periods of Tenant Incapacity

SKDC recognises that housing tenants may become incapacitated due to illness, disability, or other circumstances that limit their ability to maintain their gardens or care for trees within their property boundaries. To support tenants during these times, SKDC may provide temporary maintenance assistance to tenants who are temporarily unable to maintain their trees due to health-related issues. This assistance will be available for tenants with medical documentation supporting their period of incapacity, and support will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For further information please refer to Assisted Garden Maintenance Scheme web page.

SKDC will adopt a flexible approach, offering reasonable adjustments for tenants experiencing temporary incapacity. This may include temporarily relaxing enforcement of garden maintenance standards or extending timelines for addressing garden upkeep concerns.

2.2.5. Tree Work Requests

SKDC recognises that there may be instances where housing tenants want to request tree work that is beyond their ability or responsibility to

undertake. The Council will only consider requests for tree work that involves tasks that are not reasonable for tenants to perform due to the complexity, scale, or safety risks associated with the work. For example, if the work can be done with ordinary hand tools (i.e. the removal of branches/stems up to 100mm diameter) from ground level in the council's reasonable opinion, SKDC would expect this to be done by the tenant. Tenants are encouraged to make requests for tree work under the following circumstances:

- Safety Concerns: If a tree is dead, dying, or showing signs of serious disease, or shows visible signs of structural defects (cracks etc.) that could pose a risk to people or property, tenants should report it to SKDC. The Council will assess the tree's condition and determine whether pruning or removal is necessary.

- Tree Size and Proximity: If trees that have grown too large for tenants to reasonably manage (e.g. large branches at height or trees requiring specialist equipment for safe pruning) these can be assessed by SKDC, which may take responsibility for pruning or removing them. If the tree size/proximity has become an issue due to a lack of reasonable maintenance by the tenant, the cost of works undertaken by SKDC to resolve the issue may be recharged to the tenant.

- Complex Tree Work: Tenants can request tree work be undertaken by SKDC if it would require specialized equipment that tenants are not expected to have, such as chainsaws or high-reach tools for significant pruning or removal tasks, or if the task involving work at height, or if it involves trees in dangerous locations (e.g. near power lines).

Housing tenants should submit requests for tree work via SKDC's customer service channels: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback; customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk; 01476 406080. Each request will be reviewed to assess whether the work is necessary and falls outside the tenant's reasonable responsibilities. SKDC will communicate the outcome of the assessment and, if tree work is approved, arrange for a qualified contractor to carry out the necessary work.

Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants will be responsible for all tree related maintenance operations. It will be the responsibility of the tenant to ensure that any tree work is

undertaken safely and competently, in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

2.2.6. Trees Affecting Neighbouring Properties

For any tree(s) located on land owned or managed by SKDC that are outside of a tenanted property, complaints and concerns raised by neighbouring landowners will be dealt with by SKDC in all cases. These issues will be dealt with in accordance with the policies outlined in Part 1 of this document.

For trees in tenanted properties, complaints and concerns raised by neighbouring landowners should be directed to the tenant in the first instance. If the action necessary to resolve the issue falls outside of the tenants' responsibilities as described in paragraph 2.3 below or meets one of the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2.1 above, the tenant may submit a tree work request (see paragraph 2.2.5).

Only where the complainant can demonstrate that they have exhausted all reasonable means of resolving the issue directly with the tenant will SKDC consider reviewing the complaint.

2.3. Responsibilities of Tenants

2.3.1. Routine care and maintenance

The following tasks are considered routine maintenance and fall within the tenant's responsibility:

- Clearing leaves, twigs, and small branches.
- Pruning small, accessible branches that can be safely managed with household tools.

2.3.2. Prohibited Actions

Tenants are not permitted to fell or remove any tree(s) located on their tenanted property with a stem diameter greater than 8cm measured at 1.5m above ground level without prior written consent from SKDC.

Housing tenants are prohibited from undertaking significant pruning or tree work that requires working at height or involves large trees (>8m height). This includes the removal of large branches, canopy reduction, or any work that requires specialist equipment (e.g. chainsaws). Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants are not prohibited from undertaking this type of work

Where a tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or located within a Conservation Area, tenants must seek the necessary planning consent for the proposed work.

Tenants are prohibited from cutting, damaging, or interfering with tree roots, especially structural roots, without consent from SKDC. This includes actions such as digging near the base of trees, installing new hard landscaping, or excavating trenches.

Tenants are prohibited from applying any herbicides, pesticides, or other chemical treatments to trees without written permission from SKDC.

Tenants are prohibited from lighting fires or using fire pits close to trees, as this can damage the tree bark, roots, and surrounding soil.

Tenants must not intentionally damage trees (e.g. carving into tree trunks, breaking branches, or deliberately poisoning trees).

2.3.3. Reporting Concerns

Housing tenants are expected to take an active role in the safe management of trees within their tenanted properties by promptly reporting any concerns to SKDC. Timely reporting ensures that trees are properly maintained, and any risks to safety, property, or the environment are addressed. Tenants' responsibilities include reporting safety hazards (dangerous trees), signs of disease and/or pests (unusual leaf loss, fungal growth etc.) structural issues (e.g. signs of subsidence), and instances of unauthorised work.

Housing tenants are responsible for reporting tree concerns through SKDC customer services (customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk; telephone – 01476 40 60 80; out of hours telephone – 01476 40 60 40). When reporting concerns, tenants should provide as much detail as possible, including details of the specific issue and the location of the tree within the property, and, if possible, provide photographs, to assist in the assessment.

Note: The responsibilities of housing tenants to report tree safety concerns means that trees located in private tenanted areas (e.g. private back gardens) will not normally be formally inspected by the council. In exceptional circumstances, however, where risk factors such as large tree size and high occupancy warrant it, some trees may be added to the council's schedule of regularly inspected trees. Where this is the case, council officers (or its appointed contractor) will require access to the area from time to time to carry out the inspections.

Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants will be responsible for all tree related maintenance operations, so would not normally need to report concerns in the same way as housing tenants.

2.4. Enforcement and Penalties

Tenants are responsible for maintaining their trees in accordance with the terms of their tenancy agreement. If the terms of the tenancy agreement are breached SKDC can apply to the Court for a possession order.

2.5. Appeals and Dispute Resolution

If you dissatisfied with a decision taken by SKDC about a tree related matter, the complaints process outlined in SKDC's Customer Feedback Process should be followed.

2.6. Tree Planting on Tenanted Property

Tenants are encouraged to contribute to the environmental and aesthetic value of their gardens by planting trees, but they must seek written permission from the Council prior to planting any tree. This ensures that the proposed species and location are suitable and do not interfere with existing structures, underground utilities, or future property maintenance.

The tenant is responsible for maintaining any trees they plant, ensuring they do not become a nuisance to neighbouring properties or pose safety risks. The Council reserves the right to request or undertake tree removal if the tree is not maintained or causes issues and may recharge any costs incurred to the tenant.

At the end of the tenancy, the tenant may be required to remove any trees they have planted if they are deemed unsuitable or if they may interfere with future occupancy.

2.7. Prioritisation

In accordance with the prioritisation principle discussed in section i) c) and illustrated in figure 1, work required as a result these scenarios will be assigned one of the category ratings described in Section 4.10, summarised below as follows:

	Priority category	e.g.
Safety related	Safety group 1	Imminent hazard with severe consequences likely
Safety related	Safety group 2	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
Safety related	Safety group 3	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
General Management	General Management group 1 – damage	Work required to prevent damage to a structure
General Management	General Management group 2 – obstruction	Work required to maintain access
General Management	General Management group 3 – visibility	Work required to maintain site lines and light splays
General Management	General Management group 4 – nuisance	Work required to resolve a nuisance issue
General Management	General Management group 5 – proactive management	Work required to deliver other social, environmental and economic benefits

2.8. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

For trees under its management, the Council will consider habitat and wildlife protection as described in sections 1.9 and 3.13. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that any tree maintenance work they undertake complies with all relevant legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and any regulations related to the protection of nesting birds, bats, and other protected species. It is the tenant's duty to check for and avoid disturbing wildlife habitats during maintenance activities.

PART 3: Policies relating to trees in closed churchyards

3.1.   Introduction

The responsibility for the management of closed churchyards is set out in Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972. This legislation states that if a churchyard has been closed for burials by an Order and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) formally notifies the local authority, the responsibility for its maintenance passes to the local authority. The legal ownership of a closed churchyard is not affected by the transfer of maintenance responsibility.

3.2.   Duty of Care

In respect of trees, the duty of care will be managed as set by the policies in Section 4 of this document.

3.3.   Service definition

SKDC will only undertake essential works. 'Essential' in this context means that either:

- Tree work is required to avoid damage to a built structure or boundary fence; or,
- Tree work is required to maintain access along established/formalised pedestrian and/or maintenance routes; or,
- Tree work that is required to avoid litigation.

Examples of scenarios relevant to the last point in above list are as follows:

- If SKDC was aware that a tree was likely to fail and there was a reasonable chance that failure would result in injury/damage, this would be considered essential, because if SKDC chose to do nothing a claim of negligence could be made against the council.
- If the encroachment of branches was causing material damage to a neighbouring property (rather than just inconvenience), this would be considered essential because it may lead to a claim of nuisance.

Although SKDC are responsible for the management of closed churchyards under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972, the land, and the trees on it, remain in the ownership of the church. The church can therefore undertake additional non-essential work to achieve aesthetic (or other) objectives as it sees fit.

PART 4: Policies relating to risk management

4.1. Introduction

Although trees provide many environmental, social and economic benefits, they can also pose risks to people and property. In general, the risk of harm from trees is very low, but it is a risk that must be actively managed.

Trees are living structures that sometimes shed branches or fall during severe weather. SKDC can't remove all the risk, but the council will fulfil its duty of care by managing the risk to an acceptable or tolerable level.

SKDC manage and maintain a variety of amenity areas and communal gardens throughout the district, containing trees of different species, ages and conditions. These trees are found in diverse contexts, with some having minimal public access and others seeing regular vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

4.2. Legal Obligations

SKDC has a legal obligation to manage the risk posed by trees which is referred to as a 'Duty of Care'. There are two key pieces of legislation that outline this responsibility:

- The Occupiers Liability Act (1957,1964) places a duty on the occupier of land to take reasonable care to ensure that visitors are safe while on their property.
- The Health and Safety at Work, Etc., Act (1974) requires employers take reasonable steps, as far as is practicable, to ensure that non-employees (the public) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

In addition to these statutory duties, SKDC also owes a duty of care at common law to all individuals who may be injured by a tree on land it owns, unless that duty has been discharged to another party through a legally binding agreement (e.g. a tenancy agreement). SKDC also owes the same duty of care for trees in their management which are not on council-owned land.

The duty of care involves **taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or damage to property.**

4.3. Industry Guidance

The following policies draw on guidance from several key documents which are currently accepted as best practice for managing the risk from trees:

- Common sense risk management of trees, National Tree Safety Group (NTSG), 2024
- Hazards from trees: A General Guide, Forestry Commission (Lonsdale), 2000

- Tree Surveys: A Guide to Good Practice, The Arboricultural Association (Fay, Dowson, Helliwell), 2005
- Tree Safety Management – Operational Guidance Booklet, Forestry Commission, 2007
- Sector Information Minute 01/2007/05 – Management of the risk from falling trees or branches, HSE, 2013.

4.4. Scope

The following policies outline how the physiological and structural health of the trees under SKDC's control will be monitored to identify foreseeable and unacceptable risks posed to any person owed the duty of care.

Additionally, the policies describe how SKDC will allocate its limited resources for tree management across the various sites under its jurisdiction, ensuring effective prioritization of resources within and between sites.

All land and property under the direct control of SKDC is covered by this policy.

4.5. Strategic Approach

The council's objective is to grow, maintain and conserve trees because of the many benefits they give us. The council aims to manage the risk from tree failure to an acceptable or tolerable level. A risk is 'tolerable' if it is as low as reasonably practicable (i.e. if the costs of risk reduction are much greater than the value of risk reduction).

Zoning will be used to define areas of high confluence (high rates of use or high value, combined with large trees). This zoning will determine the assessment type and interval.

Assessments will be passive and active. A passive assessment is one where the observer is not actively looking for tree risk features but may notice them as they go about their daily routine. Passive assessments can be undertaken by SKDC staff, tenants and members of the public.

A active assessment is one where the observer is actively looking for tree risk features Active assessments can be basic or detailed. Active assessments will be triggered by a proactive schedule or a reaction to a trigger (i.e. a report from a member of the public, or a severe weather event).

The frequency of active assessments will be based on the zoning.

4.6. Zoning Policy

Zoning is a means of focusing resources where they are most needed and contributes to a cost-effective approach to risk management.

All land and property under the direct control of SKDC will be zoned – see table 1 below.

Table 1. Zone classes for land managed by SKDC

Zone Class	Characteristics
1	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by many people each day Value (Likelihood of damage): High value static target(s) Trees: Large size/mature or older/known features of interest (Most likely to cause harm/damage)
2	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by some people each day Value (Likelihood of damage): Low value static target(s) Trees: Medium size/young or early mature/no known features of interest
3	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by few people. Value (Likelihood of damage): No static target(s)Trees: Small size/young or early mature/no known features of interest
4	Land that does not contain trees Private tenanted land (exceptions may apply) – see notes below

Due to the responsibilities of tenants described in section 2.3.3 above, passive assessments are considered sufficient to manage the risk arising from trees on private tenanted land. In exceptional circumstances, where occupancy, value or tree factors warrant it, some areas of private tenanted land may be classified into other zone categories.

If a passive assessment of a tree on private tenanted land (Zone 4) identifies a feature that needs to be monitored, the individual tree may be recorded and recommended for ongoing active assessment.

4.7. Active Assessments

Active assessments can be basic or detailed.

Basic active assessments will be walkover surveys and 'visual checks' intended to identify obvious and significant hazards that need to be escalated to detailed assessments.

Detailed active assessments will include inspections of all trees with a stem diameter over 8cm, measured at 1.5m above ground level, based on the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method defined by Mattheck and Breloer (1995). For further details of VTA methodology, please refer to appendix 1.

The type of assessment and the time interval between assessments will be determined by the zone, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Assessment type and interval for each Zone.

Zone Class	Assessment type	Interval
1	Detailed Active	18 months
2	Detailed Active	30 months
3	Basic Active	54 months
4	Passive	n/a (none)

The assessment interval for a particular tree or tree group can be increased beyond the default interval for zone, if it is recommended by the surveyor due to the structural or physiological condition of the tree(s).

4.8. Records

Regardless of the zoning, the Council aims to create a full inventory of all the trees under its control with basic data such as species, age class, height class and stem diameter class.

For trees that have features which may cause nuisance issues, or which raise their risk level above the acceptable level, a range of additional data will be collected. Assessment of the risk level related to particular tree feature is highly context specific, based on factors such as species, age, and the relationship to nearby targets. The Council will keep individual tree records in a proprietary tree management database system.

4.9. Recommendations for remedial action

Recommendations for a given tree or group of trees resulting can include:

- Escalation to higher level or specialist type of assessment.
- A reduced reassessment interval.
- Remedial action for the tree (e.g. pruning)
- Remedial action for the tree environment (e.g. target management, or treatments that improve the soil environment)
- Remedial action to facilitate a future assessment (e.g. ivy removal).

All recommendations for remedial action will be given a priority rating (see section 4.10 for detail).

4.10. Priority Ratings

If resources were not limited, all recommendations would be acted upon in the shortest possible timeframe. The limited resources available for tree work mean that the council must prioritise recommendations linked to scenarios which present the highest level of

risk. Every recommendation resulting from a formal proactive survey will therefore be given a priority rating.

Priority ratings for safety critical recommendations will be a number from 1 to 3. The protocol for assigning priority ratings is as follows.

Firstly, the feature identified as a hazard will be assigned one of the hazard ratings described in table 3 below, based on the likelihood of failure:

Table 3. Hazard ratings to be applied to features based on the likelihood of a failure occurring.

Likelihood Rating	Example
Improbable	A tree with good vitality, good biomechanical structure, and limited external environmental stressors.
Possible	A tree with compromised vitality and/or biomechanical structure and/or a tree subject to moderately increased external environmental stressors.
Probable	Tree with major biomechanical defects, hazards, and/or physiological decline, and/or a tree with significantly increased external environmental stressors.
Imminent	Tree at imminent risk of collapse due to serious significant defects

Secondly, the identified hazard will be assigned one of the consequence ratings described in table 4 below, based on the context of its setting:

Table 4. Consequence ratings to be applied to identified hazards, based on the harm that may be caused if failure occurred.

Consequence Rating	Example
Negligible	Potential for injuries requiring only minor first aid
Minor	Potential for an injury requiring medical attention
Moderate	Potential for serious injury likely to cause on-going disability
Severe	Potential for serious life-threatening injury or fatality

Lastly, the hazard rating and consequence rating are cross referenced via the matrix shown in table 5 below, to produce a priority rating, as follows:

Table 5. A matrix to determine the priority rating based on the hazard and consequence rating.

Consequence Rating ↓	Priority Rating			
Negligible	2	3	n/a	n/a
Minor	2	3	3	n/a
Moderate	1	2	3	3
Severe	1	1	2	2
Hazard Rating →	Imminent	Probable	Possible	Improbable

The protocol for assigning priority ratings to safety critical recommendations is a basic form of risk assessment. The terms used are qualitative and broad but are sufficient for the intended purpose: to prioritise recommended works to ensure that limited resources are prioritised to scenarios which present the highest level of risk.

Recommendations for work which is not safety critical will be categorised as 'General Management' (GM) and be assigned to one of the subcategories described in table 6 below. In terms of their priority rating, all GM recommendations will be a lower priority rating than any safety critical recommendation. However, for logistical reasons some GM recommendations may be undertaken before safety critical recommendations, if they can be done at the same time as safety critical works being carried out in the same location at minimal additional cost.

Table 6. Subcategories of general management recommendation.

Sub-category code	Name	Example (e.g. ...)
GM-1	Damage prevention	Where work is required to prevent (further) damage to a structure or infrastructure
GM-2	Obstruction to access	Where work is required to maintain reasonable access along a highway or footpath.
GM-3	Visibility issues	Where work is required to maintain/restore visibility to a highway junction or amenity area or maintain/restore the effective functioning of street/security lighting.
GM-4	Nuisance issues and/or neighbour relations	Where work is required to prevent or abate a nuisance issue such as leaf litter, or to maintain good neighbouring relations by dealing with any situation causing a neighbouring landowner concern.
GM-5	Proactive management	Where work will deliver social, environmental, or economic benefits.

4.11. Surveyor Competency

Detailed active assessments will be undertaken by a competent person who holds a RQF level 3 accreditation in arboriculture (or higher) OR a Lantra Professional Tree Inspection Qualification.

Basic active assessments will be conducted by someone who holds a Lantra Basic Tree Inspection Qualification.

4.12. Private Neighbouring Trees

Where a privately-owned tree situated on neighbouring land is believed to pose an unacceptable risk to targets on council land, the landowner will be contacted in writing to be made aware of the issue. Access to the affected area may be restricted or prohibited until the risk has been addressed.

Section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows SKDC to deal with trees on private land that pose an immediate danger to the people or property, however, it is beyond the scope of this policy to describe the accepted protocols for utilising these powers.

4.13. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

The policies described above (3.1 to 3.12) are intended to manage the risk posed by council-owned trees. Whenever remedial tree work is required, there is the possibility that this could have an unintended negative impact on local wildlife and biodiversity. The main areas of concern are bats, birds and the loss of deadwood

4.13.1. Bats

Bats are known to roost in several features commonly found in trees such as hollows, holes, cracks, loose bark and thick ivy. It will be the responsibility of SKDC's appointed contractors to undertake the necessary checks for bats prior to undertaking the specified tree work.

4.13.2. Birds

Birds can nest in trees from March to August. No recommended tree work designated as 'general management' (refer to table 6) will be undertaken during this period. Tree work designated as 'safety critical' may be undertaken during the nesting period if suitable checks have determined that disturbance of nesting birds is unlikely or if the risk identified is immediate and significant and no other options are available to manage the situation.

4.13.3. Deadwood

Deadwood habitats are vital for a wide range of plants, fungi, animals, and micro-organisms. Council-owned trees are often in urban locations where the retention of standing deadwood would create an unacceptable risk. If deadwood cannot be retained without posing an unacceptable risk, we will consider the risk posed could be adequately managed by shortening the dead branch/stem rather than completely removing it. If it is not feasible to retain any standing deadwood, we will consider whether it is possible to retain deadwood nearby on the ground (without causing an obstruction, nuisance issues, or introducing a new hazard).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – additional information about the visual tree assessment methodology

The Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method was developed by Claus Mattheck and is an internationally acknowledged method for tree inspection. It is a logical, systematic, and diagnostic approach which aims to identify trees with reasonably foreseeable defects, hazards, or features that may indicate dysfunction in the structural integrity or physiological vitality of the tree.

There are 3 stages to the inspection process:

I. **Inspection** – conducted from ground level to identify features which may be a symptom of compromised structural or physiological condition. It is a visual assessment only.

II. **Examination** – conducted from ground level or as an aerial inspection, as required, to confirm the presence or absence of a suspected defect. Only basic tools are involved such as a probe and sounding mallet.

III. **Measurement -** conducted from ground level or as an aerial inspection, as required, to measure the extent of the defect and calculate/estimate the remaining strength of the affected part. It is likely to include the use of advanced tools such as resistance measuring drills or sound velocity measuring devices.

Limitations of a Stage 1 VTA:

The majority of tree inspections undertaken will be Stage 1 VTAs. It is important that the limitations of this method are documented and understood.

A3.1. Trees are living organisms and can decline in health rapidly due to biotic and abiotic influences. Therefore, failure of intact trees can never be ruled out due to the laws and forces of nature. An example being extreme wind speeds.

A3.2. No invasive means of investigation are used at this stage. No detailed decay measurements shall be taken. No soil or foliage samples shall be taken. The requirement for any further investigation (Stage 2) or discussion shall be identified during the Stage 1 investigation and presented as a recommendation.

A3.3. No soil profile assessment shall be made. For this reason, the failure of a tree because of ground failure, such as landslip, cannot be ruled out. Where the inspector identifies the potential for failure in such a manner, however, they shall make a recommendation for further investigation.

A3.4. Recent excavation or ground works near a tree may have resulted in structural roots being damaged or severed, and that damage being hidden by deposited soil or a new structure. For this reason, the failure of a tree because of hidden root damage or dysfunction cannot be ruled out. Comments shall be made, however, for trees which have obviously and most likely been affected.

A3.5. Only the trees within the areas indicated on the associated maps shall be assessed and presented in the reporting.

A3.6. Although limitations shall exist within these investigations, it is believed that all reasonably practicable steps are being taken to identify and address unacceptable risk, and that the duty of care has been met by the author, the surveyor, the manager, and the tree owner.

References

The body language of trees: A handbook for failure analysis. Mattheck, Breloer. TSO. 1994.

The Body Language of Trees: Encyclopaedia (sic) of Visual Tree Assessment. Mattheck, Bethge, Weber. KIT. 2015.