

TREE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel – 04 November 2013



1. Purpose of the report

To provide Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel with an update on the City Council's view on managing its tree stock in relation to existing pressures, up to date national guidance and proactive maintenance to ensure the management of the city's the tree stock is risk based and appropriate. It sets out the guiding principles for managing our tree stock, for guiding arboricultural management decisions on all Council owned and managed tree stock.

2. Background

As a local authority with a duty of care to residents and visitors to the city there is a need to implement and continually develop a risk-based approach to tree maintenance.

There is a growing need for the Council to provide accurate information on all of its assets, to show transparency in local government processes. Tree risk management is a systematic and proactive approach that prioritises work based on potential risk of hazardous trees. This assessment method provides an efficient process for establishing an inspection schedule and methods, and enables the prioritisation of works based on perceived risk.

Each tree or groups of trees that have been inspected will be given a category based on the ground inspection information and the level of risk they pose to the general public.

These priority categories are documented below-

Priority 1 – Dead, dying or dangerous trees. Trees in this category warrant work to make safe within 3 months.

Priority 2 – Tree(s) that are showing signs of decay or stress. These trees will be monitored for further decline but do not warrant work to be undertaken immediately including trees that need to be pruned or felled in relation to insurance claims

Re-Inspection – Tree(s) that are causing an issue to a resident or residents (such as dropping leaves/sap on cars or creating shade). These trees fall outside of Priority categories 1 and 2.

The process for tree inspection includes a ground inspection to evaluate if there are any trees that are hazardous and require maintenance works or additional inspection. This inspection would be recorded on Plymouth City Councils Tree Management database. This incorporates the identification of the existing tree problem (if any) and stipulate any remedial action necessary based on best practice to address the specific issue.

The Tree Management Statement also deals with tree selection for new plantings ensuring the 'Right Tree, Right Place' ethos governs decision making as well as ensuring there is a good mix of trees to further encourage wildlife and biodiversity within the city boundaries.

3. Implementation

The management statement has been drafted to standardise how all requests for tree work are dealt with in Plymouth and it seeks to detail to Plymouth City Council Officers, Elected members and residents how trees are being and will be managed now and in the future.

Application of the management statements will ensure trees within Plymouth are managed in a pro-active and systematic manner, leading to improvements in tree health and a more sustainable tree population.