

Trees Newcastle

Newcastle City Council Tree Strategy 2018-2023



FOREWARD

Trees are our history and our future. They define the landscape where we live, work and play. Research proves that humans feel better when they are in the company of trees. Even in urban areas we require contact with the natural world and trees bring this right into city centres, minimizing the impact of the built environment by providing colour, shade and shelter. They act as way-markers and signposts for us and provide homes for wildlife. By careful selection of species it is possible to provide trees that will contribute to improved air quality, reduce noise and control run-off from heavy rain. Trees are integral to our wellbeing, health and quality of life.

We are fortunate in Newcastle to have areas of parks and woodland which are freely accessible to the public and a large number of trees lining our residential streets and within the City centre. A recently completed iTree Canopy study measured Newcastle's area of tree canopy cover at 18.1% which is slightly above the national average but also revealed that some areas of the City have greater tree cover than others. Not only is it important that our existing trees are conserved and managed to ensure they bring benefit to future generations, but we also need to identify and action ways to increase their numbers across the City. This is the overriding objective of the Tree Strategy.

The Newcastle Tree Strategy was originally published and adopted in 2002 and apart from some minor revisions has not been updated. However, many factors affecting trees have changed considerably during that 16 year period including national policies and guidance. Local Government has also undergone huge changes in this period with finance and labour resources reduced to the point where it was inappropriate or difficult to deliver some of the aims of the previous strategy. The Strategy has therefore been revised taking these factors into account.

The objectives of the Tree Strategy apply to all the trees within the City whether they are on council owned land, on land owned by other organisations or by individuals. The document explains how the City Council can support others in their tree management and encourage additional planting such as through the planning process for new developments. The document includes targets and action plans that will allow us to monitor progress by:

- Setting out the methodology we will use to take stock of the tree population in the city.
- Making a commitment to increase the number and type of trees.
- Providing a mechanism to improve the provision and care of trees in the city
- Ensuring that decisions and activities undertaken in relation to trees are made in a structured and consistent way
- Monitoring the action plan and policies for the care, management and enhancement of the city's tree population

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Part 1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The benefits of trees, woodlands and hedges have long been acknowledged. Trees provide one of the most cost effective ways to improve the environmental quality of a city, delivering physical, social and economic well-being as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity and visual amenity to name but a few. We must work with all our partners to ensure that our city's tree canopy cover is not only maintained but increased to a level which allows us to mitigate the effects of city living and climate change. Planning for the future is key to having resilient cities which are sustainable places to live.

1.2 Why have a Tree Strategy?

A Tree Strategy provides a strategic framework for the management of the local tree population to achieve agreed aims and objectives. This Tree Strategy helps us deliver our obligations under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 (s40: duty to conserve biodiversity), deliver aims contained in the Governments 25-year Environment Plan 2018 to leave our environment 'in a better condition than when inherited it', and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework. Trees Newcastle proposes an integrated approach to tree management across the city.

1.3 Status of this document

Newcastle developed its first tree strategy in 2002 with the launch of 'Trees Newcastle – A Tree Strategy for Newcastle upon Tyne'. It has been quoted as a national example of good practice (Trees in Towns II (2008) and, more recently in the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) publication, '[Trees in the Townscape, A Guide for Decision Makers](#)' (2012). This refresh therefore does not involve a radical change to the original document but will update the strategy in line with good practice guidance and legislative changes as well as changes within the Council. The original Tree Policy published in 2002 was adopted as Council policy guiding the management of Council tree and hedge stock.

1.4 Trees Newcastle covers all trees, woodlands and hedges within the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, both public and private. It is to be used as a framework for all key stakeholders who have a role to play in protecting and increasing tree cover across the City including all organisations and individual households that own trees. It addresses how we will enhance the benefits trees can give and how challenges can be met, delivering a tree resource that will benefit all people who visit, work and live here.

1.5 By adopting this tree strategy Newcastle City Council further demonstrates its commitment to caring for the trees under its management and increasing the number of trees in public places. The tree strategy will also be used as best practice to influence private land owners to look after and encourage planting on private land.

1.6 The Trees Newcastle Strategy has three parts:

- A **Tree Policy** which sets out our strategic objectives that guide and influence the decisions we take.
- The **Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines** which provides the detail around sourcing, planting, establishing and managing trees under the ownership and influence of the Council.
- A **Tree Risk Management Plan** which outlines processes we will use to manage the risks trees can cause

Closely aligned to the Tree Strategy sits our emerging Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) '**Trees, Landscaping and Development**' which will set out developers' responsibilities regarding existing and new trees within planning applications.

1.7 The guiding principles of this Strategy document are the same as those set down in 2002 to

- Protect and care for Newcastle's trees and hedges.
- Plant more trees and hedges.

The document sets a target of increasing the current canopy cover from 18.1% to 20% by 2050. The overall objective being that Newcastle will have a sustainably managed and protected, healthy and diverse tree population with sufficient canopy cover to benefit and meet the needs of all who live, work and visit the city.



2.0 Background and context

- 2.1 Newcastle covers 11400 ha² and of this, 3,002 ha² is managed by either the Council or Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) which is the Arm's Length Management Organisation managing the Council's housing stock.

Many of our trees were planted over one hundred years ago along streets and in parks such as Jesmond Dene. Some are remnant trees associated with historical estates and manor houses. Our parks and recreation grounds also have a long history, being regarded by our philanthropic predecessors as recreation space for working people. Other parks have been created more recently for example our country park at Newburn and sites with a similar 'countryside' character where wildlife enhancement is a priority. Woodland has been retained in areas which have historically been difficult to develop such as the steep-sided Denes to the west of the City as well as new plantations on reclamation sites, some of which have become relatively mature woodland. There has also been a continued history of street tree planting emanating not just from our past but through the garden village movement and similar landscape initiatives which recognised the contribution trees made to landscape value and so to the quality of our City.

We need to protect and care for the legacy which has been passed to us and plant new trees to ensure that legacy continues.

T1 - Healthy trees and woodlands will be protected, retained and managed to ensure healthy growth, development and species diversity. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason as set out in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines.

2.2 Public perceptions

Trees invoke strong emotions amongst residents, some negative due to issues such as leaf and sap drop or shade and some positive with people volunteering for tree planting, woodland management and campaigning to prevent tree loss. There is also a growing appreciation of the wider environmental benefits of our urban forest.

2.3 Benefits of trees

- 2.3.1 Trees provide many benefits within our City, some of which are interlinked: The Forestry Commission for England has published '[Case for Trees](#)' and the [Trees for Cities](#) website is a useful source of further reading. Trees help create a green environment and the presence of trees in our city makes it feel more natural, improving its visual and physical quality. Although tree population numbers are a useful measure of the tree cover within a city, it is the healthy leaf area which delivers a tree's benefits. For this reason, it is also important to remember that there is a 20 to 100 year lag between planting a tree and the delivery of its full range of benefits making planning for the future key to achieving the aims of this strategy.

The Tree Strategy aims to support water management and green infrastructure to address future changes in climate, land use, water

management, and socio-economic activity while contributing to the amenity of the city.

2.3.2 Mitigation of climate change

Trees mitigate climate change in many ways including removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, encouraging walking and cycling through the creation of more attractive routes and providing shade in hot weather. Our Climate Change Strategy includes an action point '*to develop design guidance to...promote soft landscaping and trees*'. It also aims towards '*...creating and maintaining an urban network of trees, green spaces and habitats that is sufficiently robust to withstand climate extremes (while posing minimal danger to property or human life) and to support as much urban biodiversity as possible*': this Tree Strategy helps deliver these aims.

2.3.3 Mitigation of airborne pollution

In the UK it is estimated that trees remove four million tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year. Within the right context (right tree species, right planting layout) trees and hedges can decrease air pollution by trapping dust and absorbing air pollutants such as ozone. Our [Climate Change Strategy 2012-2020](#) makes reference to trees in the context of air quality '*There are a number of measures already taken or planned for the future in response to climate change including: investing in street tree planting with a beneficial effect on air filtration and air quality*'. Species type and density are important considerations.

2.3.4 Trees and flooding

As well as protecting and enhancing the urban environment trees and green infrastructure can provide complimentary benefits to surface water management. These are mainly through:

- Transpiration – water evaporated by trees into the air.
- Interception – reducing the amount of water that reaches the ground.
- Increased infiltration and attenuation of water – roots, and the soil in the planting pits increase the capacity of the ground to hold water by keeping the soil structure open. The retained water can be used by the tree or will infiltrate into the surrounding ground.
- Phytoremediation – turning harmful chemicals into less harmful substances

A variety of engineering techniques are available to manage surface water but planting with a range of tree pits and planters can collect and slow down the flow of water in heavy storm events.

Future maintenance is also an important issue that needs to be considered to ensure trees remain healthy and continue to deliver surface water management benefits.

Trees can also assist in managing erosion along slopes adjacent to rivers or roads.

The Flood Management Team will provide advice based on current design guidance. At the time of writing this will include the City Council's current Core Strategy and [CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015](#).

2.3.5 Improving health and wellbeing

International studies and research have identified that urban trees provide 'breathing spaces' in cities, decrease respiratory problems, encourage walking and cycling, reduce traffic speeds and generally help to reduce stress. The Nature Conservancy report 'Funding Trees for Health' demonstrates these benefits, showing them to have economic value by decreasing health budget spend.

2.3.6 Biodiversity

Trees play a vital role in our urban ecosystem, providing many benefits for wildlife. Birds, mammals and invertebrates use trees, scrub and hedgerows as roosts, breeding sites and feeding areas, while deadwood associated with these habitats is valuable for a variety of organisms such as bacteria, lichens and fungi which help decompose the deadwood. [Newcastle and North Tyneside's BAP](#) aims to conserve and enhance our natural environment to protect these natural resources and leave a legacy for future generations. The BAP consists of a series of plans for priority habitats and species which are considered to be under threat locally and nationally. Native Woodland and Scrub, Shrub & Hedgerow are priority habitats within the BAP. In addition, our ancient semi-natural woodlands, of which there are four in Newcastle, are all designated as Local Wildlife Sites, giving them protection within the planning system. There are other woodland and plantation sites which are important in biodiversity terms with many designated as Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites or Sites of Local Conservation Interest, due to their value to wildlife. Bats, urban birds, red squirrel and hedgehog are all local priority BAP species which are dependent on Newcastle's trees and hedgerows. Protection is given to species such as bats, red squirrel and nesting birds under European and UK legislation.

2.3.7 Ancient semi-natural woodland and veteran trees

Ancient woods, those continuously wooded since 1600, are home to more threatened species than any other habitat in the UK. A closely-knit network of plants and animals, some of which are rare and vulnerable, has developed and are dependent on the stable conditions which these ancient woodlands provide. Therefore, if tree species change, they may become threatened and vulnerable to climate change. It is the closest we have to natural woodland in the UK and is an irreplaceable part of our heritage. Many have been left to develop naturally but most have been altered in some way with additional planting. These areas are rare in the North East comprising only 1.3% of the region's land cover with almost half being less than 5ha and often surrounded by intensive land use. Within Newcastle they are represented within the wooded Denes at Denton, Jesmond, Sugley and Throckley/Walbottle Dene covering 52 ha in total. These sites are included in the Ancient Woodland

Inventory and are designated as Local Wildlife Sites for their biodiversity value.

Veteran trees are usually in their second or mature stage of life and have exceptional cultural, landscape and nature conservation value. Veteran trees are identified by signs of aging. They may have started hollowing and have patches of decay, broken branches or flaking bark that provide holes, cavities and crevices in the trunk and large limbs which are especially important for roosting and nesting bats and birds. However decay and other physical defects can pose a danger to the public and this must be managed.

A Green Infrastructure Strategy and Evidence Base was produced to support our Core Strategy. This refers to trees in several terms listing 'Street trees, verges and hedges' as GI assets. It also includes 'irregular woodland cover, generally sparse, but with well wooded steep valley sides, estates with mixed woodland and parkland trees, and plantations on restored spoil heaps' as key characteristics of the Tyne and Wear Lowlands of which Newcastle is a part. Linking with the aims of the BAP: 'The aspiration of a Green Infrastructure study will be to integrate these 'isolated' green/blue spaces within the urban area, and into the wider GI network, with the use of street trees/highway buffers/greening of transport corridors/linkages with wildlife corridors.' Delivery of the GI, the BAP and this Tree Strategy are linked.

2.3.8 Trees as part of our landscape and heritage

Landscape value and features are important to cities with trees and hedges adding to this value by providing physical features such as historical boundaries, drives and woodlands. [Newcastle's Landscape Character Assessment](#) including the Areas of Local Landscape Significance (ALLS) and Areas of Local Townscape Significance (ALTS) both cite trees as being important to their character. Trees have an architectural and place-making role. On a local level they can improve the quality of our environment by screening, enhancing the sense of scale, reducing glare from buildings and hard surfaces, directing pedestrians and slowing vehicular traffic. They bring colour and character to our urban and rural areas.

2.3.9 Economic benefits of trees

Research and good practice guidance already referenced show that people prefer to live, work and play in green leafy environments which can lead to economic benefits including property value increases ranging from 5-18% with more mature trees giving higher gains. Industrial areas and employment sites with natural green space can have more productive employees and there is research evidence of increased footfall in shopping areas and tourist attractions with trees. These effects can increase levels of inward investment in these areas.

2.4 Problems trees can cause

Although trees have many benefits they do in some cases conflict with our city way of life. Problems such as damage to structures, branch, sap and leaf drop, pollen and

shade can range from minor inconvenience to serious consequences. Many of the problems can be resolved or mitigated through appropriate management and maintenance. It is common, when a path or wall is damaged by a tree to suggest that the tree is removed, however this is not always needed. It can be less expensive to repair the structure using slightly different methods which allow the tree to be retained and so save the felling and reinstatement cost. Due to the problems trees can cause, it is important to have clear guidance on what action can be taken in various circumstances and the need to balance problems against benefits. Guidance on how decision will be reached is presented in our Tree Management Guidelines. Where new tree planting is proposed it is essential to ensure a good design which take all factors into account and ensures the 'right tree in the right place'.



3.0 Issues affecting our tree and hedge resource

3.1 Our trees face challenges from the day they are planted, through their establishment to growth and maturity. Many factors threaten not only the tree's survival but its ability to reach its potential and deliver its many benefits. To achieve the aims of this strategy the current and future distribution, health and suitability of our tree stock will be considered and managed. The following section discusses threats on both Council and private land.

3.2 Climate change

Climate change will impact our trees and woodlands due to increases in extreme weather such as high winds, heavy rainfall and drought. These effects will probably be seen in declining tree health in some species or increased difficulty establishing young trees. As climate change progresses, some mature trees will be lost through both direct causes such as windthrow due to gales or indirectly as weather conditions make them more stressed decreasing their tolerance to pests and diseases. Other factors such as increased winter rainfall may lead to water logging, which can affect tree roots and stability. If our woodlands are affected, this has a knock-on effect upon the plants and animals which are found there.

3.3 Pests and diseases

Climate change is changing and extending the range of pests and diseases and this will affect the UK as new pests and diseases become more common in this country. In the 1970's Dutch elm disease was introduced into the UK and is one of the most well-known examples of a 'new' pathogen dramatically changing the look and make-up of our urban forest. The importation of trees, along with their associated soil and packaging materials, from across Europe and elsewhere continues to bring threats and these imported pests and diseases are already having an effect on the tree population of Newcastle. The following are some of those currently present in Newcastle or which could pose a threat in the future: ash dieback (present in Newcastle); horse chestnut bleeding canker (present in Newcastle), Dutch elm disease (present in Newcastle), horse chestnut leaf miner (present in Newcastle), acute oak decline (reached the Midlands), sweet chestnut blight (most in southern England but one outbreak in Derbyshire), Asian longhorn beetle (southern England), Gypsy moth (southern England), plane wilt, emerald ash borer (not yet in the UK).

3.4 Poor species diversity

There are two relevant factors - the number of different species present within our city and the genetic diversity of the trees. Increasing both factors reduces the impact of threats such as pest and disease as well as climate change. The survey of our tree stock gives us vital information on the diversity of our tree stock and this will guide our approach to tree planting on both Council land and within landscape plans for new development. It will also inform advice given to private individuals or developers on species choice

3.5 Loss or damage through development

Demolition and construction can damage trees in a variety of ways. This may be through direct loss to make way for the development, a reduction in space for retained trees' future growth and spread, direct damage due to compaction of soil, severing roots or branches or from spill of chemicals or the use of fire. Infrastructure and service installation can also be damaging due to open trenching. For new trees, the presence of pre-existing or new utility provision must be carefully considered if future conflict is to be avoided. Our SPD will give guidance to developers regarding tree retention, protection and planting.

T2 - Newcastle's tree stock and canopy cover will be increased to give greater species and age diversity to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.

T3 - The Council will use its powers to prevent unnecessary damage to trees within all construction/development in accordance with the current version of BS5837 and pursue enforcement action where appropriate if trees are damaged or destroyed.

3.6 Permitted Development Rights

3.6.1 Where a planning application is needed, there is the opportunity for trees and hedges to be considered and protection sought if needed. If development is 'permitted' this means that no planning application is needed and there is no third party to assess removal or potential damage trees. Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning, (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, 2015 sets out when planning permission is not required. Probably most relevance to our urban trees is maintenance and improvement of the highway by Highways Authorities, repairs to services by utility companies and small extensions or alteration to dwellings or commercial buildings. Local authorities also have permitted development rights for work on their own land.

3.6.2 Work associated with installation and repair of utility services

Street trees are very vulnerable to damage which can cause at best, loss in vigour and at worst, death, both of which may take several years to become evident. It also poses a health and safety risk if trees are made unstable (severing of major roots) and work just covered over. To address this issue Newcastle has a [Trees and Utilities](#) guidance document which sets out our procedures around working around trees.

3.7 Specification, planting and maintenance

Unless a tree reaches maturity and is healthy, it cannot deliver its full benefits. Many of the trees in the City are merely 'surviving, not thriving' wasting the time and finance invested in their purchase and planting. To ensure the trees we plant reach their potential they need to be correctly sourced, planted, established and then maintained. Poor planting with trees planted too deep, in tree pits with inappropriate surfacing or small soil volumes either kills or stunts the trees. Poor establishment maintenance (particularly insufficient watering), tree guards, stakes and grilles left in place so

damaging to bark and stems and a lack of thinning of plantations also reduces the value our tree stock.

Another issue is the limited palette of tree species used in planting schemes which reduces species diversity in the city and also the landscape value. Species choice may also be inappropriate due to the trees being too big or too small and so unsuitable for their setting.

3.8 Damage and vandalism

Damage to trees, both deliberate and through ignorance, is common. Criminal damage includes cutting down or lopping/topping, snapping saplings, setting fires beneath trees and various other attempts to kill Council trees. Some damage to trees is through ignorance for example by failing to maintain trees or leaving on stakes, ties metal grilles etc. or through the fixing of decorative lights which are not loosened on a regular basis. Damage related to highway use and maintenance causes compaction of rooting areas, branches can be torn branches by high vehicles, the installation of driveways cutting across verges or through contamination from salt in grit or hydrocarbons. Enforcement action will be taken against anyone who damages Council trees.

Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT)

[CAVAT](#) provides a method for managing trees as public assets rather than liabilities. It is designed to be a strategic tool to aid decision-making about the tree stock as a whole and to be used where the value of a single tree needs to be calculated in monetary terms. There are two versions of the CAVAT method. The 'Full' method is recommended for use in decisions concerning individual trees or groups, when precision is required, and sufficient time is available for a full assessment. In summary CAVAT delivers:

- A monetary value for amenity trees based on tree size having a trunk formula valuation method adjusted for tree health and function.
- It adjusts valuations for human population density to account for all potential beneficiaries.
- The system using the 'Full Method' can be used to give compensation values for damaged public trees.
- The 'Quick Method' has informed urban forest succession planning and resource allocation.

We will use the 'Full' CAVAT method where appropriate to calculate a compensation value to be pursued from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any Council owned tree.

T7 - The Council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.

4.0 The future of Newcastle's trees

4.1 Understanding our tree population

Before we can consider the future of our tree stock we need to know what we have now and consequently our inventory is being refreshed. Trees can be considered in terms of individual tree numbers and species, however, to supplement the inventory data an iTree canopy survey has been undertaken in 2018. This study shows the canopy cover for the City as a whole and on a ward-by-ward basis. Where feasible it shows relationships between canopy cover and information gathered from the Office of National Statistics such as health, mortality rates, deprivation. The study highlights areas of high and low tree cover to give a baseline which informs an integrated plan for maintaining the existing tree stock and increasing it for the benefit of future generations.

The Council has also commissioned a full iTree Eco-survey which will give a fiscal value to the ecosystem benefits Newcastle's trees provide for:

- Storm water attenuation and assess their current value.
- Annual carbon storage and value
- Annual amount to carbon sequestered and value
- Amount of pollution removed annually and value
- Energy savings attributed to trees in relation to buildings

The study will highlight areas of good and poor tree cover and identify areas for future tree planting allowing assessment of the required level of investment to deliver improvements to the City's environment and the health of its residents. The study will provide the City with information policy makers can use to take full account of trees in future decision making. The final report is due by the end of 2019.

T2 - Newcastle's tree stock and canopy cover will be increased to give greater species and age diversity to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.

4.2 Canopy cover targets

Results from the study completed in July 2018 indicate that Newcastle has a canopy cover estimated at 18.1%. This puts Newcastle above the average of 17% estimated in 320 towns and cities surveyed across the UK. Given the increasing understanding of benefits that trees bring to the urban environment and its population it is reasonable that the City aims to increase the canopy cover. A target figure of 20% canopy cover by 2050 would be achievable. The full iTree Eco-survey, when completed, will form the basis of a monitored action plan and identify areas of the City where tree planting is not only possible but will have the most benefit.

4.3 How we will increase our canopy cover

Using the iTree Eco-survey we will identify sites where new tree planting is both possible and most beneficial to improve canopy cover, air quality, flood prevention and habitat quality. It will not be possible to deliver target canopy cover on just Council

owned land alone so other ways will need to be investigated. These include, although are not limited to:

- Use of planning conditions and obligations in Development Management
- Working with community partners on funding bids,
- Using opportunities within the design of Council schemes to increase tree planting,
- Working with agencies such as the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission,
- Giving advice, encouragement and raising awareness,
- Developing a Newcastle's Trees website.

4.4 Tree planting – what we will do

There are many factors which need to be considered when planting urban trees involving both species selection and the actual growing and living conditions for the trees in the future. If trees merely survive, rather than thrive, then they will not provide the many benefits we plant them for such as their ecosystem benefits and aesthetic qualities.

Our Tree and Hedge Management Guidance and SPD will set out the detail covering the following:

- 4.4.1 There is a wealth of information available to assist experienced designers in making the right choice of tree including 'Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide for Specifiers' published by TDAG. Our guidance will also refer to BS8545 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations and CIRIA's (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) guidance, ['The benefits of large species trees in urban landscapes: a costing, design and management guide \(C712\)'](#)

Issues to be considered include

- where trees are planted in relation to highway, property and outlook,
- species choice to give an appropriate mature size and shape,
- species diversity including non-native genera and species and those from different latitudes to account for climate change and provide resilience to pests and disease,
- planting size to reduce maintenance requirements and improve establishment.

4.4.2 Species diversity selection

When it comes to species selection we find that a small group of 'reliable performers' are specified and planted time and time again, whereas there are many other possibilities. We will therefore consider a wider range of commercially available genera and species.

A city needs large and mature trees to deliver the widest possible range of environmental benefits in urban areas. However, there must also be trees in varying age classes to replace the mature trees as they decline and die. It is also important to allow for loss within the younger age classes due to damage,

poor maintenance or disease so that the planting programs deliver the target tree canopy levels.

The city's trees are split between those owned and/or managed by the Council and those in private ownership. Our Tree Management Guidelines which form part of this strategy set out how we will make decision regarding the City's tree stock.

However the urban environment is not always conducive to successful tree cultivation and therefore the choice of tree species must be appropriate to ensure it maximises the overall benefits. Trees lost or made vulnerable through climate change may need to be replaced with more resilient species.

4.4.3 Trees in hard landscapes

It is often necessary to plant trees in areas within hard surfacing such as car parks, streets and pedestrianised areas. It is better to design in open planting areas, but where this is not possible, special planting techniques are available which ensure adequate soil volumes to ensure the trees reach their full potential. The publication by TDAG, '[Trees in hard landscapes - a guide for delivery](#)' considers practical challenges and solutions to allow integration of trees in our streets, civic spaces and surface car parks. These areas are the most challenging urban environments for growing trees but are also the areas that benefit most from their inclusion. The City will encourage the use of modern planting techniques which have been researched and developed to enable successful tree establishment and growth in these areas.



5.0 Management of Council trees

5.1 Newcastle City Council has an in-house Tree Team providing a specialist arboricultural service across the Council. To ensure that work to trees and hedges on Council land is carried out in accordance with our Tree Management Guidelines, only the Council's Tree Team will specify and carry out work on Council trees even if this is part of a development being carried out by a private developer.

5.2 Tree pruning and removals

We receive a high volume of requests from the public and other sources relating to trees each year. These range from requests to remove trees completely to minor pruning. We will not carry out any work to trees without arboricultural justification. The Tree Management Guidelines set out the circumstances within which work will be carried out. All management and maintenance work will be undertaken in accordance with the current version of BS3998 as detailed in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidance.

5.3 Replacement trees

Except in the case of woodland or plantation thinning, replacement planting is essential to ensure continuity of the tree stock. A single young tree will take many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature one and one for one replacement does not give the same benefit, nor does it give the increase in canopy cover we need. When it is necessary to remove trees we will ensure that appropriate replacement takes place in order to help us achieve our tree canopy cover target by 2050. Replacement trees do not have to be in the same spot as the felled tree: a nearby location may be more practical and appropriate. The Tree and Hedge Management Guidance will detail our standards for tree replacement which will be aligned to those in the SPD.

5.4 Permitted Development on Council land

Local Authorities have some Permitted Development Rights and the policies within Trees Newcastle ensures tree retention, protection and replacement is given due consideration and is in accordance with the procedures within the current version of BS5837. These standards are detailed in the Tree and Hedge Management Guidance. In summary they will include the need for a pre-development tree survey, an arboricultural implications assessment (prior to design of the scheme), an arboricultural method statement and arboricultural supervision for any work within the root protection area (RPA) of a retained tree and a tree protection plan. If there is work within the RPA no-dig construction will be used. Our Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines set this out in detail and this will be mirrored in our SPD for development management.

5.5 Existing trees in the highway

Trees add considerably to our streetscape and parking areas however city streets offer a very unnatural environment for trees and so they need special care and protection. In residential areas verges have often been surfaced with tarmac and used

for parking and where tree roots could previously access adjacent gardens, these have now been paved. Highway trees are not only located within the carriageway and footways but also within verges and small areas of green space. These areas need to be retained and protected as they provide a better growing space than fully hard surfaced areas and opportunities should be taken wherever possible to reinstate this soft landscaping. Due to the difficulty establishing replacement trees in the existing highway, the removal of street trees will only be considered as a last resort where all other solutions have been considered.

Many of our street tree populations are coming to the end of their natural lives and will, over time, need to be removed. When this occurs, we will replace the trees on a one for one basis as close as possible to their original position. It is not always possible to do this as conditions may no longer be suitable, services may have been installed making excavation of a new tree pit impossible or unsuitable species may have been planted in the past. Major development or redevelopment offers us our best opportunity for planting new street trees and this must be utilised whenever possible. We need to choose locations for new street trees with great care and concentrate on streets that still have verges and new road schemes where tree planting can be planned at the outset. Guidance will be produced with reference to street trees including species choice, establishment and maintenance.

5.6 Establishing new and replacement trees in the highway

The value of trees within the streetscape has been detailed throughout this document and as such, every opportunity should be taken to include street trees within highway renewal and new highway schemes. Guidance for highway tree design is included in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidance. Newcastle Code of Conduct for Street Works and Road works is currently in draft form and this will align with the Tree and Hedge Management Guidance.

5.7 Trees in green space

There are many different types of green space across the City including the Town Moor, parks, recreation grounds, allotments and countryside sites. They will be managed in accordance with the policy contained in this document and in the Tree and Hedge Management Guidance. Newcastle's green spaces provide excellent space for existing trees and offer potential sites for additional planting. Where studies identify gaps in tree canopy and where this coincides with existing green space, planting opportunities will be taken.

5.8 Your Homes Newcastle (YHN)

YHN is a major land holder in the City, managing land on behalf of Newcastle City Council. The trees on this land are managed and maintained in accordance with our Tree Strategy with tree work being carried out by our in-house Tree Team. Over the years many council houses have, and are continuing to be, sold which threatens the future of the tree stock within the property portfolio. Currently, when YHN receives an enquiry to purchase a property, the visual amenity value of the trees is assessed by Planning Division. If the tree has wider value within the neighbourhood a TPO will be considered should the sale proceed.

Trees in the gardens of YHN properties are protected by the terms of the tenancy agreement which states *'You must not plant any large fast growing shrubs, trees or Japanese Knotweed and otherwise cut down, remove, relocate or significantly alter any trees in your property unless you have been given written permission by us in advance.'*

If trees on YHN properties are damaged by tenants it would be a breach of tenancy and appropriate enforcement action may be taken.

5.9 Strategic Property

Residual Education, Adult and Children's Social Services land and other sites not directly related to facilities is managed by Strategic Property. Many of these sites are leased and the terms of the existing leases tend to protect the Council's tree resource. Any new leases will be required to consider this tree strategy and ensure similar protection as well as undertaking to implement both the policies and the Tree and Hedge Management Guidance herein.

5.10 Sale of Council land

Where Council land is sold or leased there may be an increased risk of existing trees being removed and a risk that little new planting will occur. To retain valuable trees, they must be protected prior to sale or transfer of the land to retain the City's asset for the benefit of the wider population.

T5 - Where Council land containing trees is to be sold, the trees will be assessed to determine whether protection via a TPO or restrictive clause in a lease is appropriate to ensure retention for the benefit of the wider population.

5.11 Tree related damage claims

The Council's Insurance Section, supported by the Tree Team, currently manage all claims relating to Council-owned trees. Where a Council tree is implicated as having caused damage to property, the onus is on the claimant to provide evidence that the tree is the cause. Where trees are of high visual amenity value and where they would be worthy of protection by a TPO, the Council will require the submitted evidence and information to be in line with what would be expected for a TPO tree. The Tree and Hedge Management Guidance sets out our requirements.

5.12 Tree management plans

Trees and woodlands need long term management to ensure their current and future value. Opportunities will be taken on both Council and private land to achieve this long-term management. This will be done through funding applications, working with communities, partner landholders and land managers and, within developments, through planning conditions and obligations as set out in our SPD.

5.13 Staff skills and training

Arboricultural inspections and works will be carried out to the relevant British Standards and following current industry best practice guidance.

All staff dealing with trees whether in a planning, landscape, design, highway, safety or operational context will hold the relevant skills, experience and qualifications to undertake their particular roles.

5.14 Risk Management

The issue of risk to property and people is one we take seriously and as a consequence we have produced a Risk Management Plan. This sets out our approach to prioritising inspection based on the level of impacts and potential risks posed to people and property. Areas with mature large trees that may present the highest potential impacts such as high-volume roads and heavily used public spaces will be prioritised before lesser used areas or those with young trees. The frequency of inspection is also guided by these criteria and helps us comply with best practice guidance and our duty of care responsibilities.

Planting the 'right tree in the right place' can prevent future problems and although as a City we want to plant large species trees, this is not always the best choice and each situation must be considered on its own merits.

Veteran and trees of special character or interest will be identified in the course of ongoing tree inspections and assessed as to their future merits and controls required at that time" as set out in our Tree Risk Management Plan and in accordance with Natural England's [Veteran Trees Guide to Good Management](#).

6.0 Trees on private land

Most tree owners appreciate the contribution the trees make to both their own land value and their wider benefits. The majority of the land in the City is in private ownership and this Tree Policy aims to influence the management of the associated trees and hedges through a combination of education, promotion, consultation, involvement, conditions on planning consents and statutory protection through TPOs and conservation areas.

The City Council provides information on how best to plant, establish and look after trees including how to find a competent tree surgeon. In addition, the Council provide arboricultural services to the general public on all aspects of tree survey and practical work.

T4 - Using powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act, related legislation and/or lease clauses, Newcastle City Council will, in the interests of amenity, protect trees and woodlands that are of acknowledged value where they are visible to the public, are in reasonable health and condition and where there is a threat.

T5 - Where Council land containing trees is to be sold, the trees will be assessed to determine whether protection via a TPO or restrictive clause in a lease is appropriate to ensure retention for the benefit of the wider population.

T6 - The Council will engage with partners, the public and other landowners to raise awareness of tree protection, maintenance, planting and establishment best practice.

6.1 Trees and development

Trees on streets, open spaces and private land can be at risk from the pressures of development, where development is proposed it is essential that both existing and proposed trees are considered from the very early stages of the design process. The effect of proposed development on trees is a material consideration when determining planning applications. There is a presumption that trees on development sites will be retained unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify their removal. In the event of the tree needing to be removed a replacement tree which enhances the amenity will be required.

Development can cause damage to trees through soil compaction, direct damage to roots or branches or by leaving them with little room to grow and develop so preventing the long-term contribution they can make to the City. Protection of existing trees is achieved through planning conditions which ensure trees are not damaged and that there is space for them to grow and mature alongside the development. Retention of trees and hedges can make some developments more acceptable due to their screening effect and developers should consider this before proposing tree and hedge removal.

New tree planting can replace poorer quality trees lost through development and also enhance the development and the local area. Our SPD on Trees, Landscaping and sets out what we expect from development regarding tree protection, mitigation for loss and enhancement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national policy and so guides local policies which are translated into local plans. Newcastle's local plan is our Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consider trees and within our Core Strategy trees are a material consideration which must be considered in new development. The NPPF pursues development but with specific reference to the need to protect local character and environmental quality as well as to include trees.

Trees and woodlands are specifically protected under policy CS18:

CS18 - Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment

A high quality and comprehensive framework of interconnected green infrastructure that offers ease of movement and an appealing natural environment for people and wildlife will be achieved by:

1. *Maintaining, protecting and enhancing the integrity, connectivity, multifunctionality and accessibility of the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.*
2. *Protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure assets which include:*
 - i. *Biodiversity and geodiversity assets, including designated sites, designated wildlife corridors and priority habitats and species,*
 - ii. *Distinctive landscape character, recognising the particular importance of our rivers and topography, and*
 - iii. *Trees, woodland and hedgerows.*
3. *Addressing gaps in the network and making improvements in Opportunity Areas.*
4. *Improving and extending linkages to and within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.*
5. *Protecting and enhancing open spaces, sport and recreational facilities in accordance with agreed standards in line with National Policy.*
6. *Improving access to, along and onto the River Tyne and tributaries, without adversely impacting on the local ecology or damaging the river banks.*

Paragraph 12.51 of the Core Strategy makes particular reference to trees and hedgerows:

‘Woodlands, trees and hedgerows, including street trees and listed trees in urban areas, are important for the attractiveness of our area as well as being a key component of ecosystems. They contribute to cooling and shading in urban areas and to linkages in the Green Infrastructure Network. Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area designations protect many of the most important assets. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention, protection, and enhancement of woodlands, trees and hedgerows, as well as, where appropriate, additional provisions by new developments.’

This Tree Strategy document will be a material consideration within the determination of planning applications.

6.2 Protected trees

Trees are protected under planning law by the [Town and Country Planning \(Tree Preservation\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#). This allows the Council to protect trees on private land with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) if they have ‘good visual amenity value’ meaning that they can be seen by the public in general and add to the quality of the local area. Not all high value trees need to be protected, only those which are under threat. The wording from the legislation is ‘*Local planning authorities can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be ‘expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area’.*’ TPOs can be used to protect trees if the authority believes there is a risk of trees being felled, pruned or damaged in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area. It is not necessary for there to be immediate risk for there to be a need to protect trees. Extracts from Government guidance of when a TPO may be expedient are:

- *‘...the authority may believe that certain trees are at risk as a result of development pressures.’*
- *‘...consider other sources of risks to trees for example, changes in property ownership’.*
- *‘Intentions to fell trees are not always known in advance, so it may sometimes be appropriate to proactively make Orders as a precaution.’*

Once a tree as a TPO planning permission is needed before any work takes place to the tree including work to roots.

The legislation gives blanket protection to all trees with a stem diameter greater than 75mm in conservation areas due to the contribution trees make to the character of the conservation areas. If work to the tree is planned, six weeks’ notice is needed to be given to the Council. If the Council assesses that the works will be detrimental to the visual amenity value or health of the tree it can make a TPO to prevent this occurring. Section 3.10 sets out our procedures and compensations if protected trees are wilfully damaged or destroyed.

6.3 Implementation of planning conditions

On the grant of planning permission a detailed landscaping scheme will be subject to a 5 year management regime. We have appropriate powers to enforce any breach of condition. On major development sites we will require monitoring on an annual basis during the first 5 years. Fees to ensure landscape plans are fully implemented will be secured by way of Sec 106 planning obligation.

6.4 Influencing landowners

The council has a role to encourage landowners to manage their trees responsibly and work with us to reach our city’s tree canopy targets. We will engage with landowners and other stakeholders to develop the iTree Eco-Survey action plan and encourage organisations to develop their own tree management plans.

6.5 Unsafe trees on private land

Owners and occupiers have a duty of care to others with regard to the safety of the trees on their land under the Occupiers Liability Act.

If trees are dangerous, we have powers granted under the Miscellaneous Provisions Act to require an owner to make safe a tree which is deemed to be an immediate threat to people or property. In the absence of the land owner, we can also act directly in the interests of public safety and recover any reasonable costs associated with the works. Any other dispute between neighbours is a private matter which should be resolved between the affected parties.

Where private trees are considered a threat to users of the highway or public footpaths, we have powers under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 and can require the owner to make the trees safe. If trees and hedges are causing an obstruction to the highway we will issue a letter requesting works to be carried out to remove the obstruction within 28 days. If the works are not carried out in this time a formal notice will be issued giving a further 14 days to have the works carried out. If

the works are still not carried out after this time legal proceedings may be instigated. Even if the trees are protected emergency work can be carried out if specified by an arborist. Owners are advised to contact Planning to discuss the extent of the works and any additional balancing of the crown which may be required.

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7.0 Hedges

7.1 Value of hedges

Hedges are of significant aesthetic and environmental value: this strategy aims to protect them.

7.2 Council hedges

Hedges will be retained on Council land wherever possible and established or mature hedges will not be grubbed out without adequate justification. Young hedgerows will be managed to ensure that they develop into healthy mature hedges in accordance with good practice as set out in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidance. The Council will also increase stocks of traditional, locally native hedgerows where appropriate and will encourage the inclusion of hedgerow trees particularly in countryside locations or adjacent to sites of nature conservation value, to reinforce local countryside character. In certain urban locations hedges of exotic or ornamental species may be more suitable and will still contribute significantly to amenity and wildlife. Leyland Cypress hybrids will not normally be specified for use as hedging on Council property. Hedges in Council house gardens will however remain the responsibility of individual tenants and we will provide advice and guidance to encourage their retention and sustainable management.

T9 - Newcastle City Council will seek to regenerate and increase traditional, locally native hedgerows with inclusion of hedgerow trees

T10 - In conjunction with the Tree Team, land holding departments and teams will ensure appropriate management of their hedges. Requests for work to hedges on Council land will be assessed in accordance with legislation and the Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines.

7.3 Hedges on private land

Although hedges cannot be protected by a TPO, we have powers under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. Through advice and guidance, we will encourage the sustainable management of hedges in private ownership. Where hedges are present on development sites we will seek protection, improvement and, if there is loss of hedge, replacement planting. New hedges will also be sought where appropriate to act as boundary features. The Tree and Hedge Management Guidance and SPD will give guidance as to species mix, planting and maintenance detail. The planting of hedges of Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis "Leylandii"*) will be discouraged in accordance with emerging national guidance on hedging.

7.4 Enforcement

Under the Hedgerows Regulations we can prosecute offenders who damage or destroy hedges in contravention of the law. We will ensure the Hedgerows Regulations are properly enforced and will take steps to investigate reports of unauthorised work. Where an offence has been committed and there is clear and

sufficient evidence to do so, we will take appropriate enforcement action which may include prosecution proceedings.

T8 - Hedges that are of visual amenity, archaeological or nature conservation value and are in reasonable health and condition will be retained, protected and managed to ensure healthy growth as set out in and Tree and Hedge Management Guidance.

7.5 High Hedge Legislation

Complaints relating to evergreen hedges over 2m in height will be considered in the context of the High Hedges legislation as set out in Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 which gives local authorities powers to adjudicate in unresolved disputes over high evergreen hedges: the complainant must first try to resolve the issue through negotiation with the hedge owner. For the purposes of the Act, a high hedge is essentially a line of two or more evergreens, of a height of more than two metres, which form a barrier to light or access and is adversely affecting the reasonable enjoyment of a domestic property. "Evergreen" means an evergreen tree or shrub or a semi-evergreen tree or shrub. Trees such as Leyland Cypress are included, as are other conifers, yew, laurel, box and other evergreens/semi-evergreens.

The Ministry for Housing Communities & Local Government has published explanatory leaflets: [Over the Garden Hedge](#), which offers advice on how people can settle hedge differences without involving the Council and [High Hedges: complaining to the Council](#), which explains what complaints local authorities can consider and how they will deal with them.

7.6 Applications for work to hedges

All requests for works to hedges on private land will be assessed in accordance with statutory requirements by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether an application is needed under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and any other subsequent legislation. Requests for work to hedges on Council property will be assessed and authorised by the Tree Team with reference to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and DETR best practice guidance. For hedges on private land the Local Planning Authority is required to determine a Hedgerow Removal Notice including an assessment as to whether the hedge can be classed as "important" under the Hedgerow Regulations.

8 The Policies

The following policies which form this Tree Strategy aim to allow Newcastle City Council to retain healthy trees, increase canopy cover and ensure species and age diversity across the City. This will be done through use of legislation, through the good practice contained in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidance and Supplementary Planning Guidance in addition to working in partnership with landowners and developers to encourage good practice.

Policy	Tree Policy Detail
T1	Healthy trees and woodlands will be protected, retained and managed to ensure healthy growth, development and species diversity. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason as set out in our Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines.
T2	Newcastle's tree stock and canopy cover will be increased to give greater species and age diversity to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.
T3	The Council will use its powers to prevent unnecessary damage to trees within all construction/development in accordance with the current version of BS5837 and pursue enforcement action where appropriate if trees are damaged or destroyed.
T4	Using powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act, related legislation and/or lease clauses, Newcastle City Council will, in the interests of amenity, protect trees and woodlands that are of acknowledged value where they are visible to the public, are in reasonable health and condition and where there is a threat.
T5	Where Council land containing trees is to be sold, the trees will be assessed to determine whether protection via a TPO or restrictive clause in a lease is appropriate to ensure retention for the benefit of the wider population.
T6	The Council will engage with partners, the public and other landowners to raise awareness of tree protection, maintenance, planting and establishment best practice.
T7	The Council will seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by CAVAT.
T8	Hedges that are of visual amenity, archaeological or nature conservation value and are in reasonable health and condition will be retained, protected and managed to ensure healthy growth as set out in and Tree and Hedge Management Guidance.
T9	Newcastle City Council will seek to regenerate and increase traditional, locally native hedgerows with inclusion of hedgerow trees.
T10	In conjunction with the Tree Team, land holding departments and teams will ensure appropriate management of their hedges. Requests for work to hedges on Council land will be assessed in accordance with legislation and the Tree and Hedge Management Guidelines.

9.0 Delivery, monitoring and review of the Tree Strategy

The Tree Strategy will be monitored and reviewed by the nominated Tree Officer and Tree Team annually to ensure its aims are being met and progress is being made on the actions identified. The outcome of the review will form an annual report which will be published on the Newcastle City Council website.

The following areas will be covered in the report

1. To ensure the number of trees and level of canopy cover is being maintained and increased the report will include
 - a. A comparison of the felling rate against replacement tree planting rate
 - b. A summary of new planting included in both public and private development schemes (including highways)
2. To ensure our own trees are properly looked after and the quantity and species variation is improved the report will include
 - a. The level of tree loss among trees planted over the year
 - b. A table outlining the number and type of trees planted.
 - c. A summary of the inspection and surveying work undertaken over the year
3. To assess how private land owners have been encouraged to manage their trees in accordance with the strategy and tree protection legislation the report will include
 - a. An assessment of changes in the tree canopy cover over a 5 year period
 - b. The number of applications to fell TPO'd trees approved over the year
 - c. A summary of enforcement actions taken following reported contraventions

The canopy cover will be assessed through an i-Tree study using the data from the 2018 study as a comparator.

Ezytreev tree management software will be used to record numbers, species and positions of trees planted, removed and replaced as well as the condition of our current tree stock.

Part 2

Tree Management Guidelines

These guidelines are intended as a supplementary note to accompany the Tree Policy. They outline our 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 also describe the types of tree work that are normally accepted as good practice, but each tree will be assessed on its merits. All work to our trees will normally be carried out by our own specialist arboricultural teams and will be in accordance with current legislation, guidance, British Standards and codes of practice.

Although this guidance will inform decisions they should not be considered prescriptive as situations do vary. Where there is a clear and foreseeable threat to the safety of people or property that is directly related to the condition of a tree, action will be taken to reduce that risk. No single approach should be considered in isolation, but all relevant guidance and policies should be considered when reaching a decision.

1	Specific Tree Management Issues		
	Footpaths – trip hazards	Isolated roots can be pruned if these do not affect the stability of the tree. Removal of the tree is the last resort with the appropriate re-planting regime applied.	The Council will make safe an unacceptable trip hazard in streets, roads or the public highway caused by the growth of a Council owned tree.
	Installation of a drop kerb	If the installation of a drop kerb off the highway is likely to adversely affect a Council owned tree, this will be considered by an Arboricultural Officer before permission is granted or refused. Removal of the tree will be accepted in some circumstances with the cost of this and the replacement being met by the applicant.	The Council is not legally required to agree the felling or pruning of the roots of a Council owned tree to allow the installation of a drop kerb

	Protection of trees during construction/trenching on Council land	We will protect all trees affected by construction and development sites. Work on these sites must be in accordance with the current version of BS5837	The Council will ensure that all construction and development on its own land, including temporary installations and placement of movable equipment, near to trees follows the current version of BS:5837 (2012) "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction"
	Crime and anti-social behaviour	We will prune or if necessary remove trees contributing to crime and/or anti-social behaviour.	Where a Council owned tree is associated with criminal activity and/or anti-social behaviour, measures to alleviate the problem will be implemented in consultation with the Police and the community.
	Vandalism	Incidences of vandalism to Council owned trees will be reported to the police. Where incidences of vandalism occur we will try to correct any damage as soon as possible.	The Council will investigate reports of vandalism to a Council owned tree.
	Nuisance third parties – private trees	We do not provide a mediation service. You should try to resolve a dispute between yourself and your neighbour amicably or seek advice from a solicitor or Citizens Advice	The Council has no authority to intervene in a dispute between neighbours and will not do so.
2	When can trees be felled?		
	We will not fell trees unless it is necessary. Each case will be carefully judged on its merits and there is clear justification to do so. Circumstances where felling is essential or	<p>A dead or dangerous tree that is a danger to public safety.</p> <p>A tree causing an obstruction to a public highway, public right of way, access to property or footpath, where the obstruction cannot be overcome by pruning the tree or other reasonable measures.</p>	<p>The Council will not remove trees without good reason. When felling work is carried out, the reasons for the work will be documented and recorded.</p> <p>All planned tree works will be published on the Council website and through site notices for the</p>

	<p>advisable are listed in the next column</p>	<p>A tree causing a legal nuisance to an adjoining property, where pruning would not address the problem. Examples of a legal nuisance include soil subsidence or physical damage to another owner's property.</p> <p>A tree which is shown to be a major contributor to soil shrinkage and serious structural damage to buildings, where pruning alone would not provide a solution. Private owners will be expected to provide proof that a tree is causing damage to the property.</p> <p>Trees which are of a size and species inappropriate to their situation</p> <p>Situations where pruning has been tried to rectify a severe problem and has not been successful.</p> <p>Thinning out young and developing trees in accordance with a Management Plan.</p> <p>Removal for wildlife habitat improvement.</p> <p>Removal to allow authorised development or redevelopment.</p>	<p>community to access at least 20 working days before implementation.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>When can trees be pruned?</p>		
	<p>Pruning trees will only be carried out where necessary as cutting can</p>	<p>Pruning is likely to be acceptable when:</p>	<p>The Council will undertake work to its trees to maintain clear sight-lines where reasonably</p>

	<p>weaken the tree and allow decay organisms to enter exposed and vulnerable tissue. Tree pruning will not be permitted where there is no justification for the work. Work will be resisted if the tree has been pruned in the previous 2 years, unless agreed by an arboricultural or landscape officer. Each case will be carefully judged on its merits</p>	<p>A tree is causing an obstruction to or grows low over a public highway, public right of way, footpath or access to property over gardens or open spaces where the public have access. A minimum clearance of 2.5 metres should be maintained over pedestrian accesses and 4.5 metres above the highway; 6 metres in the case of trunk roads.</p> <p>A tree is causing a legal nuisance to an adjoining property.</p> <p>A tree contributing to soil shrinkage and structural damage to adjacent buildings or other built features Trees restrict repairs and maintenance of property, or authorised construction work.</p> <p>Trees block daylight from habitable rooms to a severe and unreasonable degree.</p> <p>Trees give rise to justifiable fears about the risk of crime or have provided access and/or cover for criminal acts, vandalism and harassment for residents.</p> <p>Trees contact with buildings and roofs.</p> <p>Trees prevent the reasonable enjoyment of the home and garden.</p>	<p>practicable at junctions and access points associated with a street, road or highway</p> <p>The Council will undertake work to its trees to ensure they do not unduly obstruct traffic signals or street signs.</p> <p>The Council will undertake measures to clear obstructions affecting streets, roads or the public highway caused by its trees.</p> <p>The Council will undertake work to its trees to maintain a minimum 2.25m height clearance over a footpath and 2.75m over a cycle path, associated with a street, road or highway.</p> <p>The Council will undertake work to its trees to ensure that they do not unduly obstruct a streetlight.</p> <p>In the event that a Council tree is touching a building, remedial works will be undertaken.</p>
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4	Acceptable types of pruning for trees		
	<p>Pruning should not remove more than 20% of the canopy at any one time.</p>	<p>Crown Thinning to reduce the density of the tree's crown without changing the shape and form of the tree. Ideal for admitting more light to gardens and windows and allows crossing and rubbing branches to be cleared</p> <p>Crown Lifting which prunes off lower limbs close to the trunk to give more clear space below the crown.</p>	<p>All pruning work to Council trees will be carried out by the Tree Team in accordance with the current version of BS3998.</p>

		Crown Reduction by shortening branches, usually carried out all round the crown or canopy to maintain a balanced shape.	
5	Risk Management		
	We will use the National Tree Safety Group's guidance 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees' to achieve the right balance between public safety and amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society; • Trees are living organisms and naturally lose branches or fall; • The risk to human safety is extremely low; • Tree owners have a legal duty of care; and • Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management. 	<p>The Council will prioritise its legal obligations over all other aspects of the service.</p> <p>The Council will operate a system of proactive and reactive tree inspections by competent staff and maintain a record of trees and inspections</p>
	Emergencies	<p>We use our emergency procedures if one of our trees is assessed as dangerous by our Tree Team</p> <p>If a tree does not pose an immediate risk to the public it will be made safe</p> <p>Dangers posed by privately owned trees are the responsibility of the tree owner. Before contacting us concerns about potentially dangerous trees need to be raised with the owner. We will only intervene if the owner fails to act in a reasonable timescale</p>	<p>If a Council owned tree poses a very high risk to people or property and is considered to be an emergency situation, instruction will be given to make the tree safe within 90 minutes.</p> <p>The Council will only intervene to make a private tree safe where the danger of it causing damage to people or property is imminent and in accordance with the provisions set out in via Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 Section 23</p>

6	Tree Related Damage		
	The Council's Insurance Section, supported by the Tree Team, currently manages all claims relating to Council-owned trees.	A claimant must contact the Council to report the claim. concerned is owned by the Council. The onus is on the claimant to provide evidence that the tree is the cause. Trees will not necessarily be felled because of a subsidence claim. Remedial action will be considered with felling being the last resort.	The Council will manage all claims directed at its trees and challenge unwarranted claims based on poorly investigated or inaccurate evidence
7	Other tree related issues		
	Blossom/leaves	The maintenance of gardens and/or gutters is the responsibility of landowners. We are not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from our trees. Some roads and pavements will be cleared of leaves.	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce leaf fall and/or blossom or remove fallen leaves and/or blossom from private property
	Fruit/berries/nuts	To help manage public health and safety risks associated with fallen fruit/berries/nuts, we clear fallen leaves and associated fruits/berries/nuts from paths in the autumn.	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce the nuisance of fruit/berries or nuts or remove such fallen fruit from private property. However, where fallen fruit is leading to significant anti-social behaviour problems it will consider measures to reduce the problem.
	Trees too big or too tall	A tree is not dangerous just because it may be considered too big for its surroundings	The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree simply because it is considered 'too big' or 'too tall'
	Light	In law there is no general right to light either in buildings or garden/other open space. If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge	The Council will not prune or remove trees in cases where they cause a reduced amount of

		then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003	light to fall on a property, other than in exceptional circumstances
	Bird Droppings	The problem is not considered sufficient reason to prune or remove trees. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other related wildlife law)	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees or remove bird droppings from private property.
	Sap/honeydew	Honeydew is caused by greenfly (Aphids) feeding on the tree, which excrete a sugary sap. Often the honeydew is colonised by a mould, which causes it to go black. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to remove the aphid which causes the problem and pruning the tree may only offer temporary relief	The Council will not prune or fell its tree to remove or reduce honeydew or other sticky residue from trees.
	Pollen	It is not feasible to prune trees to remove pollen sources	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce the release of pollen.
	Telephone Wires	It is the telephone service providers responsibility to maintain your service	The Council will generally not prune or fell a Council owned tree to remove or reduce interference with telephone wires.
	TV/satellite reception	The responsibility for receiving a satellite television signal is with the company that erects the satellite dish or aerial. The company should erect their equipment in a location that receives a clear signal.	The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to prevent perceived interference with TV/satellite installation/ reception.

Trees and solar panels	Whilst we appreciate the need to provide renewable energy resources, trees have an important role in maintaining and improving local amenity, in addition to contributing to local and national targets in tackling climate change. The presence of trees must be fully appreciated when considering a suitable location for the placement of solar panels	The Council will not prune or fell its owned/managed trees to improve natural light to a solar panel.
Wild animal/insect pests	Bees, some animals, and many birds are protected species and advice should be taken before considering their removal	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, or wild animals.
Trees overhanging property	Householders have the right to prune overhanging branches back to their boundary however, this is bad practice as it may not enable the principles of good pruning to be applied, can further damage the tree to allow disease in and can unbalance the tree making it more of a risk. It is better to get agreement from the owner to prune the tree properly. If the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is within a Conservation Area planning consent will be required.	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches other than in exceptional circumstances
Trees obstructing view	There is no legal right to a 'view'	The Council will not prune or fell its trees to improve the view from a private property
Personal medical complaints	We will not normally prune or fell a tree because of a personal medical complaint unless it can be established that the presence of a tree is causing a detriment to the health of a resident. Further	The Council will not prune or fell its trees because of a personal medical condition other than in exceptional circumstances

		consideration will be given to the management approach of trees especially where elderly, infirm or disabled persons who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected. This consideration will also consider the quality and importance of the tree in question, as well as the benefits to the wider community.	
	Exceptional circumstances	We recognise that in some exceptional circumstances the problems caused by a tree are so great that it will consider undertaking remedial works. Where these problems and likely future maintenance costs are excessive the tree may be removed and replaced with a more suitable species. Where multiple tree removals from an area are involved this may be done in a phased manner. Exceptional circumstances will be assessed individually on their merits and tree works will only be undertaken if there are sufficient funds available after all safety works have been concluded.	The Council recognises that in some exceptional circumstances the problems of a tree are so great that it will consider undertaking remedial works. Each situation will be assessed individually on its merits.
8	Tree Planting		
	Right tree, right place	We will follow a Right Tree, Right Place policy by considering the constraints and opportunities of planting site, the features of proposed trees and their habitat needs. Large trees in a city bring more benefits than smaller trees and these will be used wherever possible. The Right Tree, Right Place approach is intended to allow any trees planted to reach full height and maturity without the need for regular pruning programmes.	When planting trees, the Council will select species based on the principles of Right Tree, Right Place. Where space permits, there will be a presumption in favour of large, shade-producing, forest-scale trees with maximum opportunities for mitigating the effects of climate change

		Having a mix of species is important to safeguard against the risk due to pest, disease or climate change	
	Planting Programmes	We will follow a programme of works to increase the diversity of its tree species and age to give a nett increase in canopy cover and tree number in line with targets set within our Tree Strategy. When one of our trees is removed we will prioritise replacement planting after consideration of whether it is appropriate to replant in the same place. Wherever possible the site will be considered as a whole, reflecting its history, character, available space, use and local interests. In some situations, replacement in the same place is significantly more expensive or difficult. In these cases, an alternative position will be found	The Council will endeavour to maintain its tree stock and increase current tree numbers by planting. The Council will look to increase and improve its tree cover and species diversity within available resources as part of an annual tree planting programme, paying particular attention to street tree planting.
	Woodland Management Plans	Woodland Management Plans are essential to ensure our woodlands are well managed and provide the wider benefits extensive areas of canopy cover give. We are committed to managing our woodland sustainably and will prepare woodland management plans for these sites.	The Council will produce management plans for its areas of significant woodland
	Tree sourcing, planting and establishment maintenance	To achieve a healthy tree which reaches its full potential it is important to choose healthy planting stock, plant the trees correctly and maintain them until they are independent. It is important that when a tree is planted the ongoing costs of	The Council will source, plant and maintain new trees in broad accordance with the current version of BS8545 to ensure they have the best chance of establishing and reaching maturity.

		<p>establishing the tree are considered. If plantations are to be planted, then the ongoing cost of thinning operations also needs to be considered.</p>	
	<p>Trees and biodiversity</p>	<p>Urban trees provide benefits in terms of biodiversity that gives wildlife shelter, food and movement corridors. They are unique in their ability to support a variety of wildlife in many of the most hostile environments within an urban setting. As such, the following principles will be applied:</p> <p>Where possible, and subject to public safety assessments, we will retain standing dead trees in tree belts, local nature reserves and woodlands, preferring to prune rather than fell.</p> <p>Where possible, and subject to public safety assessments, we will retain exposed root balls in tree belts, local nature reserves and woodlands,</p> <p>Where possible, and subject to public safety assessments, leave dead timber and felled trees in situ to benefit habitat creation.</p> <p>Where possible we will retain mature ivy on trees. It will only be removed to aid tree safety inspections, reduce damage to the tree through wind throw or reduce shade to more valuable habitats beneath.</p>	<p>The Council will consider the implications of its tree maintenance and management on biodiversity</p>

		<p>We will seek to expand and look for opportunities to create new woodlands.</p> <p>We will adhere to the requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in relation to the protection of wildlife during all of its tree-related activities.</p>	
	YHN tenants	<p>Trees growing in YHN gardens are an important resource which should be maintained and enhanced. Where the properties are being refurbished we will look at planting suitable trees in the garden areas. Trees are protected within Council house gardens by the terms of the tenancy agreement. Only our Tree Team may carry out work on a Council tree.</p> <p>If trees on YHN properties are damaged by tenants it is a breach of tenancy and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.</p>	<p>In partnership with the Tree Team, Your Homes Newcastle will maintain and manage its tree stock in accordance with the Tree Strategy and the good practice set out in the Tree and Hedge Management Guidance.</p>

Tree Risk Management Plan

Newcastle City Council

April 2018



1. Introduction

Newcastle City Council is a large tree owner with nearly 1 million trees growing in its woodlands, parks and open spaces and alongside footpaths and highways. These trees provide many benefits to our lives. They help to

- Adapt to climate change by filtering air borne pollutants and absorbing carbon dioxide and water,
- Improve our environment by reducing noise levels in urban environments, providing shade and encouraging habitats that help increase our bird and wildlife population.
- Relieve stress, encourage outdoor activity and improve health and general wellbeing

Trees enhance our communities, can add value to our homes and businesses and create places where people want to live. In short, trees are a huge asset to be encouraged and appreciated.

However, trees also pose risks and therefore, while it is important to maximise their benefits we must also ensure that we have processes in place to manage these risks within reasonable limits.

The overriding motivations for managing trees include sustaining tree cover for environmental and public benefit balanced against the risks that trees can present if they fail.

Age can cause decline, roots can be damaged, infections can set in and the effects of extreme weather can weaken or cause failure of branches or even whole trees.

Urban trees need more assessment and management than those in more rural type settings due to the difference in environmental and physical stresses upon the trees and the different impacts that could occur if the trees fail. Tree size, age, species condition and location are the main factors used to gauge the likelihood of failure and scale of harm that could be caused.

It is therefore important to recognise that risk management can be undertaken only by understanding trees and their value to people in the context within which they grow and this needs to be undertaken in a planned way by people with the competence to understand both the value of trees and their potential risks.

2. Policy and Legal Context

The key principle of this plan is that it follows a risk based management approach that enables us to comply with our legal responsibilities as well as delivering our strategic objectives to

1. Care for our trees and maximise the benefits we can get from them
2. Focus inspections on highest use and highest risk areas
3. Ensure cost effective tree management

Health and Safety Executive guidance states:

Employers and persons carrying out undertakings or in control of premises all have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA). In particular, there is the duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.

To help comply with this guidance the HSE has a “Tolerability of Risk Framework’ from which this Plan takes guidance to ensure that risks are reduced as low as reasonably practicable

In addition to the responsibility placed on us by the HASWA we also need to manage our tree stocks in a way that protects us from litigation in civil law. For example to

- Reduce the risk of property damage from subsidence
- Maintain stocks to preserve their amenity, conservation and environmental value
- Prevent personal injury through trips and falls on footways disturbed by tree roots
- Prevent vehicle damage and personal injury from obscured sightlines on the highway

3. Approach to Risk Management

This plan sets out our prioritised risk management approach for all the trees we own as well as privately owned trees which may impact on public space.

The Forestry Commission recommends that landowners who have large numbers of trees use a system of tree zoning as a cost effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where most needed. We have therefore adopted the principles of Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) for the management of trees. This system is licensed and requires users to have attended and passed a training course and regular updates.

The QTRA system evaluates risk in terms of

- Targets: People or property and their location in relation to the tree, thus allowing the inspector to determine the level of survey required.
- Impact potential (size): Where necessary the tree or part thereof considered most likely to fail is then considered in terms of its size and potential to cause harm
- Probability of Failure: The assessment of the likelihood of the tree or branch failing based on technical knowledge and experience of the inspector.

Values from the assessment of these three parts is then combined to calculate the probability of significant harm occurring.

4. Inspection Zoning

Our inspection regime is based on zoning trees into designated categories determined by levels of risk.

Zone	Criteria	Examples
High	High volume of traffic High likelihood of public access	Areas close to dual carriageways, railway lines, trunk roads and busy B roads Areas which contains large mature tree species and are close to private dwellings, schools and busy car parks Areas next to high use footways
Moderate	Moderate volume of traffic Moderate likelihood of public access	Areas close to B roads and busy C roads Areas close to moderate use parks, playgrounds, footpaths and picnic areas Main footpaths within woodlands
Low	Low volume of traffic Low likelihood of public access	Areas net to high targets which contain small tree species and/or trees in a good condition with a low probability of failure

5. Inspection Regime

Individual inspections will be made using the Visual Tree Assessment method (VTA) and will take the form of one of the following

- **informal observation** - this can be done by walking by a group of trees when in full leaf and only recording defects if obvious to the trained eye
- **formal observation** - 5-10 mins per tree using binoculars and measuring equipment to record defects and recommended actions.
- **detailed observation** – may include the use of decay detection equipment and/or MEWP (Mobile Elevating Work Platform) to undertake aerial survey or taking samples.

Inspection frequency will be based on the following

Zone	Timing of Inspection	Inspection method
High	Monthly	Informal observation
	18 monthly	Formal observation
		Detailed observation
Moderate	3 monthly	Informal observation
	3 yearly	Formal observation
		Detailed observation
Low	6 monthly	Informal observation
	5 yearly	Formal observation

		Detailed observation
All Zones	After report of damage	Formal observation
		Detailed observation
	Ward working intervals	Cyclical tree pruning team

Informal observations are carried out by a competent person who are qualified at least to LANTRA Basic Tree Survey and Inspection Course level. Formal and detailed observations are undertaken by those holding a LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector Course and a QTRA license.

Service level agreements and contracts include zoning information and frequency of inspection to ensure the level of service provided is clear and appropriate.

Any seasonal survey or inspection, for example to see fruiting bodies of fungi in autumn, insect activity in summer or the structural detail of a tree in winter can also be included in scheduled inspections.

The details of all inspections including any resulting action is recorded and used to update the inventory. In addition details from surveys commissioned through external sources are added where possible. This information informs and shapes our tree maintenance programme. Appendix 1 sets out the details that are captured.

Staff in relevant service areas for example Parks, Highways or YHN who have undertaken the LANTRA Basic Tree Survey and Inspection Course are trained to spot defects will help to undertake basic surveys and escalate any issues to the more experienced/trained members of staff.

6. Responsive works

Our priority is to use the inspection regime to update the tree inventory, identify issues in order of risk priority and have operational resource appropriately allocated to respond to those issues.

At the same time, however we provide a prioritised response to day to day enquiries and requests from the public and local businesses and respond to tree related issues that occur during high winds and other extreme weather events when priorities must change according to the circumstances.

Requests for inspection are filtered using Case Based Reasoning (CBR) through our call centre. This helps to assess if an inspection is required and if so give an indication of the urgency. Details of timescales for responding to reports are outlined in Appendix 2.

At all times a proportionate response will be provided with intervention decisions made after the probability of harm from trees has been assessed.

Ezytreed, the tree management software package used by those inspecting trees combines elements of the responsive and scheduled inspections and updates records accordingly.

Appendix 1

Data Field being Captured by Inspectors in School, using OTISS

Edit Tree Safety Inspection - 0002

General | Survey | Recommendations

Reference *: 0002

Species *: Holly

Structure *: Tree

Site Name: Ashfield Nursery

Botanical Name: Ilex sp.

Coordinates *: POINT (423432.997 563844.004)

Survey (Site) *: Jan 2018 Survey (Ashfield Nurs)

Variety:

Surveyor: Rachel Flannery

Num. Stems: 1

Inspected Date *: 15/01/2018

NZ 23433.00 63844.00

Tree has been removed

Description & Targets:

Owned by local council.
Target # - footpath
Target # - playground

Add description & targets...

Photos | Map | History | Save | Cancel | Help

Edit Tree Safety Inspection - 0002

General | Survey | Recommendations

Life Stage: Mature

Tree Spacing:

Height: 10 to 15m

Inspect Period: 1 Year

Life Expectancy:

DBH: 30 to 50cm

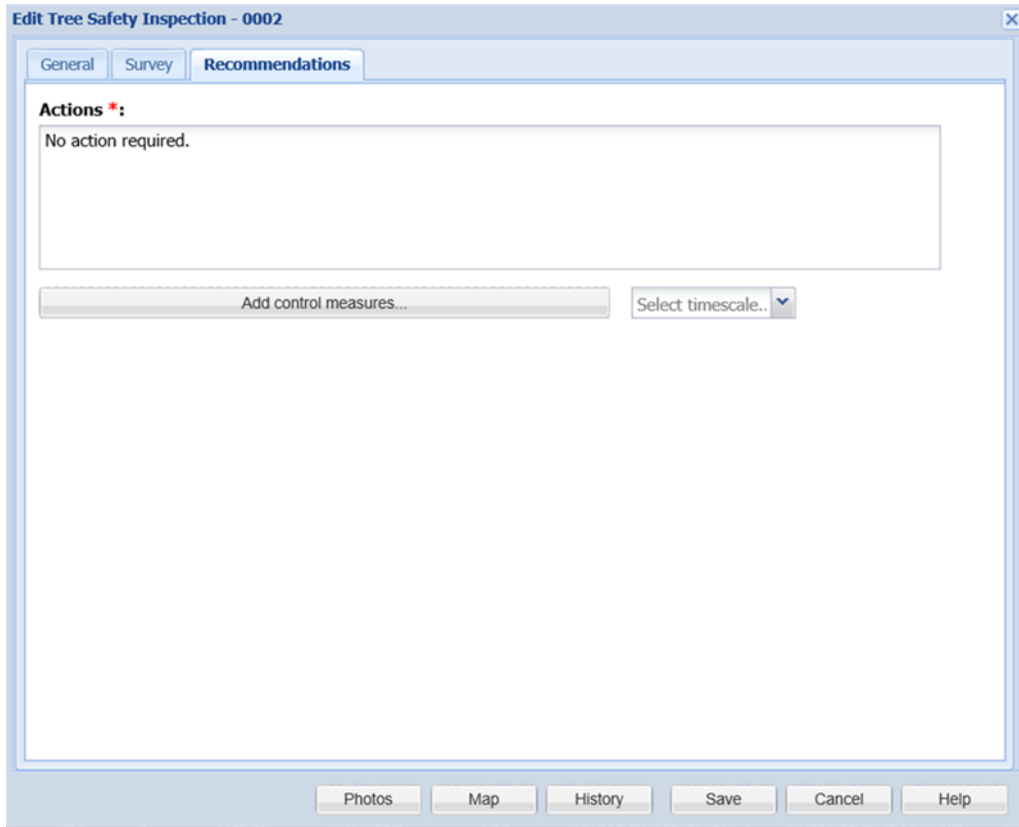
Condition *: Fair

Comments:


wound to north at 1.5m, healing over with exposed wood
crown raised

Add survey notes...

Photos | Map | History | Save | Cancel | Help



Select All Actions: Edit Caption Delete Download Map
Select photos and apply the actions above.

<input type="checkbox"/>	0023 P001.jpg	15-Jan-18
		
pic to demonstrate cavity to dominant lea...		
Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplat...</i>		Survey

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