

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Tree Policy – Proposed Amendments
Committee : Environment
Date : 29 September 2025
Author : Marc Read, Head of Environmental Services

1. Background:

- 1.1. The Tree Policy was last reviewed and updated in 2022 (Version 5). Following feedback from Members and Officers, a series of amendments have been drafted for inclusion in Version 6.
- 1.2. These proposed changes have been highlighted in yellow within the draft policy (Appendix A). They include contributions from Cllr Suddards, Cllr Corbin, Cllr Sample, and the Estates Manager.
- 1.3. Officers have assessed each proposed amendment for clarity, practicality, and consistency with existing policy objectives.
- 1.4. Members should note that, under the Policy and Procedure Management Policy adopted by Full Council on 15 September, this document will need to return to Committee in due course. The Tree Policy will require separation into distinct policy and procedure documents to comply with the new framework.

2. Summary of Amendments

2.1. Cllr Suddards

- *New Section 3.23 – Discretionary Pruning for Exceptional Residential Impact (Versions 1 & 2)*
- Intends to introduce a discretionary framework for pruning trees in cases of significant residential impact (loss of light, overhang, litter).
- Revised by Cllr Suddards to lower thresholds (age 67+), adjust criteria, and add budget dependency.
- **Officers' Position:** Version 1 recommended. Version 2, not recommended as risks ambiguity, inconsistent application, and additional budget pressures.

2.2. Cllr Corbin

- *Replacement of Section 3.11 – Adjacent Landowners' Rights to Prune*
- **Existing wording:** Requires residents to offer pruning's back to the Council.
- **Proposed wording:** Allows residents to prune encroaching branches/roots responsibly and dispose of cuttings themselves.
- **Officers' Position:** *Supported*. Clearer, modern practice, reduces administrative burden.

2.3. Estates Manager (Mostyn Coombes)

- *New Section – Transfer of Maintenance Responsibilities: Pruning of Hedges, Thickets, and Shrub Areas*
- Provides that where Wiltshire Council transfers maintenance of hedge/shrub areas to SCC, planting may first need to be reduced to a manageable height by an external contractor.
- **Officers' Position:** *Supported*. Practical and operationally necessary.

2.4. Cllr Sample

- *New Section – Raising Tree Canopies in Response to Anti-Social Behaviour and Rough Sleeping*
- **Proposed wording (Sections 11.5–11.10):**
- Recognises that dense low canopies/undergrowth can conceal anti-social behaviour or rough sleeping.
- Allows targeted canopy lifting/clearance only where there is verifiable evidence of persistent issues and as part of a multi-agency response.
- Requires assessments by Parks Team in collaboration with Police, Community Safety Officers, and support agencies.
- Work must be proportionate, BS 3998 compliant, and mindful of biodiversity.
- Decisions to be documented, reviewed, and, where relevant, subject to Wiltshire Council permissions (TPOs or conservation areas).
- **Officers' Position:** *Supported*. The principles of safety, compassion, and multi-agency working are sound.

3. Implications

- 3.1. **Financial:** Supported amendments have minimal cost impact. Cllr Suddards' discretionary pruning amendment could create unbudgeted liabilities.
- 3.2. **Personnel:** Officer time required to finalise and publish policy; some efficiency gains from Estates Manager's section.
- 3.3. **Environmental:** Supported amendments strengthen operational management while safeguarding biodiversity.
- 3.4. **Equalities:** Clarity in wording ensures fair and consistent policy application across all wards.

4. Wards Affected:

- 4.1. The Tree Policy applies city-wide.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1. Appendix A – Tree Policy Version 6

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 6.1.1. Notes all proposed amendments highlighted in yellow in Appendix A.

- 6.1.2. Approves Version 1 or Version 2 of the new Section 3.23 proposed by Cllr Suddards. If Version 2, notes the potential risk on ambiguity, inconsistent application, and additional budget pressures.
- 6.1.3. Approves adoption of the replacement wording for Section 3.11 proposed by Cllr Corbin.
- 6.1.4. Approves adoption of the Estates Manager's new section on transferred maintenance responsibilities.
- 6.1.5. Approves adoption of Cllr Sample's new section 11.5-11.10
- 6.1.6. Endorses publication of the Tree Policy (Version 6) incorporating the supported amendments.



Tree Policy

Policy Number	Version	Author	Doc No.	PDF No.	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
CS023	5	MC	n/a	n/a	12 Dec 23	12 Dec 26	Man
CS023	4	MC				21 Sept 25	Man
CS023	3	DB MC	80002		21 Sept 20	21 Sept 23	Man
CS023	2	DB	50282		12 Nov '15	1 Nov '18	Man
CS023	1	DB	50282	51471	1 July '15	1 July '18	Man

Distribution

Internal: All SCC Staff External: Website/Councillors/Partners

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Introduction:

This Policy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors, officers and professionally interested people to enable informed discussion and to establish a clear, consistent and more structured approach to the issues affecting trees.

The Policy has been designed for the following purposes:

- To establish the responsibility of Salisbury City Council in relation to its tree stock
- To identify and subsequently adopt a tree risk management system
- To provide officers and members of the public with advice and guidance in relation to requested remedial tree works
- To adopt best practice with regards to the appointment and subsequent management of council arboricultural contracts/contractors
- Tree planting objectives and maintenance

1. Responsibilities of Salisbury City Council:

- 1.1 If a tree fails and causes injury or damage its owner could be held negligent if they omitted to take sufficient care of the tree. Trees are a potential liability and SCC, as a landowner, has a duty of care to ensure that all of the trees on its land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put persons and property at unreasonable risk.
- 1.2 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also apply to this situation. Failure to comply with this legislation could lead to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) taking criminal action against the Council. Section 3 of the Act places a duty on the Council to take reasonable care for the health and safety of third parties. The Regulations effectively require the Council to have an adequate management system to ensure health and safety.
- 1.3 The need for Councils to carry out tree surveys has been recognised for some time. Government guidance in the form of circulars requires Local Authorities to regularly inspect trees under their control and/or management.

Putting risk into perspective:

- 1.4 This policy aims to accord with the *'Common Sense Risk of the management of trees'* - guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisors - 2011 as published by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). A pdf of this document can be obtained by visiting www.ntsg.org.uk it also aims to accord with HSE publication SIM01/2007/05 *Management of risk from falling trees or branches*. Both documents endorse the sensible, proportionate, reasonable and balanced management of the risk from trees. The law does not expect owners to maintain their trees in completely safe condition, but risk needs to be evaluated and controlled.

Industry Best Practice:

- 1.5 Best practice now strongly favours a risk-based system of tree management relying on a programme of regular inspection and the prioritisation of potential hazards.
- 1.6 In the event of a tree failure causing loss, such a system is recognised as a reasonable method of management. It should also provide the basis of a robust defence in the event of litigation.

2. Tree Risk Management System:

- 2.1 The Council will adopt a proactive approach to managing its trees and undertake regular and routine inspections of all trees on Council managed land.
- 2.2 The main aim of the Council is to have in operation a reasonable, defensible and proactive tree management system that conserves and enhances the tree population on the land for which it is responsible.
- 2.3 In order to implement the new system effectively, the land SCC is responsible for has been divided into areas, and each area will be routinely and systematically inspected. These areas are distinct packages of land such as Victoria Park, Churchill Gardens etc. (See Appendix 1) for the complete list of Salisbury City Council Managed areas.

Risk Zones:

- 2.5 It is essential that all areas for which SCC is responsible are categorised in relation to the risk they represent. This is in conformity with industry best practice and is a significant step in ensuring a defensible system of tree management is implemented.

Areas will be categorised as High, Medium or Low Risk, dependant on their location:

- **High Risk Zone Areas** - of high density pedestrian and vehicle use or areas frequented by vulnerable age groups including major roads, areas near to schools, car parks, playgrounds and busy parks.
- **Medium Risk Zone Areas** - of medium density pedestrian and vehicle use including estate roads and green spaces, allotments, major woodland paths,
- **Low Risk Zone Areas** - of low density pedestrian and vehicle use including woodlands, minor roads, isolated green spaces

2.6 When inspection is undertaken priority for works will take into consideration the *Risk Zone* the tree is located in and the priority of the works will be adjusted accordingly.

Tree Risk Assessment:

2.7 Each individual or group of trees on all land SCC is responsible for will be inspected to determine their general condition and health. Hazards will be identified and recorded. Where necessary, remedial works will be specified and prioritised accordingly. See also Appendix Two.

There will be three types of inspection:

1. Informal Observations of trees contribute to wider management and tree safety. They are essentially those day-to-day observations of trees made by employees who have a good local knowledge of the trees and location and see them during the course of their working day.

To be undertaken by:

People with good local knowledge and familiarity with local trees who are not tree specialists, but rather those closely associated with a site, such as the parks team, who understand the way the site is used (areas most and least frequented) and the extent of the danger, should a tree be found that is clearly failing. Reports of problems by staff or members of the public are a fundamental part of the SCC risk management process.

2. Formal Inspection of a tree is when a specific visit to a tree or group of trees is made with the sole purpose of performing an inspection that is not incidental to other activities. From Salisbury City Council's perspective the formal inspection process would assess the overall condition of the tree/s. It provides a useful, cost-effective means of inspecting the SCC tree stock which is an important means of identifying when further action is needed, including tree surgery or further detailed inspection.

To be undertaken by:

People who have a good general knowledge of trees and the ability to recognise normal and abnormal appearance and growth for the locality. This includes an ability to recognise obviously visible signs of serious ill health or significant structural problems where tree failure, could result in serious harm. They also need to know when to request a detailed inspection. In practice these inspections will be undertaken by Parks Officers (following suitable training) and SCC appointed tree surgeon/s.

3. Detailed inspection of a tree should be applied for individual, high value trees giving high-priority concern in well-used zones. The detailed inspection is normally prioritised according to the level of safety concern. Detailed inspections are therefore reserved for trees valued for their heritage, amenity or habitat and which are suspected of posing a high level of risk, as already identified through a previous formal or informal assessment.

To be undertaken by:

An appropriately competent person, experienced in the field of arboricultural investigation. The inspector must be suitably qualified and experienced and carry appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

2.8 The frequency of inspections will be as per **fig one** below and **Appendix Two** the **Tree Inspection Matrix**

2.9 The frequency of future inspections will be determined by the age and condition of the tree and its location within a high, medium or low risk zone. For example a high risk tree may be inspected annually and a tree with negligible risk inspected five or more years after initial survey.

Fig one

Tree Risk Zone	Informal Inspection Frequency	Formal Inspection Frequency	Detailed Inspection Frequency
High	On going	2 years	As required
Medium	On going	4 years	As required
Low	On going	6 years	As required

Inspection Records:

- 2.10 The results of tree inspections will be recorded on the council data management system. Customer enquiries will also be recorded on this system, which will provide a clear audit trail of the enquiry and action taken.
- 2.11 Each particular job will be categorised and will reflect on the urgency of the situation, the degree of inconvenience being caused and the best time of year for the work to be undertaken.

The following categories will be used when prioritising tree works:

PRIORITY	RESPONSE	DESCRIPTION
Urgent	Up to 1 week	EMERGENCY tree work requiring an immediate response to remove a hazard – Access to tree location may be restricted until work can be completed.
High	Within 12 weeks	Work to be classified as ESSENTIAL, associated with mitigation of a danger. The Council will endeavour to ensure that works will be undertaken within 12 weeks of the inspection.
Mod/High	Within 6 months	Work to be classified as DESIRABLE. The Council will endeavour to ensure that work will be undertaken within 6 months of the inspection. These will be works associated with the mitigation of nuisance such as branches brushing against buildings in normal winds.
Moderate	Within 12 months	Non-essential maintenance work including cyclical pruning, cultural pruning and pollarding work.

Mod/Low	Within 24 Months	Non-essential maintenance work. Needs to be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to ensure the longer term health of the tree.
Low	Only to be done if budget allows.	Work classified as NON ESSENTIAL or NON DESIRABLE.

3. Guidance – Requesting Tree Work

- 3.1 It is important to remember that people rarely contact the Council when they are happy about local trees. Only when trees become an apparent problem are comments made, and therefore a distorted picture of peoples' perception of trees develops. It is important to seek alternatives to felling or severe pruning when conflicts arise, so that the trees can remain for the silent majority who value them.
- 3.2 It is not always necessary to remove or severely prune a tree because it is causing a problem. Often, there are other options available and these need to be considered first. Furthermore, the Council is not legally required to mitigate all tree related nuisances, and to do so would not be practicable with the resources available.
- 3.3 This section looks at some of the most common issues associated with urban trees and how these can be mitigated or overcome. The aim of the following policies is to ensure the Council is meeting its legal obligations in respect of trees on its land and strike a balance between removing problem trees and retaining trees in good health.

Tree Safety:

- 3.4 Where there is a clear and foreseeable threat to the personal safety of residents or visitors, or to property, that is directly related to the condition of a tree, action will be taken to minimise that risk. If damage to property has occurred directly relating to a tree or hedge and the resident feels Salisbury City Council are liable, they should follow the process set out in: **3.30 Damage caused to property from a Council owned/managed tree or hedge.**
- 3.5 Risk that is an indirect consequence of a tree (e.g. slippery leaves on the pavement in autumn) will not be dealt with through pruning or felling other than in exceptional circumstances and where other options (such as clearing the leaves) are not available.

- 3.6 Unfounded fear of a tree (e.g. due to the height or size of the tree) will not normally result in action to prune the tree unless there has been a recent change in circumstances.

Emergency Tree Work:

- 3.7 The 1987 gale highlighted the fact that in bad weather even the healthiest of trees can become hazardous. Salisbury City Council has an established procedure for prompt action in such emergencies, to ensure that everything possible is done to protect road users, residents and property.
- 3.8 Dangerous or fallen trees reported to the Council will be inspected by a trained officer within two hours from the initial call in order to assess the risk, determine the extent of the hazard and implement health and safety measures where necessary. Removal of the hazard identified will be prioritized based on the risk to the public and the tree contractor engaged to undertake the work.
- 3.9 Where it is not possible to immediately undertake the works (e.g. for safety reasons or due to fallen electricity cables) a Council Officer will liaise with the relevant WC highway officers and emergency services to ensure the site is safe until such time as the hazard can be removed.

Council Owned Trees that Overhang Neighbouring Properties:

- 3.10 The Council has no legal obligation to prune overhanging trees unless they are causing direct damage to an adjacent property or are dangerous. The Council will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or are causing an actionable nuisance. This reflects the Council's position as an owner of thousands of trees and the resources available.
- 3.11 Adjacent landowners are entitled to prune encroaching tree branches or roots back to the boundary of their property providing that the works do not unbalance the tree or do other damage to it. Legally, they are required to retain the pruning's and offer them back to the Council, but the Council is not obliged to accept them.

To replace 3.11 with the following wording on request of Cllr Corbin:

Residents are entitled to prune branches or roots of Council-owned trees that encroach over their boundary, provided the works do not harm or unbalance the tree. While the cuttings legally remain the property of the Council, residents are not expected to return them. Instead, pruning's should be disposed of appropriately and responsibly by the resident, using green waste bins, composting, or via authorised waste disposal routes.

- 3.12 Where access to the Council's land is required in order to undertake tree works, the adjacent landowner must seek the permission of the Council to enter their land. This will not be unreasonably refused.

- 3.13 It is a requirement that all Contractors working on Council land are suitably qualified to undertake the proposed work. It is also a requirement that adequate public liability insurance is in place and that appropriate risk assessments and method statements have been completed. The Council will request evidence of this before permitting access.

Obstruction of Roads, Cycle ways, Footpaths and Street Furniture:

- 3.14 The Council will maintain its trees to provide the statutory clearance for pedestrians and vehicles over footways and roads respectively, so as to maintain a free and unobstructed passage.
- 3.15 The Council will ensure that branches shall be reduced back where they are touching streetlights, road signs and other street furniture, so as to maintain vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Pruning Trees for Light Improvement:

- 3.16 A common complaint about urban trees is that they block light from properties or shade gardens. However, the seriousness of this effect is variable and often removal of the tree will have little effect on the amount of sunlight reaching the house or garden. An example of this is where the house is north facing and the tree is small or at a distance.
- 3.17 There is no right to light under the law and therefore the Council has no legal obligation to abate this perceived nuisance. However the Council will consider taking action (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:
- Trees over 12m in height – distance between base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5m
 - Trees smaller than 12m high – distance between base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree.
 - Where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2m. A 'habitable room' means a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but specifically excludes WCs, bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways.
 - It is recognised through the preparation of the Equalities Impact Assessment that there are exceptional circumstances in which this approach needs to be more flexible. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is causing a detriment to the health of residents, further consideration will be given to the management approach of trees. This consideration will also take in to account the quality and importance of the tree in question. This approach is important as the presence of trees also has a beneficial impact on other

residents and the reduction in the number or size of trees may have a greater impact than on just one original enquirer.

3.18 Where a situation falls within these guidelines cases will be prioritised according to proximity and account will also be taken of the orientation of the affected window. The results of any consultation exercise may modify decisions if it appears that any work would be by and large unpopular with the rest of the community.

Pruning Trees to Improve Television and Radio Reception:

3.19 Interference with television or satellite reception causes frequent complaints. Interference is worse when leaves are on trees and in bad windy and rainy weather. Satellite reception is more sensitive to interference than television reception. There has been an increase in these complaints in recent years with the advent of this new technology and increased numbers of subscribers.

3.20 There is no right to good reception and in many cases it is possible to resolve issues of poor reception by finding an engineering solution.

The Council will only consider requests to prune trees to improve reception where all the following conditions are true:

- Efforts have been made to find an engineering solution to the problem and have not been successful
- The work required is consistent with good arboricultural practice and will not unduly affect the amenity or health of the tree
- The work required can be executed within financial resources available

Pruning to Prevent General Nuisances:

3.21 The Council will not fell or prune Council owned trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of their control.

3.22 There are a variety of potential nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor or seasonal and considered to be social problems associated with living near trees.

Examples of such problems are:

- Falling leaves, sap, fruit, nuts, bird droppings or blossom.
- Reduction or increase of moisture to gardens.

- Suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens.
- Leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs.
- The build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures

Clearing of leaves from gutters and pathways and weeding of set seeds are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out.

As with leaves, honeydew is not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance. Pruning will not normally be considered solely as a way of alleviating problems with honeydew.

This new section was drafted by Marc Read, Head of Environmental Services, at the request of Cllr Suddards. Please note, however, that Version 2 incorporates an amendment proposed by Cllr Suddards.

3.23 Discretionary Pruning for Exceptional Residential Impact Version 1

3.23.1 Salisbury City Council recognises that, in a limited number of cases, trees on Council-managed land, while healthy and structurally sound can cause substantial and ongoing detriment to the use and enjoyment of adjacent residential properties. In such circumstances, the Council may authorise discretionary pruning to reduce specific impacts, without compromising the tree's health or setting an unsustainable precedent.

3.23.2 Discretionary pruning may be considered only where all of the following apply:

- The tree overhangs a residential garden to a significant degree (e.g. more than 5 metres into the property or over 50% of the garden area).
- The overhang causes serious loss of light to habitable rooms or private garden areas or results in excessive seasonal litter fall that is demonstrably unmanageable for the resident.
- The resident is aged 70+, has a registered disability, or provides evidence of limited physical or financial means to address the issue privately.
- The works requested are minor, one-off pruning operations that do not unbalance or otherwise compromise the health of the tree.

3.23.3 Requests will be assessed by a Council Officer (e.g., Parks Officer), with a recommendation approved by the Head of Environmental Services. Each case must include:

- A site visit and photographic evidence.
- An impact assessment considering canopy spread, overshadowing, and any physical obstruction.
- Consultation with the Tree Care contractor regarding arboricultural feasibility.

3.23.4 If approved, works will be carried out at a time of year appropriate to the tree species and wildlife regulations. The Council retains discretion to refuse requests where:

- The tree has high ecological, heritage or visual value.
- The proposed pruning would set a precedent that undermines policy principles.

- The issue can be reasonably managed by the resident or via informal pruning to the boundary.

3.23.5 This clause does not create a right to pruning but enables the Council to act in exceptional and compassionate circumstances, balancing neighbourliness with the Council's statutory tree management responsibilities.

Discretionary Pruning for Exceptional Residential Impact Version 2 with Cllr Suddards amendments in red

3.23 Salisbury City Council recognises that, in a limited number of cases, trees on Council-managed land, while healthy and structurally sound can cause substantial and ongoing detriment to the use and enjoyment of adjacent residential properties. In such circumstances, the Council may authorise discretionary pruning to reduce specific impacts, without compromising the tree's health or setting an unsustainable precedent.

3.23.2 Discretionary pruning may be considered **considering the following factors:**

- The tree overhangs a residential garden to a significant degree (e.g. more than **several** metres into the property or over a **high proportion** of the garden area).
- The overhang causes serious loss of light to habitable rooms or private garden areas or results in excessive seasonal litter fall that is demonstrably unmanageable for the resident.
- The resident is aged **67+**, **has a registered disability**, or provides evidence of limited physical or financial means to address the issue privately.
- The works requested are **minor**, one-off pruning operations that do not unbalance or otherwise compromise the health of the tree.
- **There is in-year budget availability to meet this discretionary tasking**

3.23.3 Requests will be assessed by a Council Officer (e.g., Parks Officer), with a recommendation approved by the Head of Environmental Services. Each case must include:

- A site visit and photographic evidence.
- An impact assessment considering canopy spread, overshadowing, and any physical obstruction.
- Consultation with the Tree Care contractor regarding arboricultural feasibility.

3.23.4 If approved, works will be carried out at a time of year appropriate to the tree species and wildlife regulations. The Council retains discretion to refuse requests where:

- The tree has high ecological, heritage or visual value.
- The proposed pruning would set a precedent that undermines policy principles.
- The issue can be reasonably managed by the resident or via informal pruning to the boundary.

3.23.5 **This clause does NOT create a right to pruning** but enables the Council to act in exceptional and compassionate circumstances, balancing neighbourliness with the Council's statutory tree management responsibilities **and is subject Environmental Services having budget availability.**

Pruning for Clearance of Overhead Power Cables and Telecommunications Equipment:

Overhead Power Cables

3.23 In accordance with Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act 1989, electricity suppliers are empowered to remove obstruction to their equipment. This applies where any tree is or will be in such close proximity to an electric line or electrical plant that it will:

- Obstruct or interfere with the installation, maintenance or working of the line or plant
- Constitute an unacceptable source of danger to the public

3.24 In both the above cases routine cyclical pruning of trees would enable the Council to proactively manage trees to reduce the risk of obstructions to overhead power and telecommunications equipment.

Pruning to Prevent Direct Damage to Property:

3.25 The Council will cut back trees from properties where they touch windows, walls, roofs or gutters. This will ensure that damage to property such as aerials, tiles or gutters is avoided. If an Officer notices whilst carrying out inspections, that a Council owned tree or hedge is growing to the extent where it's nearly touching or damaging a property, they will monitor the situation and arrange for work before damage to the property takes place. If an Officer notices that there is direct damage to a property caused by a Council owned tree or hedge, they will notify the resident and action the required tree work immediately. If the resident feels that the tree or hedge has caused damage to their property, they should follow the guidance information below in: **3.30 Damage caused to property from Council owned/managed tree or hedge.**

3.26 Cases of direct root damage will be considered on an individual basis. A balance will be struck between the nuisance experienced by individuals and the benefits offered by the tree to the wider community.

3.27 The Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council trees are damaging drains. Trees do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain, but they will ruthlessly exploit any existing fault. The removal of one tree will not prevent other vegetation from exploiting the same opportunity.

3.28 The Council's presumption is that the appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is to ensure that the drains are watertight.

High Hedges:

3.29 When a complaint is received about a hedge on Council land, Council Officers will apply a recognised formula, devised by the British Research Establishment (BRE) and approved by the Department of Communities and Local Government, to determine if the hedge is in breach of the Act. If, as a

result, the hedge is found to be too high it will be reduced in height or removed dependant on the individual circumstances of the case.

A high hedge is a continuous barrier to light or access that rises to more than two metres above the ground and comprises a line of two or more evergreen or semi-evergreen trees or shrubs. The hedge must also impact on a residential property (house, bungalow, flat etc.) or part of a property in more than one use, which is being used for residential purposes (such as a flat over a shop).

Specifically a high hedge is:

- The hedge is more than 2m (approx. 6½ft) tall (there is extra guidance for hedge heights on slopes)
- The hedge must impact on a residential property (house, bungalow, flat etc.)
- A hedge is defined as a line of two or more trees or shrubs
- The hedge is formed wholly or predominantly of evergreens or semi-evergreen
- Bamboo and ivy are not included
- Where a hedge is predominantly evergreen, the deciduous trees and shrubs within the hedge may be included in the work specified. However, these trees may be excluded or require a different approach.

Salisbury City Council will only consider a high hedge complaint if it satisfies the following criteria:

- It must relate to a high hedge as defined in the Act;
- The hedge must be on land that is owned by the council;
- It must be affecting a domestic property;
- The complaint must be made on the grounds that the height of the hedge is adversely affecting the reasonable enjoyment of the domestic property in question; by the owner or occupier of that property.

Upon receipt of a complaint meeting the above criteria Salisbury City Council will follow the guidance as offered by – High Hedges Complaints: Prevention and Cure. Please see link below.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11476/highhedgescomplaints.pdf

Ordinary Hedges

These are all other hedges that do not meet the high hedge criteria.

Council hedges have no entitlement to occupy the air space above residents land. Residents can therefore alleviate the nuisance caused by this encroachment by trimming back branches to the point at which they each cross the boundary.

Residents are required to retain the pruning's and offer them back to the Council, but the Council is not obliged to accept them.

The council is entitled to decide to what height the hedge grows – subject to High Hedge guidance so residents are not entitled to reduce the height of the hedge.

A request to add in the following to this section on request of Mostyn Coombes, Estates Manager.

Transfer of Maintenance Responsibilities: Pruning of Hedges, Thickets, and Shrub Areas

In certain instances where the Council (SCC) assumes maintenance responsibility for hedge, thicket, or shrub areas transferred from Wiltshire Council, the planting may need to be reduced to a manageable height for ongoing maintenance by SCC Grounds Operatives.

In such cases, it may be necessary for the Council to appoint an external contractor to undertake the initial remedial pruning work.

Note - If you live in a conservation area, or the trees in the hedge are protected by a tree preservation order you may need council's permission to trim.

Miscellaneous

- If a resident considers that a council owned or managed hedge is structurally damaging a fence/boundary they should follow the advice below **3:30 Damage caused to property from Council owned/managed tree or hedge.**
- Encroachment of brambles etc. – residents are entitled to cut back brambles and or other vegetation that is encroaching onto their land and trim back to the boundary. Residents are required to retain prunings and offer them back to the Council, but the Council is not obliged to accept them.

Damage caused to property from a Council owned/managed tree or hedge:

3.30

If a resident believes that their property is suffering subsidence due to the action of trees or hedges owned or managed by Salisbury City Council (or they're concerned about any potential damage to a building, boundary fence or path) they're advised to contact their property insurer (private ownership) or Wiltshire Council (Council tenants) in the first instance, so that they may discuss their concerns and agree an appropriate course of action. Should they, or those acting on their behalf, wish to make a claim for damages against the Council, alleging that a Council owned/managed tree or hedge is causing/caused damage to their property, then they will be required to carry out

an independent report at their own cost and send it to the Council's Insurance Department.

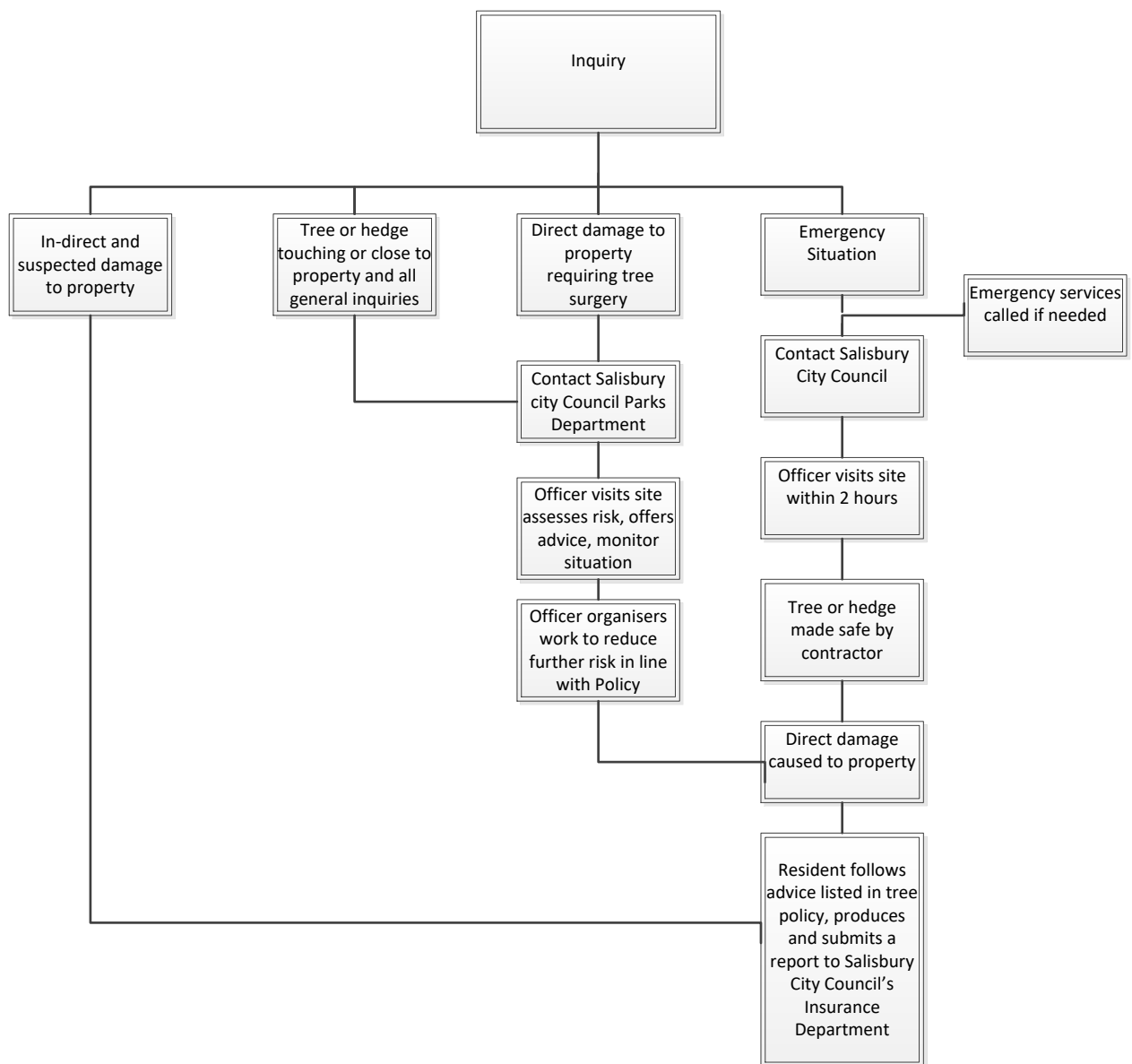
Submissions to the Council should include:

- Photographs of the tree or hedge suspected of causing damage to property.
- Photographs of the damage.
- A written letter or email giving a full description of the damage and the tree or hedge in question.
- Map indicating the exact location of the tree or hedge.

In the case of suspected root damage:

- Photographs of the suspected tree or hedge causing the damage.
- Photographs of the damage.
- Root analysis (presence, condition and identification).
- Crack/level monitoring (showing greater than seasonal movement).
- Two trial pits should be dug and photographed, one remote and one at the point of damage.
- Soil analysis (soil type, moisture level).
- Depth of foundations.

This flow chart indicates how an inquiry should be handled and dealt with by a resident and by a Salisbury City Council Officer and is aimed to be a quick reference guide to accompany this policy:



Tree Protection Order/Tree Conservation Area:

Tree Protection Orders (TPO's) are administered by the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, and are made to protect trees that bring significant amenity benefit to the local area.

All types of tree, but not hedges, bushes or shrubs can be protected, and a TPO can protect anything from a single tree to all trees within a defined area or woodland. Any species can be protected, but no species is automatically protected by a tree preservation order.

A TPO is a written order, which in general, makes it a criminal offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree protected by that order, or to cause or permit such actions, without the authority's permission.

Trees not protected by a TPO may be in a tree conservation area. SCC must give written notice to the Wiltshire Council of any proposed work, describing

what we want to do, at least six weeks before the work starts. This is called a 'section 211 notice' and it gives the Wiltshire Council an opportunity to consider protecting the tree with a TPO.

SCC does not need to give notice of work on a tree in a conservation area less than 7.5 centimetres in diameter, measured 1.5 metres above the ground (or 10 centimetres if thinning to help the growth of other trees).

Some areas of SCC owned parks and open spaces are TCAs, for example Queen Elizabeth Garden's, whilst others are not, for example Victoria Park.

4. Standard of Works – Appointment of Contractors:

- 4.1 It is important to ensure that Salisbury's trees are maintained to a high standard. Poor tree pruning can not only look unsightly, but also reduce the life expectancy of a tree or lead to it becoming hazardous. Tree surgery is not only specialised and skilled work, but also can be dangerous. Staff who are involved in this work require training to protect themselves and the public.
- 4.2 Tree planting is also a specialised task and requires proper consideration. All too often trees are planted in poorly prepared pits with inadequate protection and maintenance.

Tree Maintenance Contracts:

- 4.3 The City Council will prepare and regularly review technical specifications for tree work that require the highest standards of arboriculture and compliance with the most up-to-date health and safety legislation.
- 4.4 The Council will identify approved contractors, who have achieved the highest standards of safety and technical expertise. All contractors will need to be Arboricultural Association Accredited or be committed to achieving this accreditation over a three-year period from the start of their contract with Salisbury City Council.

Standards of Work:

- 4.5 The Council will ensure that all work will be carried out to modern safety and technical standards.
- 4.6 Documentation needs to be regularly updated to ensure that the standards set are up to date with current best practices. The accepted standard for tree work at present is BS 3998 British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work (1989). This will be used as a guide for the specification of tree work.
- 4.7 The accepted standards for tree planting and nursery stock are: BS3936, BS 4043, BS 4428 and BS 5236.

Training:

- 4.8 Appointed Contractors will be required to have achieved LANTRA/NPTC qualifications for the area of work in which they are engaged.
- 4.9 Tree officers will receive appropriate training and regularly update skills through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Courses.

Insurance:

- 4.10 Contractors employed by the Council will be required to obtain Employee and Public Liability Insurance to a value of £10 million

Health and Safety:

- 4.11 All contractors employed by Salisbury City Council are required to achieve the appropriate standards of health and safety and demonstrate compliance with these standards as part of their work operations. Contractors are required to complete generic and on-site risk assessments for all operations, and complete method statements for more complex operations.

Protecting Wildlife:

- 4.12 Precautions are to be taken to avoid disturbance of nesting birds and bat roosts in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Proposals for any work on trees on or associated with SSSI/SAC/SINC and LNR Priority Habitat sites must be fully investigated with the appropriate authorities before actioning.
- 4.13 Contractors working for Salisbury City Council are required to inspect trees and hedges thoroughly before commencement of work and also look thoroughly in the immediate proximity of the works; this should be noted down as part of the Risk Assessment done before the start of every job.
- 4.14 If nesting birds are found to be present then the tree work will not commence and will be rescheduled for later in the year. Bats and their roosts are protected by law therefore, if a Bat roost feature or evidence of Bat activity is found in a tree scheduled to be pruned or removed, the Council is legally required to obtain advice from a qualified person before proceeding.
- 4.15 The above will limit and may prohibit certain tree pruning or felling work during spring and summer. Birds will nest in trees and shrubs between March and August each year, while bats will use roost sites in trees between April and September, depending on weather conditions. Some species may hibernate in large old trees, during the winter months.

Monitoring Tree Contractors:

- 4.16 The Council will regularly monitor contractors to ensure standards of work and health and safety are being maintained. An annual review of all Contractors will take place to ensure that they have adequate insurance in place, standards of

health and safety have been achieved and that staff are adequately trained for the work in which they are engaged.

All contractors are required to comply with the following, when working on the public highway:

- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991
- Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice

Working near to Power Cables:

4.17 A shutdown of overhead power lines is required when working close to high voltage power lines and cables. Contractors will comply with HSE and Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group guidance note 804.

5. Tree Planting and Young Tree Maintenance:

- 5.1 From time to time trees have to be felled. However, these trees need to be replaced or the tree population will continue to decline. Replanting trees is essential to maintain and help the urban tree population grow.
- 5.2 It is important to ensure that for every tree felled, at least one tree is planted in its place and is properly cared for. The size and scale of replacement planting should reflect both the trees removed and the situation. Salisbury City Council have adopted a Tree and Ecosystem Service Strategy (TrESS) the policy shows the canopy coverage over the city for each ward, it also suggests land suitable for planting and gives tree species suggestion for various sized areas. Officers should use TrESS as a helpful guide when determining what tree species to choose when replacing stock.
- 5.3 It's the Council's aim to replant in the same area where a tree has been removed however, sometimes this may not be possible, either through lack of support from residents or due to the circumstances of the site for instance, nearby drains, powerlines, services or a general lack of space for a tree to thrive. In this instance, a tree will be planted as close to the site as possible on Council owned/controlled land in a suitable location.
- 5.4 Trees in urban areas are usually present either because a conscious decision was made to plant them or because they self-seeded in parks and gardens and were allowed to grow and mature.

Objectives of Tree Planting:

Retention: Ensuring the retention, wherever practicable or desirable, of trees on Council land.

Enhancement: To increase the tree cover and species diversity in those areas of the City that are lacking in trees

Continuous Tree Cover: To undertake the management of the existing stock ensuring that there is a continuous programme of tree replacement throughout the City, ensuring that there is a mixed range of age and species.

Species Selection: Planting, where appropriate, large indigenous or exotic species to create skyline features.

Lowering pollution levels: Selecting trees and hedging plants suitable for absorbing carbon dioxide and air pollutants across the city.

Conservation: Encourage nature conservation through tree planting so that across the City there is a measurable increase in the conditions suitable for wildlife to colonise areas where before it had limited foothold opportunities.

Publicity and Promotion: Increase the level of public awareness of the tree resource by encouraging public involvement in decision making and planting schemes.

Sponsorship: To encourage members of the public, businesses and other groups to sponsor trees via the introduction of a Tree Donation Scheme.

5.6 When devising planting schemes it will be the Council's policy to: -

- Replace mature trees lost through natural wastage (disease, senility etc.) and those that have out-grown their environment so that in these areas the existing tree populations do not decline
- Take into account any visual landscape factors so that the species chosen will, when mature, have a significant impact in enhancing the character of the area without compromising any existing views, sightlines etc.
- Allow for the planted tree to be the eventual successor to any existing trees that are either nearing maturity or in decline;
- Achieve a species mix so that in the event of a future disease affecting one particular species (as happened with Dutch Elm disease) no one area or park suffers from excessive loss due to a single species being the dominant tree.
- Increase tree canopy coverage informed through TrESS (Tree and Ecosystem Service Strategy) with the objective of reaching 21% in each ward within the parish boundary. Funded by the legacy income from cremations or by funding opportunities through organisations such as the Woodland Trust.

Site Selection:

- 5.7 The 'right tree for the right place' will minimise conflict and maintenance in the future. For example, a cherry tree with a wide crown may not cause any problems in a small open space. However, if planted in a narrow grass verge it will cause obstruction and will require regular maintenance to remove low branches. Not only does an inappropriate tree have a less beneficial effect on the landscape, but it also leads to more complaints and costs more to maintain.

Maintenance of Young Trees:

- 5.8 Care and maintenance of young trees is vital. Care taken in the early stages can avoid expensive maintenance at a later date. It will also increase the number of trees that we can expect to survive to maturity.
- 5.9 When trees are first planted they are at their most vulnerable. They are more likely to die within their first 5 years than at any other time in their life. Research indicates that 75% of urban trees are destined to die through malpractice such as strimmer damage or strangulation by failure to remove tree ties.
- 5.10 Salisbury City Council will adopt a management regime to all young trees that ensures the best chance for their long term survival.
- 5.11 All new planted trees will be watered for the first two years after planting and young trees will be inspected annually during the first three years and maintenance work undertaken where appropriate. Maintenance will include:
- Loosening of tree ties
 - Mulching
 - Removal of stakes and ties when the tree has become established
- 5.12 The cost of tree planting can be significantly reduced if local residents agree to implement some of the maintenance tasks described above. Often, trees planted at the request of nearby residents have the best chance of survival, as the resident will keep watch on the tree and either undertake remedial works or inform the Council of problems.

6. Increasing tree canopy coverage

Salisbury City Council has set a target of increasing tree canopy cover on land it owns or controls so that it exceeds the current national average of 16% by 5%, i.e., SCC Land will support a tree canopy coverage of at least 21% within each of the Wards in Salisbury parish. The Tree and Ecosystem Service Strategy (TrESS) was created in 2023 and is designed to support the achievement of this target by:

- Defining the current tree stock including locations, numbers, canopy coverage, species, and function on SCC owned and managed land.
- Identify suitable SCC land for planting and advise on suitable native trees for the identified areas, or alternatives.
- Provide an aerial canopy survey which produces a map and percentages of coverage; and consider the findings of consultation with residents and partners. The tree strategy also provides the opportunity to identify and therefore maximise a wide range of stacked nature-based benefits (“Ecosystem Services” that are and can be delivered from SCC owned land, including biodiversity, carbon, natural flood management, air quality, pollination, amenity, landscape, heritage, shade and cooling, health, and wellbeing benefits), all set within the context of adapting and increasing Salisbury’s resilience to climate change. Salisbury City Council’s trees and associated “natural capital” (together with other trees and habitats in the parish) is of critical importance to the community, the local environment and has a large economic value. They are therefore clearly worthy of protection and enhancement, whether situated within legally or policy protected locations or elsewhere. The strategy seeks to promote, protect, enhance, and increase Salisbury’s trees, and the habitats associated with them, and the role they play in this historic and beloved city.

Tree and Ecosystem Service Strategy Doc 91283 and 91384

7. CCTV

7.1 Salisbury CCTV has been operating the CCTV system since September 2018, when the system was passed from Wiltshire Council to Salisbury City Council. The department sits within Environmental Services alongside Parks, Street Scene, the Crematorium and Facilities. They work with many City partners including ShopWatch, PubWatch, City wardens, and the Police to help make our city a safer place to live, work and visit.

Trees are living organisms and are constantly growing and changing. In certain locations trees can obscure cameras leaving blind spots where surveillance is required. Section 17 of The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of all their activities and functions and do all that they reasonably can to reduce these problems.

There are two types of situations where a tree can affect a CCTV camera’s view. Direct obstruction, this relates to a branch or foliage within close proximity to a camera and indirect obstruction relates to a tree which sits at a distance away

from the camera blocking the view of an area that requires surveillance. In both these cases the approach detailed below (guidelines) should be followed.

For CCTV cameras to be utilised to their full potential, camera management should include regular inspections of trees in the surrounding area to assess if maximum surveillance is being achieved. These inspections will be conducted by the CCTV team and any findings passed onto the Parks department. Each situation will be unique and will require careful consideration from both departments. The tree policy criteria should be adhered to in every situation regarding the tree, and careful consideration made for the trees health and its importance within the landscape of the city.

Most of the CCTV Cameras are located within a conservation area or are around trees which could have a TPO (tree preservation order,) so if work is required, an application will be sent to Wiltshire Council for approval. Wiltshire Council are the governing authority regarding tree surgery within the conservation area or on a tree with a TPO, it is down to their assessment to determine if work can take place on a tree.

Guidelines

Tree ownership

7.2 SCC only have the authority to work on trees which they own or maintain. Many trees which grow along roadsides are owned and maintained by Wiltshire Highways. The Parks department may be able to help identify who is responsible for a particular tree. If the tree is maintained or owned by SCC and work is agreed by both the CCTV and Parks departments, the Parks department will be responsible for applying to Wiltshire Council to seek authorisation for the proposed work if the tree has a TPO or sits within a conservation area.

Camera inspections

7.3 The CCTV team carry out regular inspections of the cameras and can pinpoint certain trees which are blocking their view. On finding an issue, they will contact the Parks Department passing on pictures taken from the camera and from the street or park, along with a description explaining how Surveillance is being hindered.

Tree Health

7.4 Unless a tree is declared as dead, dying, or dangerous, it will not be completely removed for the sole reason of improving the surveillance compacity of a camera. A tree should never become unbalanced because of tree surgery; therefore, careful consideration must be made when deciding on the suitability of the work in relation to the camera view.

Damaged Property

7.5 There may be occasional situations where a tree is damaging property by growing from a wall or pavement these types of situations need to be considered and assessed on an individual basis. Self-seeded juvenile shrubs and trees such as Ash, Buddleia or Alder should be assessed and removed if necessary.

Determining an outcome

7.6 Pruning branches from a tree will encourage a healthy tree to produce rapid growth in that area to compensate its loss. Therefore, Officers will need to consider whether moving the location of the camera is the fairest decision for the tree and the most cost-effective way to overcome what could be a repeated problem.

Authorising tree work

7.7 The CCTV and Parks Department will work together to determine the best course of action when issues arise. However, the Environmental Services Manager is the overriding authority and ultimate decision maker if a proposed course of action is not favourable by one of the departments.

Tree surgery

7.8 Working on trees next to CCTV cameras will require working at height therefore, all tree surgery will be conducted by SCC'S approved contractor who hold the correct licences and certificates. Some tree work which can be performed from the ground could be undertaken by SCC'S grounds team.

Nuisances

7.9 At times cameras will be affected by small fallen sticks and branches, dead leaves, berries, deserted bird's nests, and tree sap. These types of nuisances come under general camera maintenance and work will be organised by the CCTV department using their relevant contractor.

8. Maintaining historic views



The importance of views

A view can play a vital role in enhancing a landscape and can inspire people to visit a site repeatedly. Attractive landscapes offer an escape from the pace of modern life. They invite and encourage physical activity such as walking, jogging and bike riding. Being in nature can reduce stress and increases wellbeing.

What is a historic view?

A historic view is one that has been present on a site for an extended period and is known widely by the community, Officers, and Councillors. It may have been the subject matter for Artists or Landscape Photographers in the past which now provide a historic reference.

8.1 Distinguishing a viewing point

A view can be of many things, a scenic landscape, a city, architecture, building, a park, or open space.

Criteria for determining what this policy classes as a viewpoint

- A piece of land that overlooks the city and in certain locations the Cathedral from a public space owned or maintained by Salisbury City Council.
- The viewpoint must be located on a popular woodland, park or green space which is widely used by the residents and visitors of the city.
- The viewpoint must be historic to the site.
- The viewpoint should be recognised and highlighted in the site management plan

This policy does not authorise work for maintaining viewpoints such as:

- From private properties or land
- Will not create a view, or recreate an old view which does not meet the necessary criteria
- To benefit individuals, streets, cul-de-sac or close
- From City council owned buildings leased to businesses and organisations
- Overlooking a river, natural feature or an object which is in close proximity

Working on trees to maintain viewing points must not take place if it will result in having a detrimental impact on the condition of a healthy tree. A healthy mature tree will not be

removed. Neither should any clearance work on trees, scrub and vegetation take place if the results would be damaging for wildlife. It will be down to the Officer to determine how work will impact these factors before they authorise action. Things to consider: TPO'S (tree preservation orders,) Conservation zones and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

How much clearance work should take place to maintain a view

8.2 In many cases viewpoints will be surrounded by trees. Therefore, a sensible approach needs to be determined as to how much space is made available to frame the view. For instance, it will not be feasible to prune all the tops of the trees in a woodland to create a panoramic view across the whole city. It is reasonable to determine that from the viewpoint there is a clear space which is just big enough to frame the object or subject matter. In some cases, it may be logical to move the viewpoint to a clearer location which still frames the same view.

Determining at what point work should take place to clear a viewpoint:

8.3 Once a large proportion of the view has been covered by trees or foliage, the Officer can then start to investigate if clearance work can take place based on the criteria listed in this chapter. Work could be actioned sooner if tree work is already happening in the area and the Council could save money in the long term by also carrying out work to clear the view at the same time.

Views from benches

8.4 In some cases, it may be logical to move a bench which is positioned at the viewpoint to a new location where the view frames the same landscape and subject matter, but has no sight obstructions, rather than conducting extensive tree and clearance work. It will be down to the Officer to determine the most practical way of achieving the desired result considering budgetary restraints and the impact on trees and wildlife.

Newly planted trees that affect viewpoints

8.5 Officers should carefully consider where they choose to plant a tree, in some locations where newly planted trees could have a dramatic impact on the landscape, consultations with residents are recommended. SCC will not remove or prune a tree which they have planted because it blocks a view.

9. Trees growing on the Market and Guildhall Square

The Market and Guildhall square is the City's central outside space. It holds a Market twice a week which has run since 1227 comprising of seventy stalls. It also holds French and Christmas markets and events all year round.

This chapter is only concerned with trees that grow in the Market and Guildhall Square and does not apply to other locations. It exempts itself from certain criteria set in this policy to enable tree work to take place which will help maintain the functionality and appearance of the Market and Guildhall Square.

London planes grow on the market Square and Lime trees grow on the Guildhall square, the trees are mature and healthy and enhance the landscape. It is vital that the squares stay accessible for events, stalls, and the visitors to the city centre. The trees grow and spread and on occasions it may be necessary to prune lower branches which can cause obstructions for stalls and vehicle access.

The Market and Guildhall Square are within a conservation zone. Therefore, an application must be submitted to Wiltshire Council regarding any proposal for tree work to take place. Wiltshire Council are the governing body and hold the authority to approve or reject an application.

Pollarding the Lime trees

9.1 Due to the need to keep the Guildhall Square accessible for stalls and events it is necessary to regularly pollard the Lime trees in line with industry recommendations which states that this should take place every 2 – 5 years. It is not advised to pollard a mature tree which has not been previously pollarded before, losing a large amount of its structure can leave a tree exposed to pests and diseases and in some cases kill the tree. The best time to prune a Lime tree is at early – mid spring before the blossom appears.

Pruning branches that obstruct market stalls or pedestrian travel

9.2 Branches that hang low and obstruct market stall zones or pedestrian travel across the Guildhall and Market Square can be pruned back to allow clear access. In both these cases it will be down to the Officer to determine how much of a branch can be removed. They must consider what impact it could have on the health of the tree to help inform their decision. Market stall rooftops are just above head height in size, branches will not be pruned back for new or unique events which require additional space. The Stalls in Market and Guildhall Square are set out in certain areas, trees will not be reduced in size to create new areas for events and stalls.

Epicormic growth

9.3 As trees grow, they produce suckers from the ground and small branches over their trunk this is known as epicormic growth. To maintain the aesthetics of the tree and the accessibility of the site epicormic growth can be pruned back to the trunk or to ground level. The best time to do this is during wintertime when the tree is in dormancy, however, this can be carried out throughout the season if necessary. The trees on the Market and Guildhall Square require regular pruning to remove epicormic growth to maintain access for stalls and events, this work can be carried out by the SCC tree contractor or by the grounds team. It is unlikely that an application to Wiltshire Council is required to prune back epicormic growth due to the small diameter of the suckers and branches.

Statues and memorials

9.4 Statues and memorials play a vital role in the landscape and history of Salisbury. There are two statues on the Guildhall and Market Square one in honour of Henry Fawcett and the other is the turning point statue which marks eight hundred years since the founding of the city's cathedral. The war memorial is in the centre of the Guildhall Square. Not all the statues and memorials are positioned close to trees

however, these principles will apply if the landscape around them changes in the future.

- Branches that are touching the statues or the war memorial and are or might cause damage can be removed or pruned back.
- If branches are growing within one metre of the statues or war memorial, they can be pruned back to increase visibility. Branches should not be pruned back more than two metres in length unless there is a risk concern or a concern for the health of the tree. Trees will not be reduced in size to improve the view from the surrounding area of the statues or war memorial.

Benches, bins, floral furniture, and signs

9.5 There are several benches, bins, signs, and floral furniture in position on the Market and Guildhall square. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that these assets are safe to access and clear to see. Therefore, branches that cover or obstruct these items can be pruned to improve visibility and accessibility.

Nuisances relating to the cleanliness of the statues, war memorial Street furniture including signs, floral displays, bins, and benches.

9.6 Cleaning schedules are already in place to maintain the cleanliness of the war memorial, statues, and street furniture. This policy does not authorise tree work to prevent nuisances such as leaf fall, sap, insects, birds, and bird droppings.

Nuisances which can affect businesses

9.7 Where there are trees growing there will also be nuisances that occur, for instance, leaf fall, sap, insects, birds, and bird droppings. These can affect Pubs, shops and restraints that surround the Market and Guildhall Square. In line with this policy, work on the Guildhall and Market Square trees will not be authorised to deter these common nuisances.

Damage to the Guildhall and Market Square floor surface

9.8 The floor surface of the Market and Guildhall Square consists of granite and York stone sets. There may be occasions due to movement below the surface of the ground that can cause the stone to sink or raise in places. This could happen for several reasons. If this occurs, the affected granite and stone sets should be removed, and the ground carefully excavated to determine the cause of the problem. It may be possible to remove soil and re-bed the stone sets in place. If tree roots are too close to the surface, the SCC tree care contractor will conduct a full assessment of the tree and its root system in this area to determine if certain roots could be pruned without affecting the trees health. If the tree care specialist suggests that work could take place, Officers will then submit an application to Wiltshire Council. All other options should be investigated before concluding a course of action.

10. Trees growing on allotment plots

Choosing trees for allotment plots

10.1 Salisbury City Council encourage people to use their allotments to gain as much varied produce as possible therefore, support the planting of fruit trees. Tenants should avoid planting trees which do not produce edible fruits, especially fast-growing tree species such as Leylandii.

Planting trees

10.2 Tenants must only plant trees within the boundary of the plot, ideally near the centre avoiding the edges. Branches should not extend over paths, tracks, or neighbouring plots.

Fruit trees

10.3 All fruit trees planted on allotments should be of the dwarf variety. Tenants must keep their trees pruned to a manageable height so fruit can be handpicked from the highest branches whilst standing on the ground. It is down to the tenant to keep their trees maintained to the correct height and to determine when the trees need pruning.

Overgrown trees

10.4 If trees on allotment plots exceed the regulated size tenants will receive a notice asking them to prune their trees to the correct height. The correct time to carry out pruning is autumn – winter. Therefore, tenants should conduct the work over this period.

Received the letter in March – the tenant should conduct the work from Oct – Feb. 8 months' notice.

Received the letter in September – the tenant should conduct the work from Oct – Feb. 1 months' notice.

Terminating contract

10.5 The tenant must prune their tree or trees within the timeframe issued on the notice. Once the tenant has received the notice, they will have up to the maximum of one year to complete the work. If the tenant has not completed the work by the stated time, the Council may issue an eviction notice.

Help and support

10.6 If a tenant has received a notice to prune their tree but cannot conduct the work due to illness, mobility, or a personal problem, they should contact the Council or the site Warden who will offer advice.

Notice to quit

10.7 When the tenant issues a notice to quit, they must prune the trees on their plot to the correct height before the end of their term.

Large trees growing from allotment plots

10.8 Tenants must maintain their trees to the correct height detailed in this policy. If the tree or trees exceed the maximum height, tenants will be issued a notice asking them to prune their tree. The tenant may have inherited a tree from the previous plot holder which is taller than the maximum height specified in this policy and may not be in the position to be able to conduct the work. In this instance, the tenant must contact the Council. The Council will assess each situation on a case-by-case basis. The Council may assist or make allowances for cases raised by the tenant to the Council before 2025.

Conservation Zones

10.9 To prune larger trees, it may be necessary to apply to Wiltshire Council for authorisation if the site sits within a conservation zone. The tenant can contact Salisbury City Council for advice on this matter.

Tree health

10.9.1 The tenant should maintain their trees in a responsible manner and follow/use industry recommended pruning techniques.

11 Pruning the lower branches of a tree to enable access for grounds maintenance or space for recreation

Tree branches grow in all directions, and often form low limbs at the base of their trunk close to the ground. Removing these branches can benefit grounds maintenance operations, particularly for mower access, and allows greater space for recreation but removing these branches may not be beneficial for the tree. However, if lower limbs are vulnerable to damage from activities, pruning the branches may be the best course of action.

Budgetary restraints

11.1 In most cases low tree branches will pose no immediate risk to public safety. Therefore, the yearly budget allocated for tree surgery must be prioritised for dead, dying, and dangerous trees. Work will be accessed against budgetary constraints and is more likely to take place during late winter – early spring when a clearer understanding of how much money is left within the budget before the new financial year.

Authorising work

11.2 It will be down to the Officer or the Grounds Operations Supervisor to determine the suitability of the proposed request/work. They should take into consideration the following factors:

Grounds maintenance:

How much is the tree limiting access

Could the area around the tree be left for long grass to grow

Is the tree being damaged by grounds maintenance operations

Are the lower branches enhancing the aesthetics appearance of the tree and landscape.

Will the tree become unbalanced if branches are removed
What will be the impact on wildlife

Recreation:

Is the space where the tree is growing used by residents and how popular is it.
In the past was the green space more accessible and if so, how long has the space on the green been limited.

Are ball games encouraged on the green space

Are there other open spaces close by suitable for recreation

Is the tree or trees restricting access

By pruning branches and creating more space will it invite cars to park on the grass

Are the branches acting as a screen for houses close by

Are all the residents in the immediate proximity aware of the request

Is there a site line issue

Are branches a hazard

Impact on wildlife

By raising the crown will it create shaded areas for people to sit

Will removing the lower branches improve accessibility for all

Grounds maintenance operations

The Grounds Operations Supervisor will collect feedback from the grounds team and decide which work to action bearing in mind the factors mentioned above. This will take place over the winter when trees are in dormancy. Some work can be undertaken by the grounds team, it will be down to the Grounds Operations Supervisor to determine what work can and cannot be conducted by the team based on their qualification and experience and the time which is available for such works. Work which cannot be undertaken by the grounds team will be passed over to the SCC tree care contractor. If the tree sits within a conservation zone Officers should seek approval for the work by submitting a section 211 to Wiltshire Council. However, if the tree diameter does not exceed 75mm at a measurement of 1.5 metres from natural ground level the Officer is not required to submit a section 211 for cutting down, topping, lopping, or uprooting.

Tree Health

11.3 Work should not take place if the results would be detrimental on the health of the tree or result in the tree becoming unbalanced. In some cases, the Officer may need to seek advice from the Tree Care Manager contractor.

Wildlife

11.4 The Officer or Grounds Operations Supervisor will carefully assess the proposed work to determine whether pruning the tree could have a negative impact on the surrounding wildlife, before proceeding with a course of action.

This is a new section which has been requested to be added by Cllr Sample Raising

Tree Canopies in Response to Anti-Social Behaviour and Rough Sleeping

11.5 Salisbury City Council recognises that, in certain locations, dense low tree canopies and undergrowth may contribute to concealment, rough sleeping, or anti-social behaviour. While the Council remains committed to treating homelessness with compassion and supporting vulnerable individuals through appropriate agencies, it also has a duty to ensure that public spaces are safe, accessible, and welcoming for all.

11.6 Where there is verifiable evidence of persistent anti-social behaviour or the use of specific areas for rough sleeping that creates safety concerns or public obstruction, the Council may consider targeted canopy lifting or understorey clearance. These actions will be part of a broader multi-agency response and not undertaken in isolation.

11.7 Any works carried out under this provision will:

- Be proportionate and avoid compromising the long-term health, structure, or aesthetics of the tree(s);
- Be aligned with British Standard BS 3998 (Tree Work – Recommendations);
- Be undertaken only following an assessment by the Parks Team, in collaboration with Community Safety Officers, Wiltshire Police, and relevant support agencies;
- Take into account the impact on biodiversity and wildlife in the area.

11.8 This form of tree work will not be used as a default measure but considered selectively in areas where ongoing issues have been confirmed and where alternative methods of intervention have been assessed.

11.9 All decisions made under this clause will be documented, reviewed periodically, and reassessed if conditions change. Community engagement and equality considerations will be taken into account where appropriate.

11.10 If a tree is within a conservation area or has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) permission to carry out work must be granted by Wiltshire Council.

Epicormic growth

11.11 As trees grow, they produce suckers from the ground and small branches over their trunk this is known as epicormic growth. To maintain the aesthetics of the tree and the accessibility of the site epicormic growth can be pruned back to the trunk or to ground level. The best time to do this is during wintertime when the tree is in dormancy, however, this can be carried out throughout the season if necessary. Work can be carried out by the SCC tree contractor or by the grounds team. It is unlikely that an application to Wiltshire Council is required to prune back epicormic growth due to the small diameter of the suckers and branches.

12 Management of Riverside Trees

Many of our Council owned/managed green spaces have waterways running through them, careful management of these natural habitat areas are crucial to help preserve and enhance biodiversity. The analysis and procedures for Council owned/managed trees set out within this document will also apply to

trees growing by rivers however, the Council takes advice on the management of these waterway areas from the Environment Agency. As a general practise the Council will follow the guidance listed in the Environment Agency document: ***A guide for land owners on woody debris and trees near rivers*** <https://lfcc.org.uk/downloads/category/18-environmental?download=169>

12.1 Trees next to rivers are valuable because:

- Their root systems stabilise riverbanks helping to reduce and prevent erosion.
- Planting trees in the upper reaches of river catchments can help to alleviate flood risk downstream, by intercepting and slowing flood flows, and increasing infiltration.
- Overhanging branches that touch the water and underwater tree roots provide vital refuge and spawning substrate for fish, along with habitat for invertebrates.
- Overhanging branches provide perches for Kingfishers and yield insects that fall into the river, providing food for fish.
- Trees act as a barrier preventing fly hatch from being blown away from the river.
- Tree roots above ground and dense scrub provide Otter habitat.
- A mosaic of trees and open areas provide a mix of light and shade. The light areas encourage in-channel vegetation while the shady areas cool rivers. This is important for species such as native brown trout, and contribute to reducing the impacts of climate change.
- Trees and shrubs provide habitat for nesting birds, while mature trees with holes and crevices provide important roosting sites for bats and nesting sites for hole-nesting birds such as owls and woodpeckers.

12.2 Woody material in the channel provides:

- A means of restoring the morphology of rivers, especially where over-widening or straightening has historically been applied.
- Restoration of the floodplain connectivity and help to encourage upstream flood storage (however, woody material can increase flood risk in critical locations if not secured or anchored to the bank, such as by causing blockages beneath bridges or culverts).
- Habitat for fish and invertebrates, especially where there is a lack of in-channel vegetation.
- Variation in flow and shape of the channel, creating and diversifying habitat for many species of plants, invertebrates and fish.
- Backwaters and pools that provide refuge for fish and invertebrates during drought.

- Slack water areas behind woody debris to prevent juvenile fish from being washed away downstream during flood events.
- Fast flows that clean spawning gravels and cause scour (erosion) of the river bed to help create riffles and pools.

12.3 Good Practise:

- Retain mature trees and riverside scrub.
- Pollard or coppice rather than removing the entire tree.
- Retain the root balls
- Create mosaic of groups of trees and open areas along a course or the river. Seek advice from an expert about how to do this.
- Do not leave large gaps between groups of trees – some bats species are reluctant to cross a gap larger than 10m. Ensure all planting proposals on the main river have consent from the Environment Agency.
- Retain or create an uneven age structure that will encourage greater biodiversity.
- Do not carry out tree shrub works between 1st March and 31st July, to avoid the bird nesting season.
- When working on mature trees, always survey for protected species such as bats and barn owls and check for otter holts (seek advice if unsure).
- Where possible, leave fallen trees in the river and secure if necessary.
- Always secure any woody material installed in the river, to prevent it drifting downstream and causing a flood risk.

13 Ash Dieback

Ash Dieback is a highly destructive disease of Ash trees caused by the fungus of *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.

It can kill young and coppiced trees quite quickly. Older trees can resist it for some time until long exposure, or another pest or pathogen, such as *Armillaria* (honey fungus) attacks them in their weakened state causing them to succumb.

Effectuated trees can be identified from blackening of the leaves which eventually spreads to branches and the main trunk of the tree. There is no known prevention or curative treatment.

Fraxinus (Ash trees) is one of our most versatile native species which are home to many insects and invertebrates who depend on them for habitat. With exception for felling for safety reasons it's advised to take a general presumption against felling living Ash trees whether infected or not. This is due to evidence that a small proportion of Ash trees will be able to tolerate *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. There is also the possibility that a proportion of Ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. It's important to

note, that not all Ash trees in poor condition are suffering from *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, other reasons may be at cause such as drought, root damage or other diseases or pests.

13.1 Removing felled Ash trees and arisings from site

There is no specific advice about removing felled trees or arisings from site. However, the guidance for Ash trees in parks is that arisings can be left on site, and if required, processed there through composting or burning where possible. However, if removing from site, best practice, would include transporting material in a covered vehicle to a site where it can be safely burnt or composted.

13.2 Replanting

Replanting with Ash trees is not permitted due to the current restrictions on Ash plant movements. General advice is to restock from a variety of site suitable tree species, that are appropriate to the sensitivity of the local landscape and which will help replace the variety of ecosystem services that Ash had previously provided.

13.3 The Council's approach to Ash dieback

Along with all Salisbury City Council trees, Ash trees are monitored and surveyed as detailed within this policy. If an Officer believes an Ash tree is suffering from *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (*Ash dieback*) they will monitor the situation and seek advice from our expert tree specialist along with up to date recommendations from the Forestry Commission on the Government website.

13.4 Choosing to fell an Ash tree with *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*

The decision to fell a tree with Ash dieback will be considered on a case by case basis, the Council will follow advice from our tree specialist and take into consideration location and risk levels to public safety. High risk areas such as trees close to property, pathways or highways will take priority over trees in the middle of a wooded area where risks are much lower. Where possible, trees will be left to support wildlife and biodiversity and continually be monitored and inspected by Officers.

14 Appendix One – Tree Inspection Matrix

Tree Risk Zone	Informal Inspection Frequency	Formal Inspection Frequency	Detailed Inspection Frequency
High	On going	2 years	As required
Medium	On going	4 years	As required
Low	On going	6 years	As required

	<p>Informal observations of trees contribute to wider management and tree safety. They are essentially those day-to-day observations of trees made by employees who have a good local knowledge of the trees and location and see them during the course of their working day.</p> <p>May be undertaken by:</p> <p>People with good local knowledge and familiarity with local trees who are not tree specialists, but rather those closely associated with a site, such as the parks team, who understands the way the site is used (areas most and least frequented) and the extent of the danger, should a tree be found that is clearly failing.</p> <p>Reports of problems by staff or members of the public are a fundamental part of our risk management process.</p>	<p>Formal inspection of a tree is when a specific visit to a tree or group of trees is made with the sole purpose of performing an inspection that is not incidental to other activities. From Salisbury City Council's perspective the formal inspection process would assess the overall condition of the tree's. It provides a useful, cost-effective means of inspecting our tree stock which is an important means of identifying when further action is needed, including tree surgery or further detailed inspection.</p> <p>May be undertaken by:</p> <p>People who have a good general knowledge of trees and the ability to recognise normal and abnormal appearance and growth for the locality. This includes an ability to recognise obviously visible signs of serious ill health or significant structural problems where tree failure, could result in serious harm. They also need to know when to request a detailed inspection.</p>	<p>Detailed inspection of a tree should be applied for individual, high-value trees giving high-priority concern in well-used zones. The detailed inspection is normally prioritised according to the level of safety concern. Detailed inspections are therefore reserved for trees valued for their heritage, amenity or habitat and which are suspected of posing a high level of risk, as already identified through a previous formal or informal assessment.</p> <p>May be undertaken by:</p> <p>An appropriately competent person, experienced in the field of arboricultural investigation. The inspector must be suitably qualified and experienced and carry appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance.</p>
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