

Tree Policy



This policy sets out South Ribble Borough Council's (SRBC) approach to the management of trees and woodlands on Council owned land. It is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, officers, elected members and professionals to ensure a clear, consistent and structured approach to the management of the borough's trees.

As a Council we recognise the importance of trees in combating air pollution through the sequestering of CO2 and other pollutants and the production of oxygen, we are committed to improving the air quality of our residents and will replace trees on a two planted for each one removed basis. Trees will be planted in line with "The Right Place, Right Tree" policy which will filter out trees that would otherwise grow too big for certain locations.

We have also committed to planting as minimum 110,000 new trees over the next four years, one for each of our residents.

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1. Introduction

South Ribble Borough Council places a high value on our district wide tree cover and recognises that trees and woodlands are of vital importance in maintaining and improving the quality of life of those who live, visit and work in the borough. Trees are one of the most obvious natural assets, by virtue of their sheer size and prominence. It is our duty to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy the many benefits that our trees bring to the environment.

This policy is intended to act as a point of reference for members of the public, Councillors, officers and professionals to establish a clear and consistent approach to issues affecting trees on Council owned land or under the control of the Council.

Trees are a potential liability and SRBC 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 a level of risk which would be deemed unreasonable.

The local district is under the control of two different authorities – South Ribble Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. Each organisation has respective responsibilities in relation to the management of buildings, land, trees, open spaces and public highways. In relation to trees Lancashire County Council manage the majority of trees on and in the adopted highway, this policy does not apply to these trees.

2. Policy Aims

This policy has been designed to be as comprehensive as possible, however we acknowledge it does not cover every situation. The Council reserves the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council.

The Council will manage its tree stock in accordance with good arboricultural practice and ensure that trees are inspected in accordance with the National Tree Safety Group guidance. (NTSG Common sense risk management of trees 2011).

The Council will only remove trees only when it is in accordance with good arboricultural practice, or as part of a management plan for the area and will look to increase its tree stock whenever possible.

The Council will ensure all tree work is carried out in accordance with BS;3998 2010 Tree Work – Recommendations. (BSI 2010).

3. Useful Contacts

Enquiry	Department / Service	Contact
General	South Ribble Borough Council	Gateway Customer Services Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk

Trees & Development; Trees in Conservation Areas; Tree Preservation Orders;	Planning Department	Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk
Trees Established on Council Land / Property; Trees in Public Parks & Open Spaces	Neighbourhood Services	Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk
Trees & Suspected Tree Related Subsidence or Insurance Matters	Shared Assurance Services	Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk
Trees & Insect / Animal Pests	Environmental Health	Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk
Trees & Public highways or Footpath	Lancashire County Council	Civic Centre West Paddock Leyland PR25 1DH Tel: 01772 421491 www.southribble.gov.uk

4. Specific Advice, Policies and Standards, Amenity Trees

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy Standard	Response Timescale
Tree related subsidence, alleged damage to property	<p>The Council will rigorously identify and defend any claims which are presumed to be false</p> <p>Advice: If you believe that your property is suffering from subsidence damage due to the action of trees in council ownership (or that you are concerned about potential damage) you are advised to contact your insurer in the first instance to discuss your concerns and agree an appropriate course of action. Should you or your representatives wish to make a claim for damages against the council. You should in the first instance send details of your claim in writing to the Shared Assurance Services, this will then be</p>	All claims will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and will then be investigated and passed to our insurers for action.

	forwarded to our insurers the appropriate officer for investigation and responded to appropriately.	
<p>Tree touching a building</p> <p>A council owned tree touching private property.</p>	<p>If a tree in council ownership is touching your property, we will investigate and take action to remove the nuisance.</p> <p>Advice:</p> <p>In most cases the solution will be for the council to prune the tree, however in some cases it may be more appropriate to fell the tree. If pruning is appropriate, we will endeavour to stop the problem reoccurring within five years.</p> <p>You have a Common Law right to abate the nuisance associated with the trees encroaching on to your property. The following advice is given if you wish to exercise your Common Law right with respect to encroaching trees:</p> <p>a) You can only consider removing those parts of the tree from the point where they cross the boundary of your property. You have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a tree that does not overhanging your property;</p> <p>b) You are strongly advised to consult a professional tree surgeon for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are trivial meaning you could do the works with hand secateurs or similar;</p> <p>c) You are strongly advised to tell the owner of the trees what you plan to do. You can find out if the trees are owned by the council by contacting The Gateway;</p> <p>d) Before you consider doing any works to the trees you should find out if they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or they are in a Conservation Area. If trees are protected, then you will need to gain consent by making an application / give notice to the council. For guidance on how to check if the trees are protected and how to make an application please contact: The Gateway;</p> <p>e) Legally you do not own those parts of the tree that encroach over your property and you should make arrangements to return these to the owner. You are advised to discuss this with your neighbour to agree a mutually acceptable solution. If the encroachment is due to a council owned tree, then</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

	<p>please make arrangements with the council for the removal of any material that you are not able to dispose of yourself.</p>	
<p>Tree overhanging property</p> <p>Council tree encroaching onto private property.</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a tree in council ownership to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches.</p> <p>Advice: The nuisance caused by overhanging branches may be considered as part of our general tree work programme and will be inspected accordingly, the programme is prioritised and subject to the resources available.</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees and Light</p> <p>Council tree restricting light in a private property.</p>	<p>We will not generally prune or fell council owned trees to improve natural light, however following a site inspection the council may thin the crown of the tree to allow natural light to reach other trees or vegetation.</p> <p>Advice: If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge, then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003. This is enforced by the council's Planning Enforcement Team.</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees and Drains</p> <p>Council tree allegedly causing damage to a drain on private land.</p>	<p>We will not prune or cut the roots of a council owned tree to prevent roots entering a drain that is already broken or damaged.</p> <p>Advice: Tree roots typically invade drains that are already broken or damaged. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain their drains accordingly. If you are concerned about the condition of your drains, you are advised to contact United Utilities.</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

<p>Trees & Views</p> <p>Council tree restricting view from a private property.</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to improve the view from a private property.</p> <p>Advice: If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees, Leaves, Sap, Blossom & Fruit</p> <p>Council tree shedding leaves, sap, blossom or fruit over a private property.</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce leaf fall or remove fallen leaves from private property.</p> <p>Advice: We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce the fall of leaves, sap, blossom or fruit or remove leaves, sap, blossom or fruit from private property, this is a natural part of the cycle and cannot be avoided. Honeydew is caused by greenfly feeding on the sap from leaves and excreting their sugary waste, this can be removed by washing with warm soapy water. Additional resources and put in to removing leaves from footpaths and highways in the autumn, if you would like to contact the council to report a road, street or path that needs to be swept, please contact: The Gateway;</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees & bird droppings</p> <p>Council tree harbouring birds leading to a nuisance from bird droppings.</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees or to remove bird droppings from private land.</p> <p>Advice: Bird droppings may be a nuisance, but the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the</p>

	<p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees & wild animals, insect pests</p> <p>Council tree harbouring bees, wasps or other nuisance animals.</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce the incidence of bees, wasps or wild animals</p> <p>Advice: Bees are a protected species and advice should be taken before considering their removal.</p> <p>Advice should be sort from a professional to deal with wasp nests, the council can provide a chargeable service for removing certain pest species, you should contact The Gateway for further details.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Tree and TV & satellite reception</p>	<p>We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to prevent interference with TV / satellite installation / reception.</p> <p>Advice: It may be that your satellite or TV provider will be able to suggest an alternative solution such as relocating your aerial or dish or a means to boost the signal.</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees & telephone wires</p> <p>Council tree interfering with telephone wires.</p>	<p>We will not fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce interference with telephone wires. There may be instances where the Council will undertake works to prune trees and reduce interference where pruning will be an effective measure.</p> <p>Advice: Your telephone service provider may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem.</p> <p>If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can</p>

		expect to receive a full response.
<p>Tree considered too big / too tall</p> <p>Council tree considered to be excessive in size.</p>	<p>We will not prune a tree due to unfounded fears regarding its size or height.</p> <p>Advice: A tree is not considered dangerous just because it may be viewed as too big for its surroundings, other issues would need to be apparent for it to be considered dangerous.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees & vandalism</p> <p>Any act of vandalism to a council owned tree.</p>	<p>We will investigate any reports of vandalism to a council owned tree and deal with accordingly.</p> <p>Advice: Generally, we plant larger trees which are less prone to vandalism, larger planting schemes are fenced initially to provide protection, this will be removed once they have become established. Residents are encouraged to report acts of vandalism if and when they witness them.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees & crime / anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Council trees implicated in providing conditions that encourage criminal activity / anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Where a council owned tree is associated with criminal activity or anti-social behaviour, measures will be considered to reduce the problem on an individual basis.</p> <p>Advice: Pruning or felling a tree is not always the answer to a problem, most issues require a coordinated approach involving a number of agencies including the Police, action will only be taken following agreement with other agencies.</p> <p>The removal of food from council owned land is not permitted without consent, timber left on site is generally left to create wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

	<p>Unauthorised individuals are not allowed to use chainsaws on council owned land if you see someone using a chainsaw or removing wood from council owned land this should be reported to The Gateway as soon as possible. (Someone in an unmarked vehicle or without clothing that clearly identify who they are).</p>	
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5. Specific Advice Policies & Standards, Dangerous Trees

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy / Standard	Response Timescale
<p>Dangerous tree requiring immediate attention</p>	<p>Where a council owned tree is in such a condition that it poses a very high risk to residents or property and has been identified as an emergency situation.</p> <p>Advice: If a tree poses an immediate danger it will be made safe as soon as possible.</p> <p>Signs that may mean that a tree is in such a condition that it may warrant immediate action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree is snapped or blown over • Tree is rocking - roots are damaged • Tree is uprooted and held up by another tree or building • A large branch has broken off or is hanging off the tree • Tree or branch is blocking access to a property • Tree has fallen onto property or vehicle <p>Signs that may mean that a tree may pose a potential risk to people or property, however the risk does not require an emergency response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree is dead • Tree is dying – die back in the crown, fewer leaves • Bark is loose, falling off • Fungi growing on or near base of the tree • Old splits and cracks in the trunk or large branches • Small branches or twigs falling from a tree <p>Trees will be made safe via pruning or felling, typically we would employ the most efficient, for certain high value trees we will consider other</p>	<p>The council will attend the site as soon as possible to make the situation safe.</p> <p>An emergency is defined as a tree that is in immediate danger of collapse or a tree that is causing an obstruction requiring urgent attention.</p> <p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can</p>

	options to prolong the life of the tree and reducing the risk of failure.	expect to receive a full response.
Private Trees a danger to land	<p>Private trees – danger to land other than highways</p> <p>The danger posed by trees on private land is principally a matter for the parties to resolve, hence the council should not be considered as the first point of call in attempting to resolve concerns about the danger posed. The Local Authority has powers to require a private individual to make safe a tree via the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976, this will only be used as a last resort.</p>	

6. Specific Advice Policies & Standards, Legislation & Development

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy / Standard	Response Timescale
<p>Council owned tree & adjacent building site</p> <p>Council owned tree established outside a private development site.</p>	<p>The council is not required to prune or fell a council owned tree to allow your building works to proceed whether planning consent was necessary or via permitted development.</p> <p>Advice: If you wish to exercise your Common Law right to remove the nuisance associated with encroaching trees – see previous advice. (Section 4)</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
<p>Trees and development</p>	<p>Tree will be considered as a material consideration in relation to a development and must be considered in accordance to BS 5837 (2012) Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.</p> <p>Advice: If there are trees established within a site proposed for development, they are required to be considered within an Arboricultural Implications Assessment in line with BS5837.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the</p>

	<p>The assessment must be carried out by an individual qualified and experienced in arboriculture and development.</p> <p>Where trees are agreed to be removed as part of an approved development, the applicant will be required to submit a landscape plan with mitigation for the trees removed.</p>	<p>customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>
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7. Specific Advice Policies & Standards, Maintenance of Council Trees

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy / Standard	Response Timescale
<p>Works to Council owned trees</p>	<p>The council intends to manage its trees, so they make a positive contribution to their locality and are reasonably safe and do not cause excessive nuisance.</p> <p>Advice: The council operates an in-house team who are responsible for the majority of council owned tree work throughout the borough. The team are professionally competent in all aspects of tree surgery and undertake tree work operations in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 intended for use by arboriculturalists, tree surgeons and others involved with the maintenance of trees.</p> <p>On occasion the council will seek to employ contractors. These works may include stump-grinding, work to trees over the highway which require traffic management, out of hours emergency works, large scale works requiring specialist equipment, works exceeding a specific time frame in order not to impact on the current work schedule and tree works associated with the Councils Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Customer Enquiries</p> <p>The majority of non-emergency tree related enquires are received via The Gateway both via phone and e-mail, these are assessed against resources required, benefit and impact upon the tree.</p> <p>Once an appropriate officer is made aware, work determined to be classed as emergency works will</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

	<p>receive a site inspection within two hours during office hours.</p> <p>Any emergency works reported out of hours will be subject to the out of hours officer's response. Where strong winds have been forecast the council will subject to an assessment, place tree surgeons on-call until normal working hours resume.</p> <p>The council will aim to complete the first stage contact of a tree enquiry within twelve working days of its creation, once an enquiry has been investigated feedback will be provided to the customer, any works will then be added to the works schedule according to classification, with any non-urgent tree works to commence within eighteen months.</p> <p>The council operates a grading system for tree works scheduled from stakeholder enquiries.</p> <p>Category A – Works requiring immediate attention, usually trees which have partially failed are hung up or pose an imminent risk of injury to persons or property.</p> <p>Category B – Works passed to the tree team which are either in progress or beginning very soon.</p> <p>Category E – Works will be passed to the tree team as soon as the current workload (Cat B) is clear.</p> <p>Category G – Works which require completion but after the initial inspection do not require a short term response.</p>	
	<p>Maintenance works to council owned trees may be undertaken as the result of the following.</p> <p>Advice:</p> <p>As the result of an inspection the council may 'dead wood' the crown of a tree if the works are deemed appropriate from a safety perspective given the estimated footfall / traffic under the tree. Deadwood is a valuable ecological resource and its removal should only be done when appropriate.</p> <p>As the result of an inspection the council may 'crown raise' trees, these works include the removal of lower branches to allow for pedestrians and vehicles to pass underneath the tree without coming into contact with tree branches on a recognised footpath / highway / entrance.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

	<p>As the result of an inspection the council may ‘thin’ the crown of a tree, this action allows natural light to reach other trees and vegetation within the area. This does not include the thinning of a crown to allow light to a property or other built structure.</p> <p>As the result of an inspection the council may undertake the removal of branches and limbs which will benefit the wellbeing of the tree, e.g. the removal of a diseased / decayed / damaged limb, pruning the tree away from an obstacle or other trees within its immediate vicinity.</p> <p>To abate an actionable nuisance dependent upon individual circumstances.</p> <p>Pruning works will form part of a scheduled operation / management plan for an area.</p>	
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8. Specific Advice Policies & Standards, Tree Inspection Programme

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy / Standards	Response Timescales
Tree inspection programme	<p>The council will inspect trees in areas deemed as high usage, priority will be given to trees in public open spaces over paths and footways popular with residents and visitors</p> <p>Advice: Inspections will be carried out by a suitable qualified officer with the appropriate experience to identify potential defects and suggest the appropriate remedial action where appropriate.</p> <p>Inspections are carried out on a visual assessment basis to identify any external visible defects from ground level. Internal inspections, e.g. core sampling, will not be carried out as a matter of course. If an aerial inspection of the tree is deemed necessary, this will be completed by the Council’s tree team with details of their findings given to the inspecting officer to assist in the decision making process.</p> <p>Tree inspections include individual tree inspections, whole woodland inspections and area inspections. It</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>

	<p>is not practical, nor required by law, to inspect every single tree in detail.</p> <p>Completed survey information will be kept on an in-house database detailing the inspection date, the findings and the next inspection date.</p>	
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9. Specific Advice Policies & Standards, Tree Planting

Tree Related Enquiry	Policy / Standards	Response Timescales
<p>Tree planting programme</p>	<p>The council is committed to maintaining and increasing the tree cover across the district, the council operates an annual tree planting programme. in addition, the council has committed to planting 110,000 trees across the borough over the next four years.</p> <p>Advice: When the decision is taken to remove a council owned tree, the Arboricultural Officer will determine whether it is appropriate to replant a tree in the same place or very close by, each tree removed will be replaced although this may be elsewhere in the borough. Aspects considered will be the impact of the tree on the site and future planting will take account the character of the site, its future use and local interests.</p> <p>The council will operate “The Right Tree, Right Place” policy which should prevent trees being planted in unsuitable locations.</p> <p>The council hold an annual “Tree Giveaway” event each year in which trees are gifted to local residents to plant in their own gardens.</p> <p>Donated Trees</p> <p>The council is currently revamping the Arboretum on Worden Park and residents are encouraged to sponsor these trees.</p>	<p>The enquiry will be answered within 12 working days of receipt and feedback provided to the customer. If the enquiry requires further research, we will indicate a timescale in the which the customer can expect to receive a full response.</p>