2026-2036

Parks and Green Spaces Tree Strategy

Nuneaton & Bedworth
United to Achieve

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Nuneaton and Bedworth
Borough Council
2026-2036

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Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason

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Foreword

By Cllr Brady Hughes – Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health

Our trees are an invaluable part of Nuneaton and Bedworth, silently contributing to the beauty, health, and vitality of our parks and green spaces. They are a cherished natural heritage, providing clean air, vital habitats, and tranquil settings for our communities to enjoy. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council recognise the profound responsibility we hold as stewards of this valued resource, estimated to include around 120,000 trees across our parks and open spaces.

This strategy marks a key moment in our approach to tree management. It signifies NBBC's commitment to move beyond simply reacting to issues, towards a more proactive, and evidence-based system of care. We are embracing a guiding philosophy: "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason," ensuring that every decision, from planting a new sapling to managing our mature woodlands, is made with long-term sustainability and community benefit at its heart.

Over the next decade, this document will guide our efforts to enhance public safety through robust risk management, protect our most significant trees, and adopt a considered approach to new planting that truly enriches our environment. We will also strive to understand and maximise the inherent value of our trees and foster a deeper connection and shared stewardship with our residents.

This strategy is designed to be both formative and flexible, providing a clear roadmap for our officers and a transparent framework for our community. It lays a strong foundation for building healthier, more resilient green spaces that will benefit Nuneaton and Bedworth for generations to come.

Executive Summary

Trees are an important contribution to the quality of life in Nuneaton and Bedworth, serving as living landmarks that enhance our landscapes, support biodiversity, and enrich daily experiences. As custodians of an estimated 120,000 trees within our parks and green spaces, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) has a significant responsibility to manage these assets safely and sustainably for current and future generations.

This strategy, spanning 2026–2036, represents a crucial shift from a historically reactive approach to tree management towards a proactive, evidence-led framework. It acknowledges trees not merely as decorative elements but as vital components of our green infrastructure, delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. Our guiding principle, "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason," will underpin all decisions, from planting to long-term management, ensuring actions are considered, sustainable, and aligned with the Borough's best interests.

Trees provide various benefits:

- **Environmental:** They improve air quality by filtering pollutants, regulate climate through carbon absorption and shade, manage stormwater runoff, and are crucial for biodiversity, supporting thousands of species.

- **Health & Wellbeing**: Green spaces reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, promote physical activity, and offer restorative environments, contributing significantly to public health.

- **Social & Community**: Trees enhance the aesthetic appeal of neighbourhoods, foster social cohesion, and can even contribute to crime reduction.

- **Economic:** They increase property values, attract investment, reduce energy costs through shading, and boost local tourism.
  While acknowledging these immense benefits, the strategy also addresses challenges such as nuisance complaints, potential structural damage, and public perceptions of risk. It aims to provide a clear, fair, and consistent framework for balancing these concerns against the substantial value trees provide.

Our Five Strategic Aims:

This strategy outlines five interconnected aims to guide our work over the next decade:

1. **A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management:** We will implement a systematic, risk-based inspection programme, moving away from

   ad-hoc responses. This includes zoning areas by public occupancy, conducting formal Visual Tree Assessments (VTA) by qualified arboriculturists, and utilising asset management software (Ezytreev) to ensure a robust audit trail. This approach prioritises resources where risk is greatest, ensuring public safety while protecting valuable tree assets from unnecessary intervention, aligning with the "As Low As Reasonably Practicable" (ALARP) principle.

2. **Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock:** Recognising the irreplaceable ecological and amenity value of mature trees, we will adopt a holistic protection approach. This involves safeguarding Root Protection Areas (RPAs), associated habitats, and microhabitats. We will also implement biosecurity protocols to prevent and manage pests and diseases (e.g., Ash Dieback), uphold professional standards by employing qualified contractors adhering to BS 3998, and develop succession plans for even-aged tree populations to ensure continuity of canopy cover and species diversity.

3. **Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement:** All new planting will adhere strictly to the "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason" philosophy, avoiding mass or inappropriate planting that could compromise the existing function or character of green spaces. Our policy will guide species selection (prioritising native, climate-resilient, non-invasive species), define minimum clearances, and mitigate potential conflicts with infrastructure or personal safety. Replacement will be case-by-case, focusing on quality over quantity and considering the true whole-life cost of trees, including establishment, maintenance, and potential liabilities.

4. **Realising the Full Value of Our Trees:** To inform better decision-making and secure funding, we will quantify the economic, environmental, and social value of our trees using recognised valuation models like CAVAT. We will identify and protect high-value trees—those with significant ecological, aesthetic, historical, or cultural importance—through systematic identification, assessment, and recording processes. This will embed tree value into NBBC processes, support green investment mechanisms, and help secure external funding and partnerships.

5. **Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement:** We aim to build a positive and sustainable relationship between the community and the Borough's trees. This will involve developing accessible digital resources and on-site interpretation to raise awareness and facilitating community engagement through supporting volunteer groups and encouraging participation in initiatives such as tree-planting events.

This strategy is designed to be formative and flexible, acknowledging the evolving local government landscape and potential resource limitations. It provides a clear direction for NBBC officers, a transparent framework for residents, and a solid foundation for building sustainable, healthy, and resilient green spaces across Nuneaton and Bedworth for generations to come.

1. Introduction

1.1. Why a Strategy?

Trees, whether as individuals, groups, or woodlands, have a significant effect on our quality of life. All local authorities have a duty to protect significant trees for their amenity value and to manage their tree stock in a safe and responsible manner. In view of the immense benefits we receive from trees and the NBBC's responsibility for their management, it is essential for NBBC to set out a clear, coherent, and strategic approach.

The purpose of this strategy is to initiate, guide, and review actions to ensure that the Borough's trees are adequately protected and cared for. By doing so, NBBC can sustain and enrich their extent, quality, biological diversity, and contribution to the character and appearance of the areas in which they are located for the benefit and enjoyment of all residents and visitors. These principles naturally extend to the need to protect and enhance the green spaces into which trees are planted, recognising that these sites have many legitimate but often competing needs.

1.2. Our Vision and Guiding Principles

Our Vision:
For Nuneaton and Bedworth to have a healthy, resilient, and well-managed tree population that enhances our green spaces, supports community wellbeing, and contributes to a safe and sustainable environment for all.

Our Guiding Principles:

- **Proactive and Risk-Based:** where necessary, we will move from a reactive management style to a practicable, planned, proactive system that prioritises resources to where risk is greatest and benefits are highest.

- **Evidence-Led:** Our decisions will be informed by professional inspections, robust data, and recognised industry standards to ensure they are reasonable, proportionate, and defensible.

- **Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason:** All planting and management decisions will be based on a careful assessment of the site's context, function, and long-term needs.

- **Protecting Our Assets:** We view our trees as vital natural assets and will manage them to protect their health, longevity, and the wide-ranging benefits they provide. We will do so in manner that is mindful of present and future resource constraints

- **Sustainable and Long-Term:** We will manage our trees with future generations in mind, maintaining and enhancing canopy cover, biodiversity, and amenity value wherever possible. Our approach will anticipate and adapt to challenges such as climate change, pests, and diseases, ensuring the resilience and continuity of our treescape over broad time scales.

- **Transparent and Accountable:** We will be clear about our policies and the reasons for our decisions, fostering public trust and understanding.

1.3. Strategic Context

This strategy compliments the NBBC Parks and Greenspace Strategy (2025-40), adopted in 2025. A ten-year timescale has been chosen for the tree strategy, primarily due to the potential period of significant local government change and reorganisation being brough about by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (2025) ([English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill: Guidance - GOV.UK](#)).

The process of council reorganisation and devolution is underway, with a proposed vesting day for new unitary council structures in April 2028. It is anticipated that this will be followed by efficiency measures and that many existing objectives will either align with or be superseded by new arrangements. Therefore, rather than introducing a rigid, comprehensive tree strategy, a formative and flexible approach has been adopted.

1.4. Scope and Limitations

This strategy focuses solely on trees owned and/or managed by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) located in:

- Parks and Recreation Grounds
- Public Open Spaces
- Cemeteries
- Woodlands and Nature Areas managed by the PAGS team
-

It **does not** cover trees on:

- **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Land:** Trees on council housing land are managed under separate policies.

- **Highways:** Trees on the public highway are the responsibility of Warwickshire County Council.

- **Private Land:** Trees on private property are the responsibility of the landowner, although they may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or be located within a Conservation Area, which are administered by NBBC's Planning Services.

Figure 1: Map of woodland and isolated trees in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough
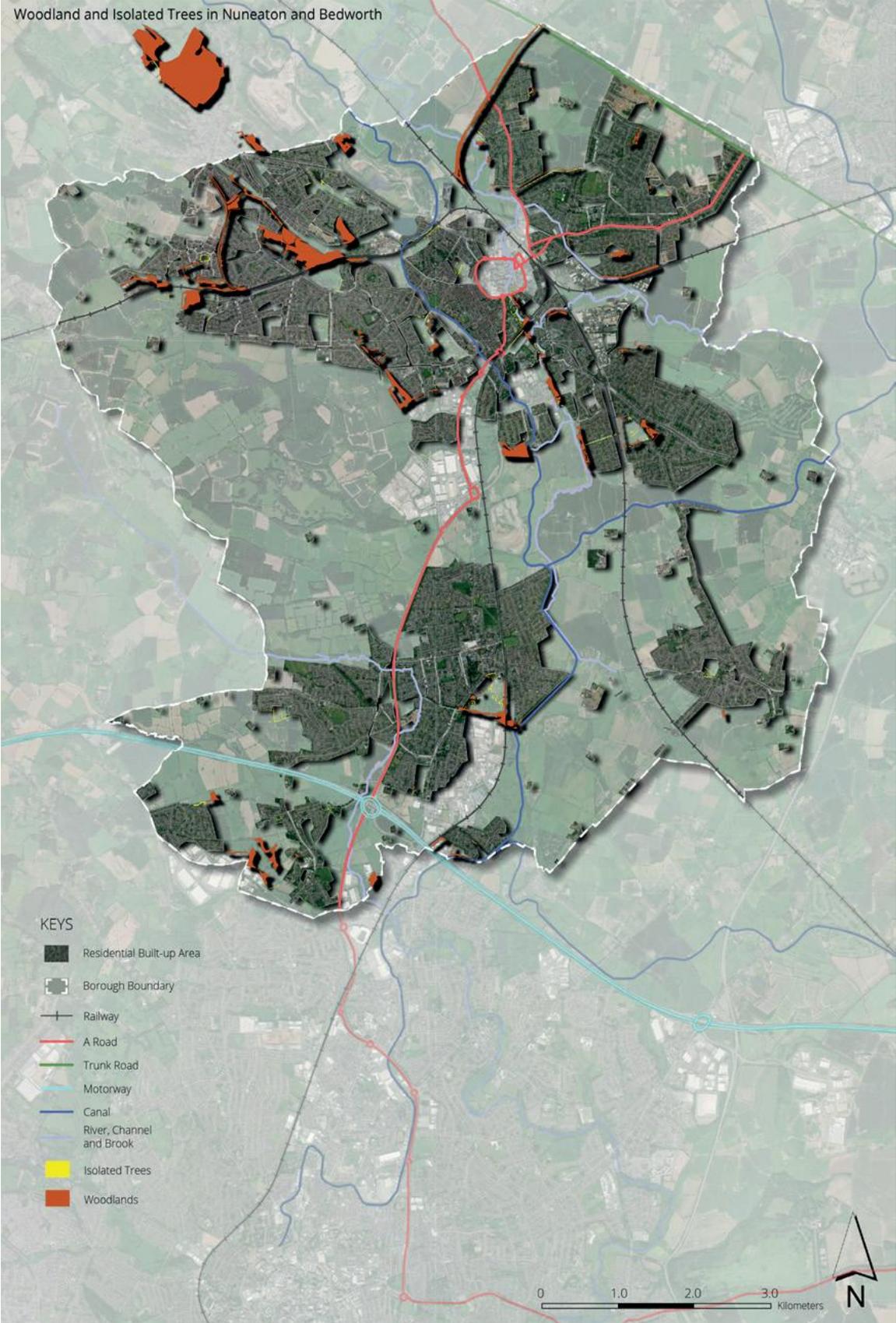
2. The Case for Trees in Nuneaton and Bedworth

It is widely accepted that trees are fundamentally important. Their benefits are extensive, well-documented, and touch every aspect of our lives (for example see: [The Benefits of Trees - Woodland Trust - Woodland Trust](#)). This section makes the case for why protecting and enhancing our tree population is not a luxury, but an essential investment in the future of our Borough. However, urban tree planting is often promoted as a key solution to various environmental issues, from air pollution to carbon cap.

2.1. Environmental Benefits

Urban tree planting is often promoted as a key solution to various environmental issues, from air pollution and carbon sequestration to noise reduction and flood management. While trees offer undeniable benefits, focusing primarily on their ability to offset the environmental problems associated with urban living may not be the most effective or realistic approach. In the urban context, it's essential to recognise that trees have limitations, and their role should be considered as part of a broader, more integrated approach to sustainability, rather than a simple environmental "panacea".

1. Limited Capacity for Environmental Offsetting in Urban Areas

While trees can help mitigate certain environmental problems, their capacity to offset the negative impacts of urban life is inherently limited.

- **Pollution Reduction:** Urban trees do absorb some air pollutants, but their overall contribution is relatively modest. Cities are densely populated with traffic, industry, and buildings that emit large volumes of pollutants. Trees cannot absorb enough of these pollutants to significantly improve overall air quality. Furthermore, certain tree species, such as willows, poplars, and oaks, release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from their leaves, which react with nitrogen oxides from vehicle emissions to form harmful ozone, thus actually contributing to pollution.

- **Carbon Sequestration**: While urban trees sequester carbon, the amount they store is small compared to the carbon emissions produced by vehicles, industrial activities, and heating systems in cities. Large-scale forests—not individual urban trees—are the real contributors to carbon sequestration. In urban areas, trees are just one small part of the carbon cycle and cannot compensate for the large emissions generated by cities. Additionally, carbon stored in trees can be lost due to tree death, disease, or removal, and the emissions from tools used for tree maintenance, transportation, processing storage (and potential release into the atmosphere) further dilute the benefits.

- **Noise Reduction:** There is a common belief that trees can help reduce noise levels in urban areas, but in reality, their impact on noise reduction is limited. Sound travels through trees, meaning they are not very effective at blocking noise. The noise reduction benefits of trees are largely **perceived** rather than actual. Trees may mask noise if they rustle in the wind, but this effect is temporary and dependent on weather conditions. The primary benefit is **visual** screening, which can make noise feel less intrusive, but trees do not significantly lower actual noise levels in urban environments.

- **Flood Prevention:** Trees can help manage stormwater and reduce surface runoff to some extent, but their contribution to flood mitigation is limited in most urban areas. The low percentage of tree cover in cities (often less than 20%) means that trees alone cannot have a significant effect on city-wide flooding. Urban infrastructure, including drainage systems and impermeable surfaces, plays a much larger role in managing floods, and trees are just one piece of a broader stormwater management strategy.

2.2. Health and Wellbeing Benefits

The link between green spaces and human health is undeniable. Trees play a vital role in creating healthier, happier communities.

- **Mental Health:** The concept of **Biophilia**—our innate human connection to nature—is supported by extensive research. Time spent in natural settings reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. The organic forms and patterns of trees have a restorative effect that hard, urban environments cannot effectively replicate.

- **Physical Health:** Tree-lined streets and parks encourage walking and cycling, promoting active lifestyles. Improved air quality also reduces the incidence of respiratory illnesses.

- **Rest and Recovery:** In today's fast-paced and often overstimulated world, many people experience prolonged periods of stress. Exposure to trees and natural environments helps to calm the mind and body, lowering stress levels and supporting our natural capacity to rest, recover, and restore balance.

Did you know? Evidence shows that in England alone, the NHS could save an estimated £2.1 billion every year in treatment costs if everyone had access to good quality green spaces. (Source: The NHS Forest)

2.3. Social and Community Benefits

Trees help to shape the character of our neighbourhoods and foster stronger communities.

- **Sense of Place:** Trees add aesthetic value, shaping our sense of space and place through their form, colour, and scale. Iconic, interesting, or simply well-placed trees can become cherished local landmarks.

- **Social Cohesion:** Parks and green spaces are shared environments where people can relax, play, and engage with one another, strengthening community bonds.

- **Crime Reduction:** Studies have consistently shown that areas with well-maintained greenery tend to have lower crime rates.

Did you know? The Natural Capital Account for Nuneaton and Bedworth (2020) has estimated the value of health benefits accruing from the borough's greenspaces (including trees and woodland areas in parks (but excluding street trees) as £5.5 million. This value is equivalent to a direct saving to health budgets that are a consequence of avoided health costs. See Parks and Green Space Strategy 2025-2040.

2.4. Economic Benefits

The benefits of trees can also be measured in financial terms. They are valuable assets that deliver a significant return on investment.

- **Increased Property Values:** The presence of mature trees and well-maintained green spaces can increase property values by a significant margin.

- **Attracting Investment:** Attractive, green environments make an area a more desirable place to live, work, and invest.

- **Energy Savings:** The shade provided by trees can reduce the need for air conditioning in summer, lowering energy bills for nearby buildings.

- **Tourism:** Beautiful parks and green spaces can attract visitors, boosting the local economy.

Did you know? The total natural capital value of the UK's non-woodland trees is estimated to be £151.5 billion at 2020 prices (i-tree canopy). Valuing-our-Non-Woodland-Trees_Final-Report_2022-09-07.pdf

2.5. Recognising the Challenges

Before making the case for trees, it is important to acknowledge that they can, at times, cause problems. It is often these issues that lead to trees coming under threat.

- **Nuisance**: Common complaints relate to shade cast onto properties, seasonal leaf or fruit fall, and interference with television signals.
- **Structural Damage:** A significant concern for homeowners is the potential for structural damage, particularly subsidence caused by tree roots in shrinkable clay soils. While proven claims against NBBC remain very low, this is a risk that must be managed, especially in respect of expected climatic change.

- **Fear and Perception:** The large size of mature trees can sometimes lead to a perceived, rather than actual, risk of failure.

- **Sense of personal safety** - Dense plantings, understorey plantings and tree growth near to paths can all block oversight from houses and roads and create blind spots etc - all potentially adding to perceived and real public personal safety concerns.

2.6. Conclusion

While urban trees undoubtedly provide significant environmental and social benefits, their role in offsetting the broader environmental challenges of urban living should not be overstated. Their ability to address issues such as air pollution, carbon emissions, and noise reduction is limited, and they should not be viewed as a primary solution to these complex problems. Instead, urban sustainability requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach, with trees playing a supportive role within a wider strategy that includes improvements in transport, energy efficiency, waste reduction, urban design and mass planting and protection beyond urban areas (but not beyond urban responsibility and accountability).

Trees should be valued not only for their environmental contributions but also for the social and wellbeing benefits they offer, especially in urban setting where the demands are most concentrated. When planted and managed thoughtfully, urban trees can greatly enhance the quality of life, contribute to biodiversity, and foster a sense of community. Their presence in public spaces can improve mental health, provide areas for recreation, and make urban environments more appealing and therefore valuable.

We will therefore have a realistic recognition about what trees can achieve in terms of environmental offsetting on PAGS land. If we are to maximise their impact, it's essential to ensure that trees are planted in the right places, with careful attention to local needs and reasons. In doing so, we create spaces where trees contribute meaningfully to urban life. Through this approach, the environmental benefits of trees will naturally follow, as part of a larger, more integrated strategy that both respects our heritage and prepares for the future

A central purpose of this strategy is to provide a clear, fair, and consistent framework for balancing the immense benefits of trees against these challenges.

3. Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management

Our Goal: To ensure public safety by implementing a balanced, reasonable, and proportionate risk management framework that is legally defensible and protects our valuable tree assets from unnecessary devaluation or removal.

3.1. The Legal Duty of Care

NBBC has a legal duty under both Criminal Law and Civil Law to manage the risks posed by trees.

1. Civil Law: Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984.

As the occupier of the land, the Council owes a common duty of care to all visitors and, in some cases, trespassers.

- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 requires the Council to take reasonable care to ensure that lawful visitors are reasonably safe while using the premises for the purpose for which they are invited.
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 extends a duty of care to uninvited persons (trespassers) if a danger is known to exist and it is reasonable to expect the Council to offer some protection.

The courts expect the Council to act as a reasonable and prudent landowner, which includes implementing a system of regular inspections for trees in areas where they could foreseeably cause harm.

2. NBBC has a legal duty under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that the public is not exposed to risks to their health and safety from its operations, including the management of its trees. **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** further requires a "suitable and sufficient" assessment of these risks. This duty does not require the elimination of all risk. The law requires a functional yet balanced approach.

Our policy is therefore to:

- Meet our legal obligations by identifying and managing material risks from trees to a reasonably practicable level.
- Protect our tree assets by avoiding unnecessary interventions, in line with a risk-based approach, protecting unnecessary wastage of finances and staff time.
- Adopt the principle of As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP), which involves striking a reasonable balance between the sacrifice (in time, trouble, and money)

and the subsequent reduction in risk.

The existence of this formal strategy demonstrates that NBBC is taking its duty of care seriously by implementing a system to manage risk to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable.

For more information on ALARP and our adoption of a balanced approach, please see the latest version of the National Tree Survey Group "Common Sense Risk Management of Trees: Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers. Click here for available version at the time of writing: NTSG-full-guidance.pdf

3.2. A Proportionate, Evidence-Based View of Risk

Sound tree management depends on a clear understanding of the distinction between **hazard** and **risk**:

A **hazard** is any feature or condition with the potential to cause harm (for example, a large, decayed branch).

Risk refers to the likelihood of that hazard actually resulting in harm to a person, property, or other defined target.

Risk assessment must always be undertaken in context, taking into account the condition of the tree, site usage, and frequency of use of the area.

In many cases, **managing the surrounding environment** offers a more appropriate and proportionate response than direct arboricultural intervention. Examples include:

- Relocating a bench positioned beneath a tree.
- Temporarily restricting access to an area of concern.

The risk does not arise from the tree itself, but from its potential and likelihood **to interact with nearby targets alongside the significance of it doing so.** The first and often most effective step is to consider what changes can be made to the surrounding context to manage that relationship. Measures may also include improving the tree's own vitality— such as alleviating soil compaction or applying mulch—so it can better maintain its structural health over time. Active tree work is not always the most appropriate first response. If an initial non-invasive first response is unlikely to yield the desired mitigation the next step will be to consider a minimal appropriate intervention to achieve the desired outcome, subject to financial constraints.

Incidents of serious or fatal tree failure occasionally attract significant media attention, and this can create a perception that such events are common. The probability of such events is extremely low, particularly where trees are subject to an appropriate inspection and maintenance regime. Decisions must therefore be **proportionate and evidence-**

based, recognising when, how and if the residual level of risk associated with trees is justifiable when balanced against their substantial environmental, social, and economic benefits.

To put risk into context we can compare it to other risks nationally:

National Risk Context

Annual UK fatality risk probability:

Potential cause of death	Probability of this happening to an individual	How many times more likely than being killed by a falling tree or tree branch?
Falling from a ladder at home	1 in 10,000	1500 times more likely to happen
Car accident	1 in 20,000	750 times more likely to happen
Accident at workplace	1 in 200,000	75 times more likely to happen
Fire related	1 in 260,000	58 times more likely to happen
Falling tree or tree branch	**1 in 15,000,000**	
Being struck by lightning	1 in 30,000,000	2 times less likely to happen

Figure 1

The risk of a member of the public in the UK being killed by a falling tree is exceptionally low:

- **Approximate probability:** 1 in 15,000,000 per year (4.5 deaths annually – source: NTSG-full-guidance.pdf)
- This is **15 times lower** than the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guideline for a "broadly acceptable" risk, which is set at **1 in a million** (the lowest risk threshold)

The Tolerability of Risk (TOR) Framework:
NBBC adopts the following principles of the HSE's TOR framework to help guide its decisions.

To clarify the relationship between the likelihood of harm and the response expected from duty holders, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) developed the Tolerability of Risk

(TOR) framework in their key document, Reducing Risk, Protecting People *Guidelines for HSE inspectors - HSE*.

This framework outlines three categories of risk: unacceptable, tolerable, and broadly acceptable. These categories are defined based on the annual risk of one individual in a population dying as a result of exposure to a particular hazard. These risk regions are then used to guide decision-making in risk management.

In the TOR framework (Figure 2), the lighter area at the bottom represents the broadly acceptable region. Risks within this zone are typically considered negligible and sufficiently controlled. As regulators, the HSE would generally not require additional action to reduce risks unless reasonably practicable measures are available. The HSE explains that the risks in this region are comparable to those people regard as trivial or insignificant in their daily lives. These risks are usually associated with activities that are inherently low-risk or with hazardous activities that can be, and are, effectively controlled to ensure very low risk levels. Nevertheless, the HSE emphasises that duty holders must still reduce risks where reasonably practicable or when required by law.

In perceiving the diagram below (Figure 2) it must be remembered that the fatality risk to the public does not sit at bottom tip of the triangle (which terminates at the broadly acceptable region set at 1:1,000,000) but 15 times beyond it.
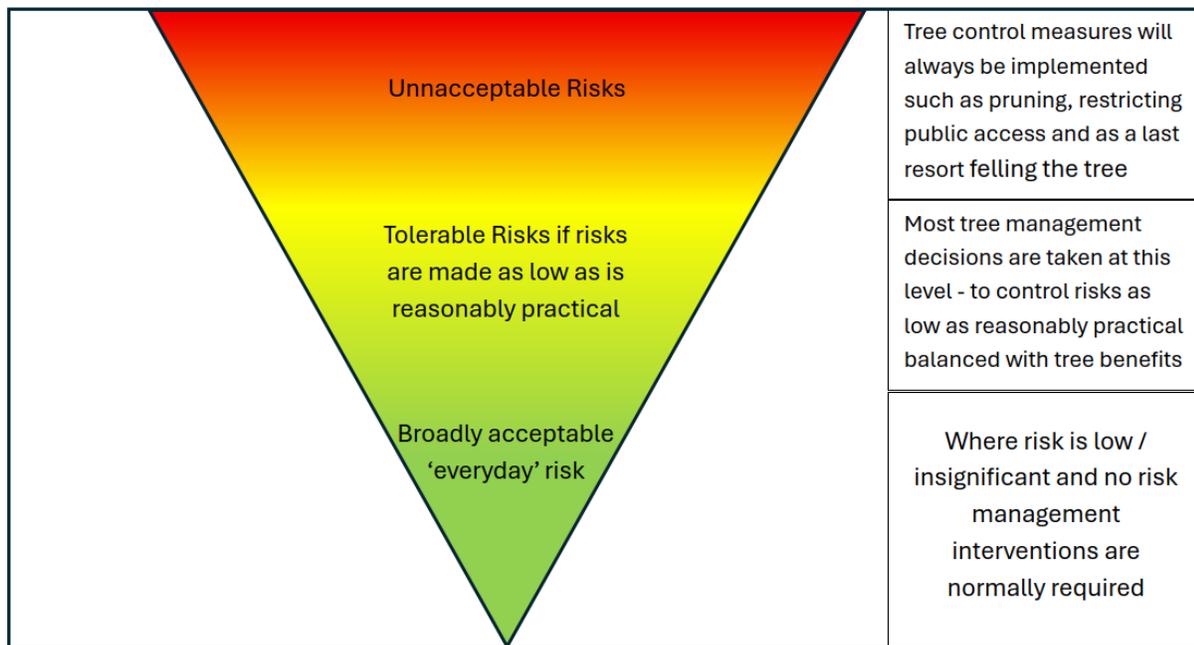
Figure 2

- **Unacceptable Risk:** Where risk is unacceptably high, control measures will be implemented. This may include pruning, preventing access, or, as a last resort, removing the tree.
- **Tolerable Risk**: This is the region where most tree management decisions lie. Risk is managed to a level that is ALARP, balancing the risk against the tree's benefits.

- **Broadly Acceptable Risk:** Where risk is very low and insignificant, no risk management intervention is normally required.
  This framework ensures that our limited resources are focused on managing genuine, material risks, not reacting to perceived or trivial ones.

And what about non-fatal injuries?

Again, these are greatly lower than many other sources of risk:

Non-fatal injuries:

- Trees: 55 injuries per year
- Footballs: 262,000 injuries per year
- Children's swings: 10,900 injuries per year
- Bicycles: 130,000 injuries per year
- Tripping on pavements: over 250,000 injuries per year

These figures illustrate that **the risk posed by trees is far lower than many everyday activities** that are generally considered trivial. Note that some incidents may involve contributing factors beyond the tree's failure itself (e.g., vehicle speed in car accidents).

Managing Residual Risk

- Trees have a **natural failure rate**. Whilst being statistically low-risk overall, no individual tree is entirely immune from natural, unforeseeable failure. This is inherent risk cannot be broadly mitigated without also losing the broad benefits that trees provide.

- Completely eliminating risk would require removing all trees or restricting access entirely—an undesirable outcome.

- NBBC's responsibility is to take reasonable and proportionate measures to mitigate risk from foreseeable failure, ensuring public safety while maintaining the substantial benefits that trees provide.

3.3. Our Strategic Risk Management Framework

NBBC will implement a proactive and systematic approach to tree management. This represents a significant shift from the current reactive, ad-hoc survey approach to a more proactive, risk-based system/management

Key components of our management system include:

1. **Zoning by Occupancy:** Tree populations will be categorised into zones based on levels of public access and use. High-use areas (e.g., busy parks, school routes, play areas) will be inspected as a priority, or more frequently than low-use, remote areas, subject to resourcing i.e. resources are targeted/allocated where the risk is greatest.

2. **Proactive (Formal) Inspections:** A programme of formal inspections, based on the above zoning, will be undertaken by competent arboriculturists. These inspections will use the **Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)** methodology to assess and record the condition of the tree stock, providing recommendations and timeframes for any necessary work. At the time of writing an initial phase has already surveyed 20-25 high-priority sites.

3. **Competent Inspectors**: All formal inspections will be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced arboriculturists holding relevant qualifications, such as the Lantra Professional Tree Inspector certificate.

4. **Data Management and Record Keeping:** A system will be maintained to record inspections, identify necessary works, and track their completion. NBBC uses the **Ezytreev** asset management software for this purpose. This provides a clear audit trail demonstrating NBBC is actively and reasonably managing its tree stock.

5. **Reactive and Ad-Hoc Inspections:** Alongside the formal programme, a protocol will be utilised for dealing with reactive cases, such as public reports, storm damage, or issues discovered by parks staff during other duties. This ensures a timely response to clear and present dangers.

6. **Basic Tree Inspection:** To equip relevant officers with the necessary knowledge to identify potential tree hazards and report them to the appropriate expert. The aim is

to enhance NBBC's risk resilience and support the tree officer, who would otherwise be a single point of failure within NBBC's in-house staffing resources.

3.4. Action Plan: Proactive Risk Management

Action	Description	Priority
Initiate Phased Proactive Tree Surveys	Commission a risk-based survey of council-owned trees, starting with high-priority sites, using VTA methodology to assess condition and recommend works.	High
Develop and Apply Risk Zoning	Formally categorise parks and green spaces into risk zones (High - than Medium to Low as resources allow) based on public usage to prioritise inspection frequencies and resource allocation	High
Establish a Formal Tree Risk Policy	Formally adopt a tree risk management policy based on NTSG and HSE's Tolerability of Risk (TOR) framework and the principles outlined in this strategy.	Medium
Optimise Asset Management Software	Populate and utilise the Ezytreev software to log all survey data, ensuring a complete and defensible audit trail.	Medium
Maintain Reactive Response Protocol	Review and formalise the system for the public and staff to report urgent tree issues, ensuring clear lines of communication and responsibility for immediate assessment.	Medium

4. Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock

Our Goal: To safeguard our most valuable trees and their surrounding environments from threats, ensuring their long-term health, resilience, and contribution to the Borough's character and biodiversity.

4.1. The Irreplaceable Value of Mature Trees

Mature trees, particularly those entering their later life stages, are ecological powerhouses. It is often said that an oak tree spends 300 years growing, 300 years thriving, and 300 years in graceful decline. This long period of senescence is of immense ecological importance.

The loss of a single mature tree, especially a keystone species like oak, can represent the collapse of a locally interdependent ecological hub, leading to the disappearance of dependent species. Planting several young saplings is a poor substitute for the deep-rooted presence and ecological complexity of an established tree. A 600-year-old tree

cannot be made quickly. While NBBC may not have any truly ancient trees, we have numerous beautiful and locally important long-lived trees that function as vital biodiversity hotspots, and as ecological bridges between them.

More details on veteran trees in the borough can be found on the Woodland Trust ancient tree inventory website: Tree Search - Ancient Tree Inventory

4.2. A Holistic Approach to Protection

Effective tree protection often requires not just the protection of the tree itself, but also the safeguarding its entire context/environment. This includes:

- **Root Protection Areas (RPAs):** Protecting the soil and root zones from compaction, excavation, or contamination is critical.

- **Associated Habitats:** This might be cavities, niches or hollows associated with the tree itself. Protecting associated understorey vegetation, nearby hedgerows, and other habitats maintains vital ecological corridors.

- **Microhabitats:** Retaining features like deadwood, decay features and bark crevices provides essential shelter and food for countless species

- **Visual and Cultural Setting:** Protecting the wider setting preserves the tree's contribution to landscape character and local identity.

Threats to established trees most often arise from changes to their stable environment. Therefore, our protection strategy is twofold:

- **Identifying Trees of High Importance:** We will identify and prioritise trees with significant ecological, aesthetic, or social value.

- **Identifying and Mitigating Threats:** We will aim to proactively manage human activities that pose a threat, such as the inappropriate placement of paths or street furniture, or the use of heavy machinery near root zones.

4.3. Biosecurity: Defending Against Pests and Diseases

Biosecurity is essential to safeguarding our tree population from pests, diseases, and other biological threats that could compromise tree health, resilience, and the ecological services they provide. Global threats, such as Ash Dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) and the potential arrival of Oak Processionary Moth (Thaumetopoea processionea), underline the importance of a proactive and strategic approach.

Strategic Objectives:

Prevention: Minimise the risk of new pests or diseases being introduced to the Borough.

Early Detection: Identify emerging threats quickly to allow timely intervention.

Response and Containment: Implement effective measures to manage outbreaks and prevent further spread.

Education and Awareness: Ensure staff, contractors, and the public understand biosecurity risks and best practices.

Strategic Actions:

Sourcing and Planting: Use only trees and planting materials from reputable, biosecure sources and nurseries with certification where possible.

Operational Protocols: Implement 'clean kit' procedures for staff and contractors, including tools, machinery, and vehicles, to prevent cross-contamination between sites. Include guidance on when this should be applicable.

Monitoring Programme: Conduct inspections of mature and young trees to detect early signs of pests or disease. Use recognised reporting system for suspected cases and promote use where possible (e.g. through Tree Alert) Identify an appropriate level of resource commitment, if any. Identify the potential costs of not have a formal biosecurity plan/policy.

Rapid Response Plan: Establish clear procedures for intervention if a pest or disease is detected, including containment, treatment, and public communication strategies.

Collaboration: To an appropriate level, maintain active communication with the Forestry Commission, plant health agencies, and neighbouring local authorities to remain informed of emerging threats and best practices.

Training and Awareness: Provide ongoing guidance and consider training for all relevant staff and contractors, ensuring that biosecurity measures are understood and consistently applied to an appropriate level.

Performance and Review:

- Monitor the health of the Borough's tree stock, recording incidents of pest or disease outbreaks.

- Create a biosecurity action plan and regularly review biosecurity protocols and update them based on emerging threats or new guidance (see: : [Biosecurity - Forest Research](#)

- Where concerns are identified, set measurable targets, such as reduced spread of known diseases or percentage compliance with clean kit procedures, to evaluate effectiveness.

By adopting this strategic approach, NBBC can reduce the likelihood of pest or disease outbreaks, protect valuable tree assets, and maintain the long-term ecological, social, and cultural benefits that healthy and long-lived trees provide.

4.4. Protection Through Professional Standards

One of the greatest threats to tree health is poor quality workmanship. To protect our trees, NBBC will:

- **Employ Qualified Contractors**: All significant tree work will be carried out by specialised arboricultural contractors who are appropriately qualified and insured. Evidence of quality and professionalism will be requested and given appropriate value within the contract tendering process.
- **Adhere to British Standards:** All tree work will be planned and carried out in accordance **with BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work: Recommendations**. Where professionally justified, supplementary guidance—such as the **Hamburg Tree Pruning System**, which advises smaller pruning wounds for species that are poor at compartmentalising decay—may be applied, but only when it is likely to benefit tree health or safety, aligns with recognised professional standards and is a more cautionary/judicious approached when compared to the standards.
- **Provide Advisory Guidance:** NBBC (Parks) will offer guidance to residents and other agencies whose work may affect council trees, advising on best practice and legal responsibilities. This includes reference to **BS3998 (Tree works – Recommendations), BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations)** and **NJUG V4 – guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees**, which provides recognised guidance on working near trees and utilities, including root

protection, apparatus placement, permissions, and safe working practices. Both documents complement each other, support tree protection, NJUG V4 is freely available here: National Joint Utilities Group

4.5. Protecting Trees as a Legacy

Many of our tree populations, such as avenues and designed parks, were planted at the same time, often using the same species as a defining and cohesive feature (for example the circle of limes adjacent to Nuneaton's Riversley Park bandstand or the avenue of trees in the nearby Lovers' Walk, or the pleached beech trees encapsulated Louis's play area. The use of a limited palette can be a strong design statement but can also create future vulnerabilities, in that trees can be codependent (functionally rely on each other) and/or may enter into senescence at a similar time, or be simultaneously or be wiped out by a species-specific pest or disease or due to shared environmental disturbance (mechanical ground compaction or climatic changes). As a result of these scenarios, mass losses of amenity and ecological value for future generations may be experienced.

Pleached beech trees bordering the play area at Riversley Park, Nuneaton.

To secure intergenerational equity of such features, this strategy promotes:

- **Feature duplication or substitution:** If space allows a duplicate or complimentary avenue will be established adjacent to the original or within the same site.
- **Phased proactive replacement:** For avenues and other formal plantings where significant duplication or substitution is not possible or practicable, we will develop strategies for phased removal and replacement over time, so as to maintain a continuous canopy cover of a suitable and balanced number.
- **Increasing Species Diversity:** New plantings, especially in avenues, will increasingly use a mix of species to build vegetive resilience.

4.6. Action Plan: Protecting and Enhancing Existing Trees

Action	Description	Priority
Identify and Map High-Value Trees	Utilise GIS and tools like TEMPO to catalogue trees of significant ecological, aesthetic, or cultural value, integrating this data into all site planning.	Low
Develop Biosecurity Protocols	Create and disseminate clear biosecurity guidance for staff and contractors, covering clean kit procedures, responsible sourcing, and pest/disease monitoring. Relevant contactor will be committed to biosecurity best practice, and evidence of this of this will be made a requirement of the tendering process.	Low
Uphold Professional Standards	Ensure all tree works contracts specify adherence to BS 3998 and other relevant best practices. Provide advisory guidance to third parties working near council trees.	High
Develop a Succession Planning Framework	Identify key even-aged or single-species tree populations (e.g., avenues) and develop long-term, phased replacement plans to preserve legacy and ensure continuity.	Medium
Implement Practical Protective Measures	Evaluate and implement practical health-promoting measures, such as mulching key trees and using defensive planting to protect root zones from damage.	Medium

5. Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement

Our Goal: To ensure that all new tree planting is sustainable, context-driven, and enhances the character and function of our green spaces, avoiding the creation of future conflicts.

5.1. The "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason" Philosophy

This principle is the cornerstone of our planting strategy. While tree planting is often seen as an unequivocal good, it is not always an appropriate action. Our parks and green spaces are established designed, tried and tested environments with defined functions. Mass-planting, over-planting, inappropriate and unplanned planting can compromise these functions and devalue the space.

NBBC's greenspaces run across a spectrum from occasional areas of near natural habitat (semi-natural areas in ecological terms) through to high use formally managed and laid out recreational parks. Trees are appropriately present in all these contexts but their main function changes across that spectrum.

In the more naturalistic areas the main reasons for tree planting might be to accelerate establishment of naturalistic woodland in appropriate locations or to add an understorey layer for increased wildlife value to an existing wooded area.

In the more formal settings trees are primarily present to create a framework and setting for recreational activity and as such extremely careful planting choices of structural and replacement trees should be focussed on long term enhancement of the park / greenspace landscape as a setting for informal recreational enjoyment of the site. In these settings new planting and overall tree management should primarily create and reinforce landmarks, vistas and views and help screen unsightly surroundings and help to soften and filter views of surrounding buildings.

Before proceeding with any planting, we will ask the following questions to ensure that trees align with the site's purpose and contribute positively to the environment without creating undue future conflicts and costs:

1. **What does this site currently do that it must?** (e.g., sports, play, events, quiet reflection).
2. **What could this site do?** (e.g., can the space be used for other purposes without compromising its core function or future potentials?).
3. **What should this site do - and what must be sacrificed to achieve it?**
4. **Does the site or the parts of the site being considered for planting already have significant ecological value as another type of habitat?** (therefore such tree planting should be avoided).
5. **Is the proposed planting inappropriate through being detrimental to park users perceived sense of personal safety or actual personal safety?** (e.g. through reducing visual oversight of the greenspace from roads /housing etc, creating blindspots or narrow path corridors etc).
6. **Where planting is being considered within any of the Boroughs' Destination' and Community level parks and wild spaces - how does the planting contribute positively to delivering the long term park concept plan for future park development?** (i.e. what is the long term objective and required tree placement to create the desired 'treescape' as the core component of the park landscape).

Only after answering these questions will we determine the quantity and positioning of trees, ensuring that we make well-informed decisions that reflect the needs of the space.

Our parks are assessed against **Green Flag** (The Green Flag Award - Green Flag Award) criteria, which include functional and aesthetic factors. This review process provides a logical opportunity to assess the current quality and function of our parks. Several council officers will be involved in this evaluation, and it will be the right time to consider tree placement. If a strategic conflict arises where more trees are necessary than initially considered optimal, we will weigh the sacrifices that may be required. This could include the loss of tree value, both estimated and known (see Section 6 for further details). Ultimately, this approach ensures that the park's identity, functionality, and aesthetic integrity are maintained. In addition, when any significant development is planned on one of our open spaces a concept plan is developed including all current and future uses of the space. This concentrates decision making on the placement number of trees proposed, ensuring that they add value to both the design and uses of the open space.

5.2. Understanding Site Context and Function

We will approach each green space as being inherently valuable as it is and with the understanding that it is not an "empty display" to be filled with devaluing objects. The openness in Open Space is a valuable and often scarce resource in and of itself, and the space itself must be protected. Even large parks can sometimes have limited room for additional tree planting without compromising the park's primary purpose. Parks can at the time same time have lots of space – and yet have little space for additional trees.

- **High-Function Sites:** In smaller or highly functional sites—such as sports pitches, event spaces, or areas with high foot traffic—crowded planting can lead to overcrowding, poor tree health, and a diminished value to the public. In these areas, the focus will be on protecting and replacing existing key trees, special structural planting, and succession planting for feature trees and avenues etc rather than introducing new plantings - especially if involving large numbers of trees.

- **High ecological value sites and sections of sites.** Open areas in sites often already contain other high value ecological habitats such as meadow grassland - which is a much rarer and more threatened habitat than new plantation woodland. Planting will be avoided where wildlife habitat with significant value already exists.

- **High-Canopy Sites:** In areas with existing tree cover, such as woodlands or mature parks, there may be space to extend or diversify the canopy. However, planting here will only be considered if space allows and/or the removal of undesirable species (e.g., monocultures) has already occurred.

- **Specimen Trees:** In open-grown settings, individual trees can become keystone features. Their removal can have a drastic effect on the character of an area (e.g., the Sycamore Gap tree). Planned succession for such trees is critical. Where a significantly large tree is be succeeded – a great provision of time and space is likely to be required. This is a good reason to preserve and protect the space around trees and not just the trees themselves.

5.3. A Future-Focused Planting and Replacement Policy

We will develop a formal planting and replacement policy to provide clear guidance on our approach. This policy will address key considerations for both planting and replacement to ensure that our actions are sustainable and beneficial in the long term. The policy will include:

Planting:

- **Minimum Clearances:** Recommending minimum and optimum planting distances from buildings, utilities, street furniture, and property boundaries as best practice and to prevent future conflicts.
- **Species Selection:** Choosing species that are appropriate for a site in terms of ultimate size, form, and water demand. We will prioritise native species and include recommendation on climate-resilient species non-invasive species and planting schemes that provide high biodiversity value.
- **Conflict Mitigation:** Avoiding planting in locations that will interfere with CCTV, lighting, signage, or create unacceptable shading of private gardens.
- **Conflict Mitigation** – Avoiding planting on areas or impacting areas (e.g. through shading of meadow areas) that already have significant ecological value.
- **Personal Safety** – Avoiding inappropriate planting that may be detrimental to park users perceived sense of personal safety or actual personal safety.

Replacement:

Case-by-Case Assessment: We will reject blanket replacement ratios. Replacement will be based on a site-specific assessment of whether it is necessary or appropriate. In some cases, it may be better not to replace a tree.

- **Succession Planning:** Promoting phased replacement for avenues and groups to preserve canopy cover and intergenerational equity of nature-informed experience and understanding. (see section 4.5)
- **Quality Over Quantity:** Our current priority is to establish healthy, well-placed trees that can thrive with minimal intervention, rather than planting simply to meet numerical targets. For this reason, we will not compromise the functional quality or enjoyment of our parks for environmental gains that may be negligible in a broader global context and could be achieved more effectively through other actions. For example, the practice of mass planting for carbon offsetting may be better undertaken through a scheme that focuses on land outside the borough, where finances might be more effectively spent and where returns are likely to be greatest.
- **Ecological detriment:** Planting will be avoided where wildlife habitat with significant value already exists.
- **Personal Safety:** Avoiding inappropriate planting that may be detrimental to park users perceived sense of personal safety or actual personal safety.

Did you know? Offsetting London's carbon emissions could require planting an area at least the size of England itself (source: [CASEBOOK OF DR. D. R. SLATER - No. 17 - CARBON & TREES](#)), highlighting that urban large-scale planting, while valuable, should never be considered a standalone solution for the offsetting of urban emissions.

5.4. The True Cost of Tree Planting

Even a "free" tree is never truly free. The initial low value of a sapling or tree is not sufficient justification for planting it. We must consider the whole-life cost, including:

- **Establishment and Maintenance:** Watering, weeding, and formative pruning for the first few years.
- **Future Maintenance:** The ongoing cost of inspections and pruning as the tree matures.
- **Potential Liabilities:** The cost of managing future conflicts, such as subsidence claims or infrastructure damage.
- **Eventual Removal:** The significant cost of removing a large, mature tree at the end of its life.
- **Emotional and Social Costs:** The disappointment or conflict that can arise if donated trees fail to establish, must later be removed due to site changes or safety concerns, or if some offers of free trees are accepted while others cannot be accommodated.

- **Quality and Biosecurity Risks**: Donated or low-cost trees may be of inconsistent quality or carry pests and diseases, creating long-term health, safety, and management challenges for the wider tree population.

Additionally, any offers of donated trees or participation in external planting schemes (e.g., in partnership with Warwickshire County Council) will be evaluated in line with the "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason" principle. We will assess the feasibility of long-term management to ensure that these trees can be properly cared for throughout their lifespan.

5.5.   Action Plan: Sustainable Planting and Replacement

Action	Description	Priority
Develop a Formal Planting and Replacement Policy	Create a clear policy document based on the "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason" principle, including guidance on species selection, clearances, and replacement criteria.	High
Prioritise Species and Age Diversity	Ensure new planting schemes use a diverse mix of species and ages to build a resilient urban forest and avoid the risks of monocultures and simultaneous senescence.	High
Integrate Planting with Site Design	Ensure new tree planting is considered as part of a holistic site design process, respecting existing functions and consulting with relevant stakeholders.	Medium
Review External Planting Schemes	Apply consistent and rigorous criteria to all offers of "free" or donated trees to ensure they align with strategic objectives and long-term management capacity.	Low
Develop a Framework for Succession Planting	Create a proactive framework for identifying and planning the replacement of key specimen trees and avenues before they reach the end of their safe useful life expectancy.	Low

6. Strategic Aim 4: Realising the Full Value of Our Trees
Our Goal: To understand, quantify, and leverage the full economic, environmental, and social value of our tree stock to inform better decision-making, secure funding, and protect them as essential assets.

6.1. Understanding and Quantifying Tree Value

Trees are often undervalued within decision making processes. To make balanced choices, particularly when trees conflict with development or infrastructure, it can be useful to assign them a tangible value. In the UK, several models exist for this purpose:

- **CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees):** The industry standard method for valuing the public amenity benefit of trees. It provides a monetary figure that can be used in cost-benefit analyses.
- **The Helliwell Method:** Assesses the visual amenity value of trees, often used for insurance or compensation purposes.
- **TEMPO (Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders):** A tool used to assess a tree's suitability for a TPO, based on its condition, retention span, public visibility, and other factors.

For example, if a park tree valued at £20,000 under CAVAT is implicated in minor wall cracking, this valuation provides a powerful argument for pursuing a £2,000 engineering solution rather than a £1,000 tree removal.

6.2. Green Flag for Trees: Prioritising and Protecting Our Valuable Assets

Identifying and Protecting High-Value Trees
While all trees contribute to our environment, certain trees possess exceptional value due to their age, size, species, historical or cultural significance, or their critical role in the landscape. These are our 'landmark' trees—assets that define the character of a park, serve as living memorials, or form key ecological niches. Protecting these trees is a priority, as their loss can be irreplaceable.

This strategy establishes a formal process for identifying, assessing, and protecting these high-value trees across the Borough.

1. Identification:

- High-value trees will be identified through multiple channels:
- Proactive Surveys searches: The risk-based survey programme, which is already underway, can be used to identify key indicators such as size, species, age and condition.(e.g. In a given area, a tree that is particularly large/old when compared to others is likely worthy of special consideration). If important, other smaller/younger trees can be additionally marked for additional attention, for example in respect of legacy succession, rarity or habitat support.
- Officer and Contractor Observation: Arboricultural officers and approved contractors will flag potential high-value trees during routine site visits and works.

In practice, a significant tree will also be visually significant. It may be particularly large, well proportioned, or be aged, crooked and gnarled.

- Community reporting: A process will be considered to allow the public, "Friends of" groups and residents to nominate trees of local importance.

It is expected that, because high-amenity trees are by their nature visually prominent and easily recognisable, an initial visual sweep of each park or green space will provide a strong baseline list of the Borough's most significant trees. This first stage will form the core dataset. Further refinement and expansion of this list will then come from the additional identification channels outlined above, ensuring that both the obvious landmark specimens and the less conspicuous but equally important trees—such as younger successors, rare species, or key habitat providers—are properly acknowledged and therefore better protected.

2. Assessment, Recording and Protection:

To ensure a consistent, evidence-led approach to identifying and safeguarding the Borough's most important trees, a combined process of assessment, recording, and protection will be adopted.

Assessment
Where resources allow, a simple, formal assessment methodology—based on the principles of the Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders (TEMPO)—will be used to evaluate high-value trees, particularly where foreseeable risks exist, such as proposed path realignments, CCTV installation, or adjacent development.
Although NBBC does not apply TPOs to its own land, the TEMPO framework provides a structured, objective basis for determining whether a tree clearly merits enhanced protection, considering its condition, retention span, public visibility, ecological value, and cultural significance.
Where beneficial, a complementary valuation method (e.g., the Helliwell Method) may be applied to record the tree's amenity value in terms of equivalent monetary value at the time of assessment.
While this formal and objective approach supports the strategy's commitment to clear and consistent decision-making, it should not replace the need for sufficient flexibility to recognise and record trees that are self-evidently of local importance, character, or heritage value, even where their significance is less quantifiable. Records should however distinguish between the two approaches.

Recording
All identified high-value trees will be formally recorded within NBBC's asset management system. Each tree will be:
• **Plotted and numbered** on NBBC's digital mapping platform (GIS/Ezytreev/other);
• Assigned a unique ID by site that links the trees to a **statement of significance**,

summarising the reasons for its high-value designation (e.g., landmark form, age, rarity, ecological role, cultural importance);
• Allocated a **category or level of importance**, reflecting both assessed amenity value and, where relevant, monetary valuation; Maps should mark trees in colour and have an identification key.
• Supported by **survey data, photographs, and any known historical or community information;**
• Recorded on a site-specific spreadsheet and referenced with a precise **what3words** location to aid clear communication and public transparency. Ideally in all cases the root protection areas and canopy spread will be recorded so that tree protection plans can be quickly made (if there is an event, utility installation or an access route near trees needs to planned).

This structured approach ensures that important trees are easy to locate, consistently monitored, and fully considered in all future planning and management decisions.

Protection and Ongoing Management
Once a tree is designated as a high-value asset, this status will trigger specific management and protection protocols, including:
• **Enhanced Protection:** Safeguarding the tree and its Root Protection Area (RPA) from harmful activities, such as soil compaction from events, excavation, or inappropriate placement of street furniture.
• **Prioritised Management:** Giving precedence to health-promoting interventions—such as mulching, soil de-compaction, and specialised pruning—to prolong the tree's safe and useful life.
• **Informing Site Planning:** Ensuring that the tree's status is a material consideration in all site-based decisions, including pathway design, event planning, and development proposals.
• **Customer Service Alerts:** Ensuring that any service request involving a high-value tree (e.g., pruning due to overhang into private gardens) is flagged early, so customers understand that the tree is of significant public interest and that its protection is a priority.

Through this integrated system, the Borough's most important trees—including those on less prominent or overlooked sites—will be consistently recognised, carefully managed, and given the level of protection they deserve.

6.3. Why are 'Right tree, Right location, Right Reason' (section 5.1) and Identifying and Protecting High-Value Trees (section 6.2) closely linked?

Linking Section 6.2 with Section 5.1 creates a cyclical and mutually reinforcing relationship that is fundamental to a successful long-term tree strategy. The benefits are:

Informing Strategic Planting: The inventory of high-value trees created under Section 6.2 directly informs the "Right Place, Right Reason" principle of Section 5.1. By knowing where existing landmark trees are, we can plan new planting to complement rather than compete with them. This prevents planting a new tree that might block the view of a foundational, legacy or nominated succession tree - or eventually crowd its canopy. It also helps identify ideal locations for planting the next generation of landmark trees, ensuring a continuous legacy.

Creating Future Assets: The "Right Tree, Right Place" philosophy (5.1) is the primary tool for creating the high-value assets that Section 6.2 aims to protect in the future. By investing in the careful selection and placement of quality saplings today, we are proactively cultivating principle trees assets for future generations. This shifts the strategy from being purely protective of existing assets to also being generative of future ones.

Enhancing Site-Level Decision-Making: When assessing a park for new planting opportunities, understanding the quality and distribution of its existing high-value trees provides a crucial baseline. A park with several designated high-value trees has a different character and set of management needs than a park with none. This knowledge allows for more nuanced decisions: one site might require a focus on preserving open vistas around its existing assets, while another might benefit from a new avenue to create future character, or the scattering of interesting pioneer trees to temporarily fill a in readiness for the eventual spread of large dominating trees for the next generations of users.

Justifying Resource Allocation: The link provides a clear rationale for investment. Spending more on the purchase and establishment of a high-quality specimen tree (as per 5.1) is justified when it is understood as a direct investment in a future high-value community asset (as defined in 6.2). Conversely, the cost of protecting an existing high-value tree can be weighed against the long-term cost of trying to replace its amenity value, reinforcing the principle that protecting mature trees is often the most cost-effective option for our parks. [carbon link – large open grown trees have more benefits – such tree require space – one good tree can provide better service than ten poor ones).

6.4. Economic Benefits of Trees: Saving and Generating Value

In addition to their environmental and social benefits, trees have significant economic value that can benefit NBBC and the local community.

Saving Money:

- **Energy Savings:** Trees provide shade, reducing the need for air conditioning in summer and lowering energy costs for nearby buildings.
- **Stormwater Management:** Trees help absorb rainwater, reducing the pressure on drainage systems and lowering the costs of flood repairs and infrastructure maintenance.
- **Public Health:** By improving air quality and encouraging outdoor activity, trees help reduce healthcare costs related to respiratory diseases and lifestyle-related illnesses.

Generating Revenue:

- **Increased Property Values:** Well-maintained green spaces can enhance the attractiveness of an area, boosting property values and, consequently, local council tax revenue.

- **Tourism and Events:** High-quality parks and tree-lined spaces attract visitors and provide opportunities for hosting income-generating events, festivals, and markets.

- **Carbon Trading:** By planting trees that sequester carbon, NBBC could potentially generate revenue through the sale of carbon credits or participation in carbon offset schemes.

- **Attracting Grants and Funding:** A well-managed tree stock positions NBBC to secure external funding for environmental projects, from government grants to corporate sponsorships.

Recognising the financial value of trees—both in terms of savings and revenue generation—reinforces the importance of strategic tree management and supports a more sustainable future for local communities.

6.5. Securing External Funding and Partnerships

Exploring external funding will be crucial for supporting our tree management ambitions. A clear strategy and a robust valuation framework can underpin applications for:

- Government grants (e.g., from the Forestry Commission or Defra).
- Corporate sponsorships and partnerships with local businesses.
- Lottery funding.
- Community fundraising and crowdfunding initiatives.

6.6.   Action Plan: Realising Tree Value

Action	Description	Priority
Adopt a Tree Valuation Protocol	Develop a consistent internal protocol for applying valuation methods like CAVAT in relevant contexts (e.g., development control, asset management, insurance claims).	Low
Establish a Funding Strategy	Actively identify and pursue grants, sponsorships, and partnership opportunities to support tree planting and maintenance.	Low
Promote the Economic Benefits of Trees	Communicate the financial, environmental, and health benefits of trees to residents, businesses, and developers to encourage shared stewardship.	Low

7. Strategic Aim 5: Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement

Our Goal: To build a positive and sustainable relationship between the community and the Borough's trees, based on shared understanding, education, and opportunities for engagement.

7.1. The Importance of Public Relationships

The public are the primary beneficiaries of PAGS and tree stock within it, and their support is vital for its long-term protection. A positive relationship is built on transparency, consistency, and a shared appreciation for the value of trees. However, engagement can be resource-intensive, and success often hinges on managing expectations and focusing efforts where they will be most effective.

7.2. A Sustainable Approach to Education and Awareness

Given limited resources for direct outreach, a more sustainable approach is to facilitate general awareness and provide easy access to high-quality information. This will involve:

- **Digital Resources:** Developing a dedicated section on the NBBC website with information on tree benefits, policies, best practice guidance, and answers to frequently asked questions.
- **On-Site Interpretation**: Using tools like notice boards, tree labelling (for significant specimens), and annotated park guides to provide information directly within our green spaces.
- **Signposting:** Directing residents to the wealth of information already available from expert organisations like the Arboricultural Association, the Woodland Trust, and the Forestry Commission.

7.3. Facilitating Community Engagement

While NBBC may not have the capacity to lead numerous community projects, it can act as a facilitator and supporter. This could include:

• **Supporting Volunteer Groups:** Consider working with established "Friends of" groups and other local organisations who wish to undertake tree-related activities, such as promoting opportunities for residents to get involved in national monitoring schemes, for example reporting tree pests and diseases via the Forestry Commission's TreeAlert service.

• **Encouraging Stewardship:** Consider creating opportunities for residents to take an active role in the care and appreciation of trees, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to the Borough's green spaces.

• **Promoting Awareness through Participation:** Consider encouraging community-led initiatives such as citizen science projects, educational walks, and tree-planting events to strengthen understanding of the ecological, social, and cultural value of trees.

7.4. Action Plan: Fostering Community Stewardship

Action	Description	Priority
Develop Online Educational Resources	Create a comprehensive tree information hub on the NBBC website, covering policy, benefits, FAQs, and links to expert organisations.	Medium

Action	Description	Priority
Explore On-Site Interpretation	Pilot the use of on-site interpretation, such as QR-coded tree tags or information boards, in one or two key parks to gauge public interest and effectiveness.	Low
Create a Framework for Community Support	Develop a clear framework for how NBBC can support community groups wishing to undertake tree planting or care, outlining what support is available and what is expected.	Low

8. Implementation, Monitoring, and Review

8.1. Limitations (barriers to success)

The successful implementation of this strategy is subject to several inherent limitations and potential barriers. A primary challenge is the reliance on a single Tree Officer, which creates a single point of failure and limits the capacity for both proactive work and timely response to reactive demands. This constraint is exacerbated by a limited budget, which can be disproportionately consumed by low-risk requests that divert resources from strategic priorities.

The current operational environment often necessitates reactive working, which, by its nature, becomes ineffective when demands outpace the capacity of available personnel, leading to exposure to unaddressed risks. Furthermore, the Tree Officer role frequently involves navigating complex enquiries that extend beyond risk related arboricultural expertise, requiring collaboration with other departments (e.g., Planning, Legal, Engineering) or addressing issues on land with unclear ownership, which can further dilute focus and time.

These pressures on resources, both personnel and financial, have been recognised and in the 2025/26 financial year more resources were made available. These resources have been used in the first instance; to commence a programme of zoning-based surveys on tree stock in areas most used the public.

In general, to mitigate these challenges and ensure the strategy's objectives are met, it is crucial to consider additional staffing, clear delegation of duties (potentially to qualified contractors), and robust processes for managing and prioritising diverse demands. Addressing these limitations is vital for transitioning from a reactive to a truly proactive and sustainable tree management approach this strategy outlines.

8.2. Governance and Responsibility

The overall responsibility for the delivery of this strategy lies within the Parks and Green Spaces team. Governance of trees will be balanced with the overall workload of the team and financial resources available.

8.3. Reviewing the Strategy

This is a ten-year strategy (2026–2036). Progress against the action plan will be monitored annually by the Parks and Greenspaces management team. A full review of the strategy will be undertaken in 2031 to inform the development of its successor, taking into account the evolving local government structure and any new challenges or opportunities.

9. Summary and Action Plan

This strategy establishes a new, proactive direction for the management of trees in Nuneaton and Bedworth's parks and greenspaces. It moves away from a reactive approach towards a modern, evidence-led framework that balances risk, protects valuable assets, and plans sustainably for the future.

Our vision is for a healthy, resilient, and well-managed tree population that enhances our green spaces and supports community wellbeing. This will be achieved through five strategic aims:

1. **A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management**
2. **Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock**
3. **A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement**
4. **Realising the Full Value of Our Trees**
5. **Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement**

By implementing the actions outlined below, we will ensure that the Borough's trees continue to provide environmental, social, and economic benefits for generations to come.

Prioritised Action Plan (2026–2036)

Action	Description	Strategic Aim	Priority
Initiate Phased Proactive Tree Surveys	Commission a risk-based survey of council-owned trees, starting with high-priority sites, using VTA methodology to assess condition and recommend works.	Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management	High
Develop and Apply Risk Zoning	Formally categorise parks and green spaces into risk zones (High - then Medium to Low as resources allow) based on public usage to prioritise inspection frequencies and resource allocation	Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management	High
Uphold Professional Standards	Ensure all tree works contracts specify adherence to BS 3998 and other relevant best practices. Provide advisory guidance to third parties working near council trees.	Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock	High
Develop a Formal Planting and Replacement Policy	Create a clear policy document based on the "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason" principle, including guidance on species selection, clearances, and replacement criteria.	Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement	High
Prioritise Species and Age Diversity	Ensure new planting schemes use a diverse mix of species and ages to build a resilient urban forest and avoid the risks of monocultures and simultaneous senescence.	Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement	High
Establish a Formal Tree Risk Policy	Formally adopt a tree risk management policy based on NTSG and HSE's Tolerability of Risk (TOR) framework and the principles outlined in this strategy.	Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management	Medium
Optimise Asset Management Software	Populate and utilise the Ezytreev software to log all survey data, ensuring a complete and defensible audit trail.	Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management	Medium

Action	Description	Strategic Aim	Priority
Develop a Succession Planning Framework	Identify key even-aged or single-species tree populations (e.g., avenues) and develop long-term, phased replacement plans to preserve legacy and ensure continuity.	Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock	Medium
Implement Practical Protective Measures	Evaluate and implement practical health-promoting measures, such as mulching key trees and using defensive planting to protect root zones from damage.	Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock	Medium
Integrate Planting with Site Design	Ensure new tree planting is considered as part of a holistic site design process, respecting existing functions and consulting with relevant stakeholders.	Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement	Medium
Develop Online Educational Resources	Create a comprehensive tree information hub on the NBBC website, covering policy, benefits, FAQs, and links to expert organisations.	Strategic Aim 5: Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement	Medium
Maintain Reactive Response Protocol	Review and formalise the system for the public and staff to report urgent tree issues, ensuring clear lines of communication and responsibility for immediate assessment.	Strategic Aim 1: A Proactive and Sustainable Approach to Tree Risk Management	Low
Identify and Map High-Value Trees	Utilise GIS and tools like TEMPO to catalogue trees of significant ecological, aesthetic, or cultural value, integrating this data into all site planning.	Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock	Low

Action	Description	Strategic Aim	Priority
Develop Biosecurity Protocols	Create and disseminate clear biosecurity guidance for staff and contractors, covering clean kit procedures, responsible sourcing, and pest/disease monitoring. Relevant contactor will be committed to biosecurity best practice, and evidence of this of this will be made a requirement of the tendering process.	Strategic Aim 2: Protecting and Enhancing Our Existing Tree Stock	Low
Review External Planting Schemes	Apply consistent and rigorous criteria to all offers of "free" or donated trees to ensure they align with strategic objectives and long-term management capacity.	Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement	Low
Develop a Framework for Succession Planting	Create a proactive framework for identifying and planning the replacement of key specimen trees and avenues before they reach the end of their safe useful life expectancy.	Strategic Aim 3: A Considered Approach to Tree Planting and Replacement	Low
Adopt a Tree Valuation Protocol	Develop a consistent internal protocol for applying valuation methods like CAVAT in relevant contexts (e.g., development control, asset management, insurance claims).	Strategic Aim 4: Realising the Full Value of Our Trees	Low
Establish a Funding Strategy	Actively identify and pursue grants, sponsorships, and partnership opportunities to support tree planting and maintenance.	Strategic Aim 4: Realising the Full Value of Our Trees	Low

Action	Description	Strategic Aim	Priority
Promote the Economic Benefits of Trees	Communicate the financial, environmental, and health benefits of trees to residents, businesses, and developers to encourage shared stewardship.	Strategic Aim 4: Realising the Full Value of Our Trees	Low
Explore On-Site Interpretation	Pilot the use of on-site interpretation, such as QR-coded tree tags or information boards, in one or two key parks to gauge public interest and effectiveness.	Strategic Aim 5: Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement	Low
Create a Framework for Community Support	Develop a clear framework for how NBBC can support community groups wishing to undertake tree planting or care, outlining what support is available and what is expected.	Strategic Aim 5: Fostering Community Stewardship and Engagement	Low

Appendices
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

- ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable): A principle of risk management requiring that risks are reduced to a level where the cost and effort of further reduction is grossly disproportionate to the benefit gained.
- Arboriculture: The cultivation, management, and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants.
- Biosecurity: A set of measures designed to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms, such as pests and diseases.
- CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees): A method used to place a monetary value on the public amenity benefit provided by a tree.
- Canopy Cover: The layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above.
- Root Protection Area (RPA): A calculated area surrounding a tree that contains sufficient rooting volume to ensure its survival, which should be protected from disturbance.
- Subsidence: The downward movement of the ground, which can be caused by soil shrinkage due to moisture extraction by tree roots, particularly in clay soils.
- TEMPO (Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders): A systematic tool for assessing the suitability of a tree for a Tree Preservation Order.
- Tolerability of Risk (TOR): A framework developed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to categorise risks as unacceptable, tolerable, or broadly acceptable, guiding the level of management required.
- Visual Tree Assessment (VTA): A systematic, ground-level method of examining the health and structural condition of a tree.

Appendix B: Relevant Legislation and Guidance

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Places a duty on employers (including councils) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their operations do not expose non-employees to risks to their health and safety.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Requires employers to undertake a "suitable and sufficient" assessment of risks.
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984: Places a duty of care on occupiers of land towards lawful visitors and, to a lesser extent, trespassers.

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: Makes it an offence to intentionally take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built. This has significant implications for the timing of tree works.
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Provides the legal basis for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and the designation of Conservation Areas.
- BS 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations: The British Standard providing guidance on best practice for managing and working on trees.
- BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations: The British Standard guiding how to successfully integrate trees into new developments.
- BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations: The British Standard providing guidance on tree planting, from sourcing to establishment.

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