

## TREE MAINTENANCE POLICY

### Responsible Officer

Director of Customer Services

### Aim of the Policy

This policy aims to set out how we manage and maintain our trees in accordance with good practice and to reduce health and safety risks to us and our community.

### Scope of the Policy

The focus of this policy is to:

- ensure the effective management of all trees within our area.
- mitigate any risks arising from our portfolio of trees to the community/organisation.
- reduce the cost of tree maintenance to the organisation.
- achieve reduction of nuisance within the community in relation to trees.
- ensure fair and transparent maintenance of the trees.
- ensure cost are recovered for the maintenance of the trees.
- ensure a balanced environment with the right tree species nurtured in the most appropriate locations.

### The Policy

#### Tree Maintenance

All trees on our estates (including trees on amenity greens and in communal gardens) will be surveyed on a three-year cycle (to assess health and safety and disease risks).

All trees on estates including trees on amenity greens and in communal gardens will be pruned, cut back, pollarded or felled as required as part of an annual programme.

The annual tree programme will ensure observations or findings from inspections/surveys are carried out with recommendations for any necessary works.

We will work closely with the relevant local authority to ensure the trees on the public highways are maintained on a cyclical basis.

We will prune, fell or remove our trees that are:

- dead, dying, falling or dangerous.
- causing structural damage.
- causing a trip hazard.
- part of an improvement work that will benefit the environment.

- preventing contractors from carrying out major building works and/or repairs.

We will remove ivy or creeper from external walls of tenants' properties, blocks and community buildings if these plants are causing structural damage to the buildings and/or drainage.

We will not prune or fell trees where:

- there is a live nest present.
- there is an issue with light.
- the tree is blocking a satellite signal.
- there is excessive fall.

### Tree Planting

We will:

- encourage tree planting of the right tree species in the most appropriate locations.
- plant trees on a cyclical programme.
- ensure that trees on estates, amenity greens and in communal garden areas that yield edible fruit are clearly labelled as such for the benefit of the local community.
- plant two trees within our area for every single tree that we fell on amenity greens or in communal garden areas wherever practically possible.
- encourage the planting of trees on all new developments and environmental improvement works by all stakeholders/ partners.

### Waste Disposal

We actively encourage recycling; this includes the waste from trees. We will encourage our contractors to recycle the chippings and logs following the completion of tree works.

### Emergency Tree Works

We operate an emergency service for our trees, or for private trees that have fallen onto our land. This service is for dangerous trees, such as trees with large hanging branches or where a tree is in danger of falling or has fallen.

### Service Charges

If we are required to carry out tree works in your property, there will be a potential recharge for the works in line with our Rent Setting and Service Charge Policy.

### Contractors

All appointed tree contractors will be arboricultural approved contractors, who will ensure health and safety practices are followed before, during and after works.

## **Tenants Responsibility**

Tenants are responsible for the maintenance of the trees/hedges in their own gardens and should ensure their trees/hedges do not cause a nuisance by allowing branches to overhang into neighbouring gardens or allowing tree roots to trespass to neighbouring property.

Tenants must apply for permission in writing to us to plant, fell or remove any trees in their garden or in communal garden areas. The following details must be included:

- Number of trees.
- Species of tree.
- Location of tree.
- Expected height of tree once fully grown (for planting requests).
- Reason for removal (for removal requests).

Trees are not allowed to be planted adjacent to the building or within two metres of the fence line. Creeper or ivy must not be planted near buildings as they are likely to cause damage to the building.

## **Lessees Responsibility**

Lessees are responsible for the maintenance of the trees/hedges in their own gardens. Lessees should ensure their trees do not cause a nuisance by allowing branches to overhang into neighbouring gardens or allow tree roots to trespass in neighbouring property.

If we are required to carry out tree works in lessees' properties, there will be a potential recharge made for the works.

Lessees must advise us in writing if they wish to plant, fell or remove any trees in their garden with the following details:

- Number of trees.
- Tree species.
- Location of tree.
- Expected height of the tree once fully grown (for planting notifications).
- Reason for removal (for removal notification).

Trees should not be planted adjacent to the building or within two metres of the fence line. Creeper or ivy must not be planted near buildings as they are likely to cause damage to the building.

## **Monitoring**

Trees on estates, amenity greens and in communal garden areas will be surveyed every three years to monitor species, height, girth, condition, location, and possible damage to the surrounding area.

We will inspect sites on a regular basis.

## Review

We will review this policy every three years, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, good practice or other learning.

## Legislation

Including:

- The Forestry Act 1967 as amended
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005
- Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Coronavirus Act 2020

## Associated documents, policies and procedures

- The Forestry Commission National Tree Safety Group Best Practice Publication
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - High Hedges: Complaining to the Council
- Today's Homeowner - Take Care When Planting Ivy on Your House
- Home Ownership Management Policy
- Rent Setting and Service Charge Policy

## Definitions

Term	Description
We/us/our	Refers to Phoenix Community Housing.
You/your	Refers to Phoenix tenants and lessees.

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