

Tree Management Policy - update

Environment Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 July 2023



Tree Management Policy

The council's approach to managing trees in its ownership, or under its management, and trees in private ownership which pose a safety risk to the public.

Informed by statute law, common law and arboricultural best practice.

Approved by Cabinet July 16th 2014 following a public consultation exercise



Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

July 2020

Managing the council's trees

- Inspection of trees
- Publicising tree felling / pruning
- Dealing with tree care
- Damage and tree roots

Dealing with tree care

- Obstructing / overhanging tree branches
- Shading and loss of light
- Loss of view
- Trees affecting reception (television / satellite / solar panels)
- Overhead cables / telephone wires
- General / minor nuisances
- Trees considered too big / too tall
- Personal medical complaints

Damage and tree roots

- Root invasion in gardens
- Damage to walls and fences
- Damage to paths
- Damage to drains or water pipes
- Trip hazards
- Installation of drop kerbs
- Subsidence
- Heave

Other peoples trees

- Trees on private land causing a danger / obstruction to the public highway

Highways Act 1980

- Trees on private land causing a danger (other than to a public highway)

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- High Hedges

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

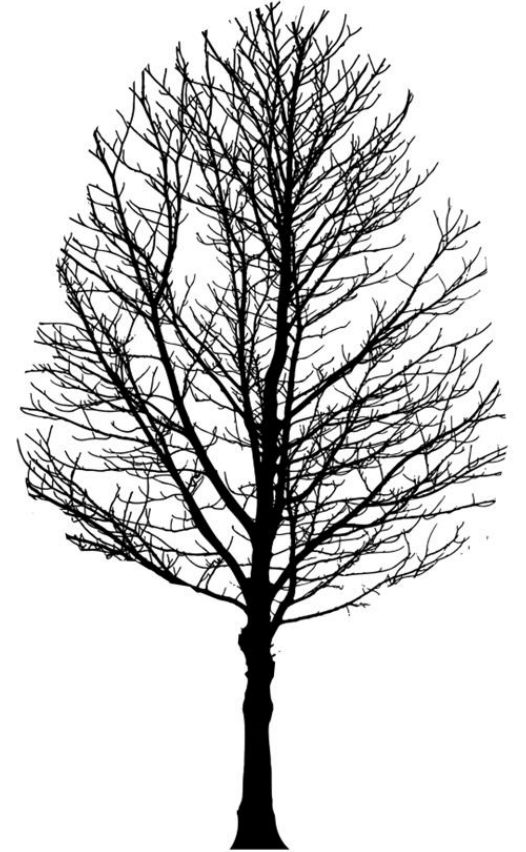
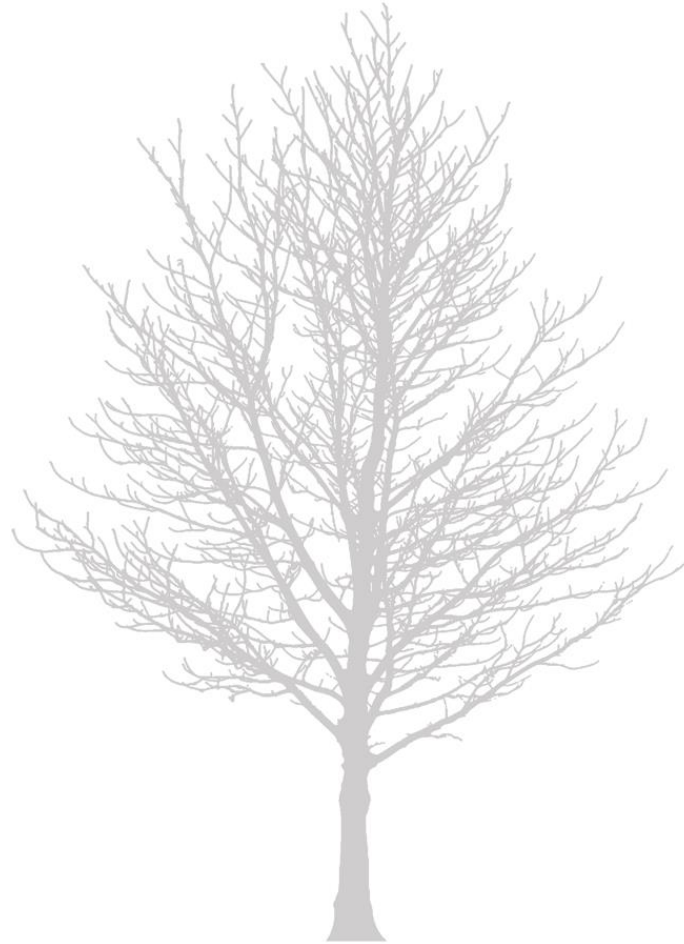
Protected trees and planning

- Tree Preservation Orders
- Trees in Conservation Areas
- Felling Licences
- Trees and development

- Other factors constraining work to trees
 - Birds
 - Bats
 - Planning permission
 - Restrictive covenants
- Replacement tree planting
- Vandalism and damage to Council owned / managed trees
- Biosecurity / Pest & Epidemic Management

Tree Pruning Techniques

- Crown lifting
- Crown thinning
- Crown reduction
- Crown cleaning
- Pollarding
- Formative pruning
- Stump grinding
- Topping





The Policy has proved to be a useful document since its introduction, providing information to the public on tree-related matters and helping to provide a consistent approach to dealing with customer enquiries.

Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

July 2020

Review

The Policy was scheduled for review in July 2023 and this review is currently underway. The purpose of the review is to update the document to reflect:

- changes in national or local policies
- proposed changes to internal procedures within the council relating to tree inspections
- its relationship with other publications being produced by the council.

It will also seek to clarify existing policies where necessary and to provide additional information on issues such as ash dieback.

Review period July-September 2023

Changes in national / local policy

- England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024
- Keepers of Time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England.
- County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Emergency Response Plan
- Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Tree inspections

- Past approach has been reactive
- New approach will be proactive
- An additional STO was appointed in 2022

- The new Tree Inspection Procedure will be reported to Cabinet for approval
- This needs to be embedded in the Tree Management Policy

Tree maintenance and damage

- Existing policy is based on well founded principles
- Very similar to those adopted by other local authorities
- Has proved itself in use

- Some areas would benefit from greater clarity in wording or additional information
- New topic areas need to be picked up – such as effects of certain tree species on horses
- More information on how claims are dealt with by our insurers

Protected trees and development

- New SPD on Trees Woodlands and Hedges covers these issues in much greater detail
- Unnecessary to duplicate in the Policy

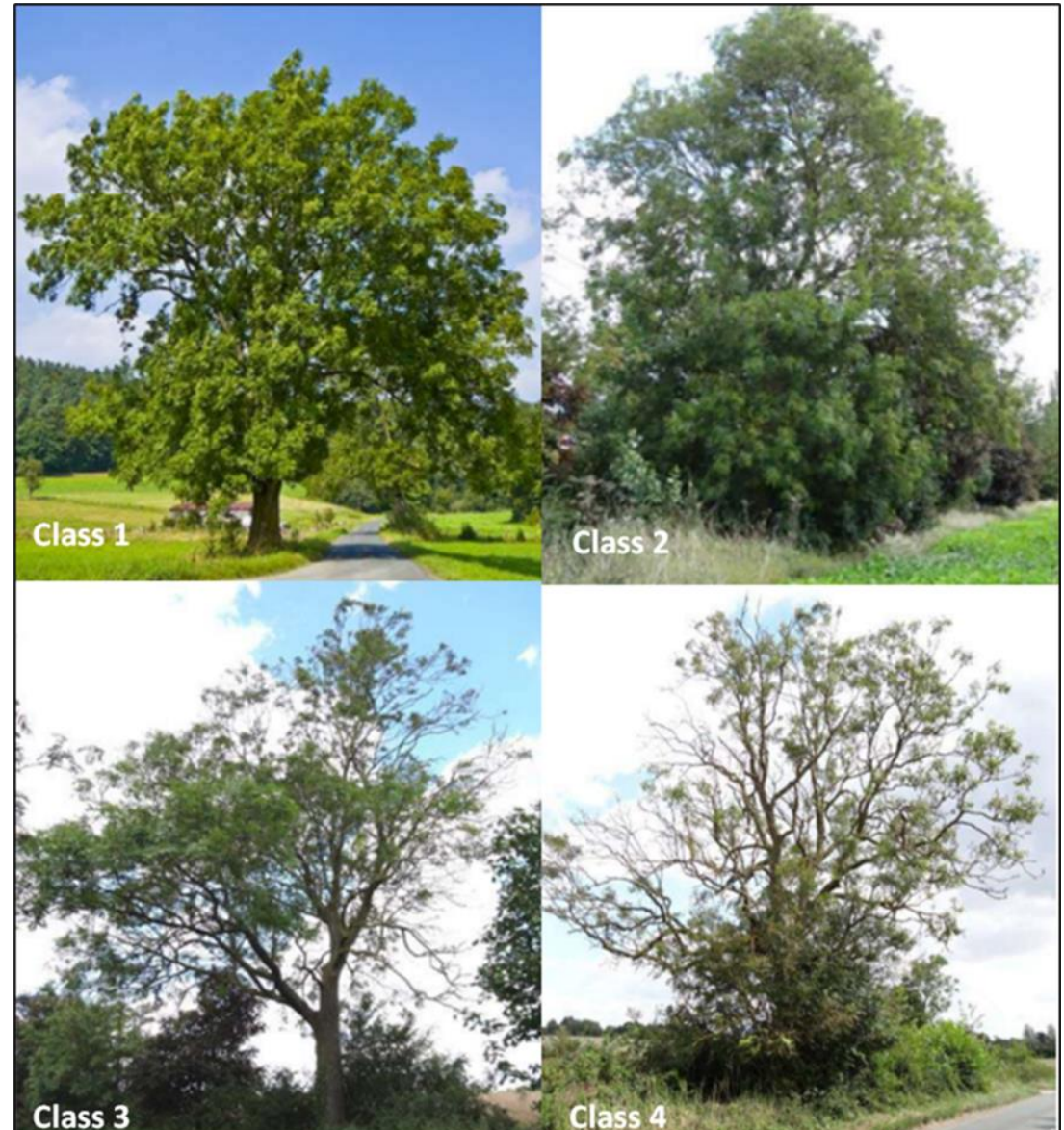
- Policy 40 of the County Durham Plan refers to the Tree Management Policy – revisions in the Policy need to be reflected in the SPD



Trees, Woodlands and Hedges Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - January 2023 Consultation Draft

Ash dieback disease

- Ash dieback (ADB) is a disease caused by a fungal pathogen which is likely to result in mortality rates on between 50% and 75% of the county's ash population.
- SPD gives advice on protected ash trees and trees on development sites.
- Policy position needed on how we deal with ash trees in our care



Woodland Management

The Policy doesn't currently reference to woodland management and this is an area that might usefully be included.



Programme

Review period July-September 2023

Timing of report to Cabinet will depend on progress / timing of Tree Inspection Procedure and SPD.

