

Simon Smith, Tree & Green Waste Recycling Manager

Response to Key Lines of Enquiry

Responsibility for trees

- *Where does responsibility lie for trees on Council owned land?*

All trees on Parks, Housing, Education ,Birmingham Property Services and Transportation (None PFI) are managed by the Parks & Nature Conservation Tree Section.

Highway Trees are managed by Amey under a PFI contract.

- *Who is responsible for managing and maintaining these trees and how is the basis for carrying out this responsibility agreed covering trees in different parts of the Council eg Housing?*

See above.

- *Who is legally responsible for highway trees?*

N/A

- *Where does responsibility for the Tree Service sit and what does the Tree Service do?*

Trees that are not part of the Highway PFI contract are the responsibility of the Parks Tree Manager.

- *Who carries out the actual work of pruning and felling?*

None PFI work is carried out by Idverde.

PFI work is carried out by Amey.

- *Who supervises tree planting works carried out for example on the highways or as part of development schemes?*

Highway PFI – Amey

Development schemes – Planning Tree Officers

Other – Parks Tree Section

- *What is the budget and costs involved in pruning/felling/planting/removal of trees?*

Parks Tree Section - £950k (Parks, Housing, Education ,Birmingham Property Services and Transportation (None PFI)

Planting of trees

- *What is the current City Council policy for tree planting? What is the current target? What is the current level of canopy cover for Birmingham and should there be a target increase for canopy cover within Birmingham?*

There is no city wide policy for tree planting targets. Current canopy cover is 18%. We should have a target of at least 25%.

- *What process do we use for identifying and installing tree planting areas within development zones such as highways infrastructure, planning/regeneration schemes and parks or public open spaces?*

Parks Tree Section – Tree Officers liaise with Birmingham Trees for Life to identify sites and species selection. Tree Officers also plant a small number of trees annually.

- *Do we have a recommended tree species list that can be used to identify the right species to be planted in particular places/where specific conditions exist.*

No, I don't think we should have a list as each situation should be considered on its merits.

- *Do we have a set of standards or designs for potential tree planting locations covering issues such as, minimum rooting volumes, incorporation of rainwater harvesting within hard landscape situations, cable and services routing and canopy space needed for different species?*

No

Monitoring tree stock

- *What is the current method of valuation of tree stock and the relationship to retention/replacement?*

We do not have one. However, the Parks Tree Section use CAVAT for amenity value and Itree for Eco-benefit evaluation.

- *Do we monitor changes in tree stock quantities and if so how?*

The Parks Tree Section (PTS) uses the POPI database.

- *How is the current tree stock composition (age, condition and species) assessed? Do we have targets for what an ideal composition would be?*

An assessment is carried out using the dataset. No agreed city targets but the PTS is working towards the Frank Santamour targets of (1) plant no more than 10% of any species, (2) no more than 20 % of any genus, and (3) no more than 30 % of any family.

- *Is information about the distribution and management of the tree stock widely available and is it available to the public?*

The PTS data is available on the Open Universities Treezilla webpage.

- *Do we have a tree strategy which managers can refer to and that can be updated as required to reflect changes to the city's tree stock and new thinking?*

There is a policy that was written in 2009 but it is now out of date.

Management and maintenance of trees

- *Can you explain how the Annual Highway Tree Pruning Programme is drawn up, and how it is agreed?*

N/A

- *What data does the council keep on Council owned trees, how is this data gathered and how is it maintained? Is this data used to determine priorities? Can it be used to deal with enquiries from Councillors and the public?*

All trees managed by the PTS are recorded on the POPI database. The trees are inspected by a Tree Officer every five years. An basic annual inspection is carried out by the Duty Holder. This is as per the agreed Management system setup by Dr David Lonsdale following the deaths caused by a falling city tree in Kings Heath (1998). All enquiries are recorded on POPI and remedial work orders are linked to the enquiries.

- *How is the planned programme of work communicated to local councillors and to the public?*

PTS - Notices for major tree works are sent to Cllr's and discussed with stake holders such as Parks Friends of Groups.

- *Do the public or local councillors have an opportunity to be involved prior to the work being carried out?*

PTS -If they have expressed an interest or any work is potentially contentious.

- *Who decides which roads should be included and what criteria are used to select the roads to be included?*

N/A

- *Who is responsible for undertaking this work?*

Not sure what this question is referring to?

- *Can you explain the criteria used for carrying out other urgent remedial tree works and pruning as necessary throughout the year?*

Trees that are identified as being dead, diseased or dying have an order raised to rectify the problem. Trees that are identified as being the cause of indirect structural damage to property (on the balance of probabilities) have to be removed. Emergency works are carried out by the Service Provider who offer a 2hr call out service.

- *Who deals with public enquiries about trees and what is the process for dealing with these enquiries?*

PTS – Call are recorded by the call centre or online and are then delegated to the area Tree Officer through POPI.

- *What happens where there are requests for tree removal or tree pruning from members of the public. How are these requests assessed ?*

The area Tree Officers assess if the tree requires pruning or felling.

- *What happens when calls are received out of office hours or when there is an emergency to do with a dangerous tree?*

PTS – Yes, all emergency calls are responded to within two hours. There is always a Tree Officer on standby to deal with emergency issues.

- *What is the process for handling enquiries from councillors?*

PTS – The enquiry is entered on POPI and the area Tree Officer responds.

Controlling activities of contractors working for developers, utilities or the highway authority near to trees

- *What measures does the City Council take to prevent damage to trees caused by works near to trees? How are these measures monitored and enforced?*

PTS – In Parks the Park Managers liaise with the Tree Officers when trees may be affected.