

Melton Park Management Company

Priority of Works – Appraisal Regime – January 2023

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Melton Park Management Company (MPMC) is responsible for maintaining a large number of trees. Given the differing types of areas covered, taken together with the intended outcomes, there are a wide variety of maintenance regimes and management options that are available. These range from pruning an individual tree to undertaking works to a whole woodland.
- 1.2 Whatever maintenance regimes or management options are undertaken by MPMC, the four primary aims of all tree work must be to: -
1. Reduce, and maintain at as lower level as reasonably possible, the risk from the existing tree stock to persons and property,
 2. Preserve the existing tree stock,
 3. Enhance the existing tree stock,
 4. Comply with legal obligations.
- 1.3 The four primary aims must inevitably be achieved using different intervention methods as the setting, species mix and age of trees within MPMC administered land is hugely varied. The effect of this is that in some cases an implemented management regime will be observed by, or impact on, a large group of people, whilst in others the action may be perceived by much smaller number of residents or visitors to Melton Park.
- 1.4 In all cases, intervention will only be undertaken when there is a genuine and justifiable benefit to be gained from an arboricultural perspective that complies with one or more of the four primary aims.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to offer guidelines for prioritising and implementing tree work. These guidelines are designed to be transparent, simple to apply and understand, and provide clear and consistent justification for actions. This document also gives guidance as to when action is not to be taken.
- 2.2 Such guidance is essential because of the competing demands for tree maintenance, the importance of long-term decision making in the life of trees (and by extension the impact of this on the wider community), and the finite financial resource available to facilitate the works.



3 MATTERS TO CONSIDER

- 3.1 Trees are living organisms which by definition will naturally grow larger every year if they are to survive. The rate of expansion to the branches, stem and roots may vary but only senescent and dead trees do not increase in size annually. Therefore, trees progress through a lifecycle and react to outside agencies including intentional human intervention (in the form of surgery or vandalism); unintentional human intervention – damaging trees through lack of knowledge (e.g. contamination or compaction of soil in the rooting zone); climatic conditions (e.g. storm or drought); and biotic factors (pests and diseases).
- 3.2 The lifecycles of trees in some ways mirror the human experience and it is important to understand this when making maintenance and management decisions:
1. Young trees, particularly in the urban environment need protection and nurturing if they are going to thrive.
 2. Semi mature trees grow quickly but often need careful management (both to them and to the environment around them) to allow them to achieve their full potential.
 3. Mature trees are established and grow more slowly. They may sometimes tolerate a certain amount of change, but this must be carefully considered and justified before it is permitted to occur.
 4. Over mature and veteran trees normally display very little growth, though they may still have a considerable life expectancy. They are often robust in their own setting, but frail if the setting is changed or if they become isolated from the community they have inhabited for a long time.
- 3.3 As detailed above, and in simple terms, “trees grow”. In a developed setting where trees compete for space with highways and residential areas there is always going to be conflict. *Table 1* below identifies how these conflicts should be prioritised.

Table 1

Priority	Issue	Report Ref
1	Health and safety and legal obligations	Item 4 below
2	Insurance indemnification	Item 5 below
3	Necessary maintenance (short term urgency to protect retention of existing tree stock)	Item 6 below
4	Non-essential maintenance, planting and ecological provision (long term and sustainable environmental enhancement)	Item 7 below
5	Aesthetics	Item 8 below
0	Other requests	Item 9 below



4 HEALTH AND SAFETY AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS (PRIORITY 1)

- 4.1 In accordance with the primary aims of **1. Reducing and maintaining low levels of risk**, **2. Preserving the existing tree stock**, and **4. Complying with legal obligations** trees will be inspected through either the systematic arboricultural surveys, or as the result of ad-hoc enquires/work requests. In either case, if works are identified as necessary from a health and safety perspective, they will be allocated a priority and work completion period.
- 4.2 Health and safety concerns may arise from naturally occurring defects and diseases, issues arising out of normal tree growth (e.g. low branches over a footpath), as the result of a localised incident (e.g. fire or car accident), or as a consequence of severe weather.
- 4.2 The procedures detailed within the *“Melton Park Management Company - Tree Policy for Management Company Managed Trees”* address MPMC’s obligations under the following items of legislation:
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984
 - Health & Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 (for bystanders sec 3(1))

5 INSURANCE INDEMNIFICATION (PRIORITY 2)

- 5.1 In accordance with the primary aim **4. Complying with legal obligations**, and like any landowner, MPMC is obliged to manage its assets in a manner that reduces and ideally prevents any damage to neighbouring persons or property. Any tree related issues that affect personal safety will be addressed as first priority (in accordance with Table 1 above). Other matters where an insurance obligation has been identified by MPMC or shown to be a genuine issue by a third party will be addressed as second highest priority in terms of investigation (and action – if required).

6 NECESSARY MAINTENANCE (PRIORITY 3)

- 6.1 In accordance with the primary aim **2. Preserving the existing tree stock**, the *“Melton Park Management Company - Tree Policy for Management Company Managed Trees”*, trees will be inspected through either the systematic arboricultural survey, or as the result of ad-hoc enquires/work requests. In either case, if works are identified as necessary maintenance, they will be allocated a priority and work completion period.
- 6.2 Such works are not required to abate a health and safety concern but are necessary for the safe and useful retention of an individual tree, cluster of trees or a woodland. Example works are weed control on newly planted trees, re-staking young trees, formative pruning, thinning out of a dense plantation, pruning out diseased wood or a reversion, respacing and aeration.



7 NON-ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE, PLANTING AND ECOLOGICAL PROVISION (PRIORITY 4)

7.1 In accordance with the primary aim **3. Enhancing the existing tree stock**, MPMC will seek to undertake improvement works. These items are unlikely to be specifically identified by the systematic arboricultural survey, but may occur as the result of ad-hoc enquires/work requests or be developed as standalone projects.

7.2 Such works are important as the lifecycle of trees determines that they have a finite longevity and in order for future generations to enjoy the full range of benefits provided by trees and the associated wildlife that they host, ongoing regeneration is essential. By definition however, such works cannot take priority over caring for the existing tree stock.

8 AESTHETICS (PRIORITY 5)

8.1 In accordance with the primary aim **3. Enhancing the existing tree stock** MPMC may consider undertaking works that improve the aesthetics of an existing tree or group of trees. This work would not be undertaken as the result of any health and safety or maintenance recommendations, but may in certain limited circumstances be justified by the quality, location or historical association of particular specimens.

8.2 Such works are by definition lower priority because of the non-essential nature of the works, and the fact that no long-term benefit is likely to be derived. However an example might involve maintaining an historic topiary feature.

9 OTHER REQUESTS (PRIORITY 0)

9.1 MPMC has no obligation, no mandate and no resource to address other perceived issues and associated work requests. Typical individual requests often involve the following:

- Blocking light to a neighbouring structure or neighbouring land;
- Issues associated from roosting bird droppings;
- Intense shading of a neighbouring structure or neighbouring land (excluding obligations under the High Hedges legislation);
- Leaves falling within private land or affecting structures (gutters);
- Fruit falling within private land;
- Perceived negative effects of Aphid drip (honeydew);
- Interference with television reception (terrestrial, digital, satellite, etc.);
- Perception of ‘oppression’ from large or dominant trees;
- Tree retention, maintenance or new planting schemes to provide “privacy”;
- Obscuring of private CCTV security systems;
- Allergies associated with trees, for example pollen and seed dispersal.

9.2 The list at item 9.1 is not exhaustive and should not be treated as such.

9.3 Works to abate the above issues will not be undertaken by the MPMC unless they coincide with either a routine planned maintenance programme, or any legal obligations as defined in the four primary aims. This remains valid irrespective of any willingness to pay.

David M Carmichael

Practice Manager – Hayden’s Arboricultural Consultants Ltd

10th January 2023

