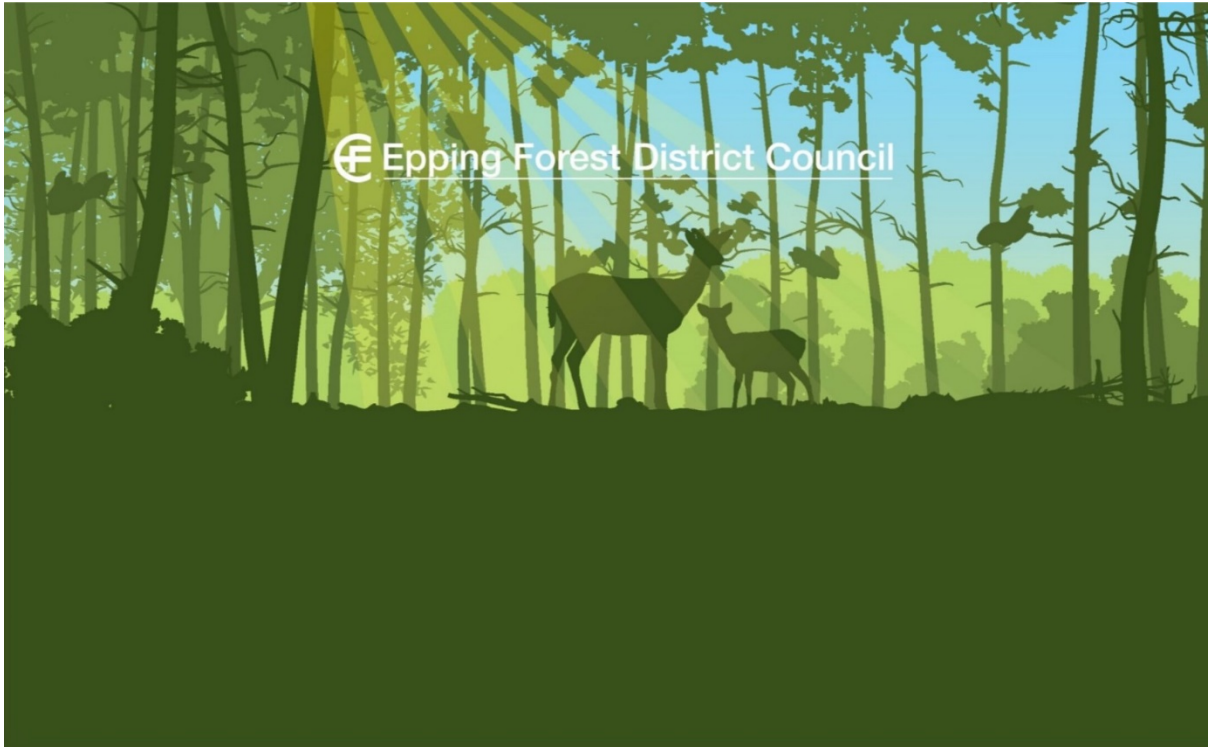


Epping Forest District Council

Tree Policy 2024-2029



Version Control	Date	Review Date

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1. Introduction

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC or The Council) manages a landscape in no small part defined by its' trees. The Council's tree stock is the largest natural asset the Council owns and manages. Its' trees are the single biggest positive contributor to biodiversity, air quality and climate change mitigation in the district.

EFDC comprises 133 square miles extending fan-shaped out from the edge of Northeast London. It has a population of approximately 135,000. Nearly half the population live in the south, within the urban areas of Chigwell, Loughton, and Buckhurst Hill. The market towns of Waltham Abbey and Epping, together with villages and hamlets are situated in the West and rural North of the District.

Trees are the common element that features across all its many and varied landscapes from the miles of tree lined streets and roads, parks and gardens, churchyards and cemeteries to woodlands and other sites managed for nature conservation. It should be noted that the Forest known as Epping Forest is managed by the City of London Corporation and is not covered by this policy.

Trees are universally recognised as vital to providing a healthy and safe future landscape that will be desirable to live in. Across the world societies that are serious about greening their cities and urban environments, look to trees as the major contributor. As a local authority we are proud and protective of our tree stock. We strive to maintain the existing stock to a high standard and replace and increase canopy cover for the future.

2. Scope

This policy defines EFDC approach to the management of trees owned by the District Council and the publicly owned highway, under the stewardship of Essex County Council.

Trees contribute many positive attributes throughout the district which include.

- Reduction of air temperature
- Shading
- Removal of air borne pollution
- Carbon sequestration
- Mental health benefits
- Flood mitigation.
- Increasing house prices

The Council recognises the importance of its role in the protection of the local and global environments, and the priority given to this role by those who live locally, work in or visit the Epping Forest district. The Council will, in all that it does, either through the direct provision of services or otherwise, give particular emphasis to environmental considerations.

There are few issues more important than the environment in which we all live. From Government down to the individual citizen, there are concerns about how we must change the way we live and behave to protect our environment, for us now and future generations.

Trees form a major part of the environment. They bring character to towns and villages and soften the hard edges of buildings. They enhance gardens, local streets, and the countryside.

It has been estimated that a substantial street tree will, over its lifetime, contribute an equivalent value to the community of up to £100,000. Trees are not only of visual amenity value, they are also effective in improving the quality of the environment, by modifying local climate and improving air pollution.

They are effective in improving the quality of the environment, by modifying local climate and by controlling air pollution. An environment enriched with trees improves human health and lowers stress levels. Trees are also important for wildlife and can have historic and sentimental value.

Obviously, there can also be problems, but these should be outweighed by the general benefits. The presence of trees significantly increases land and property values.

The Council will use its power to protect and increase public respect for our countryside and wildlife. The Council is playing a leading role at local level by:

- Setting an example by its own actions and practices.
- Working in the community to educate and influence about the need to protect and manage the environment.
- Offering guidance on community environment initiatives.
- Using its powers in a positive way to guide and control the activities of others.

3. Responsibilities

EFDC are responsible for the maintenance of all tree assets on EFDC land.

- EFDC owned trees will be inspected and managed adopting a risk-based approach.
- Trees in high footfall areas will be inspected at a higher frequency.
- EFDC tree work is also dealt with on a reactive basis.

Open Spaces

EFDC manage trees within Open Spaces, they are managed adopting a risk-based approach.

Nature Reserves

EFDC own and manage nine sites that have been designated as Local Nature Reserves.

- Linder's Field, Roughtalley's Wood, Chigwell Row Wood, Church Lane Flood Meadow, Home Mead, Thornwood Common Flood Meadow, and Weald Common Flood Meadow.

Countrycare assists with the management of privately, parish or town council owned sites but the responsibility with these sites reverts back to the landowner. For instance, Nazeing Triangle Local Nature Reserve is owned by Nazeing Parish Council.

Use the link below, to access the Epping Forest Country Care website and further information.

[Epping Forest Countrycare](#)

Planning Control and Advice

EFDC Planning team is responsible for serving and processing applications regarding T.P.O.s and any trees within a Conservation area, as well as considering requests for a new TPO to be made. The service is a statutory consultee for planning applications and provides pre-application advice to customers, for which there may be a fee.

Please use the link [Planning Control & Advice](#) to access the Epping Forest District Council webpage, regarding TPO and Trees within a conservation area.

Town and Parish Councils

Town/Parish Council are responsible for trees on their land.

Please use the link [Council Services - who does what](#) to access the EFDC webpage for information on Town and Parish Councils.

Essex County Council/ Essex Highway Trees

EFDC carry out reactive tree maintenance as required on behalf of Essex County Council for certain trees assets considered to be part of the public highway. This does not include trees assets located on Essex Property and facilities (EPF sites), or tree assets owned by the local Town and Parish Councils.

EFDC carry out reactive maintenance of Highway tree assets includes works to dangerous and fallen trees which present a high risk to the public highway. Any fallen trees reported within normal working hours will be undertaken by EFDC.

The Conservators of Epping Forest

The District Council do not have responsibility for Epping Forest, and all enquiries should be addressed directly to The Conservators of Epping Forest. [Please use the link Tree strategy - City of London](#) for more information.

4. Tree Planting

Planting is undertaken on an annual basis in locations that are appropriate, within budget provision, for the following reasons:

- to replace dead or dying trees or ones that have been removed.
- New sites (EFDC owned land).
- Donation planting [Tree donation scheme](#)

Planting schedules incorporate 'The right tree for the right place'.

The tree planting list is compiled from 1st August to 30th June the following year. Trees will be planted from the November of that year to April of the following year while the trees are in their dormant state. In all cases the onus being on 'The right tree for the right location'.

5. Climate Change

Epping Forest District contains Epping Forest itself and remnants of further ancient woodland. Although land use in the district only captures a small amount of carbon emissions (2%), trees, hedges, and nature in general help to increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change (such as overheating and flooding), improving air quality, and providing wildlife habitats which help maintain and increase biodiversity.

Use the link below for more information on how you can enhance the natural environment in your home, organisation, or business.

[Climate Change - Natural Environment](#)

6. Maintenance

EFDC will undertake the following: -

- Fell or undertake remedial works to trees in high footfall areas that are deemed as an unacceptable risk to the public.
- Prune back a tree that is physically touching an EFDC owned building to a maximum of 30% of the crown volume where it is feasible to do so.
- Undertake emergency tree works.

- Prune/Reduce the size of the tree on a regular maintenance regime where documentary evidence supports it has historically caused damage to private property and/or is currently causing damage to property.

Where the tree requires works which is beneficial for the health and amenity value of the tree.

Winter Works Programme.

Except for reactive works, planned maintenance works will be undertaken only in the Autumn/ Winter period while the trees are dormant, when the nesting season is over. Pruning at this time of the year is also more beneficial to the trees rather than to prune while the tree is in full leaf.

Nesting Birds

It is illegal to disturb a nesting bird as part of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981. We will only undertake light works to trees in the nesting period, such as lifting of low branches, pruning back from street furniture, and felling trees in cases where there is a risk to the public.

EFDC will not undertake works on trees for the following: -

- Leaf fall on footway or private land.
- Fruit fall on footway or private land
- Flower fall on footway or private land
- Right to light or light issues.
- Perception of tree height
- Perception of future damage
- Oak Processionary Moth situated on private land
- Television or satellite reception
- Allergies or medical complaints
- Lifting or damage to Highways (See Highways)
- Improvement of sightline
- Wasp, Bee or animal use or infestation.
- Bird droppings.
- Interference with telephone lines
- Mitigation of the growth of moss or mould.
- Encroachment of the boundary line.

7. Tree Removal

Trees are classed as an asset, and under normal EFDC Stewardship a healthy tree will not be removed. However, there are some exceptions which are listed below: -

- If the tree is inspected by an EFDC Tree officer, and defined as either, Dead, Dying or Dangerous
- Accordance with Council procedures when damage is occurring to property.

Illegal damage to EFDC owned trees.

In cases where there has been intentional or accidental damage to Council owned trees, we will prosecute and seek full cost of the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) of the tree before the tree was damaged or felled.

8. Overhanging trees/ Root encroachment

In cases that a tree branch or root encroaches the boundary line of a piece of land or residence the landowner is within their right in 'Common Law' to remove the offending branch, up to and not past their boundary line, from their side of the boundary. Under these terms pruning is legal and permissible. If the tree is found to have been pruned in any way other than specified, the person or persons undertaking the work may be prosecuted for trespass, and criminal damage.

9. Damage caused by trees to private property

Where it is alleged that tree roots are causing damage either directly or indirectly to privately owned property, the following information will be required to satisfy the Council on causation and/or that any tree work will mitigate the alleged damage.

- 12 Months of Crack monitoring data ideally at 2 monthly intervals.
- 12 Months of Level Monitoring Data ideally at 2 monthly intervals.
- Year the property was originally built and date of erection of a subsequent extension.
- Engineers report including description, photos, plans of damage and site plan showing layout including position of trees, drainage runs, vegetation within the boundary of the property.
- Site investigations to include soil and root analysis (which may include DNA analysis), and depth of foundations.
- Arboriculturist report.

All information should be sent to Insurance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk.

10. Useful Contacts and Numbers

i) Countrycare

Nature reserves

Tel. 01992 788203

Tel 01992 564000

CountrycareTeam@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

ii) Planning Services

Trees in Relation to New Developments, Parish Tree Strategies, Tree Warden Scheme, Tree Preservation Orders, Trees in Conservation Areas, Tree Advisory Service (garden trees)

Contacttrees@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Tel: 01992 564117

iii) Tree Team

Council-Owned Trees (General Enquiries), Tree Donation Scheme

Tel. 01992 564562

Tel. 01992 564000 (out of office hrs)

Trees@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

iv) Epping Forest

EFDC are not responsible for the Epping Forest, and all enquiries should be addressed directly to: -

The Conservators of Epping Forest

City of London Corporation

Tel: 020 8532 1010

Email: EppingForest@cityoflondon.gov.uk

v) Essex County Council

Potentially dangerous trees on private land adjacent to the highway, trees protected by ECC.

ECC, Area Highways

Tel. 01279 624500