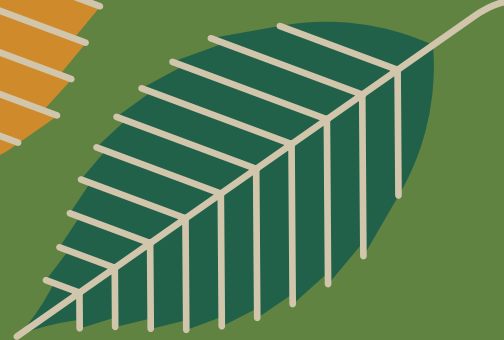
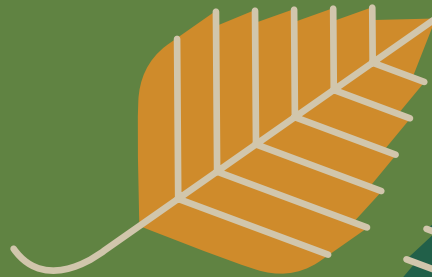
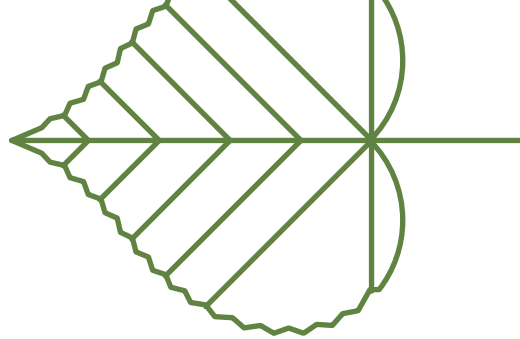


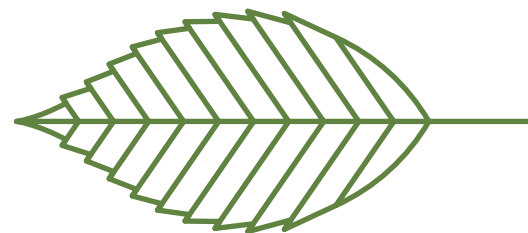
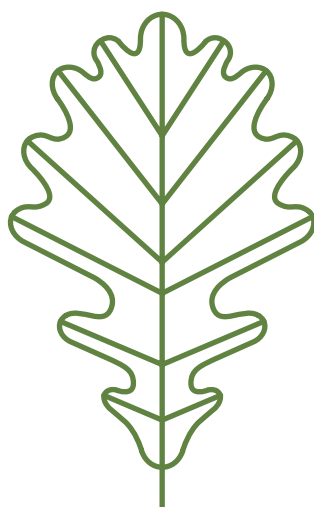
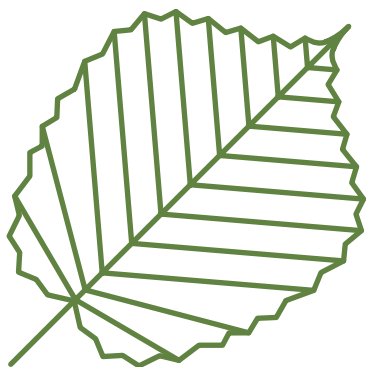
Street tree Guidelines

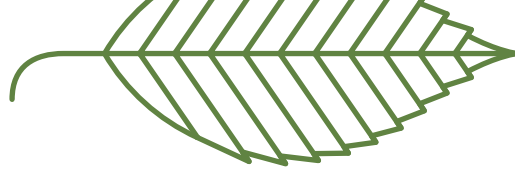
For the management of Sheffield
City Council's street trees





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Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to help answer some of the most common street tree related questions that people ask the Council.

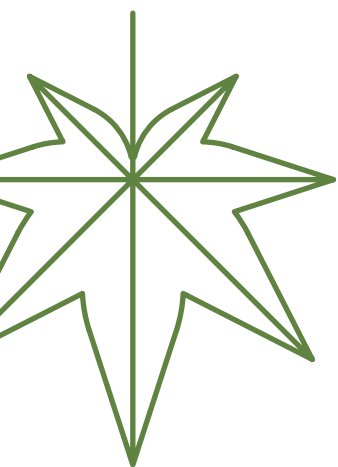
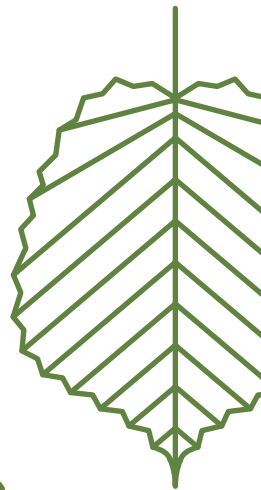
The guidelines refer to the *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy* (May 2021).

Streets Ahead

As the local highway authority, Sheffield City Council has a statutory duty to maintain the city's highway network. The Council needs to make sure that the city's roads and pavements are safe and accessible for all members of the public, and that people and property are protected from any danger caused by hazards on the highway. This duty is delivered through the Streets Ahead highways maintenance contract between the Council and its contractor, Amey, which runs until 2037.

The Streets Ahead contract provides funding to ensure that trees on the highway are managed and maintained in line with best practice. Good management of street trees supports the long-term improvement of the quality of the city's street tree stock. It also makes sure that all identified tree-related risks to people and property are reduced or eliminated so that everyone can safely enjoy the benefits provided by a healthy tree canopy.

Streets Ahead works are carried out on adopted roads, that is public roads that are managed and maintained by the Council as the highway authority. Other roads such as private roads, trunk roads and unadopted public highways are not included.

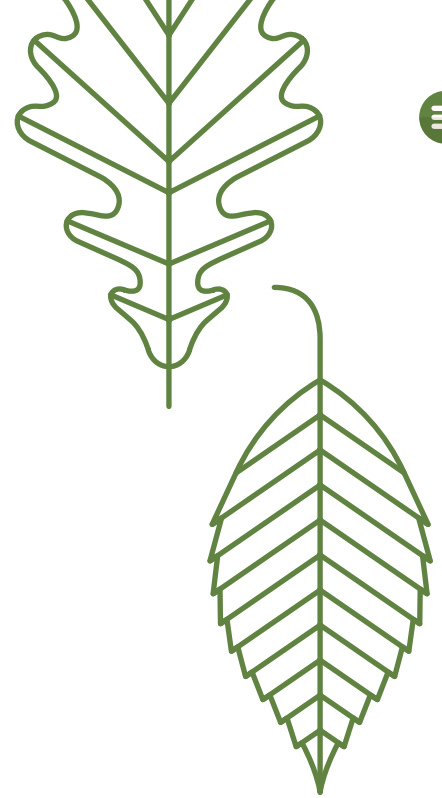




Street tree inspection

Street trees are routinely checked for safety and condition by the Streets Ahead team of qualified tree inspectors. This is on a ward-by-ward basis at least every five years. We inspect some trees on a more frequent basis to ensure that they can be retained on the highway and kept in as safe a manner as possible. This may be in conjunction with other processes such as crown reduction to reduce the risks of trees failing in high winds. Reactive inspections may also be undertaken when a report of significant concern is made about a tree.

All street trees are assessed by qualified tree experts who hold current professional tree inspector qualifications from LANTRA, the UK's Sector Skills Council for land-based and environmental industries. Amey tree inspectors work to industry standards and contract requirements. These are summarised in the *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy* (**Appendix 9** – British standards and codes of practice pertaining to management of trees and the Streets Ahead contract).





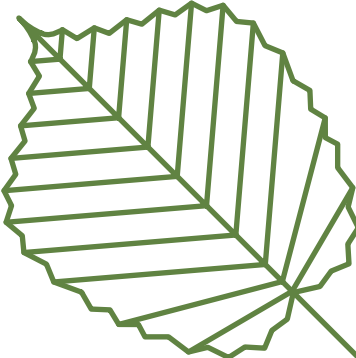
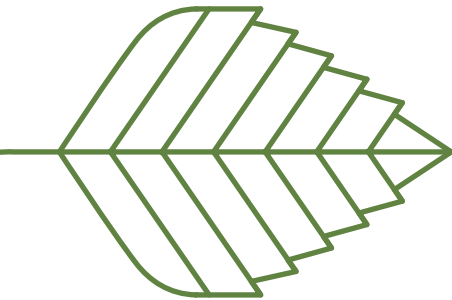
Street trees on private roads, trunk roads and unadopted public highways

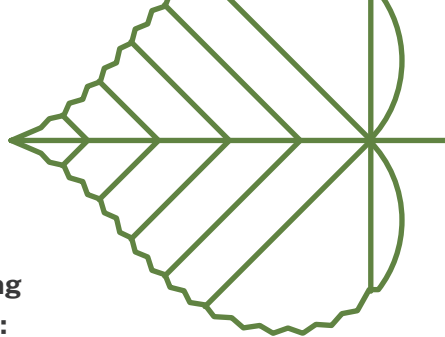
The Council and Amey would notify third party landowners if a tree in a garden or other private land was presenting issues that affect the highway, for example, presenting a risk or blocking pavement access. However, it is the responsibility of the owner to deal with these issues and make sure that trees on private land that are next to the highway are regularly inspected by qualified professionals and maintained.

Routine street tree maintenance

Routine street tree maintenance takes place for the following:

Maintenance activity	Explanation of maintenance activity
Pruning of epicormic growth to ensure clear sightlines	Epicormic or sucker growth (shoots arising at the bottom of the tree trunk) can be abundant on many street tree species. Streets Ahead remove epicormic growth at least on an annual basis and more frequently in some cases to keep sightlines clear. This frequency will vary depending on the individual street tree and its location.
Watering new plantings	New street trees are watered for the first two years following planting. Watering takes place when the street trees are in leaf and demand for water is at its greatest. Additional watering may be carried out during prolonged periods of dry weather. Streets Ahead encourage members of the public to carry out additional watering of new trees (even after the initial two years) to help give them the best possible chance of becoming established.
Staking	New trees are staked for a minimum of two years to provide support whilst the roots develop. After two years the stakes are removed unless the stability of the tree is inadequate, in which case the stakes will remain in place and checked after another 12 months.






Pruning works

If considered necessary following a tree inspection, pruning work will be carried out by Streets Ahead for the following:

Issue	Explanation of pruning works
Low branches that are obstructing the footway or carriageway	Where reasonably practical, street trees are pruned to provide footways and major carriageways with a minimum height clearance.
To provide clear sightlines including for street furniture such as streetlights and road signs	To maintain safety, street trees will be pruned away from sightlines, street lighting columns, road signage and to create clearance away from high-sided vehicles such as buses to reduce the risk of vehicles hitting branches. Residents may be asked to prune back trees growing on their land that overhang the highway or to improve the levels of street lighting on a street. This is in line with Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980. We will inform the occupier in advance if they need to take action to carry out pruning of trees on their land.
Low branches obstructing driveways or drive access	Branches are pruned to provide the necessary height clearance for the type of vehicle expected to use the driveway and crossing. Where larger vehicles are in use, greater clearance can be provided.
The removal of significant dead and broken branches	Dead branches naturally form in the crown of a tree due to 'self-shading' as the tree grows or because of disease, injury, or later life decline. In a natural environment like a woodland, deadwood provides a valuable ecological habitat. However, deadwood in highways trees is usually undesirable because it can create a risk to public and property. In most cases dead branches will be removed. However, if the risk is considered very low, dead branches may be retained for their ecological value. Broken branches will also be removed. In exceptional circumstances and provided the risk is considered very low, a broken branch may be pruned and retained, for example, if a split branch is likely to be a bat roost.
To mitigate for any inherent or developing defects within the tree's crown	Pruning work may be required if a tree inspector is concerned that defects are developing in the tree that might put people and property at risk in the foreseeable future.
The removal or pruning of branches that are in contact with or within 1m of buildings	Branches that are causing direct damage through contact or lashing in adverse weather will be pruned to give, where possible, 2 metres clearance of a building or structure.

 **Before considering any pruning on a highway tree that is overhanging your property boundary, please contact Streets Ahead.**



Bird nests and bat roosts

We employ trained ecologists who check all trees for bird nests and bat roosts. If bird nests or bat roosts are found in a tree identified for removal, the work will be delayed unless it is a safety hazard and needs immediate action. A further check will be carried out on the day of the planned removal. Wherever possible, we will not carry out tree removal works during the bird nesting season, approximately April to September. Members of the public should not attach bird or bat boxes to highway trees as this may prevent essential safety or pruning works.





Street tree work that we do not do

Streets Ahead do not routinely carry out work for the following:

Issue	Information
Street trees affecting you belong to private properties	If you have an issue with a street tree that is not on highway land (such as your neighbour's tree) and the tree is not considered a risk to the highway then you should contact the land or property owner in the first instance.
Falling blossom, leaves or fruit are causing annoyance	Falling blossom, leaves and fruit are natural occurrences and street trees will not be pruned to lessen their impact. Once fallen, blossom, fruit and leaves are considered detritus and a request can be made to have the highway cleaned.
Falling sap or bird droppings are causing annoyance	Whilst sap and droppings can result in unwanted mess, Streets Ahead will not prune trees to reduce it.
Street trees are blocking natural light or causing shade	Streets Ahead will not usually remove or prune a Council-owned street tree to address loss of light or excessive shade.
To mitigate for any inherent or developing defects within the tree's crown	If trees are interfering with your telephone line then you should contact your service provider to seek a solution, for example, re-routing the wire.
The removal or pruning of branches that are in contact with or within 1m of buildings	Streets Ahead do not prune to improve satellite or TV reception. You should contact your service provider to seek a solution.
Street trees obstructing solar panels	Streets Ahead do not prune to clear solar panels or to prevent any future obstruction to panels. If you are having panels installed, you should always consider the future growth of nearby vegetation.
Street trees are considered 'too large' or 'overgrown'	To increase the benefits provided by highway trees, the crowns will be left to grow as large as possible without causing obstruction or damage. Pruning will not take place simply because they are considered 'too' large.
Branches are overhanging a third party property but not causing damage or a legitimate obstruction	There is no obligation for Streets Ahead to prune trees that overhang your property boundary. By law the property owner has the right to prune branches back to their boundary at their own expense. When doing so, care should be taken to ensure there is no legal protection on the tree concerned, or that your actions do not compromise the safety of the tree. Before considering any pruning on a highway tree, please contact Streets Ahead. Members of the public should never attempt to climb highway trees.
Street tree roots have encroached into third party properties or gardens	Roots from mature and developing trees should be assumed to be under surrounding surfaces, including footways, or neighbouring gardens. Although you have the right to prune any roots on your property back to your boundary, care should be taken when pruning roots as their removal can result in the tree becoming unstable, or the failure of the whole tree. Contact Streets Ahead before undertaking any root pruning works on your own property.



Street tree removal and replacement

Removal and replacement of a street tree is considered on a case-by-case basis. Before a decision is made, an inspection of the tree for safety and condition is carried out by the Streets Ahead team. **Street trees are typically removed and replaced for the following reasons:**

Reason	Information
Immediately dangerous because the tree is dead, dying or has structural defects	The street tree will be removed from the highway to prevent the tree or its branches falling and injuring people or damaging property. In these instances, or during storm and high wind events, no consultation takes place as the primary duty is to keep members of the public and property safe.
Dead	In some low risk or rural areas, stems of dead trees may be retained at a suitable height for their wildlife habitat value. Otherwise, in most circumstances, dead trees will be removed.
In rapid decline or assessed as having less than five years safe useful life expectancy	If environmentally valuable trees are undergoing a gradual decline, if safe to do so, they may have their crown size reduced and retained in the landscape for as long as possible.
Significant disease	If a street tree is host to a disease that cannot be remedied and will result in its death over a short period, it is likely to transfer to and harm adjacent trees. The Streets Ahead team is instructed to sterilise tools and chainsaws after working on these kinds of trees to prevent the infection from spreading.
Structurally unsafe	A street tree may become structurally unsafe for various reasons. Damage to the supporting root system, root decay caused by certain fungi as well as regrowth from previous topping wounds are all examples that can lead to a tree becoming unsafe. In all circumstances Streets Ahead will consider whether a tree can be made sufficiently safe through pruning. Removal of the tree would only be recommended if pruning cannot make the tree safe for retention.
A dangerous obstruction to the carriageway	Street trees can cause an obstruction to the safety of vehicles on the carriageway. In most cases this can be remedied through pruning obstructing branches. In some circumstances when trees reach a certain size, their trunk or buttress roots may naturally begin to obstruct the carriageway. When this happens a road safety audit would be carried out to establish whether the tree can be retained or needs to be replaced.
Is causing significant damage to the highway	Where a street tree is causing significant damage to the highway infrastructure, it will be subject to a cost/benefit analysis to establish whether the tree should be replaced or whether engineering solutions are reasonably practicable.
Is causing damage to third party property	Streets Ahead will act to prevent damage to third party property. If you believe a highway tree is adversely affecting your property, you should discuss this with your home insurer in the first instance so that they can undertake an inspection and gather relevant evidence. This will be evaluated by the Streets Ahead team before tree removal is considered.



Any street tree removed will be replaced on at least a 1:1 basis (depending on the circumstances) with a suitable species for the location in as close to the original site as possible unless there are good reasons to do otherwise.

Streets Ahead works to an agreed list of replacement tree species. **Appendix 2** of the *Sheffield Street Tree Partnership Strategy* sets out the considerations when selecting the species of replacement tree after an existing street tree has been removed. The decision on the replacement species takes account of these factors and, at the same time, aims to maximise future canopy cover and increase resilience in the street tree stock. The replacement species may be different from the species of tree that has been removed.



Useful contacts

Streets Ahead/Highway Maintenance

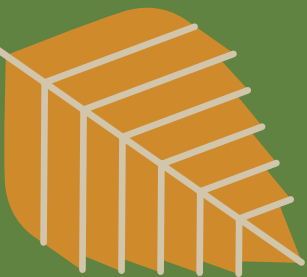
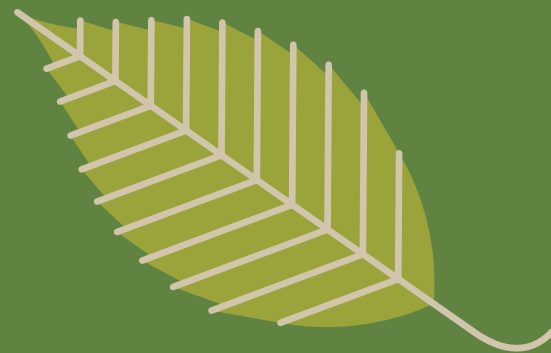
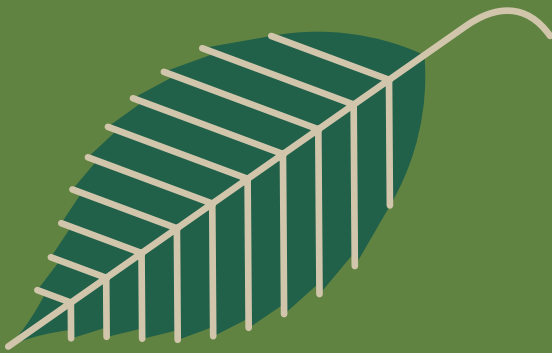
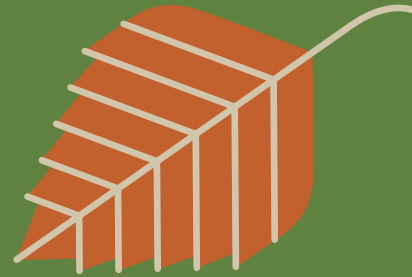
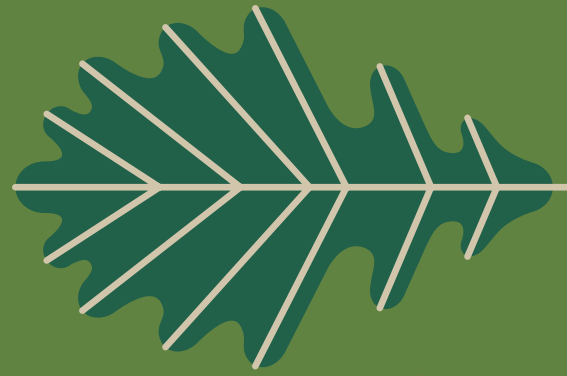
0114 273 4567

Parks and Countryside Service

0114 250 0500

Planning Helpline

0114 203 9183



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