

## **Tree Management Plans – An Overview**

### **Introduction**

The length, breadth and depth of a tree management plan or tree strategy varies considerably depending on a number of factors, including; the needs of the tree owner, the nature and extent of the tree population and the number of stakeholders involved.

The aim of a tree management plan should be to inform all interested parties of the short, medium and long term management of the existing and future tree stock.

The tree management plan should include the following four components;

#### **1. A Tree Survey**

The tree management plan starts with a comprehensive survey to establish the nature and extent of the trees to be managed. If a comprehensive survey is not possible, sample surveys should be undertaken to give a reasonably accurate picture of the total tree population.

#### **2. The Tree Policy**

With an accurate picture of the existing tree population the aims and objectives of tree management plan can be written.

The aims and objectives should consider the views of all interested parties. These may include public bodies, commercial and business interests, voluntary organisations and community groups. To find out the views of interested parties they need to be asked.

#### **3. Tree Management Guidelines**

With the broad aims of the management plan identified and objectives specified, tree management guidelines can be developed. Specific management guidelines need to be formulated to achieve each objective.

Management guidelines should include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timed) targets. Whenever tree work is specified, it should be stated that this will always be undertaken to the very latest industry standards.

#### **4. An Action Plan**

The implementation of the action plan changes the nature and extent of the tree population. It is therefore essential to annually monitor and measure these changes and adjust the management plan as necessary.

If specified objectives are not being met, then the reasons for this must be investigated and addressed.

The whole tree management plan should be reviewed and revised as necessary every five years or so. This review provides the opportunity for major policy changes to be made.

Reference: Trees in Towns II published by Department for Communities and Local Government