

Freedom Of Information Request Response



Ref No.	FOISA 2025-4
Title	Environmental information around tree felling
Date Received	13/08/2025
Date Responded	10/09/2025

Request	<p>A number of trees have recently been felled along the local access road, Muirside Road, leading to the square in which I live in Pennyburn, Kilwinning. These areas are indicated to be in public ownership and I understand from North Ayrshire Council that they are owned and managed by Riverside Scotland. The trees were felled on or around 26 June 2025.</p> <p>I would like to request the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What Riverside Scotland's decision-making framework or process is for identifying trees that need to be felled, along with copies of any documents which set out that framework or process.2. How that decision-making framework or process was applied with specific regard to the trees positioned along Muirside Road and its associated branch roads on or around 26 June 2025, and what conclusions were drawn which led to these trees being felled.3. What Riverside Scotland's programming and timetabling is with regards to replacing these trees and the important public amenity they provided. <p>For point 2 I would appreciate any reports and internal correspondence pertinent to decision-making with regards to the felling of these trees.</p>
Response	<p>We acknowledge your request for information under the Freedom of Information Scotland Act (FOISA), made on 13th August where you requested information regarding Riverside Scotland's tree felling processes.</p> <p>Riverside Scotland can confirm that it holds information relating to your request and provides the following in response:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What Riverside Scotland's decision-making framework or process is for identifying trees that need to be felled, along with copies of any documents which set out that framework or process.

*Our trees are all assessed annually by a delivery manager arborist who compiles a report on all our trees condition, denoting ash dieback, positioning and potential hazards. From this they then submit a cost plan and priority rating for the trees marked with any concern. We meet to discuss the plan and agree what trees should be considered for works, this can include pollarding crown reduction or removal. Once approved AWI orders are sent and works programmed in. Please find attached a copy of our Specification extract which provides further details on the decision-making processes.**

2. How that decision-making framework or process was applied with specific regard to the trees positioned along Muirside Road and its associated branch roads on or around 26 June 2025, and what conclusions were drawn which led to these trees being felled.

These trees are encompassed by the stock wide reports and were identified as a hazard following storm damages, from meeting with the contractor and following their experience these were agreed to be felled as they were entangled with other trees and carried a high risk of causing further damage to the surrounding area in the event of another strong storm.

3. What Riverside Scotland's programming and timetabling is with regards to replacing these trees and the important public amenity they provided.

We do not currently carry a timetable for tree replacement in woodland areas.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of your original response and should be forwarded to:

foi@riverside.org.uk

However, if you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision via the following details:

Email

enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Post

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle

Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS
Telephone
01334 464610

Kind regards,

FOI Team
The Riverside Group

*Specification Extract:

Tree Inspections

In order to ensure that the Association's trees and woodland strips are maintained in a safe and healthy condition and do not pose a significant risk to public health and safety, annual visual tree inspections will be carried out. These inspections will be carried out by a competent person having sufficient arboricultural knowledge and experience to identify areas of concern and to recommend remedial works or instruct further investigation as necessary.

In identifying any requirement for tree works within woodland strips it is recognized that access to these areas could be restricted due to the density of undergrowth etc. Under these circumstances visual inspections may be carried out from the woodland periphery and any required works identified on this basis.

Tree inspections will seek to identify and address the following:

- Tree canopy die-back
- Deadwood
- Fungal and/or fruiting body associations
- Root-plate heave
- Stem cavities or decay
- Included bark unions
- Previous branch failure points

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree canopy touching adjoining buildings, obscuring signage/street lights/CCTV. • Low branches or tree canopy obstruction over roads and footpaths <p>Where a defect is identified during inspection that could represent a significant risk to public/property safety, this will be recorded and appropriate remedial action recommended. The nature of any recommend remedial action should take account of the nature of the identified defect and the level of associated risk.</p> <p>Where inspection identifies that a tree constitutes a hazard or is unsafe the recommended remedial action must be reported to the Association as soon as practicable to facilitate the required works. Examples of circumstances that require immediate action include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tree is unstable, uprooted and is leaning in the direction of property or areas of public access. The level of risk and the degree of urgency required to address the problem will be dependent on the target type (the public, vehicles, buildings, footpaths and roads, as examples) and frequency of use, size of the tree, extent of root-lift and current and forecasted weather conditions. • The tree has hung up limbs that if were to become detached would cause harm or damage to public or property. • The tree is blocking a part of the highway network. • The tree has fallen and is preventing the natural flow of pedestrian/vehicular traffic or a watercourse. • The tree has fallen and is blocking access to property. • The tree has fallen onto property or vehicles • Trees encroaching railway related infrastructure* <p>*Trees identified to be encroaching railway infrastructure e.g. boundary fences, bridges, tracks, overhead lines etc. should be reported to Network Rail immediately in order that the appropriate arrangements can be made for any remedial works to be carried out in full compliance with the required track safety arrangements.</p>
--	--

	<p>In the first instance consideration should be given to pruning. However, excessive pruning or reducing a tree's size can adversely affect the health, appearance and amenity value of the tree, as well as resulting in weakly attached re-growth. Examples of where pruning is appropriate include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor works. • To improve the growth and establishment of adjacent trees. • To prevent or rectify direct or indirect physical damage to buildings, structures and public utilities where practical and accessible • Formative pruning of any newly planted trees • To improve the health and condition of existing trees, e.g. crown cleaning. • As part of woodland or screen thinning operations <p>In those instances where pruning is not considered appropriate recommendations can be made for a tree to be felled. Felling/Removal should generally only be considered in the following instances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tree is dead, dying or diseased and presents an unacceptable degree of risk to persons or property. • The tree is uprooted or wind-thrown and presents an unacceptable degree of risk to persons or property. • The tree is causing damage to buildings, structures or public amenities. • Regeneration of woodland (clear felling) and landscaped areas. • To improve the growth and establishment of adjacent trees, e.g. woodland thinning. • To facilitate works by statutory undertakers. • Where pruning is not practical. <p>As a general rule the Association will not carry out tree pruning or removal works directly attributable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or interference with TV or satellite signal reception • Restriction of sunlight or artificial lighting, unless this is considered to be excessive. • Blocking or obstructing a view from a residence • Medical ailments unless supported by expert medical opinion.
--	--

- Falling leaves
- Sap exudation (honeydew)
- Falling fruits/nuts
- Bird droppings
- Blossom
- Reduction or increase moisture within gardens
- Basal stem sucker growth
- Germinating seeds from trees
- Blockages or obstructions from tree deposits and leaves
- Presence of algae and/or build-up of moss.

Incidents of this nature are considered minor inconveniences as opposed to legally defined nuisance issues. Only in exceptional circumstances, and when all other potential solutions have been exhausted, should tree pruning or removal be recommended. Examples of potential alternative solutions include:

- Slippery road and path surfaces arising from leaf or fruit fall should be reported to the Association who will arrange for an inspection and cleaning works to be carried out if deemed appropriate. Where any such enquiry relates to an area that has been formally adopted by the Local Authority or other private land owner, the matter will be referred to the same for consideration and action as deemed appropriate.
- Anti-social behaviour arising from fruit fall should be reported to the Association for further investigation and action as appropriate. Where necessary enquiries of this nature may also be referred to the Police and the Local Authorities Anti-Social Behaviour Team for investigation and action as appropriate.
- Leaf and/or fruit fall within private gardens can be deposited within the 'brown' garden waste bin collected by the Local Authority Waste Management service.
- Re-location or use of extension poles for aerials and satellite receivers.

Tree Inspection Report

The recommended tree works should be notified to the Association in the form of a report for

	<p>consideration/verification. The report must include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Location • Tree Reference No. (Pennyburn Only) • Tree Species • Recommended Tree work • Quantity • Reason • Photographic evidence
--	--