



# Tree and Woodland Management Policy

Date Effective: May 2026

Date of Review: May 2029



<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>1.1 Irvine Housing Association is responsible for the management and maintenance of a significant number of mature trees and woodland strips throughout its schemes and estates.</p> <p>People often live in close proximity to these trees, particularly in urban areas, which can create varying degrees of inconvenience. Conflict or disputes can arise where a tree or group of trees makes an important contribution to the local environment yet creates inconvenience to residents.</p> <p>There are a number of legal obligations in both Common Law and in Statute upon the Association in the management of trees and woodlands for which it is responsible.</p> <p>This policy will set out the Association’s approach to the ongoing management and maintenance of trees and woodland areas in our ownership, which will ensure that trees continue to enhance our estates.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>The objective of this Policy is to set out the Association’s approach to the management of trees on Association owned land.</p> <p>The aim of the policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out how the Association will effectively manage its trees and woodlands ensuring that they positively contribute to the area and achievement of the corporate priorities of the Association whilst meeting legal obligations and customer expectations. The policy does not consider trees within private ownership;</li> <li>• act as a source of information and reference regarding tree issues on Association owned land;</li> <li>• provide a framework for decisions that will affect trees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>PLANNED TREE AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The Association seeks to manage its trees and woodlands on an ongoing basis in an effective manner in the following ways:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing and maintaining healthy and safe trees.</li> <li>• Maintaining and encouraging bio-diversity.</li> <li>• Maintaining and improving landscape quality via the care of existing trees and the inclusion of future plantings.</li> <li>• Compliance with legal responsibilities in both Common Law and through Statute.</li> <li>• Providing clear channels of advice and information to the stakeholders regarding arboriculture.</li> <li>• Tree inspections and assessments are carried out annually on a cyclical basis ensuring that all areas are inspected and assessed on a 5 yearly cycle.</li> </ul> <p>Tree Surveys commissioned by the Association will be carried out in</p>

	<p>accordance with the guidance provided in BS 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (or any subsequent revision/replacement).</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIVE TREE AND WOODLAND WORKS</b></p> <p>Issues regarding trees are often raised by customers and requests made to the Association to remove or prune trees which are causing a nuisance or concern.</p> <p>The Association’s primary objective is to ensure that all its woodlands are enhanced and sustained on a long term basis. The Association will always respond to such requests primarily with the aim of maintaining healthy trees across our estates as far as possible given the fundamental importance of trees to wildlife and bio-diversity.</p> <p>The height and size of some trees can cause concern for residents and can potentially impact negatively on the enjoyment of their home and the fabric of our properties.</p> <p>The Association will consider each concern and tree on an individual basis. Any trees which pose a health or safety issue will be given priority for remedial works. Health and Safety concerns include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The tree has hung up limbs that if were to become detached would cause harm or damage to public or property.</li> <li>• The tree is blocking a part of the highway network.</li> <li>• The tree has fallen and is preventing the natural flow of pedestrian/vehicular traffic or a watercourse.</li> <li>• The tree has fallen and is blocking access to property.</li> <li>• The tree has fallen onto property or vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>Other Health and Safety concerns may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree canopy die-back</li> <li>• Ash dieback disease</li> <li>• Deadwood</li> <li>• Fungal and/or fruiting body associations</li> <li>• Root-plate heave</li> <li>• Stem cavities or decay</li> <li>• Included bark unions</li> <li>• Previous branch failure points</li> <li>• Tree canopy touching adjoining buildings, obscuring signage/street lights/CCTV.</li> <li>• Low branches or tree canopy obstruction over roads and footpaths</li> <li>• Trees with thorns.</li> </ul>

<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p>Where the tree does not pose a Health and Safety concern, we will take account of the following to determine if and what remedial works should progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and spread of tree canopy</li> <li>• Branches overhanging into gardens and the highway</li> <li>• Low branches over footpaths</li> <li>• Trees blocking significant natural light, street lights and road signs</li> <li>• Leaf and fruit fall</li> <li>• Sticky deposits</li> <li>• Physical damage to structures</li> <li>• Interference with utilities</li> <li>• Affecting TV and satellite reception</li> <li>• Affecting CCTV and security systems</li> <li>• Obscuring a view (where this is impacting on the health and well-being of residents).</li> <li>• Highway safety issues</li> <li>• Fear of tree safety</li> <li>• Birds and wildlife</li> <li>• Subsidence and drains (supporting evidence required to confirm, i.e. through property insurers or structural engineers report).</li> <li>• Vandalism and Anti-social behaviour, (where work to a tree is likely to reduce ASB issues or escalating neighbour disputes).</li> </ul> <p>Where it has been decided that works are required to trees consideration will always be given to maintain the value and health of the tree as far as possible. Remedial works may include pruning, felling/tree removal</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Tree and woodland Protections</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b> Any works undertaken in respect of poisonous trees will be based on the level of risk relating to each individual case. Factors for consideration will include the level, nature and frequency of site usage, level of toxicity, position of berries and seeds, etc. on the tree and any alternative means of addressing/managing the problem, such as regular uplift of fruit fall.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Trees will not be pruned or felled to remove any animal protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, other appropriate Protected Species legislation, or to remove insects such as aphids, wasps, bees or midges. In the case of pests advice should be sought from the Association and /or the Local Authority Environmental Health service.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Where birds are found to be nesting, tree work will be postponed until nesting has finished, other than where there is an immediate risk to safety. Please note that the commonly used nesting season dates (generally accepted as 1<sup>st</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> July) are indicative only; active nests and certain species have legal protection whenever they oc</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Where trees have been identified as a roosting site for bats, work will not be carried out until an assessment has been undertaken by an appropriately qualified practitioner and, where required, advice/licensing has been sought</p>

	<p>from NatureScot (Scotland's nature agency), other than where there is an immediate risk to safety.</p>
<b>5.5</b>	<p>Any unauthorised work undertaken to an Association owned tree, unless it is overhanging or encroaching upon a private property, will be considered as vandalism and will be reported to the Police accordingly.</p>
<b>5.6</b>	<p>Where relevant, the Association will comply with Scottish planning controls for protected trees, including Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area requirements, and will obtain any necessary consents/submit required notifications before undertaking works (other than where exemptions apply, e.g., urgent works for safety).</p>
<b>5.7</b>	<p>All works to Association owned trees will be carried by competent contractors in line with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BS 4428: 1989 Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces) (or any subsequent revision/replacement)</li> <li>• BS 3998: 2010 Tree Work – Recommendations (or any subsequent revision/replacement)</li> <li>• BS 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (or any subsequent revision/replacement)</li> </ul>
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>Monitoring and Review</b></p> <p>This policy will be reviewed as a minimum every three years and in response to relevant legislative changes.</p>