

**Common Areas Procedure  
Including Common Area Cleaning and  
Estate, Greenspace and Tree Management**

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<b>Amended</b>

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) is committed to providing aesthetically pleasing areas which enhance our properties and improve the living experience of our tenants and their families. The process we follow to do this is tenant focussed and designed to provide a high-quality service.
- 1.2 In blocks of flats common areas are designed to provide a safe route for tenants, visitors and related service providers to access their homes. Correct management of common areas is essential to allow for evacuation of buildings and clear access routes for the Fire Service.
- 1.3 A significant common area problem is residents' personal property that is left or placed in hallways, staircases, outside doors and in meter cupboards etc. These can obstruct fire escape routes, increase flammability and provide ignition sources. Therefore, Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) and residents need to work together to maintain safe escape routes at all times, minimising the risk of fire and smoke compromising common areas.
- 1.4 LHP exercises its legal duty to manage fire risk in the common areas of our stock, and to maintain 'fire compartmentalisation' between properties and common areas. LHP is responsible for keeping the common areas to a safe fire standard and has a duty to make sure residents can escape in an emergency. LHP takes resident fire safety seriously and because of this, LHP must be strict about what is stored in common areas.
- 1.5 This procedure also covers the Greenspace and Tree Management services provided by our Asset Management Department. These mainly comprise the management and maintenance of land and facilities, e.g. play areas.

This includes:

- open spaces
  - play areas
  - recreation grounds
  - tree management
  - weed control
  - sheltered and dispersed housing schemes.
- 1.6 It is a key priority to maintain common spaces to a high standard by maintaining grounds and open spaces and cleaning internal common areas through a cyclical programme delivered to an agreed specification. This work is service charged in accordance with the rent setting and service charge policy.
  - 1.7 The following information and practices relating to common area use have been developed following best practice and advice, to help ensure that people living in LHP properties have access to common areas that are monitored regularly and maintained to the highest possible standard.

## **2. Common Area Risk Management Procedure**

- 2.1 All Employees have a responsibility to:
- Report any fires and fire hazards.
  - Remove fire hazards where they can and ensure those which they cannot personally deal with are reported to the relevant persons to be actioned.
  - Cooperate with other managers to implement fire safety and provide assistance in the investigation of fire or fire system related incidents.
- 2.2 Common areas relate to blocks of flats - lobbies, corridors, staircases and landings, escape routes, plant rooms, laundry areas, landlord's stores (including service and cleaners' cupboards), service riser cupboards, communal lounges, communal rooms and areas, external communal gardens and pathways. The communal areas include the building structure and walls. No items should be affixed to these areas without permission.
- 2.3 Common areas are not an extension of a resident's property and cannot be used for personal items or as an additional room. Nothing must block fire escape routes. This is a Fire Brigade requirement. A fire escape route must be able to accommodate at least the width of a wheelchair. Any personal items in common areas pose a fire risk and are trip hazards. Nothing must be stored in meter cupboards, which is also a Fire Brigade requirement. If any personal items are found in common areas or meter cupboards they should be removed immediately.

## **3 Fire Safety**

- LHP's Common Areas Policy specifies relevant legislation in this area as the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Housing Act 2004. This Order requires management of fire risk in common areas; supporting guidance and best practice requires that common areas be kept free of obstructions, trip hazards and combustible material.
- Controlling the presence of combustible materials and ignition sources not only results in a dramatic reduction in the potential for accidental fires to start and develop in the common parts of blocks, it significantly reduces the scope for deliberate fires. It also ensures escape routes are free of obstructions that might hinder the evacuation of people from the building and access for fire-fighters.
- Tenants and their visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape within the internal communal areas. However, tenants and their visitors can smoke/vape within an external communal area, providing that this does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other residents.

### **3.1 Assessing Fire Risk & Inspections.**

- 3.1.1 Fire risk management is an ongoing process. In between formal, cyclical, Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) undertaken by the Compliance Team, LHP monitors fire risk, including the use of common area by residents, during estate inspections and when front line staff, including Housing, Income and Lettings Officers, Repairs & Asset Team members and Wardens visit blocks during the course of their normal work activities.

All building safety inspections are to be completed in line with the guidance stated in LHP's Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Process.

- 3.1.2 In all areas, Housing Officers (HO) complete Common Area Inspections (CAI) monthly for general needs flats and, in the North, weekly for sheltered schemes where there is an Automatic Fire detection system. In the South the weekly Sheltered Housing Inspections are undertaken by the Support Services team.
- 3.1.3 The cycle of inspection is undertaken so that the areas are checked for compliance at the same time each week or month, dependent on the agreed cycle - e.g. an area checked on week 1 of the month will be checked during the same week each consecutive month. Ideally the area will be checked on the same day of that week, but an operational tolerance of target day +/- 2 days is in operation for General Needs areas. The tolerance for weekly, sheltered scheme, inspections is the target day (of that week) + 2 days. There is no tolerance for weekly inspections to be undertaken earlier than the target date.
- 3.1.4 HOs and Wardens must ensure that the inspections are completed within this tolerance. If for any reason a non-compliance event is identified or anticipated e.g. due to absence or operational conflict, they must inform a Line Manager.
- 3.1.5 Area Housing Managers (AHM) and the Support Service Manager (SSM) must ensure that the inspection schedule is met, and data is available to demonstrate compliance.

### South

- Monthly CAIs are completed on mobile devices and are submitted to the Estate Management Inbox ([Estate.Management@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:Estate.Management@lincolnshirehp.com)). The Housing Assistant (HA) will transfer this data to a main recording spreadsheet located at - [W:\Housing\\_Services\Tenancy\\_Management\South\Officer\\_Checks\Common Area and Estate Checks.xlsx](W:\Housing_Services\Tenancy_Management\South\Officer_Checks\Common_Area_and_Estate_Checks.xlsx)
- Weekly sheltered inspections are completed on and submitted via mobile devices; the destination is pre-determined and no further processing is required.

### North

- CAIs are completed on mobile devices where possible. The HO is responsible for updating the Northgate property checklist which will populate and monitor frequency of visits. The HO must then update the process management case for that block within Northgate. This will ensure that any actions identified are followed up and completed.

### Sheltered & Extra Care Schemes

- LHP operates a 'managed approach' towards fire safety within Sheltered and Extra Care schemes. Communal halls and identified break out areas are allowed some items; the suitability of these is assessed on a case by case basis.
- It is a requirement of this approach that no customer property is to be in circulation areas, corridors, entrance foyers, kitchens, offices, halls and cupboards or escape routes; and only furnishings provided by LHP which are appropriately fire rated.

### General Needs Common Areas

- Common Areas within general needs blocks are different in terms of the level of attendance and mitigation that occur; in these blocks the common areas are usually circulation spaces which also form the escape routes. These areas must be fire sterile, so a zero-tolerance approach is enforced.
- A sterile environment is one which is empty of all items. No exceptions will apply; the operation of sterile environments is designed to ensure that the communal areas are free of combustible material, ignition sources and obstructions. The communal areas are for access and egress only.
- This approach reduces the likelihood of toxic gases and smoke being produced in a fire from the materials being stored in the area and affecting the Fire and Rescue Service attending as well as the potential evacuation of the block.

### 3.2 Temporary DIY materials

- 3.2.1 Under no circumstances are DIY materials or waste to be left in a common area.

### 3.3 Storage of bicycles, buggies and prams

- 3.3.1 Under no circumstances can bicycles, buggies or prams be kept in meter cupboards or block fire escape routes. Owners must store such items within their own flats or in external facilities (where present).

### 3.4 Communal gardens, grounds and pathways

- 3.4.1 Permission must be sought from LHP for any improvements to communal areas, for the erection of sheds or any storage facility. Communal areas, including, walkways and gardens must not be segregated for a person's own use, or for things such as children's play equipment or personal furniture, or to lay patios or decking, or alter the use of the area/garden.

### 3.5 Repairs identified during common area inspections

In addition to the inspection report elements submitted via the mobile device, when reporting a repair job, ensure an email is sent to the repairs planning department [Planners@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:Planners@lincolnshirehp.com) and cc. [amci@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:amci@lincolnshirehp.com) putting a priority (Immediate / Emergency / Non-Emergency / Planned) against each repair job at the point of emailing. Concerns identified should be raised using the flow chart for reporting concerns (see [Appendix 1](#)).

This will ensure that the correct timescales are applied to reflect the nature of the risk on site. Also, most items identified during the common area inspections (unless they are a neighbourhood management action) will relate to the building safety so when these are being reported make it clear in the text that it is for **Building Safety Works**.

When a Building Safety Works request is received, Planners will ensure that it is logged under FRA Compliance Works, this allows tracking of the item through the reporting systems.

Planners will return an email to confirm that the job has been raised.

In line with the repair standard, the following repair timescales are available when raising a repair:

LHP Repairs Timescales			
Type of Repair	Definition	Examples	Timescales
Immediate	A repair which requires immediate attention and cannot wait to be made safe as it has an immediate impact on customer or building safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silencing a fire alarm.</li> <li>• Lift entrapment</li> <li>• Uncontrollable leak.</li> <li>• Loss of heating for a customer who has a medical condition which means they need to be warm.</li> </ul>	Within 4 hours
Emergency	Emergency repairs are repairs that are necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to the health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupier's property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Heating or Hot Water</li> <li>• Loss of Power</li> <li>• Loss of Building security i.e. door entry system failure.</li> <li>• Making safe a broken window.</li> </ul>	Within 24 hours
Non-Emergency Repair	This covers all other repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blocked gutter</li> <li>• Damage to a kitchen work surface.</li> </ul>	An appointment will be made at the next mutually convenient time. The repair could be completed from the day after <b>it is reported</b> it up to a maximum of 20 working days especially if parts are required.
Planned (Major Works)	This is a repair which due to its size or nature requires planning and does not have an immediate impact on the customer or the property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair to a boundary wall/fence</li> <li>• Roof repair</li> <li>• Re-glazed blown window unit.</li> </ul>	We try to deliver these as soon as possible but due to the nature of the work we will ensure it is completed in a maximum of 60 working days

### 3.6 Items in common areas

3.6.1 All tenants within blocks of general needs flats with common areas were written to and advised that as of April 2019 the common areas will be inspected on a monthly basis, and no items can be left within them. TORT notices are displayed in common areas. The letters and TORT notices state that items found during inspections will be removed by LHP (see [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#)).

3.6.2 Doormats are not allowed for two reasons. The first is that in the event of a fire and large amounts of water being used in the area, mats will become slip and trip hazards for firefighters tackling a fire and for residents evacuating. The second is that the mats increase the fire loading within the corridors and can be used as a fuel source in a deliberate fire.

3.6.3 If any such items are identified by any member of LHP staff during the course of their duties; that staff member will attempt to identify and approach individual tenants, so that items can be relocated by the owner to an appropriate place, rather than be removed from the common area.



- 3.6.4 HOs will follow a process map ([Appendix 4](#)) when items are found when carrying out the inspections.
- 3.6.5 For all other staff members: if owners of items found in common areas cannot be readily identified and approached, all items are to be removed; this will be via the in-house clearance team: [PlannersBoston@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:PlannersBoston@lincolnshirehp.com).
- 3.6.6 Removed items will be moved into storage and labelled with date and where collected from, with a photo taken of item including label.
- 3.6.7 Where items have been removed the staff member must email the details, attaching a photograph of the items removed to the relevant Housing Services Team for follow up action.

Housing Services South [HousingServicesSouth@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:HousingServicesSouth@lincolnshirehp.com)  
Housing Services North [HousingServicesNorth@lincolnshirehp.com](mailto:HousingServicesNorth@lincolnshirehp.com)

- 3.6.8 Removed items will be stored (in compliance with the TORT procedure) for a set amount of time so that the resident can reclaim them. All properties in the block will receive a notification letter (see [Appendix 5](#)) advising them that the items are being held and how long they have to claim them before they will be disposed of.
- 3.6.9 If a tenant contacts LHP to arrange collection two staff members will meet them at the arranged location. Items will be collected by the customer not delivered to them.

## 4. Common Area Cleaning

- 4.1 There are currently different contractual specifications operating within the North and South Areas; there are specific requirements held within each contract which must be adhered to until contracts have been aligned. The service delivered will be as follows:

### South

The primary duty for internal common area cleaning is undertaken by our cleaning contractor, however some common cleaning tasks on the Fenside Estate and Middlecott Close areas are undertaken by Caretakers.

The common area cleaning undertaken by the contractor is conducted monthly on a cyclical basis.

- All internal common areas are to be cleaned once a month.
- Internal windows are cleaned monthly.
- External windows are cleaned on a 3-month cycle.

The contractor records completed works on a handheld device; completed logs are sent to the contractor's office and forwarded by email to the Contract Manager (CM) for recording and reporting purposes.

HOs will monitor common area cleaning standards during monthly Common Area Inspections; completed inspection reports will be submitted to the HA and AHM.

HOs will report concerns regarding contract compliance directly to the CM; concerns will be investigated and if it is felt necessary, the CM will liaise with the contractor to seek a resolution.

Concerns reported from customers will be addressed by the Customer Contact Centre; these concerns will be relayed to the CM directly or by way of call log.

The CM will be expected to undertake a check of the recording system in order to establish if the cleaning schedule has been maintained. On some occasions an inspection of the area of concern will be required. The outcome of the concern reported and subsequent assessment of it will be relayed to the customer by the CM.

## **North**

All communal blocks and sheltered schemes are attended to weekly, apart from some stairwells which are done on a monthly basis.

- All internal common areas are to be cleaned once a week.
- Internal windows are cleaned on a quarterly cycle.
- External windows are cleaned on a quarterly cycle.

The contractor records completed works on a handheld device; completed logs are sent to the contractor's office and forwarded by email to the CM for recording and reporting purposes.

HOs will monitor common area cleaning standards during monthly Common Area Inspections; completed inspection reports will be submitted to the HA and AHM.

HOs will report concerns regarding contract compliance directly to the CM; concerns will be investigated and if it is felt necessary, the CM will liaise with the contractor to seek a resolution.

Issues reported from customers are passed to the CM to address. The CM immediately advises the supervisor of the contract requesting a report of their findings to rectify the problem. In some circumstances such as Health & Safety incidents the CM will visit the area and take photographic evidence, reporting back their findings immediately – for example wet floors/slips/falls.

## **5. Estate Greenspace Management Procedure**

Estate common areas include the landscaped areas surrounding bungalows, sheltered schemes and communal flats. Gardens to the front, side or rear of general needs housing are classed as private areas within the curtilage of the property. They are the responsibility of the tenant along with trees and any boundary hedges that enclose the garden. Maintenance of these areas will be enforced through the tenancy agreement.

### **5.1 Service Delivery**

There are currently different contractual requirements operating within the North and South Areas; there are specific requirements and specifications held within each

contract which must be adhered to until contracts have been aligned. The service delivered will be as follows:

### 5.1.1 Grass Cutting

#### South

- 17 visits to each site per year, with 15 cuts completed between April and October on a fortnightly basis and two further cuts completed in March.
- Grass cuttings are only collected at Sheltered Housing Schemes. Cut and Fly at all other open spaces.
- Grassed areas neatly mown with edges strimmed against kerbs, beds and obstructions.
- After cutting, blow and sweep any grass cuttings (arising) that have been deposited on adjacent footpath/front door alcoves.
- Site visits to be recorded by the Greenspace Maintenance Contractor on a Portal on their Website.
- Litter is to be collected prior to grass being cut.

#### North

- Mow areas defined as 'grass regular' as often as required to ensure grass does not exceed 50mm in the summer and 70mm in the winter. Cut down to between 20-25mm, ensuring cuttings are evenly distributed. Immediately following each cut clear cuttings from paths, paved areas, highways or play area surfaces onto surrounding grass.
- During the winter period or as instructed by the CM; where grass abuts hard paving, cut back the grass edge to the original line and level using an edging iron or approved mechanical method.

### 5.1.2 Hedge Trimming

#### South

- 2 visits per year; prior to and immediately following the Bird Nesting Season. The 'Bird Nesting Season' is officially from February until August (Natural England) and it is recommended that vegetation works (tree or hedge cutting) or site clearance should be done outside of the nesting season. However, the nesting period may start before this and extend beyond it, in some cases. The busiest time for nesting birds is from 1st March until 31st July and of course varies according to species, etc.  
Contractors must aim to avoid impact to nesting birds and infringement of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and breaching the European Habitats Directive 1992/Nesting Birds Directive.
- All clippings are to be removed.
- No hedge will be clipped if nesting birds are present.
- Hedges will be maintained at their present height and width. Contractors only trim the top and the LHP side - customers are responsible for the side of a hedge on their property.
- Litter to be collected prior to hedges being trimmed.

### North

- Trim hedges approximately June and October each year unless excessive growth requires earlier attendance using shears, hand operated hedge trimmer or approved tractor mounted trimmer. Trim carefully and neatly with the width at the top less than the base. Cut back to previous year's growth.
- On completion of cutting each hedge, remove all weeds, brambles, litter and debris from the base of the hedge and dispose.
- Monthly between 1st February and 30th October each year, remove all weeds, brambles, litter and debris from the base of the hedge and dispose.

## 5.1.3 Weed Spraying

### South

- Weed spraying to be carried out three times a year at all hard-landscaped areas (communal footpaths, garage sites, LHP-owned estate parking bays, sheltered housing parking and drying areas).

### North

- Weed control to be carried out on all hard surfaces, along perimeter fence lines, wall lines and around obstacles in turfed areas with an approved non-residual herbicide at a frequency to ensure the appearance. The frequency is to ensure adherence to the Grading Standards listed in the Table in Section 11 of the Specification, to Grade B or above. LHP anticipates this to be a minimum of three occasions per year, once during April/May, once during June/July and once during September/October, spray.

## 5.1.4 Other Grounds Maintenance works

### Shrub and rose pruning (sheltered only)

- Prune as appropriate to the species or the site (adjacent to footpaths, doors, windows etc.).
- Remove accumulation of weeds and litter.

### Dig over beds

#### South

- Once over the winter period, unless otherwise specified on the Bill of Quantities.

#### North

- Every 15 working days between 1st of March and 30th November and on one occasion in January remove all weeds from borders by hand ensuring all roots are eradicated. Remove all litter, debris, dead or diseased plant material and leaves from the borders and dispose of at Contractor's own tip. Lightly fork the soil surface where required to remove any footprints and relieve compaction but avoiding damage to the roots of adjoining plants and leave the area in a neat, raked condition with the soil edge thrown up.

### **Litter and Weed Control**

- Ensure all sites are kept in a clean, tidy and attractive condition.
- LHP parking areas with build-up of soil/moss/weeds to be scraped once a year.

### **Leaf Clearance**

- Leaves will be collected as part of winter works where there are large accumulations which are detrimental to grass, plants or personal safety.

### **Attenuation Ponds and Open Watercourses**

Attenuation ponds are designed to slow the passage of water from surface run-off to the ground/drainage system

- One visit per year (mid cutting season).
- Banks of watercourses and attenuation ponds to be cut back.
- Debris, litter or rubbish to be removed.

### **Landscaped Buffer Zones**

- One visit per year (winter works).
- Trim back any overhanging branches.
- Remove any litter, rubbish or waste.
- Any trees/shrubs that are removed shall be replaced if subject to a planning condition requirement.

## **5.1.5 Japanese Knotweed**

In all suspected cases refer to the current Invasive Species Procedure.

- Identified by specialist - Japanese Knotweed Ltd. (South), Japanese Knotweed Specialists (North)
- Treatment programme to be provided by the respective specialist dependant on the area.
- Tenants will be provided with information leaflet on DOs and DON'Ts and kept informed of progress ([Appendix 6](#)).

## **5.1.6 Play Areas**

- Provide a safe, clean environment for children to play.
- Weekly inspection undertaken by Greenspace Management Contractor.
- Greenspace Management Contractor to provide weekly report and identify any maintenance issues including vandalism. CM can request Greenspace Contractor to carry out general repairs to the site/fencing and deal with trip hazards or removal of equipment. All issues with the equipment itself would be dealt with by specialists.
- Topping up bark chippings around play equipment as necessary.
- Annual safety audits carried out by independent specialist Play Area Assessors (Wicksteed) and our Insurers (Zurich).

## 5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

- HOs will monitor quality of service using an Application on their mobile device, visiting sites on a monthly basis throughout the year.
- HOs may invite local tenants to join them on their regular inspections.
- Customer Satisfaction surveys will be carried out at monthly intervals.
- LHP's Contract Managers have access to the Contractor's web site. This access includes a document which shows every site being maintained, when the works are programmed and actual completion dates with before and after photographs.
- Occasionally for reasons beyond the Contractor's control (e.g. prolonged inclement weather) the agreed number of grass cuts is not completed. The Contractor will look to undertake other greenspace management works to the equivalent value of missed grass cuts to ensure that our customers continue to receive a value for money service.

## 5.3 Compliance with Company Policies and Government Legislation

Greenspace Management Contractor will be expected to comply with:

- LHP's Code of Conduct for Contractors Policy.
- LHP's Equal Opportunities Policy (where they do not have their own policies and procedures).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.
- Working at Height Regulations 2005.

## 6. Tree Management Procedure

### 6.1 Operational Guidance

- 6.1.1 Trees enrich our environment by providing shelter, shade and colour, by filtering pollutants from the air and by absorbing Carbon Dioxide and producing Oxygen. Most people value the trees and shrubs which grow on our green spaces and enjoy the close contact with nature created by trees and their associated wildlife.
- 6.1.2 Trees are living things; they change with the seasons and grow with the years; this is part of their beauty. Sometimes it is necessary to carryout work on a tree to repair damage or make the tree safe. However ongoing work which aims to unnaturally restrict the size and shape of a tree can be counterproductive, resulting in the tree producing more vigorous growth in response.

6.1.3 LHP receives numerous enquiries each year from members of the public requesting works to be carried out on our owned trees. Most of these requests are to prune or fell trees which the tenant considers to be causing a nuisance.

The main concerns associated with trees are:

- dead, dying, diseased and dangerous trees
- dangerous branches
- trees causing damage to property
- obstruction of light to houses or gardens
- overhanging branches
- falling leaves or debris and aphid problems
- branches obscuring signs and street lighting columns
- branches affecting telephone lines
- Interference with television reception
- limbs or growth interfering with access/site lines

6.1.4 While we respond positively to tree matters involving safety, it is not possible, or desirable, to undertake all the works that LHP is asked to carry out. In some cases, the work requested will not resolve the problem and in other cases it will provide only a temporary solution, raising expectations that the work will be repeated whenever requested. Pruning works can also affect the health and amenity value of the tree and most trees do not respond well to attempts to restrict their size by continual pruning.

6.1.5 Tenants are responsible for maintenance of trees in their gardens, the only exception to this is if the tree(s) are deemed to be dead, dying, diseased and dangerous.

6.1.6 The following list sets out how LHP will evaluate requests for work to be carried out on LHP owned trees.

## **6.2 Dead, Dying, Diseased and Dangerous Trees**

LHP will remove trees that are dead, dying, diseased or dangerous.

### **6.2.1 Dangerous Branches**

A dangerous branch is one which is dead, shows signs of decay or damage, or weak attachment to the tree. Where a dangerous branch is identified it will be removed or reduced to a safe point.

### **6.2.2 Damage to Property**

Where it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property LHP will act to rectify the problem. Direct damage may include tree roots lifting paving stones, or trunks or branches damaging garden walls or fences. Indirect damage may include subsidence due to soil shrinkage resulting from water extraction by tree roots. In cases of damage to property it must be clearly demonstrated that the tree is the principal cause of the damage.

### **6.2.3 Obstruction of Light to Houses or Gardens**

It is usually very difficult to prune a tree in order to give a lasting improvement in light levels to a property. Often the extent of pruning required to alleviate light obstruction can be damaging to the tree or destroy its amenity value, and thick re-growth



following pruning can make shading problems worse. **LHP will therefore resist this course of action except in exceptional circumstances.**

#### **6.2.4 Overhanging Branches**

LHP has a similar responsibility to a private landowner or neighbour in respect of overhanging branches and will only cut them back in circumstances where damage is being caused or the tree is dangerous.

Under common law a property owner has a legal right to cut back overhanging branches to their boundary. Ideally this work should be done to a good standard (British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Treework') by a competent person.

#### **6.2.5 Falling Leaves or Debris and Aphid Problems**

LHP is not legally responsible for fallen leaves or other tree debris such as cones, seeds, blossom etc. Pruning of trees is not a solution to this occurrence and we would be extremely unlikely to fell a tree because of leaf litter etc. The same criterion applies to trees which host aphids with associated stickiness (honeydew) problems or trees that produce large amounts of fruit.

#### **6.2.6 Branches Obscuring Signs or Street Lighting Columns**

Where trees are blocking streetlights, road signs etc. and jeopardise public safety LHP will consider carrying out work that to alleviate the problem while retaining the tree. In extreme cases removal of the tree and replacement with a more suitable species may be appropriate.

#### **6.2.7 Branches Affecting Telephone and Power Lines**

Effective use of telephone lines and power supplies is the responsibility of the service provider.

#### **6.2.8 Television Reception**

LHP will not normally carry out works to trees or remove trees to improve television reception. Aerials and satellite dishes should be carefully sited at the time of installation, with consideration being given to how neighbouring trees may grow in the future.

### **6.3 Other Operations**

From time to time it may be necessary for LHP to carry out work on trees in response to its development priorities. Development priorities may include neighbourhood or site redesign, or the redevelopment of green spaces. Where trees are removed LHP will seek to replace them with species appropriate to the location and site conditions.

Trees in woodlands and other heavily wooded areas may also be thinned out periodically to encourage the growth of the most appropriate specimens and species.

### **6.4 Tenant Alterations - Tree Works**

LHP will consider whether tenant requests to carry out works to trees in their garden are in the interest of the tree. LHP would therefore recommend that contractors are members of the Arboricultural Association. Tenants are responsible for trees in their garden and can request to remove them if they no longer wish to maintain them. This would be done at a cost to the tenant.



LHP will not give permission for tenants to plant trees in their garden. Only ornamental trees that remain in pots are appropriate, in order to protect buildings and prevent issues associated with tree maintenance in the future.

## **6.5 Bird Nesting Season**

Please be aware that the bird nesting season is between 1st March and 30th July; LHP will give due consideration to nesting situations on a case by case basis; subsequently service delivery may be affected by presenting situations. In some cases, LHP will only carry out emergency tree works during this period.

## **6.6 Standards**

6.6.1 All works to LHP trees will be carried out in line with British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Treework'. All personnel undertaking these works will wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing and be adequately trained as per the contract specification.

## **6.7 Tree Inspections**

6.7.1 LHP contracts independent experts to undertake regular tree inspections to ensure that its tree stock is safe and in a healthy condition. The survey will record information on all LHP owned trees and identify any tree which may pose a risk to health and safety. In the case of unsafe trees remedial actions will be taken within a timescale recommended by inspectors. Other works will be organised in line with the priorities identified by the inspectors. Appropriate re-inspection dates will be set for all trees dependent on their age, condition, location and species.

6.7.2 HO's are required to undertake monthly inspections of all common areas. During inspections any trees that are identified as being cause for concern will be noted, and pictures taken. Customers may also contact LHP to raise concerns they have with trees. These will be passed to the CM via call log if the CM is not available at point of contact.

## **6.8 Operational Process**

### **South Area**

6.8.1 Tim Moya Associates (TMA) undertakes a cyclical audit of all LHP owned trees. The inspection results are relayed to the CM and high priority works will be scheduled within the recommended timeframes. The list of trees requiring attention will be reviewed by the CM and passed to the Arboricultural contractor (Malc Firth) to obtain a quote for the work. The CM will raise an order and update records once confirmation of completion has been received.

6.8.2 The CM will identify if the tree in question is owned by LHP utilising the MyTrees software and the GIS mapping system. Where the concern has been raised by a customer the CM may arrange a visit to the area or ask the customer to email in photos, in order to assess the tree. Utilising the information contained within the

procedure, the CM will discuss the concern with the tenant and will decide as to whether further action is required.

6.8.3 All concerns relating to LHP trees will be passed to the CM who will liaise with the contractor to decide on appropriate works and timescale for action (if any). If a tree causing concern does not belong to LHP the CM will take all reasonable steps to identify the owner and send details to the appropriate authority.

6.8.4 All works undertaken will be recorded on budget spreadsheets to log costings for the budget, The CM will periodically request TMA to update the MyTrees software to ensure accuracy.

### **North Area**

6.8.5 Lindsey Tree Services undertake all surveys and subsequent works. All the recommended works are completed as part of the current contract.