

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

TREE POLICY WORKING GROUP

SITE VISIT TO KINGSTHORPE RECREATION GROUND

Thursday, 1 June 2006

PRESENT:

Councillor Jamie Lane	(Chair)
Paul Chambers	Team Leader
Branwell Sugden	Tree Inspector
Tracy Tiff	

A contract is issued to the contractors carrying out the work (example copy attached) which details the Latin names of the trees on the site, maintenance work required and a map.

It could take three months before work commenced on a large contract: -

- One month to draw up the contract
- One month for the tenders to be submitted
- A further month before work commenced

The budget for parks is £135,000 per annum, £75,000 has been committed since 1 April 2006. The contractors that the Council is now using provide a good value for money service.

The cost of removing/maintaining a tree was approximately £150 to £180 (1/2 days work). The Council was invoiced £500 plus VAT for emergency calls. However, it had cost £8,000 to remove a large tree (once removed, four people could stand in the whole where the trunk had been). A large tree weighs approximately 7 tonne. A tree can perspire which can make a leaf weigh three times more; the excess weight this can cause a branch to fall. Branches do not tend to fall in the rain as rain runs off the leaves and does not create additional weight.

NBC is responsible for all 127 parks and open spaces in the borough and the tree inspectors aim to inspect parks annually. NBC is also responsible for the maintenance of all trees in the borough. In addition, the tree inspectors dealt with insurance claims, nesting birds, unprotected bats, insurance claims etc.

Tree Maintenance Staff

- Paul Chambers Team Leader
- Branwell Sugden and Ben ??/ Tree Inspectors
- Temporary Administration Officer

A site visit of Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground took place at 12 noon on 1 June 2006. The location was chosen as it has a variety of trees for viewing.

The site visit commenced by the tennis courts at Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground. Two trees had been marked for removal due to old age and a fungal infection. Branwell advised that other maintenance work consisted of: -

- Crown lift by 4m
- Crown lift by 5m
- Removal of major deadwood
- Removal of basal suckers to first major union
- Clear buildings and property by 3m

Complaints from the houses abutting the park had been received regarding overhanging trees and lighting issues. Trees must legally be one metre away from a property but the Council ensures that there is a three-meter distance. Lighting is not a legal requirement. Concerns had also been raised regarding tree roots and potential subsidence.

There were safety issues regarding the trees that were along the boundary of the school that was within close proximity to the park.

A balance must be found for public need and the health and need of the trees.

Four Poplars had been blown down in the wind and these had been marked for removal.

Abington Park

A survey was almost complete of the top end. 220 trees need to be worked on.

Two Pine trees had beetle infestation but there was the potential for it to affect the rest of the Pines. The situation must be monitored. It would not be known until the end of the Beetle-breeding season (end of July) the extent of the infestation. Beetle infestation is untreatable.

It was possible that all the Horse Chestnut trees in Abington Park will have to be removed due to disease.

Trees can look in perfect health but the stem is dead. This type of disease is air borne, ground borne and water borne.

Highways Trees

Crowns were maintained to 5 metres over the highway. Trees must not obscure lighting/traffic lights, signage or speed cameras.

The site visit concluded at 1pm