Limerick City and County Tree Policy 2024-2030

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City & County Council

ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

www.limerick.ie

Contents

Page


TUS
treet Campus
LIMERICK SCHOOL
OF ART & DESIGN

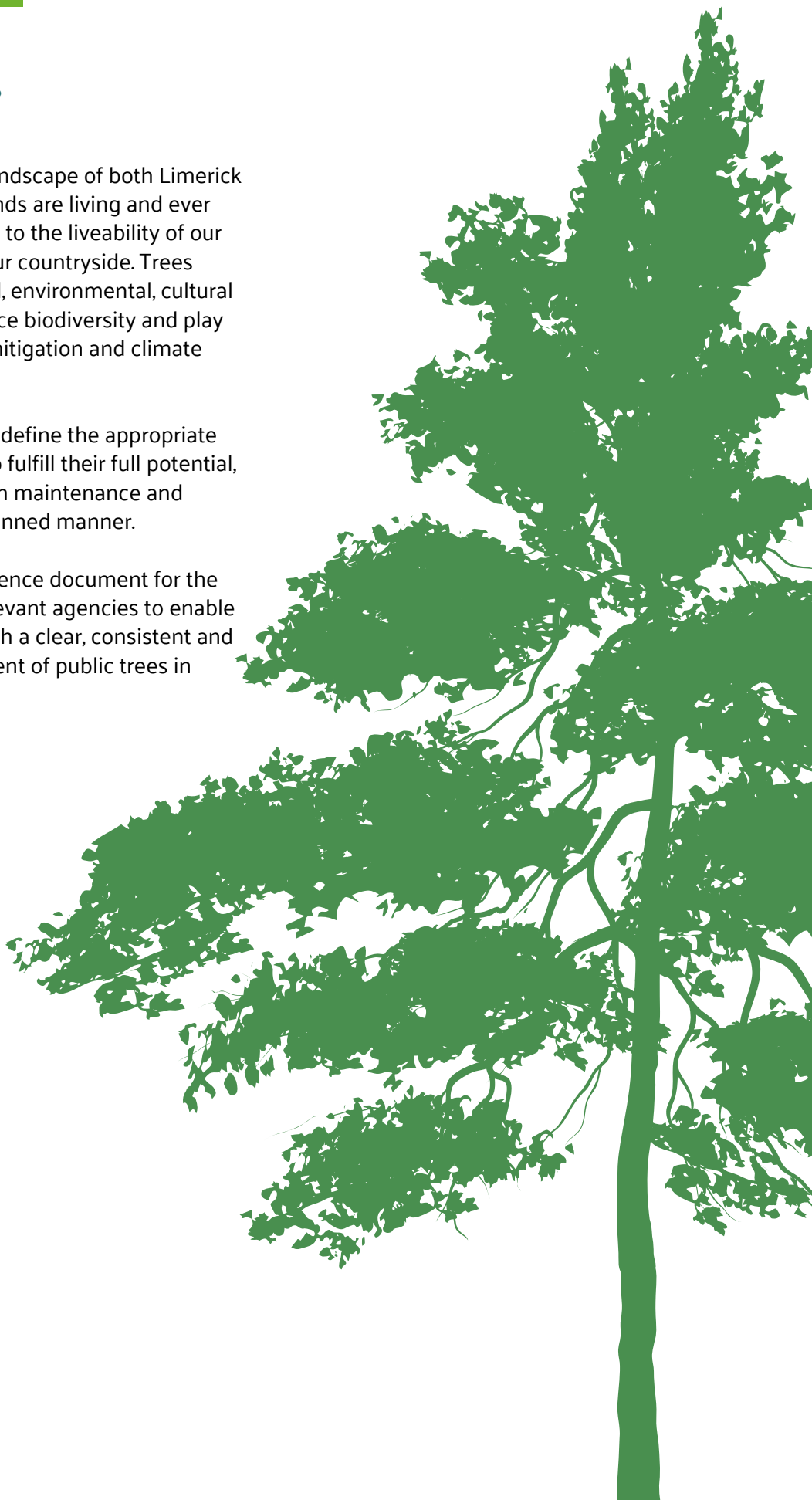
1 Introduction

1.1 Why have a Tree Policy?

Trees are an essential part of the landscape of both Limerick City and County. Trees and woodlands are living and ever changing features. They contribute to the liveability of our city and towns and the beauty of our countryside. Trees provide significant economic, social, environmental, cultural and aesthetic benefits. They enhance biodiversity and play vital roles in both climate change mitigation and climate adaptation.

The purpose of this document is to define the appropriate guidance needed to enable trees to fulfill their full potential, to provide multiple benefits through maintenance and management in a proactive and planned manner.

This policy is intended to be a reference document for the public, local authority and other relevant agencies to enable informed discussion and to establish a clear, consistent and structured vision for the management of public trees in Limerick.



2 International, National and Local Policy context.

As outlined above, the benefits of trees are many and varied. This is recognised in policy at global, national, regional and local levels. A synopsis of global, national and local policies, as they relate to trees, is provided in the table below.

Policy Level: **Global**
Policy: **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
Policy Reference: **Goal 11.7**
Synopsis of Policy:
Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities the SDG seek, by 2023, to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Policy Level: **Global**
Policy: **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
Policy Reference: **Goal 13.2**
Synopsis of Policy:
Climate Action where the SDG seek to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

Policy Level: **Global**
Policy: **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
Policy Reference: **Goal 15**
Synopsis of Policy:
Under Goal 15 – Life on Land – the SDG seek to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally (Goal 15.2) and additionally includes a call to take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species (Goal 15.5)

Policy Level: **National**
Policy: **Project Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework**
Policy Reference: **NPO 58**
Synopsis of Policy:
National Policy Objective 58 provides that integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans. It goes on to state "Green infrastructure planning will inform the preparation of regional and metropolitan strategies and city and county development plans by ensuring that sufficient and well planned green spaces, commensurate in scale to long-term development requirements, are designated in statutory plans."

Policy Level: **National**
Policy: **Project Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework**
Policy Reference: **NPO 62**
Synopsis of Policy:
National Policy Objective 62 seeks to "identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas. Green belts and green spaces in our cities, towns and villages play an integral role as part of the fabric of our settlements, either through their use for community recreation and amenity purposes, supporting biodiversity or as a natural delineation of the settlement itself, forming the interface between urban and rural areas. Green spaces and parks have a role in determining the quality of life in and sustainability of, our settlements. Green belts adjoining our urban areas also fulfil a strategic purpose, as a potential asset for future, planned development as an urban extension, particularly at a city scale."

Policy Level: **National**
Policy: **A Shared National Vision for Trees, Woods and Forests in Ireland by 2050**
Synopsis of Policy:
"The right trees in the right places for the right reasons with the right management - supporting a sustainable and thriving economy and society and a healthy environment" (DAFM 2022) is the shared national vision for trees and forests for Ireland. It envisages by 2050 that "Ireland's forests and woodlands will be seen as a symbol of the transformational social, economic and environmental changes that were needed to address the climate, biodiversity, housing and health emergencies of the 2020's".

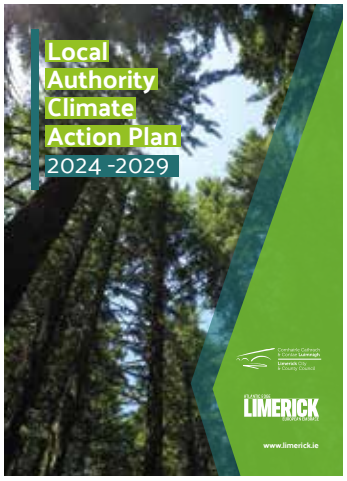
Policy Level: **Local**
Policy: **Limerick City and County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024**
Synopsis of Policy:
Limerick City and County Council's Corporate Plan includes a specific goal to Transition to an Environmentally Sustainable Carbon Neutral Economy (Goal 4)

Policy Level: **Local**
Policy: **Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028**
Synopsis of Policy:
Included in the strategic objectives of the Development Plan is the objective to "protect, enhance and connect areas of natural heritage, green infrastructure and open space for the benefits of quality of life, biodiversity, protected species and habitats, while having the potential to facilitate climate change adaptation and flood risk measures."

Policy Level: **Local**
Policy: **Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy**
Synopsis of Policy:
The Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy (GBI) has as its overarching aim to inform and guide the planning and management of a network of green and blue spaces, helping drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy. It recognises the benefits which trees and woodlands provide to society in terms of environmental services; climate change; health and wellbeing; economic and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. It recognises and supports the need to develop a Tree Policy and Biodiversity Strategy for the study area.

Policy Level: **Local**
Policy: **Limerick City and County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024**
Synopsis of Policy:
The Limerick City and County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 assesses and prioritises the potential risk to infrastructure and communities in Limerick of severe weather events. It promotes the adoption of green solutions to climate change, and seeks to promote, inter alia, the expansion of tree cover in Limerick through the utilisation of a variety of woodland grant schemes, recognising the ecosystems services which trees and woodlands to protect against the impacts of climate change.

Policy Level: **Local**
Policy: **Limerick City and County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029**
Synopsis of Policy:
The Limerick City and County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan sets out the actions that Limerick City and County Council will take to lead the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. Its primary focus is reducing the organisations own carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 as well as a range of action to influence, coordinate, facilitate and advocate action across all sectors of society.

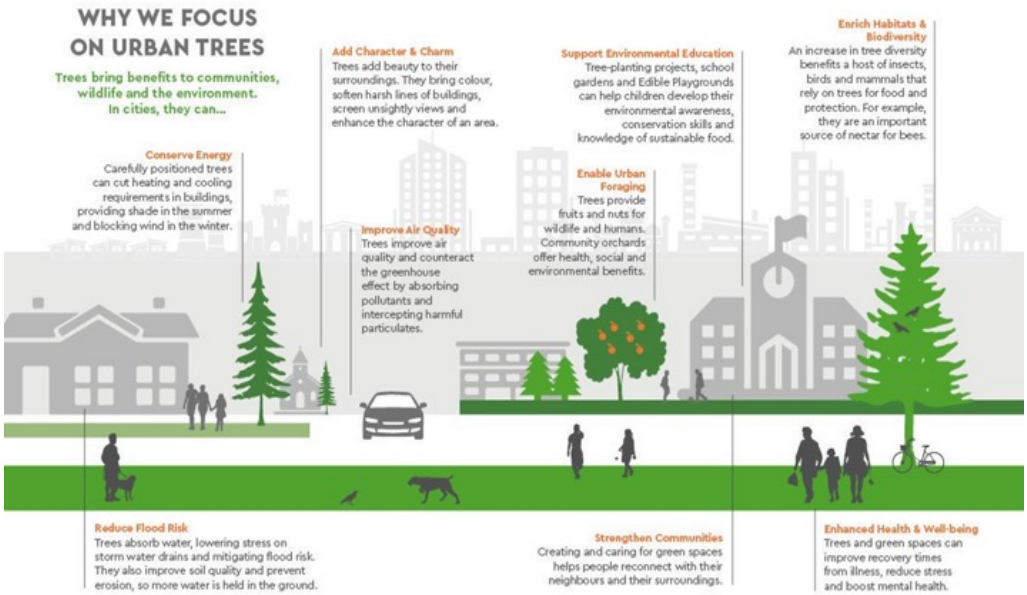


3 A Tree Policy for Limerick

3.1 The Importance of Trees

Trees are the largest and longest living organisms on earth. They are essential for our health and the health of the planet. Trees confer a wide array of benefits. Some of these benefits are visible, such as the enhancement of our surroundings; some invisible, such as the sequestering of carbon; and some intangible such as their impact on our well-being and happiness.

The graphic below outlines some of the ecosystems services urban trees provide.



Limerick City and County Council has a duty of care and responsibility for the management and maintenance of trees in the public realm, streets, parklands, open spaces and woodland demesne.

3.2 Ecosystems Services Provided By Urban Trees

Air Quality

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gases from the air producing oxygen in the photosynthesis process. Each year a mature tree produces enough oxygen for 10 people. Trees also trap dust particles thus improving air quality.

Trees are capable of removing and storing harmful pollutants that have become associated with poor urban air and soil quality. These include Sulphur Dioxide, Nitrogen Oxides and Particulates, Carbon Monoxide, Cadmium, Nickel and Lead.

Flooding

Trees help mitigate the risk of flooding. Trees can also have a big impact on the water cycle of urban areas. The crown of a large tree is a free standing anti-flood reservoir and one hundred mature trees can capture over 260,000 gallons (1 million litres) of rainwater each year. For every 5% of tree cover in a community, storm water run-off is reduced by 2%, which also reduces topsoil erosion and prevents the leaching of urban pollutants into watercourses. Because of their water carrying capacity, trees are a key component of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

Urban Heat Reduction

Trees provide shade and perform an important cooling function. This will become increasingly important as our climate warms. One mature tree has the same cooling effect as 10 room-sized air conditioners.

Carbon Storage and Sequestration

A single mature tree absorbs more than 20kg of CO_2 each year. Trees are carbon sinks, they store carbon as they grow, temporarily reducing carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere. As climate change increasingly becomes a reality, planting and caring for trees in our towns and cities will become even more important.

Habitats and Biodiversity

Trees and their ecosystem provide habitats for wildlife. Trees and timber with cavities are especially valuable for animals such as bats and birds.

Trees provide green links between parks and open spaces allowing opportunities for wildlife to travel from place to place to access new habitats.

Older trees, often part of parkland or old demesnes, often have cracks or crevices which offer opportunities for roosting bats. They are also important landscape features. Older trees, at a later life stage, can support insects or other invertebrates and can provide sheltered conditions to allow foraging by bats.

Planting trees as linear landscape features can help bat movement in urban areas as they tend to navigate along such features in the landscape. In full leaf such trees can help screen lighting, which can further aid the movement of light sensitive species such as Brown Long Eared Bats.

For birds, trees provide singing perches, helping them to establish territories, nesting sites and depending on species, food. This can be either invertebrates, supported by the tree, or fruits. The selection of native species can also promote larger invertebrate populations, which can sustain both bird life and bats.

Trees can also provide valuable cover, not just for nesting or rousting but also from predators such as raptors, an important, but often overlooked aspect of bird ecology.

Health and Wellbeing

Trees reduce incidences of asthma, skin cancers, hypertension and stress. They do this by reducing air pollution, providing shade from solar radiation, and providing a calm, attractive environment.

Economic

Districts with healthy tree populations are deemed more attractive and thus more valuable – properties are valued between 5-15% higher. Trees can reduce local energy consumption by as much as 10%. US studies show that for every $1 invested in urban trees cities can save up to $7 of expenditure in other areas.

Improved Quality of Urban Living

Trees create a sense of place, give a local identity and act as landmarks.

Trees and green spaces foster community cohesion by creating a sense of place, a local identity and a system of landmarks. Tree areas can provide space for leisure and community activities, helping residents to take pride in the attractiveness of their location.

Mature trees can even have a positive impact on the levels of petty crime and anti-social behaviour in inner city areas.

3.3 Public Tree Inventory

A comprehensive inventory of public trees within the Council's administrative area has not previously been undertaken and so accurate and detailed information on the extent, profile, condition and maintenance history of our tree stock is very limited. Information about these trees is essential if our trees are to be managed effectively and to enable planned management.

A partial survey was conducted in Limerick City Centre a number of years ago which recorded the species, age and condition of about 500 specimen trees in the city parks. However, this is only a small fraction of the total number of trees managed by the Council.

Recently, the Council acquired a GIS dataset of tree cover in the City and County, produced by automated analysis of high resolution aerial photography. This dataset includes trees over 3m tall and gives their location, height and canopy spread. From this, it is estimated that there are approximately 5 million trees in Limerick. Of these, approximately 19,000 are in our city and county parks; 23,000 in estates taken in charge and an estimated 4,000 are street trees. This suggests that Limerick City and County Council is currently directly responsible for the maintenance and management of approximately 46,000 trees.

3.4 Current Tree Management Practices in Limerick

Public trees are managed by the Parks Service. Works involve tree planting and establishment operations, as well as tree surgery works, which are carried out directly by Parks staff or by specialist contractors.

This document identifies key opportunities to strengthen the management of public trees through a central, coordinated approach for responding to planting requests and new planting opportunities in the annual tree planting programme. The Limerick Tree Policy will facilitate a more proactive approach with a planned annual tree schedule focused on central coordination and procurement.

The environmental, social and economic factors relating to trees are recognised, but the pressures on existing trees, opportunities for new tree planting and the impact of development in its many forms tend to be dealt with in isolation.

Many trees which are ultimately managed by the Council are not planted by it. When estates are taken in charge by the Council, it takes on responsibility for maintaining any trees previously planted. It is important that clear guidance is provided for developers so that the trees the Council take in charge are suitable from both a species and location point of view.

3.5 Impact of climate change and trees

The effects of climate change are predicted to result in warmer wetter winters with an increased risk of flooding and hotter drier summers. Trees play an important part in cooling the urban environment and reducing heat stress. Trees also have the ability to maintain and recycle vast amounts of water and can play an important part in flood mitigation.

One of the greatest challenges facing the local and national tree population is the control and containment of new pests and diseases from outside Ireland. New pests and diseases are a threat to Ireland due to the increased international trade in plants, timber and general goods, and the more favourable conditions for new pests and diseases associated with climate change. Examples include ash dieback and bacterial canker of horse chestnuts.

It is important to ensure the future continuity of tree cover across the city and county by, where practical, managing the age range of trees and by planting with a more diverse range of species in order to mitigate the risks that monoculture and climate change present for tree management.

4 Tree Policy

4.1 Aims and Objectives of the Tree Policy

The overall aims of the Tree Policy are to ensure a safer, healthier tree population; enhance biodiversity; improve climate resilience; maintain and improve landscape quality and through these elements, improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Limerick. We will do this by:

- creating an inventory of public trees in Limerick City and County, which will record their species, age and condition
- ensuring that the Council has a clear proactive programme of tree maintenance, management and planting;
- maintaining and improving the tree cover for the future;
- ensuring appropriate siting and species selections for all new trees;
- promoting the importance of trees in shaping the distinctive local character and appearance of Limerick's landscape
- recognising the significant environmental, social, cultural and economic value that trees provide;
- effectively communicating, educating and engaging with the local community on trees and their importance;
- allocating sufficient resources to allow for best practice tree management
- providing clarity over why decisions and actions are taken;
- balancing the risk and nuisance to persons and property against the other aims; and
- recognising the value of trees as a tangible asset, by assessing their economic value and ensuring that damage to trees is viewed like any other form of property damage;
- Develop protocols with relevant stakeholders including service and utility companies for working near trees.

4.2 Tree Survey

Policy 1
The Council will initiate a tree survey of all Council owned and managed trees, so that the collected information can be used to manage the tree resource in a planned and efficient way, which allows for the development and implementation of long term management plans, work schedules and the prioritisation of tree work.

Policy 2
The Council will acquire a computerised GIS based tree management system to enable the mobile mapping, surveying and management of all publicly managed trees in the City and County

To address the shortcomings in the current tree management practices and subject to the availability of resources, the Council will purchase a computerised, GIS based tree management system to enable the mobile mapping, surveying and management of all publicly managed trees within the city and county. This system will also be capable of integration with the Council's Sugar CRM system and other operational systems. An integrated tree management system will provide a comprehensive record of individual trees and enable the Council to trace the full history of any tree including inspections, tree works completed and related customer enquiries. There are several such systems available and a full procurement process will be required.

Once the GIS based tree management software system is in place, a programme of public tree surveying across the city and county will be implemented to record details of location, species, age, size, condition, maintenance history and management requirements of individual trees. Surveyors will input the data collected from surveys into the computerised tree management system. The Council will use the data to better manage its risks and to prioritise actions for our public tree population. The survey will prioritise street trees in the first instance.

4.3 Seek to appoint a Tree Officer

Policy 3
The Council will seek to appoint Tree Officer to implement the transition of Tree Management in Limerick from a reactive to a proactive service.

Another key element of moving towards a more proactive tree management policy will be the appointment of a dedicated, suitably qualified Tree Officer.

The role of the Tree Officer will be to:

- Procure software and services to enable proactive management of trees.
- Manage contracts with external service providers
- Ensure the GIS Tree Management System is kept up to date
- Generate annual work programmes and review progress
- Develop guidance documents and protocols in relation to tree management and planting.
- Provide expert advice in relation to specific tree management issues, including species selection.
- Review the quality of work of external services providers involved in surveying and managing the tree stock.
- Engage the public and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of trees and the proper care.
- Make information on planned tree works available to the elected members and public on limerick.ie
- Developing and overseeing implementation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan (see chapter 9)
- Value trees to assess compensation for damage or unauthorised removal (see chapter 10).

4.4 Budgetary Provision

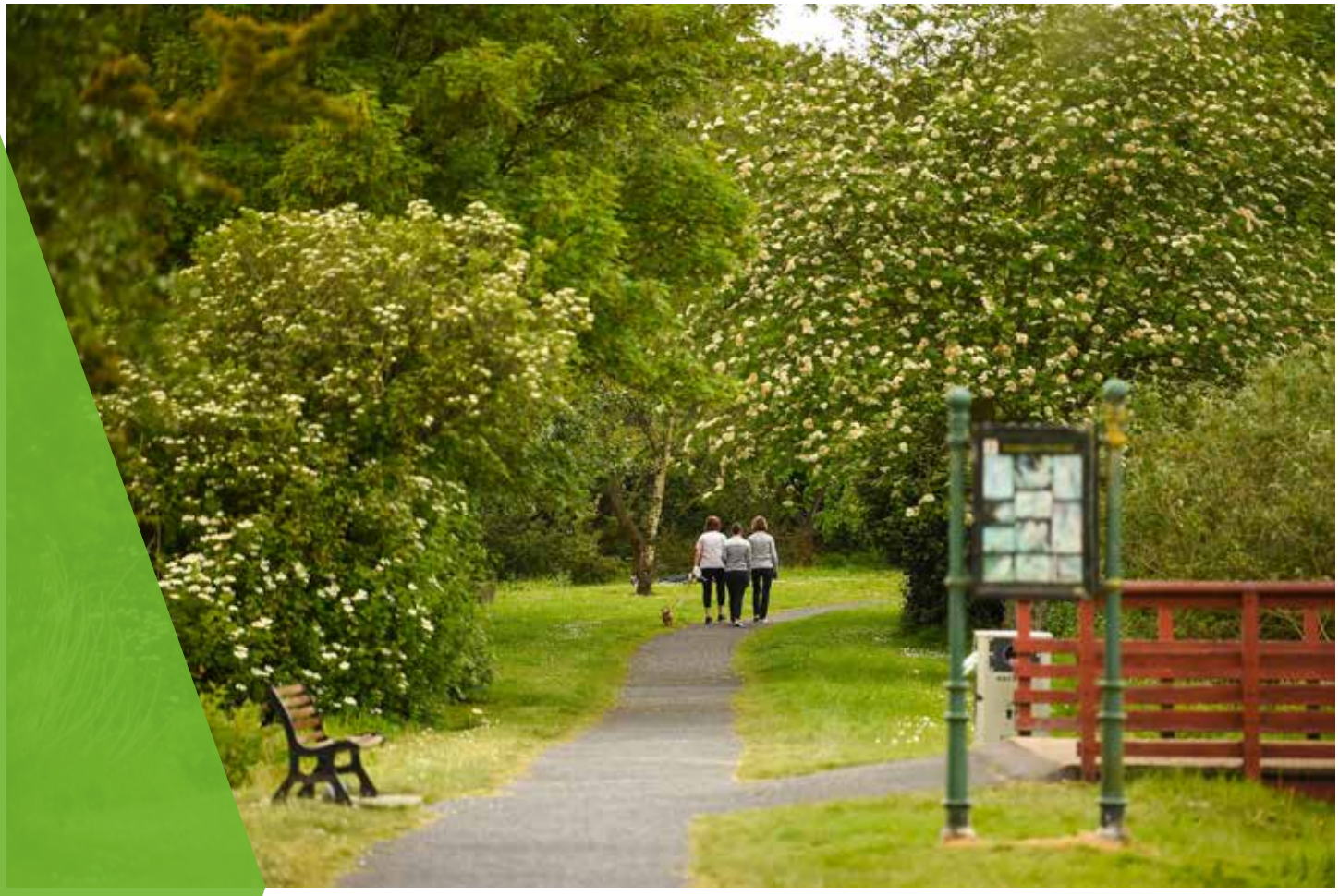
Policy 4
The Council will make adequate budgetary provision in the annual estimates to allow for the planned and proactive management and expansion of its tree stock

The Council will provide a dedicated budget for tree maintenance so that a multi annual maintenance program can be developed and implemented.

4.5 Tree Maintenance Service

The system and resources described above will allow the Council to offer a more planned and reliable service to the public, Council members and other Council Services Providers. In particular, it will allow the Council to proactively:

- Manage inspections and surveys of trees under Council ownership and management.
- Develop and maintain the computerised tree management system.
- Plan and monitor tree works
- Compile and deliver an annual programme of tree maintenance works.
- Deal with public enquiries and complaints on tree related matters.
- Provide professional advice to other Council services and Council members.
- Communicate with community stakeholders.



4.6 Cyclical Programme of Planned Tree Maintenance

Policy 5
The Council will progress the phased introduction of a cyclical programme of tree maintenance.

To ensure 'Best Value' service delivery, the Council will continue to advance the phased introduction of a planned cyclical programme of tree maintenance. This represents a move away from pruning individual trees on a one off basis to pruning entire roads or whole estates which is more efficient both in terms of cost, time management and community benefit. Having a planned approach also reduces the risk of tree failure and nuisance to residents, and will help to pre-empt complaints and meet the majority of customer requirements for tree works. This planned programme of tree maintenance will be made available to the public via the Municipal Districts and the Council's website

In addition to the rolling programme of planned works, some works will also arise from unplanned events such as severe weather conditions or insurance claims. Trees which threaten public safety and property will always be given the highest priority which may lead to plans for programmed works having to be delayed.

4.7 Reactive and Emergency Works

There will always be a need to carry out reactive works, although the quantity of this work should reduce over time as cyclical work is embedded. Reactive works are carried out to manage risks to the public. They include felling dead trees, removing hazardous branches, and clearing obstructions to sightlines and infrastructure. Reactive works are carried out in response to enquiries from other Council Services Providers, residents and Elected members or where staff have identified them when travelling in the County.

The Council has an emergency plan for severe weather conditions and has tree maintenance crews attend as required for any tree related emergencies.

4.8 Public Awareness, Education & Engagement

Policy 6
The Council will engage with the general public, schools, resident groups and environmental non-governmental organisations to promote a better understanding of the management, care and value of trees and to increase public awareness of their importance in promoting well-being, environmental sustainability and improving quality of life.

Education on good practice in tree management is essential to improve understanding and appreciation of trees. It is an effective method to dispel any negative concerns and fears that residents may have. Where practicable, the Council will promote awareness and appreciation of trees through encouraging and facilitating the involvement of local communities, schools and other stakeholders in tree planting, management and educational activities. Limerick City and County Council will undertake to organise events for National Tree Week in March and Tree Day in October, particularly in association with schools and community groups throughout the county.

4.9 Trees in Parks & Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces make an important contribution to people's overall quality of life. Trees are one of the major components that define the landscape and layout of parks and recreational open space and as such the Council recognises the importance of its parkland trees. They provide screening, shade and structure to make our parklands a more attractive environment to visit and in which to enjoy a broad range of recreational activities. These trees also offer a rich and unique wildlife habitat, particularly where they grow to form woodlands.

Tree cover in Limerick's parks and open spaces is variable. Some parks such as the Demesne in Newcastlewest and Portland Park in the City contain extensive woodland areas, others such as the People's Park contain beautiful individual specimens and stands of mature trees. In some parks, there are limited opportunities for planting new trees without encroaching on the recreational open space that, in itself, is important to the structure and use of the parks. Existing trees in parks and public open spaces are managed to reflect the circumstances of the site and their type, age and condition. Ongoing maintenance includes removing dead wood, formative pruning of establishing trees, removing low branches from pathways and removing trees when they come to the end of their safe and useful life. Available resources will be used to plant new trees where a need has been identified.

Larger parks such as Mungret Park and open spaces offer the most scope and potential to plant a mixed range of diverse tree species, large individual trees and urban forests. Trees in parks generally have more room to grow compared to street trees and usually grow to their full height and spread. Trees in these areas can be planted with no restriction on size or habitat and can include exotic trees which can be in keeping with existing character or history of a park or area. Noteworthy features may also be included in parks such as plantings to remember historical, public and social events. An example is the Millennium Forest in the Shannon Fields.

4.10 Autumn Leaf Fall Management

The Council's street cleaning contract includes leaf sweeping during the autumn period. Leaves are removed from public roads and footpaths throughout the county. This usually begins in September and extends to the end of January each year. Residents are responsible for dealing with leaf-fall on their private property. Leaves from private gardens, drives or pathways should not be swept into the road but should be disposed of in a responsible manner. Options may include:

- home composting
- collection from your home via the brown/green bin service
- taking them to one of the Civic amenity centres in Kilmallock, Mungret or Newcastlewest for composting

Resident Associations, Tidy Towns groups and community groups may wish to compost leaves to create beneficial leaf mould, which is a valuable resource and can be used to enrich soils.

5 Tree Planting and Replacement Planting

Policy 7
Limerick City and County Council recognises the value of trees in the environment and is committed to planting new trees to ensure that their benefits in terms of ecosystem services, visual amenity and climate resilience is assured for future generations. We will maintain a database of sites that have been identified as possibilities for new trees and implement an annual programme of tree planting in accordance with available resources.

5.1 Right Tree Right Place

Policy 8
The principle of planting the 'right tree in the right place' will apply for all new and replacement tree planting.

The careful selection of appropriate tree species and planting location is essential to minimise future nuisance issues and unnecessary maintenance costs. Potential sites for tree planting will be inspected to assess their suitability for new trees, considering factors such as services, sight lines, warning signs and traffic signals, space for future growth, sub-surface archaeological deposits etc. When positioning new street trees, the Council will specifically aim to:

- Avoid future obstruction of public lighting columns by ensuring that the fully mature new tree canopy will be ideally greater than 5m, but certainly no less than 3m from the lighting column
- Seek to ensure that future tree growth does not compromise a minimum footpath width of 2.0 m.
- Make adequate soil volume a priority to sustain tree health and longevity when selecting planting sites and preparing pits for tree planting.
- Ensure that the tree planting or tree removal does not compromise or risk damage to upstanding archaeological monuments or sub-surface archaeological deposits.

All tree planting planned, as part of either Council or other developments should be subject to detailed review by the Council Tree Officer. Relevant Engineering, Archaeological, Parks and Scientific staff should also be consulted to ensure that the species and locations are appropriate.

5.2 Tree Planting

Areas targeted for new tree planting will be those where trees have been removed or where there is an identified need to increase the overall tree cover. Within City Centre streets, in the interest of public amenity and public realm enhancement, new in-ground tree planting should be facilitated as much as possible in-line with the City Centre Public Realm Strategy, which outlines key zones for future planting. Requests from Council members and local residents for new trees in their area will be taken into consideration within the planting programme. Individual requests will be prioritised according to the number of trees already in the area.

In addition, areas will be identified on which to create new native woodlands under the Native Woodland Creation on Public Lands scheme recently announced by the Forest Service which is part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. This scheme is intended to encourage public bodies to plant native trees on suitable council lands as a climate change and biodiversity action. In appropriate locations these woodlands may also become a public amenity. The scheme is applicable to lands in both urban and rural locations.

The Neighbour-wood Scheme is another native woodland scheme managed by the Forest Service. This scheme is similar in many ways to the more recent Native Woodland Creation on Public Lands scheme. However, the Neighbourwood scheme is likely to be more appropriate where the primary object of the project is to create an amenity woodland for the public. It is also more suited to woodland enhancement such as thinning of established overgrown woodlands or addition of paths, signage, exercise equipment or other amenities. This scheme will be considered to enhance the Millennium Forest in the Shannon Fields, which is currently somewhat overgrown with poor understorey development as a result.

Tiny Forests or Choill Bheag are small areas densely planted with a range of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants which replicate the composition of natural woodlands native to the particular area. Because of the particular techniques used, these Tiny Forest develop the ecology of a 100 year old forest within 10 years. Tiny Forests are havens for biodiversity, carbon sinks and a wonderful educational resource. The Council will aim to develop at least one Tiny Forest on County lands and will work with schools and community groups to encourage their development in other areas.

5.3 Design of Street Tree Planting Schemes

Where there is a substantial requirement for new or replacement tree planting within a streetscape, our preferred approach is to prepare a tree-planting plan for the site reflecting its character, scale, use and local interests. The design of any new tree planting should ensure that it complements the local landscape character and enhances the immediate environment. Trees will be selected for their appropriateness of scale and proportion to their surroundings and the aesthetic contribution they make to that environment. Planting density and species selection should be guided by available space to ensure that each tree is compatible with its new site and has every opportunity to develop into a healthy mature specimen. The scheme should endeavour to incorporate trees as a positive asset and an integral feature of the landscape setting. Such schemes may be subject to community consultation before being adopted and implemented.

5.4 Species Selection

The choice of tree species is dependent on suitability to the planting location and local landscape character. A greater variety of trees can be planted in parks and open spaces and species will be selected on suitability to setting, biodiversity value and visual appearance. The selection of street trees is guided by their mature size, water demand, crown shape and future management requirements. Species utilised in tree planting programmes will be those judged by the Council to be appropriate for the circumstances based on policy, arboriculture knowledge and experience. Appendix 1 contains a suggested list of tree species suitable for street tree planting. The list is not definitive and additional species will be considered where they have shown to be appropriate for street tree planting. More detailed guidance on trees for specific situations is given in Clare County Council's Tree Design Guide for Towns and Villages. The tree species list from this document is reproduced in Appendix 2. Limerick City & County Council will develop their own Tree Design Guide in due course which will replace the above document. Another valuable documents is the Heritage Councils Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages, where on page 6 a succinct guide to the selection of native species is presented.

Comprehensive guidance on tree selection can be obtained from Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide for Specifiers which is published by the Trees & Design Action Group

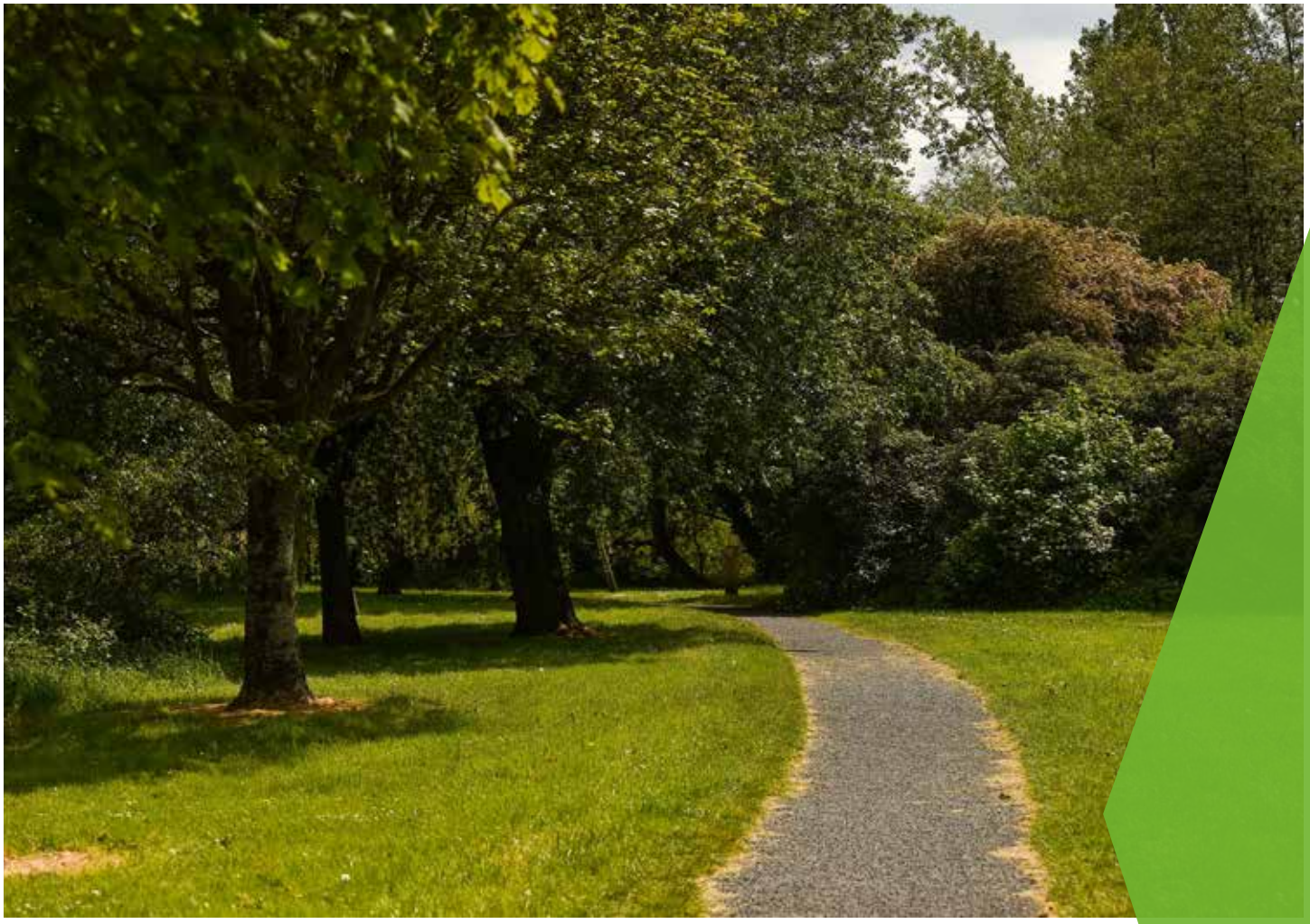
Having too many of the same type of tree in the county is a concern because of the increased risk of a loss of one or more species of tree to disease or other environmental factors. We can enhance the resilience of our tree population by increasing the diversity and variety of new trees planted. However, where the same type of tree species creates an avenue or clearly defined group within part of a street, new and replacement trees will be of the same or closely matching species in the interest of visual continuity.

As well as increasing species diversity, the Council will also seek to plant large canopy trees, wherever possible, to achieve the maximum benefits that trees provide. Large-growing tree species confer much greater benefits to urban areas than small trees. Where space allows, preference will be given to planting as large a tree as is appropriate for the location. The Council also encourages the planting of fruit trees in parks, community centres and schools.
All tree planting plans for both Council and other developments, including street trees, shall be agreed with the Council Tree Officer.

5.5 Replacement Tree Planting

Policy 9
The Council aims to ensure, subject to available budget resources, that every tree felled should be replaced with at least 5 new trees , to ensure that over the years, the County retains and increases its tree stock for future generations. If it is not practical or prudent to replace a tree in the same location or with the same species that was previously planted, then, a more suitable location nearby and species may be chosen.

If a site where a tree was removed is suitable to support a new tree or trees the site may be replanted with a suitable tree species. A new tree or trees will be planted as soon as practicable, allowing for stump removal and dormant season, but no later than 2 years after the initial tree removal. Replacement tree planting will only take place during the dormant season. In some cases it may not be appropriate to remove the tree stump and it may be left as a feature or decompose naturally. The Council Tree Officer shall be consulted prior to removal and to agree replacement scheme.



5.6 Use of Tree Guards

The Council does not install mesh tree guards around street trees or trees on public open spaces. It is our experience over the years that tree guards attract vandalism and become traps for unsightly accumulations of litter. They can also have the opposite effect to that which is intended in that the tree guard structure itself can provide leverage against which the trunks of young trees can be broken. In order to minimise vandalism to newly planted and establishing trees, the Council's preferred approach is to plant trees of robust size stem girth, usually a minimum of 18-20cm and support the tree with a staking mechanism of about 1m above ground. It is our experience that the heavier stem girth combined with a low stake minimises the ability to cause damage to the tree.

5.7 Post Planting Maintenance Programme

Care and maintenance of young trees is vital. When trees are first planted, they are at their most vulnerable and are more likely to die within their first 5 years than at any other time in their life. In order to aid their establishment, all new planted trees will be watered during the first growing season, between May and August. Newly planted trees will be inspected after year one and a water regime may be required to extend into year two. Local residents are encouraged to help trees outside or near their property by watering them on dry and windy days (10-20 litres per week). Where present, this can be done via the plastic tubing protruding from the earth at the base of the tree, which is buried around its roots. Residents should conserve water and use a basin in the sink to collect water or collect rainwater in a water butt for watering trees. Maintenance of the tree will also include loosening of tree ties and removal of stakes and ties when the tree has become established.

6 Tree Maintenance

Policy 10
The Council will maintain trees on public spaces, streets, parks and open spaces adhering to relevant industry guidelines when carrying out Arboricultural works to ensure all trees are in a safe condition and not causing actionable nuisance or foreseen danger.

Street tree maintenance includes the inspection, pruning, removal and replacement of trees.

6.1 Quality of Work

All tree works will be undertaken in accordance with British Standard BS 3998: 2010 Tree Work -Recommendations and current Health & Safety requirements. All staff undertaking tree works shall be competent with appropriate training, experience and qualifications. Any tree surgery contractors engaged to work on Council owned trees shall be competent and adequately qualified, trained, experienced and appropriately insured.
Any tree work carried out should be essential to the long-term retention of the tree in its current position rather than simply for appeasement reasons. The Council will aim to maintain a natural silhouette to a tree unless it can be shown to be in the best interests of the long-term health of the tree to do otherwise. The Council will not normally consent to pruning works that are greater than the standard set out by the Arboricultural Association or industry best practice, generally accepted to be crown reductions and thinnings of no greater than 30% by volume.
The Council will develop a quality standard for tree maintenance to be used as a checklist for assessment of completed tree works to ensure that all tree works and site clean-up post works operations are completed to a specified standard.

6.2 Public Information on Tree Works

In order to expand public access to information on the Council's planned programme of tree works, it is intended to enhance the Council's website limerick.ie to provide a 'Trees' webpage that will include relevant information on planned tree maintenance.

The planned removal of trees can be a particularly emotive and contentious issue. Therefore, once a tree becomes a removal candidate, and the works are not emergency works, steps will be taken to provide public notice prior to any trees being removed to inform residents and reduce customer enquiries. Trees that are removal candidates are identified by requests from residents or public representatives or through routine survey work by Council staff. Public notification of any proposed tree removals will consist of a variety of methods that may include posting a list of trees on the Council's website, emailing known residents associations, notices being attached to trees, and/or letter drops to adjacent properties. Timescales for notice will vary according to the type of work, whether it is urgent and the local significance of the tree but wherever practical, the period of notice will be at least 10 working days before any scheduled tree removals. We will not usually give notice where works involve the felling of dead trees or those in imminent danger of failing.

6.3 Reasons for Tree Pruning and Felling

Policy 11
The Council will wherever possible try to avoid removing a tree or undertaking unnecessary pruning works where there is no good arboriculture reason. It has a duty to manage the tree population for the benefit of the wider community and in accordance with good arboriculture practices.

The Council will undertake tree works to fulfil its legal obligations to ensure the safety of the public and properties. Tree works will be undertaken:

- Where an inspection has identified visible decay, fungal brackets indicating possible root and trunk decay or any other defect that would lead to the tree failing.
- Where a tree is dead or visibly in decline.
- To abate an actionable nuisance, where branches are touching buildings, e.g. physical contact with walls, windows and gutters.
- Where road signs, traffic signals, street lights, and sightlines for vehicles and pedestrians are obscured.
- Where evidence has been provided that the tree is a contributing factor in causing structural damage that cannot be reasonably addressed by an alternative solution and proactive tree management has had no mitigating effect.
- Where evidence has been provided that a tree has been inappropriately planted and is causing damage to archaeological material.

6.3.1 Tree Pruning

The type of pruning works undertaken depends on the tree's location and its species. Bad or unnecessary pruning can do more harm than good since each cut has the potential to change the growth of a tree, cause damage or allow the entry of wood decaying organisms, therefore no branch should be removed without a good reason.
Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger trees and substantial pruning can be very damaging. The effect of pruning also varies between species and some are not naturally tolerant of cutting. In general, minimal pruning works will be undertaken in order to sufficiently manage a tree. This may often only involve removing the lower branches to increase clearance for pedestrians and vehicle traffic and/or cutting back the branches from adjacent buildings.

6.3.2 Formative Pruning

Young immature trees, particularly in an urban setting, can benefit from pruning in their formative years. This should be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 3998: 2010 Tree Work – Recommendations as required throughout the early years of a tree's life in the landscape. It involves removing crossing branches and potentially weak forks to encourage a good natural shape, reduce health issues and reduce the need for major pruning when the tree is mature.

6.3.3 Topping of Trees

Topping of trees (reduction in height) causes large wounds, exposing trees to decay pathogens and causing their long-term decline, as well as being unsightly and potentially unsafe. Topping is, therefore, only considered where trees have serious defects, which cannot be reasonably addressed otherwise, and their short-term retention is essential or highly desirable.
It is often the view of residents that removing the crown or 'topping' a tree or trees will improve light levels or views or improve reception to TVs, satellites etc.. Whereas this may be true in the short term, any pruning, but especially 'topping', will cause decline in some species or rapid growth in others. Regrowth resulting from 'topping' will often be denser than the original crown and be weakly attached to the branches it develops from. Wounds associated with topping are often large and are more likely to be colonised by wood decaying fungi. 'Topping' is not good practice and can lead to dangerous trees in the future. For these reasons the Council will not 'top' trees.

6.3.4 Removal of Trees

Trees are removed only when necessary, as a last resort. The criteria for tree removal are:

- The tree is dead, dying or is considered hazardous due to its poor structural or biological condition. Hazardous conditions may exist above and/or below ground and may include significant root, trunk or crown decay, split trunks and crotches, and large dead limbs.
- The tree has declined beyond the point of recovery and is no longer meeting the functional requirements of a street tree. Typically, a tree with 30 percent or less of its foliage remaining would meet this criterion.
- Trees which are fatally diseased (eg. Ash dieback, Fireblight Disease) may be removed before they reach the primary threshold in order to prevent the spread of disease to healthy trees.
- To allow space for development of nearby trees that may be more desirable for retention.
- To allow space for new planting.
- To make way for any approved engineering or building works when unavoidable construction work will immediately compromise the stability or viability of the tree.
- Tree proven to be causing significant structural damage that cannot be reasonably addressed by an alternative solution and proactive tree management has had no mitigating affect.
- Tree is proven to be causing significant damage to archaeological material and there is no other mitigating option.
- The trunk of the tree is within 2m of a public lighting column and the long-term viability of the tree if retained in its location would be compromised by a requirement for ongoing maintenance in order to maintain the effectiveness of the adjoining street light.

6.4 Unauthorised Pruning, Removal or Damage to Council Owned Trees

Policy 12
The Council may seek to prosecute anyone found to be carrying out unauthorised work or causing damage to its trees without permission and where appropriate apply the maximum penalty.

The unauthorised removal of trees affects the amenity of an area and destroys the many positive benefits of trees in a locality.

All Council staff operate from vehicles displaying the Council's logo and tree contractors operating on behalf of the Council are required to erect signage which refers specifically to Limerick City and County Council. If someone is observed pruning, removing or causing damage, including to the roots, to a Council owned tree who may be without consent (person not associated with a relevant sign or vehicle and / or without clothing that clearly identifies who they are) the Gardai should be called and the Council notified. Unauthorised damage, including to tree roots, pruning or removal of a Council owned/managed tree may be prosecuted by An Garda Síochána under the Criminal Damage Act 1991.

Unauthorised works or damage to Council-owned trees may result in a charge being levied.

This charge will reflect the amount of damage sustained and where the life/safety of the tree is undermined, it will include the cost of total tree replacement and compensation for loss of tree value. These charges will be drawn up by professional Parks staff and each case will be assessed on an individual basis using a recognised tree valuation system (eg. CAVAT)

6.5 Arrangement or Payment for Street Tree Maintenance by Residents

Where tree work is not justifiable as the result of a request for service from a resident, some residents may seek to pay for the work themselves. This will often be in relation to minor seasonal nuisance issues. If the Council were to engage in pay for service agreements, this would create an unfair two-tier system. This would fail to deliver an even-handed service for residents who are unable to pay for service. The Council will not enter into any arrangements where members of the public pay for, or contribute towards the cost of tree maintenance works. We will also not allow tree surgeons engaged by members of the public, access to climb trees under our stewardship. Except in the case of overhanging branches any unauthorised works to Council owned trees carried out by any person would be treated as criminal damage.

6.6 Stump Removal

When a tree is felled by the Council, it is not always possible to remove the stump immediately. Stump removal may be delayed at least 6 months after tree removal. Under these circumstances a short tree stump is left as a temporary measure. The stump is usually left at around 1m high so that it does not constitute a trip hazard in the intervening period. Tree stump removal is normally undertaken during the winter months between November and February or may be done when there are a sufficient number for their removal to be economical. Where a stump has been removed and it is not proposed to replace the tree at that location, the ground will be reinstated to match the existing. In some cases it may not be appropriate to remove the tree stump and it may be left as a feature or decompose naturally.

6.7 Timber and Green Waste Use Policies

Policy 13
The Council will seek alternative uses for wood arising from tree work to ensure as much as possible is reused or recycled.

A large quantity of wood and woodchip is produced each year from pruning and felling trees. Wherever possible, the wood debris from tree work is converted and recycled into woodchips for use as a mulch in planted areas or surfacing for woodland paths within the Council's parks and open spaces. Larger sections that can't be processed by the wood chipper are recycled according to the condition and species of timber. At present, these are generally made available to wood turners for carving and crafting or for firewood to charitable organisations through official local contacts. Timber and green waste generated from tree works in woodlands is usually left in situ to create wildlife habitats. However, this should not be done where it might create a risk of causing water pollution/contamination.

6.8 Nesting Birds

Policy 14
The Council will carry out inspections of trees prior to tree works for bird nests during the nesting period of March 1 – August 31 and comply with the relevant legislation and seek expert advice from relevant organisations where necessary.

The Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended 2000) is the principal legislation protecting nesting birds in Ireland. The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take, damage or destroy any nest that is either in use or being built. Section 40 of the Act prohibits cutting of vegetation on uncultivated land between March 1st and August 31st. However, it is accepted in practice that street trees are cultivated and as such, this allows for tree maintenance works to be carried out during the closed period subject to compliance with best practice protocols in regard to pre-works assessment of trees for active nests or nesting birds. Where an active nest or nesting birds are observed, no tree works should be carried out.

The primary reason for a year-round programme of street tree maintenance is to ensure public safety and minimise tree hazards. Phenological and biological research also indicates that a number of tree species including cherry and walnut are best pruned in mid-summer to avoid introduction of disease while maple and horse chestnut will bleed sap extensively if pruned during early season growth.

To comply with the Act, the Council will draft a best practice protocol to ensure minimal impact on wildlife and nesting birds. The Council's tree maintenance crews or contractors engaged by the Council, will be required to thoroughly check trees for nesting birds during the nesting period (March 1 – August 31) and take appropriate measures to prevent disturbance prior to the commencement of routine works. Advice from external experts will be sought where necessary. These measures may mean delaying the works until young birds have flown.

6.9 Pest & Disease Control

Policy 15
The Council will investigate signs of pests and diseases and where practicable, will respond in accordance with current best practice.

In the last few years, several new pests and diseases have emerged in Europe as significant risks to tree health and plant biosecurity. Due to Ireland's island status, there is a better chance of remaining free of many pests and diseases not currently found on the island. However, the growth of global trade in plants and the increasing movement between countries of plant material increases the risk of new pests and diseases entering Ireland. There is also a risk of exotic pests arriving in dunnage and timber packaging through our ports. The predicted changes in climate may increase the risk of these pests and diseases spreading. Small changes in temperature or weather patterns, due to climate change, can enable organisms to become established in areas where previously they would have struggled to survive.
Ash dieback disease is currently the greatest single threat to Irish trees. This Council's proposed response to this disease is dealt with in chapter 7.

6.10 Ivy on Trees

Policy 16
The Council will seek to retain ivy on trees where the ability to inspect for decay or effects is not compromised.

The Council acknowledges the considerable value of ivy (Hedera helix) as a habitat and food source for wildlife. Unless ivy has established on young or weak trees, where it may compete for water and nutrients and suppress healthy growth, it causes little harm. However, where ivy has taken hold on mature trees, especially those close to roads and public areas, judgements must be made on its retention based on the health of the tree and the possibility of cavities or defects being hidden from view as well as its increased vulnerability to wind damage. In these situations, removal of ivy may be deemed necessary for risk management purposes.

7 Prioritising Tree Work

It is recognised that residents' views on trees can vary greatly and a tree that is of great beauty and value to one person can be perceived as an unsightly nuisance to another. People rarely contact the Council when they are happy about local trees. Only when trees become an apparent problem are comments made, and therefore a distorted picture of peoples' perception of trees develops. It is important to seek alternatives to felling or severe pruning when conflicts arise, so that the trees can remain for the often silent majority of those who value them.

The Council's role is to try to achieve a compromise, which is acceptable to the community at large but not necessarily to every individual within the community and to safeguard the tree population for the future, within available resources. The implementation of this Tree Management Policy will clarify many of the existing ideologies and improve the management of customer expectations and the Council's website will be enhanced to provide a 'Trees' webpage that will include answers to frequently asked questions about trees.

7.1 Response to Enquiries

The Council's Customer Services Department is usually the first point of contact for enquiries and complaints from the public, including those relating to trees. Details of the customer's name, address, contact details, nature of the enquiry and location of the enquiry are logged into the Customer Relationship Management System (Sugar CRM). The enquiry is then referred to the relevant Council section for response.

Any tree-related emergencies are referred for immediate action in accordance with the Council's emergency procedures. An emergency is defined as a tree that is in immediate danger of collapse or a tree that is causing an obstruction requiring urgent attention.

For non-emergency tree enquiries, customers will be informed of Council policy within 10 working days of receipt of an enquiry. Where a site inspection is considered necessary, customers will be informed that such a site inspection will be undertaken within 60 working days of receipt after which the customer will be notified of what action, if any, is considered appropriate.

7.2 Inspections

Currently, the Council undertakes tree inspections primarily in response to requests for tree work. Each inspection involves an assessment of the tree's health and condition, and identifies if any work is required, having regard also to any issues raised in an enquiry that has been received in relation to a specific tree.

These inspections are primarily of individual trees across a wide geographic spread throughout the county. In order to make most efficient use of the Council's staff resource who undertake tree inspections, non-emergency inspections are normally undertaken when there is sufficient number of tree inspections listed for undertaking within a particular geographic area. Priority for inspection of requests for tree pruning or removal will be given to those that comply with the criteria for tree pruning removal works as specified in section 4.3.

In order to progress to a planned rather than reactive approach to tree management, the Council will adopt a more proactive management approach through regular cyclical inspections. The frequency of inspections will depend on available resources and the severity of identified issues for monitoring in our street tree population. Following inspection where it is identified that tree works are required, they are categorised and will be included for attention on the Council's work programme if required and be undertaken in accordance with a priority-based system.

The results of tree inspections will be recorded in Sugar CRM and, on the electronic tree management system, once this is in place. Customer enquiries will be linked to the system which will provide a clear audit trail of the enquiry and action taken.

7.3 Tree Risk Management

Industry best practice now strongly favours a risk-based system of tree management relying on a programme of regular inspection prioritised by potential hazard and its potential impact on known targets in the surrounding area. Whether trees are managed for their amenity, social, heritage or environmental benefits, their management must however be balanced and proportionate to the actual risks from trees. It is both normal and natural for trees to lose branches or fall and the risk to human safety is very low.

While no research has been carried out in Ireland with regard to the level of risk posed by falling trees, research by the UK Centre for Decision Analysis and Risk Management demonstrates about a one in 10 million chance of an individual being killed by a falling tree (or part of a tree) in any given year. However, the low level of risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident and its coverage in the media.

The Council has both a moral and legal duty of care to ensure members of the public and staff are not put at risk because of any failure to take reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. All such processes balance the need for safety with the amenity and other benefits of trees on a risk assessment basis. Exposure to an element of risk is however accepted as an unavoidable consequence of all environments where trees are present.

The Council will develop a pro-active and systematic good practice approach to tree management and inspection with the aim of promoting good tree health, condition, diversity, public amenity and a balanced age profile. This approach will highlight necessary works at an early stage and enable hazards to be identified and made safe in a cost effective and efficient way.

All identified tree work will be prioritised and carried out according to identified hazard or risk. Work will be undertaken to survey and record Council owned/managed street trees. The aim is to develop a computerised record of Council owned trees and a prioritised regime of re-inspection based on the level of risk. Resources will need to be identified to develop this system into the future to cover all Council owned trees.

7.4 Priority Rating System for Tree Works

To enable efficient use of resources, tree works will be prioritised and programmed based on the Priority Category as shown below, and in each category a list of maintenance that would normally fall into that priority has been given as guidance. However, until the tree has been inspected and the relevant information has been recorded its true priority cannot be established. It is strongly emphasised that these categories and figures are only guidelines which are applicable under normal circumstances only. The occurrence of emergencies, storms and other events beyond our control do occur and thus would have to take priority over programmed work. This would result in scheduled work being delayed.

The following categories will be used when prioritising tree works:

Tree Maintenance Priority

Priority	Type of Maintenance
Priority 1: Emergency Work Response to trees that are perceived to pose imminent danger to people or property Target completion – within 24hrs	• Making safe of storm damaged trees where they post a threat to the public in adverse weather conditions • Large limbs snapped and hung up over high vehicular and pedestrian flow
Priority 2: High Priority Works Works on trees that are not considered high risk but where remedial work is required Target completion – action immediately or within 3 months depending on severity.	• Dead, dying, diseased and dangerous in high pedestrian and traffic flow areas • Tree branches below 2.5m causing obstruction over high pedestrian flow footpaths • Tree branches below 4.5m causing obstruction over high traffic flow roads • Tree branches causing damage to property • Trees with root plate movement
Priority 3: Medium Priority Works Improvement works that are considered desirable to enhance street scene or public space. Works to abate nuisance caused by Council trees Target completion – action within 12 months	• Crown thinning of trees close to public lighting • Crown lifting/ removal of low branches over footpaths and roadways • Pruning of trees near buildings to prevent damage from occurring • Snapped limbs/branches on public open space with low pedestrian access • Works which promote the effective establishment of newly planted trees
Priority 4: Low Priority Works Target Completion – action when resources allow within 24 months +	• All other general tree maintenance work that is causing no risk of harm to persons or property.
Priority 5: No action /Unnecessary Works	• This category consists of trees that have been inspected and considered healthy and safe with no works required at this time of inspection regime

8 Felling & Pruning Policies

Many requests for tree works received by the Council related to issues which an individual may perceive to be problematic but which do not represent a risk to the public and which when compared to the value of the tree to the broader community, may be insignificant. On the other hand, there are situations where trees may pose a genuine threat to health and safety and where works are essential.

With this in mind and to ensure that requests for tree works are dealt with efficiently and consistently, Limerick City and County Council's policies in relation to the more common types of requests are outlined below. These policies relate to Council owned or managed trees and not to trees in private ownership.

Policy 17
Any felled tree must be replaced by at least five new trees.

If the Council has to fell or remove a tree for any reason , it must be replaced with at least 5 suitable trees in a location to be identified prior to its removal. Prior to felling, the Council Tree Officer must be consulted and be in agreement with the felling. The replacement tree type, proposed location and the time of planting shall be agreed with the Tree Officer and shall be undertaken under their supervision.

8.1 Obstruction of Street Light

Policy 18
The Council will undertake work to a tree to ensure that trees do not unduly obstruct streetlights.

Tree pruning will be undertaken where reasonably feasible to address obstruction of a street light where a tree is within 5m of the lighting column. Where the trunk of a tree is within 2m of a lighting column, the removal of the tree is considered to be the most appropriate long-term option.

Where a tree is removed from a roadside verge, due to proximity to a public lighting column, a replacement tree will not be planted back into the same verge. Designers of new lighting schemes shall take existing mature trees into account in the design and shall endeavour to take all reasonable action to minimise the requirement to remove a tree.

8.2 Obstruction of Road Traffic Sight Lines, Traffic Signals or Street Signs

Policy 19
The Council will undertake work to a tree to maintain clear sight lines, where reasonably feasible, at road junctions and access points and for traffic signals and street signs.

Where an ongoing pruning requirement arises as a result of sightlines, road signs or traffic signals being obscured by tree growth or regrowth, consideration will be given to the removal of trees to minimise ongoing repeat maintenance costs. Prior to tree removal, a plan for planting replacement trees, and a suitable location shall be agreed with the Local Authority Tree Officer.

8.3 Obstruction of Roads, Cycleways and Footpaths

Policy 20
The Council will undertake work to a tree where a tree is causing an obstruction to a public highway, public footpath or cycleway, public right of way, access to property or public open space, where reasonably feasible.

Tree pruning to achieve the following height clearance is considered appropriate where reasonably practical and where it can be achieved without harming tree health or form:

- Pedestrian areas: 2.5m
- Cycleways: 3m
- Distributor roads / streets: 4.5m

Any works necessary to prevent an obstruction in the width of a public footpath due to the presence of a Council owned tree will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If a tree is growing on privately owned land, then the maintenance rests entirely with the landowner. If a privately owned tree or other vegetation is causing an obstruction to a footpath or road, powers exist under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993 which enable the Roads Authority to deal with the matter. The section allows for the serving of notice on the landowner setting out remedial works to be carried out. Failing action by the landowner, the Roads Authority can arrange to have the necessary works carried out and seek to recoup the cost of the works from the landowner concerned.

8.4 Trip Hazard

Policy 21
The Council will undertake measures to make safe an unacceptable trip hazard on a public footpath or road caused by the growth of a tree

The roots of trees exploit the soil in various ways dependent on species, local conditions and history of site disturbance. Pressure exerted by the radial growth of roots can deform the surfaces of footpaths, roads or other light structures, especially in the close confines of the urban setting. Damage occurs most commonly close to the tree and will diminish rapidly with distance. To constitute a trip hazard the deformation will be assessed by the Council. Where a hazard exists and is attributable to tree roots engineering options will be explored before root pruning or tree removal is undertaken.

It is often possible to repair paths to take account of adjacent trees and tree roots. Where roots protrude they can be root pruned, or the path can be re-laid around the tree with flexible material such as asphalt to provide a smooth surface or using reinforced concrete or other engineering solutions.

Where trees are considered to be causing damage to paths or footpaths, the Council will not normally consider tree removal except where there is a risk to public health which cannot otherwise be mitigated. Removal of the tree will usually be the last resort, accepting that in some circumstances where the tree is of low value or easily replaced removal may be the most appropriate solution. The Council will seek to explore engineering options through internal consultation between the Public Realm and Roads Maintenance sections to reduce trip hazards before root pruning or tree removal. The Council will develop a protocol for resolving issues where tree roots are in conflict with public areas under hard surfacing.

8.5 Trees in Conflict with the Built Environment

Trees in an urban environment will inevitably conflict with people and infrastructure which creates pressures for trees to be pruned or felled. The Council recognises that trees under its ownership/ management may be implicated in causing damage to nearby built structures but is also aware that this is not always the case and that nearby trees often get blamed for damage before a thorough investigation is carried out. Some other reasons for structural failure are inadequate foundation design, general structural failure, poor quality construction, nearby excavations or major works to adjacent properties.

Property owners will be expected to provide evidence that a particular tree is causing damage to the property and that all reasonable engineering alternatives have been explored before felling will be considered.

Although the level of evidence required may differ on a case by case basis, the Council, as a minimum, will normally require an engineer's report including an accurate survey, a history of the damage to a built structure and a plan and profile of foundations where relevant.

If this evidence is not sufficient to demonstrate that the tree is responsible for the damage, the Council may require further information including an arborist's report, crack monitoring, soil analysis and root analysis to be submitted.

Where necessary, the Council will obtain expert specialist advice to verify submitted evidence and where it demonstrates that the tree is an influencing cause, permission to remove the tree will not unreasonably be withheld, provided that there is no other recourse available.

8.6 Trees and Drains

Policy 22
The Council will not prune, fell or cut the roots of a tree to prevent roots entering a drain that is already broken or damaged.

The Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council trees are damaging drains. Tree roots do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain but typically they will invade drains that are already broken or damaged. Trees themselves very rarely break or damage the drain in the first place. Tree roots found in a drain are usually symptomatic of an underlying problem requiring repair of the broken pipe. The Council's presumption is that the appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is to ensure that the drains are watertight. Any concerns about the condition of public drains should be reported to the Council or Uisce Eireann as appropriate. Householders are usually responsible for the maintenance of the drains within their own property.

8.7 Trees, Riverbanks & Watercourses

The Council will develop a protocol for maintenance and management of trees along riverbanks and watercourses in consultation with relevant internal Council Departments, Inland Fisheries, WaterWays Ireland, ESB and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

8.8 Trees and Utilities

Utility companies have certain legal rights to carry out works to public or privately owned trees to address health and safety problems and to maintain a clearance between trees and their apparatus. This may sometimes involve the loss of trees or removal of large parts of a tree leaving a misshapen and unbalanced crown and reducing the amenity value of the tree. Excavation works near to street trees brings considerable potential disturbance within the root zone of trees, often reducing their stability and long-term viability. Damage to roots can also have significant health and safety implications in affecting the stability of the tree.

Where works to trees are necessary, as a result of proximity or conflict, the Council will encourage utility operators to adopt the most appropriate long-term solution, giving consideration to tree health, local tree cover and visual amenity.

Utility companies must consult with The Council Tree Officer, in advance of any pruning, trenching or other works likely to affect Council owned trees.

8.9 Telephone Wires

Policy 23
The Council will not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce interference with telephone wires.

Telephone service providers have statutory powers to clear their operational equipment or may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem. Where pruning is necessary, discussion with the Council Tree Officer is advised to agree the most sensitive pruning regime possible.

8.10 Street Trees Overhanging Neighbouring Gardens Properties / Roots Encroaching into Gardens

Policy 24
The Council will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or are causing actionable nuisance.

The Council has no legal obligation to prune overhanging trees unless they are causing direct damage to an adjacent property or are imminently dangerous. This reflects the Council's position as an owner/manager of thousands of trees and the resources available. Given that hundreds of Council trees overhang boundaries, it is not an effective use of resources to prune every overhanging limb.
Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning. However, situations where a tree is genuinely generating root encroachment to an exceptional, severe and unreasonable degree will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
Adjacent landowners are entitled to prune encroaching tree branches or roots back to the boundary of their property. Legally, they are required to retain the prunings and offer them back to the Council but the Council is not obliged to accept them.

8.11 Trees Touching or Causing Direct Damage to Property

Policy 25
If a tree in Council ownership/managed by the Council is touching your property (dwelling house, garage etc) the Council will take action to mitigate the nuisance.

The Council will cut back trees to provide 2m clearance from properties where they touch windows, walls, roofs or gutters to avoid damage. In many cases the solution will be for the Council to prune the tree, but in some exceptional circumstances it may be more appropriate to fell the tree. If it is decided to remove the tree, a location for replacement trees must be identified before the felling takes place. At least five new trees shall be planted for every one mature tree felled. If pruning is appropriate, we will endeavour to undertake works to stop the problem reoccurring within three years. A balance will be struck between the nuisance experienced by individuals and the benefits offered by the tree to the wider community.

8.12 Trees Blocking Natural Light / Sunlight

Policy 26
The Council will not prune, top or fell a tree to improve natural light in a property.

A common complaint about urban trees is that they block light from properties or shade gardens. However, the seriousness of this effect is as variable as the perception of it and often the removal of the tree will have little effect on the amount of sunlight reaching the house or garden. An example of this is where the house is north facing and the tree is small or at a distance.
There is no right to light under the law and therefore the Council has no legal obligation to abate this perceived nuisance. However, situations where a tree is genuinely blocking daylight from habitable rooms to an exceptional, severe and unreasonable degree are dealt with on a case-by case basis. A habitable room is defined as residential living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens (if they include a dining space and are larger than 12.6sqm). Bathrooms, toilets, landings and lobbies are excluded. Each case will be evaluated having regard for balancing the severity of the nuisance to the individual with the benefits of the tree for the wider community. Pruning will normally only be carried out where the tree is a significant contributory factor and there is a reasonable chance that pruning will improve the situation. The effect of restricting light can sometimes be reduced by crown thinning and crown lifting. Although this may not increase the amount of light to the maximum level possible, it is usually a satisfactory compromise. Any decision to undertake tree works would take into account the health and significance of the tree, its contribution to wider public amenity, the orientation of the house, and whether the tree was already present when the occupier moved into the property. Shading of habitable rooms of property will be given more weight than the shading of the garden.

8.13 Obstruction of a View

Policy 27
The Council will not prune or fell a tree to improve the view from a private property.

There is no legal right to a 'view'. Vegetation and trees grow and, over time, contribute to the county's distinctive character. It would be impracticable to prune every tree that affected a view, and this would have a major negative impact on public amenity.

However, where there are historic vistas or area defining views appropriate tree maintenance will be considered to preserve the landscape character.

8.14 Tree Considered Too Large

Policy 28
The Council will not prune or fell a tree because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.

Residents may feel apprehensive about the size of a tree and consider it dangerous. However, trees are not dangerous just because they are perceived as tall, too big for their surroundings or move in the wind. Tree movement in high winds is natural and is one of the ways they are able to withstand strong winds. Other problems would need to be shown for the Council to consider the tree to be dangerous.

8.15 Driveways and New Entrances

Policy 29
Removal of Council owned/managed trees will be managed by protocol through the Planning Application process. No action will be undertaken until such time as driveway widening or the creation of a new entrance has been subject to the planning process.

The removal of a Council owned/managed tree to facilitate a new entrance or extension of an existing entrance will be managed through the Planning Application process. Prior to any decision to remove a tree, the applicant must identify, in agreement with the Council Tree Officer a location for planting of at least five new trees. The cost of felling, removal and planting shall be borne by the applicant.

8.16 Trees and Solar Panels

Policy 30
The Council will not prune or fell a tree to facilitate installation or improve natural light to a solar panel.

Whilst the Council appreciates that there is a need to provide renewable energy resources, trees have an important role in maintaining and improving local amenity, in addition to contributing to local and national targets in tackling climate change. The presence of existing trees and how these trees will grow in the future must be fully appreciated when considering a suitable location for the placement of solar panels.

8.17 Trees Affecting TVs and Satellite Reception

Policy 31
The Council will not prune or fell a tree solely to improve TV and / or satellite reception, where the trees in question would not otherwise require works.

The Council acknowledges that television and satellite entertainment are important to residents. However, a balance has to be found between these and the local environment. The Council will encourage residents to seek reasonable alternative solutions to improve television or satellite reception rather than requesting tree pruning or removal. In most cases the situation can be significantly improved or solved by relocation of the aerial. Boosters are also available which can improve the reception. These options are far cheaper and less destructive than the felling or pruning of a tree. When positioning a new satellite receiver, residents are recommended to carefully consider existing trees and their potential for growth to avoid problems in the future.

8.18 Trees Affecting CCTV

Policy 32
The Council will not normally prune or fell a tree to improve CCTV sightlines.

Exceptions may include Garda CCTV, trees adjacent to CCTV cameras that monitor ATMs or within the field of view being covered to ensure that public security is not compromised. The installation of new CCTV cameras must take into consideration existing trees to prevent requests for unnecessary pruning works or the removal of trees to improve desired sightlines.

8.19 Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

Policy 33
Where a Council owned tree is associated with criminal activity and / or antisocial behaviour, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a site-by-site basis.

Where a tree is associated with criminal activity and / or anti-social behaviour, steps to reduce the problem will typically require the coordination of a number of agencies including the Gardaí. Pruning or felling a tree is not always the answer to the problem.

8.20 Tree Climbing and Children Playing

Policy 34
The Council will not fell or prune trees to deter children from playing on or near them.

Exploring the natural environment is a normal and very important part of childhood. Trees provide opportunities for children to engage with nature and explore natural play, which is important for their development. The Council will not fell or prune trees to deter children from playing on or near them. However, the Council will work with parents and resident's associations to deter activities which may damage trees or place children at risk.

8.21 Fruit / Berries / Nuts / Blossom/Leafs/Honey Dew/Pollen

Policy 35
The Council will not fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena such as fruit / berries, nuts or blossom, honey dew, and leaf fall , or the release of pollen,

Problems caused by falling fruit, berries, nuts or blossom are natural and seasonal occurrences and not something the Irish legal system recognises as a 'legal nuisance'. Whilst we appreciate these problems, they are judged a relatively minor inconvenience when considering the many benefits of having trees within an urban environment. Fruit trees such as apple, cherry and pear are welcomed in many locations for having the double benefit of spring blossom and autumn fruit. This makes fruit trees good for wildlife and a source of free food.

Certain species of tree for example lime and sycamore are susceptible to aphids or other leaf feeding insects. Honeydew is the sugary sap / sticky deposit which results from insects feeding and is subsequently colonised on surfaces by sooty mould fungi giving it a black appearance. Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem and the severity varies from year to year depending on conditions. A balance between the inconvenience of honeydew

deposits and the wider benefits of trees must be achieved and as such there is unlikely to be justification for the pruning or removal of trees due to honeydew deposits.

The loss of leaves from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning. The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the property / land owner and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from Council owned trees. Where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves gutter guards may be fitted to provide a low maintenance solution. The Council organises a street cleaning service which will sweep leaves from most streets and residential roads during the autumn period. The composting of leaves is encouraged as a way of environmentally recycling this valuable resource.

Pollen is produced by all plants as part of their natural life cycle. While pollen from some trees may cause allergies, by far the biggest cause of hay fever in Northern Europe is pollen from grasses. Pollen from trees such as willow in early spring and apple and other blossom trees later in the season provides essential food for pollinating insects. Limerick City and County Council became a partner to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan in 2019 and is committed to preserving and increasing the cover of plants, including trees, which provide habitat and food for bees and other pollinators.

8.25 Trees and Poisonous Berries

Policy 36
The Council has no general policy to remove trees bearing poisonous fruit / foliage (such as yew trees). However, where it is claimed or known that young children, under supervision, are likely to be exposed to poisonous berries or foliage, such cases will be investigated and appropriate action considered.

While some trees fruits and berries may be poisonous to humans, they serve as a valuable source of food for certain animals, birds and insects. The trees often form an important part of a thriving ecosystem

8.22 Bird Droppings

Policy 37
The Council will not prune or fell a tree solely to remove or reduce bird dropping.

The benefit of birds and trees in our environment vastly outweigh any perceived nuisance associated with bird droppings. Therefore, the problem is not considered a sufficient reason to prune or remove a tree. Roosting birds are a natural occurrence as is their production of droppings. Generally, felling a tree will not alleviate the problem as birds will relocate to another tree in the locality. Similarly pruning will not resolve the problem as birds will relocate to other branches. Pruning or felling of trees will not be considered as a way of resolving such matters. Warm soapy water will usually be sufficient to remove the bird droppings. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and Habitats Regulations 1997-2005.

8.22 Bird Droppings

Policy 38
The Council will not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, or wild animals.

The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned/managed tree to remove or reduce incidence of perceived pests such as bees, wasps, or wild animals. What people perceive as pests, often play an essential part in a healthy habitat and in increasing biodiversity. The Council will endeavour to highlight the importance of such species in a healthy environment.

9 Ash Dieback

Policy 39
It is the policy of the Council to assess the scale of risk posed by ash dieback and develop an ash dieback action plan for publicly owned or managed trees.

While there are many pests and diseases that affect trees, at the current time, there is none that poses a more immediate or wide scale threat in Ireland than ash dieback.

Ash dieback is a serious disease of ash trees caused by the invasive fungal pathogen Hymenoscyphus fraxineus (previously known as Chalara fraxinea), which originates in Asia and was brought to Europe in the early 90s. Today, the pathogen covers most of the natural range of ash in Europe causing high mortality rates of ash trees.
Ash dieback was first detected in the Republic of Ireland in October 2012 on plants imported from continental Europe. The disease is now prevalent throughout most of the island of Ireland and is likely to cause the death of the majority of the ash trees over the next two decades.

The disease can affect ash trees of any age and in any setting. The disease can be fatal, particularly among younger trees. Ash dieback is more severe in wet sites, where it is more likely to cause collar infections in ash trees.
It is important that landowners, both public and private, understand the risk posed by ash dieback and the actions that must be taken to minimise damage and loss from this devastating disease.

9.1 Ash Dieback Action Plan

The scale of health and safety risks caused by ash dieback alone will mean that it will not be 'business as usual' for any organisation managing ash trees. Tree failures could translate into an increase in the number of people harmed by trees and a potential increase in property claims. Organisations, including LCCC, will need to review and, where necessary, make changes to tree safety management regimes and practices. This can be done through the preparation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP). The production of such a plan is required because:

- Proactive management of trees and risks is more cost effective than reactive management and to proactively manage ash dieback, a clear strategy and action plan will be required.
- The spread of ash dieback will cause a significant proportion of all ash trees to decline or die. This will financially and practically impact every organisation responsible for vegetation management.
- There is only a short period for preparation: death of mature trees may happen after only a few years of infection, so an organisation may not have long to prepare for the impacts of ash dieback and its additional costs.
- The scale of the impact must be assessed: the scale of the problems posed by ash dieback is likely to be significantly greater than the impact of Dutch elm disease as there are far more ash trees in the landscape. This includes the additional costs attached to managing the decline of ash. Being reactive to the problem is likely to be more expensive than planning our response through an Action Plan.
- Ash dieback will impact corporate risk registers particularly in respect of risks to statutory functions or service delivery, increased potential for deaths or injuries, budget impacts, risks to infrastructure, increased liabilities, risks to staff and 'user' communities, as well as political and reputational risks.
- There will need to be changes in management practices: changes to tree management practices will be necessary as ash dieback spreads.
- Working with others for efficient joint responses: the response to ash dieback needs to be planned, to avoid working in silos and conflicting with other local policies such as landscape and biodiversity policies.
- Communication and collaboration is key: a plan will provide better opportunities for communication and discussion and provide opportunities for agencies to work strategically together to share costs and responsibilities.

9.2 Resistance to Ash Dieback

Policy 40
It is the policy of the Council to identify, monitor and preserve potentially healthy ash trees and to liaise with Teagasc so that the genetic material may be used to create a healthy future population.

A very small proportion of ash trees show natural tolerance to the pathogen. This means that they show minor symptoms and the disease does not have noticeable impact on their growth or health.

Teagasc is working to identify such trees and build up a gene bank with the ultimate goal of producing tolerant ash seed and restore ash trees to Irish forests and hedgerows.

LCCC will notify Teagasc of healthy ash trees in its functional area and will preserve and monitor these trees to assist in the restoration efforts.

10 Tree Valuation

10.1 Valuing Trees and Compensating for Tree Damage

Policy 41
The Council will initiate use of the CAVAT system to value all Council owned or managed trees and use this information to assist in the management of the tree stock and the basis for compensation if trees are subject to damaged or unauthorised removal

In recent years there has been increased interest in quantifying the benefits of trees and translating them into financial terms. There are many reasons for wanting and needing to value trees, for example: setting and justifying budgets; calculating loss of amenity and replacement value following wilful or negligent damage to trees; urban forest management and decision making.

A range of valuation methods is available, though none specifically developed for the Irish Context. These methods include the Helliwell system, CLTA (Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers) Method, the i-Tree Suite of tools and CAVAT (Capital Asset Value of Amenity Trees). All these methods have advantages and disadvantages. However, it is considered that CAVAT is likely to prove the most useable and appropriate for use in Limerick.

CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) has been developed by The London Tree Officers Association to allow authorities to prepare a valuation of their tree stock which can then be used to justify managing the trees as if it were a financial asset of the community. The CAVAT system takes into account: tree size, longevity and condition, site suitability and other attributes to give a monetary value used to help guide management decisions. This is a major step forward as traditionally, the management of trees and woodlands by local authorities has been seen solely as a cost, with no acknowledgement of the financial benefits that trees bring. The CAVAT system has being successfully used by South Dublin County Council for a number of years.

It is important to place a monetary value on Limerick City and County Council's trees because of the contribution trees make to the economic, social and environmental landscape of the county. Assessing the value of each tree will enable a more effective and efficient level of understanding to be applied to a given tree or group of trees when deciding their future management or removal. The Council will also use the CAVAT tree valuation system to provide the basis in calculating the replacement value of any trees that have been significantly damaged or removed and the Council will seek this level of compensation from organisations found to be responsible for such damage.

11 Trees and Development

Mature trees are a hugely important asset to Limerick and can significantly enhance a new development. They give a place a sense of character, as well as providing a ready-made landscape. Retaining trees is always desirable, though many trees are lost each year in the course of development. Some are removed due to their condition or because they are directly in the way of development. However, many are lost due to unsuitable protection during the construction phase.

11.1 Green Infrastructure, Tree Retention and Aftercare on Development Site

Policy 42
The Council will require developers to demonstrate how their sites contribute to and connect with Limerick's green infrastructure networks and assets.

The Council is committed to continuously improve the way that tree, biodiversity and landscape issues are considered in relation to applications for new development. There is increasing pressure to both maximise available development opportunities and at the same time protect and enhance existing landscape and biodiversity features.

Trees and hedgerows within both the natural and the built environments provide vital habitats and corridors for wildlife. As part of the development of Limerick's Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) Strategy, such corridors and habitats will be identified and mapped.

It is essential that new development contributes in a positive way to Limerick's Green Infrastructure (GI) to ensure that a coherent network is created which connects to the wider countryside. During the planning process, developers will need to demonstrate how their proposed development will connect with and positively contribute to Limerick's green infrastructure networks and assets. Where existing trees and hedgerows exist, these can be considered as part of the site's contribution to GI. Where existing trees or hedgerows either do not currently exist or have been removed, new planting will be required which will deliver an equal or greater level of ecosystem services and connectivity to the green infrastructure network. Nature based solutions such as appropriately designed Sustainable Urban Drainage Features and landscaping/tree planting proposals can also contribute to green infrastructure.

Policy 43
The Council will use its powers to ensure that where it is conducive with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan, and other planning objectives there is maximum retention of trees on zoned lands and on new development sites.

The Council will seek the retention of trees of high amenity / environmental value taking consideration of both their individual merit and their interaction as part of a group or broader landscape feature.

Provision for same has been included in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 which provides at Section 11.3.8.2 that existing trees and vegetation (hedgerows) should be retained and incorporated into the landscaping of the site, where possible.

The Development Plan goes on to state: "The Council will seek the protection of existing trees when granting planning permission and the continued preservation and management of important trees, groups of trees and hedges as part of planning applications. Any proposals to remove mature trees shall be done as part of the planning application

process, in order to prevent mature trees being removed on lands zoned for development, in advance of a planning application being submitted, where there is an intention to develop the lands."

The Council will seek financial securities for trees where trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Council will require a developer to lodge a financial security to cover any damage caused to them either accidentally or otherwise as a result of non-compliance with agreed/specific on-site tree protection measures. Types of securities could include a cash deposit, an insurance bond or such other liquid asset as may be agreed between a developer and the planning authority. The security will be returned on completion of the development once it is established that the trees/hedgerows are in satisfactory condition and have not been unnecessarily damaged by development works. Where damage occurs, the sum deducted from the tree security or bond or other financial security will be calculated in accordance with a recognised tree valuation system such as CAVAT.

Where there is evidence that trees or hedgerows on zoned lands have been removed before a planning application was lodged in order to avoid their retention and the payment of the bond, an assessment will be undertaken of the loss of amenity, green infrastructure and ecosystem services, based on available data (GIS dataset of trees in County Limerick, aerial photography, local knowledge, existing surveys etc.) and the developer will be required to provide new planting of equal or greater value in terms of the above.

On construction sites all work must be in accordance with British Standard 5837 (2012): Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations.

The Council will promote the replacement of trees whose removal is necessary to facilitate approved planning and development of urban spaces, buildings, streets, roads, infrastructural projects and private development sites.
Ensuring retention of trees on development sites in the manner outlined above will require significant input from the planning enforcement section. It will be important to ensure that adequate resources are assigned to this area to prevent undermining of the significant contribution trees and hedgerows make to Limerick's Green Infrastructure.

11.2 Tree Planting on Development Sites

The Council will ensure that tree planting on development sites is adequate and appropriate by requesting that landscaping proposals and plans to include tree planting are submitted as part of a planning application. Careful consideration will be given to the proposals for new developments, to ensure that they:

- Contribute to Limerick's green infrastructure networks and assets.
- Enhance the local ecology and add to biodiversity as appropriate to the site
- Do not block light into existing dwellings/buildings and
- Enhance the aesthetics of the site.

11.3 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

Making a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is the primary mechanism available to a planning authority to ensure that trees of significant value are preserved. Section 205 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides the legal framework and procedures for making a TPO.
A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) enables local authorities to preserve any single tree or group of trees and brings them under planning control. Tree preservation orders are only made if it appears that a tree or group of trees need to be protected in the interests of amenity in the environment.
The establishment of a TPO brings the designated tree(s) under planning control and restrictions do apply. The permission of the planning authority must be sought before any tree with a TPO is lopped, topped or felled. When the authority proposes an order they have to publish a notice in one or more newspapers. Observations and submissions can be made to the planning authority within a period of not less than 6 weeks. Tree preservation orders are only made after careful consideration of all submissions and observations by the local authority.
TPO's must be listed in a local authority's Development Plan

Appendix 1

Sample List of Tree Species Suitable for Street Planting

The selection of street trees is guided by their mature size, water demand, crown shape, future management requirements and suitability to the location. Comprehensive guidance on appropriate tree species selection is given in "Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide For Specifiers" published by Trees & Design Action Group. However, the following is a guide to the type of species considered appropriate for street planting. It is not an exhaustive list, and other trees may be equally suitable.

LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT AT MATURITY
Acer campestre 'Elsrijk'	Field maple	10-15m
Acer platanoides 'Globosum'	Maple	6-8m
Amelanchier arborea 'Robin Hill'	Serviceberry	5-10m
Betula albosinensis 'Fascination'	Chinese Birch	10-15m
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	10-15m
Betula utilis 'Jacquemontii'	Himalayan Birch	
Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'	Hornbeam	10-15m
Corylus colurna	Turkish hazel	10-15m
Crataegus monogyna 'Stricta'	Hawthorn	5-10m
Malus trilobata	Crab Apple	5-7m
Malus tschonoskii	Crab Apple	5-7m
Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'	Ornamental Pear	10-15m
Sorbus aucuparia (Cultivars)	Rowan	10-15m
Sorbus aria 'Lutescens'	Whitebeam	7-10m
Sorbus discolor	Chinese Rowan	7-10m
Sorbus intermedia 'Brouwers'	Swedish Whitebeam	10-15m
Sorbus 'Sheerwater Seedling'	Rowan Hybrid	10-15m
Sorbus x thuringiaca 'Fastigiata'	Rowan Hybrid	7-10m
Tilia cordata 'Greenspire'	Small leaved Lime	10-15m
Prunus avium 'Plena'	Wild Cherry	8-12m
Prunus padus 'Fastigiata'	Bird Cherry	8-12m
Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'	Oak	10-15m
Robinia pseudoacacia 'Bessonia'	False acacia	8-12m
Ginko biloba	Maidenhair Tree	8-12m

Trees with a larger mature size will also be planted as street trees when appropriate to the location. Examples of large growing species to be considered for planting may include:

LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT AT MATURITY
Alnus cordata	Italian alder	15-20m
Betula ermanii	Ermans Birch	15-20m
Quercus ilex	Holm Oak	20m +
Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis	Thornless Honeylocust	15-20m
Platanus x acerifolia	London Plane	20m+
Tilia x europaea	Common Lime	20m+
Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyck'	Beech	15-20m
Liriodendron tulipifera	Tulip Tree	20m+

Appendix 2

Tree Species List and Characteristics

(Source "County Clare – Tree Design Guide for Towns and Villages")

		Growth		Soil preference				Site uses					Shelter			Features		
Size: L - Large, M - Medium, S - Small Growth: F - Fast, M - Medium, S - Slow		Size	Growth rate	Neutral to Lime-rich	Acid to Neutral	Wet or damp	Poor or disturbed	Urban spaces	Roads	Gardens	Exposed	Coastal	Screening	Shelter belts	Hedges	Flowers	Fruit/berries/nuts	Autumn colour
Common name	**Scientific name**																	
Native Trees																		
Alder	*Alnus glutinosa*	L	F	●		●	●	●						●			●	
Strawberry tree	*Arbutus unedo*	S	S		●	●				●	●					●	●	●
Silver birch	*Betulus pendula*	M	M		●		●	●	●	●				●			●	●
Downy birch	*Betulus pubescens*	M	M		●		●	●	●	●				●			●	●
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	S	M	●				●		●			●	●	●		●	●
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	M	M	●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
Spindle	*Euonymus europaeus*	M	M	●		●									●		●	●
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	L	M	●				●	●	●	●		●	●				●
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	M	S	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Crab apple	*Malus sylvestris*	M	S	●				●		●				●	●	●	●	
Scots pine	*Pinus sylvestris*	L	M		●		●	●	●				●	●			●	
Aspen	*Populus tremula*	S	F	●		●			●		●	●	●					●
Wild cherry	*Prunus avium*	S	M		●			●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●
Bird cherry	*Prunus padus*	S	M		●			●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●
Sessile oak	*Quercus petraea*	L	S		●			●	●		●	●	●	●				●
Pedunculate oak	*Quercus robur*	L	S	●				●	●		●	●	●	●				●
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*	M	F	●			●	●		●			●			●	●	
Whitebeam	*Sorbus aria*	M	M	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*	M	F	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
Yew	*Taxus baccata*	M	S	●									●	●			●	
Willow	*Salix spp.*	M	F			●							●				●	●
Wych elm	*Ulmus glabra*	L	M	●				●	●				●	●				●
Main Introduced Species																		
Sycamore	*Acer pseudoplatanus*	L	F	●				●	●		●	●	●	●		●		●
Horse chestnut	*Aesculus hippocastanum*	L	S	●				●					●			●	●	
Hornbeam	*Carpinus betulus*	L	M	●				●	●	●	●		●	●	●			
Spanish chestnut	*Castanea sativa*	L	M	●				●					●	●			●	
Beech	*Fagus sylvatica*	L	M		●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			
Larch	*Larix decidua*	L	F	●	●		●			●								
London plane	*Platanus x acerifolia*	L	M	●				●	●	●	●	●					●	
Spruce	*Picea abies*	L	M	●		●					●							
Evergreen oak	*Quercus ilex*	L	M	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●				
Red oak	*Quercus rubra*	L	M	●				●		●	●		●	●				●
Pin oak	*Quercus palustris*	L	M	●				●					●	●				
White willow	*Salix alba*	L	F	●	●	●		●			●		●					
Lime	*Tilia cordata*	L	M	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●		●		

Size: L - Large, M - Medium, S - Small

Growth: F - Fast, M - Medium, S - Slow

Common name	Scientific name	Growth		Soil preference				Site uses					Shelter			Features		
Main Ornamental Varieties		Size	Growth rate	Neutral to Lime-rich	Acid to Neutral	Wet or damp	Poor or disturbed	Urban spaces	Roads	Gardens	Exposed	Coastal	Screening	Shelter belts	Hedges	Flowers	Fruit/berries/nuts	Autumn colour
Field Maple	*Acer campestre 'Elsrijk'*	M	M	●				●	●	●								●
Var. maple	*Acer 'Drummondii'*	M	M	●						●						●		●
Paperbark maple	*Acer griseum*	S	M	●						●								●
Norway maple	*Acer platanoides*	L	M	●	●			●	●		●		●			●	●	●
Mop head maple	*Acer 'Globosum'*	S	M	●				●		●					●			●
Snowy mespilus	*Amelanchier lamarckii*	S	M	●	●			●		●	●					●	●	●
Paper bark birch	*Betula papyrifera*	M	F	●	●			●		●	●		●				●	●
Pyramid birch	*Betula 'Fastigiata'*	M	F	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●				●	●
Golden birch	*Betula 'Golden Beauty'*	M	S	●	●			●	●	●							●	●
Box	*Buxus sempervirens*	S	S	●	●					●	●		●		●	●		
Hornbeam	*Carpinus 'Fastigiata'*	M	F	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●				●
Fastigiate ash	*Fagus 'Dawyck'*	L	M	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●			●	●
Copper beech	*Fagus 'Purpurea'*	L	S		●			●		●	●		●		●		●	
Ash	*Fraxinus 'Westhofs Glorie'*	L	M	●				●	●	●	●		●			●	●	●
Claret ash	*Fraxinus 'Raywood'*	M	F	●			●	●	●	●	●		●					●
Griselinia	*Griselinea littoralis*	M	F	●	●					●	●	●	●		●		●	
Common privet	*Ligustrum ovalifolium*	M	F	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●		●	●		
Ornamental crab	*Malus 'Evereste'*	S	M	●	●			●		●	●					●	●	
Lombardy cherry	*Prunus 'Amanogawa'*	S	M	●				●	●	●						●	●	●
Laurel	*Prunus lusitanica*	M	M	●	●			●		●	●		●		●	●	●	
Pandora cherry	*Prunus 'Pandora'*	S	M	●	●			●	●	●	●					●	●	●
Tibetan cherry	*Prunus serrula*	S	M	●	●			●	●	●	●					●	●	●
Callery pear	*Pyrus 'Chanticleer'*	M	M	●	●			●	●	●						●	●	●
Cypress oak	*Quercus 'Fastigiata Koster'*	L	S	●	●			●	●	●	●		●				●	●
Goat willow	*Salix caprea*	M	F		●	●	●			●	●		●				●	●
Osier	*Salix viminalis*	S	F		●	●				●	●		●				●	●
Whitebeam	*Sorbus aria 'Majestica'*	M	M	●	●			●	●	●	●		●			●	●	●
Service tree	*Sorbus domestica*	S	M	●	●			●		●	●						●	●
Mountain ash	*Sorbus 'Joseph Rock'*	M	M		●			●	●	●	●						●	●
Small-leaf lime	*Tilia cordata 'Greenspire'*	M	F	●		●		●	●	●			●			●	●	●

Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

www.limerick.ie