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Tree Safety Assessment-Review 4.

At: Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood

For: Melton Parish Council.

Date of Report: September 2022

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1.0 Terms of reference

Melton Parish Council has commissioned AlisonK-Arbiculture to survey trees specified by them at Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood and then prepare a record of findings, highlighting any tree works necessary on safety grounds. The weather conditions at the time of inspection were sunny and dry. Deciduous trees surveyed were in leaf.

This report contains a review of the tree safety assessment from March 2021 and should be read in conjunction with this and previous **tree safety assessments, reports, and appendices**.

Mrs Alice Martin-Butler carried out the latest site survey on 2nd and 3rd of August 2022. The relevant qualitative tree data was collected in order to re-assess the condition of the trees and their potential risk in relation to their existing environment and the risk they pose to people and property.

1.1 Tree assessment and risk evaluation method

For this report, the five-step risk assessment has been adopted following Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for a simple tree management system. It is reliable, tried and tested and considered a robust method of assessing risk. It is also defensible in a Court of Law being underpinned by a nationally recognised body.

Land areas which contain trees have been assessed and allocate a 'Zone' based on the designated land type and level of use - 'Target' (measured by how frequently an area is visited by people). (1: High use, 2: Moderate use 3: Low use). Area Zones dictate the level of information collected during inspection and can suggest the reasonable frequency for re-inspections (the risk associated with the trees are less in a site which has less frequent visits).

1.2. Zoning of land areas and rationale:

1.2.1 Zone 1 trees:

All trees in areas designated as parks, play areas and areas adjacent to well used public rights of way and well used footpaths are placed in Zone 1. In these areas, where there are prominent individual specimen trees they are inspected and recorded individually. Less prominent/younger trees in Zone 1 are placed in groups. Basic information on tree species and approx. number of each, along with general group comments recorded.

In wooded areas such as along public rights of way and well used permissive footpaths, all trees within falling distance (approximately 20 metres of the Zone boundary) are briefly inspected.

1.2.2 Zone 2 trees:

Areas, which see less frequent use, such as minor footpaths, and woodland where access is somewhat restricted and where trees could impact on gardens are considered a 'lower' target area with a lower risk level associated and placed in Zone 2.

1.2.3 Zone 3 trees:

Areas which see few visits where with no easy access. present a very low risk (barring exceptional circumstances) to people and therefore placed in Zone 3.

1.2.4 Trees in Zones 2 and 3: In some restricted areas it is not practicable and often not necessary to inspect all trees in detail at the base, although it may be possible to assess some trees on sites more fully during the summer months. Where this is the case, assessments are completed from as close to trees as conditions allow and comments made on the visible parts.

1.3 Tree survey method and rationale

All trees inspected will require regular monitoring for the following reason:

- Tracking the progress of diseases such as ash dieback disease (See Table 2 at 7.0) needed as tree condition can deteriorate quickly and in a short period of time create safety issues.
- Full tree condition is unclear or thought to be such that further investigation is needed to confirm full tree health and/or potential safety issues.

Trees were assessed from the ground, using the level '1' or level '2' basic assessment developed by the International Society of Arboriculture - taking into account all tree features and site considerations.

1.4 Recommendations in the report are based on sound arboricultural management practice and to aid future decision-making and planning. Aesthetics and environmental issues are also considerations and trees in need of work, to reduce an identified higher than acceptable risk, where feasible, should be retained in some form as standing deadwood. The value of these retained trees in terms of environmental and ecological benefits is substantial and vital in sustaining a healthy tree population.

2.0 Scope of the work:

For the purpose of this report, **one hundred and twenty three** of the trees, shown on **Appendix BB4: Review4 - Tree Location Plan** have been re-assessed. **Two** additional trees have been added to the schedule due to their condition. The schedule also contains a further **nine trees** which have been removed from and around the Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood. since 2017.

The information contained in the schedule covers only those trees that were examined and reflects the condition of the specimens at the time of inspection. The trees were inspected from the ground only and were not climbed. No samples of wood, roots or soil were taken for analysis. No guarantee, either expressed or implied, of the safety stability or **internal** condition of any of the trees can therefore be given.

3.0 Review of tree safety issues from 2021 report:

All works recommended in the report of March 2021 have been completed to a satisfactory standard.

4.0 Current position following assessment:

- **Appendix AA4-Review4: Tree Schedule and Recommendations** contains full survey details of the **No124 trees** inspected in this report.
- A detailed schedule of works is listed at 6.2 in **Table 1: Recommended work schedule and priority** (extracted from Appendix AA4-Review4) and shown on **Appendix BB4-Review4: Tree location plan**.
- Supporting information for terms and explanations used within the tree schedule can be found at 7.0 in **Table 2: Evaluation of threats to tree population** and in **Appendix C: Explanatory Notes**.

4.1 General site comments:

The increase in human activity mentioned from February 2019, especially in woodland areas remains high. Several new dens (in various stages of build) are evident and the many desire line paths, which criss-cross the woodland, are well established and soil excavations and humps along one route appears well used by cyclists.

The increase in use, raises the target areas in some parts of the woodland previously considered low use. This has increased the need to take action in some areas to reduce an identified risk.

4.2 Tree related comments:

Only seventeen of the one hundred and twenty five remaining trees in the schedule have been recommended for action. (**See Table 1 at 6.2**). No works have been recommended under the 'URGENT' priority category.

- Work to three trees has been given a 'HIGH' priority for action due to poor tree condition and location.
- Work to five trees has been given a 'MEDIUM' priority with removal specified for four trees and a reduction required for one other. Two trees have been added to this category for ivy management to allow time for ivy stems to die off before the next inspection.
- Nine trees have been identified under the 'LOW' Priority category for maintenance type work recommended to allow for a more detailed assessment at the next inspection.

Two additional trees have been added to the schedule.

- One sycamore tree (133) has been added, as it is in poor condition and felling is recommended.
- One oak tree (134) has been recorded. The tree has died and required additional monitoring although not yet a safety issue.

5.0 Findings and significance:

The majority of the one hundred and twenty four trees assessed, remain in reasonably good condition, with no action needed. Only seventeen trees have been identified as in need of work on safety grounds. **See Table 2 at 6.2**.

Roadside lime trees:

Concerns raised in the last report of March 2021 regarding the condition of the twenty-four lime trees on the roadside (trees 39 to 47 and 49 to 63) remains. Many still show little or no extension growth following their last prune (around 2017) and the decline in several

continues. In this schedule, one lime (62) next to the Recreation Ground entrance now has the brittle cinder fungus (*Kretzschmaria*) and two other lime trees (46 & 47) have declined to the point where felling is recommended. A further seven lime trees (52, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61 & 63) on the roadside have been included for basal epicormic growth to be cut back to the stem before the next inspection.

Other trees listed for work.

Tree 64, an English oak was inspected on the 2nd August and assessed as in good condition. However, on Saturday 13th following this inspection, a branch approx. 275mm diameter and 8 metre long ripped out from the crown at around 8 metres up. A further inspection of the fallen branch on the 24th August revealed significant decay at the failure point and a long, linear dead section along the top of the branch. The decayed area would have not been visible from the ground level inspection. The branch failure is likely to be caused by long term decay at the site of an historic pruning wound. The branch failure could also have been exacerbated by additional weight of the developing crop of acorns on the already weakened structure from this heavily fruiting tree.

A further four trees (7, 34, 70 and 133) have been identified as in need of action to reduce the potential risk of branch or whole tree failure.

6.0 Recommendations:

Proposed tree surgery is recommended to mitigate any identified tree safety issues. It is recommended that work given a 'HIGH', 'MEDIUM' and 'LOW' priorities, specified at 6.2 - **Table 1: Tree work schedule and priority** overleaf are adhered to, and the tree surgery recommended carried out within the timescale stated, by a competent arborist to the BS Standard for tree surgery BS 3998, (2010).

It is suggested that plans be made over the next five to ten years for phased removal for the majority of the roadside lime trees (protected under the TPO). The line of lime trees is still an important landscape feature despite their gradual decline and removal and replacement tree planting should be considered.

6.1 Statutory tree Protection:

Tree surgery recommended in this report have been made to mitigate identified safety issues and are therefore considered exempt from an application to East Suffolk Council under the TPO 25. It is suggested however that the arboricultural officer is contacted to confirm whether an application for work is required, **especially in the case of the oak tree 64 if crown reduction work is planned, following the recommended climbing inspection.**

Where trees protected by the TPO are felled, there may be a replacement condition added to an approval by East Suffolk Council to plant a replacement tree.

Consideration is needed when carrying out surgery and investigations of the trees and the contractor made aware that they have responsibility for the implications of harming protected species that may be present in the trees and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

6.2 Table 1: Recommended work schedule and priority timescales:

Table 1		Recommended work schedule and priority: September 2022	
Tree No	Species	Works recommended.	Timescale
HIGH PRIORITY - Works identified on safety grounds for trees in higher use area be carried out within 3 months of notification.			
62	Tilia spp (Lime spp)	Fell to ground level grind stump to make way for a replacement tree.	Within 3 months
64	Quercus robur (English oak)	Carry out climbing inspection to check integrity of remaining structure. Take action dependent of findings.	Within 3 months
70	Acer platanoides (Norway maple)	Reduce two lowest dead Branches on remaining framework to leave 1.5m long stubs.	Within 3 months
MEDIUM PRIORITY Works identified on safety grounds for trees in higher use area with less urgent or minor tree surgery to be carried out within 6 months of notification.			
7	Quercus robur (English Oak)	Reduce tree to 6m 'bent' habitat pole and stack arisings in long lengths on site.	Within 6 months
34	Fraxinus excelsior (Common Ash)	Fell to ground level grind stump and consider planting replacement tree.	Within 6 months
46 & 47	Tilia spp. (Lime spp) x 2	Fell to ground level grind stump and consider planting replacement tree.	Within 6 months
83 & 86	80 Quercus robur (English Oak) & 86 Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	Carry out Ivy management (see Table 2 for technique) to allow time for ivy to die off before next inspection.	Within 6 months
133	Acer pseudoplatanus (sycamore)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site in long lengths	Within 6 months
LOW PRIORITY - Works identified for trees to allow for more detailed inspection - Non-urgent works to aid positive tree management/future planning timescales.			
52, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61 & 63	Tilia spp. (Lime spp) x 7	Remove epicormic growth around base as close to main stem as is feasible.	Within 12 months

6.3 Timescale for re-inspection

Trees in this report have been given a re-inspection date **within 18 months** from the report date with the next inspection ideally to take place in late winter/early spring of 2024.

Trees are dynamic, ever-changing organisms, which react to changes in their environment. In the event of high winds and storms a survey of the trees is recommended as soon as possible after the event.

7.0 Table 2: Evaluation of threats to the tree population:

Table 2 gives a brief explanation of the most significant biotic threats to the trees identified in the trees on site.

Table 2: Evaluation of threats to tree population
Artist's fungus (<i>Ganoderma applanatum</i> & <i>adpersum</i>)
Ganoderma is a common decay fungus occurring on a wide range of broadleaf hosts causing heart rot. Infected wood turns white and ultimately soft and spongy as a rot consumes lignin. It may take many years before a decay zone becomes large enough in some species such as oak before it causes mechanical failure. Trees with a weaker wood composition where Ganoderma brackets present are likely to require action to reduce the risk of failure.
Ash dieback disease (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>)
This disease can cause death of branches leaving significant sized deadwood, capable of causing harm to people and damage to structures. Rate of decline can vary significantly within trees of different ages in some cases deteriorating within a year to the point where action is required. Regular annual assessment (preferably during the summer months) is needed to monitor and manage the disease spread.
Bleeding cankers
The threat from both the fungal pathogen (<i>Phytophthora</i> spp) and other bacterial causal agents of bleeding canker (<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp) are a growing threat to the health of many tree species including oak, horse chestnut and maples. The distinctive symptoms of brown and black staining 'bleeding cankers' is now a common site across the country.
Brittle Cinder (<i>Kretzschmaria deusta</i>)
<i>Kretzschmaria deusta</i> It is considered one of the most important root and butt decay pathogens in urban trees. It causes soft rot type and has a broad host range, commonly affected are beech, sycamore, and lime, although it may occur on any species. Such a decay type can cause failure of the tree with little or no warning.
Dutch elm disease (DED)
Dutch elm disease (DED) is still common across the UK, especially in unmanaged hedgerows. New elm growth generally reaches a certain height and is then infected by the beetle (<i>Scolytus</i> spp) carrying the fungus (Stout and Winter, 1994). Most standing are not more than 'pole' stage, small diameter stems and often die within three to four years of infection. Trees of this diameter can stand dead for several years before becoming unstable and a potential safety issue.

Epicormic (sucker) growth

Epicormic growth relates to the numerous small 'suckers' stem, that grow around the base of some tree species. It can be present in various tree species as a reaction to the bark being damaged, but in species such as European lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*) it is usually a normal function of the tree. Where epicormic growth is extensive at the base, management has been specified to cut suckers back as close to the main stem as possible to allow for a clearer inspection.

Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

The presence of Ivy on healthy trees is not normally a problem and provides excellent wildlife habitat and vital as a winter food source. However, where a tree is already in decline and ivy has become extensive, it can be a problem by increasing wind sail effect increasing the risk of failure and suppressing growth. Ivy may also be masking major defects. Where this is felt to be the case, ivy management has been specified.

Ivy management technique: Sever and remove a section (minimum of a 50mm) of all ivy stems around the tree base. NB. Care needs to be taken when carrying out this work not to cut right through ivy stems into the bark of the tree as this can cause long-term damage.

8.0 Conditions and limitations:

This tree risk management report is subject to the following limitations and qualifications.

General Exclusions

Unless specifically mentioned, the report will only be concerned with the above ground inspections. No below ground inspections will be conducted out without prior agreement from the client that such works should be undertaken.

The validity, accuracy and findings of this report will be directly related to the accuracy of the information made available during the inspection process. No checking of independent data will be undertaken. AlisonK-Arbiculture will not be responsible for recommendations within this report where essential data is not made available or is inaccurate.

This report will remain valid for **18 months** from the date of report. Alterations to the site or soil levels are carried out other than those specified within the report, or additional tree work undertaken, then commissioning of a new tree inspection is strongly recommended.

Opinions expressed concerning built structures and soil data are provisional. Confirmation should be sort from an appropriately qualified professional sought for an in-depth opinion.

It will be appreciated and deemed to be accepted by the client and their insurers, that the formulation of the recommendations will be guided by the following:

- The need to avoid reasonably foreseeable damage.
- The arboricultural considerations - Tree safety, good arboricultural practice, aesthetics, and environmental considerations.

The client and their insurers are deemed to have accepted the limitation placed on the recommendations by the sources quoted in the attached report. Where time constraints or the client limits resources, this may lead to an incomplete calculation of risk.



10th September 2022

Mrs A. Martin-Butler BSc (Hons) Arboriculture
Arboricultural Consultant

9.0 References:

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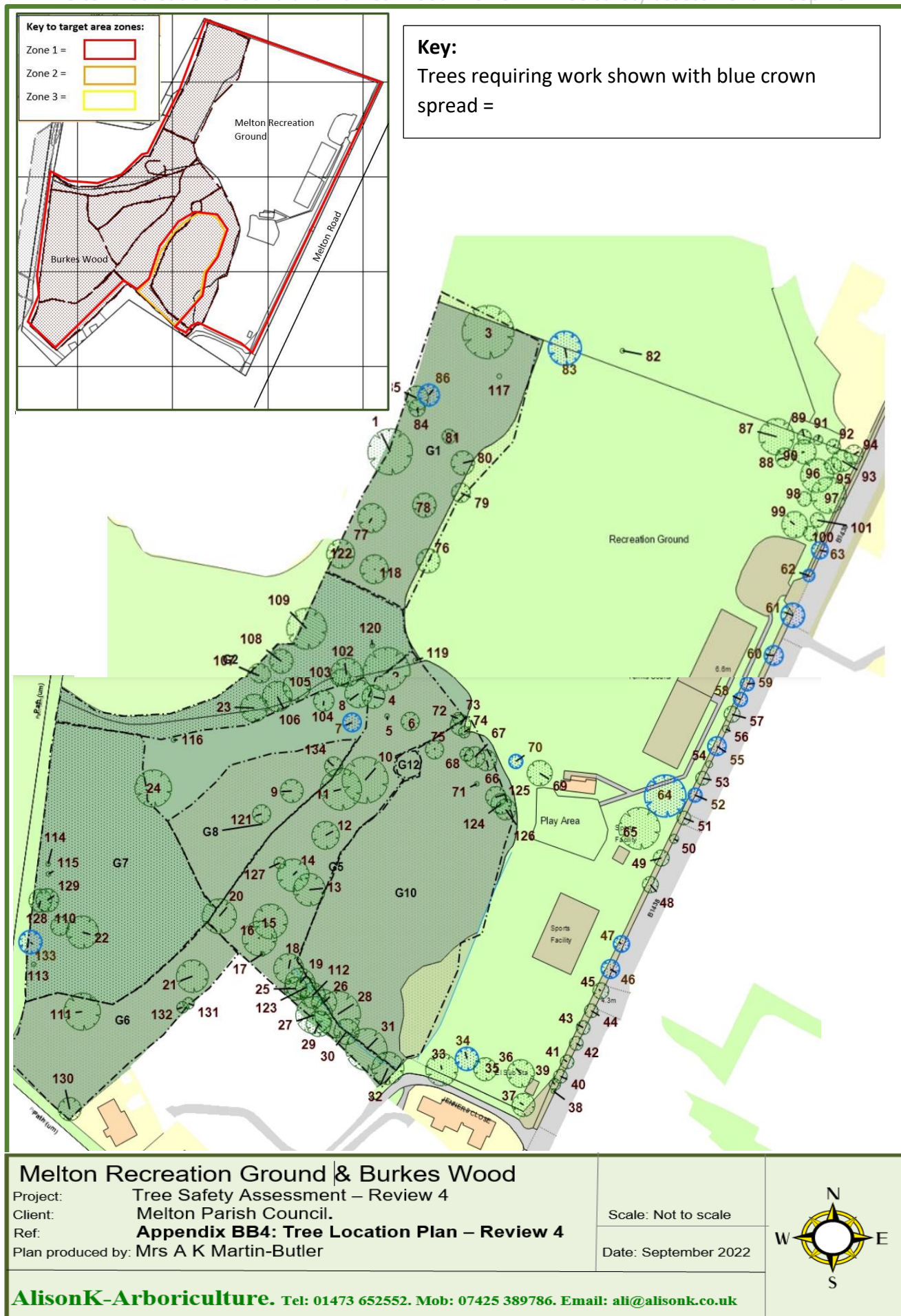
The British Standards Institute (2010) *Recommendations for Tree Work BS 3998*: BSI Standards Ltd.

10.0 Appendices:

Appendix AA4-Review4: Schedule of trees and recommendations (attached separately)

Appendix BB4-Review4: Tree Location Plan

Appendix C: Explanatory notes to accompany tree schedule.



Appendix C: Explanatory notes

Below is an explanation of the categories used in the tree survey **Appendix AA4-Review4:** Tree schedule and **Appendix BB4-Review4:** Tree location plans

Tree No:

Individual trees numbers are given in sequential order, commencing at “1” In some cases trees will be specified as groups (E.g. Gp1).

Tree Species:

Common names are given to aid understanding for a wider audience.

Spread:

A average crown spread has been provided to aid location.

Age class:

Young = An established tree (less than 1/3 life expectancy).

Maturing = A tree still to reach its full potential height and spread (around 1/3 to 2/3 life expectancy)

Mature = A mature tree (over 1/3 but less than 2/3 life expectancy) with slowing growth rate and limited potential for significant increase in height or spread.

Fully mature = A mature past 2/3 life expectancy for species.

Veteran = A fully mature specimen with high-value due to factors such as its age (having lived past that which is normal for the species) and/or ecological significance.

Tree Problem/Comments:

The following categories and descriptions are based on evaluation of tree health, structural integrity, and safety. Where appropriate comments have been made relating to:

- Tree Health and condition, tree structure and form and specific problems such as deadwood, pests and diseases broken limbs etc
- The effect of other trees present, of ground works and previous surgery.

Overall tree condition:

Good: = No significant physiological or structural defects, and an upright and reasonably symmetrical structure.

Fair: = No significant pathological defects but slightly impaired physiological structure however, not to an extent that the tree is immediate or early risk of collapse

Indifferent: = Significant physiological or pathological defects; but these are either remedial or do not put the tree at imminent or early risk of collapse

Poor: = Significant and irreparable physiological or pathological defects such that there may be a risk of early or premature failure.

Hazardous: = Significant and irreparable physiological or pathological defects, such that there is an elevated risk of failure.

Vitality: Comments on vitality are given in relation to such as growth rates, leave size and density, twig and branch extension growth and density.

Deadwood:

This relates to dead branches within the crown of the tree. In most cases this is due to natural aging of the tree or its location close to other trees. However, it could relate to fungal, bacterial or viral infection. For this reason, regular monitoring needs to be carried out on trees showing signs of excessive deadwood. Standing deadwood timber is a very important wildlife habitat and in short supply, especially in the urban environment. Standing stems should be retained where feasible when trees need to be made safe.

Minor Deadwood = 60mm diameter or less and not extensive enough to warrant removal

Moderate Deadwood = 60mm diameter up to 150mm

Major Deadwood = 150mm and above

Work Priority Rating:

This relates to the urgency of the work in relation to existing safety problems identified within the tree survey.

Very Urgent: Need for recommended works to be carried out within 48 hours of notification.

Urgent: Recommended works to be carried out within **4 weeks** of notification.

High: Recommended works to be carried out within **3 months** of notification

Medium: Works required within **6 months**.

Low: Works required within **12 months**.

Desirable: Non-urgent works given to aid positive tree management/future planning timescales