

Urban Forestry Frequently Asked Questions

Solihull Council manage in excess of 60,000 individual trees and several hundred thousand more in woodlands and tree groups. As we improve our database, the number of trees continues to grow, consequently we need to manage trees sustainably. The responses below are based on years of experience to find a balance between the needs of the individual, the community, Solihull's visitors and council budgets.

If you have an enquiry that can be answered below, this is likely to be the response we provide, however if there are more real significant reasons why these points are not likely to apply, please get in touch.

For **dangerous trees or tree emergencies**, please do not hesitate to contact us on 0121 704 8000.

A council tree is obstructing light to my property, what can the council do?

Light levels vary based on the orientation and construction of buildings, the time of year and the changing weather. In most circumstances, trees will simply be another factor in the urban environment affecting light. For large trees, we may crown lift the tree branches from view. Crown reductions will often create a more dense crown and cause additional costs and problems in future, so this should be avoided. We may cut trees back from property where they are growing close to windows.

Where two or more evergreen or semi-evergreen trees grow together to form a [high hedge](#) we may review the situation.

Leaves are falling onto my property from a council tree, can the tree be cut back?

Falling leaves are a natural consequence of tree growth. We clear falling leaves from highways and council owned land. . You can visit our [Verge and hedge maintenance](#) page for information on how we clear leaves.

We will not prune or fell trees due to falling leaves. Leaves can come from many sources, not just trees on council land. The only option is for the private owner to clear the leaves. Leaves can also be prevented from collecting in gutters and drains by placing wire guards over the top of the gutter.

The tree is dropping fruit on my property/the footway, can the tree be removed or cut back?

We will generally not prune trees for falling fruit. However, trees may be felled where the risk is proportionate. For example, a small tree dropping hundreds of plums on the footway may be removed and replaced. A large mature horse chestnut that drops conkers is more valuable and a large risk would need to be present for us to consider its removal.

The tree is blocking my TV/Telephone/Satellite Signal can it be cut back?

We will not prune trees to improve telecommunication signals. There is no guarantee pruning will improve the situation. It is a better strategy to relocate the receiver to an alternative position where a signal is known to operate. A TV aerial engineer will be able to advise.

I have a view out my window which I would like to see: can't the tree be cut back or removed?

We will not prune or fell trees for a view where that view is aesthetic or for preferential reasons.

I can't see when pulling out my drive/road junction, can the tree be cut down?

We will consider pruning/felling for visibility where there is no view onto or off of a public highway. Where the highway can be safely and clearly seen by positioning the vehicle before or after the tree then it is unlikely a tree will be felled. Where pruning can reasonably improve visibility this may be considered.

The tree is blocking CCTV, what can Solihull Council do?

We are happy to be consulted on the positioning of CCTV, particularly for public security. CCTV should not be positioned where trees are growing in the field of view. Where the CCTV predates the tree and this can be demonstrated, we may remove or prune the tree. Likewise, where the CCTV is installed when the tree was already in place we would expect the CCTV to be relocated.

Highway Obstructions

Our highways and footways are inspected every 6 months for defects and issues. Most of these are often picked up by qualified highway inspectors. The Urban Forestry Service work closely with the highways team to manage highway defects and trees in harmony. If you feel that a council tree is causing an ongoing obstruction then please contact us on 0121 704 8000.

Where a private tree is obstructing the highway this may have been identified during an inspection and where a tree is a serious persistent obstruction, we can take enforcement action.

Damage to Property

Incidental damage can occur from tree roots or falling branches. In all cases the onus is on the person suffering the damage to show that the tree was responsible. We may inspect damage and where the damage is clearly and irrefutably as a consequence of the tree we may support a claim as a good neighbour. However, damage is not often clearly linked to the tree. Therefore it is the responsibility of the claimant to provide evidence of cause and effect from the tree. Claims will not be reviewed without sufficiently clear supporting evidence.

For alleged direct damage such as lifting driveways, damaged fences etc. a simple claim with photographic evidence of the tree in contact with the damage may be sufficient.

For alleged subsidence related cases it is advisable to seek professional advice and contact your home insurer. Subsidence is a complex multifactorial issue that needs detailed investigation and advice. The Urban Forestry team will not review the claim without professional geotechnical

evidence and a supporting Arboricultural report. Evidence will need to demonstrate a clear link between the damage, the subsidence, and the tree.

In all cases, please contact our insurance team should you wish to make a claim as a result of the tree.

Dangerous Trees in Neighbouring Private Property

Where you have an ongoing concern with a dangerous trees in a private neighbouring property and you have exhausted all communication options with the neighbour, we may be able to enforce removal of the hazard. This will usually only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances where the tree can be shown to be an imminent danger. Imminent danger is broadly accepted to be a tree or branch that would cause significant harm or damage within a few weeks or months of us being notified.

We will not undertake site visits or works to for general nuisance issues such as blocking light, drains, overhanging branches or other non-hazardous issues.