Code of Practice for Highway Tree Inspections

March 2023

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Cheshire East Council

Version Control

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1.0	Final for Approval	March 2023

Cheshire East Council
Highways

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1. Introduction

1.1 Cheshire East Council's Approach

The Council's approach to Highway Tree Safety Inspections is as follows:

"Cheshire East Council will carry out highway tree safety inspections on all adopted highways in accordance with its Tree Risk Management Strategy, Highway Tree Maintenance and Inspections Policy and the Code of Practice for Highway Tree Safety Inspections."

1.2 This Document

All landowners and occupiers of land have a legal duty of care for the safety of trees within their control and in exercising this duty of care it is important that they have a high regard for the benefits that trees provide while balancing this against the need to keep the public safe.

The Council recognises that generally the risk from falling trees is low; however, it has specific responsibility to identify any potential hazard presented by trees to highway users and to take action as appropriate to mitigate any risk. The Council will therefore undertake regular safety inspections of highway trees and trees immediately adjacent to the highway and undertake work as necessary to maintain public safety in accordance with published guidance and case law. The level and frequency of safety inspection will be dependent on an assessment of the risk of harm presented by the location of trees relative to highway users.

Highway tree safety inspections are an important means of keeping the highway safe for the travelling public. They are also vitally important in court cases for providing evidence that the Council takes a responsible attitude to its duties as Highway Authority, and to provide a defence against third party claims under Section 58 of The Highways Act 1980. If a member of the public suffers damage or injury which can be attributed to the condition of a tree, then the Highway Authority maybe liable to pay damages unless it can show that it has taken reasonable care to keep the highway safe as is its duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

This document has been developed to detail how the Council's Highway Tree Maintenance and Inspections Policy will be delivered. This policy was produced to implement the Council's Tree Risk Management Strategy and includes the main principles contained in that Strategy. The general principles and specific guidance contained in 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice 2016' have also been used to produce a code of practice which adopts a comprehensive risk-based approach.

Highway tree safety inspections are designed to identify and record defects and hazards presented by trees that may impact on highway users or adjacent property. Such defects will be assessed to determine the appropriate action required and a timescale for completion, prioritising those trees which may present an immediate danger.

Highway tree safety inspections are supplemented by other safety inspections and assessments undertaken in line with national standards and/or good practice, including but not limited to:

- Highway safety inspections carried out in accordance with the Highway Safety inspection Code of Practice.

- Ad-hoc safety inspections undertaken in response to specific matters identified through enquiries and correspondence.

- Safety inspections carried out by the council in relation to other duties such as planning applications and the management of Tree Preservation Orders

The frequency of safety inspection will be determined using the principles described in the Tree Risk Management Strategy and are based on the network hierarchy developed using the principles contained in 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'. The frequencies will also be consistent with those for similar or adjacent areas of land owned and maintained by the Council.

This Code of Practice sets the standard for highway tree safety inspections on the roads of Cheshire East Council. In most cases, following the advice given will be adequate. However, staff engaged on highway tree safety inspections will always be expected to apply a risk assessment approach as not every eventuality can be covered in this document. All details of tree safety inspections, defects and intended remedial action must be recorded, together with a recommended timescale for action. In addition, tree safety inspections for roads with no **defects** must be positively recorded.

This document describes the highway tree safety inspections to be carried out by trained and competent inspectors. It sets out the standards to be followed on the borough's highway network.

Updated and amended versions of this document will be published as required.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Highway Safety

The Council has a legal duty of care to ensure that it acts as a reasonable and prudent landowner. This means that the Council must ensure that it avoids acts or omissions that could cause a foreseeable risk of harm to persons or property. As Highway Authority, the Council has a legal duty to maintain the highway. Under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, it may be exposed to the possibility of actions for breach of statutory duty if it fails to maintain a highway.

The type and frequency of safety inspections and any subsequent actions to remove hazards presented by trees, described in this code of practice, are designed to meet that duty.

This Code of Practice has taken into account the current legal position (both statute and common law) and how these relate to the Duty of Care placed on landowners. (a summary of legislation and relevant legal cases are attached at Appendices 1 and 2)

The Council's responsibility as a reasonable and prudent landowner, is to consider the risks posed by its trees. The level of knowledge and the standard of safety inspection that must be applied to the safety inspection of trees are of critical importance, but the courts have not defined the standard of safety inspection precisely. Generally, the courts appear to indicate that the standard of safety inspection is proportional to the size of and resources available (in terms of expertise) to the landowner. It is of note that the HSE states that: "for trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate" (HSE 2007)

Where harm occurs, liability is a matter for the courts to determine. The question is whether or not the Council has discharged its duty of care, which will be largely dependent upon whether or not the council has taken a reasonable and proportionate approach to the management of tree safety.

A comprehensive summary of English Law as it relates to trees can be found in Chapter 3 of 'What the law says' of the National Tree Safety Group publication Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (2011).

The regular safety inspection / recording / retrieval system and the consequent action provide both a formal record of the condition of highway trees and the defence for the Highway Authority under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980. The recording of safety inspections & investigations made following notification of a possible hazard by members of the public, the police etc. or on the receipt of a Third-Party Claim is essential in establishing a comprehensive defence.

In order to provide a defence against a claim there must be written standards of maintenance, which are in accordance with nationally accepted criteria. The Highway Authority needs to show that it had effective policies and that they were adhered to. The 'Confirm' Business Management System and specialist tree inspection and management software is designed to be a key element in that task.

2.2 Definition of Maintenance and Repair

For the purposes of the Code of Practice, and in order to fulfil the legal duty to keep the highway safe, maintenance and repair will be that work identified and recommended during the tree safety inspection.

2.3 The Highways Act 1980

The Act expressly provided that the reasonableness of the Council's actions in attempting to perform the duty of maintenance could form a defence to the action.

The burden of proof was to be on the Highway Authority to establish that it had taken such care as was in all the circumstances reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action related was not dangerous for traffic. This statutory defence is contained in the Highways Act 1980, Section 58. (Highway Law, S.J.Sauvain 1989 p95 Sect 5-03).

The Highways Service has the task of providing for the defence of the Council on the roads within the Borough, by taking action to make safe. Insurance against third party highways claims is carried by Cheshire East Council for all adopted highways in the Borough.

The Council needs to establish that it has acted reasonably, which it would do by the production of adequate documentation and evidence in support of actions taken. In Cheshire East, these include a defined and monitored safety inspection regime, safety inspection records, the ordering of works of repair and the checking of compliance with instruction to repair.

The Council, as a Highway Authority, has responsibility for ensuring trees outside the highway boundary, but within falling distance, do not cause a danger or obstruction. Section 154 of the Act empowers the Council to deal, by notice with hedges, trees, and shrubs growing on adjacent land and recover costs where necessary.

2.4 Ensuring a Defence

A claimant must show that the highway tree is not in a reasonably safe state as a result of failure to maintain. The test is whether the state of the highway tree was such as to cause a reasonably foreseeable danger.

For the purposes of a defence under subsection (1) of Section 58, the court shall in particular have regard to the following matters:

- the character of the highway, and the traffic which was reasonably expected to use it.
- the standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic.
- the condition in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the tree.
- whether the Highway Authority knew, or could reasonably have been expected to know, that the condition of the tree to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway.
- where the Highway Authority could not reasonably have been expected to carry out the work to the tree before the cause of the action arose, what warning notices of its condition had been displayed.

The burden of proof is on the claimant to prove that the accident occurred as described and that such caused their losses and damage. It is also on the claimant to prove that the condition of any 'defect' in the highway was dangerous such to breach Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

If it is established that a defect is dangerous then the burden of proof rests with the defendant to establish their Section 58 'special defence' and also to prove any allegations of contributory negligence.

2.5 Statutory Undertakers

Section 58 does not apply to damage resulting from Statutory Undertakers' works or apparatus forming part of the highway surface.

2.6 Other Authorities & Owners

A safety inspection or a visit to a site may reveal trees which present a hazard to highway users which do not fall within the remit of the Highway Authority. Any hazards found must be recorded in the authority's Asset Management System and a report sent immediately to the appropriate engineering supervisor in order that the correct street authority or owner may be informed. Swift action may be necessary by telephone or email. Any failure to report such defects could raise arguments regarding liability.

3. Highways Tree Safety Inspections

3.1 General

This Code of Practice sets out the criteria for highway tree safety inspections. Details of highway safety inspections, which also includes for the identification of hazards presented by trees, can be found in the current Highway Safety inspection Code of Practice.

Highway tree safety inspections, defect identification and remedial action are the responsibility of Cheshire East Highways and will be delivered in accordance with this code.

Regular tree safety inspections of the whole network are made by trained and competent personnel using hand-held tablet devices to record the date, location and nature of defects hazardous to highway users.

The data from tree safety inspections is transferred to a central database and used as instructions to carry out the repairs or make safe the hazard.

3.2 Network Hierarchy

In accordance with WMHI, the Council has developed a Network Hierarchy in order to prioritise its resources in the most effective way allowing it to better address the various risks and issues associated with the management of the highway network. Each road is categorised in accordance with the criteria outlined in Table 1 of WMHI:

Table 1: Network Hierarchy

CATEGORY	CRITERIA
Resilient Network	The category of roads to which priority is given for maintenance and other measures to maintain economic activity and access key services.
Strategic Routes	Trunk and some Principal 'A' class roads between Primary Destinations, routes for fast-moving long-distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions.
Main Distributors	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access.
Secondary Distributors	B and C class roads and some unclassified urban routes carrying buses. In residential and other built-up areas these roads have 20 or 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings.
Link Roads	Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions. In urban areas these are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 20 or 30 mph speed limits, random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking. In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads.

Local Access Roads	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic. In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-sacs.

Note: Special Interest Areas are defined as town centre areas etc.

3.3 Inspection Regime and Frequencies

The inspection of highway trees will be informed by the use of Site Zones where sections of the highway are defined according to the levels of use (Table 3) There are three zone categories, (High, Medium or Low) and will be defined by: -

- Frequency of use such as the Network Hierarchy, taking into account the risk-based approach in the Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' (WMHI).
- Number of users and exposure time
- Location such as urban or rural, town centre, speed limits, junctions
- Facilities such as shops, schools, transport infrastructure

The Council will carry out a review of all zones every three years or where there are clear identified changes in use.

3.4 Risk Assessment

This Code of Practice is informed by guidance produced by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) Common Sense Risk Management of Trees and current best practice within the arboriculture industry. The NTSG position is underpinned by a set of five key principles:

1. Trees provide a wide variety of benefits.
2. Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall.
3. The overall risk to human safety is extremely low.
4. Tree owners have a legal duty of care.
5. Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety and management.

The HSE sector information minute 'Managing the risk from falling trees' requires that a reasonably practicable approach be taken which is proportionate to the risk. It also highlights that the safety inspection of individual trees can be disproportionate to the risk they pose.

The HSE has set out a framework, known as the Tolerability of Risk (ToR) (HSE 2001); for reaching decisions about whether risks are unacceptable, tolerable, or broadly acceptable. Where a risk is considered tolerable it is deemed to be 'as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). A risk is tolerable where the costs of reducing that risk further would be disproportionate to the benefits gained. This Strategy has been formulated to take these principles into account.

The HSE has developed a five-step approach to risk management (www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm) which shall be applied when assessing the risk from trees (see Table 1 below)

Table 2: Five steps to risk assessment

Step	HSE Assessment	Action
1	Identify the Hazard	Trees on land owned by Cheshire East Council, Trees affecting land owned by Cheshire East Council
2	Decide who might be harmed and how	The general public, council employees, contractors and their property when: • Using the highway • When visiting parks, gardens, open spaces and other property owned by the council. • On land adjoining council owned property
3	Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions	Where the public might be harmed, or property damaged by falling trees or branches. What constitutes an acceptable level of risk is determined by the Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) approach which defines broadly acceptable and unacceptable levels of risk. Within this range is where the risk is Tolerable if it is deemed to be '*low as reasonably practicable'* (ALARP). This means the risk is Tolerable if the costs of risk reduction are much greater than the value of the risk reduction.
4	Record findings	Tree Inspections /risk assessments and any remedial works will require to be recorded in an electronic database which shall be made available across Council Services.
5	Review your assessment and update where necessary	Reassessment will be based on the risk of significant harm for each area or site. This Risk Management Strategy will be formally reviewed every 3 years as part of the reporting and monitoring arrangements for key corporate risks.

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Table 3: Zoning, Frequency of Inspection and Inspection Method

Zones of Use	Network Hierarchy	Usage Criteria	Frequency of Inspection	Inspection Method (Level)	Examples
Zone 1 High Use	Resilient network, strategic routes, main distributors, secondary distributors and link roads	High volumes of traffic and public access/ occupancy [3]	Every One or Two years [1]	Basic (Level 1) **Risk not tolerable/acceptable** Detailed (Level 2)	Principal/Trunk Roads, major road junctions, roads adjacent to the rail network, car parks, town centres, schools, employment areas, emergency facilities and access routes, permanent structures with a constant target, play areas, public areas/ events [3]
Zone 2 Moderate Use	Strategic routes, main distributors, secondary distributors and link Roads	Moderate volumes of traffic and public access [3]	Every Three or Four years [1,2]	Basic (Level 1) **Risk not tolerable/acceptable** Detailed (Level 2)	Main roads and junctions adjacent to car parks of moderate use, footpaths and access ways (pedestrians 1-36/hour), moderate use parks and public areas.[3]
Zone 3 Low Use	Local access roads unless volumes of traffic are subject to peak periods of traffic	Low volumes of traffic and public access [3]	Every Five or Six years[1, 2]	Basic (Level 1)	Secondary and unclassified road (unless used during peak periods to avoid congestion or regular events[2]), adjacent to low use parks and recreation areas and public areas where use is dispersed. [3]
Zones 1 and 2		Reports of damage following severe weather events	Immediately following event	Detailed inspection of reported damage (Level 2)	

In line with national codes of good practice (notably the Code of Practice, Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, published on 28 October 2016) the characteristics of the tree safety inspection regime, including frequency of safety inspection, items to be recorded and nature of response, are defined following an assessment of the relative risks associated with any tree.

The tree safety inspection regime is applied and recorded systematically and consistently. As well as information relating to defects, all tree safety inspections must also therefore record:

- time of inspection and defect identification.
- weather conditions.
- any unusual circumstances of the safety inspection.
- person(s) conducting the safety inspection.

The frequency and method of inspection will be determined by zoning the network based on the network hierarchy and frequency of use.

Although the Network Hierarchy will be the main determinant of inspection frequency, site specific factors may merit a decision to temporarily or permanently increase or reduce the frequency in a specific location (for example to mitigate the risk from certain tree species or with consideration for vulnerable users).

Notes:

1. Inspections will normally be carried out from a slow-moving vehicle. Where the inspector determines that a particular tree or group of trees requires a more detailed inspection, the vehicle will stop in a safe place. The more detailed inspection will then be carried out from a position where it is safe to do so.
2. Inspections will be carried out during daylight hours and where weather conditions do not create poor visibility.
3. Inspections will be carried out by two people, with the passenger being the inspector.
4. Dual carriageway inspections will be carried out in both directions.

The table defines the minimum frequency at which inspections will be undertaken. Additional safety inspections may be planned in response to user or community concern, requirements for monitoring of structural concerns, as a result of incidents or in response to extreme weather conditions.

Arrangements are made to review the safety inspection, assessment, frequency and recording regime at least every 3 years. This review will be considered at a senior management level within Cheshire East Highways (CEH) and will consider:

- changes in network characteristics and use.
- completeness and effectiveness of data collected.
- trends within defect formation.
- success of repair programmes.
- the need for changes/amendments/additions to the inspection regime derived from risk assessment.

As a result of such reviews, proposals may be put forward to amend the safety inspection frequency or methodology should such alterations be deemed to be beneficial. Any such

amendment will be considered, proposed to CEC and The Highways and Transportation Committee for agreement and, if implemented, recorded as such in formal minute.

Consideration will be made to reviewing and updating details of any Asset Management Plans as a result of any such changes.

3.5 Defect Categories

The Council's duty of care to manage the risk from our trees shall be reasonable, proportionate and reasonably practicable. The Council must therefore balance this risk with the aesthetic, ecological, environmental, and social benefits that trees bring with "reasonableness" and the benefits of risk reduction taking into consideration the financial cost of managing and controlling that risk.

The priority for implementing any remedial action will be dependent on the assessment of risk and hazard related to the zone of use. Those trees that have been identified as the highest risk will be dealt with first, with emergency work given the highest priority as set out in Table 2.

Severe Weather

Following any storm or severe weather event, reports of damaged trees will be investigated, prioritising high use zones on the highway for assessment by our staff for any obvious tree risk features.

Emergency Work

Where a tree has a very high likelihood of failure and it is in a high use zone, then the risk is 'Not Acceptable' and will be deemed a priority. Operatives will attend to the tree as soon as possible (within 24 hours, with the site to be secured with warning signs and
barriers or closed to the public in the event of a delay).

Cost Effectiveness Risk Reduction

Other than Emergencies, risk reduction work will not normally commence until all planned annual active risk assessments have been carried out. This will assist in prioritising the work and coordinating with other tree maintenance so that it is planned in a cost-effective way.

Not Tolerable Risks

Not tolerable risks will be carried out in conjunction with other tree maintenance work. Where there is not the budget to do this, priority will be given to the risk reduction work.

The Council will manage the risk from trees using the Tolerability of Risk (ToR) principle taking into account the following factors:

- Trees provide a range of important environmental and social benefits.
- The overall risk to the public from tree failure is extremely low.
- The Council has a duty of care to manage the risk from trees.
- The duty should balance the benefits from trees, risk and costs.
- The Council will manage the risk from trees where there are obvious tree risk features reduced to a Tolerable or Acceptable level.

Tolerable Risks

Tolerable Risks will not be reduced but may require recording and be recommended for increased frequency of safety inspection.

Review

A review will be undertaken with the Council's Contractors every 3 months to monitor how risk reduction priorities are being carried out and managed and whether any improvements to work priorities can be made.

Table 4 : Priority for work to trees

Work Priority	Risk Assessment	Action	Response Time
Category A Emergency (Council or privately owned trees)	Response to trees that are a significant risk and an imminent danger to public safety	**Not Acceptable** Risk will be reduced to an acceptable level	Within 24 hours (or site secured with warning signs and barriers until work is completed)
Category B Essential Works	Response to trees that are considered essential but not imminently dangerous but where remedial works are necessary	**Not Tolerable** Risk will be reduced to an Acceptable level but with a lower priority than Category A **Tolerable** Risk will not be reduced but may require increased assessment frequency than Category C	Works completed within 6 months or restrict public access by barriers and signs until work is completed.
Category C Desirable – Pro active Management	Works to trees that are not considered to be high risk Works to abate a nuisance (other than subsidence) caused by Council owned trees	**Acceptable** Risks will not be reduced unless resources are available	No specific time scale (as resources allow)

It will be the responsibility of the inspector to ensure the trees are assessed to the best of his/her ability and to ensure that the inspection is recorded accurately. The method of inspection is set out below.

Tree inspections will normally be carried out from ground level with the use of binoculars and hand tools (such as a nylon sounding hammer and metal probe). Cameras may also be used to record specific defects and in order to monitor defects over a period of time.

Basic Inspection (Level 1 Visual Survey)

Trees will be assessed in a vehicle as a drive- by inspection. The inspection will identify the target area (what the tree or parts of it will fall on) and the type of assessment recorded.

A more detailed Level 2 Assessment will be carried out where there are trees with obvious features where the risk is considered not acceptable or tolerable.

Drive-by Inspection

A drive-by inspection is an assessment carried out at a Basic Level from a moving vehicle that is driven at a low speed observing only trees with obvious risk features which might not be acceptable or tolerable. The inspection shall be carried out in accordance with a Traffic Management Plan and incorporate the following: -

- the vehicle shall include one driver and one surveyor.
- the surveyor will only assess trees and not assess other highway issues.
- Trees will be assessed from both directions even if trees are only on one side of the road to avoid missing any features that are only visible from one direction.
- where trees are present on both sides of the road, each side of the road shall be observed separately.
- the vehicle shall be driven at an appropriate speed and may be variable depending on the surveyor (less than 50kph/30mph).
- vehicles will be equipped with flashing beacons and display signage.
- Where it is safe to do so the vehicle shall slow down or stop when there are many trees or a tree is showing obvious tree risk features (e.g. decay fungi, crown dieback, large wounds, splits, cracks or significant leaning towards the road).
- The surveyor will take photographs and record the tree and a decision made as to whether a detailed assessment shall be carried out.
- If the decision is to carry out a detailed assessment, a full 360-degree assessment will be carried out on foot. If vegetation needs removing or access is difficult, arrangements shall be made to carry out the work necessary to allow a detailed inspection to take place.

Walk-over Inspection

When inspecting some of the network, such as urban streets in residential areas, it may be more appropriate to inspect by a visual examination carried out on foot to identify obvious and serious above ground tree risk features. This will involve observing the tree in its entirety at a distance followed by a walk round each tree to gather information on the condition of roots, trunk, branch structure, crown, buds and leaves and may include the use of simple tools. Where there are limitations to the inspection due to obstructions or restrictions due to ownership this shall be noted in the survey.

Detailed Inspection (Level 2 Survey)

A detailed inspection is carried out on trees identified during a drive-by inspection or walk-over inspection that require closer examination because they have a feature where there is an obvious risk that is considered not acceptable or tolerable.

The assessment is carried out from ground level using a quantifiable tree risk management system.

A report will be produced which will include the risk assessment/rating and appropriate options (if necessary) for reducing the risk and any appropriate management advice. Any work carried out will be recorded when it has been completed.

Advanced Inspection

Where a risk assessment from a Level 2 survey is unclear or more information is required about the likelihood of failure, and resources are justified for further intervention (e.g. a tree of significant

amenity, heritage or cultural value) a more detailed advanced inspection may be undertaken. This may include below ground and aerial investigation, including detailed information about specific parts of the tree, the significance of structural defects and strength loss due to decay, the presence and significance of diseases, pests, assessment of targets and site conditions and the use of specialized equipment.

If the costs of an Advanced Inspection are substantial, a decision will be made whether the tree has sufficient value to justify the expense of inspection over removal. This will be determined using a system for valuing amenity trees as public assets (e.g. CAVAT). A report will be produced that will include the detailed information obtained from the investigation and those covered in the Detailed (Level 2 Survey).

3.6 Recording inspections

Accurate record keeping enables proactive and responsible risk management providing evidence in support of professional challenge. It also supports future decision making about the management of the Council's trees.

Whilst all trees within a survey area need to be checked, only those identified with specific tree risk features requiring work need to be recorded, however the areas that have been inspected need to be recorded.

A record of all tree inspections, including related maintenance and proposed actions will be maintained on a retrievable database that is accessible and corporately available.

The highway service will: -

- Ensure that safety inspections include both trees within the highway and those outside but within falling distance of the highway.
- Implement a programme and record of tree inspections including related maintenance and action proposed. The record will be retained, maintained and updated in a retrievable database to support an asset management approach and inform allocation of resources and value for money.
- Ensure adequate budget provision based on evidence of need and service level for ongoing regular tree inspections and necessary safety related maintenance work for trees arising from inspections.
- Ensure that the data base is accessible to all officers with corporate responsibility for tree risk.

3.7 Emergency Procedures

If a Highway Tree Inspector considers that a tree presents a hazard to highway users or adjacent property due to its health or condition, and it is assessed to be sufficiently dangerous to require an emergency response, arrangements will be made to take whatever action is necessary to remove the hazard in accordance with the response times detailed within this document. In some circumstances it will be necessary to close roads or implement temporary traffic management until action to remove the hazard has been completed. Operational procedures are in place to ensure that resources are available during and outside normal working hours to ensure that the required response times can be achieved. During normal working hours, third party reports are made to the Council's Customer Contact Centre. If it is determined that an emergency response is required, the details are passed directly to the appropriate operational team and resources deployed to meet the required response time. Outside of office hours, third party reports of

dangerous defects made using the Council's Out of Hours service will be reported to the on-call Duty Inspector who will arrange the appropriate response. Additional resources will also be available to attend to specific situations as determined by the Duty Inspector.

3.8 Tree Safety Inspectors

Competency of Personnel

All personnel carrying out inspections of trees on behalf of the Council shall have the following levels of competence and training: -

Level 1

Inspections will be carried out by a member of staff or contractor with a basic understanding of trees. Because of their training, experience, and site knowledge, they will be able to notice common tree risk features and abnormal growth in trees and will understand how to pass on their concerns to a more experienced person.

Training - LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection Certificate for inspectors of parks and open spaces, LANTRA Highway Tree Inspection for inspectors of highway trees. LANTRA Intermediate Tree Inspection certificate is desirable.

Level 2

The inspector will be a competent arboriculturist (as recommended in Circular 52/75 Inspection of Highway Trees) with training and experience of managing trees for safety, balanced with other site-specific requirements. Inspectors will be familiar with the use of probes, nylon faced mallets and binoculars.

Inspectors carrying out level 2 surveys will have been assessed as competent to carry out detailed inspections of trees by completing LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection training and certification.

Training - Minimum RCF Level 3 Arboriculture with modules covering tree inspection and the recognition and treatment of defects and LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection.

Level 3 – Detailed Inspection

An inspection that provides a detailed assessment of any decay or tree stability with the use of specialized equipment e.g. Resisto-graph or Tomography. This level of inspection shall be usually reserved only for high value trees within high use areas.

Training - Minimum RCF Level 6 Arboriculture (e.g. BSc. RFS Professional Diploma and

LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection.