gentoo

Tree Management Policy

Policy:	Tree Management Policy
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Accountable Executive:	Executive Director of Housing
Policy Owner:	Operations Manager
Policy Author(s):	Area Estates Manager
Approved by:	Executive Director of Housing
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For the full version history of this policy, see the back page	

Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy.
Printed versions may quickly go out of date – the latest version will be on the Policy Hub, or contact the Governance Team. For support and advice regarding the policy, please contact the Policy Owner.

1.0 Introduction and Scope

1.1 This policy covers our approach to tree management and should be read in conjunction with our tree management procedure. The policy and procedure provide clear directions on how we will manage Gentoo's stock of trees in a proactive manner, safeguarding the health and safety of everyone as its first priority as well as ensuring that its trees continue to make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of communities in the long term.

1.2 The scope of the policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Developments Ltd	
Gentoo Genie	

1.3 It applies to:

General Needs rented properties	X
Supported Housing	
Sheltered Housing	
Leasehold/Shared ownership	
Rent to Buy properties	
Market rented properties (domestic)	
Temporary Accommodation	
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	
Communal areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	
Commercial Property (offices, depots etc)	
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	
Garages and outbuildings	
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc)	
Curtilage	

1.4 Trees are essential to life and their value cannot be overstated.

They:-

- Contribute as part of the landscape character, adding to people's quality of life and sense of well being.
- Are essential to the bio diversity of an area.
- Assist in reducing Urban Temperatures.
- Encourage wild life.

- Intercept rainfall, filter air and absorb pollutants.
- Reduce noise levels.
- Provide carbon dioxide absorption and oxygen production.
- Provide links with the countryside.

2.0 Links to Strategy and the Business Plan

2.1 Our vision and values set the direction and shape the culture of our organisation.

2.2 Gentoo's **vision** is:

To provide great homes, strong communities and inspired people for Sunderland.

2.3 The Group's **values** are:

- We care about people
- We take accountability
- We shape the future
- We bring leadership
- We deliver

2.4 The Group's Board and Executive Team have approved Gentoo's strategic **priorities**:

The safety of our customers and colleagues will always be our number one priority. We have identified **six further priorities** which will guide the delivery of our services:

- We know our customers
- We provide great homes
- We help communities to thrive
- We are a great place to work
- We spend our money wisely
- We are well governed

We live our **values** in everything we do from the board room to the front room, to deliver our **priorities** for our customers.

2.5 Gentoo's policies support the delivery of the Group's Vision, Values and Strategic Priorities.

3.0 Regulation and Legislation

3.1 The Executive Director (Corporate Services) will ensure this policy has

regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice.

3.2 Gentoo has a duty of care to others in respect of trees on land under their control. These duties derive from amongst other things, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act), Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (as amended) and the general duty of care in common law. The duty of care is common to all and requires duty holders to do all that is reasonably practicable.

3.3 HSE guidance and research by The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) confirms that, **the overall real risk of serious harm from trees in the UK is "extremely low"** (1 in 10,000,000) as such the generally agreed standard to be achieved by tree owners is that of a **"reasonable and prudent landowner".**

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 As a Housing Association, we have a statutory responsibility to comply with all relevant regulation and legislation in relation to tree management.

4.2 The Executive Director of Housing is accountable for ensuring this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice and for ensuring the implementation for this policy effectively.

4.3 The Associate Director (Housing) is responsible for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement the policy.

4.4 The Operations Manager is responsible for the day to day delivery of this policy but more specifically, the Area Estates Manager is the operational lead.

4.5 All Gentoo staff involved in the management of trees are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and accompanying procedure and for reporting any concerns they have.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or in line with business need.

5.2 This policy may be subject to an audit in line with the internal audit plan.

5.3 The procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate.

6.0   Our Policy Statement

6.1   At Gentoo our reasonable and balanced approach to tree safety management is based upon four essential aspects that will lead to a proactive rather than reactive regime:

1. **Zoning**: appreciating tree stock in relation to people or property
2. **Tree inspection**: assessing obvious tree defects
3. **Managing risk at an acceptable level**: identifying, prioritising and undertaking safety work according to level of risk.
4. **Records:** keeping records of all inspections and work undertaken.

6.2   Zoning

6.2.1 Gentoo will define areas of land according to their levels of use.

This practice prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where most needed and demonstrating Value for Money. Gentoo will identify two zones, high and low use.

6.2.2 High-use zones are areas used by many people every day or high used routes such as adjacent to busy roads, land adjacent to schools and children's playgrounds or where property may be affected, sheltered units and open shared spaces situated within communal blocks. Trees in all zones will be subject to an inspection on a five-yearly cycle.

6.3   Tree Inspection

6.3.1 A dedicated Tree Surveyor manages the trees taking a pro-active approach. All trees in high use areas are inspected and tagged. The need for a detailed inspection will only apply to individual trees which have been identified from informal observation or formal inspection as giving high-priority for concern in a high-use zone.   The detailed inspection will record the information identified in Appendix 1. The Arboricultural Team will advise the local area offices and the information will be included within the local Estate Profiles.

6.3.2 In addition Gentoo will respond to urgent enquiries within 24 hours and non-urgent enquiries within 5 working days to carry out inspections on trees within Gentoo land ownership. Detailed inspections as per Appendix 1, will be carried out. Future cyclical inspections shall be carried out as

specified by the detailed inspection record (Appendix 1), where required.

6.4 Managing Risk

6.4.1 Reasonable tree management involves taking actions proportional to the risk. As previously stated, the overall real risk of serious harm from trees in the UK is "extremely low".

6.4.2 Reasonable tree management has both reactive and proactive elements. Tree Inspections will be carried out and follow the principles of risk assessment (Table 1) and will form the basis of pro-active planned tree maintenance and future tree inspection regimes for Gentoo.

Table 1

Code:	Priority:	Response
H	High	Work to be carried out within 0 - 3 months
M	Medium	Work to be carried out within 4 to 18 months
L	Low	Work to be carried out 19 to 60 month
Z	Non- priority	No Action proposed – review in 5 years

6.4.3 The inspection primarily looks for external features indicating mechanical (structural) defects that pose significant risk to public safety, concentrating on risks that are either immediate or reasonably foreseeable in the near future.

6.4.4 Inspection resulting in the identification of a defect or situation that could result in immediate risk to public safety will require urgent action, for example:
- It has snapped or blown over.
- It is rocking (roots are damaged).

- It is uprooted but held up by another tree or building.
- A large branch has broken off or is hanging off the tree.
- It or its branch is blocking the road or footpath.
- It or its branch blocking access to property.
- It has fallen on to a structure, such as a building or a car.
- Few leaves in summer or dieback in the crown.
- Mushrooms or fungi growing on or near the tree.
- Old splits and cracks in the trunk or large branches.
- Smaller branches or twigs falling from the tree.
- Dead, Dying, Diseased and Dangerous.

6.4.5   This action could consist of immediate tree work being required i.e. felling or branch removal or site management e.g. stopping or diverting traffic. Non immediate risks identified will form future planned maintenance programmes of work.

6.5   Records

6.5.1   Records can be important proof of reasonable tree management. All requests for inspection are raised through the Group's management information system (currently "Orchard"). The findings of the inspection are held as a record within the system. All resultant tree work is programmed according to priority.

6.5.2   All trees identified within a high-use zone or identified as requiring a detailed inspection in accordance with Appendix 1 shall be tagged and referenced.

6.5.3   The group are in the process of developing its Geographic Information System (GIS). Records will be held of all trees within high-use areas and those requiring detailed and cyclical inspections.

7.0   Unforeseen Circumstances

7.1   The above approach applies to day-to-day management of trees within Gentoo land ownership.

7.2   In the event of an international or national directive i.e. as received with regard to Ash die back, the Group will follow the relevant issued guidelines.

Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
2.0	Amended format	Sarah Treadwell	12/03/2018
2.1	Policy review – first draft	Albert Copus	25/01/2019
3.0	New approved version following review	Kirsty Collins	01/04/2019
4.0	Policy revision	Susie Thompson	04/04/2022

Appendix 1 – Tree Survey

			Gentoo Group Tree Survey						
							Priority		
LOCATION	**Biddick**		**Date of Survey**				H = High to be carried out within 24 hours		
AREA	**224**		**Survey carried out by**				M = Work to be carried out within 4 to 18 month		
							L = Work to be carried out 19 to 60 month		
							Z = No work required		
Tree/Group ref no	Species	Trunk Dia (mm) >1.5 m	Height (m)	Crown spread (m)	Comments	Recommendations	Timescale (Hrs)	Priority (B/H/M/L)	Recommended Re- Inspection
B001	Acer	500	8	5	MEWP Required	Crown lift, clear of property	6	M	10 years
B002	Laburnum	750	8	5	Close to property	Fell and grind stump	18	M	6 months
B003	Oak	800	8	5		Prune required	3	L	12 months

Appendix 2 – KPI Template

Performance Template - Tree Management

Code:	Priority:	Work to be carried out within 0 - 3 month		Work to be carried out within 4 to 18 month		Work to be carried out 19 to 60 month		No Action proposed – review in 5 years	
		No. completed	% completed	No. completed	% completed	No. completed	% completed	Number	%
H	High								
M	Medium								
L	Low								
Z	Non- priority								

works

Address	Details summary

Appendix 3 – Local Service Offers

Description	We will:
Neighbourhood Management - to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe, attractive and well maintained places to live.	• Provide you with regular information specific to your neighbourhood
	• Ensure all issues affecting the neighbourhood are identified and responded to
Customer Service - to provide a personalised, tailored service to our customers.	• Provide a range of ways for customers to access services from Gentoo
	• Provide regular information on Gentoo products and services
	• Provide a range of ways for you to give us your feedback and to use your feedback to improve our services