

Oxford City Council's Tree Management Policy: Nuisance Trees in Blackbird Leys

I'm bringing this address to the Central Executive Board to bring the issue of nuisance trees on Blackbird Leys to the attention of the CEB members and to ask them to explore what might be done to mitigate the problem and improve the quality of life for the affected tenants and residents on the estate.

Our Tree Management policy dictates that reactive tree work is not carried out to address overhang branches or leaf and bird drop, no matter how many representations are received from residents or the local councillors on their behalf. Reactive tree works are only carried out if they are judged to be necessary on health and safety grounds. While I understand the budgetary pressures which have resulted in the formulation of this policy, I also believe that the particular situation in Blackbird Leys merits attention.

Many of the trees which are causing a nuisance were planted when the estate was built in the 1950s and have not had works carried out to them since. There are cases where the mature trees loom over two storey terraced houses blocking out light from all the front rooms for most of the year. There are also car parking spaces on the estate (including sites newly installed under our Great Estates program) which are unusable because of the deluge of organic matter from overhanging trees at certain times of the year.

Many of the problem trees are not street trees but are growing on some of the green amenity space between buildings, the patches of grass around which many homes on the estate are built. The council has an additional responsibility as the landlord to look after these spaces as part of its estate management programme and I hope that Housing Services will work with the Parks Department to agree a course of action.

Linda Smith
Councillor for Blackbird Leys

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