

Undated document copied from: <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/read-sheffield-council-s-secret-contract-policy-for-felling-trees-in-full-1-9167613> Published 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018. **Highlighting** and *comments* by Fran Halsall.

The following document was published after an Freedom of Information request submitted by the Yorkshire Post. This guidance forms the basis for the felling and replacement of many thousands of trees, yet it fills a mere one and a half pages. It makes no mention of the 6Ds used to justify felling and the much talked about engineering solutions are also curiously absent. More on this story [here](#).

## HIGHWAY TREE REPLACEMENT POLICY

1. The species of tree listed in Annex 2 are currently considered suitable for replacement plants on the highway. Alternative species will be considered subject to Authority Approval. The selection should be made after consideration of the following: -
  - Site conditions
  - Sufficient space available on site for both root development and ultimate height and spread upon maturity
  - Species and size of any existing trees on the same street where these are appropriate to the location and in particular maintaining the visual and historical integrity of the tree planting on the street (e.g avenue planting schemes)
  - Minimising future maintenance requirements and nuisance (eg preference for small leaves, light foliage/canopy, **restricting the use of large or fruiting species to appropriate locations** – *very open to interpretation, as there is not enough specific detail in the word 'appropriate'. This leaves both the contractor and the Council broad scope as to what locations are considered acceptable for planting large trees. Considering the emphasis on minimising cost, it would certainly be possible to use this requirement as a means of choosing smaller species that are arguably cheaper to maintain.*
  - Ability to withstand extreme temperatures and drought
  - Any tree diseases prevalent in the area or probable in future (as far as practicable)
2. Where possible the character of an area will be preserved by using replacement plants of a similar species of tree. If a disease is present, resistant cultivars of a similar species should be used before considering alternative species.
3. All replacement trees will be containerised in 45 or 80 litre pots with a girth between 12 and 16cm. All new plants should be suitably supported until they are sufficiently established and able to stand up unsupported during strong winds.

4. Tree grills shall only be installed in high amenity areas such as the City Centre.
5. The planting location shall be checked for the presence of utility equipment to ensure that there will be no restriction to the future growth and development of the tree and to avoid damage to the equipment both during planting and over the life of the tree.
6. The planting season for replacement trees shall be November to April inclusive. Trees shall only be planted outside this season with the written permission of the Authority.
7. **Where all trees on a street are identified for replacement, and the number of trees is six or more, this shall be phased so that no more than one third of the trees are replaced in any phase.** The subsequent phase of planting shall take place no less than five years after the previous phase to allow the earlier replacements to become established. **Where there are five or less trees on a street and all have been identified for replacement, all the trees shall be replaced at the same time.** *– the paragraph starts with an awareness of the need to use a minimum 5 year interval between phased fellings and sounds reasonable, however by the end of the paragraph they are sanctioning the wholesale removal of trees, should that street happen to have less trees to start with! Totally backwards from an ecological point of view. One possible reason that the 'one third at a time' rule does not apply here is expediency. It is more convenient for the contractor. Or they just did not think it was important. So much for a managed succession.*
8. There shall be a process of consultation with residents to ensure they are fully aware of the replacement proposals and have sufficient opportunity to make comments or suggestions regarding the proposals.
9. All tree replacement work shall be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice and in particular the requirements of the BS 3998: Recommendations for Tree Work, and shall take cognisance off the SCC Highway Tree Design Guide.