

North Hertfordshire Homes

Reducing insurance premiums and identifying savings of up to 50% on tree management with Ground Control



Introduction

Whether it is tree planting, tree work or dealing with tree enquiries from residents, North Hertfordshire Homes have chosen to pro-actively manage their tree stock. Through commissioning Ground Control to carry out a full tree stock and maintenance assessment survey, using the industry standard WoodPlan tree management software, North Hertfordshire Homes can plan ahead, manage and reduce expenditure through informed decision making and most of all provide responsibly managed open spaces within their communities.



The Client

North Hertfordshire Homes are one of the largest registered Social Landlords in Hertfordshire, providing approximately 8,700 homes for rent including over 800 sheltered homes for older people and approximately 200 temporary and supported housing places, across the north of the county. In addition they manage over 500 lease hold and shared ownership properties.



Leroy Pearson - *Estates Services Manager* provides an overview of tree management at NHH

The Challenge

“Trees were managed at North Hertfordshire Homes on a reactive basis rather than a proactive and planned approach with tree works being undertaken on an ad hoc basis. We were uncertain as to the amount of trees located on open spaces in our ownership. A driver for this review was also to manage the risk associated with trees and the concerns of our insurer. The management of trees has traditionally been devolved to our Neighbourhood teams as well as the Supported Housing team with the Estate Services Manager having a co-ordinating role. Our original requirement was to ascertain how many trees we have, their condition and to put in place a planned programme of tree maintenance and to explore the options for tree surgery works.”

The Solution

“The decision to proceed was taken after research, visits and contact with other landlords to ascertain good practice in this area of estate management. A four pronged approach was then developed to firstly carry out a survey of our trees to be fully aware of condition, works required and cost. Secondly to purchase specialist tree management software to assist in the management of our trees and to improve customer service, thirdly to explore the future contractual options and finally to take the opportunity to review how we manage trees.”



The Result

“Post survey we were very pleased with the report and presentation of the data and the analysis provided including methodology and basis for costs. At the beginning of this process it was not clear as to how this review would end as we do not have the in house expertise on tree management. However, with the assistance of Ground Control we are now able to plan a manageable budget for year on year tree maintenance, identifying savings of up to 50% within 2 years of carrying out this exercise. Aside from this our neighbourhood officers now have details of all our open spaces trees at their fingertips. Using the WoodPlan software, officers can deal with nearly all resident tree enquiries without having to leave their desk. We are sure that we will now have a much improved framework for managing trees that is streamlined, more effective, value for money and provides better customer service.”

The Future

“We are hoping that by taking the above approach and our intention to join a framework contract to achieve significant savings. The savings will be achieved through the tender that has been undertaken but also by our ability to programme and batch our work on trees going forward. Ground Control will continue to monitor and audit our trees on an annual basis to ensure we remain consistently proactive.”

Ground Control

Ground Control is an award-winning commercial landscaping, grounds and tree management service provider, currently maintaining over 13,000 sites for some of country's largest retailers, utilities and housing associations (Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Tesco, Thames Valley Housing, Watford Housing, North Hertfordshire Homes, Tower of London, Knowsley Metropolitan Council, B&Q, Royal Mail, Vodafone, Thames Water, Anglian Water, etc.).

Ground Control is an investor in people with ISO 9001, 14001 and 18001 accreditation and safe contractor approved status.

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