

# LATERAL POLICY

## Background

A lateral is the private connection from a building to the public main. This pipe is owned by the property owner. Therefore the property owner is responsible for the maintenance or renewal of that asset.

A properly constructed and maintained pipe is designed to withstand normal tree root and traffic loadings. As owners of the laterals it is the responsibility of property owners to ensure that their pipes are in sound condition.

As pipes reach the end of their life, their structural condition is likely to decrease and be affected by tree roots and traffic loadings. In these cases, the cause of the damage is not the tree root and traffic loadings, but the age of the pipe.

## Trees and root blockages

It is recognised that tree root blockages can raise issues. If a pipe is well constructed and maintained, then it is particularly unlikely for tree roots to cause damage to pipes in the first instance. However, once structural damage has occurred (normally due to the poor condition of a pipe) tree roots can cause blockages and exacerbate the extent of the damage.

In recognition of the complexity of these issues Council will pay once only for unblocking a lateral if the blockage is due to the roots of a tree on road reserve. Where a blockage occurs, the property owner will be advised that a structural repair is required to the pipe and that they are responsible for ensuring that this happens at their cost and in accordance with the normal Council's specifications (which ensure that the replacement pipe, or repair, is of a standard that must withstand damage from tree roots). If the property owner does not carry out the repair (or partial pipe relay), or does not carry out the works to the required specification and the blockage reoccurs, any future costs (both for tree root removal and for structural repairs) will be the responsibility of the property owner.

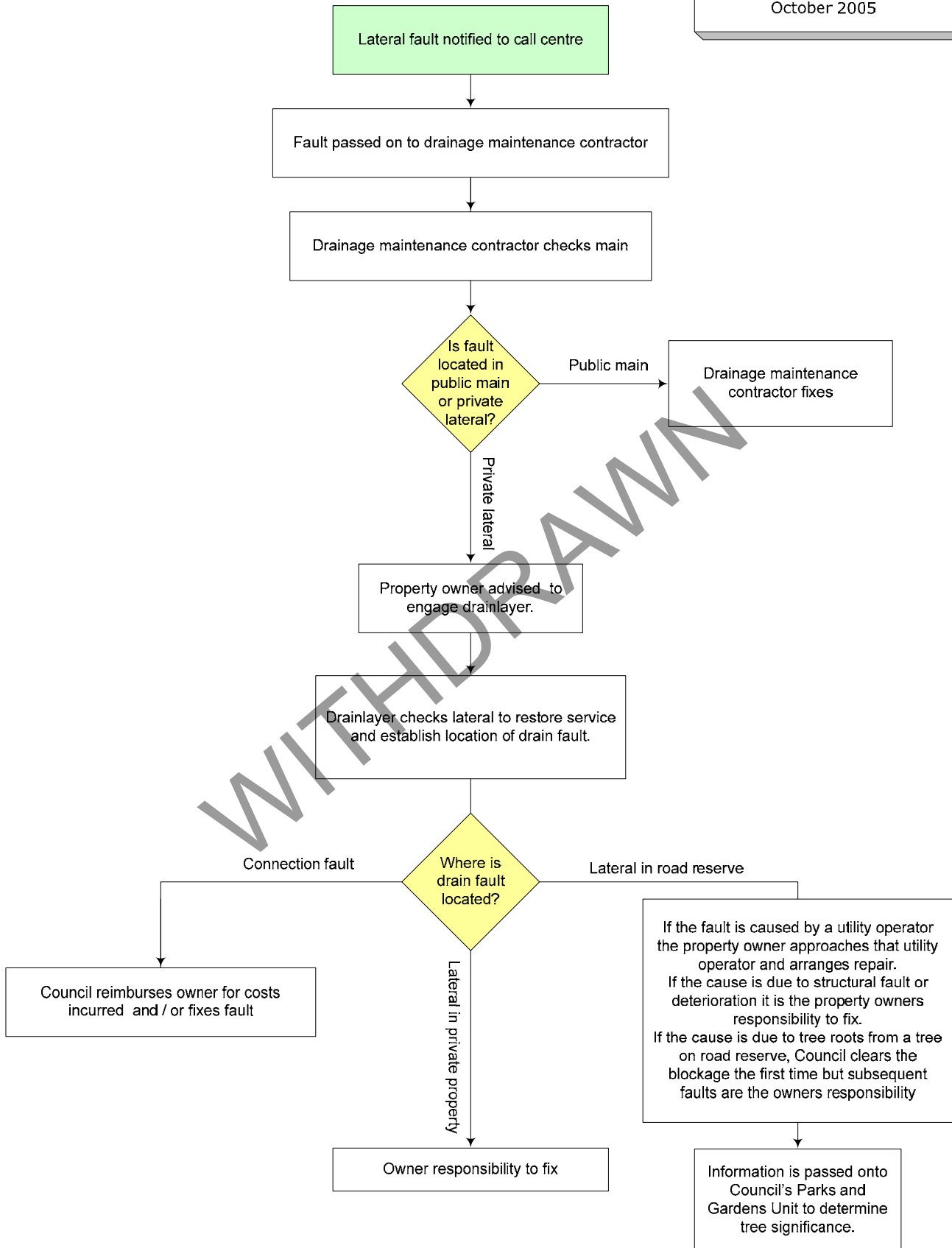
Trees will normally take priority. If in the opinion of Council's Parks and Gardens Unit, the tree is not a "significant" tree, it may be removed. Out of caution, Council staff will continue to ensure that future trees are planted in locations where they avoid the existing pipes. Council's BCLS staff will also ensure that private pipe locations are sensible.

## Utility operators

No changes are proposed and utility operators will continue to be required to pay for repairs carried out as a result of their work.

# Lateral Policy 2005

**LATERAL POLICY**  
 applies to wastewater laterals  
 connected to public mains  
 October 2005



## Definitions

- Utilities - refers to damage by a utility operator
- Deterioration - structural damage other than that caused by trees or utilities
- Trees - damage caused by tree roots
- Connection - joint between private lateral and public main