

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 10 OCTOBER 2018  
TITLE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES IN AND ADJACENT TO ST MARYS CHURCHYARD, ST MARYS BUTTS, READING

ITEM NO. 7

Ward: Abbey

### RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed tree works be approved

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to and seek approval from Committee for proposed works to Council maintained trees within and adjacent to St Mary's Churchyard, Reading, subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 10/06 (TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 15 August 2018 an application was received from Reading Borough Council's Tree Officer in Parks seeking consent for works to trees in and adjacent to St Mary's Churchyard (reference 181487/TPO).
- 2.2 Whilst the trees are not owned by Reading Borough Council, the Council inspect and maintain the trees under a historic agreement.

#### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 As the Council-maintained trees in question are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, a formal application is required for these works to be approved.
- 3.2 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires applications for works to Council owned or maintained trees to be decided by a Committee of the Council which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates.
- 3.3 The law also requires a public notice to be displayed for at least 21 days giving details of the proposed works and contact details for any comments to be sent. A site Notice was attached to a tree adjacent to Chain Street and one to the notice board outside the Church's main entrance on 22 August 2018 and left for the required period.
- 3.4 The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 allows applications to seek consent for specified works to be carried out on multiple occasions within the time period of the consent in order to avoid the need for regular applications. This application takes advantage of

that regulation so that regular maintenance can take place without unnecessary paperwork.

#### **4. PROPOSED WORKS**

4.1 The application seek approval for the following works:

- T1 Norway Maple - crown lift over pathways to statutory heights; reduce back branches extending into pathways/highways to growing points to clear rights of way; reduce branches back from the roof of No. 55 St Mary's Butts to give approx. 1m clearance
- All relevant trees within the TPO - remove basal growth twice a year for the next 5 years; crown lift to 2.75m over paths and 5.5m over the roads annually for 5 years and crown clean (remove dead, dying, dangerous, crossing/rubbing branches) annually for 5 years.

4.2 Removal of dead wood and crown lifting to the statutory heights of 2.75m above adopted paths and 5.5m above adopted highways is exempt from requiring permission under the TPO but has been included to cover the requirement to give formal notice of such works.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 The works proposed are not considered to be harmful to the trees' appearance or future health and are reasonable works in order to appropriately manage the trees. No objections or comments were received as a result of the public notice. It is therefore recommended that the works be approved.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.

6.2 Applications for works to Council owned TPO trees are to be decided by a Committee and one which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Administrative.

#### **8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to proposed tree works.

In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the tree works.

## 9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The aim of TPO's is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees also have high environmental benefits through their absorption of polluted air, creation of wildlife habitats, reduction of surface water runoff and flooding caused by heavy rain, provision of shelter and shading and reduction of noise. The Council's adopted Tree Strategy highlights the importance of the use of TPOs in the retention and protection of important trees in the Borough. Policy CS38 of the Council's Core Strategy relating to Trees, Hedges and Woodlands also reinforces the need to continue making new and retaining existing Tree Preservation Orders.

## 10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Planning Sections street index of TPO's

10.2 Register of Tree Preservation Orders

10.3 Plan for TPO 10/06 relating to St Mary's Churchyard, Reading (Appendix 1)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

### Appendix 1

