

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 December 2022

Ward: Norcot

Proposal: Works to protected trees Hampstead Court, Grovelands Road

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed works be approved.

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to and seek approval from Committee for proposed works to 12 Lime trees at Hampstead Court, Grovelands Road, Reading, subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 8/12 (TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 3 October 2022 an application was received seeking consent to pollard the Lime trees (reference 221493/TPO). Following an officer site visit on 14 October 2022, the pruning specification was expanded to include removal of basal and epicormic growth.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 The Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services is not delegated to make a decision on tree work application where the applicant is a Councillor, as is the case for this application, hence approval is sought from Committee as required.
- 3.2 Tree work applications are able to seek consent for a specific operation to be repeated a number of times within the consent period, to avoid multiple operations. This application utilises that allowance.

4. PROPOSED WORKS

- 4.1 The application seek approval for the following works:
- 12 No. Lime - re-pollard back to previous pollard points
 - 12 No. Lime - Removal of epicormic growth (minor growth growing from main stem) twice a year for the next five years (all currently have this).
 - 12 No. Lime - Removal of basal growth twice a year for the next five years (only 4 currently have this growth).
- 4.2 Standard conditions will be attached to the consent requiring works to be carried out to good arboricultural practice, for notice to be given on each occasion the works are carried out and for the re-pollarding to be limited to Dec-Jan or late July-August to minimise the harm to the future health of the trees. I understand that a date for the works has already been arranged for December in anticipation of approval, due to the timing limitation for carrying out the re-pollarding.

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. It is therefore recommended that the works be approved subject to no substantive objections being received.

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 TPOs 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 EN14 of the Local Plan 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 Register of Tree Preservation Orders
- 10.2 Plan for TPO 8/12 relating to Hampstead Court, Grovelands Road, Reading (Appendix 1)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

Appendix 1 - Plan for TPO 8/12



