



<b>Title</b>	PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE COUNCIL OAK TREE ADJACENT TO ELIZABETH HOUSE, GOSBROOK ROAD AND TWO COUNCIL ASH TREES AT THE FORMER HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL, 82 GOSBROOK ROAD, READING
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report</b>	Emma Gee
<b>Report author</b>	Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer
<b>Lead councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Council Priority</b>	Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
<b>Ward</b>	Caversham
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To approve the proposed tree works.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1. To report to Committee on the proposed felling of one council Oak tree adjacent to Elizabeth House, Gosbrook Road and two council Ash trees at the former Heights Primary School, 82 Gosbrook Road; those being T1 & G1 respectively of TPO 7/08 (copy of TPO plan attached – Appendix 1).

## **2. Policy Context**

- 2.1. Local Plan policy EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS includes the aim for  
*‘Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended’.*
- 2.2. The protection of Council trees where appropriate to do so contributes to this policy aim.
- 2.3. The Reading Borough Council adopted Tree Strategy (2021) sets 12 Objectives, which can be viewed here: [Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy, March 2021](#) . Appropriate management of Council, protected trees meets the aims of Objective 1.

### 3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The Oak tree (T1) is located on a strip of land to the west of the access road into Elizabeth House. The tree has historically been reduced to manage its declining condition and has been subject to unfavourable activity within its rooting area in the past, including parking and dumping of green waste. Following an inspection by the Tree Surveyor in Streetscene, an application was received on 23 January 2026 seeking consent for the felling of the Oak tree (application reference PL/26/0080). The reason for the felling is due to the majority of the western half of the tree being dead with indications of extensive internal decay, and the eastern half showing signs of declining vitality with a sparse crown and large dead wood over the parking area. A 2m high stump will be left for wildlife value. An indication of the tree condition can be seen in the photographs in Appendix 2. Replacement planting will consist of one *Quercus castanifolia* Green Spire (upright form Chestnut-leaved Oak) within the courtyard garden of Elizabeth House and two *Crataegus monogyna* (common Hawthorn) in the location of the felled Oak. The locations of these can be seen in Appendix 3.
- 3.2 The Ash trees (G1) are located at the former Heights Primary School and have been previously reduced (in 2018) as a result of identification of fungal brackets and decay. Following an inspection by the Tree Surveyor in Streetscene, an application was received on 21 January 2026 seeking consent for the felling of the Ash trees (application reference PL/26/0063). The reason for felling is as a result of continuing decay and a sparse crown with poor vitality making the trees' structural integrity questionable. Replacement planting with one *Acer platanoides* (Norway Maple) and one *Pinus nigra* (Austrian pine) will take place in the same location of the two TPO Ash trees. The location of these can be seen in Appendix 3. For information, an adjacent, non-TPO Ash is also in a similar, declining condition and is proposed to be felled.
- 3.3 Tree work approvals will have conditions attached, one of which will be to secure the replacement planting. It should be noted that under the TPO we can only require 1 for 1 replacement. As RBC trees, there will, however, be a net gain in line with the Tree Strategy.
- 3.4 As the Council-maintained trees in question are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, a formal tree works application is required for the works to be approved.
- 3.5 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires applications for works to protected 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.
- 3.6 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.

- 3.7 The works proposed are necessary in order to appropriately manage the risk these trees present and there are no feasible alternatives to felling. Replacement planting will be carried out, as is normal following felling of council trees, but also secured via condition. As no objection or comments have been received as a result of the public notice, it is recommended that the works be approved.

#### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. Trees within the Council's ownership improve the quality of its open spaces and provide multiple environment benefits, including improvement of air quality. The retention, planting and appropriate management of Council trees promotes a sustainable and healthy environment in Reading and helps to reduce its carbon footprint, one of the five priorities of the Council Plan 2025/28.

#### **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. Trees have multiple environmental benefits that include flood alleviation, wildlife benefits, air pollution mitigation and air cooling. The replacement planting overall represents a net gain in tree number hence contributed to the Council's aims.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. A site Notice was placed at the frontage of the entrance to Elizabeth House on Gosbrook Road on 27 January 2026 and left for the required 21-day period, i.e. until 17 February 2026. No objections or comments were received.
- 6.2. The applications have also been available to view via Public Access

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. No implications identified.

#### **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1. None

#### **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. Service and administration of Tree Preservation Orders falls under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012.
- 9.2. Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.
- 9.3. Determination of applications affecting work to protected trees is delegated to officers except where the proposal has been submitted by or on behalf of the Council.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. None of this report. It is understood that works to the tree would be funded by the Council from existing budgets.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. Once issued, tree work approvals last for a period of 2 years, i.e. must be carried out within that period.

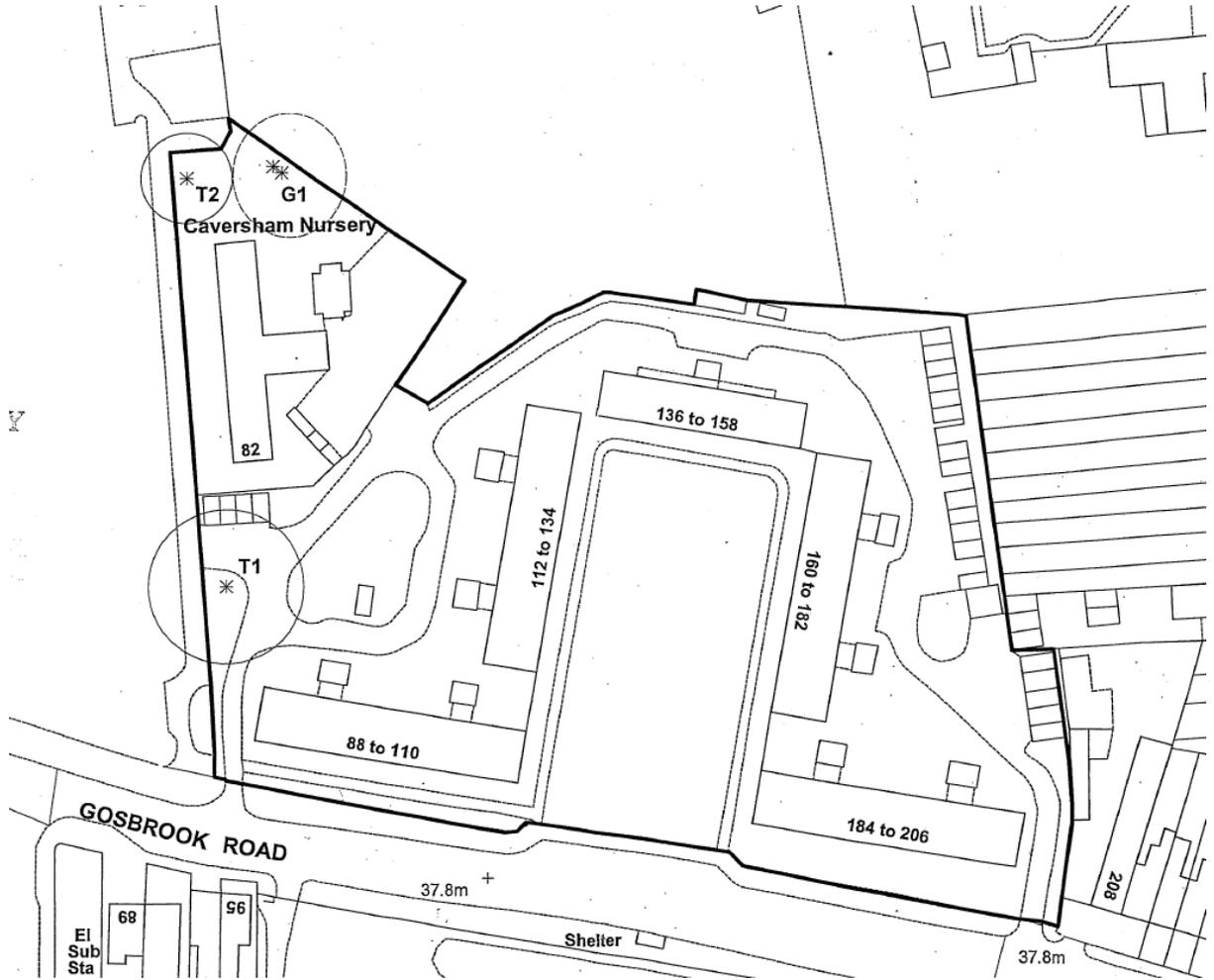
## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1. Register of Tree Preservation Orders

## **Appendices**

- 1. TPO plan of TPO 7/08**
- 2. Photographs**
- 3. Replacement planting details**

**Appendix 1 – TPO 7/08 (plan)**



**T1 Oak; G1 Ash trees**

## Appendix 2 – Photographs



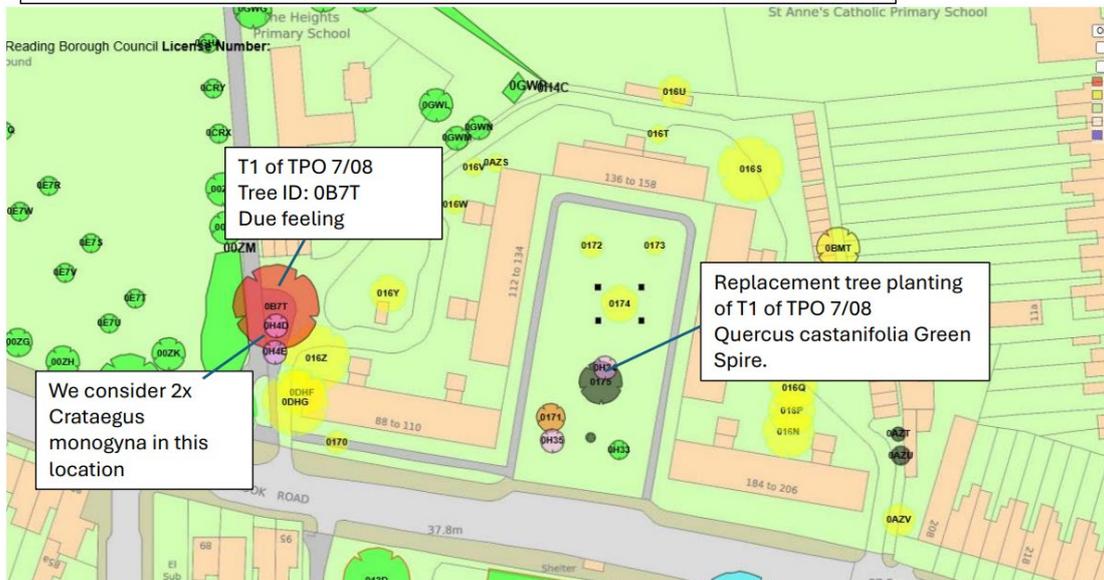
**T1 Oak**



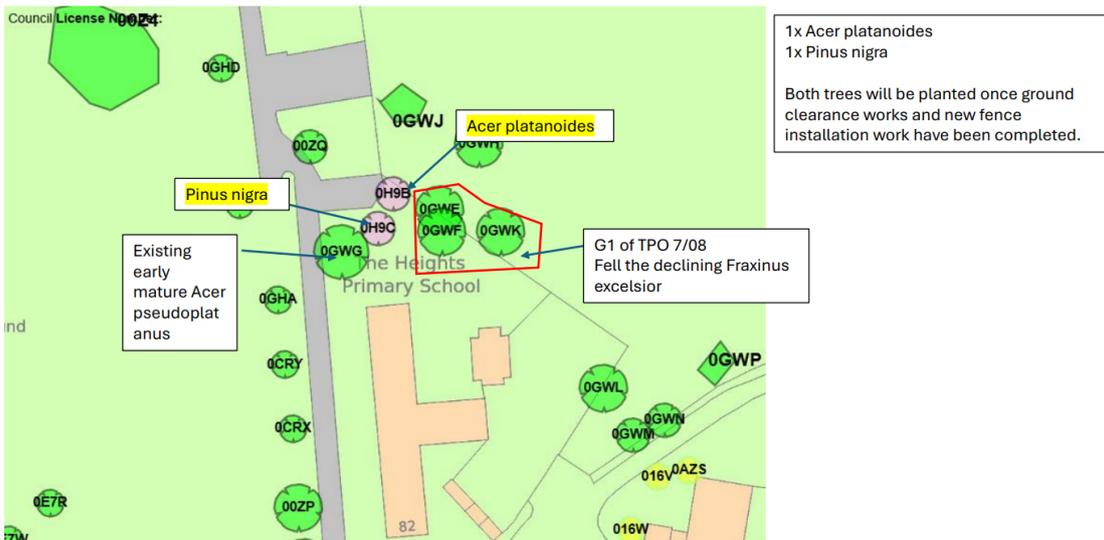
**G1 Ash indicated by the arrows; other non-TPO Ash visible**

### Appendix 3 – Replacement planting details

#### 88 Gosbrook Road Replacement tree planting plan.



#### 82 Gosbrook Road Replacement tree planting plan for G1 of TPO 7/08



G1 of TPO is made up of 0BWE & 0BWF of the tree survey

Overall 4 Council trees are to be felled (3 TPO; 1 non-TPO) and 5 replacements planted.