

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 17 July 2019  
TITLE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE MULBERRY TREE AT 44 FIRCROFT CLOSE, READING

Ward: Kentwood

### RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed felling be approved

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the proposed felling of one Mulberry tree at 44 Fircroft Close, Reading; T1 of TPO 100/01 (copy of TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The application is made by a staff member at Reading Borough Council hence the decision is not delegated to Officers and must be determined by Planning Applications Committee.

#### 3. PROPOSED WORK AND REASONS

- 3.1 The proposal is to fell the mature Mulberry tree located to the front of the property, leaving a 1.5m stump. This is T1 of Tree Preservation Order 100/01.
- 3.2 The reason for the felling is due to recent and historical major branch failure leaving the tree unsafe given its location adjacent to a public path.
- 3.3 Officers have visited the tree on a number of occasions, following branch failure in October 2017 and more recently in June 2019. The structural integrity of the remaining tree is now highly questionable as a result of the historical branch loss and weight of the remaining main limbs leaving them liable to failure. Whilst the tree demonstrates good physiological health, the extensive work (reduction) that would be required to address the unacceptable hazard now presented by the tree would result in the tree's amenity value being affected to the point that it would no longer be worthy of inclusion in the TPO. The tree has now reached a point where felling, whilst unfortunate, is a reasonable option. Photographs of the tree can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Officers consider it reasonable to attach a replacement planting condition to the approval (if agreed), for a replacement tree in the same location; the species of which should be agreed with Officers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposed felling is considered a reasonable course of action given the historic branch failure and unacceptable risk the tree now presents. It is therefore recommended that the felling be approved.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1.1 Administrative.

## **7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES 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 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the felling of this tree.

## **8. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

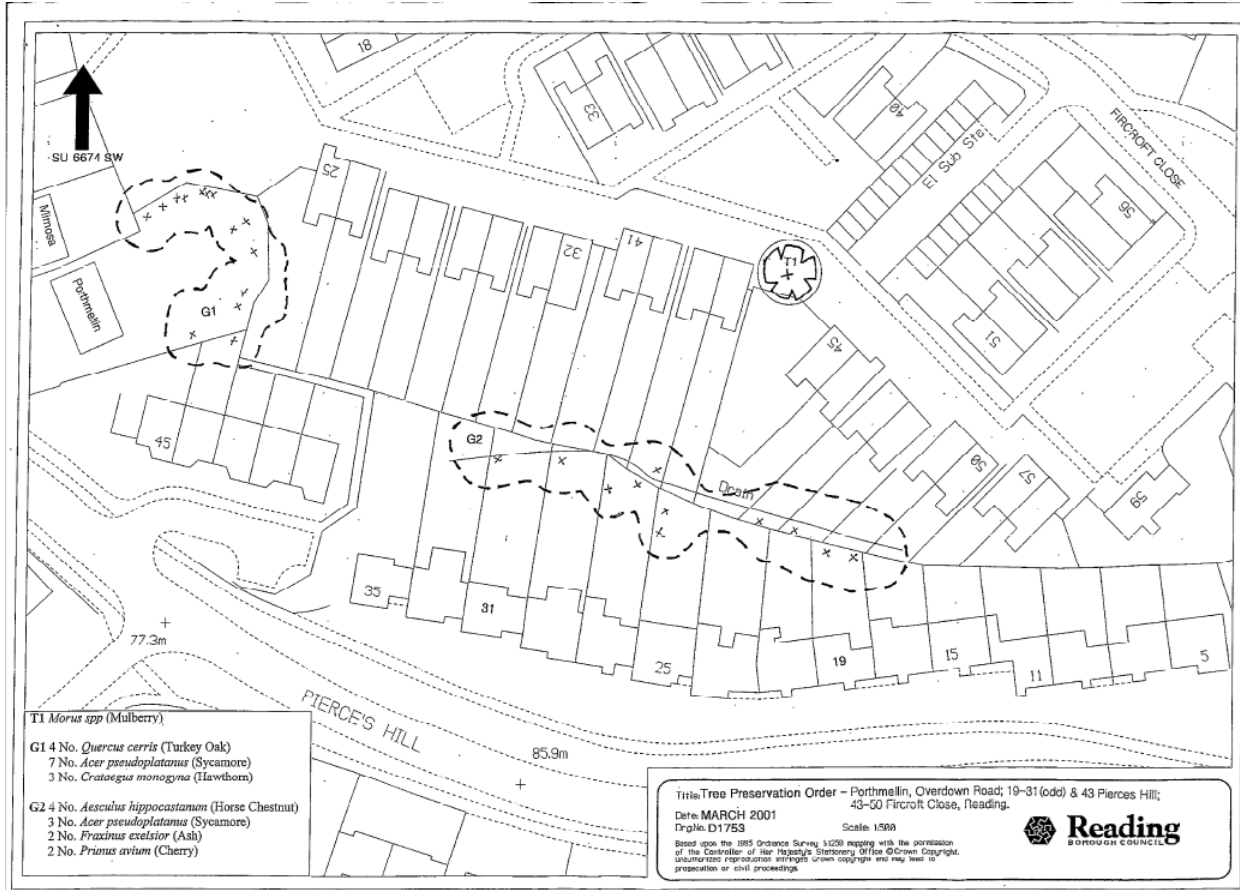
- 8.1 The aim of the TPO's is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees also have high environmental benefits through their absorption of polluted air and creation of wildlife habitats.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1 Planning Section's Tree Preservation Order Directory
- 9.2 Register of Tree Preservation Orders
- 9.3 Plan of TPO 100/01 relating to Porthmellin, Overdown Road; 19-31 (odds) and 43 Pierces Hill; 43-50 Fircroft Close, Reading (Appendix 1)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

# Appendix 1



Appendix 2



2019 branch failure



2017 branch failure

