

25th February 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services - Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected: Cheylesmore

Title: Petition – Request that the Council Thin the trees on London Road, between Tonbridge Road and Abbey Road.

Is this a key decision? : No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition submitted by Councillor Bailey a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor and requests that the Council thin the trees on London Road, between Tonbridge Road and Abbey Road.

The petition reads:

“We the undersigned ask Coventry City Council to Thin the trees on the London Road between Tonbridge Road and Abbey Road to reduce the rapid growth and garden overhang of branches that encroach onto the properties and also reduce the damage caused to nearby structures.”

The need to also look at street cleaning along the London Road at the above location, especially during the Autumn”.

This petition relates to street trees which line the verge on both side of the road composing of a Lime tree species in the footway outside the houses of 260 – 290 London Road. The trees overhang the property boundaries in question and however thinning the trees as requested will have no positive effect on the local residents who live nearby and the trees will react to the pruning making the problem worse. This would then lead to more requests for pruning or possibly removal.

This area of London Road is cleansed all year round on a weekly basis through manual and mechanical cleansing methods. In addition autumn leaf fall is cleared by specific teams. The frequency of this is dependent on the weather conditions and the rate in which the leaves fall.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

1. Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners'.
2. Decline the request for tree works to thin the trees.
3. Note that the requested works will have no positive effect on the way in which these trees, on this section London Road affect the local resident who live nearby.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel, or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: **Petition - Request that the Council Thin the trees on London Road, between Tonbridge Road and Abbey Road.**

Context (or background)

- 1.1. This petition relates to the street trees that stand in the footway outside the houses of 260 – 290 London Road.
- 1.2. They are Lime species and line the verges of London Road on both sides of the road, providing valuable amenity to those who live in the area and to those who travel along the London Road, entering or exiting the city.
- 1.3. The requested works will have no positive effect on the way in which these trees, on this section London Road affect the local resident who live nearby.
- 1.4. This is due to this species of tree's ability to react to the pruning, in an effort to recover the leaf area that has been removed by the pruning. The regrowth is quick and the new leaves that regrow within one growing season, are larger than normal, there-by making the problem worse. This would then lead to more requests for pruning or possibly removal.
- 1.5. The trees do overhang the boundary garden walls of these properties, but this is normal for most street trees present in the city and for many trees in private ownership that stand near to a boundary. There is no duty on any land/tree owner to prevent trees from encroaching. The only duty is to keep them in good health and condition.
- 1.6. This request would set a precedent that cannot be sustained. Adverse pruning to keep all trees within the confines of the highway across the city would be very expensive and the City Council does not have resources available to do this.
- 1.7. These trees are pruned annually to remove the trunk growth that appears each spring and can encroach onto the footway and road. This work removes all the growth up to 6m high.
- 1.8. These trees have a high amenity value and their appearance should be retained to maintain this high value.
- 1.9. Reductions in Government spending has meant that the funding allocated to street cleansing operations was reduced in 2016 by 25%. This resulted in a review and reduction in cleansing operations across the City including street sweeping, litter collection, litter bin emptying and weed control amongst other activities. This funding reduction has reduced our ability to increase cleansing frequencies and standards.
- 1.10. The frequency of cleansing operations undertaken on the roads and streets within the City vary depending on the type of Road, its location, the levels of litter and detritus generated and this enables us to set frequencies and focus our limited resources most effectively.
- 1.11. This area of London Road is cleansed all year round on a weekly basis through manual and mechanical cleansing methods. During the autumn when the leaves are falling we have a specific team who clear the leaves from footpaths between October and early January. The frequency of this is dependent on the weather conditions and the rate in which the leaves fall, but is inspected on a fortnightly basis.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

The options available are:

Option 1 - thin the trees as requested has been rejected on the grounds that it will have no positive effect on the properties in question and will inevitably result in the trees reacting which could increase the likelihood of the trees overhanging the properties and increasing shade.

Option2 - continue to maintain the trees in accordance with the annual management and maintenance programme to ensure they are retained in a safe and healthy condition which can be sustained from within existing budgetary resources has been considered and is recommended.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

No consultation has taken place on this issue

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

To be agreed subject to approval of a recommendation within this report

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The costs of the recommended option will be managed within existing resources.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

The Council's tree stock is highly valued by the citizens of Coventry and contribute greatly to improving the quality of life to those that live and work in the City, help to improve the environment and provides valuable wildlife habitats.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Continued maintenance of the site will be delivered using existing resources.

6.4 Equalities / EIA Implications for (or impact on) the environment

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

No direct impact

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Cath Crosby	Lead Accountant (Business Partner) Place Directorate (Finance)	Place Directorate - Financial Management	8 th Feb 2019	8 th Feb 2019
Gill Carter	Team Leader, (Regulatory) , Legal Services	Resources	8 th Feb 2019	12 th Feb 2019
Liz Knight	Governance Services co-ordinator	Place	8 th Feb 2019	11 th Feb 2019
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and Members)				
Andrew Walster	Director (Streetscene and Regulatory	Place	12 th Feb 2019	14 th Feb 2019

	Services)			
Councillor P Hetherton	Cabinet Member for (City Services)	-	11 th Feb 2019	11 th Feb 2019

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