



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL
Cabinet Highways
Committee

9

Report of: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PLACE

Date: 9 FEBRUARY 2012

Subject: Petition from Residents of Carter Knowle Road, S7 regarding the pruning of Highway trees

Author of Report: Nick Fellgett (Manager – Horticulture), Street Force

Summary: To advise members of the current position regarding the condition of the Highway trees at Carter Knowle Road, S7

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Highways committee approve the proposals in this report.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES /NO Cleared by:
Legal Implications
YES /NO Cleared by:
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES /NO Cleared by:
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
YES /NO
Human rights Implications
YES /NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES /NO
Economic impact
YES /NO
Community safety implications
YES /NO
Human resources implications
YES /NO
Property implications
YES /NO
Area(s) affected
South West Community Assembly
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Councillor Leigh Bramall
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Economic & Environmental Well Being Scrutiny Committee
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
YES /NO
Press release
YES /NO

PETITION FROM THE RESIDENTS OF CARTER KNOWLE ROAD REGARDING THE PRUNING OF HIGHWAY TREES

1.0 SUMMARY

A 44 signature petition was received on 25 November 2011 from the residents of numbers 1 to 36 Cater Knowle Road expressing concern about potential tree related damage to their properties & requesting the following:

- The pruning of tree branches overhanging their properties.
- An inspection of house gutters & drains to check whether they are blocked by fallen leaves.

A tree inspection carried out on the 28/12/2011 confirmed that with the exception of 4 trees which were touching property, the remainder appeared in a fair general condition with no immediate safety concerns.

Currently all maintenance work on the 35,000 highway trees in Sheffield is prioritised on a safety basis which in this context relates to the structural integrity of the tree and its potential to fail and cause accident/injury or result in a claim against the Council. Pruning work is not undertaken for reasons of tree size, shade, overhang, leaf/fruit fall, honeydew or the interference of telephone wires, TV or satellite reception.

This is in accordance with the 'Prioritisation Criteria for the Maintenance of Highway Trees' in the Council's Street Maintenance Policy Standards and Strategy Statement.

The clearance of leaves from house gutters/drains is considered to be part of routine property maintenance and therefore the responsibility of the owner.

The Council does not take pre-emptive action on the basis that a tree may cause damage to a property at some point in the future. However, if a resident believes this has happened they are at liberty to make a claim against the Council.

As part of the Highway PFI Contract approximately 8000 highway trees are scheduled to be replaced. However, until the preferred bidder is appointed the proposed strategy and specific tree replacement program is unknown.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD

2.1 For many years maintenance of the 35,000 Highway Tree stock has been restricted to maintaining the trees in a safe condition. Therefore there has been no programmed pruning to cut back overhanging branches or any planned replacement programmes. Consequently there are many trees which have become too large for their location and would ideally be replaced with smaller trees or be systematically pruned and cut back from properties.

The current position whereby only work to keep the trees in a safe condition will continue up to the commencement of the PFI project in

Summer 2012. As part of the PFI project approximately 8000 highway trees are to be replaced and it is likely that trees such as those on Carter Knowle Road will be considered for replacement and/or regular pruning.

However, it is not possible to say if the trees on Carter Knowle Road will be replaced as part of the PFI project; however, it is certain that the overall condition of the Highway Tree stock will improve significantly.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 No specific issues

4.0 MAIN BODY OF REPORT

4.1 BACKGROUND

The trees on Carter Knowle Road in the petition area are a mixture of mature Plane & Sycamore trees. They form an impressive Avenue of Trees, however given the relative narrowness of this residential road could also now be considered to have outgrown their location.

One tree on this section of Carter Knowle Road has been proven to be implicated in a structural damage claim. As a consequence this tree is included on the Structural Damage Cyclical List to be pruned every 5 years.

4.2 PROPOSALS

Work is to be undertaken to cut back the branches from the 4 trees touching property during the current financial year.

The trees on Carter Knowle Road will be monitored and any future maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with 'The Prioritisation Criteria for the Maintenance of Highway Trees' in the Council's Street Maintenance Policy, Standards and Strategy Statement.

Any resident who believes the highway tree to be the cause of damage to their property should submit a claim in accordance with Council Policy.

Consideration will be given to tree replacement and improved standards of general maintenance to the trees on Carter Knowle Road as part of the Highway Maintenance PFI Contract programmed to commence in Summer 2012.

4.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

There are no specific public consultation issues arising from this report

4.4 NEXT STEPS

None

4.5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report

4.6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are no specific equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific environmental Implications as a result of this report.

4.8 PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

There are no property implications

4.9 PROGRESS

None

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No alternative options were considered as the proposals are in accordance with current City Council Policy.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The recommendations are based on the Street Maintenance Policy Standards and Strategy Statement approved by Cabinet in May 2008.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Highways Committee approve the actions taken which are in accordance with the Council's Street Maintenance Policy, Standards and Strategy Statement.