

7th December 2016

Environment and Housing Management Committee

**Petition received at Ordinary Council - Removal of trees
at Oldfields and Victoria Court**

Report of: *Steve Chapman- Team Leader of Property Services*

Wards Affected: *Brentwood West*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Three mature trees were removed from the green area between Victoria Court and Oldfields. These trees were removed due to their root system damaging the tarmac footpaths that run between the two properties and therefore presenting a health and safety hazard.
- 1.2 As a result some residents have expressed their disappointment that these trees have been removed.
- 1.3 Although no further trees are to be removed, the proposal is that two small trees are planted in the green area.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee approve the planting of two small trees.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Three mature trees were identified on the green area between Oldfields and Victoria Court, as being a Health and Safety concern. The trees were lifting and breaking up the path due to the root system penetrating into the tarmac area and footpaths that surround the green.
- 3.2 The decision was taken to remove the trees in the summer by the Council's Horticulturalist, as it was identified that leaving the trees in situ would cause further destruction to the paths, and in turn cause a potentially dangerous trip hazard, to both the sheltered scheme residents at Victoria Court and the residents at Oldfields.

- 3.3 The decision was made due to significant concerns that leaving the trees in situation would constitute a dangerous trip hazard. At present we are monitoring the pathways, as we are anticipating that the ground will reconsolidate now the trees have been removed. Once the ground has settled, we will be looking to reinstate the path to a suitable level.
- 3.4 To clarify the councils position regarding the remaining trees within the green area, we are not looking to remove any further trees.
- 3.5 The only reason these would ever be looked at, is if they present a further Health and Safety issue regarding trip hazards or they have a subsidence impact to the surrounding buildings. At some point the trees may need to be crowned if they interfere with the buildings in respect to the opening of windows or blocking of natural light.
- 3.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that some residents are unhappy at the removal of the trees, our priority is to maintain and control Health and Safety issues that arise within our housing stock.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 We could consider the re-planting of two small trees to the central green area, to go some way to appeasing the ill feeling felt by residents.
- 4.2 We would only choose trees that are both slow growing and will need minimal maintenance through the years.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The planting of two small trees will reduce the effects of removing the large mature trees that were previously in situ, and by choosing small slow growing trees will require minimal maintenance.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There has been no formal consultation in relation to this report.

7. References to Corporate Plan

Improving service delivery will meet the Council's commitment to service improvements and will also enhance the efficiency of the service.

8. Implications

8.1 If agreed that the two trees are planted, these costs will be covered within existing budgets.

8.2 There are no legal implications to consider.

9. Background Papers

9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

- There are no appendices

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Steve Chapman

Telephone: 01277 312 500

E-mail: steve.chapman@brentwood.gov.uk