

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 January 2024

Member's Item: Sycamore Trees in Northdane Way

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

Author: Ian Gilmore, Head of Regulatory and Environmental Services

Summary

This report sets out a response to a Member's item raised by Councillor Gulvin, in relation to sycamore trees in Northdane Way.

1. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the comments from the Director of Place in response to the Member's item.

2. Budget and policy framework

2.1. Under Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Gulvin has requested that an item on this matter is included on the agenda for this meeting.

3. The Issue

3.1. Councillor Gulvin has requested that an item be placed on the agenda and the reasons are set out below.

'The issue concerns some sycamore trees which are on Council owned land on Northdane Way, which are adjacent to No's 26 & 28 Aintree Roads rear gardens. The issue is not with the trees themselves; it is with a species of aphid which feed on the leaves during the summer months, they excrete a sticky substance which covers the surrounding area, making the residents gardens unusable. Having seen the mess myself, I believe the residents have a legitimate case to have the trees removed. This would not result in loss of tree cover as the planting is so dense that other species would quickly fill the gaps. Our Officers are unwilling to allow this, so I would like to give the residents the opportunity to make their case to O & S.'

- 3.2. At the request of Councillor Gulvin, residents affected will be in attendance at the meeting to address the committee.
- 3.3 The Committee can use any of its powers in dealing with this Member's item, including making recommendations to officers or the Cabinet.

4. Directors Response

- 4.1 Under the Authority's Tree Strategy, policy 15 clearly states that we do not fell trees unless there is an arboricultural reason to do so, unfortunately nuisance of this type does not fall into that category.

I am advised that a more sensitive approach can be assessed and, subject to a completed site inspection, our recommendation is to cut back the tree overhang in the garden. This will be sufficient to minimise any nuisance in the gardens.

In making these comments, I am mindful of the need to comply with current policy and be consistent with our agreed expectations in managing our trees.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1. There are no significant risks to the Council arising from this report.

6. Legal and Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no legal or financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None