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| <b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>        | PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY PANEL                     |   |                           |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>               | REMOVAL OF THREE MATURE ALDER TREES IN HEATHER COURT |   |                           |
| <b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>      | 25 JUNE 2013   |   |                           |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>             | CITY SERVICES SENIOR MANAGER                         |   |                           |
| <b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b> |  |   |                           |
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| <b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b> |
| None.                               |

### **BRIEF SUMMARY**

A petition has been received from the majority of the residents at Heather Court requesting that Southampton City Council remove three council owned alder trees to the front of the properties, due to the negative impact on the resident's quality of life. (Appendix 1)

All three trees are approximately 20 to 30 years old and are in good health. The trees provide a significant visual and ecological amenity to the area. (Appendix 3)

The average life expectancy of the trees is between 80 to 100 years with an average height of 20 to 25 metres.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (i) To refuse the removal of all three alder trees to the front of Heather Court. (Appendix 2)

### **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The majority of the issues raised are seasonal and natural events, whilst other issues have been addressed in the past by remedial tree pruning.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

2. To reduce the canopy of the trees by 25% and maintain these trees on a 5 year cyclical reduction program to maintain at a reduced size. Taking this action is likely to cause the tree to put on extra growth and the canopy can thicken up greatly and cause greater leaf fall than previous. Taking this action would also have a long term financial implication.
3. Felling the trees and planting with an alternative species will have a significant impact on the visual amenity and the wildlife value they currently provide and it would be many years before a replacement tree is providing the same benefit.

4. Suitable replacement trees would be Silver Birch which has a similar habit and life expectancy.

#### **DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)**

5. Heather Court is an age exclusive housing site comprising of 30 flats that are managed by Southampton City Council. The maintenance and ownership of the trees comes under the responsibility of Southampton City Council Housing. (Appendix 2)
6. The parking and open space area is planted with low level shrub beds and contains individual tree species of alder, whitebeam and cherry. To the south of the flats there is a boundary linear planting of mixed species of trees. A wooded belt runs from the eastern aspect crossing to the north heading to the west. This belt consists mainly of Scots pine with the occasional oak, sweet chestnut and sycamore.
7. The alder trees growing within the housing development are low maintenance trees. The works that have been carried out to the trees in the past was to prune away from the building and to crown lift to 6 metres above ground level.
8. There have been issues in the past with tree roots pushing up footpaths and parking bays. These have been passed repaired by Housing. Since 2004, when comprehensive records were kept the Tree Team has received 15 enquiries/requests/complaints about the trees in and around Heather Court. Of these records the issues were as follows.
  - 3 – Hanging or fallen branches.
  - 1 – Tree to be felled.
  - 2 – Dying tree.
  - 3 – Encroachment.
  - 3 – Root issues.
  - 2 – Daylight and leaves.
  - 1 – Missed works enquiry

#### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Capital/Revenue**

9. There are no implications to capital.
10. The trees are inspected every 5 years and total maintenance costs on the three trees over twenty years will be in the region of £300-£600. However, as the trees will be replaced if felled then this figure will not change. There are therefore no implications for tree revenue budgets.
11. The cost to fell the three alder trees in the parking area to the front of Heather Court = £301.80  
The cost to fell all three trees, remove stumps and supply, plant and maintain alternative tree species = c.£1,250.00
12. The cost to reduce the canopy by 25% on all three alder trees £433.44. Assuming that the trees have a remaining safe useful life expectancy of around a further 50 to 70 years, the cost of maintaining these trees every five years with a 1% annual increase on today's costs, would be £5,834 to £9,204.

**Property/Other**

- 13. The Council has a duty to maintain its tree stock and highways in a safe condition.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

- 14. In accordance with the Constitution any decision relating to Council trees, unless delegated, will be determined by the Planning and Rights of Way Panel.

**Other Legal Implications:**

- 16. None

**POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

- 17. None

**KEY DECISION?** No

|                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b> | Harefield ward. |
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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices**

|    |                                    |
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| 1. | Petition                           |
| 2. | Tree Location Map and Location map |
| 3. | Photographs                        |

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

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| 1. | None |
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out. | No |
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**Other Background Documents**

**Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. None                      |  |