

DECISION-MAKER:	PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY PANEL		
SUBJECT:	REMOVAL OF 24 TREES ALONG THE WOODLAND EDGE TO THE REAR OF 54-82 CHERITON AVENUE TO FACILITATE DRAINAGE WORKS		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 JULY 2011		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES		
AUTHOR:	Name:	Mike Harris	Tel: 023 8083 3422
	E-mail:	Mike.p.harris@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None.			

SUMMARY

Over recent years there has been a worsening problem with surface water run-off from Cheriton woodland into the rear gardens of 54-82 Cheriton Avenue. Remedial measures will require the replacement of an existing failed drainage system and the removal of up to 24 trees, along the western edge of the woodland, is necessary to allow these works to be completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To allow the removal of twenty four trees along the western boundary of Cheriton woodland to enable the drainage works.
- (ii) For the proposed drainage works to be carried out to a method mutually approved by a local authority Senior Tree Office and Ecologist.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An existing drain along the rear of the affected properties has failed, probably due to a combination of age and root infiltration.
2. Failure to remove the trees will not enable the works to be carried out with a high risk of the properties liable to flooding at certain times of the year.

CONSULTATION

3. Asset Management (Paul Howard – Projects Manager)

The residents of Cheriton Avenue whose property is directly affected by the flooding have been informed of all of the works that have been undertaken an extract of the last correspondence is printed below:

“We have recently completed a programme of works to relieve the immediate problems a number of residents were experiencing where surface water from the woods was cascading down the rear gardens.

The approach was twofold, to identify existing blockages by undertaking a CCTV survey and where we could we would clear the obstruction or if the drain was damaged we would carry out urgent repairs.

You may be aware that a number of your properties are protected by two

land drains, a large diameter primary drain that runs parallel to the rear garden fence on the wood side and a smaller one on the garden side of the fence.

We should say that we have had limited success with the primary drain whereas the work we carried out on the secondary drain has been more successful.

Capita our partners have recently carried out a topographical survey and are about to embark on a programme of drilling boreholes alongside the existing primary drain to ascertain the composition of the substrate.

Conversations will then follow with Southern Water before a suitable design is produced for the installation of a new primary drain to run alongside the existing.

We anticipate starting these works in the autumn once the nesting season has passed and we have undertaken a tendering exercise.”

4. Ecology (Andy Welch – Land Management Ecologist)

Comments on proposed drainage works along the boundary of Thornhill Park woods (north) with properties in Cheriton Avenue. Andy Welch
June 2011

The woods were identified as being important for nature conservation during survey works for the Nature Conservation Strategy for Southampton (1992). They are one of the areas included in the LAA targets for Open Spaces and are due to be considered for designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Soon after the initial survey I was involved in a meeting where the damp areas in adjacent gardens was discussed. Apart from damage to the woodland it was also thought to be unwise to set a precedent for works to stop seepage water reaching properties down hill from Council land (there are several other sites where complaints have been made).

The woods adjacent to Cheriton Avenue are characterised by the wet flushes that run in several places along the lower banks. It is considered to be important not to drain these and as such it is suggested that a membrane is used on the upslope side of the new drainage pipe. This will need to be deep enough to join with the underlying clay bed that forms the flush.

It is also suggested that the spoil from the new excavation is used to form two shallow bunds either side of the new pipe line to help protect the woodland and act as a storm surface water intercept. The existing materials dumped from adjacent gardens could be buried under the bunds thus avoiding potential damage and expense of removing it.

Access to the site for works should be from the path off of Blendworth Lane as near to the back of properties as is possible, avoiding damage to mature tree roots and the sensitive gravel banks. This access and the route of the new drain and bunds will then need to be maintained as a natural grassy woodland edge to facilitate future maintenance of the drain.

Due to the ecological sensitivity of the site it is not considered advisable to plant replacement trees for those removed. It is more appropriate to carry out woodland management to encourage the growth of existing natural regeneration.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. None provided.

DETAIL

6. Cheriton woodland is a mature woodland mainly of beech, oak, Silver birch, Sweet chestnut and sycamore. The land surface slopes north westwards towards Cheriton Avenue and this aspect together with a poorly draining clay subsoil results in significant water run-off into the rear gardens of the adjacent properties, a mixture of council and private houses.
7. According to local knowledge a drainage system was installed along the woodland edge, and a secondary system installed in the rear gardens of 58-82 Cheriton Avenue, in the early to mid 1970's, indicating that drainage problems have been a long-term issue. Recent investigations by Asset Management have found the original drainage system has failed through a combination of age and tree-root infiltration.
8. In recent years the problem with surface water run-off has worsened creating bog-like areas in some of the rear gardens of 18-82 Cheriton Avenue. The problem is significant enough for Cabinet to have approved funding for a project to replace the failed drainage system.
9. In the intervening years since the drainage system was installed a number of trees have established themselves along the route of the woodland drain. The installation of a new drainage system along the route of the old one will require the use of mechanical diggers for trench construction. In order for this to happen it is necessary to remove 24 young and semi-mature trees, comprised of Sweet chestnut (6no.), Silver birch (12no.), beech (5no.) and sycamore (1no.) that are currently growing directly on or very close to the drain.
10. The new system when installed will require future way-leave access for maintenance, thereby limiting the scope for replacement tree planting along this boundary. Also, the authority's ecologists have indicated that there is no need for any tree planting within the woodland but instead would rather see works carried out to improve natural regeneration..
11. The authority's ecologists have voiced concern that the existing waterlogged areas of woodland, which comprise a unique habitat within the woodland, will be adversely affected by the proposed works. They have suggested the design be modified to minimise adverse effects on the local woodland environment.

12 It is proposed that the works will take place this autumn.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

13. Approved on a Capita Programme Sharepoint Reference 1713

Revenue

14. None.

Property

15. None.

Other

16. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

17. In accordance with the Constitution any decision relating to council trees, unless delegated, will be determined by the Planning Panel.

Other Legal Implications:

18. Under the Forestry Act, the volume of timber to be removed requires a felling licence from the Forestry Commission.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

19. None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1	Location map.
2	Aerial photograph.
3	Site photographs.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None.
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

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Background documents available for inspection at:

FORWARD PLAN No:

KEY DECISION?

NO

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:

Harefield ward.