

CABINET

Market Square Lancaster - Trees 16 February 2016

Report of Chief Officer (Environment)

PURPOSE OF REPORT					
To agree the recommendations outlined by Cllr Hanson to Council on 3 rd February 2016.					
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A				
This report is public					

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR HANSON

1. Cabinet recognises the value placed by our citizens on the lime trees in Market Square and therefore would like to retain them.
2. Cabinet however recognises that by their nature lime trees can cause particular management and maintenance problems, particularly in a busy place like Market Square
3. Cabinet also recognises that properly managing the trees, cleaning the square to an acceptable standard, and ensuring the safety of pedestrians is likely to require additional budget which due to the Council's precarious financial position will need equivalent savings to be found.
4. As such Cabinet requests that the Chief Officer (Environment)
 - Carries out more work over the course of a growing season to further identify the extent of the problem
 - Continues to trial the use of various algicidal and other cleaning products as an addition to pressure washing.
 - Investigates how other places deal with this problem
 - Explores how other stakeholders can help the City Council to achieve its aims.
 - Reports to Cabinet in autumn 2017 with realistic and affordable recommendations that will then be considered within the overall context of the councils financial position

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The report attached in Appendix A was deferred by Cabinet at its meeting in January pending a debate at Council following a public petition.
- 1.2 At the Council meeting (3rd Feb 2016) in response to three questions from members of the public on this subject Cllr Hanson outlined what her recommendations to the February Cabinet meeting would be.
- 1.3 This was accepted by the petitioners as an acceptable outcome and therefore the scheduled debate was not required.
- 1.4 As ward Councillor, Cllr Brookes specifically requested that Officers work with local businesses and the Friends of the Limes group, and the recommendation above specifically requests that Officers explore how other stakeholders can help the City to achieve its aims.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the recommendations set out above.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council has in place an agreed tree policy which was last reviewed in 2010. The Policy makes clear that-

'The policy has been designed to be as comprehensive as possible. However, we acknowledge it does not cover every situation. The Council reserves the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council.'

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The recommendations outline how the potential impacts of retaining the trees will be dealt with.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no observations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

From the recommendations, there would be no additional quantifiable budgetary implications arising in 2016/17 at this stage, although this means that the exposure to financial and other associated risks remain. Ahead of taking robust remedial action in some form (be it extra street cleansing or tree removal, as examples), should there be any slips or other accidents as a result of the slipperiness attributed to the trees and as the Council is clearly aware of the issue, it will become increasingly difficult for Council to defend itself from any claims arising. The position will need to be monitored.

Once the work requested has taken place, a report would be brought to Cabinet to allow consideration of the financial implications of retaining the trees in 2017/18 and beyond.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None – the trees are sited within adopted highway but managed by the city council.

Open Spaces:

The options analysis covers the implications of removing trees.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

See attached report, the s151 Officer has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

none

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