

APPENDIX- Comments directly received by Chief Officer (Environment) from consultation to 30 Dec 2015

Cllr Nick Wilkinson (Ward Councillor) - Having read the paper, studied the trees and spoken to lots of people I'm afraid I can't support the decision to remove the trees unless they were immediately replanted with a more suitable 'permanent' (i.e. planted in the ground rather than planters) tree type. Unfortunately you have not listed this as an option. Having spoken to a horticulturist I believe it is possible to do this with a little work to either remove some of the tree roots or planting the trees in a new location.

Cllr Dave Brookes (Ward Councillor) - My very strong preference would be for the existing trees to remain in situ. I understand that there will be a cost to maintaining mature trees in this most urban of settings, but I don't think said cost is a valid reason to remove them. In any case, cost needs to be set against the wide range of benefits that street trees provide, including summer shade, improved air quality, rainwater detention, aesthetic appeal, and an injection of life into what would otherwise be a fairly sterile environment, pigeons excepted.

Whilst immediate replanting may seem like a reasonable compromise position, you will no doubt be aware that it isn't a trivial matter to get street trees well established, and it seems to me to be an unnecessary risk to remove well established thriving trees to replace them with smaller trees that would never get close to providing the same level of benefits as the existing trees, and most likely have some fail to establish thus starting a cycle of further replanting and eventual giving up, as has happened in other parts of the city centre.

I consider it to be completely unacceptable to remove the trees and only have a vague consideration that they could be replaced with planters at some undefined point in the future.

BID- I spent some time yesterday talking to some of the businesses around Market Square to gauge their views on the trees as they are in the square. In some cases, people simply see the trees as immovable and haven't ever actually considered the benefits or negatives relating to their placements. This led to some discussion and many could see reasons why they should be replaced. Others were immediately supportive of their immediate removal due to the slip hazards that they see and experience daily. One business owner suggested that we ask the ambulance service to release their log of accidents that they have attended due to slips in the Square under the trees. This individual has personally provided first aid to a significant number of incidents and he was specific in pointing out that it was the secretions beneath the trees in front of TKMaxx and Vodafone that were the worst. Everyone supported replacing the trees with a suitable species.

I have also been looking at the scale of the trees in Dalton Square which I understand are the same species. It may be worth pointing out that although the Market Square trees currently stand at approximately roof height of a two storey building, those in Dalton Square are at approximately six storeys in height. How would Market Square feel if they were left in situ and allowed to grow to their potential?

The following comment was also put forward-

Cllr Andrew Kay (Bulk Ward) - I disagree strongly with the removal of trees from Market Square which in my view would result in an unattractive, sterile environment. Most successful town Squares do have trees -and notably part of the attraction of continental squares. While noting that this would entail the cost of pruning, and of cleaning the square pavements - perhaps a contribution from BID could be requested. I would specify that the trees are indeed part of the economic value to local traders -as part of the visitor offer.