

REPORT FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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TREE PLANTING ON RINGSTONE CRESCENT, NELSON

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To remind Members of the Council's decision in July 2019 to declare a Climate Emergency and set out an emergency action plan which included supporting the Lancashire Woodland Connect to increase tree and woodland cover.
2. To inform Members of residents' objections to the planting of an orchard on Ringstone Crescent and in the light of these objections to recommend that the scheme does not proceed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the planting of an orchard on Ringstone Crescent, Nelson is not approved.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

In response to objections received from local residents.

ISSUE

1. At the Policy and Resources meeting of 17th September 2020 it was resolved that a number of Council owned sites be allocated for tree planting to help with our efforts to combat and lessen the impacts of climate change. Included in the list of sites was Ringstone Crescent.
2. Due to the site being urban and close to residential properties, a scheme was produced to create four orchards on the site (Appendix 1). This schemes design meant that the tree provision remained relatively small, open space would be retained, it would provide a source of free fruit for local people and provide volunteers with opportunities to learn new skills.
3. Local Councillors became aware of residents objecting to the proposal. In response to these objections the issue was raised at the June meeting of Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Area Committee where it was resolved that;

‘(1) That the decision to consult with Ward Councillors and local residents on the proposed tree planting scheme for Ringstone Crescent, Nelson be implemented and the consultation be carried out as soon as possible.

(2) That the results of the consultation be brought back to this Committee.’

4. The consultation was held at Ringstone Crescent on Monday 9th August. Residents attending the event submitted a petition, letters and comments which can be summarised as follows:
5. The majority of the residents around the Crescent area are against any form of tree planting on the site.
6. The residents additionally produced a copy of the Land Registry documents for the site claiming that this showed there is a covenant on the land preventing the Council from growing anything on it. Legal advice sought after the event advises that this does not apply to the Ringstone Crescent site but to a section of Marsden Park.
7. The land allocated by this Committee equates to around 30 hectares of new tree planting sites. Ringstone Crescent is 2.35 hectares, around 8% of the land mass of all the proposed planting sites.
8. In conclusion there are sound reasons for planting on this site but at the same time there is strong local opposition to it. The very reluctant officer view is that the Council should not proceed with it in the face of such opposition.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

Planting of trees is in line with the Council's Trees and Woodland Strategy which expresses the Council's desire to increase tree cover by planting on Council owned land.

Financial: None arising from the report

Legal:

None arising from the report

Risk Management:

None arising from the report

Health and Safety:

None arising from the report

Sustainability:

The planting of trees will help the Council reduce its impacts on the environment by storing carbon. It will also reduce the amount of fossil fuels used during grounds maintenance operations, reduce pollution reaching residents' properties and assist with urban cooling.

Community Safety:

None arising from the report

Equality and Diversity:

None arising from the report

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposed site plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee – 17th September 2020

Minutes of Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee – 7th June 2021