

<b>HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DATE</b> 14.10.2021	<b>ITEM NO</b> 5
<b>TITLE</b> Petition for Street Tree Planting - Goldsmid Street, Plumstead	<b>WARD (S)</b> Glyndon	
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b> Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Skills	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b> Environment, Sustainability & Transport	
<b>DECISION CLASSIFICATION</b> Non-exempt report Non-exempt appendices	<b>IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING?</b> No. Recommendations endorsed by Highways Committee will be reported to the next available meeting of Full Council for approval.	

1. **Decision required**

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- 1.1 Note the petition requesting that the Council plant trees along both sides of Goldsmid Street in Plumstead.
- 1.2 Note and comment upon the proposed response to the petition as set out in this report, which will be summarised and reported to Full Council at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

- 2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed high level objectives as follows:

- **A Healthier Greenwich**

Street trees contribute to reducing air pollution and increasing air quality in their local environment, thus improving public health. Their cooling effect helps to mitigate the effects of climate change in built-up urban areas, and they act in carbon sequestration. They also have a high amenity value which increases mental health and wellbeing.

- **A Great Place to Grow Up**

Urban greenery contributes to a sense of civic pride and gives young people a greater sense of connection with their environment. Urban greening creates a more pleasant environment to live and play in, and nature has been shown to have positive benefits on children, especially post-lockdown.

- **A Cleaner, Greener Greenwich**

Studies show streets with tree canopy cover are less likely to suffer from antisocial behaviour such as graffiti and vandalism.

- **A Great Place to Be**

Street trees enhance the visual aspect of a neighbourhood and make it a more desirable environment. Trees encourage people to leave the house where they are more likely to interact with their neighbours and build stronger social relationships.

- **A Strong Vibrant and Well-run Borough**

By responding to this petition and listening to our residents wishes, we are demonstrating how well-run our Borough is.

### **3. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

3.1 A petition containing 7 signatures was presented to the meeting of Council on 23 June 2021 by Councillor Adel Khaireh.

3.2 The petitioners have requested that consideration be given to plant trees along the pavement on Goldsmid Street.

3.3 The substance of the petition reads:

*“I think some small trees will make our little road look so much nicer, with careful consideration of course to ensure they do not take up too much of the street width to allow for space for pushchairs and wheelchair users.”*

### **4. Introduction and Background**

4.1 The Council manages and maintains approximately 16,000 street trees across the Royal Borough. Street trees are those trees that are planted within the streets maintained by the Council, usually on pavements and grass verges. Many more thousand trees are within the Councils Housing Estates, Parks and Opens Spaces.

- 4.2 A copy of the current policy, which sets out the general approach the Royal Borough takes to managing its street trees can be found at Appendix I of this report. In summary, the policy provides that the Royal Borough has work programmes in place to ensure its street trees:
- remain safe and risks to injury or property damage are managed
  - remain healthy
  - are suitable for their setting and their size managed where needed
  - contribute to the health and amenity of the borough
- 4.3 The policy also sets out the main criteria for when street tree removal should be considered as well as general planting requirements.
- 4.4 The total street tree budget, to meet these policy objectives, is £465,000 per annum.
- 4.5 Approximately 250 street trees are removed (felled) each year. This is normally due to reasons such as the tree dying or old age, disease, increasing maintenance burden, property damage or inappropriate species or size.
- 4.6 Where trees are removed to facilitate development, compensation from the developer is recovered to ensure off set planting (nearby) can be completed.
- 4.7 The Council plants around 500 new street trees per year, costing around £125,000. This means the number of street trees is increasing over time (by approximately 100 to 200 per year). The significant proportion of this planting is aimed at replacement or gap planting in existing stands of trees.
- 4.8 As with many Council budgets there are significant financial pressures to maintain the current situation. Costs have increased over time and as the number of street trees increases further pressure on maintenance budgets has meant some cyclical work spreads out. This means areas (trees) that have traditionally been pruned, say, once every three to four years are now pruned once every four to five years and this has led to concerns from some residents (about the size of some trees / property encroachment etc).
- 4.9 Opportunities to supplement the budget are always taken and recent planting programmes have been supplemented with funds from the Highways Improvement Local Labour (HILL) Project and compensation payments for the loss of trees through development.
- 4.10 Currently there are no street trees planted in Goldsmid Street but there are stands of trees in adjacent roads such as Sladedale Road and Lakedale Road.

- 4.11 There are a number of streets in the borough where there are no street trees, but it is not clear why there is no planting in Goldsmid Street.
- 4.12 Goldsmid Street is a relatively quiet side road connecting Sladedale Road and Lakedale Road, with post Victorian terraced housing and post war housing.
- 4.13 Having completed a preliminary assessment of Goldsmid Street officers consider that the footway widths in the main would accommodate tree planting and that the relatively wide carriageway would allow reasonable canopy encroachment without presenting a hazard to larger vehicle such as refuse lorries. However, a detailed site investigation would be required to ensure that no ground conditions (such as underground utility services) or any other on-site factors would make the planting of street trees impractical in this location.
- 4.14 Accordingly officers conclude that in principle there is scope and space within Goldsmid Street to accommodate some street tree planting, and that subject to a detailed site investigation and a residents' survey of the street, officers recommend that the request for the street tree planting go ahead.
- 4.15 Powers to plant and maintain trees in the highway are contained in Section 96 of the Highways Act 1980 and those powers must be exercised in accordance with the provisions of that section.

## 5. **Available Options**

- 5.1 The available options are as follows:
- i) Note the petition and recommendations to carry out a detailed site investigation and survey with the residents of Goldsmid Street and, subject to the outcome of that detailed site investigation and residents' survey, plant street trees in Goldsmid Street, Plumstead.
  - ii) Do nothing: this would mean that the petition is rejected and no further recommendation is made.

## 6. **Preferred Option**

- 6.1 The preferred option is Option (i) – Plant street trees in Goldsmid Street, Plumstead.

Undertaking a detailed site investigations to ensure Goldsmid Street is suitable for tree planting and that no ground conditions (such as underground utility services) or other on-site factors would make this impractical;

- Subject to satisfactory results from the site investigations, developing a tree planting proposal;
- To carry out consultation on the proposal with the residents of Goldsmid Street (all letter boxes in the street); and
- A decision to be taken on whether or not to implement the proposed scheme, following due consideration given to any representations and any valid objections made in response to consultation with residents. This would need to be the subject of a separate decision report in due course.

## 7. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The planting of street trees in the road would have a positive impact on improving amenity and the general streetscape as well as environmental improvements. Street tree planting contributes to improved air quality.
- 7.2 The Council will undertake detailed site assessment to ensure Goldsmid Street is suitable for tree planting and that nothing (such as underground utility services) prevents this.
- 7.3 Subject to satisfactory results from the site investigations a tree planting proposal will be developed. The proposal will be formally shared with residents of Goldsmid Street (all letter boxes in the street) in the form of a consultation.
- 7.4 Consultation responses will be assessed, and a decision will then be taken whether to:
1. Progress with the scheme, as consulted. Or
  2. Progress with the scheme with minor amendments taking account of comments made (if received). Or
  3. Not to progress due to 50% or more of the consultation responses objecting.
- 7.5 Due to the time of year planting would be undertaken during the 2023-24 tree planting programme. This will run from November 2023 to February 2024.

- 7.6 The cost of the planting, and future maintenance costs, will be met by the existing Street Tree Maintenance (revenue) Budget.
- 7.7 The species of tree selected will be made with future maintenance in mind, with the following criteria:
- A native / semi native species if possible
  - A tree that does not produce large fruits
  - An ascending habit, rather than one with large spread
  - A tree of suitable mature size that fits within the setting
- 7.8 The normal species considered for small street plant are *Amelanchier arborea* 'Robin Hill', *Magnolia denudata* 'Yellow River' and *Magnolia Susan* and *Parrotia persica* 'Vanessa'

## 8. Consultation Results

- 8.1 If the Highways Committee approves the recommendation in this report, the next step would be to consult with the residents of Goldsmid Street to further develop the proposal.
- 8.2 A residents' survey would be carried out among all residents of Goldsmid Street via post to ask for their approval/rejection of the proposal. If the majority of responses would be positive, the scheme would go ahead.

## 9. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p><b>Legal</b> including Human Rights Act</p>	<p>The Highways Committee is requested to note the petition presented by Councillor Adel Khaireh to the Council meeting held on 23 June 2021, and to comment upon the proposed response to this petition, as outlined in this report.</p> <p>Article 3.01(a) of the Council's Constitution provides that residents of the Borough may bring concerns to the direct attention of the Council by asking a member to present a petition. Paragraph A1.19 of Part 4 of the Constitution requires that</p>	<p>Eleanor Penn, Assistant Head of Legal Services (Planning &amp; Procurement), 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021</p>

	petitions are referred to the relevant Chief Officer for investigation and response. The outcome of the investigation is to be reported back to full Council within two meetings.	
<b>Finance and other resources</b>	The Highways Committee is requested to note the petition regarding the planting of trees along Goldsmid Street and note the response to the petition as set out in this report which will be reported to Council on 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2021. If approved following consultation it is proposed this scheme would be funded from existing revenue resources.	Sue Rock Accountancy Business Change Manager (9/9/21)
<b>Equalities</b>	Decision-maker is aware of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010). This report makes contribution to the Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equality Objectives 2020-2024. Specifically HEMS, contributing to a healthy and safe environment as well as contributions to social care and health.	Jack Partridge, Senior Street Tree Engineer (9/9/21)
<b>Climate change</b>	Planting trees contributes to climate change mitigation, sequesters carbon and reduces the carbon footprint of the borough.	Jack Partridge, Senior Street Tree Engineer (9/9/21)
<b>Risk management</b>	This matter does not feature in the Risk Register nor should it.  Operational risks are the responsibility of the report author.	Jack Partridge, Senior Street Tree Engineer (9/9/21)

## 11. **Report Appendices**

Appendix I: DRES Highways Tree Policy

## 12. **Background Papers**

n/a

Report Author: Jack Partridge – Senior Street Tree Engineer  
Tel No. 020 8921 4110  
Email. [Jack.Partridge@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Jack.Partridge@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Reporting to: Malcolm Smith – Operations Manager GM  
Tel No. 020 8921 4116  
Email. [Malcolm.Smith@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Malcolm.Smith@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Chief Officer: Pippa Hack – Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills  
Tel No. 020 8921 5519  
Email. [Pippa.Hack@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Pippa.Hack@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)