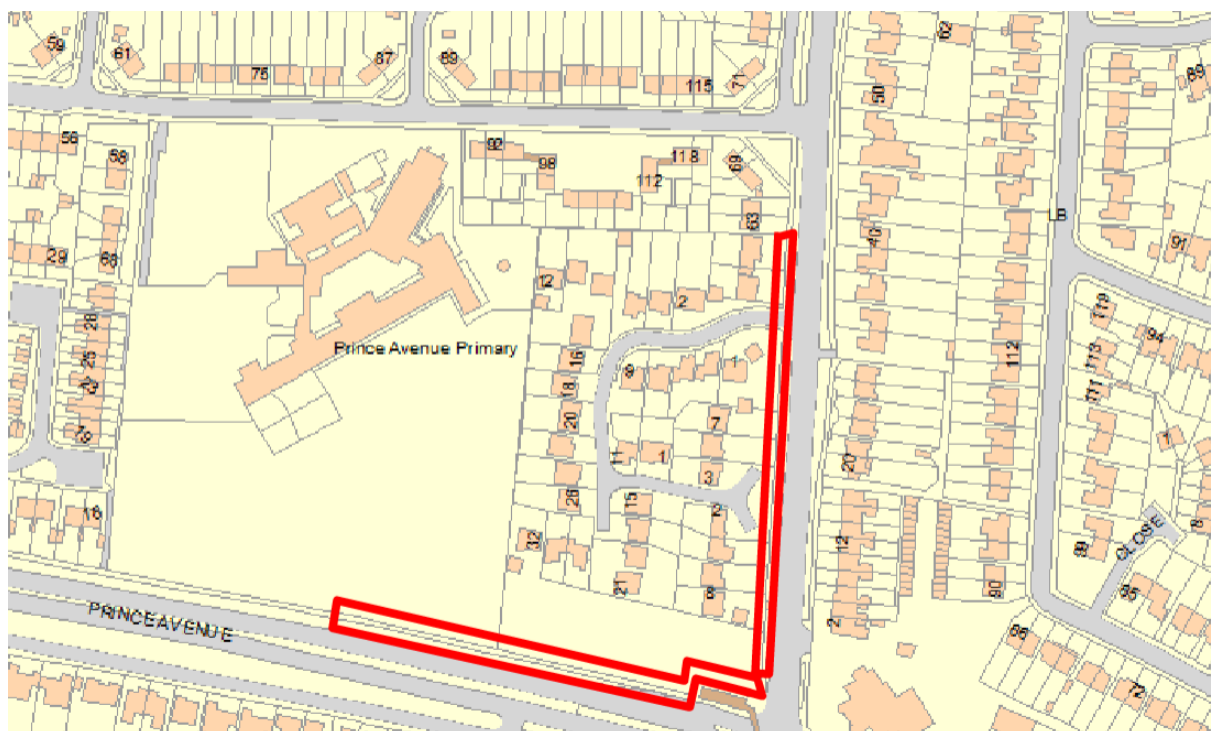


Reference:	16/02060/TPO	
Ward:	St Laurence	
Proposal:	Fell 38 poplar trees (Application for works to trees covered by a tree preservation order)	
Address:	Land at Junction of Prince Avenue (A127) and Rochford Road, Westcliff-on-Sea	
Applicant:	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	
Agent:	N.A.	
Consultation Expiry:	15 th December 2016	
Expiry Date:	14 th December 2016	
Case Officer:	Abbie Greenwood	
Plan No's:	Application Form dated 15 th November 2016, Plan of Trees to be Removed, Plan for Tree Planting - Bell Walk, Prince Avenue	
Recommendation:	DELEGATE TO HEAD OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT OR GROUP MANAGER OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL TO GRANT CONSENT FOR WORKS TO PRESERVED TREES FOLLOWING EXPIRY OF THE PUBLIC NOTIFICATION PROCESS	



1 The Proposal

- 1.1 The applicant is seeking permission to fell 38 poplar trees along the frontage of Prince Avenue and Rochford Road at the Bell junction on the A127. The reason given for the works are that the trees are in a poor condition and there are health and safety concerns. It is proposed to plant 20 trees (10 tulip trees and 10 Acer trees) in this location to replace the poplars.

2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The trees form part of a group of mature Lombardy Poplar trees which line the street frontages of Prince Avenue (A127) and Rochford Road. The trees are mature specimens that are fully visible from the surrounding streets and the group is a significant feature in the townscape.
- 2.2 The Council owned trees are part of a wider group of poplars which include 5 additional trees to the north of the Lark Rise junction on Rochford Road and a number of other trees including a continuation of the group of poplars on the southern boundary of Prince Avenue Primary School.

3 Planning Considerations

- 3.1 The sole consideration for this application is whether the proposed felling works are justified.

4 Appraisal

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, Core Strategy Policies KP2 and CP4, Development Management Policy DM1 and the Design and Townscape Guide 2009 (SPD1).

- 4.1 The Council seeks to protect preserve trees which make a positive contribution to the townscape of an area. Applications for felling of preserved trees therefore need to be justified.
- 4.2 The trees are a prominent townscape feature but are in a poor condition and a vulnerable location. Almost 10 years ago there was a dangerous incident where the top of one of the mature Lombardy Poplars in group G1 broke off and landed in the highway on top of a passing van. As a result of this all of the poplars under the control of Southend Borough with groups G1 and G2 were reduced significantly in height to lower the likelihood of any further breakages. The position of the trees right beside two very busy highways makes this location particularly vulnerable. The Council's Arboricultural Officer (the applicant) has considered alternative solution but comments that reducing the height of the poplars is never an ideal solution as it creates large pruning wounds and poplar trees have soft wood which is very prone to decay and this means continued height reduction is necessary in the future. Six of these trees have had to be felled in recent years due to severe decay within the main trunks.

- 4.3 A recent survey has been carried out of the remaining 38 poplar trees (19 are in group G2 and 19 in group G1). All of the Council trees were drilled with a Resistograph to detect whether there is decay within their lower trunks. Of the 38 trees 21 were found to be in a hazardous condition with results showing internal cavities, severely decayed wood or irregularities of readings indicating decay in the trunk. The report concludes that the trees need to be felled as there may be another incident.
- 4.4 The Council's Arboricultural Officer (the applicant) comments that these trees have always grown in very close proximity to one another, to fell only 21 of them would be removing a significant amount of the shared wind resistance and pre-dispose the remaining trees to wind throw (the tree falls over under wind loading) or wind damage to the crown. Therefore any retained trees would have to be once again significantly reduced in height and as their condition is in decline and it is likely that they would need to be removed anyway within the next 12-18 months.
- 4.5 The Council Arboricultural Officer (the applicant) has acknowledged that the loss of these trees will have an impact on the local townscape and therefore proposes to replace them with new trees in the same area. A new planting scheme plan has been submitted with the application. This shows that it is proposed to plant 10 Tulip trees and 10 Acer trees (10-12cm stem diameter, 45L container size which grow up to 20m) in the 2016/2017 planting season. These species have broad crowns to take the place of the narrow crowned poplars. It is proposed to plant 8 trees to the front of Bell Walk (Rochford Road frontage) and 12 trees in the broader grassed area along the Prince Avenue boundary.
- 4.6 Whilst the loss of these trees will change the character of the area it is acknowledged that in this case there is good evidence to suggest that if left they are likely to pose a danger to vehicles and pedestrians and have reached the end of their useful life. The proposed replacement tree planting will provide a suitable townscape alternative and the application to fell the trees is therefore considered to be acceptable.

5 Representations Summary

- 5.1 17 neighbours were individually consulted on this application and 2 site notices were displayed. The public consultation period expires on the 15th December but at the time of writing 7 objections had been received expressing concerns over
- Visual impact of loss of trees
 - Impact on air pollution
 - Concern that the felling is to enable road widening
 - Impact on traffic noise for residents
 - Loss of biodiversity
 - Loss of property value

Any further consultation responses received before the 15th December will be taken into consideration in the final decision.

Parks

5.2 The application has been submitted by the Parks Section.

Structural Engineer

5.3 No comments received.

6 Planning Policy Summary

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

6.2 Development Plan Document 1: Core Strategy Policies KP2 (Development Principles) and CP4 (Environment & Urban Renaissance)

6.3 Development Management Policy DM1 (Design Quality)

6.4 Supplementary Planning Document 1: Design & Townscape Guide, 2009.

7 Relevant Planning History

7.1 04/01008/TPO | Prune 14 poplar trees to Prince Avenue boundary (Application for works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order) - granted 2004

8 Recommendation

Members are recommended to delegate to the Head of Planning and Transport to GRANT CONSENT for 16/02060/TPO following the expiration of the public consultation period subject to the following conditions:

01 The works covered by this consent must be begun not later than the expiration of two years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason: To enable the circumstances to be reviewed at the expiration of the period if the consent has not been implemented, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DPD1 (Core Strategy) Policy KP2 and CP4, Development Management Policy DM1 and SPD1 (Design and Townscape Guide).

02 The replacement tree planting scheme shall be that shown on 'Plan for Tree Planting – Bell Walk, Prince Avenue' which shows twenty replacement trees (10 tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and 10 Acer trees (*Acer freemannii*) of 10-12cm 45L container size) to be planted in this area (8 on Rochford Avenue and 12 on Prince Avenue) within the 2016/2017 planting season unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DPD1 (Core Strategy) policy KP2 and CP4, Development Management Policy DM1 and SPD1 (Design and Townscape Guide).

03 The works shall be carried out in accordance with BS 3998 (2010) by a suitably qualified person.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DPD1 (Core Strategy) policy KP2 and CP4, Development Management Policy DM1 and SPD1 (Design and Townscape Guide).

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. The detailed analysis is set out in a report on the application prepared by officers.