

## Regeneration Local Centres Programme – Harehills Road Tree Planting

Date: 22 March 2023

Report of: Jonathan Waters – Senior Traffic Engineer

Report to: Chief Officer Highways & Transportation

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

This report seeks the approval of the Chief Officer Highways & Transportation, to introduce a project in Harehills that will see up to 12 tree pits installed within the central reservation on Harehills Road and planted with a suitable tree.

The project, as part of Regenerations' Local Centres Programme, seeks to support local businesses by making the area of Harehills in question more aesthetically pleasing as well as improving local residents wellbeing through this change.

The project cost is £150,000 and has approval of all three Ward Members and would be delivered within the spring of 2023.

### Recommendations

- a) Approve the detailed design and subsequent implementation of a project to introduce up to 12 tree pits within the central reservation on Harehills Road, Harehills and plant a tree species suitable for the location, as shown on the associated drawing 718-LCC-13-XX-DR-TM-01-02.
- b) Note the required expenditure of £150,000, comprising £140,000 works and £10,000 staff fees, to be funded from Regeneration's Local Centres Programme, with injection of the funds to be approved separately by the Chief Officer Asset Management & Regeneration.

## What is this report about?

- 1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Chief Officer Highways & Transportation for the detailed design and subsequent implementation of up to 12 tree pits with planted "*Pyrus calleryana*" Chanticleer (ornamental pear) trees within the central reservation on Harehills Road, Harehills, as part of Regeneration's Local Centres Programme.
- 2 Being a historical inner-city area, there is limited greenspace or green infrastructure in the area and as such, there is a strong desire to change the overall aesthetic from red brick, black tarmac and grey concrete for the wellbeing of local residents and to promote Harehills Road as the local centre.
- 3 Elected Ward Members for Gipton & Harehills identified this area as being a focal point in the local area that they believed required uplift following the Highways & Transportation road safety project introduced between 2017 and 2018, including the central reservation which runs for a distance of approximately 540 metres from Ashton Place at its southerly extent, northwards to Back Lascelles Road.
- 4 A report to the Chief Officer Highways & Transportation in January 2022 outlined the green infrastructure interventions being considered. Ultimately, the only realistic intervention that could be considered was the introduction of tree pits with a suitable tree species planted within.
- 5 The proposals as shown on the associated drawing 718-LCC-13-XX-DR-TM-01-02 (Appendix 2) indicate the locations chosen to introduce the tree pits, these being away from junctions, formal and informal pedestrian crossings and known areas where statutory undertakers' equipment crosses the carriageway.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 6 The proposals contained within this report will benefit residents and visitors to Harehills Road, through enhanced public realm. In line with a core aim of the Local Centres Programme, by focussing investment into this local centre, it is anticipated that this will become a more pleasant area to use and to spend time in, resulting in an uplift in visitors and therefore further supporting the vitality and viability of this local centre and the commercial properties within. A similar approach was adopted in Stanningley Bottom as part of the City Connect 1 project, where trees in tree pits have thrived and have changed the visual dynamic of this area.
- 7 The provision of tree planting will benefit the area through natural drainage provision as well as working towards Leeds City Council's climate emergency commitment for zero carbon by 2030.
- 8 The Best City Ambition, elucidated by way of the Best Council Plan 2020-2025, outlines how Leeds City Council will achieve the vision to become the best city in the UK. The proposals contained in this report contribute to the Leeds vision, particularly introducing Sustainable Infrastructure, promoting Health and Wellbeing as well as the aims of Leeds being a Child Friendly and Age Friendly City. The proposals promote Inclusive Economic Growth and support the local community and businesses through increased and improved public realm and visual aspects for this area of Harehills.
- 9 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening Form has been completed for this project and is attached as Appendix 1. In summary:

The positive impacts of the scheme are:

- The scheme will provide a more attractive street aesthetic focussed more to the needs of pedestrians on Harehills Road, benefitting the local community and visitors through prioritisation of pedestrian needs over vehicular;

- The introduction of tree planting will change the highway environment and may cause vehicle traffic to adopt a slower through speed, which will have general road safety benefits and reduced emissions, to the benefit of local residents.

There are no noted negative impacts of the proposal, however feedback to the scheme Engineer will be welcomed from any party towards a completed proposal and any suggestions for betterment considered accordingly for future works.

### How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

10 The proposal is in line with The Best Council Plan 2020-2025 of promoting Inclusive Growth, by directly seeking to uplift a designated local centre, making it more attractive to visitors and safer for all to use. The proposals promote pedestrians walking around Harehills Road thus promoting Health and Wellbeing. By choosing to introduce green infrastructure, this proposal will also work towards the Council's Climate Emergency ambitions.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Gipton & Harehills

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 11 The proposals have been formed through dialogue with Ward Members for Gipton & Harehills, as part of Regeneration's Local Centres Programme funding provision for their ward. Ward Members are supportive of the proposals, offering support in October 2022.
- 12 Other stakeholders were consulted in October 2022, with no adverse comments being received.
- 13 Local residents were consulted by letter in December 2022 with a supporting consultation drop-in session at SHINE (Harehills Road). No adverse comments were received to the proposals.

### What are the resource implications?

14 The estimated project cost is £150,000, comprising £140,000 works costs and £10,000 staff costs. The project is to be funded via Regeneration's Local Centres Programme. A Full Business Case has been presented to the Local Centres Programme Board and was approved. A separate report will be presented to the Chief Officer Asset Management & Regeneration as the budget holder and Officer with the appropriate delegated authority, to formally approve the injection of funding required for this project.

### What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

15 Construction risks are limited to those normally encountered when working on the public highway and no significant risks have been identified which relate to this project. Risk remains that any tree planted in a hard environment has an increased chance of not establishing and surviving and this is mitigated by planting semi-mature trees and undertaking a 2-year establishment period.

### What are the legal implications?

16 There are no legal implications arising as a result of this project, nor this report. The report is not subject to Call-In.

17 All works shall be contained within the publicly adopted highway and are being delivered under Sections 62 and 96 of the Highways Act 1980, which provides the Council as local highway authority with a general power for improvement of the Highway and the power to plant trees, lay verges etc. respectively. There are no Traffic Regulation Orders required as part of this project.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

18 Under the Local Centres Programme a financial budget was assigned to each electoral ward and bids were invited from various parties for that funding, subject to criteria. Gipton & Harehills Ward Members highlighted to Officers that their desired project was to introduce “green infrastructure” on Harehills Road. Options such as planters, grass verge provision and hanging baskets were considered but not considered suitable due to future maintenance concerns. As such, the design as seen on the associated drawing 718-LCC-13-XX-DR-TM-01-02 (Appendix 2) was arrived at as meeting the budget and the desires of Ward Members.

### **How will success be measured?**

19 There are no defined parameters onto which the success of this project will be measured. Feedback from elected Ward Members and residents in Harehills will be taken on board before, during and after the delivery of the project and any particular suggestions for improvement will be duly considered for inclusion into the proposals.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

- 20 It is intended, subject to approval of this report and the separate report to the Chief Officer Asset Management & Regeneration, that the project will be delivered in Spring 2023, around the suitable period for such landscaping works.
- 21 As part of the project, the installing Contractor will be engaged by Leeds City Council Highways & Transportation to undertake a tree establishment regime for a period of two years. This will include regular watering and pruning where required, all of which will be documented. Upon completion of this establishment period, the trees will fall into typical maintenance regimes within Leeds City Council.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening Form.
- Appendix 2 – 718-LCC-13-XX-DR-TM-01-02 – Project overview drawing.

## **Background papers**

- Report to the Chief Officer Highways & Transportation titled “Harehills Road Greening Project” presented January 2022.