

Pine Tree Avenue



Tree Consultation



Leicester
City Council

1. Introduction

Pine Tree Avenue is a residential street in the Humberstone area of the city. The trees that give the street its name are mostly non-native Wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), better known as Giant Redwoods.

The Wellingtonias pre-date the road and housing. They are about 150 years old, and were originally planted to form an avenue either side of the driveway leading to the former Humberstone Hall. Several trees have been removed over the years creating gaps in the original avenue.

Wellingtonias are generally not considered to be suitable for street planting. In the wild Wellingtonias are known to live for more than 1,000 years, growing to heights exceeding 200ft with a girth in excess of 30ft. The roots can spread extensively and sometimes exceed the height of the tree.

The trees are a key part of the street's character, are of considerable local historical interest and subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Tree Preservation Order N4.242 was made in 2001 to protect 28 individual trees on both sides of Pine Tree Avenue. The original TPO covered 21 Wellingtonias but also protected two cedars, a pine, a beech, a chestnut, a lime and a cypress. Appendix 1 shows the location and ownership of TPO trees.

Government advice on Tree Preservation Orders is that local planning authorities should keep their TPOs under review and use the powers available to them to vary or remove orders if needed.

2. Problems and issues

The trees have grown so large that their roots are now damaging the foundations of nearby houses and distorting driveways and pavements. Concerned residents have asked that the council find a solution to this problem while preserving the character of the street.

In recent years the council has received an increasing number of insurance claims related to property damage, subsidence and personal injury attributed to the trees. The council's insurers have withdrawn cover for property claims based on the fact that more claims are almost certain to occur. This means that the council and taxpayers will have to meet the costs of future claims.

In terms of property damage alone £250,000 is now reserved for meeting on-going claims. This does not include the costs of repairs of the carriageway and pavements, tree maintenance, removal and cleansing for tree debris and any costs incurred by utility companies in repairing pipes or cables damaged by tree roots. The council has made several repairs to the pavements and road in the past costing about £25,000.

The situation will worsen as the trees continue to grow, damaging homes, driveways, walls, utilities, roads and pavements as well as causing more trips and falls and making it more difficult for people with mobility issues to use the pavement.

3. The way forward

A way forward is needed to tackle the problems caused by the trees, which must strike a balance between preserving the character of the street and preventing the trees from causing any further damage.

All urban trees have a useful life expectancy and eventually require removal. In each case it is a matter of judgment when that point is reached.

Practically, the council has two options.

Option 1: Retain the trees due to their amenity and local historical value.

Any damage to property would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and repairs carried out to the road and footpaths as and when they are needed. The trees will continue to grow and cause further damage and problems, so the council will need to increase significantly its insurance reserves to cover future claims, which could run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Option 2: Tree removal and replacement.

A phased removal of the Wellingtonias, replacing them with an alternative species of pine tree that would retain the character of the avenue of trees. Appendix 2 shows an example of the type of replacement planting.

The removal/replacement programme will be guided by annual risk assessments of the condition of the trees and phased over 10 – 20 years, meaning no more than one or two trees would be removed in any year.

Additional measures will be considered:

Option 2.1 – Replacing trees on a ‘two for one’ basis. This could extend to planting pine trees further along Pine Tree Avenue, improving the look of the avenue and benefitting additional households.

Option 2.2 - Planting of Wellingtonias in parks and green spaces in the local area to replace those lost.

Option 2 is the council’s recommended strategy. This will greatly reduce the problems the trees are causing residents, road and footpath users and utility companies. This option will also reduce future claims.

An alternative option involving root pruning and installing root barriers was considered, but was ruled out because the amount of work needed would affect the trees’ health and stability.

Another option to raise the level of the road and footpath was also ruled out because it failed to address future tree root growth.

4. Have your say

At this stage the council has not made a final decision on how to deal with the issue as we would like to hear your views.

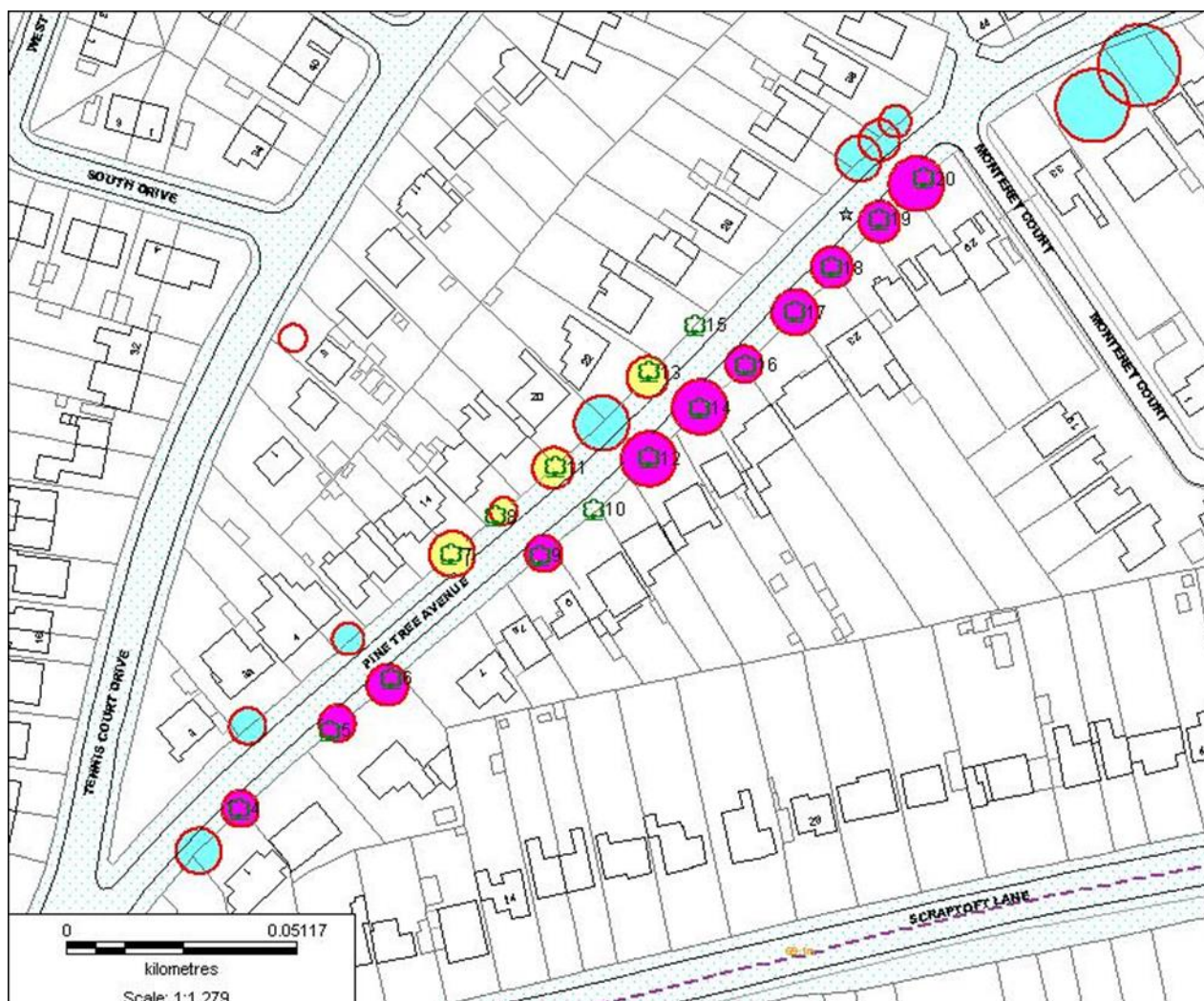
To have your say, please complete our online survey at:

Online: <http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/>

Or write to us at: Pine Tree Avenue consultation
Leicester City Council
Park House
Abbey Park
Abbey Park Road
Leicester
LE5 5AQ

This consultation closes on Friday 9th May 2014

Appendix 1: Location & ownership of Pine Tree Avenue TPO trees.



- Trees in council ownership
 ● Trees in shared ownership
 ● Trees in private ownership

Council & Shared Ownership

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Wellingtonia | 12. Wellingtonia |
| 4. Wellingtonia | 13. Wellingtonia |
| 5. Wellingtonia | 14. Black Pine |
| 6. Wellingtonia | 16. Wellingtonia |
| 7. Wellingtonia | 17. Wellingtonia |
| 8. Wellingtonia | 18. Wellingtonia |
| 9. Wellingtonia | 19. Wellingtonia |
| 11. Wellingtonia | 20. Wellingtonia |

Private

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| P1. Lime | P9. Wellingtonia |
| P2. Beech | P10. Wellingtonia |
| P3. Cedar | |
| P4. Wellingtonia | |
| P5. Cupressus | |
| P6. Wellingtonia | |
| P7. Wellingtonia | |
| P8. Wellingtonia | |

Appendix 2: Replacement tree stock (semi-mature)

