



Officer Decision Report

Date:	13/07/2026
Title:	Proposed Tree Consultation on Eskdale Avenue, Chesham
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Steven Broadbent, Leader Councillor Thomas Broom, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Adekunle Osibogun, Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change & Waste
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Parveiz Aslam MBE Councillor Alan Bacon
Author and contact officer:	John Pateman John.Pateman1@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	Chesham South
Decision:	Approval to proceed to Statutory Consultation seeking views on the removal of 15 trees on Eskdale Avenue, Chesham to facilitate pavement improvements (footway re-modelling).
Reason for decision:	To improve the accessibility and safety of the footway for Pedestrians and People using wheeled mobility.
Legal reason/s:	For avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the footpath or surrounding areas or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians) and for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs.

1. Background

- 1.1 Eskdale Avenue contains 15 highway trees near house no. 1, 27, 32, 34, 43, 55, 60, 88, 90, 103, 105, 109, 122A, 127 and Chesham Eskdale Avenue bus stop (1 - west bound),more than half of which are obstructing footways and causing surface and kerb damage, with the remainder in poor condition and continuing to deteriorate.
- 1.2 The overgrowth of trees within the footway has resulted in root systems uplifting and damaging the surfacing and kerbing, while also creating a substantial obstruction to the footway. Non-pedestrian users are forced to divert around the tree via the carriageway, presenting significant road safety risk.
- 1.3 Buckinghamshire Council has received claims relating to injuries and damage attributed to the trees and associated defects, and remains at risk of further claims if the issue is not addressed.
- 1.4 An Arboricultural survey was conducted in 2024, and a feasibility report was prepared proposing a range of options (as detailed in section 3 of this report). However, any option short of removing all 15 trees would result in residual risks to pedestrian users.
- 1.5 Removal of all 15 trees on the footway is proposed, followed by full reconstruction of the adjacent footway and any affected carriageway areas to achieve clear widths of 1.8–2.1m, which are not currently present at the site. The approach enables a layout which is fully compliant to Buckinghamshire Council Highway standards, with all damaged kerbs and surface defects addressed.
- 1.6 The construction works would be extensive due to the level of root removal and footway reconstruction required. Significant kerb adjustment or replacement will be needed, and any carriageway resurfacing would mostly involve inlaying new surface or combined surface and binder courses.
- 1.7 All identified design risks related to damaged surfacing, degraded street furniture, and tree-related hazards would be fully eliminated only through complete reconstruction and removal of all 15 trees.
- 1.8 Suitable Replacement trees need to be planted in appropriate alternative nearby locations. Engagement with Ward councillors will be undertaken to identify suitable locations. Budget for planting has been allowed for as part of the project.
- 1.9 Trees will be removed as per table 1, below:

Table 1 - Proposed Removal of Trees

Road Name	Type of Proposal
Eskdale Avenue, Chesham (nearby house no. 1, 29, 32, 34, 43, 55, 60, 88, 90, 103, 105, 109, 122A 127 and near Chesham Eskdale Avenue bus stop (1 - west bound))	Removal of Trees

2. Authority to take this decision.

- 2.1 The Council scheme of delegation is contained within the Council’s constitution.

3. Design Options Considered

3.1 A range of design options have been considered to address the identified issues relating to tree related damage and accessibility constraints. Each option has been addressed in terms of its ability to mitigate safety risks, achieve compliance with Buckinghamshire Council standards, and provide a practical and sustainable long-term solution for footway users.

3.2 Option A – All trees to remain in-situ

This option preserves all of the trees, and requires the least amount of maintenance works, however it does not mitigate any design risks related to trees. The footway remains obstructed to non-pedestrian footway users which continues to limit accessibility and inclusiveness, and there are ongoing compromises required for kerbing, surfacing, and footway widths, resulting in poor compliance with footway design standards.

For the reasons stated above this option is deemed as unsuitable for the scheme

3.3 Option B – Removal of 5 Trees and introduction of ‘Key Footway Route’

This option offers a compromise for removing all the trees, however the resultant layout is not fully compliant to Buckinghamshire Council Highway Standards. Although the design risks associated with the remaining trees are reduced, the other key design risk of footway users needing to enter the carriageway remains. The ‘Key footway route’ would require introduction of formalised crossing points along the highway, which will require installation of dropped kerbing, trimming of additional vegetation and potential enforcement of parking. This option would also be subject to a full road safety audit.

For the reasons stated above this option is deemed as unsuitable for the scheme

3.4 Option C – Removal of All 15 Trees (with replacements planted elsewhere)

From a tree retention perspective, this is the least favourable option. It also requires potentially significant construction works due to the tree removal aspect. It does however provide a safe and unobstructed route for pedestrians by fully eliminating the design risk associated with the trees and root related damage. This option also allows for full design compliance with Buckinghamshire Council Footway specifications. From a design and maintenance perspective, it results in the most simple and represents the most robust and sustainable long-term solution, with reduced ongoing maintenance requirements.

For the reasons stated above, this option is considered to be the most suitable for this scheme

3.5 Option D – Road Improvement Scheme

This option requires significant construction and design input, involves kerb realignment, footway widening, and potential traffic calming measures, necessitates additional approvals as it qualifies as a highway improvement scheme, and results in the removal of all existing trees during the initial

works. Furthermore, there is currently no funding available to deliver this option.

For the reasons stated above this option is deemed as unsuitable for the scheme

4. Local Councillors & Community Boards consultation & views

- 4.1 All local members and Chesham Town Council were consulted to gather their feedback on the options.

5. Feedback from Initial Consultation

- 5.1 Councillors Parveiz Aslam MBE and Alan Bacon have been consulted, and have expressed their support via email response at this stage.

6. Financial & Legal Implications

- 6.1 The scheme is fully funded by Buckinghamshire Council Capital Footway Budget.
- 6.2 Section 96 of the Highways Act 1980 provides that a Highway Authority may, in a highway maintainable at the public expense by them, plant trees and shrubs and lay out grass verges. These powers will facilitate the second phase proposed works in relation to landscaping improvements with above-ground planters.
- 6.3 Section 96A of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on Local Highway Authorities in England to consult on the removal of some street trees – the ‘duty to consult’. A Local Highway Authority in England must consult members of the public before felling a tree on an urban road (a ‘street tree’)
- 6.4 Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 places a duty on Buckinghamshire Council and gives the highway authority powers to require the removal or cutting back of trees, shrubs and hedges that obstruct or endanger highway users.
- 6.5 All works are planned within the adopted highway boundary. Buckinghamshire Council as the Highway Authority is granted rights for permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 9 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

7. Your questions and views

- 7.1 If you have any questions about the matter contained in the paper, please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose email address is given at the head of the paper.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 **Appendix A – Technical Note (TO-12-ATK-HKF-BH24_FW019-RP-CH-000001)**

Approval Signature:



Dave Roberts, Head of Highways

13/07/2026