

To: Planning and Climate Change Policy Board

On: 14 June 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Tree Preservation Order Request

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report responds to requests to apply a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to sites in Erskine and Inchinnan.
 - 1.2 The requests submitted are considered in line with the relevant legislation, namely, Section 160 of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, and within the procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.
 - 1.3 The report recommends that a tree preservation order is made in relation to the two sites proposed.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
 - (i) Approve the need for a tree preservation order in respect of the tree group known as Sandieland Wood and agree that officers proceed to prepare the order, serve it on relevant parties and make the order available to the public and seek representations.
 - (ii) Approve the need for a tree preservation order in respect of the tree group known as Erskine Hotel Wood and agree that officers proceed to prepare the order, serve it on relevant parties and make the order available to the public and seek representations.
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3. **TPO Requests**

- 3.1. Two requests have been received in respect of suggested wooded areas where tree preservation orders should be made. Both sites in question have been assessed.
- 3.2. The two areas in question are as follows:
 - Sandielands Wood, Inchinnan;
 - Erskine Hotel Wood, located between the A726 and the Mutha Hotel; and

4. **Renfrewshire Planning & Development Tree Policy 2022**

- 4.1. The Renfrewshire Planning & Development Tree Policy 2022 was approved by the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board in March 2022.
- 4.2. The approved policy outlines how tree preservation orders (TPO) are made and the process that is followed when requests are received.
- 4.3. In light of the above, the sites in question have been assessed and a recommendation provided in respect of the amenity value of the trees in question. The assessments undertaken in respect of each of the three sites in question are detailed below.

5. **TPO Considerations**

Sandieland Wood

- 5.1. The Sandieland Wood is located southeast of Torran Drive, Erskine and is currently surrounded by farmland with recent suburban housing estates to the northwest and southwest. The woodland in question is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5.2. The woodland is of a linear shape on a slight elevation in an otherwise flat landscape. It is bounded by a low dry stone retaining wall, similar to the nearby Teucheen Wood TPO and SINC.
- 5.3. It is significant to note that part of the woodland is currently subject to a planning application which is currently under consideration and concerns the erection of a residential development comprising fifty-nine dwellinghouses and twenty-four flats, including access, drainage, landscaping and associated works (22/0178/PP).
- 5.4. The woodland comprises mature mixed woodland of plantation origin, which is dominated by Pedunculate Oak (>50% of the canopy), Scot's Pine (c15% of canopy), Beech (10%) and Silver Birch (10%). Canopy gaps occupy about 15% of the site, mainly where an old, silted up and vegetated hollow shows where a pond used to be. Other tree and shrub species are present, for example, a large Sycamore on the northern boundary, at least one old Alder, plus Downy Birch, Ash, Grey Willow, Goat Willow, Rowan, Holly and Hawthorn.

- 5.5. The canopy includes trees approaching veteran status, with a few Beech surviving which are more than 200 years old, several of the Oaks in the 100-150 age bracket and some of the Scot's Pine exceeding 100 years old. One boundary Sycamore exceeds 100 years and there is a very large Common Alder which probably approaches 100 years. Beech probably used to occupy a larger proportion of the canopy, but several fallen giants can now be seen on the ground, as 200 years is about the maximum age expectation for the species in Scotland.
- 5.6. The assessment undertaken in relation to the site concludes that the woodland is in good/fair condition and is mapped as established woodland on the 1st series ordnance survey map for the area. In addition, the woodland is considered to be a prominent landscape feature and has a high proportion of very old trees.
- 5.7. In terms of biodiversity the woodland is of some value as a result of its high proportion of native oak trees and dead wood habitats, including standing dead trees suitable for hole-nesting birds, invertebrates and fungi.
- 5.8. In light of the above it is recommended that the woodland, known as Sandieland Wood, as identified in Appendix 1 is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

Erskine Hotel Wood

- 5.9. The woodland in question is located within the ground of the Muthu Glasgow River Hotel, off the A726, Erskine. The woodland in question is detailed in Appendix 2.
- 5.10. It should be noted that the site is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- 5.11. It is significant to note that the site in question is currently subject to a planning application which seeks the erection of a residential development in principle (19/0765/PP).
- 5.12. The woodland comprises mature broad-leaved woodland, which is dominated by Sycamore and Ash, but which has a variety of other tree species in the canopy, including Wych Elm, Horse Chestnut, Silver Birch, Downy Birch, Pedunculate Oak, Crack Willow, Lime, Alder, Beech and a single Yew.
- 5.13. The understorey is also diverse, containing Hawthorn, Goat Willow, Rusty Willow, Holly, Elder, Honeysuckle, Bramble and Raspberry, as well as a large component of planted or "garden escape" non-native shrubs, e.g. Snowberry, Dogwood, Portuguese Laurel. Cherry Laurel and Mountain Currant.

- 5.14. The field layer is quite diverse for a small woodland area and includes three species of orchid (Broad-leaved Helleborine, Twayblade and Common Spotted-orchid) as well as some typical woodland species, e.g. Bluebell, Wood Sorrel, Enchanters Nightshade and Wood Dock. In places grasses and ferns predominate, especially Tufted Hair-grass, Male Fern and Broad Buckler-fern. In some areas near the site of the long demolished North Barr buildings, the groundflora reflects the horticultural heritage associated with the former walled garden and non-native species like Solomon's Seal and Crow Garlic (*Allium vineale*) are well represented.
- 5.15. Further variation is provided by an area of Ash and Willow dominated secondary woodland, which has colonised the formerly open ground within a demolished walled garden over the last few decades. Beneath the nearly closed canopy the area retains tall ruderals (e.g. Stinging Nettles, Rosebay Willowherb) and marshy grassland with rushes, Wild Angelica and Marsh Thistle, suggesting that soil drainage has become impeded since its horticultural heyday.
- 5.16. The assessment undertaken in relation to the site concludes that the woodland is in good/fair condition and is mapped as established woodland on the 1st series ordnance survey map for the area. In addition, the site is included on Scottish Forestry's Native Woodland Survey of Scotland as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, a habitat category included on the Scottish Biodiversity List by NatureScot and prioritised as "conservation action needed".
- 5.17. As noted, part of the site is located within SINC No. 72 and is therefore a woodland with a local designation.
- 5.18. The assessment of the site notes that almost all canopy trees fall into an age range of around 50-80 years old and many are multiple stemmed, suggesting that the trees may have been harvested as part of the war effort in WW2, and then regenerated from coppice stools. The size of these stools suggests a replanting during the early 19th Century. Along the southern edge there are some multi-stemmed Pedunculate Oaks and Limes on a steeper slope which are growing from stools which are much larger in size. In the case of the Oaks these are over 2m in diameter suggesting trees with an origin dating back 300+ years. In this general vicinity there are also (now partially hidden) dry-stone retaining walls, a stock exclusion feature found around woodlands elsewhere in the wider Erskine area and dating back at least into the 18th Century.
- 5.19. In light of the above it is recommended that the woodland, known as Erskine Hotel Wood, as identified in Appendix 2 is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 A TPO is prepared in respect of the woodland at both Sandieland Wood and Erskine Hotel Wood. Thereafter each of the orders will be served on the respective landowners and made available to the public for comment.
- 6.2 In the event that no comments are received the respective order will be confirmed and all parties informed. In addition, the order will be made available to the public and recorded in the Land Register of Scotland.
- 6.3 Should comments be received, these will be considered and assessed to determine if the order requires to be modified or withdrawn.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
4. **Legal** – The recommendations in the report would require for two separate tree preservation orders to be made in relation to the sites in question. Should the orders be confirmed they would require to be lodged with the Land Register of Scotland.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** - None.

13. **Climate Risk** – The proposed site development briefs seek to ensure that any development coming forward is undertaken in a sustainable manner and aids the adaption required as a result of climate change.

Appendix 1: Site Plan – Sandieland Wood

Appendix 2: Site Plan – Erskine Hotel Wood

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