DELEGATED APPLICATIONS

ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO: **DC/26/1646: 18 Warnham Road Horsham.**

REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES:
Horsham Town Council has stated no objection to this proposal.
No additional representations have been received in respect of this application.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The application relates to the removal of a mature Horse Chestnut tree situated at 18 Warnham Road and protected by Preservation Order ref TPO/0098.

2. The tree makes a positive contribution to local amenity and is a prominent feature within the street scene. Its removal would inevitably result in the loss of public visual amenity and the wider environmental benefits associated with a mature tree.

3. The observations made during that visit broadly confirmed the defects identified within the submitted arboricultural report, including extensive decay, hollowing and significant structural defects affecting the principal stems and principal union of the tree. The condition observed on site was consistent with the findings and conclusions set out within the submitted assessment.

4. Having reviewed the submitted arboricultural report and undertaken a site inspection, it is evident that the tree contains extensive internal decay and hollowing affecting both principal stems. In addition, a significant longitudinal crack is present at the main fork extending into the south-facing stem. Collectively, these defects raise substantial concerns regarding the ongoing structural integrity of the tree.

5. Particular concern arises from the combination of extensive decay, large internal cavities and the crack associated with the principal union. Whilst the precise extent of sound residual wall thickness has not been quantified, the defects appear significant and affect key structural components of the tree. The submitted evidence, together with the observations made on site, indicate that these defects are unlikely to be satisfactorily addressed through routine pruning works alone.

6. The tree is located adjacent to Warnham Road and within falling distance of the public highway and footpath. Consequently, the level of potential harm arising from a structural failure event must be afforded considerable weight. The presence of frequently used public areas within the potential target zone materially increases the consequences of any failure and weighs heavily in the assessment of the application.

7. It is acknowledged that mature Horse Chestnut trees can provide significant visual amenity and ecological value, and the Council would ordinarily seek their retention where reasonably practicable. However, in this instance the available evidence indicates that the identified defects are extensive and relate directly to the principal structural integrity of the tree. When balanced against the potential risk posed to highway users and pedestrians, the retention of the tree in its current form is not considered justified.

8. The applicants have indicated a preference to retain a section of the lower stem at approximately 2 metres in height. Subject to the extent of decay at the proposed cut height and the advice of the appointed arborist, retention of a low monolith may be achievable. This could provide limited habitat value and potential for reaction growth whilst addressing the principal safety concerns and would for the time being negate the need for a replacement to be planted following the works.

9. Having regard to the extent of the reported decay, hollowing and cracking, together with the tree's proximity to the public highway and footpath, although the proposed works will result in the loss of a tree that currently contributes to local amenity, the safety concerns associated with its retention are considered to outweigh its public benefits. A replacement tree of an appropriate species, size and location should be secured by condition to mitigate the longer-term loss of amenity resulting from the proposed works.

RECOMMENDATION:
Grant consent subject to the conditions below.

CONDITIONS TO BE APPLIED:
1. TR2 *Time limit, 2 years*
2. TR7 *replacement (single tree)*
TINF1 *Note to applicant.*

TINF2 *Wildlife protection.*

DELEGATED

Authorising Officer sign……ANBU…….. ***Arboricultural Officer (Strategic Planning).***

Date……20 Nov 26…