

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR INCLUDING TREES IN TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS



Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Wokingham Borough Council has powers to include trees in Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Subject to certain exemptions this will prevent work from being carried out to the tree(s) without the written consent of the Council first being obtained. The Council will normally only allow works to be carried out to protected trees that are in the interest of safety or appropriate to their long-term management. The Council will not allow works to trees that are likely to harm their health or appearance.

From December 2009, Wokingham Borough Council will prioritise the making of new Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) to be focused on the four identified Strategic Development Locations (SDL), identified within the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework.

The making of these new strategic Orders will take priority over other requests for TPO's in other locations, where there are no known or specific threats to trees. Requests for Tree Preservation Orders in these other locations will be reviewed and kept on file for further consideration following completion of the SDL programme.

You may find the following information of help in understanding the criteria the Council considers before deciding whether to include trees in a TPO:

- The tree(s) must be highly significant when viewed from a public place such as a road or footpath. Trees that can only be viewed from a neighbouring property and are not significant in the wider landscape cannot be included. Council owned trees are not normally protected by Tree Preservation Orders as they are managed for public benefit and are not usually under threat.
- The tree must be safe and healthy, capable of a reasonably long life and not be contributing to any known damage to buildings (e.g. subsidence damage).
- It must be expedient to include the trees in a TPO. This usually means that they are under some form of threat, such as from a proposed development. We will not normally protect trees at individual properties, which are perceived as being under threat from more general risks such as changes of ownership. (This risk could apply to most of the properties in the Borough.)
- All types of tree including trees within a hedgerow, but not hedges, bushes or shrubs, may be included in a Tree Preservation Order. The order can cover anything from a single tree to woodland.
- The Borough Council currently makes in the region of five Tree Preservation Orders per month. They often include a number of trees in each order. They are normally made when we receive planning applications that may have an adverse impact on important trees.
- Any requests to include trees in a Tree Preservation Order will be considered on their merit and prioritised accordingly. We will only inspect and consider trees that appear to be highly significant in views from public places.
- The Council has identified a number of roads through the Borough, which it has designated as 'Green Routes' in the Local Plan 1996 – 2006. Priority will be given to protecting trees which form part of the tree lined character of these routes if they are under threat from proposed development.
- Any request to include trees in Tree Preservation Orders should specify the trees to be considered, their precise location and the reasons why the TPO is thought to be necessary. This can be sent in a letter or on the form 'Application to include trees under a Tree Preservation Order' available from the Council Offices.

If you require any further information please contact the Council's Trees and Landscape Team using the following contact details:

Email: treesandlandscape@wokingham.gov.uk