**WBCIR:19323**

**Reports of Obstruction from Private Land:**

**1. How many reports or complaints regarding overgrown vegetation and foliage obstructing footways, originating from private land were received by your authority in the past two years (2023 and 2024)?**

In 2023 there were 680 customer reports classed as “vegetation” via the Wokingham Borough “Report a problem” webpage at [Report a problem](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/report). Of the 680 reports, 308 appear to mention the pavement or a footpath. It is not possible to determine whether the vegetation reported was from public or private land, as the source of the vegetation is often not stated.

In 2024 there were 906 customer reports classed as “vegetation” via the Wokingham Borough “Report a problem” webpage at [Report a problem](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/report). Of the 906 reports, 331 appear to mention the pavement or a footpath. It is not possible to determine whether the vegetation reported was from public or private land, as the source of the vegetation is often not stated.

**Reports of Obstruction from Public Land:**

**2. How many reports or complaints regarding overgrown vegetation and foliage obstructing footways originating from public land were received by your authority in the same period?**

In 2023 there were 680 customer reports classed as “vegetation” via the Wokingham Borough “Report a problem” webpage at [Report a problem](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/report). Of the 680 reports, 308 appear to mention the pavement or a footpath. It is not possible to determine whether the vegetation reported was from public or private land, as the source of the vegetation is often not stated.

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**Actions Taken by the Authority**

**Enforcement or Intervention on Private Land:**

**3. For reports concerning overhanging vegetation and foliage from private land, how many led to:**

**• The landowner being contacted?**

In 2023, 31 landowners were contacted reference to cases obstructing adopted highway.

In 2024, 59 landowners were contacted reference to cases obstructing adopted highway.

**• Formal enforcement action?**

Official letters and notices served to the landowners requesting to remove the cause of the danger, obstruction or interference to the adopted highway.

**• Direct intervention by the authority to remove or address the vegetation?**

In 2023 – 3 cases

In 2024 – 1 case

**• Penalty fines issued?**

Not applicable

**Length of time for action to be taken**

**4. On average, how long did each report take to action, from the moment the complaint was received, to the point which the issue was dealt with?**

24 hrs to 14 days depending on the urgency of the situation.

**5. What is the usual timeframe you state you will deal with overgrown vegetation and foliage in?** Within a month

**Maintenance of Public Land:**

**6. What actions were undertaken to address complaints about overgrown vegetation and foliage obstructing footways on public land? Please provide details of:**

**• The number of cases resolved per year (2023 and 2024).**

We do not hold a record of this information.

**•  The nature of the interventions (e.g., pruning, clearing, etc.)**

Where overgrown vegetation and foliage from public land is reported as obstructing footways, works are instructed to our grounds maintenance contractor to cut back vegetation to clear the obstruction and make the footway accessible.

**Best Practices and Guidance**

**Policies or Guidance on Overhanging Vegetation:**

**7. Does your authority have any specific policies, procedures, or guidance documents on preventing or addressing overgrown vegetation and foliage obstructing footways? If so, please provide copies or links to these documents, ensuring they are in an accessible format for blind and partially sighted people.**

Details of the Wokingham Borough approach to vegetation control on the highway are available online in the form of the Wokingham Borough Highways Maintenance Management Plan (HMMP) at: [Highways Maintenance Management Plan](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/road-maintenance/highways-maintenance-management-plan)

The management of vegetation is described in Volume 02 “Highway Network Maintenance” and Volume 09 “Miscellaneous Highway Functions” of the HMMP.

**Examples of Good Practice:**

**8. Can you provide examples of good practice adopted by your authority to effectively manage overhanging vegetation and foliage issues (e.g., community engagement, educational campaigns, partnerships with landowners, or consultation with disability groups)?**

* We undertake annual pruning of most hedges and shrubs during the Autumn/Winter period to reduce the likelihood of them becoming an obstruction in the future.
* Where vegetation has been identified as causing an ongoing problem we will look to reduce/remove this where suitable to prevent it from being an obstruction in the future.
* We continue to have contractor operatives available during bird nesting season (March-September) to carry out reactive vegetation cut backs to ensure health and safety .
* We have contract monitoring officers and highway inspectors who are able to identify and report vegetation obstruction issues so these can be addressed.
* We encourage reporting of vegetation issues from the general public and Councillors so these can be addressed.

**Coordination with Other Authorities:**

**9. Has your authority worked with neighbouring councils or external organizations to share resources or best practices for tackling overhanging vegetation? If so, please provide details.**

No

**Accessible reporting**

**10. What is the process of reporting overgrown vegetation and foliage, how many steps are there, and how accessible/easy to find are these processes on your website? (By accessible, we mean how easy is it for a blind or partially sighted person using assistive technology or person with low vision, to access and report it.)**

The process of reporting overgrown vegetation and foliage is to use an online form eg <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/countryside-parks-and-conservation/trees-hedges-and-grass-cutting/report-overgrown-vegetation-and-grass-sight-line-issues> – the form is linked to from the website and is the first result if you use the search ‘overgrown foliage’ or ‘overgrown hedge’. The number of steps could be as few as three. 1. Search for how to report 2. access the relevant content and 3. complete the form.
The form is 4 pages long and built on our CRM (Netcall).
The website is built to and maintained to WCAG 2.2 AA standards. This means that blind and partially sighted persons should be easily able to use our content and services. Our designs are accessible with suitable contrast ratios for text. We also ensure that content and navigation work well with assistive technologies such as screen readers.
More detail is available on our website’s accessibility statement. <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/accessibility-statement-wokingham-borough-council>

**11. How many reports of overgrown vegetation and foliage did you receive from blind and partially sighted people did you receive in the past two years?**

Wokingham Borough Highways and Cleaner&Greener do not record this information.

**Spending and Budget Allocation**

**Expenditure on Addressing Vegetation Issues:**

**12. What was the total expenditure allocated and spent by the authority on tackling overhanging vegetation and foliage affecting footways during the past two years? Please break down this spending by:**

**• Addressing vegetation from public land.**

**• Addressing vegetation from private land (including enforcement and direct intervention costs).**

2022-23 – Grounds Maintenance of Highway verge expenditure  (inclusive of grass maintenance) – approx.. £180,300

2023-24 – Grounds Maintenance of Highway verge expenditure (inclusive of grass maintenance) – approx. £190,600

**Additional Budget for Vegetation Management:**

**13. Has your authority allocated any specific budget or additional funding (e.g., grants, subsidies) to manage overhanging vegetation and foliage? If so, please provide details of the amounts and their use.**No.