

Place and Environment - Natural Environment

PE20 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

1. There will be a presumption against the removal of safe and healthy trees, non-commercial woodlands or hedgerows, where such removal would be detrimental to landscape, local amenity, nature conservation, recreation or historic environment interests, or erosion and natural flood management. Criteria in the Scottish Government's policy on Control of Woodland Removal will be used to determine the acceptability of woodland removal;
2. Ancient, long-established and semi-natural woodland, including sites identified in the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory, will be protected as a resource of irreplaceable value;
3. In areas covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or Conservation Area, development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, health or stability of trees, or their landscape, biodiversity or historic value. Where appropriate, other endangered trees or woodlands which have amenity, cultural or historic importance will be protected through the designation of further TPOs;
4. Development which is likely to affect trees should comply with Supplementary Guidance SG10 'Trees and Development'. A Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan will be required to inform the design, together with a Tree Protection Plan. Where development is permitted which will involve the loss of trees or hedgerows of amenity value, the Council will normally require replacement planting on site comprising similar species and numbers to the trees and hedgerows removed;
5. The enhancement and management of existing woodland and hedgerows will be encouraged. Where the retention of a tree group or woodland area is integral to a development proposal, developers will be required to prepare and implement an appropriate Management Plan;

6. The provision of new trees and woodland in association with new development will be encouraged in accordance with Supplementary Guidance SG05 'Green Infrastructure and New Development'; and
7. There will be a preference for the use of locally native species in new and replacement planting schemes, or other species where these are integral to an historic landscape.

4.21 Trees and woodlands have many benefits, including timber production, placemaking, landscape enhancement, screening, shelter, biodiversity value, carbon fixing, air quality improvement, natural flood management, recreation and opportunities to interact with nature. Hedgerows similarly have important benefits for landscape enhancement, screening, biodiversity, and air quality improvement. Protection of existing trees and woodland will be a priority, and the principles of the Scottish Governments Policy on 'Control of Woodland Removal' will be followed where woodland is affected. In addition, a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are in force across the Council area, as shown on the Proposals Map. New development will be expected to contribute to woodland and green network objectives through management and new planting as appropriate.

PE21 Promotion of Forestry and Woodland

1. The Council will promote the Falkirk Forestry and Woodland Strategy by:
 - Encouraging sustainable forestry that delivers a range of economic, social and environmental benefits, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, in accordance with the Strategy; and
 - Taking the Strategy into account in responding to consultations on proposals for felling, planting and restocking; in making planning decisions on woodland removal or creation; and making decisions on the Council's woodland projects.

4.22 Woodland cover, and the proportion of woodland brought under management, has increased in the Falkirk area over recent years, contributing significantly to the green network and bringing multiple benefits. The Falkirk Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2015-2055 provides a long term vision for the management and expansion of our woodland resource, including opportunities and constraints for new planting.

