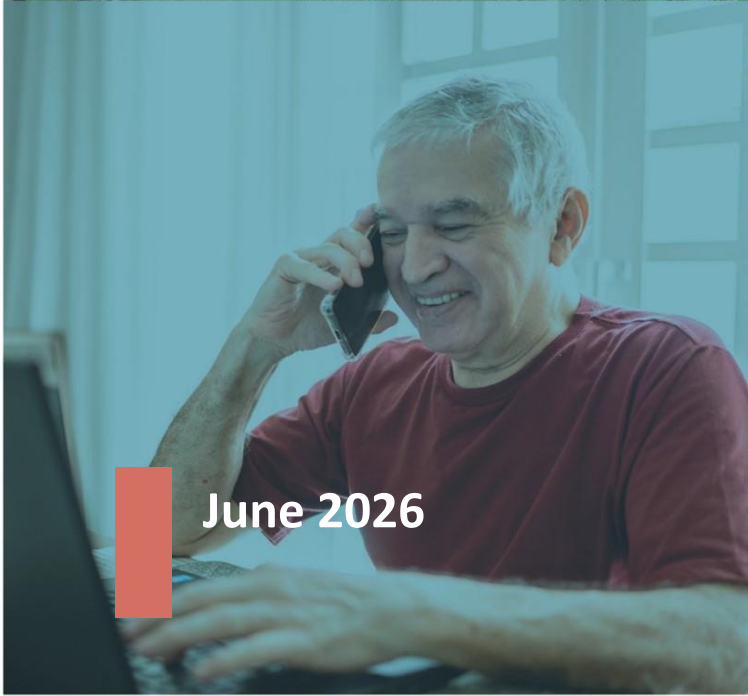




Milton Keynes
City Council



High hedges guidance.



June 2026



Please read this prior to completing the high hedges application form

This sheet gives some basic details relating to high hedges to help you decide if you wish to make an application under the High Hedges Act 2003, and to assist with the completion of the application form.

Information

The law requires that the complainant has taken reasonable steps to settle the hedge dispute amicably with their neighbour before complaining to the Council. Mediation Services are available to assist with this process if needed. Their contact details are

Tel: 01908 545 180, email: mediation@mkcab.org.uk.

If the complainant has not been able to resolve the hedge dispute, then they can apply to the Council on a High Hedges Application Form. available at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/environment-parks-and-open-space

There is a fee of £450.00 for this service, £225.00 for OAP and people on benefits (proof will be required) payable at the time of application.

The completed application form together with all relevant documentation and payment is to be sent to

High Hedges, Parks and Open Spaces, Milton Keynes Council, FREEPOST ANG 7121, Milton Keynes MK9 3ZZ.

The complainant should provide a copy of their completed application form to the landowner and occupier where the hedge is located. Photocopying services are available from all libraries throughout Milton Keynes.

Once the application form has been received you will receive an acknowledgement.

The Council can decline to investigate if the complaint does not meet the requirements of the High Hedge Bill e.g. the hedge has to be evergreen or semi evergreen with 2 or more plants and over 2 meters in height. If the hedge does not meet these criteria, you may lose your application fee.

Once the payment has cleared the Council will carry out an investigation of the complaint.

The investigation will include contacting the landowner and occupier where the hedge is situated for their comments, a site inspection (lasting approx. one hour), followed by a

calculation using government figures to work out what height the hedge should be for that location.

The calculation is made up of 2 parts one relating to the evaluation of the garden area, and the second relating to the evaluation of the nearest living area window.

The investigating officer is on private land by invitation only, if they are asked to leave before the inspection is completed the complaint will not be pursued and no refund of money will be given.

Once a decision has been made on the complaint both the complainant and the landowner and occupier will be advised in writing.

The result of the investigation will be a recommended height down to which the hedge should initially be cut and an Action Hedge Height above which the hedge should not be allowed to grow.

If the height of the hedge is above the recommendation The Council has the power to take enforcement action to ensure that the work requested in the decision is carried out to meet the recommendation.

If the hedge is at or below the recommended action hedge height, no remedial cutting works will be recommended.

Both the complainant and the landowner and occupier have the right of appeal against the Council's decision to the independent Planning Inspectorate.

If you wish to continue with a complaint about a neighbour's high hedge complete the enclosed form along with the appropriate remittance – cheques/postal orders should be made payable to Milton Keynes Council and all supporting documentation must be included.

Guidance Notes

General

This guidance notes are to help you fill in the form to make a complaint about a neighbouring high hedge. You should also read the leaflet 'High hedges: complaining to the council'.

Consideration of your complaint will be delayed if you do not complete the form properly or do not provide the information requested.

If you are still unsure how to answer any of the questions, please contact the Council Tel: 01908 691 691 or email: environmentalserviceshelpline@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

Who's who/The parties

We need this information because we will have to get in touch with this person to arrange to visit the property so that we can see for ourselves the effect of the hedge and take the necessary measurements and photographs.

We need to know who the hedge owner is because we will have to get in touch with this person for their comments, and to arrange a site visit to the land where the hedge is growing.

If the site where the hedge is growing does not have a postal address, use the box to describe as clearly as possible where it is e.g. Land to the rear of 12 High Street or Park adjoining Main Road.

If you are in any doubt about who owns the property where the hedge is situated, you can check with the Land Registry. Alternatively, there are a number of other websites offering a similar service. Land Register Online (at www.landregisteronline.gov.uk) provides easy access to details of registered properties in England. Copies of title plans and registers held in electronic format can be downloaded in PDF format for a fee. The register includes ownership details.

2. Criteria for making an application

You must be the owner or occupier of the property affected by a high hedge in order to make an application to the council.

If you do not own the property (e.g. because you are a tenant or a leaseholder), you can still make an application, but you should let the owner (e.g. landlord or management company) know what you are doing.

The property does not have to be wholly residential but must include some occupied living accommodation otherwise we cannot consider the application.

3. Attempts to resolve the dispute

Please keep the descriptions brief but say how you made the approach (e.g. face to face, phone, letter) and what the result was.

Example 1

12 March 2025 – wrote to ask if we could discuss hedge. 2 weeks later no reply;

9 April 2025 – wrote to ask if would speak to mediator. 2 weeks later still no reply;

7 May 2025 – wrote to inform neighbour would be making application to council.

Example 2

12 March 2025 – saw neighbour in their garden and asked if we could discuss hedge. Neighbour came round on 19 March but we couldn't agree a solution.

15 April 2025 – mediators visited;

29 April 2025 – met neighbours and mediators but still couldn't find an answer we were both happy with;

14 May 2005 – wrote to neighbour to advise that complaining to the council.

It is not necessary to send copies of all correspondence with your neighbour about the hedge – especially if the dispute is a long-running one. You need only provide evidence of your latest attempts to settle it.

4. Grounds of Complaint

It will help if you provide as much information as you can but keep it factual. Remember that a copy of this form will be sent to the person who owns the site where the hedge is growing, and to the person living there if they are different people.

Concentrate on the hedge and the disadvantages you actually experience because you feel it is too tall.

We cannot consider problems that are not connected with the height of the hedge. For example, if the roots of the hedge are pushing up a path.

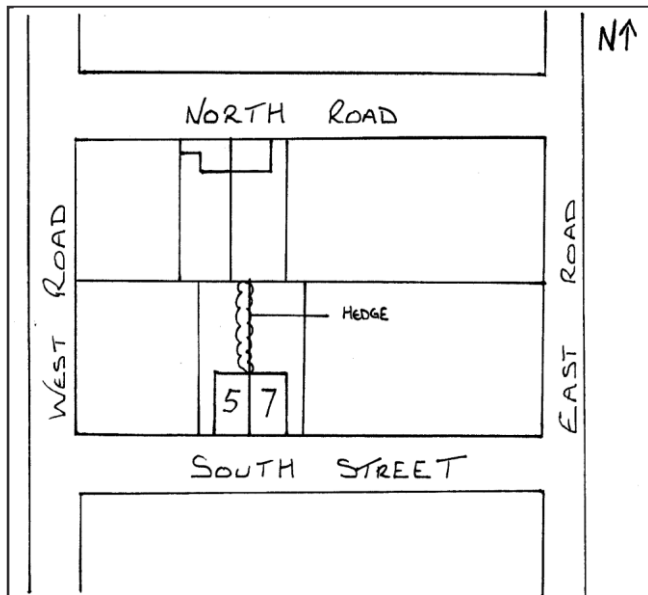
Nor can we consider things that are not directly about the hedge in question. For example, that other people keep their hedges trimmed to a lower height, or that the worry is making you ill – if this matter is causing such a problem, you should consult your GP.

Please also provide photos of the hedge and a plan showing the location of the hedge and surrounding properties.

When drawing your plan, please look at the example below and make sure that you:

Mark and name surrounding roads

- Sketch in buildings, including adjoining properties. Add house numbers or names
- Mark clearly the position of the hedge and how far it extends
- Mark which way north is



5. Previous application to the council

We only need to know about formal complaints, made under the high hedges part of the Anti-social Behaviour Act

2003. You don't need to tell us about telephone calls or other informal contact with the council about your hedge problem.

6. Permission to enter land

The council officer can only enter your land by invitation if you refuse or ask the officer to leave this could jeopardise your application.

7. Supporting documents

Please make sure you have ticked all the relevant boxes.

If you are sending in copies of documents, please can you list them by date and title (e.g. January 2025 – letter to neighbour). This will help us to check that we have got everything.

If you are submitting this form by email but will be posting supporting documents to us separately, put a reference or title on them (e.g. hedge complaint 12 High Street) so that we can match them up with your application.

