



## Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH)

### Neighbourhood Forum

Planning Enforcement  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

4 February 2021

Dear Sirs

**Complaint Ref: EN/2021/00038/TREE: Alleged removal of trees protected by TPO/01150**

Further to the complaint submitted by Gill Griggs on 1 February, more information regarding this matter has come to the attention of the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum. This indicates that the Council was served with a 5 day Notice to fell dead trees on this site in November 2020, and that the notice included trees forming part of a group TPO\*. It appears that the landowner has now felled trees, including TPO trees, on the basis that they were dead standing trees that represented an imminent danger to the public.

Following concerns raised by local residents about the tree felling, members of both the Neighbourhood Forum and the Knowle Society have visited the site and also reviewed recent aerial photography. There is no obvious indication of decay from an inspection of the tree stumps, although expert opinion is required.

With this in mind, and given similar previous issues regarding this site, the Neighbourhood Forum now requests that a formal investigation is undertaken into the loss of these trees, and that this is made public for transparency. This should include:

1. What action did the Council take in response to the 5 day notice, and when?
2. What evidence has been produced to verify that the protected trees were dead and an imminent danger?
3. The TPO was placed on the Lansdowne site relatively recently, in response to another incident of tree felling. Why were the lost trees included in this TPO if they were dead or showing signs of decay, which must have been evident at the time of making the TPO?
4. If the trees were dead and an imminent danger in November 2020, why has it taken so long for that danger to be removed?
5. What action the Council proposes to take, where necessary / appropriate.

As part of the Local Plan Review, the Council is now taking the lead role in bringing forward the Arden Triangle site as a comprehensive development. This includes the proposal to build an education complex on the Lansdowne site and adjoining property. Following discussions yesterday, it appears that the Council's lead officer for this site was not aware of the tree felling. This suggests that the individual landowners continue to act in their individual interests rather than working together. This is reinforced by concerns that one landowner is preparing to submit an early planning application on part of the site.

Actions such as the tree felling do nothing to instil confidence in the Council's plans for a comprehensive development of the area which respects and enhances the landscape.

\* "x8 trees, of which x3 are located where 'G2' of TPO 1150 is designated", per Enforcement Officer email



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Since it appears that lessons have not to have been learnt, nor processes reviewed and strengthened, since the last issue of tree felling, the Neighbourhood Forum now formally requests that:

- The valuable trees on the whole of the Arden Triangle site are made subject to a TPO. Our previous requests have been rejected. However, the Council should now have its own survey evidence (including the presence of important veteran trees) to support this request and, in view of the actions taken on one part of the site, there is a clear threat to the whole site. Unless important trees are protected, they can be removed at any time with insufficient time for the Council to act once action is being taken. The green framework is integral to any future development and must be protected.
- Any future 5 day notices to fell trees within the KDBH Neighbourhood Area are notified to the Forum as soon as they are received, thereby enabling us to follow up quickly and help verify any claims re condition etc.
- The Council provides the Forum with details of all trees with TPOs in the Neighbourhood Area, ideally including, if possible, a shapefile to incorporate this information into our GIS mapping.

The intent by these actions, recognising the demands on SMBC Planning Officers, is to empower the Neighbourhood Forum as knowledgeable 'feet on the ground' to support the Council in delivering a more effective and rapid response to such requests in the future.

In conclusion, both the Neighbourhood Forum and the Knowle Society regard this as a very serious matter requiring your urgent attention. We look forward to receiving a detailed response within 7 working days. Please note also that, for transparency with residents, we will be placing a copy of this letter and associated correspondence onto the Forum's website [kdbh-np.org](http://kdbh-np.org).

Yours faithfully

Jane Aykroyd  
Chair  
Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum