

Moorland Wildfire PSPO Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)?

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) are intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in an area that has a detrimental effect on the local community's quality of life by imposing restrictions on certain behaviours. The orders are designed so that we can all enjoy the use of public spaces safely.

A PSPO can last up to three years. The Council can – after further consultation – extend it for another three-year period. It would only do so if it is considered proportionate and necessary.

For further information about PSPOs in general, please see [Public Spaces Protection Orders \(PSPOs\) – Bolton Council](#)

2. When was the Moorland Wildfires PSPO introduced, and where do I find a copy?

The current PSPO was introduced on 21st August 2023. A copy of the current order can be found at: [wildfires](#)

3. What does the PSPO mean for people living in, or visiting, the area?

The PSPO prohibits (bans) activities within the boundaries of the PSPO which have been identified as carrying a significant risk of causing wildfires. This includes the lighting of fires, barbecues, fireworks, Chinese lanterns or using any article/object which causes a naked flame and poses a risk of fire.

4. What is the penalty for breaching the PSPO?

The primary purpose of the order is to prevent risky behaviours which could lead to uncontrolled wildfires from occurring through awareness, deterrence and responsible use of the moorland. It aims to mitigate wildfire risk by deterring prohibited behaviours through public awareness, signage, and early engagement rather than through the routine use of formal enforcement powers.

- A £100 fine on the spot, known as a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which must be paid within 14 days.
- A fine of up to £1,000 if the charge goes to court. Defendants may also face the prospect of added court costs, and if convicted, they will obtain a criminal record for the offence.

Over the 3 years that the current PSPO has been in place, no fixed penalty notices have been issued across the three local authority areas.

5. Can anybody appeal the PSPO?

Anyone who lives in, regularly works in, or visits the area can appeal a PSPO in the High Court within 6 weeks of it being created or extended.

6. Why are you consulting, and how do I give my views on the proposed extension of the PSPO?

The PSPO was introduced on 21st August 2023. According to the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 59, a PSPO can last up to three years at which point it needs to be extended, amended or allowed to expire.

To extend a PSPO, the local authority must be satisfied that:

- The problem behaviour is still happening or likely to continue; and
- It is persistent or continuing,
- Having a detrimental effect on quality of life,
- Unreasonable,
- Justifies the restrictions.

We are now seeking the views of residents, businesses and agencies in relation to a proposed extension of the current Wildfire PSPO.

As a local resident, land or property owner, someone who works in the area, or other interested party, it's very important that you give us your views.

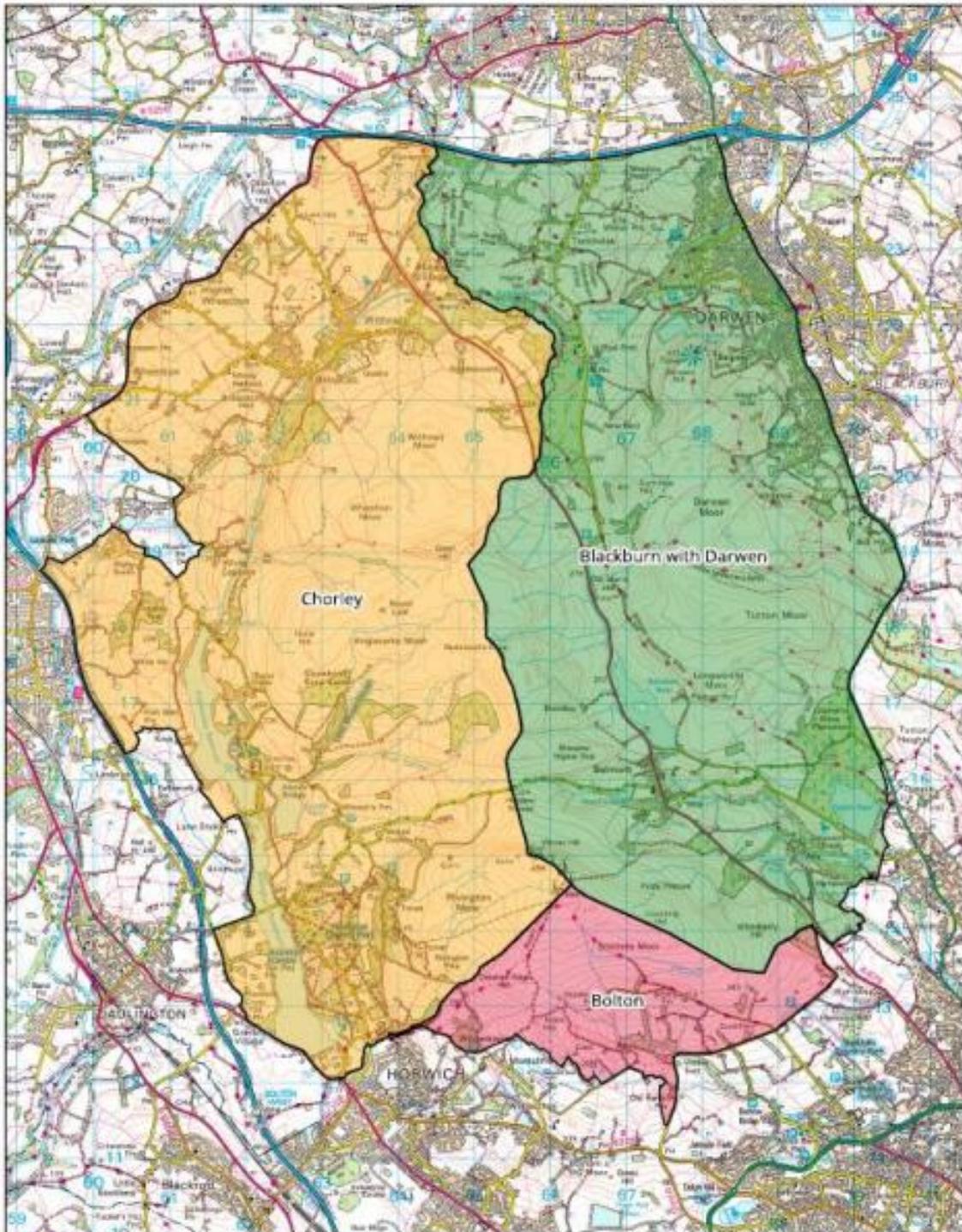
Following this consultation, the council will carefully consider the results before making the final decision as to whether the current order should be extended, and whether any amendments are required. As well as the consultation feedback, we will also be considering a range of other information to consider if extending the order is both appropriate and proportionate.

The consultation period runs from Monday 9th March to Monday 20th April 2026. All comments received during that time will be considered and used to inform the final decision.

If you would like to comment on the consultation, please refer to the current PSPO before giving your views on the proposed extension of the order and completing the questionnaire (available on the Bolton Council Active Consultation webpage www.bolton.gov.uk/consultations).

7. How do I know what area the PSPO covers?

A wildfire can rapidly burn across acres of moorland destroying everything in its path. When the order was introduced in 2023, it was important that any restrictions were applied across the wider moorland area. Bolton, Chorley and Blackburn with Darwen Councils therefore worked together to introduce a PSPO in each of their local authority areas which include the same restrictions. The below map shows the land covered by the restrictions under a PSPO across the three local authority areas. To find out more about the PSPO in place at Chorley and Blackburn with Darwen, please visit their respective websites.

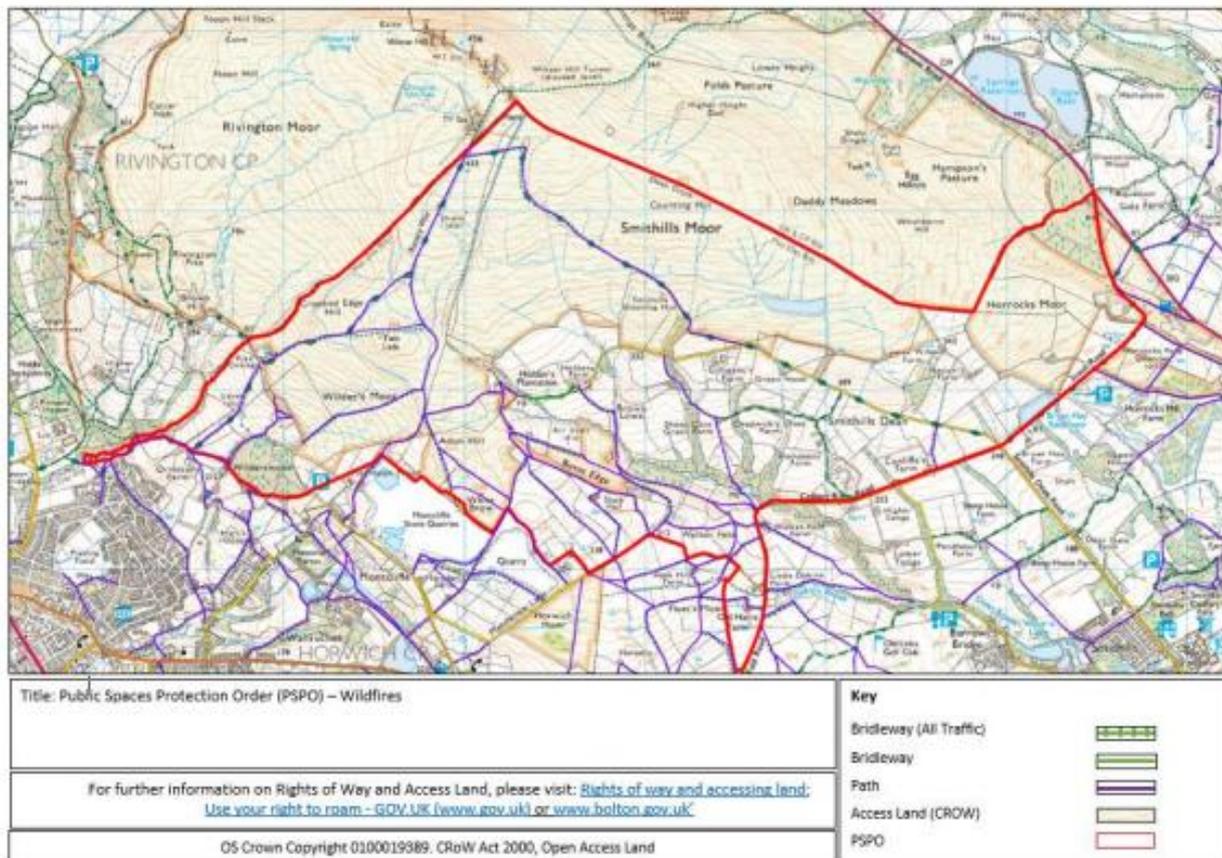


Approximate Scale = 1:63708
(when printed at A4)

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Boltons PSPO restricted area:



8. Can the PSPO be extended to cover all parks and woodlands across the borough?

The geographic area covered by the original order is based on incident data and in discussion with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) and wider partners. It is considered both proportionate and justified, as per the legislative requirements.

When the PSPO was introduced in 2023 it was not considered that the evidence acquired for the PSPO application, would sufficiently support the notion to extend restrictions to other parts of the borough, such as all parks or woodlands.

9. How do people who don't live in the area or visit frequently know about the PSPO and the restrictions in place?

Signage is located across the PSPO area which indicates to visitors that the restrictions are in place and the behaviour that is prohibited. Given the size of the area and the nature of the land, it is not possible to have signs everywhere and we ask that you visit our web page to check the maps if you are planning a trip to the area.

10. My property is within the PSPO area – what does this mean for me?

A PSPO does not cover land which is part of a dwelling; however, we would ask you to consider the impact of what you are doing within your property, behave appropriately and take precautionary action to prevent the risk of fire.

The Public Spaces Protection Order only applies to public spaces where the public or any section of the public has access to, whether this is by payment, by right or by express or implied permission.

11. Does the PSPO stop me from managing my land?

No. However, we would always ask that your actions are lawful and in consultation with the fire service, and that you have taken all of the necessary steps to be compliant. We also ask that you ensure you comply with any requirements put in place by the landowner as appropriate.

12. What do I do if I see somebody breaching the PSPO?

If you feel their actions are likely to cause a fire, damage land and / or put the community at risk **this is an emergency** so please ring 999.

If you simply want to report an issue or concern which doesn't require an emergency response, please contact the Council on 01204 336500 or email asbreporting@bolton.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the police on 101 (non-emergency number).

13. Who do I speak to, to find out more about the PSPO?

If you have any further questions about the proposed PSPO, or would like to speak to someone about PSPOs more generally, please email community.safety.services@bolton.gov.uk

14. How do I find out whether the Wildfires PSPO gets extended, replaced or allowed to expire?

Once a final decision has been made around the future of the PSPO, it will be published on the council website.