

Tree Risk Management Policy



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL



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1. Definitions

The Council Surrey County Council

The Policy Tree Risk Management Policy published June 2023

The Inspector An employee or agent of Surrey County Council deemed to have the requisite skill and experience to conduct a tree inspection.

2. Summary

The Council recognises trees and woodlands are an invaluable asset, contributing to the county landscape and wildlife value, as well as bringing environmental, social, economic, and health benefits to residents & visitors. The Tree Risk Management Policy sits within a Tree Management and Enhancement Framework that is designed to improve the quality, biodiversity and spread of tree coverage in Surrey in line with the climate and ecological emergencies as well as supporting nature recovery.

SCC Overarching Strategy & Policy Approach



The Tree Risk Management Policy (The Policy) defines Surrey County Council's (The Council) proactive approach to managing tree stock and the associated benefits and risks. It applies to trees under The Council's ownership and management. It also refers to those trees which are not in council ownership or management but could pose a safety risk to people or property in locations that are owned or managed by the Council.

Safety, biodiversity, nature recovery and visual amenity will all be taken into consideration when managing Surrey's trees. Where possible trees will not be felled where other measures such as signage and fencing of areas can be put in place, or other arboricultural intervention can occur for example, pruning, cable bracing, advanced decay detection, felling to monolith etc.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that "each year between 5 and 6 people in the UK are killed when trees or branches fall on them. Around 3 people are killed each year by trees in public spaces. Thus, the risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is extremely low (in the order of one in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use). However, the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident."

From both a general husbandry and legal perspective, trees require management, and the law does not aim to create a 'risk-free' environment, only one in which there is no material risk. The Council's approach to risk management is a balancing act between safety and conservation of its natural assets.

3. Scope

The Policy applies to all trees under management of The Council, including trees not in The Council's ownership which could pose a safety risk to people or property and where the Council is able to intervene.

We will review this policy every three years post publication, to ensure it remains current, or sooner in the event of legislative change, or important developments in case law. The Council's approach may differ from The Policy following developments in case law or amendments to primary legislation, whilst amendments to The Policy are in progress.

As an extraordinary and emerging issue, the widespread occurrence of Ash Dieback (ADB) within Surrey is not a business-as-usual issue. ADB in Surrey has impacted many areas, causing serious practical and financial impacts. To manage ADB effectively a collective, co-ordinated approach has been adopted. The tools developed for the purposes of this policy, which create a standardised approach would not be sufficient in isolation to address the large-scale issue of ADB in Surrey. Trees suffering from ADB are less predictable in nature and so require different prioritisation and a bespoke schedule of monitoring, based on the expertise of The Inspector. We will refer wherever

possible to the [ADB Toolkit published by The Tree Council](#). For the Surrey Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP) please see **Appendix 1**.

Where trees are not owned or managed by The Council, but The Council becomes aware of a safety risk, The relevant department will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk as much as practicably possible.

The Council's Tree Strategy for planting and Local Nature Recovery Programme will fall outside the scope of this policy although the licences provided by governing bodies for tree felling may influence or guide replanting plans. Once planted and established, these trees will be included within the scope of this policy and be subject to tree risk management and associated inspection regimes.

This policy focusses on the health and safety risks associated with trees. Sometimes, The Council may also decide to prune or remove trees due to other risks, such as insurance risk mitigation. These decisions fall outside the scope of this document.

4. Tree Risk Management Methodology

The methodology in The Policy sets out how The Council will conduct tree risk management within an acceptable risk framework given the health and safety risks associated with tree failure.

The Council has adopted risk assessment methodologies that consider the impact of failure relative to the likelihood of failure, whilst considering subjective risk factors in order to determine the appropriate response.

Where many trees across Surrey's countryside estate are under consideration, the concept of zoning by location is recognised as an important principle of hazard management and will be used by The Council. A minimum of two zones will be adopted, distinguishing between an area where there is a high use area, or more frequent public access to trees (schools, car parks) as against an area where trees are not subject to frequent public access. On the highway, zoning is determined by the speed and frequency of use of a road. Trees on Public Rights of Way are inspected on a reactive basis unless they are part of Surrey's countryside estate.

5. The Law

The legislation and supporting guidance which has been considered during the development of The Policy and supports The Council's approach to tree risk management and the duties of The Council under them are:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA 1974)
- Highways Act 1980 (HA 1980)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981)

- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984 (OLA 1957 & 1984)
- Environment Act 2021 (EA 2021)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERCA 2006)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW Regs 1999)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM Regs 2015)
- School Premises Regulations 2012 (SP Regs 2012)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (CHSR Regs 2010)

In complying with HA 1980, The Council has a statutory duty to assert and protect the public's rights to use any highway, including any public right of way. The Council has a power under HA 1980, to serve a section 154 notice, on owners of trees in third party ownership that pose a danger to; or obstruct users of the highway.

SP Regs 2012, requires that school premises (and the accommodation and facilities provided therein) must be maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. These regulations apply to schools maintained by local authorities in England (including pupil referral units).

EA 2021 strengthens the existing duty under NERCA 2006 on public authorities to conserve biodiversity and local authorities will need to report every 5 years on actions they have taken. In addition, the 2021 Act of the same name imposes a duty on Highway Authorities to consult over the removal of 'urban' roadside' trees, unless they present a safety risk, and are over 8cm in diameter (other exemptions may apply).

The Council's approach to tree risk management is considered consistent with the methodology outlined within the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) "[Common Sense Risk Management of Trees](#)" and the UK Roads Liaison Group, "[Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice October](#)". This supports a risk-based approach to trees based not only on the tree, but also its location and how that location is used.

6. Other Considerations

There are several policies and strategies developed by The Council that must also be taken into account when considering the risk management of trees;

- [Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan](#)
- [Health & Safety Strategy](#)
- Land Management Policy (in development – Due for publication late 2023)
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy (in development – Due for publication in 2023)

7. Council Managed Trees

Consistent with long-established health and safety principles, The Council apply a risk-calculated approach to planning & delivering inspections; as well as assigning & delivering works. The priority of inspections and works will consider many risk factors, including the tree location, the environment surrounding the tree, footfall/traffic within the vicinity, pests or diseases and the risk posed by the tree, for example the species characteristic, tree size, age and management history.

The Council's applied tree risk management framework adopts the following principles:

- The Council will deliver tree inspections by appropriately qualified inspectors or inspectors deemed by The Council to have relevant industry experience and qualifications. However, this policy recognises that there may be periods of staffing shortfall which may impact on the delivery of works in accordance with prescribed timescales.
- The Council will apply and implement appropriate remedial works for trees and other alternative management measures where there is a foreseeable risk of harm or damage. These will be within priorities determined according to the level of risk of tree failure along with the location of the tree, type, and frequency of traffic (both human & vehicular[®]) and the impact of a full or partial tree failure. Works are issued to our contractors based on the priority score to address the most significant defects. In exceptional circumstances, where funding is made available to address a specific issue on lower priority works, then this may be escalated for action.
- The tree inspector (The Inspector) will consider the intrinsic value of the subject tree or its parts, as an integral component of the decision-making sequence. Tree works will only be undertaken when all reasonable options for managing the area within falling distance of the tree have been explored or where public exclusion from the area is neither, legally possible, desirable nor practical. Where biodiversity and habitat have high value, a range of treatment options may be considered to retain maximum habitat balanced with the need for adequate safety.
- The Council may inform third party landowners of foreseeable hazards threatening users of the Council's property, and public highway, and implement measures necessary to protect users of The Council's areas of responsibility.
- The Council will have appropriate reporting procedures and contractual arrangements in place to respond to any tree related hazard, commensurate with the service's priority systems. However, in the event of contractual issues affecting service delivery, works will be prioritised, and alternative delivery mechanisms sought to ensure that any risk is minimised as far as possible.

- Where the cost of delivering the priorities outlined in this policy exceed allocated budgets, works shall be prioritised to ensure that any risk is minimised as far as possible. The Council will periodically review the prevailing risk from tree inspections delivered by the service, so resource allocation and informed budgetary decision making can be made.
- The Council will develop and maintain tree inspection records to show compliance with the policy.
- Tree management on tenanted land is determined by existing agreements, but where landlord's permission is required for tree works, this tree policy will apply.
- When determining whether a tree is on council-owned land, highways land and/or third-party land, the council shall refer to its own GIS records, the Definitive Map and Statement as well as the Highways Information Team database along with onsite boundary features and Land Registry.

8. Tree inspections and the risk Management decision-making processes

The Inspector may be a dedicated Arboriculturist, Countryside Estate or Countryside Access team member, Canal Ranger (currently employed by Hampshire County Council) or may hold other substantive roles. The Council may also engage external consultants, qualified in tree risk assessment.

Cyclical tree inspections are carried out on the Highway network (not public rights of way) by arboriculturists every 3 or 5 years, depending on the nature of each road. To provide flexibility for works planning, the programme allows for a two tier level inspection of priority (based on the Surrey priority network) to be completed later in the year than its last cyclical inspection. A consequence of this is that some trees may be inspected closer to (but not exceeding) 4 or 6 years, respectively.

More frequent inspections on Highways are carried out by Local Highways Officers. The Council will also respond to hazardous trees which have been identified by external stakeholders, including contractors, local authorities, and parish councils, along with members of the public. Although a tree inspection carried out by a non-arborist may not be as detailed as the inspection carried out by The Council's arboriculturists, the greater frequency of inspections is an important component of The Policy. Inspections on other land the Council owns will be determined by the zones they are located in or the type/nature of use or tree stock type (eg mature, aged/vetera) and will be annual, biennial or triennial in frequency.

In schools, childrens homes or care homes for the elderly or youth centres for example, where the risk is deemed higher, inspections will take place every two years.

Inspections are carried out in a systematic manner. During an inspection, The Inspector will carry out an initial visual check of the visible parts of the tree. This can either be on foot or from a vehicle, from a distance or up close. The Inspector will consider the risk and impact of a tree failure as well as access limitations when deciding how the visual check is carried out. The Inspector will determine if further investigation of the tree is needed, following this initial visual inspection.

Access to some trees can be limited due to, for example, dense undergrowth and ivy, shrub beds, topography, physical barriers, and other environmental risk factors. A reasonable effort will be made to overcome these issues; however, the council will not routinely remove all obstacles to inspection.

If there is any doubt about the nature and significance of any observed features during the visual inspection, (for example significant abnormalities or symptoms displayed within the tree), a more detailed investigation of that particular feature will be carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist

The Inspector will create a record of the tree where a defect or abnormality warrants intervention, or because of particular characteristics of the tree and/or its position, poses a risk.

This record could sometimes include a recommendation to undertake further investigation or remedial action. The recommendation will include a risk rating based on a balance of calculated risk, ecological considerations, access, and budget.

When all reasonable options for managing the area within falling distance of the tree have been explored or where public exclusion from the area is neither legally possible, desirable nor practical, remedial tree work will be necessary. Where biodiversity and habitat have high value, a range of treatment options may be appropriate to retain maximum habitat balanced with the need for adequate safety.

Tree survey and works reports will have as a minimum:

1. **Survey and surveyors' details** – Inspector's name, date, time, and location of the inspection to include, where known, indication of use.
2. **Tree Details** - Tree species, age range, dimensions.
3. **Characteristic/defects** – details of notable characteristics, abnormalities and/or defects.
4. **Works prescription** – a prescription of work(s) or actions necessary to abate the hazard posed by the physical defect or other negative physical or physiological influences caused by trees.
5. **Intervention period** – a suggested time for action to be taken.

9. Third party trees adjacent to the highway

Whilst The Council does not carry out routine detailed inspections of trees growing on third-party land, if during the exercise of its various duties, The Council becomes aware of a third-party tree which is deemed to present an undue risk to the highway, The Council may take proportionate action to meet its duty to assert and protect the public's rights to use the highway.

The safety of third-party trees remains the responsibility of the landowner and/or occupier and The Council may occasionally choose to write to the third party to offer advice on tree management, where an unacceptable risk exists. However, due to the extremely high numbers of trees involved, such action will only be taken in exceptional circumstances.

Where there is a critical risk to the highway, The Council may intervene, either by carrying out the requisite works and seeking to recover costs, or by serving a section 154 notice to require the occupier to carry out works.

10. Tree Failure

In the event of a catastrophic tree failure, an assigned officer will create an incident report to provide a record of the tree failure, to record details of the tree failure which may be needed in the case of court action and to enable understanding of why the tree has failed, so this can be included in our future management of trees and tree risk.

The Council will record details of any tree failure within its ownership that has resulted in damage or injury deemed to be serious by The Council and make this information available to the courts or insurers as soon as is practicably possible after a formal request. The incident report for a tree failure on land in high-risk areas owned by The Council will include photographs showing details of the tree failure. Where reasonably practicable and possible, failed parts of trees owned by The Council, will be retained and stored for submission into evidence upon request. The Council will use an incident report to manage any response to a damaged tree or where a tree has failed, on land owned by The Council.

The Council arboriculture experts, or delivery partners will use the details within any incident report received as well as onsite observations to assess damage. Outside of these circumstances, the response procedure will be proportionate to the individual circumstances and will be at the discretion of the managing group of The Council responsible for the tree(s) in question.

11. Relevant Information

11.1 Tree work standards

The Council will ensure that the standard of arboricultural works is carried out to the relevant British Standards.

11.2 Protected trees

Some trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), whilst some are protected by virtue of growing in a designated conservation area. These place legal controls on works that can be carried out to trees, although a number of exemptions do apply. In particular, the 2012 regulations specifically provide for an exception to cutting down protected trees that are causing a risk to public safety covered under regulation 14(c).

Both TPOs and conservation areas are administered by Borough or District authorities across Surrey. The Council will seek to ensure that it liaises with the relevant local planning authority, where practicably possible.

11.3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSI is the highest level of nature conservation protection afforded to any site in English law. It is an offence to cause or permit the intentional carrying out of an operation which damages any of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which a site of special scientific interest is of special interest.

The Council has an additional statutory duty to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's other functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the site is of special scientific interest.

Each SSSI has a list of protected features and activities which are damaging – these are published on the Natural England pages of the Government website.¹³ Tree surgery and felling is among the list of operations likely to damage most SSSIs. Unless the site has an agreed scheme of management (Such as a Woodland Management Plan) allowing site managers to undertake certain operations in an agreed manner, the consent of Natural England will be required before carrying out such an operation on a SSSI.

SSSI areas are shown on the council's Maps & Data GIS system, and on [DEFRA's MAGIC Mapping website](#).

11.4 Oak Processionary Moth Caterpillar (OPM)

The Council will broadly align its decision making and management options with the [Tree Council's published local authority toolkit](#). Arboricultural surveys will record OPM presence in Oak Trees, monitor and assess the risk to the public in determining whether OPM spray treatment or manual nest removal is

required and will be based upon the individual tree/ population of Oak onsite, site usage and other factors (e.g.nature conservation status, surrounding populations not within our control etc).

11.5 Important trees and trees with existing faults

There are some trees that hold certain cultural or historical significance or have either veteran or ancient status. These trees provide a multitude of ecosystem service benefits or have high ecological significance that need to be retained where reasonable and practicably possible. Where such trees exist and they have identified structural faults or 'defects' or are perceived to have risks associated with them, but on balance can be considered tolerable then these trees will be inspected annually and to a higher level than usual with all necessary follow up work undertaken, drawing on third party arboricultural expertise where necessary. This will be noted on any inspection report.

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1.Executive Summary

Ash Dieback (ADB) is considered the most significant disease to affect the UK's tree population since Dutch Elm Disease in the 1960's and 1970s'. ADB will cause the decline and likely death of a significant proportion of the total ash population, estimated at some two billion trees.

Surrey is the most wooded county in England, with approximately 24% canopy cover and has a significant number of ash trees in a multitude of settings, including woodlands, agricultural land and hedgerows. The ash species is an important cultural and economical tree within the county, with numerous towns and villages named after the ash, for example [Ash](#) and [Ashtead](#), which have been associated with the tree since 1086. Ash grows within a wide range of conditions, but is particularly prominent along the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment, where the soils are chalk based.

Trees in Surrey play a vital role in providing ecosystem service benefits such as carbon sequestration, improving air quality, reducing pollution, providing cooling benefits and contributing to soil health. Arboricultural surveys undertaken during 2022, indicate that approximately 30,000 Ash trees were showing symptoms of ADB on the Surrey County Council (The Council) Countryside Estate. The vast majority, if not all, of these are likely to need felling for public safety reasons. It is acknowledged the loss of ash from the countryside will have a significant impact on biodiversity and the interdependent species that rely on them. Change may not be apparent immediately, but would certainly be an issue within 10-20 years.

Table shows Invertebrate species at risk from Ash Dieback in the UK

Organism	Level of association					Total
	Obligate	High	Partial	Cosmopolitan	Uses	
Birds			7	5		12
Mammals			1	2	25	28
Bryophytes		6	30	10	12	58
Fungi	11	19	38			68
Lichens	4	13	231	294	6	548
Invertebrates	30	24	37	19	131	241
TOTAL	45	62	344	330	174	955

As many as 955 species as shown above are interdependent on Ash.

Source: Forestry Commission

It is estimated that ash accounts for approximately 20% of trees across the United Kingdom. As Surrey is the most wooded county in England, the exceptional issue of ADB is beyond The Council's business as usual tree management practices. ADB will undoubtedly cause a significant increase in risk, management pressures and resource requirement. In order to effectively manage the issue, The Council will need to maximise opportunities of grant funding, acquire additional resources and engage in partnership working wherever practicably possible.

The Council ADAP is modelled on the template provided within [The Tree Council Ash Dieback Toolkit](#). The Tree Council developed the toolkit to support Local Authorities to respond to the pressures brought on by Ash Dieback (ADB).

The Council will endeavour to proactively manage the issue of the declining ash population and the associated tree risk management, health and safety issues and potential reputational risks this brings, whilst also focusing on the recovery phase. The recovery phase should include assessing genetic tolerances within the population, retaining them where possible and where appropriate restocking with suitable alternative species that provide similar ecological benefits or identify alternatives which improve the biodiversity of each area¹ This work must be balanced with the need for protecting remaining trees and natural regeneration of the landscape. Our residents will notice the changes in landscape that ADB management will bring about and they will want to see us respond, manage the risks but also to ensure that we do all we can to repair the loss as soon as we possibly can. This is a challenging time for The Council, as well as many other organisations and private individuals. We endeavour to identify suitable funds and resources to rise to meet that challenge, seek to develop collaborative relationships and utilise partnership working for the best ecological outcomes with the resources we have but above all to ensure that we continue to serve our community as best we can. ADB will not just have a significant impact on The Council, but also many local landowners, land managers and private homeowners. We will endeavour to find the best approach to limit this wherever possible to achieve the most productive, efficient, and economic solution possible.

2. Ash Dieback Action Plan Aims and Objective

The purposes of the ADAP are:

- To proactively survey, record and monitor for the disease and its associated risks (tree failure or parts failing, deadwood etc.) within populations and act (deadwood removal, felling or further investigation) according to The Council Tree Risk Management Policy, where ash trees are considered a risk, or fall within a high-risk zone on the
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countryside estate- this could include areas such as public rights of way, bordering car parks or kiosks, or adjoining highways/railway lines, communication networks etc.

- To Identify actions that are a priority (based upon our tree risk management plan and 'P- priority' risk ratings for works priorities) because they pose a short-term, medium-major risk, (as to public safety), and those that pose a longer-term risk (as to the environment) and require long term planning and budgeting.
- To plan and consider for both woodlands and non-woodland trees, both a worst-case scenario, where over 90% of ashes die or are clearly dying within a ten-year period, and a less severe scenario, where about 50% of woodland or non-woodland ashes are affected and likely to die within the same period.
- Identify the likely costs (both in terms of The Council's finite resources and monetary cost) of responding to the disease, and thereby identify where extra resources will be needed. This could be in the form of tree removal works, replanting and aftercare/maintenance of planted or naturally regenerating areas.

3. Ash and Ash Dieback

3.1 What is Ash Dieback?

ADB is a serious disease of ash trees caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Formerly named *Chalara fraxinea*). The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback of European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) affected trees and can lead to the death of the tree, with associated risks such as deadwood, branch or whole tree failure.

3.2 Where is Ash Dieback?

Below is a map showing ADB distribution nationally. The information was taken from the Countryside Survey of 2007 and records the extent of ash based on percentage cover in Broadleaved woodland habitat parcels under 0.5 hectares in size.

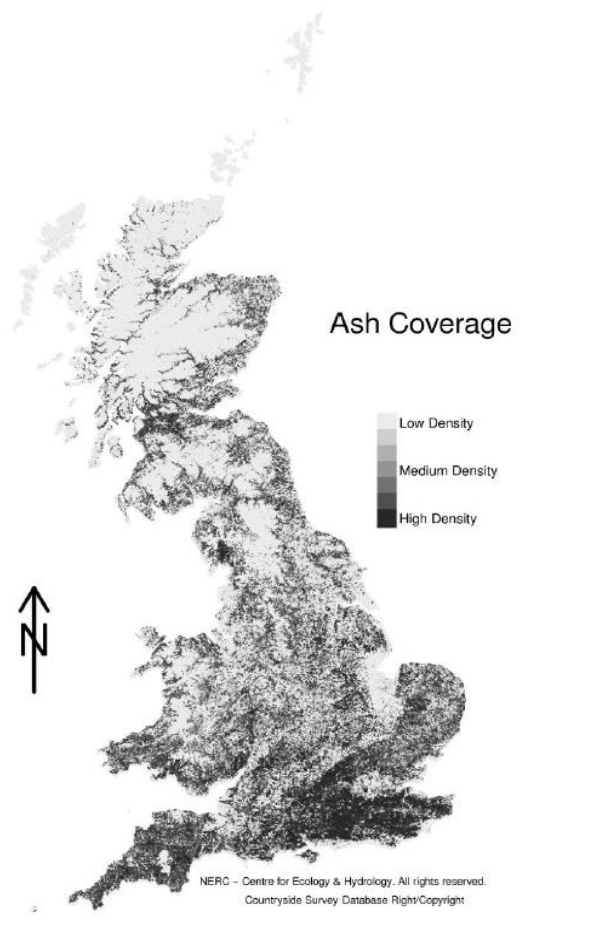
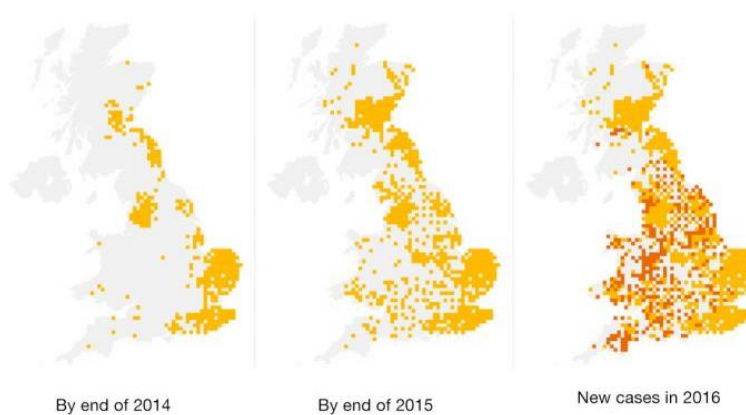


Figure 1: Map showing ash dieback distribution nationally

ADB is well established within all boroughs and districts of Surrey. The below distribution map shows the areas affected, with darker blue areas signifying 2012- 2016 first reports, and red areas 2017-2020.



**Figure 2: Ash dieback distribution and year of first recording.
(Source: Forestry Commission)**

Ash is considered the second most common tree species within the UK and is a significant component of woodland within Surrey.

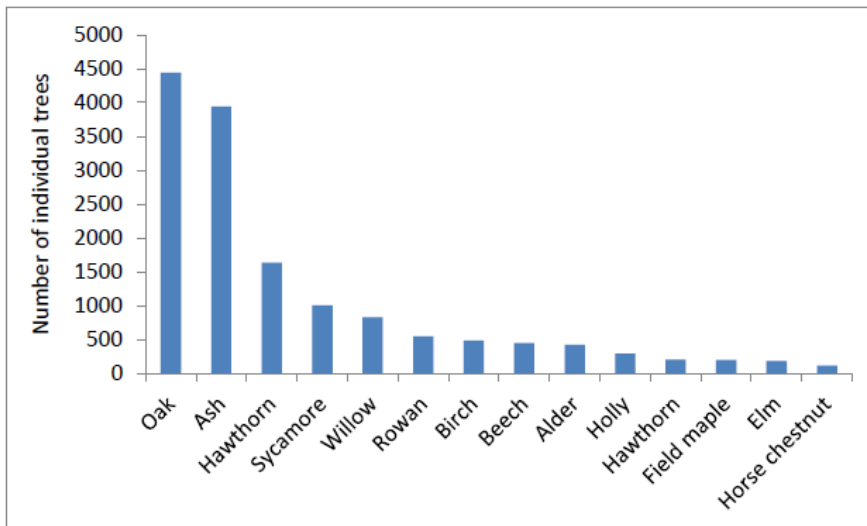


Figure 3: Graph showing ash as the second most common tree species in GB. Number of individual trees recorded in 1km trees in 2007 Countryside Survey.

3.3 Identifying Ash Trees and Ash Dieback in Surrey

The trees at greatest risk of ADB infection and decline across The Council's estate are within the managed countryside estate. This is due to the fact the trees are mature, often in high or medium risk areas with sites featuring high visitor numbers or footfalls and alongside major highways. The infected leaf material is not cleared away and hence reinfection often occurs, and the disease pressure is considered high (There is estimated to be up to half a million ash trees on the highway network in Surrey).

Ash trees on the built estate (Land and Property) tend to be less affected by ADB and show lower levels of decline as the infected leaf material tends to be cleared away and is disposed of offsite- this good hygiene has led to some ash lasting longer before succumbing to the disease. Currently there are approximately <1000 ash trees recorded on the built estate- When a severely affected Ash tree within a fire station, youth centre, children's home or other high-risk setting is recorded The Council will normally take action to remove the tree and associated risk, - where possible trees affected in a minor way are monitored on an annual programme or other work is carried out to manage the decline (eg. Deadwood removal or inspecting for canopy condition in July-September the following year).

3.4 Trees within designated areas of nature conservancy (SSSI's, SAC's)

Where significant ash dieback removal work is required on safety grounds within Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI's) or Special areas of conservation (SAC's) then Natural England is informed of the work and their consent required.

In some circumstances trees do not have to be wholly felled to ground level and can be reduced to ecotomes (standing hulks of 2-8m in final height) for nature conservation reasons. Ecotomes or monoliths retain potential habitat for bats, invertebrates and birds therefore it may be advised to leave wood onsite as habitat piles.

On SSSI's and SAC's it may be through monitoring of trees that potentially genetic resistant trees are identified and safeguarded and hence slow down the pace of landscape-wide change, reduce impacts on biodiversity and associated/interdependent species that rely on Ash. These trees may also become a seed source for the future.

Surrey Wildlife Trust manage conservation on The Council's Countryside Estate, but [they also take a view on ADB on land they manage or own directly](#).

The Council maintained schools are surveyed on a biennial basis. ADB is recorded and appropriate work recommended to the school, who budget for the work accordingly. Schools are considered high risk environments due to their nature and use and therefore it may be necessary to remove ADB affected trees earlier in their phase of decline than usual.

If trees on the Countryside Estate and any other operational land, become severely affected with ADB then there is a risk of branch and whole tree failure (via secondary pathogens/basal decay) to users of highly used car parks, outdoor recreational spaces, public buildings, and some Public Rights of Ways promoted by The Council. There is a system of tree inspection and risk zoning in place for all trees on land owned by The Council to ensure declining trees are recorded and removed, other works prescribed, or monitored for disease progression as per the [Tree Council guidance](#).

ADB is considered a substantial risk to The Council, particularly from a health and safety perspective and having to manage the risks from deadwood, crown failure and failing trees affecting persons or property, and ensuring it discharges its statutory duty of care within tree risk management duties owed to the public.

3.5 Recognising the symptoms

ADB manifests in a variety of symptoms and can affect young/semi mature trees, but also [mature ash](#):

- Whole dead trees or trees with significant canopy dieback with abnormal clusters of twigs resulting from re-growth in a 'candelabra' like fashion;
- Visibly wilting leaves visible in summer
- Diamond shaped lesions or brown discoloured stem/branch wounds and sometimes at the base of trees
- Dieback of the foliage which can become dry and blackened, often shrivelling
- Small white fruiting bodies growing on ash leaf stalks, often on the leaf litter in autumn.



Figure 4: Illustrating the range of Ash dieback symptoms (Source: The Tree Council)



Figure 5: Characteristic canopy dieback and 'sparseness' of a tree with ADB, this is considered 50-75% canopy dieback and is serious. (Source: Jon Stokes, The Tree Council)



Figure 6: Characteristic basal lesion on base of stem, these form as diamond shaped on branches or stems. (Source: Jo Clark, Future Trees Trust)



Images from left: © Rob Wolton, Jon Stokes

**Figure 7: Dramatic change in canopy vitality over one season
(Source: Rob Wolton, Jon Stokes, The Tree Council)**



© Jon Stokes

**Figure 8: Fungal fruiting bodies on leaf rachis
(Source: Jon Stokes, The Tree Council)**

4. Benefits of Trees and Woodlands

Ash is an important component of woodland in Surrey and accounts for approximately 20-30% of all trees. It is our most common and widespread tree. The National Trust have estimated that the disease has the potential to kill or seriously damage up to 95% of ash trees over the next 10 to 15 years. This will have a major impact on Surrey's diverse landscape character, the associated wildlife these trees support, and the other ecosystem services that trees provide such as, but not limited to:

- Air filtration and pollution capture
- Carbon sequestration

- Visual screening/buffering
- Stormwater/flood reduction
- Provision of Shade
- Protecting soils from erosion
- Economic value of wood
- Cultural/social/historical relevance of ash

5. General management advice

5.1 Tree Risk Management

In general, ADB presents a significant tree risk management issue, however The Council must deal with it as part of the responsibility of a County Authority and landowner under Health and Safety at Work act 1974 and Occupiers' Liability acts of 1957 or 1984. Tree owners have a legal duty of care and must maintain their trees in a reasonably safe condition. Surrey County Council is only responsible for trees growing on council owned or managed property, including highway verges defined as publicly maintainable highway.

For general information on tree risk management, not just ADB related risks, The Council will refer to the [National Tree Safety Group guidance](#).

The Council has produced a Tree Risk Management Policy, which can be used to establish the priority rating and best practice for management of tree risk, including ADB.

Ash trees affected by ash dieback but subject to a TPO (Tree Preservation Order) and where an application to fell has been considered by a borough/district council will tend to be judged on its individual merits such as maturity of the tree, amenity value and situation, the presence of the disease is not necessarily a significant consideration in determining the application to fell or prune. Some ash trees that are pruned produce young regrowth which is more susceptible to the disease, so may be counterproductive.

It should be noted however that with the severity and spread of the disease increasing particularly within the last 5yrs some local authority tree officers may be hesitant in applying TPO's to ash trees marginally or significantly affected by the disease especially as the tree may succumb and require felling, also a TPO is a legal charge on a land register. It is recommended that a decision be deferred until nearing the end of the 8 week period, then an up to date assessment of the tree and its condition can be made, particularly if in the summer period.

In the event that an LPA receives a 5 Day Notification (dead/dangerous exemption) is received for infected ash trees, it must be stated that infection of a tree does not necessarily mean that it is inherently dead or dangerous. It is likely that such notifications will require additional scrutiny, and where the

works are deemed inappropriate, advice given that a full TPO application/211 (Conservation Area) Notification to the local authority be required.

Requests for work under The Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 should be assessed on a tree by tree basis and an assessment of the risk. Whilst a local authority may have the duty to investigate whether the tree poses a risk, they do not have a duty to act and the presence of ash dieback disease does not change this.

5.2 Local landowners, land managers and homeowners

ADB will not only be felt by The Council, but also by many other communities and organisations that manage or own land in Surrey, for example, parish councils, private landowners, farmers, utility companies, Highways England and Network Rail (who both own a significant amount of infrastructure affected by trees).

The Council can signpost private landowners and members of the public to advice on ADB management, but ultimately persons in this group that own or manage such trees are responsible for them. The Council, where directed to (or as part of its planned surveys) by Network Rail, will remove ash in high-risk areas. Utility companies (and Network Rail) have statutory undertaking powers to remove at risk trees or to serve legal notices upon us or private landowners to safeguard their infrastructure.

5.3 Public Rights of Way

Trees alongside a public right of way are the responsibility of the landowner. Public rights of way are public highways and when carrying out any works adjacent to, or on a public right of way, landowners and contractors must always ensure the safety of public users.

Works should be planned in such a way as to keep disturbance and interruption to a minimum. If this is not possible to keep the route open safely then an official closure may be necessary. Please see the [Countryside Access page](#) on our website for details. Any closure must meet the legal test necessary and be applied for well in advance. It may be possible to waiver the fee for a 5-day closure; however, fees will apply for longer closures.

The Council appreciates the need to remove affected ash trees, however it will be the landowner's responsibility to make good any damage to the surface of the right of way, and this should be to the same or higher standard than before works were undertaken.

6. Impacts of Ash Dieback

6.1 Tree risk management and public safety

Tree risk management is the most important factor in assessing the impacts of ash dieback. The below table shows where this fits in with other management objectives.

Factor	Detail
Tree risk and safety	Tree risk and safety of the general public, tenants, users of its site and all those contracted to work on our land and trees are of high importance and is central to decision making. Ash considered dead, or severely impaired by the disease (disease class 3-4 50-75% dieback) would be added to high priority felling schedules, while those trees less affected will be inspected annually, or biennially as deemed necessary
Biodiversity	If tree risk has been assessed and considered tolerable it may be possible to leave, monitor, or reduce trees to standing ecotomes for biodiversity reasons, it also allows for future assessment of genetic tolerance.
Tree ecosystem services	We balance the risk of the disease within trees and a population with the various ecosystem service benefits they provide, for example air filtration, shade, screening, storm water attenuation, cooling effects.
Landscape character and amenity	Surrey is the most densely wooded county in England and the county has some unique landscape characteristics formed by trees. Consideration of all these factors will be given where tree safety has been met.

6.2 Landscape and biodiversity

From a biodiversity perspective, ash is an important component of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, which is considered a [biodiversity action plan habitat](#) often with elements of ancient, or ancient semi natural woodland.

Ash is one of the most common trees within woodlands, hedgerows, parks and gardens throughout the UK. It is anticipated since the discovery of ADB in the UK in 2012 that it may lead to the widespread death of ash trees and that the impact will be high/negative, leading to a significant impact on populations of plant and animal species that are interdependent on ash for feeding, breeding or as habitat (for example, lichens, bryophytes, fungi or other phytophagous species).

Areas we will focus on include:

- air quality
- flood management
- noise and visual impact
- habitat conservation and development
- Carbon
- Pollinators

A total of 1,058 species are reported as being associated with ash: 12 birds, 55 mammals, 78 vascular plants, 58 bryophytes, 68 fungi, 239 invertebrates, and 548 lichens. Of the 55 mammals, 28 use the ash trees and the remainder use the ash woodland habitat; the vascular plants use the ash woodland habitat rather than the trees themselves.

6.3 Local landowners, land managers and homeowners

Ash loss within the landscape context will be significant for Surrey, especially in [Special Areas of Conservation \(SAC\)](#) such as the Brockham Hills, Box Hill or Reigate Hill areas² feature up to 60% lowland deciduous woodland, of which a significant component of the canopy is ash. The loss of mature ash within these areas will signify landscape wide changes and change the character of the woodland landscape.

The loss of ash from The Council's countryside estate may have an effect in the reduction and buffering of air pollution adjoining major roads, there is also the potential for an increase in flooding events and severity due to the lack of mature ash to capture and intercept rainwater on woodland/highway interfaces.

The removal of ash may also allow for sound to travel further through the landscape, particularly as highway edge trees are removed, this will mean potential for increased noise levels in certain areas as the natural buffer is lost.

Finally, the removal of ash from the countryside estate will undoubtedly lead to loss and/or release of carbon in the form of sequestered carbon within the woody structure of the tree itself. All these factors will need to be accounted for within future revisions of the woodland management plans for each countryside estate site, in addition to recognising the risk this disease poses in the context of woodland management and the lowered timber value.

The Council will explore avenues to extract and utilise the ash timber in a variety of ways including utilising it at the Norbury Park sawmill for firewood, transport for biomass fuel or other possible uses. This is largely dictated by the forestry contractor and timber market dependencies.

It should be stated that majority of ADB affected timber is of low quality (often because of decayed basal regions or structurally altered wood) and has therefore, limited uses and a lower market value. There will be opportunities to leave wood in situ for biodiversity reasons and to enhance the conservation value of a site for reptiles/amphibians, saproxylic insects or fungi.

The Council will endeavour to replant sites where required by the Forestry Commission as part of a restocking condition or will rely on natural regeneration to colonise felled areas.

7. Impact of Ash dieback on The Council

The Council has identified the risk posed by ADB and has added it to the Environment, Transport, and Infrastructure Directorate's Risk Register.

It is acknowledged within The Council's Tree Risk Management Policy that the disease poses a risk to public safety and that intervention via a risk-based approach is necessary. Furthermore, a proactive approach to record and monitor the disease on land owned by The Council is required.

7.1 Health and safety

- Potential for death or injury as a result of ADB related accidents.
- Increased health and safety issues due to risk of deadwood falling, branch failure and whole tree failure due to declining ash trees on, countryside estate, Operational buildings such as fire stations, youth centres, care homes, schools or other educational establishments, highways (including public rights of way).
- Risks to statutory county council functions or service delivery such as retaining safe schools, public open spaces or highways, operation of sites as detailed above.
- Offsite private or third-party tree failure and associated risks to staff, contractors and members of public utilising our owned and managed sites.
- General risks from falling ash to infrastructure such as high value buildings, electrical/gas equipment, fencing.
- The cycle of annual/seasonal inspection and felling programme will continue until the majority of diseased stock of ash in high risk or medium risk locations has been infected and removed and the main

impact of the disease is deemed to have been controlled. It is uncertain how long this will take, but could be between 5-10yrs.

7.2 Economic

- Increased liabilities in cases of death or injury as a result of ADB related incidents.
- Inadequate staffing levels to survey and detect the disease across significant landholding in a large county with 11 boroughs and districts- or the significant amount of arboricultural work required resulting significant budget pressures.
- Increasing prices as a result of market competition for a limited pool of skilled arboricultural contractors.
- Increased expenditure from direct and indirect costs as a result of ADB - for example traffic management, requirement for specialist equipment such as MEWPs (Mobile Elevated Platforms) or mechanised felling.
- Likely additional costs of the disposal of waste products from felled, diseased ash.
- Increased direct/indirect costs due to increased flood risk due to the loss of potential storm water attenuating ash trees, perhaps resulting in localised incidents of flooding.
- Significant costs of replanting and aftercare needed to retain multiple ecosystem services provided by ash, for example, flood/stormwater attenuation, urban shading, carbon sequestration and habitat for biodiversity.
- Costs associated with identifying and protecting naturally regenerating areas on countryside estate.
- Increased liabilities due to potential failure of diseased trees from private or 'third party' affecting the councils landholding and operational buildings.
- Drop and significant fluctuations in market value for ash wood products due to an excess of ash on the market coupled with current market volatility. This means there is a degree of uncertainty over timber value and therefore increased difficulties in recouping felling costs.

7.3 Reputational

- Potential for disruption to the normal operation of the highway due to increased ash tree failure and resultant clear up and road closures to deal with risk trees.

- Political and reputational risks due to negative press over ash dieback and general tree risk management and public outrage and/or anxiety. Increasingly in the social media age it is easy for individuals/groups to publicise and interpret tree work as negative and potentially spread misleading information.
- There is the potential for working relationships to become strained with landowners, conservation organisations, borough, district councils and parish councils their elected members or even members of the public particularly if third party notices are served on individuals or landowners where ash dieback is believed to pose a risk.

7.4 Environmental

- Significant landscape wide changes with potential knock-on impacts on tourism activities, visitor numbers and recreational opportunities- this could be due to loss of woodland character, loss of ancient or heritage trees or drastic landscape change.
- Losses to the ecosystem services ash trees provide, such as reductions in air quality, potential for increase/severity of flood events through lack of stormwater attenuation, biodiversity losses- loss of species interdependent on ash, increases in noise levels adjacent to roads, losses of visual screening and loss of visual receptors at key viewpoints, particularly in locations famed for their views in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Risks to protected species and designated sites through significant alteration of habitat structure, stability and composition, for example loss of bird breeding and feeding sites or bat roosting habitat.
- Losses of carbon stores and sequestration mechanisms.

8. Financial and operational issues in dealing with the impacts of ash dieback

It is estimated that the CAVAT (tree Capital asset value) value of the ash population on the built estate is approximately £350,000-£400,000. Over the next 10 years it is predicted that The Council will lose up to 50% of these trees due to ADB, at an estimated cost of £200,000 in CAVAT value amenity loss. The data is incomplete, but this is a conservative estimate. There are no figures for the total ash population on the countryside estate or the highway

network and it is recommended that a concerted effort is made to calculate the approximate cost to The Council in dealing with dead, dying or at-risk ash population in all areas of its landholding.

There is a high degree of uncertainty over the actual financial cost to The Council in dealing with declining and high-risk ash on all its landholdings (including highways). An ADB removal programme on the built estate (Land and Property) is projected to be at least £430,000 to deal with ash if there is 100% decline within the next 2-3 year period. It should be noted the cost is likely to be much higher than this to factor in rising economic costs within the arboricultural/forestry sector and the hire of specialist contractors to safely and effectively remove diseased or high-risk trees.

The Council will have to significantly increase its spending and resource allocation to both detect and subsequently deal with ADB across its various landholding portfolios. The tree inspection programme will be affected due to individual/groups of ash deemed at risk having to be inspected on ad hoc basis out of the usual biennial/triennial cyclical inspection (typically in mid-late summer) to check for obvious canopy dieback symptoms- this additional monitoring programme places increased strain on arboricultural inspector resource and of course adds to the work programme for the autumn/winter season (outside of bird nesting season) but also leads to the requirement to fell ash trees during sub optimal times (e.g. late spring/early summer) if trees are considered dead and high risk (e.g. Class 3 with 50%–26% remaining canopy or Class 4 - 25%–0% remaining canopy according to the pictorial guide).

9. The Delivery Plan

9.1 The Ash Dieback Action Plan – Countryside Estate

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
1	Communication	All sectors, including plan delivery bodies, general public, farmers and other land managers, garden centres,	Develop and deliver a communications plan to promote engagement by those bodies asked to help lead delivery of this plan. Provide information and guidance to farmers, foresters, woodland	High	Low	Local Resilience Forum

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
		agricultural suppliers	owners, other landowners and managers, tree professionals (especially those not in professional associations), government and agency staff, colleges, the general population		Medium	
2	Countryside Estate – Arboricultural surveys	CY Operations Team Arboricultural Team	<p>Primary surveys to be undertaken on all CY Estate sites to assess and identify main areas of ash (complete)</p> <p>Detailed arboricultural surveys of main areas of ash undertaken, tree risks assessed and felling actions/plans recommended (complete)</p> <p>Produce CY Estate ADB survey summary, identifying site-based RAG status priorities (complete)</p> <p>Annual reviews undertaken of surveys, to reflect progression of disease and changing risks. Felling programmes to be altered as necessary</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>CY Estate Ops Manager</p> <p>Arb & GM Ops Team Leader</p> <p>CY Estate Ops Manager</p> <p>Arb & GM Ops Team Leader</p>
3	Countryside Estate - Ecological surveys	CY Est Operations Team Surrey Wildlife Trust	Undertake appropriate ecological surveys	High	Medium	CY Estate Ops Manager
4	Countryside Estate – Felling plan consents	CY Est Operations Team Natural England	Secure felling licences and NE consents for felling plans	High	Low	CY Estate Ops Manager

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
		Forestry Commission				
5	Countryside Estate – Felling plans	CY Est Operations Team Arboricultural Team Contractors Forestry Commission Natural England Surrey Wildlife Trust	Produce and deliver ADB felling plans for CY Estate sites. 28 sites identified in total. Highest priority sites (Red) to be undertaken first (3 sites) followed by Medium (Amber) and Low (Green).	High High	High High c. £2m	CY Estate Ops Manager CY Estate Ops Manager

* Low <£10K, Medium £10K - £100K, High > £100K

9.2 The Ash Dieback Action Plan – Highways

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
1	Communication	All sectors, including plan delivery bodies, general public, land managers and highway users	Feed into the development of the communications plan developed by the Local Resilience Forum Advertisement of road closures via the Traffic Regulation Order process	High High	Low	Highways Arboriculture Team Manager
2	Proactive road network survey	Highway users, internal highway maintenance colleagues	Surrey Priority Network (SPN) 1,2&3 routes inspected on a 3 yearly basis, identifying P4 and P5 individual trees and groups of trees <10 to be felled within agreed timescales.	High High	Medium	Highways Arboriculture Team Manager

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
			<p>SPN 4 & 5 routes inspected on a 5 yearly basis, identifying P4 and P5 individual trees and groups of trees <10 to be felled within agreed timescales.</p> <p>(P4 & p5 priority relate to agreed Highway Arboriculture priorities)</p>			
3	Annual ash dieback survey programme	Highway users, internal highway maintenance colleagues	<p>Driven survey carried out during the growing season to identify and monitor groups (10+) of ash trees showing signs of ash dieback.</p> <p>A risk assessment shall be carried out for each group based on the extent of decline, the size of the group and the SPN category of the highway.</p> <p>Works are allocated by priority according to the annual ash dieback budget allowance.</p>	High	Medium	Highways Arboriculture Team Manager
4	Third party trees	Third party landowners Residents	<p>Wherever possible, alert third party owners to high priority defective ash trees that present a significant threat to the highway network.</p> <p>Where necessary serve notice under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980</p>	High High	Low	Highways Arboriculture Team Manager

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
			to require the removal of dangerous trees.			
5	Contract management	Arboricultural contractors	Collation and prioritisation of annual ash dieback survey results. Allocation into individual lots based on geographic proximity and volume of work. Tender process and contract management. Works to be completed over the winter months.	High High	High	Highways Arboriculture Team Manager

9.3 The Ash Dieback Action Plan – Land & Property ‘Built Estate’

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
1	Communication	General public, farmers, landowners SCC tenants, Elected members, Councillors. For restocking potential communicate with tree nursery stock managers/agri suppliers. NC Tree Planting Team, Forestry Commission	Develop and deliver a communications plan to promote engagement by those bodies asked to help lead delivery of this plan. Provide or signpost to information and guidance to landowners, farmers, foresters, woodland owners/managers, other landowners and managers, tree care professionals, government and NGO's.	Medium Medium	Low Low	Arb Ops Team Leader with input from wider Natural Capital Group Team Arb Ops Team Leader with input from NC Senior Woodland Management

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
						Officer and wider NC Tree Planting Team
2	Land and Property/ Countryside Estate Arboricultural Surveys	<p>Arb & GM Ops Team Leader</p> <p>Land and Property land management officers/Senior Managers, Rural Estate Surveyor</p> <p>General public, Tenants, Farmers, Landowners, Elected Members, Councillors.</p>	<p>Land and Property arboricultural surveys to be undertaken by Natural Capital Group Arboriculturists. Information to be disseminated to relevant persons such as Rural Estate Surveyor, L & P Senior managers with interest in land management.</p> <p>Primary surveys to be undertaken on all CY Estate sites to assess and identify main areas of Ash in high/medium risk zones (complete). Countryside Access assistants to assess/triage ash dieback on low risk zones as necessary or report tree risk concerns they have in high/medium zones on BAU or 'day to day' basis.</p> <p>Detailed arboricultural surveys of main areas of ash undertaken, tree risks assessed and felling actions/plans recommended.</p> <p>For future years Ash dieback removal on the Countryside Estate Produce CY Estate ADB survey summary, identifying site-based</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low-Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>CY Estate Ops Manager/ Arb Ops Team Leader</p> <p>Arb Ops Team Leader, Countryside Access Assistants</p> <p>CY Estate Ops Manager in collaboration with arb team</p> <p>Arb Ops Team Leader</p> <p>Arb Ops Team Leader</p>

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
			<p>RAG status priorities, identifying any P1-P2 works as a priority.</p> <p>Annual or biennial site and tree population surveys undertaken, to reflect progression of disease and changing risks (Ash dieback monitoring programme, identify dead, dying or at risk groups and scope to identify disease resistance and monitor). Felling programmes to be altered as necessary.</p>			
3	Land and Property - Ecological Surveys	Arb & GM Ops Team Leader Surrey Wildlife Trust or in house Ecologist for Ecology services (Survey and reporting/advice)	Undertake appropriate ecological surveys (Spring/Summer 2023-2024 prior to felling).	High	Low-Medium	Arb Ops Team Leader to initiate, collaboration with NC Ecologist or SWT as appropriate.
4	Land and Property – Felling licences/consents	Arb & GM Ops Team Leader Natural England (if SSSI or bordering) Forestry Commission	Secure felling licences and NE consents for felling plans (Winter 2023/24)	High	Low	Arb Ops Team Leader
5	Land and Property ash dieback and tree risk	Arb & GM Ops Team Leader	Produce and deliver ADB felling plans for selected Land and Property Sites on risk based approach.	High	High High	Arb Ops Team Leader

#	Topic	Key stakeholders	Actions	Priority	Cost*	Lead
	management felling programme	SCC Land and Property Forestry Commission Natural England Surrey Wildlife Trust	Highest priority sites (Red) undertaken Winter 2023/24 (5-8x sites estimated) followed by Medium (Amber) and Low (Green). It should be noted that RAG status can change following re-survey or sites or risk zones within and upgraded accordingly if ash dieback is severe or new tree defects discovered.	High	Estimate £500,000	Arb Ops Team Leader

*Cost= Low <£10K, Medium £10K - £100K, High > £100K

9.4 Site programme plans

For all programmes of ADB removal, a detailed programme plan, stakeholder management strategy and Threats assessment methodology will be implemented by The Council. The plans will also include, wherever practicably possible, baseline ash tree surveys and tree safety audit data for the trees affected, or arboricultural professional opinion/advice backed up by industry best practice.

28 sites on The Council's countryside estate were identified as requiring ADB felling plans to be delivered. Of these 28 sites, 10 were classified as High priority sites (Red). Work on three of the High Priority sites (Hill Park, Sheepleas and Worplesdon Commons), will be undertaken in 2022/23. Plans are in progress for work on other sites to be undertaken during the following winters. These will be undertaken in a priority order, prioritised according to their degree of risk.

9.5 Public communications and engagement

The Council has prepared a [communications plan](#) that highlights how it intends to deal with ADB and how this is communicated in simplified, easy to understand terms to the general public and stakeholders. The ADB communications plan explains how The Council will deal with ADB communications through the following channels:

- On-Site Signage
- Website
- Social Media
- Press Release
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Downloadable content

9.6 Communication priorities

Any individual programme plan for ADB management or removal will cover communications with all relevant stakeholders and will be dealt with according to the following hierarchy:

Level of priority	Stakeholders
Priority 1 communications	These stakeholders are highly influential to the success of the plan. These include senior management, local Politicians, budget holders. They may be unaware of ash dieback. Focused and timely communications are required.
Priority 2 communications	Other staff within the organisation and staff in partner organisations. These stakeholders need to understand about ash dieback but are likely to require less frequent communications.
Priority 3 communication	The wider public. This group need clear communication about Ash Dieback, about the Plan, about the response to Ash dieback and details of how Ash dieback may impact upon them.

9.7 Stakeholder analysis

A high-level stakeholder analysis has identified the following key stakeholders, who will be most affected by ADB and most integral to The Council's ADB management. These stakeholder have been grouped into three categories.

<p style="text-align: center;">Key Influencers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected members/Councillors • Surrey’s 11 borough and district councils and their respective councillors • DEFRA • FERA • Forestry Commission • Natural England • Network Rail • The Tree Council • Utility companies
<p style="text-align: center;">Internal Stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arboricultural and land managers • Surrey Highways Arboriculture Team • Natural Capital Land Services Team • Visitor Services Team • Countryside Estates Team • Countryside Access Team • Greener Futures Team • Land and Property
<p style="text-align: center;">External Stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General population of Surrey (utilise Surrey’s landscape, countryside estate, transport infrastructure and public rights of way network) • Landowners with significant ash stocks • Woodland managers with significant ash stocks • Nature recording bodies/conservation charities- ash dieback affecting habitat/species populations and their survey • Forestry and arboricultural contractors • Parish Councils • Church/Diocese landholders • Surrey County Council managed educational establishments

10.Ash Dieback Recovery Plan

The Council will cease the planting of this species on its landholdings until such time a suitable species or variety/clone can be introduced that is recommended as genetically resilient (akin to Elms with Dutch Elm Disease resistance), this of course will have a major impact on the future planting programmes as it limits the diversity of species that can be planted within our woodlands and amenity landscapes.

The ADB Recovery Plan will form part of the [Climate Change Delivery Plan](#) and [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), which has set a target to plant 1,200,000 trees before 31 March 2031. This is referred to in [The Council's Tree Strategy](#).

An overarching ADB Recovery Plan will be implemented by The Council in collaboration with strategic and regulatory partners to allow the recovery phase from ADB be set in a strategic context, rather than it happening in a piecemeal way. The following key objectives to be addressed in the ADB Recovery Plan are tabled below.

Objective	Actions
<p>Secure resources for direct planting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include direct replacement planting in project proposals with appropriate native species that help fill ash habitat/ecological niche or match as close as possible • Investigate opportunities for additional planting on directly owned and managed landholdings • Develop resources to encourage key influencers and decision makers to consider planting in their own schemes
<p>Explore opportunities for natural regeneration, mitigation, or offset planting wherever possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine where sites may be improved using alternative planting options- for example protection of existing natural regeneration of young/semi mature trees or genetically resistant stock. • Where planting is preferable but difficult to implement identify opportunities to mitigate • Identify whether offset options are required and where they could be feasible • Identify resources for all proposals, including alternative funding sources and grant funding opportunities
<p>Alternative models for the recovery phase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a log of all sites where direct planting is not practically achievable, with evidence to back this up • Investigate options for sponsorship programmes or donations • Research alternatives in use in other settings e.g. Network Rail or Highways England • Build all feasible models identified into the Ash Dieback Recovery Plan for a long-term embedded approach to recovery

11. Useful Links

The following resources have been referred to in this document or serve as useful background reading:

- [The Tree Council Ash Dieback toolkit](#)
- [National Tree Safety Group](#)
- [Managing Ash Dieback](#)
- [DEFRA- Tree Health Resilience Strategy](#)
- [Forestry Commission Ash Dieback tools and resources](#)
- [Woodland Trust](#)
- [European Ash Dieback project Fraxback](#)
- [Kent County Council - The Ash Project](#)
- [West Sussex County Council Ash Dieback action plan](#)
- [Ash Dieback in the county of Devon](#)
- [Replacing Ash: appropriate tree selection](#)