



## Devon Highway Survey

### The Issue

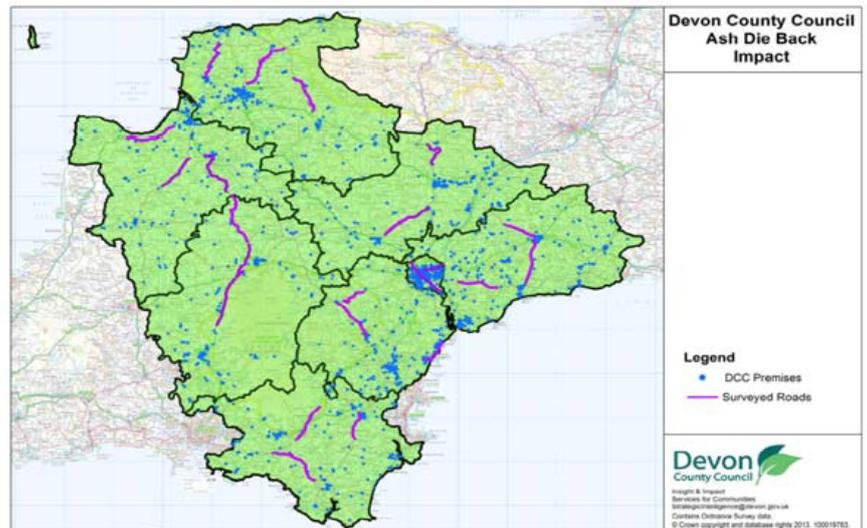
Ash trees adjacent to the highway or in council owned land could become a problem if they die and fall into the highway or onto public space. During the summer of 2014, Devon County Council staff therefore collected **data to determine the potential number of highway trees within the county.**

### The steps undertaken

During the summer of 2014, 440 km of Devon roads were surveyed, looking for ash trees that might affect the highway.

**In total, 440 kilometers of Devon roads were surveyed,** by recording trees on 30 kilometers of A roads in each of Devon's eight district council areas. The 30 kilometers per district were divided into three ten-kilometer sections, taking in the coast, high ground, farmland and moors to give a good geographical and environmental cross section of each district.

In addition to the survey of the A roads, trees were then counted on other classes of road, by using videos produced for highways assessment. 10km of class B, C and unclassified road were counted in each district, again counting both highways and private trees.



All ash trees were counted within falling distance of the highway, counting both private and public trees. Trees were counted in two age classes - one under forty years old, the other over forty years old.

## The Outcome

The main findings are shown in the two tables below:

### Summary of highway ash trees:

#### By District

District	Total Number of Ash	Ash / km
South Hams	30811	16
West Devon	74487	50
Torridge	49532	29
North Devon	45284	22
Mid Devon	58527	33
East Devon	103644	53
Teignbridge	85028	51
Exeter	325	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>447639</b>	<b>263</b>

#### By category of road

District	Average number of trees / km
Category A road	12
Category B Road	21
Category C road	36
Unclassified Road	33

These figures show the estimated total of trees within falling distance of the highway in the county of Devon (which has the one of the largest road network of any county in the UK).

In this survey no distinction was made between woodland and non-woodland trees – all ash trees being counted if they could fall on the highway.

A second survey of ash trees on county council managed properties was also undertaken during 2014. Data collected is shown below.

Premises	Ash trees per site	Estimated Total ash trees
Schools	9.41	3095.89
Other Corporate sites	9.41	3914.56

No distinction was made between woodland and non-woodland trees – all ash trees were counted if they were adjacent to the highway. **An estimated 447,639 ash trees in Devon are within falling distance of the highway.** The number of highway ash varied considerably around the county from Exeter with 325 trees to East Devon with 103,644. The results also show that there are **on average 12 trees per kilometer on A roads, 21 per kilometer on B roads and 36 per kilometer on C roads.**

This survey has therefore provided Devon County with an invaluable **management tool** – estimating the **scale of the problem**; highlighting areas of the county with **high ash tree density** and identifying the need to **focus on all road types to keep the county's roads clear.**