

ACTION PLAN

for managing the impacts of Ash Dieback in East Lindsey

Strategy

The vision of our Corporate Strategy is to provide places which residents, businesses and visitors are proud of. Trees, through the social, environmental and economic benefits they provide, help to realise this aspiration.

In our strategy for trees in East Lindsey, one of our goals is to ensure that we manage our trees well. We will do this in accordance with best arboricultural practice and latest research, informed by evidence and experience taken from around the world. We will increase the resilience of our tree population to the uncertainty associated with climate change, and reduce the risks associated with pests and pathogens.

Delivery of this strategy is threatened by the introduction of Ash Dieback across Britain.

Objective

This Action Plan sets out how we will manage the anticipated health & safety, economic, reputational and environmental impacts of Ash Dieback as the disease progresses in East Lindsey.

What is it?

'Ash dieback' is a new and untreatable disease found throughout Britain, causing ash trees of all ages to decline and die in a very short period of time. Sometimes known as 'Chalara', the disease is caused by a fungus which arrived from Asia into Europe during the 1990s and spread quickly, with the first official record in Britain in 2012. The disease is now widely distributed throughout the nation.

Dieback has been easy to find on young ash, where dead and dying trees are frequently seen at the side of highways, or in new woodlands. However, because of the difficulty of detection further above the ground, it is only in the last 18 months that it has become evident on mature trees in Lincolnshire, where the loss of leaf area becomes more apparent as trees deteriorate.

Key issues;

- Infected trees decline and die over a short period (some reports suggests 3-5 years).
- They become brittle as they decline, losing branches and succumbing more readily to attacks by other pests or pathogens. In particular, infection by honey fungus which can cause trees to become unstable over a relatively short period of time.
- All ash will eventually succumb to the disease, and currently there are no known prevention or cure treatments.

Why does this matter to the Council?

Ash trees on land we own and manage will decline or die as a result of ash dieback. The timescale is unclear, yet early within the next 10 year period seems likely.

The risks are as follows:

Health and Safety

- dead and declining large trees will pose a risk to nearby residents, property, and people using our sites for recreation
- ash, especially when dead and declining, can be extremely brittle and unstable, elevating the risk for the safety of contractors.

Economic

- increased short-term expenditure to manage the risk
- removing trees individually, as and when they become dangerous, will be very expensive.

Reputational

- public anxiety over the loss of trees and changes to the landscape, risk of harm, inconvenience of closed access, temporary loss of electricity (for trees close to power lines)
- we are the authority administering tree protection legislation, and will decide applications to remove our own protected trees.

Environmental

- impacts on recreation and tourism through loss and change of landscapes, ecosystems, biodiversity.

What will we do about it?

We will manage the anticipated impacts as the disease progresses and in a way which accords with our objectives for good management of our trees and woodland.

This approach will:

1. prioritise the safety of people and property
2. accord with the principles of good arboriculture, silviculture and woodland management
3. secure an economic return from any timber, where feasible
4. enable clear, inclusive and transparent communication of our decisions.

How will we do it?

The majority of sites we own and manage have either a small number of mature ash, or include ash which, although diseased, don't pose a risk to people or property. We will continue to manage these using our existing tree risk assessment and management system. Large ash trees will be inspected more frequently, and removed where they pose an unacceptable risk of harm to people or property.

Vine Walk & Coronation Walk

These two sites, protected by a Tree Preservation Order, connect to form a continuous woodland ribbon through a residential area of Skegness, with a footpath running along their entirety. We will manage the ash trees at these sites differently because they pose a higher risk. They have a high proportion of mature large ash (about 140), which are in close proximity to domestic dwellings, a frequently used public access route, and power lines.

We will inspect these trees annually for crown dieback using Appendix 1, and when the majority are either in class 4 (76% to 100% dieback) or have additional diseases affecting their structural condition, we will remove all of the mature ash in one operation. Removing the ash collectively in this way, rather than individually, is justified on health & safety, and economic & reputational grounds, and is not detrimental to the environment.

Health & Safety

Felling the trees will create a large volume of timber. This can't be left in the woodland. It would encourage people to take wood for their own use, potentially using equipment and putting themselves and others at risk of harm.

Economic & Reputational

Taking the timber out of the woodland for an individual tree would be very expensive, require ad hoc closures of woodland areas, power lines and paths, and entail significant officer time for management. It would be difficult to generate income from individual tree removal.

Removing the ash in one collective operation would minimise public inconvenience and be cheaper as the work would be carried out in one time period. It would also generate a saleable volume of timber and so provide an income.

Once the diseased trees are removed we need to ensure our trees and woodlands continue to provide multiple benefits to society, the environment and economy, and are more resilient to future environmental conditions.

Opportunities for the future?

The risk and uncertainty, and the pace and scale of environmental change experienced over the past 25 years, and expected over the next 50 years, presents a challenge to all in our society. So we will take this opportunity to deliver more resilient trees and woodlands; adapted to face future challenges from climate change and the increase in pests and diseases.

ASH DIEBACK ACTION PLAN for CORONATION WALK & VINE WALK, SKEGNESS

The following is a proposed Action Plan for Vine Walk & Coronation Walk to address the anticipated health & safety, economic, reputational and environmental impacts of Ash Dieback as the disease progresses. It will need to be revised and updated on a regular basis.

It identifies necessary actions and divides them into 4 key stages:

- **Awareness** – communicating facts and impacts to stakeholders
- **Planning** – preparing to moderate and manage the problems caused by the disease
- **Action** - remedying the problems faced by the disease
- **Recovery** – restoring the landscapes following tree removal to become more resilient to future environmental change.

	ACTION	RISK ADDRESSED	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE
AWARENESS	Raise stakeholder awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELDC members • Skegness Town Council 	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the disease and its impact. • Show management is open and transparent 	ELDC Officers ELDC Members Skegness Town Council	Jan 19
	Raise public awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media • Tree Wardens • Local community • Arrange woodland/tree walk • Involve public in replanting and management 	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the disease and its impact. • Show management is open and transparent • Public aware of management and involved in future work. 	ELDC Officers ELDC Members Skegness Town Council Community Forums	May 19 onwards
	Obtain Felling License from Forestry Commission	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission agreed to fell trees (within a 4 year period). 	ELDC Tree Officer	May 19
PLANNING	Assess appropriate means of felling trees and extracting timber	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise extraction length, damage to existing paths, ensure safe and secure timber storage. 	ELDC Tree Officer	Jan 19
	Assess the decline in the trees	Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % crown dieback per tree (as per Appendix 1) • % trees with basal lesions/secondary pathogens. • Report to stakeholders. • Move to Action stage when the majority of ash trees are either in class 4 (76% to 100% dieback) or have additional diseases or pathogens requiring tree removal 	ELDC Tree Officer ELDC Officers	Jun 19 Annually TBA
ACTION	Submit TPO application	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application and approval is required to carry out work to protected trees. To minimise any conflict of interest the application must be considered by ELDC Planning Committee. 	ELDC Tree Officer	Autumn Year TBA
	Tender tree felling	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors need to be skilled in tree felling in built up areas (arboricultural contractors) and also have means of efficiently and economically extracting timber and leaving the site tidy (forestry contractors). 	ELDC Tree Officer	Autumn Year TBA
	Bat and Bird Surveys	Environmental Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any protection or mitigation measures are in place prior to tree removal. 	ELDC Tree Officer Ecologist	Autumn Year TBA
	Fell trees, extract and sell timber	Economic Reputational Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees removed safely to a site suitable for haulage collection. 	ELDC Tree Officer Contractor	Winter Year TBA
RECOVERY	Replanting	Environmental Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of open space replanted with a diverse and resilient species mixture. 	ELDC Tree Officer	First available planting season following felling

Appendix 1

Ash dieback Survey – crown dieback classes

- Class 1 0% - 25% dieback
- Class 2 26% - 50% dieback
- Class 3 51% - 75% dieback
- Class 4 76% - 100% dieback



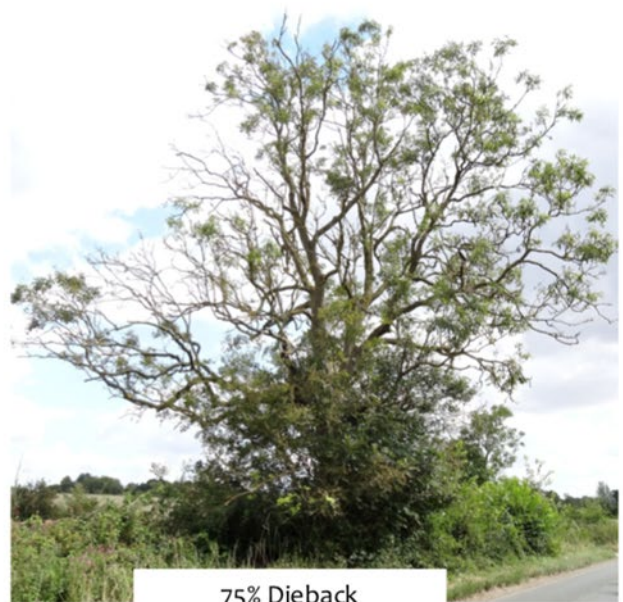
0% Dieback - Healthy Crown



25% Dieback



50% Dieback



75% Dieback