

# The Need for an Ash Dieback Plan

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# The national charity working together to...



**Fund, plant and care for trees and hedgerows**

**WITH TREE WARDENS & THE COMMUNITY**

**COMMUNITY ACTION**

**Inspire the next generation of young environmentalists**

**WITH EDUCATION PARTNERS & YOUNG TREE CHAMPIONS**

**YOUNG LEARNING**

**Use science to influence policy and support best practice on trees and the environment**

**WITH GOVERNMENT & ACADEMICS**

**PRACTICAL SCIENCE & RESEARCH**

**Influence tree-related policy**

**WITH CHARITY PARTNERS & TREE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**PARTNERSHIP POWER**

# Ash Dieback in non-woodland trees



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

## Chalara Management Plan

March 2013











50

Yield

Directional signs

# Numbers non-woodland ash



Available figures suggests that there are for example:

- 17 - 34 million ash in small woodland and plantations
- 5.4-19.7 million ash in hedgerows in the UK
- 4 million + ash on Highway Agency Land
- 3.6 - 4 million ash in Britain's towns and cities
- 1.2 -2.3 million ash in the wider agricultural countryside

The Tree Council therefore estimates there are between 27.2 and 60 million ash trees in non-woodland situations (greater than 4cm diameter at breastheight) plus 400 million seedlings and saplings





← 2002

← 2003

↑ ↓

Growth rings decline in size over last 10 years as tree get more infected.

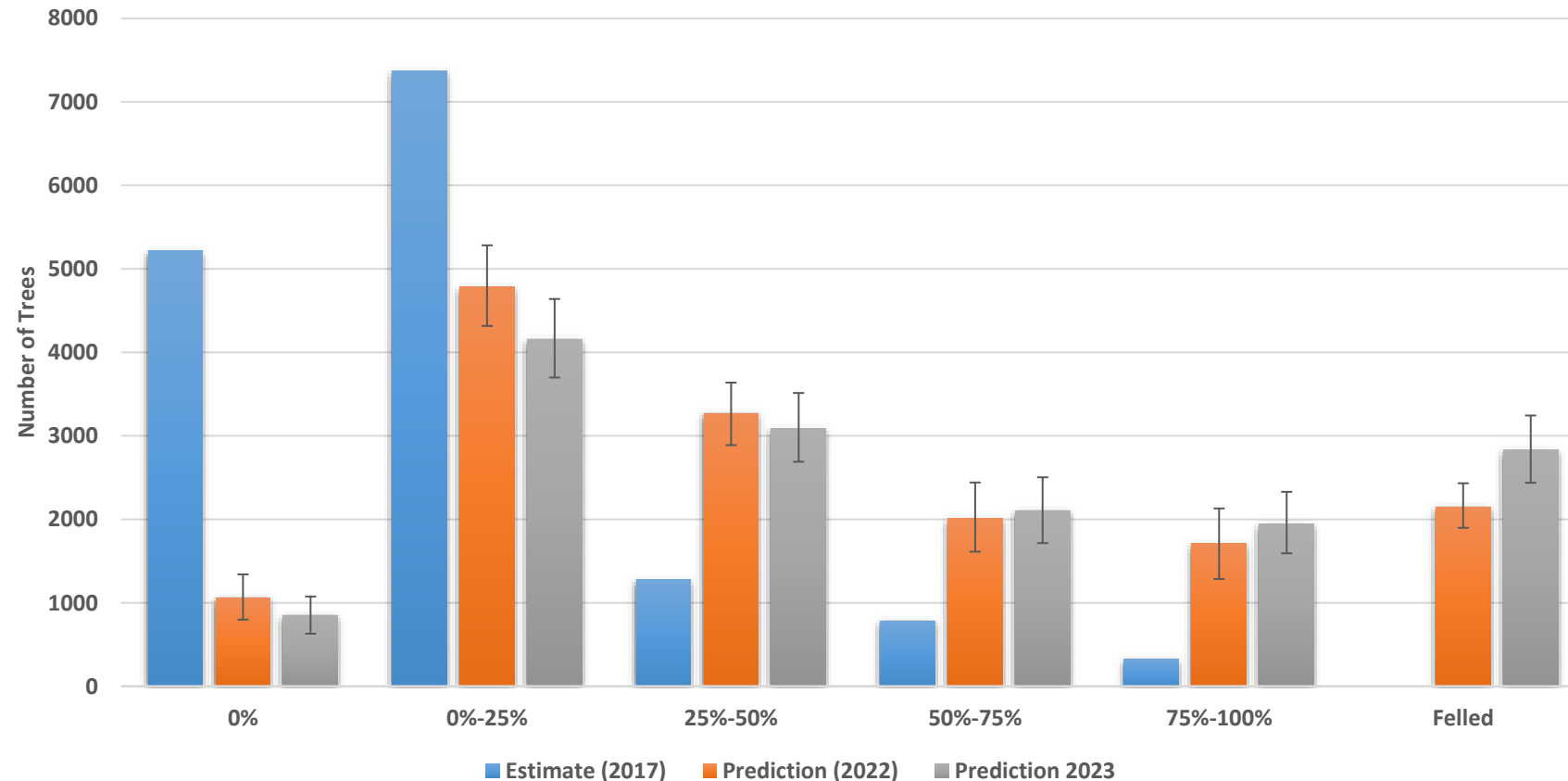
Last Healthy and probably year disease arrived



# FERA science: A roads ash surveys and forecasts



Estimates of Ash Canopy Dieback for  
Trees along A-Roads in Norfolk





# Ash dieback - trees





# Ash dieback – management



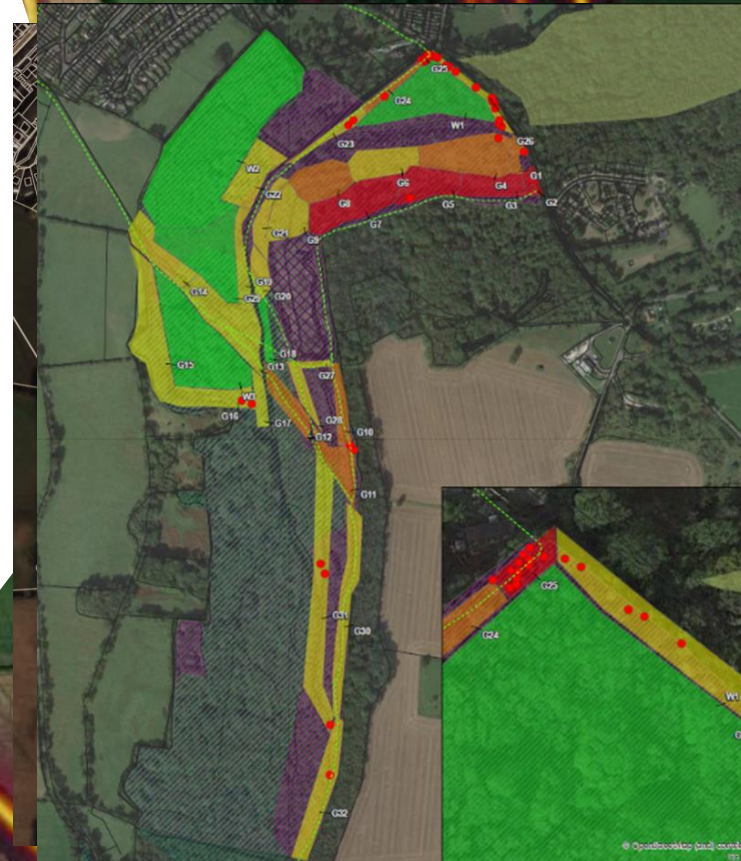






# Mapping Tree risk

- ▶ **Grouping trees** – homogenous groups – target and age mix
- ▶ **Individual tree assessment** within group to get average condition.
- ▶ **Record high value** or high risk individual trees.
- ▶ **Plan** - colour coding to indicate level of risk of harm
- ▶ Tree mapping includes:
  - ▶ Individual tree locations in high use areas
  - ▶ Tree schedule
  - ▶ GIS record
  - ▶ Tree marking - high risk trees









# Ash dieback – Press Coverage

## Female tree surgeon, 42, was crushed to death by falling Ash as she was cutting down trees with chainsaw at National Trust estate in Kent, inquest hears

- Debbie Austin had been felling diseased trees at Ightham Mote on December 7
- The arborist had been 'struggling' to get the right stance before the tragedy
- A HSE investigator said the work 'has a very high level of accidents and fatalities'
- Miss Austin has been described as 'one in a million' by her loved ones

By [EMMA JAMES FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 11:43, 13 June 2022 | UPDATED: 14:58, 13 June 2022



 [View comments](#)

A tree surgeon was crushed to death while cutting down a dying Ash tree on a National Trust estate which fell on top of her after being sheared off 25ft above where she was stood, an inquest heard.

Debbie Austin, 42, had been felling diseased Ash trees at Ightham Mote, in Sevenoaks, Kent, in December last year.

The 'highly experienced' arborist had been working as part of a team of three when the trunk of the Ash unexpectedly split and collapsed onto her.





# Ash dieback survey 2022 (sample 42 local authorities)

**Q1. How many trees affected by Ash Dieback do you expect to remove in the next 2, 3-5 and 6-10 years?**

**Next 2 years**

- Unknown 20%

**6-10 years**

- Unknown 19%

**Q3. What do you estimate to be the eventual total costs for dealing with the impacts of Ash Dieback?**

- Under £250k = 14%
- £251k - £500k = 5%
- £501k - £1 million = 2%
- £1.1 million - £5 million = 29%
- £5.1 million - £10million = 5%
- Over £10 million = 24%
- Unknown = 21%

**Q5. Which areas of council owned land are most affected by Ash Dieback (percentage score)?**

- Highway verges (10 - 40%)
- Parks and open spaces (10 – 30%)
- Woodlands (10-70%)

**Q11. Do you have an Ash Dieback Plan?**

52% now had formal plans.

# Ash Dieback Toolkit



## ASH DIEBACK:

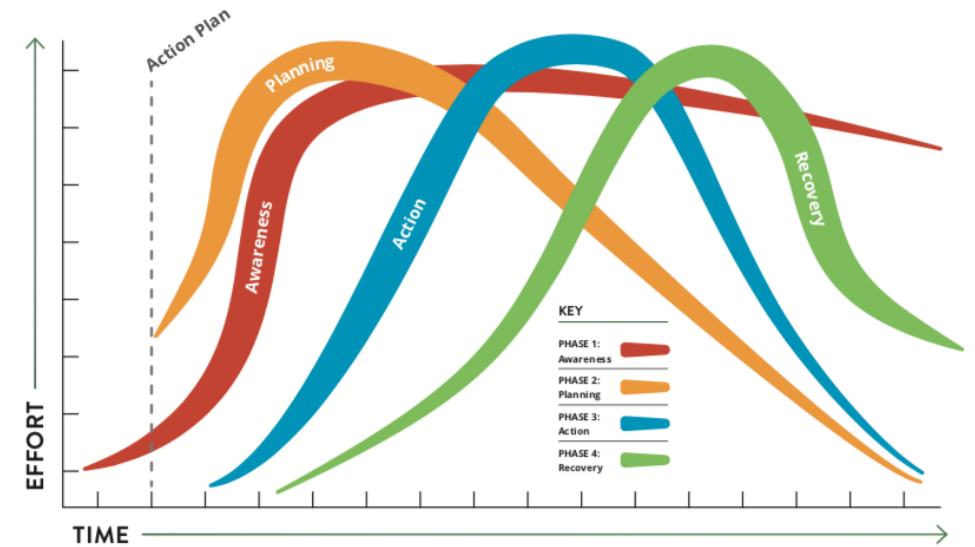
an Action Plan Toolkit

First published February 2019



This Toolkit is based upon discussions with Local Authorities who felt *'unprepared for the impacts of ash dieback'*.

This Toolkit is designed to assist Local Authorities and other regional or local agencies to prepare an **Ash Dieback Action Plan** (ADAP) to respond to the problems that the affected trees will create.



**Awareness/anticipation:** raising awareness about ash dieback

**Planning/assessment:** preparing and developing a Plan to help manage the problems.

**Action/response to ash dieback:** undertaking actions to remedy problems

**Adaptation and recovery** from ash dieback

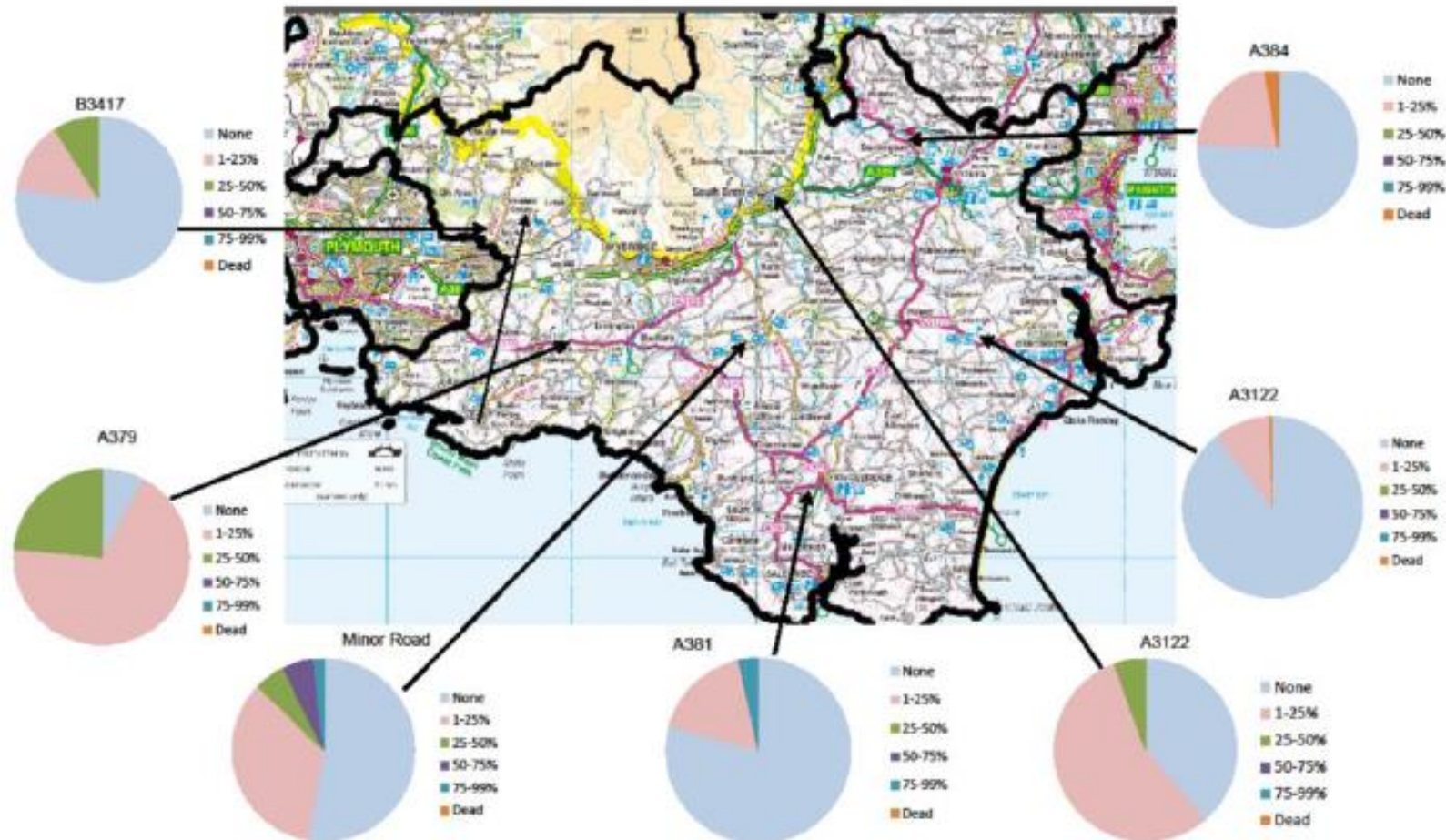


# Canopy assessment in 2017

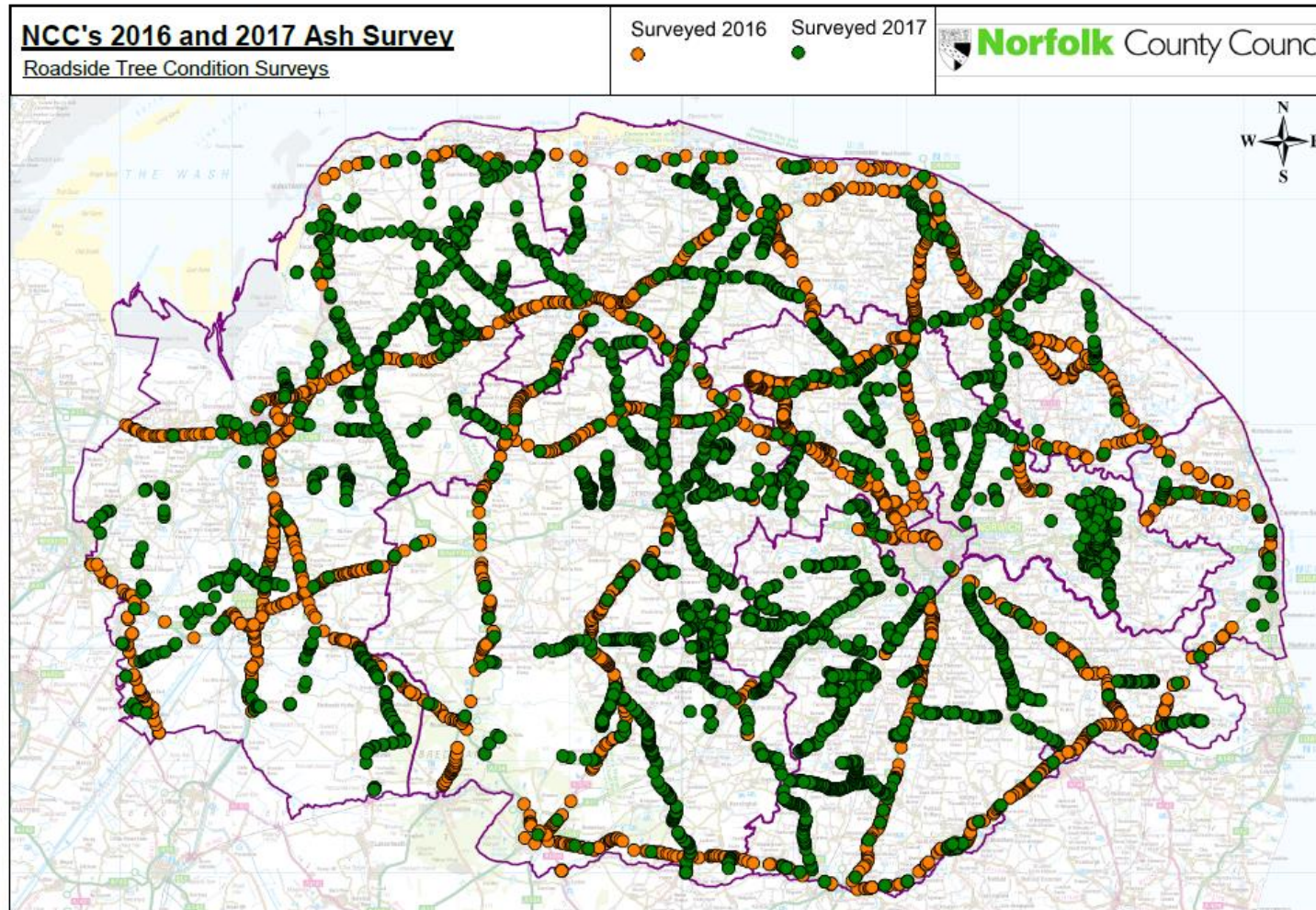


## Canopy Assessment of Ash Trees in Selected Locations Across the County of Devon – SOUTH HAMS

**Confidential** – Not to be disseminated outside of the Devon Ash Die Back Resilience Forum  
Please note that this is a limited sample and cannot be relied on to indicate the full extent of the spread of the disease.



# Norfolk County Council Ash Surveys 2016 and 2017



# Awareness: County Council Cost



## Stats for a County Council

- 6020 recorded Ash trees on adopted highway verges
- Estimated 120,000 Ash in private ownership within falling distance of the highway
- 1546 recorded Ash trees on schools
- 468 recorded Ash trees on other County Council sites
- c. 5,500 non recorded Ash trees in County Council woodlands adjacent to areas of public use

## Information to inform Costs

83% of recorded Ash trees are 6 metres plus in height

90% mortality of Ash trees in Denmark - however, assume 75% mortality in mainland Britain due to greater genetic diversity

Assume average cost of felling an Ash tree including site management is £400

## Cost/Resource implications

Adopted Highway: **£1,499,200** or **£150K per year for 10 years**

Private trees adjacent to Highway - **£29,880,000**

Schools - **£385,600**

**Other sites including woodlands- £1,486,000**

## Tree Planting to address loss in landscape, amenity etc.

83,127 trees lost on County Council land, Schools and adjacent to the highway

Based on Free Tree Scheme @£15 per tree = £1,246,905 i.e. £83K per year for 15 years

# Your Corporate Risk



## **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACTS**

- Potential for death or injury as a result of ash dieback related accidents, both to professionals working on trees and to the general public
- Risks to statutory functions or service delivery such as retaining safe schools, public open spaces or highways

## **ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

- Increased liabilities in cases of death or injury as a result of ash dieback related incidents
- Inadequate staffing levels and the ability (or inability) to undertake the work required resulting in increased costs to recruit and retain the necessary staff

## **REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE**

- Potential for disruption as a result of ash dieback management e.g. widespread road closures to deal with potentially dangerous trees
- Political and reputational risks as a result of negative press over ash dieback management and public outrage and/or anxiety

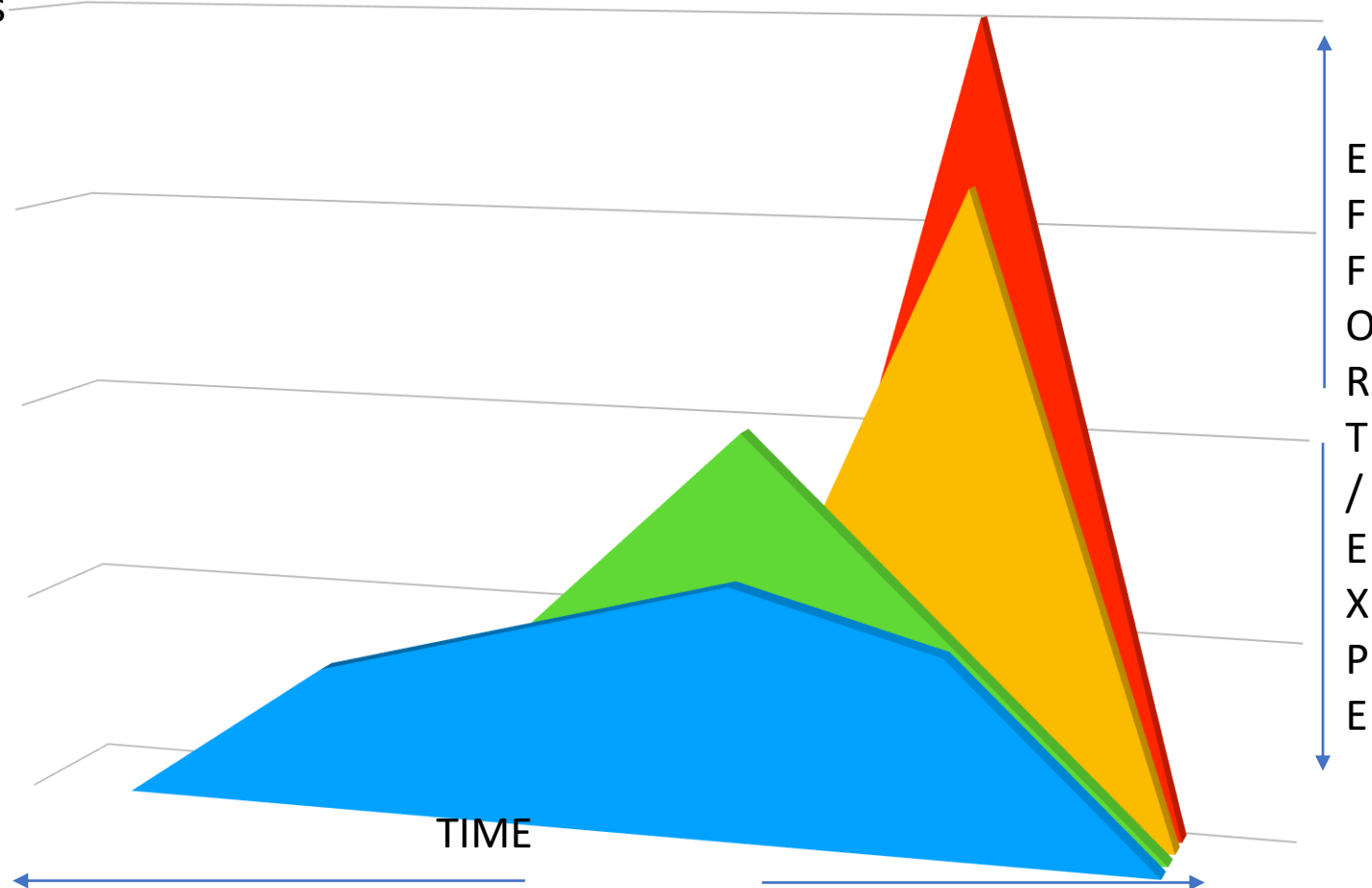
## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

- Landscape changes with impacts on tourism and recreational opportunities
- Losses of carbon storage and sequestration

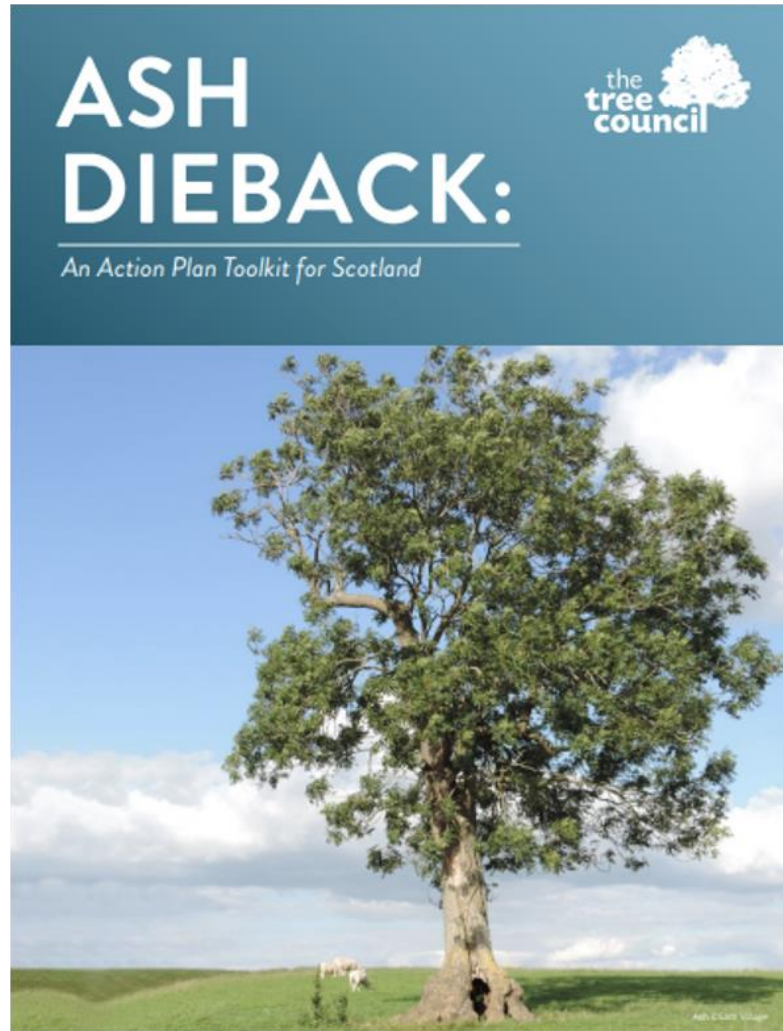
# Effort and expenditure



- The end point of Ash Dieback is fixed – ie the trees die in a finite time period.
- Delaying dealing with Ash Dieback simply increases the severity of the the funding issues



# The Scottish Ash Dieback Toolkit

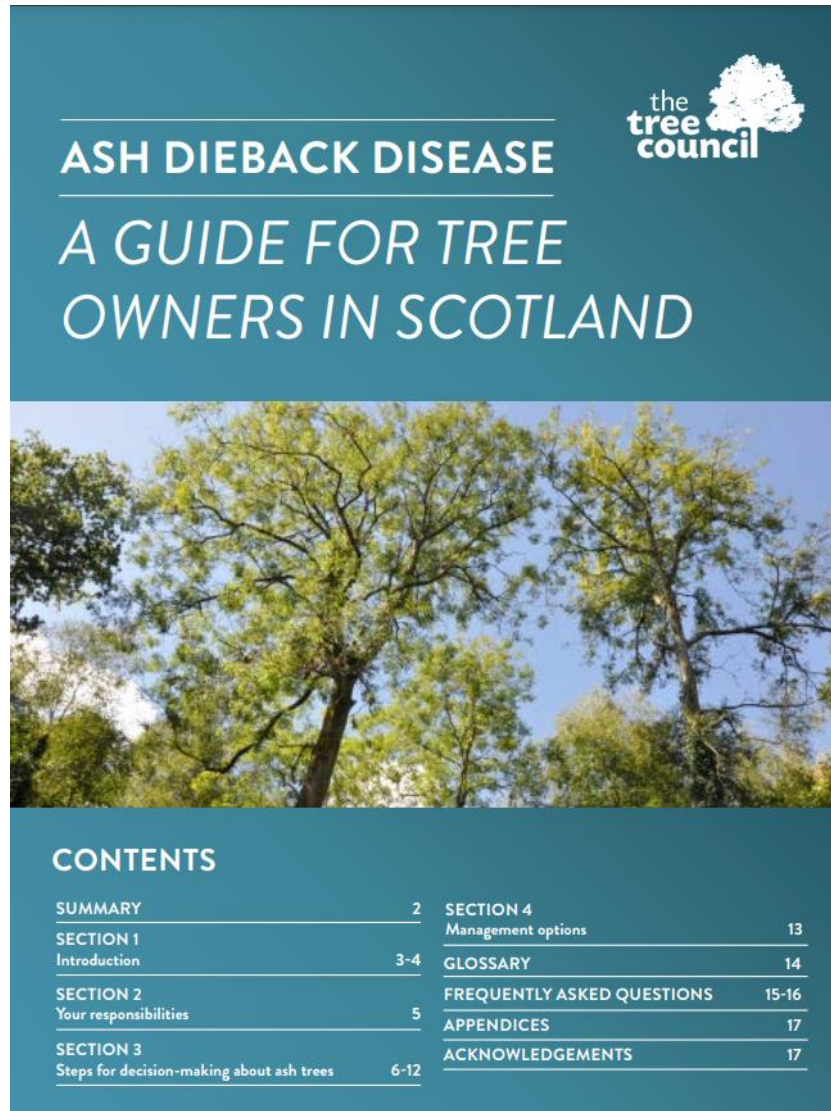


**Launched**

**CEO Briefing: June 2021**

**4 Workshops for Local Authority and other staff**

# The Ash Dieback Advice



## Is this guidance for you?

### THIS GUIDANCE IS FOR YOU IF:

- You are a homeowner or landowner and have trees on your land
- You think you may have ash trees on your land

### THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU TO:

- Understand what ash dieback disease is and its impacts
- Learn to spot ash trees and understand what the signs of ash dieback look like
- Understand your responsibilities
- Understand options for managing affected ash trees
- Understand the value of ash trees and the environmental impact of ash dieback
- Understand the importance of replanting trees where possible and what species to plant

#### What is ash dieback disease?

Ash dieback is a highly destructive fungal disease affecting ash trees. It causes leaf loss and canopy decline and in some cases causes the trees to die. The disease was first officially recorded in the UK in 2012 and is now widespread across England, Wales and Scotland.

#### Why is it important?

Ash trees are the third most common tree in Britain, present in woodland, hedgerows, parks and gardens across the country and have much cultural significance in our urban and rural landscapes. They are also valuable habitats for over 1,000 species of wildlife, including a wide range of mammals, birds, invertebrates, plants and lichens.

It is estimated that there are more than 60 million ash trees outside woodlands in the UK and that the majority will become affected with ash dieback in years to come. A proportion of these infected and weakened trees will pose safety risks, especially if they are next to a busy road, public pathway, school or community grounds. Anyone with an ash tree on

their land has a responsibility to ensure that risk posed by the tree is kept within appropriate limits.

#### The future of ash trees

A small proportion of ash trees may have what's called 'genetic tolerance' to ash dieback, meaning they will survive and reproduce to create the next generation of trees. Therefore, tree owners have an important part to play in understanding the impacts of ash dieback on the environment and protecting tolerant and resistant trees and their associated wildlife wherever possible and safe to do so. ❌



A typical ash tree

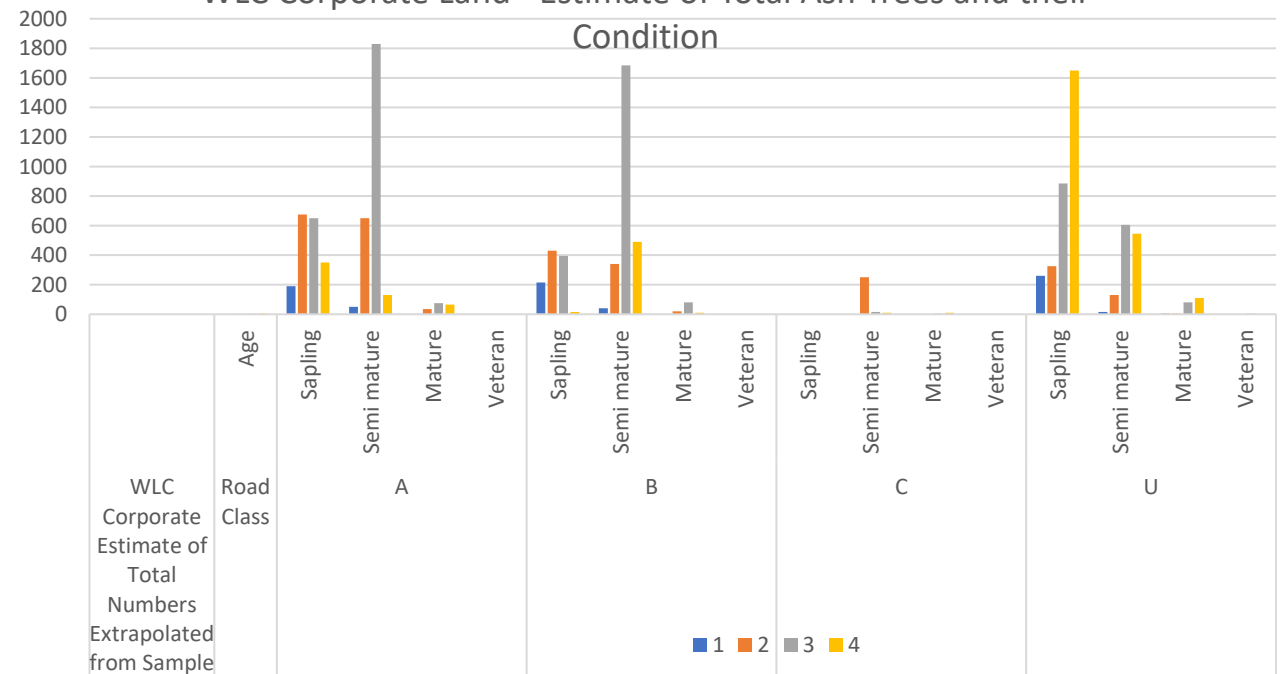


# West Lothian Case Study



**23,000 significant trees which may be lost along West Lothian's roads.** An estimated 41% of the roadside trees are owned by the council i.e. approximately **9,600 significant trees along roadsides.**

WLC Corporate Land - Estimate of Total Ash Trees and their Condition





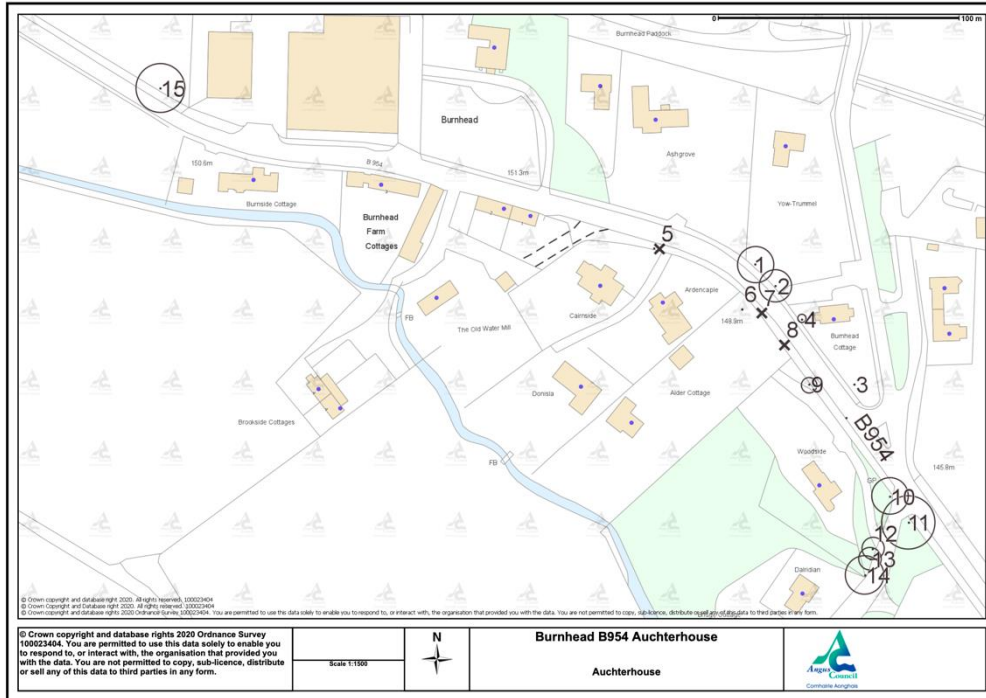
# South Lanarkshire Case Study



Given the size of the study area a 'Google Street View (GSV) virtual survey' of all A and B roads was undertaken. Extrapolating the results for lower use C and U roads was used.

The survey consisted of a laptop or similar, GSV imagery and a spreadsheet for recording. From a desktop a trained person would 'travel' along a route surveying both sides of the road and collecting appropriate data (included the URL taken when directly viewing the subject tree). The survey captured trees up to 20m from the road and > 3m tall. Accessing historical google imagery was found to be helpful.

# Angus Case Study 2



Angus Council Park and Roads sections decided to pilot the removal of some ADB infected Ash trees on two roads sites that both spontaneously came to light via members of the public living locally to the two sites 'worried about overhanging branch drop and next to a road'.

There was considerable complexity in the sites and the work took approximately 120 hours to resolve.



- Monitor the health status of trees
- Clusters of these sensors over small areas - Sentinel Treescapes
- Act as an early warning system for the movement of current threats and new incursions
- Essentially looking for deviations from a baseline health status reading and creating alerts

# Footpaths and ADB



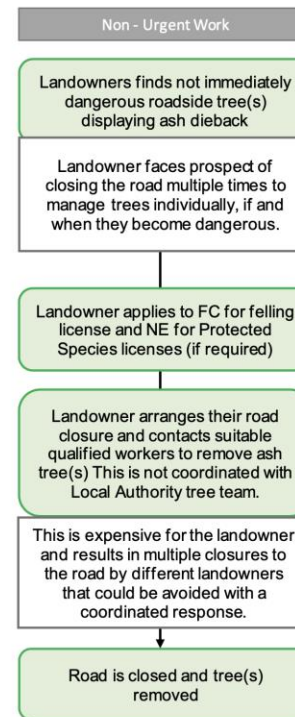
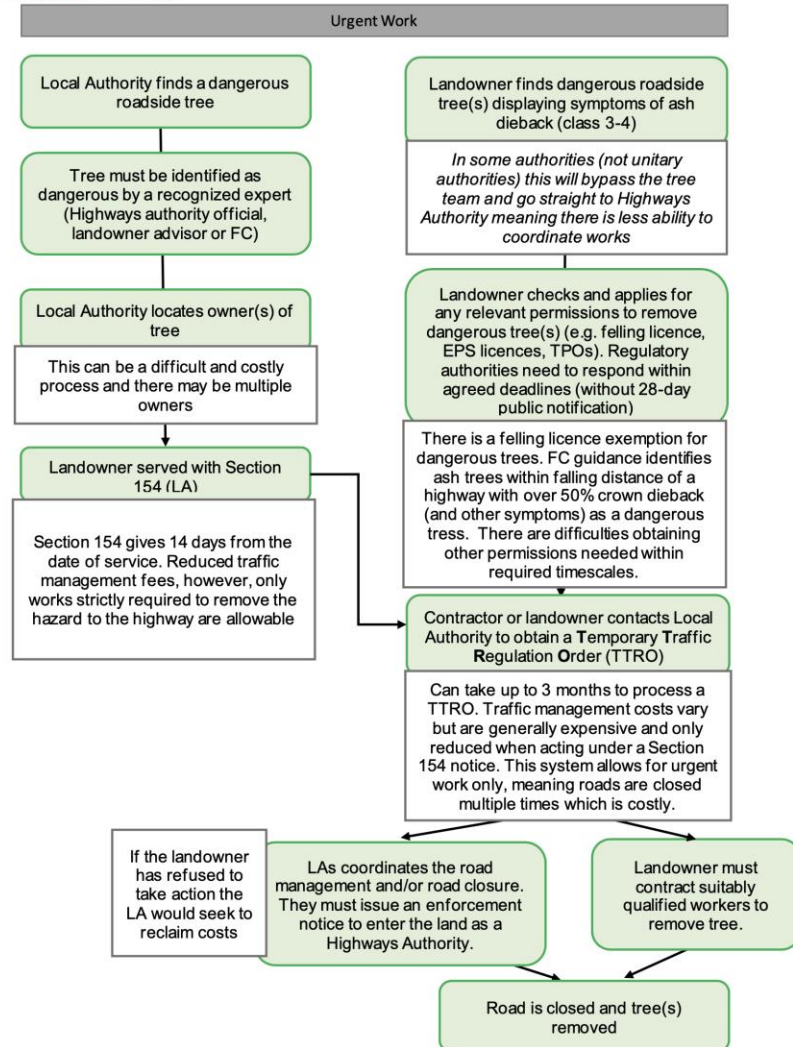
- Starting investigating the issue with Local Authorities and NGO's
- Range of concerns and issues
  - Difficulties of monitoring and survey
  - Problems engaging with landowners and their awareness levels
  - Legal restrictions on footpath closures and costs associated with this
  - Problems then linked back to survey – ie when to close a path depends on the spread of the disease locally
  - Issues around liability around public ignoring 'closure signage'
  - Balance between safety/ ecology and access which has been heightened by pandemic
- Asks
  - Flexibility in the rules around footpath closures (timing and duration)
  - Resource issues for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party owners
  - Increased awareness of the issues for landowners

# Ash Dieback Highway Surge Report



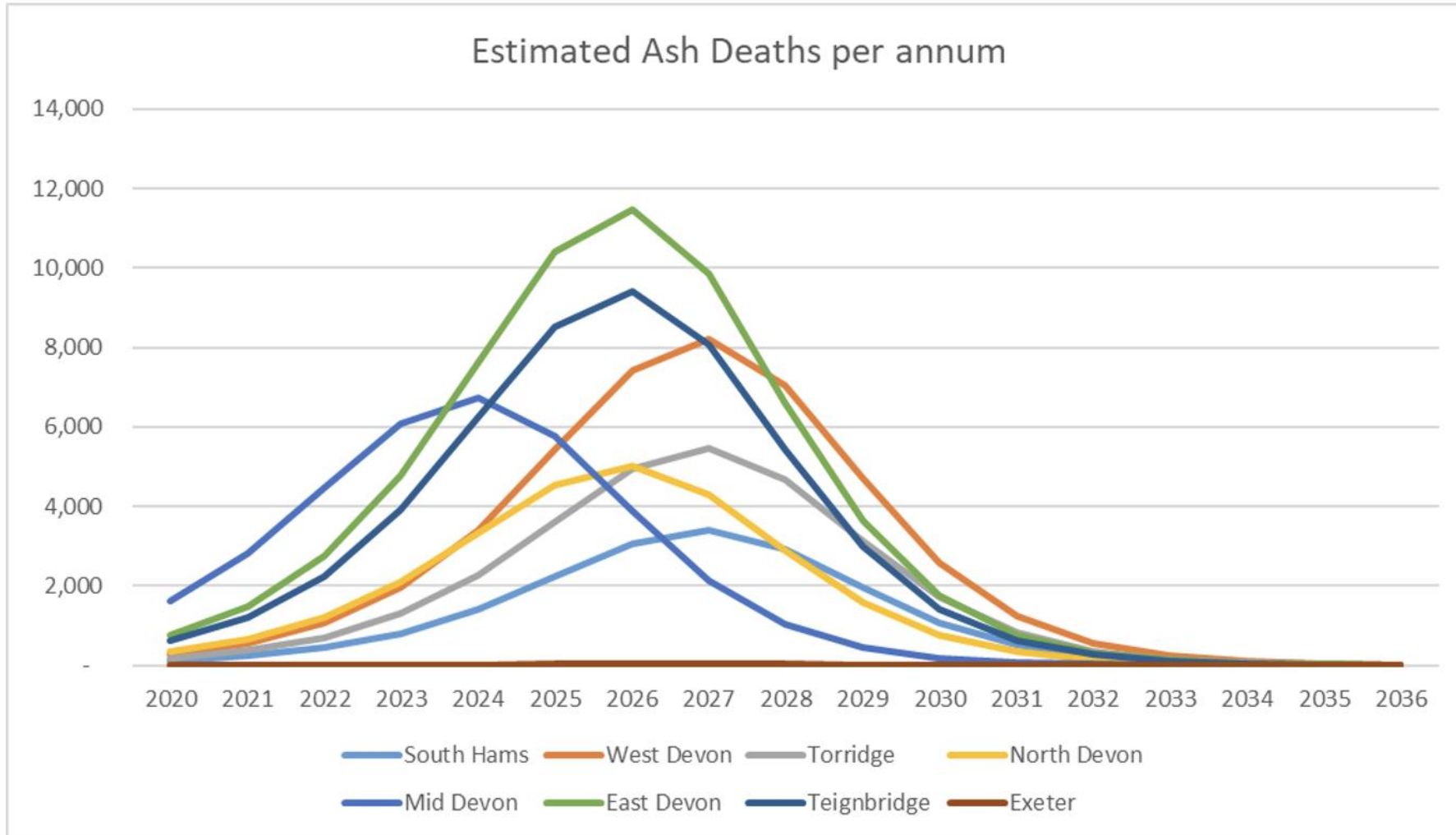
## Annex 1 – Road Closure Process Diagram

### 1.1 Current Process

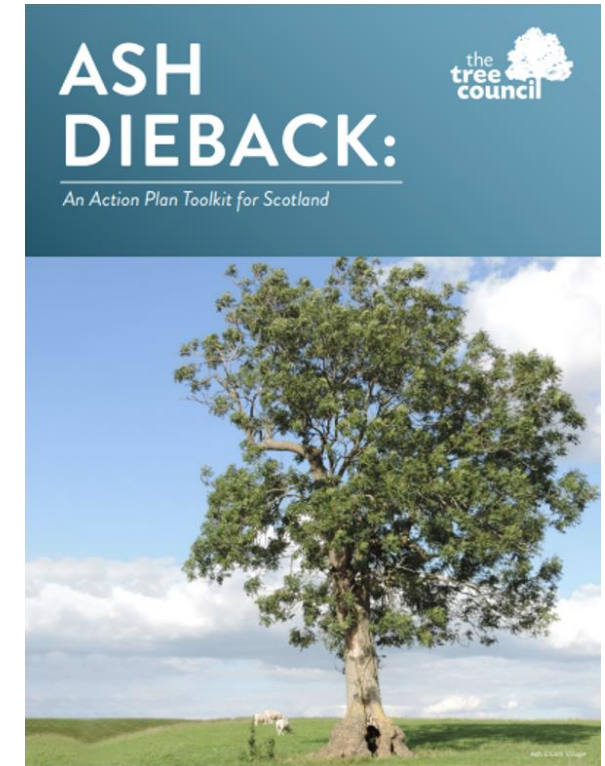
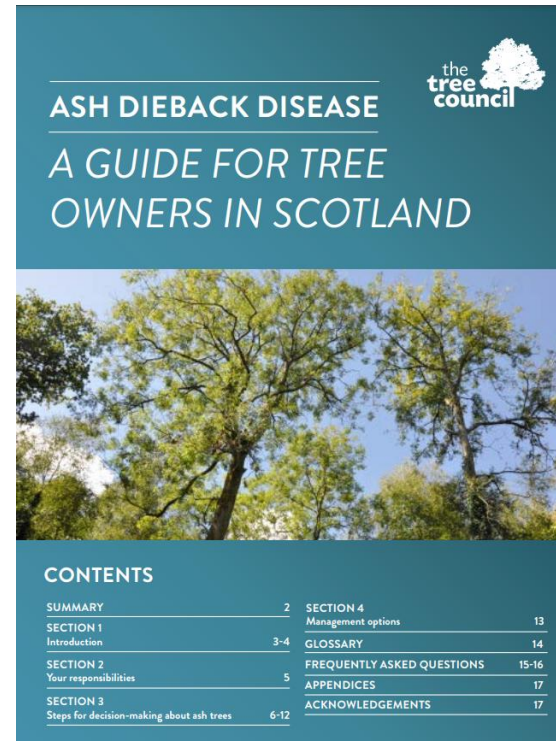
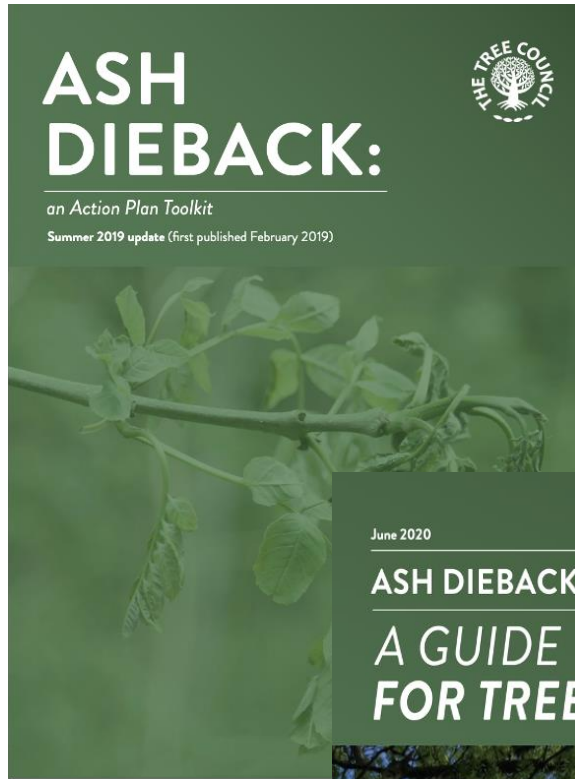


**Explanatory Note: Traffic Regulation Orders/Notices**  
**Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO):** At least 7 days before making an Order the authority must publish a note of intention in one or more local newspapers. On or before the day Order is made the authority must notify relevant stakeholders including chief officer of police. Within 14 days of making the Order the LA must publish a second notice in one of more local newspaper  
**Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice (TTRN):** Chapter 12 of the practice for coordination of street works states: *Where urgent action is needed a traffic authority may issue a TTRN. This allows work to take place without delay requiring the authority to notify all relevant stakeholders including emergency services and other traffic authority with roads that may be affected.*

# Mortality models



# Ash dieback – Guidance



# Changing landscapes







# Conclusions

- There will be dead/dying ash trees
- There is only a short period for preparation
- The scale of the impact must be assessed
- It will impact corporate risk
- There will need to be changes in management practices
- Working with others for efficient joint responses
- Communication and collaboration is key

**It is vital to understand that ash dieback will not be 'business as usual'.**

**YOU NEED A PLAN!!**