



# Brighton and Hove City Council Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP)

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#### 1. Executive Summary

Brighton and Hove City Council have created this document which lays out the council's Ash Dieback Plan. Ash Dieback (ADB), *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (formerly known as *Chalara fraxinea*), Is going to lead to one of the most significant environmental episodes affecting the UK's trees since Elm Disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) <a href="https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/parks-and-green-spaces/elm-disease">https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/parks-and-green-spaces/elm-disease</a>, in the 1970's. ADB has the potential to cause death to *Fraxinus excelsior*, Common ash and other Fraxinus species with little resistance being observed across Europe. This could equate to the loss of two billion trees here in the UK

Here in Brighton and Hove we believe we will possibly lose 35,000 to 40,000 ash trees which will have a significant effect upon the landscape, existing trees and woodlands across the city. Our woodlands here provide a wide range of services including regulating ecosystems, providing habitat for multiple species and providing social spaces with connection to nature. This Ash Dieback Plan (ADBP) will outline the council's intention in dealing with ADB and look at the opportunity to enhance and recreate areas affected. BHCC will be using the Tree Council Toolkit to help create our plan and preparing for the future effects of ADB.

We have already identified several areas of ash which are dangerous and estimated that we have removed over 5,000 ash trees, due to ADB, in our city which posed either a current or a foreseeable significant risk to the public or property. It has been predicted that in removing ash trees affected will have an economic impact on our normal business in our city. This plan outlines a methodology to deal with this situation and we hope to minimise disturbance as much as possible. BHCC will also be engaging with private landowners, stakeholders, and other local authorities to help achieve this plan and review and recover from this situation. We will also be working with other organisations to find the best way to reduce the impact on the biodiversity and create new and improved habitats which will benefit all the residents and visitors of the city.

The risk from ash infected with ADB is increasing as more infected trees become hazardous and from our recent ADB survey within the city the infection rate has progressed across the city and little resistance is visible. This plan outlines the risk-based approach to each site with ash trees present and the management plan for woodlands and open spaces. Individual trees will be assessed, removed, and replaced with a suitable alternative if the location is suitable. The ADB management plans for each site will be devised using internal and local knowledge as well as guidance from other organisations. This will help to create bespoke site plans for each with detailed future management plans covering the next 5, 10, and 50 years. Training and developing local groups, City Parks staff and other agencies has already taken place, and this will be ongoing throughout the delivery of the ADBP, and an Ash Dieback action group will be formed. In the next section of the plan, we will set out how BHCC will monitor, assess and prepare for the future. All significant replanting schemes will require Forestry Commission approval.



# 2. Ash Dieback Plan (ADAP) Aims and Objective

BHCC's ADB plan will outline the main aims and objectives giving a clear understanding how the Council are going to manage the challenges ADB presents. Two of our main aims and objectives are to reduce the risk to the public and property and replace trees we remove to meet with our declared climate and biodiversity emergency and 2030 carbon neutral programme.

We will be removing trees which may look healthy to the public, and some residents may be concerned by the works, but all trees have been surveyed by a professional Arboriculturist. The ADB fungal infection will cause a decline in tree health and condition resulting in a public safety risk. The disease is not only affecting ash trees in Brighton & Hove, but also killing ash throughout the country, with the worst affected areas being here in the south- east of England where major works have already taken place removing 100,000s of trees.

With an estimated 95% of Ash trees throughout the country expected to die within the next five to 10 years, we must accept that our woodlands will look very different as a result. As more detailed assessments are carried out on our woodlands our initial estimates of 20% of our woodland trees being ash look low and this figure could be as high as 35% which equates to as many as 40,000 trees.

This will result in a significant change to the city, however, there is the opportunity of a new start and a chance to replace the lost ash. A main aim of the plan will be regenerating the areas affected by increasing biological diversity in the city through species selection and age, structure etc.

## 3. Brighton and Hove City Council's ADAP Objectives and Aims

- Surveying and identifying the areas and trees affected by ADB to control future risk and to provide the information for the ADAP
- Identify the environmental, landscape and biodiversity loss/gain from the ADAP
- Aim to replace all canopy cover lost by the removal of ash where appropriate.
   We have multiple different habitats across the city and the planting will be designed to protect valuable soils and improve the biodiversity in these woodlands by planting over 35,000 40,000 trees in woodland areas whilst actively encouraging ground/herb and shrub layer structure and open glades etc.
- It's unknown how much natural regeneration will occur across the woodlands so replanting with whips will help improve habitat and widen the biodiversity



where appropriate taking into account herb / ground and shrub layer regeneration

- Create a ADB Forum which will discuss any current issues and up and coming events e.g., tree removal and regeneration plans
- Identify high risk ash in woodland and other areas, prioritise tree removal based on those considered high risk first. Those trees that pose a lower risk will be managed to an appropriate timescale
- Produce forecasts and identify budget requirements to deal with infected ash and to replant
- We may find areas of woodlands where public access is limited, or the woodland
  can be secured to allow the ash to decline and woodland to naturally regenerate
  noting the importance of dead wood resource for biodiversity. These areas will
  be limited because of the open access to our woodlands however surveying is
  ongoing to identify possible sites.
- Reviewing previous records of individual trees and areas of ash to identify risk and to inform management decisions after re-establishment measures have taken place.
- Estimating the cost and then evaluating the recovery from the financial and environmental effects ADB has had on the city.
- Building resilience for the future of the city's woodlands and enhancing the valuable open spaces we have already
- Engaging community groups and residents in the regeneration of the woodlands affected, where possible, and improving the on-going management of our woodlands

# 4. All about Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Ash Dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*



Ash Dieback is a fungal disease *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* affecting common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and other Fraxinus species, formerly known as *Chalara fraxinea*.

Common ash is the third most prevalent woodland species in the United Kingdom and within BHCC woodlands here in the city. They are present in high numbers throughout the city's approximate 500 hectares of woodlands.

In Brighton and Hove there are relatively few ash trees in street settings, some exist in parks and open spaces and, where prominent, their loss would create a significant impact upon the local visual amenity of the area, alongside other beneficial ecosystems services.

The symptoms first become visible during early June when the leaves are first emerging. These show themselves as wilting and dark discoloration on the leaves with elongated lesions developing on the smaller branches. Eventually the whole crown will become infected with a characteristic 'crown dieback' developing over the next few years.

There is no way to contain the disease and all the city's ash trees has been /will be exposed to it.

The action the council takes to control Elm disease by sanitation felling is not appropriate for ADB, it cannot be contained, or the spread controlled. We will only act where ash trees become a danger, to reduce the risk of falling parts which could cause injury or damage to persons and property. Where appropriate, we will replace trees with other trees suited to the woodland conditions.

The disease spreads via spores caught in the wind from tiny mushrooms born from the main leaf stalk and can spread within a ten-mile radius within one year. Over longer distances the risk of disease spread is most likely to be through the movement of diseased ash plants and foliage.

The movement of infected ash timber is not restricted and where possible felled ash timber will be removed. Where we leave timber on site this is due to limited access for extraction and for the creation of dead wood / habitat piles / dead-hedges to improve biodiversity. The decisions for which methods to employ will be based on the specific locations and woodland conditions. Further information on the disease is available from the Forestry Commission website.





# 5. General management advice

Other tree species in the areas affected may require removal during these works due to poor condition or over exposure to wind following the removal of adjacent ash trees. Furthermore, any elm trees which pose a threat to existing elm disease controls will also be removed, where necessary, as part of the ADB works.

#### Our basic management proposals are:

- Restrict the pace of landscape changes where possible, and as appropriate, planting replacement trees as quickly as is safely possible
- Work with the Forestry Commission on licence and restocking
- Identify any individuals or groups with possible genetic resistance to the disease
- Applications for works to ash trees under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) will be considered
  as per the current legislation with respect to disease and life expectancy
- Identifying effect on budget, timescales and costs more effectively
- Working in line with our current Elm disease management
- Minimising disruption and risk to the city's residents during tree felling operations
- Replanting where appropriate to protect soils, improve habitat structure and diversity of species

# 6. Landscape and biodiversity

- Review available historical wildlife and management records to inform regeneration plans relating to ADBP.
- Identify where tree loss will cause /create fragmentation of habitats, and replant trees accordingly so as to maintain connectivity and wildlife corridors
- Identify where tree loss will increase noise and decrease visual screening and replant trees accordingly
- Identifying any areas where tree loss will affect the prevention of flooding or soil stability



Working in line with current wildlife laws and legislation such as Env Act 2021, NERC 2006
 Act, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 etc, the UK Government's Biodiversity Plan and the
 BHCC Local Biodiversity Action Plan by identifying and considering areas and species of interest.

#### 7. Local landowners, land managers and homeowners

Here at BHCC we have identified that Ash Dieback will not only be felt by BHCC but by many local organisations and others in our communities. Within the BHCC ADAP we outline some of problems in trying to work with these other bodies and agencies. We will be identifying these areas and making sure that the other agencies understand the impacts that this problem may have on them.

# 8. Potential impact of Ash Dieback on our organisation

#### Health and safety impacts

- Areas of the city's woodlands and parks to be deemed as unsafe for public use due to declining ash trees
- BHCC staff and contractors working with an increasing risk when removing ash trees
- Increased health and safety issues because of declining ash trees on roads, owned and managed land such as in woodland and parks, housing estates, schools, cycleways, bridle paths and footpaths.
- Desire lines or unmarked path / cycle ways will not be prioritised as these are not publicly maintained. Designated footways only will be cleared first and then within the future management new pathways maybe cleared and created.
- Method of tree removal increasing in risk to contractors as trees become more hazardous,
   which will also increase costs to remove

#### **Economic and social impacts**

- Increased liabilities in cases of property damage and injury because of ADB related incidents.
- A shortage of suitable contractors coupled with recruitment difficulties may lead to inflated costs for work
- Increased direct and indirect costs caused by ADB such as additional staff, additional management activities and the impacts this may have on other services and budgets

#### **Reputational impacts**

 Political and reputational risks because of negative press and/or public criticism of ash dieback management.



- Potentially strained relationships with landowners and managers as ash dieback spreads and increased costs fall on the private owners' Environmental impacts.
- Landscape changes with impacts on recreational opportunities.

#### **Environmental Impacts**

- Loss of Fraxinus excelsior Ash trees for our Cityscape including multiple ecosystems services such as cultural, provisioning etc
- Loss of Ash woodland habitat and protection to other woodland species
- Possible changes / effects in environmental conditions within surrounding areas. Other tree species being affected due to new environmental changes (e.g., predation and loss of companion shelter).
- Cumulative impact on wider city's biodiversity from loss of particular species and general loss / fragmentation of habitats.
- Loss of species particularly associated with Ash trees. The JNCC identifies 44 species (of which 29 are invertebrates) that only occur on Ash trees (<a href="https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/1352bab5-3914-4a42-bb8a-a0a1e2b15f14/JNCC-Report-483-FINAL-WEB.pdf">https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/1352bab5-3914-4a42-bb8a-a0a1e2b15f14/JNCC-Report-483-FINAL-WEB.pdf</a>). Also 255 lichen species info here <a href="https://doi.org/10.1001/JTMC-Report-483-bb8a-a0a1e2b15f14/JNCC-Report-483-bb8a-a0a1e2b15f

## 9. The Delivery and Action Plan

The BHCC felling program and works are being planned for the next 3 years which will remove the high-risk ash from the highest risk areas. There will be more works to be undertaken for a possible 5-10 years to clear the remaining low risk ash and re- stock where appropriate. It has been identified that extra resource / staff and funding will be needed to achieve these goals, and for all the woodland across the city for the near future where maintenance work is needed. The plan will be reviewed and developed in terms of the on-going effectiveness of the ADBP and other site management plans that are already in place. The negative effect of ADB has already been mentioned but its larger impact will need to be reviewed in order to change what we are doing and how long this will take to achieve the end goal. Here are some of key factors in achieving the plan.

- In house team of inspectors, from City Parks, to identify and risk assess
- In house Arboriculture service team for any immediate tree issues arising from ADB
- GIS use and other surveying technology to help analyse and predict changes
- Training to in-house staff, and commissioning of other stakeholders / consultants to survey and observe the changes e.g., tree sapling and wildlife / ecological surveys



#### Activities required to ensure the Action Plan is effective

- Ash dieback surveying and Tree risk management / public safety focused methods to be used.
- In some instances ecological surveys to ensure legal compliance
- Create an Ash dieback group to deal with increase safety risk and discuss the future management.
- Review legal practice, creating partnerships with local Universities to aid with scientific studies around the resistance and theories in dealing with ADB.
- Carry out immediate removal of trees identified within ADB survey 2020-21. Focus public on
  public safety and communication networks (e.g., ash trees along public roads, public rights
  of way and railways; ash trees near overhead cables; ash trees away from road, cables etc)
  and longer-term risks to the environment e.g., biodiversity impacts; landscape restoration.
- Producing a communications strategy and public information updates on the latest ADB news page.
- Developing an ash dieback recovery review timetable and bespoke site management to assists in a sensitive but efficient recovery.

#### 10. Recovery from Ash Dieback

The recovery from ADB is going to be one of the greatest challenges of the plan and where we have the greatest chance of increasing and changing the landscape of the city's woodlands. We aim to increase the biodiversity across all the woodlands safeguarding soils and existing seedbanks, improving species and structural diversity, creating areas of new habitat, and protecting these areas for the future.

Here at BHCC we plan to replant/regenerate all the woodlands where ash has been removed due to ADB. In nearly all sites the need for a Forestry Commission licence demands a replant strategy and species list before the licence to remove the trees can be granted. There are 8 categories of recovery from ADB. Replant felled area, restock by natural generation, restock with individual trees, restock with coppiced trees are the main four methods we will be using across the city's woodlands. The main method in dealing with ADB will be to replant felled areas with some woodland sites left to regenerate naturally, dependant on existing tree species diversity and Forestry Commission felling licenses. The density and the species will be selected based on limitations and site conditions.

The limitations to replanting can be proximity to property or highways and site conditions e.g., species, age, soils, shading, and density of remaining trees. The BHCC inspectors will be carrying out site visits with a Forestry Commission officer to discuss and agree the correct method of removal, and also



working with Ecologists other local stakeholders, such as community groups, to identify areas of interest. Native trees of local provenance will be prioritised to restock the woodland, non-native species maybe used in the future for resilience against pest and diseases, seed genetics strengths and future resilience to a changing climate. We are in dialogue with multiple agencies who are involved in woodland regeneration plus local and national tree nurseries /suppliers to secure stock and adhere to plant health safety.

Most of the replanting will be carried out by the City Parks department, contractors and in-house staff, but we will be using voluntary groups and residents we have here in the city to help to achieve this. The design of the replanting plan is simple and is outlined in the Forestry Commission licence with spacing and density is measured pre-felling. We are only required to replant areas of lost canopy as part of the licencing and the available grants which we will be applying for.

The removal and recovery will also affect the wildlife and impact on the biodiversity of the city's woodlands. BHCC hope with the sensitive methods of removal and the restocking plan the impact to wildlife and residents will be at a minimum.

However, the safety of the public is our main concern which must be at the forefront of deciding when all ADB works begin which allows the recovery phase from ADB to be planned and delivered in a strategic and phased context.

# 11. ADB Planting List 2021-2022

Table 1 comprises mainly of native trees known for their value to biodiversity<sup>1</sup>. Any non-native trees have been added due to their characteristics and habitat value. Woodland edge trees have been selected for these characteristics and their lower final growth heigh 5m-12m. This group will be used to line the edge of the woodland paths and boundaries to properties, to create new habitats and improve the structure of those woodlands affected. Woodland centre trees have been selected for the characteristics and their final growth height 9m-22m. This group will be used to restock the central areas of the woodlands and different species percentages will be used in restocking due to the already resident species diversity. E.g. 15 % of beech in woodland – Restock percentage 5 % beech. This method will ensure not to restock a larger percentage of one species possibly forming future monocultures.

Table 1. Ash Replacement Tree Selection 2022-23

Habitat Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat Type	Common Name	Scientific Name
	<u>Blackthorn</u>	<u>Prunus spinosa</u>	<u>e</u>	Western Red cedar	<u>Thuja plicata</u>
밀	Cherry Plum	Prunus cerasifera	ent	Scotts Pine	Pinus sylvestris
oodland Edge	Common Buckthorn	Rhamnus cathartica	ΟP	European Lime	<u>Tilia x europaea</u>
	<u>Damson</u>	<u>Prunus domestica</u>	dlan	<u>Field Maple</u>	<u>Acer campestre</u>
≥	Dog Rose Rosa canina		000	<u>Holly</u>	Ilex aquifolium
	<u>Dogwood</u>	Cornus sanguinea	×	<u>Hornbeam</u>	Carpinus betulus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The value of different tree species for insects and lichens (countrysideinfo.co.uk)



Habitat Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat Type	Common Name	Scientific Name
	<u>Elder</u>	Sambucus nigra		Silver Birch	<u>Betula pendula</u>
	<u>Bullace</u>	<u>Prunus domestica</u>		<u>Walnut</u>	<u>Jugalns Nigra</u>
	<u>Guelder Rose</u>	<u>Viburnum opulus</u>		Wild Cherry	<u>Prunus avium</u>
	<u>Hawthorn</u>	Cratagous monogyna		Willow	Salix sp.(S. capraea)
	<u>Hazel</u>	<u>Corylus avellana</u>		<u>Yew</u>	<u>Taxus baccata</u>
	Wild Honeysuckle	Lonicera periclymenum		<u>Alder</u>	<u>Alnus glutinosa</u>
Juniper Juniperus communis			<u>Yew</u>	<u>Taxus bactta</u>	
	<u>Medlar</u>	<u>Mespilus germanica</u>		<u>Hornbeam</u>	Carpinus betulus
	<u>Spindle</u>	Euonymus europeaus		<u>Beech</u>	<u>Fagus sylvatica</u>
	Wayfaring Tree	<u>Viburnum lantana</u>		English Oak	Quercus robur
	<u>Whitebeam</u>	<u>Sorbus aria</u>		<u>Box</u>	Buxus sempervirens
	Wild Crab Apple	<u>Malus sylvestris</u>		Wild Service Tree	Sorbus torminalis
			<u>Walnut</u>	<u>Jugalns Nigra</u>	
				<u>Silver Birch</u>	<u>Betula pendula</u>
			Small Leaved Lime	<u>Tilia x cordata</u>	
				Wild Cherry	<u>Prunus avium</u>
				<u>Willow</u>	Salix sp.(S. capraea)
				<u>Yew</u>	<u>Taxus baccata</u>
				<u>Alder</u>	<u>Alnus glutinosa</u>
				<u>Yew</u>	<u>Taxus bactta</u>
				<u>Hornbeam</u>	Carpinus betulus
				<u>Beech</u>	<u>Fagus sylvatica</u>
				English Oak	<u>Quercus robur</u>
				<u>Box</u>	Buxus sempervirens
				Wild Service Tree	Sorbus torminalis

## 12. Future Costs, Estimated costs

Below is a table of costs which shows the spent total on ADB last Autumn/Winter season 2021-2022 (Table 2.) and the predicted costs for the next two years 2022-23 (Table 3.), 2023-24 (Table 4.). The amount will need to be adjusted each year due to rising costs as already contractors are increasing costs due to operating overheads. It is also predicted the ash removal across the city may take another 3-5 years, this will not be on the same scale but with large, isolated pockets of ash across the city and Estate properties the removal will need to be continued.

The tree planting, maintenance and monitoring of the woodlands will also need to be incorporated into the future budget for ADB works. The maintenance is a major part of the licencing from the Forestry Commission, and we will be inspected on the re-stocking and management conditions. We are also looking at government schemes and grants to help with financing the removal, protection and replanting. This will all be extra strain to the council's budgeting and any financial help we could gain form the Tree Plant Health Grant Scheme will assist in the removal and replanting program.

Table 2. 2021-22 Complete Ash Dieback Works and Final costs

Site Name	Cost. £	Date of Start – Finish
Abinger Road	43,900	01.22 - 03.22



Site Name	Cost. £	Date of Start – Finish
Moulescoombe Way (Stage1)	15.200	01.22 - 03.22
3Corner Copse (Stage 1)	29.900	02.22 – 04.22
Westdean Woods	36.8800	01.22 - 02.22
Wild Park Woods (Stage1)	31.500	01.22 - 02.22
Withdean Park (Stage 1)	36,000	02.22 - 03.22
Total	193.3900	

Table 3. 2022-23 Planned Ash Dieback Works and Estimated costs

Site Name	Estimated Cost. £	Planned start Date	
Wild Park Stage 2	100,000	2022-23	
Woodvale Cemetery Stage 1	25,000	2022-23	
Extra Memorial Cemetery Stage 1	25,000	2022-23	
Cooney Hill Stage 2	16,000	2022-23	
North and south woods Ovingdean.	15,000	2022-23	
Ditchling Road	16,510	2022-23	
A293	25,000	2022-23	
Withdean Stadium Woods Stage 1	25,000	2022-23	
Easthill Park Woodland	In house	2022-23	
Bersted Woods Stage 1	25,000	2022-23	
Hollingbing Woods Stage 1	30,000	2022-23	
Jevington Drive Stage 1	17,000	2022-23	
Coldene Woods Stage 2	30,000	2022-23	
Withdean Park Woods Stage 2	15,000	2022-23	
3 Corner Copse Stage 2	10,000	2022-23	
Heath Hill/Wild Bank wood Stage 1	30,000	2022-23	
Total Estimate	404,510		

Table 4. 2023-24 Planned Ash Dieback Works and Estimated costs



Site Name	Estimated Cost. £	Planned start Date
Wild Park Stage 3	100,000	2023-24
Woodvale Cemetery Stage 1	70,000	2023-24
Extra Memorial Cemetery Stage 2	70,000	2023-24
Jevington Drive Stage 2	30,000	2023-24
Heath Hill/Wild bank wood Stage 2	25,000	2023-24
Cooney Hill Stage 2	17,000	2023-24
Cooney Hill Stage 3	25,000	2023-24
Coldene Wooods Stage 2	25,000	2023-24
Stanmer Park Stage 2	100,000	2023-24
Stanmer Park Stage 3	100,000	2023-24
Stanmer Park Stage 4	50,000	2023-24
A293	45,000	2023-24
Standean Farm	30,000	2023-24
Withdean Stadium Woods	15,000	2023-24
Bersted Woods Stage2	35,000	2023-24
Hollingbing Woods Stage 2	45,000	2023-24
Total Estimate	£782,000	