

Management of Pest and Disease in Trees

Purpose and Scope

This document sets out how the Council aims to safeguard and enhance the health, safety, and biodiversity of trees under the ownership of St Albans City & District Council by proactively managing existing pest and disease threats through systematic monitoring, targeted interventions, and public engagement.

It applies to all trees located on land owned or managed by the Council, including parks, green spaces, cemeteries, Council housing areas, and public open spaces. It does not cover trees situated on the public highway, which are managed in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Tree Policy and Strategy.

Objectives

- Monitor and identify key pest and disease threats affecting Council-owned trees.
- Reduce the impact of pests and diseases on tree health and public safety.
- Support biodiversity and promote ecological resilience.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, standards, and best practice guidance.

Priority Threats

The Council currently recognises the following pests and diseases as significant threats:

- Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
- Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopea processionea*)
- Dutch Elm Disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*)
- Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner (*Cameraria ohridella*)
- Phytophthora species (e.g., *P. ramorum*)

Management Approach

1. Monitoring and Inspection

- Undertake cyclical inspections every three years by qualified arboricultural professionals.
- Maintain a GIS-based tree inventory with up-to-date pest and disease records.
- Encourage and utilise public reporting to supplement monitoring efforts.

2. Risk Assessment

- Prioritise management actions based on risks to public safety, tree health, and ecological value.
- Apply recognised industry-wide Tree Risk Management protocols to inform decision-making.

3. Intervention and Control

- Remove or prune affected trees where necessary to prevent spread.
- Use biological or chemical treatments where appropriate and legally permitted.
- Implement containment or quarantine measures for high-risk pathogens.

Biosecurity Measures

All tree-related works are undertaken by approved contractors who adhere to strict biosecurity protocols to minimise the risk of spreading pests and diseases. Contractors are required to:

- Maintain current training in recognised biosecurity standards and best practices.
- Clean and disinfect all tools, vehicles, and equipment between work sites to prevent cross-contamination.
- Avoid transporting any plant material that may be infected or pose a biosecurity risk.

In addition, when purchasing and planting new trees, the following measures apply:

- Source trees from reputable nurseries that comply with plant health regulations and provide certification of disease-free stock.
- Inspect all trees prior to planting for signs of pests, disease, or poor health.
- Avoid high-risk species or varieties known to be susceptible to current outbreaks or invasive pests.
- Ensure proper handling and transport to prevent contamination during delivery.
- Dispose of packaging and waste responsibly, following biosecurity guidelines.

Communication and Engagement

- Provide clear and timely information to the public regarding tree health issues where relevant.
- Collaborate with community groups and volunteers to raise awareness and support monitoring.
- Work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and national organisations such as the Forestry Commission and DEFRA.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Principal Parks and Green Spaces Officer: Leads implementation and coordination of the policy.
- Arboricultural and Tree Officers/Inspectors: Conduct inspections and recommend appropriate actions.

- Contractors: Deliver tree works in accordance with Council standards and biosecurity protocols.
- Public and Stakeholders: Support monitoring efforts by reporting concerns and observations.