

# Tree Diseases and the action the Council is taking— an overview

Overview and Scrutiny

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**September 2025**



**Brighton & Hove**  
**City Council**

# The fight against tree disease and why it matters

**A City to be proud of** – protecting our trees from disease and improving safety for residents where tree disease results in risk to the public

**A healthy city where people thrive** – trees are important assets for our parks, gardens and streets which play an important role in pollution control, cooling, the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of people living in our city

**A fair and inclusive city** – maintaining a healthy tree population across the city will ensure equitable access to nature and a home for local wildlife

**Well-run council services** – world renowned management of Elm Disease and preservation of National Elm Collection. Innovation using modern technology and UK first mass inoculation program.



**Protecting our  
unique and  
valuable tree  
population for  
the benefit of all**

- ✓ Commitment to **better community engagement** around Ash Dieback (ADB)
- ✓ **Innovation** in harnessing technology and new controls
- ✓ **Biosecurity push** targeting tree planting in the city and log storage



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# Overview

- ✓ **Consistent investment and support** in fight against tree disease has preserved the city's unique and valuable collection (est. **£549m urban tree stock capital value** – Treeconomics 2022)
- ✓ **FY2025-26 BHCC tree disease budget of £335k** for Ash Dieback and Elm Disease
- ✓ **Overspend for Elm Disease this FY** – annual costs are not static or predictable, 100% of infections found each summer in the city are dealt with by BHCC
- ✓ **Biosecurity is critical for prevention of future pests and diseases**
- ✓ **Tree disease strategy to be developed** as part of an overarching Tree Strategy for BHCC

## Priority in B&H now

- Elm Disease – tree/canopy loss
- Ash Dieback – public safety/woodland impact

**Costs for managing tree disease have increased in recent years. BHCC Elm Disease control has always depended on funding to deal with 100% of all infections city wide found each year. This approach prevents much larger elm tree losses each year.**

# Elm Disease (ED) Management

- **Intensive on-going program** of identification and felling of infected trees each summer
- High levels of ED, but it is **not currently accelerating due to control measures**
- **Elm log storage/elm debris/elm regeneration a persistent source of infections**
- **Dutch Trig injections are working** **FY2025/26 1500 trees injected = £40k of ED budget**

## COSTS

### Annual costs for ED felling and elm inoculation works

FY 2023/24  
£290k

FY 2024/25  
£260k

FY 2025/26  
£164k budget  
+ £100k current  
reported  
overspend

## ACTION

- **Completion of backlog of 100% of ED works for this FY** – large volume of summer work continues into winter
- **Maintain current 100% control program** or loss of control leading to significant upsurge in infections/tree death = **+£30m BHCC liability to fell and replace street elms over 5yrs if control not maintained**
- **Explore potential for resident/corporate sponsored scheme** for Dutch Trig inoculations
- **Develop long term strategy for Elm Disease Management** as part of wider Tree Strategy for

# Ash Dieback Disease (ADB) Management

- **No containment/control possible** – works are public safety led and focused on areas of concern (woodland mainly)
- **Felling licences are conditioned for 10yrs** – annual maintenance checks/works required for replanting or regeneration success
- **Current vacancy for ADB Coordinator post**
- **Phased approach to felling** based on risk prioritisation but unfinished sites prevents replanting works

## Annual costs for Ash Dieback works

### COSTS

FY 2023/24  
£273k

FY 2024/25  
£230k

FY 2025/26  
£164k budget  
Yet to be spent  
(winter  
program)

### ACTION

- **1 Hectare site planned for replant** this winter 2025-26 in Stanmer
- Comms improvement including **Woodland Advisory Group** and review of process
- **Maintenance of Woodland sites affected required long term**, previously no program
- **Review of Ash Dieback Action Plan** with longer term strategy for managing woodlands in light of ADB



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# Other tree disease and pest impacts



## Elm Zig Zag Sawfly (recent)

- Relatively new invasive pest affecting all elm species
- Expected to boost Elm Disease infections
- Dutch Trig will help to combat

### ACTION

- No containment or control possible
- Monitoring

## Horse Chestnut - various (well established)

- 3 pathogens all combining to a decline in common HCs throughout the city
- We are gradually losing this species

### ACTION

- **Steady removal of trees in decline** as part of existing tree maintenance budgets

## Oak Processionary Moth – OPM (likely)

- Heading to South Coast
- OPM is public health concern

### ACTION

- Monitoring progress of cases in South-East towards the city – none yet

## Future UK threats

**Xylella**

**Asian Longhorn Beetle**

**Emerald Ash Borer**