

OFFICIAL



Elmbridge

Borough Council

Tree Risk Management Strategy 2026



Date: December 2025

Authors: J. Marengi & R. Gibbons

Version: 2.3

OFFICIAL

Contents

Tree Risk Management Strategy 2026	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Mission Statement & Aims	4
3. Tree Risk - Proportionality vs Value	6
4. Legislation and Duty of Care	6
5. Benefits of a Tree Risk Strategy	8
6. Which Trees to Inspect and Why – Target Zones & Frequency.....	9
7. Types of Inspection and Levels of Expertise.....	12
8. What to Record and How	15
9. Priority for Remedial Tree Work.....	17
10. Management of Council Trees Adjoining Private Property	18
11. Suspected Subsidence Cases Involving Council Trees	20
12. Lease Renewals and New Leases	21
13. Pests and Diseases.....	21
14. Management of Privately Owned Trees	24
15. Performance Indicators	24
16. Councillor Notifications.....	25
17. Review.....	26
Appendix a) Background documents and case law.....	27
Appendix b) VTA – Visual Tree Assessment	28
Appendix c) Definitions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix d) General tree features when inspecting trees.....	29
Appendix e) - Risk Zone Maps	31
Appendix f) Target and inspection level chart	34
Appendix g) Priority time frames for remedial works	35
Appendix h) OPM Risk Map.....	36
Appendix i) OPM (Key Facts and Threats).....	37
Appendix j) Ash dieback.....	39
Appendix k) Example tree incident report and failure log	40

1. Introduction

Elmbridge Borough Council recognises the responsibility to proactively manage the hazards presented by trees under its control and support a coordinated and focused approach to managing them.

This strategy has been created as a guide on how Elmbridge Borough Council will manage the risk from its trees. The guide is aimed at council officers and all stakeholders, including councillors, residents and users of land owned and managed by Elmbridge Borough Council.

Trees and woodlands are fundamental to the character, identity, and environmental health of Elmbridge Borough. They have played a vital role throughout history providing food, fuel, shelter, tools, and transport and continue to deliver a wide range of ecological, social, and economic benefits today. Scientific research confirms that access to green spaces, including treed landscapes, reduces stress and improves public health outcomes. Looking ahead, trees will be essential in supporting climate resilience, enhancing biodiversity, and maintaining a habitable environment for current and future generations.

Elmbridge boasts an average tree canopy cover of 25%, well above the national average of 16% while also being the most densely populated Borough in Surrey. This juxtaposition highlights both the exceptional value and the management challenges associated with maintaining a substantial urban and semi-urban tree population. The Council manages a significant number of trees across diverse land types, including 20 countryside sites covering approximately 550 hectares.

Among the most notable of these is Esher Common, a 360 hectare site (representing 3% of the Borough's total area) with a rich heritage. Its mosaic of woodland, heathland, and wetland habitats supports a wide range of flora and fauna, including rare species of butterflies, beetles, and reptiles.

Given the extensive distribution of trees across Council managed land often in close proximity to homes, schools, roads, and other infrastructure, Elmbridge Borough Council carries a significant responsibility for managing tree risk. This responsibility includes land that is publicly accessible or borders public rights of way, requiring a strategic, proportionate, and evidence based approach to tree risk management.

Definitions:

- Definition of a tree For the purpose of Elmbridge Borough Council tree surveying, a tree is a (generally single stemmed) woody plant of minimally 15

cm diameter at breast height (DBH) and minimally 5 m height. Trees of lesser stature can be included if, in the opinion of the inspector or they pose an obvious risk.

Definition of a tree defect

Defects which justify recording a tree are those items or symptoms which result in that tree or its parts to pose a higher-than-average risk to cause harm or damage to people or property.

Items that do not justify trees to be recorded include:

- Pruning wounds without any active or significant decay
- Small dead wood which is not related to apparent overall decline –
- Leaning or one-sided trees without evidence of compromised (root) stability.
- Minor defects which, due to their location, are very unlikely to cause harm or damage, such as a dead or broken branch in the crown area which is away from public access.
- Ordinary growth deformations not normally associated with defects likely to result in increased risk.

Definition of an important tree

Trees defined as important are usually significant in the landscape or have historic or local importance, rarity, size, veteran tree status and ecological importance.

2. Mission Statement and Aims

Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to the responsible, proactive, and proportionate management of tree related risk across its estate. Recognising the vital role that trees play in public health, biodiversity, climate resilience, and local character, the Council seeks to ensure that trees under its stewardship are managed in a way that protects people, property, and infrastructure, while also safeguarding the long term value of the Borough's treescape.

This Tree Risk Management Strategy establishes a clear framework for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of tree related risks. It supports a systematic, evidence led approach to decision making, in line with current legislation, national guidance, industry best practice, and relevant case law.

Through collaboration with stakeholders and informed by expert input, the strategy aims to balance public safety with environmental sustainability. It provides a basis for transparent, consistent, and cost effective tree risk management that meets the Council's legal responsibilities and aligns with its wider environmental and community objectives.

Ultimately, this strategy will guide Elmbridge Borough Council in managing its tree and woodland assets both responsibly and sustainably, ensuring they continue to benefit residents, wildlife, and the wider environment now and into the future.

Elmbridge Borough Council Tree Risk Management Strategy Aims:

- Establish a proactive, systematic, and proportionate approach to managing tree related risk across Council managed land, minimising the likelihood of both foreseeable and unforeseeable tree failures.
- Define inspection zones and set appropriate levels and frequencies of tree inspections, based on target areas and potential impact.
- Provide a robust framework for prioritising and allocating resources, ensuring efficient and effective use of Council budgets.
- Clearly outline the roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines within the Council in relation to tree risk management.
- Embed a culture of risk awareness among staff, contractors, and all those involved in delivering Council services that may interact with trees or tree related assets.
- Promote collaboration in managing tree risk, including engagement with private landowners where appropriate.
- Maintain clear, documented procedures for the assessment, control, and mitigation of tree risk, including the provision of training, information, and supervision.
- Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of tree risk management practices, ensuring they remain effective, legally compliant, and responsive to emerging challenges.
- Ensure Members are appropriately informed of strategic tree risk management issues, promoting transparency and accountability in decision making.

3. Tree Risk - Proportionality vs Value

Data from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) indicates that the risk of a tree failure resulting in a fatal injury in areas of high public use is approximately 1 in 10 million. To put this into context, on average failing trees or branches kill six people a year. This level of risk is classified as “broadly acceptable” according to the HSE’s Reducing Risks, Protecting People framework and its Tolerability of Risk triangle. Despite this, public perception of tree related risk can often be higher particularly in the aftermath of incidents leading to increased concern and pressure for removal or heavy intervention.

However, the complete elimination of risk is neither feasible nor desirable. In the context of tree management, the expectation is for a reasonable and proportionate approach and one that recognises the need to protect people and property, while also preserving the significant social, environmental, and ecological value that trees provide.

Tree risk management should therefore focus on identifying and managing trees that present an unacceptable risk, without resorting to overly cautious practices that result in unnecessary tree loss. This requires policies that establish clear thresholds for acceptable risk, supported by transparent, evidence based decision making.

While the benefits provided by trees including air quality improvement, climate mitigation, biodiversity support, and mental health enhancement are substantial, they are not always easily quantified in economic terms. As such, a balanced approach is essential, and one that considers the cost and practicality of risk mitigation against the often irreplaceable value of mature trees and woodlands.

This strategy recognises that tree risk management is not about pursuing absolute safety, but about making informed, proportionate decisions that respect both the public’s safety and the wider benefits that trees bring to Elmbridge.

4. Legislation and Duty of Care

The approach takes account of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – Occupier Liability Acts (1957 and 1984), as well as strategies developed by other Local Authorities, industry guidance, and relevant case law.

The Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 imposes a ‘duty of care’ on the landowner to do what is reasonably practicable to prevent foreseeable harm from trees under the

occupiers' ownership or management. This duty also extends to uninvited visitors to land if there is a known danger present on the occupier's land.

Whether trees are managed for landscape, habitat, commercial or multi-purpose objectives, the legal obligation to ensure the reasonable safety of others remains the same. The law recognises that there is a balance to be struck between the risks and benefits of trees.

Under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984, Elmbridge Borough Council, as both owner and occupier of the land, owes a duty to take reasonable care in relation to risks arising from trees on its property. This duty requires the Council to assess the level of risk posed by a tree, to identify any obvious sources of danger, and to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to mitigate those risks.

Liability will arise where a danger associated with a tree was reasonably foreseeable and where the Council failed to implement reasonable measures that could have reduced the risk to an acceptable level. In essence, the test is whether the Council acted reasonably in light of the foreseeable danger and whether proportionate precautions were taken to safeguard against harm.

In the unfortunate situation of a claim or case being made against Elmbridge Borough Council because of tree failure, this document, together with survey records, will explain the position of Elmbridge Borough Council and approach in respect of management of hazards posed by its tree stock.

HSE guidance states that:

“doing all that is reasonably practicable does not mean that all trees have to be examined on a regular basis”

“a decision has to be taken on what is reasonable in the circumstances and this will include consideration of the risks to which people may be exposed.”

Therefore, a proactive system of tree inspection for specific zones of varying levels of risk as recommended by the HSE should enable the Council to comply with the above legislation.

This document sets out how that system will operate in Elmbridge.

Using 'reasonably practicable' allows HSE to set goals for duty holders rather than being prescriptive and allows the duty holder to choose the method which suits them best allowing for innovation. Determining that risks have been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable involves an evaluation of both the risk and the sacrifice or cost involved in reducing the risk.

Expense of tree assessment should proceed on a rational, cost effective basis, the regime should strike a balance between risk presented and benefits accumulated. The balance should be based on risk assessment involving a risk/benefit tradeoff between safety, cost and other goals. Because trees present a low risk to people management

decisions and planning within this context should avoid unnecessary intervention and ensuring management is proportionate.

See appendix a) - Background documents and case law.

5. Benefits of a Tree Risk Strategy

Implementing a Tree Risk Management Policy provides Elmbridge Borough Council with a structured, defensible, and sustainable approach to managing tree related risk.

Key benefits include:

Public Safety: Helps protect residents, visitors, and property by identifying and mitigating unacceptable risks from tree failure in a proactive and proportionate manner.

Legal Compliance: Supports the Council in fulfilling its legal duties under health and safety legislation, common law, and national guidance including the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE), ensuring the Council meets its legal responsibilities under health and safety laws and industry best practices.

Efficient Resource Use: Prioritises inspections and interventions based on risk, enabling targeted allocation of budgets and staff time to areas of greatest need.

Environmental Stewardship: Ensures that risk management decisions consider and minimise impacts on tree health, biodiversity, and the wider environment.

Transparency and Accountability: Establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and decision making processes, improving internal coordination and public confidence.

Resilience and Continuity: Provides contingency planning and risk control procedures to enhance the Council's ability to respond to incidents and extreme weather events.

Informed Decision Making: Supports evidence based assessments that balance the benefits of trees with associated risks, avoiding unnecessary removals and preserving Elmbridge's green infrastructure.

Community Engagement and Education: Encourages awareness of shared responsibility for trees, supporting a more informed and engaged public.

Public Confidence: Reinforces the public's confidence in the Council's ability to manage its tree assets responsibly and transparently, ensuring that both safety and environmental benefits are preserved.

Improved Tree Care and Conservation: Ensures trees with high ecological or amenity value, including those in poor health or aging, are carefully managed, avoiding unnecessary removal or damage to trees with significant wildlife or aesthetic value.

6. Which Trees to Inspect and Why – Target Zones and Frequency

The need for a particular tree or group of trees to be inspected depends on the usage of the area within their potential falling distance. Inspection is unquestionably necessary within zones where people, or high value items of property, are continuously or frequently present close to trees which are capable of being hazardous. However, there are remote areas where tree failures are very unlikely to cause injury or damage, even though the risk of such an outcome cannot be entirely disregarded. Even at a more heavily used site, it could be that the risk is currently very low by virtue of the size and species of the trees present or complete lack of trees.

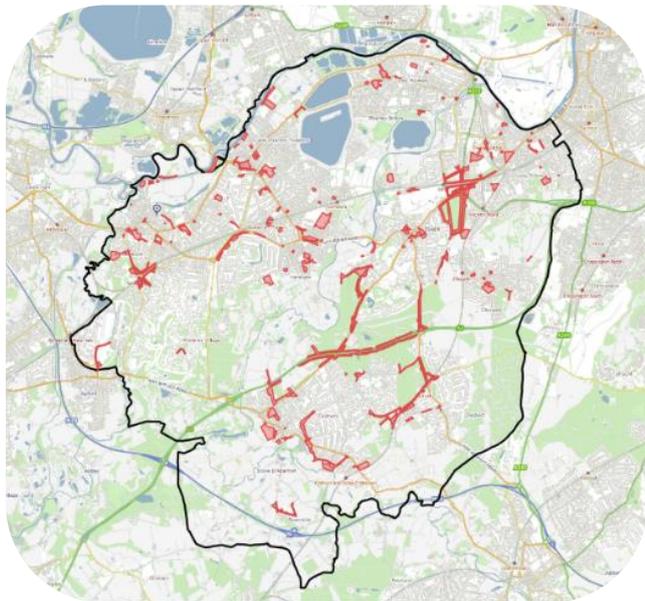
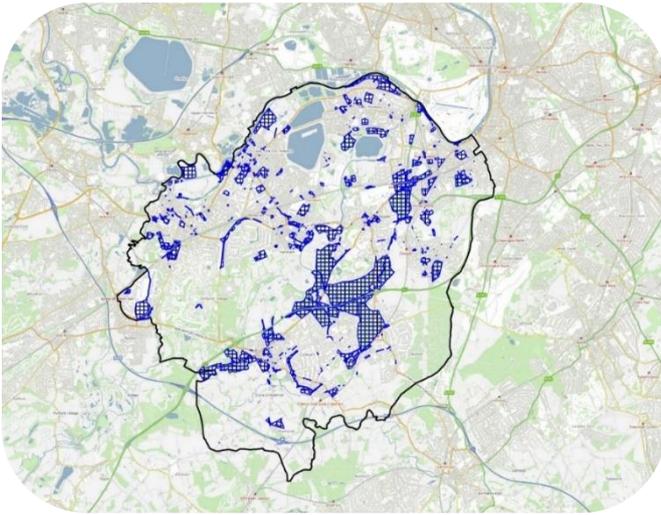
There cannot, therefore, be a hard and fast distinction between sites or part of sites where inspection is essential and where it is entirely unnecessary. The key consideration is foreseeability; if it can be reasonably foreseen that anyone could be at risk, the occupier has a duty of care to reduce that risk within reason.

Target zones classify areas according to target value and frequency of use and provide a notional range of risk from high to low. If a site has a significant number of trees with a variety of targets, the use of target zoning can aid decisions on the nature and priority of inspections.

Zone classifications are not absolute values that can be compared from one site to another, but provide information to help determine the need for, and priority of, inspection relevant to a particular site. As the nature of site usage may change, it will be necessary to review these zones periodically.

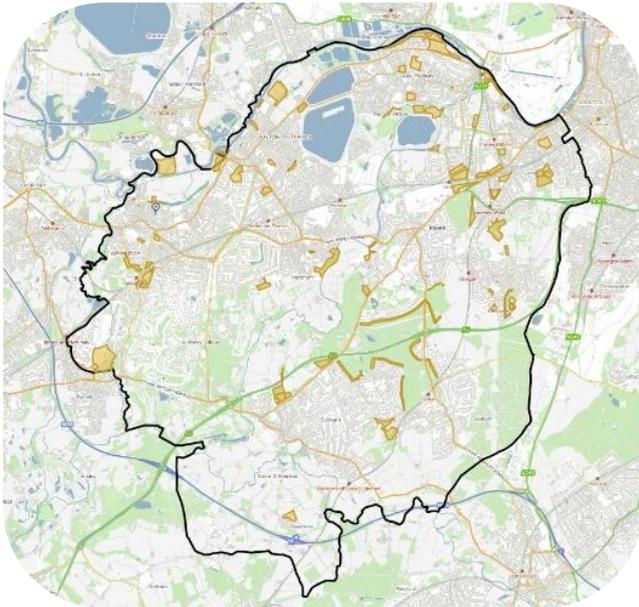
Witley Parish Council v Cavanagh (2018) suggested that a period of 3 years between tree inspections was too long. Therefore, inspection should take place every 2 years in residential areas or where there is a similar risk of damage, injury, or fatality. This timescale forms the basis of determining the frequency of inspection for the high frequency inspection zones identified.

All the Council's land holdings have been assigned either High, Medium or Low risk zones. The below map identifies all the known land owned by Elmbridge Borough Council.



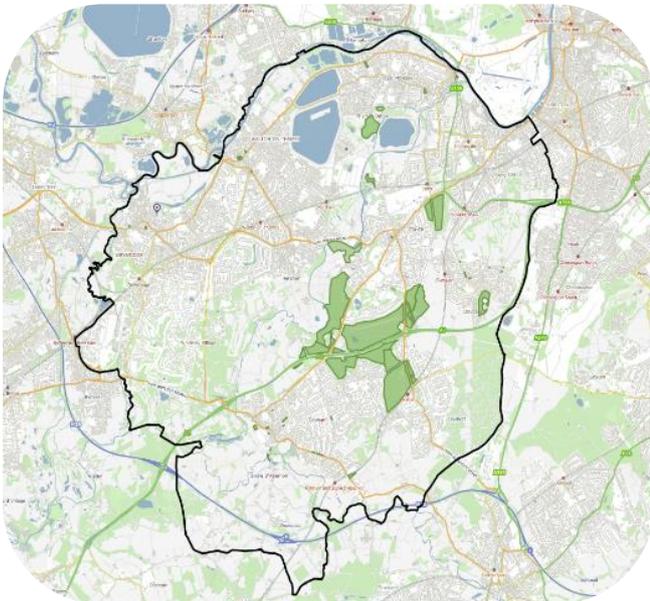
Zone 1 - HIGH RISK (RED): – Inspect every two years

Zones identified as having the highest likelihood of a significant tree failure involving persons or property, due to their high frequency of use.



**Zone 2 - MEDIUM RISK
(ORANGE/AMBER) – Inspect every
four years**

Zones identified as having a lower likelihood of a significant tree failure involving persons or property, than the high frequency zones. However, due to their often intermittent frequency of use, there is still a requirement for formal tree inspection, but on a lower frequency.



**Zone 3 - LOW RISK (GREEN) – No
proactive inspection required**

The likelihood of a significant tree failure involving persons or property identified within these zones is identified as low enough that there is no requirement for a formal tree inspection frequency. Any works required would be reactive or included in a management plan that considers the whole group/area e.g. a silvicultural operation. See appendix d) – Risk zone maps (Enlarged)

7. Types of Inspection and Levels of Expertise

Target Zone	Colouring on Map	Examples of Target Area Trees In or Adjacent To:	Level of Inspection	Frequency of Assessment	Inspector Minimum Level of Competence
High Risk (Zone 1)	Red	Well used areas; playgrounds, high use recreations grounds, car parks and frequently occupied buildings, land adjacent to railways, heavily used roads or junctions, occupied property, high frequency footpaths, community centres and some cemeteries.	Detailed & Formal	Two years	Advanced Professional Tree Inspection qualification (LANTRA).
Medium Risk (Zone 2)	Orange/Amber	Well frequented open woodland areas, woodlands abutting residential areas; open space, cemeteries, some parks and recreation grounds, gardens, footpaths, and bridleways with moderate use, occasionally used buildings and car parks, access routes to other properties, sports pitches, some allotments	Formal	Four years	Basic Basic Tree Survey and Inspection qualification (LANTRA).
Low Risk (Zone 3)	Green	Open parkland, woodland heathland, fields, paths, lanes and bridleways with occasional use and no other high value or vulnerable targets	Informal	During normal routine visits by site managers.	No specialist knowledge required

A) Detailed inspections

The need for detailed inspections typically only applies to individual, high value trees giving high priority concern in highly used zones. Given that most trees pose an extremely low risk, it is unreasonable to expect that every tree in each area should receive a detailed inspection; to do so would be grossly disproportionate to the benefit gained in risk reduction.

Detailed inspections are therefore typically reserved for trees valued for their heritage, amenity, or habitat and which are suspected of posing a high level of risk, as already identified through owner interest or a previous formal or informal assessment.

The detailed inspection will normally be prioritised according to the level of safety concern, and will usually entail an initial ground level, visual assessment by an appropriately competent specialist looking at the exterior of the tree for signs of structural defects and likelihood of failure.

In rare special cases, further detailed investigations may be required, involving soil and root condition assessments, aerial inspections of upper trunk and crown, or other

procedures to evaluate the nature of suspected decay and defects, including using specialist diagnostic tools.

Who can undertake a detailed inspection?

Detailed inspections require an appropriately competent person with advanced experience in the field of investigation that is to be carried out and who holds the minimum industry Level 3 qualification in arboriculture and recognised Professional Tree Inspection qualification (LANTRA).

The inspector should be able to consider a wide range of issues. For example, if the rooting environment is identified to be a likely problem the inspector might be required to demonstrate competence in soil assessment; similarly with a tree inspector concerned with structural stability and their ability to demonstrate sound arboricultural competence and experience and knowledge in tree risk management.

The inspector involved in conducting a detailed tree inspection should be able to demonstrate the reasonable basis for allocating risks according to priority and identify effective ways of managing those tree related risks.

They also need an ability to recognise obviously visible signs of serious ill health or likely short term significant structural problems, such as substantial fractured branches or a rocking root plate which, were they to cause tree failure, could result in serious harm.

B) Formal inspections

In a formal inspection, someone visits the tree with the specific purpose of performing an inspection, which is not incidental to other activities. The spectrum of formal inspection ranges from survey work for tree inventories, to health and condition assessments.

These will be undertaken by 'walk over' inspections, ground based visual checks, or aerial assessment. Walk over inspections are accepted types of reasonable risk assessment depending on the circumstances.

Simple formal inspection through ground level visual checks during walk over surveys provides a useful, cost-effective means of identifying clear and present signs of imminent instability.

This is an important means of identifying when pressing action is needed, including a further detailed inspection.

Who can undertake a formal inspection?

Formal inspections do not necessarily require specific qualifications however it is recommended that inspectors hold the industry recognised Professional Tree qualification (LANTRA).

Inspectors will require general tree knowledge and the ability to recognise normal and anomalous appearance and growth for the locality. Inspectors need the capacity to assess approximate tree height and falling distance from the tree to the area of use.

C) Informal Inspections

Informal inspections happen on an ad-hoc basis when areas are being visited as part of day-to-day activities. This form of inspection is incidental to other activities.

Who can undertake an informal inspection?

People with a common sense connection with their environment and local familiarity with trees are suited to carrying out informal inspections.

Typically, this does not require an inspector with specialist knowledge of trees, but rather those closely associated with a property, such as the owner, gardener, other staff, or agent, who understand the way the property is used (areas most and least frequented) and the extent of the danger, should a tree be found that is unstable. However, reports of problems by staff or members of the public are also an integral part of informal inspections and can be acted upon.

See Appendix e) Target and inspection level chart (Enlarged)

8. What to Record and How

A datasheet identifying all of the Council's known land holdings and what risk zone they fall into has been prepared and will be updated and reviewed on a cyclical basis. The data sheet includes site name, address, risk rating and historical inspection dates. This document is used to co-ordinate inspection schedules and record the date of completed site inspections. Records of inspections must be entered onto the Tree Risk Master Spreadsheet and onto the Councils Tree Risk Layer on Mapstack (GIS mapping System).

Based on the type of land owned by Elmbridge Borough Council and available resources to manage it, the plotting of every individual tree is not practical. Trees will only be recorded if they have notable defects and/or require maintenance within a particular inspected area (negative surveying). All trees requiring work will be recorded on Kaarbontech's Tree Smart which is a piece of asset management software.

Field workers will plot an accurate location of the tree with GPS and visible land features and record inspection observations using a tablet computer which communicates with the office system to present data in one accessible place.

Trees requiring work will be identified with a numbered round metal tag and in some circumstances fluorescent marker spray paint is used so that the trees can be identified in woodland sites or sites with thick vegetation.

The following information is recorded for each tree.

- Tree Species
- Tree Comments – Observations relating to ownership query
- Tree or Group Tag Number
- Tree Preservation Order
- Location Description
- Tree Properties – Estimated general height and canopy spread
- Inspection Frequency
- Age / life stage
- Vitality
- Observations
- Recommended works
- Photographs
- Priority for completed works

The record of inspection of an area/defined site shown on the datasheet with the recommended works and date completed is evidence to demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled its obligation when no trees are plotted for that inspection round.

Where individual trees have been highlighted for maintenance, specifications for remedial works, dates of completion, will also be recorded on the tree risk software Tree Smart. Records provide the basis for safety management reviews and can, over

time, build a valuable historical record of site specific tree failure or non failure patterns. Once hazards have been assessed or work completed, re-inspection times should be assigned or reviewed and then recorded.

Where tree works are identified they will be prioritised. Works that are immediate or high priority will be carried out first before medium and low priority works. This can enable the tree works to remain within the parameters of the budget available.

The tree survey may identify trees that have not previously been recorded. It is likely that some remedial works will be necessary the Council were not previously aware of due to the biological nature of trees. Following complete cycles of surveying and remedial works, it is anticipated that the amount of work generated by the surveys will reduce in volume, priority and frequency.

Works will be prioritised so that the budget expenditure can be limited in a rational manner. It will be important to manage and review the current financial resource available given that additional funding may be required through the presence and spread of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM).

Summary of Record Keeping

Datasheet – Excel spreadsheet format containing all the Council's known land holdings with wards, site names, addresses, managing department, risk rating, and inspection dates.

Tree Smart Software – Records each tree or group of trees as assets with detailed descriptions and tree work recommendations. Used to produce work packages with maps and tree work descriptions.

Mapstack – Elmbridge's internal GIS system records the sites by area including last inspection dates, managing department and risk ratings.

Tree Incident Report and Failure Log - Tree incident reporting and the failure log should be used internally to record where practical all known tree failures. A record shall be kept of all tree failures, regardless of whether they are in part of or whole tree.

See appendix h) Example tree incident report and failure log

9. Priority for Remedial Tree Work

Identified tree works will be prioritised based on urgency. Immediate and priority works will be addressed first, followed by medium and low priority tasks. This approach is taken to help keep the works within the available budget. Where necessary, additional funding may be requested, with such requests being considered alongside the Council's wider responsibilities and financial commitments

Tree work priority time frames to be allocated based on the opinion and experience of the inspector:

P1 - IMMEDIATE SAFETY WORK	Work ordered immediately and completed within 1 week or sooner. Typically classified as EMERGENCY work requiring an immediate response to remove a hazard. Access to tree location may be restricted until work can be completed.
P2 - PRIORITY SAFETY WORK	Work ordered same day and completed within 6 weeks of inspection – Work to be classified as ESSENTIAL , associated with mitigation of a foreseeable danger
P3 - PLANNED SAFETY WORK	Work completed within 12 weeks of inspection – Work to be classified as ESSENTIAL , associated with mitigation of an obstruction or removal of structural defects.
P4 - MAINTENANCE WORK	Work completed within 6 months year of inspection – Work to be classified as MAINTENANCE , associated with maintenance work including cyclical pruning / deadwood removal
P5 - MANAGEMENT WORK	Work completed within 12 Months - Work to be classified as NON-ESSENTIAL , associated with shaping healthy tree canopy, select healthy tree removal, clearance for grounds maintenance operations.

The record of inspection of an area shown on the datasheet with the recommended works and date completed is enough to demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled its statutory obligations.

See Appendix (f) Priority timeframes for remedial tree works

10. Management of Council Trees Adjoining Private Property

Elmbridge Borough Council adopts a balanced and responsible approach to managing Council owned trees that adjoin or encroach onto private property. Common urban conflicts involving trees typically arise in relation to pedestrians, vehicles, property boundaries, buildings, and drainage systems.

Public Highways

The Council's primary responsibility regarding trees growing on Elmbridge Council land on or near public highways is to ensure compliance with Highway Regulations. This includes:

- Regular inspections to identify and mitigate hazards posed by trees.
- Preventing obstruction to roads, driveways, or sightlines.
- Maintaining clear pedestrian access along footpaths and highways.

Low hanging branches and epicormic growth from trees growing on Elmbridge Council land will be pruned or lifted as needed to allow safe access for large vehicles and prevent damage to both vehicles and trees. Council owned trees that encroach onto the highway will be subject to regular inspection and maintenance to ensure sufficient clearance for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Overhanging Branches

The Council is not obligated to prune back branches from Council owned trees that extend into private property. However, we will investigate reports of property damage allegedly caused by such encroachment. If it is determined that the trees are causing direct damage or pose an unacceptable risk, remedial action may be taken at the Council's discretion.

Light and Shade

The Council will not prune or remove Council owned trees to improve light conditions to private properties.

While the Rights of Light Act 1959 may provide protection where daylight has been received for a continuous 20 year period, trees are rarely implicated under this legislation due to their gradual growth and the difficulty in proving the timing of light loss. In all other cases there is no inherent 'right to light' in relation to trees or hedges.

Satellite Reception and Solar Panels

There is no legal requirement for the Council to prune or remove trees to improve TV, satellite, or solar panel reception. A TV license permits the use of receiving equipment but does not guarantee signal quality. It is the responsibility of property owners and satellite providers to consider potential obstructions, including trees, when installing equipment.

Similarly, those installing solar panels must take into account the mature height and spread of nearby vegetation. The Council will not carry out pruning or tree removal to improve access to sunlight for solar panels and to facilitate TV or satellite reception.

Leaves, Seeds, and Natural Tree Debris

While we acknowledge the inconvenience and cost of cleaning up fallen leaves, seeds, sap, catkins, flowers, or pollen, these are natural and essential characteristics of trees. There is no legal obligation for the Council to prune or remove trees to prevent such occurrences.

Elmbridge Borough Council does not undertake pruning to avoid natural debris falling onto private property. However, we remain committed to protecting and managing our tree stock responsibly for the benefit of current and future generations.

Honey Dew

Some trees produce a sticky residue known as "honeydew," which is caused by aphid secretions, not the trees themselves. Although unsightly, honeydew is sugar based and not harmful to the health of the tree. It can usually be removed from surfaces with soap and water.

The Council does not use insecticides or undertake pruning to control aphid populations or reduce honeydew production.

Squirrel Activity

The Council is not obligated to prune or remove trees to prevent squirrels from entering private properties. Property owners are advised to consider pest control or squirrel proofing measures. However, we will investigate reports where squirrels are causing damage via Council owned trees and may take remedial action at the Council's discretion.

Other Tree Works

In exceptional circumstances, tree work may be carried out outside of the Council's standard tree risk management strategy, subject to the discretion of the relevant budget holder.

Residents also retain their common law right to prune branches that overhang their property, provided the work does not harm the health or structure of the tree and remains within legal boundaries.

11. Suspected Subsidence Cases Involving Council Trees

The Council is committed to retaining important trees wherever possible and has established a robust process for critically assessing subsidence claims, particularly those submitted by the insurance sector. This approach ensures that decisions are evidence based and balanced, protecting both property and the urban treescape.

Any valid claim or report of damage caused by tree root induced clay shrinkage subsidence will be logged and investigated, provided that the necessary supporting information is submitted. To be considered, all claims must include detailed evidence from appropriately qualified professionals such as structural engineers, arboriculturists, or building surveyors. Supporting documentation should include (but is not limited to):

- Level monitoring data
- Soil analysis and Plasticity Index
- Tree root identification
- A detailed damage report
- Estimated repair costs

Submission of comprehensive evidence allows the Council to make informed decisions regarding the management or retention of the trees in question.

All subsidence claims will be formally recorded and mapped using the Council's GIS system (Mapstack), including details of trees identified for retention and those requiring remedial works.

Ongoing and cyclical tree management will be delivered in accordance with the Council's Tree Risk Management Strategy. The Council will only undertake subsidence-related mitigation works where evidence supports a link to a pre-existing and substantiated claim.

12. Lease Renewals and New Leases

The management of trees on land leased by Elmbridge Borough Council must comply with the terms of existing lease agreements. All new lease agreements must clearly specify the party responsible for tree maintenance and duty of care obligations.

13. Pests and Diseases

Building resilience within the urban tree population is a shared responsibility. Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to ensure that trees within the borough are better equipped to resist, recover from, and adapt to the increasing threats posed by pests and diseases.

The Council will periodically review on an annual basis the current threats to our tree population using resources such as Woodland Trust, Forest Research, Forestry England and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). If any suspected threats are found and identified they will be reported using the Forest Research Tree Alert systems.

Some of the most current and relevant pests and diseases and how the Council is managing them have been listed below.

Oak Processionary Moth

As part of the ongoing strategy developed to help tackle the spread of OPM the timing of inspections is optimised where possible to identify the presence/extent of infection within the Oak population and permit forward planning in relation to remedial works. Records provide a history of the appearance and spread of OPM in areas across the borough and each site has been categorised into a risk depending on the presence of OPM or Oak trees and intensity or nature of the site usage.

Where remedial work has been carried out it is then important to monitor that site to evaluate the effectivity of any treatment. Nest removal is currently the primary control measure, particularly in high use public areas where infected trees pose a greater risk to human health. Chemical spraying is generally avoided but remains a viable option in the event of widespread infestation, when nest removal becomes impractical, or where budget constraints necessitate alternative methods.

The dates and types of treatment will be input into the Council's Mapstack GIS recording system. Records will be kept against each site and will help track the effectiveness of treatments, costing and frequency of future treatment.

See Appendix (g) OPM Risk Map

To provide public awareness, information about the caterpillars is published on the Council's website and posters placed in Council Civic centre to help raise awareness. Ground staff working near trees should also be made aware and to take precautions when working near oak trees.

Management of High risk sites:

Is undertaken using onsite information and education via posters and links to relevant websites and indicate what measures and practices are best to avoid meeting OPM. Detailed inspections at the correct time of year to identify the presence of OPM and recommend correct remedial action. It's considered practical to remove low OPM nests up to 6m from ground level however in certain circumstances a thorough nest removal has been recommended.

Options to consider include biological chemical spraying and leaving areas wilder and more overgrown to deter the public. New planting or replacement planting may avoid including Oak trees which are more susceptible to host OPM including *Quercus robur*. Areas where Oak trees have been planted more recently should be monitored to assess if the risk to the public is higher if there is presence of OPM, notable sites include Brooklands Community Park and Leg 'O Mutton.

Management of Low and Medium risk sites:

Is undertaken using onsite information and education. This is carried out via posters and links to relevant websites and indicate what measures and practices are best to avoid meeting OPM. Trees near hot spots such as car parks, narrow paths or benches are inspected on site to site basis, it's considered practical to remove low OPM nests up to 6m from ground level this is generally applied to remove any risk where public are most likely to come into contact. Other tactics will require not cutting grass underneath trees.

Ash Dieback

Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to the strategic and proportionate management of Ash Dieback to ensure public safety, minimise long term risks, and support the future resilience of the borough's treescape.

Where feasible, the timing of tree inspections will be optimised to detect the presence and assess the extent of infection within the Ash (*Fraxinus*) population. This enables forward planning for appropriate remedial action, including phased removal and replacement planting, where necessary.

As part of ongoing proactive tree surveys, Ash trees showing significant symptoms of infection will be individually assessed. Decisions regarding remedial works or tree removal will be made based on the tree's condition, its location (particularly in relation to public access), and relevant health and safety considerations.

Each case will be judged on its individual merits. As a general rule, where an infected Ash tree exhibits less than 50% live crown density, removal is likely to be the most appropriate course of action due to declining structural integrity and the increased risk of branch or tree failure.

The Council will not support requests for the removal of Ash trees that show no visible signs of infection on the basis of perceived safety concerns. Retaining uninfected or minimally affected trees is vital, as these individuals may be among the estimated 5% of Ash trees that possess genetic resistance to Ash Dieback. Their preservation is essential to maintaining the long term health and genetic diversity of the species.

See appendix i) Ash Dieback Information.

Tree Planting

Section 4 of the Tree Health Resilience Strategy (2018) outlines four key environmental objectives that underpin a resilient treescape:

- **Extent** – Expanding the overall number and canopy cover of trees, woodlands, and forests.
- **Connectivity** – Enhancing the spatial linkages between tree populations across both urban and rural areas to strengthen ecological corridors.
- **Diversity** – Increasing genetic and structural diversity within tree populations to reduce vulnerability to specific threats.
- **Condition** – Promoting the health, vitality, and sustainability of individual trees and wider woodland areas.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risks, a strategic and forward looking approach can significantly reduce vulnerabilities and improve long term outcomes. Future proofing the borough's treescape requires a shift beyond reactive pest and disease control, toward building lasting ecological and biological resilience. Key elements of this approach include:

- Procuring high quality tree stock from reputable, accredited nurseries.
- Enhancing species and age diversity across all planting schemes to reduce uniformity related risks.
- Applying sound design principles and long term planning, as reflected in comprehensive tree and woodland strategies.

To mitigate the spread of pests and diseases and manage associated risks, Elmbridge Borough Council implements the following practices:

- All new trees used in planting schemes are sourced from UK nurseries with fully traceable provenance. Wherever feasible, trees will be UK grown to minimise the risk of importing harmful pests and pathogens.
- Species selection prioritises a broad and diverse mix, including both native and non-native species, to strengthen overall resilience through biodiversity.
- Suspected cases of relevant pests or diseases are promptly reported to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) using the Tree Alert service.

Through these proactive measures, Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to safeguarding the long term health, sustainability, and resilience of its urban forest.

14. Management of Privately Owned Trees

Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, if a privately owned tree presents a danger not only to the highway but also to neighbouring properties, the local authority may intervene at its discretion, in accordance with Section 23 of the Act.

Elmbridge Borough Council does not operate a formal inspection regime for trees on privately owned land. However, if a tree showing obvious signs of poor health is visible from public land, it may be recorded by the Council. Where such trees appear to pose a threat to the public highway, the information may be referred to Surrey County Council Highways Team through their online reporting system.

Surrey County Council retains responsibility for the inspection and management of highway trees in Elmbridge. Under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, Surrey County Council also has the authority to take enforcement action if privately owned trees pose a risk to highway users.

Members of the public can also report concerns about vegetation affecting the highway directly via Surrey County Council's online reporting tool.

15. Performance Indicators

This strategy will provide key performance indicators which contain a defensible framework for managing the risk from Elmbridge Borough Council trees. Performance indicators will help set the key objectives, track the progress, and understand if the targets are on track to being met.

Performance indicators can help monitor the progress and aid the review by understanding if the targets have been met and where improvements can be made. The strategy should set in place a structure for monitoring the effectiveness of delivery.

Measuring how the project is progressing is important for a proactive tree management. New aims and objectives can be developed following the review as many will have been achieved or are actively being carried as part of the service and regular routine.

The following indicators have been developed to measure the performance of all the key areas.

- All high risk zones are inspected within the designated 2 year time frame.
- All medium risk zones are inspected within the designated 4 year time frame.
- All remedial tree work is completed within the stated priority time frame.
- All remedial tree work is completed in accordance with current best practice as recommended in British Standard 3998: 2010- Tree work – Recommendations.
- Keeping comprehensive records, ensuring all sources of record keeping are maintain up to date and made freely accessible.
- Tree failure log completed following each tree failure; ensuring all the data is input correctly and accurately.
- The strategy reviewed annually to ensure that it is being implemented properly and that it reflects up to date practice.
- Annual reduction of the number of incidences recorded in the failure log each year.
- Annual reduction of the expense on emergency work required on council owned trees.

16. Councillor Notifications

Elmbridge Borough Council's Tree Risk Management Strategy and associated tree maintenance works are managed by trained and experienced officers. Given the extensive, risk based nature of tree inspections and subsequent works, which may carry potential liability for injury or damage. Councillors and the public will generally not be routinely consulted or notified about scheduled maintenance activities.

However, in cases where the removal of large, high profile trees or significant numbers of trees under Council ownership and management is planned, officers will proactively inform the relevant ward Councillors. This communication will typically take the form

of an explanatory email, providing details of the proposed works to prepare Councillors for any potential enquiries from constituents.

An exception to this procedure applies in emergency situations where high risk trees require immediate attention to mitigate imminent hazards. In such cases, notification may be delayed or limited due to the urgent nature of the response required.

17. Review

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Tree Risk Management Strategy, it is essential that the Council conducts periodic reviews. This process helps confirm that the Council continues to meet all relevant legal obligations concerning public safety. Elmbridge Borough Council will undertake a formal review of the Strategy on an annual basis from the date of its adoption.

The review will focus on identifying any procedural issues and will take into account changes in legislation, case law, and best practice guidance. Additionally, the review process will ensure that the Strategy remains aligned with current standards and emerging risks.

All Risk Zones and land ownership classifications will be subject to regular reassessment, as site usage and environmental conditions may evolve over time. Land managers are specifically advised to conduct targeted reviews following significant changes, such as the installation or removal of play equipment or site furniture, the development of adjacent land, or any alteration in land use.

To effectively implement the Strategy, all staff involved in tree risk management must be appropriately trained and demonstrate competence in their roles. Competence encompasses not only knowledge, experience, and skill but also may require formal training or the attainment of relevant certifications or qualifications.

Appendix a) Background documents and case law

This strategy is informed by the following documents and case law:-

- Liability For Death Or Injury Caused By Falling Trees Or Branches: A Review Of The Present Position Under English Law In Relation To Tree Safety Inspection, Julian Forbes-Laird, Arboricultural Journal 2009, Vol. 32, pp. 233-241
- National Tree Safety Group - Bringing Common Sense To Tree Management, Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers (Draft)
- Arboricultural Association 2005: Tree Surveys, a strategy to good practice.
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Health and Safety Executive 2007: Management of the Risk from falling trees (SIM)
- Forestry Commission 2007: Tree Safety Management (update from 2000)
- National Trust 2007: Tree Safety Management (update from 2001)
- Surrey Wildlife Trust 2008: Practice note on Tree Safety
- British Standards Institute 2010: BS3998 National tree safety group documents
- English Nature 2000 : Veteran Trees, A Strategy to Risk and Responsibility.
- Lonsdale, D. 1999. Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management (Research for Amenity Trees No. 7).
- Forestry Commission 2000 : Hazards from Trees, A General Strategy.
- Mynors, C. 2002 : The Law of Trees, Forests and Hedgerows.
- National Trust 2001 : Inspection of Trees; Trees and Woodlands Instruction 1.
- Treework Environmental Practice - 'The Future of tree Risk Management'
- Neville Fay MA (Hons), FLS, MArborA, FRSA - Towards Reasonable Tree Risk Decision-Making
- Waverley Borough Council - Tree Risk Management Strategy
- Southampton City Council - Tree Operating Risk Management System
- Torbay Council – Tree Risk Management Strategy
- Thurrock Council – Tree Strategy
- Guildford Borough Council Tree Inspection Protocol 2008
- Court Cases:
 - Edwards v National Coal Board [1949] All ER 743 (CA)
 - Tomlinson v Congleton Borough Council [2003] 1 AC 46, [2004] UKHL 47
 - Shirvell v Hackwood Estates Co Ltd [1938] 2 K.B. 577
 - Noble v Harrison [1926] 2 K.B. 332
 - Caminer v Northern & London Investment Trust Ltd [1951] A.C.88;
 - McLellan v Forestry Commission (2005) 0.B.D (TTC) Bristol, unreported
 - Atkins v Scott (2008), unreported
 - Kent v Marquis of Bristol (1940), unreported
 - Brown v Harrison (1947) E.G. June 28 1947
 - Lane v Tredegar Estate Trustees (1954) E.G. November 27 1954
 - Ouinn v Scott [1965] 1 W.L.R. 1004
 - Chapman v Barking & Dagenham LBC [1997] 2 E.G.L.R. 141; [1997] 48 E.G. 154
 - Poll v Bartholomew and Bartholomew [2006] EWHC
 - Payne v Guildford Borough Council 2006, unreported
 - Micklewright v Surrey County Council 2010
 - Bowen (A Child) & Ors v The National Trust 2011
 - Witley Parish Council v Cavanagh (2018)

Appendix b) VTA – Visual Tree Assessment

It is a systematic approach, which directs the arboricultural inspectors through a procedure:

1. If feasible, look at the tree and its surroundings from a distance, and look at the harmony of the trees shape (no phototropism etc.)
2. Base of stem: especially repair growth, fungal fruit-bodies, bark inclusion, indications of excavations near the stem, soil cracking, missing incremental strips on large root junctions no longer active, High-water level, shallow soil.
3. Stem: repair structures, cracks, forks, ribs, increasing lean, stem forks with bark inclusion, splitting of stem fork, old decaying pruning wounds, fungal fruit-bodies, degree of slenderness (taper).
4. Crown: branches without neighbourhood support, deadwood, cracks, tear-outs, degree of slenderness, fungal, fruit bodies, crown securing, branches bending down, foliation.
5. If defects symptoms are determined, detailed investigation using instruments may be necessary. The defect which has been identified may and measured is the assessed with failure criteria and a decision is made on the fate of the tree.

Appendix c) General tree features when inspecting trees

Safety inspection needs to consider features that might affect the tree's structure and their significance as hazards. The inspector is looking for features that indicate serious, significant decline in tree health, or structural weakness.

Inspectors need to act within their level of competence and be careful in their judgment not to draw the wrong conclusions.

Features that may indicate possible structural failure include:

- Cracks and splits in main stem or heavy branches
- Decay across large cross-sectional areas of trunk or large branches
- Broken or hanging heavy branches
- Weak forks with bark trapped between heavy stems
- Dead trees
- Disease
- Decline in health e.g. small or discoloured leaves, die-back of branches
- Damage from construction and development
- Fungal fruiting bodies
- Significant amounts or sizes of deadwood.

Obvious features indicating imminent serious structural failure.

- Actively lifting root plate
- Heavy limb actively splitting or breaking away from the tree
- Stem fractured, moving, and opening enough to 'pinch'.

General observations and considerations:

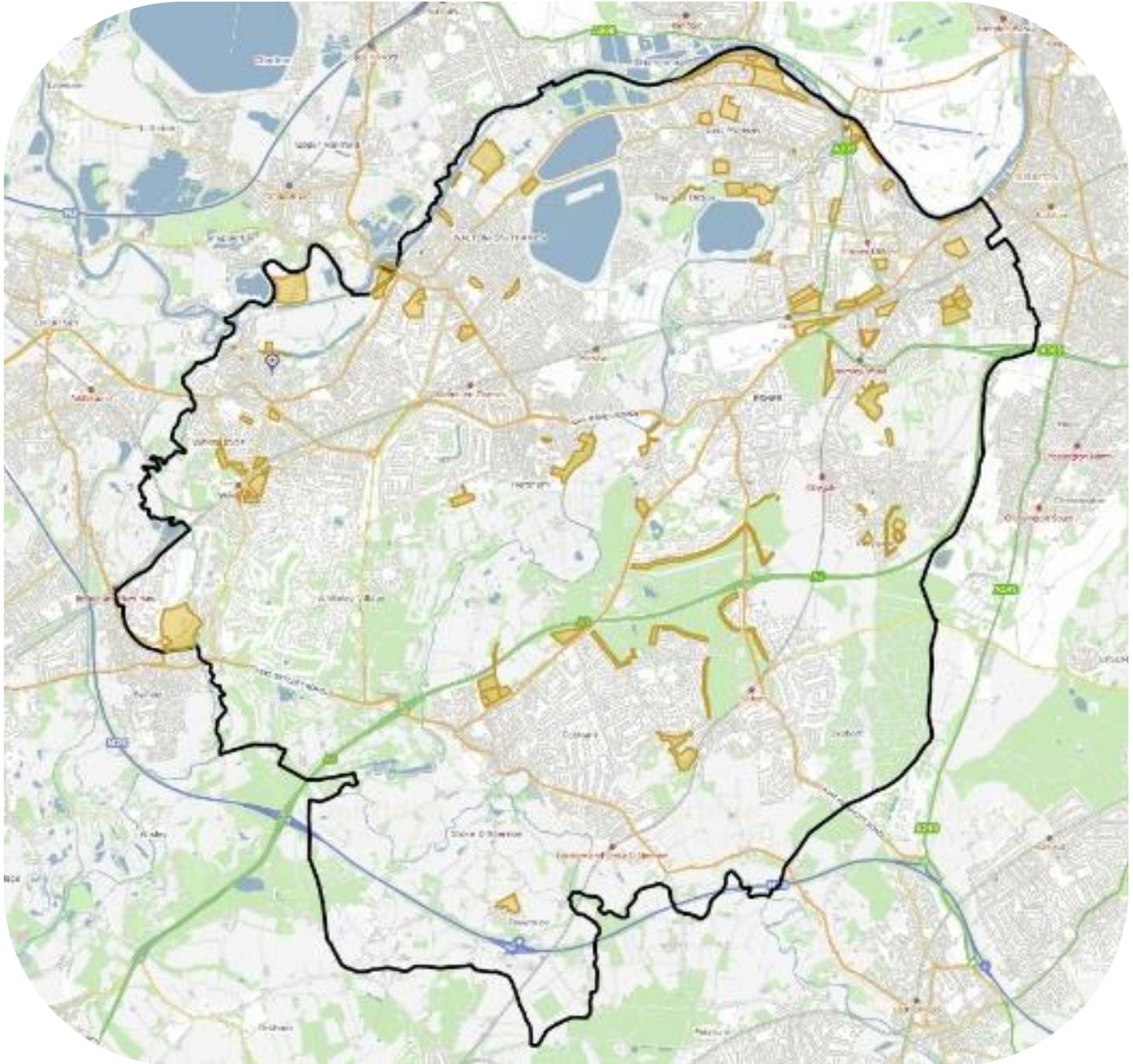
- It is inappropriate to react to tree defects as though they are all imminently hazardous.
- Growth deformities and other defects do not necessarily indicate structural weakness.
- When noting features that might indicate a likelihood of weakness or collapse, it is important that concern for risk of failure is restricted to events likely in the near future.
- There are a wide range of tree features and the scope for interpreting their significance is complex, particularly when considering the likelihood of non-imminent failure.
- For example, anomalies in tree growth may indicate internal decay and hollowing; but anomalies in form may be attributable to the tree having compensated for the decay, by mechanically adapting to natural processes.

Interpreting tree features

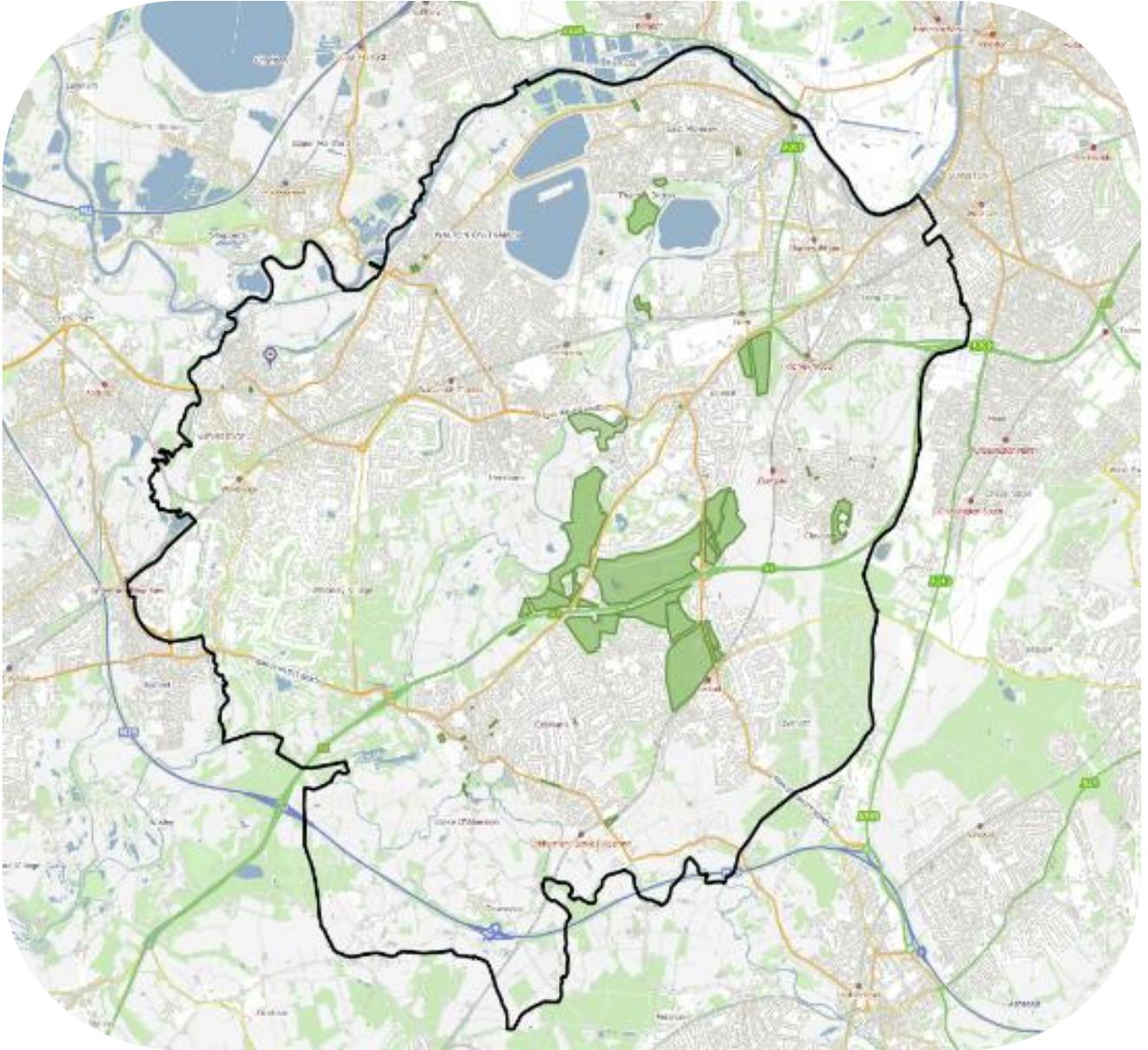
The following features persist for many years in a vast number of standing trees. In some cases, they may indicate a tendency to failure. When noting such features, careful judgment and relevant knowledge is important in assessing their significance:

- Tight forks with bark trapped between the two stems with incipient cracks and splits; while this can indicate a structural weakness, a high proportion of such trees remain intact throughout their lives.
- Old wounds with decay and trunk hollowing may indicate impaired strength; trees often accommodate these with continued growth.
- Decay across a large cross-sectional area, resulting in the circumference of the trunk or large branch being breached, may warrant investigation; often such circumstances are manageable and do not require urgent treatment.
- Heavy broken branches and dead trees; dead trees may in some cases be cost-effectively reduced and retained as a habitat feature, even when close to high use areas.
- Treatment of broken branches should be prioritized according to the level of risk.
- Dead wood and fungal fruiting bodies; inspectors automatically interpreting these features as hazards tend to be overreacting.
- As with other external signs of possible structural weakness, these features are often diagnosed as riskier than they actually are. Both need to be competently assessed, to avoid unnecessary and costly intervention.

Zone 2 – Medium Risk – Yellow/Orange



Zone 3 – Low Risk - Green



Appendix e) Target and inspection level chart

Target Zone	Colouring on Map	Examples of Target Area Trees In or Adjacent To:	Level of Inspection	Frequency of Assessment	Inspector Minimum Level of Competence
High Risk (Zone 1)	Red	Well used areas; playgrounds, high use recreations grounds, car parks and frequently occupied buildings, land adjacent to railways, heavily used roads or junctions, occupied property, high frequency footpaths, community centres and some cemeteries.	Detailed & Formal	Two years	Advanced Professional Tree Inspection qualification (LANTRA).
Medium Risk (Zone 2)	Yellow/Orange	Well frequented open woodland areas, woodlands abutting residential areas; open space, cemeteries, some parks and recreation grounds, gardens, footpaths, and bridleways with moderate use, occasionally used buildings and car parks, access routes to other properties, sports pitches, some allotments.	Formal	Four years	Basic Basic Tree Survey and Inspection qualification (LANTRA).
Low Risk (Zone 3)	Green	Open parkland, woodland heathland, fields, paths, lanes and bridleways with occasional use and no other high value or vulnerable targets	Informal	During normal routine visits by site managers.	No specialist knowledge required

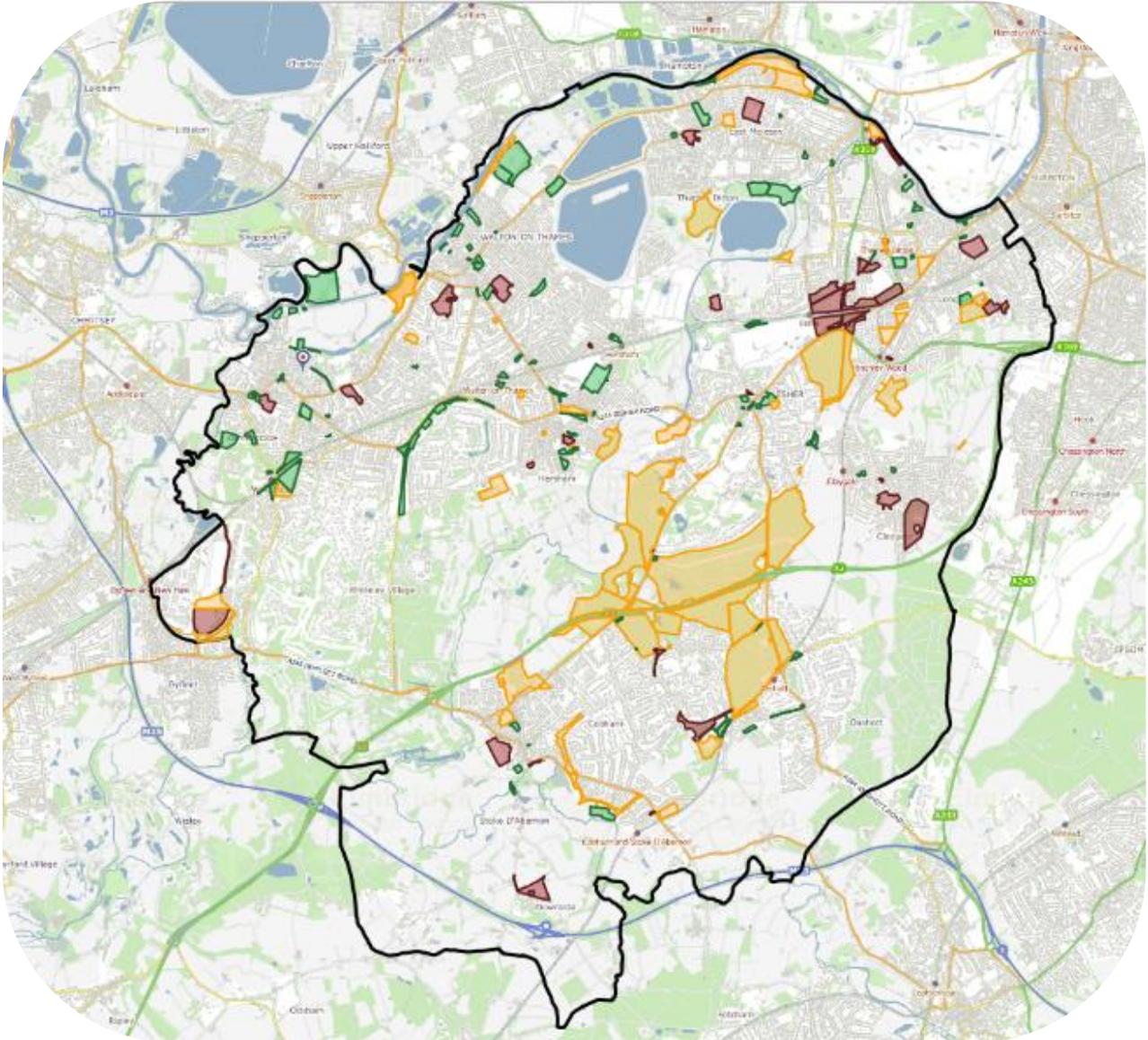
Appendix f) Priority time frames for remedial works

Recommended work priority time frames to be completed within the priority time frames or before an instructed date. Recommend tree works are instructed based on the priority and at the discretion of mangers.

P1 - IMMEDIATE SAFETY WORK	Work ordered immediately and completed within 1 week or sooner. Typically classified as EMERGENCY work requiring an immediate response to remove a hazard. Access to tree location may be restricted until work can be completed.
P2 - PRIORITY SAFETY WORK	Work ordered same day and completed within 6 weeks of inspection – Work to be classified as ESSENTIAL , associated with mitigation of a foreseeable danger
P3 - PLANNED SAFETY WORK	Work completed within 12 weeks of inspection – Work to be classified as ESSENTIAL , associated with mitigation of an obstruction or removal of structural defects.
P4 - MAINTENANCE WORK	Work completed within 6 months year of inspection – Work to be classified as MAINTENANCE , associated with maintenance work including cyclical pruning / deadwood removal
P5 - MANAGEMENT WORK	Work completed within 12 Months - Work to be classified as NON-ESSENTIAL , associated with shaping healthy tree canopy, select healthy tree removal, clearance for grounds maintenance operations.

Appendix g) OPM Risk Map

Red – High
Yellow/Orange – Medium
Green – Low



Appendix h) OPM (Key Facts and Threats)

The Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) is a pest that has established itself within the borough of Elmbridge over since 2011. The caterpillars live on Oak trees and pose a risk to human and animal health.

The caterpillars shed hairs as a defense mechanism; lots of hairs can also remain in the new and old nests. The microscopic hairs typically cause skin rashes, eye and throat irritations and occasionally breathing difficulties in both animals and humans.

Key Facts and Threats

- OPM is a native species of Southern Europe which was accidentally introduced into England in 2005 possibly aided by Oak plants in trade. In Europe predators and environmental factors usually minimize the impact but they are expanding as far north as Germany and the Netherlands.
- It is theoretically possible that if it were to spread in Britain they can survive and breed in England and Wales. It is currently localized to South West London and north East Surrey, although sightings have been made outside the Core Zone.
- The caterpillars rest up in the nests during the day between feeding periods and return to the nest to pupate into adult moths. The greatest risk period is May to July, but nest should always be avoided because of the thousands of shed hairs can remain in the nests.
- Large numbers could potentially cause damage to the health of Oak trees, large defoliation can occur from the caterpillars feeding on the leaves. Large populations can strip trees bare and increase the vulnerability to other threats like further pest/ disease or events such as drought or flood.
- Caterpillars can be a hazard to the health of humans and animals in the area as tiny hairs can be blown around by the wind. The tiny hairs are barbed and contain a urticating or irritating substance called thaumetopoein. Contact with the hairs can cause itching skin rashes and, less commonly, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye irritations.

Action plan and Controlling the OPM

Surveys and inspections are carried during winter for old nests to analyze the areas that are most at risk and what we might expect to see the following spring or summer.

Destruction of eggs masses before the eggs are hatched are difficult to find and only practicable on small trees. Surveying the Oak trees for signs of eggs, nests and caterpillars during the spring and summer and reporting and recording the trees for treatment.

Caterpillars emerge in April from the eggs laid in the Oak trees the previous summer. Careful timing and application the most effective control treatment is insecticide that is sprayed over trees in spring or summer. Spraying is usually carried out from the ground and is not known to harm people, pets, livestock and a small range of caterpillar species.

Spraying is supplemented with the manual removal of OPM nests by suitably trained and equipped operators. This can be effectively carried out with the use of vacuum equipment at the brief stage when the caterpillars are pupating into adult moths.

Infestations can be found by professionals, volunteer surveyors, tree and ground care professionals and members of the public reporting sightings.

Appendix i) Ash dieback

Ash dieback also known as Chalara dieback of Ash, is a serious disease that is killing Ash across Europe. Ash is a very important tree in the UK both ecologically and culturally so this disease is causing great concern about the damage it will do.

Ash dieback affects Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and is caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (previously known by the names *Chalara fraxinea* and *Hymenoschyphus pseudoalbidus*). It blocks the water transport systems in trees causing leaf loss, lesions in the wood and on the bark and ultimately the dieback of the crown of the tree.

Young trees are particularly vulnerable and die quickly once they succumb. Older trees can be slowly killed by a yearly cycle of infection. Spread of the disease in the UK is most likely to be as a result of the planting of infected nursery stock and transport of wood material but wind-borne distribution of the fungal spores also occurs.

Outlook

- The disease is spread by spores from the fruiting bodies of the fungus produced on fallen Ash leaves. These airborne spores can disperse naturally via wind over tens of kilometres
- Prior to the ban in October 2012 on the movement of Ash trees, spread over longer distances was likely to have been via the movement of infected ash plants
- Scientists have developed techniques to identify individual trees that are less susceptible to Ash dieback disease, this technique combined with resistance breeding trials, can be used to grow trees that are more likely to survive the disease
- Evidence suggests young trees are killed quickly while many mature Ash trees can resist infection for some time until eventually dying or becoming weakened and succumbing to attack from another pest or pathogen.

It is predicated that Chalara will have an impact on Ash trees within the UK similar to that experienced on Elm trees in the 1970/80s because of Dutch Elm Disease. Eastern counties of the UK are already experiencing significant losses and this impact is expected to spread further across Surrey with Hampshire seeing an increase of mortality within the next 3-4 years.

Appendix j) Example tree incident report and failure log

Reported by:

Contact details:

Date	Address	Tree Species & Age	Description of failure	Reasons for failure	Foreseeability	Damage	Remedial Action	Cost
10/01/24	Hersham Recreation Ground, Pratts Lane, Hersham, KT12 4RR	Quercus Robur (Oak) Mature	Snapped scaffold limb	Summer branch drop	None	Broken bench	Clear up broken limb	£400

Map & Photograph:

