

Chevron Green Consultancy monitor ash dieback infection on strategic road network

The current level of ash dieback infection is unprecedented in the south west region and it has spread rapidly to the trees alongside our roads over recent years. This is the challenge that is facing National Highways particularly in Southwest England where they manage a large estate including significant areas of woodland by the side of their roads.

The Challenge

Ash dieback is now widespread throughout the UK and Europe. It's thought that it will affect around 60 million trees in the UK alone since its discovery in 2012 which will have a significant impact on our landscape around the strategic road network. National Highways has a strategy in place to monitor the spread of ash dieback and to make every effort to slow it down. This includes surveying, recording, and taking required action to ensure the network is safe and serviceable whilst minimising the potential loss of vast numbers of ash trees.

The Project

Chevron Green Services consultancy division was appointed by National Highways Southeast and Southwest Scheme Delivery Frameworks (SDF) to conduct ash dieback surveys across the region. This included driven surveys which were then followed up with detailed plotting of the affected areas in the Southwest. In the Southeast, we conducted driven inspections to identify and plot areas of ash trees showing signs of ash dieback for future action.



Image showing National Highways Southwest region.

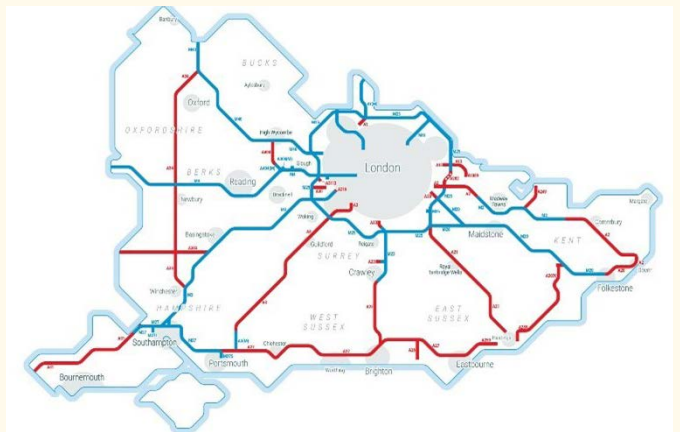


Image showing National Highways Southeast region.

The Solution

In the Southeast, the survey work focussed on the specific location of trees affected by ash dieback and whether any remedial work or restocking were required. All areas were recorded using a dashcam whilst the surveyor logged the specific marker post information. In the Southwest, the recordings of ash trees and the extent of dieback were incorporated into detailed surveys of all trees across the Southwest National Highways estate. Our Arboricultural Surveyors recorded which trees required remedial actions while also collecting typical survey information such as height and distance from target.

Knowing which trees need action will help to stop the spread of the disease further. The sooner trees are flagged, the easier they are to remove, and steps can be made to replace the stock where appropriate.

The Project Outcome

Our Arboricultural Surveyors recorded 325 ash trees which require action in the Southwest along five routes.

In the Southeast, 1423 locations of ash trees showing ash dieback were identified.

Regrettably our surveys have found that dry conditions and increased temperatures have exacerbated the disease and many ash trees are deteriorating more quickly than expected.

Based on the survey results, our Consultancy division has provided advice and recommendations to National Highways to ensure they are able to manage the trees across their estate in line with asset management strategy for ash dieback.

National Highways has begun the process of removing dead or dying trees which are posing safety risks.



About the client

National Highways is a government-owned company charged with operating, maintaining and improving motorways and major A roads in England. It also sets highways standards used by all four UK administrations, through the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

