

# Ash dieback

DNLP Board,  
19 October 2015



# How much of a threat is it?

- Strong evidence that it will severely effect most woodland ashes.
- Available evidence suggests that it will infect most non-woodland trees, and be fatal to many.

# What will be the environmental impact?

- Loss of non-woodland trees (eg in hedges) will have highest impact – on landscape and biodiversity.
- C. 2 million large ash trees outside woodlands in Devon. 2<sup>nd</sup> most frequent hedge tree.
- Strong evidence that isolated trees, regardless of their species, are important for wildlife.

# Public safety implications

- C. 450,000 ash trees alongside Devon roads.
- Even if these do not all die, they will shed limbs.
- Average cost of removing such trees perhaps £400. Total cost £160 million?
- 99% of these trees are responsibility of landowners.



# Other major impacts

- Overhead cables – increased costs for BT, WPD
- Ash frequent along railways



# What we should do?

- To conserve landscape and biodiversity, encourage replacement trees, especially outside woodlands.
- Presume most ash trees alongside roads and railways will dieback over within 15 years, and plan accordingly.
- Consider opportunities to kick start wood-based business on the back of the disease, and introduce more sustainable wood and hedge management.

# Key players

- Delivery of action plan will require the buy-in and co-operation of many organisations.
- Need clarity on leads for each action.
- Key players are:
  - FC (policy, advice, monitoring, woodlands)
  - DCC (tree safety, roads, business start-up)
  - Devon Hedge Group (wider countryside, tree replacement)

# Next steps

- Finalise action plan – is the current draft along the right track? OK to consult wider now?
- Put in place a steering group to promote, guide and monitor plan implementation.
- Can Natural Devon play a lead role?