



Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum

Convened by Devon County Council

Landscape and ecological resilience group

Meeting 26 April 2017

Key messages arising

1. Our main aim is to see new trees planted, or otherwise encouraged, to replace those that will be lost to ash dieback. Work continues on the development of overarching principles to guide this, prior to detailing actions (interventions) that need to be taken.
2. The main barriers to the establishment of new trees are social and educational ones, rather than economic ones. However, funding, as for free trees schemes (see 4 below), is likely to be important.
3. We are exploring the development of a Devon Ash 3/2/1 Replacement Formula for tree replacement, similar to that being piloted in Norfolk. For every large ash tree lost along highways three are planted, for every medium-sized tree two planted, and for every small one lost one is planted (or otherwise encouraged).
4. Free tree schemes have in the past been found to be a cost-effective way of encouraging new trees. We are working towards making the case for the establishment of such schemes in response to ash dieback, perhaps adopting the Devon Ash 3/2/1 Replacement Formula. Here the priority should be for trees to be planted in non-woodland situations such as hedges, field corners or small copses. (Natural regeneration will serve in most woodlands.) The establishment of free tree schemes has the potential to benefit the rural economy (e.g. through the enhancement of existing nurseries or establishment of new ones).
5. Following the identification of ecosystem services, or public goods, delivered by ash trees, we are now seeking available information on the financial value of these services. This information will help make the case for expenditure on replacing lost trees and encourage better decision making about where to plant new trees. New research may be desirable.
6. The choice of trees to plant will be dependent largely on context (i.e. what species are appropriate to the local landscape and to the particular circumstances). We should guard against being prescriptive on tree choice: there are unlikely to be any preferred species to use on a general basis. We intend to develop context guidelines to help people choose which species are most appropriate to plant (or otherwise encourage).
7. We need to be alert to the different needs of rural and urban landscapes.
8. We also need to identify opportunities for joint public-private body working to achieve our aims.
9. Finally, the next month is the best to take photos which can be used to demonstrate the impact that the ash loss will have on the landscape, to raise awareness. High quality photos showing landscapes with frequent ash trees which can be paint brushed away will be welcomed by the group. Such photos from our most sensitive and iconic landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) will be especially welcome.

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