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Contact Officer:
Sharon Thomas / 01352 702324
sharon.b.thomas@flintshire.gov.uk

To: Cllr Patrick Heesom (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

9 October 2019

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 10.00 am on Tuesday, 15th October, 2019 in the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Greenfield Road, Greenfield, Holywell CH8 7GH to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING (Pages 3 - 10)

Report of Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

4 GREENFIELD VALLEY - SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 11 - 16)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: Six monthly update on the work carried out to deliver the audit recommendations and the current operational position.

5 WASTE STRATEGY REVIEW CONSULTATION (Pages 17 - 34)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: To receive an update.

6 GRASS CUTTING POLICY REVIEW (Pages 35 - 42)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: To receive an update.

7 ASH DIEBACK ACTION PLAN (Pages 43 - 78)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: To inform members of the Authority's proposed response to Ash Dieback disease which will significantly affect the tree population of Flintshire.

8 CEMETERY PROVISION AND FUTURE STRATEGY (Pages 79 - 86)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: To provide Scrutiny with details of the future burial capacity and the extensions necessary to the existing cemeteries within Flintshire.

Yours sincerely



Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 October 2019
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Cabinet Member	Not applicable
Report Author	Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Environment OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Margaret Parry-Jones Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702427 E-mail: Margaret.parry-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
Tuesday 12th November 10.00 am	Flint Landfill and Crumps Yard Solar PV Final Business Cases	To consider the final business cases for solar PV developments at Flint Landfill and Crumps Yard following planning permission and tender exercise to determine capital costs. Members to review the business cases to ensure they are robust prior to final review by Cabinet.	Consultation	Chief Officer Streetscene and Transportation	
	Mid Year Council Plan Monitoring Report	To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Performance monitoring/assurance	Facilitator	
	Provision of MOT's and other Commercial Opportunities	To consider the proposals.	Consultation	Chief Officer Streetscene and Transportation	
	Contaminated land	To receive an update	Assurance	Chief Officer Planning, Environment & Economy	
Tuesday 10th December 10.00 am	Waste Consultation	To consider the outcome of the Waste Consultation	Policy Development	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Effect of roadworks by utilities and dropped kerbs policy and practices.	To consider the policy	Consultation	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	Integrated Transport	To receive an overview of current developments.	Assurance	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
Tuesday 14th January 10.00 am	Fleet Electrification	To consider proposals for fleet electrification.	Consultation	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
Tuesday 10th March 10.00 am	Visit to Parc Adfer Waste Permitting & Data Flow Quarter 3 Council Plan Monitoring Report	To receive a report To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Assurance Performance Monitoring/ Assurance	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation Facilitator	
Tuesday 7th April 10.00 am	Garden Waste update Street lighting	To receive a progress report To receive an update report.	Assurance Assurance	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
Tuesday 5th May 10.00 am					
Tuesday 7th July 10.00 am	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report	To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Performance Monitoring/ Assurance	Facilitator	

ACTION TRACKING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
21.05.19	Mold to Broughton Cycleway	Detailed designs to be shared when completed. Not yet available.	Sue Price	Details will be shared when available.	On-going
09.07.19	Review of Streetscene Service Standards	Look into member concerns at recent Call Centre response times.	Steve Jones	A review is to be carried out once the call time figures are available	Completed – email 09/10/19
09.07.19	N/A	Details of the Pest Control charges and any exemptions to be circulated to members of the committee.	Andy Farrow	To be confirmed.	Completed – email 09/10/19
17.09.19	Forward work programme/action tracking	Facilitator to advise Democratic Services Manager of the Committee's request regarding information provided to individual members following scrutiny committee should be included in action tracking report.	Margaret Parry-Jones	Robert Robins to discuss further with Cllr David Evans	Completed
17.09.19	Forward work programme/action tracking	Steve Jones to provide feedback to Committee when trial is completed.	Steve Jones	Information to be provided when trial is completed.	Ongoing
17.09.19	Forward work programme/action tracking	North Wales Regional Growth Deal – invitation to Community & Enterprise OSC when item is considered on 6 th December.	Margaret Parry-Jones	Invitation to be extended to Members of the Committee.	Ongoing

17.09.19	Forward work programme/action tracking	Street lighting report to be added to Forward Work Programme	Margaret Parry-Jones	Added to Forward Work Programme	Completed
17.09.19	Bus lanes in Flintshire – Limitations on use	Link to North Wales Joint Transport Plan to be circulated to Members	Margaret Parry-Jones	Link circulated via email	Completed
17.09.19	Year-end Council Plan monitoring report	HRC – concerns raised re issue with taking PVC and suggestion that a new policy had been introduced directing PVC to specific sites. Whilst no policy changes had occurred, the Chief Officer agreed to investigate and respond to Members of the Committee.	Steve Jones		Completed – email 09/10/19
17.09.19	All Wales Concessionary Travel Scheme	Chief Officer to raise issue of why the re-application was necessary with Transport for Wales.	Steve Jones	Ceri Hansom is raising the issue with Transport for Wales	Ongoing



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 th October 2019
Report Subject	Greenfield Valley - Six monthly progress report
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and the Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a six monthly update on the work carried out at Greenfield Valley between April and October 2019 to deliver the recommendations of the recent audit report and outline the current operational position at the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members note the content of the report and the positive progress achieved at Greenfield Valley.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	
1.01	Greenfield Valley is managed by the Greenfield Valley Trust Ltd, a registered Charity and a Limited Company. The Trust was established in 1986 to manage the Greenfield Valley on behalf of Flintshire County Council. The Trust manage the site under a Management Agreement with the Council. Under this agreement the Trust receive a management fee and Flintshire provide staff to enable delivery of the Business Plan.

1.02	In April 2015, the Trust engaged Sam Hunt Consulting to carry out a review of the long term governance arrangements at Greenfield Valley. The Governance Review made recommendations for the Trust and the Council to strengthen the governance and operation of the site.
1.03	The audit of Greenfield Valley Museum and Heritage Park was included in the Council's annual Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17.
1.04	The audit was undertaken to examine the governance, funding and operating arrangements in place within Greenfield Valley and assess whether efficient and effective systems were in place to manage Greenfield Valley.
1.05	<p>Areas highlighted by the audit which required improvement were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic decision had to be made around the short and medium term management arrangements at Greenfield Valley; • Clarification was required around the task and reporting structures, responsibility and lines of accountability within the site; • A Decision to be made around Trust compliance with the Councils Contract Procedure Rules; • Implementation of full electronic banking; • Development of effective financial controls (including segregation of duties) to ensure transparency, accountability and good financial stewardship.
1.06	In summary, all actions and recommendations from the audit report have now been completed.
1.07	The new Management Agreement was signed on 19 th August 2019, and supersedes the previous agreement of 1995. This agreement, formalises the partnership arrangement between the Trust and Flintshire County Council. The agreement is open-ended but with termination clauses built in. The Management Agreement is the legal framework to allow the Trust set the strategic direction and have responsibility for management of the site through an agreed Business Plan. The Business Plan details the site vision and goals and highlights the areas of work over a fixed 5 year term.
1.08	The Trust, in response to the Hunt review, has changed its Trustee membership so that neither the Town, nor County Council, have representation on the Board. The Trust, FCC and Holywell Town Council meet twice a year to discuss items of mutual interest and to maintain open and positive communication. The Trust has undertaken recruitment and has a full complement of Trustees with a wide range of skills, experiences and backgrounds.

1.09	<p>Site operational highlights for the last six months:</p> <p>Site Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly patrols and day to day maintenance completed and standards are continuing to improve. • Fly-tipped waste (which included two filing cabinet and a mattress) has been cleared from the path that runs along Wat's Dyke, and two trailer loads of green fly-tipped material was dumped in Bryn Celyn car park and has been moved. • Funding has been secured through the Landfill Tax Grant (£19,600) to improve access and sense of place into the Valley from the Strand area and includes new kissing gates and improved footpath surfacing. Unfortunately a small amount of fly-tipped material has been seen since the completion of the works. • A site meeting was held with volunteers who undertake weekly butterfly surveys in the Valley. Although the overall number of butterflies in the Valley are up this year due to the mass migration of the painted lady, some butterfly species have shown a drop, in particular the dingy skipper. Management prescriptions have been discussed and agreed to reverse this decline. • Staff have supported the summer holiday event programme and led events such as feed the animals and den building.
1.10	<p>Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has continued in creating a coffee point at the Bake-house – electrical work has been completed and security shutters installed. Plumbing work and flooring is outstanding. • The Trustees have approved works for a new path to view the animals. • New windows are due to be installed in Abbey Farmhouse • HLF funded enhancements 2019 - £15,600 • HLF funded events and activities 2019 - £16,000
1.11	<p>Active Travel Route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback has been received from users about the Active Travel Route. An increase has been seen in people using mobility scooters in particular. • A representative from the Welsh Government Active Travel Team visited the Valley and were happy with the scheme and impressed with the site in general. • Further signage funded by the Trust matched by Flintshire County Council is to be installed to warn people of pinch points along the route and that it is a shared access path. • Proposals for tree management for phase two, an improved route from the main path to Holywell High School, has been drawn up and consulted on.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site meeting was held during the summer with the Trust Chair, Sustrans and Holywell Town Council to discuss the second phase of the scheme.
1.12	<p>Volunteering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new volunteers have started in the Valley, helping with the Community Garden Volunteers and also with preparation for events, but also with general duties in the Valley. • Two new Community Service placements have started with the Valley and have completed a significant amount of work. • Historic Garden Volunteers have improved the area in front of Basingwerk House and put bark around the new planting that was completed earlier during the year.
1.13	<p>Fire Alarm / Electrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to renew the fire and electrical systems was suspended during the summer holidays to ensure that it didn't impact on the visitors during the school holidays. Work has now reconvened, with the contractors currently working at the Lower Cotton Mill. • Flintshire County Council has agreed to pay for the updating of the electric fuse board at Abbey Farm. • Electrical safety checks has been completed on those buildings that required a survey on an annual basis due to particular issues identified with the electrics in the last audit.
1.14	<p>Health and Safety Assessment</p> <p>Unison and Flintshire County Council's Health and Safety department undertook a safety audit of working areas at Greenfield. Staff are currently working through the list of items raised.</p>
1.15	<p>Greenflag</p> <p>Greenfield Valley and the Community Garden have both received the Greenflag award this year. The Greenflag is the industry standard for greenspace management and is a nationally recognised award. Independent judges score the site on its management, presentation, marketing & PR, community involvement, natural & cultural heritage and cleanliness. It is testament to the staff that this award is achieved.</p>
1.16	<p>Footfall within the pay boundary has increased 20.3% from 9916 in 2018 to 11937 (2019 year to date).</p>
1.17	<p>Income taken from till (entrance, shop, education and events) has increased 21.8% from 2018 figures.</p>
1.18	<p>Promotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual elements now on the website • The Valley has moved away from 'season passes' and now issue passes for a year, and at any point of the year, which allows staff to maintain contact and continuity with the customer and will pave the way for standing order payments and a more efficient administration

	<p>of the process. The customer gets a full year regardless of when they join.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio promotion with Radio City Liverpool. • An agreement with 'Groupon' has seen 1485 vouchers sold, 1015 redeemed, with an additional income this year so far at £3250 and feedback suggests that these customers would otherwise not have experienced the Valley. • A new 'App' has been commissioned and is currently being designed. 																																																												
1.19	<p>Social Media Greenfield Valley Facebook Page follows are 4903 (to date), with a reach of 115k, this is an increase from 3749 in 2018, many recommendations and high number of people checking in. Twitter and Instagram are still relatively new to the Valley but are slowly increasing in number of followers.</p>																																																												
1.20	<p>Events 2019 18 events held with 4074 attendees</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Event title</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Footfall</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wonderful Wales</td> <td>1 & 2nd March</td> <td>400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh Myths and Legends</td> <td>13th April</td> <td>350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Re-enactment festival</td> <td>20th & 21st April</td> <td>580</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Merry Mayfair</td> <td>4th May</td> <td>411</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wicked and Wonderful Weeds</td> <td>18th May</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greenfield Goodies Vs Valley Villains</td> <td>25th May</td> <td>300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Party in the Park</td> <td>22nd June</td> <td>430</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teddy Bears Picnic</td> <td>29th June</td> <td>220</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meadows and Flower Fairies</td> <td>6th July</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wizard Academy</td> <td>20th July</td> <td>146</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foraging and Campfire cooking*</td> <td>24th July</td> <td>110</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fuzzy Felt</td> <td>10th August</td> <td>97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSPB</td> <td>14th August</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Victorian School Experience</td> <td>17th August</td> <td>140</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wind in the Willows</td> <td>24th August</td> <td>325</td> </tr> <tr> <td>World War two Workshop</td> <td>29th August</td> <td>118</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Den Building*</td> <td>30th August</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Woodland Skills</td> <td>1st September</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4074</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Event title	Date	Footfall	Wonderful Wales	1 & 2nd March	400	Welsh Myths and Legends	13th April	350	Re-enactment festival	20th & 21st April	580	Merry Mayfair	4th May	411	Wicked and Wonderful Weeds	18th May	80	Greenfield Goodies Vs Valley Villains	25th May	300	Party in the Park	22nd June	430	Teddy Bears Picnic	29th June	220	Meadows and Flower Fairies	6th July	60	Wizard Academy	20th July	146	Foraging and Campfire cooking*	24th July	110	Fuzzy Felt	10th August	97	RSPB	14th August	40	Victorian School Experience	17th August	140	Wind in the Willows	24th August	325	World War two Workshop	29th August	118	Den Building*	30th August	107	Woodland Skills	1st September	160			4074
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The improvements are being delivered within Service budget.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Internal audit report identified a five high and three medium priority actions to be implemented. All recommendations are now complete.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Greenfield Valley Heritage Trust - The Valley Trust is a registered company and charitable organisation, established to manage the Greenfield Valley on behalf of Flintshire County Council.



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15th October 2019
Report Subject	Waste Strategy Review Consultation
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene And Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Flintshire County Council introduced a Managed Weekly Collection waste service (MWC), which changed waste collections in the County from a weekly, black sack and back door service to weekly recycling and food waste collections with fortnightly collections of non- recyclable waste, alternating with garden waste - with all of the various waste streams being pre-sorted by residents and collected at the kerb-side.

This change significantly improved the Council's recycling performance and due to the engagement and efforts of residents, the Council continues to perform well with the recycling performance for 2018/19 confirmed at 69.16%. This is already above the 2019/20 target of 64% with the next significant target being 70% in 2025.

The current recycling performance needs to be celebrated but without operational and policy change, it is likely that performance will now stabilise and any future improvements in performance will become difficult to achieve. Whilst the current waste strategy does not come to an end until 2025, the target set within the document of 70% has been almost achieved and it is important that the Council starts to plan for the future, considering what more could be done to increase recycling rates still further.

Therefore, on 24th September 2019, the Council's Cabinet Committee approved the commencement of public consultation to gauge public opinion on the current recycling and waste services and explore options on alternative service delivery models.

This report outlines the recycling success to date and provides information on the consultation for discussion and feedback.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Council's current recycling performance.
2	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides feedback on the points raised within the consultation programme and questionnaire.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	RECYCLING AND WASTE PERFORMANCE AND CONSULTATION															
1.01	<p>Recycling Targets and Performance</p> <p>In 2010, Welsh Government (WG) published its policy for dealing with municipal waste in Wales 'Towards Zero Waste' (TZW). This policy set out statutory recycling targets for all Council's in Wales to meet.</p> <p>In June 2010, the Council adopted its own Municipal Waste Strategy. The strategy contained a number of key actions which were required to meet the challenging targets set out in TZW.</p> <p>In 2011, WG published its Municipal Sector Plan which was a partnering document to TZW which provided guidance to Welsh Council's in the form of a blueprint describing WG's recommended service delivery for Council's to follow.</p>															
1.02	<p>Working to the Council Municipal Waste Strategy, recycling performance has exceed the statutory targets, with current performance almost at the level required by 2024/25.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Recycling Target</th> <th>FCC's Recycling Performance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>52%</td> <td>54.92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>58%</td> <td>68.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>64%</td> <td>69% (projected)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>70%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Council recycling success is to be celebrated, however, Welsh Government are currently reviewing their national policies with a view to revising future targets which could increase targets to 80, or even 90%.</p>	Year	Recycling Target	FCC's Recycling Performance	2013/14	52%	54.92%	2016/17	58%	68.2%	2019/20	64%	69% (projected)	2024/25	70%	
Year	Recycling Target	FCC's Recycling Performance														
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2024/25	70%															
1.03	<p>The need to review recycling targets</p> <p>Waste compositional analysis has shown that items such as steel cans, plastic bottles and food waste are still ending up in the residual waste bin and then inevitable in landfill or being incinerated - rather than recycled.</p>															
1.04	<p>It is widely recognised that the impact of not recycling our waste has substantial environmental implications that must be addressed to mitigate future impact on the planet.</p>															

	<p>Some of the most significant effects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of raw materials for the manufacture of new products destroys natural habitats and ecosystems. • Increased Carbon emissions from the mining, transport and manufacture of new products. • Increased pollution as non-recycled items enter the waste stream and pollute the natural environment. Plastic waste, specifically, has recently been highlighted as polluting our sea and oceans.
1.05	<p>There is a lost financial opportunity by not recycling our waste. There is a cost for every tonne of waste which is treated or landfilled, whilst the sale of the recycled products raises a small amount of income for the Council.</p>
1.06	<p>Review of current waste strategy</p> <p>With the current Municipal Waste Strategy coming to an end in 2025, and the expectation that our current performance will plateau without further changes, now is an opportunity to review the current service provision to identify how recycling performance could increase further.</p> <p>Therefore, the Council's Cabinet Committee have approved the commencement of a public consultation from the 25th September 2019 to the 31st October, to gauge public opinion on the current recycling and waste services and explore the potential of alternative service delivery models to assist with maximising recycling potential.</p>
1.07	<p>In order to deliver the consultation to as many key stakeholders as possible a programme has been developed, highlighting methods of communication and engagement Appendix 1.</p>
1.08	<p>Information has been collated and presented for residents to review before providing their individual feedback so that any concerns or questions can be answered. This information is available via a designated webpage created specifically for the consultation and includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing service users on current successes • Informing service users on what the Council collects as recycling • Informing service users on what happens to collected recyclable items • Providing more information on services provided and dispelling misconceptions • Explaining the need for a review to be undertaken
1.09	<p>The consultation feedback takes the form of a short Survey Monkey questionnaire in which a number of questions are asked Appendix 2, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the current recycling behaviours • What restricts a person's ability to recycle • What concerns are there about recycling • Consideration for future service change options that will maximise recycling potential.

1.10	Potential alternative service provisions have been identified by looking to neighbouring Authorities and reviewing their current and future service models. Options for consideration are detailed in Appendix 3 .
1.11	<p>Within the first week of the consultation in excess of 6000 responses have already been received, demonstrating the importance of the recycling and waste services to our residents.</p> <p>The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee are now invited to comment on the consultation programme and stakeholder engagement, the content of information provided to services users and provide feedback on the questions presented in the consultation survey.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no additional resource implications for undertaking the public consultation.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Member workshops were held in June 2019 to seek views on the future provision of the collection service.
3.02	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside.
3.03	Town and Community Council's – invitation for written response/comment.
3.04	Elected Members – invitation for written response/comment.
3.05	Assembly Members – invitation for written response/comment.
3.06	Members of Parliament – invitation for written response/comment.
3.07	Flintshire residents.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	A project team is in place to manage and support the consultation to ensure Countywide engagement.
4.02	An Integrated Impact Assessment has begun to assess the impact of any potential service changes.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Consultation Programme Appendix 2 – Consultation Questions Appendix 3 – Service change considerations

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Consultation web page https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Bins-Recycling-and-Waste/Waste-Strategy-Consultation/Recycling-and-Waste-Consultation.aspx</p> <p>Survey https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RecyclingHaveYourSay</p> <p>Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	WG – Welsh Government TZW – Towards Zero Waste MWC – Managed Weekly Collections

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APPENDIX 1

Consultation programme

August 2019	Integrated Impact Assessment	Start IIA process
24 th September	Cabinet	Seek approval on the launch of consultation Present: Document, survey, consultation list, video,
25 th September – 31 st October	Consultation Live	Launch consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live on Flintshire CC Website • Video detailing recycling operations • Live survey monkey questionnaire • Live on Infonet / workforce email • Informative banner on HRCs • Twitter updates • Press release • Information via My Account / Your Council • Letter to: Members, T&CC, AMs, PMs • Letter to School Councils / eco groups • Leaflet to each property (with calendar) • Call %age of residents to take survey
25 th Sept – 31 st October	Connects Centres / Libraries	<p>Buckley Connects Centre Monday 7 October, 10am-2pm</p> <p>Mold Connects Centre Wednesday 9 October, 10am-2pm</p> <p>Flint Connects Centre Friday 11 October, 10am-2pm</p> <p>C'Quay Connects Centre Tuesday 15 October, 10am-2pm</p> <p>Holywell Connects Centre Thursday 17 October, 10am-2pm</p>
25 th Sept – 31 st October	Twitter Reminders	Reminder on Consultation / Recycling advice
10 th October	County Forum	Brief on consultation and request participation
15 th October	EO&S committee	Present report on consultation and request discussion / feedback
16 th October	Press Release	Reminder on consultation
31 st October	Consultation End	Close consultation and review feedback

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Have your say on recycling and waste collections

Flintshire County Council is undertaking a public consultation to engage with residents on the current and future waste services. Feedback is required on how residents currently use the service provided, what restricts a person's ability to recycle and what we could do to make sure recycling performance is maximised into the future.

Please take this opportunity to complete this short questionnaire to have your say.

We will consider all the information we receive and use it to inform our review of the Waste Strategy.

The consultation will close on 31 October 2019.

For more information about the way we handle the information you provide please go to www.flintshire.gov.uk.

About your household

1. Your postcode sector e.g. CH7 6**

2. How many people live in your household?

- 1 3 5
 2 4 6 (or more)

3. Please tell us how many people live in your household within each age range ..?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 (or more)
0-15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16-24	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25-44	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45-64	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
64+	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

About your recycling

4. Which of these statements best describes how much you currently recycle?

- I recycle everything that can be recycled
- I recycle a lot but not everything that can be recycled
- I recycle a little
- I do not currently recycle, but I intend to start recycling
- I do not currently recycle and do not intend to start recycling

5. How often do you use the following collection services?

	Every Week	Every fortnight	Once a Month	A few times a year	Never
Black bin - non-recyclable waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plastic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tins and cans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paper and cardboard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Batteries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Garden waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bulky waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Typically, how full are your recycling containers and black bin on your collection day?

	Overflowing	Full	Half Full	Quarter Full	Virtually Empty
Black bin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food waste caddy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plastic bottle sack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tins and cans sack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paper and cardboard sack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blue box for glass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Garden Waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Do any of the following factors prevent you from recycling? (tick all that apply)

- It takes too much time
- I'm not sure what containers I should use
- I don't have all the recycling containers and/or food waste bags
- I don't know where to get containers / bags from
- I don't think it matters whether I recycle or not
- I recycle everything
- Other (please specify)

8. Over the past few months, how often have you:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Thrown recyclables in to the waste bin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thrown uneaten food or food that is packaged in to the waste bin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thrown dirty recyclables into the waste bin because of the time it would take to rinse the items	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thrown items into the waste bin because you weren't sure if they could be recycled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forgotten to put recycling out as you were unsure of the collection day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thrown recyclable items into the waste bin because your recycling containers were full	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thrown waste into the recycling bin because your wheelie bin is full	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

9. Do you agree that the Council should take steps to encourage more people to recycle so less money is spent on disposal costs?

- Yes No

10. Do you think it is reasonable for the Council to take robust enforcement action against those who do not recycle?

Yes

No

11. Thinking about **your current recycling habits**, how do you think you would manage if your black bin was still collected every other week but the size of your bin was smaller?

I would manage just fine

I'm not sure, it may be an issue

I wouldn't manage at all

12. Thinking about **your current recycling habits**, how do you think you would manage if we collected your black bin less often?

I would manage just fine

I'm not sure, it may be an issue

I wouldn't manage at all

13. If you **made changes to your habits** and recycled everything you could, how would you manage with less frequent black bin collections?

I would manage just fine

I'm not sure, it may be an issue

I wouldn't manage at all

I would manage if I could get more non-recyclable waste into my black bin

14. What concerns would you have if your black bin was emptied less often?

I would have no concerns

Odours

Disposable nappies

The black bin would fill up too quickly

The bin would be too heavy

There would be an increase in fly-tipping and litter

There would be a longer time between collections if I miss my collection day

Vermin

Flies

Animal waste / animal bedding

15. Please provide any additional comments you may have here.

About you?

Thank you, for the information you have provided.

We would appreciate your co-operation in providing, on a voluntary basis, the information as requested below, to ensure our engagement is inclusive and delivered in a way that is fair to all and free from bias. The information is confidential and anonymous, and will be used solely for statistical monitoring purposes.

About you?

16. How would you describe your Welsh Language skills?

- Fluent
- Moderate
- Other (please specify)
- Basic
- None

17. Please indicate your age by ticking the appropriate box:

- under 16
- 17 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 and above

18. Sex

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

19. How would you describe your national identity?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Welsh | <input type="radio"/> British |
| <input type="radio"/> English | <input type="radio"/> Irish |
| <input type="radio"/> Scottish | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Northern Irish | |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please describe) | |

20. What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White | <input type="radio"/> Black - any other background |
| <input type="radio"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Asian - Indian |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed – White / Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Asian -Bangladeshi |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White / Black African | <input type="radio"/> Asian - Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White / Asian | <input type="radio"/> Asian – Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - any other background | <input type="radio"/> Asian – other |
| <input type="radio"/> Black - Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Any other ethnicity |
| <input type="radio"/> Black - African | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |

21. What is your religion?

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Christian (all denominations) | <input type="radio"/> Jewish | <input type="radio"/> Aethist |
| <input type="radio"/> Buddhist | <input type="radio"/> Hindu | <input type="radio"/> No religion |
| <input type="radio"/> Muslim | <input type="radio"/> Sikh | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (state) | | |

22. Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- (a) that person has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Using this definition do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|

23. Do you look after or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either:

- Long term physical or mental ill-health/impairment; or
- Problems related to old age

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Thank you.

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APPENDIX 3

Consideration for future service provision to maximise recycling potential

Undertaking stricter enforcement of what is placed in the residual waste (black) bin

Enforcement action to take place when recycled material is placed in a black bin.
Enforcement action to take place when waste or recycled material is put in the wrong container.
Only impacts those residents who do not recycle

Improve education

Improve resident understanding on what can / cannot be recycled
Improved education through schools, community and local groups
Improved information through digital media (website, social media, my account)

Changing the frequency of collection of the residual waste (black) bin

Reducing collection frequency for black bin collection to three or four weeks
Maintain weekly recycling collections
Maintain fortnightly brown bin collections (March – Mid-December)
Possible increase in black bin size dependant on collection frequency.

Reducing the size of the residual waste (black) bin

Maintaining the current frequency of collection while reducing the size of the black bin
Maintain weekly recycling collections
Maintain fortnightly brown bin collections (March – Mid-December)

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ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15th October 2019
Report Subject	Grass Cutting Policy Review
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the impact of the summer weather on the 2019 grass cutting season, the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested that the Council's Grass Cutting Policy is reviewed.

The Grass Cutting Policy has been regularly reviewed since 2012, with the last version being presented to Cabinet for approval in January 2018, when the revised policy demonstrated compliance with the latest Highway Code of Practice, which was released in March 2017.

The Council provides a grass cutting service in a number of locations and at key facilities around the County, and the report also provides further details relating to increased interest in the planting of wildflowers in areas where grass cutting is less frequent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends Cabinet approves the Grass Cutting Policy.
2	That Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee approves the promotion of a programme of wildflower planting with those Town & Community Councils who wish to support the initiative.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE GRASS CUTTING POLICY
1.01	The County has a legal responsibility for managing the Highway Network in terms of keeping the routes available and safe for the passage of the highway user. It undertakes this duty in its role as the Highway Authority. Grass-cutting takes place on highway verges in areas that are key to maintaining visibility, such as at junctions, laybys, and the inside of bends. The aim of grass-cutting is to maintain visibility and keep the highway safe for all road users.
1.02	Regular grounds maintenance of publicly accessible areas is recognised to improve the appearance of those areas, and maintains accessibility for the communities that look to enjoy these green spaces.
1.03	The Grass Cutting Policy, which includes the standard for all highway and open space grassed areas was last revised in January 2018, and a copy is attached (Appendix 1).
1.04	All grassed areas in the County are categorised into one of the following definitions and the service current delivery arrangements for each is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Highway Verges – Contracted • Urban Verges and visibility – Contracted • Amenity Areas – In-house • Cemeteries – In-house • Tenants Gardens – Contracted • Hedges – Contracted • School Playing fields – Contracted • Rights of Way – Contracted (Managed by Countryside services)
1.05	The frequency of cutting for each category is defined within the current Grass Cutting Policy as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural highway verges – once per year • Urban verges and visibility splays – 4 times per year • Amenity areas – Maximum 13 cuts per year / every 2-3 weeks • Cemeteries – Every 2-3 weeks • Tenants gardens – Maximum 13 cuts per year / every 2-3 weeks • Hedges – once per year • School playing fields – up to 16 cuts per year
1.06	The commencement date for all classifications of grass is flexible however the budget is fixed and if the service starts earlier in the year there will be insufficient budget for cuts later into the year.
1.07	Recent milder winters have had an impact on the service as grass continues to grow, even during the winter period. This results in longer grass for the first cut of the year which slows down the grass cutting operation and requires cuttings to be removed in some locations. If

	resources allow the service intends to undertake a single winter cut, if these circumstances are experienced in future.
1.08	Favourable weather conditions, usually in early summer, can also cause grass to grow more rapidly, meaning the grass is longer when by the time we reach the site. The length of the grass extends the cutting time, which in turn further extends the period between cuts – allowing the grass to grow even more before the next visit.
1.09	During early June 2019, heavy rain interrupted grass cutting services whilst resources were redirected to respond to localised flooding incidents, and were not able to restart the grass cutting rounds whilst the ground remained too wet for the machinery to operate. Meanwhile, this was a peak grass growing period, and the additional growth interrupted schedules into July 2019.
1.10	July 2019 was a record breaking month for temperatures and this again promoted the pace of grass growth. In efforts to address the issue of rounds struggling to keep up with the accelerated growth, Streetscene & Transportation engaged additional support from an incumbent contractor to assist the in-house amenity grass cutting teams to catch up. Additional contractor support continued until the end of September 2019.
1.11	There are no proposals to change the grass cutting standards however flexibility over the starting date is proposed to ensure the service can compensate for mild or severe winter weather. In addition a winter cut for amenity areas will be undertaken in the event that there is a mild winter and winter maintenance resources can be diverted to undertake the work. The operation will also be dependent on ground conditions, as the work cannot be undertaken if the ground is too wet.
1.12	Grass-cutting may be undertaken more frequently by Town & Community Councils (T&CC) but this is at their discretion and with the Council's agreement. Any enhancements to the standard above the policy would be funded by the T&CC. Under such circumstances, T&CC's are encouraged to take on an extended role in the provision of grass cutting for either additional sites, or more frequent cuts.
1.13	<u>Wildflowers</u> Encouraging communities to manage verges and other areas such as smaller roundabouts (where visibility is not an issue) and amenity areas for wildflower planting and care, can improve the aesthetics of the area and reduce the burden on the grass cutting service. This can only be considered where it is safe to do so, and not in conflict with health and safety management of verges.
1.14	Roadside verges and other areas can also be sanctuaries for wildflowers, pollinating insects, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. These are seen as essential green corridors for which these species disperse.
1.15	Through a variety of grant funded and partnership projects, a number of different approaches to wildflower area creation and management have been trialled by the Countryside Service as an alternative to the usual 'engineered' annual wildflower areas which, although often having a

	stunning visual impact, rely on regular re-creation. Alongside tree planting, areas of amenity grassland and road verges have been allowed to grow longer for the summer with a later cut to allow grasses and flowers to grow throughout the season. This approach has incorporated necessary and essential maintenance work to ensure there is no impact on highway safety.
1.16	Streetscene & Transportation are recommending Town & Community Councils put forward areas for consideration of wildflower planting, and where regular grass cutting can be avoided, these areas are trialled as an alternative to less frequent cuts and longer grass.
1.17	Those sites to be considered, an assessment will need to be carried out to consider existing wildlife, historic designations or features, plant identification to consider invasive plants and protected species and other wildlife interests. Any works and on-going management of these sites will need to consider the hazards of working in the verge, traffic management considerations and a risk assessment for the site.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	It is the intention of the service to maintain budgets and deliver the service with cost neutral implications.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation took place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational departments and stakeholders With Cabinet Member

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Streetscene service has undertaken risk assessments on the provision of the standard and frequency of all grass cutting services which are outlined within the policy.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Grass Cutting Policy (January 2018)

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Appendix 1 – Grass Cutting Policy (January 2018)
6.02	Code of Practice for Well-managed Highway Infrastructure (2016)
6.03	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones – Chief Officer – Streetscene & Transportation Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: Stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None

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Flintshire County Council.
Grass Cutting Policy (January 2018)

1. Roadside verges Cut by tractor flail

a) Rural Verges (outside 30mph) - **1 cut per year in July** (subject to weather conditions)

- 1 swathe widths on all principal roads
- 1 swathe width on all non-principal and unclassified roads

Visibility splays at junctions **4 cuts per year** in –

- April
- June
- August
- September/October

Full width verge cutting for weed and self-sown sapling control on all classifications of rural roads **once every 4 years** in September/October

Additional cuts may be carried out on Health and Safety grounds in specific locations as identified by the Area Coordinators.

b) Urban verges (within 30 mph zones) -- **4 cuts per year**

- April
- June
- August
- September/October

2. Amenity Areas

Maximum of 13 cuts per year as required.

Flexible start required for the start of the cutting season, in February/March, subject to weather conditions.

Frequency of cuts based on every 2 weeks in April to June, extended to every 3 weeks July to Oct, subject to weather conditions.

(Removal of grass cuttings will only take place in exceptional circumstances i.e. First-Cut of the season)

3. Public footpaths / Cyclic Routes

A **maximum of 4 cuts** per year as required, to prevent rural footways being lost to grass ingress and verge creep due to lack of usage.

4. Hedges

The majority of highway hedges are the responsibility of the adjacent land owner. Where the hedge has grown to an extent that it is causing an obstruction to the highway user, notice will be served on the land owner to cut the hedge accordingly. Highway hedges owned by the Council will be cut **once a year** after the nesting season has passed.

5. Bus-stops

A maximum of 4 cuts per year as required across the grassed areas either side of rural Bus-stops, up to 20 metres across the length of the stop.

6. Village / Town Gateways

A maximum of 4 cuts per year as required across the grassed areas either side of Village / Town Gateways signs, up to 10 metres either side of the gateway.

7. Recreation Sports Grounds –

Up to 16 cuts per year March to October. Subject to separate procurement arrangements and direct liaison with the Schools.

8. Cemeteries

Flexible start required for the start of the cutting season, in February/March, subject to weather conditions.

Frequency of cuts based on **every 2 weeks in April to June**, extended to **every 3 weeks July to Oct**, subject to weather conditions.

(Removal of grass cuttings will only take place in exceptional circumstances. i.e. First-Cut of the season)

Additional key dates outside of the cutting season to include **Christmas** and **Mothering Sunday**.

9. Tenants Gardens

Where tenants have requested and qualify for the assisted gardening service. The service is provided by contractors who will provide the following:

Maximum of 13 cuts per year as required.

Flexible start required for the start of the cutting season, in February/March, subject to weather conditions.

Frequency of cuts based on every 2 weeks in April to June, extended to every 3 weeks July to Oct, subject to weather conditions.



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 th October 2019
Report Subject	Ash Dieback Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Ash Dieback Action Plan (the plan) sets out how Flintshire County Council will confront Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) which is the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch Elm disease. Ash dieback has the potential to infect more than two billion UK ash trees and lead to the death of approximately 90% of them.

The plan focuses on making stakeholders aware of the problem and assessing the considerable risks to the council resulting from the disease. It outlines the steps that will need to be undertaken to help mitigate the disease's worst effects. The most immediate threat is the increased risk to public safety as a result of mature ash trees dying and subsequently falling onto the public highway or within urban areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the content of the plan and have awareness of the potential impact for the Authority in terms of finance and health & safety risks.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE ASH DIEBACK ACTION PLAN
1.01	Common ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) is a native ash tree found in nearly every part of the UK. Ash is typically found in hedgerows, highway verges and un-grazed land and a wide variety of urban spaces including, open spaces, semi-urban woodlands, parks, private gardens, schools and cemeteries. It is prolific at self-seeding on unmaintained land and has been extensively planted in the past by local authorities, private landowners, landscape architects and developers.
1.02	Ash dieback (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>) is a fungal pathogen that affects the UK's native ash trees. The disease arrived in Europe from Asia in the 1990s and spread rapidly on the continent. The disease was first recorded in Britain in 2012.
1.03	Ash dieback infects a tree via airborne spores produced by the fungus mushroom which grow on last year's leaves decaying on the ground. In favourable conditions many millions of spores are produced between during June to September on the fallen dead leaves of a single tree.
1.04	Symptoms of the disease are wilting and subsequent blackening of the leaves which usually hang dead on the twig. Infection extends into branches and stems initially causing a lens shaped lesion around the dead side shoot.
1.05	Despite the UK Government prohibiting the movement of Ash for planting in 2012, the disease has developed rapidly and response to the disease has changed from control to mitigating and managing its effects, by way of safety felling. The estimated cost of safety felling in Britain is £4.7 billion including £2.8 billion for a roadside safety felling and £1.6 billion for safety felling in urban areas.
1.06	The disease in Flintshire Ash dieback was first confirmed in Flintshire on the A55 at Northop by Forestry Commission plant health staff in 2015. In 2016 it was found in a woodland near Rhydymwyn on ash that had been cut down underneath overhead power cables.
1.07	It is evident that since being initially recorded ash dieback is now endemic in the county. It is widely distributed along the Alyn and Wheeler river valleys, the Dee coastline, Greenfield Valley and A55 trunk road. Ash is widely distributed and one of the most abundant trees species especially where the soil is calcareous over the limestone geology. It is estimated that Flintshire has approximately 24,000 ash trees growing outside the woodland environment adjacent to the highway.
1.08	Responding to the disease The plan summarises the various responsibilities, risks and required actions of Flintshire County Council and through the four phases of awareness, planning, action and recovery.

1.09	The national media have extensively covered ash dieback in the parts of the country where it was first found but it is not appreciated that it is now in Flintshire. Members of the public will also be concerned about the disease and ash trees that they may own.
1.10	The disease's effects are not currently obvious in Flintshire. There is a need to make the public aware that ash dieback will have a major effect in the county but in several years' time.
1.11	Awareness can be raised by posting on social media, updating the Council's website tree pages and engaging with the media. Landowners will need advice on how to best deal with diseased trees. Officers are working with the Corporate Communications Team to develop an appropriate communication plan.
1.12	Tree officers are working together across North Wales to share information and experiences of dealing with ash dieback. The North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NWTRA), Network Rail, Transport for Wales and utility companies will also be key partners.
1.13	The Tree Council has produced an Action Plan Toolkit, now in its second edition, that provides best practice on how large organisations can tackle ash dieback and mitigate its effects. The document provides useful information about the background to the disease, its spread, impact and how to plan for the disease using the experiences of organisations who have coped with the disease for longer.
1.14	Currently Tree Officers are undertaking surveys and monitoring of progression to inform forward plans and detail likely costs.
1.15	The plan highlights the likely risks associated with ash dieback and estimates the potential cost impact in dealing with the disease.
1.16	Ash trees in Flintshire, although showing signs of the disease, have not yet developed to such an extent to require safety felling. The disease will develop at different rates across the county and monitoring is key to enable response to be effectively managed. Felling will occur when an inspection deems a high risk of failure.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The national cost of removing trees with ash dieback is difficult to calculate, but the health and safety implications of affected roadside trees or trees adjacent to major target areas will require significant investment. Officers are currently learning from those authorities with the disease in a more advanced state e.g. Leicestershire CC.

2.02	Average costs for felling and clearing mature roadside trees are in the order of £800 per tree, a cost which may rise when traffic has to be managed and road surfaces cleaned. Smaller trees will cost less to remove and combining large work programmes/felling schedules will reduce the unit cost substantially. Nevertheless, dealing with smaller trees is expected to cost in the region of £400 per tree.
2.03	A significant proportion of the 24,000 mature ash trees are growing next to Flintshire's highways and are on predominantly privately owned land. Assuming a worst case scenario in which 90% mortality rates are experienced and based on a figure of £400-£800 per tree, the potential cost to private and public landowners, especially the farming community is estimated to be in the region of £1.2m - £5m.
2.04	It is currently estimated that the cost of removing Flintshire owned trees adjacent to the highway to be £344K.
2.05	Costs associated with other Authority departments who have trees within their remit such as schools, housing and public open spaces have an estimated cost for felling of £87K. The plan also identifies costs of increased monitoring, and replacement planting, to give a total cost of managing the disease on Authority owned land as £665K.
2.06	The impact on officer time to deal with issues associated with ash dieback will be substantial and will have to be prioritised against day to day duties. The plan looks at administrative costs associated with undertaking our statutory duty, at an estimated £190K.
2.07	Currently the Authority revenue budget is not expected to be robust enough to deal with this issue. It is expected that officers will make application to the Authority's Capital and Health and Safety budgets to partly cover this pressure.
2.08	It is hoped that Welsh Government may make some grant available to tackle the disease, but currently there is no provision. Welsh Government are being lobbied by Farming Unions and Tree Officers are in contact with the WLGA.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation with Natural Resources Wales, North Wales Tree Officers, NWTRA and the Tree Council has been carried out in the production of the plan.
3.02	The plan, once adopted, needs to be shared widely with internal and external stakeholders.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The plan identifies the risk to Flintshire County Council under the headings of: Health and safety, economic, reputational, and environmental.
4.02	The risks can be divided into those associated with the Council being a landowner and those resulting from its statutory functions.
4.03	The decline and death of mature trees caused by ash dieback will make trees highly liable to failure and as a result has implications for public safety and tree related insurance claims.
4.04	To address this increase in the level of risk it is vital that that the frequency of council tree inspections is increased to address the danger. Focused tree inspections on critical areas such as trunk roads, A/B roads and urban streets are the priority.
4.05	Streetscene is the service which will be most affected because there will be a need to be proactive with the management of ash trees within its portfolio and also be proactive in identifying infected ash trees belonging to other landowners that are at high risk of falling onto the carriageway or footway.
4.06	Where it is necessary to remove or make safe infected trees on FCC highway land the work will need to be funded by the Council. As the Council does not have a specialist tree gang capable of undertaking the removal of mature trees, contractors will need to be employed to carry out this type of work. In addition to the cost of the tree works, it is expected that in most cases the removal of mature trees will require traffic management (e.g. traffic lights, cones) so that the works can be carried out safely.
4.07	In addition to the financial pressures on landowners, including FCC, there will be an initial shortage of trained and insured tree surgeons capable of under taking the work, especially dangerous trees adjacent to the highways, electricity lines and railway tracks. One of the issues highlighted by the Tree Council was that rogue operatives will cause further problems and endanger themselves and/or their clients.
4.08	The disease will continue to have a profound impact on how trees and woodlands are managed, reduce biodiversity and weaken environmental resilience. Protected habitats such as the Alyn Gorge Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which are sensitive to change because of their high quality and will be harmed.
4.09	Currently, Flintshire County Council is embarking on a tree planting programme, whereby trees have been planted with a view of increasing the urban tree canopy cover and to offer more resilience to offset tree diseases (planting a selection of alternative tree species). As well as increasing resilience, it is anticipated these trees will also offer more in terms of supporting biodiversity.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix One - Ash Dieback Action Plan

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 703902</p> <p>E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Tree Council is one of the UK's leading charities for trees, promoting their importance in a changing environment. We work in partnership with communities, organisations and government to make trees matter to everyone
7.02	Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body. NRW were formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions.

Flintshire Ash Dieback Action Plan



First Edition – September 2019

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Introduction

This first edition of the Flintshire Ash Dieback Action Plan (FADAP) sets out how Flintshire County Council will confront ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Ash dieback is the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch elm disease and has the potential to infect more than two billion UK ash trees and lead to the death of approximately 90% of them.

The experience of other local authorities, who have been dealing with ash dieback for longer, is that it will not be business as usual and it is necessary to plan for the disease and its anticipated impacts on council services.

As a first edition of the FADAP this document focuses on making stakeholders aware of the problem and assessing the considerable risks to the council resulting from the disease. It also outlines the steps that will need to be undertaken to help mitigate the disease's worst effects. The most immediate threat is the increased risk to public safety as a result of mature ash trees dying and subsequently falling or shedding large limbs.

The loss of the ecosystem services currently afforded by ash trees is a major concern. Ash trees remove pollution from the air, store carbon and intercept rainfall, they are a functioning part of a vital ecosystem. The financial value of these ecosystem services are immense.

There is also the loss of biodiversity and the impact on the appearance and quality of the landscape to consider. If the ecosystem services and other benefits currently provided by ash trees and ash woodlands are not to be permanently lost it will be necessary to carry out extensive replacement planting and plan for recovery. It is hoped that later editions of the FADAP will be able to focus on this huge task and identify where the very considerable resources necessary to undertake this work will be found.

1. Ash Dieback Action Plan

The Tree Council has produced a second edition of its Action Plan Toolkit^{1 2} which provides best practice to large organisations on how to plan for ash dieback and mitigate its effects. The document provides useful information about the background to the disease, its spread, affects and how to plan for the disease using the experiences of organisations who have coped with having the disease for longer.

The Action Plan Toolkit recommends that large organisations each produce an Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP) to inform key stakeholders about the disease and the risks it poses to their services, and to also have a planned, measured and coordinated response to it.

The production of an ADAP will allow the council to combat the disease's effects in a coherent and proactive way which will be more efficient and cost effective. This ADAP follows other published plans, produced by Leicestershire County Council and Kent Resilience Forum. ADAPs are being produced by large organisations in other parts of England and Wales.

In the same way as The Tree Council's Action Plan Toolkit is now in its second edition, it is proposed to update Flintshire's Ash Dieback Action Plan to take into account evolving best practice and address any deficiencies in the current edition. It is also hoped that later editions of the plan will be have an emphasis on a programme of recovery.

¹ [Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit \(English\)](#)

² [Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit \(Welsh\)](#)

2. Ash trees

Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is a native tree found in nearly every part of the UK except for parts of the Scottish Highland and islands. Ash trees grow best in moist but well-drained nutrient rich soils with a pH of 5 or above. The canopy casts light shade and the fallen leaves soon decompose both benefiting the woodland ecosystem. The species is hardy unless the leaves, which generally come into leaf later in the spring, are caught by frost.

Older ash trees that are gnarled and decaying have the greatest value for wildlife. Over a thousand species are associated with common ash. Of these species, 62 are highly associated with the species and 44 are restricted to it making them particularly at risk from ash dieback.

Ash wood has many uses and is an important broadleaved tree for the timber and firewood industries.

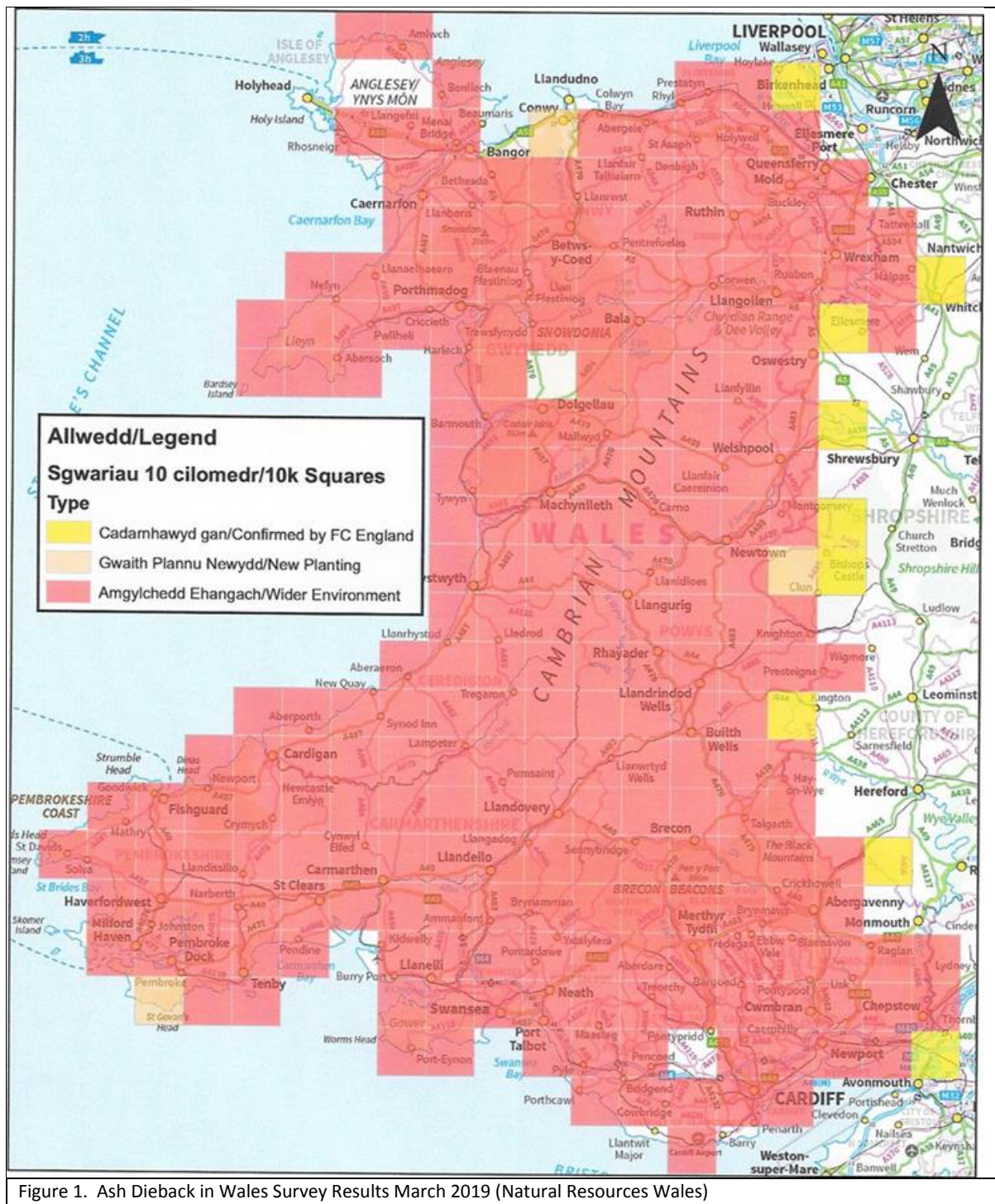
The Tree Council estimates that there are 27.2-60 million ash trees in non-woodland situations and 125.9 million in British woodlands over 0.5ha in area. This figure covers trees larger than 4cm in diameter (measured 1.3m above the ground level). It is also estimated that there are 2 billion saplings and seedlings in the UK³. Ash is the second most abundant broadleaved woodland tree in Wales.

As a countryside tree, ash is typically found in hedgerows, highway verges and boscsages (i.e. groups of trees and shrubs too small to be classed as woodland). In an urban setting it is found in a variety of areas including open spaces, peri-urban woodlands, parks, private gardens, schools and cemeteries. Ash is prolific at self-seeding on unmaintained land and prior to the disease was extensively planted by woodland managers, local authorities and private landowners.

³ The Tree Council, Chalara in Non-Woodland Situations. February 2015

3. What is ash dieback?

Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is a fungal pathogen that affects the UK's native ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The disease arrived in Europe from Asia in the 1990s and spread rapidly on the continent. Although the first official records of ash dieback in Britain were not until 2012 analysis of diseased trees now suggests it arrived here earlier and possibly before 2000.



Other species of ash belonging to *Fraxinus* are affected by the disease and also garden shrubs belonging to the *Oleaceae* family but these are much less frequent than common ash. The disease

does not affect mountain ash (also known as rowan) which is an unrelated species. Ash dieback previously had the scientific name *Chalara fraxinea* and is therefore sometimes called chalara.

Since first being identified at three separate locations in England the disease has been found across England into Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Despite the Government prohibiting the movement of ash for planting in October 2012⁴ the disease continued to spread rapidly and management soon changed from control and eradication to mitigating and managing its effects.

Figure 1 shows the widespread distribution of ash dieback in Wales as of March 2019. The disease is now endemic in Flintshire and it can be assumed that all ash trees in the county have been exposed to the airborne spores of the pathogenic fungus.

Ash dieback infects a tree via airborne spores produced by the fungus' mushroom which grow on last year's fallen leaves. In favourable warm and wet conditions, during the period June to September, many millions of spores are produced on the fallen leaves shed from a single tree. Where healthy trees are heavily exposed to the spores they become infected. Symptoms of the disease are wilted and subsequently blackened leaves which hang dead on a twig (Plate 1). Infection soon extends into branches and stems initially causing a diamond shaped lesion around the dead side shoot (Plate 2).



Plate 1. Dead infected leaves hanging from branches



Plate 2. Dead bark forming a diamond shaped lesion around dead side branch

Where the disease is fatal the dieback progresses until there is no foliage in the tree. Mature trees may respond to the infection with dense clusters of leaf growth that mark the extremities of the live

⁴ [The Plant Health \(Forestry\) \(Amendment\) Order 2012](#)

tree. This dense growth can be likened to a cheerleader's pom-pom and a clear symptom of ash dieback in a mature tree.

In addition to the above symptoms, infected trees in dense ash populations across mainland Europe exhibit dead lesions at the base of the stem. Research found that 17% of mature trees infected with the disease suffered from basal lesions and this was not always associated with crown dieback. The lesions can readily develop into a butt or root rot and make the assessment of risk much more difficult in large tree populations where it is not accompanied by crown dieback. This is a significant cause for concern.

Young trees are usually killed over a period of several months whilst mature trees decline over several years. Following initial infection by ash dieback mature trees are likely to be subject secondary infection by other pathogens (e.g. honey fungus).

Although devastating ash dieback is not always fatal. Evidence from mainland Europe suggests that 10% of trees exhibit moderate tolerance and 1% to 2% have a high level of disease tolerance⁵. Even after 20 years of exposure no site in Europe has reached 100% mortality⁶. In the UK there is hope that a small percentage of ash trees will be highly tolerant of the disease or possibly resistant and research is being undertaken to identify these trees. Early research shows ash trees in Wales and eastern England are more susceptible to the disease than trees in the middle of Scotland.

The Tree Council and the Forestry Commission have online resources for the disease's identification.

[Forest Research – Chalara Ash dieback](#)

[The Tree Council – Chalara in the UK: A photo id guide to symptoms in young trees](#)

[The Tree Council – Chalara in the UK: A photo ID guide to symptoms in in larger trees](#)

It has been predicted that ash dieback in Britain will cost £15 billion⁷. The largest proportion of this cost, £9 billion, is the loss of ecosystem services provided by ash trees. These ecosystem services include improving air quality, mitigating the effects of climate change, carbon sequestration and flood attenuation that will be foregone as a result of the disease.

The estimated cost of safety felling in Britain is £4.7 billion, comprising £2.8 billion for roadside safety felling and £1.6 billion for safety felling in urban areas.

⁵ [Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit \(English\)](#)

⁶ Coker L. R. et al. (2019). Estimating mortality rates of European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) under the ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) epidemic. *Plants People Planet* 2019;1:48-58

⁷ Hill, L. et al. (2019). The £15 billion cost of ash dieback in Britain. *Current Biology* 29, R301-R316, May 6, 2019. Elsevier Ltd

4. Ash trees and ash dieback in Flintshire

Due to its calcareous limestone geology common ash is one of the most abundant and widely distributed trees in Flintshire. Ash is dominant in National Vegetation Classification (NVC) W8 and W9 woodlands that comprise of nearly 1500ha of the county's 2700ha of broadleaved woodland⁸.

As a minor component, ash is present in pedunculate oak (W10) and beech (W12) woodlands found on drier ground. Whilst ash is not suited to damp ground, it was often planted or has colonised NVC W6 and W7 woodland types as a substitute for wych elm killed by Dutch elm disease or common alder affected by the disease *phytophthora alni*. When taking into account these factors it is estimated that there is another 400ha of ash woodland forming a sub component of woodland where other species are predominant⁹.

The estimated number of mature ash trees outside of woodlands in Wales is 240,000¹⁰. Based on this national figure it is estimated that there are 24,000 mature ash trees outside of woodlands in Flintshire growing in hedgerows, boscsages, shelter belts and urban areas.

Out of the 12 Landscape Character Areas in Flintshire mature ash trees, in a non-woodland setting, are a dominant feature of the landscape in the Pantymwyn Farmlands and the Trelawynd Plateaux. In four other Character Areas mature hedgerow trees, including ashes, are noted as being important in defining the character of the landscape¹¹.

Within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty mature ash trees are a particularly strong feature and one of the key features of the Alyn Gorge Special Area of Conservation is its ash woodlands.

Ash dieback was first suspected but not confirmed in Flintshire during 2014 when the Forestry Commission's plant health team ordered the destruction of young ash trees at Llong. At that time the trees had been recently planted and were known to be sourced from an infected nursery. The following year ash dieback was suspected and confirmed on the A55 at Northop. In 2016 ash dieback was identified on ash trees that had been cut down underneath overhead power cables near Rhydymwyn. Even though Figure 1 only shows the presence or absence of the disease and not the level of infection in any 10km grid square, it is evident that since 2015, ash dieback has become endemic in the county. It is now widely distributed along the Alyn and Wheeler river valleys, the Dee coastline, Greenfield Valley and A55 trunk road.

It is predicted that the ash dieback will have a significant adverse effect on Flintshire's landscape. The disease will reduce biodiversity and weaken environmental resilience. Protected habitats such as the Alyn Gorge Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and will be particularly vulnerable to disease's effects.

⁸ Reference required

⁹ Hall J. E., Kirby K. J. and Whitbread A. M.(2004). [National Vegetation Classification: Field guide to woodland](#). English Nature

¹⁰ Maskell L. (2013). Distribution of Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) in Countryside Survey data. Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

¹¹ Clwyd Landscape Assessment.(1995). FCC

5. How will ash dieback affect Flintshire County Council?

Local authorities that have experienced ash dieback for a longer period have recognised that the disease represents a ‘significant corporate risk’¹². The main areas of corporate risk are identified under four separate headings (Table 1).

HEALTH AND SAFETY	ECONOMIC	REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE
<p>Potential for death or injury as a result of ash dieback related accidents, both to professionals working on trees and to the general public</p> <p>Increased health and safety issues due to declining ash trees on roads, owned and managed land such as in county parks, housing estates, schools, cycleways, bridle paths and footpaths</p> <p>Risks to statutory functions or service delivery such as retaining safe schools, public open spaces or highways</p> <p>Risks to staff and user community from trees on adjacent land falling into your estate</p> <p>Risks from falling ash to your infrastructure such as fencing, signs, equipment stores.</p>	<p>Increased liabilities in cases of death or injury as a result of ash dieback related incidents</p> <p>Inadequate staffing levels and the ability (or inability) to undertake the work required resulting in increased costs to recruit and retain the necessary staff</p> <p>Increased expenditure from direct and indirect cost due to ash dieback e.g. additional staff and management activities, and the impacts this may have on other services and budgets</p> <p>Additional costs of the disposal of waste products from felled ash entering the waste management system</p> <p>Increasing prices as a result of market competition for a limited pool of skilled tree contractors</p> <p>Increased direct/indirect costs due to increased flood risk resulting from changes in the way water may be held back by tree roots, or absorbed into the soil, or taken up by ash trees</p> <p>Costs of replanting needed to retain ecosystem services provided by ash e.g. flood reduction, urban shading, carbon storage and habitat for biodiversity</p> <p>Increased liabilities as a result of risks to adjacent land and ‘third party’ property from your trees falling/shedding branches</p> <p>Drop in market prices for ash wood products due to excess ash on the market.</p>	<p>Potential for disruption as a result of ash dieback management e.g. widespread road closures to deal with potentially dangerous trees</p> <p>Political and reputational risks as a result of negative press over ash dieback management and public outrage and/or anxiety</p> <p>Potentially strained relationships with land owners and managers as ash dieback spreads and increased costs fall on the private owners.</p>
		<p>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS</p> <p>Landscape changes with impacts on tourism and recreational opportunities</p> <p>Losses to ecosystem services such as reductions in air quality, potential for increased flooding, biodiversity losses, increases in noise levels adjacent to roads, losses of visual screens</p> <p>Risks to protected species/ sites through alteration of habitat structure, stability and composition e.g. loss of bat breeding/feeding sites</p> <p>Losses of carbon storage and sequestration</p> <p>Loss of biodiversity from the decline or extinction of species which are largely or entirely dependent upon ash.</p>

Table 1. Source: The Tree Council, Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit

The risks identified can be divided into those associated with the council being a landowner and those resulting from its statutory functions, where, as result of ash dieback there will be increased pressure.

¹²[Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit \(English\)](#)

The decline and death of many mature trees has implications for public safety because the trees will become likely to fail. Taking into account what is known about the disease and its spread the decline and death of numerous ash trees will commence in the county during 2020.

The council is exposed to the greatest health and safety liability where it is the tree owner. Like all landowners the council has a duty of care under the Occupiers Liability Acts¹³ and must meet with this requirement if it is to defend potential civil claims of negligence brought against it. In the worst scenario, the council could be held criminally liable in the courts for a death caused by a falling ash tree if it were found to be grossly negligent.

To address the increased healthy and safety risks presented by ash dieback it will be necessary to be more proactive in the surveying and maintenance of the council's ash trees. More specifically it will be necessary to identify declining trees in high risk areas, where if they fall or shed boughs, are likely to cause damage or harm.

Even if the council is not the legal owner of a tree there is also a risk that its reputation could be damaged if it did not act using its statutory powers to deal with trees that are deemed dangerous. This will mainly apply to trees which are at risk of falling onto busy stretches of public highway.

Consequently the scale of the health and safety risk caused by ash dieback alone will mean that it will not be 'business as usual' for the council.

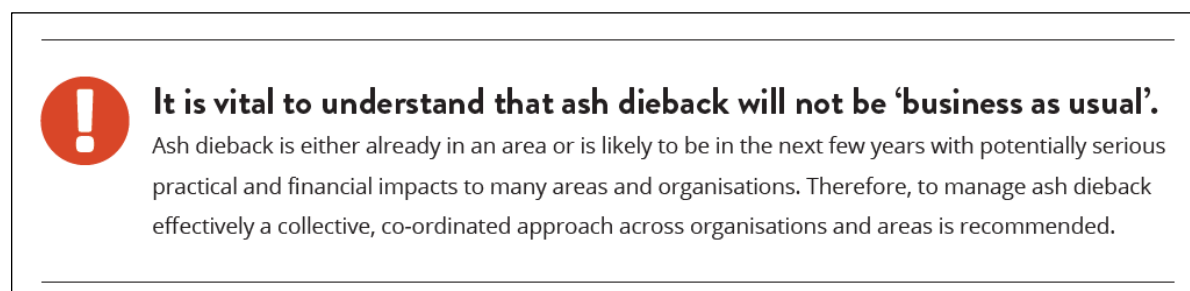


Figure 2. The Tree Council's statement on ash dieback¹⁴

Table 2 is guide for assessment of diseased trees using a system based on the percentage of live canopy cover and is used to determine when action is necessary to address the risks posed by a tree's decline. It is recommended to take action when approximately 40% of the crown remains (towards the beginning of Health Class 3) and it is advised that the tree will be a safety issue where the crown dieback is 75% or greater (Health Class 4). Where there is dieback but the crown remains in Health Class 1 a tree may have degree of tolerance and worth monitoring.

It should be emphasised that the above recommendations are only necessary where there is a risk of harm or damage if tree failure occurs.





In response to the disease it is important that the resources are prioritised to address the areas where there is the greatest risk. This is in accordance with Objective 3 of the Flintshire Urban Tree and Woodland Plan 2018-2033¹⁵ and will target Principal A Roads, B Roads and urban streets with

¹³ HMSO. 1957 & 1984. The Occupiers' liability Acts 1957 and 1984. HMSO.

¹⁴ [Ash Dieback : an Action Plan Toolkit \(English\)](#)

¹⁵ <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Countryside--Coast/Tree/Tree-Plan.pdf>

increased frequency of inspections. These are the stretches of the highway network which have the greatest vehicular and pedestrian traffic where a tree falling onto the footway or carriageway is more likely to strike a vehicle or pedestrian.

	
<p style="text-align: center;">Health Class 1 100%-75% Remaining Canopy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Health Class 2 75%-50% Remaining Canopy</p>
	
<p style="text-align: center;">Health Class 3 25%-50% Remaining Canopy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Health Class 4 0%-25% Remaining Canopy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Table 2. Ash dieback in Flintshire using Suffolk County ash health assessment system</p>	

RHYBUDD AROLYGU GWYWIAD YR ONNEN CAUTION ASH DIEBACK SURVEYING

Figure 3. It is proposed to use specific survey signs on highway vehicles to increase awareness whilst warning motorists

Where trees are identified as being a risk it will be necessary to have resources to carry out works to the council's own trees or in the case of privately owned trees resources to engage with the owner and resolve the issue. Tree works carried out adjacent to the highway will require traffic management and inevitably lead to traffic disruption.



Plate 3. Planned tree works and tree failures will cause traffic disruption

Considered secondary to the highway risk are the trees in schools and parks that are the responsibility of the Local Education Authority and Streetscene respectively. On these sites it will be necessary to increase the frequency of tree inspections and carry out works to make trees safe.

Additional areas of lesser concern comprise of FCC owned business parks, Countryside Service sites (e.g. Wepre Park and Greenfield Valley), cemeteries and housing land. Due to historical reasons the Housing Department is responsible for several large woodlands and although these woodlands are not regarded a priority they still require a desktop study to assess the extent of the land and the potential ash component present near to people and property.

At this time the areas of lowest priority are considered to be public footpaths, bridleways and council farms.

There will be additional demands on administration and legal services to help identify tree owners, serve notices under the Highways Act to make trees safe and recover costs.

The number of proposals to carry out work to trees protected by the Local Planning Authority will increase as a result of ash dieback. There is evidence that owners of protected ash trees are wanting to fell healthy trees that could have a high level of tolerance to the disease.

The council does not have a specialist tree gang capable of undertaking the removal of mature trees and therefore it will be reliant on tree contractors to carry out this type of work. The services of tree contractors may become more difficult to secure and the council may have to pay a premium to employ competent firms.



Plate 4. Early mature ash dying back adjacent to A55 on NMWTRA land, Broughton

Plate 5. Mature ash declining adjacent to A Road, Bodfari

When being felled or dismantled there is anecdotal evidence that ash dieback makes trees more unpredictable and there is a need to ensure method statements specifically highlight and address these risks.

Due to the demand for tree contractors there is potential for unscrupulous operators to 'cash in' on the disease and this should be addressed by information on the council's website and a Trading Standards campaign raising public awareness.

The loss of ecosystem services presently provided by ash trees will be huge and whilst health and safety concerns are more immediate this should not be wholly at the expense of planning replacement tree cover. Planting at an early will retain biodiversity and mitigate the environmental effects of ash dieback.

Currently Flintshire County Council manages highway trees using a GIS based computerised tree management system. Through better IT support, this type of technology can be used to survey trees on other land and identify where the disease is likely to result in the greatest risks to the council.

When planning and undertaking tree works it is necessary to ensure protected species and habitats are safeguarded. This would be most effectively dealt with by adopting a protocol in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). In particular it is important that standard survey methods are adopted to assess the likelihood of the presence or absence of European Protected Species (e.g. bats, dormice). Where protected species are present it will be necessary to obtain a licence and work closely with NRW. Every effort should be made to safeguard protected species as they will already be at risk as a result of the catastrophic loss of ash tree and woodland habitat.

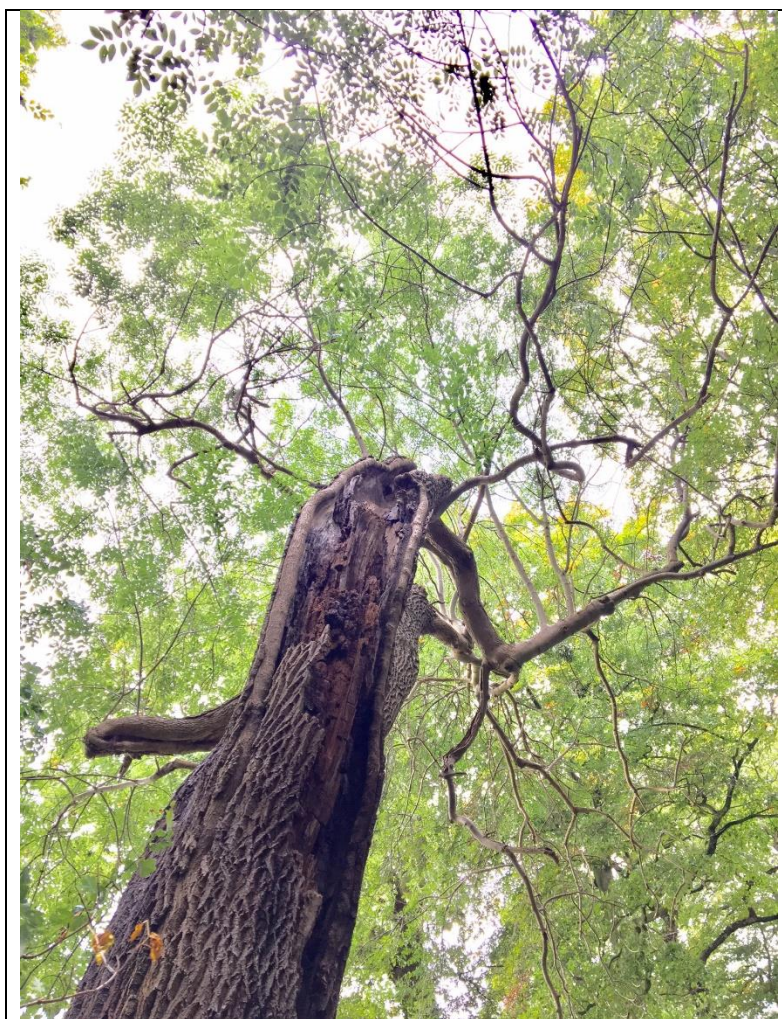


Plate 6. Decaying ash tree habitat

Bats are one of the key protected species of concern and it is necessary to ensure that their roosts and habitat is safeguarded. The Bat Conservation Trust's publication *Bats in Trees*¹⁶ provides best practice guidance on protecting bats during tree works and will be followed by the council when carrying out ash dieback tree works. In accordance with the advice, works to trees that have a high bat potential will be supervised by the council's ecologist or other licensed bat worker.

At the time drafting the first edition of the Flintshire Ash Dieback Action Plan a protocol for assessment of protected species and habitats has not been prepared however it is one of the points recommended for action. Following on from the

adoption of a protocol there is also scope to agree a derogation under licensing which would allow the council to carry out ash dieback related tree works across its sites without having to apply for a licence on each site.

When liaising with landowners over infected trees the council will make them aware of the need to safeguard protected species and habitats.

¹⁶ [Bats and Trees. Bat Conservation Trust](#)

6. Estimating the financial cost of the disease to the council

The risks and also financial costs to the council can be divided into those associated with the council being a landowner and those resulting from its statutory functions. For clarity the following tables with burgundy shading relate to trees where the council is the landowner and tables shaded blue relate to a statutory function or duty relevant to trees.

Trees on adopted highway land

Acting in its capacity as a Highways Authority the council is responsible for managing 152Kms of A roads, 78Kms of B Roads, 262Kms of C Roads and 682Kms of Minor Surfaced Roads. This excludes the roads maintained by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Roads Agency. Currently trees on highway land adjoining Principal A and B roads, and urban streets are surveyed once every five years, unless due to a tree's condition, it merits inspection more frequently. Prioritising a selected number of trees for more frequent inspection saves time and is in accordance with established Tree Risk Assessment methodology. The tree survey database has over 4000 records which are either individual trees or trees surveyed in groups. Within this dataset there are 562 individual ash trees and 33 ash groups containing an estimated 400 trees. Therefore there are approximately 1000 mature ash trees representing 14% of all the trees on highway land.

As a result of ash dieback it will be necessary to increase the inspections of ash trees on highway land from five to one year. In the case of mature ashes growing in sub optimal conditions where the rate of decline is quickest it is recommended that they are inspected biannually and checked at the base for lesions. Taking these factors into account the additional cost of surveying is estimated to be 30K over a five year period. (This figure excludes the cost of surveying trees adjoining the highway on private land).

It is estimated that the mortality rate for ash dieback in Flintshire will be 90% and all the following cost projections are based on this figure.

Predicted mortality rate for mature ash trees	90%
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Based on figures used by other local authorities the average cost of felling a single mature roadside tree is between £400 and £800. This will include traffic management, clearance and disposal.

To safeguard highway users and operatives, road works must be carried out in accordance with the Safety at Street Works and Road Works – A Code of Practice¹⁷. Where identified by a risk assessment, traffic management or even road closures will be necessary to carry out tree works adjacent to the public highway. Typical traffic management requiring stop/go lights will cost £200-£300 per site. The cost of a road closure is much higher and for example, where the FCC undertook tree works on the old railway bridge at Greenfield this necessitated a four day closure of the A548 which cost £2500.

¹⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321056/safety-at-streetworks.pdf

A single mature tree adjacent to the highway may cost £2,000 to dismantle and remove whilst a 6m high but still mature tree will be much less.

Average cost of felling a mature ash tree adjacent highway	£400-£800
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To more accurately predict the cost of felling ash trees on highway land the recorded tree heights can be used. Table 3 provides a breakdown for the felling of trees in three different height categories and percentage in each category to estimate the total cost.

Estimated cost of removing mature ash trees on adopted highway land				
1000 trees x 90% mortality				900 trees
Height Category	Percentage in category	Unit cost to fell	No. of trees	Cost
<10m	20%	£50	180	£9K
10-20m	67%	£400	603	£241K
>20m	13%	£800	117	£94k
Total				£344K

Table 3. Mature ash trees on highway land

Whilst there is a wide variation in the cost of removing a tree the high number means that it is not unreasonable to use an average to estimate the cost of the health and safety tree works required. Economies of scale will also mean there will be a saving which is also taken into account. The cost of removing diseased trees for health and safety reasons is likely to take place over a five to ten year period with most of the cost being incurred in the first three years.

The cost of replacement planting is based on the assumptions that three trees will be planted for every one tree removed and the cost of planting each tree using small nursery stock, including maintenance, will be £30. The total cost for replacing mature trees felled within the adopted highway is £81K. The cost per tree when planting in the adopted highway will be lower compared to other types of council land. This is because most ash trees are situated in wide informal verges where cheaper and smaller nursery stock can be used.

Education

It is estimated that identifying ash trees and surveying for ash dieback in schools will cost 20K over five years based on the number of primary and secondary schools in the county. There is a need to undertake a full Tree Risk Assessment based survey of all schools as one has not been undertaken for at least five years and this would form part of a strategy for surveying and managing trees infected with ash dieback.

A desktop study using aerial photographs was undertaken to assess the mature tree canopy cover in 12 primary and three secondary schools. It is estimated that there are 1300 mature trees on education land. Compared to trees on the adopted highway verge adjacent to Principal A and B Roads the proportion of ash trees will be lower and is estimated to be 5%. Using a mortality rate of 90% and

nominal felling cost of £300 per tree it is estimated that the cost of felling 59 mature diseased ashes in council schools will be £18K.

An estimation of the cost replacement planting on a three for one basis is also provided with a unit price per tree of £100, reflecting the need to plant trees of a reasonable size in schools and reduced survival rates for larger nursery stock sizes.



Plate 7. Mature ash in a Flintshire school

Public open spaces

Public open spaces are maintained by Streetscene but were formerly managed by Leisure Services. There is a lack of survey information for trees on Public open space and a need for a full Tree Risk Assessment based survey to be undertaken. The cost of surveying for ash dieback in public open spaces is estimated to be 30K over five years.

A desktop study using aerial photographs was undertaken to estimate the mature tree canopy cover on a sample of five public open spaces. The area covered by the five open spaces was measured and using the total area of open space it is estimated that there 2030 mature trees.

Once again it was estimated that 5% of the trees would comprise of ash species and there would be 90% mortality. Taking into account these assumptions 90 mature trees will require felling as a result of the disease. At a cost of £300 per tree the cost of felling ash trees on public open space will be £27K.

The formula used for calculating replacement planting costs was the same as that used for Education land and is £27K

Identifying, removing and replacing council owned trees					
Activity	Area	Department	Cost (£K)		
			Increased surveying 5 years	Felling	Replacement planting
Removing* and replacing diseased ash trees on adopted highway land	Adopted highway	Streetscene	£30K	£344K	£81K
	Education	Education and Youth	£20K	£18K	£18K
	Public open spaces	Streetscene	£30K	£27K	£27K
Increased tree surveying (*Removal also includes truncation or lopping a tree so that it is no longer a risk)	Housing	Housing and Assets	£4K	10K	£3K
	Cemeteries	Streetscene	£4K	£8K	£3K
	Industrial Estates	Valuation and Estates	£4K	£12K	£3K
	Country parks Rights of way	Access and Natural Environment	£4K	£12k	£3K
Sub Total			£96K	£431K	£138K
				Total	£665K

Table 4. Estimated costs for surveying, felling and replacement planting

The costs of surveying, felling and replacement planting have been estimated for other council land types and are also contained in Table 4.

The above figures demonstrate that there is a saving of £138K if the council does not undertake replacement planting. However this would not meet the council's duty under the Environment (Wales)

Act 2016 and not be in accordance with Objective 2 of the adopted Flintshire Urban Tree and Woodland Plan¹⁸.

Statutory functions

The main area of concern is the risk that the council will be exposed to in carrying out its duties under the Highways Act 1990.

A sample survey of 18.5kms of the road network was undertaken during August 2019 and found that there are 1078 mature ash trees (over 6m in height) in private ownership adjacent to the highway. Using the length of the highway network these figures can be extrapolated to estimate the number of mature ashes adjacent to the highway on Principal A and B roads (Table 5). Category C Roads and Minor Surfaced Roads were not included in the sample.

Estimated number of mature ash trees adjacent to the highway (Principal A and B Roads) on private land	
60 mature ash trees per kilometre x 90% mortality	54 trees/Km
Length of Principal A and B roads (Excludes NMWTRA roads)	230Kms
Trees total	12,420

Table 5. Estimated number of ash trees adjacent to highway on private land that will require removal

The unit cost of felling the trees has been estimated to be between £100 and £400 taking into account the level of traffic management requirement on Principal A and B Roads, clearance and disposal.

Cost of felling* mature ash trees adjacent to the highway (Principal A and B Roads) on private land	
Number of mature ash trees over 6m in height	12,420
Unit cost – higher and lower estimates	£100-£400
Total	£1.2m - £5m

Table 6. Higher and lower estimates to fell mature ash trees adjacent highway on private land

Critical to an estimation of the cost to the council is predicting how proactive private landowners will be managing diseased trees adjacent to the highway and how frequently it will be necessary for the council to intervene and use its statutory powers following initial discussions with a tree owner. However, the council is more likely to have to fell trees which are difficult to remove because of their location and size.

Under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 (As amended)¹⁹ the council in its Highways Authority capacity can serve notice on a landowner to require the removal of a tree deemed a danger to the highway, and where necessary carry out tree work in default of the landowner. The highways authority is not under a strict duty to use Section 154 and may choose not to serve a notice on a landowner especially where, if a tree fell, it would be unlikely to cause damage or harm. Public footpaths, C Roads and Minor Surfaced Roads in rural areas will be considered to be a much lower priority than other busier stretches of the highway network.

¹⁸ <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Countryside--Coast/Tree/Tree-Plan.pdf>

¹⁹ Highways Act 1980 (As amended) HMSO

Even on Principal A and B Roads it is anticipated that the council will not have the resources to identify trees deemed as dangerous adjacent to the highway, ascertain the landowner and engage with them over tree felling; especially when the council will be dealing with its own trees which will be a higher risk as far as strict liability is concerned.

To further compound the estimate of the cost to the council, there is provision within the Act for the council to recover its costs in arranging and carrying out the work, although realistically only a small percentage of these costs are ultimately recovered from the tree owner. The reasons for this may be because the tree owner cannot pay, cannot be established or it is not viable to pursue recovery of the debt. The flow diagram in Figure 2 summarises the process.

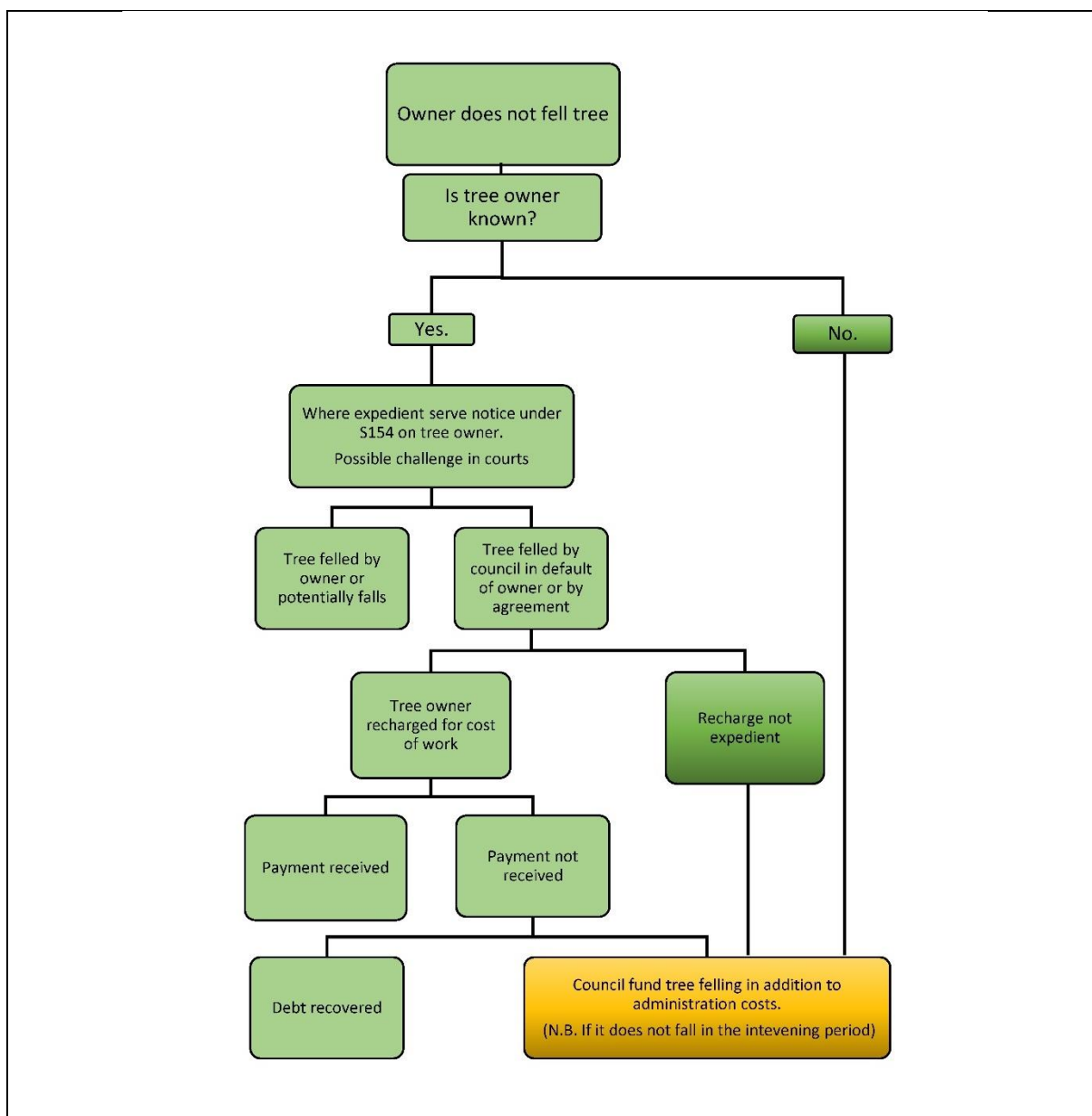


Figure 2. Flow diagram showing where the council will incur costs felling dangerous trees on private land adjacent to highway

Taking into account the above factors it is very uncertain what the cost to the council will be when dealing with the estimated 12,000 mature and diseased ash trees adjacent to Principal A and B Roads on private land. Inevitably, the council's response will also be dependent on the resources available to deal with ash dieback.

It is important to note that the above assessment does not include C Roads or Minor Surfaced Urban Roads because they are a lesser risk. If it is assumed that the number of trees per kilometre is consistent for the whole network there would be an estimated 63,000 diseased ash trees which would cost between £6.4m and £25m to fell using the £100 lower and £400 higher estimates used in Table 6.

To address the weaknesses in the above assumptions it is important that costs of ash dieback to the council's services are accurately recorded and used to more accurately predict future costs. One of the actions proposed is to set up a unique cost code for dealing with ash dieback to enable easier auditing of figures. Officers will also be advised to record the time spent dealing with ash dieback.

Statutory requirements or duty				
Activity	Area	Department	Estimated Cost	
			Survey/Admin over 5 years	Felling
Increased surveying costs Issuing and serving notices Felling* ash trees on private land adjacent to public highway in default of landowner	Highways Authority under S96, S150 and S154 Highways Act	Streetscene	£150K	£1200K to £5000K
Administering LPA tree work applications to fell diseased ashes Replacement planting costs can be incurred by the LPA when a Tree Replacement Notice is served	Tree Preservation Orders and conservation areas	Development Management	£20k	Not part of duty
Ordering the felling* of ash trees on private land which are a danger to adjoining property	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	Access and Natural Environment	£20K	£10K (Takes into account recovery of some costs)
Sub total			£190K	£1410-£5010K
*Felling also includes truncation or lopping a tree so that it is no longer a risk				Total
				£1.6m - £5.2m

Table 7. Estimated costs to the council when carrying statutory requirement or duty

Where a tree falls and blocks a highway the council is under a duty to remove the obstruction. Once again there is provision for the council to be able to recover costs from the owner of the fallen tree however in the past this has been rarely undertaken. If private landowners are to be encouraged to

remove standing dying trees adjacent to the highway it will be necessary to recover the cost of clearance if they do fall. This is particularly relevant when a tree owner is served with a notice to remove a standing tree who may be inclined not to carry out the work in the formal notice knowing that if they, negligently, let the tree fall onto the highway they may not be charged by the council for the tree's clearance.

Private landowners will be expected to shoulder a considerable financial burden when removing diseased ash trees adjacent to the highway. Ergo it is likely that relationships between private tree owners and officers will become strained where the council requires works to be carried out and is unable to offer any financial assistance.

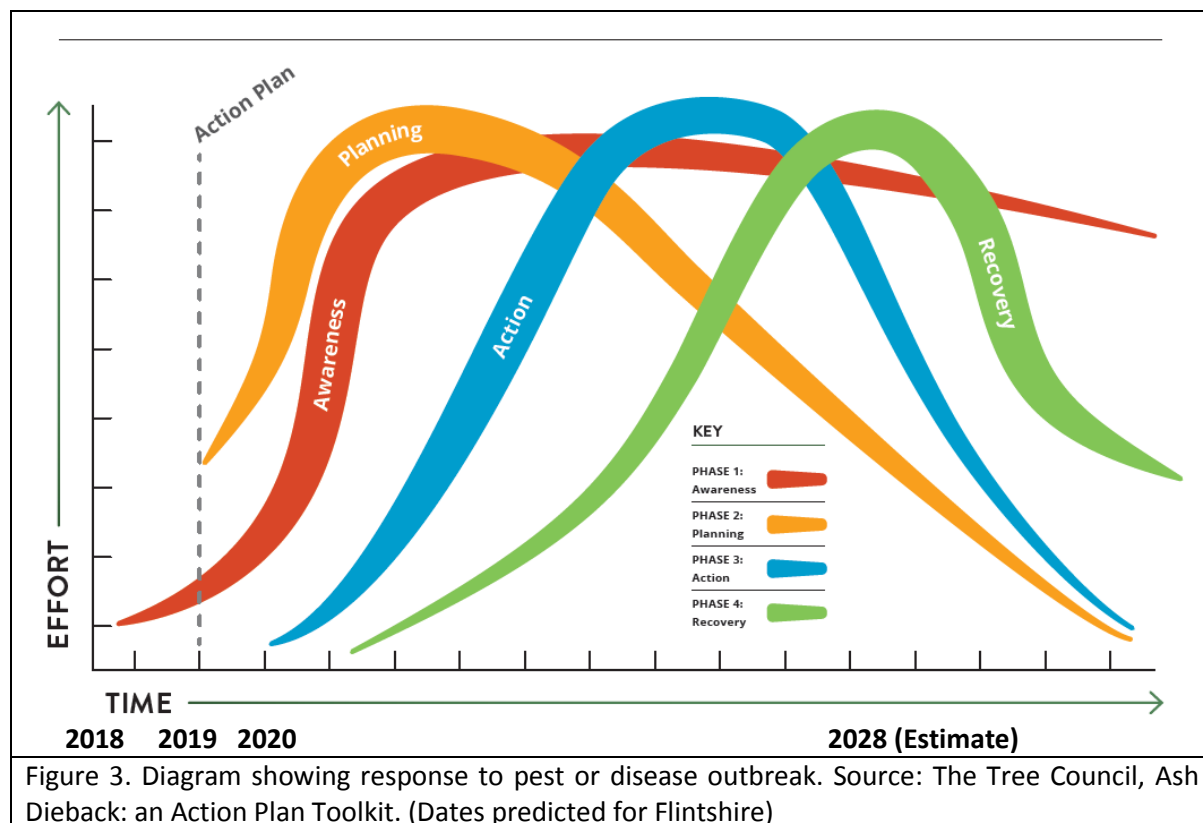


Plate 8. The cost of removing a mature tree adjacent to an A road will be approximately £2,000

As indicated in Table 7 the burden of dealing with ash dieback related tree work applications and enquiries to the Local Planning Authority are relatively minor. It is also anticipated that the cost to the council dealing with the powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 will be minor.

7. Delivery plan

Figure 3 shows four key parts of a recommended response to the potential outbreak of a tree pest or disease. It is based upon the wider used protocol of an Emergency Plan and was the basis of the strategy used by Kent County Council in response to ash dieback.



Awareness

The national media extensively covered ash dieback when it was first found in 2012 however coverage of the disease has waned despite its major effect. Now that the disease is widespread in Flintshire we cannot afford to be complacent. Awareness of the problem and coming to terms with it are the first steps in confronting it.

At the time of drafting this first FADAP awareness of the disease within the council is low and its effects are not fully appreciated. It is hoped that publication of the FADAP will raise awareness of the disease and the magnitude of its consequences. FCC tree officers have learnt a lot about the disease from counterparts who have been dealing with the disease for longer and a lot of this information is contained in this document.

Making members of the public aware of the disease will help gain momentum and support for later phases. It will also help them understand why there will be disruption to the highway network and council services.

Planning

An Ash Dieback Management Team has been set up as the first step in planning for the disease. The team comprises of the tree officers, a lead highways officer and principal solicitor. This will be the main forum discussing issues relating to ash dieback within the county and report to a Chief Officer.

Where necessary to address specific issues, additional officers will need to attend Ash Dieback Management Team meetings. From time to time this may include a chief officer, communications officer, finance officer, ICT officer and officers involved with the management of council land where ash dieback is less critical. At this stage it is not proposed to include stakeholders from outside the council (e.g. Police) but this can be subject to ongoing review.

The FADAP has been prepared and is due to be considered by Informal Cabinet which will notify council members about the disease and the council's exposure to its effects. Following promulgation through the distribution of the plan, internal stakeholders will be asked to participate in a meeting to identify action points for their services areas.

The North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency manages parts of the road network in Flintshire and it is important that there is regular communication between the agency and the council over ash dieback. There is also a North Wales Tree and Landscape Officer Group which meets every six months. Where common to external stakeholders there is scope to share information and expertise, and a planned approach to this will achieve better outcomes.

Utility providers will also be faced with having to deal with the challenges of ash dieback. Taking into account the number of trees managed by the council it will be worthwhile discussing protocols with the main providers.

An obvious part of the planning stage is identifying the areas of highest risk and the resources required to address or at least mitigate the risk. This has already been undertaken with the findings and financial costs identified in Chapter 6.

Actions

So far there has been limited action in response to the disease and this will need to change as it progresses. The cost of dealing with the disease will be greater if actions are delayed.

There is an obvious need to make a case for additional funding and it is recommended that the council cooperates with the Welsh Local Government Association to lobby the Welsh Government for extra funding for local authorities to tackle ash dieback. The Welsh Local Government Association wrote to the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs in July (Appendix 1) which among other things highlights the need for a package of funding and there is a need to maintain pressure by providing supporting information.

As outlined in Figure 2 it is not possible to come to a firm estimate of the costs that the council will incur as a result of dealing with trees deemed as dangerous on private land adjacent to the public highway. The amount estimated is between £1.3m and £5.2m for Principal A and B Roads and there is a need for further assessment of this figure to determine whether more of the highway network should be included and what the council's liabilities are if it cannot afford to carry out its duty under the legislation.

Whilst the main estimated costs of ash dieback are stated in Chapter 6 there is a need to estimate the costs to other council services in dealing with the disease especially in administration and legal support. It is therefore proposed to prepare a comprehensive table outlining all the costs to the council.

As outlined above there is a need to increase public awareness and it is proposed to use the council's website, social media and the regional press to achieve this. Inevitably, ash dieback will increase the number of enquiries made to the council and it is important that the right information is efficiently provided to members of the public on the web. Where appropriate links can be used on council's web pages to take enquiries to more appropriate websites such as The Tree Council, Forestry Commission and trade bodies for the arboricultural industry.

Therefore one of the key initial actions is to adopt the Communications Strategy which is attached as Appendix 2.

Recognising the pressure on resources a vehicle mounted GPS enabled HD video camera has been used to record footage of each side of Principal A and B Roads in two passes. This method is much faster than carrying out the manual plotting of trees and is a more advanced method of windshield surveying used in the U.S.²⁰ and will identify areas where the incidence of ash trees and ash dieback is greatest. It is proposed to carry out resurveys at the same time each year so that the footage can be used for assessing the impact of the disease over time.

The Area Coordinators in Streetscene undertook a Basic Tree Inspection qualification in May 2016 and there is a need to refresh this training with an emphasis on identifying ash dieback and the Tree Risk Assessment methods used for the disease. It is also necessary to increase awareness of ash dieback for Streetscene officers.

In anticipation of a significant increase in the amount of tree work procured by the council another action is to increase the number of contractors who are approved to work for the council and to formalise emergency call out procedures.

Another action is for Trading Standards to be aware of the increased risk that householders may be under from rogue tree contractors and a further action could be a campaign highlighting the issue.

Recovery

It is too early to focus on the recovery stage especially where there are more urgent priorities.

However it is worth exploring what we would like in the way of future tree and woodland cover, how this can be achieved and what indicators will be used to measure recovery or, at least, the degree of recovery. Many ash trees in Flintshire's countryside are over 100 years and cannot be replaced in a human's lifetime but we can insist on making our existing woodlands more resilient and look after our existing mature trees better.

²⁰ [The reliability of a windshield survey to locate hazards in roadside trees](#)

It has been estimated that the cost of recovery to Britain could be reduced by £2.5 billion by facilitating natural tree regeneration through the proactive management of areas²¹. Thus, where there is an opportunity to undertake 'quick fixes' to encourage regeneration it may be possible to replace ecosystem services at a reduced cost.

Section 6 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a specific duty on public bodies, including local authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and to promote ecosystem resilience. Under the Act Natural Resources Wales is required to publish Area Statements covering natural resources, the benefits they provide and the priorities, risks and opportunities that need to be addressed for their sustainable management. Trees and woodlands are part of this natural resource and the publication of Area Statements could provide a framework for recovery.

The Flintshire Urban Tree and Woodland Plan has the target of increasing urban canopy cover to 18%²² by 2033 and provides a strategic approach to recovery from ash dieback in urban areas. This document also makes use of the canopy cover studies^{23 24} carried out by NRW.

Woodland recovery will be guided by UK Forestry Standard²⁵ and Woodlands for Wales²⁶ the Welsh Government's long term woodland strategy.

Where new tree planting is undertaken it must be properly maintained and nurtured to ensure the trees mature and ultimately provide the replacement ecosystem services that are necessary.

In any recovery plan it is vital that there is stringent biosecurity as there is currently an unprecedented level of pest and disease threats to UK trees. Whilst it is open to debate whether ash dieback was imported as a result of trade or has blown across from mainland Europe, there is a need to be much more aware of tree health and resilience²⁷.

It is also evident that any meaningful recovery will not take place without funding from the Welsh Government. Therefore the strongest possible case needs to be made to secure funds for recovery in addition to the more urgent health and safety tree works.

²¹ Hill, L. et al. (2019). The £15 billion cost of ash dieback in Britain. Current Biology 29, R301-R316, May 6, 2019. Elsevier Ltd

²² <http://www.sirffflint.gov.uk/cy/PDFFiles/Countryside--Coast/Tree/Tree-Plan.pdf>

²³ [Tree Cover in Wales' Town and Cities](#)

²⁴ [Town Tree Cover in Flintshire](#)

²⁵ [Forestry Commission. \(2017\).UK Forestry Standard](#)

²⁶ [Welsh Government. \(2018\).Woodlands for Wales](#)

²⁷ [DEFRA. \(2018\). Tree Health Resilience Strategy](#)

8. Conclusion

The first Flintshire Ash Dieback Action Plan explains the background to the disease, how it is now prevalent in the Flintshire and how it has begun to affect the county's trees. Critically, it also sets out the anticipated risks to the council.

At the time of preparing this first Flintshire Ash Dieback Action Plan councils are having to begin preparing for the disease using existing resources and budgets. It is evident that the cost of addressing the health and safety effects of the disease alone will be considerable and place a massive burden on already severely restricted budgets for tree maintenance and highway budgets.

Using the information contained in Chapter 6 the estimate for dealing with ash dieback on the council's land is estimated to be £665K over the next five years. This estimate includes additional tree surveying, felling and replacement planting.

The cost of felling mature infected and dangerous trees on private land adjacent to the highway is much greater but less clear but has been estimated to be between £1.2m and £5m when applied to the main part of the road network. In addition to this figure there will be other costs for surveying.

9. Appendix

Appendix 1 – WLGA letter to Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

Appendix 2 – Communications Strategy



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 October 2019
Report Subject	Cemetery Provision and Future Strategy
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bereavement Services currently manage 15 Cemeteries and 8 Closed Churchyards located throughout Flintshire. In addition the service also has 2 Gardens of Remembrance located at Hawarden and Kelsterton, a dedicated Child and Baby Memorial at Kelsterton Cemetery and a Woodland / Natural burial area also located at Kelsterton Cemetery. Also located within the 15 Cemeteries are approximately 300 memorial benches and 12 buildings of various sizes and usage, including the chapel located in Hawarden (No 1) Cemetery.

Currently the major challenge and risk facing the service is the availability of future burial space, particularly at Hope (Bryn y Grog) and Hawarden (No 2) Cemeteries in the short term and beyond that at Buckley Cemetery.

Without action being taken to address these shortages, local residents will no longer be able to be buried in their local Cemetery with other family members and loved ones.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the purchase of the identified land to extend Hope and Hawarden Cemeteries.
2	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that investigations into future burial provisions at other Cemeteries in the County should commence 4 years prior to the anticipated point when the existing capacity will be reached.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	PROVISION OF FUTURE BURIAL SPACE																																
1.01	<p>Bereavement Services currently manage 15 Cemeteries and 8 Closed Churchyards located throughout Flintshire as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="400 412 1313 1323"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="400 412 860 472">Cemetery</th> <th data-bbox="860 412 1313 472">Closed Churchyards</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 472 860 524"><i>Bagillt</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 472 1313 524"><i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 524 860 575"><i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 524 1313 575"><i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 575 860 627"><i>Buckley</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 575 1313 627"><i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 627 860 678"><i>Flint - London Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 627 1313 678"><i>St James, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 678 860 730"><i>Flint - Northop Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 678 1313 730"><i>St Peters, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 730 860 781"><i>Greenfield No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 730 1313 781"><i>Trelawnydd</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 781 860 833"><i>Greenfield No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 781 1313 833"><i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 833 860 884"><i>Hawarden No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 833 1313 884"><i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 884 860 936"><i>Hawarden No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 884 1313 936"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 936 860 987"><i>Holywell</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 936 1313 987"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 987 860 1039"><i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 987 1313 1039"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1039 860 1090"><i>Hope - Old</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1039 1313 1090"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1090 860 1142"><i>Kelsterton</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1090 1313 1142"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1142 860 1193"><i>Rhewl</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1142 1313 1193"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1193 860 1245"><i>Treuddyn</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1193 1313 1245"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Cemetery	Closed Churchyards	<i>Bagillt</i>	<i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i>	<i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i>	<i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i>	<i>Buckley</i>	<i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i>	<i>Flint - London Road</i>	<i>St James, Holywell</i>	<i>Flint - Northop Road</i>	<i>St Peters, Holywell</i>	<i>Greenfield No 1</i>	<i>Trelawnydd</i>	<i>Greenfield No 2</i>	<i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i>	<i>Hawarden No 1</i>	<i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i>	<i>Hawarden No 2</i>		<i>Holywell</i>		<i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i>		<i>Hope - Old</i>		<i>Kelsterton</i>		<i>Rhewl</i>		<i>Treuddyn</i>	
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<i>Treuddyn</i>																																	
1.02	<p>The management of Cemeteries is in the main covered by the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 (LACO). LACO states that whilst the provision of Cemeteries is not a statutory duty, if a Local Authority does take on this provision, it must then maintain the provision of the these Cemeteries to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>The Authority also has a statutory duty under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1974 to undertake the funeral arrangements for those residents of Flintshire who are unable to fund their own funeral or have no Next of Kin able to do so.</p>																																
1.03	<p>The service is staffed by 2 full time Officers (Bereavement Services Manager and Bereavement Services Officer) and 6 Streetscene Operatives who undertake the grave digging operations and cemetery maintenance. The service also manages a team of 6 seasonal operatives who undertake grass cutting duties during the growing season (April to October).</p>																																

	<p>The service undertakes the following main operations during the year:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 400 interments (70% Full Body, 30% Cremated Remains which is the direct opposite to the national trend) • Memorial Safety Testing of approximately 6000 memorials annually • Undertake on average, 8 Public Health Burials (with a cost recovery rate of approximately 73%) • Maintains approximately 140,000m² of grass (16 cuts per year) • Maintains approximately 100,000m of paths and areas around memorials (16 visits per year) • Maintains approximately 5000m of hedge
1.04	<p>Appendix 1 provides the estimated capacity (in years) for all of the Council Cemeteries - in relation to new burial space.</p> <p>Of particular concern is the Cemetery at Hope with only 1 year (7 new grave spaces) and Hawarden with 4 years capacity. Buckley Cemetery is the third in line with 9 years of capacity available.</p> <p>The remaining Cemeteries have on average 35 years capacity remaining.</p>
1.05	<p>Suitable land has been identified adjacent to the Cemeteries at Hope and Hawarden and the Capital Business Case has been submitted for the extension to Hope Cemetery and negotiations are currently ongoing with the landowner. The Capital Business Case for the extension to Hawarden Cemetery is awaiting approval, and negotiations are at an early stage with the landowner's agents.</p>
1.06	<p>Unfortunately, there is no suitable land available adjacent to Buckley Cemetery, meaning an extension is not possible at the existing site. Enquiries have been made which have confirmed that there is no suitable land available in the Council's ownership in Buckley which could be utilised as an alternative Cemetery site. Investigations would therefore be required to identify options to purchase another suitable site in Buckley or in neighbouring areas to utilise as Cemetery land.</p>
1.07	<p>Clearly the purchase of additional land, creation of infrastructure and the extensive ground investigation works would require significant investment from capital funds. However the investment would secure future income from burial fees, which would be lost should extensions not be provided.</p> <p>Based on current fee rates the proposed extension at Hope Cemetery would generate an anticipated income of approximately £375k over a 25 year scheme period with initial purchase and development costs of approximately £225k. The balance between expected income and the cost of developing the sites will be sufficient to cover the operational costs for maintenance and supporting the burial work. This ensures the service achieves full cost recovery as require by the corporate Fees and Charges policy.</p>

	<p>As Hawarden is the major Cemetery within Flintshire, undertaking a third of all our interments, a larger extension would be required. The anticipated cost of the land purchase and developing the scheme would be approximately £600k.</p> <p>If the extensions are approved at Hope and Hawarden, they would provide a minimum of 20 years burial capacity at each site.</p>
1.08	<p>On average the timescales involved for establishing new or extending existing Cemeteries is approximately 4 to 5 years from identification of suitable land. It is therefore recommended that any future extensions are addressed 4 years prior to the anticipated date that current capacity will be reached, based on the information provided in Appendix 1.</p>
1.09	<p>A move to three “Strategic” Cemeteries located throughout the County, was previously considered and rejected as it would mean that residents would not necessarily be buried in the areas that they have lived their lives in, and would potentially not be able to be buried in the same Cemetery as other family members or loved ones.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Capital funding would be required to purchase land and develop new burial sites.</p>
2.02	<p>There are no staff resource implications associated with this project.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Natural Resource Wales – Groundwater risk assessments at individual sites.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Approval of the recommendations made within this report will assist the Bereavement Services in managing and reducing the level of risk associated with this highly sensitive service.</p>
4.02	<p>Approval of the recommendations made within this report will reduce the significant “reputational & political” risk associated with discontinuing burial provision in local areas where it has been provided previously for in excess of 50 years.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Burial Space

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Richard Blake – Bereavement Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704780 E-mail: richard.blake@fintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None

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Appendix 1 - Flintshire CC Cemeteries Average Years Left

Cemetery	Plots Available	Current Average Number New Graves per year	Average Years Usage Available
<i>Bagillt</i>	129	8	16
<i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i>	0	0	0
<i>Buckley</i>	45	5	9
<i>Flint - London Road</i>	792	33	24
<i>Flint - Northop Road</i>	0	0	0
<i>Greenfield No 1</i>	0	0	0
<i>Greenfield No 2</i>	1039	5	208
<i>Hawarden No 1</i>	0	0	0
<i>Hawarden No 2</i>	200	50	4
<i>Holywell</i>	387	14	28
<i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i>	7	10	1
<i>Hope - Old</i>	0	0	0
<i>Kelsterton</i>	1943	11	177
<i>Rhewl</i>	250	3	83
<i>Treuddyn</i>	397	3	132
Average	5189	142	36
Closed Churchyards			
<i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i>	0	0	0
<i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i>	0	0	0
<i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i>	0	0	0
<i>St James, Holywell</i>	0	0	0
<i>St Peters, Holywell</i>	0	0	0
<i>Trelawnydd</i>	0	0	0
<i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i>	0	0	0
<i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i>	0	0	0

