

Multi-Agency Strategy<sup>1</sup>**Background**

In developing this Strategy consideration has been given to the COBR and Defra / Fera strategic guidance for the Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) outbreak. In accordance with this, members of the SCG will seek to act and react positively and proportionately in managing the outbreak in Kent & Medway and seek to prevent wider infection, whether accidental or deliberate.

**Strategic Aim & Objectives**Aim

We will work in partnership to protect the environment, by containing the outbreak, limiting the spread and mitigating its potential wider consequences.

Objectives

We will achieve the above aim by putting in place an Action Plan to support the following strategic objectives:

- Establish robust Command, Control & Co-ordination (C3) arrangements (including relevant plans and protocols) to support effective & proportionate local, cross-border & national response arrangements;
- Provide a single-source of consistent Scientific & Technical Advice, to inform risk assessment and decision-making, including options for monitoring & treatment, containment / bio-security & disposal;
- Implement a rigorous Environment Management Strategy to support the effective implementation of relevant mitigating actions including monitoring, enforcement & treatment;
- Maximise public, media & stakeholder awareness & confidence through a joined-up Media & Communications Strategy; and
- Maintain continuity of the response & develop a long-term Recovery Strategy, covering business & economic confidence, cultural & amenity impacts and long-term environment management.

**Definition of an 'emergency'**<sup>2</sup>*1. Meaning of 'emergency'*

*(1) In this Part 'emergency' means —*

*(a) An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK;*

*(b) An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom; or*

*(c) War, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK;*

*(3) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) an event or situation threatens damage to the environment only if it involves, causes or may cause —*

*(a) Contamination of land, water or air with biological, chemical or radio-active matter; or*

*(b) Disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life.*

<sup>1</sup> Agreed at inaugural meeting of the Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) Outbreak SCG on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012

<sup>2</sup> As defined under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) - [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/section/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/section/1)

**Kent Resilience Forum (KRF)  
Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) Outbreak  
Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)**

**ACTION PLAN**

**Introduction**

At the initial Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) Ash Dieback Outbreak Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 it was agreed that an Action Plan would be drafted to provide clear direction to local, cross-border & national partners as to the response to be implemented across Kent & Medway in support of the agreed multi-agency Gold Strategy and the Interim Chalara Control Plan.

Four 'virtual' working groups, largely utilising email and teleconference facilities, will be established to oversee the implementation of the objectives outlined in the Gold Strategy as follows:

- **Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC);**
- **Environment Management Group (EMG);**
- **Media & Communications Group (M&CG); and**
- **Recovery Advisory Group (RAG).**

**Background**

Media reports widely cite the impact of the fungus Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) in Denmark, where a 2010 estimate stated that some 60-90% of ash trees were affected and may eventually die<sup>3</sup>. Since the announcement in October of confirmed cases in the UK, the outbreak has been reported widely by national and local media with much speculation as to the fate of our Ash trees. The latest reports<sup>4</sup> quote Danish scientists as suggesting that up to 95% of UK Ash trees could eventually be affected.

Such headlines have generated significant local concern as Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is the most widespread tree species found in Kent, with records from 930 of the county's 1,043 tetrads (or 2km squares)<sup>5</sup>. Some 111 invertebrates feed directly upon ash, and this figure increases significantly when associated predators and parasites are considered<sup>6</sup>. In addition some 255 lichens have an especial association with the alkaline substrate afforded by Ash bark<sup>7</sup>. The tree forms a component of high forest, coppice woodland and hedgerow habitats across Kent, and is also a prominent feature of our urban landscape, as street trees and within parks and gardens. Kent also supports the largest extent of surviving ancient woodland within the UK. If *Chalara* takes hold in the UK at the rate and extent experienced in Denmark, and elsewhere within Continental Europe, it will bring profound change for the landscape, ecology and rural economy of Kent.

Practical challenges are posed by the threat of unprecedented numbers of deteriorating trees, growing on private and public land, and to the safety of public spaces, pedestrian and bridle routes, the railway network and highways. The risk that 'rogue traders' will seek to profiteer from the outbreak is another key concern.

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<sup>3</sup> European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (2010)

<sup>4</sup> Denmark's ash disease dieback toll poses warning to UK. Jeremy Cooke (BBC Rural affairs correspondent) – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012

<sup>5</sup> A New Atlas of the Kent Flora. E.G. Philp 2010

<sup>6</sup> UK Biological Records Centre Database of Insects and their Food Plants

<sup>7</sup> Pasture and woodlands in Lowland Britain and their importance for the conservation of the epiphytes and invertebrates associated with old trees. Nature Conservancy Council & The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology

## Local Action Plan

Responsible Owners (Tactical Co-ordination): KCC Senior Emergency Planning Officer / KCC Senior Biodiversity Projects Manager

Reporting To (Strategic Co-ordination): KCC Director of Planning & Environment / KCC Emergency Planning Manager

	Key Targets	Performance Measure	Accountability	Timescale	RAG
1.	<b>Command, Control &amp; Co-ordination (C3):</b> Establish robust C3 arrangements (incl. relevant plans & protocols) to support effective & proportionate local, cross-border & national response arrangements				
1.1	Effective multi-agency C3 structure, Gold Strategy and Action Plan in place, being implemented, monitored and communicated.	Regular SCG and Working Group / Cell meetings to progress issues & flow of communications via Tactical Co-ordination leads Regular flow of communications between local, cross-border and national partners.	SCG Co-Chairs / Tactical Co-ordination Leads / All SCG Members	Ongoing	Amber
2.	<b>Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC):</b> Provide a single-source of consistent Scientific & Technical Advice, to inform risk assessment and decision-making, including options for monitoring & treatment, containment / bio-security & disposal. STAC will be largely 'virtual' in format, utilising email and teleconference facilities.				
	<b>Membership:</b> KCC Emergency Planning (Tony Harwood [Chair]), Forest Research (Dr. Gary Kerr), Fera (Martin Ward), Forestry Commission (Jonathan Harding), Jacobs (Aubrey Furner), KCC Flood Risk and Natural Environment Team (William Moreno), KCC Property and Infrastructure Support (Lynn Keeley), Kent Downs AONB Unit (Nick Johannsen), UKC (Roger Fraser), Arboricultural Association (Jim Quaife), KMBRC (Tony Witts)				
2.1	Compile detailed data set on Ash Dieback impacts within UK and Continental Europe, including better understanding of damage inflicted upon mature Ash trees and consequent health and safety implications to enable enhanced planning and response.	Report back to Strategic Co-ordinating Group	STAC Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Amber
2.2	Bio-security tool-kit / guidance to seek to contain level of <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> spread within county, with specific focus upon tackling spread from natural environment	Ash tree management guidance note produced	STAC Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Amber

	Key Targets	Performance Measure	Accountability	Timescale	RAG
	into parks, gardens and other urban green space.				
2.3	Ensure measured, cost-effective systems in place for ongoing monitoring and assessment of Ash Dieback spread (informed by national policy).	Systems in place.	STAC Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Amber
3.	<b>Environment Management Group (EMG):</b> Implement a rigorous Environment Management Strategy to support the effective implementation of relevant mitigating actions including monitoring, enforcement & financial safeguards. EMG will be largely 'virtual' in format, utilising email and teleconference facilities.				
	<b>Membership:</b> KCC Flood Risk and Natural Environment Team (William Moreno [Chair] / Ruth Childs), Forestry Commission (Jonathan Harding), Maidstone Borough Council (Jason Taylor), Medway Council (Nigel Holman / Robert Lucas), Kent Highway Services (Alan Riley), Highways Agency (John Henderson), KCC Emergency Planning (Tony Harwood), Kent Tree Officers Group (Daniel Docker); Greenspace Forum Kent (Darran Solley), KCC Public Rights of Way (Graham Rusling) Environment Agency (Nick Paige), East Sussex County Council (Anthony Becvar), UK Power Networks (James Nicholl)				
3.1	Ensure baseline asset and tree safety audit data for Ash on public land informing identification of required staffing / contractor / financial resources.	Audits in place.	EMG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Amber
3.2	Project management i.e. confirm relevant partnership arrangements for assessing, monitoring and, where necessary, enforcement of bio-security and health and safety interventions (informed by Sussex Dutch Elm Disease Plant Health Order protocols)	Audits in place.	EMG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Amber
3.3	Assess potential scale and cost of monitoring and felling (for safety purposes only) dead and dying Ash at public open spaces in Kent and Medway (including parks and gardens).	Reports back Strategic Co-ordinating Group.	EMG Chair	Updates at future SCG meetings	Amber

	Key Targets	Performance Measure	Accountability	Timescale	RAG
3.4	Assess potential scale and cost of increased workloads around enforcement, applications for works to TPO trees / trees located within Conservation Areas, notifications of works as exception to regulations and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	Reports back Strategic Co-ordinating Group.	EMG Chair	Updates at future SCG meetings	Amber
3.5	Draft strategy for monitoring and felling (for safety purposes only) dead and dying Ash adjacent to transport routes in Kent and Medway (including footways, bridleways, road and railway network). This can be part of a wider Tree Strategy for Kent.	Key stakeholders (Highways Agency, Medway Council, Kent County Council, and Network Rail) to confirm that threat is being considered internally and report back to future SCG meetings with 'for information' updates.	EMG Chair	Updates at future SCG meetings	Amber
3.6	Assess potential scale and cost of monitoring and felling (for safety purposes only) dead and dying Ash within privately owned sites with public access (including zoo parks and heritage sites).	Key stakeholders (private landowners and land managers, commercial and relevant charitable organisations) to confirm that threat is being considered internally and report back to future SCG meetings with 'for information' updates.	EMG Chair	Updates At future SCG meetings	Amber
4.	<b>Media &amp; Communications Group (M&amp;CG):</b> Maximise public, media & stakeholder awareness & confidence through a joined-up Media & Communications Strategy. M&CG will be largely 'virtual' in format, utilising email and teleconference facilities.				
	<b>Membership:</b> Maidstone Borough Council (Roger Adley [Chair]), KCC Communications (John Todd), Forestry Commission (TBC), KCC Emergency Planning (Fiona Gaffney), KCC Flood Risk and Natural Environment Team (William Moreno), DCLG RED (Chris Innes), Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre (Hannah Cook)				
4.1	Develop a local Media & Communications Strategy for the outbreak, to support the national strategy led by Defra & Forestry Commission, using a range of channels	Strategy developed & joined-up communications being co-ordinated across multiple channels and partners.	M&CG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2012	Amber
4.2	Forestry Commission public information signs installed at entrances and on notice	2,500 Forestry Commission Public Information Signs circulated to key	M&CG Chair	Signs installed by end of	Green

	Key Targets	Performance Measure	Accountability	Timescale	RAG
	boards at publicly accessible wooded sites across Kent and Medway.	stakeholders and installed at wooded sites.		calendar year 2012	
4.3	Link to Forestry Commission Ash Dieback page posted on all Kent and Medway Local Authority websites.	All Local Authorities comply with target.	M&CG Chair	Link posted by 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Green
4.4	Develop on-line Ash Dieback forum for sharing best practice. Create links with European forums on tree and plant health.	Forum and links established.	M&CG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2013	Amber
4.5	Link to Defra Interim Chalara Control Plan distributed to all KRF partners to inform relevant activities by their personnel and contractors. Partners to utilise their networks and partnerships to optimise extent of distribution e.g. key service users, associations, trade bodies, land-owners, community groups, businesses etc.	Defra Interim Chalara Control Plan distributed.	M&CG Chair	End of calendar year 2012	Green
4.6	Engage with Fera 'train the trainers' initiative aimed at developing a plant health network of trained personnel to support official surveillance and detection.	Local personnel signed-up to initiative.	M&CG Chair	Ongoing	Amber
4.7	Trading Standards teams to produce and publicise guidance (in co-operation with arboriculture trade) addressing risk from 'rogue traders' profiteering from outbreak.	Guidance produced and publicised.	M&CG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2013	Green

	Key Targets	Performance Measure	Accountability	Timescale	RAG
5.	<b>Recovery Advisory Group (RAG):</b> Maintain continuity of the response & develop a long-term Recovery Strategy, covering business & economic confidence, cultural & amenity impacts and long-term environment management. RAG will be largely 'virtual' in format, utilising email and teleconference facilities.				
	<b>Membership:</b> Kent Downs AONB (Nick Johannsen [Chair]), KCC Flood Risk and Natural Environment Team (Elizabeth Milne), Forestry Commission (Jonathan Harding), Shepway District Council (David Sephton), Maidstone Borough Council (Deanne Cunningham / Nick Gallavin), Kent Tree Officers Group (Daniel Docker), Kent Wildlife Trust (Lynn Keeley), Kent Local Nature Partnership (Linda Davies), Greenspace forum Kent (Darran Solley), KCC Emergency Planning (Tony Harwood), Kent Economic Development Officers Group (Jeremy Whittaker), KCC Regeneration and Economy (Alan Turner)				
5.1	Work in partnership to minimise direct & secondary impacts of the outbreak on the local economy and cultural amenity, by maintaining consumer / public confidence, supporting businesses with relevant insurance & legal advice and providing a strong voice for Kent & Medway in negotiations with central government.	Ongoing commitment.	RAG Chair	Ongoing	Amber
	Advocate for the development and adoption by all Kent councils of a tree strategy for Kent and Medway.	Action included as a priority in the Kent Environment Strategy.	RAG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	Amber
5.2	Incorporate a 'Kent & Medway natural regeneration and dead wood retention (saproxylic wildlife) policy' into existing Local Authority / government agency landscape strategies and guidance and circulate across wider landowner / land management community - to maintain biodiversity and engender good bio-security and a resilient natural environment.	Draft policy drafted and circulated to key stakeholders.	RAG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	Amber

	<b>Key Targets</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>RAG</b>
5.3	Incorporate a 'Kent & Medway tree planting / landscaping bio-security policy' into existing Local Authority / Government agency landscape strategies and guidance and circulate across wider landowner / land management community, predicated upon excellent bio-security, genuinely local provenance stock and optimising species diversity (Kent Design Guide approach).	Draft policy drafted and circulated to key stakeholders.	RAG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	<b>Amber</b>
5.4	Ensure a multi-agency replacement policy for ash trees lost from formal street plantings, parkland gardens and other locations (where natural regeneration is impossible), predicated upon excellent bio-security, genuinely local provenance stock and optimising species diversity.	Draft policy drafted and circulated to key stakeholders.	RAG Chair	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	<b>Amber</b>
5.5	Identify opportunities for woodland extension and creation at species-poor sites, utilising naturally Ash Dieback resistant local provenance Ash seed / saplings. Formulate bid for project funding.	Number of woodland extensions / new sites achieved.	Kent Local Nature Partnership	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	<b>Amber</b>
5.6	Address financial recovery implications of outbreak for responding agencies, including financial record keeping and investigation of Bellwin scheme and other potential reparation options.	Financial recovery strategy agreed.	RAG Chair	Ongoing	<b>Amber</b>