

Supplementary Agenda

6.30 pm

Monday, 30 September 2019

Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames
TW18 1XB



Items

Written public questions and responses.

Attending the Joint Committee meeting

Your Partnership and Committee Officer is here to help.

Email: carys.walker@surreycc.gov.uk

Tel: 01932 794081 (text or phone)

Website: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/get-involved/your-local-area/spelthorne>



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8 WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To answer any questions from residents or businesses within Spelthorne borough area in accordance with Standing Order 14.2. Notice should be given in writing or by email to the Partnership Committee Officer by 12 noon four working days before the meeting.



SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE – 30 September 2019

AGENDA ITEM 8

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1

A number of questions has been raised by Mrs Caroline Nichols.

With Ash dieback (Chalara) having reached Spelthorne could the Councils please explain their respective management plans in respect of (a) Council owned trees and (b) privately owned Ash trees covered by TPOs (tree preservation orders).

Please comment on what measures both councils are taking to:

- **systematically measure the number of trees which will be lost and establish a likely timescale**
- **support early removal of affected trees and replace them**
- **transfer TPOs onto other trees in the urban landscape to protect the overall tree canopy?**

Spelthorne Borough Council response:

Ash Dieback is widely recognised as the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch elm in the 1960's. The disease originated in Asia and affects trees through a fungal pathogen, which can result in a swift decline of tree health.

The majority of Ash trees that occur in Spelthorne are situated alongside our highways, SCC Highways Services are currently in the process of quantifying Ash presence county-wide in these areas. Due to its limited woodland habitat the borough will not be subject to the extensive pressures experienced by neighbouring authorities. However, the issue of dealing with Ash die back cannot be underestimated.

Spelthorne Borough Council will put forward a risk based approach with areas of public usage the foremost priority, once a tree is noted as 'declining' it will

monitored and earmarked for removal, monolith features will be retained where possible. The number of Ash trees within Spelthorne is unknown, therefore it's hard to predict the exact scale of works. The council has attended Ash dieback workshops organised by the Tree Council who are at the forefront of proactive measures to combat and mitigate against the disease, we will endeavour to follow their best practise.

A planting regime to replace lost trees will be adopted, this will be especially prominent with features trees and replanting in our parks. In some cases where trees are lost within woodland pockets natural regeneration would be allowed to take place.

As it stands there is no strategy to transfer TPO's, although replanting would bring the associated benefit of future canopy cover; should an area be subject to an existing TPO blanket the newly planted trees would also be adopted.

Surrey County Council response:

“Ash Dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (formerly known as *Chalara fraxinea*) is the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch elm disease which was first recognised in the 1960s. It will lead to the decline and possible death of the majority of ash trees in Britain and has the potential to infect more than two billion trees (over 1.8 billion saplings and seedlings to more than 150 million mature trees) across the country.” – quoted from Ash Dieback: an Action Plan Toolkit, dated summer 2019, available from the Tree Council website.

We don't know the number of Ash trees on the Public Highway. Surrey County Council's Highways Service is working to estimate the number and distribution of Ash across the network, so that we can plan our response. With the information currently available to us, it would appear that the majority of the Ash on the Public Highway is in the southern areas of the County, where 90% to 95% of the Ash are affected by the disease. For example as part of our routine inspections in Waverley we are identifying approximately 200 Ash per day that are infected.

In terms of timescales we are expecting virtually all the Ash in the county to be infected in the next season or so. We are expecting virtually all the Ash in the county to have died within the next 3 to 10 years.

Ash tend to deteriorate to the point of collapse quite quickly once they die, and so a pro-active risk based approach is likely to be adopted by the County Council for Highway trees. For example we have already been clearing Ash from high speed dual carriageways towards the end of 2018-19 when we had the opportunity to do so.

Highway trees are very rarely subject to Tree Protection Orders. In any case these are for the Borough Councils to administer.

Surrey County Council has no regular budget for planting of trees on the Public Highway.