



Summary of Report: Tree Condition by Savills Arboriculture

Overview

In 2024, the Conservators of Ashdown Forest (CoAF) introduced a new industry-standard policy for tree safety, which has been implemented across the Forest since its approval.

It is based on zoning areas by risk within the Forest and conducting surveys on a three-year cycle. The primary focus of the inspection is the management of health and safety regarding trees, both internally and adjacent to third-party properties and boundaries within the high-use northern regions of the Forest.

The report recommends remedial tree work, including its locations and projected costs, based on a small tree surgery team. The first survey highlighted a significant potential cost to the organisation, estimated at £113,700 for the first year's work. This exceeds our budget for the current financial year by a substantial amount.

See Table 1 for a breakdown of the recommendations, timescale and estimated cost.

Immediate Actions:

COAF has already carried out the very urgent and urgent (3 months) work shown in the report (costing £200 and £ 6,300). That leaves £107,200, and our current budget will cover approximately another £8,000. We are also in discussions with neighbouring owners about some of the trees, but the significant majority of identified trees will be our responsibility.

Future Years 2 and 3:

As highlighted, this constitutes part of a three-year proactive cycle of inspections and related work. We have increased the budget for 2026-27, although those surveys will be carried out this winter when we will have more information.

Ashdown Forest Trust

We understand that there is £179,000 of unrestricted funds in the Ashdown Forest Trust, and that we need to apply for these funds either through a grant or for a specific purpose. The Conservators believe tree management could be considered necessary to provide an 'amenity and place of resort for members of the public', Ashdown Forest Act 1974.

Proposal

CoAF will assess ways to minimise costs in years 2 and 3 of tree management, but we don't have the necessary funds to cover this level of expenditure from the first year of the survey. Thus, we propose that the AFT fund £99,200 to ensure the site remains safe for the 1.4M visits to the Forest.

Mark Pearson,
CEO, Conservators of Ashdown Forest

Table 1: Breakdown of works, Savills Arboriculture

Timescale	Number of trees/groups	Estimated time (hours)	Rate per hour	Appendix	Total estimated budget costs
Very urgent	1	2	£100	A	£200
Urgent - 3 months	13	63	£100	A	£6300
High - 6 months	88	403	£100	A	£40,300
Moderate - 12 months	140	632	£100	A	£63,200
Low - 12 months	25	37	£100	A	£3700
Total	267	1137	-	-	£113,700