

VALID TREE RISK-BENEFIT SUMMARY REPORT

**For the trees within Knowle Wood
At Leighwood Fields, Cranleigh, Surrey**

Prepared For:	Berkeley Homes
Local Authority:	Waverley Borough Council (WBC)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S1. This VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Summary Report (VTRBSR) has been instructed by Berkeley Homes Limited, the landowner and developer of the subject site known as Leighwood Fields, Cranleigh. The report relates solely to the trees within Knowle Wood, an area of designated ancient woodland.

S2. This report is intended to inform The Client of the condition of the surveyed tree stock, an assessment of the risk it poses to users of the site, and makes arboricultural risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary.

S3. Thirty-five individual trees, two groups of trees, and the individuals within one area of woodland, were assessed in accordance with the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Assessment methodology provided at **Appendix 3**.

S4. With the exception of one tree (T20), all trees were found to be of **Acceptable** risk and as such, no significant risk-mitigation works are required at this time. Where trees were found to be dead, they have been recommended for removal and no formal risk assessment has been carried out, unless otherwise stated at **Table 2**.

S5. A summary of my recommendations is provided below.

Tree number	Species	Comments	Risk Rating
G2	Ash	Remove individuals with moderate and severe foliar symptoms of Ash Dieback Disease.	Not Assessed
G3	Ash	Remove individuals with moderate and severe foliar symptoms of Ash Dieback Disease.	Not Assessed
T11	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T12	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T13	English oak	Remove storm damaged limb(s).	Acceptable
T14	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T15	Silver birch	Fell to 5m stump and retain trunk. Remove adjacent partially failed tree hung up in canopy.	Not Assessed
T16	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T17	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T18	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T19	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T20	English oak	Fell to form 8m tall woodland trunk.	Not Tolerable
T21	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T22	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T23	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T24	Common ash	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T25	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T26	Common ash	Fell to ground level.	Acceptable
T27	Sycamore	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T28	English oak	Fell to 8m stump and retain trunk.	Acceptable
T29	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable

T30	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T31	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T32	Goat willow	Coppice.	Acceptable
T33	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T34	Sycamore	Fell to 1m stump.	Acceptable
T35	Common ash	Contact neighbour and request removal.	Not Assessed

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTION

1.1.1. This VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Summary Report (VTRBSR) has been instructed by Berkeley Homes Limited, the landowner and developer of the subject site known as Leighwood Fields, Cranleigh. The report relates solely to the trees within Knowle Wood, an area of designated ancient woodland.

1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

1.2.1. This report is intended to inform The Client of the condition of the surveyed tree stock, an assessment of the risk it poses to users of the site, and makes arboricultural risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary.

1.2.2. The agreed scope of work is outlined below:

1. To visit the subject site and undertake a ground-based Active Assessment at Basic Level, of all trees growing within the area of ancient semi-natural woodland known as Knowle Wood;
2. Where risks exist, to carry out a Detailed Level assessment, and to make risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary; and
3. To produce this VTRBSR, which discusses my observations and provides additional details as necessary.

1.2.3. This report should be read in conjunction with the documents and plans listed below for context:

- The tree survey plans (ref. MDJAC-23.068-TSP-02.1 [WEST] and MDJAC-23.068-TSP-02.2 [EAST]) [Appendix 1];
- The Detailed Assessments appended to this report [Appendix 2]; and
- The VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management methodology [Appendix 3].

1.3 AUTHOR'S CREDENTIALS

1.3.1. I am Matthew Jones BSc (Hons), MArborA, the Director and Principal Arboriculturist of MDJ Arboricultural Consultancy Limited.

1.3.2. I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, awarded by The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in 2022. This is a top up degree following successful completion of a Foundation Degree in Arboriculture, also awarded by UCLan in 2020. I have also previously completed the National Diploma (RQF Level 3) in Arboriculture and Forestry at Merrist Wood College, Guildford in 2009.

1.3.3. During the course of my career I have attended various CPD events and courses. I hold the Professional Tree Inspection accreditation awarded by LANTRA, and am a registered user of the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management and Assessment framework (A 'Validator'), and was previously a registered user of The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) methodology, which expired in 2021.

1.3.4. I am a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association (The AA) and an Associate Member of The Institute of Chartered Foresters (The ICF). I am therefore bound by the code of ethics and required to uphold the professional standards expected of both professional bodies.

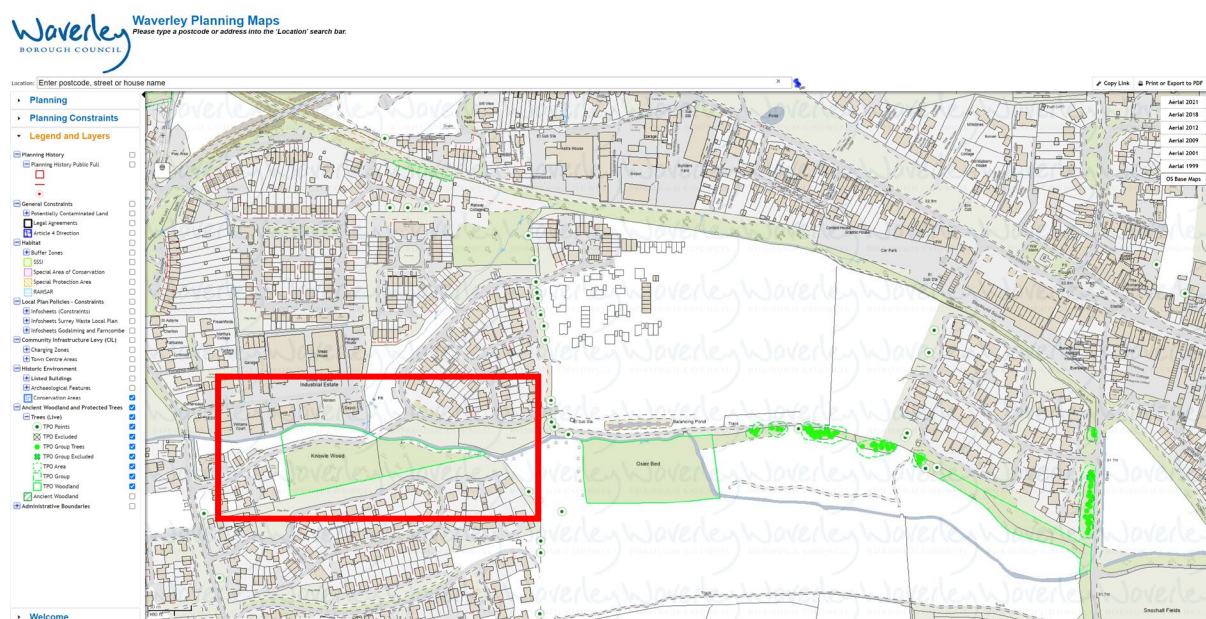
1.3.5. Since transitioning from practical arboriculture in 2014, I am regularly instructed to carry out appraisals of various sizes of tree stocks in relation to development, health and safety considerations, and the potential impact of trees on the built environment; and I am required to provide considered tree management recommendations as necessary during the course of these instructions.

2 STATUTORY CONTROLS

2.1 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPOs)

2.1.1. As part of my instruction, I have consulted the Waverley Borough Council's interactive planning maps to ascertain whether any of the subject trees are covered by a TPO. This search suggests that the entirety of Knowle Wood is protected by a TPO, as shown below.

Figure 1: WBC planning maps, showing the TPO affecting Knowle Wood.



2.1.2. Accordingly, a statutory requirement to submit a formal TPO application to Waverley Borough Council exists, prior to carrying out any work to the subject trees.

2.2 CONSERVATION AREAS (CAs)

2.2.1. The site is not within a designated conservation area and thus, there are no arboricultural constraints in this regard.

3 VALID TREE RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT METHOD SUMMARY

3.1 LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT

3.1.1. **Passive Assessment:** passive assessment is carried out as an ongoing informal observation exercise, usually by the owner and or staff of a particular site, during the day-to-day routine. The appended methodology provides a visual summary of potential risk features for this purpose. If passive assessment is undertaken by non-arboriculturists, no risk assessment should be made, and an arboriculturist should be invited to carry out a subsequent formal risk assessment.

3.1.2. **Active Assessment:** active assessment is a purposeful visit made by a qualified arboriculturist, to identify and evaluate any potential risk features within the tree stock. There are three levels of assessment, ranging from 'Basic' (tree inspected, but no risk features identified), 'Detailed' (risk features identified and evaluated using the VALID App to generate a standalone report), to 'Advanced' (risk feature identified and assessed in depth, usually aided by specialist diagnostic equipment). See **Appendix 3** for additional information.

3.2 TREE RISK STATISTICS

3.2.1. Trees are dynamic organisms that are the subject of continual change and adaptation to their given environments. As such, they are complex organisms that are able to successfully adapt to structural defects, if given the time to do so (The National Tree Safety Group, 2011).

3.2.2. Statistics on tree-related injuries suggest that the risk of being killed by a falling tree, either in whole or in part, is around 1:10,000,000 [one in ten million] (The National Tree Safety Group, 2011). Approximately 55 A&E cases per year relate to injuries resulting from being struck by trees, and this is exceedingly small when compared to A&E cases for other commonly accepted risks, including 2.9 million leisure-related cases; footballs (292,000), children's swings (10,900) and even wheelie bins (2,200) are involved in significantly more incidents on an annual basis. (The National Tree Safety Group, 2011).

3.3 TREE RISK RATINGS

3.3.1. The valid system comprises four easy to understand risk ratings, summarised below, which are generated using the Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) and ISO 31000 – Risk Management. Full details are provided within **Appendix 3**.

- **Red - Not Acceptable** – risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level;
- **Amber – Not Tolerable** – risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks;
- **Amber – Tolerable** – risks will not be reduced but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks; and
- **Green – Acceptable** – risks will not be reduced.

3.4 RECOMMENDATION TYPES

Risk mitigation works

3.4.1. The VALID methodology dictates when remedial works should be undertaken, based on the above risk ratings. Consequently, it is possible for a Detailed Assessment to conclude that a tree carries an Acceptable risk, and that therefore, there is no requirement to carry out any remedial works in the interests of risk mitigation.

3.4.2. Put simply, the benefits of such trees will often outweigh the risks they pose and therefore, the VALID system does not require any works to take place. The benefits in risk-reduction works to these trees by carrying of tree surgery works is negligible and will often result in unnecessary expenditure.

Tree management works

3.4.3. However, it is also possible that trees which pose an Acceptable risk may simultaneously benefit from routine or proactive management works, such as canopy reduction work or selective branch removal, to prevent further structural issues in the future.

3.4.4. Any recommendations made in this regard are subject to the Client's preference, and are not strictly necessary for the purposes of mitigating risk.

4 SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS

4.1 SITE VISIT AND TREE INSPECTION

4.1.1. I undertook a site inspection and tree survey on Wednesday 8 May 2024. Weather conditions at the time were clear, dry and bright and deciduous trees were in full leaf.

4.2 SUMMARY OF TREE INSPECTIONS

4.2.1. A summary of the inspections undertaken are provided below. The single-page report generated by the VALID App for each of the trees assessed at Detailed level, are provided within the appendices of this report.

Table 1: summary of inspections.

Tree number	Species	Comments	Assessment level
G2	Common ash	Group of trees significantly adversely impacted by Ash Dieback Disease, such that retention is no longer advisable.	Basic
G3	Common ash	Group of 4x ash with Ash Dieback Disease. Best pre-emptively removed.	Basic
T11	English oak	Minor deadwood in canopy. Typical of a tree of this size, age and species. No actionable defects.	Basic
T12	English oak	Minor deadwood in canopy. Typical of a tree of this size, age and species. No actionable defects.	Basic
T13	English oak	Minor deadwood in canopy. Typical of a tree of this size, age and species. Storm damage and hanging branch over desire line.	Detailed
T14	English oak	Dead tree. Of biodiversity and habitat benefit.	Detailed
T15	Silver birch	Dieback in upper canopy. Partially failed birch to easy resting in canopy.	Basic
T16	English oak	Woodpecker hole and weeping exudates at 4m on SW aspect. Usual deadwood. No actionable defects.	Basic
T17	English oak	Twin-stemmed from 6m. Large, historical storm damage on S aspect; partial stem failure. Usual deadwood as expected.	Detailed
T18	English oak	Usual deadwood. No actionable defects.	Basic
T19	English oak	Sparse canopy. Likely in decline. Deadwood. No actionable defects.	Basic
T20	English oak	Root loss on W aspect. Incipient decay. Large longitudinal cracks consistent with partial stem failure on N and S aspects. Possibly from 1987 Storm. Sparse canopy.	Detailed
T21	English oak	Ivy-covered. May obscure sight of defects. No actionable defects noted.	Basic
T22	English oak	Bacterial exudate on trunk. Trunk leans to S. No actionable defects.	Basic
T23	English oak	No actionable defects.	Basic
T24	Common ash	No actionable defects.	Basic
T25	English oak	No actionable defects.	Basic
T26	Common ash	Ash Dieback Disease.	Basic
T27	Sycamore	Basal assessment restricted by bramble understorey. No evident actionable defects.	Basic
T28	English oak	Dead tree.	Basic
T29	English oak	No actionable defects.	Basic
T30	Wild cherry	No actionable defects.	Basic
T31	Wild cherry	No actionable defects.	Basic
T32	Goat willow	Dieback in upper canopy.	Basic
T33	Wild cherry	No actionable defects.	Basic
T34	Sycamore	Low level vegetation and steep bank impair assessment. Flaking bark around old trunk wounds. Canopy appears to be declining.	Basic
T35	Common ash	Third-party off-site tree. Dead. Within falling distance of the road.	Basic

4.2.2. The locations of the trees have been estimated and plotted onto satellite imagery to produce the tree survey plan at **Appendix 1**. I collected the baseline data using a handheld tablet, which was then exported to produce the Detailed Reports at **Appendix 2**.

4.3 DISCUSSION

4.3.1. The subject trees are typical woodland examples that would, prior to the site's re-development, have been located broadly internally within Knowle Park. However, the primary access road has now been

constructed through the woodland and therefore, some of the larger trees are now located in proximity to and overhang the vehicular access road.

4.3.2. The trees are generally of good health with either few structural defects of note. A number of dead trees exist within the wood, but this is to be expected and, is a positive characteristic of the woodland itself in so far as these trees provide valuable standing deadwood habitat of little risk.

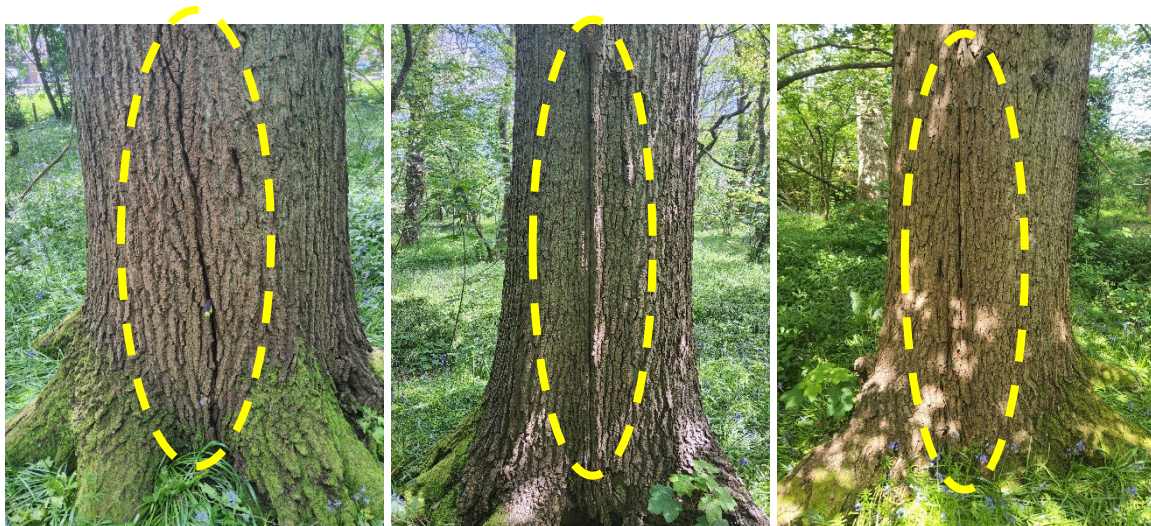
4.3.3. With the exception of one English oak (T20), none of the individual trees show prominent risk features and accordingly, I find that they are of acceptable risk, in accordance with the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit methodology, with the likelihood of significant harm arising being negligible. Therefore, there is little benefit in terms of risk-mitigation, in carrying out any works of that nature to these trees.

4.3.4. By contrast, T20 is a mature oak within the centre of the ancient woodland. Assessment of its stem shows two primary, longitudinal shear cracks extending to c. 2m above ground level on the north and south sides. A third shear crack of similar size and nature exists of the west side, but this has been surrounded by wound wood development. These defects are consistent with the damage caused by a significant past wind event, such as The Great Storm of 1987, and constitute the partial failure of the trunk.

Photograph 1: (below left), showing the open longitudinal cracking on the north aspect. Screwdriver shown for scale;

Photograph 2: (below centre), showing the partially occluded shear crack on the west aspect; and

Photograph 3: (below right), showing the open longitudinal cracking on the south aspect.



4.3.5. In addition to the cracking, I noted that one of the prominent buttresses roots on the west aspect has been undermined and as such, no longer provides any anchorage to the soil. This is located on the tension side of the trunks slight lean, and would likely have been of considerable importance on the tree's overall stability when intact.

Photograph 4: showing the undermined buttress root and incipient basal decay on the west aspect.



4.3.6. Finally, the tree's ability to successfully overcome these structural defects is limited by the sparse nature of its canopy, which is suggestive of generally low vitality. Low vitality means that the tree will be able to generate only a proportion of its potential energy reserves, reducing efficiency and therefore, the amount of resources available for other means, such as woundwood development.

4.3.7. The VALID App has categorised this tree as a **Not Tolerable** risk and as such, it would be prudent to carry out remedial works. To maximise the ecological benefits of the tree with regard to habitat provision, shelter and food source(s), I recommend that the tree is removed to form an 8m tall woodland monolith, also referred to as a 'snag'. This will significantly reduce wind loading, while enabling the safe retention of the valuable trunk wood.

4.3.8. The eastern end of the ancient woodland differs in nature from the west, in that tree size becomes smaller, but at a higher density. Ash is the primary species in this area, and these trees appear to be infected with Ash Dieback Disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) to varying extents. The infected specimens are highlighted indicatively on the attached tree survey plan as **red trunks and canopies**.

Photograph 5: (below left), showing moderate Ash Dieback Disease symptoms towards the eastern end of Knowle Wood; and

Photograph 6: (below right), showing severe Ash Dieback Disease symptoms.



4.3.9. Tree felling is a restricted activity under The Forestry Act 1967. Moreover, current government advice on the felling of Ash Dieback Disease-related trees (UK Government, 2021) states that a felling licence will be required '**unless the trees are dead or pose a real and immediate danger**'. In this instance, the risks are unlikely to be considered immediate and therefore, I recommend contacting The Forestry Commission and submitting an application for a felling licence.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1. Thirty-five individual trees, two groups of trees, and the individuals within one area of woodland, were assessed in accordance with the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Assessment methodology provided at **Appendix 3**.

5.1.2. With the exception of one tree (T20), all trees were found to be of **Acceptable** risk and as such, no significant risk-mitigation works are required at this time. Where trees were found to be dead, they have been recommended for removal and no formal risk assessment has been carried out, unless otherwise stated at **Table 2**.

5.1.3. A summary of my recommendations is provided below.

Table 2: summary of recommended works.

Tree number	Species	Comments	Risk Rating
G2	Ash	Remove individuals with moderate and severe foliar symptoms of Ash Dieback Disease.	Not Assessed
G3	Ash	Remove individuals with moderate and severe foliar symptoms of Ash Dieback Disease.	Not Assessed
T11	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T12	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T13	English oak	Remove storm damaged limb(s).	Acceptable
T14	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T15	Silver birch	Fell to 5m stump and retain trunk. Remove adjacent partially failed tree hung up in canopy.	Not Assessed
T16	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T17	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T18	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T19	English oak	Monitor condition through repeat surveys.	Acceptable
T20	English oak	Fell to form 8m tall woodland trunk.	Not Tolerable
T21	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T22	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T23	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T24	Common ash	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T25	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T26	Common ash	Fell to ground level.	Acceptable
T27	Sycamore	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T28	English oak	Fell to 8m stump and retain trunk.	Acceptable
T29	English oak	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T30	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T31	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T32	Goat willow	Coppice.	Acceptable
T33	Wild cherry	No risk-mitigation works required.	Acceptable
T34	Sycamore	Fell to 1m stump.	Acceptable
T35	Common ash	Contact neighbour and request removal.	Not Assessed

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Carry out the prescribed tree surgery works, set out at Table 2 above; and
2. Carry out repeat tree surveys to take account of any changes, and to provide updated management recommendations where necessary.

Matthew Jones

Matthew Jones, BSc (Hons), MArborA
Director & Arboriculturist

14 May 2024

6 REFERENCES

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