# Bridgend i-Tree Eco project (2014)

## Background

This i-Tree Eco project covered the Bridgend County Borough area, with a steering group of Natural Resource Wales (NRW), Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Forest Research. The project was partly driven by a desire for an evidence base for urban trees in Bridgend† and partly by ongoing countryside management planning needs and a desire to inform on aspects of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Welsh Government, 2016a).

## Outputs

A full report and a two page summary were produced (Doick et al., 2015). Further single page infographics were produced by NRW (NRW, 2016) and BCBC†. A workshop was also held where the project findings were presented to a range of stakeholders including engineers, planners, the Woodland Trust, NRW and WG.†

## Impacts

### Cross-departmental uptake and improved communication:

- Engineers used project results to help justify sustainable drainage systems†.
- Workshop opened up communication with urban forestry experts†.
- Report underpins other policies and supports decision making. For example used for a landscape design package, sustainable urban drainage schemes and using green infrastructure in transport schemes†. i-Tree Eco results on the role of trees in air pollution removal was cited in Bridgend County Borough's new Transport Strategy (BCBC, 2015).
- Used to support wider green infrastructure agenda, such as promoting Bridgend's green spaces†.

### Highlighted risks to urban forest:

- The i-Tree Eco report found that ash comprised a high proportion of the urban forest, highlighting the potential loss of ecosystem services from outbreaks of Chalara (ash dieback). This information was used to inform an internal BCBC Chalara report†.

### An information base for further work:

- The value of air pollution removal in Bridgend, as well as in Wrexham and Tawe catchment, were used by the Wildlife Trusts Wales in a consultation about air quality and noise management (Wildlife Trusts Wales, 2016).
- The report (along with Tawe catchment) was used by a community housing association to incorporate it into a Social Impact Methodology (Wythenshawe, 2016).

### Changing approach to urban forest management:

- Positive benefits of trees being used to tackle the liability approach to trees. Evidence on valued benefits helps to make a stronger case†.
    - *"It's a difficult one to encourage people to invest in trees, but… this is about providing that evidence rather than just saying hypothetically these are the values."*

### Evidence to lobby for tree investment and management:

- Legitimised need for dedicated tree officer to manage and protect urban forest, which had now been shown to deliver a service to the local area †
- Evidence of tree benefits helped build on conversations and interest emerging around urban trees†.
    - *"It provides us with a much easier position [from which] to present our argument."*

## References


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NRW. (2016). Bridgend's Urban Trees - an amazing resource benefiting us all. Natural Resources Wales.

Wythenshawe. (2016). Social Impact Methodology. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group. Manchester, England. 50 pp.

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Welsh Government (2016a). Environment (Wales) Act (2016). Welsh Government.



Version: March 2018 By: Kathryn Hand and Kieron Doick



† This impact summary note is part of a research project on the role of i-Tree Eco in protecting and expanding the urban forest. Findings are identified from the Impact Evaluation report (Hall et al. 2018) and the Literature Review (Hand and Doick, 2018), available from: www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/itree-evaluation