

VALUING OLDHAM'S URBAN FOREST



Urban forests provide people with a range of benefits (or Ecosystem Services) that help make our towns and cities better places to live.

Trees filter air pollution, improve our health, store carbon and reduce flooding, whilst also providing important habitat for wildlife. Trees provide many other benefits too, all at the same time and at little cost.

During the summer of 2016 Oldham Council worked in partnership with First Choice Homes, Treeconomics, Forest Research and Davey to survey the trees in Oldham. Using i-Tree Eco, the team quantified the structure of Oldham's Urban Forest Resource and valued a range of the benefits (ecosystem services) it provides to society.

The services provided by Oldham's Urban Forest are worth **£2.1 Million** every year

Number of Trees
466,800

11.8%
Tree Cover

58
Tree Species

33
Trees per hectare

Oldham's Urban Forest:

Contains an estimated 466,800 trees which benefit over 224,800 people. That's 2 trees per person, double the ratio for London.

In addition these Trees:

- Cover an area equivalent to 1680ha with a leaf area of 64km².
- Intercept around 278,000 million cubic metres of rain water every year, equivalent to an estimated £420,000 in avoided stormwater treatment costs.

- Filter an estimated 96 tonnes of airborne pollutants each year, worth more than £1.5 million in social damage costs.
- Remove an estimated 2830 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year, estimated to be worth £181,000.
- Store an impressive 66,500 tonnes of carbon worth £4.25 million.

Most Common Trees:
Alder, Ash and Larch



Oldham is one of 10 boroughs in the Greater Manchester Area And the first of which to undertake such a study

How ?

A survey of 219 randomly allocated plots was undertaken by teams of trained volunteers and professionals across Oldham. Plots were located on both public and private property in both rural and urban areas. **The Urban Forest is everywhere!** Detailed measurements from over 1000 trees were recorded, including the species, height, diameter of the trunk and canopy spread. In addition, details on the location of the trees such as the land use and the ground cover were also collected to build up a picture of the structure and composition of Oldham's urban forest.

Conclusions

Oldham's Tree resource is providing a valuable benefit to all of its residents and visitors. For example, the filtration of Sulphur Dioxide alone is equivalent to the emissions of 41,000 cars every year. However there are challenges too, *Ash Dieback* and *Phytophthora* diseases threaten around 30% of Oldham's tree resource and this could have a devastating effect on the provision of tree benefits.

Understanding urban forest composition is the first step in the proactive management of this important resource. Now we can begin to strategically plan to improve and maintain our urban forest. Through targeted planting, maintaining, diversifying, monitoring, community engagement, training and a whole range of other activities we can ensure that Oldham's Urban Forest Continues to provide benefits into the future.

What Next ?

A full report detailing the results will be published early in the new year. If you want to learn more or want to find out about the trees in your local area then contact Oldham Council's Environmental Management Team on 0161 770 4067 or by e-mail at: environmentalservices@oldham.gov.uk

What is i-Tree?

A state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed software suite from the USDA Forest Service. i-Tree Eco quantifies the structure and functions of community trees & urban forests.

It is adaptable to multiple scales from a single tree to area-wide assessments. It's also open source and free to use.



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