

Oak Processionary Moth Evidence and Policy Workshop – St Matthew’s House, London,
2 May 2018

1. Update on OPM Control Programme (Forestry Commission)

OPM Management Zones have been revised for the 2018/2019 OPM control programme. The Control Zone has been expanded to provide a wider buffer between the Core Zone (established OPM population in London) and the Protected Zone (i.e. majority of the UK). The focus of the OPM control programme in 2018/19 will be to prevent OPM spread into the Protected Zone (PZ). Movement of oak into the PZ requires a plant passport (EU plant health regulations). [Revised OPM Control Map](#).

2. Update on Research into OPM Control Options

Stem injection is commonly used in the USA to provide protection against tree pests such as emerald ash borer. Research into the effectiveness of stem injection against Oak Processionary Moth has been inconclusive. Other alternative methods of OPM control which may be available in the future include species specific RNAi pesticides (first became available last year for crop pests), bio-control agents (OPM obligate parasitoids), and un-manned aircraft pesticide application (currently a lot of legal restrictions for commercial use of drones).

Parasitism rates for OPM are increasing year on year in the Core Zone (including one obligate parasitoid). There is a richer parasitoid (and invertebrate predator) community which acts on OPM in other parts of Europe. In addition to potentially introducing biocontrol agents in the future, habitat management which supports a rich invertebrate community will help support natural OPM control.

3. Update on research into the impact of OPM on tree health

The Forestry Commission are initiating a 5 year study this year to investigate whether OPM has a long term impact of OPM on the health of oak trees.

4. Update in research on social attitudes to OPM

The public and land owners in general are more concerned about retaining oak trees in the community and the environment than about the potential health impacts of OPM. The public feel that national government agencies should be in control of OPM management whereas landowners in general would prefer to have control over how OPM is managed on their land.