

Consultation launched on the England Tree Strategy

- Consultation to run for 12 weeks, seeking views on how to increase tree planting and tree and woodland management.
- Trees are a unique natural asset that play a crucial role in combating the biodiversity and climate crises we face.
- The government's environmental programme will play its full part as we build back better and secure a fair, green and resilient recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Plans to accelerate tree planting and improve the management of our existing trees and woodlands are underway as the government today (19 June) launched a [consultation to inform a new England Tree Strategy](#).

Everyone – from farmers, foresters and land managers, experts and environmental organisations, to members of the public – is being invited to give their views on the future creation and management of our trees, woodlands and forests.

Subject to consultation, the new strategy will set out policies to expand tree cover, support woodland management and increase public engagement with trees and woodlands. It will help ensure the government's tree planting commitment – to increase tree planting to 30,000 hectares per year across the UK by 2025 – is delivered, working closely with the devolved administrations, communities and landowners to do so.

The government is asking for views on:

- how to expand, protect and improve our public and private trees and woodlands,
- the increased role that trees and woodlands can play in supporting the economy,
- how best to further connect people to nature, and
- the most effective way in which trees and woodlands can be created and managed to help combat climate change.

By growing, protecting and restoring our trees, forests and woodlands we can help reduce carbon emissions, encourage biodiversity and nature recovery, grow our sustainable timber market, and improve people's health and wellbeing.

Launching the consultation, Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith, said:

In many ways the coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the importance of nature. Growing and protecting our nation's forests will be an integral part of our recovery, and the England Tree Strategy will give us the tools to do this.

This consultation will help inform a keystone strategy which will be vital for helping us deliver the government's tree planting commitment, our commitment to the recovery of nature and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

But, we need input from the sector and public. I encourage everyone to give their views to design a tree strategy that delivers the maximum benefits for our environment for generations to come.

In the March Budget, Defra welcomed the new Nature for Climate Fund from HM Treasury. The England Tree Strategy will help inform how elements of this £640million fund will be used to deliver against the manifesto tree planting commitments, alongside peatland restoration and wider nature recovery.

Forestry Commission Chair and former National Tree Champion, Sir William Worsley said:

The England Tree Strategy will set out how we plan to accelerate woodland creation, but also importantly how to manage and protect the trees we already have. Significant work has gone into developing the groundwork for a strategy which will ensure the right tree is planted in the right place, and for the right reason.

We now need people to submit their views, to design a strategy that increases and balances the different benefits that our woodlands provide, to nature, to people, and to the economy.

The Forestry Commission will be at the forefront of delivery and I look forward to working closely with Defra and all stakeholders involved at this exciting time.

The England Tree Strategy will be developed in parallel with other key strategies that flow from the 25 Year Environment Plan. These include the recent Tree Health Resilience Strategy and the forthcoming England Peat Strategy and Nature Strategy, as well the future Environmental Land Management Scheme which will operate on the basis of providing public payments for public goods.

In close alignment with the England Tree Strategy, targeted stakeholder engagement is currently underway to shape the development of the England Peat Strategy and the peatland aspects of the Nature for Climate Fund.

Integrating the aims of the England Tree Strategy with the wider ongoing work in these areas enables a coordinated vision that delivers real, sustainable change.

The consultation period is due to conclude in 12 weeks on 11 September 2020. Subject to review, the England Tree Strategy will be published later in the year.

Notes to Editors

- The consultation will open on 19 June 2020 and under current plans, will close on 11 September 2020. However, in light of the coronavirus outbreak, the closing date will be kept under review.
- All feedback for the consultation is to be submitted online in line with [latest government guidance](#).
- Through this open consultation, the government is encouraging people to give their views on 4 key areas, including:

1. Expanding and connecting trees and woodlands by:

- increasing the supply of planting material, the size of the forestry workforce and encouraging collective agreement from stakeholders to obtain widespread support for woodland creation
- providing farmers and other landowners and managers with the right incentives through improving grant funding and simplified application processes
- working with partners to increase tree cover across public land
- encouraging private investment in woodland creation by helping to develop the market for the ecosystem services generated as trees grow
- expanding tree and woodland cover to contribute to the Nature Recovery Network, which aims to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat

1. Protecting and improving our trees and woodlands by:

- building the capacity of the domestic UK nursery sector to ensure planting stock is bio-secure and from a known provenance
- reducing damage to woodlands through the sustainable management of invasive species
- stronger protection for ancient woodland sites, building on newly proposed measures of the Environment Bill which give communities a greater say in the protection of local trees
- increasing the percentage of woodlands in active management
- adapting treescapes and woodlands to the future climate and maximising the benefits they can provide to support adaptation measures, such as natural flood management and helping improve the resilience of wildlife

1. Engaging people with trees and woodland by:

- providing more and better-quality green infrastructure – including in urban areas – to make towns and cities attractive places to live and work and bring about long-term improvements in people's health
- supporting Community Forests to create new woodlands and facilitate access to existing woodlands
- closer engagement with the education and health sectors, developing skills and expertise in the forestry sector to support health programmes through social prescribing

1. Supporting the economy by:

- growing the market for wood products, and supporting and upskilling farmers and land managers to add trees to their business

- supporting the sustainable timber industry and increasing the use of all domestic forest products including timber and forest biomass for energy
- designing grants and clearer policy to increase the uptake of agroforestry