

News story: Communities to have greater say in protecting local trees

Environment Secretary Michael Gove today announced plans to create greater protections for trees in urban areas.

The proposals would ensure councils can't cut down street trees without first consulting communities.

The measures reflect the important role trees in towns and cities play in improving our health and wellbeing, as well as providing crucial environmental benefits.

Launching a [consultation on a raft of new forestry measures](#), the Secretary of State unveiled proposals designed to ensure local people have a bigger say over what happens to the trees in their communities.

The proposals include:

- Making sure communities have their say on whether street trees should be felled with requirements for councils to consult local residents;
- Responsibilities on councils to report on tree felling and replanting to make sure we can safeguard our environment for future generations;
- Giving the Forestry Commission more powers to tackle illegal tree felling and strengthen protection of wooded landscapes.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It's right that the views of local people are at the heart of any decision that affects their community – and the futures of the trees that line their streets are no different. Trees have often been rooted in our towns and cities for many years, and are undoubtedly part of our local heritage.

These measures will enhance the protection given to urban trees, ensuring residents are properly consulted before trees are felled and safeguarding our urban environment for future generations.

The government's Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

Urban trees are an amazingly valuable natural resource, and with this consultation I hope we can take further steps towards strong and robust protections to ensure their futures.

By planting the right trees in the right place we can ensure that they continue to improve health and wellbeing and encourage people to enjoy the outdoors.

Forestry Commission Director of Forest Services Richard Greenhous said:

The Forestry Commission recognises that our trees and woodlands are under increasing pressure, especially in and around urban areas. With this consultation we hope to be able to better protect more of our cherished woodlands from illegal felling.

This consultation forms part of the government's ongoing work to protect and promote our precious trees, including our commitment to plant one million trees in our towns and cities in addition to eleven million trees nationwide over the course of this parliament.

Protecting and planting more trees is a key part of our ambitious [25-Year Environment Plan](#), which will ensure we leave this environment in a better state for the next generation.