**Arboricultural Association**
**England Tree Strategy – Consultation response**

# AA ETS questionnaire answers

September 8th, 2020

*The Arboricultural Association (AA) response to the England Tree Strategy (ETS) Consultation document is in three parts:*

- *A covering letter to Lord Goldsmith.*
- *AA ETS questionnaire answers.*
- *AA ETS briefing note.*

*This document contains the questionnaire answers. It should be read in conjunction with the document AA ETS briefing note and the covering letter (both dated September 8th) which provide additional detail and commentary about the questions and the ETS consultation document itself.*

*The AA has only addressed those questions which seem to be most relevant to arboriculture. Where selection of specific options is required, questionnaire responses are highlighted in bold and in italics.*

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**Q17. Which actions would be most effective to increase protection for trees and woodland from unsustainable management? (select up to three options)**

a) Introducing measures to support compliance with the UK Forestry Standard
b) More effective information sharing between government departments and their delivery bodies to inform decisions impacting on woodland, including to prevent woodland loss
c) Introducing clearer processes for licencing tree felling, with felling licences that can be suspended, withdrawn or superseded
***d) Greater penalties for non-compliance with the requirements of the Forestry Act***
e) Powers to set wider felling licence conditions, for example to enable enforcement of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard
***f) A clearer policy presumption that all trees felled without a licence will be replaced (except in exceptional circumstances)***
g) Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders, and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities
***h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.***
***Clear enforcement guidance – for professionals and the general public – and adequate resources are required for the proper enforcement of TPO and Conservation Area offenses.***

**Q18. Which actions would best help the planning system support better protection and enhancement of the ancient and wider woodland environment and trees? (select up to two options)**

a) Providing support to fully complete revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory (to include ancient woodlands under two hectares in area)

*b) Commissioning research into effective size and use of buffer zones around woodland for different impacts*

c) Providing better monitoring and recording of decisions on planning applications affecting ancient woodland

d) Sharing best practice guidance and training to support implementation of National Planning Policy Framework policy on ancient woodland with local authority planners

e) Encouraging more woodland to be brought into management where impacted by development

f) More effective information sharing between agencies and local planning authorities to inform decision making impacting on woodland including to prevent woodland loss

g) Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders, and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities.

*h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.*

*Revising the NPPF to include specific reference to the retention and provision of non-veteran/ancient trees as an integral part of sustainable development and within wider green infrastructure.*


**Q27. Which of the following actions would be most effective in improving plant biosecurity across England's trees and woodlands? (pick up to two options)**

*a) Increasing the number of nurseries that meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard*

b) Providing better best practice guidance and information about biosecurity

c) Introducing conditions which require suppliers to meet the "Plant Healthy' management standard for those public sector contracts and government grants that relate to tree planting and restocking

d) Amending planning policy to encourage local planning authorities to source trees from suppliers who meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard

e) Sharing the Forestry England's experience and case studies.

f) Managing the impact of invasive non-native plants which provide a pathway for disease through targeted action, ongoing management and monitoring, and wider education

g) Developing a supply of diverse and locally-appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees

*h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.*

*More powers and funding for LPAs and the FC to monitor/enforce biosecurity and an increased awareness campaign for the general public who are purchasing plants/trees.*


**Q31. Are any of the following significant barriers to securing and maintaining street trees? (select up to three options)**

a) Appropriate standards and guidance for securing the right trees in the right places

*b) Practical challenges in terms of street design, planting requirements and compatibility with other infrastructure provision*

c) The adoption of street trees by local highway authorities, or alternative arrangements where streets are not adopted

d) The skills and resources needed to deliver new street trees, including funding for planting

*e) The funding and skills for ongoing maintenance of street trees over their lifetime*

*f) Other – please specify in no more than 100 words.*

*Urban tree management – arboriculture – must be regarded as a critical service and a specialist discipline, distinct from forestry. It is often disregarded, receiving inadequate funding and support. Outsourcing can mean that the financial bottom line is prioritised over best practice, to the detriment of the urban forest and the local community. Young tree management must also be regarded as a specialist discipline, and the focus should be on establishment and maintenance rather*

*than just tree planting numbers. For urban trees to establish and thrive they need professional attention – nurseries, public sector tree officers, inspectors, contractors, consultants, researchers and policymakers.*

**Q32. How could government overcome the barriers to securing and maintaining street trees you have identified in question 31? (Maximum 150 word response)**

*Urban trees must be recognised as critical infrastructure delivering social, environmental and economic benefits – and those who work with urban trees at any stage of the process must be recognised as professionals fulfilling an essential role for the public good. Public and political education is essential if this is to happen. Only then will trees be given equal weight to other kinds of urban infrastructure and will adequate provision be made for trees to be cared for properly. No other piece of urban infrastructure delivers as many benefits as a tree or increases in value and in efficiency from the day it is installed for decades or even centuries afterwards. If we want trees to deliver these benefits to our communities over the long term then we must move away from the headline-grabbing scramble for mass planting targets and must seek to establish trees rather than merely plant them.*

**Q33. Which of these actions would be most effective in increasing the number/coverage of trees in and around urban areas? (rank the following options in order of preference)**

g) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.
*Adequate government funding and support for the proper management of public trees, and the acknowledgement of arboriculture as a specialist discipline in its own right.*
c) Development and implementation of Local Tree and Woodland Strategies and local planning policies - setting local targets for tree canopy cover and recognition that trees and woodlands are key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to other green and built infrastructure
a) Promotion through national policy (including England Tree Strategy and national planning policy) including recognition that trees and woodlands are key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to other green and built infrastructure
b) Promotion through national guidance (such as green infrastructure, planning and design, and code/street guidance, e.g., Manual for Streets) - stronger inclusion of appropriate engineering solutions
d) Training for practitioners, including highways engineers and others
e) Providing better support for community forests in areas of greatest need
f) Creating new community forests in areas of greatest need

**Q34. Which actions would most help the preparation and implementation of local Tree and Woodland Strategies? (rank the following options in order of preference)**

a) Preparing national guidance on developing Local Tree and Woodland Strategies
h) Recognising trees and woodlands as key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to green and built infrastructure
f) Adopting Local Tree and Woodland Strategies as supplementary planning documents
g) Strengthening technical expertise in tree and woodland management in local authorities
c) Using canopy cover as a measure to monitor the scale and development of the urban forest
b) Setting local targets for tree canopy cover
e) Standardising the approach to measuring the value of the urban forest resource
d) Agreeing national data standards for urban trees

**Q35. Which actions would most effectively engage people in the management and creation of their local woodlands? (rank the following options in order of preference)**

f) Providing better support for community forests in areas of greatest need
d) Enabling community groups to participate in the management of their local woodland
h) Supporting the growth of woodland social enterprise in and around towns and cities
a) Providing more training opportunities to support woodland management and creation
e) Facilitating networks to exchange ideas and share good practice
g) Creating new community forests in areas of greatest need
c) Enabling community groups to influence decision making about the management of their local woodland
b) Providing legal support to community groups for the acquisition or lease of woodland

**Q36. Which actions by government would be most effective in addressing barriers to peoples' access to trees and woodlands? (rank the following options in order of preference)**

a) Supporting woodland access through existing incentives and rights of way
f) Regulating to maintain access rights when creating new woodland
g) Supporting people to become trained/accredited to better facilitate contact (learning and health) with nature
c) Creating new accessible woodlands in and around towns and cities
b) Offering more generous woodland management incentives for those woodlands with public access
d) Supporting woodland access with bespoke incentives, simply to allow access
e) Improving the quality of access by investing in infrastructure (car parks, trails, path surfacing, signage, seating)

**Q37. Which of the following do you most value about trees and woodland? (select up to two options)**

a) Places to exercise and relax and engage with nature
b) Places for nature
c) A source of sustainable products and employment
d) A resource that provides water management
e) A resource that cleans the air
f) A resource that stores carbon
g) As a feature within towns and cities
*h) As part of urban green space*
*i) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.*
*One key benefit of trees - wherever they are – is improved physical health and mental wellbeing for those with access. Social and cultural values are critical.*

**Q38. Which of these actions would best address the funding challenge for the planting and on-going maintenance of trees in urban areas? (select up to two options)**

a) Making central funding available to supplement private finance for establishing trees in existing developments.
b) Using planning levers to require developers to plant trees relating to new development on streets and other public spaces
c) Using planning levers to raise funds for on-going maintenance

*d) Ensuring the value of tree's longer term benefits are captured to access financing*
*e) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.*
*Trees must be treated as critical infrastructure for public health and wellbeing and resourced accordingly. Tree officers are the custodians of the urban forest.*

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