

Trees and Woodland Strategies (TAWS) Survey

Section One

3.1. The Tree Council and APSE have a long association of helping provide the latest information on trees and woodlands to our various members. The Tree Council has a mission to care for trees and the planet's future. The Tree Council aims to inspire and empower organisations, government, communities and individuals with the knowledge and tools to create positive, lasting change at a national and local level.

3.2. In 2022 the Tree Council set up The Trees and Woodland Strategy (TAWS) Toolkit, which is a step-by-step guide for Local Authorities and their stakeholders to develop and deliver a local tree strategy and harness the long-term benefits that trees can bring to local communities. It provides practical guidance, insightful case studies from ten Local Authorities around the country and an array of other useful resources.

Funded by Defra and co-created by The Tree Council, Fera Science, Forest Research, the Forestry Commission, Local Authorities and other stakeholders, the toolkit also highlights how Local Authorities can draw on the current exceptional levels of Government funding for tree planting to enhance local communities.

3.3. A copy of the toolkit can be found at the following link

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Tree-Council-Trees-and-Woodland-Strategy-Toolkit-2022.pdf>

Section Two

2.1 Following the launch of the TAWS toolkit in January 2023, The Tree Council held four in-person, regional workshops – these were held in Leeds, Burton-on-Trent, Reigate, and Exeter. In total over 130 people attended these events, which were delivered by the

research partnership of Forest Research, Fera Science, and The Tree Council. The events were also supported by local co-hosts and speakers, including Leeds City Council; The National Forest; Leicestershire County Council; Surrey County Council; Treeconomics; Woodland Trust; and Eunomia.

While it is still relatively early days in the toolkit's existence, it has been downloaded over 3000 times and The Tree Council has received promising feedback.

The ongoing programme of research will help The Tree Council evaluate the TAWS impact over time and identify any additions and changes required.

Section Three

3.1. The Tree Council has created a survey which they hope will help gather the sort of comments to help their research in making the TAWS more relevant and user friendly. In the survey, The Tree Council is interested in hearing from Local Authority officers about their current context, their needs, the challenges they face and what support would help them to set and achieve strategic goals that will benefit the treescape in their local areas. Responding to this survey will help ensure that The Tree Council can offer support around Trees and Woodland Strategies that is tailored to the real needs of Local Authorities, particularly with so much emphasis now being given to the growing importance of tree and tree planting schemes across the UK.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and all responses to this survey will be confidential and anonymised, meaning that no identifiable information will be retained. The information collected will be treated, stored, and analysed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018). Forest Research is the data controller and any concerns about data should be sent to:

informationrights@forestrycommission.gov.uk

The survey consisting of 18 questions can be found at the following link

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TAWS2023/>

Section Four

4.1 Following on from the results of the survey, The Tree Council, later in the year, is planning to run workshops that address key challenges. Whilst a good deal of

information has already been gathered from the engagement undertaken to date, the survey results will help to ensure that the Tree Council continue to meet the priorities of local authorities (tree officers, ecologists, planners, highways officers etc.)

APSE Comment

In 2021 the Government published The England Trees Action Plan which outlined the role trees should play in achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. There is now a growing acceptance that trees and woodlands are critical elements in meeting many of the climate change and ecological targets facing UK local authorities.

Local authorities have a key responsibility in protecting and enhancing the nations treescapes via their direct management and control but also through their links to local communities and wider stakeholders.

However, based on Tree Council surveys, only just over a third of local authorities have any form of strategic document that can guide the planting and management of the treescape – and many of these are in need of updating. Therefore, by developing a Tree and Woodland Strategy this will help local authorities and treescape stakeholders to help protect and sustain future treescapes and develop new tree areas which collectively will deliver environmental and economic benefits as well as increased health and well-being opportunities for local communities.

APSE would therefore ask that its members complete this survey and support the aims of The Tree Council in securing a sustainable and resilient future for the UK's trees and woodlands.

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