

## Innovative Trees & Woodland Toolkit launched to maximise benefits of trees and woodlands in communities across England

An innovative Trees and Woodland Strategy Toolkit, **developed in collaboration with Stonehouse Town Council**, was launched to empower Local Authorities to create their own strategies and action plans for trees, to build resilient treescapes across the country.

The Toolkit will help Local Authorities plan how they can meet net-zero targets by increasing tree planting across the country, reversing the decline in nature and supporting economic growth.

Funded by Defra, the Toolkit has been co-created by The Tree Council, Forestry Commission, Fera Science and Forest Research, in collaboration with **Stonehouse Town Council** and nine other Local Authority partners, fulfilling commitments set out in Defra's [England Trees Action Plan](#).

Local Authorities have a unique and critical leadership role to play for the nation's trees, as they sit at the heart of delivering national and local objectives. The Toolkit will help Local Authorities set out their vision to expand and protect their local treescapes and offers practical solutions on how to achieve it. It also aims to help accelerate tree planting to meet net zero targets by 2050 and increase access to nature within local communities. Equally importantly, it instils a joined-up approach that spans both public and private land.

The Toolkit highlights how Local Authorities can draw on the current exceptional levels of Government funding for tree planting to enhance local communities. It also provides practical, step-by-step guidance on how to develop a strategy. It will help local authorities to:

- Make the case for trees as a key asset to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives
- Provide a framework for a healthy treescape
- Unlock opportunities for new funding streams
- Encourage partnership working with local stakeholders
- Improve community health and wellbeing
- Engage with the public, harnessing 'people power' and giving communities a say in the future of their trees
- Mitigate public health risks through strategic tree management
- Create a structure for embedding trees into planning policy and highway management

### **Sara Lom, CEO The Tree Council, said:**

"Local Authorities have a unique and critical leadership role to play for the nation's trees. With prolonged, record-breaking heatwaves and continuing drought, the effects of a changing climate have been starkly felt across Britain this year. Trees play a key role in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss by capturing and locking up carbon and providing homes and connectivity in the landscape for thousands of species. Trees can also lower the land surface temperature in a city by up to 12°C. At CoP27, countries around the world announced some highly ambitious planting targets and we must meet our own demanding targets too. We can only do this through local action on the ground."

**Councillor Carol Kambites said:**

“Stonehouse Town Council is very proud that our Community Arboretum Management Plan, developed with the help of local residents and arboricultural professionals, is able to contribute to this national strategy and tool kit. We hope that it will inspire other local authorities and communities to value and look after their existing trees as well as carrying out new tree planting.”

**Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison said:**

“Trees bring cleaner air, cooler temperatures and flood resilience to communities across the country, making them invaluable assets to Local Authorities. This toolkit will help councils turn their tree planting plans into action through practical advice, expert knowledge and step-by-step guidance.

“By working together, across central and local government, as well with trusted partners like The Tree Council, we can deliver on our ambitious targets to treble planting rates in England by the end of this Parliament, tackle the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and achieve net zero.”

**Sir William Worsley, Chair, Forestry Commission, said:**

“It is clear that Local Authorities nationwide are passionate about unlocking the environmental, economic and health benefits that trees provide for their residents. By advising on how best to involve local people in tree planting, this toolkit will not only help to get more trees in the ground but also foster a true sense of community pride and unity.

“Thanks to this toolkit, local authorities can kickstart their planting ambitions today and help to deliver resilient, thriving treescapes of all kinds across the country.”

Alongside the new toolkit, Defra recently announced that 57 local authorities across England have received £9.8 million in funding to kickstart tree planting activity, create new green jobs and boost access to nature. This will enable local authorities to bring on board new staff and access the professional expertise needed to drive tree planting and woodland creation at a local level. More than 100 new green jobs will be created across the country, with an emphasis on upskilling professionals from outside the sector. This will help to expand the industry’s workforce, address skills shortages and help to grow the economy.

**The Tree Council will host a [Tree Toolkit launch online on Monday 16 January](https://treecouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/science-and-research/tree-strategies/) which will be followed by a series of face-to-face regional events in the New Year. The Toolkit will continue to be updated to develop and adapt to the Local Authority needs. Please find your copy here > <https://treecouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/science-and-research/tree-strategies/>**

**Ends**

For more information, contact Matt Hurst, Head of Comms at The Tree Council, via 07786 392611 or [matt.hurst@treecouncil.org.uk](mailto:matt.hurst@treecouncil.org.uk).

For media queries relating to Defra group, email: [newsdesk@defra.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@defra.gov.uk)

## Notes to editors

The ten Local Authorities who helped create the Toolkit were:

- Surrey County Council
  - Islington Borough Council (London)
  - Wirral Borough Council
  - Leeds City Council
  - Birmingham City Council
  - Norfolk County Council
  - Manchester City of Trees
  - West of England Forest of Avon
  - Fareham Borough Council (Hants)
  - Stonehouse Town Council (Glos)
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- Trees are at the forefront of the Government's plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, to help to bend the curve of biodiversity loss, improve the environment and to create thousands of green jobs while better connecting people with nature.
  - The England Trees Action Plan, supported by circa £675m from the Nature for Climate Fund, is a once-in-a-generation plan to help achieve this vision. We will see an unprecedented number of trees planted, protected and managed to deliver more for society, nature, the climate and the economy, setting us on a path to realise our longer-term ambitions for increased tree cover.

## On the Local Authority Treescapes Fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund:

- The Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) is a key government offer for local authorities to drive an increase in non-woodland tree planting across our landscapes.
  - In the two rounds since its launch in 2021, the LATF has funded the planting of nearly 200,000 trees outside of woodlands, with over 200,000 due to be planted this winter. 190 local authorities will be allocated a share of approximately £7.7 million across 76 projects.
  - For more information, go to: [Local Authority Treescapes Fund](#)
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- The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) is a key government offer to level up access to nature across the country, planting trees in socially deprived urban areas with low canopy cover in proximity to healthcare and educational facilities.
  - The UTCF supports planting of large 'standard' trees and street trees – making an immediate impact to communities and ensuring other organisations who provide planting for smaller trees can continue to do so.
  - Both the LATF and the UTCF have been announced to reopen for new applications early in 2023, with some significant improvements to the funds based on stakeholder feedback. [Read the new FC blog to find out more about the improvements.](#)
  - There is a free online Q&A session taking place on Monday 5 December where Local Authorities can ask questions about the LATF and UTCF. [Click here](#) for more information and to register your place.

## **About The Tree Council**

The Tree Council is the national charity that brings everyone together with a shared mission to care for trees and our planet's future. We inspire and empower organisations, government, communities and individuals with the knowledge and tools to create positive, lasting change at a national and local level. We are helped in our work by thousands of volunteer Tree Wardens and a growing force of Young Tree Champions. For more information about our work, visit [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk).