



Plan Tree

Kent County Council's Tree Establishment Strategy 2022 to 2032

**Public Consultation Report
May 2022**

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1 Executive Summary

- The consultation, which ran between 8 March and 2 May 2022, had a **good response rate**, with a total of **569 responses**, 561 of which were received online, the others as direct emails or letters. During the consultation period, the draft Tree Establishment Strategy was downloaded 1,742 times. The consultation webpage was visited 5,018 times by 4,568 visitors.
- 90% found the Strategy **easy to understand**.
- The consultation showed **strong support for, and agreement with, the Strategy's ambition** of extending tree cover by 1.5 million and a target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050.
- Respondents **want to see clearly defined targets, with a rigorous monitoring** process in place.
- The consultation illustrated that the **protection and restoration of existing trees and woodland**, and improving the condition of native and ancient woodland, are of **primary importance**.
- The **Strategy objectives were extremely popular and well supported**.
- There was **strong support for** all four of the Strategy's **tree establishment principles**.
- There were calls for the **principles to ensure that any new trees** delivered under the Strategy **have appropriate protection and maintenance**.
- A large majority of respondents considered the Strategy's **high-level actions appropriate and believed they would deliver** "to some extent" the Strategy's ambitions and targets.
- The consultation showed that **45% of respondents had limited confidence that the Strategy will deliver the ambitions for Kent**, with a number of **concerns relating to Kent County Council's long-term commitment** to, and resourcing of, this agenda.
- Feedback also demonstrated **concerns over the challenges** that face tree establishment.
- The consultation made very clear that the Strategy's high-level actions need to disseminate down to communities at a local level.

As a result of the consultation, the following will be addressed in the finalisation of the Tree Establishment Strategy:

- Development of a **standalone, executive summary** in an accessible language and format.
- Clarity over the **development of an associated implementation plan**, which will, amongst other things, more clearly define:
 - **specific targets** for extending canopy in rural, agroforestry and urban settings;
 - delivery through assisted **natural regeneration**;
 - the tree **planting plan** and comprehensive **monitoring** process.
- **Clarity over** how the Strategy's delivery will be **monitored and reported on** and how this will be **resourced**.
- Re-emphasise the role that assisted natural regeneration will play in meeting tree establishment targets.
- Ensure sufficient attention is given to the **protection of existing tree stock** and, in particular, considers the impact of development and growth.

- Reassurance of the **long-term security of new trees** delivered under the Strategy, including management, maintenance and monitoring.
- Further detail on how the Strategy might deliver **targeted action for biodiversity** and specific woodland species.
- Ensure the Strategy properly **reflects the challenges** of tree establishment and how action might help tackle these.
- Ensure the Strategy fully **reflects and demonstrates Kent County Council's commitment** to this agenda.

2 Background and Methodology

2.1 Background information

, Kent County Council (KCC) carried out a public consultation for feedback on our proposed Tree Establishment Strategy. The Strategy presents Kent County Council's ambitions for increasing trees and extending tree canopy cover in Kent and the principles that should underpin any tree establishment. The draft Strategy also outlines what objectives we want to deliver by extending tree cover in Kent and delivering Plan Tree and the action we will take over the next 10 years to realise these ambitions and objectives.

2.2 Purpose of the consultation

The consultation gave the public, partnership organisations and stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Strategy's targets, objectives, the principles for tree establishment and the KCC action plan before it is finalised and adopted.

The feedback received from the consultation questionnaire has helped us identify the level of public support for the ambitions and objectives of the Strategy and to consider any further possible impacts (both positive and negative) of the KCC action plan.

2.3 Purpose of this report

This report presents the analysis and findings of the responses to the public consultation. In addition, the report summarises the consultation process and the engagement and promotional activities that took place. The report also explains how the feedback will be used and identifies the next steps for the Strategy.

2.4 Decision making process

Opinions shared through the consultation will be used to help finalise the Strategy before it is formally presented to the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 8 September 2022 for their endorsement for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Environment.

3 Consultation Process

3.1 Pre-consultation activity

Members of KCC's Natural Environment and Coast team have been engaging with delivery partners throughout the development of the Strategy. Presentations were made to the Kent Nature Partnership, Kent Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Network, Kent & Medway Environment Group, and the Joint Kent Chiefs.

3.2 Stakeholder identification

KCC's stakeholder identification and mapping work highlighted the following groups to be engaged with during the consultation:

- Residents / general public
- Kent County Council Members and staff
- District / Borough Councils
- Town / Parish Councils
- The Kent Downs and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Units
- Kent's Countryside Management Partnerships
- Government agencies, including Forestry Commission, Natural England, and Environment Agency
- Environmental charities, including Woodland Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust, and RSPB
- Landowners, land managers and farmers, plus association bodies such as National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association.
- Kent Tree Warden Network
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Community and volunteer groups, such as The Kent Men of the Trees
- Businesses
- Schools

3.3 Consultation activities

All consultation documents were made available via the Let's Talk Kent engagement website¹ and an online questionnaire captured feedback and collated comments. A copy of the consultation questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1. Hard copy responses and general comments outside of the questionnaire were welcomed. Alternative formats, including hard copies, were available on request. Links and banners to the consultation webpage were setup from service pages and the Kent.gov homepage.

There was a KCC press release and promotion through various channels to stakeholder organisations and partners, including district and borough councils and groups representing and/or working with protected characteristic groups. The consultation was promoted through posters at Kent libraries and country parks. The consultation was also featured in KCC's residents' e-newsletter on 29 April 2022. A promotional email footer was designed and added as a signature to all KCC Natural Environment and Coast team emails.

¹ [Plan Tree: Kent County Council's Tree Establishment Strategy 2022-2032 | Let's talk Kent](#)

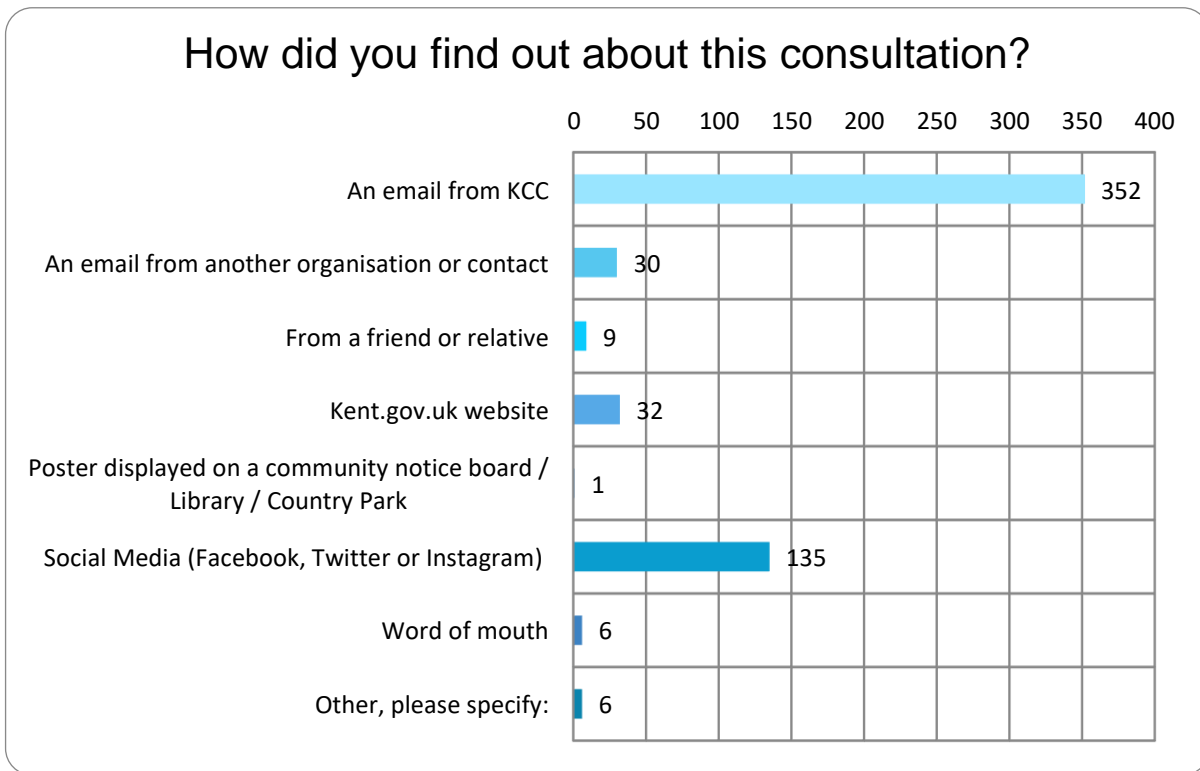
Social media included posts on KCC’s corporate Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; Kent Green Action Twitter and Facebook; and Kent’s Plan Bee Facebook. A paid-for two-week Facebook advertisement campaign was commissioned, to promote the social media posts.

In addition, an email invite was sent to 6,500 individuals and organisations registered with Let’s Talk Kent, who have expressed an interest in hearing about consultations to do with environment and countryside, public health and wellbeing and general interest. And the consultation was promoted within the council to KCC staff via the intranet, e-newsletters, and other staff communications channels.

During the consultation period, the draft Tree Establishment Strategy was downloaded 1,742 times. The consultation webpage was visited 5,018 times by 4,568 visitors.

3.4 How did you find out about this consultation? (question 3)

There were 571 responses to this question from 561 respondents (note: respondents were able to select multiple responses). The results are shown below.



3.5 Feedback mechanism

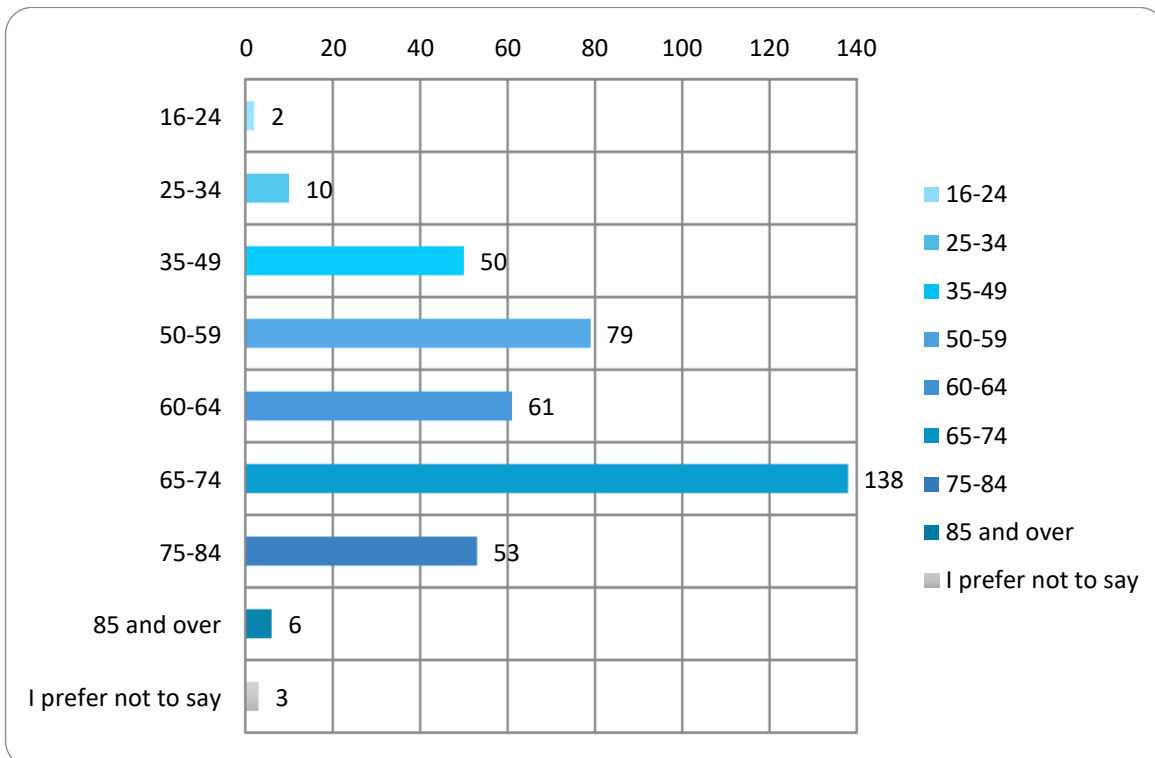
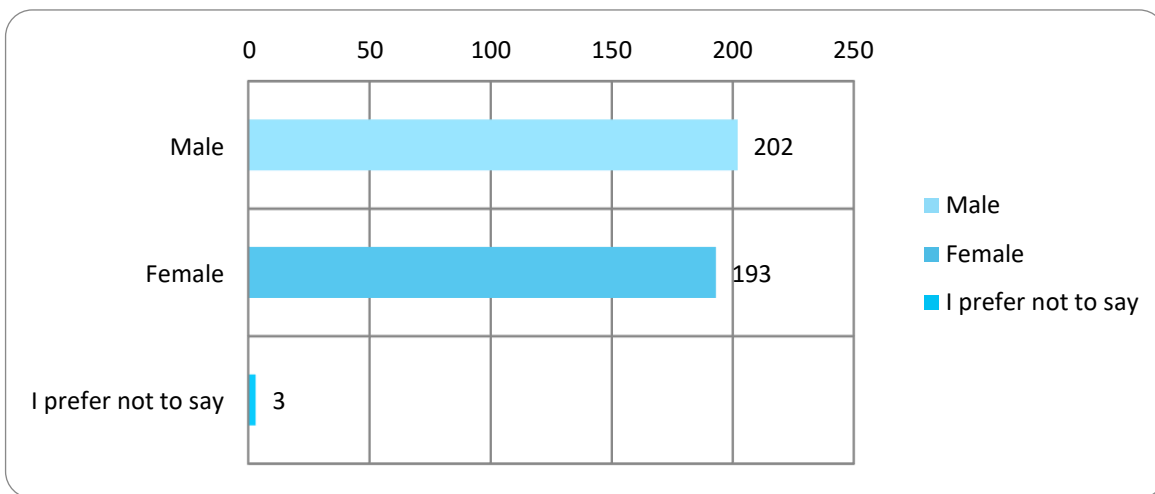
This consultation report has been published on the consultation page and with a link to the final Strategy. The ‘Due Regard’ chapter of this report demonstrates how the consultation responses have influenced the final Strategy.

4 Response Profile

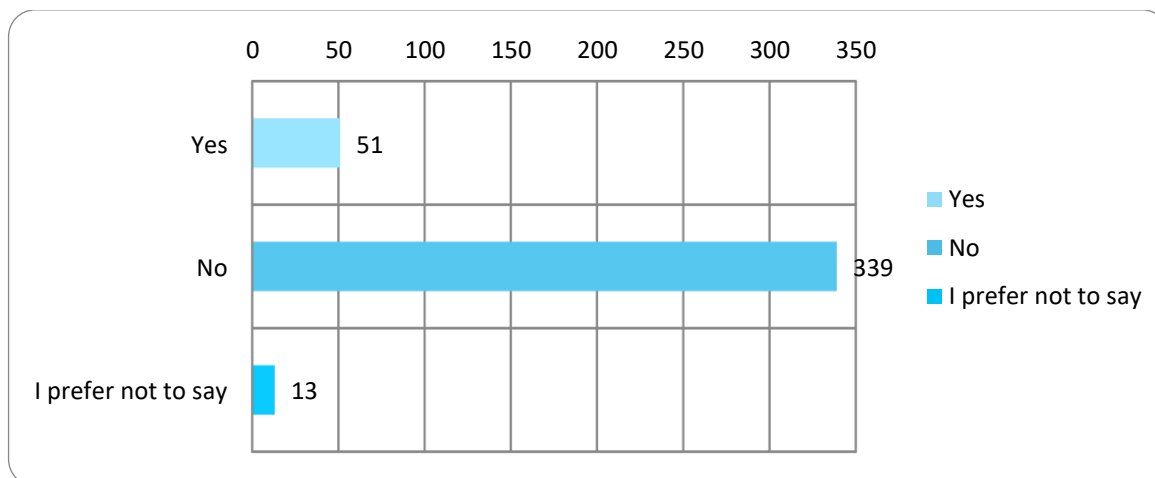
This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received, respondent demographics and the capacity in which they responded. There was a total of 569 responses to the consultation, of which 561 were received online, the others as direct emails or letters.

4.1 Respondent demographics

Data was collected using the 'More about you' questions in Section 3 of the questionnaire (question 14 to question 21). These questions are optional and are not asked of people responding on behalf of an organisation. Respondents were asked their gender (398 responses) and age group (402 responses). The largest proportion of respondents were in the 65-74 age bracket.



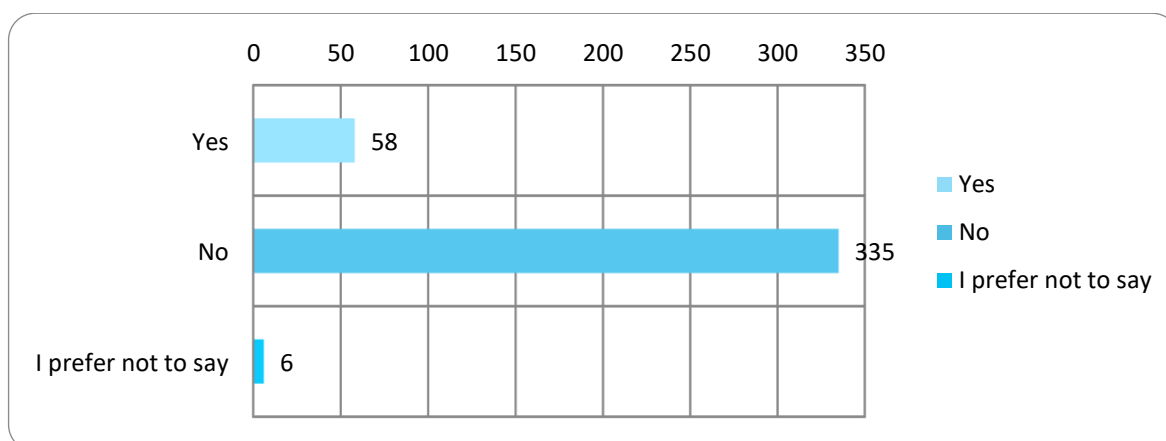
Respondents were asked if they considered themselves to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010. There were 403 responses to this question. A total of 51 considered themselves to be disabled, 339 did not, and 13 preferred not to say.



Of the 51 respondents who did consider themselves to be disabled (note: respondents could select as many disabilities as applicable):

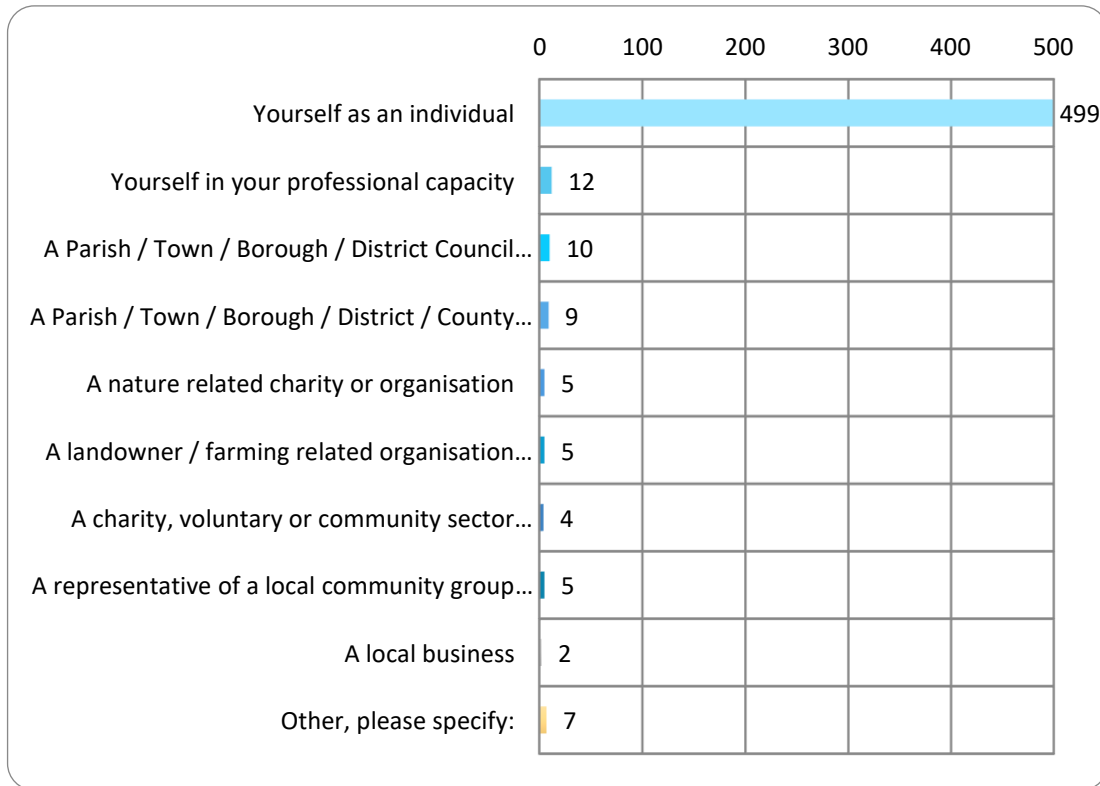
- 28 have a physical impairment
- 12 has a sensory (hearing, sight) impairment
- 20 have a longstanding illness or health condition
- 11 have a mental health condition
- 5 have a learning disability
- 4 selected 'other'

Respondents were asked whether they are a Carer. There were 399 responses to this question. With 58 caring for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction could not cope without their support.



4.2 Respondent groups

Respondents were asked who they were responding on behalf of (question 1). Most responded as 'Yourself as an individual', with the second highest group responding as 'Yourself in a professional capacity'.



Responses were received from the following named authorities and organisations:

- 10th Deal Eastry Scout Group
- ACRA Alliance of Canterbury residents' associations
- Addington Parish Council
- Azets
- Bean Residents Association
- Bishopsbourne Parish Council
- British Horse Society
- Canterbury City Council
- Chartham Parish Council
- Dover District Council
- Eastry Parish Council
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council
- Friends of Dukes Meadow and Neals Place Meadow
- Friends of Duncan Down Whitstable (Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve)
- Friends of West Cliff Bank
- Hadlow Parish Council
- Horsmonden Parish Council
- Istead Rise Pétanque Club
- Kent County Council
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit (AONB)

- The Kent Men of the Trees
- Kent Nature Partnership
- Kent Tree and Pond Wardens
- Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership
- Kings Hill Parish Council
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
- Meopham Parish Council
- Minster Parish Council
- Poplar Close Management - Weaving, Maidstone
- Seal Parish Council
- Selling Bee Friendly Project
- Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)
- Sidcup and District Motorcycle Club Limited
- Southborough Town Council
- Southfleet Parish Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Teynham Parish Council
- Thanet Friends of the Earth
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
- Trees for Farms
- Vigo Parish Council
- West Malling Parish Council

Free-form substantive responses were received from:

- Folkestone & Hythe District Council
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit (AONB)
- Kent Nature Partnership
- Seal Parish Council
- Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)
- The Kent Men of the Trees
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

5 Consultation Results

The consultation was carried out to determine the level of support for the proposed Strategy. Data was collected using the ‘Your response to the Strategy’ questions in Section 2 of the questionnaire.

5.1 Ease of understanding of the draft Plan Tree, KCC’s Tree Establishment Strategy (question 4)

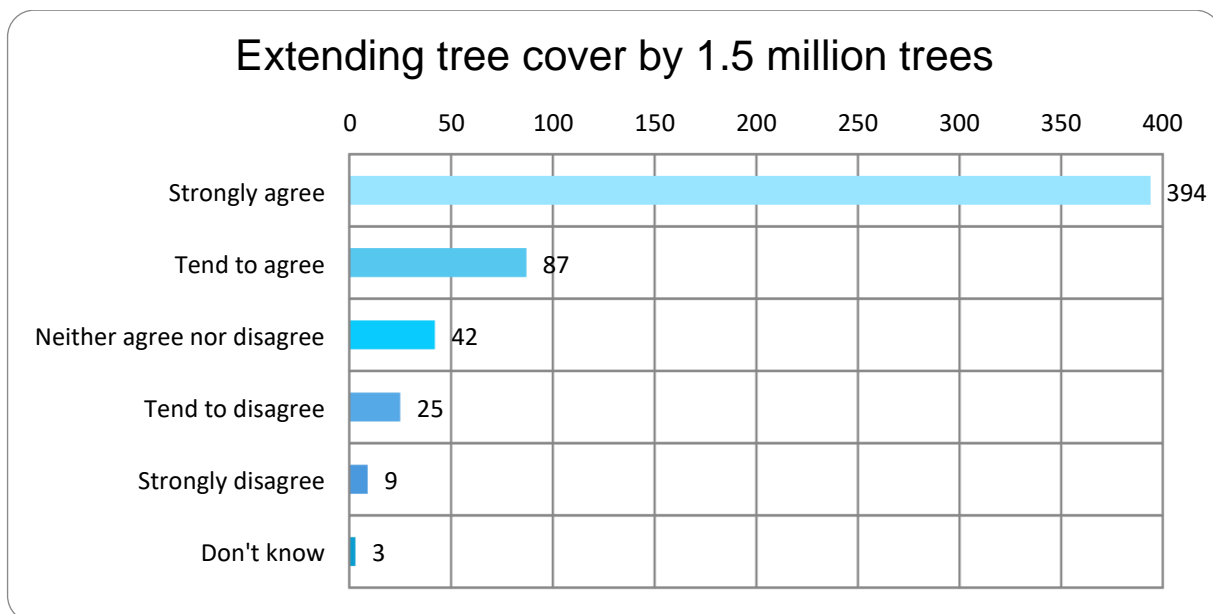
The majority of respondents, 90%, considered the draft Strategy easy to understand.

Yes	495
No	28
Don't know	29

Respondents were also asked if they had any suggestions on how to make the Strategy easier to understand. In response to the comments received, an executive summary will be included in the final Strategy that can be used as a standalone document that will be accessible to all audiences. In the finalisation of the designed document, opportunities to summarise elements of the Strategy with infographics will be considered along with a glossary at the end.

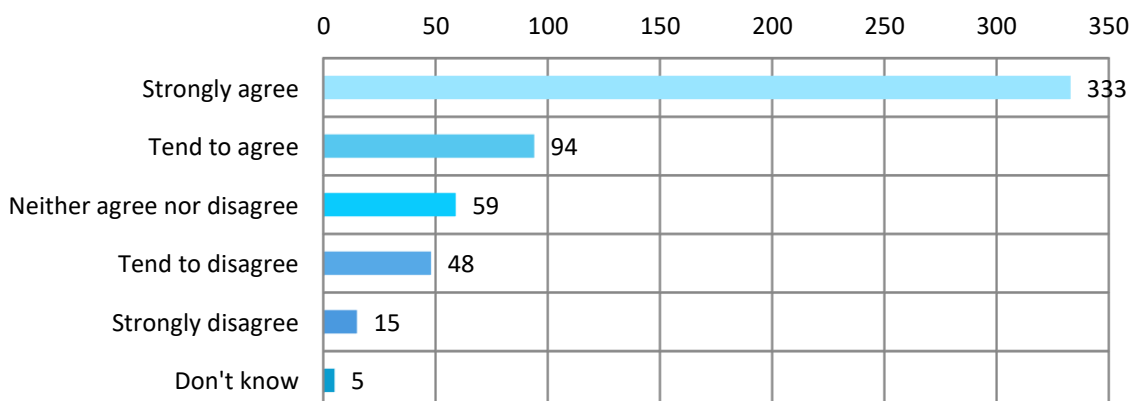
5.2 Level of agreement with ambition of extending tree cover by 1.5 million trees and the target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050 (question 5)

86% either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the ambition of extending tree cover by 1.5 million.



77% either strongly agreed or tended to agree with a target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050.

Achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050



When respondents were not in agreement, they were asked to tell us the reason(s) from a list, with the option to provide their own reason.

There were a number of reasons selected for why respondents disagreed with the ambitions and/or targets of the Strategy (note: respondents could select as many reasons as applicable). Whilst important to consider these, it should be noted that these came from a minority of respondents – 6% disagreeing with the number of trees target and 11% disagreeing with the canopy cover target; and 8% and 12% respectively for the number of trees and canopy cover targets, who were undecided (answering neither agree/disagree or don't know).

The most common reason selected suggested that those that disagreed with the targets did so because they didn't consider them ambitious enough, wanting to see greater canopy cover and more trees in the target. Responses also suggested that they considered the targets inadequate to fight climate change.

Free-form comments provided further considerations for the Strategy's ambitions; these suggested the need for:

- Clear and defined tree establishment targets, accompanied by a tree planting plan, and rigorous monitoring process.
- Separate objectives for rural woodland (canopy cover) and local urban trees (green infrastructure).
- Opportunity mapping to determine the feasibility of the targets.
- More targeted assisted and natural regeneration, alongside manual tree planting.
- Long term security of establishment trees.
- Immediate and urgent action.
- Better protection and restoration of existing trees and woodland.
- Recovery of tree stock lost to disease, in particular ash trees.
- Consideration of quality and scale of woodland habitats created (not just number of trees).
- Providing specific habitat to support important or threatened Kent species, for example turtle dove and nightingale, and/or habitats that extend our species, such as beavers and pine martin.

More of the detailed feedback received in response to question 5 is provided in Appendix 2.

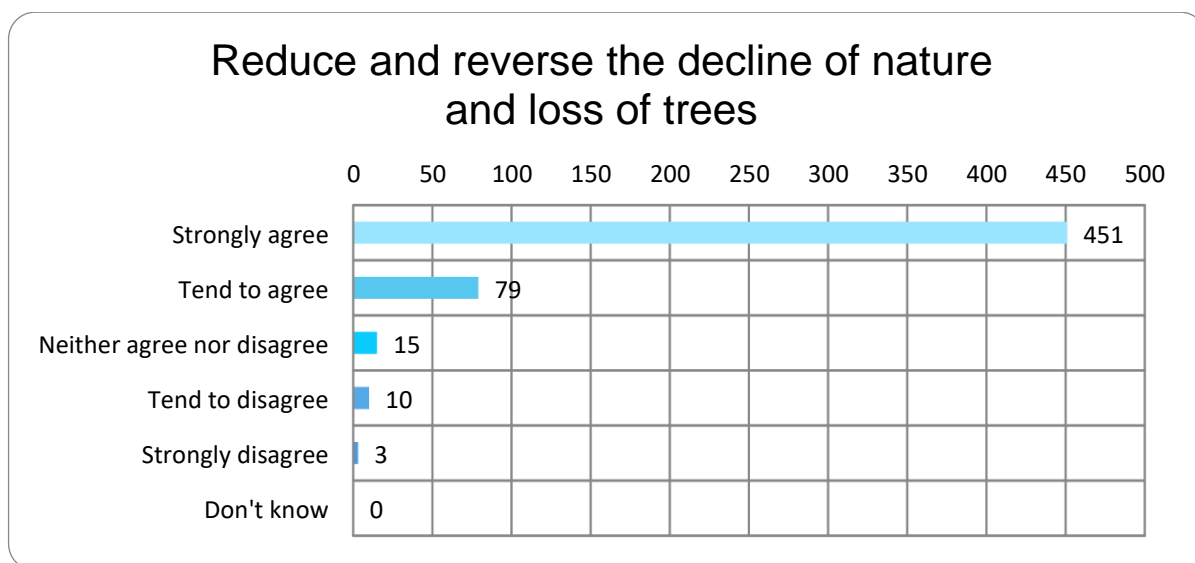
5.3 Level of agreement with the Strategy’s objectives (question 6)

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the eight objectives the Strategy aims to deliver by extending tree cover in Kent.

The objectives have been ranked in order of popularity, based on the percentage of responses that ‘Tend to agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’.

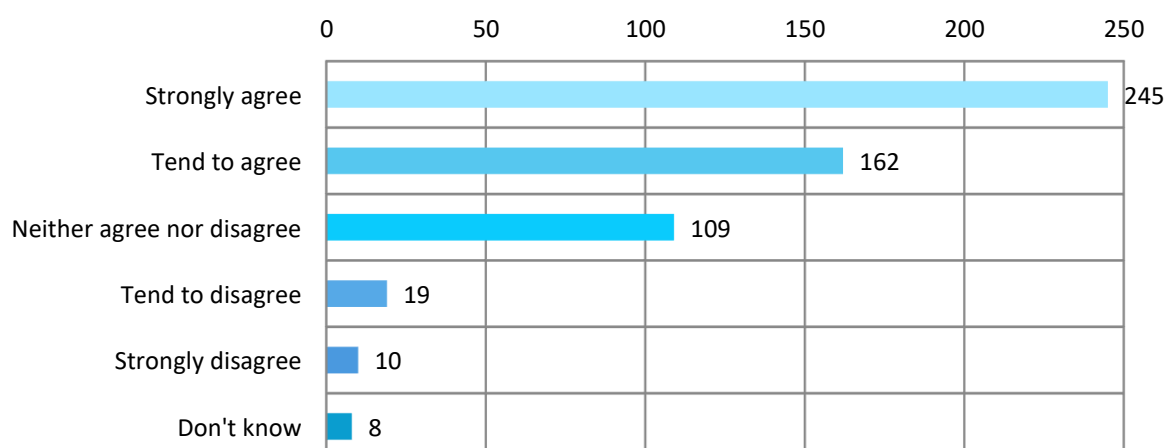
1	Reduce and reverse the decline of nature and loss of trees	95%
2	Address the decline of trees outside woodland and decline in urban trees	94%
3	Tackle the multiple threats to our trees	94%
4	Deliver nature-based solutions to some of the county’s challenges	92%
5	Increase our knowledge and provide better protection	90%
6	Contribute to KCC’s and the county’s net zero targets	87%
7	Provide enhanced and improved recreation and amenity	86%
8	Realise the economic benefits	74%

The most popular objective was “Reduce and reverse the decline of nature and loss of trees”.



The least popular objective was “Realise the economic benefits” but this objective was still supported nonetheless, with only 5% of respondents selecting ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with this least popular objective.

Realise the economic benefits



All the objectives of Plan Tree were well supported. The full breakdown of responses for all eight objectives is presented in Appendix 3.

Respondents were given the option to note whether or not there were other objectives that should be included in the Strategy. 37% of respondents thought there were, and these included:

- More protection for trees from housing development.
- Better provision for trees through new development.
- Delivery of urban trees for health and wellbeing benefits.
- Ensuring new woodland creation is accompanied by management, maintenance, and monitoring.
- Ensuring planting delivers diversity and enables engagement.
- Addressing land use conflicts, in particular in relation to food security.
- Delivering flood management through woodland creation.
- Securing long term funding.
- Economic benefits should also acknowledge the cultural aspects of trees, landscape character, and enhancing beauty.
- Conserve and enhance the beauty of the county's land and townscapes, including enhancing landscape character and quality.

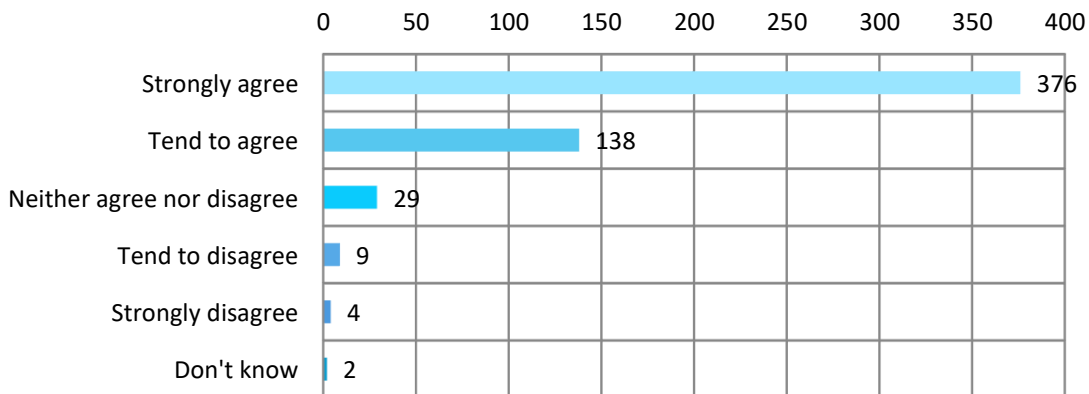
More of the detailed feedback received in response to question 6 is provided in Appendix 2.

5.4 Level of agreement with the Strategy's four principles for tree establishment (question 7)

The Strategy outlines four principles for tree establishment in Kent that will ensure any tree establishment in the county will deliver benefits for Kent's wildlife, people, and the economy.

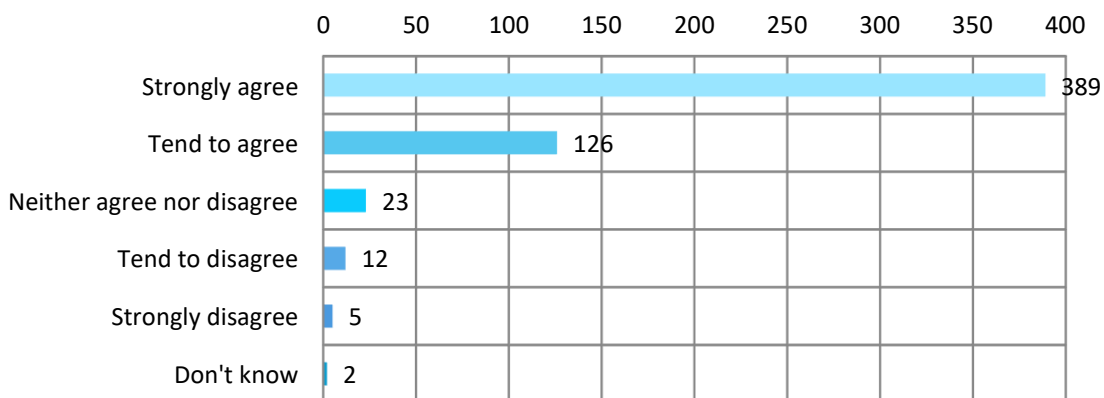
92% responded with 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' with the principle of better management and protection of existing stock:

Better management and protection of existing stock



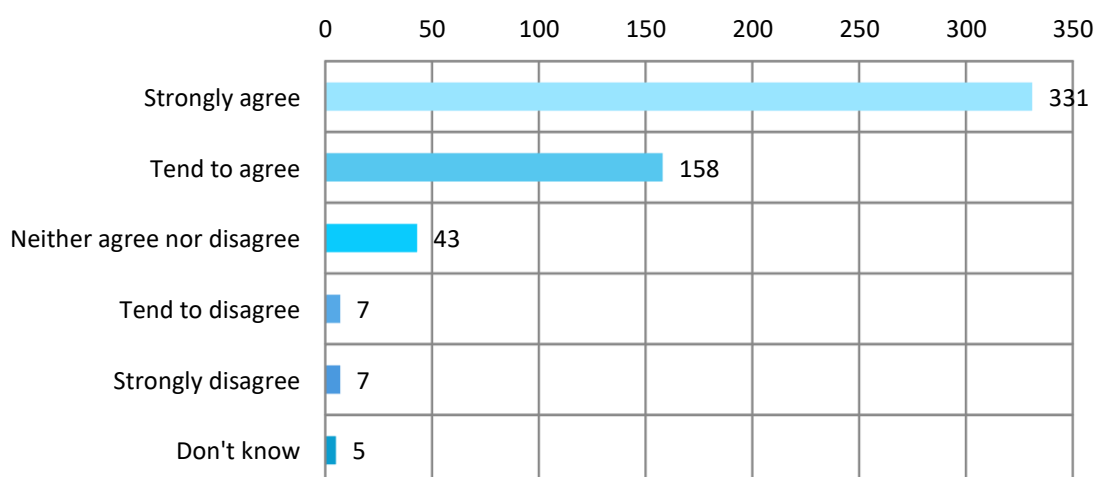
92% responded with 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' with the principle of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason, with the right management:

The right tree, in the right place, for the right reason, with the right management



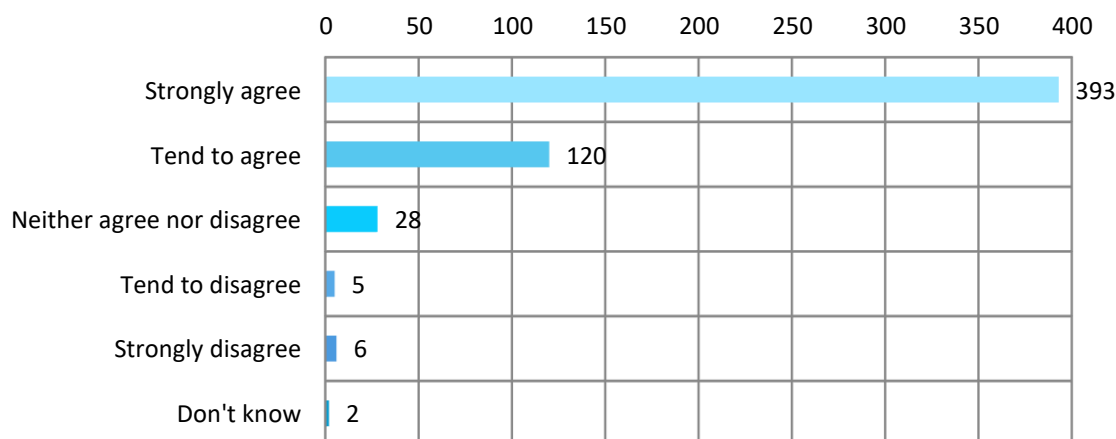
89% responded with 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' with the principle of deliver multiple benefits:

Deliver multiple benefits



93% responded with 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' with the principle of ensure biosecurity of new tree stock through the application of strict standards:

Ensure biosecurity of new tree stock through the application of strict standards



Respondents were given the option to note whether or not there were other principles for tree establishment that should be included in the Strategy. 26% of respondents thought there were, and comments on the principles included:

- Expanding the principle of better management and protection to specifically tackle the impact of development.
- Ensure protection and maintenance of new trees planting under the Strategy.
- How will the principle of right tree in right place, etc be applied?
- Delivery of habitat connectivity.
- Prioritising action in areas of Kent with less tree canopy cover.
- Consideration of potential negative impacts of more trees, for example in respect of allergies and infrastructure.

- Consideration of tree species, including ensuring they are resilient/adaptable to climate change and the Strategy’s role in supporting/reintroducing endangered tree species.
- Involvement of local community and schools.
- Delivering health and well-being benefits with accessible woodland near areas of deprivation.

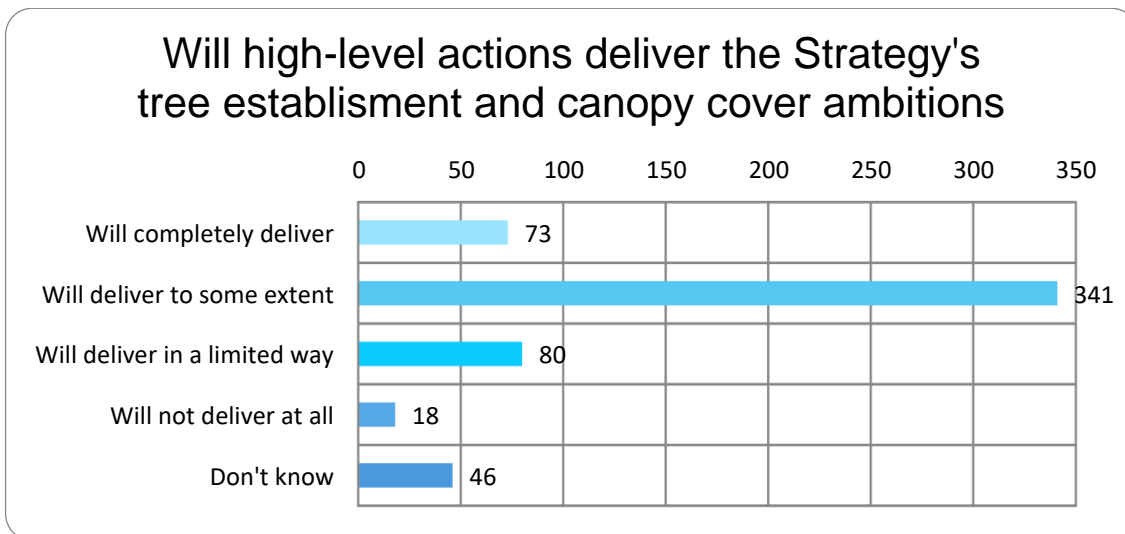
More of the detailed feedback received in response to question 7 is provided in Appendix 2.

5.5 Will the Strategy’s high-level actions deliver the tree establishment and tree canopy ambitions? (question 8)

The Strategy outlines the high-level actions we will take to deliver increased tree cover in Kent:

1. Deliver against the tree establishment target
2. Exemplar provision for trees on our own estate
3. Improve protection to trees in Kent
4. Improve our understanding of Kent’s trees
5. Develop Kent carbon offset market for unavoidable emissions

74% of respondents thought these high-level actions were appropriate and ‘will deliver to some extent’ the ambition of 1.5 million new trees and a target of 19% average canopy cover by 2050?



Respondents were given the option to note whether or not there were other actions that should be included in the Strategy. 34% of respondents thought there were, and focused on more detailed actions in relation to protection of trees and delivery and monitoring of tree establishment. Comments in respect of the high-level actions also highlighted the need for strengthening community engagement actions.

More of the detailed feedback received in response to question 7 is provided in Appendix 2.

5.6 Delivery partners (question 9)

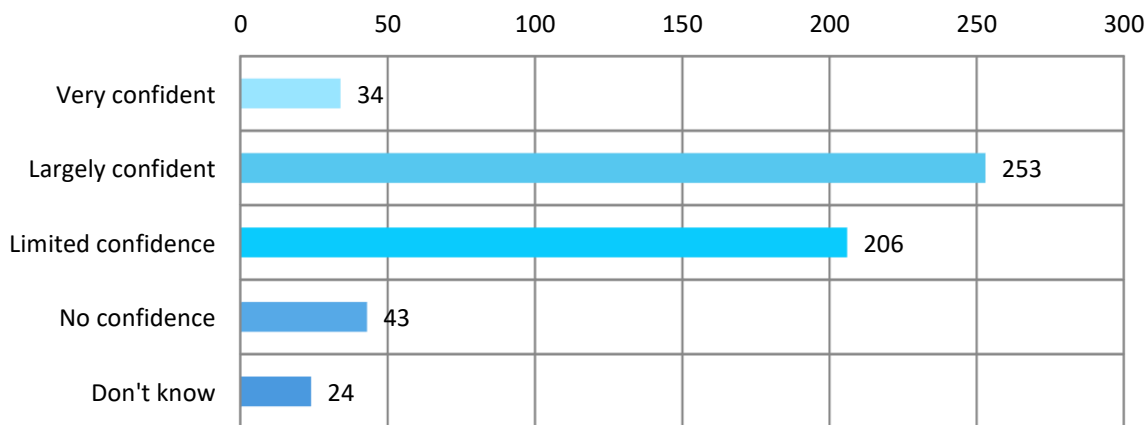
33% of respondents thought the suggested partner list on page 18 of the Strategy covered all potential delivery partners for tree establishment in Kent. The following additional delivery partners were suggested by respondents:

- Residents
- Parish Councils
- Schools, and Academy trusts
- Colleges and Universities
- Private Landowners
- Local planning
- Housing developers
- Construction/building companies
- Utilities companies (Water)
- Internal Drainage Board
- Local businesses
- Public sector landowners (NHS)
- Highways England (Kent Highways and Department of Transport)
- National Trust
- English Heritage
- Historic Houses Association
- Rural estate companies
- Commercial timber suppliers
- CPRE - The Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Wildwood Trust
- Urban Bees
- Plantlife
- Edible Culture in Faversham
- The Woodland Trust
- Trees for Farms
- Friends of the Earth
- Greenpeace

5.7 Confidence that the Strategy will deliver (question 10)

Respondents were asked, in consideration of the Strategy's principles for tree establishment and the action plan, to what extent were they confident that the Strategy will deliver on the ambition of 1.5 million trees and a target of 19% average canopy cover by 2050?

Confidence that the Strategy will deliver



51% of respondents were 'largely confident' or 'very confident' that the Strategy will deliver the ambitions for Kent. Explanations of any limits in confidence highlighted some of the delivery challenges and the need to demonstrate commitment to the Strategy:

- Contrasting principles with housing development prioritised ahead of tree preservation; more needs to be done to protect established trees.
- Levels of financial support and funding committed to the long-term goals of the Strategy; the need for continued resources for the lifetime of the Plan that won't be cut if budgets are stretched.
- Is the level of ambition enough to reverse the trees lost to development and Ash dieback?
- Land availability and competing priorities for this – will woodland creation be a priority?
- Urgency of the project and whether there is the drive to deliver the targets within the timescales.
- Feasibility work and an implementation project plan with annual metrics and milestones is required.

5.8 Tree establishment plans, targets and projects (question 11)

Respondents were asked to detail existing plans, targets, and projects for tree establishment. Responses to this question focussed more on new actions the respondent wished to see and/or partners that would like to be engaged. The detailed feedback received in response to question 11 is provided in Appendix 2.

6 Equality and Accessibility

The following steps were taken to help make the consultation accessible:

- Accessible PDFs of the draft Strategy and EqIA were provided to ensure accessibility for consultees using audio transcription software.
- Word version of questionnaire for anyone who could not or did not want to complete the online version.
- Large print versions of the draft strategy, EqIA and questionnaire were provided.
- All consultation documents and publicity material included an email address and telephone number for people to request hard copies of the documents or alternative formats.
- A mix of promotional activity took place both online (e.g., social media and emails) and in hard copy (e.g., posters).

6.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The EqIA provides a process to help us understand how our proposals may affect people based on the protected characteristics (age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities).

A consultation stage EqIA was available on request and was included as one of the documents on the public consultation webpage: <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/plantree>

The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was downloaded 22 times.

6.2 Feedback on the equality analysis (question 12)

Within the consultation questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to feedback on the EqIA. There were 25 responses to this question.

Several comments were received about ensuring access to woodland for low-income communities, vulnerable people, children, and the elderly. It was also noted that people of colour are twice as likely to live in areas with minimal access to green space; in the UK almost 40% of individuals from BAME backgrounds live in the most green-space deprived areas. Therefore, increased tree cover within the county is expected to deliver more positive equality impacts than negative.

Trees improve air quality and tackle other climate change effects, such as extreme heat and flooding. Children and young people, and the elderly and disabled people, who tend to suffer more from respiratory illnesses and the extremes of climate change therefore may benefit from increased tree cover. Studies have also shown poor air pollution levels are often found in areas of highest ethnic diversity and therefore improved air quality, as a result of increased trees, may also benefit this protected characteristic group.

Comments were made about Public Rights of Way when they pass through woodland, to ensure that wherever possible tracks are suitable for disabled people to use and enjoy. Inappropriate planting could restrict access or cause obstacles. Pathways should be wide enough, without obstructions that may impede blind/partially sighted, and capable of taking

the full weight of any disabled carriage, even on the wettest of days and they should be gated rather than using stiles. Safe access for walkers, bicycles, and pushchairs should also be considered.

This feedback has been used to review the EqIA.

The Strategy applies a clear principle of the right tree in the right place, and this will ensure that any tree planting does not have unintended consequences, including impacting access or causing obstacles. Likewise, it will be directed to where planting is needed, such as economically and greenspace deprived areas and urban areas; therefore the positive benefits of tree planting to protected groups can also be realised.

No amendments have been made as a result of the responses to question 12 but specific EqIAs will be undertaken as appropriate when elements of the Strategy are implemented.

7 Outcome of consultation

7.1 Key findings

The consultation had a good response rate and respondents have taken time to complete the questionnaire and detail their reasons for and against, with many well considered and valid comments received.

90% found the Strategy easy to understand, an executive summary will be included at the front of the final Strategy that can be used as a readily accessible standalone document.

Strategy ambitions

The consultation showed strong support for, and agreement with, the Strategy's ambition of extending tree cover by 1.5 million and a target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050. The small minority that disagreed with the ambitions felt the targets were not ambitious enough and called for greater canopy cover and more trees in the target. This would suggest that even those that disagreed with the targets' figures, would still support the general aspiration of extending trees within the county.

Respondents want to see clearly defined targets, with a rigorous monitoring process in place. The consultation analysis also suggested that it would be valuable to define the targets in terms of delivery via rural woodland, agroforestry, and urban trees. And further, that assisted natural regeneration should be a clear mechanism for delivery, with associated targets.

The consultation illustrated that the protection and restoration of existing trees and woodland, and improving the condition of native and ancient woodland, are of primary importance to respondents.

It was also suggested in responses that targets should not necessarily focus on the number of trees planted, instead the quality of woodland habitats created and the scale of canopy cover.

Strategy objectives

The objectives of the Strategy were extremely popular. Reducing and reversing the decline of nature and loss of trees was the most popular objective with 95%, but over 85% of respondents agreed with seven of the eight objectives. Realising the economic benefits was the least popular, however over 74% still agreed with it as an objective.

Suggestions for further objectives indicated that respondents would like to see greater emphasis on protection of trees from development including restricting green space development. There was also the suggestion that the preferred policy should be for trees and hedges to be retained, rather than accepting the practice of replacement. And where trees are unavoidably lost, replacement trees should be mandated.

Plan Tree principles for tree establishment

There was again strong support for the Strategy's tree establishment principles, with over 89% agreed with all four.

As with feedback on the objectives, feedback on the principles again illustrated a desire for better protection for the trees we have within development management. Although we can look to strengthen this within the Strategy, we need to recognise the limitations of KCC's

influence over housing development that is determined by district and borough planning authorities.

Feedback also noted the need for the principles to ensure any new trees have appropriate protection and maintenance. The principle of “right management” was intended to cover this but it is agreed that we need to reinforce this message more clearly and address mechanisms needed to deliver this, such as conservation covenants.

Strategy action plan

The Strategy outlines the high-level actions we will take, some in partnership with others, to deliver increased tree cover in Kent. A large majority of respondents considered these actions appropriate and believed they would “deliver to some extent” the Strategy’s ambitions and targets.

Many of the suggestions for additional actions were more appropriate for inclusion in the (to be developed) detailed Strategy implementation plan and these will be considered further in due course. Feedback also reinforced the strong message that more action was needed in respect of protecting existing trees and actions pertaining to this within the Strategy will be reviewed and built on.

Confidence in the Strategy’s ability to deliver

The consultation showed that 45% of respondents had limited confidence that the Strategy will deliver the ambitions for Kent. Primary concerns that have contributed centred around a conflict of principles with targets for housing development, the level of funding and financial support, fears that environmental projects will be the first to be ‘cut’ and a lack of trust that climate concerns will be prioritised. It will therefore be important to report on, and promote, action taken under the Strategy to demonstrate a commitment from Kent County Council and its partners. It is hoped that the associated implementation plan for the Strategy will also go some way to allay delivery concerns.

Feedback also demonstrated concerns over the challenges that face tree establishment; these challenges need to be reflected within the Strategy to build confidence that they are understood and will be tackled alongside tree establishment.

Strategy delivery partners

The consultation received suggestions for specific delivery partners, many of which we are already engaged with.

The consultation made very clear that the high-level actions in the Strategy need to disseminate down to communities at a local level. Partnerships with Parish and Town Councils, and local community groups, will be key to the sustained mobilisation of the community.

7.2 Using the findings of the consultation

All the consultation responses will be considered during the finalisation of the Tree Establishment Strategy. Some key items to be addressed will include:

- Development of a standalone, executive summary in an accessible language and format.

- Clarity over the development of an associated implementation plan, which will, amongst other things, more clearly define:
 - specific targets for extending canopy in rural, agroforestry and urban settings
 - delivery through assisted natural regeneration
 - the tree planting plan and comprehensive monitoring process
- Clarity over how the Strategy's delivery will be monitored and reported on and how this will be resourced.
- Re-emphasise the role that assisted natural regeneration will play in meeting tree establishment targets.
- Ensure sufficient attention is given to the protection of existing tree stock and, in particular, considers the impact of development and growth.
- Reassurance of the long-term security of new trees delivered under the Strategy, including management, maintenance, and monitoring.
- Further detail on how the Strategy might deliver targeted action for biodiversity and specific woodland species.
- Ensure the Strategy properly reflects the challenges of tree establishment and how action might help tackle these.
- Ensure the Strategy fully reflects and demonstrates Kent County Council's commitment to this agenda.

In particular, in refining the Strategy and defining its delivery with the implementation plan, we will:

- Set specific goals and objectives for rural woodland canopy cover, agroforestry canopy cover, and local urban trees.
- Consider how much of the targets can be delivered through assisted natural regeneration.
- Consider how we monitor the ecological condition of native and ancient woodland.
- Ensure Plan Tree is linked up with the (Kent) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (development to commence late 2022), Plan Bee and other relevant strategies and targets.
- Develop an associated strategic implementation plan, with measurable actions. This will be developed following adoption of the Strategy.
- Identify schemes that enable and subsidise planting events for parishes and wards.
- Prioritise urban planting in areas identified with the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Kent's Canopy Cover Assessment and in areas that deliver health and wellbeing and nature connectivity benefits, such as sites near healthcare and educational facilities.
- Opportunity map the land available for new green sites on Kent's local authority estate.
- Develop a list of potential sites where tree establishment is both suitable and desirable.
- Identify which sites are suitable for natural regeneration and those that will need advanced or supplementary planting.
- Evaluate the incentives available and develop strategies to encourage landowners to support the tree establishment ambitions by integrating more trees on their land.
- Assess at a high level the potential for sites to provide nature-based solutions, such as habitat connectivity, biodiversity net gain, carbon sequestration, nutrient neutrality mitigation, flood management, water quality and air quality benefits.

7.3 Where will the report go and next stages of the project

This consultation report will be uploaded to the consultation website www.kent.gov.uk/plantree and will be issued to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee. Respondents that registered to be kept informed will also be notified of its publication.

The revised Strategy will be presented to the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 8th September 2022 for their endorsement for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Environment.

The final adopted Strategy will be published on kent.gov.uk. Following adoption, an associated strategic implementation plan, with measurable actions will be developed and this will also be published, in due course, on the KCC website.

APPENDIX 1 – Consultation questionnaire

Consultation Questionnaire

We would like to hear your views on Plan Tree, our draft Tree Establishment Strategy 2022 to 2032.

We have provided this feedback questionnaire for you to give your comments.

What information do you need before completing the questionnaire?

We recommend that you read the draft Strategy before filling in this questionnaire. All consultation material is available at www.kent.gov.uk/plantree or in hard copy on request.

If you have any questions regarding the Strategy, please email plantree@kent.gov.uk.

This questionnaire can be completed online at www.kent.gov.uk/plantree

Alternatively, fill in this paper form and return to:

Email: plantree@kent.gov.uk

Address: Natural Environment & Coast Team, Environment & Waste, Kent County Council, 1st Floor, Invicta House, Maidstone, ME14 1XX

Please ensure your response reaches us by midnight on 2 May 2022.

Privacy: Kent County Council (KCC) collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. KCC respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. Read the full Privacy Notice at the end of this document.

Alternative formats: If you require any of the consultation material in an alternative format or language, please email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 42 15 53 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 42 15 53). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

Section 1 – About you

Q1. Are you responding on behalf of ...?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation. *Please select **one** option.*

- Yourself as an individual
- Yourself in your professional capacity (*please specify below - Q1a*)
- A Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity
- As a Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor
- A government organisation or agency
- A nature related charity or organisation
- A landowner / farming related organisation or association
- An educational establishment, such as a school or college
- A charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)
- A representative of a local community group or residents' association
- A health organisation
- A local business
- Other, please specify:

Q1a. If you are responding in a professional capacity, please tell us what it is.

*Please write in **below**.*

Q1b. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (business, community group, residents' association, council or any other organisation), please tell us the name of your organisation. *Please write in **below**.*

Q2. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please use your organisation's postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q3. How did you find out about this consultation? Please select *all* that apply

An email from KCC

An email from another organisation or contact

From a friend or relative

Kent.gov.uk website

Poster displayed on a community notice board / Library / Country Park

Social media (Facebook, Twitter or Instagram)

Word of mouth

Other, please specify:

Section 2 – Your response to the Strategy

Q4. Was the draft Plan Tree KCC’s Tree Establishment Strategy easy to understand? *Please select **one** option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don’t know

Q4a. If you have any suggestions on how to make the strategy easier to understand, please tell us in the box below. If your suggestion relates to a specific section/page please provide details.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with ...?
*Please select **one** option per row.*

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know
The ambition of extending tree cover by 1.5 million trees						
A target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050						

Q5a. If you answered, ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, ‘Tend to disagree’, ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Don’t know’ to Q5, please tell us why? *Please select **all that apply***

<input type="checkbox"/>	Net zero should be delivered by other means
--------------------------	---------------------------------------------

- Not achievable
- Not ambitious enough, inadequate to fight climate change
- Not right or appropriate for Kent's landscape
- More trees are not needed
- Public money should not be invested in tree planting
- Targets are not focused on what is needed
- Targets need to be clearer and more enforceable
- Targets should not focus on the number of trees planted and rather the quality and scale of the woodland habitats created
- Targets should include the area of natural regeneration (wildwoods and wood pasture)
- Targets should separate out objectives for rural woodland (canopy cover) and local urban trees (green infrastructure)
- The managed natural regeneration (rewilding) approach in the Strategy is the most environmentally responsible
- Too ambitious
- We have enough trees and would prefer other types of habitat restoration and creation
- Would like to see greater canopy cover
- Would like to see more trees in the target
- Would prefer investment in other carbon rich habitats
- We should focus on protecting and restoring the woodland we already have
- Other, please specify:

By extending tree cover in Kent (through both natural regeneration and planting), we aim to deliver a number of objectives. (See pages 8 to 11 in the Strategy.)

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following objectives:
*Please select **one** option per row/objective.*

Objectives	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

			disagree			
Contribute to KCC's and the county's net zero targets						
Reduce and reverse the decline of nature and loss of trees						
Tackle the multiple threats to our trees						
Deliver nature-based solutions to some of the county's challenges						
Provide enhanced and improved recreation and amenity						
Address the decline of trees outside woodland and decline in urban trees						
Realise the economic benefits						
Increase our knowledge and provide better protection						

Q6a. Are there any other objectives not included in the Strategy that you think should be? Please select *one* option.

Yes

No

Don't know

Q6b. If 'Yes', please provide details briefly in the box below:

The Strategy outlines four principles for tree establishment in Kent that will ensure any tree establishment in the county will deliver benefits for Kent's wildlife, people and the economy. Any tree establishment will follow these principles. (See pages 12 to 14 in the Strategy)

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the four principles will deliver extended tree canopy cover that also provides for wildlife, people and economy?
Please select **one** option for each row/principle.

Principles	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Better management and protection of existing stock						
The right tree, in the right place, for the right reason, with the right management						
Deliver multiple benefits						
Ensure biosecurity of new tree stock through application of strict standards						

Q7a. Are there any other principles for tree establishment not included in the Strategy that you think should be? Please select **one** option.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q7b. If 'Yes', please provide details briefly in the box below:

The Strategy outlines the high-level actions we will take, some in partnership with others, to deliver increased tree cover in Kent:

1. Deliver against the tree establishment target
2. Exemplar provision for trees on our own estate
3. Improve protection to trees in Kent
4. Improve our understanding of Kent's trees
5. Develop Kent carbon offset market for unavoidable emissions

(See pages 16 to 17 in the Strategy)

Q8. To what extent are these high-level actions appropriate for the delivery of an ambition of 1.5 million new trees and a target of 19% average canopy cover by 2050? Please select *one* option.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Will completely deliver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Will deliver to some extent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Will deliver in a limited way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Will not deliver at all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know |

Q8a. Are there any other actions that should be included in the Strategy? Please select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q8b. If 'Yes', please detail briefly in the box below:

We believe collaboration and partnership working will be key to delivering on the ambition of 1.5 million trees established in Kent by 2050.

Q9. Does the suggested partner list on page 18 of the Strategy cover all potential delivery partners for tree establishment in Kent? Please select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q9a. If 'No', please tell us which delivery partners for tree establishment in Kent are missing in the box below:

Q10. Based on Plan Tree’s principles for tree establishment and our action plan, to what extent are you confident that the Strategy will deliver on the ambition of 1.5 million trees and a target of 19% average canopy cover by 2050? Please select *one* option.

- Very confident
- Largely confident
- Limited confidence
- No confidence
- Don't know

Q10a. Please use the box below to explain any limits to your confidence:

Q11. If you have any tree establishment plans, targets or projects not covered in the draft Strategy, please use the box below to let us know of them:

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have prepared an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on our draft Strategy.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any proposals would have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, and carer's responsibilities. The EqIA is available online at www.kent.gov.uk/plantree or on request.

Q12. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments below:

Section 3 – More about you

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We'll use it only to help us make decisions and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.

Q13. Are you...? Please select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q14. Is your gender the same as your birth? Please select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q15. Which of these age groups applies to you? Please select *one* option.

0-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>	35-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>
60-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>	75-84	<input type="checkbox"/>	85+ over	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q16. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or holding a belief? Please select *one* option.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q16a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q16, which of the following applies to you? Please select *one* option.

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a long standing physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

*Please select **one** option.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I prefer not to say |

Q17a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q17, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'Other' and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Physical impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mental health condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Learning disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |

Other, please specify:

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers.

Q18. Are you a Carer? Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q19. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? Please select **one** option. (Source 2011 Census)

White English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Asian or Asian British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>		

*Other - If your ethnic group is not specified on the list, please describe it here:

Q20. Are you ...? Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/Straight
--------------------------	-----------------------

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bi/Bisexual
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay man
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay woman/Lesbian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; your feedback is important to us. All feedback received will be reviewed and considered in the development of our Strategy.

We will report back on the feedback we receive, but details of individual responses will remain anonymous and we will keep your personal details confidential.

Closing date for responses: 2 May 2022

APPENDIX 2 – Detailed feedback

Question 5 – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the ambition of extending tree cover by 1.5 million trees and the target of achieving an average tree canopy cover of 19% by 2050?

The results of the feedback to why respondents did not agree with the targets are presented in the table below (note: respondents could select as many reasons as applicable).

A small number of additional themes were prominent among the free-form substantive and individual email responses to the consultation. Responses stressed the importance of setting clear targets for tree establishment and having a rigorous monitoring process in place, so that the County Council's aspirations are achieved *in addition* to the tree planting plans of district councils and other organisations, to make sure that each organisation contributes all that it can and there is no double-counting of new trees and woodlands by different bodies.

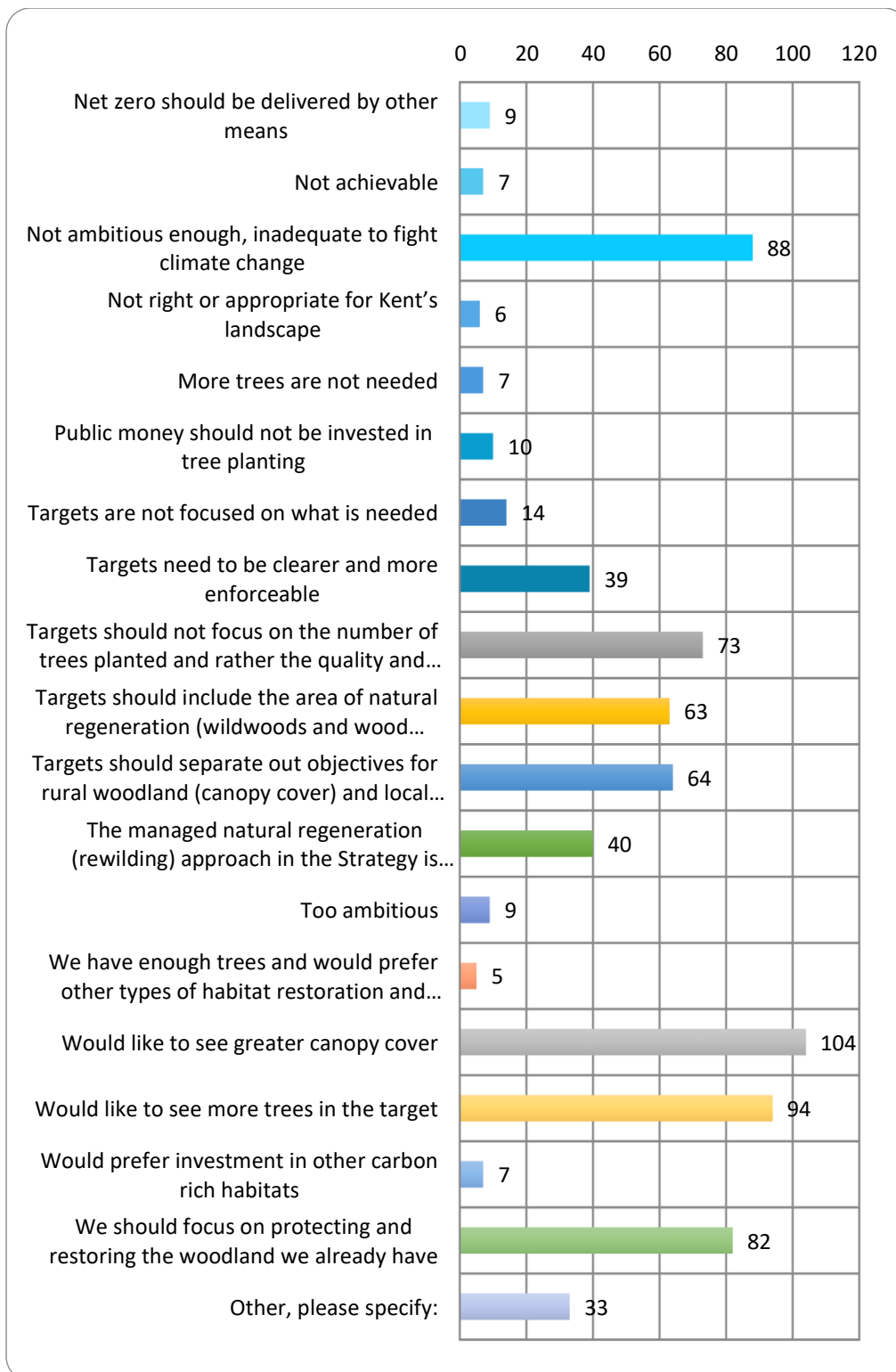
The feasibility of the targets needs to be assessed with opportunity mapping and a tree planting plan, to ensure the extent to which partners can contribute (e.g., available land, staffing resources, and funding).

Responses argued that assisted and natural regeneration (ANR) are more effective approaches to reforestation and are more environmentally responsible than manual tree planting (MTP). ANR should be targeted alongside MTP. Responses gave a series of reasons why this was preferable including the quality of habitats and clear benefits for nature recovery in Kent.

Definitions were discussed in depth, especially when (after how many years) a tree is defined as being *established* – this is not the same as when it is planted. We should ensure that our targets for tree establishment and canopy increase are for the long term, so we only invest where we are confident, and that the carbon (and other ecosystems services benefits) is secure.

Responses highlighted the urgency to establish trees imminently to realise the benefits before 2040. There is limited real carbon benefit of newly planted trees before Year 15, therefore it is only the management and protection of existing woodlands that will help carbon targets in the short term.

Targets for protecting and restoration of existing trees and woodland are of primary importance, especially given our special national position regarding ancient woodland. The recovery of Ash Woodland and replacement of ash trees outside woodland should have a higher emphasis and needs careful thought. We can illustrate the impact of Ash Dieback and explain the importance of the Strategy in replacing the services (especially carbon sequestration) that the loss of Ash has caused.



Respondents argue that targets should not necessarily focus on the number of trees planted; the quality of woodland habitats created, as well as the scale, is frequently mentioned in this context. Also, targets should separate out objectives for rural woodland (canopy cover) and local urban trees (green infrastructure).

Potential areas for targets to be set that are mentioned include (but are not limited to):

1. Rural woodland canopy cover (ANR, MTP)
2. Agroforestry canopy cover (integrating and the cultivation of trees)
3. Local urban trees - green infrastructure (MTP)
4. Ecological condition of native and ancient woodland (key species monitoring, proportion of trees: reaching maturity, lost to disease)

Targets could also be more focussed on delivery and outcomes, for example:

- Providing specific habitats for species such as the turtle dove and nightingale.
- Exploring the possibilities to expand unique habitats such as wet woodland and forests to create nature corridors for wildlife to further the range of species such as beavers and pine martins.
- Expanding Kent's heritage of wildlife rich old orchards by creating new village orchards.
- Working with residents to identify urban areas where they wish to see trees planted.

Question 6a – Are there other objectives that should be included in the Strategy?

Respondents were asked to tell us the reason(s) for answering 'Yes to Q6a. In analysing the 'free text' responses, they have been categorised into common themed groups.

The most common reason was that respondents wanted to see more protection for trees from housing development. (52 comments). Respondents want to reduce the amount of land being developed (mainly for housing) and protect and retain all types of trees, including, urban, garden, mature/veteran trees (not just ancient), heritage trees, and significant landscape trees. They want to protect what is already there, with a much stronger emphasis on restricting development of green space, with a preference for brownfield, and retaining existing trees and hedges, rather than accepting the practice of replacement.

It is important to note that Kent County Council does not have a statutory influence over planning and local plans from an ecological perspective. We can only advise on environmental and protective species policy and legislation.

The second theme covers a variety of concerns that will be addressed by mandatory biodiversity net gain (39 comments). Respondents wanted to ensure that when new housing developments happen, they should be planned around existing trees, and there should be greater power to impose and enforce environmental covenants on developers, so that they provide enough replacement trees and shrubs to enhance the environment.

The Government's response to the 2018 consultation on net gain set out that there would be a 2-year implementation for mandatory biodiversity net gain once the Environment Bill received Royal Assent and became the Act (which happened on 9 November 2021). Kent County Council will take a strategic lead as a statutory consultee and will be applying the principles of biodiversity net gain.

For understandable reasons there seems to be a lack of awareness about the introduction Biodiversity New Gain (biodiversity net gain), however respondents see the need and understand the concept that development projects need to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

The other prominent additional themes argued that:

- There needs to be much more importance put on urban trees (particularly town and city centres) for health and well-being. The focus should be on scaling up street trees in the areas that most need it. Perhaps working with parish and town councils to retrofit street trees in areas where so many have been felled and not replaced. There are suggestions to encourage householders to plant wildlife strips in their gardens and select small native trees that provide good wildlife habitats.
- New woodland habitats must be created to a high standard and managed, maintained, and monitored for the long-term. All too often saplings are abandoned after planting, watering does not take place, tree supports are not looked after, and tree guards are not removed (and reused or recycled) at the specified time.
- Tree planting should be more random, avoiding straight lines, with a diverse mix of species to minimise the risk of pests and to provide (and connect) habitats for a diverse population of creatures. Shrubbery, low level woody plants should be considered for land not suitable for trees. Non-native ornamental trees should be avoided where possible. Although, non-native fruit and nut trees might be an exception, so people are encouraged to forage and engage with the natural world.
- The diversity can be increased by planting some specialist non-native species. This is especially important in the light of climate change. We need to plant trees which cope well in drought and to plant more evergreen trees which extract greater amounts of carbon from the atmosphere.
- The Strategy needs to recognise the implications of planting woodland on land that is currently farmed (Agroforestry). For example, considerations might avoid planting on the most productive farmland. There needs to be more engagement about the possibilities to integrate trees with either crops or livestock on the same land, to achieve additional benefits in comparison to keeping agriculture and trees separate.
- The Strategy should do more to inspire woodland creation as a flood prevention measure.

A small number of additional themes were prominent among the free-form substantive and individual email responses to the consultation

- Consider strengthening the section titled - Partners and funding. There is a need to secure and ring-fence long-term funding. The current funding plan is targeted at the short term specifically new planting plus three years. It will be difficult to support the ongoing care especially within the urban environment and the new planting will only be sustainable if the Strategy provides for the longer term.
- There needs to be clarification when discussing net zero targets, whereby planting on organisations land contributes to their own emission reduction targets. On a wider scale it all contributes to 2050 target, but clarification would ensure the local authorities and partner organisations can claim carbon savings for themselves for their own environmental reporting and targets.
- Realise the economic benefits should consider the cultural aspects of trees, landscape character and enhancing beauty.
- Realise the economic benefits should consider objectives around timber and wood innovation, especially longevity, so we only invest where we are confident, and that the carbon (and other ecosystems services benefits) is secure.
- Consider a new objective to conserve and enhance the beauty of the County's land and townscapes, including enhancing landscape character and quality.

Question 7a – Are there other principles for tree establishment that should be included in the Strategy?

Respondents were asked to tell us the reason(s) for answering 'Yes to Q7a. In analysing the 'free text' responses, they have been categorised into common themed groups.

The most common reason was the principle of protecting the trees we already have. Stricter policies for tree preservation to stop tree felling for housing development (28 comments). Comments reinforced support for the first principle and included examples of how the principle could be delivered:

- Housing building and development is excessive, green spaces need better protection.
- Ancient woodland sites are irreplaceable. Keep older trees and orchards as a priority.
- Every tree, hedge, or green space is an asset that cannot be easily replaced
- Local planning should take tree preservation more seriously
- Protect what we have with stronger enforcement
- Design housing estates around the existing trees and wildlife
- Leave trees alone if they are healthy, encourage more green planting
- Ensure enough trees are planted to offset the pollution associated with the development.

- There were an additional 12 comments addressing the need for enforceable Biodiversity Net Gain (**biodiversity net gain**).

The second reason was the principle of providing ongoing protection and maintenance for the trees we plant under this scheme (21 comments). Comments highlighted issues that will be addressed with appropriate conservation covenants:

- Funding the ongoing management of increased tree stock
- Provisions for regular watering, weeding, and pruning
- Financial support for coppice
- Protection into perpetuity
- Policies to replace trees that are lost or cut down
- Policies to manage tree pests such as deer and the grey squirrel
- Policies to report tree diseases
- Understanding tree communities (the fungal and root networks in the soil)
- Removing glyphosate herbicide from management.
- Publishing the achievements for each area.

The other prominent additional themes discussed:

- How decisions are made to ensure the right tree in the right place. Whether each principle carries equal weight, should tackling climate change be the number one priority, who will make these decisions, the benefits of involving the local community in decision making, lots of suggestions about where we should plant, and the need for more positivity behind the intent to plant trees.
- Planting at appropriate densities with emphasis on building connectivity.
- The difference between east and west Kent. East Kent sadly has much less tree cover than west Kent. The Strategy should prioritise areas with low canopy cover with an emphasis on east Kent.
- The specifics of the constraints behind the right tree in the right place principle should consider the cultural aspects of trees, landscape character and natural beauty.
- The pros and cons of planting trees near to housing. Careful guidance to avoid blocked drains, tree roots penetrating underground pipework, problems with building foundations, and safety issues with roads and pavements.
- The best and worse trees for people with asthma or allergies; pollen can trigger a reaction (Birch pollen is one of the most allergenic).
- The choice of tree species regarding climate change adaptation and resilience. The time it takes before the trees have any sort of impact. How our existing flora and fauna are adapting to global warming.
- The inclusion of endangered species, conifer plantation, and Maritime pines in coastal areas.
- The need to involve the local community and to educate children, and train staff.

- Accessible woodland near areas of deprivation has greater potential to deliver health and well-being benefits.

Question 8a – Are there other actions that should be included in the Strategy?

Respondents were asked to tell us the reason(s) for answering ‘Yes to Q8a. In analysing the ‘free text’ responses, they have been categorised into common themed groups.

The most common reasons were to improve the protection of trees in Kent (79 comments). Prominent suggestions for protection included:

- more emphasis on enforcement to ‘stop the destruction’ of mature trees
- strengthen existing protection measures (TPOs and conservation areas).
- resource local planning and building control properly to stop housing development
- stop building on green sites (woodland, farm, and meadow land), use brownfield land
- protect existing orchards, hedges, and meadows
- promote wildflowers on road verges (less mowing and weed killer)
- rethink the use of mature trees for biomass, whether locally grown or imported
- focus on planting native trees in large numbers as a safety net
- encourage tree planting within or close to new developments
- ensure the replacement trees are sufficient to balance the loss of a mature tree
- ensure the trees and hedgerows planted by developers are looked after

The second reason were ideas to improve delivery and sharpen our focus on our tree establishment targets (39 comments). Prominent suggestions for implementation included:

- a long-term funding Strategy including crowdfunding
- the urgency to plant sooner rather than later and be more ambitious
- a delivery trajectory with annual milestones.
- ideas for monitoring and reporting against the delivery trajectory
- an engagement programme to encourage landowners to participate
- factoring in woodland loss and trees lost to development
- a focus on urban trees, especially for the deprived areas of east Kent
- a focus on habitat creation for healthy ecosystems and priority species
- subsidising tree planting in gardens and schools
- avoiding commercial carbon offsetting schemes
- funding to purchase land for woodland creation

In terms of additional high-level actions, engagement with the local community runs through many of the prominent themed groups. Respondents highlighted the need to

- provide accessible woodland for better health and well-being
- subsidise and inform to promote planting in gardens and 'greening' homes
- encourage residents to identify sites for urban trees (brownfield sites)
- involve residents with planting and maintaining the trees
- educate in terms of recognising and reporting tree pests and diseases
- explore crowd fundraising opportunities for accessible woodland
- educate the next generation at schools.

We are grateful for all the ideas: we will review them and consider a community engagement plan for the next revision of the Strategy.

Question 11 – If you have any tree establishment plans, targets or projects not covered in the draft Strategy, please use the box below to let us know of them

Suggestions:

- Alignment with wider strategies from lower tier Local Authorities
- Direct and sustained mobilisation of the community
- Thousands more street trees
- Allow trees to emerge from hedgerows.
- Private individuals could be encouraged to plant trees in their gardens
- Concentrate on Thanet.
- More trees on roadside verges.
- More focus on rural areas.
- Consult with woodland owners
- Encouraging small community orchards in each village
- A survey of potential sites carried out by borough councils.
- The plan must include species, including a focus on levels of endangered species, and how these subsequently support other animal and insect endangered species.
- There should be an evergreen species target (carbon extraction).
- Developers should work more with Parish Councils to ensure green spaces on new housing developments are properly managed.
- Ancient woodland should be protected at all costs.
- Natural Flood Management projects across the Medway catchment
- Consult with the local communities
- Consider the tree nurseries
- Give grants and advice to everybody wanting to plant trees in their gardens

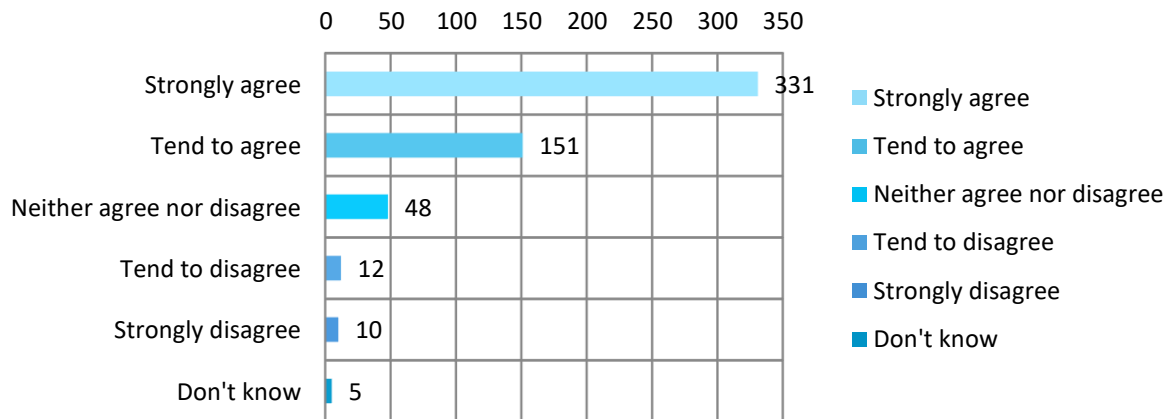
Requests:

1. Contact the village of Speldhurst.
2. Contact the Hollingbourne Meadows Trust
3. Contact Trees for Cities to increase urban tree cover.
4. Trees needed along Herne Bay high street.
5. Protect and plant more orchards around Faversham.

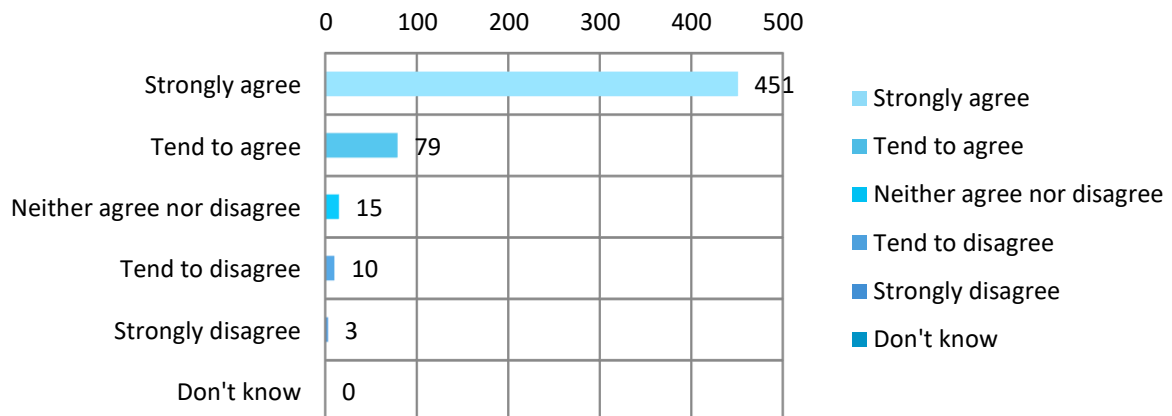
6. Contact the local parish council in Dunton Green.
7. Parish Councils need to be able to call on specific "on-site" advice.
8. Colleges and universities need space to plant trees.

APPENDIX 3 – Full responses to question 6: to what extent do you agree or disagree with strategy objectives

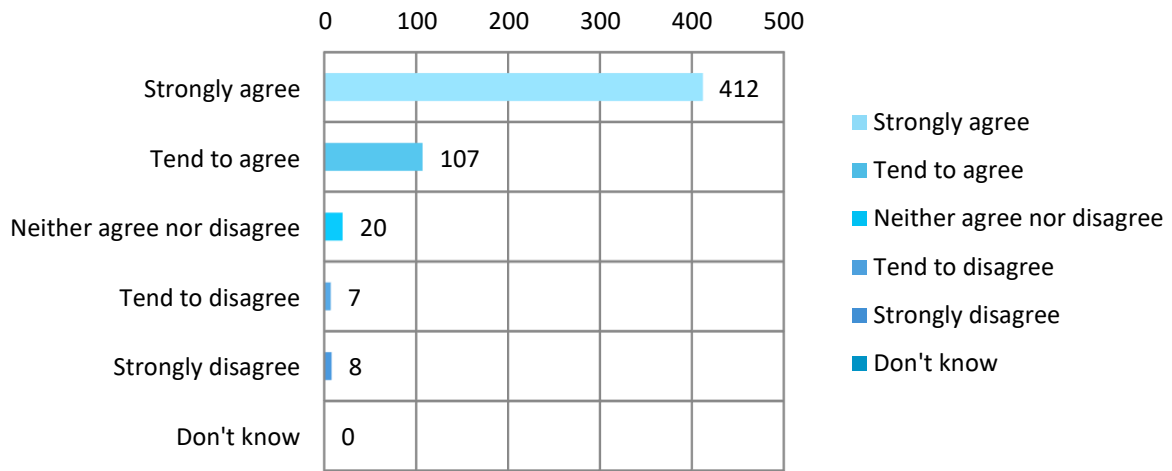
Contribute to KCC's and the county's net zero targets



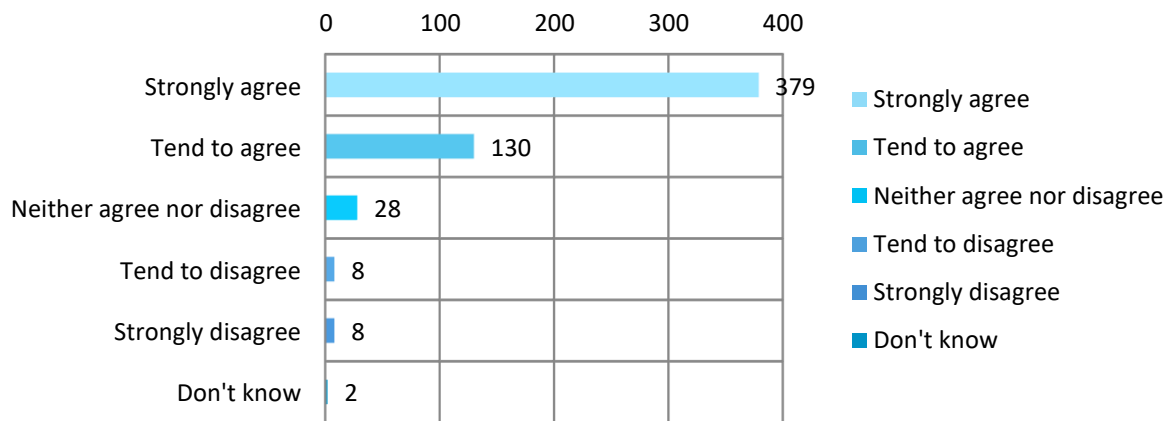
Reduce and reverse the decline of nature and loss of trees



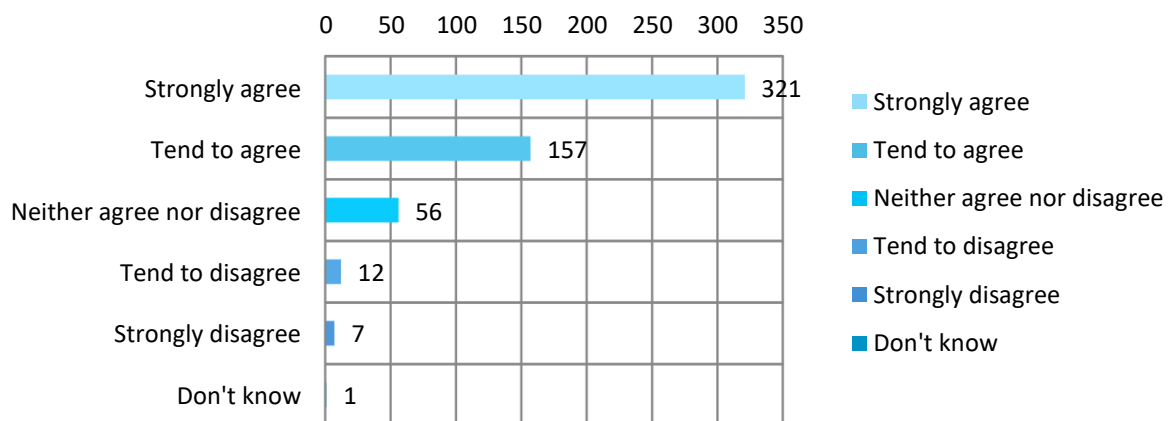
Tackle the multiple threats to our trees



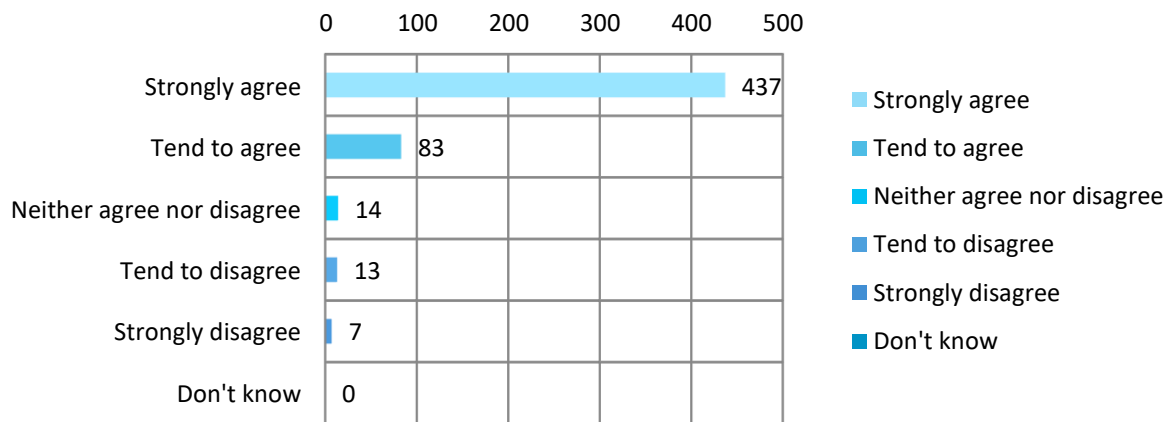
Deliver nature-based solutions to some of the county's challenges



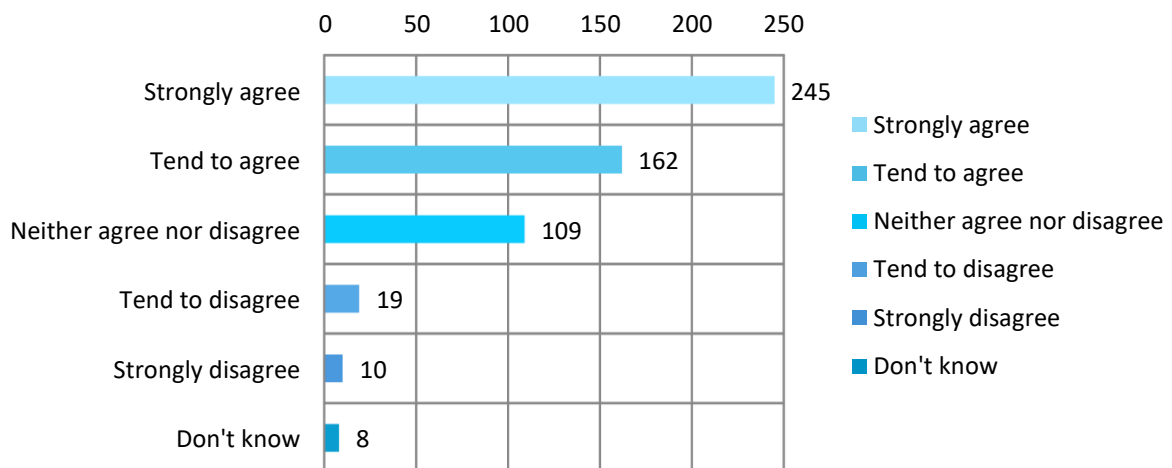
Provide enhanced and improved recreation and amenity



Address the decline of trees outside woodland and decline in urban trees



Realise the economic benefits



Increase our knowledge and provide better protection

