



The Association of Tree Officers would like to respond to the Consultation on Environmental Targets issued on 6 May 2022 in the following way:

**Target: “Increase tree canopy and woodland cover from 14.5% to 17.5% of total land area in England by 2050”**

**Question:**

- Do you agree or disagree with the proposed metric for a tree and woodland cover target? [Agree/Disagree/Don't know]

**Questions:**

- Do you agree or disagree that short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry plantations should be initially excluded from a woodland cover target? [Agree/Disagree/Don't know]
- Do you agree or disagree with the proposed inclusion of trees in woodlands, as well as trees in hedgerows, orchards, in fields, and in towns and cities? [Agree/Disagree/Don't know]

**Questions:**

- Do you agree or disagree with our proposed level of ambition for a tree and woodland cover target? [Agree/Disagree/Don't know]
- [If disagree] What reasons can you provide for why the government should consider a different level of ambition?

Setting a canopy cover target is difficult and a lot of assumptions have to be made because we can't account for tree mortality and growth in all environments. There is also no real way of knowing the carrying capacity of an area unless it has been surveyed. We suggest that the target should be linked to the carrying capacity of the land/environment and landowners should be encouraged to optimise their tree planting and maintenance to meet this.