

Policy Paper

Healthy trees, healthy places

SUMMARY

July 2013



WOODLAND
TRUST



Investing in a vibrant and thriving natural environment is critical to key services, and a powerful tool in regenerating and reinvigorating the local economy

What can councils do?

- Take an ambitious strategic approach which identifies where green space can contribute to economic regeneration, improved public health, reduction of flood risk and support for biodiversity.
- Adoption of access standards to ensure everyone has access to green space. We believe no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2 hectares in size.
- Encourage local people to participate. Government at all levels should support active involvement in the planning and management of trees, woods and other open green space.

What can individuals do?

- Take an active interest in the development of local plans and in the planning process.
- Join with others in protecting trees, woods and landscapes that are important to you.
- Plant more trees by getting involved in community woodland and local tree planting events.
- Get in touch with your local councillor and tell them about the importance of trees and woodland to you and your community.



Water management



Urban heat



Wellbeing



Flood prevention



Clean air



Woodland creation



Urban trees

Benefits of tree cover

- **Tree cover provides economic advantages** – The planting of trees and woods is effective in the remediation of derelict land and urban regeneration, creating places that are more attractive for businesses and people.
- **Trees and green space improve the environment and encourage healthy lifestyles, improving public health** – Less than 10% of the population have access to local woodland within 500m of their home, providing more trees, woods and green space could provide a critical link to healthier lives.
- **Mitigation of the urban heat island effect** – Trees provide direct shade and reduce the temperature, mitigating heat island effect.
- **Well-designed tree planting can improve air quality** – The economic cost from the impacts of air pollution in the UK is estimated at £9-19 billion every year. Urban trees remove large amounts of air pollution and improve urban air quality.
- **Trees in rural and urban areas can help reduce the risk of flooding** – Trees can help slow the rate at which rainfall runs into streams and drains, reducing the likelihood or severity of flooding.
- **Trees and green spaces can help improve water quality.**
- **Woodland can prove a cheaper land use to maintain than amenity grassland.**

Copies of the full *Healthy trees, healthy places* report can be downloaded at woodlandtrust.org.uk/healthytreeshealthyplaces

For further information telephone 0845 293 5564.



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