

Helliwell review

Mark Hemming, Technical Officer

The Association is currently in early discussions with key stakeholders regarding a review of the Visual Amenity Valuation of Trees and Woodlands (the Helliwell System).

The Association holds the intellectual property for the system and review is required to consider its application alongside other evaluation systems. The system is more likely to be used if it addresses the most relevant questions of visual amenity, is robust in design, and produces realistic evaluations in a timely manner.

As part of the review process, the Association is looking to formulate a working group. We are looking to bring together individuals with diverse

backgrounds, skills, and expertise to help review the current system. The group will share their knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned from past experiences. It is hoped that this exchange of ideas and information will lead to a document that is compatible with and complementary to all the existing evaluation systems.

If you would like to be part of the group, please contact Simon Richmond, Senior Technical Officer, in the first instance – simon@trees.org.uk



Urban forest valuation in West Midlands and South Yorkshire

Ben Coles, Senior Urban Forest Consultant, Treeconomics

Two i-Tree Eco studies conducted in the West Midlands and South Yorkshire have shed light on the value and health of urban forests in these regions.

Led by Treeconomics, these projects have not only highlighted the environmental and economic benefits of urban trees but have also set a path for future arboricultural strategies.

West Midlands

The extensive project in Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry, encompassing over 1,000 sample plots, estimates a total of nearly 3 million trees in the region, with an

astonishing CAVAT value of approximately £47.9 billion. The health of the region's trees was commendable, with 82% in 'good' or 'excellent' condition. However, a notable concern was the relatively low canopy cover of 13.8%, which falls below the UK average of 16%. The study, a collaboration between West Midlands Combined Authority, Treeconomics, Birmingham Tree People, Barton Hyett Associates and Forest Research, also highlighted the substantial environmental benefits provided by these trees, including air pollution reduction and carbon sequestration, valued at over £43 million annually.

South Yorkshire

The South Yorkshire study, covering Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham, assessed 751 sample plots. An estimated 2.5 million trees provide a CAVAT value of around £37 billion, with 86% of trees in 'excellent' or 'good' condition. Despite a low canopy cover of 10.2%, a healthy 19% of the region was identified as 'plantable', opening avenues for future greening efforts. The study was carried out with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, City of Doncaster Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, with help from Treefellas Arboriculture Ltd, Sheffield Tree Care Ltd and Acme Arb Ltd. It uncovered annual environmental benefits worth over £35 million, underlining the crucial role of urban trees.

The West Midlands and South Yorkshire studies mark a significant step in understanding and valuing urban forests. Not only do they illustrate the current state of urban trees in the study areas, they also pave the way for strategic, sustainable urban forest management, ensuring a green legacy for future generations.

These and similar reports are available at: www.treeconomics.co.uk/resources/reports



Francesca Marsden, senior regional manager at Amazon, Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, Ian McDermott of Birmingham Tree People, Jeff Grant, West Midlands Combined Authority's Forest Partnership coordinator, and Harry Munt, urban forest technician at Treeconomics, at Loxton REC Play Park in Birmingham.