



# **WRF Strategic Plan (2025-50)**

## **Public Engagement Survey Report**

**13 February 2025**

## 1. Introduction

The White Rose Forest (WRF) is the Community Forest for North & West Yorkshire. Established in 2000, the WRF partnership is approaching its 25th anniversary, and is developing a strategic plan setting out its ambition and direction for the next 25 years.

A Summary WRF Strategic Plan (2025-50) was developed by the partnership to provide the key points from the emerging strategic plan to facilitate engagement with stakeholders and enable feedback to shape the development of the final strategic plan.

This report summarises responses to the public engagement survey undertaken.

## 2. Process

The WRF Shadow Strategic Board approved the proposed approach to formal stakeholder and public engagement at their meeting on 3 December. The formal public engagement process was launched on 6 January 2025, with a deadline for response of 28 January 2025.

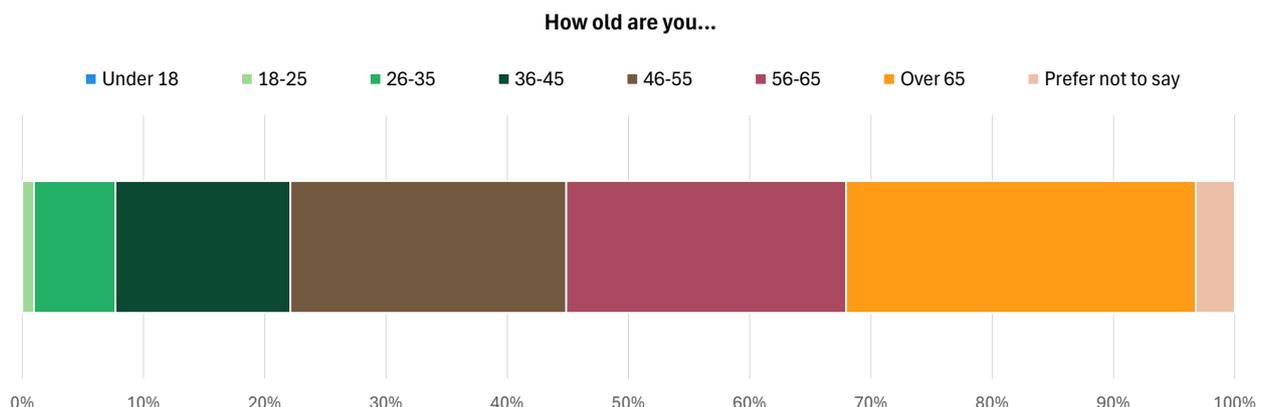
A copy of the summary strategic plan document (and an explanation of the process underway) was hosted online with a survey (see Appendix 1), comprising a number of multiple choice, rating / ranking type questions. A news article was published on the WRF website to promote the survey and social media posts (X/Twitter and LinkedIn) were used to raise awareness. Local Authority partners were asked to promote in their area through their external communications/social media and stakeholder organisations were also encouraged to do so.

## 3. Responses

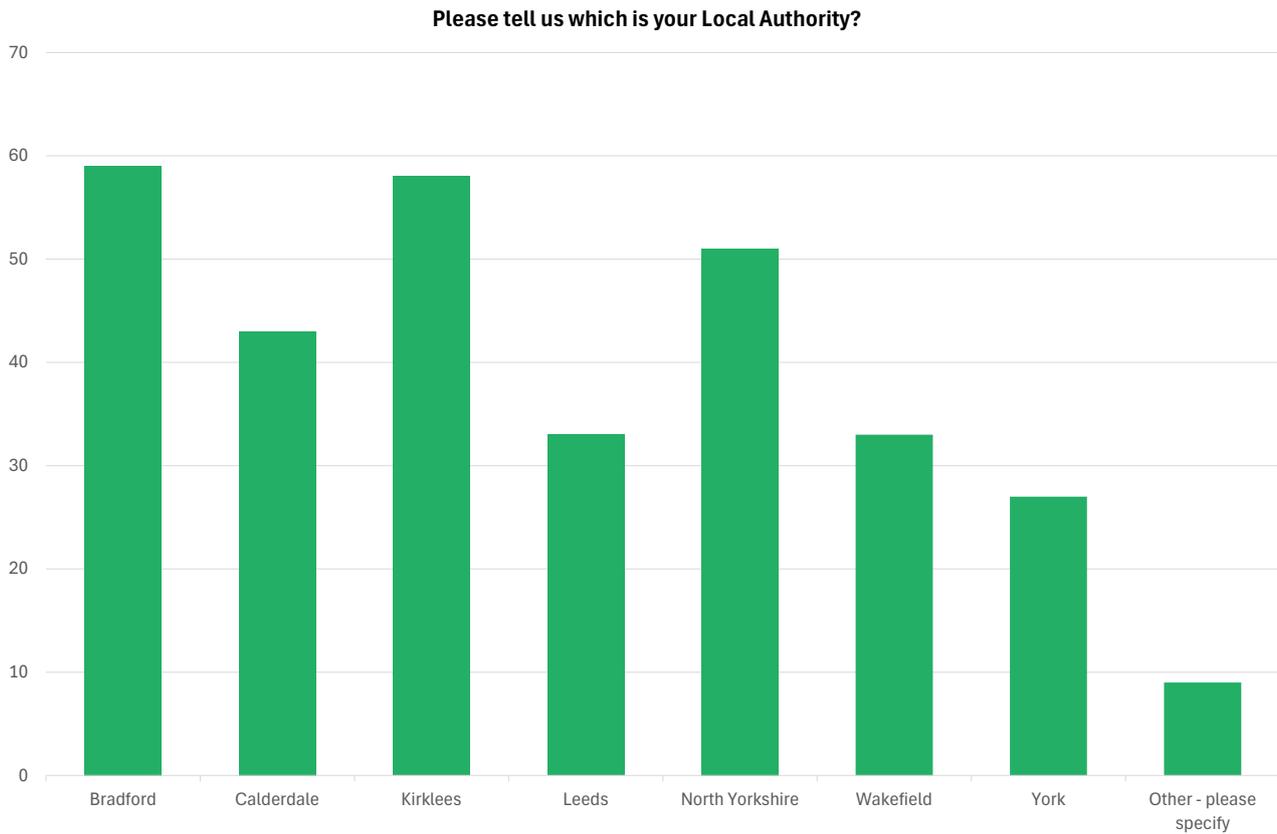
By the 28 January deadline 313 responses had been received via the survey.

When interpreting the survey findings, it should be borne in mind that the survey was only provided online and its promotion was predominantly via social media, plus it is likely that those responding already have an interest in this subject area.

The public were asked a range of 'About You' questions, principally to provide monitoring information on who surveys are/are not reaching. As shown below, **responses were received from almost all age groups, but they were predominantly from older members of the public.**



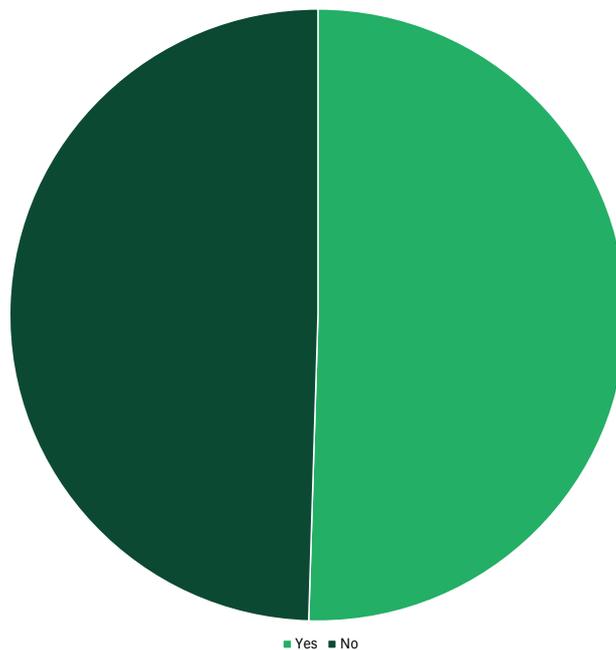
The public were asked for their Local Authority to understand the geographic spread of respondents. As shown below, **responses were received from all areas, but there was a significant variation in the response rate by Local Authority area.**



### 3.1 Were you already aware of the White Rose Forest before completing this survey?

The public were asked whether they were already aware of the WRF before completing the survey to gauge their level of awareness. As shown below, **just over half of respondents were aware of the WRF before completing the survey.**

Were you already aware of the White Rose Forest before completing this survey?



## 4. Summary

The results of responses to individual questions are outlined on the following pages. A summary of the key findings from each question are listed below:

- Over 70% of respondents strongly agreed that trees and woodland help tackle climate change, prevent flooding, and benefit nature. While only 30% of respondents strongly agreed that trees and woodland support business and jobs.
- Many more respondents thought that trees and woodland close to where they live had declined (40%) rather than improved (25%) in the last 5 years.
- Respondents overwhelmingly agreed (93% Strongly agree or Agree) that we need more trees and woodland in North and West Yorkshire.
- Parks and green spaces and By rivers/canals/lakes scored most highly as the place it was most important to have more trees and woodland, with all other options scoring fairly similarly.
- Just under half of respondents had been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months
  - The most popular way in which respondents had been involved in supporting trees and woodland was having planted a tree themselves (nearly 70%), followed by being involved in an organised tree planting event or other voluntary work connected to trees and woodland (around 40%), with just over a third making a donation, and a quarter having been involved in or consulted on plans for establishing/managing trees and woodland in their area.
  - The most frequent reason why respondents had not been involved in supporting trees and woodland was that they were unaware of opportunities (over 60%), followed by being too busy with other commitments (nearly 40%) and then a variety of other reasons (each between 3% and 17%).
- All objectives were seen to be important (80% to 96% Very important or Important) to include within the WRF Strategic Plan, with the planting and woodland management objectives rated higher than the access and engagement objectives. Interestingly, improving the management of existing trees and woodland was rated slightly higher than planting more trees and woodland (which has been the focus of the WRF to date).
- Respondents overwhelmingly supported the long-term direction and level of ambition outlined in the Summary WRF Strategic Plan (91% Strongly support or Support), with very few respondents against (3% Strongly against or Against).
- Just under half of respondents indicated they would like to be contacted regarding the work of the WRF and the opportunities to get involved in the future.

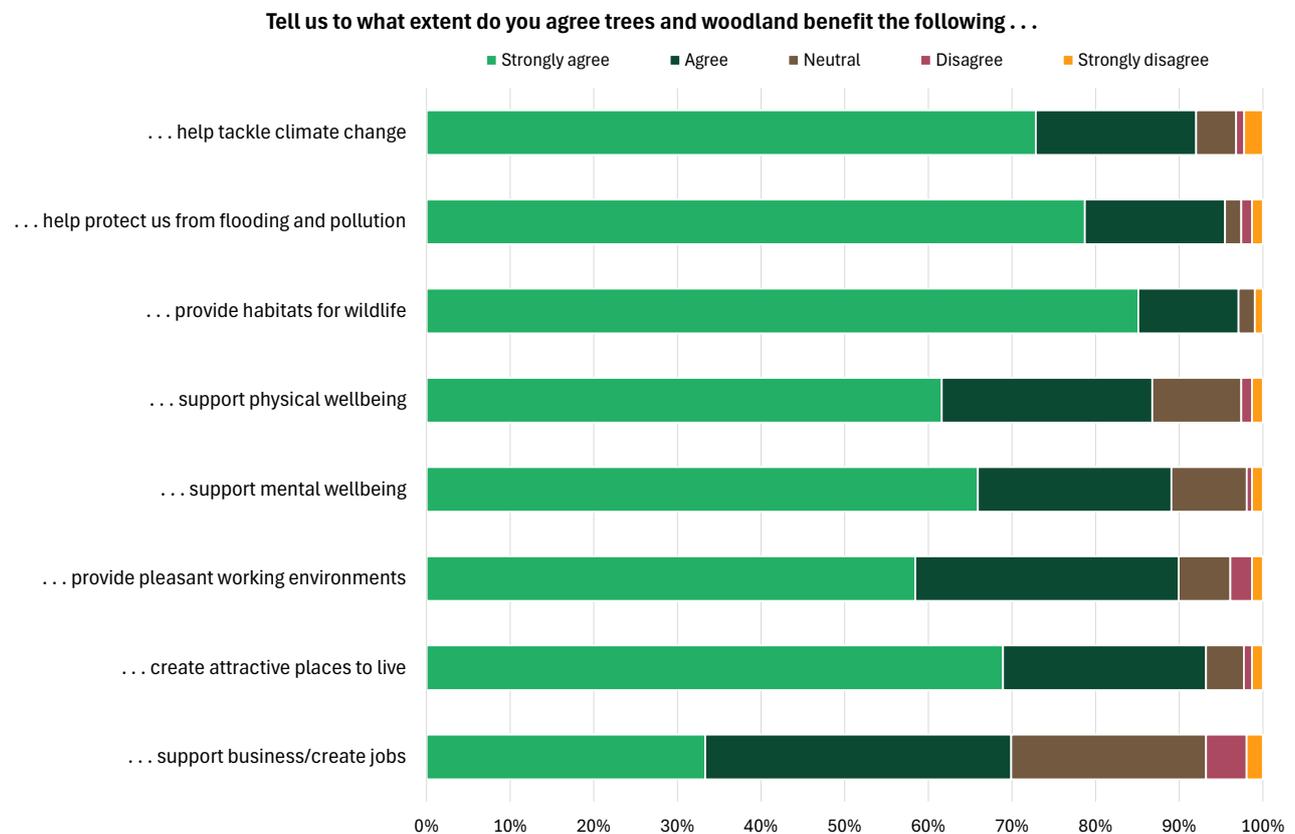
In conclusion, the public engagement survey has helped raised the profile of the WRF and confirmed public support for the proposed long-term direction, level of ambition and approach outlined in the Summary WRF Strategic Plan. In addition, it has provided some useful input on the value the public place on trees and woodland and what they would like to see prioritised in the future. Finally, contact details have been provided by 153 respondents who would like to be contacted regarding the work of the WRF and the opportunities to get involved in the future, supporting ongoing community engagement.

## 5. Results

All of the questions posed were multiple choice or rating / ranking type questions, to make the survey as easy to complete as possible. Therefore, the analysis of the results is all quantitative in nature. Given the number of respondents, it wasn't deemed appropriate to undertake any segmentation analysis (e.g. by Local Authority area or age group etc).

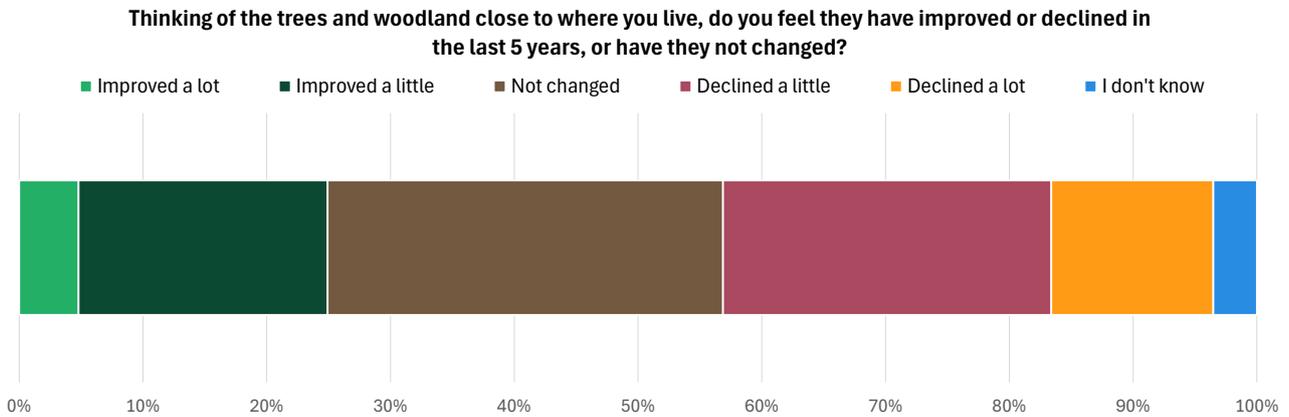
### 5.1 Tell us to what extent do you agree trees and woodland benefit the following . . .

The public were asked to rate how strongly they agreed (or disagreed) with a range of different benefits provided by trees and woodland to gauge which they understood and valued the most. As shown below, **over 70% of respondents strongly agreed (90% Strongly agree or Agree) that trees and woodland help tackle climate change, prevent flooding, and benefit nature. While only 30% of respondents strongly agreed that trees and woodland support business and jobs (70% Strongly agree or Agree).**



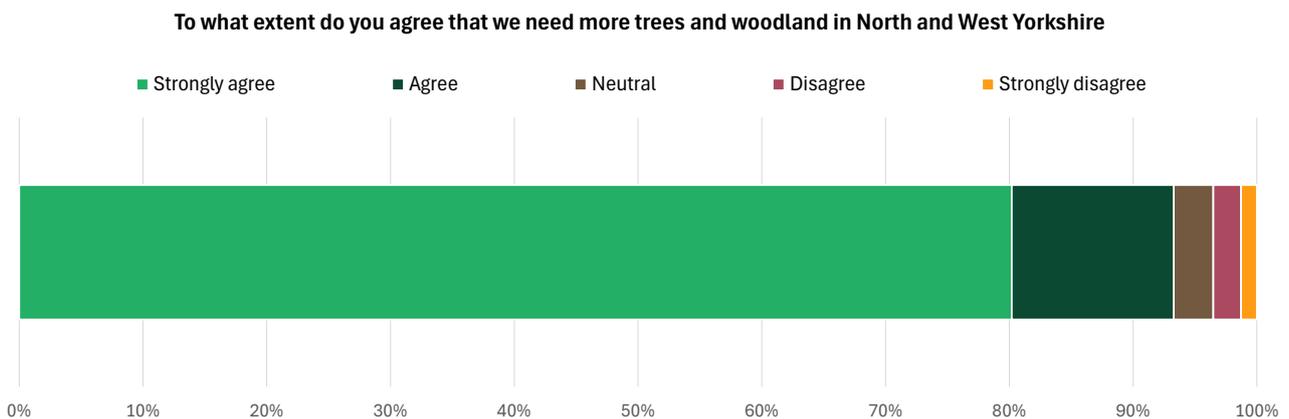
### 5.2 Thinking of the trees and woodland close to where you live, do you feel they have improved or declined in the last 5 years, or have they not changed?

The public were asked to consider the trees and woodland where they live to gauge their assessment of whether trees and woodland close to where they live had improved or declined in the last 5 years. As shown below, **many more respondents thought that trees and woodland close to where they live had declined (40%) rather than improved (25%) in the last 5 years.**



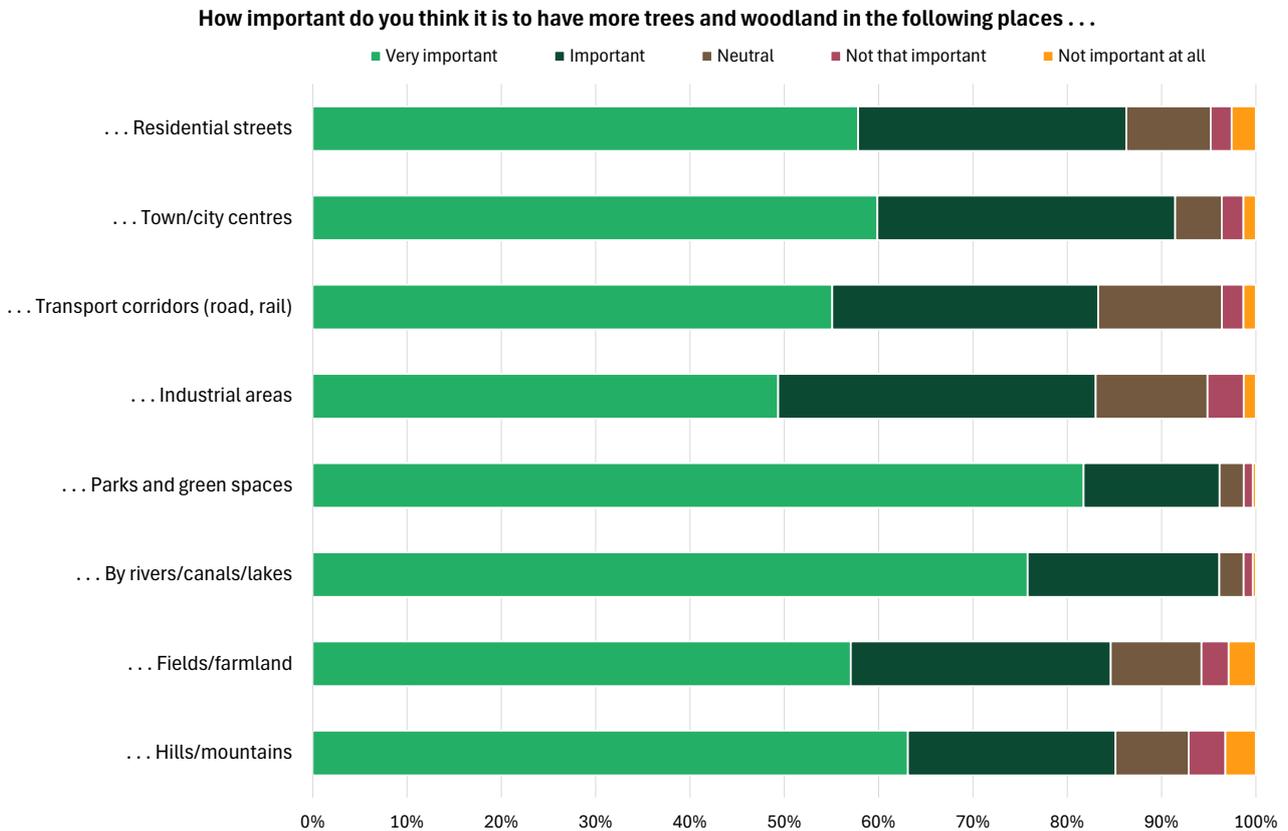
### 5.3 To what extent do you agree that we need more trees and woodland in North and West Yorkshire

The public were asked a simple question to rate how strongly they agreed (or disagreed) that more trees are needed in North and West Yorkshire to gauge their overall level of support. As shown below, **respondents overwhelmingly agreed (93% Strongly agree or Agree) that we need more trees and woodland in North and West Yorkshire.**



### 5.4 How important do you think it is to have more trees and woodland in the following places . . .

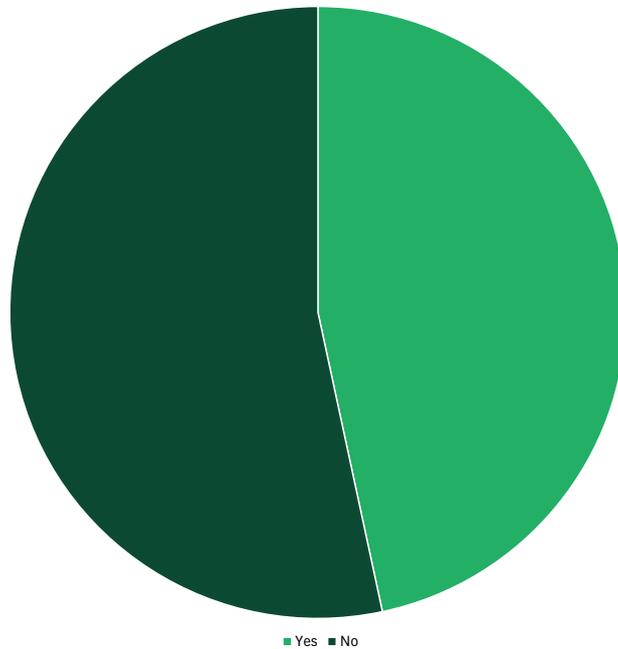
The public were asked to rate how important (or not important) it is to have more trees in a range of different environments to gauge which they valued the most. As shown below, **Parks and green spaces** and **By rivers/canals/lakes** scored most highly as the place it was most important to have more trees and woodland, with all other options scoring fairly similarly.



### 5.5 Have you been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months?

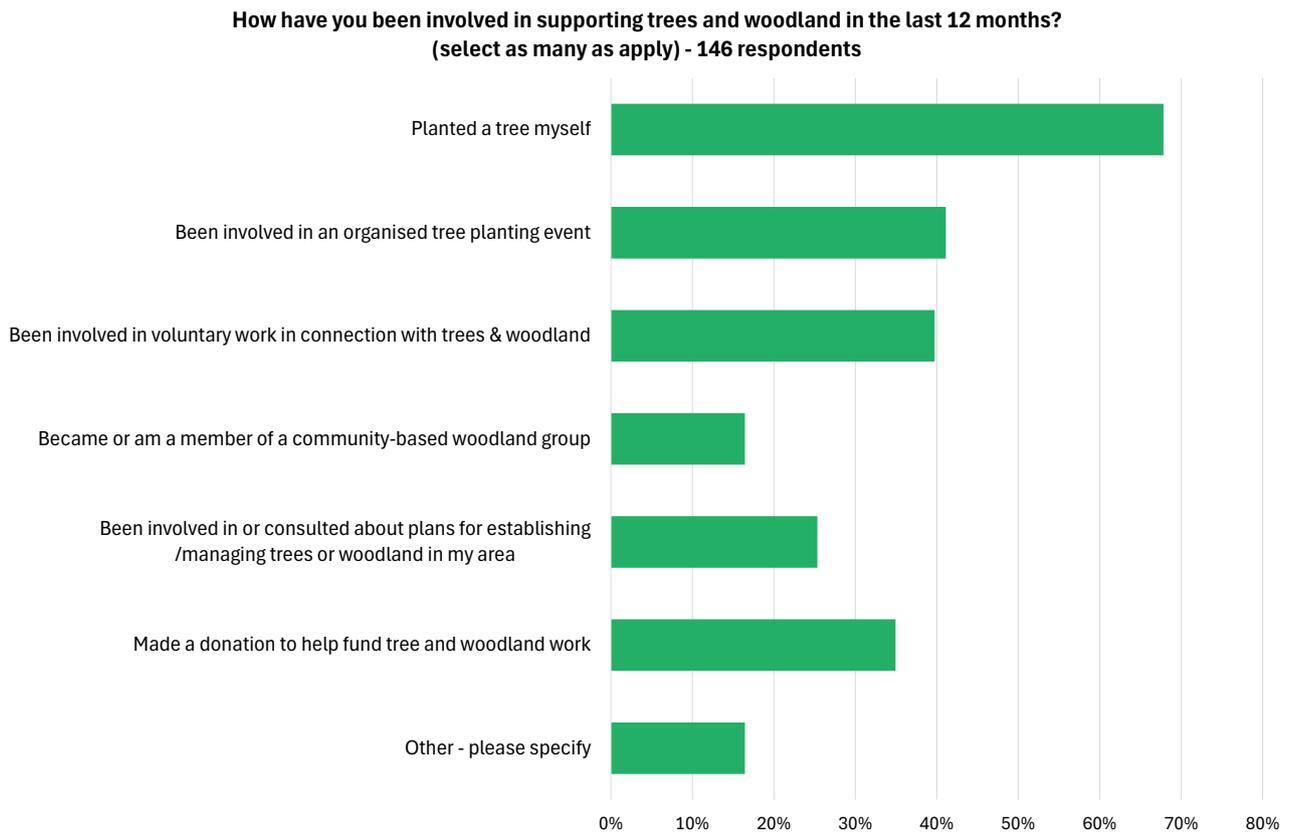
The public were asked whether they had been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months to gauge their engagement and were then routed to a follow-up question based on their response. As shown below, **just under half of respondents had been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months.**

Have you been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months?



### 5.5.1 How have you been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months?

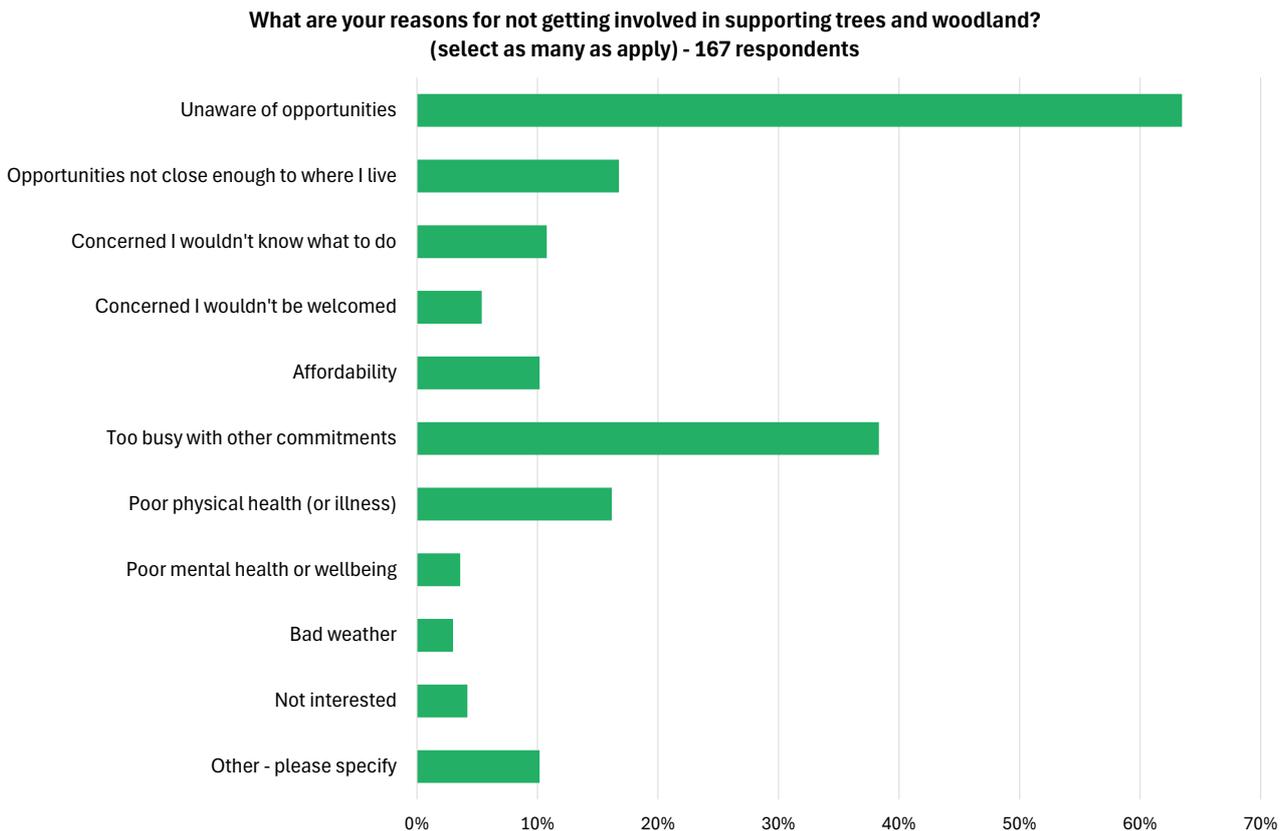
The (146) respondents who indicated that they had been involved in supporting trees and woodland were asked a follow-up question to understand how they had been involved. As shown below, **the most popular way in which respondents had been involved in supporting trees and woodland was having planted a tree themselves (nearly 70%), followed by being involved in an organised tree planting event or other voluntary work connected to trees and woodland (around 40%), with just over a third making a donation, and a quarter having been involved in or consulted on plans for establishing/managing trees and woodland in their area.**



The most popular responses specified by those selecting ‘Other – please specify’ were: people who had been involved through their work (e.g. as an arboriculturist or gardener etc); people who had a woodland themselves; a number of people who were members of the Woodland Trust (and perhaps felt that didn’t fit the options available); and a range of more specific responses.

### 5.5.2 What are your reasons for not getting involved in supporting trees and woodland?

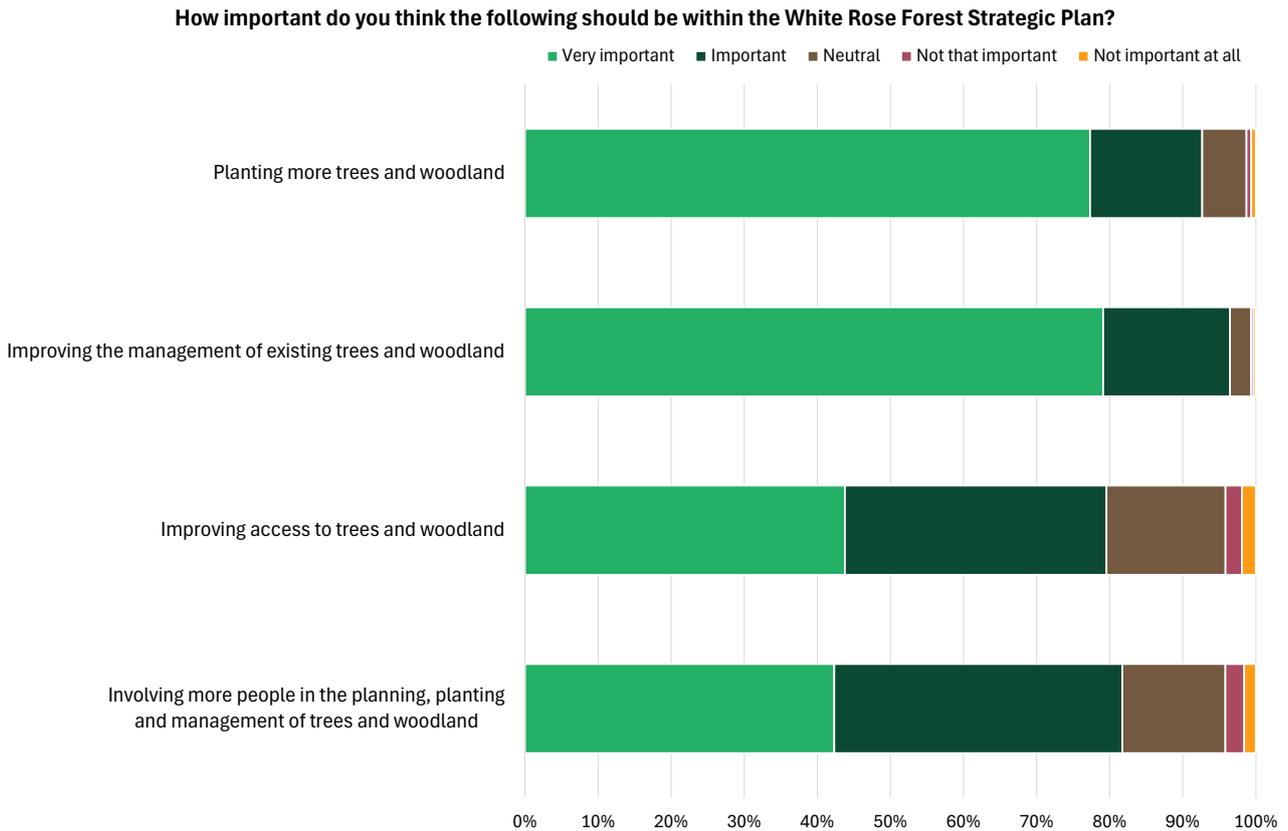
The (167) respondents who indicated that they had not been involved in supporting trees and woodland were asked a follow-up question to understand their reasons for not having been involved. As shown below, **the most frequent reason why respondents had not been involved in supporting trees and woodland was that they were unaware of opportunities (over 60%), followed by being too busy with other commitments (nearly 40%) and then a variety of other reasons (each between 3% and 17%).**



The responses specified by those selecting 'Other – please specify' were generally from people providing a bit more detail, with this tending to be related to: people being too busy; or people not feeling physically able, with a few people taking the opportunity to make other specific points.

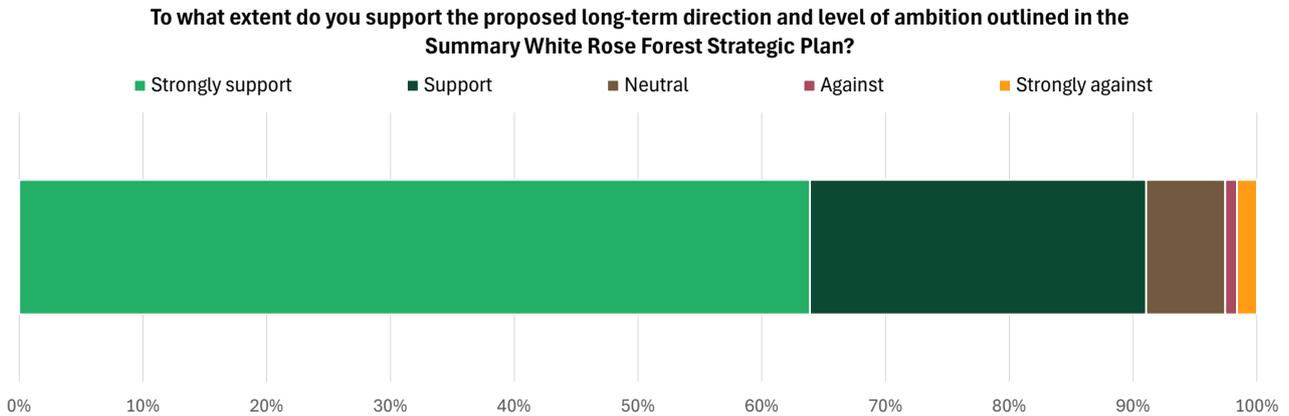
### 5.6 How important do you think the following should be within the White Rose Forest Strategic Plan?

Turning more specifically to the WRF Strategic Plan, the public were asked to rate how important (or not important) they felt it was for a number of different objectives to be included to gauge which they valued the most. As shown below, **all objectives were seen to be important (80% to 96% Very important or Important) to include within the WRF Strategic Plan, with the planting and woodland management objectives rated higher than the access and engagement objectives. Interestingly, improving the management of existing trees and woodland was rated slightly higher than planting more trees and woodland (which has been the focus of the WRF to date).**



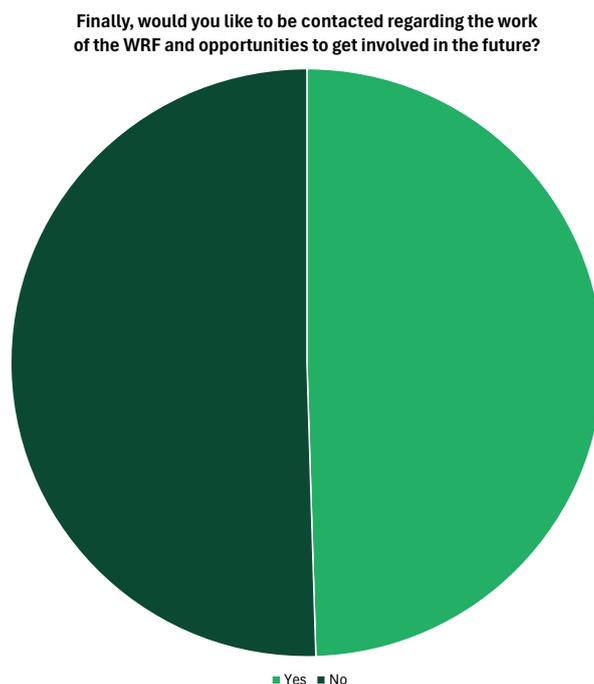
### 5.7 To what extent do you support the proposed long-term direction and level of ambition outlined in the Summary White Rose Forest Strategic Plan?

The public were asked a simple question to gauge their overall support for the long-term direction and level of ambition outlined in the Summary WRF Strategic Plan (2025-50). As shown below, **respondents overwhelmingly supported the long-term direction and level of ambition outlined in the Summary WRF Strategic Plan (91% Strongly support or Support), with very few respondents against (3% Strongly against or Against).**



### 5.8 Finally, would you like to be contacted regarding the work of the WRF and opportunities to get involved in the future?

The public were asked whether they would like to be contacted in the future, to provide an opportunity for them to stay involved after completing the survey (and those who responded positively were asked to provide their email address to enable this). As shown below, **just under half of respondents indicated they would like to be contacted regarding the work of the WRF and the opportunities to get involved in the future.**



## Appendix 1: Public Engagement Survey

### The White Rose Forest Strategic Plan (2025-50) Public Engagement

The White Rose Forest (WRF) is the Community Forest for North and West Yorkshire, a partnership organisation supported by all local authorities as well as many tree and woodland charities, businesses and community groups.

The WRF is not a single 'forest', but the network of all trees, woods and forests across North and West Yorkshire.

This survey is being carried out to capture your views on the importance of trees and woodland and what you think of the proposed direction and ambition within the Summary WRF Strategic Plan for the next 25 years.

Please take a quick read through the Summary White Rose Forest Strategic Plan (2025-50) before commencing this survey

1. Please can you confirm you have read the Summary White Rose Forest Strategic Plan (2025-50)

- Yes  
 No

Please read [this document](#) before continuing with this survey

2. Please tell us which is your Local Authority?

- Bradford  
 Calderdale  
 Kirklees  
 Leeds  
 North Yorkshire  
 Wakefield  
 York  
 Other - please specify  
- please specify

3. Please tell us the first part of the postcode where you live leaving no spaces e.g WF12 (this will be 3 or 4 characters) You cannot be identified from this information.

#### Benefits of trees and woodland

4. Tell us to what extent do you agree trees and woodland benefit the following...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
... help tackle climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...help protect us from flooding and pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...provide habitats for wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...support physical wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...support mental wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...provide pleasant working environments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...create attractive places to live	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...support business/creates jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>				

#### Trees and woodland in the surrounding areas

5. Thinking of the trees and woodland close to where you live, do you feel they have improved or declined in the last 5 years, or have they not changed?

- Improved a lot  
 Improved a little  
 Not changed  
 Declined a little  
 Declined a lot  
 I don't know

6. To what extent do you agree that we need more trees and woodland in North and West Yorkshire

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

7. How important do you think it is to have more trees and woodland in the following places...

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not that important	Not important at all
...Residential streets	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Town/city centres	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Transport corridors (road,rail)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Industrial areas	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Parks and green spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...By rivers/canals/lakes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Fields/farmland	<input type="checkbox"/>				
...Hills/mountains	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Involvement in supporting trees and woodland

8. Have you been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months?

- Yes  
 No

9. How have you been involved in supporting trees and woodland in the last 12 months? (select as many as apply)

- Planted a tree myself  
 Been involved in an organised tree planting event  
 Been involved in voluntary work in connection with trees & woodland  
 Became or am a member of a community-based woodland group  
 Been involved in or consulted about plans for establishing/managing trees or woodland in my area  
 Made a donation to help fund tree and woodland work  
 Other - please specify  
- please specify

10. What are your reasons for not getting involved in supporting trees and woodland? (select as many as apply)

- Unaware of opportunities  
 Opportunities not close enough to where I live  
 Concerned I wouldn't know what to do  
 Concerned I wouldn't be welcomed  
 Affordability  
 Too busy with other commitments  
 Poor physical health (or illness)  
 Poor mental health or wellbeing  
 Bad weather  
 Not interested  
 Other - please specify  
- please specify

### The White Rose Forest Strategic Plan

11. How important do you think the following should be within the White Rose Forest Strategic Plan?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not that important	Not important at all
Planting more trees and woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Improving the management of existing trees and woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Improving access to trees and woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Involving more people in the planning, planting and management of trees and woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>				

12. To what extent do you support the proposed long-term direction and level of ambition outlined in the Summary White Rose Forest Strategic Plan?

- Strongly Support  
 Support  
 Neutral  
 Against  
 Strongly Against

13. Were you already aware of the White Rose Forest before completing this survey?

- Yes  
 No

### About You

We want to make sure as many people as possible have a chance to give us feedback. We are collecting some monitoring information. This helps us to find out if there are any people or groups we are not hearing from. We can then work to find more ways to reach out to them.

As per our Privacy Notice, the information you provide will be kept confidential. It will only be used by our departments and services within the Council. If you don't want to answer a question, you can skip it or choose "Prefer not to say".

14. How old are you...

- Under 18  
 18-25  
 26-35  
 36-45  
 46-55  
 56-65  
 Over 65  
 Prefer not to say

## 15. Are you...

- Non Binary/Intersex/Gender Fluid/Agender
- Female
- Male
- Not specified
- Prefer not to say

## 16. Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Other
- Prefer not to say

## 17. What is your sexuality?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

## 18. What is your ethnic group?

- Asian or Asian British** Includes any Asian background, for example, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani
- Black, African, Black British or Caribbean** Includes any Black background
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups** Includes any mixed background
- White British**
- White Other**
- Another ethnic group** Includes any other ethnic background, for example, Arab
- Prefer not to say

## 19. What is your religion?

- Buddhist
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No religion
- Any other religion
- Prefer not to say

20. Would you describe yourself as disabled?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

21. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

22. Finally, would you like to be contacted regarding the work of the WRF and opportunities to get involved in the future?

- Yes
- No

23. Please provide your e-mail - this will only be used for registering your interest in the White Rose Forest work.

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please now press submit and your responses will be received - you will then be directed to the White Rose Forest webpage.