

# LATF and UTCF Frequently Asked Questions

Local Authority Treescapes Fund  
and Urban Tree Challenge Fund

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## General

### What are the differences between LATF and UTCF?

**LATF:** The LATF is the key government offer for local authorities (LAs) to restore tree cover in non-woodland areas which may have been impacted by issues such as disease, habitat degradation or ageing tree stock. The fund is focused on planting and natural colonisation of trees in areas outside of woodlands, including parklands, riparian zones, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths as well as trees in hedgerows and field boundaries (not hedgerows themselves). LATF-funded trees can be small or large, and in urban or rural settings (although large trees planted in urban areas must be direct replacements of recently lost trees). Applications must come from a local authority, although partnerships with other organisations, private landowners, community groups etc. are strongly encouraged.

**UTCF:** The UTCF is a key government grant to level up access to nature across the country, planting trees in socially deprived urban areas with low canopy cover, in proximity to healthcare and educational facilities. The UTCF supports planting of large 'standard' trees in urban areas – making an immediate impact to communities. You don't have to be a local authority to apply for UTCF, and will receive 80% of standard cost items to plant and maintain trees.

### How long have I got to apply and what do I need?

The application packs and instructions/guidance will be made available on the LATF and UTCF gov.uk pages. The application forms and processes will be similar to previous years for both funds, with minor changes for clarity and simplicity. Once applications have re-opened, they will stay open all year round, rather than having a discrete application window as there has been in previous years.

**LATF:** Whilst LATF is open year-round it takes up to four months from receiving a valid and complete application to an Agreement being offered. Therefore, it is advised that applications are submitted no later than 30 June 2023 for tree planting in the 2023/24 planting season and applications after this date will be considered for projects which start in winter 2024/25. You should bear these timings in mind when planning your planting, as well as your own internally agreed timelines for approvals etc. Applications are encouraged as early as possible in the year, as LATF is a competitive grant, and the funding will be provided to the applications which meet the minimum scoring requirement until the capital allocation has been committed. Applying early will also help to maximise the time you have to secure your planting procurement and land agreements in time.



UTCF: Applications will be open year-round, there will be a threshold score published on gov.uk and reviewed every three months. Applications that are above the threshold score will progress and following successful completion of eligibility and due diligence checks will receive a grant offer. Whilst UTCF is open year-round it takes three to five months from receiving a valid and complete application to an Agreement being offered. Therefore, it is advised that applications are submitted no later than 30th June 2023 for tree planting in the 2023/24 planting season.

## If I am a local authority, what fund should I apply to?

You can apply for both, and this is encouraged. You should apply to UTCF if you wish to plant new large trees (standards) in urban areas, or LATF if you wish to plant all sizes of trees outside woods in urban or rural areas that would not be eligible for UTCF (urban standards must replace trees that have been recently lost to disease or other causes).

## Will planting with these funds allow us to claim Woodland Carbon Units under the Woodland Carbon code?

LATF & UTCF: Yes. Public bodies can register with the WCC although consideration needs to be given to the size of the area that is being planted. WCC accepts small projects that are under 5ha but the new woodland needs to have the potential to achieve 20% canopy cover at 400 stems per hectare. There are costs associated with validation and verification under WCC which need to be borne in mind.

## Do these grants have expectations, recommendations, or guidelines for community consultation?

LATF & UTCF: There are no specific requirements for community consultation, but as part of the local authority due diligence requirements community consultations may need to be undertaken.

## If vandalism occurs and trees are snapped, for species that can regenerate after snapping, would you recommend we leave these in the ground to contribute to the total number of trees, or should we remove and replace these?

LATF & UTCF: This would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the most likely outcome would be a request to replace the vandalised trees. Where vandalism is extensive, and

replacements are also highly likely to be vandalised alternative planting locations should be considered in discussion with the grant teams (contact via [utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk) or [latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk)).

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## Eligibility

### Are LATF and UTCF available to Welsh Local Authorities?

LATF & UTCF: No, these funds are available to local authorities within England only.

### Will each grant fund fruit trees and orchards?

LATF & UTCF: Fruit trees can be funded, but there are subsidy rules around the use of any produce, as funds cannot be used to subsidise production of fruit to be sold for commercial gain. If the fruit is given away it should not undermine any existing businesses supplying fruit. UTCF and LATF support the creation of community orchards. Please contact the LATF grant team for the most up to date guidance on your specific situation [utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk) ([latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk)).

UTCF: Applicants are required to declare on their UTCF application form that they are not an agricultural producer and through receiving UTCF funding will not support agricultural producers. If there is uncertainty about the activity and whether there is the potential for commercial gain, please contact the UTCF grant team ([utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk)) for further discussion about your grant application.

### Are landowners, including/or grant recipients allowed to benefit commercially and economically from receiving trees, e.g. from agroforestry? Can applications be made for subsidised planting incentives that are open to private landowners (subject to checks that planting location is viable)?

LATF: Please contact the LATF grant team for the most up to date guidance on your specific situation ([utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk), [latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk)).

UTCF: As with fruit trees and orchards, applicants are required to declare on their UTCF application form that they are not an agricultural producer and through receiving UTCF funding will not support agricultural producers. If there is uncertainty about the activity and whether there is the potential for commercial gain, please contact the UTCF grant

team ([utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk)) for further discussion about your grant application.

## Will you fund direct sowing within guards?

LATF: LATF allows flexible and innovative planting approaches, so we would consider this technique, if it was appropriate to the location and showed a good likelihood of success. More information on the LATF requirements for funding assisted natural colonisation is available in the Guidance section of the Application Form. Key considerations around natural colonisation include the protection of the new trees, and your plans for monitoring and encouraging success.

UTCF: UTCF funds large tree planting only.

## If you currently have a grant from either UTCF or LATF, can you reapply for these grants again?

Yes, if you have received previous funding from LATF and/or UTCF, this doesn't exclude you from applying to either/both again. However, you must be able to show that the application is for a new project, not a repeat of your previous work – for example, this could be on a different planting site.

## Can a local authority apply for both LATF and UTCF?

Yes, you can apply for both, and this is encouraged. If, for example, you want to plant new urban standards (large trees), we'd encourage you to apply for UTCF funding for these trees. For all other trees you should apply for LATF funding.

## Can we submit numerous applications as the lead project partner for both UTCF and LATF?

You can apply for both grants, and this is encouraged. However, for LATF there may only be one application per local authority in each planting year, and for UTCF, individuals may submit up to one application per financial year. This is for planting that begins in winter that year.

## Can districts apply individually?

LATF: Yes. Borough, District and City Councils, as well as County Councils, Unitary and Metropolitan Boroughs may apply individually or in groups. Group applications from multiple local authorities are still strongly encouraged, as partnership working maximises the shared benefits for each partner. Groups will therefore score more highly so will be more likely to receive funding. Group applications must have one lead local authority, which may be from either tier. Local authorities are encouraged to work with schools,

other organisations, grass root organisations, community groups, NGOs and private individuals to deliver tree planting. There is no limit on how many applications may be received per upper tier local authority area, and each bid will be scored independently based on your application. There may be only one application per applicant per year. This is for planting that begins in winter that year. If a neighbouring LA who is not in the same upper tier area as you would like to join your bid, to deliver a landscape scale project, they may do, so long as all parties are happy to share the maximum bid threshold of £300,000.

UTCF: Either can apply. UTCF is open to anyone providing that they have management control over the land, or permission from those with management control over the land for the duration of the agreement.

## Can parish councils apply individually?

LATF: Parish councils will not be able to apply individually but will be able to apply as part of a group application with a District or City Council, as well as County Councils, Unitary and Metropolitan Boroughs.

UTCF: Yes, if they meet the relevant criteria e.g., they have land management control and meet the minimum application requirements.

## Can combined authorities apply individually?

LATF: Yes

UTCF: Yes, if they meet the relevant criteria e.g., they have land management control and meet the minimum application requirements.

## LATF: Is each application for up to £300k, or for up to £300k per year?

The £300,000 limit applies to each application, not for each financial year. Only one application may be submitted per applicant for planting that begins in winter that year.

## LATF: If we or someone in our top tier received LATF funding in 2021 or 2022, can we apply this year?

Yes. The application must just be for a new project, not a repeat of your previous work – for example, this could be on a different planting site.

**LATF:** In addition to replacement of trees lost to disease etc. can LATF fund future proofing to reduce future losses e.g., pollarding willows on the river?

No, LATF can only be used for activities relating to planting or establishing trees.

**LATF:** Trees planted to create standards in hedgerows are eligible, but is planting to create new hedgerows also eligible?

We can't accept applications for planting hedgerows themselves. LATF funding is restricted to standard emergent trees (over 3m tall) if planted into a hedgerow and must not be cut to maintain hedging. Trees which stand above the rest of the hedgerow offer different habitat and ecosystem services.

**LATF:** Do you fund unconventional planting - such as high density, high cost Miyawaki method forests?

We can take specific enquiries to our email inbox [latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk). LATF encourages innovative approaches, but all funded activity must follow best practice. Miyawaki method planting is an approach for rapidly creating miniature woodlands, for instance, in urban areas or on degraded land. It involves planting mixed native species at very close densities in small patches, to replicate natural processes of forest regeneration. Advantages include higher growth and survival rates, minimal maintenance (after 2 years), higher diversity, and lower vulnerability to vandalism. Disadvantages are higher costs (intensive soil preparation, mulching, watering during establishment, and more trees per area).

Where appropriate, Miyawaki planting can be considered under LATF. We would encourage any applicants looking to create Miyawaki forests to consider whether volunteers could help preparing and planting sites, as this will increase community engagement and benefits. Volunteers can help to reduce costs, which can otherwise be significant for this method. Third party suppliers also offer Miyawaki-type planting, but the costs are often very high, which may reduce how your application's score.

**LATF:** Could you support Covid Memorial plantings of tree groups?

Yes. Small groups of trees are eligible under LATF. The application will score more highly if these are situated in locations that help to restore ecosystems or habitats that have been degraded, for instance by increasing connectivity to an existing woodland, and/or if they are expected to benefit local communities.

## UTCF: Would planting across several wards in a large urban authority only be eligible for a block bid?

In 2023 the minimum application value will be set at £10,000, replacing previous thresholds, there will be no upper limit. Applicants are still encouraged to work together to combine planting sites across wide geographic areas into one application. In 2023 the separation of block bids and small-scale bids has been removed and replaced with a single minimum application value of £10,000.

## UTCF: Can a bid be submitted for a block application alongside a smaller community application from a particular local authority area?

In 2023 the separation of block bids and small-scale bids has been removed and replaced with a single minimum application value of £10,000.

## UTCF: Will UTCF still require a minimum of 10 trees per site? How is each site defined - is this per road, ward, or something else?

Yes, UTCF continues to require a minimum of 10 trees per site. There are a range of potential planting sites that would be suitable for example parks, open space, grass verges, school grounds, housing estates (this is not an exhaustive list). The extent of the site would depend on the location, broadly speaking trees should be within the same neighbourhood, approximately within a 0.5km radius.

## UTCF: Can individual bids be across several locations within an area? What are the geographical restrictions, if any?

Yes, a bid can cover several different planting locations. Land included in a UTCF application must fall within an urban area. An urban area, as defined for the purposes of the UTCF, is a built-up area (based on Office of National Statistics data) with a population of at least 2,000 people, and a buffer of 1km to account for peri-urban planting. This can be identified on the Forestry Commission map browser using the 'UTCF Trees Close to People' layer located in the Targeting and Scoring list of map layers.

## UTCF: Can a London LA apply directly (as opposed to with the GLA, this partnership has worked well in the

past, but just in case they don't apply again for next winter)

Yes, London Boroughs can apply on their own or in partnership. It must be understood that we will deal with only one applicant/project manager if there is more than one LA involved in the bid.

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## Application Process:

### What can I do to get ready to apply before the application window opens?

- ☐ Register with the Rural Payments Agency to obtain a Single Business Identifier (SBI) and Customer Reference Number (CRN).
- ☐ Sign up to the Forestry Commission eAlert and register for email notifications for email updates to the gov.uk pages (Local Authority Treescapes Fund - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) and Urban Tree Challenge Fund - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))).
- ☐ For LATF only, collect information surrounding the distribution and health of your trees, and the ecosystems they support.
- ☐ Discuss partnering up with other local authorities, schools, other organisations, grass root organisations, community groups, NGOs and private individuals.
- ☐ Initiate conversations about utilising private investment to match fund your application, to reduce those costs-per-tree.
- ☐ Identify available land for planting.
- ☐ Develop a planting plan.
- ☐ For LATF, precise planting locations are not expected at application, but you must describe the approach you will take to planting (approximate numbers of trees, tree size, expected species choice and the approximate locations or settings in which they'll be planted), and how this clearly links to developing resilient non-woodland treescapes. For example, you may describe losses of trees alongside roads, along with an intention to plant a certain number of trees alongside roads, but you wouldn't need to specify exactly which roads at this stage.
- ☐ Begin collecting quotes from tree suppliers.

### How do we apply this year?

LATF: You must not undertake any planting or ground preparation detailed in your application form until you have a signed agreement with the Forestry Commission in place. To apply, applicants will need to follow these steps:



1. First, read the LATF Grant Manual, which details full eligibility criteria and guidance on completing your application, to find out if you're eligible and to decide whether you wish to apply.
2. You must register with Rural Payments to obtain a Single Business Identifier (SBI) and Customer Reference Number (CRN) before you can apply, as this information must be provided in your application.
3. Next, complete the Application Form and Project Cost Calculator, which can be found in the LATF application pack. Please complete these and send an email with any supporting information from the lead applicant to [latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:latf@forestrycommission.gov.uk) at your first available opportunity.

UTCF: You must not undertake any planting or ground preparation detailed in your application form until you have a signed agreement with the Forestry Commission in place. To apply, applicants will need to follow these steps:

1. Read the Grant Manual and Round 5 Terms and Conditions to find out if you're eligible and to decide whether you wish to apply
2. You must register with Rural Payments to get a Single Business Identifier (SBI) and Customer Reference Number (CRN) before you can apply
3. Complete the application form, application annex and map(s) (PDF acceptable but shapefiles preferred), send these to [utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:utcf@forestrycommission.gov.uk).

## How will the applications be assessed?

LATF: The evaluation criteria will be outlined in the LATF Grant Manual online. Your application will be appraised by the FC against the criteria outlined in the LATF Grant Manual. Applications will have their scoring verified by an Oversight Panel. LATF is a competitive fund, so applications which do not meet the minimum scoring threshold will be rejected, given feedback, and given the opportunity to reapply. Funding will be provided to the applications which meet the minimum scoring requirement until the capital allocation has been committed.

UTCF: UTCF is a criteria-based competitive scheme, with funding offered on a first come, first served basis. Applicants need to score their applications and we will review this. We will offer Agreements to applicants whose proposal's score meets or exceeds the threshold score. The threshold score is set based on the available budget and is reviewed every three months. The current score is shown on the UTCF GOV.UK webpage.



## When will we know if an application has been successful?

We recognise that timescales were very challenging for applicants last year so have worked to open both funds significantly earlier this year.

**LATF:** LATF is open year-round and takes up to four months from receiving a valid and complete application before application outcomes are communicated. It will then take up to an additional two months for the agreement to be offered. Therefore, it is advised that applications are submitted no later than 30 June 2023 for tree planting in the 2023/24 planting season, and that you bear this timing in mind for your planting plans. Applications received from 1 July 2023 will be considered for the 2024/25 planting season.

**UTCF:** UTCF is open year round but it takes three to five months from receiving a valid and complete application to an Agreement being offered. Therefore, it is advised that applications are submitted no later than 30th June 2023 for tree planting in the 2023/24 planting season. We hope that this will be an improvement from last year and help you to establish your supply chains.

## If at first I am unsuccessful, will I be able to improve my application and reapply?

**LATF:** Yes. Applications which are not successful at first will be provided with feedback, and there will be the opportunity to improve applications and resubmit.

**UTCF:** Yes, as with LATF applications can be improved and re-submitted, ensure your application is equal to or above the threshold score (published on gov.uk) before submitting.

## Do sites need to be identified for tree planting as part of the application process? Or can specific sites be identified after funding has been approved?

**LATF:** Precise planting locations are not expected at this stage, but you must describe the approach you will take to planting (approximate numbers of trees, tree size, expected species choice and the approximate locations or settings in which they'll be planted), which must be clearly linked to developing resilient non-woodland treescapes. For example, you may describe losses of trees alongside roads, along with an intention to plant a certain number of trees alongside roads, but you wouldn't need to specify exactly which roads at this stage. This will hopefully reduce the resource input required before knowing the outcome of the funding, as the details can be confirmed later. LATF

can do this as it is administered as a Section 31 grant from one part of government to another so allows for greater flexibility.

UTCF: Yes, specific planting locations must be decided before applying. UTCF is open to anyone with management control of the land, and LAs must be treated as the other applicants are for the scoring system to work, and so the planting locations must be identified at the point of application for due diligence.

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## Reporting:

### With a rolling application window, will the reporting dates be static?

LATF: Yes, the reporting dates will remain static, because reporting must be completed at the end of each planting season, before the end of the financial year end alongside your claim.

UTCF: UTCF does not require a report in the same way as LATF, claims for payment need to be submitted by 31st March.

### Will there be an interim report?

LATF & UTCF: No.

### Does photographic evidence need to be supplied for every tree planted including grid references for each tree as part of the post planting report?

LATF: Photographs for every site (but not every tree) which clearly depict the planting activity and grid references for all sites will be required in your Post Planting Report. You can also see the post-planting report in the application pack on the gov.uk page which you will be required to complete if your application is successful. Photographs of all capital items purchased must also be supplied with your claim.

UTCF: On the application form you are asked for your strategy for how you'll look after and maintain the tree after the three years of establishment payments come to an end. To claim your payment, you will need to take photos of the site before and after the work is carried out. You will need to keep these photos on file and may be asked for these upon request, alongside invoices of expenditure. We don't ask for a report in the same way as LATF.

## The last reporting forms were aimed at woodland blocks and not suited to recording 400 separate locations, will this be revised?

LATF: Post Planting Report templates have been updated for LATF round 3 and LAs can apply at the lower tier level, reducing multi-site reporting requirements.

UTCF: UTCF does not require post planting reports.

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## Costs and Finances:

### Will standard costs be updated to reflect inflation next year?

LATF: The standard costs set by the FC will remain the same, and you will be asked to indicate an estimated quantity and unit price for each capital item in your project budget, compared to these standard costs to help us with our assessment. This is for our guidance only and you should always use realistic costs. Where your estimates differ by more than 10% from FC standard costs, we require this difference to be explained in your application. You will need to provide a supporting statement in the Project Cost Calculator explaining how you have estimated the costs in your bid and achieved value for money. Please refer to the LATF Grant Manual for further information.

UTCF: The standard costs set by the FC will remain the same.

### How do you recommend we address uncertainty over supplier costs (e.g., fuel volatility) and supply chain issues (e.g., getting hold of stock)?

We recommend having an early conversation with your nursery to discuss planting stock availability and lead in times, but you must not start work until you have a signed grant agreement in place (this includes formally ordering stock).

### How much flexibility is there on the FC standard costs?

LATF: You will be asked to indicate an estimated quantity and unit price for each capital item in your project budget. Some of these will be compared against standard costs set by the FC to help us with our assessment. This is for our guidance only and you should always use realistic costs. Where your estimates differ by more than 10% from FC standard costs we require this difference to be explained in your application. You will need to provide a supporting statement in the application form explaining how you have

estimated the costs in your bid and achieved value for money. Please refer to the LATF Grant Manual for further information.

UTCF: None – they are fixed costs. The cost to supply and plant a tree is based on the average cost of undertaking the work, any additional costs would need to be met through match funding.

## Does the FC standard cost item for planting trees in grass cover supply, planting, and water?

LATF: FC standard costs for standards, whips and feathers cover the costs to supply and plant the trees, further details are provided in the Scheme Manual. Annual maintenance covers the costs of watering, checking and weeding. See above for how to detail further estimates of these costs in your LATF bid.

UTCF: UTCF standard costs for tree planting includes the cost to supply and plant the tree with twin stakes, watering tube, mulch and lightweight mesh guard. The annual establishment payments cover the cost of watering, checking stakes and ties and weeding.

## Can you fund administration costs associated with managing funded projects or promotion to communities to encourage them to develop proposals?

LATF: The grant covers 100% of the costs of planting trees (cost of buying a tree, planting in grass, the cost of basic protection and the labour required to plant it) and their associated establishment costs for three years following planting following annual submission of maintenance reports (weeding, watering and checking trees during multiple visits over a 3-year period). You are encouraged to use approaches such as involving local communities in maintenance to maximise value for money and societal benefits.

You should check with your local authority finance department as to which costs can be classed as capital costs. LATF is a capital funding grant and cannot be used to pay for resource funding, but the definition of capital funding can vary between local authorities. Local authority staff time cannot normally be classed as capital spend, but contractor time may be in some cases – although please be aware that this may increase the cost-per-tree of the project, and therefore may negatively impact your scoring.

UTCF: UTCF does not fund promotional activities or project management costs. The grant covers 80% of the fixed standard costs of planting large trees and their associated

establishment costs for three years following planting. The funding supports the cost of buying a tree, planting in grass or a hard surface, the cost of basic protection and the labour required to plant it. Establishment payments support the cost of weeding, watering and checking trees during multiple visits over a 3-year period. In 2023 new standard cost items will be introduced for digging a trial pit to check for services and backfilling with topsoil. The payment for trial pits will incorporate a contribution toward reinstating aborted pits due to the presence of services matching with the existing surface.

## Can you fund us to develop our own tree planting strategies?

LATF and UTCF are only able to fund activities relating to the planned tree planting. Defra and the Forestry Commission have committed in the England Trees Action Plan to produce best practice guidance for local authorities to produce their own local tree and woodland strategies, supporting local authorities to expand, manage and protect local treescapes. This toolkit for Local Tree and Woodland Strategies was published on 1 December 2022 by the Defra and the Tree Council.

## Is there any resource funding that might sit alongside the capital funds available?

We recognise the resource issues some local authorities face pose challenges to tree planting. To support applicants, our partners the Forestry Commission and Forest Research publish online guidance on planting and managing trees in a range of settings. Last year, the first round of the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF) awarded funding to upper tier Local Authorities in England to provide revenue support for the additional staff / consultants required to accelerate plans for tree and woodland planting – if you are a district, borough or city council you should contact your upper tier to find out if they were successful in their application (although please be advised that they are under no obligation to share this additional resource with you). All successful local authorities have now received their first WCAF payment (by the 16 Nov 2022) and the second payment will be made in April/May 2023, allowing for spend up until March 2025. The next WCAF webinar will be held on Wed 18 January 2023. There will also be a new LA advisor starting on the 10 Jan 2023 who will be able to support LAs in delivering their ambitious targets.

## LATF: Does the fund also cover staff costs required for coordination? Can local authority staff or contractors be classed as capital spend to maintain and plant trees in the LATF?

You should check with your local authority finance department as to which costs can be classed as capital costs. LATF is a capital funding grant and cannot be used to pay for resource funding, but the definition of capital funding can vary between local authorities. Local authority staff time cannot normally be classed as capital spend, but contractor time may be in some cases – although please be aware that this may increase the cost-per-tree of the project, and therefore may negatively impact your scoring.

The grant covers 100% of the costs of planting trees (cost of buying a tree, planting in grass, the cost of basic protection and the labour required to plant it) and their associated establishment costs for three years following planting following annual submission of maintenance reports (weeding, watering and checking trees during multiple visits over a 3-year period). You are encouraged to use approaches such as involving local communities in maintenance to maximise value for money and societal benefits.

## LATF: Is there a lower/ higher limit on costs?

Bids for LATF must be between £50,000 and £300,000 in total (for the whole project, not per financial year). For each capital item in your project budget, you will be asked to indicate an estimated unit price. Some of these will be compared against standard costs set by the FC to help us with our assessment. This is for our guidance only and you should always use realistic costs, but where your estimates differ by more than 10% from FC standard costs, we require this difference to be explained in your application.

## UTCF: Does the £10k limit include the funding split, or is the 80 % intervention rate need to be £10k as a minimum?

The application value, that is the amount of grant funding required, needs to be at least £10,000.

## UTCF: Do the FC standard costs represent 80% of the costs of the item, or 100% of the costs of the item (of which the FC will contribute 80% of)?

The UTCF grant manual contains both the full cost of each item (100%) and the amount that is available via grant funding (80% of the full cost).

## UTCF: What is the FC standard cost for planting in tree pits with hard surfaces?

The standard cost item to supply and plant a standard tree in a tree pit prepared in a hard surface is £271.58. This includes use of appropriate pit edging, stakes, watering tube, mulch, and a lightweight mesh guard.

## If grant recipients are unable to plant the proposed number of trees, will applicants be able to recover funds without penalty?

LATF: Applicants will need to provide evidence that the proposed number of trees have been planted in their Post Planting Report. Grant recipients will only be able to claim for the trees planted at the cost agreed at point of offer. If a lower number of trees were planted than proposed in the application, the agreement holder will claim for those trees planted and detailed in the Post Planting Report.

UTCF: Grant recipients must only submit a claim for payment for trees that have been planted. Grant recipients can submit a request to delay planting to the next planting season but there is no guarantee that this will be approved.

## Will there be any additional financial support offered if we increase the watering frequency due to prolonged periods of warm weather?

LATF & UTCF: Active discussions are ongoing, for example during this summer's drought water companies were strongly encouraged to allow watering of standard trees. We are working on providing more clarity on this question.

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## Match funding

Can either fund be used to match fund against other existing grant schemes (e.g. the Emergency Tree Fund from Woodland Trust, or the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund funded posts), and can other existing grants be used as match funding for UTCF and LATF?

LATF & UTCF: Funding from any other government grant cannot be used as match funding for LATF or UTCF, or vice versa. However, funding from non-government sources can be put forward as match funding, and this is encouraged. Neither grant can be used to fund works that are legally required to be carried out, including as part of a contracted grant agreement with another provider or as a requirement of a felling license or planning application.

## Would labour costs, or staff costs for maintenance, count as an in-kind match funding contribution?

LATF: Labour costs for planting are included as part of the standard costs for tree planting. Contributions in kind can be items donated or volunteer time.

UTCF: The match funding requirement for UTCF has decreased from 50% to 20% and we will no longer ask for evidence of match funding as part of the application process. Labour can be converted into a monetary value and then used as match funding, the viability of the project must be considered before an application is submitted.

## What value is put on volunteers' time?

LATF: This should be a realistic estimate. You may wish to calculate this based on the average hourly wage for the type of work being undertaken, or a quote from an equivalent contractor. For LATF only you should detail how you reached your estimates in the Project Cost Calculator. Consideration should be given to the level of skill the work requires.

## What are the match funding requirements, and what evidence do we need?

LATF: There is no minimum match funding requirement for LATF, however bids which have lower costs-per-tree will score more highly, and therefore have a higher chance of



being funded. Match funding to bring the cost per tree down is therefore strongly encouraged.

UTCF: UTCF will no longer require evidence of match funding. The grant contribution has been increased, resulting in a more limited financial contribution from the participant. Removing the requirement for evidence of match funding recognises this change, measures are in place to reduce the risk of non-delivery including business viability checks, photographic evidence for claims, an inspection regime and evidence of defrayal (invoices) must be made available to the Forestry Commission upon request.

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## Value for Money:

### LATF: Why are large trees scored lower when the CAVAT value is higher?

In the LATF scoring system, trees are scored for value for money using both their costs and the benefits they will provide over 50 years. The size of the benefits depends on the location and size of the tree. Larger trees get a head start over smaller trees in terms of the benefits that they produce, but they are also significantly more expensive to plant and establish. This means you can plant fewer trees for the same amount of money. These factors will all be included in the value for money scores produced for LATF bids. More information on the scoring criteria is available in the guidance for applicants.

### Would applications comprising 100% standards be looked on unfavourably?

LATF: For LATF, we will consider bids on a case-by-case basis and success will depend on the quality and value of all bids received. FC encourage you to put together bids based on the needs of your local area and the benefits that can be provided. LATF is a competitive fund and has scoring criteria based on the value for money that can be provided by those trees. Planting standards is a lot more expensive, but the benefits can also be higher (I.e., instant greenery). Nonetheless, applications with standards only will likely be scored as lower value for money, unless a strong argument is made, because fewer trees can be established for the same cost. Further information is available in the LATF Grant Manual. Tailoring your bids to the scoring criteria will give you the biggest chance of success in this round (note that value for money is one of several scoring criteria).

UTCF: UTCF only supports planting standards so all applications will be for standards only.

## Sites

### What is an “urban” area?

Urban areas are defined as the areas in the ‘trees close to people’ map layer of the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). This map layer shows areas with a population of at least >2,000 people buffered to 1km. LATF does not fund new standard (large) trees in this area, only replacements.

### LATF: What degree of control would a local authority need to have over land in third-party ownership? Do you need management control of the land, or can you plant trees on private non-local authority land?

An LA does not need to be able to maintain management control over land where planting has taken place in third-party ownership. However, the LA must have consent and access agreements for all land where activities have taken place, as detailed in the LATF Memorandum of Understanding. Land submitted in an LATF application does not need to be registered on the Rural Land Register.

### If we are not able to identify planting locations in time for the application deadline, will there be further rounds of funding in future years?

LATF and UTCF: Once applications have re-opened in early 2023, they will stay open all year round, rather than having a discrete application window as there has been in previous years. There will be future rounds of UTCF and LATF, in line with the England Tree Strategy, but at this point we cannot clarify how much funding there will be or the form the grants will take. For LATF, precise planting locations are not required for the application form, compared to UTCF where sites must be known at the point of application.

### Are planting sites required to have public access or can planting take place to improve connectivity or resilience in locations without public access?

LATF: LATF is a competitive fund, and bids which meet key aims of the fund, such as providing public access or improving ecological connectivity, will be scored more highly. Public access is not an absolute requirement, but the more LATF priorities your bid can

support, the more likely it will be to receive funding. Please see the LATF Grant Manual for details on these scoring criteria.

UTCF: Planting sites should be publicly accessible unless there is a strong justification against this, such as planting on school grounds.

## LATF: Can trees be funded by LATF in areas that are eligible for UTCF?

Yes, but only if they are not eligible for UTCF.

You can see if the proposed planting area is eligible for UTCF if it falls within the 'UTCF trees close to people' layer of the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). Within these areas, any new standard (large) trees must use UTCF funding, whereas any small trees (whips and feathers), and replacement standard size trees in these areas can be funded through LATF.

Any proposed standard size trees in these areas must be one of the following to be eligible for LATF:

- ❑ Replanted within the same planting site or local area (e.g. within 2 km) and of a similar ultimate size. Where there is no suitable replanting site available, FC may at their discretion, agree to up an 8km distance from the original site, on a case-by-case basis.
- ❑ Replanted within existing tree pits which have been empty for under 3 years. Planting in tree pits that have been empty for more than 3 years is eligible under UTCF, and as such would not be accepted in an LATF application.

## LATF: Will LATF non-woodland schemes always be exempt from EIA?

LATF funds non-woodland tree planting, so most areas planted under LATF will be too small to trigger a requirement for EIA, but you should always check for such requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure that your plans meet all relevant regulations and requirements, and you will be required to certify that this is the case in your application.

## LATF: Does LATF include city parks?

Yes. In urban areas (like cities) you can plant new or replacement whips and feathers. If the proposed planting area is eligible for UTCF, any proposed standard size trees must be one of the following:

- ❑ Replanted within the same planting site or local area (e.g. within 2km) and of a similar ultimate size. Where there is no suitable replanting site available, FC may at their discretion, agree to up an 8km distance from the original site, on a case-by-case basis.

- Replanted within existing tree pits which have been empty for under 3 years. Planting in tree pits that have been empty for more than 3 years is eligible under UTCF, and as such would not be accepted in an LATF application.

New standard (large) trees in “urban” areas must use UTCF funding. As with all sites, you will need written permission from the land management for the tree planting, and to be aware of our policy on urban standards in urban areas.

‘Urban’ refers to areas that sit within the UTCF Trees Close to People map layer. You can see the UTCF Trees Close to People layer on the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). The map layer shows areas with a population of at least >2,000 people buffered to 1km to allow for peri-urban planting.

### UTCF: Would an application that covers all the Boroughs and Districts of a county be considered as a block bid even though the only link between the sites may be that they sit within the same county?

Yes – a bid can be geographically dispersed across a large area such as a county if there is management control over the land for the duration of the agreement, or permission from those who have management control over the land. In 2023 the separation of block bids and small-scale bids has been removed and replaced with a single minimum application value of £10,000.

### UTCF: Can sites be amended later due to site constraints and resident requests or complaints, so long as the same numbers are provided within each block?

If a planting site needs to be relocated then an amendment request must be submitted to the UTCF grant team ahead of planting taking place, the revised location will be reviewed by the FC and if it is approved an updated agreement document issued.

### UTCF: How is proximity to healthcare and education facilities assessed? Is this 50 m measured between the edge of the planting site with healthcare / education facility grounds, or between the centre?

The distance of 50 meters can be based on a straight point to point measurement, or ‘as the crow flies’ from the planting location to the curtilage of the healthcare or educational facility.

UTCF: Could you define education facility? Are primary and secondary schools only considered, or are nurseries, colleges, universities, and adult education facilities also considered priority?

Currently education facilities are restricted to primary and secondary schools.

Would an NHS site be able to apply, planting trees on their own estate?

LATF: Local authorities are encouraged to form partnerships with other organisations such as the NHS, or NGOs, community groups, schools etc. An NHS site would therefore be able to plant trees on their own estate if they partner with an eligible local authority.

UTCF: Yes, they could apply with a local authority or apply in their own right. Public accessibility is usually required but there are likely to be some exceptions, e.g., school or NHS sites.

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## Partnership

Do we need to involve partners, or can we apply on our own?

LATF: Individual applications are welcomed from Borough, District and City Councils, as well as County Councils, Unitary and Metropolitan Boroughs (although bids from groups of LAs will score more highly). However, Local authorities are encouraged to work in partnership with other organisations to implement the proposed project. This could include community organisations, local NHS groups, local Wildlife Trusts, schools, NGOs, private land managers or private companies. Bids with anticipated benefits to local people will be scored more highly, this could include planting in schools or in areas with public access. Please see the published LATF case studies for examples of where this has been done successfully.

UTCF: Applications from multiple land managers are eligible for UTCF. Once potential applicants have read the Grant Manual and have decided to pursue a joint UTCF application, they will need to agree on the person who will make the application on their behalf – the 'lead applicant'. If the application is successful, the lead applicant will become the named Grant Recipient on behalf of the land managers; they will be responsible for all requirements of the Agreement.

## LATF: Can local schools partner with LAs for LATF?

Yes. Local authorities are encouraged to work in partnership with other organisations to implement the proposed project. This could include community organisations, local NHS groups, local Wildlife Trusts, schools, NGOs, private land managers or private companies. Bids with anticipated benefits to local people will be scored more highly, this could include planting in schools or in areas with public access. Please see the published LATF case studies for examples of where this has been done successfully.

## LATF: Where there is both a county and combined authority, which would be the upper tier?

For LATF, there is no longer a requirement for individual bids to come from an upper tier, and this year, individual applications are welcomed from Borough, District and City Councils, as well as County Councils, Combined Authorities, Unitary and Metropolitan Boroughs (although bids from groups of local authorities will score more highly).

## LATF: When a group application is made by a County Council, does the maximum limit apply to the County Council, or separately for each involved District Council?

The maximum amount of funding available is £300,000 per application. This is for the whole group and is to be shared between partners (where applicable). Whilst it's good to work in groups to achieve economies of scale, parties could apply separately if a joint application exceeded the limit.

## LATF: If a County and a District within the County apply independently, would they be able to apply for £300k each?

Yes. Please note, bids from groups of local authorities will score more highly, so be more likely to receive funding.

## LATF: Can lower tier authorities apply individually?

This year, individual applications are welcomed from Borough, District and City Councils, as well as County Councils, Unitary and Metropolitan Boroughs (although group bids will score more highly).

## LATF: Can applications be submitted as a joint application between Local Authorities?

Yes. Group applications are encouraged and will score more highly than individual bids. Group applications must have one lead local authority, which may be from either tier. Local authorities are encouraged to work with other organisations, NGOs and private individuals to deliver tree planting.

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## Large Trees (Standards)

### LATF: What is a “replacement” tree, and what evidence do you need?

If the proposed planting area is eligible for the UTCF, any proposed standard size trees must be one of the following:

- ❑ Replanted within the same planting site or local area (e.g. within 2 km) and of a similar ultimate size. Where there is no suitable replanting site available, FC may at their discretion, agree to up to an 8km distance from the original site, on a case-by-case basis.
- ❑ Replanted within existing tree pits which have been empty for under 3 years. Planting in tree pits that have been empty for more than 3 years is eligible under UTCF, and as such would not be accepted in an LATF application.

You can see if the proposed planting area is eligible for UTCF if it falls within the ‘UTCF trees close to people’ layer of the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). Within these areas, any new standard (large) trees must use UTCF funding, whereas any small trees (whips and feathers), and replacement standard size trees in these areas can be funded through LATF.

### LATF: Please can you confirm if the planting of up to 2km from the original site of trees lost within the last 3 years only applies to standard trees in urban areas?

Yes, this only applies to standard trees in urban areas. This restriction does not apply to any trees in rural areas (outside the ‘UTCF trees close to people’ layer of the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com))), or to smaller trees in urban areas.

### LATF: What size of tree is eligible?

Any size of planting is included and recolonisation schemes are included. To avoid overlap with UTCF only replacement standards for failed urban schemes of less than three years old are covered.



## LATF: What does the term 'urban standards' mean? Does that include planting alongside major roads, or just in towns?

'Urban' refers to areas that sit within the UTCF Trees Close to People map layer. You can see the UTCF Trees Close to People layer on the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). The map layer shows areas with a population of at least >2,000 people buffered to 1km to allow for peri-urban planting.

In rural areas, you can plant both new and replacement trees of all sizes (whips, feathers and standards).

In urban areas you can plant any whips and feathers, but standards must be replacements for recently failed trees (within 3 years). New standard (large) trees in "urban" areas must use UTCF funding.

If the proposed planting area is eligible for the UTCF, any proposed standard size trees must be one of the following:

- ❑ Replanted within the same planting site or local area (e.g. within 2 km) and of a similar ultimate size. Where there is no suitable replanting site available, FC may at their discretion agree to up an 8km distance from the original site, on a case-by-case basis.
- ❑ Replanted within existing tree pits which have been empty for under 3 years. Planting in tree pits that have been empty for more than 3 years is eligible under UTCF, and as such would not be accepted in an LATF application.

## LATF: Urban standards can only be funded if they are direct replacements of recently lost trees, but do they have to be the same species and does this include disease-affected trees?

Replacement urban standards do not need to be the same species as the trees that have been lost (especially in cases of loss to disease). However, they should be of a species that can attain a similar ultimate size to the lost trees (unless there is a good reason why this should not be the case).

## LATF: For a bid to plant both whips and standards, what proportion of funds covering standard planting may be considered uncompetitive?

The cost-per-tree will be calculated for each application and scored against the cost-per-tree for previous rounds to generate the final score. If an application scores below the minimum scoring threshold for any application question (including the cost-per-tree),



the application will be rejected, with feedback provided, and the applicant will be invited to reapply with an improved application.

## UTCF: Can you utilise vacant tree pits older than 3 years within UTCF?

Yes.

## LATF: If failures have resulted from vandalism which is likely to happen again, can replacements be in a different location?

Yes, replanting can be up to 2km away if there is a good reason. This has been up to 8km in the past in exceptional circumstances. In urban areas you can plant any whips and feathers, but standards must be replacements for recently failed trees (within 3 years). New standard (large) trees in “urban” areas must use UTCF funding. ‘Urban’ refers to areas that sit within the UTCF Trees Close to People map layer. You can see the UTCF Trees Close to People layer on the Forestry Commission Map Browser ([forestergis.com](https://forestergis.com)). The map layer shows areas with a population of at least >2,000 people buffered to 1km to allow for peri-urban planting.

If the proposed planting area is eligible for the UTCF, any proposed standard size trees must be one of the following:

- ❑ Replanted within the same planting site or local area (e.g. within 2 km) and of a similar ultimate size. Where there is no suitable replanting site available, FC may at their discretion agree to up an 8km distance from the original site, on a case-by-case basis.
- ❑ Replanted within existing tree pits which have been empty for under 3 years. Planting in tree pits that have been empty for more than 3 years is eligible under UTCF, and as such would not be accepted in an LATF application.