Tree Management and Social Housing in England

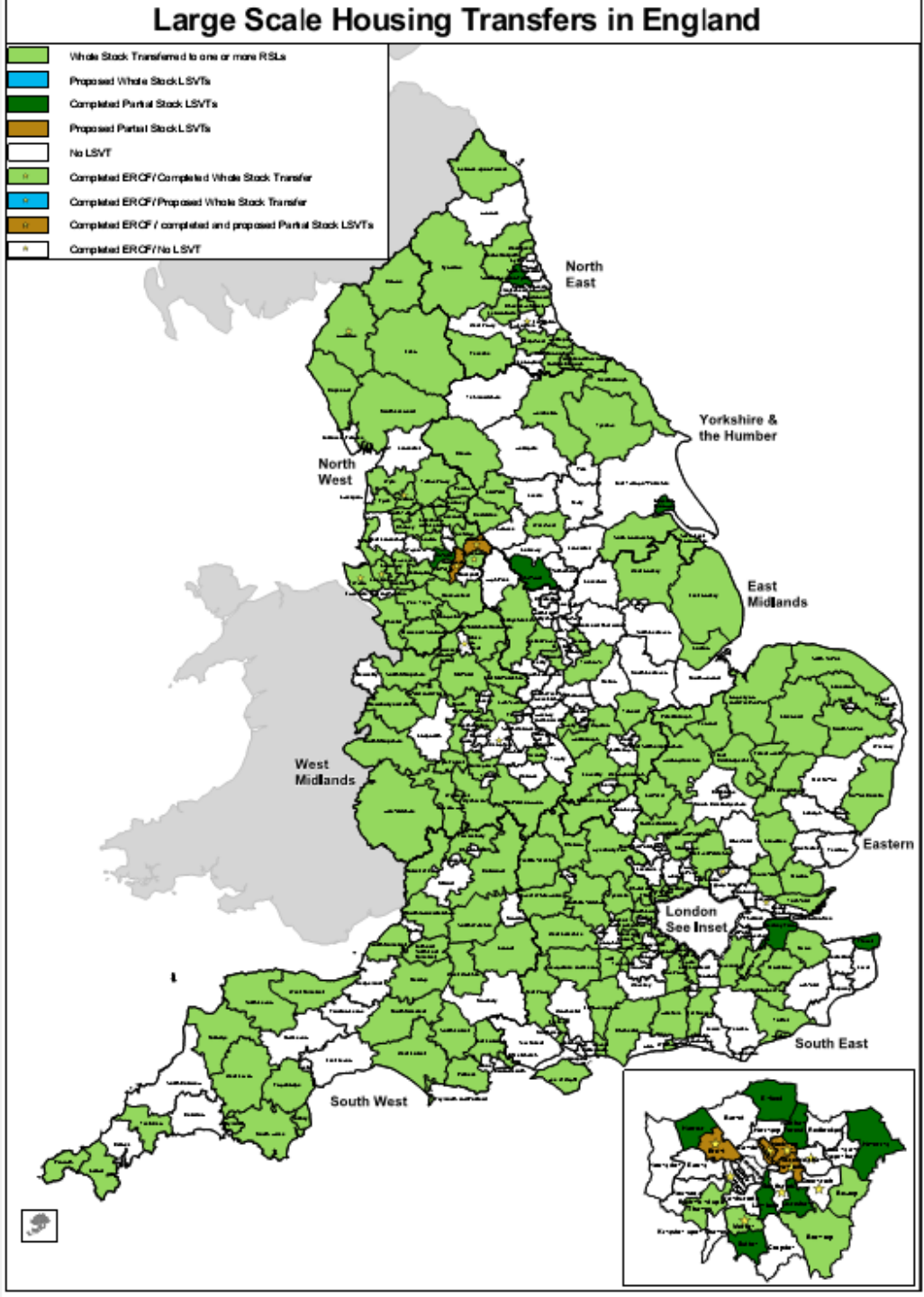
Paul Barton

BARTON
TREE CONSULTANCY

2.3 million homes

10% of total housing stock

Large-scale voluntary stock transfers



Policy has focussed on quality of homes.

1860s social housing.

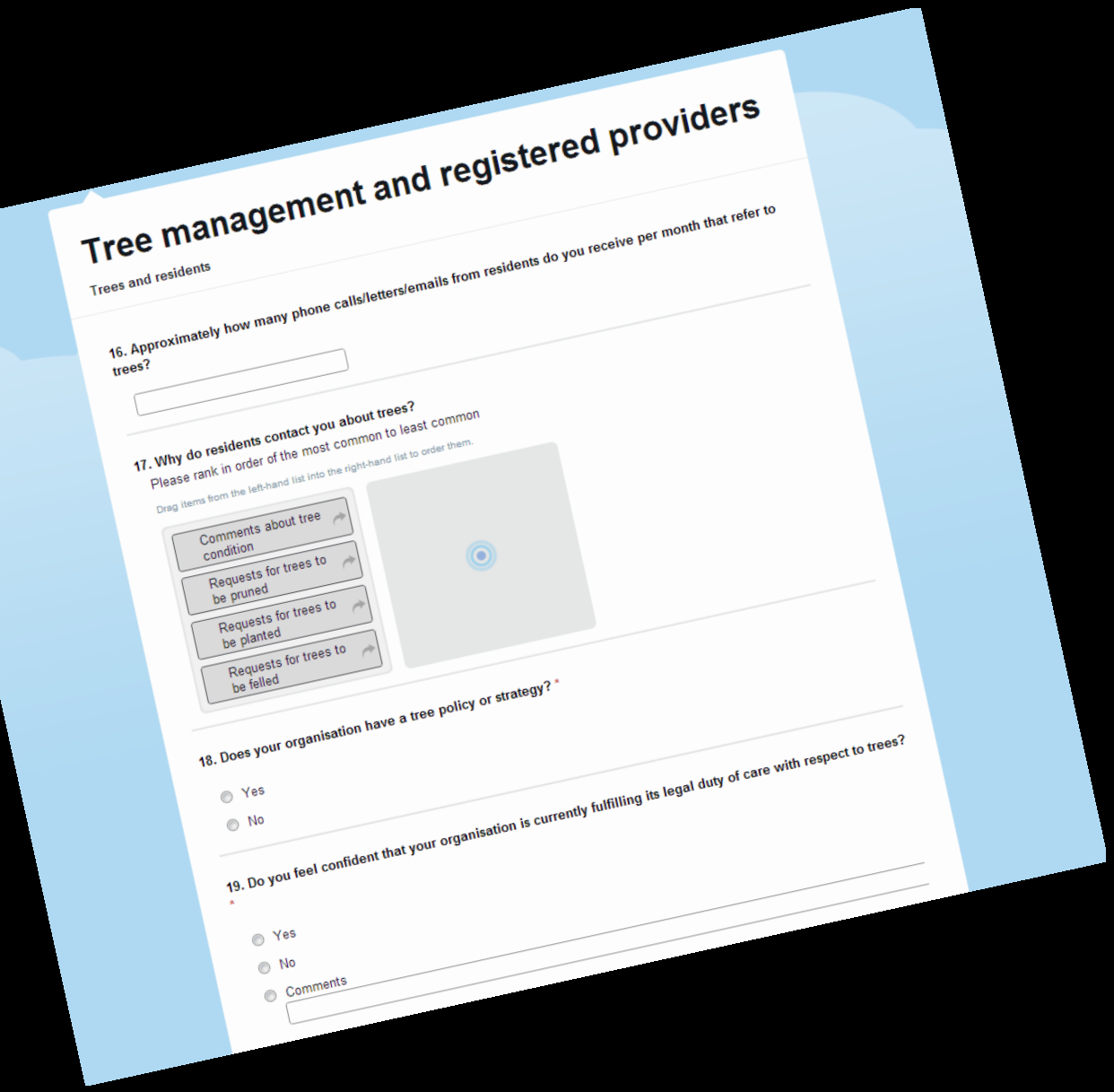
Founder of National Trust

Improved mental wellbeing of residents

Caring for trees is a means to that end

Legal duty of care

Management pro-active or reactive?



Personnel

Budgets

Strategic management

Barriers

Responses covered 680,000 properties

29% of England's private social housing stock

Average number of properties per organisation: 14,500

87% manage ex-council stock

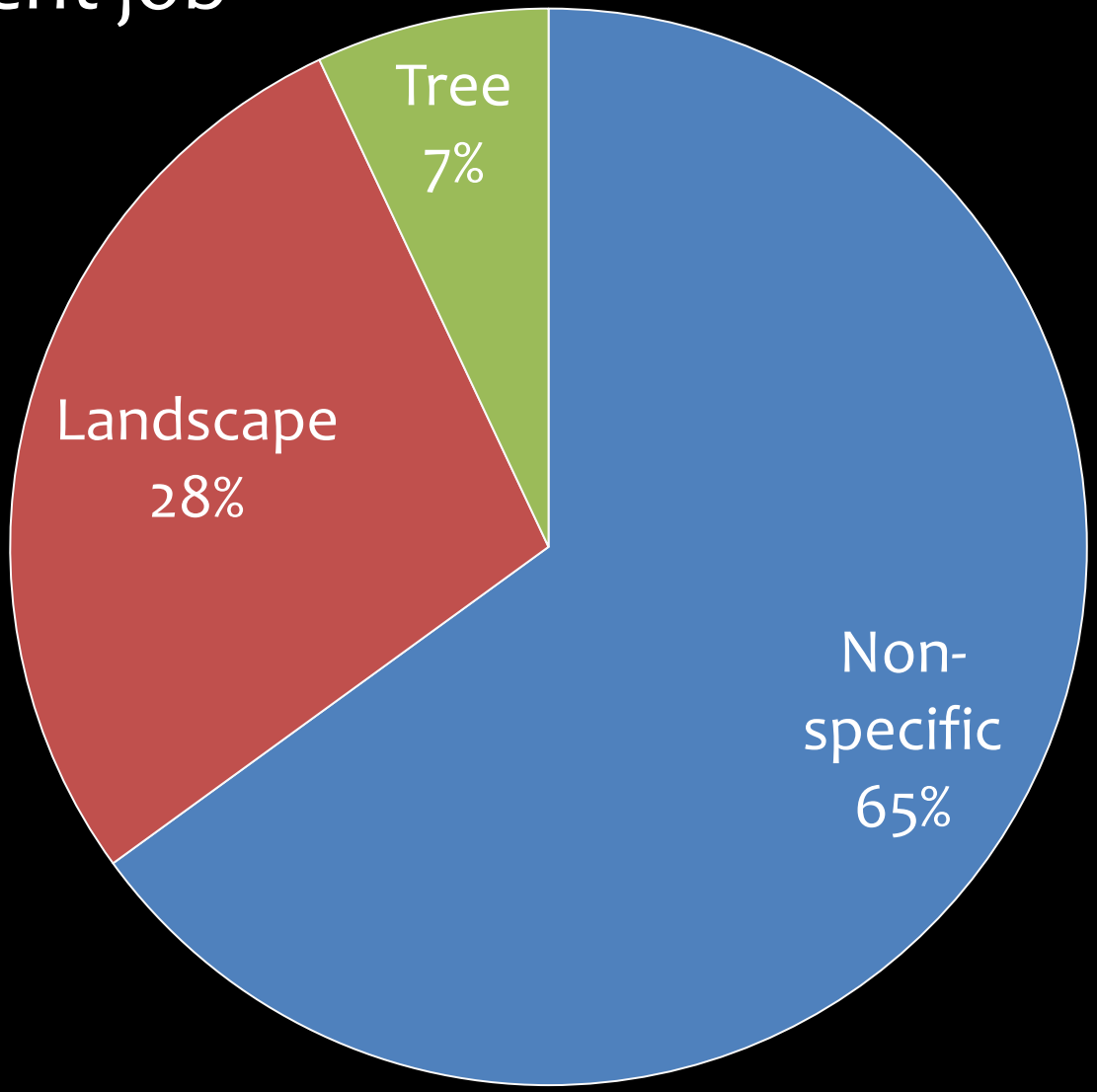
49%

21%

24%

6%

Respondent job titles



57% had no formally qualified staff

32% had one qualified person

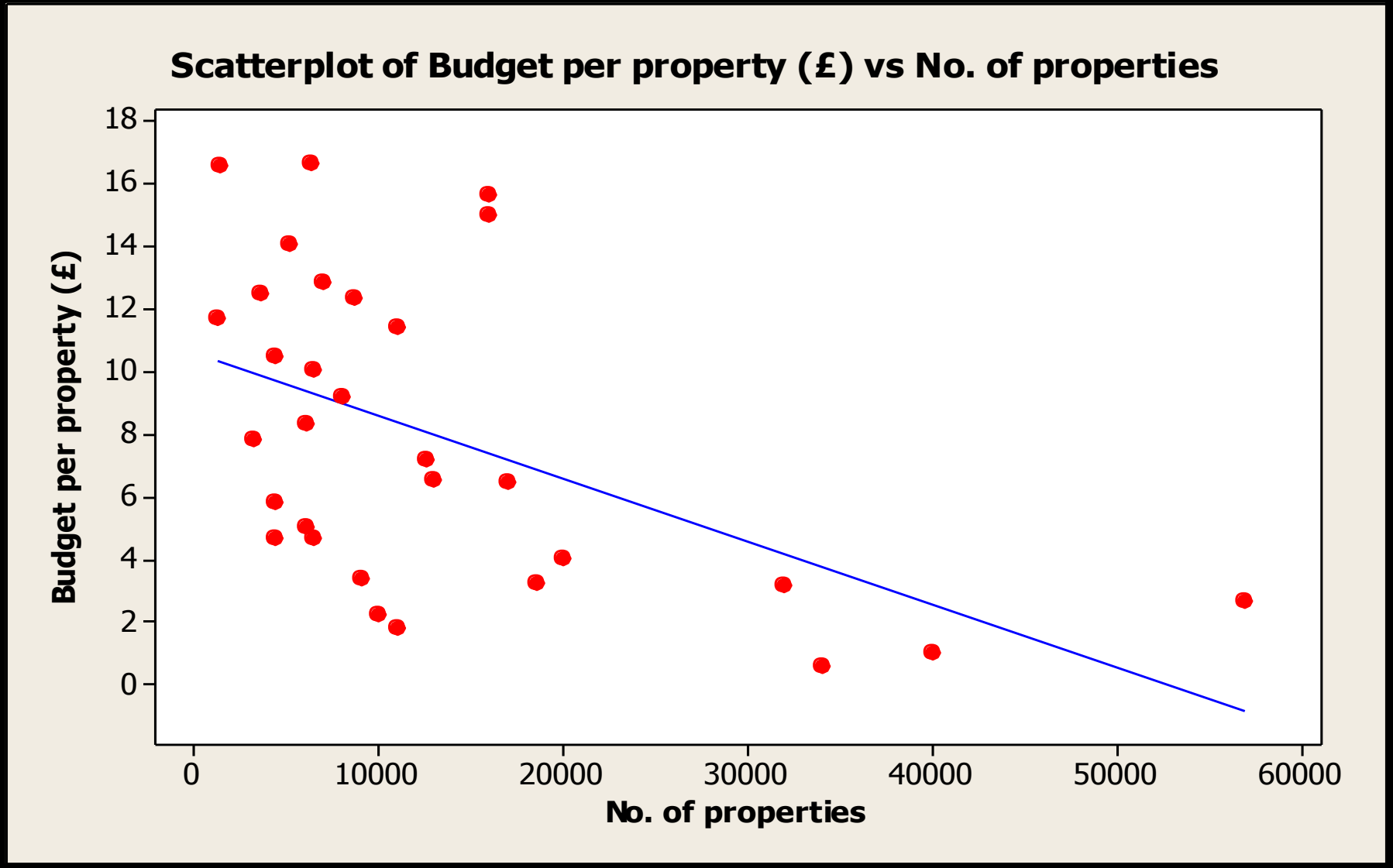
…but only 6% above level 3 NQF

Qualification	% of total
Arboriculture (<level 3)	17.1%
Arboriculture (>level 3)	5.7%
Arboriculture (not specified)	11.4%
Horticulture (<level 3)	8.6%
Horticulture (>level 3)	8.6%
Landscape design	2.9%
Non-relevant / informal / unspecified	45.7%

72% have a specific tree budget

Average budget:
£72,000 p/a

£3.61 per resident per year.


Scatterplot of Budget per property (£) vs No. of properties
Budget per property (£)
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
0
10000
20000
30000
40000
50000
60000
No. of properties

Expenditure on trees

Average actual spend in 2011/12 was £70k

59% had a tree inventory

No difference of large vs small

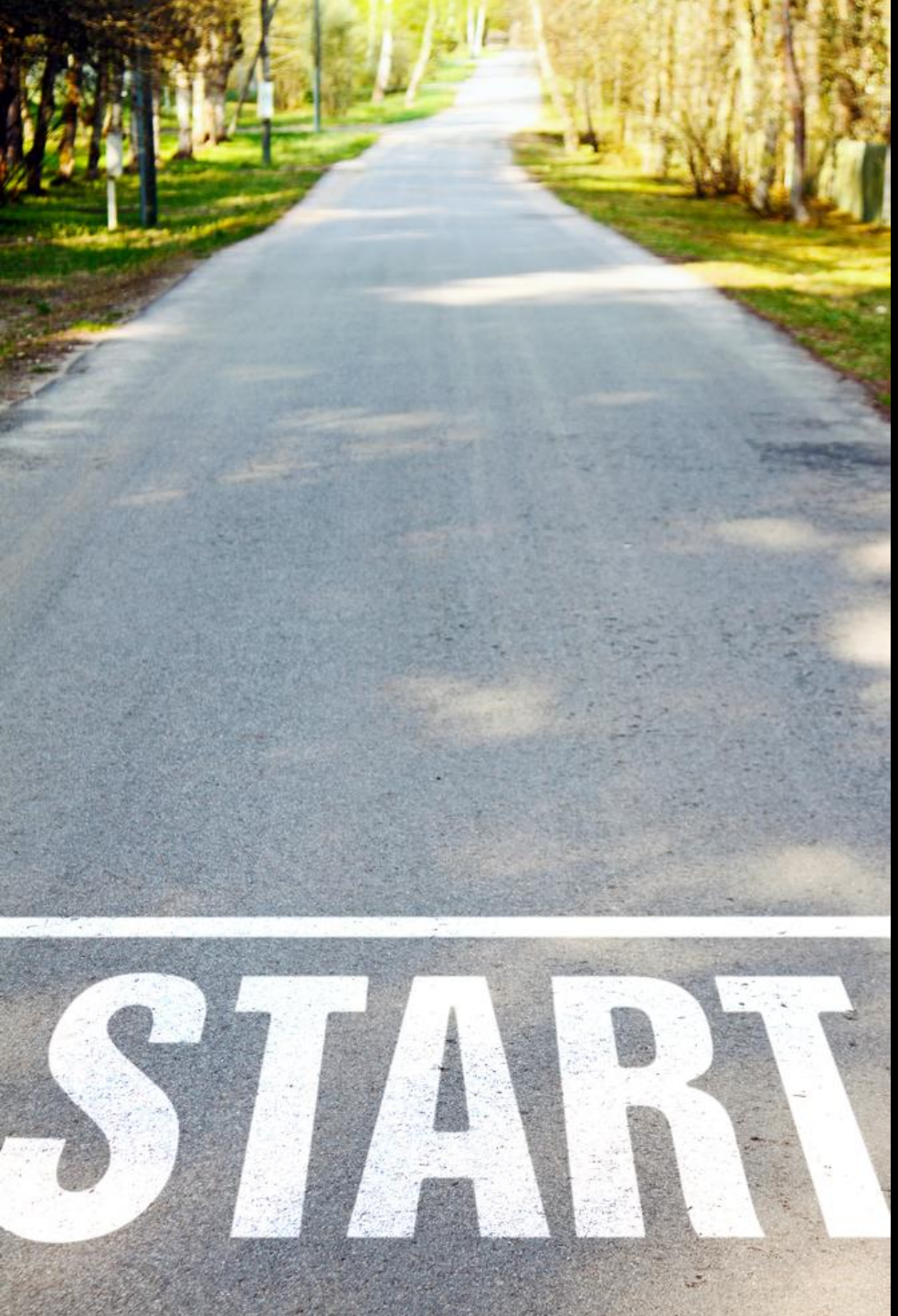
75% were created by external consultants

Average of 3731 trees

Strong relationship between presence of inventory and level of planned tree works

	Inventory present	Inventory not present
Programme of tree works	56%	16%
No programme of tree works	4%	24%

- 54% have a GIS
- Of those that have a GIS, 72% have trees mapped
- 39% of respondents have trees mapped on a GIS



66% had a policy/strategy document

Documents reviewed were high-level policies rather than long-term strategies

Opinions on barriers to good management

RECOMMENDATION 1

Have at least one member of staff with a relevant tree-related qualification

RECOMMENDATION 2

Create an inventory to enable a planned and systematic approach

RECOMMENDATION 3

Use a GIS for tree mapping

RECOMMENDATION 4

Develop a strategy specific to the organisation through consultation with residents