

New Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest announced

The Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest, announced today by Defra, England's Community Forests and Plymouth City Council, will be the first newly created Community Forest supported through the Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) and join England's Community Forest network.

The scheme will receive NCF funding to develop canopy cover across the city and plant up to 500ha of woodland by 2025, which is expected to more than treble in size to 1600ha by 2034. Plymouth will plant up to 25ha in the first year of this project and receive up to £480,000 in funding from the NCF funded Trees for Climate.

Green jobs, training and skill development will come from the project for young people, who will be invited to lead on aspects of the new Community Forest, from naming it to developing its design, management and strategy.

Under Defra's England Trees Action Plan, this project is the first of at least three new Community Forests to be created in areas most at need and is in line with the ambition to meet net zero emissions by 2050 – by 2025 England's Community Forests will contribute over 6,700ha to woodland creation ambitions.

The project also supports Plymouth City Council's Plan for Trees scheme, which aims to help trees in urban areas become fit for purpose, resilient to the challenges of climate change and disease, and adaptable to whatever new challenges the future may hold.

Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

I am delighted to welcome Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest to the Community Forest network. Joining this network will enable Plymouth and South Devon to receive key support from the Nature for Climate Fund through Trees for Climate funding to plant trees and help rewild areas that are most in need.

The health and wellbeing benefits are some of the most important reasons we need to be making more space for trees.

Paul Nolan, Chair, England's Community Forests: said:

We are really pleased to welcome Plymouth and South Devon into the Community Forest family. England's Community Forests have been transforming the landscapes and communities in and around our largest towns and cities for 30 years.

In that time, we have always been committed to sharing the powerful principles of community forestry as widely as possible so millions of people can experience the many benefits of trees and woodland. Today's announcement marks another exciting chapter in the story of community forestry across England and for the area of Plymouth and South Devon.

Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest will create space for nature, encourage enterprise and support the area's commitment to tackle climate change. Joining the powerful partnership of 10 established Community Forests across the country will support these ambitions, enabling local people and partners to achieve truly transformational environmental and social change.

Councillor Patrick Nicholson, Deputy Leader of Plymouth City Council, said:

We are thrilled to be joining the Community Forest family and excited for the many benefits that it will bring Plymouth and the surrounding area.

The forest chimes a chord with so many of the aspirations we're trying to achieve economically, environmentally and for health and wellbeing here in Plymouth and I'm excited to get started on the next stage.

As hosts of COP26, President of the G7 and a key player in the CBD COP15, the UK is leading the climate change agenda. Nature is our most precious asset and it sits at the heart of the world's goods and services. We need to fundamentally change how we view the economic value of nature if we are to reverse biodiversity loss. Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all rely on nature. Plymouth Community Forest recognise this and have put an emphasis on the value trees and green space add to the mental health of local residents.

The news follows the recent announcement of [funding for the Forest of Cornwall, a partnership between Cornwall Council and Defra to help identify sites in Cornwall for woodland creation and bring local stakeholders on board](#)

EDITOR'S NOTES

The funding for Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest is through the Woodland Creation Partnership, part of the Nature for Climate Fund Programme.

England's Community Forests are located in and around our largest towns and cities and they co-ordinate accessible woodland creation projects designed to deliver a wide range of public benefits and involve local people. Collectively, they form the country's biggest environmental regeneration initiative and are highlighted as part of the government's 25 Year Plan for

the Environment. For thirty years the Community Forests have delivered urban, economic and social regeneration, championing green infrastructure and creating high-quality environments for millions of people.

The England's Community Forests network includes: The Forest of Marston Vale; Great Western Community Forest; The Greenwood Community Forest; The Mersey Forest; Manchester City of Trees; Forest of Avon Trust; HEYwoods; Thames Chase Trust; White Rose Forest; the Forest of Mercia and most recently the new Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest.

England's Community Forests are supported by the national charity the Community Forest Trust (CFT). CFT is the national charity for the community forestry network and aims to secure more investment for community forestry, ensuring a green future for all. It is supporting England's Community Forests in the delivery of the Trees for Climate programme.

The Trees for Climate programme launched in December 2020, with the announcement of £12.1million of funding through the Government's Nature for Climate Fund. In the first year of the programme, Trees for Climate has seen trees planted in Community Forests right across the country. When mature, these will eventually store over 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, playing an important role in the meeting the government's net zero emissions by 2050 target.

Trees for Climate is delivered by England's Community Forests and support by the Community Forest Trust and Cheshire West and Chester Council, who are the accountable body for the programme.

www.englishcommunityforests.org.uk

www.communityforest-trust.org