

[Press release: First government-funded tree of Northern Forest takes root](#)

Ambitious plans to create a swathe of forest in the north of England branched out today (30 November 2018) with Forestry Minister David Rutley planting the first government funded tree of the Northern Forest.

Minister Rutley joined the [Woodland Trust](#), Community Forest Trust, government [Tree Champion Sir William Worsley](#) and students from St Andrew's CE Primary School in Radcliffe, where they began the planting of 200 saplings as part of the government's £5.7 million investment.

Over the next 25 years the Woodland Trust and Community Forest Trust are aiming to plant more than [50 million trees](#) from Liverpool to Hull, connecting the five community forests of the north. Government backing for the project was announced by the Prime Minister in January during the launch of the Government's flagship 25 Year Environment Plan.

Spanning more than 120 miles, the Northern Forest will help boost habitats for woodland birds and bats and protect iconic species such as the red squirrel – alongside providing a tranquil space to be enjoyed by millions of people living in the area.

Forestry Minister David Rutley said:

It is a privilege to be here to see the Northern Forest take root, and to plant the first of many government funded trees which will contribute to what will one day be a great forest.

This new forest will benefit communities across the north of England and deliver on our pledge to leave the environment in a better state for future generations.

This investment takes forward a commitment made in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), and will contribute to the government's pledge to plant 11 million trees, and one million urban trees.

With the Government backing growth, investment and jobs across the Northern Powerhouse as part of efforts to create an economy that works for everyone. The Woodland Trust and [Community Forest Trust](#) estimate this new forest will generate more than £2 billion for the country's economy.

Simon Mageean Northern Forest Programme Director, Woodland Trust said:

A new Northern Forest will strengthen and accelerate the benefits of community forestry, support landscape scale working for nature, deliver a wide range of benefits, including helping to reduce flood

risk, and adapt some of the UK's major towns and cities to projected climate change.

The North of England is perfectly suited to reap the benefits of a project on this scale. But this must be a joined up approach, we'll need to work with Government, and other organisations to find innovative funding mechanisms to ensure we can make a difference long term.

Iain Taylor, Community Forest Trust said:

Community Forests have been planting trees and woodlands in a range of communities across England for 25 years.

The Northern Forest programme and this new funding allows the five community forest initiatives in the Northern Forest area to work together with the Woodland Trust and Defra to accelerate the delivery of local forest plans and make a real differences in communities.

The Northern Forest will connect the five Community Forests in the north of England – the Mersey Forest, Manchester City of Trees, South Yorkshire Community Forest, the Leeds White Rose Forest and the HEYwoods Project – with green infrastructure and woodland created in and around major urban centres such as Chester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester.