

England's Northern Forest

A growing opportunity
for a better quality of life



England's community forests



Manchester
City of Trees



A new Northern Forest

The Woodland Trust is working with the Community Forests in the north of England to develop plans for a new Northern Forest – stretching from Liverpool across to Hull, with the M62 as its spine.



25
years



50m
trees

Our area is changing — we need to respond

With below average woodland cover, but above average ambition, the North of England is perfectly placed to leverage huge value from renewed investment in community forests.

650k 

new homes planned for the Northern Forest area. Over the next 20 years these could save over 2 million tonnes of CO²

7.6%  woodland cover

UK average = 13%

EU average = 44%

The area has an abundance of transport infrastructure, with key gateways served by

2 & 7 plus a new unified transport body,
ports airports Transport for the North

13m 
population

>£75bn
infrastructure investment
planned over the next 25 years

1 million companies help
the area generate over

£304bn 
(that's 18% of England's GDP)

Why is my area not included?

The boundaries of the Northern Forest include a core area of Community Forest and community forestry initiatives. These have boundaries that have been agreed through local consultation.

However there is still plenty of scope for including sites in the wider North – such as Lancashire, North Yorkshire and Cheshire East – in the Northern Forest and our mapping work to identify the best sites for planting **has** included these areas.

The Community Forest Trust would be interested in supporting local partners across these wider areas to join the partnership.

The chance to deliver

The Northern Forest will complement planned investment and the new UK Industrial Strategy, and help to achieve the 25-year plan for the environment.

Planting an additional 50 million trees over the next 25 years, we will focus on:



Setting the scene for growth



Reducing flood risk



Improving health



Producing sustainable timber products and biomass for energy



Mitigating and adapting to climate change



Creating a woodland culture



Enhancing biodiversity



Increasing our Natural Capital



Identifying new funding mechanisms



A living laboratory



Effective delivery



Setting the scene for growth

Planting trees in and around our towns and cities to attract investment and provide a great place to live, work and visit.



Reducing flood risk

Working with the Environment Agency, water companies and local authorities, we will target woodland planting where it can 'slow the flow'. We will develop the Urban Catchment Forestry approach to maximise the value of urban trees for flood risk reduction.



Improving health

Targeting areas where we can have the greatest impact, we will provide more opportunities to use woodlands, promote and deliver the passive benefits (including improvements to air quality) and, through social prescribing and other mechanisms, develop specific interventions that target chronic health conditions.



Producing sustainable timber products and biomass for energy

The Northern Forest area contains 1.2 million tonnes of annual sustainable timber yield. In addition to timber products, there is an opportunity to increase the harvest for biomass to supply renewable energy.



Mitigating and adapting to climate change

Projections for climate change identify drier summers, with more heatwaves likely, and an increased risk of flooding in both summer and winter. Trees and woodlands sequester carbon from the atmosphere and can also help us to adapt to climate change.



Creating a woodland culture

We want to connect more people, particularly young people, with nature, increase volunteering and access to woodland. We also want to develop career paths into Forestry. We want to help develop a skilled workforce to create and manage a Northern Forest, develop new technologies and increase the range of high quality jobs in the sector.



Enhancing biodiversity

The Northern Forest will increase woodland cover, reduce habitat fragmentation, improving management and link to the wider landscape to provide space for nature to thrive. With Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands and our Heritage Trees at its heart, we will create a woodland ecological network as the Northern Forest develops.



Increasing our Natural Capital

We are measuring our progress toward the Government's objective of "being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it". We will link investment in a new Northern Forest to monitored increases in Natural Capital.



Identifying new funding mechanisms

These can be used to help to deliver increased woodland cover, improved woodland management, a renaissance of woodland businesses and a woodland culture.



A living laboratory

Woodland Trust and the Community Forests have strong links to many of the 18 universities in the Northern Forest. World leading research will provide a solid foundation for innovative approaches to delivery. Four of the world's top universities are in the area and have active research programmes with the Community Forests.



Effective delivery

Using 'what works' as well as looking for new opportunities and partnerships.

A Northern Forest will...



deliver up to £2.2bn GVA



provide economic benefits through the production of biomass and timber



bring new skills and employment opportunities



improve health in multiple ways, such as the major impact of street trees on childhood asthma and respiratory disease



reduce flood risk for over 190,000 households



tackle climate change by locking up an estimated 8m tonnes of carbon



improve water quality



provide opportunities for recreation, tourism and leisure



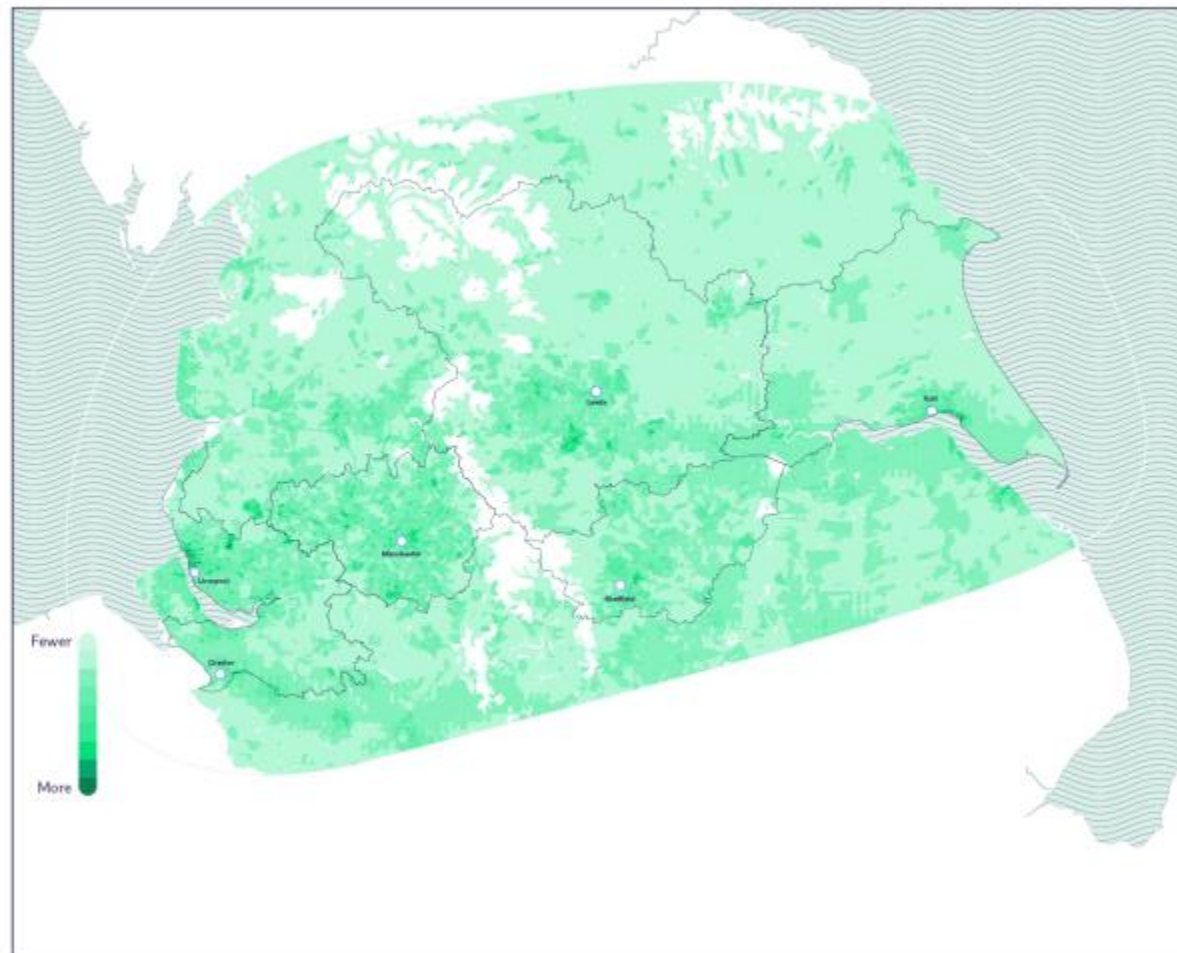
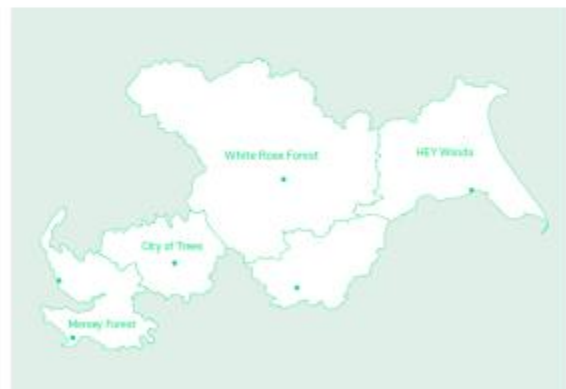
create attractive places to live, work and invest



deliver wider economic benefits worth up to £2.3bn through improved access to new woodlands increasing physical activity

Where?

Delivering a better quality of life is a central aim of the Northern Forest mission. As such, tree planting will target areas where it will have the biggest impact on health and wellbeing. The Northern Forest partners have used advanced mapping techniques to assess where trees can deliver the maximum benefits for air quality, water, recreation and biodiversity.







David Rodway/WTML









Next Steps



The best time to plant
a tree was a generation
ago, the second best
time is now.

