

## CASE STUDY

# The Northern Forest

### The Northern Forest

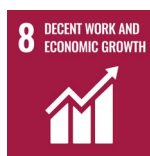
*"We are planting 50 million trees to complement the growth, investment and infrastructure that is planned for the North of England."*

Alan Simson, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urban Forestry at Leeds Beckett University



## PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Website	<a href="https://thenorthernforest.org.uk">thenorthernforest.org.uk</a>
Social channels	<a href="#">f @thewoodlandtrust</a> <a href="#">@WoodlandTrust</a> <a href="#">in @the-woodland-trust</a> <a href="#">@woodlandtrust</a>
Contact us through Alliance	Alan Simson (alan.simson@btinternet.com)
Country	England
Main sector	Public
Uforest thematic discipline	Socio-economics
Stage of development	Implementation



By boosting investor confidence in the region and helping retain residents and businesses.



By stimulating regional and local participation, linking green infrastructures, offsetting the effects of pollution and building resilience against the climate crisis.



By targeting woodlands to help manage hydro-meteo risks.



By increasing canopy cover to 19%, protecting existing woodlands and creating large areas of biodiversity.





## START-UP

The Northern Forest started in 2016 as a **long-term project** to plant 50 million trees in the North of England, which has significantly less woodland cover than the rest of the country. As **part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan**, this initiative aims at leaving the environment in a better state than it was found and to support the region's estimated growth.

### THE NORTHERN FOREST'S GOALS:

- Plant 50 million trees over 25 years in Northern England's landscape from coast to coast and in and around cities.
- Set the scene for the Northern England's growth by:
  - 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 natural capital.
  - Identifying new funding mechanisms.
  - Creating a living laboratory.



## INITIATIVE MODEL

### MAIN ACTIVITIES:

**What does The Northern Forest do?**

It plants trees through community forests across five areas:

- Urban.
- Sub-urban.
- Peri-urban.
- Ex-urban (commute areas).
- Rural.

**Community forests** are not single woodlands but distinct trees, woods and forests across each area that link to existing woodlands, weave through urban areas and wrap around communities to connect urban populations with the wider landscape. Through the community forest approach, communities' rights are recognised, secured, and enforced to preserve, restore and enhance forests. Communities have access and rights to the forest resources and participate in management decisions. These forests can be managed for timber production, agroforestry, recreation and/or watershed protection.

### BENEFICIARIES:

**Who benefits from The Northern Forest's activities?**

- 1. Northern England's 13 million residents** that enjoy a beautified, healthier and resilient large region to live, work and explore.
- 2. Landowners and land managers** that benefit from land renting for woodland creation through government funding that covers 100% of the costs.
- 3. The green-economy workforce** that finds new jobs in all five afforestation areas.
- 4. Community groups, businesses and schools** that get involved in tree-planting (ex.: teambuilding days).
- 5. Investors, sponsors and donors** that want to offer financial support for the region's growth.



## PROMOTION:

### What is The Northern Forest's promotion strategy?

The Northern Forest's communication strategy is based on three main channels:

- Community forests' partners.
- The Northern Forest promotion website.
- The Woodland Trust social media.

## GOVERNANCE:

### How does The Northern Forest implement its activities?

- **The leading board** is composed by government authorities, national and local charities, national parks and community enterprises.
- Executed by **The Woodland Trust**, the **Community Forest Trust** and the **local Community Forests**, each of which is governed by a Steering Committee and a Management Committee:
  - The Mersey Forest (North Cheshire and Merseyside).
  - HEYwoods (North Staffordshire to South Cheshire).
  - Manchester City of Trees (Greater Manchester).
  - The White Rose Forest (North and West Yorkshire).
  - The Woodland Trust.

## FINANCES:

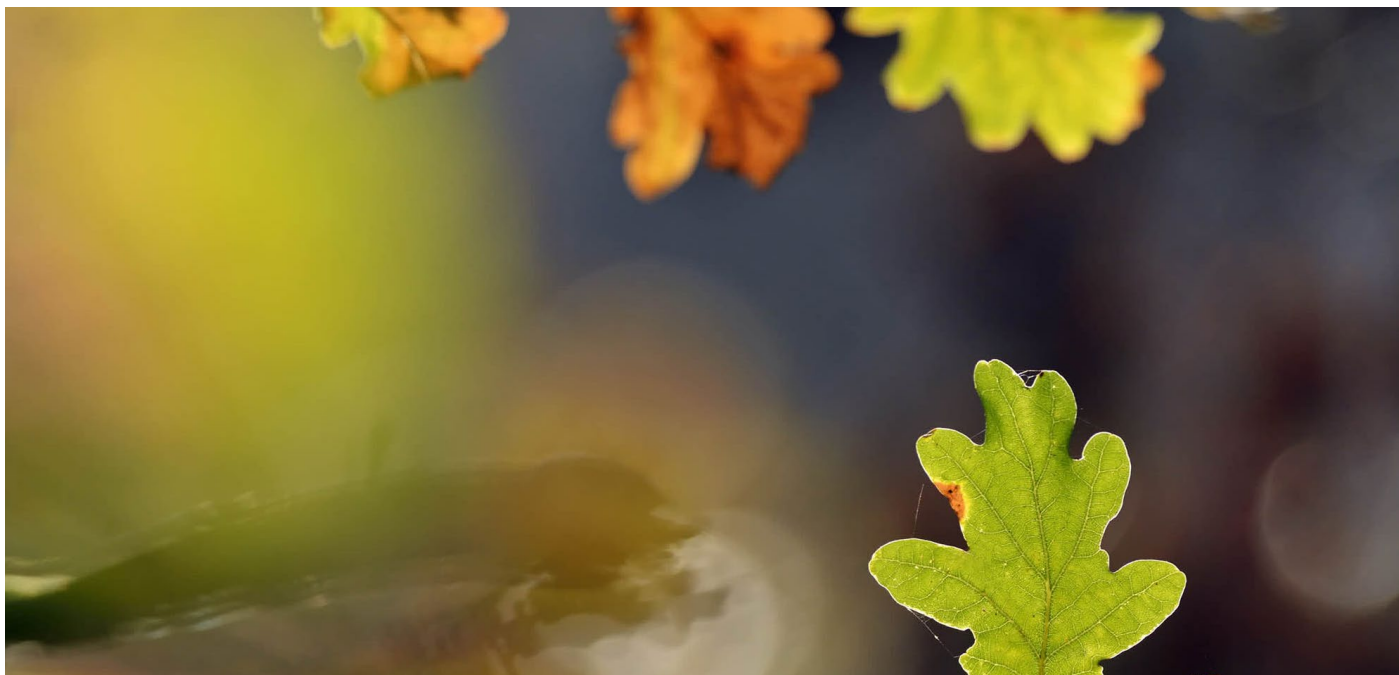
At a rate of 30,000 ha of new tree planting per annum, the project estimated costs are £500 million, which are needed to plant and manage trees for their first 5 years of life. These costs are covered through **mixed funding**:

- £5.7 million from the **UK Government** to kick start the project.
- £640 million from the **Nature for Climate fund**, which was collected through the UK Government, the Grow Back Greener and the Trees for Climate programmes, and private businesses.

## POLICY AND STANDARDS LEADING THE INITIATIVE:

- Forestry Commission standards for new peri-urban tree planting schemes.
- British standards for urban tree planting.
- The Lawton report, which reviews how England's wildlife and ecological network could be improved to help nature thrive in the face of climate change and other pressures.  
(<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/43641/the-lawton-review-factsheet.pdf>)
- The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>)
- The Woodland Trust standards for tree planting.





## **UNIQUENESS**

### What makes The Northern Forest a one-of-a-kind project?

- It's the **largest tree-planting scheme** in the UK that uses natural processes.
- It distinguishes **five afforestation domains**, including economically deprived areas and river catchments over flood-risk towns and cities downstream.
- It's organised in **Community Forests** to better address each areas' needs, widening and deepening everybody's involvement in the planning, planting and management of trees.
- It protects and connects **existing woodlands**, some of which have been present since at least 1600 CE.

## **EXPECTATION**

By **2025**, The Northern Forest aims at planting over 7 million trees, 2 million of them in urban areas and along major transport routes (1000 hectares of new tree canopy).

### What does The Northern Forest need to be successful?

- Available land for tree planting.
- Ongoing funding.

### What are today's main challenges?

- Decide whether to plant only native species or broaden the spectrum for species that can deal with growing in urban areas.
- Local political tribalism that favours loyalty to the political tribe instead of viable ground activities.

Promoted by:



In partnership with:

