

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L16 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest – Business Case Change Request
2	Decision maker: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council)
3	Report author and contact details: Peter Hawking-Sach, 01752 304109, peter.hawking-sach@plymouth.gov.uk
4	<p>Decision to be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the Business Case change request; 2. Allocates an additional £7,294,240 into the capital programme, funded by Defra’s Trees for Climate Fund; 3. Delegates the award of contracts, and programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning where they would not already have authority to do so.
5	<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>1. The council and its partners have successfully delivered Defra’s Trees for Climate fund 2022-25, enabling over 380,000 trees to be planted across Plymouth, Dartmoor, and South Devon. The delivery programme for 25/26 has been approved by Defra and England’s Community Forest network, with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest allocated £7,294,240 for capital delivery of an additional 265 hectares of tree planting and woodland creation across the region through March 2026.</p> <p>The programme is accessing unrivalled funding for PCC and partners to achieve the goals set out in the Joint Local Plan, Corporate Plan, and Plymouth’s Plan for Trees.</p> <p>Delegation of the programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning (Director of the Community Forest) will enable the project team to ensure timely delivery of contracts and grant awards to landowners and businesses across the programme area throughout the Winter.</p>
6	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing – Reject the continuation of the funding, denying the programme full external funding for capital delivery and staff resources to progress with delivering England’s tree planting targets. Rejected, as we have been provided a grant agreement for 25/26 in anticipation of continued Trees for Climate delivery across the region.
7	<p>Financial implications and risks:</p> <p>Financial risks to PCC are fully mitigated by 100% external funding from Defra’s Trees for Climate programme. All costs are funded through this programme, continuing under exact terms as per the previous business case.</p>

	Total project for 2025/26 - £7,294,240 Trees for Climate Capital Funding - £7,294,240			
8	<p>Legal Implications: (For completion by Legal Officers)</p> <p>The delegation to award contracts is being made to the Head of Environmental Planning who is also currently acting as a non-executive Director of the Community Forest programme.</p> <p>The partnership includes Devon County Council, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority, and South Hams and West Devon. There are internal governance processes to ensure any conflict of interest is declared for any grant being delivered to one of the partners, with quorate requirements against any votes to approve grants.</p> <p>The Head of Environmental Planning will not be involved in any decisions about grants being given to the Council.</p>			
9	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> <p>Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			x	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
			x	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million annually
		x	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.	
	<p>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions</p>			
10	<p>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:</p> <p>Corporate Plan Making Plymouth a fairer, greener city where everyone does their bit.</p> <p>Joint Local Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEV026 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation, • DEV028 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows • Plymouth Plan • SO1 – Delivering a healthy city • HEA7 - Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment 			
11	<p>Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)</p> <p>This programme of works aligns with and supports the delivery of the Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan by delivering a programme of works that will enhance and add resilience to the city's green estate.</p> <p>The Community Forest planting will increase carbon capture/CO2 by 83% from current levels, once fully</p>			

		established, helping us in our fight to become carbon neutral by 2030.		
Urgent decisions				
I2a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticservices@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	x	(If no, go to section I3a)
I2b	Reason for urgency:			
I2c	Scrutiny Chair Signature :		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			
Consultation				
I3a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes	X	
		No		(If no go to section I4)
I3b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Tom Briars-Delve, Portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change		
I3c	Date Cabinet member consulted	23 September 2025		
I4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		
		No	X	
I5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Glenn Caplin-Grey	
		Job title	Strategic Director for Growth	
		Date consulted	16 September 2025	
Sign-off				
I6		Democratic Support (mandatory)		JS50 25/26

	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:		Finance (mandatory)		OW.25.26.100				
			Legal (mandatory)		LS/00001312/1/AC/25/9/25				
			Procurement (if applicable)		N/A				
			Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)		N/A				
			Human Resources (if applicable)		N/A				
Appendices									
17	Ref	Title of appendix							
	.								
	A	Briefing report for publication – 250730 <i>Briefing Report – Community Forest change request</i>							
	B	Equalities Impact Assessment – 250730 <i>EqIA community forest change request</i>							
	C	Climate Impact Assessment							
	D	Capital Change Request							
Confidential/exempt information									
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? Please type an X into the relevant box		Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
			No	x					
			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:								
Background Papers									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.								
Title of background paper(s)			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Cabinet Member Signature							
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.						
Signature			Date of decision	16/02/2026			
Print Name	Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council						