

PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH DEVON COMMUNITY FOREST - ADDITIONAL CAPITAL ALLOCATION



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Plymouth City Council (PCC) is lead partner for Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF), a partnership programme consisting of PCC, South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils, National Trust, and Woodland Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority, and Devon County Council. Since 2022, PSDCF has been delivering DEFRA's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Trees for Climate fund, with £8.6m funding from DEFRA, enabling the planting of 380,000 trees across Plymouth, South Devon and Dartmoor.

DEFRA's Trees for Climate programme has been extended for another year, beyond 2025, through to April 2026. This briefing accompanies a change request to extend the Trees for Climate capital programme to be extended, and to allow an additional £7.3m of DEFRA's Trees for Climate funding to be added to the programme to enable tree planting to continue this winter across the region.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

- 2.1. Addition of £7.3m to the capital programme for Community Forest. DEFRA and England's Community Forests have allocated this amount to Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest for the delivery of tree planting and woodland creation through 2025/26.
- 2.2. Delegated authority for grant awards of DEFRA's Trees for Climate to third parties to be given to the Head of Environmental Planning. Head of Environmental Planning is acting Director of the Community Forest programme, working closely with the Project Manager and Project team to deliver Trees for Climate grants to eligible applicants across South Devon. Enabling grant awards to be authorised by the Head of Environmental Planning will enable informed decision making to be made swiftly, and to maximise the delivery of the programme throughout the year.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do nothing – Turn down the grant offer, deliver tree planting at a smaller scale through unsecured funding routes and exert internal revenue pressure on PCC through the refusal of external funding which resources the current team and operational costs. **Rejected** – as we have an agreed commitment from funders to enable the continued delivery of the programme this year, and the continued resourcing of the current Community Forest team embedded at PCC.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

Total Project cost up to £7.3M

Trees for Climate Fund - £7.3M

5. TIMESCALES

Receipt of DEFRA's Trees for Climate Fund 2025/26 – August 2025.

Delivery of tree planting in Plymouth and awarding of grants to landowners across South Devon and Dartmoor – November 2025 to March 2026.