

# PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH DEVON COMMUNITY FOREST 25 YEAR PLAN



## Background

Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest is a joint venture partnership programme consisting of Plymouth City Council (PCC), Devon County Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority, South Hams and West Devon, National Trust, and Woodland Trust. In 2020, a council project mandate was signed and the partnership submitted an expression of interest to England's Community Forests (ECF) team to access DEFRA's 'Trees for Climate' funding package to deliver new woodland and tree planting through March 2025. In 2021, DEFRA and ECF accepted Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest's (PSDCF) proposal, and PSDCF has since become England's 11<sup>th</sup> Community Forest with the vision:

***A new 21<sup>st</sup> century woodland network created by young people to inspire and support future generations of Plymouth and SW Devon. PSDCF will create space for nature, encourage enterprise, deliver a positive transition to net zero and enable young people to influence their futures.***

A requirement of DEFRA's Trees for Climate funding is that all Community Forests present an updated or new Forest Plan in 2025, aligned with objectives and targets locally through 2050.

## Benefits of the plan

The PSDCF Community Forest plan provides a regional strategic link with existing and anticipated policy, inclusive the Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy (2024), and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy obligations for Devon County (2025).

The PSDCF Plan enables joined up delivery and shared ambitions and vision across the city of Plymouth, Dartmoor National Park, and the National Landscapes of South Devon and Tamar Valley respectively.

The plan has the opportunity to deliver landscape scale habitat restoration and enhancement, contributing to flood mitigation and management, climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement, tree equity, mitigation of the urban heat island effect, and improving air quality.

The delivery of the plan will directly contribute to a number of existing projects and areas of work across Plymouth inclusive:

- **Habitat Banking** – linked to the new approach to biodiversity net gain required by the Environment Act. Funding secured through the sale of 'biodiversity units' as part of a developing habitat banking market linked to the new requirements of the Environment Act 2021.
- **National Marine Park** – the Community Forest is the green arc of the strategic natural space encircling the city and complements the ambition of the NMP to have people at its heart.

- **Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)** – potential payment scheme linked to a new approach to surface water management, delivering new SUDs features throughout the City.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Adoption of the PSDCF Plan by Plymouth City Council, along with respective partners, provides a platform upon which the 25 year objectives and targets can be communicated clearly and with appropriate support. This support will enable further funding to be secured, and for the significant benefits of the Community Forest programme to continue, affording enhancements and impact across a range of regional and local corporate objectives linked to social, environmental, and economic outcomes.

It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate change:

Approves the adoption of the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest 25 Year Plan

Reason: To enable the Council and its partners to maintain the Community Forest's participation in the 'Trees for Climate' delivery programme and beyond through 2050, and ensures PCC continues its progress to achieving net zero by 2030.