

HEART WOOD

Derbyshire's Heartwood
Community Forest
Our Forest Plan



Together, we're planting a future forest for Derbyshire.

1	Our Forest Plan	What we're building, why it matters, and the values and principles that will guide our work over the next 25 years.
2	Our Place in England's Community Forests	Our place in England's Community Forests – how we connect to England's wider network of community forests, plus the unique challenges and opportunities that shape our approach.
3	Strategic Aims	From harnessing nature recovery and supporting local communities, to improving access to green spaces and championing the long-term benefits of trees.
4	Policies	How our Forest Plan aligns with government targets, planning guidance, and regional and local policies.
5	Delivery	How we are using a growing network of partners, diverse funding streams, and a collaborative approach to put communities, landowners and land managers at the heart of delivery.
6	Get Involved	How you can play a part in creating a lasting forest for Derbyshire whether you're a landowner, farmer, business, school or part of a community group.

Our Vision:
A thriving network of trees, woodlands and hedgerows in Derbyshire, delivering a lasting legacy of benefits for our communities, environment and economy.

Our Mission:
To work with local landowners, land managers and communities to create woodlands that allow nature to thrive and bring people together to plan, plant, look after and enjoy.



Introducing Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest.

Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest (DHCF or 'The Forest') occupies a central position in England, between the National Forest to the south and Nottinghamshire's Greenwood Community Forest to the east. There are important connections to the Derwent Living Forest (a long-term Derbyshire Wildlife Trust project) to the west and the Peak District National Park to the north west. DHCF therefore provides the missing link by joining up Community Forests in the surrounding area, which are all part of the Midlands Forest Network.

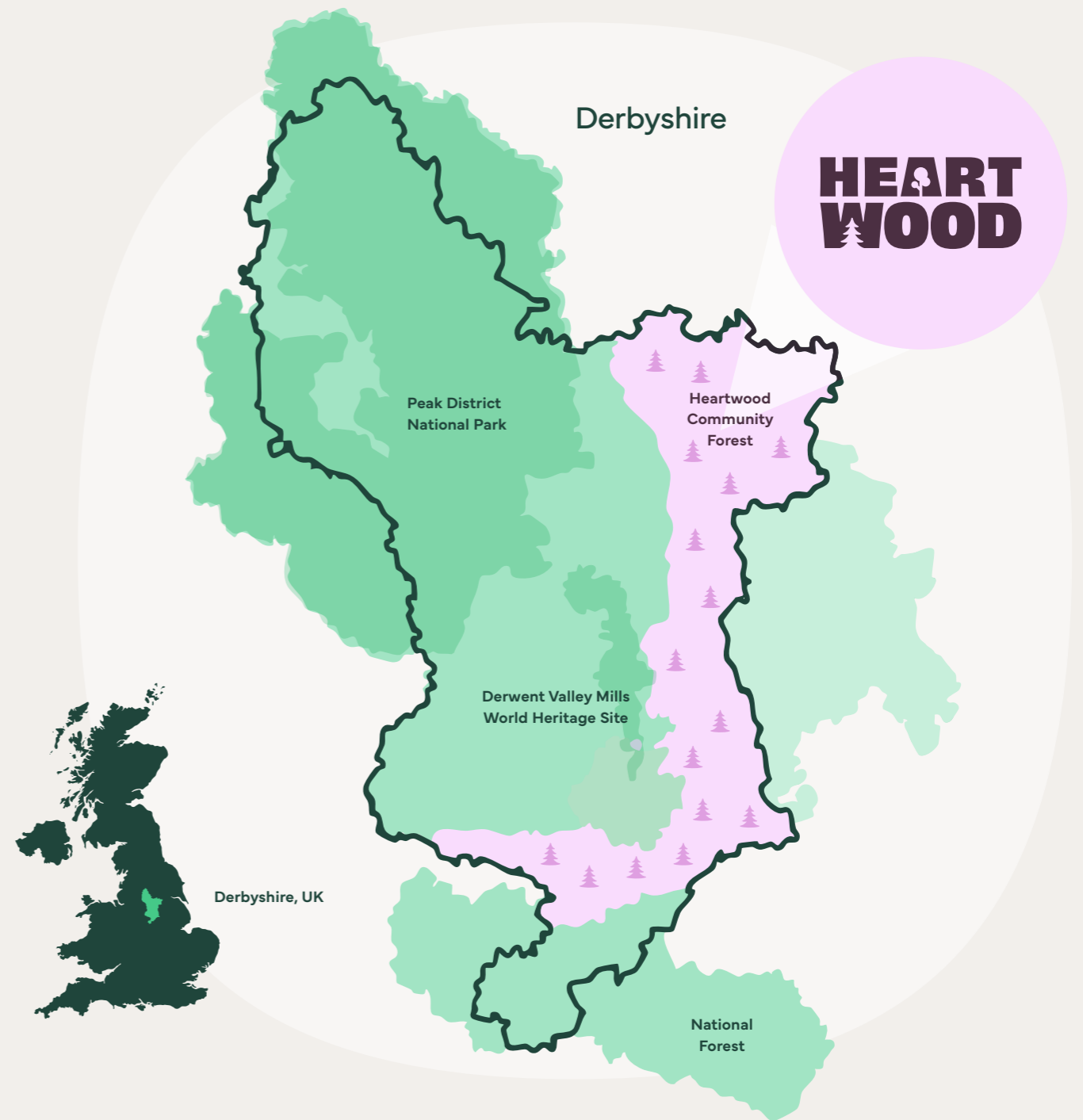
The Forest covers an area of approximately 750km² along the eastern edge and southern fringes of Derbyshire, including parts of Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Erewash, North East Derbyshire and South Derbyshire as well as the city of Derby.

DHCF was launched in 2024 and is hosted and coordinated by Derbyshire County Council, with the backing of a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Alongside the delivery of initial planting schemes, an early priority is to continue to build this collaborative partnership, engage with a wider group of stakeholders, and establish strong foundations within local communities.

The Forest area was chosen because:

- 1 Existing tree cover is low in many places, and many people lack access to local woodlands.
- 2 Many of the landscape areas have been impacted by past development, including mineral abstraction, and now have capacity for more trees, hedgerows and woodland.
- 3 Additional trees and woodland can have the greatest benefit to people, nature and our local economy.

The Forest Location:



The Forest Plan for England.

DHCF is a part of England's Community Forests, the leading woodland creation programme in the country.

This Forest Plan outlines the priorities and objectives for developing DHCF over the next 25 years and the principles that will be applied. England's Community Forest's key aims are supporting regeneration and growth, supporting local communities and creating better places.

Trees and woodland ecosystems are an important part of Derbyshire's varied landscapes and local identities and there is a strong framework of three pillars that underpin our plans:

Natural Capital Strategy for Derbyshire estimates the value that natural resources such as trees and woodlands contribute to Derbyshire's economic prosperity, leisure and tourism, health and wellbeing, nature recovery and making our communities more resilient to adverse weather such as heatwaves, droughts and flooding.

The Landscape Character of Derbyshire describes the area's National Character Areas and local Landscape Character Types and sets aspirations for tree planting, with guidelines to maintain and enhance the character of each distinctive landscape type.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire establishes priorities and measures for trees and woodland as well as the range of other habitats found here.

The goals for DHCF include increasing the tree canopy cover from 12.5% to 16.5% by 2050. As a Community Forest we aim to do this in a way that brings the maximum benefit for people, in planning, delivering and maintaining new trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

Trees and woodland within Derbyshire face challenges from disease, adverse weather, development and other pressures; our Community Forest and this Forest Plan are part of the solution to meeting these challenges.

The next two sections expand on the value of tree and woodland habitats and the opportunities that DHCF seeks to develop.

England's Community Forest's key aims are supporting regeneration and growth, supporting local communities and creating better places.



The Value of Trees & Woodlands.

Forest Research's report, commissioned by England's Community Forests, shows how trees and woodland habitats provide a wide range of benefits to people, nature, and our environment¹.

¹<https://englandscommunityforests.org.uk/why-is-our-work-important/>

The Derbyshire Natural Capital Strategy points to the financial benefits that trees and woodlands provide to the whole of Derbyshire. This assessed the private and public benefits that woodland (alongside other habitats) provides, particularly for timber production, water supply, carbon sequestration, air quality improvements, flood risk management, recreation and tourism, physical and mental health, education, volunteering and biodiversity.



Social benefits

Improved mental and physical health

- reducing stress
- promoting wellbeing
- reducing air pollution
- encouraging physical activity

Reduced heat-island effect

- lowering air temperature in urban areas

Increased shade

- providing protection from the sun, e.g. in school grounds, cycling and walking routes

Enhanced character of an area

- adding beauty to both urban and rural areas



Environmental benefits

Enhancing biodiversity

- providing opportunities for more connected habitats that support wildlife

Improved water quality and temperature

- reducing sediments and pollutants entering watercourses, and preventing rapid run-off

Stored carbon

- removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere

Improving soil health

- reducing soil erosion and compaction



Economic benefits

Reduced healthcare costs

- through air quality and improvements in wellbeing and active travel

Reduced flood risk

- increasing up-stream storage of water and slowing the flow of water entering drains and watercourses

Reduced energy costs

- shading can reduce cooling requirements

Increased property values and higher footfall in shopping areas

- mature street trees attract buyers, renters and visitors

Supporting forestry and timber businesses

- creating forestry-related jobs

Supporting farm operations

- livestock welfare through providing shelter, benefitting pollinators and natural predators



Cultural benefits

Supporting education and learning

- planting projects, rain gardens and forest schools promote and improve learning

Increased cultural heritage

- trees can create a cultural connection to place and history and inspire an artistic relationship with nature

Local food growing

- fruit trees, community orchards and trees on farms can improve the quality and availability of food

Trees for People and Places.

Many communities within the Forest have fewer accessible local woodlands than the UK average and consequently do not benefit from the social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits outlined on the previous page. Our aspiration is therefore to plant trees in places where they will have the greatest benefits.

There are also two targeted regeneration opportunities for the Forest, with communities that have historically contributed significantly (and in many cases still do) to the economy of the county and the UK. This includes the coalfields areas of eastern Derbyshire, and intensive agriculture, sand and gravel abstraction across the Trent Valley to the south. Many areas bear landscape scars from these activities and some communities have lost the industries and jobs that they were built on. Delivering the Community Forest here offers regeneration activities to re-establish the landscape character and serve both existing and new communities.



In coalfield areas that have lost their traditional industries there are opportunities for larger woodlands, which can recreate lost landscapes and promote a sense of local pride. Well managed woodlands also provide an opportunity to develop a local supply chain around tree and woodland management.



Where ongoing sand and gravel abstraction continues to shape the south of the county, uncoordinated and piecemeal development will lead to further fragmentation of the landscape and the communities who live there. Alongside initiatives such as the Trent Valley Vision, tree planting offers the opportunity to create new and improved landscapes, reconnect communities and provide economic benefits.

The rest of this Plan gives more detail about the people and places in the Forest and how the benefits of increased and better managed trees and woodland will be achieved.

Get a Grant to Plant.

Together we can make a big difference to people's lives and our natural environment.

Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest is for everyone who lives, visits or works here. We all have a part to play in its creation and in ensuring that everyone feels the benefits – both current and future generations.

Whether you own land, have ideas for a new community woodland or want an opportunity to volunteer, have a look at our website or get in touch with us for advice and inspiration.



www.derbyshire.gov.uk/heartwood

Our Mission:
To work with local land managers, landowners and communities to create woodlands that allow nature to thrive and bring people together to plan, plant, look after and enjoy.



A Proud Part of England's Community Forests.

England's Community Forests is the leading woodland creation force in the country.

We are a diverse and growing network of 15 unique Community Forests, each working in partnership with their local communities, landowners and businesses to help nature recover and regenerate the landscapes in and around our largest towns and cities. We work together to support each other and amplify our voice nationally.

Our roots go back over 30 years, with Community Forests now forming the biggest environmental regeneration initiative in England. We're recognised in the Planning Policy Framework and are highlighted as part of the Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment, playing a key role in shaping woodland creation and nature recovery policy both nationally and locally.

We provide free advice and support to landowners and land managers to help plan, fund, and plant new woodland of all sizes in both rural and urban settings, drawing on local expertise and people power. Our long-term commitment to the areas in which we work is ensuring that trees and woodlands are at the very heart of communities up and down the country, unlocking countless benefits for people and planet.

Our aims

Supporting regeneration and growth

Making towns and cities more attractive places in which to live, work and do business; attracting new investment and creating jobs.

Supporting local communities

Harnessing the enthusiasm, commitment, and knowledge of local people; helping them improve their local area and enhancing health and wellbeing.

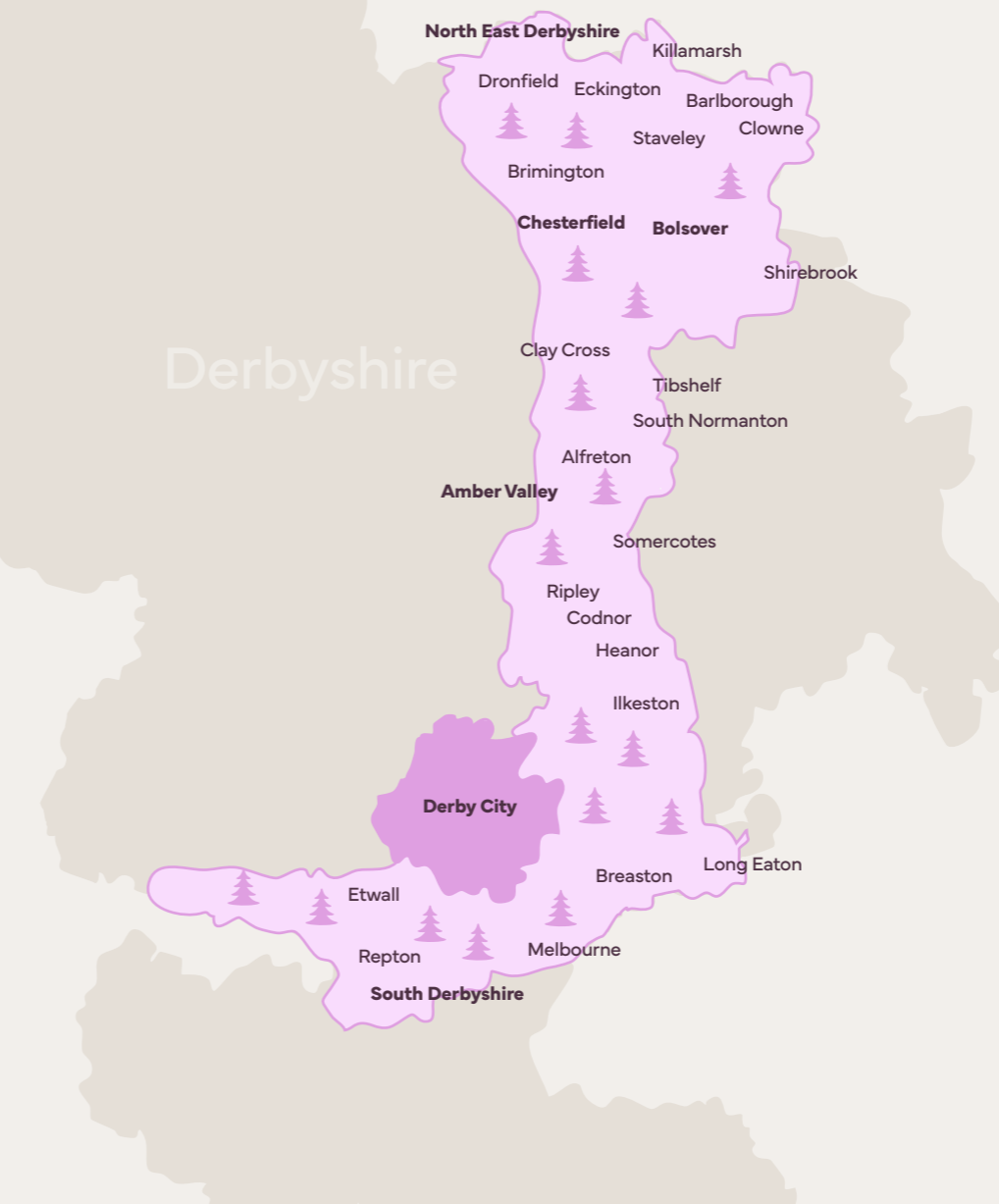
Creating better places

Enriching and enhancing biodiversity and the environment, creating new facilities for recreation and leisure and making our towns and cities more sustainable and resilient to a changing climate.

Where is Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest?

Approximately 612,000 people live within the Forest (around 57% of Derbyshire and Derby's population of just over 1 million people).

Communities across Heartwood:



In common with all of England's Community Forests planting schemes, outside the boundary could be considered on a case-by-case basis if they provide strong benefits to people, nature or the economy of the Forest.

Key features of the area include:

Urban and built-up areas

The City of Derby, large towns, market towns and rural villages.

Open country

From extremely productive agricultural land to grazing land and floodplains.

Parks, country parks and nature reserves

Including urban parks in Derby and Chesterfield, land connected to stately homes and country parks on former coalfields.

Transport corridors

M1, A38, A50, A52, A61 as well as north-south and east-west rail network.

River catchments

Parts of the Rother and Doe Lea, Derwent, Erewash, Trent and Dove catchments.

Canals

Trent and Mersey Cromford and Chesterfield Canals.

Former collieries

A significant band of former colliery sites from Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh in the north to Ilkeston in the south, including both deep mines and open cast sites.

Industrial estates, mineral abstraction, and manufacturing facilities

Ranging from large manufacturing centres in Derby to local industrial and commercial sites in each district. There are limestone quarries to the north and sand and gravel sites to the south.

Tree canopy cover in the Forest is currently only 12.5%, which is below the UK average and the Government's target. Our priority is to increase tree cover, focusing on areas with the biggest benefit for nature, landscape and people.

Tree and Woodland Contribution to Derbyshire's Varied Landscape.

Natural England's Character Map of England identifies broad tracts of countryside with similar characteristics, known as National Character Areas (NCA), and describes the landscape features that give local distinctiveness.

DHCF covers three of these areas, which inform the current tree and woodland character as well as the most appropriate ways that trees and woodland are developed.

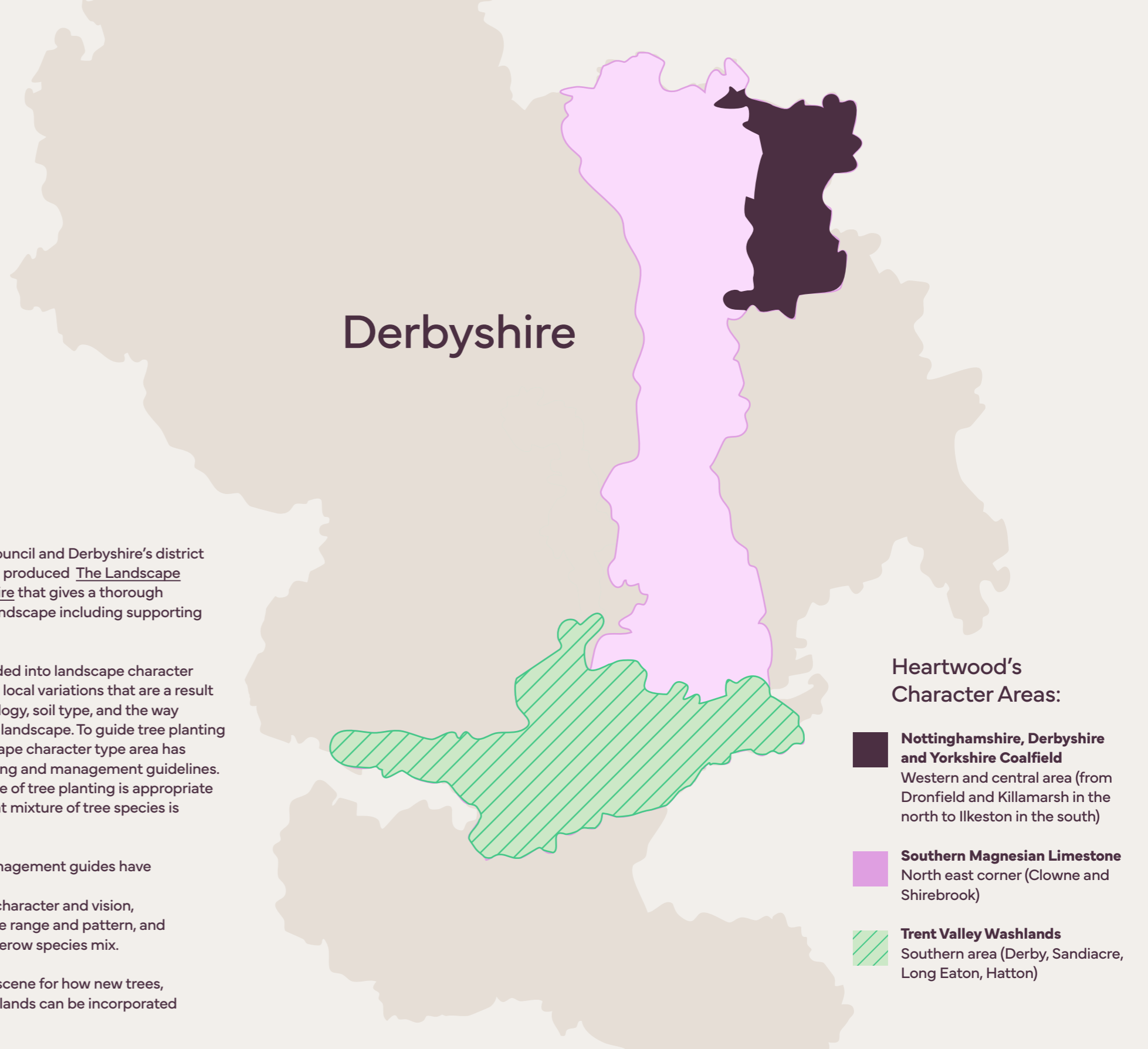
Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire's district and borough councils produced [The Landscape Character of Derbyshire](#) that gives a thorough description of each landscape including supporting photographs.

Each NCA is sub-divided into landscape character types, which describe local variations that are a result of the underlying geology, soil type, and the way people have used the landscape. To guide tree planting activities each landscape character type area has comprehensive planting and management guidelines. These show what scale of tree planting is appropriate for each area and what mixture of tree species is typically found.

Tree planting and management guides have information about:

- Woodland and tree character and vision,
- Typical woodland size range and pattern, and
- Woodland and hedgerow species mix.

These guides set the scene for how new trees, hedgerows and woodlands can be incorporated into the landscape.



Derbyshire

Heartwood's Character Areas:

- Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield**
Western and central area (from Dronfield and Killamarsh in the north to Ilkeston in the south)
- Southern Magnesian Limestone**
North east corner (Clowne and Shirebrook)
- Trent Valley Washlands**
Southern area (Derby, Sandiacre, Long Eaton, Hatton)

The map above summarises the three NCAs in the DHCF and lists the landscape area types found in each.

Landscape Types and the Implications for Tree Planting Schemes.

For example, travelling several miles from west to east in Bolsover (north Derbyshire) would take you from "Wooded Farmlands" into an urban setting and then into "Limestone Farmlands" before entering a narrow "Limestone Gorge". You would notice a change in the geology, soil type and the tree species present.

Samples from planting and management guidelines (Table 1) show how woods and hedgerows change and vary across these areas and describe the most appropriate tree planting schemes that could be considered in the Forest.

Wooded farmland (Coalfield)

A well-wooded landscape of small, organic woodlands, some of ancient origin, with scattered hedgerow and dense watercourse trees.

Urban

Trees along streets, in gardens and public spaces. May be large areas with relatively low tree cover.

No particular landscape character to preserve, but significant opportunities to enhance built-up areas through trees and other planting.

Limestone farmland (Magnesian limestone)

An open, arable landscape punctuated by the occasional very large plantation woodland, often on ancient woodland sites, with small tree groups around farmsteads and settlement.

Limestone gorges (Magnesian limestone)

Dense overhanging semi-natural woodland, some of ancient origin, with scattered watercourse trees.

Woodland vision

Widespread small-medium woodlands (0.5-20 hectares) of irregular shape.

Woodland vision

Opportunity to manage existing tree stock in urban areas and plant new trees as part of development proposals, along streets or within existing urban green space.

Woodland vision

Occasional very large plantations (over 50 hectares).

Woodland vision

Widespread small woodlands (0.5-5 hectares).

Tree vision

Densely scattered hedgerow and dense watercourse trees. The opportunity exists to manage existing woodlands and connect these through new tree and woodland planting including hedgerows.

Tree vision

Species that do not produce significant amounts of pollen.

The opportunity exists to increase urban tree cover through new street trees, as part of new residential development including Sustainable Drainage Schemes, the creation of community orchards, and more trees within existing parks and other urban green space.

Tree vision

Localised amenity tree groups. The opportunity exists to manage existing plantation woodland to diversify species composition and increase biodiversity. New tree and hedgerow planting should be considered, particularly in relation to these existing large woodlands, to create better connectivity through the landscape. Urban growth around the main settlements provides the opportunity for more tree planting as part of well-designed green infrastructure.

Tree vision

Scattered watercourse trees
This is a landscape of more limited opportunity but there is scope to manage existing tree and woodland cover and extend and reinforce as appropriate with characteristic native trees.

* Each DHCF planting scheme is considered individually, taking account of a wide range of criteria. Applying these guidelines will ensure the most appropriate interventions that deliver "the right tree in the right place" and help to reinforce the underlying landscape character of an area.

People and Trees in the Heartwood Community Forest.

Community Forests are distinct from other forest programmes because they are delivered so that trees and woodlands meet specific community needs. That is why we think about both where and why new trees are needed and how they are planted and maintained.

Where and why?

Accessible woodlands provide local opportunities for exercise and an improved sense of wellbeing. They are places people can go to escape the heat during heatwaves.

Within the Forest area we have identified communities without many local woodlands, with higher levels of poor health, and which had higher temperatures during previous heatwaves². Creation of new woodland in these areas will be particularly beneficial.

There are other areas within the Forest where a focus on environmental regeneration could kickstart or work alongside other improvement projects to benefit the lives of local people.

How?

When communities help design, plant and look after trees they have a better sense of ownership and pride in their local environment. Community Forest schemes often engage local people in the design, implementation, and management of new woodlands. This can include community planning, planting days and celebration events held in new woodlands. People can connect with nature by getting involved, or enjoying the new spaces created.

Whichever way people choose to engage, woodlands offer the opportunities for healthier lifestyles and an improved sense of wellbeing from being close to trees.

Tree and woodland creation in connection with other regeneration activities can help set the scene for greater investment and economic recovery. In some areas there are strong existing community groups who already look after woodland for community benefit. We will encourage these and work with partners to support more groups as the Forest grows.

We aim to provide a range of opportunities, routes and support for people to get involved. We will be flexible in our approach, to reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities we work with.

² E.g. The Woodland Trust's "Space for People" and Tree Equity Score developed by American Forests, Woodland Trust and Centre for Sustainable Healthcare

Connect. Be active. Take notice. Keep learning. Give.

Connecting "where and why" we need woodland, with "how" we will deliver it will give people the opportunity to "connect, be active, take notice, keep learning and give", the five ways to mental wellbeing expressed by the New Economics Foundation.

Woodlands created within Community Forests can look very different according to local circumstances, for example working with:

Children

Younger children through schools and other educational settings to nurture a love of nature at an early age and shaded spaces at schools.

Youth

Young people and support charities to provide opportunities for volunteering, personal wellbeing and access to the outdoors.

Higher education

Colleges and universities on learning, skills and research opportunities.

Food growing groups

Community food groups to create orchards and other food growing.

Support groups

Older people and support groups to create places of respite and recovery.

Principal Tree and Woodland Challenges.

There are three main challenges to trees in the DHCF area.

Disease and pests are already a major threat.

Ash trees are the second most common tree in Derbyshire as a whole and can be the most dominant species in limestone areas. Ash Dieback has therefore had a significant impact in areas of the Forest and managing this safely will cost tens of million pounds over the next 20 years.

Other current threats include water mould and needle blight as well as high levels of grey squirrel and deer in certain locations. Additionally, pests and diseases once confined to continental Europe have the potential to become threats here due to globalised movements of goods and changing weather patterns which give pests and diseases more chances to thrive in the UK.

Changing weather patterns threaten both existing and new trees.

Both mature trees and recently planted trees can suffer from increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather conditions. For example;

- Long periods of dry weather, which can harm both young and old trees, as well as hardening the ground so that rainfall runs off without reaching tree roots. Dry weather also increases the chance of wildfires, which can destroy areas of woodland very quickly.
- Unusually high air temperatures, which can scorch leaves or force trees to drop their leaves early.
- Warmer and wetter winters, which can increase the chance of pest species surviving.
- Water-logged ground, which can deprive tree roots of oxygen.

This has implications both for tree planting (where greater cost may be incurred, and greater losses can occur) as well as for management of existing woodland.

Trees and woodlands often lose out in competitions around changing land use.

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are lost as land is redeveloped through urbanisation and other housing growth, commercial and industrial development as well as construction of new roads and other infrastructure.

Changes in agricultural land use (e.g. industrialisation or conversion to large-scale solar farms) can also remove trees from the landscape unless proactive steps are taken to preserve existing woodland or create new woodland or hedgerows.

The response to these challenges will require:

- Active management of pests and diseases, robust biosecurity to prevent further accidental introductions and building resilience into the treescape by increasing the diversity of trees.
- Choice of tree species that are resilient to the likely conditions they will be exposed to both now and in the future, together with robust planting and aftercare techniques to increase survival rates.
- Application of this Forest Plan in local planning documents and decisions to prevent overall loss of tree canopy cover.

Tree and Woodland Priorities.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire highlights the importance of a 'mosaic' of different habitat types, including upland moorland & lowland heath, woodland and trees, grassland, rivers, river corridors and other watercourses, farmland, wetlands and the urban environment and infrastructure.

The LNRS outlines the place of trees and woodland within each habitat type and has six specific priorities for trees and woodlands, together with supporting measures, shown in the table below.



Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities and measures:

1: Ancient trees

Ancient woodland, historic wood, pasture parkland and veteran trees are safeguarded, managed and in good ecological condition.

- Identifying and managing sites, including using specialist techniques for older trees.
- Restoring plantations on ancient woodland sites.
- Carefully considering other species associated with ancient woodland.

2: Management

Existing woodland is well managed and better for wildlife.

- Introducing woodland management plans in accordance with UK Forestry Standards (UKFS).
- Managing and controlling invasive non-native species, pests and diseases.
- Creating and improving woodland structure and diversity.

3: Connectivity

New woodland creation delivers more, bigger and better-connected woodland, maximising ecosystem service benefits.

- Creating new woodland that is UK Forestry Standard compliant.
- Buffering existing woodland sites with new woodland surrounding it.
- Increasing the range of habitats around and between woodlands.
- Identifying ways to connect existing woodland.
- Incorporating nature-based solutions and ecosystem services into new woodland.
- Encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate species.

4: Reinforcing biodiversity

Increase trees in the wider landscape where they can reinforce the local character as well as contributing to biodiversity.

- Including field trees, fruit trees, hedgerow trees and watercourse trees, and agroforestry.
- Looking after existing trees and hedgerows along boundaries.
- Encouraging appropriate trees along watercourses to provide cooling and other benefits.
- Introducing agroforestry to increase tree cover in farmed landscapes.
- Identifying, restoring and creating new orchards.

5: Safeguarding

Trees in the wider landscape are positively managed, and ancient and veteran trees are safeguarded.

- Managing and protecting trees including ancient and veteran trees.

6: Urban shading

Urban trees become more common throughout towns and cities, for amenity, urban shading, and air quality benefits as well as biodiversity.

- Managing street trees positively to extend lifetimes.
- Incorporating new trees into streets, open spaces, gardens in both new developments and existing areas.

Our five key themes underpin the strategic ways we aim to improve Derbyshire and the lives of the people who live here.



Delivery Themes and Strategic Aims.

DHCF is underpinned by five key themes, which describe the contributions that we see the forest making to the people and places of Derbyshire.

1: Nature

Harnessing trees, hedgerows and woodlands to allow nature to flourish. We have demonstrated the need for more trees and woodlands and understand the role they can play in nature recovery.

Using the framework of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and our knowledge of Derbyshire's varied landscape character we will focus efforts on creating more, bigger and better connected woodland in a way that increases biodiversity.

- Safeguard areas of ecological importance and create new habitats that improve ecosystems and benefit wildlife.
- Protect ancient and veteran trees and create the right conditions for them to thrive, recognising their ecological, cultural and historical value.
- Manage existing woodlands in line with the principles set out in the UK Forestry Standard with the aim of improving species, structural and genetic diversity, increasing resilience, and supporting biodiversity.

2: Communities and the local economy

Using tree planting and woodland creation to support urban and rural regeneration. We will encourage tree planting and woodland creation that enable urban and rural regeneration, for example by improving the attractiveness and liveability of local areas or reducing the risks of flooding and overheating. This will include strategic projects, such as involvement in the Trent Valley Partnership. We will also promote opportunities to improve the local supply chain around the planting and maintenance of woodland and income from appropriate harvesting and use of woodland products, supporting jobs and improving livelihoods.

- Integrate trees into nature recovery and green infrastructure planning, working with developers, planners, highways teams and other partners.
- Work with landowners and managers to improve the biodiversity of existing woodlands through active management.
- Aim to use local suppliers, reduce waste and conserve resources, promoting a circular economy and strengthening both business and community resilience.
- Support initiatives that enhance local markets for timber, improve food security and support agroforestry practices.
- Work with partners to identify skills shortages, promote forestry-related careers and create employment opportunities.

3: People

Maximising impact and ownership through engagement and involvement. We will build relationships with the groups and organisations who can play their part in creating, maintaining and benefiting from areas of new woodland.

- Support landowners and managers in the active management of existing trees and woodland. Support volunteer groups, volunteering and volunteer training.
- Where possible, involve communities in the design, planting and management of trees and woodlands, and support community-led nature conservation schemes.
- Plant more trees in neighbourhoods and the wider countryside, increasing tree canopy coverage across the Community Forest area.

4: Access

Improving access and connection with nature for improved health and wellbeing.

- Through the creation of new woodland, we will increase the percentage of the population who have access to local woods. Alongside this we will work to maximise the number of people receiving health benefits from trees and woodland.
- Plant trees where people live, work and enjoy leisure time, taking into account need and equity.
- Promote regular interaction with natural environments to improve health and wellbeing.

5: Safeguarding

Communication: talking about the benefits of trees and woodlands for people and place.

- We will use opportunities to allow people creating and maintaining woodland to talk about how they and their communities benefit.
- Celebrate the benefits of trees, woodlands and wider green spaces, running activities to engage and grow participation.
- Provide educational and hands-on learning experiences for all ages, promoting a deeper understanding, appreciation and connection to nature.

Looking Ahead.

By establishing DHCF, our mission is to work with local landowners, land managers and communities to create woodlands that allow nature to thrive and bring people together to plan, plant, look after and enjoy.

Objective for 2050

The primary DHCF objective is to increase tree canopy cover from the current figure of 12.5% to 16.5% by 2050, in line with national targets and environmental objectives. In the process we also aim to increase:

- The number of woodlands under active management,
- Urban tree canopy cover, recognising the particular benefits of urban trees,
- The number of households within easy travelling distance of local woodland, and
- The strength of the forest and woodland sector.

In setting our objectives we recognise that the appropriate number of trees varies by landscape type and the increase may be very little in some areas, as outlined in Section 2.3. Our approach is therefore to prioritise tree planting in areas that bring the greatest benefit to people (e.g. in urban areas) and encourage appropriate types of tree planting, which may include supporting hedgerows rather than plantations, for example. This is described as the right tree in the right place for the right reason.

Key Principles

In common with other Community Forests, we share the following principles:

- Engage and involve local communities, using trees and woodland to help address inequalities and grow local action.
- Work as a broad-based partnership, to maximise involvement, expertise, skills and resources.
- Prioritise tree and woodland establishment in areas of greatest benefit and need, making best use of resources.
- Plant the right tree in the right place for the right reason, considering other natural habitats and land use patterns.
- Manage existing trees and woodlands in accordance with best practice.
- Adopt an evidence-led approach, monitoring delivery against targets, reporting on impact and celebrating achievements.

WE AIM:

To increase the canopy cover to 16.5% by 2050.




Key Policies.



“There are many advantages to planting trees on our land. Not only does it provide the opportunity to increase the biodiversity on the site but also leaves a wonderful legacy for the community.”
Participating Landowner in Wirksworth

The following policies, strategies and legislation are the most significant in setting the framework within which the DHCF will operate, although this is not an exhaustive list.

National policies

<p>The UK Government’s Environmental Improvement Plan sets out the target to “Increase tree canopy and woodland cover from 14.5% to 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050”.</p>		<p>Our Plan is in line with this target.</p>
<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (updated in 2025) sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It states that “an approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications”.</p>		<p>This Plan can help drive the planting of additional trees and creation of new hedgerows and woodlands through the planning process.</p>
<p>The Environment Act (2021) puts strengthened duties on to public bodies to enhance and protect biodiversity.</p>		<p>Delivering objectives linked to the Forest Plan will help public bodies achieve their duties</p>

Regional and local policies

Derbyshire’s Natural Capital Strategy sets the scene for the role that natural assets like trees and woodland have in Derbyshire to produce economic benefits, for example through flood prevention, biodiversity services, carbon sequestration and the forestry industry.

Derbyshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy will provide the framework for trees and woodlands, set in the context of Derbyshire’s other habitats. This provides six clear priorities (Section 2.6) to guide the protection and preservation of existing trees and woodland and the creation of new ones.

The six priorities from the LNRS will be interpreted at a local level through the lens of **The Landscape Character of Derbyshire**. The tree and woodland management guidelines for each Landscape Character Type will guide the tree species chosen and the appropriate hedgerow or woodland size and pattern.

Local plans (owned by district and borough councils) and **neighbourhood plans** (normally owned by a town or parish council) will provide further guidance regarding local aspirations for an area. All public authorities are also required to report and act under a Strengthened Biodiversity Duty, from the Environment Act 2021. While it is a non-statutory document, this Forest Plan will support these plans when it is used as a material consideration in planning decisions.

The East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) also has work programmes to ensure that nature thrives in the region, delivered through its Nature and Biodiversity Taskforce.

Collaboration and Partnership are Central to Heartwood Forest's Success.



Building a Delivery Partnership.

Collaboration and partnership working are central to the Forest. We work with a wide range of public, private, and community organisations, from local to national levels, and from delivery to strategy.

DHCF is a growing partnership coordinated by Derbyshire County Council. All partners share three core aims:

1. Promoting and championing DHCF
2. Identifying opportunities to increase tree and woodland cover on land they own or manage
3. Developing and delivering plans for sustainable management of existing woodland

Our partners include Defra, the environment sector across Derbyshire, and other sectors to achieve shared outcomes (for example the health sector, academics and researchers). Important local partners include communities, landowners, managers and farmers, businesses, and schools and universities.

A priority within our first Action Plan will be to develop and grow collaborative working, both to enable the DHCF area to continue to secure national funding and to maximise synergies through joint working,

securing additional resources. Initially, a broad-based Advisory Group has been formed to support delivery of the 5-year Plan. Meeting quarterly, this action-oriented group brings together officers from local authorities, representatives from technical and funding organisations and the community sector.

As DHCF is one of England's Community Forests we work as a network to support each other and amplify our voice nationally. We are also an active member of the Midlands Forest Network, a strategic regional initiative. As we are a new Community Forest an early priority is to develop governance arrangements and medium term plans. These will adapt over time as the partnership becomes more mature and this Forest Plan will be updated to reflect this as necessary.

In addition, we are looking to work with stakeholders who share our aims. In addition to the three core aims above there are specific roles and opportunities for other stakeholders to play.

Stakeholder	Roles and opportunities
Other local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish local priorities to champion trees and woodland, including developing tree and woodland strategies, local planning statement and in sharing best practice. • Consider this Plan when making planning decisions, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. • Work with the DHCF team to engage and support other landowners or managers.
East Midlands Combined County Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the DHCF through programmes to improve biodiversity and help nature to thrive. • Act as a strategic champion for green finance to improve tree and woodland cover.
National and regional agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations with remits covering heritage, woodland and forests, wildlife, health (including the NHS) and economic development can work together to maximise collaboration and delivery of co-benefits.
Town and parish councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the DHCF team on local schemes. • Promote opportunities to local residents, as well as promoting the social, community and health benefits of trees and woodland
Landowners, land managers and farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider opportunities to introduce more trees and woodland on land and engage with DHCF for guidance support and technical expertise. • Integrate trees and woodland into productive landscapes.
Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with planning regulations concerning the protection, management, and replacement of trees. • Integrate trees, hedgerows and woodland into new developments, linking in with opportunities offered by the DHCF team.
Schools, colleges and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use learning opportunities to promote the benefits of trees and woodlands. • Undertake research projects supporting DHCF objectives.
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote opportunities for staff volunteering. • Donate to local tree-planting work (e.g. through Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability work).
Voluntary, community and faith sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote tree planting activities to volunteers and in communications (e.g. the role of trees and woodlands in wellbeing or other priorities linked to the organisation). • Explore ways to connect the organisation's aims and objectives with trees, woodlands and other nature connections.
Residents and individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and take up opportunities to volunteer to plant trees or donate to local schemes. • Enjoy opportunities to explore and benefit from trees and woodlands in DHCF.
Investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with DHCF to create and test green finance mechanisms to channel funding into trees and woodlands to deliver social, environmental and economic objectives.
Forestry supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with DHCF to explore opportunities to develop skills, jobs, markets and the value of timber products within the region.

Funding Delivery of the Forest Plan.

Delivery of this Forest Plan will require significant additional funding to achieve the benefits for Derbyshire's people, communities and nature. Defra's Trees for Climate programme has been a significant source of funding for DHCF and other Community Forests.

In the future no single source of funding is expected to be sufficient, so a diversified funding approach is needed to reduce reliance on a single funder.

Opportunities will include:

- Dedicated tree and woodland grants (e.g. for planning, establishment or management).
- Other grant funding.
- Private investment through green finance mechanisms.
- Funding through the planning system, as part of development.
- Payments for natural capital / ecosystem services, (e.g. through broader landmanagement schemes).
- Devolved government investment through EMCCA.
- Income from commercial forestry activities.
- Corporate sponsorship, donations etc., (e.g. Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability programmes).
- Personal and charitable donations, including crowd funding.

All relevant funding and financing will be pursued by the core team within the scope of the Forest Plan.

Using the Forest Plan

The DHCF team and partners will use the plan to:

- Work together and find new ways to cooperate to achieve the vision.
- Guide the development of schemes and how we work with landowners, farmers and communities.
- Put together funding bids and attract investment to deliver more.
- Guide the ongoing work to establish and look after trees, woodland, hedgerows and other habitats – creating a culture that values trees and woodlands.
- Deliver specific schemes that support other relevant local strategies and plans, such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and local nature strategies.
- Help to drive positive change through the planning process by securing recognition within local plans in support of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Contribute to the neighbourhood planning process, supporting local people's priorities and aspirations for their community.
- Assist in communications to raise awareness, showcase and demonstrate the importance of trees and woodlands for all

Measuring the Impact of Our Collective Actions.

In common with the other members of England's Community Forests DHCF will measure its impact through a range of core metrics, as well as collecting additional data and stories.

We will collate standard baseline information that describes DHCF, by providing a flavour of scale, people, landscape and constraint/opportunity for woodland creation:

Area: Total area of land.

Urban vs Rural: Area of urban and rural land and the percentage split between urban and rural.

Population: Total population and the population density.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation: Proportion of Lower Super Output Areas in the lowest decile.

Protected Landscapes: Number of protected landscapes and the area they cover (also the percentage of total land area).

Sensitivity for Woodland Creation: Area of Low Sensitivity Land and the percentage of total land which meets this criterion.

1. Tree and Woodland Cover

- a) Total hectares
- b) Percentage of total land area

2. Tree and Woodland Establishment

- a) Total hectares
- b) Total number of trees

3. Woodland Management

- a) Percentage of woodland sustainably managed
- b) Hectares of woodland restoration

4. Public/Community Engagement

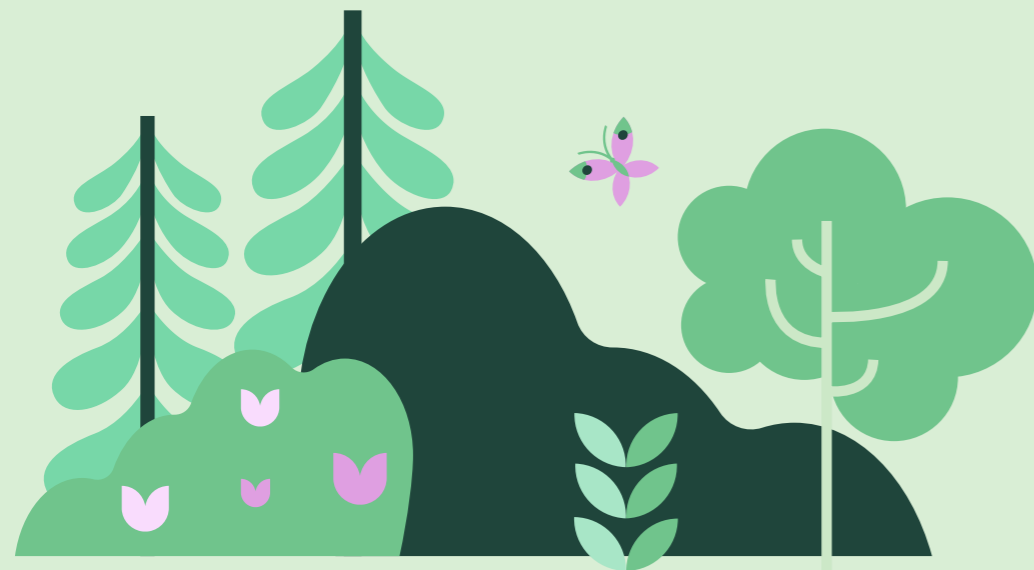
- a) Number of people directly engaged in the core work of the Community Forest (tree planting, woodland management, other activities etc)

5. Funding / Source of Funding

- a) Total funding (£s)
- b) Percentage from non-public sector sources

6. Natural Capital

- a) Headline overall figure (£)
- b) Potentially also 'return on investment' of this benefit £s to the total funding
- c) Natural Flood Management - hectares established in areas of high NFM potential
- d) Public Access- households within 500m of an accessible woodland of at least 0.1 hectares
- e) Enhancing Wildlife – hectares of ecological network for woodland species added
- f) Contribution to net zero - increase in carbon sequestration capacity
- g) Ecosystem service assessment - net change in ecosystem service capacity (scores are indices) for air purification, flood mitigation, local cooling and noise regulation



Updating the Plan

We will keep this Plan up to date, making sure that it reflects any relevant changes in legislation, Government targets, governance changes or changes to partner organisations.

We can only
achieve our vision
by working together.



Join Us.

Find out more about Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest on our website.

Get in touch with us to find out how you can play your part, whether you're a landowner, manager or farmer, a business, school or local authority partner or an individual or part of a community group. We all have a role in creating a new forest that works for all of us.
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/heartwood



www.derbyshire.gov.uk/heartwood

Landscape character areas and landscape character types in the DHCF area

Landscape Character Area	Overview	Landscape character types
Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield ³ (National Character Area 38)	<p>The Derbyshire Coalfield is located in the east of the county, stretching from the outskirts of Sheffield in the north, to the Trent Valley in the south and is a broad belt of low-lying land, approximately 10km wide and 45km in length. It forms part of the greater Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield region, which embraces the major industrial centres of Sheffield, Wakefield and Leeds.</p> <p>The Derbyshire Coalfield character area exhibits physical, historical and ecological characteristics that are similar throughout most of its landscape types.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wooded Hills and Valleys 2. Coalfield Village Farmlands 3. Plateau Estate Farmlands 4. Estate Farmlands 5. Coalfield Estatelands 6. Riverside Meadows 7. Wooded Farmlands
Southern Magnesian Limestone ⁴ (National Character Area 30)	<p>The Southern Magnesian Limestone Character Area occurs in the northeast of the county as a narrow belt of elevated land, approximately 10km wide by 20km in length, which runs between Barlborough in the north to Hardwick and Pleasley in the south. This is part of the great band of magnesian limestone that outcrops just north of Nottingham and extends to Bedale in North Yorkshire.</p> <p>The topography of the land strongly contrasts with the industrial coalfields in the west, and the low-lying regions in Nottinghamshire to the east.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limestone Farmlands 2. Limestone Gorges
Trent Valley Washlands ⁵ (National Character Area 69)	<p>The Trent Valley Washlands constitute a distinct, broad, linear band which follows the middle reaches of the slow flowing River Trent, forming a crescent from Burton on Trent in the west to Long Eaton in the east. It also includes the lower reaches of the rivers Dove and Derwent. To the north the valley rises up to the South Derbyshire Claylands and the Derbyshire Coalfield, whilst the south is bounded by the Melbourne Parklands and Mease/Sence Lowlands.</p> <p>This is a somewhat fragmented landscape of pastoral and arable land, intermixed with urban development, transport routes and localised mineral extraction. The rivers regularly flood over the adjacent land creating a temporary but very different scene.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lowland Village Farmlands 2. Wet Pasture Meadows 3. Riverside Meadows

³ www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/part-1.4-nottinghamshire-derbyshire-and-yorkshire-coalfield.pdf

⁴ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/part-1.5-southern-magnesian-limestone.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/part-1.7-trent-valley-washlands.pdf>

Find out more about Derbyshire's
Heartwood Community Forest at
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/heartwood

