



**North East  
Community  
Forest**

# NECF 5-Year Delivery Plan (2025-2030)

Action Plan | Business Plan | Communications & Marketing Plan



Approved by the North East Community Forest Partnership on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026

# Table of Contents

## Executive Summary

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 About the NECF
- 1.2 Impact and Achievements 2021-2025
- 1.3 Forest Plan Strategic Framework for Delivery

### 2. Action Plan

- 2.1 Purpose of the Action Plan
- 2.2 Key Targets
- 2.3 Priority Actions

### 3. Business Plan

- 3.1 Purpose of the Business Plan
- 3.2 Governance Model and NECF Agreement
- 3.3 Funding and Income Streams (2026-2030)
- 3.4 SWOT Analysis
- 3.5 Our Forest Team
- 3.6 North East Community Forest Partnership Structure
- 3.7 NECF and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

### 4. Marketing and Communications Plan

- 4.1 Purpose of the Marketing and Communications Plan
- 4.2 How Communications Supports Delivery
- 4.3 Objectives and Outcomes
- 4.4 Communication and Engagement Approach
- 4.5 Channels and Tactics
- 4.6 Measurement and Evaluation
- 4.7 Roles and Responsibilities

### 5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

### 6. Risk Management

## Appendices

Appendix A: Action Plan Table (2025-2030)

Appendix B: Monitoring Framework

Appendix C: Risk Register

Appendix D: Glossary and Abbreviations

## Executive Summary

The North East Community Forest (NECF) Delivery Plan (2025 – 2030) sets out how we will turn the long-term vision of the Forest Plan (2025–2050) into practical action over the next five years. It provides a clear roadmap for delivery, explaining what will be achieved, how it will be resourced, and how progress will be monitored and reported.

This plan is designed to give partners, funders, stakeholders, local authorities and communities confidence in the NECF’s approach to working together to create greener, healthier, and more resilient places across the North East of England. It explains the priorities for 2025–2030 and the steps needed to make sure trees, woodlands, and hedgerows become a central part of our towns, cities, and countryside.

The Delivery Plan is built around three connected elements:

- **Action Plan**  
The practical steps, targets, and responsibilities for delivery.
- **Business Plan**  
Governance, funding, and capacity to sustain progress.
- **Marketing and Communications Plan**  
How we will engage with funders, communities, local authorities, landowners, and partners.

By working collaboratively, the NECF aims to help tackle climate change, restore nature and improve health and wellbeing. This plan sets out how we will achieve these outcomes and strengthen partnerships to ensure long-term success.

### Headline Priorities (2025–2030)

- Create and establish new woodland, Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) and hedgerows in priority areas aligned with Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and Tree Equity principles, ensuring benefits reach the communities that need them most.
- Promote the restoration and sustainable management of existing woodlands to build resilience, protect biodiversity and deliver long-term social and environmental value.
- Engage communities, schools, local authorities and landowners at scale, placing inclusion and youth involvement at the heart of delivery and stewardship.
- Secure diversified, multi-year funding and strengthen governance and delivery capacity, enabling NECF to plan confidently and maintain momentum across planting seasons.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About the NECF

The NECF is a regional partnership established in 2021 as part of England's Community Forest Network. It brings together local authorities, landowners, environmental organisations, community groups, businesses, regional and national bodies. All parties share a mission: to grow, connect and care for the region's trees, woodlands and hedgerows, creating a greener, healthier and more resilient places across the North East.

By coordinating action across administrative boundaries, the partnership aims to delivery lasting benefits for people, nature and climate. This Delivery Plan builds on achievements to date and sets out how the NECF aims to deliver the Forest Plan objectives from 2025 to 2030.

The NECF covers an area of around 1,246 square miles (3,235km<sup>2</sup>), spanning the full geographical boundaries of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland, as well as the main urban and coastal parts of County Durham. To strengthen ecological connections with surrounding landscapes, a 10-mile "halo" buffer zone extends into the more rural areas of Durham and Northumberland.

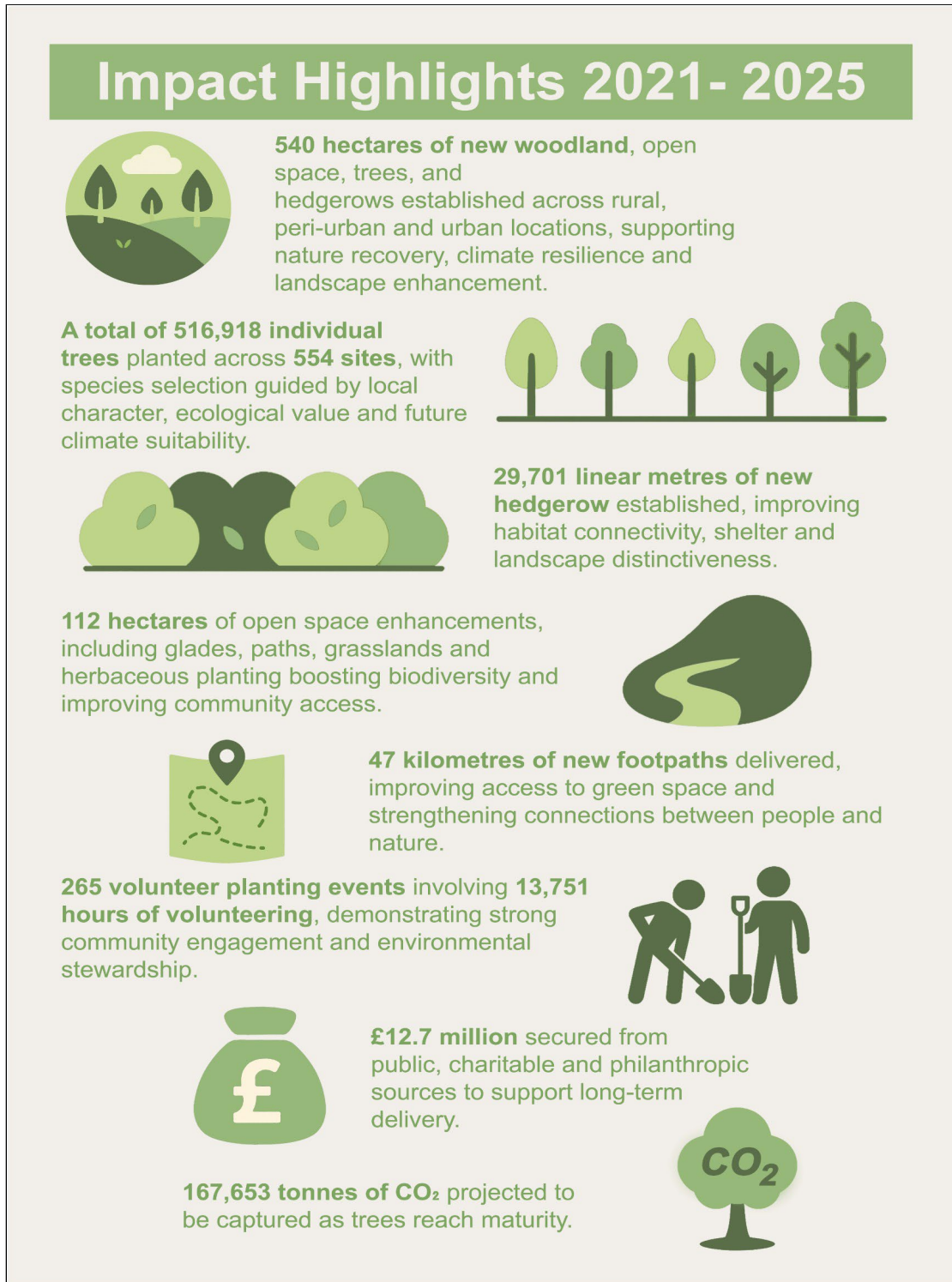
Since its establishment, the NECF has worked with communities, young people, businesses, farmers, landowners and local authorities to create accessible greenspaces and inspire a sense of woodland stewardship.

Our projects deliver a wide range of benefits, including carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, biodiversity enhancement and improvements to physical and mental health and wellbeing. Through this work, we are doing more than planting trees, we are creating connected, resilient landscapes that provide long-term value for people, nature and the climate.

Over the coming decades, the NECF will plant thousands of hectares of trees, restore habitats and bring nature closer to where we live, work and play. Together with our partners, we are transforming the region's landscape through woodland creation, tree and hedgerow planting, and sustainable management. Our mission is simple: create healthier, greener places for people and wildlife while tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

## 1.2 Impact and Achievements 2021-2025

Since 2021, the NECF has established a strong record of delivery underpinned by a transparent and robust approach to measuring impact.



Together, this growing evidence base demonstrates the significant difference the NECF is already making across the region. It provides a solid foundation for future delivery through the Forest Plan to 2050

### 1.3 Forest Plan Strategic Framework for Delivery

The NECF Forest Plan (2025–2050) sets the long-term vision for creating a greener, healthier, and more resilient region. Approved by the Forest Partnership in November 2025, it provides the strategic framework for delivery through 2050. This Delivery Plan translates that vision into practical actions for the first five years (2025–2030), ensuring measurable progress toward our shared goals.

#### Shared Vision

*To create a thriving, resilient, sustainable multipurpose forest that delivers lasting benefits for the people, economy, nature and environment across North East England for generations to come.*

#### Long-term Aims (to 2050):

- Create 5,000 hectares of new trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
- Ensure at least 80% of all woodland is sustainably managed, building on the current 60% baseline.

#### Ambitions (beyond 2050):

- Achieve 30% tree canopy cover across the region and deliver the 3/30/300 Rule:
  - *Everyone can see at least three trees from their home.*
  - *Every neighbourhood benefit from 30% canopy cover*
  - *No household is more than 300 meters from a green space of at least one hectare.*

The Forest Plan is not a statutory document and does not set new land-use policy. Instead, it serves as a strategic guide to support, coordinate and influence woodland, tree, and hedgerow initiatives across the NECF area. Its principles and objectives underpin this Delivery Plan and inform the Action Plan, Business Plan and Marketing and Communications Plan.

## How the Forest Plan Strategic Principles Guide Delivery

The following principles define how the Forest Plan is delivered and provide the foundation for shaping the Action Plan themes (See **Appendix A: Action Plan**). They set expectations for partnership working decision-making and long-term stewardship:

- **Facilitate Partnership Working:** Strengthen collaboration and encourage cross-boundary cooperation to deliver the shared vision.
- **Develop Projects and Attract Investment:** Support the development of projects, funding bids and secure resources for tree and hedgerow planting and large-scale woodland creation initiatives.
- **Guide Tree Establishment and Care:** Provide best practice guidance for planning, planting and long-term management.
- **Contribute to Local Planning:** Influence Local Plans, function as a material consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guide responses to planning applications.
- **Inform Strategic Planning:** Align partner strategies and policies with Plan objectives.
- **Understand Local Evidence and Mapping:** Use data and mapping to identify; opportunities, priorities and constraints.
- **Enhance Communications:** Highlight the value of trees, woodlands and hedgerows, celebrate achievements and raise awareness.
- **Align with Other Local Regional Strategies:** Ensure delivery supports Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), Green Infrastructure Strategies, Carbon Action Plans and Economic Development Plans.

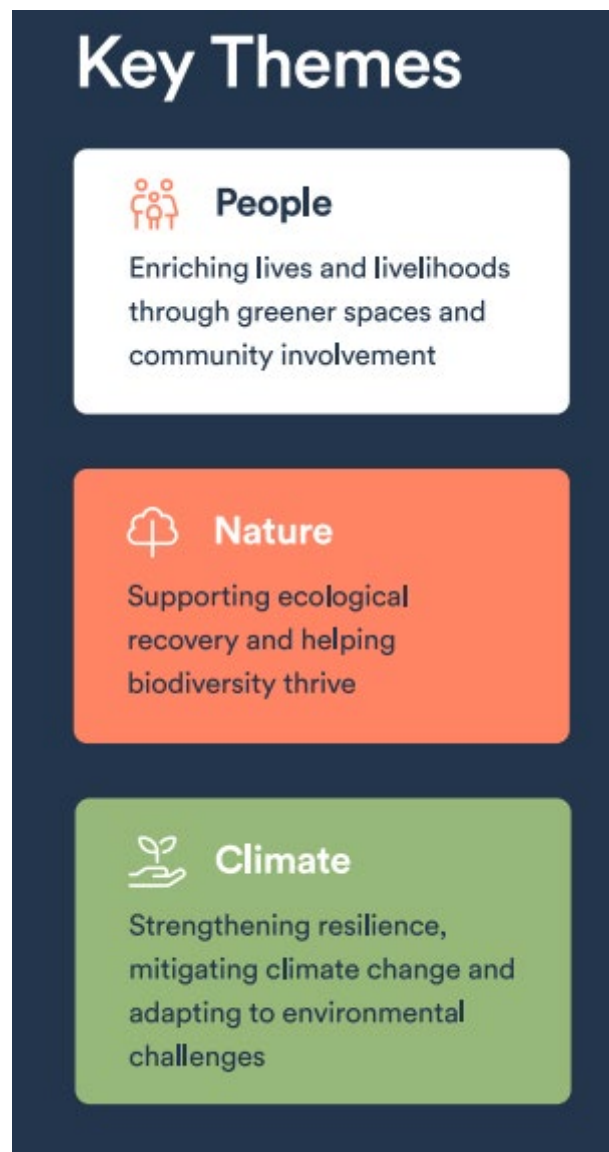
### Forest Plan Key Objectives:

The infographic consists of three vertical panels, each with a distinct background color and icon. The first panel is dark blue with a tree icon, the second is orange with a bird icon, and the third is green with a hand holding a seedling icon. Each panel contains text describing an objective and its implementation.

Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
<b>Expand, Establish and Connect Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows</b>	<b>Protect, Restore and Sustain Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Ecosystems</b>	<b>Foster a Thriving Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Culture</b>
Encourage and support the establishment and planting of well-connected, diverse and thriving trees, woodlands and hedgerows, prioritising areas of greatest need. By doing so, we will maximise benefits for people, nature and climate.	Support responsible and sustainable management practices that protect, restore and improve the health, biodiversity, and resilience of trees, woodlands and hedgerows, ensuring long-term benefits for people, nature and climate.	Inspire and support greater participation in the creation, management, and use of trees, woodlands, and hedgerows. By raising awareness of their value, we will cultivate stronger connections between communities and the natural environment.

## Forest Plan Themes for Delivery

Delivery of these objectives is structured around three interconnected themes:



These themes translate strategic ambition into coordinated, practical action and ensure that social, environmental and climate priorities are delivered in a balanced and integrated way.

## Forest Plan Guiding Principles

Actions within the Delivery Plan are informed by the Forest Plan's guiding principles. These provide a consistent framework for decision-making and delivery, ensuring that our work is inclusive and sustainable, reflects best practice and maximises benefits for people, nature and climate.

<b>GP1 Collaboration, Connection, and Co-Creation</b>
We will work together, across sectors and communities to deliver greater benefits for people, nature, and climate. By encouraging diverse perspectives, we can make better decisions and drive more impactful change.
<b>GP2 Community Engagement and Participation</b>
We will inspire and engage individuals and communities, placing people, equity, and accessibility at the heart of the forest. Active involvement in planting and management fosters ownership, stewardship, and social equity addressing social equity and environmental inequalities through inclusive grassroots engagement.
<b>GP3 Youth Engagement and Empowerment</b>
We will support and empower young people through education and hands-on involvement, building environmental awareness, skills and future leadership in sustainable forestry.
<b>GP4 Equitable Access, Inclusion, and Wellbeing</b>
We will ensure fair and equal access to trees and woodlands, prioritising underserved communities to address health inequalities and enhance wellbeing for all residents.
<b>GP5 Right Tree, Right Place, Right Purpose, Right Time</b>
We will select and plant trees strategically, ensuring ecological integrity and protecting habitats and species. Our approach will prioritise climate resilience and land-use needs, ensuring that tree planting enhances rather than damages the environment. By choosing the most appropriate species for each location, we will maximise long-term benefits while respecting and supporting current ecosystems.
<b>GP6 Collaborative Partnerships for Greater Impact</b>
We will foster strong partnerships across sectors, maximising expertise, resources and impact. Shared responsibility among individuals, organisations, and policymakers supports long-term sustainability.
<b>GP7 Ethical and Sustainable Forestry Practices</b>
We will uphold the highest professional and ecological standards aligning our approach with current science research and best practice to ensure long-term conservation and resilience of urban and rural woodlands.
<b>GP8 Evidence-Led, Innovative, and Transparent Approach</b>
We will embrace research, innovation and creative solutions, using monitoring and transparent reporting to support continuous improvement.
<b>GP9 Planning for the Future, Acting Now</b>
We recognise trees and woodlands as long-term investments. Our actions today will shape a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come.

### **GP10 A Thriving and Sustainable Woodland Economy**

We will promote a viable woodland sector that balances sustainability with economic benefits, supporting livelihoods through responsible timber production, eco-tourism and nature-based enterprise.

### **GP11 Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience**

We will embed biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and climate resilience into all forestry activities, strengthening ecological networks, and contributing to carbon sequestration and urban resilience.

### **GP12 Protection of Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees**

We will safeguard ancient woodlands and ancient and veteran trees as irreplaceable natural and cultural assets. Through informed planning and long-term stewardship, we will prevent harm from development and secure their legacy for future generations.

## **How these principles feed into the Delivery Plan:**

These principles do not sit in isolation; they actively shape the detailed plans that follow.

- They shape the priorities and activities within the **Action Plan** (e.g., setting standards, defining species lists, designing engagement programmes).
- They inform how we structure resources and governance through the **Business Plan** (e.g., partnership models, funding approaches, workforce skills).
- They guide our engagement, communication and accountability mechanisms through the **Marketing & Communications Plan** and **Monitoring & Evaluation Framework** (e.g., inclusive participation, transparent impact reporting).

The Delivery Plan operationalises the Forest Plan, ensuring that high-level principles are converted into practical action on the ground.

## **How this section links to the Delivery Plan**

This strategic framework underpins every element of the Delivery Plan:

- The **Action Plan** converts the strategic principles, objectives and themes into specific actions, targets and responsibilities.
- The **Business Plan** defines the governance arrangements, funding approach and delivery capacity required to implement these actions effectively.
- The **Marketing & Communications Plan** strengthens engagement, supports visibility and participation, promotes opportunities and communicates progress across the Forest Partnership

This alignment ensures efficient use of resources, clear accountability, and stronger, more consistent delivery across all programme areas. Together, these components ensure that the Delivery Plan is fully aligned with the Forest Plan. They provide a coordinated, transparent and accountable structure for achieving measurable outcomes over the next five years, while laying firm foundations for long-term success through to 2050.

## 2. Action Plan

### 2.1 Purpose of the Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out the priority actions, targets, responsibilities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) needed to deliver the NECF vision. It focuses on scaling up woodland creation, Trees Outside Woodland (TOW), restoration, management, and community engagement, while aligning with England's Community Forests programme and the evolving funding landscape.

To ensure delivery is measurable and risk-informed, the plan integrates three components:

- **Action Plan:** Defines what will be delivered, by whom, and when, including targets and milestones.
- **Monitoring Framework** (Section 5 and Appendix B): Tracks progress and outcomes through indicators linked to specific actions, enabling adaptive management and transparent reporting.
- **Risk Register** (Section 6 and Appendix C): Identifies strategic and operational risks linked to actions, drawn from the SWOT analysis and Forest Plan challenges.

### 2.2 Key Targets

Clear and measurable targets provide the framework for tracking progress, maintaining accountability, and driving continuous improvement. Each target aligns with the overarching objectives of the plan and reflects our commitment to achieving tangible outcomes within agreed timescales. By setting specific, achievable, and time-bound goals, we create a transparent pathway to success and enable effective monitoring throughout the implementation period.

Targets are aligned to headline KPIs and baselines from 2021–2025. Annual targets will be confirmed with partners, and the output will be made publicly available via our annual reports. See Appendix B and the KPI workbook for detailed definitions and data sources.

## Key Targets

Key Target Description	Yearly Target 2025-2030	Total Target by 2030	Achieved to date 2021 - 2025	KPI (ID) Appendix B
Woodland Creation (Create new woodland)	100 ha	500 ha	324 ha	KPI-20
Trees outside of Woodland (in parks, streets, open spaces, along boundaries, farmland working landscapes through agroforestry)	100 ha	500 ha	216 ha	KPI-20
New Hedgerow Creation	7,500 linear metres	37,500 linear metres	29,701 linear metres	KPI-22
Open space created and managed within new woodland creation sites	28 ha	140 ha	112 ha	KPI-24
Community Engagement Events, including work with schools, volunteers, businesses and agricultural shows	65 no	325 no	265 events	KPI-12
New pathway networks* within woodland creation sites	12 km	60 km	47 km of new footpath	KPI-06
Engagement and Volunteering involved in the planting design and maintenance	2000 people	8000 people	6,161 volunteers	KPI -09 KPI-13
Training and Skills development events	5	25	20	KPI-15
Natural Health Service** (people engaged)	200 people engaged	1000 people engaged	120 people engaged	KPI-16
Education (schools, universities, colleges and Pupils involved)	200 pupils involved	1000 pupils involved	615 pupils involved	KPI-14

\* “pathways” these are pathways installed as part of woodland creation projects.

\*\* The term “Natural Health Service” refers to programmes that use woodland-based activity to support physical and mental health, delivered in partnership with health and wellbeing organisations.

Ecosystem service outcomes (e.g. carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, urban cooling, biodiversity etc) will be modelled using the Liverpool John Moore’s University (LJMU) Natural Capital Model and NECF GIS data and reported annually as part of the NECF Annual Report.

## 2.3 Priority Actions

Over 2025–2030, NECF will focus on strengthening governance, improving evidence and mapping, supporting Local Plan processes, diversifying funding, scaling engagement, and ensuring high-quality establishment and ongoing management.

Our priorities for this period include:

- Strengthen governance and partnership working.
- Integrate evidence and mapping into delivery.
- Embed Forest Plan principles in local planning policy.
- Unlock planning-related funding and diversify income streams.
- Scale up engagement, education, and volunteering.
- Ensure operational quality through establishment standards and climate-resilient species choices.

See appendix A for the detailed Action Plan table, including phasing, responsibilities, and linked KPIs.

## **3. Business Plan**

### **3.1 Purpose of the NECF Business Plan**

The NECF Business Plan (2025-2030) has been developed in accordance with the NECF Agreement (2026-2030). It provides a strategic roadmap for the Forest, alongside setting a rolling four-year budget to build delivery capacity and growth.

### **3.2 Governance Model and NECF Agreement**

#### **Governance Model**

Within the England Community Forest network, there are three governance models:

- Charity model
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Local Government Partnership model.

The NECF follows the Local Government Partnership model, with Newcastle City Council acting as the accountable body. This model ensures strong accountability, alignment with local authorities' priorities and access to public sector resources.

#### **NECF Agreement 2026-2030**

The NECF Agreement 2026 - 2030 is a legal partnership between six local authorities in the North East of England: Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead, and Durham.

The purpose of the Agreement is to work collaboratively in a spirit of mutual support and understanding and use reasonable endeavours to implement the Forest Plan and the Business Plan.

The Agreement further confirms:

- Newcastle City Council (NCC) as the NECF Accountable Body, Fund Holding and Employing Authority
- Establishment of the Officers Working Group (OWG) and Members Steering Group (MSG), which meet quarterly under the umbrella of the NECF Partnership.

The OWG focuses on operational delivery and coordination across partners. They are the recommendation and coordination body. The MSG provides strategic oversight and ensures democratic accountability. They are the decision-making body.

### **3.3 Funding and Income Streams (2026-2030)**

The NECF is funded through a combination of local authority core contributions, central government support and external funding sources. The mixed funding model ensures that the Forest can deliver its objectives while remaining financially resilient and adaptable to future challenges.

## Core Funding

The six local authority partners: Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead, and Durham have collectively committed approximately £80,000 a year to support the ongoing costs of the Forest Team.

In addition, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) provides staff funding through its Nature for Climate programme, ensuring that the team has the capacity to deliver woodland creation and community engagement at scale.

## Additional Funding

Beyond core contributions from our local authority partners and Defra, the Forest Team actively secure and manages additional capital and revenue funding from a diverse range of sources, including, grants, consultancy work, corporate social responsibility, carbon finance, unrestricted donations, and other innovative mechanisms, such as through the planning system.

Our priority is to secure long-term funding from a variety of sources to facilitate long-term planning and enable the Forest Team and Forest Partnership to operate from a position of stability, as far as possible.

Currently, the Forest's primary capital and revenue funding is Trees for Climate (TfC), obtained from Defra's Nature for Climate Fund.

Other capital funding sources include grants received from:

- [Trees for Cities](#)
- [The Tree Council](#)
- ["Donate Now"](#) platform on our website
- [Carma](#)

Other revenue funding sources received include:

- [One Tree Planted](#)
- Forestry Commission [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#)
- Local Authority Core Funding of £80,000 per year (combined)
- [Royal Society for Arts \(Playful Green Planet initiative\)](#)

Our continuing priority is to secure long-term funding, diversify income streams to provide financial stability and enable strategic growth. To support this, NECF will strengthen its approach to income generation by expanding private-sector partnerships, philanthropic giving, external grants, environmental investment opportunities and planning-related funds.

NECF will also recruit a dedicated Fundraising Officer to lead on developing and implementing a comprehensive fundraising strategy, cultivating corporate partnerships, coordinating major grant applications, and identifying new funding

mechanisms. This combined approach will help secure long-term financial resilience and enable sustained programme delivery.

### Projected budget (2025/26 – 2029/30)

The table below outlines projected income for the next five budget years. These figures represent anticipated funding based on current commitments and known opportunities.

Our goal is to secure additional funding beyond these projections to meet growing demand and deliver our long-term vision. Actual figures will be published each year in our annual report.

Income Source	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
<b>Revenue (staff costs)</b>					
Trees for Climate (TfC)	£300,000	£265,000	£265,000	£265,000	£265,000
Local Authority Core Funding	£80,000	£82,000	£84,000	£86,000	£88,000
One Tree Planted	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Woodland Creation Planning Grant (Forestry Commission)	£2,000	£4,000	£6,000	£8,000	£10,000
Playful Green Planet (Royal Society of Arts) (RSA)	£0	£7,500	£0	£0	£0
<b>Capital (woodland creation)</b>					
Trees for Climate (TfC) Capital (woodland creation)	£4,000,000	£4,200,000	£4,400,000	£4,600,000	£4,800,000
Charity Grants (e.g. Trees for Cities, Tree Council, Carma etc)	£35,000	£45,000	£55,000	£65,000	£75,000
Business and Personal Donations	£10,000	£15,000	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000

### 3.4 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis provides a clear overview of the NECF’s internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that may influence delivery. This assessment helps the Partnership identify areas to build on, address challenges proactively, and align resources with strategic priorities.

SWOT Analysis	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><b>Strong Multi-Authority Forest Partnership:</b> Collaboration across seven local authorities, the Combined Authority and a wide range of partners enable coordinated delivery, shared expertise and effective use of resources at a regional scale.</p> <p><b>Strong Community Engagement:</b> High levels of public interest and involvement, including recognition and legacy support from the former Great North Forest, provide a strong foundation for participation and long-term stewardship.</p> <p><b>Clear Strategic Alignment:</b> The NECF supports national and local climate emergency declarations, biodiversity goals, and public health priorities, ensuring relevance and alignment across multiple agendas.</p> <p><b>Funding and Policy Support:</b> Backed by Defra and England’s Community Forests, the NECF benefits from national credibility and access to established funding streams and guidance.</p> <p><b>Urban-Rural Reach:</b> The Community Forest spans a diverse landscape, from densely populated urban centres to rural fringes, creating opportunities for varied planting, restoration and connectivity interventions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p><b>Fragmented Land Ownership:</b> Complex and varied land tenure across the region can slow project delivery and complicate long-term management and stewardship arrangements.</p> <p><b>Low Initial Canopy Cover:</b> Many parts of the region start from a low tree-cover baseline, requiring sustained effort and investment to achieve ambitious canopy targets.</p> <p><b>Resource Constraints:</b> Reliance on short-term or cyclical funding may limit long-term planning, workforce stability and continuity of delivery.</p> <p><b>Variable Public Awareness:</b> While engagement is strong in specific locations and projects, broader awareness and recognition of the NECF across the region is still developing.</p>

SWOT Analysis	
Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Long-Term Strategic Framework (2025–2050 Forest Plan):</b> Provides a clear vision and direction, supporting sustained growth, resilience and legacy outcomes.</p> <p><b>Green Jobs and Skills Development:</b> Woodland creation and management offer opportunities to support local employment, training and skills development within the green economy.</p> <p><b>Health and Wellbeing Benefits:</b> Expanding access to green space can contribute significantly improve physical and mental health, particularly in the post-COVID context.</p> <p><b>Nature-Based Solutions:</b> Increasing demand for carbon sequestration, natural flood management, and biodiversity enhancement creates new funding and delivery opportunities.</p> <p><b>Innovation and Technology:</b> The use of GIS, remote sensing and citizen science provides opportunities to improve monitoring, targeting and management of forest assets.</p>	<p><b>Climate Change Impacts:</b> Increasing frequency of extreme weather, pests and diseases presents risks to tree establishment, woodland health and biodiversity.</p> <p><b>Development Pressures:</b> Urban expansion and infrastructure projects may reduce land availability and compete with land for woodland creation and habitat expansion.</p> <p><b>Policy and Funding Change:</b> Shifts in government priorities or funding mechanisms could disrupt long-term momentum and delivery certainty.</p> <p><b>Stakeholder Fatigue:</b> Long-term projects risk losing engagement without visible short-term outcomes regular communication and sustained partner involvement.</p> <p><b>Land-Based Pressures:</b> Antisocial behaviour and rising deer populations pose risk to tree establishment woodland regeneration and ongoing management.</p>

The SWOT analysis directly informs the risk management approach in Appendix C, as well as the actions outlined in the Action Plan in Appendix A. By understanding these strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats, the NECF can build on its strong partnership base and alignment with regional and national policy, while proactively addressing risks such as land access, funding uncertainties, and the challenge of sustaining long-term community engagement. This ensures that the Forest remains resilient, well-governed and adaptable within a changing environmental and policy landscapes.

## 3.5 Our Forest Team

### How We Work

The NECF Team is a well-established group of professionals from diverse backgrounds who work together to deliver the NECF Forest Plan and support the wider Forest Partnership.

Each role within the team is equally important in ensuring efficient and effective delivery of actions required to meet agreed targets. The diversity of expertise enables the team to address complex challenges and deliver high-quality outcomes.

The team is committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive workplace culture. All members of staff share responsibility for ensuring this positive culture is continuously embedded in daily operations, with regular opportunities for discussion and reflection around the central ideas encouraged. Supporting this, the team has developed a set of “Team Norms.” The Team Norms are our agreed guidelines and expectations that define how members of our team will work together, communicate, and behave to ensure collaboration and effectiveness.

### Team Norms

- **Respect and Inclusivity:** We treat all colleagues, partners and communities fairly, valuing diverse perspectives and creating a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- **Clear and Kind Communication:** We share information openly, listen actively and communicate with clarity, honesty and respect.
- **Collaboration and Shared Responsibility:** We work as one team, supporting each other, sharing knowledge and taking collective responsibility for delivering high-quality outcomes.
- **Accountability and Reliability:** We take ownership of our actions, meet our commitments and hold ourselves to high professional standards.
- **Continuous Learning and Growth:** We embrace a growth mindset, supporting ongoing learning, mentoring and innovation to strengthen our skills and adaptability.
- **Commitment to Quality:** We strive for excellence, delivering high-quality work and maintaining strong relationships with partners and communities.
- **Understanding the Bigger Picture:** We align our work with the NECF Delivery Plan themes people, nature and climate and understand how our roles contribute to wider strategic goals.
- **Value Diverse Perspectives:** We encourage open dialogue and welcome different viewpoints, recognising that better decisions come from inclusive discussion.
- **Celebrate Success:** We share and celebrate achievements big or small to build pride, motivation and a positive team culture.

- **Openly Share Issues and Seek Solutions:** We raise challenges early, support each other through difficulties and seek constructive, solution-focused ways forward.
- **Positive and Supportive Culture:** We promote wellbeing, show kindness, and maintain a calm, respectful, solution-focused approach, especially under pressure.

### **North East Community Forest Team Structure**

As of March 2026, the current Forest Team structure is as follows:

- **Chair of the NECF Partnership** - Ross Weddle (0.04 FTE)
- **Forest Manager**, Lloyd Jones (1.0 FTE)
- **Senior Woodland Officer – Forest Plan**, Kelly Graham (1.0 FTE)
- **Senior Woodland Officer – Trees for Climate Lead** - Paul Hyde (0.86 FTE)
- **Community Advisor** - Bethan Kelly (1.0 FTE)
- **Community Woodland Officer** (Sunderland and Durham) - Eleanor Hopkins (1.0 FTE)
- **Community Woodland Officer** (Newcastle and South Tyneside) - Roy Bearpark, (1.0 FTE)
- **Community Woodland Officer** (North Tyneside and Gateshead) - Brijesh Pal Yadav (1.0 FTE)
- **Community Woodland Officer (Schools)** - Phill Hammond (1.0 FTE)
- **Senior Business Support Officer** - Herman Parkhomenko (1.0 FTE)
- **Technician** - Ethan Selvin (1.0 FTE)

### **Support from the Accountable Body**

Newcastle as the Accountable Body, provides the Forest Team with a range of essential support functions and corporate services. These include legal and financial support, communications and public relations, GIS expertise, ICT services, and all core human resources and employee services functions. Together, these services ensure that the Forest Team can operate effectively, compliantly, and with the organisational resilience required to deliver the Forest Plan.

### 3.6 North East Community Forest Partnership Structure

The NECF is overseen by a **Forest Partnership** that brings together the local authorities of Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Northumberland alongside the North East Combined Authority (NECA) and a wide range of national, regional and local charities and agencies.

**Newcastle City Council** acts as the **accountable body** and hosts the dedicated **Forest Team**. The Forest Team is responsible for coordinating delivery, managing funding, staffing and for overseeing the implementation of the Forest Plan and Delivery Plan. Each local authority plays an active role in managing and delivering projects across the Community Forest area.

At the heart of our Forest Partnership is the NECF **Members Steering Group (MSG)**. Each of the six core Local Authority Partners are represented on the MSG by their nominated Cabinet Member (Councillor), with senior officers from other Forest Partnership organisations also in attendance. Overseeing the MSG is an **independent chair**. Meeting quarterly, the MSG oversees the planning and delivery of a positive, ambitious and beneficial programme of work that delivers outcomes for wellbeing, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and education as well as other strategic priorities. The MSG serves as the decision-making body of the NECF.

Supporting the MSG is the **Officer Working Group (OWG)**, which also meets quarterly. The OWG is made up of one officer from each of the six core Local Authority Partners, alongside officers from other Forest Partnership organisations. The OWG is overseen by the Forest Manager. Acting as the operational hub of the NECF, the OWG ensures effective collaboration between partner councils and agencies. Its role includes coordinating the delivery of the Forest Plan, sharing expertise and best practices, monitoring progress, supporting funding applications, and facilitating communication between the Forest Team, local authorities, and community stakeholders. The OWG serve as the recommendation-making body of the NECF.

### 3.7 NECF and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The NECF is a 30-year partnership focused on the protection, improvement, and expansion of woodlands, trees, and hedgerows, while connecting people with nature. Through this work, the NECF actively supports all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating greener, healthier, and more resilient communities across the region.

<b>NECF LINKS TO UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b>	
<b>SDG 1</b> No Poverty	NECF creates green jobs in planting, woodland creation, and community engagement, supporting employment and income in areas that need it most.
<b>SDG 2</b> Zero Hunger	By supporting agroforestry, community orchards, and access to edible landscapes, NECF helps strengthen local food security.
<b>SDG 3</b> Good Health and Wellbeing	Tree planting improves air quality, reduces pollution, and provides natural spaces for walking, relaxation, boosting physical and mental health.
<b>SDG 4</b> Quality Education	NECF delivers outdoor learning, school tree planting and aftercare programmes and skills training that enhance environmental awareness and education.
<b>SDG 5</b> Gender Equality	Inclusive engagement ensures women and underrepresented groups have access to training, employment, and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
<b>SDG 6</b> Clean Water and Sanitation	Trees improve soil structure, reduce runoff, and help protect rivers and groundwater from pollution.
<b>SDG 7</b> Affordable and Clean Energy	While not an energy project, NECF supports low-carbon land use and the potential for sustainable biomass through well managed woodlands.
<b>SDG 8</b> Decent Work and Economic Growth	By investing in the green economy, NECF supports sustainable jobs, training, and new business opportunities in forestry and nature recovery.
<b>SDG 9</b> Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	NECF promotes green infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and climate-resilient planning across urban and rural development.
<b>SDG 10</b> Reduced Inequalities	Tree planting is prioritised in disadvantaged areas, helping ensure that everyone benefits from enhanced green spaces and healthier local environments.
<b>SDG 11</b> Sustainable Cities and Communities	NECF helps create cleaner, cooler, and greener urban spaces, contributing to more liveable and sustainable towns and cities.
<b>SDG 12</b> Responsible Consumption and Production	Sustainably managed woodlands promote the use of local timber, reduce waste, and support circular land management practices.

<b>SDG 13</b> Climate Action	Trees capture carbon, reduce flood risk, and enhance climate resilience, making NECF a core regional contributor to local climate action in North East England.
<b>SDG 14</b> Life Below Water	Improved land management reduces soil erosion and water pollution, helping to protect downstream aquatic habitats.
<b>SDG 15</b> Life on Land	Tree planting restores degraded land, enhances biodiversity, and connects habitats for wildlife and pollinators.
<b>SDG 16</b> Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	NECF is underpinned by transparent, collaborative partnerships between local authorities, landowners, communities, and charities.
<b>SDG 17</b> Partnerships for the Goals	As a multi-stakeholder initiative, NECF brings together councils, communities, NGOs, and landowners to deliver long-term impact through partnership working.

The NECF is a powerful regional example of how trees and people together can deliver real progress across all 17 SDGs; strengthening nature, climate, and community for future generations.

## 4. Marketing and Communications Plan

### 4.1 Purpose of the Marketing and Communication Plan

- Sets out how NECF will communicate, engage and build relationships to support delivery of the Forest Plan and Delivery Plan.
- Provides a clear, coordinated framework that aligns with NECF's long-term vision for a greener, healthier and more resilient region.
- Establishes a consistent approach to engaging key audiences, raising awareness and encouraging participation.
- Strengthens the Forest Partnership by supporting woodland creation, ongoing management and community stewardship.

### 4.2 How the Marketing and Communications Plan Supports Delivery

- Builds shared understanding and confidence among partners, communities, stakeholders and landowners.
- Encourages participation by reaching schools, volunteers, businesses and residents.
- Improves coordination across local authority areas, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency.
- Enhances accountability and trust through transparent reporting on progress and impact.
- Supports funding relationships by demonstrating clear purpose, outcomes and long-term commitment.
- Enables adaptive delivery through two-way engagement and feedback.

### 4.3 Objectives and Outcomes

NECF will use effective communication to support delivery of the Forest Plan by strengthening understanding, participation and confidence among partners, communities and funders.

The objectives of the Marketing and Communications Plan are to:

- **Increase awareness** of NECF's role, benefits and opportunities across key audiences.
- **Encourage participation** in tree planting, volunteering, education and woodland stewardship.
- **Strengthen collaboration** with local authorities, landowners, schools, businesses and delivery partners.
- **Demonstrate progress and impact** through clear reporting, case studies and shared outcomes.

- **Support investment** by providing transparent, evidence led communications that show long-term value.

Alongside external communications, the NECF will maintain clear internal communication to ensure the Forest Team and partnership remain informed, connected and motivated.

#### **4.4 Target Audiences**

Key audiences and examples of engagement activity include:

##### **Local communities and community groups**

- Promotion of local tree planting, volunteering and aftercare events.
- Community newsletters, social media updates and local noticeboards.
- Attendance at community forums, events and festivals.
- Sharing place-based case studies that highlight local benefits such as access to green space, biodiversity and wellbeing.

##### **Landowners and farmers**

- Targeted guidance on woodland creation, trees outside woodland and hedgerow planting.
- Engagement will also promote agroforestry opportunities, recognising the growing interest among land managers in integrating trees in productive farm systems.
- Case studies demonstrating financial, environmental and land-management benefits.
- Use a demonstrator agroforestry site with a landowner to showcase practical benefits and support wide uptake.
- Direct engagement through landowner events, site visits and workshops.
- Clear signposting to grant opportunities, technical advice and long-term support.

##### **Local businesses and nature-based investment partners**

- Promotion of corporate volunteering and sponsorship opportunities.
- Engagement around biodiversity net gain, carbon, and environmental responsibility.
- Case studies showcasing business involvement in woodland creation projects.
- Partnership working on events, funding and in-kind support.

##### **Schools and education settings**

- Promotion of school tree planting and outdoor learning opportunities.
- Educational resources linked to climate, biodiversity and wellbeing.
- Support for school volunteering and pupil engagement days.
- Sharing success stories from participating schools and youth groups.

### **Local Authorities elected members and policymakers.**

- Regular briefings and updates on delivery progress and impacts.
- Invitations to site visits, launches and planting events.
- Alignment of NECF activity with local plans, strategies and policy priorities.
- Clear reporting on outcomes, funding and value for money.

### **Media and sector stakeholders**

- Press releases aligned with key milestones, planting seasons and awareness weeks.
- Proactive storytelling highlighting partnership working and local impacts.
- Media site visits and photo opportunities.
- Engagement with specialist environmental, land management and local media outlets.

### **Funders and national partners**

- Clear, timely reporting on outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Evidence-based storytelling supported by data, case studies and visuals.
- Regular updates on progress against delivery milestones.
- Sharing learning, innovation and best practice across the Community Forest network.

Engagement will be tailored to different audiences, to reflect their roles in supporting woodland creation, ongoing management and community stewardship.

Communications will be accessible, and inclusive, with clear routes to involvement.

Priority will be given to engaging landowners, local authorities, communities and delivery partners, who are critical to delivering our woodland creation targets and securing the long-term resilience of sites.

## **4.5 How we communicate and engage**

A mix of digital, traditional and face-to-face channels will be used to ensure communications reach a wide and diverse range of audiences across the North East, reflecting delivery priorities and audience needs.

### **Digital**

Digital channels will provide consistent, accessible information and engagement across the region.

- Website - core source for overview, guidance, project case studies and updates.
- Social media - to share timely updates, celebrate progress and promote engagement opportunities.

- Email communications - to share key messages, opportunities and progress with stakeholders and partners.

### **Traditional media**

Traditional media will be used strategically to raise awareness of delivery milestones and successes, reaching audiences less likely to engage through digital channels.

- Press releases and briefings aligned with key milestones and seasonal activity.
- Local and regional radio, newspapers and relevant sector publications to highlight woodland creation, partnership working and community benefits.

### **Engagement events**

- Face to face engagement events are central to community involvement and building relationships with several audiences. Some examples: Agricultural Shows, community and volunteer planting days and aftercare events, encouraging hands-on involvement and local ownership.
- Schools, colleges, universities and youth engagement activities to support outdoor learning, skills development and long-term connection with nature.
- Partnership events, workshops and stakeholder forums to share learning, coordinate delivery and strengthen collaboration across the Forest Partnership.

### **Partnership communications**

Partnership communications will support joint delivery by presenting a unified voice across the NECF Partnership and extending reach through shared networks.

- Co-branded materials developed with local authorities and delivery partners to reflect joint ownership and delivery.
- Co-ordinated messaging and campaigns across partner channels to extend reach and reinforce shared priorities.

## **4.6 Measurement & Evaluation**

The effectiveness of NECF's marketing and communications will be measured using a core set of indicators covering reach, engagement and participation. These measures will show how communications contribute to delivery of the Forest Plan and Delivery Plan by increasing awareness, supporting involvement and strengthening partnerships.

Evaluation will focus on:

- **Digital engagement:** website use and social media reach and engagement, indicating how audiences access and respond to NECF content.
- **Media coverage:** volume, reach and tone of local, regional and sector coverage, providing insight into awareness and reputation.

- **Participation:** attendance at community events, volunteering, school engagement and other activity demonstrating reach and impact.
- **Enquiries and delivery pipeline:** number and type of enquiries from landowners, partners, businesses and communities, showing how communications support delivery opportunities.
- **Qualitative feedback:** insight from partners, participants and stakeholders to identify strengths, barriers, and areas for improvements.

These measures complement the Delivery Plan Monitoring Framework (**Appendix B**), and help demonstrate contribution to NECF's people, nature and climate outcomes. Performance will be reviewed through governance arrangements and reported annually in the NECF Annual Report.

## 4.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities will ensure marketing and communications activity is coordinated and supports effective delivery of the Forest Plan.

- **NCC Communications Team c/o the NECF** provide expertise support on media relations, digital channels and campaigns, ensuring consistent and accurate messaging, including linking NECF activity with the wider Community Forest network.
- Support reporting, and key communications aligned to delivery milestones.
- Press release generation, ensuring sign off from key partners where relevant.

### NECF Team

- Link NECF activity with regional and national Community Forest communications.
- Lead on delivery-focused engagement, and on-the-ground communications.
- Organise and coordinate engagement events and local partnerships.
- Supply data, project case studies, and feedback to inform communications.
- Coordinate messaging across the Forest Partnership.
- Share external communications with relevant Local Authority communications teams before publication where appropriate.

### NECF Partnership

- Share and amplify NECF communications through professional and local networks.
- Support local engagement, and shared communications activity.

### Risk Management

Risks relating to communications and engagement such as misinformation, inconsistent messaging, accessibility challenges or reputational impacts are managed through the Delivery Plan's main Risk Register (see **Section 6** and **Appendix C**). These risks are monitored quarterly through NECF governance

processes, with mitigations and escalation routes aligned to wider organisational protocols.

## 5. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation are central to ensuring accountable, effective an evidence-led delivery. By collecting, analysing and sharing data regularly, we can track progress, measure impact and ensure that actions remain aligned with both short-term targets and the long-term vision set out in the Forest Plan.

### What we Monitor

Each year, the Forest Team will collect and analyse data on including:

- **Woodland creation:** area, location, and species planted.
- **Community engagement:** participants, volunteer hours events and feedback
- **Performance metrics:** delivery against targets, financial updates, and learning outcomes.

These indicators reflect the full Monitoring Framework in Appendix B, which includes all KPI themes covering partnerships, funding, natural capital, biodiversity, access, people and participation, education and skills, health and wellbeing, tree equity, nature and climate, and local economic impacts.

All monitoring results will be brought together in the NECF Annual Report, which summarises progress, financial performance, case studies and key insights to guide future planning.

### How Monitoring Supports Local and National Reporting

NECF reporting contributes to national datasets and analytical programmes including:

- The Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory
- Liverpool John Moore's University's Natural Capital Analysis of England's Community Forests and the Trees for Climate (TfC) programme

Relevant woodland creation and habitat data will also be shared with Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) teams, local authorities and partners to support collaborative monitoring and alignment with wider environmental objectives.

### Governance and Review

Monitoring outcomes will inform action setting and help shape iterative improvements to delivery. Progress is review through established governance:

- The Officer Working Group (OWG): reviews operational progress, risks and data each quarter.
- The Members Steering Group (MSG): provides strategic oversight and ensures democratic accountability.

See **Appendix B: Monitoring Table** for detailed indicators, baselines, targets, data sources, reporting frequency and ownership.

## **Reporting Cycle**

- Quarterly: headline KPIs, delivery progress, risks and financial position
- Annually: full NECF Annual Report
- Biennially: canopy cover and Trees Outside Woodland metrics (aligned with national update cycles)

Data will be drawn from verified GIS layers (e.g., the National Forest Inventory), NECF and partner records, and Community Forest network reporting. All datasets, methods and assumptions will be documented to ensure transparency and comparability.

## 6. Risk Management

Effective risk management ensures that delivery remains resilient, adaptable and aligned with strategic priorities. NECF uses a proactive approach to identifying, monitoring and mitigating risks throughout the lifetime of the Delivery Plan.

### Managing Delivery Risks

The Risk Register (**Appendix C**) identifies key strategic and operational risks, alongside mitigation measures, controls and ownership. It supports implementation of the Forest Plan and is reviewed regularly to ensure emerging risks are captured across changing policy, environmental and funding contexts.

Risks are assessed according to likelihood and impact, ensuring resources are focused on areas requiring the most attention.

### Governance of Risk

Risk management is embedded within NECF's governance structure:

- The OWG reviews risks quarterly, alongside monitoring data, to support operational decision-making and adaptive management.
- The MSG reviews risks from a strategic perspective, ensuring alignment with local authority priorities and long-term objectives.

Communications and engagement risks including misinformation, inconsistent messaging, accessibility issues, reputational impacts and low regional awareness are fully integrated into the Risk Register. These risks reflect the importance of transparent, inclusive and coordinated communication across the Forest Partnership and ensure the Marketing & Communications Plan contributes effectively to risk mitigation.

### Linking the Risk Register to the Forest Plan and the SWOT analysis

The Delivery Plan links risks directly to the SWOT analysis (**Section 3.4**) and Forest Plan challenges. Each risk in the register is cross-referenced to its originating SWOT factor to ensure strategic context is carried through into operational delivery.

This approach enables NECF to:

- Address internal vulnerabilities such as fragmented land ownership or resource constraints.
- Anticipate external pressures including climate change, development impacts and funding uncertainty.
- Leverage strengths and opportunities such as strong partnership working or green skills development.

By reviewing the Risk Register quarterly and updating it as delivery progresses, NECF ensures that risk management remains responsive, forward-looking and aligned with the Delivery Plan priorities.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Action Plan Table (2025-2030)

Action ID	Action Description	Key Activities	Lead Responsibility	Alignment with Guiding Principles	Indicative Timescale
<b>Governance and Leadership (Facilitate Partnership Working)</b>					
<b>A-01</b>	<b>Forest Partnership Steering Group</b> Establish and maintain partnership governance through structured meeting programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule and hold quarterly Member Steering Group (MSG) meetings.</li> <li>Schedule and hold quarterly Officer Working Group (OWG) meetings to support coordination and delivery.</li> <li>Use meetings to review progress, manage risk and provide strategic oversight</li> </ul>	NECF / LA's Partnership Board	GP1 GP6	Ongoing
<b>A-02</b>	<b>Review Boundary of the NECF</b> Undertake a review of the NECF boundary to ensure comprehensive coverage and equitable benefits across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any geographical gaps? or areas of limited benefit.</li> <li>Agree and secure Partnership sign-off of any boundary changes (if required).</li> </ul>	NECF / Partnership sign off	GP4 GP8 GP9	2026
<b>A-03</b>	<b>Review Governance Options, including Charitable Status</b> In support of the existing local government function, we will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an options appraisal setting out the benefits, risks and implications.</li> <li>Consider governance, funding, staffing and delivery impacts.</li> </ul>	NECF / Partnership sign off	GP6 GP9	2026-2027

	investigate and evaluate options to strengthen governance arrangements by establishing a charitable arm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present recommendations to the Partnership for decision and sign off.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-04</b>	<p><b>Promote the NECF as a Strategic Delivery Mechanism</b></p> <p>Promote the role of the NECF as a delivery mechanism for national, regional and local strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular engagement with elected Members and senior officers</li> <li>Alignment of the NECF priorities with climate, biodiversity, health and placemaking strategies.</li> <li>Position NECF with relevant policy, strategy and programme development processes</li> </ul>	NECF	GP1 GP4 GP11	Ongoing
<b>Evidence, Mapping and Digital Infrastructure (Understanding Local Evidence and Mapping)</b>					
<b>A-05</b>	<p><b>Establish a Robust Mapping and Evidence-based System</b></p> <p>Develop and maintain an integrated, evidence-based mapping system to support delivery, decision-making, and impact reporting for the Forest Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and publish accessible online interactive mapping via the NECF website.</li> <li>Identify, collate and integrate relevant spatial datasets and mapping layers.</li> <li>Work with the Forestry Commission, Defra, England Community Forests, the North East Combined Authority, Local Nature Strategy Organisations and Local Authorities to incorporate Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) woodland and tree priorities, alongside and other key priorities (nature recovery, flood risk, housing and growth).</li> <li>Undertake ongoing spatial analysis to inform targeting of delivery, prioritisation of actions and review of impacts.</li> <li>Share appropriate mapping outputs and analysis with partners and stakeholders to demonstrate progress, outcomes and value.</li> </ul>	NECF (Specialist GIS Support)	GP4 GP5 GP8 GP9	System established by 2026.  Ongoing analysis and updates thereafter

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Mapping into evidence base to support consistent regional prioritisation.</li> <li>• Collaborate with local universities to evaluate existing NECF sites and strengthen evidence on establishment, success, climate resilience and community impact.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-06</b>	<p><b>Prepare Opportunity Mapping for Trees Outside Woodland and Hedgerows</b></p> <p>Identify priority opportunities for Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) and hedgerows to support delivery and future funding mechanisms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare priority opportunity maps for Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) and hedgerow creation and enhancement.</li> <li>• Opportunity mapping will be co-developed with Local Authorities and relevant landowners, using agreed datasets and criteria including Tree Equity Scores, existing canopy cover, Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) priorities, and local access to nature indicators.</li> <li>• Opportunity mapping will incorporate key constraint layers including but not limited to: England Peat Map, BTO Wader Zonation mapping and mapped priority habitat (e.g., via Magic).</li> <li>• Opportunity mapping will include designated site information layers (e.g. SSSI, SAC, SPA, LNR, Local Wildlife sites to identify opportunities to enhance, buffer or connect woodland and tree related features, and to avoid areas where additional trees or woodland could negatively affect sensitive habitats or species.</li> </ul>	NECF (Specialist GIS Support)	GP4 GP5 GP8	2025

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use opportunity mapping to inform delivery priorities and pipeline development.</li> <li>• Explore the use of opportunity mapping to support the development of natural capital and environmental payment schemes.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-07</b>	<b>Review and Update NECF Website</b> Update the NECF website to improve accessibility, transparency, and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate interactive mapping outputs within the website.</li> <li>• Ensure the Forest Plan and Delivery Plan are easily accessible in a web-based format.</li> <li>• Improve functionality to support enquiries, engagement, and sharing of impact evidence.</li> </ul>	NECF (Technical Support)	GP1 GP6 GP8	2025 - 2026
<b>Planning, Policy and Regulatory Integration (Align with Other Local &amp; Regional Strategies)</b>					
<b>A-08</b>	<b>P1. Integrate the Forest Plan into Local Planning Policy</b> Work with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to embed the Forest Plan principles in Local Plans and associated planning policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with ECF Planning Group and DCLG on links between CFs and Planning.</li> <li>• Engage with Local Planning Authorities at key stages of Local Plan preparation and review (Reg 18/19, examinations, updates)</li> <li>• Provide evidence and guidance to support the inclusion of woodland creation, trees and green infrastructure (GI) frameworks within planning policy.</li> <li>• Support alignment between new development, infrastructure proposals</li> </ul>	NECF and Local Authorities	GP6 GP7 GP8 GP11	Ongoing

		<p>and the Forest Plan’s objectives for trees and woodlands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Forest Plan will support Local Planning Authorities by providing evidence and strategic context, rather than forming a specific Local Plan policy. The Forest Plan can inform evidence bases, green infrastructure priorities and Development Management considerations.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-09</b>	<p><b>Secure Planning-Related Funding for Trees and Woodlands</b></p> <p>Maximise opportunities to secure funding for tree and woodland creation through the planning system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Local Authorities to secure funding through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Section 106 Agreements.</li> <li>Work with Local Authorities to identify where development-related contributions may support woodland creation, noting that Section 106 funds can only be transferred to NECF where the Forest has been formally procured by the Local Authority to deliver a defined project; and</li> <li>Local Planning Authorities cannot require or direct developers to buy BNG units from NECF or any specific provider.</li> </ul>	NECF / Local Authority / Developers	GP1 GP6 GP9 GP11	Ongoing
<b>A-10</b>	<p><b>Develop Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Delivery Opportunities</b></p> <p>Explore and develop opportunities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in partnership with Local Authorities and other delivery partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Local Authorities to understand BNG delivery needs and opportunities.</li> <li>Identify potential NECF roles in BNG delivery, brokerage, or partnership models.</li> <li>Develop pilot BNG delivery opportunities where appropriate.</li> <li>Any NECF role in BNG delivery will comply with national BNG regulations,</li> </ul>	NECF / Local Authority / Delivery Partners	GP1 GP6 GP11	Ongoing

		procurement rules, and developer choice requirements, and will be developed in partnership with Local Planning Authorities.			
<b>Funding and Financial Sustainability (Develop Projects and Attract Investment)</b>					
<b>A-11</b>	<p><b>Secure Medium-Term Funding for Core Team and Delivery</b></p> <p>Ensure financial stability for the NECF core team and delivery programme through multi-year funding agreements and diversified income streams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage partners and local stakeholders to agree shared funding commitments.</li> <li>Work with England's Community Forests (ECF), Defra, and other Community Forests to identify successful funding models.</li> <li>Develop a funding strategy incorporating alternative and blended finance options.</li> </ul>	NECF	GP1 GP6 GP9	Ongoing
<b>A-12</b>	<p><b>Recruit a Specialist Fundraising Officer.</b></p> <p>Appoint a dedicated Specialist Fundraising Officer to lead income generation, diversify funding streams, and strengthen NECF's financial resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a role profile and person specification for the Specialist Fundraising Officer.</li> <li>Agree budget, grade, and recruitment timeline with the Partnership and Host Authority.</li> <li>Complete recruitment and onboarding, ensuring access to fundraising tools and CRM systems.</li> <li>Assign responsibility for corporate partnerships, trusts and foundations, bid coordination, and donor stewardship.</li> <li>Develop Funding Strategy.</li> </ul>	NECF  (with NCC Host authority HR support)	GP1 GP6 GP9	Role recruited by 2026

<p><b>A-13</b></p>	<p><b>Develop a Comprehensive Funding Strategy</b></p> <p>Create a 3- 5-year Funding Strategy to secure multi-year support, diversify income sources, and build a sustainable funding pipeline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define funding priorities and targets across public, private, and philanthropic sources.</li> <li>• Map potential funding streams (Defra/ECF, BNG/S106, corporate partnerships, trusts, natural capital finance).</li> <li>• Develop a prospect pipeline and funding calendar with clear decision gates.</li> <li>• Produce a case-for-support pack and standardised funding propositions for partners and investors.</li> <li>• Establish governance processes for bid/no-bid decisions and ethical fundraising standards.</li> </ul>	<p>NECF  (Specialist Funding Officer once appointed)</p>	<p>GP9</p>	<p>Strategy completed 2026</p> <p>Implementation ongoing</p>
<p><b>A-14</b></p>	<p><b>Deliver a Successor Scheme to Trees for Climate (TFC) post 2030</b> delivery model. Secure and implement a successor funding scheme to support tree, woodland, and hedgerow establishment and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage Defra, ECF, Cheshire West and Chester Council (Trees for Climate Project Management Office) and Forestry Commission to agree scheme design and funding arrangements.</li> <li>• Confirm delivery model and eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Launch successor scheme and integrate into NECF delivery pipeline.</li> </ul>	<p>NECF / ECF/Defra/ Forestry Commission</p>	<p>GP1 GP6 GP9 GP10</p>	<p>Post 2030</p>
<p><b>A-15</b></p>	<p><b>Develop and Pilot a Green Financial Investment Model</b></p> <p>Create and evaluate an investment model to attract private and corporate finance for woodland creation and nature-based solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage local and national businesses to build a network of potential funders.</li> <li>• Design and pilot a green investment model, including governance and risk controls.</li> <li>• Develop a monitoring framework to track financial performance and environmental outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>NECF / ECF</p>	<p>GP9 GP10</p>	<p>2026 -2027</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement and review the model, scaling successful approaches.</li> </ul>			
<b>Engagement, Education and Participation (Enhance Communications)</b>					
<b>A-16</b>	<p><b>Produce and Implement a Marketing and Communications Plan</b></p> <p>Develop and deliver a Communications and Marketing Strategy to raise awareness, strengthen engagement, and support delivery of the Forest Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise and publish the Communications and Marketing Plan.</li> <li>Align messaging across partners and channels to promote NECF's role and opportunities.</li> <li>Targeted campaigns for landowners and businesses</li> <li>Review NECF/NCC Comms Partnership.</li> </ul>	NECF Comms	GP1 GP2 GP3 GP4	2026 (Plan in Delivery Plan)  Ongoing
<b>A-17A</b>	<p><b>Develop and Deliver an Education Programme</b></p> <p>Create an education programme to engage schools, colleges, and universities in woodland creation and environmental learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a stakeholder network of education providers and partners, including linking to existing partnerships, incorporated into development programme.</li> <li>Develop curriculum-linked resources and practical learning opportunities.</li> <li>Explore training and research partnerships with higher education institutions.</li> </ul>	NECF (Schools Officer)  /Educational stakeholders	GP2 GP3 GP4	Ongoing
<b>A-17B</b>	<p><b>Recruit a NECF Apprentice (3-year programme)</b></p> <p>Support long-term skills development, succession planning and workforce capacity through recruitment of a dedicated apprentice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop apprenticeship role profile and training plan in partnership with HR and education providers.</li> <li>Complete recruitment, onboarding and induction ahead of September 2026 start.</li> <li>Provide structured learning, mentoring, and hands-on experience across woodland creation, community engagement and environmental management.</li> </ul>	NECF  (with NCC Host Authority HR support)	GP2 GP3 GP4 GP9	2026-2029 (Three-year apprenticeship programme)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress and assess long-term pathways into the NECF or wider green sector.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-18</b>	<p><b>Establish and Grow a Volunteer Engagement Programme</b></p> <p>Increase community participation and stewardship through a structured volunteer programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and establish opportunities for volunteering in planting, aftercare, and events.</li> <li>• Research and co-design engagement methods with community organisations working in underserved communities, and previous NECF projects.</li> <li>• Maintain and grow community ties to support long-term engagement.</li> <li>• Deliver regular volunteer events and recognition activities.</li> <li>• Create a volunteering mailing database and regular newsletter.</li> <li>• Explore membership options</li> </ul>	NECF	GP2 GP3 GP4	Ongoing
<b>A-19</b>	<p><b>Develop a Health and Wellbeing Programme</b></p> <p>Work with health sector partners to integrate woodland creation into health and wellbeing initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities for social prescribing and health-linked activities.</li> <li>• Identify and engage health partners and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Develop health-related metrics and monitoring frameworks.</li> </ul>	NECF Health Sector stakeholders	GP4 GP8	2027 Ongoing
<b>A-20</b>	<p><b>Review and Secure New Delivery Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the market for suitable delivery partners with capacity for direct delivery and volunteering.</li> </ul>	NECF	GP1 GP6	Ongoing

	Expand NECF's delivery capacity by identifying new partners aligned with Forest Plan objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure alignment with NECF vision, objectives, and quality standards.</li> <li>• Formalise agreements and integrate partners into delivery frameworks.</li> </ul>			
<b>Operational Delivery and Quality (Guide Tree Establishment and Care)</b>					
<b>A-21</b>	<b>Establishment Checks and Quality Standards</b>  Develop and publish NECF tree and woodland establishment checks and quality standards, including clear aftercare requirements and a fifteen-year sign-off process for landowners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define establishment standards (stock quality, protection, spacing, watering/mulch, replacements).</li> <li>• Set out inspection points (Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, and long-term checks).</li> <li>• Publish guidance and templates on the website, brief delivery partners.</li> </ul>	NECF	GP5 GP7 GP11 GP12	2026  Ongoing
<b>A-22</b>	<b>Review and Secure New Delivery Partners</b>  Expand NECF's delivery capacity by onboarding suitably qualified partners aligned with NECF's vision, objectives, and quality standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the market for partners covering direct delivery and supply, with volunteering capacity.</li> <li>• Assess alignment to NECF standards; formalise agreements and onboarding.</li> <li>• Integrate partners into programme frameworks and reporting processes.</li> </ul>	NECF	GP6 GP7	2025-2030
<b>A-23</b>	<b>Deliver a Non-Tfc Forestry Programme</b>  Implement a balanced forestry programme covering urban tree planting, woodland management, ancient & veteran trees, and team capacity building (e.g. City of Trees model).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual urban tree planting programme (sites, species, aftercare plans).</li> <li>• Targeted woodland management (thinning, restocking, resilience measures).</li> <li>• Ancient &amp; veteran trees: identification, care plans, and public engagement.</li> </ul>	NECF	GP1 GP6 GP7 GP11	2025-2030

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build delivery capacity within the NECF forestry team and partner network.</li> <li>• Work alongside existing national programmes such as the Ancient Tree Forum and the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory to avoid duplication and strengthen delivery through recognised practice.</li> </ul>			
<b>A-24</b>	<p><b>Agree Principles for Planting and Aftercare</b></p> <p>Agree shared principles for tree and woodland planting, establishment, and care and integrate them into NECF delivery frameworks and local strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft a concise principles document (site prep, planting, protection, aftercare, stewardship).</li> <li>• Partner discussions; formal adoption and integration into Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy.</li> <li>• Publish principles online and embed within contracts/specifications.</li> </ul>	NECF / Partners	GP5 GP7 GP10 GP11	2025-2030
<b>A-25</b>	<p><b>Develop Local Nursery Partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities for developing local nursery partnerships or pilots to strengthen regional supply of climate resilient bio secure stock.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	NECF / Partners	GP5 GP7 GP11	2025-2030
<b>Woodland Creation and Tree Planting Targets (Develop Projects and Attract Investment)</b>					
<b>A-26</b>	<p><b>Deliver Woodland Creation Targets</b></p>	Target: Creation of 500 ha of woodland by 2050 (average 100 ha per year)	NECF, Partners	GP5 GP7 GP10 GP10	2025-2030

<b>A-27</b>	<b>Deliver Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) Targets</b>	<p>Target: Creation of 500 ha of Trees outside of Woodland (100 ha per year)</p> <p>TOW delivery approaches will include Miyawaki Forests as an option where site conditions and local objectives support high-density, fast establishing micro-woodland design.</p>	NECF / Partners	GP4 GP5 GP7 GP11	2025-2030
<b>A-28</b>	<p><b>Restore and Manage Existing Woodland*</b></p> <p>* As funding is not yet secured, this action is currently listed as an ambition. NECF will explore future funding options (public, private and blended finance) to enable delivery.</p>	<p>Restoration and Management of existing woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding streams (government grants, private investment, carbon credits)</li> <li>• Empower partners and advocate best practice.</li> <li>• Learn from partners, other organisations and training providers who have experience in woodland restoration and management.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for a pilot NECF led woodland management scheme to inform future like-minded projects.</li> </ul>	NECF / Partners	GP11 GP12	2025-2030
<b>A-29</b>	<b>Land Acquisition and Planting</b>	Target: Acquire and plant 200 ha of land	NECF / Partners	GP5 GP6 GP9 GP11	2025-2030

## Appendix B: Monitoring Framework

Monitoring Framework							
Outcome Area	Key Performance Indicator ID	Output Measure (KPIs)	Indicator Definition (Method)	Rationale	Data Source	Frequency	Linked Action ID (s)
Partnerships	KPI-01	Delivery Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of partners delivering Forest Plan activities and projects</li> </ul>	Demonstrates breadth/ capacity of partnership to deliver the Forest Plan	NECF/ Partner Records; grant agreements	Annual	A-01 A-20 A-22
Funding	KPI-02	Total Funding Secured*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£ secured (public, charitable, private, BNG, carbon)</li> </ul>	Demonstrate scale, leverage and financial resilience of the programme.	NECF accounts / budgets / projections  NCC Finance	Quarterly/ Annual	A-09 to A-15
		% non-public sources*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£ share from private/philanthropy/BNG/Donation</li> </ul>	Demonstrates diversification of income and reduced reliance on public sector funding	NECF accounts/ NCC Finance	Quarterly/ Annual	A-09 A-15
Natural Capital*	KPI-03	Headline natural-capital value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modelled £ of benefits from delivery (Return on investment £)</li> </ul>	Demonstrates the wider impact and benefits of delivery beyond simple based metrics e.g. ha/numbers of trees	ECF / Natural Capital / LJMU NC Model and  NECF inputs	Annual	A-5 A-13 A-15
	KPI-04	NFM Potential (ha or volume)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural Flood Management (hectares established in areas of EA high potential - NFM)</li> </ul>	Acts as a proxy measure for flood mitigation benefits delivered through woodland creation	EA spatial priorities  LJMU NC Model	Annual	A-05 A-08

					NECF GIS Model		
	<b>KPI-05</b>	Ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecosystem service Assessment (net change in ecosystem, service capacity for air purification, flood mitigation, local cooling, noise regulation)</li> </ul>	Demonstrates the wider ecosystem services benefits achieved through NECF interventions	LJMU NC Model NECF GIS Model Local Universities.	Annual	A-05 A-13 A-15
	<b>KPI-06</b>	Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households within 500m of an accessible woodland &gt;0.1ha</li> </ul>	Demonstrates improvements to access and associated health and wellbeing outcomes	ECF/LJMU LA Open Space/GI NECF GIS	Annual	A-05 A-08 A-26 A-27
	<b>KPI-07</b>	Contribution to Net Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in carbon sequestration capacity (tCo2e, year-30)</li> </ul>	Provides a proxy measure for climate outcomes delivered by tree and woodland creation	ECF/LJMU model	Annual	A-13 A-15 A-26 A-27
	<b>KPI-08</b>	Ecological Network, Enhancing wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hectares of ecological network added to woodland species</li> </ul>	Demonstrates improvements to ecological connectivity and biodiversity at landscape scale	ECF/LJMU /NECF GIS Local ecology data LNRS	Annual	A-5 A-10 A-23
<b>People and Participation</b>							
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>KPI-09</b>	People directly involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of people directly involved in the core work of the community forest (e.g. tree planting, woodland management)</li> </ul>	Demonstrates community involvement in the NECF delivery and supports the	NECF Event Registers/ partner returns CRM	Quarterly / Annual	A-16 A-18 A-17

			* (exclude paid staff/contractors)	people-centred ethos of Community	NECF Comms and Engagement Stakeholder database / Engagement Tracking System		A-19
	<b>KPI-10</b>	Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of young people engaged (as a subtotal; of the above, under 25)</li> </ul>	Demonstrates engagement of children and young people, supporting skills development and environmental learning	NECF Event log School logs	Quarterly Annual	A-16 A-17
	<b>KPI-11</b>	People attending events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of people participating in community engagement activities</li> <li>Events attended (shows e.g. agricultural, career days, community festivals, conferences)</li> </ul>	Demonstrated the scale of public engagement and NECF's role in community-facing activity.	NECF Event Registers CRM	Quarterly Annual	A-16 A-17 A-18 A-19
	<b>KPI-12</b>	Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of community engagement projects delivered (days)</li> </ul>	Demonstrates the breadth and frequency of community engagement activity	NECF Event Register / CRM	Quarterly Annual	A-16 A-17 A-18 A-19
<b>Volunteering and volunteer groups</b>	<b>KPI-13</b>	Volunteering hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Volunteer hours</li> </ul>	Provides a proxy for community ownership and in-kind value	NECF Event Register / CRM	Annual	A-18

<b>Education, Training and Work Experience</b>	<b>KP1-14</b>	Schools, Colleges and Universities involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of schools/ colleges/universities worked with</li> <li>• Number of pupils worked with</li> </ul> <p>(Institutions receiving NECF Support, working within includes both on-site planting and wider curriculum linked activity, reporting will distinguish between these activities)</p>	Builds environmental literacy and supports learning through practical engagement	NECF Schools Programme log NECF School Officer	Termly / Annual	A-17
	<b>KP1-15</b>	Training Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of training courses delivered.</li> <li>• Number of participants attending training courses (sessions / workshops)</li> <li>• Number of work experience opportunities provided</li> </ul>	Supports green jobs and skills	NECF training logs	Quarterly	A-17 A-23
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<b>KP1-16</b>	Activities and Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of health and wellbeing activities delivered (days)</li> <li>• Number of people participating in health and wellbeing activities</li> </ul>	Demonstrates alignment with health partner priorities and delivery of wellbeing outcomes	NECF Health Partners	Quarterly Annual	A-19
<b>Tree Equity</b>	<b>KP1-17</b>	Projects in low-score wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects supported or delivered in wards with a Woodland Trust Tree Equity score of less than 60.</li> <li>• Number of residents engaged in underserved and deprived communities,</li> </ul>	Demonstrates fairness by targeting delivery in the most underserved areas	WT Tree Equity & NECF GIS	Annual	A-5 A-16 A-26 A-27

			informed by Tree Equity Score and local demographic data.				
	<b>KP1-18</b>	Canopy Change in Low-Score Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canopy cover change /TWO in those wards.</li> <li>• Number of trees planted.</li> <li>• Canopy cover increases in wards with a Woodland Trust Tree Equity score of less than 60</li> </ul>	Demonstrates whether canopy improvement is reaching communities with the lowest access to nature and supporting climate justice	Cover datasets (NFI/TOW)	Biennial	A-05 A-26 A-27
<b>Nature</b>							
<b>Tree and woodland cover</b>	<b>KP1-19</b>	Total Cover (ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total hectares*</li> <li>• Percentage of total land area*</li> <li>• Amount of CO2 removed by year 30</li> </ul>	Demonstrates the activity of NECF and provides a long-term measure aligned with national targets	CF Records National Forest Inventory Woodland map + Trees Outside Woodland map (+ Orchards – when national dataset is available)	Annual	A-05 A-23 A-26 A-27
<b>Tree and woodland Establishment</b>	<b>KP1-20</b>	Total Woodland and Trees Established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total hectares*</li> <li>• Total number of trees*</li> </ul> (ha figure based on gross area of projects)	Provides a clear and responsive measure of new establishment, enabling annual reporting and alignment with funding requirements	From NECF project records  Proposal is that this is establishment undertaken / funded by each NECF	Annual	A-21 A-25 A-26 A-27 A-29
<b>Woodland Management</b>	<b>KP1-21</b>	Sustainable Management /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of woodland sustainably managed (FC)*</li> </ul>	Demonstrates NECF contribution to improving the condition, resilience, and	FC definition of 'sustainably managed' is woodland	Annual	A-23 A-28

		Restoration / Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hectares of woodland restoration*</li> <li>• Increase native species quantity.</li> <li>• Wildlife habitats restored.</li> </ul>	biodiversity value of existing woodland	managed to the UK Forestry Standard that has a Woodland Management Plan		
<b>Hedgerows</b>	<b>KP1-22</b>	Hedgerows Created and Improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Km of hedgerow created.</li> <li>• Km of hedgerow improved</li> </ul>	Demonstrates value of hedgerows in supporting nature recovery, ecological connectivity and climate resilience	NECF project records	Annual	A-06 A-21 A-25
<b>Priority Areas</b>	<b>KP1-23</b>	LNRS/ Biodiversity Opportunity Areas Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hectares established or improved in LNRS linked priority areas.</li> <li>• Hectares established or improved in Biodiversity Opportunity Areas</li> </ul>	Demonstrate alignment with LNRS and ensures targeting in the most strategic.	LNRS/ BOA mapping NECF GIS	Annual	A-05 A-08 A-23 A-28
<b>Other Green Spaces</b>	<b>KP1-24</b>	Other green space creation / restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total hectares created.</li> <li>• Total hectares improved/restored</li> </ul>	Demonstrates NECF's contribution to wider green infrastructure, supporting biodiversity, access, health and climate resilience.	NECF Project Logs, GIS	Annual	A-09 A-10 A-23
<b>Climate</b>							
<b>Climate Change Awareness</b>	<b>KP1-25</b>	Climate Change awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of climate change related activities delivered (days)</li> </ul>	Builds community understanding of climate challenges, promotes behaviour change.	NECF, Partners	Annual	A-16 A-19

<b>Climate Change Projects</b>	<b>KP1-26</b>	Climate Resilience Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of climate resilience projects delivered.</li> </ul> <p>(Defined using agreed criteria e.g. shade provision, NFM benefits, heat adaptation, drought-resilient planting) and assessed using NECF GIS layers and project design evidence.</p>	Demonstrates NECF's role in delivering in practical adaptation outcomes such as shade, cooling, flood mitigation, drought resilience and contributing to climate strategies.	NECF Project logs, GIS	Annual	A-05 A-23 A-26 A-27
<b>Local Economy</b>	<b>KP1-27</b>	Local Economy Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of projects that enhance local markets for timber, improve food security or support agroforestry practices</li> </ul>	Strengthens the green economy and supports supply chains promotes sustainable land management and diversification for landowners. Demonstrates socioeconomic benefits arising from NECF delivery.	NECF Project logs	Annual	A-11 A-15 A-23

\*England Community Forest Core Metrics (enables Network to demonstrate collective impact on a national scale)

## Appendix C: Risk Register – Forest Plan Delivery

The table below sets out the key risks and mitigation identified at the time of publication of this Delivery Plan.

Risk ID	Risk Title	Risk Description	Source (SWOT Link FP / M&C)	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Mitigations	Linked Action ID (s) Delivery Themes
R-01	Land availability	Suitable land for tree planting and woodland creation may be limited due to competing land uses, and landowner choice	SWOT – Weakness	Medium	High	NECF / Local Authority Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with landowners, local authorities, developers, and local planning authorities to identify suitable land and secure woodland creation opportunities.</li> <li>Promote multifunctional land use through e.g. agroforestry, green infrastructure.</li> <li>Maintain a coordinated ‘one team approach’ across partners.</li> </ul>	A-06 A-08 A-09 A-26 A-27 Nature Climate
R-02	Fragmented land ownership	Delays due to fragmented land ownership	SWOT - Weakness	High	High	NECF / LA Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early engagement</li> <li>Use standardised agreements, templates and partnership processes.</li> <li>Strengthen cross-boundary coordination via OWG.</li> </ul>	A-01 A-02 A-26 A-27 Governance Nature
R-03	Supply of Trees (Saplings)	Insufficient supply of suitable saplings may limit	Forest Plan	Medium	High	NECF, Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and partner with tree regional nurseries.</li> <li>Develop a forward supply/ordering strategy.</li> </ul>	A-21 A-24

		establishment at scale				Creation Partners		A-26 Nature Climate
<b>R-04</b>	Funding Uncertainty	Changes to funding programmes or delays in confirmation may disrupt delivery and reduce momentum	SWOT – Threat	Medium	High	NECF/ ECF / Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify funding sources.</li> <li>• Pursue private sector and philanthropic investment.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a fundraising strategy.</li> <li>• Improve multi-year financial planning.</li> </ul>	A-11 A-12 A-13 A-15 Governance Business
<b>R-05</b>	Securing critical funding	Failure to secure essential funding (e.g. Section 106, green finance, leasing models) may limit delivery of the Forest Plan.	SWOT– Threat Business Plan	Medium	High	NECF / LA Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen engagement with LA finance/planning teams.</li> <li>• Develop clear business cases for natural capital and BNG delivery.</li> <li>• Explore blended finance and investment models.</li> </ul>	A-09 A-10 A-11 A-13 Governance Business
<b>R-06</b>	Low Regional Awareness	Low recognition of NECF reduces engagement, participation and support for delivery	SWOT- Weakness	Medium	Medium	NECF, Communications lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted Communication campaigns and coordinated partner messaging.</li> <li>• Improve visibility and accessibility of NECF content across channels.</li> <li>• Strengthen engagement through events, storytelling, schools programme and community activity.</li> </ul>	A-16 A18 A17 People Engagement

<b>R-07</b>	Misinformation or Negative Coverage	Reputation damage or reduced trust arising from misinformation, unclear messaging or unmanaged media narratives	Communications and Stakeholder Environment	Medium	Medium	NECF / NCC Comms Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol (NCC Accountable Body) for responding to misinformation or negative coverage.</li> <li>• Agreed approved spokespersons and proportionate escalation routes.</li> <li>• Consistent, transparent messaging across partners, supported by a shared communications toolkit.</li> <li>• Media monitoring and proactive relationship-building with journalists.</li> <li>• External communications to be reviewed with relevant Local Authority and relevant partners before publication.</li> </ul>	A-16 A-07 People Governance
<b>R-08</b>	Ineffective or Non-inclusive Communications	Communications activity does not reach or reflect diverse communities, limiting participation and equity of access	Strategic Delivery	Medium	Medium	NNECF/ Communications Lead / LA Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive communications approach ensuring accessibility and representation.</li> <li>• Co-design of messages with community partners where appropriate.</li> <li>• Targeted outreach in underserved communities aligned to Tree Equity and LNRS priorities</li> </ul>	A-16 A17 A-18 People Equity
<b>R-09</b>	Supporting LNRS	LNRS finalised after the Forest Plan, risk links and alignment missed	SWOT- Opportunity / Threat	Medium	Medium	NECF, Partners, LNRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FP has identified LNRS priorities and measures that need to be considered.</li> <li>• Establish method to track delivery of LNRS measures by CCF partners.</li> <li>• Agree ecological data collection methods &amp; sharing</li> </ul>	A-05 A-06 Nature Climate

							with relevant LNRS delivery partners. Can integrate Mapping.	
<b>R-10</b>	Missed Green Jobs and Skills Opportunities	Failure to deliver training, skill development and workforce pathways may limit regional green economy benefits	SWOT - Opportunity	Medium	Medium	NECF, LA Partners, Education Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed skills development in delivery programmes.</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with colleges and training providers.</li> <li>• Create volunteering to employment pathways.</li> <li>• Provide work placement and experience opportunities within the NECF Team.</li> </ul>	A -17 A-18 A-23 People Economy
<b>R-11</b>	Climate Impacts on Establishment	Increasing drought, heat stress or extreme weather may reduce establishment success and increase aftercare / maintenance costs.	SWOT- Threat Forest Plan	Medium	High	NECF, Delivery Partners, Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the Forest Research Ecological Site Classification (ESC) when devising planting schedules.</li> <li>• Ensure site-specific soil data is incorporated when applying ESC, as soil characteristics are critical to determining species suitability and establishment success.</li> <li>• Apply establishment standards (mulch, watering regimes, protection, replacement schedules).</li> <li>• Prioritise site design to manage exposure, soil moisture and flood pathways (NFM opportunities).</li> </ul>	A-21 A-24 A-25 A-26 Nature Climate
<b>R-12</b>	Tree Health and Biosecurity (Pests and Diseases)	Pest and disease (e.g. ash dieback, Phytophthora) affect woodland health and	SWOT – Threat Forest Plan	Medium	High	NECF, Forestry Commission, Delivery Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use UK-sourced, bio secure stock; follow FC biosecurity protocols.</li> <li>• Diversify species and provenance within agreed climate-resilient lists.</li> </ul>	A-21 A-24 A-25

		resilience, leading to increased costs and replanting					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish rapid monitoring and reporting for pests/diseases; update species lists accordingly.</li> </ul>	Nature Climate
<b>R-13</b>	Deer impacts on woodland establishment	Increased deer population impacting tree growth in new woodland creation sites	SWOT – Threat	Medium	High	NECF / Local Authority Partners, private landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Forestry Commission mapping to understand potential impact.</li> <li>Engage Forestry Commission deer specialist to do site walkovers to understand best preventative measures e.g. deer proof fencing, tall tree guards, stalking etc</li> </ul>	A-21 A24 A-25 A-26
<b>R14</b>	Antisocial behaviour to newly planted sites	ASB impacting tree establishment	SWOT- Threat Forest Plan	Medium	High	NECF, Delivery Partners, Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid using shelters where possible – trees are not as obvious.</li> <li>Plant the trees amongst longer grass e.g. stop mowing a year early – people do not go where they get their trainers wet.</li> <li>Avoid obvious areas of congregation or movement of people.</li> <li>Fencing has been useful – preventing people casually walking through planted areas.</li> <li>Enter site post code into the police crime page can help identify reported ASB sites.</li> <li>Where ASB is reported to be high, walk the site before planting with the respective local authority crime prevention officer and the police who highlight where the ASB hot spots are e.g. regular</li> </ul>	A-21 A-24 A-25 A-26

							<p>bon fires, congregating places etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter box leaflet drops, undertake on site and online consultation where residents could receive a material impact e.g. potential loss of light, loss of view, leaf litter; new trees potentially planted in sledging sites; listen to and take on their views.</li><li>• Involve the same volunteers who planted the trees in the aftercare programme, so they take ownership over the area.</li><li>• Work with Local Authority ASB teams to design preventative measure including signage, site layout adjustments and coordinated community-based approaches.</li></ul>	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--

## **Appendix D: Glossary & Abbreviations**

BNG: Biodiversity Net Gain

BOA: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

FC: Forestry Commission

GIS: Geographic Information System

KPI: Key Performance Indicator

LNRS: Local Nature Recovery Strategy

MSG: Members Steering Group

NECF: North East Community Forest

NFI: National Forestry Inventory

NFM: Natural Flood Management

OWG: Officers Working Group

TfC: Trees for Climate (Nature for Climate Fund)

TOW: Trees Outside Woodland