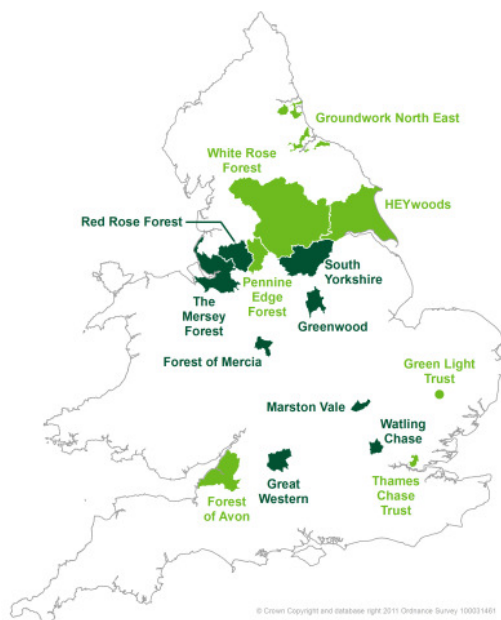


England's community forests

Information for National Forestry Forum

National Community Forests in England

England's national programme of Community Forests is a successful model for community involvement, inclusion, environmental regeneration and green infrastructure creation. The Community Forests work collectively through a national partnership to inform and respond to policy and also to provide DEFRA with information and data. This partnership also involves a number of community forestry based woodland initiatives. Collectively, England's Community Forests form the country's biggest environmental regeneration initiative, providing Community Forests within 20km for 60% of England's population.



Together, Community Forests have planted over 12,000 ha of new woodland and brought large areas of derelict and neglected woodland back into management.

The Community Forests are located in areas of high need for the types of activity provided by and benefits derived from the delivery of forest projects and programmes. The Forests are within reach of 50% of the population of England, they are in areas where community forestry can have most socio-economic benefits.

- 58 of the 100 most deprived Super Output Areas in England are in Community Forest areas
- 1,320 (40.6%) of the 3,248 (top 10%) most deprived Super Output Areas in England are in Community Forest areas

Whilst some Community Forests address the challenges of urban decline and deprivation, others focus on areas of major housing growth and development. In all instances, the

Community Forests provide DEFRA with a readymade partnership to deliver policy and also to inform policy development with a “short chain” from community level delivery to policy and vice versa.

At a time of limited resources, fewer staff, focus on jobs and growth, and a greater emphasis on small government, the Community Forests offer a proven, community focussed resource that operates cross boundary and is able to cost effectively deliver against key agendas.

England's community forests

Delivery of the Forest Plans and national policy

A key role for the forest teams is to develop and deliver projects and programmes. This involves working with funders, landowners, statutory bodies and communities.

Community Forests work closely with the three DEFRA agencies and with DEFRA civil servants. Historically our relationships have been strongest with Natural England and Forestry Commission, but more recently our relationship with Environment Agency has been developing.

Our work delivers DEFRA policies as well as local ones. We also frequently host visits by DEFRA ministers and civil servants to look at what we do and issues that may have relevance nationally.

Table 1 Examples of policy delivery

DEFRA Policy	CF engagement
Forest Policy Statement	partnerships help to deliver many of the recommendations set out in the policy
The Natural Choice – Securing the value of Nature	Work with LNPs, Green Infrastructure Planning, Landscape scale approach,
Biodiversity 2020	Protecting and enhancing priority habitats and species

Forest Plans are supported through national planning guidance (NPPF) and community forests are mentioned as delivery mechanisms in the DEFRA White Paper and also Forest Policy Statement. At a local level, Community Forests, and the delivery of their Forest Plans, are supported through local planning policies and related strategies. In many diverse ways, the continued creation of England's Community Forests is directly delivering many elements of the Government's forestry (and other) policy agendas.

Community Forests have delivered over 100,000 trees as part of DEFRA's Big Tree Plant programme. Community Forests have also been involved in bids to Regional Growth Funds and are also involved in informing partners about tree health issues such as Chalara and Phythophthora. Community Forests are also lending their support and networks to the Grown in Britain initiative, following positive direct engagement with Dr Peter Bonfield and his team to share with them the experiences of several Community Forest teams.

England's Community Forests will continue to deliver such benefits, providing environmental, social and economic benefits in parallel to society, and specifically within reach of half of England's population.