



**RAISE**

**It takes a community to raise a**





# What is Raise?

Credit: Rob Fraser, Somewhere Nowhere

# England's Community Forests



- Network of 15 Community Forests across England
- England's largest environmental regeneration initiative
- Cover 24% of England
- 65% of people live within 15km

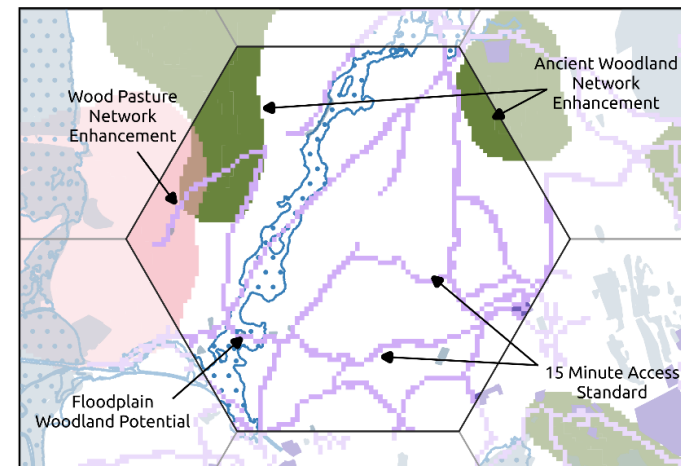
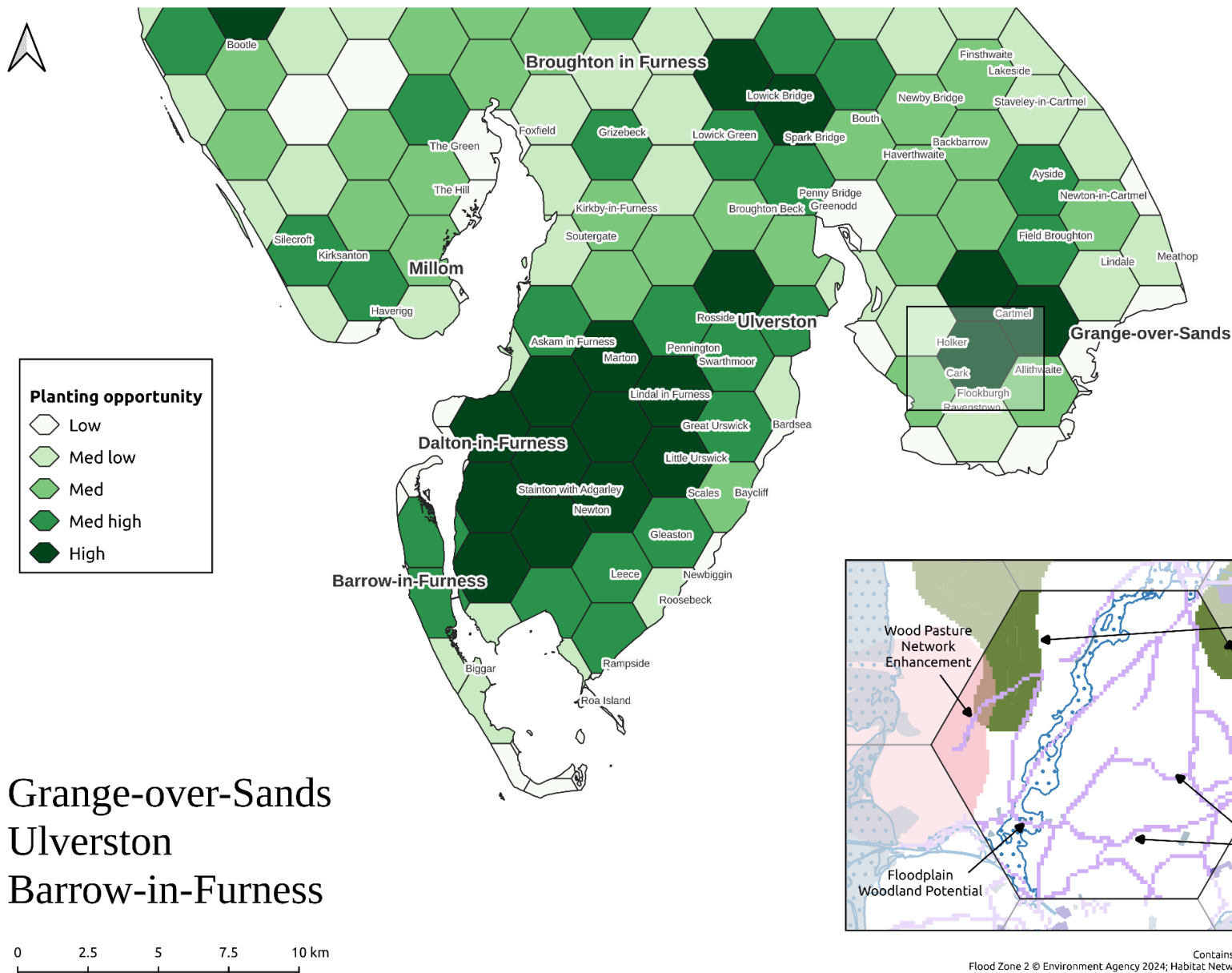


# Cumbria Community Forest

- Total footprint 1800sqm
- Tree and woodland cover 12.4% (target 16.5% by 2050)
- Footprint determined by tree equity/impact mapping
- Driven by 25-year Forest Plan



# Forest Plan: 25-year strategy



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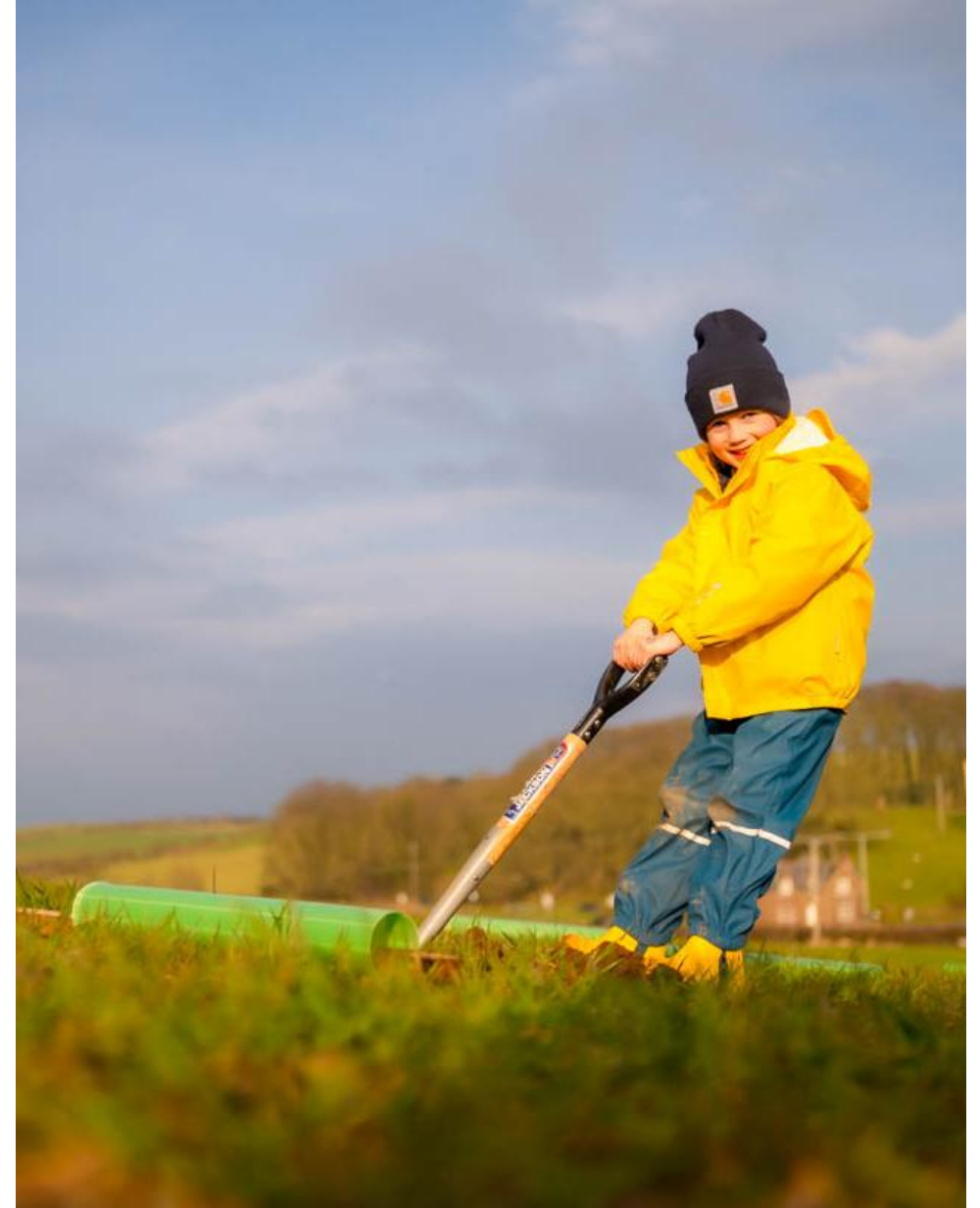
## Our first three years

Created  
**244 hectares**  
of woodlands

Planted over  
**400,000**  
trees

Generated over  
**£4.1m**  
inward investment

Engaged with  
**3,000**  
people experiencing socio-  
economic deprivation



# Our neuro-affirming approach

1. Promote inclusion and respect
2. Flexible schedules and autonomy
3. Wellbeing and support
4. Clear training and guidance
5. Sensory friendly environment



# Benefits for everyone

## Neuro-affirming approach inputs

- Respect
- Understanding
- Support
- Safety



## Benefits

- Self-advocacy
- Safe space
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Increased performance and agility
- Belonging



# Why Neurodiversity + Biodiversity?

## Neurodivergence in Cumbria

- Increasing diagnoses / stretched service provision
- Poor rates of health, employment, and education
- ND skills suit nature conservation



## Biodiversity and woodlands

- 40% England's woodlands not in sustainable management
- 93% UK woodlands in poor ecological state

## Increased health and resilience

- Woodland environment improves ND health & wellbeing
- Woodlands benefit from ND management

# Our neuro-affirming programmes

## Immediate - Direct Delivery

- Volunteering (creation, maintenance, monitoring)
- Apprenticeships and jobs
- Stewardships collaborations with link organisations

## In development

- Commissioned health and employment placement programmes
- Long-term funded projects (environment, health, skills, employment)
- Showcase events / 'thought leadership' events





**RAISE**

CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOREST

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[raisecumbria.co.uk](http://raisecumbria.co.uk)