Perth and Kinross Draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2026 to 2046

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Introduction

As the 'cradle of the Scottish forest renaissance' Perth and Kinross has a strong forestry heritage as well as some of the oldest, and most productive forests in the British Isles hence its renown as 'Big Tree Country'. The Planting Dukes of Atholl started reforesting bare land, in what was probably the first example of establishing significant new conifer plantations in Britain in the 18th century. Their legacy can be seen across the region with 22 of Scotland's recognised heritage trees within Perth and Kinross which is more than any other Council area in Scotland. These long-established woodlands continue to make a significant contribution to tourism, sustainable timber production, climate change mitigation, biodiversity enhancement and public enjoyment of the natural environment.

The UK has lost a greater proportion of its natural forest cover than most other European countries and trees and woodlands are threatened by fragmentation, grazing pressure, increased pests, diseases and lack of management. Nature is also in decline, and a key driver of biodiversity loss is land-use change, which has led to habitat loss and fragmentation. The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss present complex challenges. Trees, woodland and forests deliver a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits and therefore make a significant contribution to the three pillars of sustainable development.

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 6 requires LDPs to identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks. Through considering the existing forestry, woodland, and tree assets in our area, as well as identifying potential opportunities for enhancement and expansion via our LDP3 spatial strategy, we can help tackle the twin climate and nature crises. This updated Forestry and Woodland Strategy identifies Woodlands of High Nature Conservation Value for the first time, highlighting their value.

Perth and Kinross have favourable soils and climatic conditions to make a key contribution to creation of new multi-benefit woodlands to meet the Scottish Government's aspiration for woodland and forestry to cover 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032. Guided by principles of the Scottish Forestry Strategy and UK Forestry Standard, this Strategy provides policy guidance in the local context of Perth and Kinross to guide management of existing, and creation of new forestry and woodland to be well-managed and sustainable. The themes and priorities reflect the complex challenges faced and opportunities presented to balance the need to produce timber with other policy priorities including biodiversity, climate resilience and creating welcoming forests for people to access and enjoy.

This Strategy supports a holistic vision where trees, woodland and forestry form a landscape matrix, align with policies to develop connected nature networks and offers opportunities to re-integrate woodlands into the landscape. This will enable forestry to play an increasingly multi-functional role in delivering valuable benefits such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, flood protection, recreation and health benefits. This Strategy covers the whole of Perth and Kinross but excludes areas within the boundaries of the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Parks which have their own strategies.

Vision

In 2046, trees, woodlands and forests are valued, protected and enhanced through all land uses contributing towards sustainable development. Woodlands and forests are utilised as nature-based solutions contributing towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. Native and ancient woodlands are protected, restored and well managed to create well connected nature networks. Productive forests are diverse, climate-resilient, multi-purpose, multi-benefit and sustainable.

Woodlands and forests provide multiple benefits for nature and people and offer opportunities for people to connect with nature. Communities in Perth and Kinross enjoy access to inclusive and biodiverse woodlands and forests within easy reach, connected by nature-rich blue-green networks that support climate resilience, healthier lives and fair access for all ages. Communities are consulted and forewarned of proposed tree, woodland and forestry proposals in their local surroundings and engaged in community woodlands.

Perth and Kinross is an area of exceptional trees, woods and forests, which enhance the natural and cultural environment, support and strengthen the local economy adding value where possible and are accessible to local people and visitors alike across a range of activities and interests.

1: Priorities and contributing themes

In order to achieve the Strategy's vision, five priorities and ten contributing themes have been identified below. The priorities and themes have guided the content of the Strategy and will inform a range of other Council plans and strategies including LDP3 and the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan. It is recognised that many of the priorities and themes are cross-cutting and will provide multiple benefits. Woodland and forestry proposals should be developed in accordance with UK Forestry Standard and the Scottish Government's Woodland Removal Policy and be accompanied by a Long-Term Forest Plan or a Forest Management Plan. The Strategy focuses on a 20-year period (2026 to 2046). Our policy and forest policy will of course continue to change, and society's future demands are also likely to be different. It is therefore proposed that the Strategy will have a 'working life' of 10 years.

Priorities	Contributing themes
Forests and climate change Improving the resilience of our forests and woodlands, and maximising their role in addressing climate change	1. Climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience
Natural assets, environmental quality, and biodiversity Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment, and tackling the global nature crisis	2. Protect and enhance the environmental quality of our natural resources (air, water, soil) 3. Help to protect, restore, maintain, and enhance biodiversity across Perth and Kinross 4. Contribute to and help improve our landscapes and scenery 5. Help make the most of our historic environment
Forests and the economy Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy of Perth and Kinross	6. Productive forests 7. Forest-based enterprises and tourism

Priorities	Contributing themes
Forests, woodlands and people Maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross	8. Access for health and wellbeing 9. Integration with other land uses
Expanding our forest and woodland resource	10. Identifying preferred and potential areas for new woodland creation

2: Strategy purpose

This Strategy provides a Perth and Kinross context of the Scottish Forestry Strategy providing guidance and policy to help inform decisions about trees, woodland and forestry. The purpose of the Perth and Kinross Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS) is to:

- identify woodlands of high nature conservation value
- provide a strategic framework for the development of trees, forestry and woodlands in Perth and Kinross
- set out a local interpretation of the Scottish Forestry Strategy
- inform Development Management/Planning decisions that include proposals for tree and woodland removal and woodland creation
- inform consultation responses to Scottish Forestry on forest management and woodland creation proposals
- inform consultation responses to land and forestry owners and managers on forest management and woodland creation proposals
- assist with the development and approval of Long-Term Forest Plans and Forest Management Plans

2.1 Development Management/Planning

The FWS is a statutory document and a material consideration in the decision-making process. The FWS should be applied at the earliest stage of development, including pre-application discussions, and should be used alongside the LDP and other relevant strategies linked to throughout this document. Where proposals depart from the policies in this Strategy, clear justification will be required.

2.2 Tree, woodland and forestry management and creation

Forestry is not subject to full planning controls; however, all aspects of forest management are closely regulated, with operations such as planting, restocking, thinning, and felling requiring permission from Scottish Forestry.

Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) are a non-statutory consultee to Scottish Forestry for long-term forest plans, forest management plans, felling permissions, and woodland creation proposals. The Council also provide advice directly to applicants prior to submission to Scottish Forestry as part of the due diligence process. Details of what PKC provide is available in PKC's Woodland Creation Advice Note.

This Strategy aims to address uncertainties for land managers by providing more detail about what PKC would like to see in proposals using PKC Policy Guidance. The FWS also identifies areas where PKC will support proposals for woodland creation and areas where there may be sensitivities or constraints to woodland expansion. Guiding forestry towards appropriate locations minimises the likelihood of undesirable environmental or social outcomes. It also identifies priority activities that PKC will encourage and for which funding will be available from Scottish Forestry.

2.3 Integration with other land uses

The Strategy has links with and complements other strategies and policy documents developed or being developed by PKC, including those on landscape, renewable energy, placemaking, open space, blue and green infrastructure, nature networks, and planning and biodiversity.

3: Policy background

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, amended by the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act, requires planning authorities to prepare a Forestry and Woodland Strategy which:

- identifies woodlands of high nature conservation value within the planning authority's area
- sets out the planning authority's proposals as to the development of forestry and woodlands:
    - the protection and enhancement of woodlands, in particular those of high nature conservation value
    - the resilience of woodlands of high nature conservation value
    - the expansion of woodlands of a range of types to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social, and environmental characteristics of the area, and any other matter which the planning authority considers appropriate

The National Planning Framework 4 commonly known as NPF4, is required by law to set out the Scottish Ministers' policies and proposals for the development and use of land. It plays a key role in supporting the delivery of Scotland's national outcomes and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. NPF4 Policy 6 Forestry, Woodland and Trees intend to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees.

Under Policy 6, NPF4 expects Local Development Plans to:

- identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks
- LDP spatial strategies should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands, and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits; this is to be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy

Trees, woodland and forestry can contribute towards 15 of the 33 NPF4 Policies listed below.

Sustainable places

- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
- Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
- Policy 3: Biodiversity
- Policy 4: Natural Places
- Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees
- Policy 8: Green Belts
- Policy 13: Sustainable Transport

Liveable places

- Policy 14: Design, Quality and Place
- Policy 15: Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods
- Policy 20: Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Policy 21: Play, Recreation and Sport
- Policy 22: Flood Risk and Water Management

Productive places

- Policy 25: Community Wealth Building
- Policy 26: Business and Industry
- Policy 30: Tourism

The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal gives direction for decisions on woodland removal including that loss of woodland should only be permitted if it results in significant public benefits. Compensatory planting in other areas to make up for woodland loss is expected.

Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019 to 2029 sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for forestry in Scotland. It contains a 50-year vision and 10-year framework to expand, protect and enhance Scotland's forests and woodlands to deliver multiple economic, social and environmental benefits. The Strategy is underpinned by sustainable forest management principles and includes the aspiration for woodland and forestry to cover 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032.

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) details how sustainable forestry will be undertaken by setting out relevant legislation and good practice which all forestry proposals must comply with. It is the standard which all forestry proposals are assessed and provides guidance in relation to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, soil and water.

In addition to the UKFS, there are voluntary certification schemes including the UK Woodland Assurance Standard which assures customers that wood products come from sustainably managed forests in accordance with the UKFS including the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The Right Tree in the Right Place supports the Scottish Ministers' wish to see a significant expansion in woodland cover across Scotland, delivering multiple societal benefits.

The Technical Note on Preparing a Forestry and Woodland Strategy by Scottish Forestry provides information to support planning authorities to prepare or update their Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

Tackling the Nature Emergency – Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 sets out a clear ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.

The Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 to 2026 sets out actions to protect and enhance biodiversity across two Council areas: Perth and Kinross, and Angus. The Plan includes actions to protect and expand forests and woodland, maintain and expand native woodland and encourage natural flood management.

The PKC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan provides a vision to achieve a low carbon and climate resilient Perth and Kinross.

The PKC Forest Plan relates to trees and woodlands in Council ownership and includes work plans for 36 sites

The PKC Ash Dieback and Roadside Tree Strategy 2025 sets out how PKC will manage ash trees on Council-owned land.

The PKC Tree Planting Policy aims to ensure that new trees planted on PKC ground follows a consistent approach to promote successful establishment within a suitable location.

4: Woodlands and forestry in Perth and Kinross today

The area has a rich legacy of planted woodland and some of the earliest initiatives to re-establish woodland in Scotland started in Perth and Kinross with the Planting Dukes. Ancient woodland, semi-natural woodland and planted native woodland including oak (Quercus spp) woodlands, coppiced woodlands and tree avenues also contribute towards landscape and biodiversity.

4.1 Current resource

In 2025, the National Forest Inventory (NFI) identified 99,353 hectares (ha) of woodland in Perth and Kinross, covering 21.3% of the Local Development Plan (LDP) area, which does not include the area of Perth and Kinross within the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park boundaries. Of that total woodland cover, 18% or 17,971.9ha is categorised as Felled and Failed in the NFI. In terms of species composition, 38.3% is Conifer, 16.6% Broadleaved, 1.5% Mixed Mainly Conifer, and 1.5% Mixed Mainly Broadleaved shown in Map 1.

The most recent Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) 2025 identifies that within the Perth and Kinross LDP area there are 23,424ha of Native Woodland, which equates to 23.6% of the overall woodland cover across the area, and 5% of the total land area shown in Map 2.

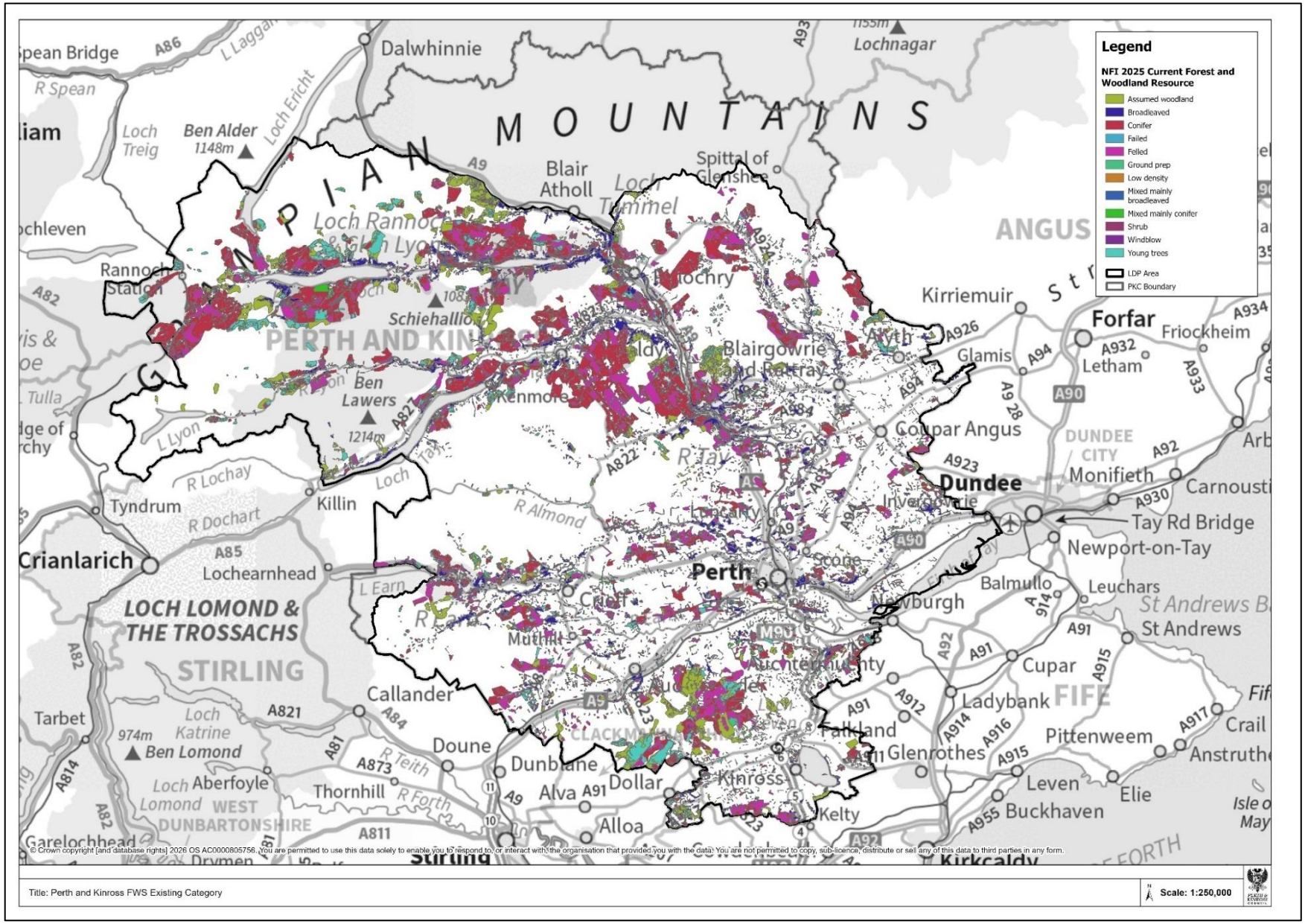
A breakdown of the NWSS also tells us that:

- 0.6% (556.9ha) of the area's total woodland cover is Nearly Native
- 2.5% (2,430ha) is Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS)
- 1.9% (1,886.2ha) is Open Land Habitat

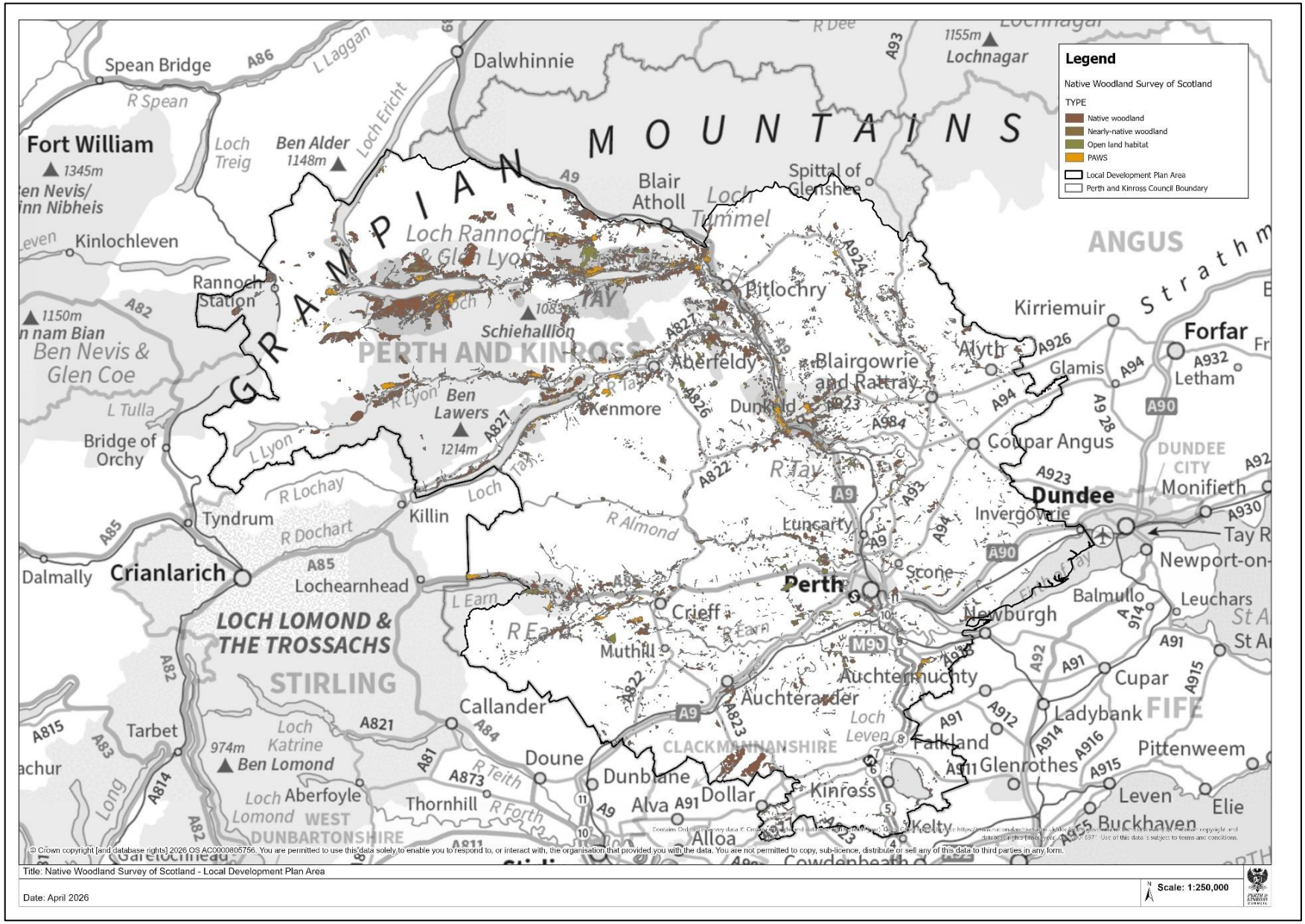
These areas include a number of important sites, such as the Caledonian pinewoods of Rannoch and Meggernie, and the oakwoods of Lochearnside and Strath Tay. There are also many important remnant oakwoods, formerly managed for bark and charcoal production in the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, individual specimen trees, such as the Fortingall Yew, help contribute towards the area's rich tree and woodland heritage.

Many native woodlands in the area are highly semi-natural in their present structure and composition, with 58.3% of the total area of native woodland in the 80 to 100% semi-natural category.

Map 1 describes spatial distribution of current forest and woodland resources in Perth and Kinross.



Map 2 describes spatial distribution of the native woodland survey of Scotland in Perth and Kinross.



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4.2 Current opportunities and challenges

The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss present complex challenges in land use planning and management. Trees, woodlands and forests offer many opportunities to provide multiple benefits and nature-based solutions for the benefit of nature and people.

4.2.1 Opportunities

1. Nature-based solutions: sustainably managed woodlands that maximise carbon sequestration have considerable long-term potential to contribute towards climate change mitigation. Carbon can be captured by both native woodland and productive forestry and is stored in the trees' own biomass, the forest floor litter, deadwood, and soil. As well as carbon storage they help regulate water flows, protect soils, and buffer the landscape and communities against increasing climate-related risks such as flooding, drought, and wildfires.

2. Connecting and protecting habitats at a landscape scale: native woodlands, designated sites, peatlands and open ground habitats offer opportunities to create Nature Networks and habitat networks on a landscape scale enhancing biodiversity.

3. Enhancing existing woodlands: Perthshire contains remnants of Caledonian forest, both coniferous and broad-leaved native woodland along with extensive tracks of timber forest which offer opportunities for restoration, especially Long Established of Plantation Origin (LEPO) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

4. Placemaking: trees and woodlands make an important contribution to successful places. Incorporating trees and woodlands into new and existing places that link with existing habitat networks can provide a range of benefits for people and nature.

5. Community health and wellbeing: the trees, forestry and woodlands of Perth and Kinross are well used by locals and visitors alike and provide opportunities for further recreation with the associated benefits to health and wellbeing and sense of community. Community-led tree and woodland initiatives present a significant opportunity.

6. Broadleaves for quality timber: Perth and Kinross is well-suited for the growing of broadleaves, and this could form a significant part of the future forest and woodland resource.

7. Transport corridor creation can provide screening, trap pollutants, improve air quality and enhance landscape quality.

4.2.2 Challenges

1. Tree and woodland loss: there is significant pressure on some of our most rich and ancient woodlands from development and land use change leading to loss and fragmentation often pre-emptively before a planning application is considered.

2. Climate change:
    - species composition change: climatic changes may alter the suitability of growing tree species in certain areas and may lead to a reduction in native species and more non-native species, including invasive species

- urban woodlands and forests: summer water stress is likely to increase the incidence of crown die back, windthrow and flood damage; an increase in summer storms is particularly risky when trees are heavy while in full leaf
- PKC undertook a climate risk and opportunity assessment which predicted the complete loss of native pinewood from its case study sites by 2080; more details of the risks and opportunities are available in the Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment Report

3. Pests, diseases and pathogens: considerable loss of ash (Fraxinus excelsior) trees because of ash dieback can be seen across Perth and Kinross. Of particular concern in Scotland are Phytophthora ramorum, a fungus-like pathogen that is a particular threat to larch, and Dothistroma needle blight, which poses a particular threat to productive forestry and native Caledonian pinewoods.

4. Lack of active management results in poor condition, less diverse range of species, age classes and open ground.

5. High grazing pressure by deer, sheep and hare prevents natural regeneration, reduces shrub and tree cover and damages trees. In some areas, the high density of red deer is preventing the opportunities from peatland restoration being realised.

6. Poorly planned forestry can negatively impact rare and threatened habitats such as species-rich grassland, waders and botanical assemblages unique to Tayside and of international conservation significance.

7. Barriers including access to land, funding, and technical support present challenges to community led woodland initiatives.

4.3 Potential resource

4.3.1 Land capability for forestry

Perth and Kinross has favourable soils and climatic conditions to make a key contribution to creation of new woodlands and support a wide range of tree species. The national scale land capability for forestry (LCF) map provides information on the potential for land across Scotland to grow trees using several capability classes based on soil, climate and topography. Classes F1 to F3 are those areas with the greatest potential.

- F1 is land with excellent flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops.
- F2 is land with very good flexibility.
- F3 is land with good flexibility.

Across the Forestry and Woodland Strategy area, the LCF identifies 143,348 hectares (around 30% of the land area) as being potentially suitable for woodland (Classes F1 to F3). However, 31% of this (43,932 hectares) is identified in the 2025 National Forest Inventory (NFI) as already having existing planting present.

4.3.2 Carbon sequestration potential

The Council commissioned the James Hutton Institute (JHI) to undertake a Carbon Sequestration Study of the Perth and Kinross Council area. The

project focussed on the sectors of land-based industries and natural resources, and how these can be considered when looking at the carbon resources of the area, and its potential for sequestering or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In terms of woodland expansion potential, the project report identifies significantly higher levels of carbon sequestration potential from the planting of Production Sitka spruce, and lower from the expansion of Native Broadleaf (after 25 years). However, the national objective of expanding native woodlands, and policy of planting the right tree in the right place must be adhered to. As such, it is most likely that a mixed approach to planting will be most appropriate for the Forestry and Woodland Strategy area (see section 5.10).

4.3.2 Locally important soils

The integration of trees on farms can provide a wide range of benefits to farmers and communities through carbon sequestration, water management, soil health, and supporting biodiversity. Trees can also provide a source of materials, such as fruit, which can be used or sold.

The subject of 'Agroforestry' is explored further under Section 5.8, but it is worth noting that in terms of potential forestry and woodland resources, whilst this Strategy seeks to protect the nationally important soils and prime agricultural land (Classes 2 to 3.1) through the 'Sensitive' category, it also recognises that there may be opportunities for the sensitive design and integration of trees within agricultural landscapes on areas of Class 3.2 soils (see section 5.9).

5: Policy Guidance

Policy guidance contained within this Forestry and Woodland Strategy is not intended to replicate or replace National Policy, the Scottish Forestry Strategy nor the UK Forestry Standard but provide more detailed guidance in a Perth and Kinross context.

Priority 1: Forests and climate change
Improving the resilience of our forests and woodlands and maximising their role in addressing climate change
• **Contributing theme 1:** Climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience

5.1 Forests and climate change

Retaining trees and woodlands in their original state is always preferable as they soak up carbon better and are more resilient to fire, storm, and drought. Trees, woodland and forestry management must increasingly consider the projected impacts of climate change, including warmer temperatures, more variable precipitation, more frequent extreme weather events and increased risk of pests, diseases and pathogens.

Trees and woodlands have an important role in flood alleviation, through managing the flow of water. Incorporating natural flood management such as protecting and enhancing riparian corridors, protecting natural flood storage areas, safeguarding and improving soil conditions, and planting to help reduce the flow of water, can result in positive improvements. Further information and practical information is available in Forest Research's 'Designing and managing forests and woodlands to reduce flood risk' guidance.

Utilising the following nature-based solutions will enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation from trees, woodland and forestry and make them more resilient with potential to adapt in changing climatic conditions.

5.1.1 Diversify existing woodland and enhance species diversity

Species diversity, a high proportion of native species and sustainable management of natural resources such as water and soil are all required to achieve sustainable forestry. Introduced and native conifers and hardwoods all have a part to play, and Perth and Kinross have a long and pioneering history of a range of conifer species in early plantations. However recent decades have seen an emphasis placed on a small number of species especially Sitka spruce (Picea sitchensis).

Selecting the right tree species is essential to creating forests and woodlands that are resilient to pests, disease and environmental stresses. Species selection must reflect both current site conditions and projected future changes, while supporting the role of woodlands as part of wider ecological networks. Growing a wide range of conifer and broadleaf species with an associated diversity of silvicultural systems and avoidance of single species or uniform planting will increase resilience and support biodiversity.

PKC support following the principle of the right tree in the right place and using site analysis tools such as Ecological Site Classification (ESC), local

habitat data and ecological surveys to guide decisions. Ecological Site Classification is a web-based decision support system to help forest managers and planners select tree species that are ecologically suited to particular sites. It is available to all and can be accessed via the Forest Research 'How to access ESC' guidance.

Assisted natural migration by sourcing planting stock from Southern UK seed zones, where evidence supports their suitability under future climatic conditions and where appropriate will be supported. Plans must reflect projected climate shifts while maintaining genetic diversity.

5.1.2 Connect and expand habitat networks

Climate change is already shifting species distributions, altering seasonal patterns, and placing additional pressure on fragmented habitats. As species attempt to move and adapt in response to changing conditions, habitat connectivity becomes increasingly critical to their survival.

To support the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy aim to restore nature by 2045, all local authorities in Scotland will create a Nature Network by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss at a national scale. A Nature Network connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping stones. Figure 1 shows a simplified landscape with discrete core areas, important for biodiversity, that are isolated from one another. It shows various ways in which the health of these core areas, and their positive contribution to biodiversity, can be increased.

Nature networks focus on two key aspects:

- connecting all sites to contribute towards the 30 by 30 initiatives (protecting 30% of our land and water by 2030)
- connecting biodiversity within and across urban, and peri-urban landscapes, ensuring that wildlife can move from place to place

The PKC Nature Networks Map will form part of LDP3 as required by NPF4. Woodlands, hedgerows, riparian corridors and peatlands will all play a strategic role in creating Nature Networks in practice. Native woodland creation, expansion, and management in locations that enhance habitat connectivity, linking existing semi-natural woodlands, wetlands, grasslands and peatlands to contribute towards Nature Networks will be supported. The PKC Nature Networks Map can be viewed on the Perth and Kinross Nature Networks Mapping webpage.

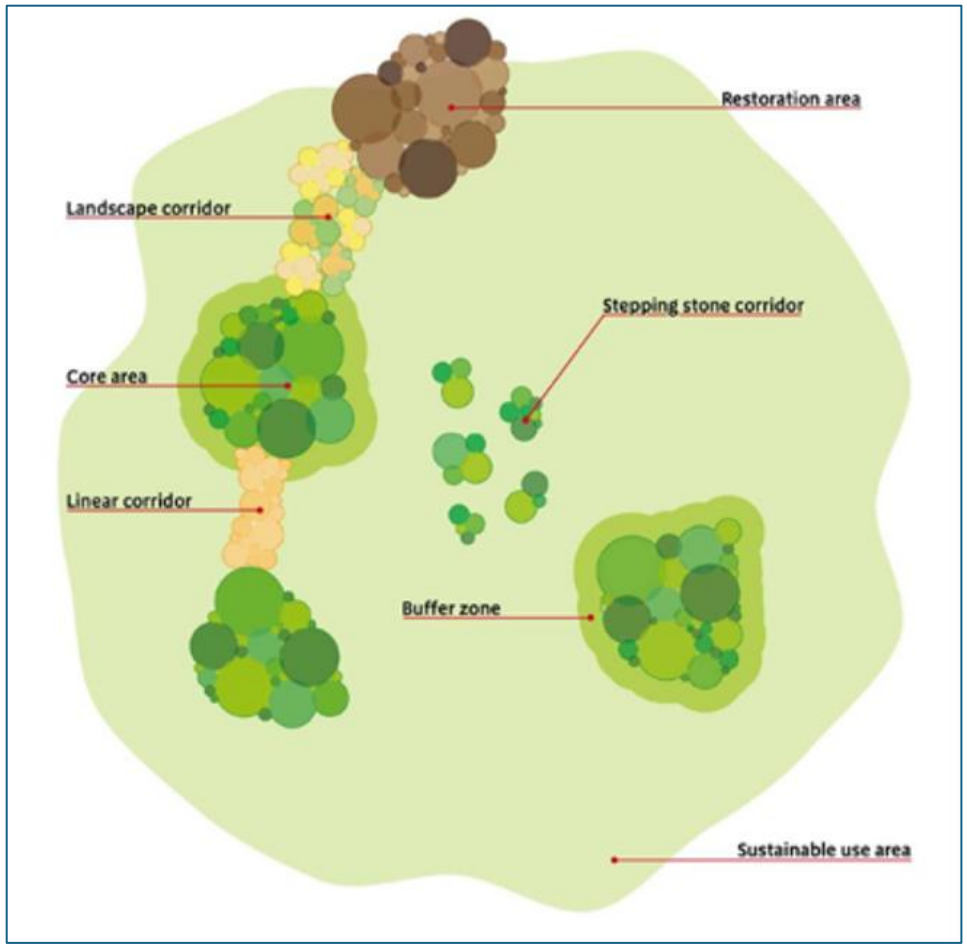


Figure 1 above describes a simplified landscape with discrete core areas, important for biodiversity, that are isolated from one another.

PKC Policy Guidance 1

1. Proposals containing diverse range of species and avoiding reliance on single species and uniform planting will be supported.
2. Proposals of single species planting will not be supported.
3. The development of buffer zones, stepping stones and habitat corridors, particularly where fragmented habitats can be reconnected to support species migration, and genetic exchange will be supported.

5.1.3 Protect and restore peatlands

Soil is a finite resource which can, if not treated properly, be easily damaged or destroyed. The importance of soils is reflected in NPF4 Policy 5 which aims to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise the impact of development on soil. Peatlands in good condition store significant amounts of carbon but degraded peatlands release carbon to the atmosphere and contribute to poor water quality and downstream flood risk. Warmer and drier conditions in future are likely to increase the rate of carbon and biodiversity losses from degraded peatlands.

Strategic integration of peatland and wetland restoration into forestry and woodland planning and design particularly in headwaters, riparian zones, and areas of high carbon soils, can deliver carbon storage, improved water retention, enhanced biodiversity and improved woodland resilience by maintaining soil moisture and reducing fire risk.

Managing restoration of peatlands carefully is vital as damaged, poor condition or eroded peatland can have a significant impact on drinking water quality supplies of upland sources from increases in dissolved organic carbon. Early consultation with the Scottish Water Sustainable Land Management Team to determine if development proposals impact on drinking water catchments is encouraged. Contact information is available on Scottish Water's 'Activities within our catchments' webpage.

A detailed survey of soils should be used to avoid and protect areas of deep peat and restore them as open habitats. Proposals must be designed to avoid damaging adjoining peatland and aim to protect and complement adjacent peatland restoration projects.

Proposals should include appropriate buffers of managed open ground and native broadleaves to prevent self-seeding conifers spreading onto peatland habitats. Planting native wet woodland species in riparian and transitional zones where they do not conflict with peatland integrity is encouraged.

Flush and mire habitat should be avoided and protected throughout forestry management and creation. Felling should be undertaken with appropriate machinery to avoid damage to mire habitat and no brash should be left within 20m of mires within protected areas. Regenerating trees in and around the wetland should be removed to prevent mires drying out.

Measures to restore degraded peatland such as removing trees, blocking forest drains, controlling non-native regeneration, and installing artificial dams will be supported. Grazing animals must be prevented from accessing peatland restoration areas to ensure measures are successful. Further information and details of financial support is available from the NatureScot Peatland Action Team. Peatland restoration works may require prior notification or an application for planning permission if permitted development rights do not apply (see section 5.3.2).

PKC will continue to work in partnership with landowners, NatureScot and communities to encourage peatland restoration in appropriate locations.

PKC Policy Guidance 2

1. A detailed soil survey should be used to avoid and protect areas of deep peat and restore as open habitats.
2. Proposals to plant on deep peat (over 50cm in depth) will not be supported and Class 1 and 2 soils should be avoided.
3. Proposals should include consideration of nearby peatland habitats and restoration projects.
4. Proposals should include appropriate buffers of managed open ground and native broadleaves to prevent self-seeding conifers spreading onto peatland habitats.
5. Opportunities for restoration of degraded peatlands will be supported, particularly within existing designated sites.

5.1.4 Expand native riparian woodland

Riparian planting is a nature-based solution that can improve water quality by trapping soil and sediments, providing shade and stabilising riverbanks. Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy acknowledges that planting trees as a natural flood management technique can contribute to reducing the risks for communities in downstream locations from the adverse impacts of flooding.

Trees, woodland and vegetation slow the flow of water compared to bare and heavily grazed land and bare soil. Woodland intercepts rainfall, increases water absorption into the soil and reduces surface flow rates, resulting in a slowing of movement of water into rivers and from the top of the catchment downstream.

Protecting existing and creating new native riparian woodland to deliver natural flood management, including in headwater catchments, alongside watercourses and on steep or erosion-prone slopes is encouraged and should be considered as part of new flood protection schemes.

Proposals should include protecting, creating and enhancing riparian woodland by removing invasive non-native species and conifer species and planting native broadleaf species or encouraging natural regeneration. Contributing and connecting to existing projects such as the Allan Water Project in partnership with NatureScot, the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, JHI and Stirling University is encouraged.

PKC will continue to encourage the management and expansion of riparian woodland and protection as part of a catchment approach that contribute towards Nature Networks.

5.1.5 Encourage natural regeneration

Naturally regenerating native woodland, rather than planted, ensures carbon locked into soils remains intact, delivers carbon sequestration more quickly and achieves wider biodiversity benefits. Forest and woodland establishment by natural regeneration rather than or alongside planting reduces the amount of mechanical ground preparation required which reduces soil erosion and release of carbon locked up in soils. Natural regeneration is also more cost effective than planting trees. PKC encourage natural regeneration in appropriate areas through reduced grazing pressure and deer management.

PKC Policy Guidance 3

1. Proposals should include protecting, restoring and creating new native riparian woodland where watercourses are present by removing invasive non-native species and conifer species.
2. The strategic use of new woodland to deliver natural flood management, including in headwater catchments, alongside rivers, and on steep or erosion-prone slopes will be supported and should be considered as part of new flood protection schemes.
3. Proposals that include natural regeneration in appropriate areas through reduced grazing and herbivore management will be supported.

5.1.6 Protect and expand urban forests

Urban forests are much like a traditional forest, with the term encompassing all the trees within an urban area. NPF4 aims to create sustainable, liveable and productive places, trees and woodland can help deliver all of these outcomes. Integration of trees and woodland into urban and peri-urban areas also provide benefits of providing shade and shelter thus reducing energy demands for cooling and insulating purposes, mitigating the urban heat island effect and improving air quality.

Some trees and woodlands are protected by existing designations such as Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Areas, and these will continue to be protected. Retaining trees and woodlands in their original state is always preferable and where trees have been specifically designed and planted for public amenity and flood risk management purposes they should be retained.

The urban forest is constantly changing, with trees being lost as a result of sub-optimal growing conditions, pests and diseases, new developments or reaching the end of their life. Methodical planning for tree planting is essential to ensure successful establishment to create a resilient, healthy urban forest, particularly considering future challenges. Several factors need to be considered when launching any programme of tree planting:

- trees take several years to reach their full potential size and canopy cover
- physical space above ground as trees grow and canopies extend over and above hard surfaces
- physical space below ground as trees require space for roots to grow, typically within the first 1m depth, also used for utilities provision
- annual losses from pests, disease, safety issues, or disease can outpace gains from new planting

PKC support protection and expansion of street trees and urban forests in appropriate locations and have undertaken opportunity mapping to identify suitable areas. Tree planting on PKC-owned and managed land must be in accordance with the PKC Tree Planting Policy and Open Space Strategy. PKC also have tree planting guides for schools and communities. Guidance on species selection in new developments is provided in the PKC Open Space Supplementary Guidance.

PKC Policy Guidance 4

1. Proposals that include retaining trees, forestry and woodland in their original state whilst encouraging natural regeneration will be supported.
2. All existing trees, hedgerows and woodland should be retained and incorporated into development design in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.
3. Tree planting on PKC-owned and managed land must be in accordance with the PKC Tree Planting Policy and Open Space Strategy.

5.1.7 Unlock nature-based investment

As the environmental value of woodland becomes more widely recognised, new forms of private and blended finance are emerging to support the delivery of climate and nature outcomes. These include schemes that reward landowners for sequestering carbon, enhancing biodiversity, improving water quality, and supporting landscape-scale resilience.

Perth and Kinross Council recognise the need to ensure local land managers and communities can access and benefit from these opportunities in a fair and transparent way. PKC will support the development of carbon credits through the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code, enabling income generation from verified carbon sequestration, and encourage local projects to access private finance where it aligns with public interest objectives.

Priority 2: Natural assets, environmental quality and biodiversity
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment and tackling the global nature crisis
• **Contributing theme 2:** Protect and enhance the environmental quality of our natural resources • **Contributing theme 3:** Help to protect, restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity across Perth and Kinross

5.2 Natural assets, environmental quality and biodiversity

When managed well, woodlands and forestry make a vital contribution to protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of air, water and soil resources and contribute towards tacking the climate change and nature loss crises.

5.2.1 Promote the protection and enhancement of air, water and soils

Adherence to the UK Forestry Standard is essential to protect water and soil resources particularly in sensitive catchments in Perth and Kinross; Loch Leven, Lunan Lochs, Dunkeld-Blairgowrie Lochs and the River Tay. Proposals should consider any watercourses which feed into protected areas.

The use of continuous cover forestry (CCF) and other lower impact silvicultural systems including group selection, shelterwood, small coupe felling, coppice or coppice with standards are encouraged to maintain soil carbon, limit erosion, and support ecological stability. With its diversity of age, species and structure, CCF avoids the impacts of large-scale clear-felling and delivers benefits of enhancing stand stability and reducing windblow and creating forests with a more natural look. It is also the most carbon efficient management system.

All proposals should avoid habitat fragmentation and aim to connect habitats by incorporating open glades, rides, transitional habitats, peatland restoration and riparian planting where appropriate.

PKC supports the planting of new, and managing existing, site-appropriate woodland and trees alongside and visible from important transport routes whilst ensuring that important views are retained. Planting smaller trees and shrub species can provide screening, noise reduction and capture of pollutants.

5.2.2 Protect, enhance and restore areas designated for nature conservation purposes

Perth and Kinross support many sites designated on international, European, national and local levels (Appendix 1). Data from 2023/2024 shows 33.5% of the land within Perth and Kinross is protected for nature. Designated sites play an important role in ensuring nature conservation is at the heart of land use decision making by protecting the most sensitive and rare habitats and species. Data and information on key Protected Areas across Scotland is available on the NatureScot Sitelink website.

Proposals within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or National Nature Reserves (NNR), or with the potential to affect them, will require consultation with NatureScot and may require a Habitats Regulations Appraisal. Further guidance including when a Habitats Regulations Appraisal is required is available in NatureScot's Habitats Regulations Appraisal guidance.

Proposals adjacent to protected areas should consider:

- providing a buffer of native species or managed open ground to minimise self-seeding from commercial crops
- measures to remove and control rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum), bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) and invasive non-native species
- creating and enhancing connectivity to contribute towards Nature Networks

5.2.3 Protect and prevent damage to protected species and their habitats

Perth and Kinross support a wide range of protected species recognised by international, European and national legislation, many of which are rare, endangered or have faced declines in abundance. Woodland and forestry proposals offer opportunities to enhance habitats for many species but can also negatively impact protected species by removing or fragmenting habitats and changing the hydrology of surrounding areas.

The Eurasian beaver (Castor fiber) is becoming widespread within Perth and Kinross and their nickname as ecosystem engineers is evident in creating dams and slowing the flow of water. They naturally coppice trees that will lead to a diverse range of age and structure along riverbanks.

Wet grassland and upland heath are important habitats for waders, some of which have experienced declines and are considered to be of Conservation Concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Proposals should be informed by surveys to ascertain the constraints and opportunities onsite and ensure site design takes biodiversity into account at an early stage to avoids and minimise impacts to protected species and important habitats. PKC encourage planting native Scots pine (Pinus Sylvestri) to create natural strongholds for red squirrel (Sciurus vulgaris).

PKC Policy Guidance 5

1. Proposals that will negatively impact protected areas, protected species and priority non-woodland habitats will not be supported.
2. Proposals likely to impact on waders should be accompanied by a survey and impact assessment to waders and their habitats.
3. Proposals within 30m of a watercourse should be accompanied by an otter survey.
4. Proposals should avoid habitat fragmentation by incorporating open glades, rides, transitional habitats, peatland restoration and riparian planting where appropriate.

5.2.4 Protect, enhance and restore rare and important habitats

Proposals should recognise and seek to safeguard and restore sensitive and rare habitats unique to Perth and Kinross.

Traditional orchards

The Carse of Gowrie has been well known for its apple, pear and plum orchards since the monasteries owned and farmed the grange lands in the 12th century. Often occupying the same piece of land for centuries, and managed without chemical input, the sites are hotspots for biodiversity and have been shown to provide a refuge for over 1,800 plant, fungi and animal species. A survey undertaken in 2007 indicated over half of the 51 documented orchards in the Carse of Gowrie no longer existed due to agricultural practises, lack of management, tree old age and pressure from development. Orchards are a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan providing benefits for biodiversity plus landscape, amenity, food growing and community involvement. Information on traditional orchards in Tayside is available in the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership guide to wildlife and management guidance.

Proposals likely to impact on traditional orchards should be accompanied by a survey and impact assessment with measures to restore and extend orchards. PKC will continue to protect traditional orchards through the planning process and use of TPOs where appropriate and will continue to request new orchard creation in all major housing developments.

Species-rich grassland

Perth and Kinross was historically a stronghold for species-rich grassland that has declined dramatically in recent decades and now occupy just 2% of Scotland's farmland grassland. Species-rich grassland is a Tayside LBAP priority habitat and is threatened by land use change including inappropriate forestry.

Where species-rich grassland is present, proposals should seek to restore and manage these areas and retain as open habitats. Proposals likely to impact species-rich grassland should be accompanied by a survey and impact assessment with measures to restore the habitat by managing it to maintain species diversity. Further information is available from NatureScot's species-rich grassland guidance.

PKC recently mapped all species-rich grassland and will continue to use the data when advising on planning applications and forestry and woodland proposals.

PKC Policy Guidance 6

1. Proposals likely to impact on traditional orchards should be accompanied by a survey and impact assessment with measures to restore and extend the habitat.
2. Proposals likely to impact on species-rich grassland should be accompanied by a survey and impact assessment with measures to restore the habitat by managing it to maintain a diversity of species.

Upland habitats

The present treeline in much of Scotland is below the natural limit and montane woodland is one of Scotland's rarest and most fragmented woodland types. It is typically found at heights of over 400 metres, and is dominated by birch and willow, grading into montane scrub (juniper, dwarf birch and mountain willow) and upland heath. Woolly willow (Salix lanata) occurs locally in Tayside but is sparse elsewhere threatened by climate change and overgrazing. Mountain heath and willow scrub are priority habitats on the Scottish Biodiversity List and the Tayside LBAP.

Heather moorland is the most extensive single upland habitat in Tayside covering 12% of the whole area and are highly valued cultural landscapes. Tayside is of international conservation significance for several extremely rare upland botanic interests including:

- alpine milk vetch (Astragalus alpinus); of the few sites known in the UK, three occur in Tayside and the population is decreasing to a critical stage
- close-headed Alpine sedge (Carex norvegica) is nationally rare, and most populations occur in Tayside with fewer than 200 plants
- yellow milk vetch (Oxytropis campestris) is found at just three sites in the UK: two are in Tayside, the other in the Mull of Kintyre
- brown bog rush (Schoenus ferrugineus) is restricted to four SSSI sites in Perthshire and one site in Selkirkshire; the plant is vulnerable to disease as a single outbreak could potentially wipe out an entire local population

Protecting and restoring upland habitats

Large conifer plantations and creation of timber haul roads can negatively impact on the upland environment and the unique assemblage of rare species. Woodland expansion must be sensitive to open habitat priorities, while also responding to opportunities for ecological restoration and connecting habitats to create nature networks.

Old ‘granny’ Caledonian pinewoods and individual trees should be retained to seed and provide a new generation of native pines. Ideally habitats should be restored through natural regeneration from the existing soil seed banks and surviving trees in gullies or inaccessible slopes if grazing is reduced and appropriate conditions restored. In areas where there is no viable seed source or remnant woodland nearby, targeted planting using locally appropriate genetically diverse stock may be required. Any planting should be designed to mimic natural structure and dispersal, using scattered trees and clumps that can act as future seed sources.

Montane woodland restoration could slow rainfall and improve upland landscapes by removing the sharp transition between afforested and open habitats. Many bird species would benefit from transition zones between forest and moorland heath and feathered edge forestry including ring ouzel (Turdus torquatus) and black grouse (Tetrao tetrix).

The National Trust for Scotland has pioneered methods of regenerating montane willows and other rare plants at Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve. The reserve has the largest abundance of arctic-alpine plants in the UK including snow gentian (Gentiana nivalis) which is unique to Tayside and alpine forget-me-not (Myosotis alpestris) which is restricted to Tayside

and Upper Teesdale. It is also the UK's most important site for lichens, home to over 500 lichen species.

Woodland and forestry operations in upland areas

Woodland creation or restoration in upland areas should be carefully designed to support species-specific conservation and reduce pressures from grazing and climate stressors. National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys should be used to avoid sensitive open habitats and impacts to climate-vulnerable species, especially those that are range-restricted.

Early consultation with the Tayside and Fife Raptor Study Group is recommended to identify any core nesting or foraging areas for the species protected within any designated sites. Guidance is available in the NatureScot disturbance distances in selected bird species guidance.

Proposals for native woodland creation should include a diverse range of native tree species, soft edges, gradual transitions of habitats and landscape sensitivities.

PKC encourage natural regeneration of treeline woodland in appropriate areas particularly through reduced grazing pressure and deer management. There is a presumption against conifer plantations in areas of sensitive habitats and ornithological interests. Early consultation with the PKC Woodland Enquiries Team and NatureScot is encouraged.

PKC Policy Guidance 7

1. All proposals should seek to protect, enhance and restore sensitive and rare habitats informed by surveys including NVC.
2. Proposals that avoid sensitive open habitats, such as dry heath, wet heath, juniper and breeding bird areas of high conservation value are more likely to be supported.
3. Proposals to support natural regeneration and low-density native woodland expansion in upland areas where this strengthens Nature Networks and improves landscape resilience will be supported.
4. Single species conifer plantations in areas of sensitive habitats and ornithological interests will not be supported.
5. Proposals to restore, enhance and connect montane scrub and woodland where appropriate informed by ecological surveys including NVC will be supported.
6. Proposals to create transition zones to restore lost or vulnerable habitats such as montane willow scrub, aspen and juniper will be supported.
7. Proposals that will result in the loss of montane woodland types, such as juniper, will not be supported.
8. Proposals to restore degraded upland woodland habitats using natural regeneration will be supported.

5.2.5 Encourage long-term sustainable deer management

Deer are a natural part of a woodland ecosystem but at high densities negatively impact the ecological condition of native woodland, prevent natural regeneration and damage trees through bark stripping, browsing and fraying. The 2025 NatureScot Deer Count Density estimated deer populations living on the open range which are habitats used mainly by red deer including heather moorland. It shows that the northern uplands of Perth and Kinross have high red deer (Cervus elaphus) numbers. Less data for the other deer species found in Perth and Kinross is available but roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) numbers have increased over recent decades. The full datasets are available from the National Data Library.

PKC support the recommendations made by the Deer Working Group in 2018 in the Management of Wild Deer in Scotland Report.

Robust deer management, preferably sustainable deer control, should form part of forestry and woodland proposals. Deer control is a more sustainable and long-term approach to deer population management than fencing. Deer fencing requires ongoing inspection and maintenance, prevents movement of other mammals such as badgers (Meles meles), and can exacerbate erosion and habitat damage. A reduction in deer fencing also reduces negative landscape impacts and creates more open and welcoming forests and woodlands for people to access and enjoy. Furthermore, deer control can improve the ecological condition of protected areas, peatlands and other habitats.

Large sites and those adjacent to protected areas should be accompanied by a Deer Management Plan in collaboration with neighbouring landowners and Deer Management Groups. If fencing is required, consideration to landscape, outdoor access and wildlife impacts is required with consideration of badger gates. Any fencing in or near existing woodland known to contain capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus) or black grouse must conform to guidance on avoiding bird strikes. Deer fences should be removed once trees and woodlands are established. Further information on deer management is available in the NatureScot managing Scotland's wild deer guidance.

PKC Policy Guidance 8

1. Proposals that include sustainable deer management through deer control will be supported.
2. Proposals that rely wholly on deer fencing will not be supported.
3. Large sites and those adjacent to protected areas should be accompanied by a Deer Management Plan in collaboration with neighbouring landowners and Deer Management Groups

5.2.6 Identify, protect, restore and connect woodlands of high nature conservation value

Native and ancient woodlands and veteran trees provide considerable biodiversity, landscape, amenity, tourism and recreation benefits as well as soaking up carbon. They provide Perth and Kinross with unique character and renown as ‘Big Tree Country’ including the Fortingall Yew which is believed to be the UK's oldest tree, with an estimated age of between 2,000 and 3,000 years.

NPF4 requires Forest and Woodland Strategies to identify Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value (WHNCV). The Scottish Forestry Technical note on preparing a Forestry and Woodland Strategy describes a ‘woodland of high nature conservation value’ as:

- native woodland and scrub as identified by the NWSS [but note the nativeness is not a requirement for the other categories listed below]

- ancient woodland and ancient semi-natural woodland, including Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and Long-Established woodlands of Plantation Origin (LEPO)
- woodland that is integral to the value of designated or special sites (SACs, SPAs, SSSIs, Ramsar sites, and NNRs)
- wood pasture

No single dataset provides a complete picture of trees and woodland of high nature conservation value in Perth and Kinross. However, in combination, the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland, the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory, coupled with designated areas data, and the Ancient Tree Inventory allows us to identify WHNCV across the Council area. Map 3 to follow shows the spatial distribution of the proposed WHNCV with the Strategy area.

The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS)

Native woodlands are defined as woods in which over 50% of the canopy is made up of species native to the region. The NWSS identified and mapped the location, extent, type, and condition of all of Scotland's native woodlands in 2014 including semi-natural (self-sown) or planted. Native woodland is of considerable biodiversity value due to their varied form, uneven age structures, mix of native tree species, open space, deadwood and natural processes. All native woodland types are UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats due to being threatened and many require management to improve them for nature conservation.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory

In Scotland, Ancient Woodland is defined as land that is currently wooded and has been continually wooded, at least since 1750. The Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) is a provisional guide to the location of Ancient Woodland derived from the Roy maps (c1750) and the OS 1st edition (c1860). The AWI contains three main categories of woodland, all of which are likely to be of value for biodiversity and cultural by virtue of their antiquity:

1. **Ancient Woodland (1a and 2a)**

   Interpreted as semi-natural woodland from maps of 1750 or 1860 and continuously wooded to the present day. If planted with non-native species during the 20th century they are referred to as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

2. **Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO) (1b and 2b)**

   Interpreted as plantation from maps of 1750 (1b1) or 1860 (2b) and continuously wooded since. Many of these sites have developed semi-natural characteristics, especially the oldest ones, which may be as rich as Ancient Woodland.

3. **Other woodlands on 'Roy' woodland sites (3)**

   Shown as unwooded on the 1st edition maps but as woodland on the Roy maps. Such sites have, at most, had only a short break in continuity of woodland cover and may still retain features of Ancient Woodland.

Ancient woodland is an important and irreplaceable habitat that cannot be replicated due to the complex association over time. They include all remnants of Scotland's original woodland; their flora and fauna may preserve elements of the natural composition of the original Atlantic forests. Ancient woodland often contains veteran trees that are of considerable biodiversity value providing habitats for rare fungi, invertebrates, lichens, birds and bats. Their structural complexity provides many habitat niches that do not co-exist on younger trees. They preserve the integrity of soil ecological processes and associated biodiversity, and some have been managed using traditional methods for centuries.

Designated areas

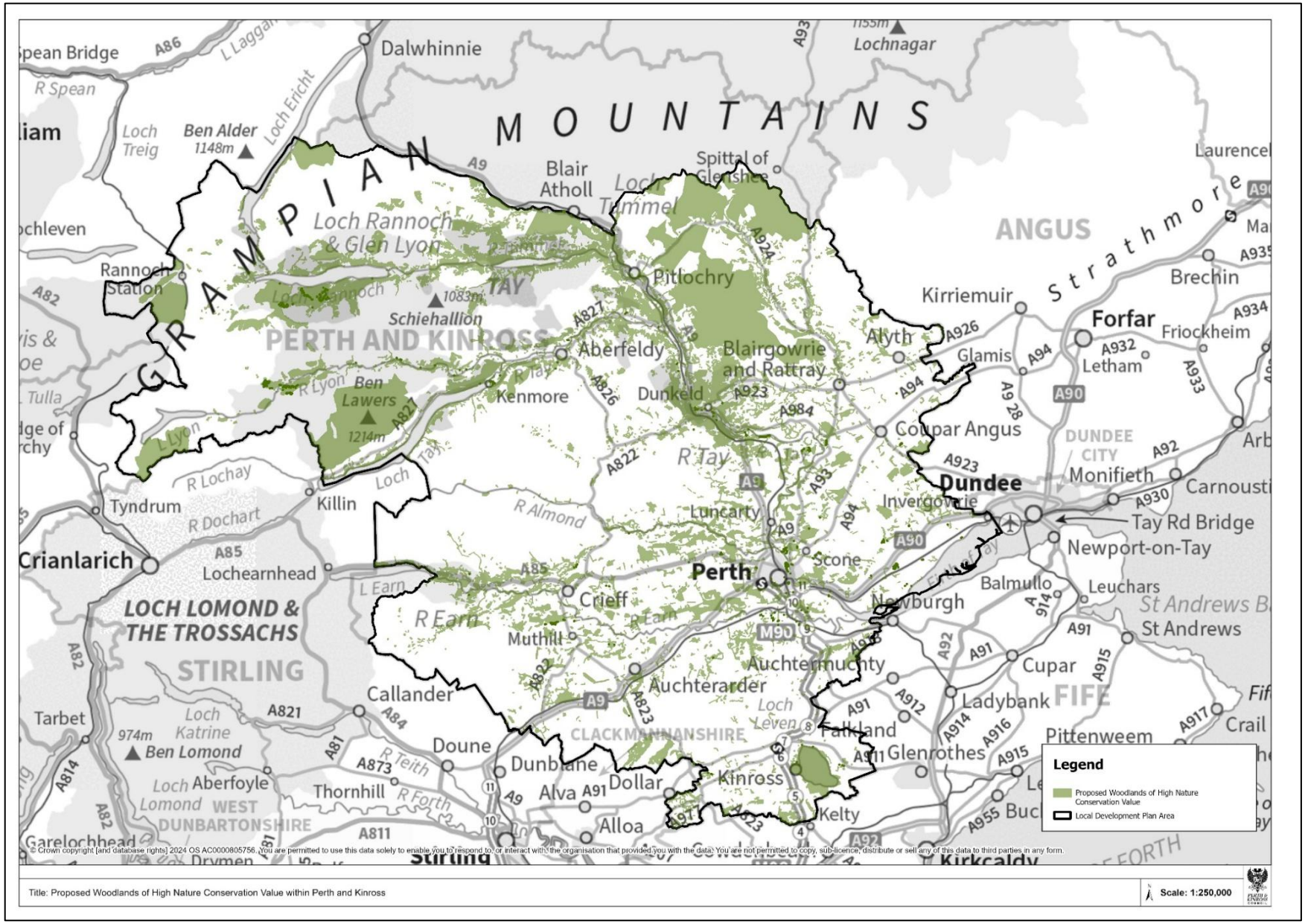
The Perth and Kinross area contains a wealth of international and national designated sites, or protected areas, to help ensure that the natural features of special interest within them remain in good health for the benefit of current and future generations. Woodlands form an integral part of a number of these sites and are essential for habitats and species due to the unique and complex ecosystem structures they offer which help support a diverse range of habitats and wide variety of wildlife.

The Ancient Tree Inventory

The Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) is a project managed by the Woodland Trust which allows users to record and map the UK's oldest and most ecologically significant trees to help support their conservation. The ATI includes ancient, veteran, and notable trees. Ancient and veteran trees provide important habitats for a range of species, including fungi, insects, birds, and mammals. They also play a role as 'living monuments' connecting people to their surrounding natural and historical landscapes.

The main purposes of the ATI are linked to the conservation of trees which are essential for wildlife and biodiversity; the preservation of trees which have significant ecological, cultural, or historical value, and also providing a source of data for the purposes of environmental education, ecological studies, and raising awareness of the importance of these trees with the public.

Map 3 describes proposed Woodlands of High Nature Conservation Value



Protecting WHNCV

NPF4 Policy 6 b) states development proposals will not be supported where they will result in:

1. any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition
2. adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy
3. fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented

As trees and woodlands of high nature conservation value cannot be readily replaced, it is particularly important to protect them from threats, including development and other land-uses. PKC will protect ancient trees and woodlands, and veteran trees from adverse impacts, loss or damage through designation and policies in the Local Development Plan and any other appropriate means such as TPOs.

Perth and Kinross Council will prioritise protection from further damage and fragmentation where trees are healthy and structurally sound. The presumption against woodland removal as per national guidance, the Scottish Government Policy on Control of Woodland Removal, will be followed.

Proposals must be informed by detailed surveys and follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, reduce, compensate and enhance (see section 5.9.4).

To protect WHNCV from development, a buffer of at least 50m from woodlands plus root, crown and future-growth space for veteran trees is required to reduce ground disturbance and reduce the potential of invasive non-native species spreading from gardens by creating a strong boundary between the two land uses. It will also help reduce impacts of increased noise, disturbance and lighting on woodland dwelling species. The buffer allows space to grow and in time will become valuable to biodiversity and amenity.

Restoring WHNCV

Perth and Kinross contain remnants of Caledonian forest, both coniferous and broad-leaved native woodland along with extensive tracks of timber forest.

Restoration of PAWS is encouraged to retain remnant features of ancient semi-natural woodlands and restore the site to woodland comprising site native species. Where forestry is proposed adjacent to PAWS, native species are encouraged. LEPO is not included in the definition of WHNCV but offer opportunities for restoration. Proposals for LEPO should contain a higher proportion of low impact silviculture systems, long-term retention areas with a diverse species mix and high proportion of native species. Any veteran trees within PAWS and LEPO should be protected. Information on managing veteran trees is available from Natural England's guide to good management.

Granny pines are old, lone and wide-crowned Scots pine trees which have survived the last 200 to 300 years. They should be retained so they can seed and provide a new generation of native pines. Removing non-native

species from old Caledonian forests and replacing with Scots pine is supported. Removal of bracken and invasive non-native species from WHNCV is encouraged.

Connecting WHNCV

A significant threat to woodlands of high nature conservation value is fragmentation and pockets of woodland isolated from each other in the landscape surrounded by other land uses. Following the principle of bigger, better and more joined up, Nature Networks (see section 5.1.2) offers opportunities to restore, expand and connect WHNCV making them more resilient and biodiverse. The expansive network of the River Tay SAC provides a network often associated with native species including oak, ash and elm due to the rugged terrain offering opportunities for enhanced riparian woodland (see section 5.1.4).

PKC is committed to promoting a county wide Nature Network by 2030 and will continue to promote connecting WHNCV alongside the Nature Network and other habitat networks throughout the region.

PKC Policy Guidance 9

1. Proposals that will result in loss of WHNCV will not be supported.
2. Proposals that will protect, restore, enhance and connect WHNCV will be supported.
3. Positive management to diversity the age and structure and increase the proportion of native species through planting and natural regeneration will be supported.
4. Restoration of PAWS to retain remnant features of WHNCV and restore the site with a high proportion of native species will be supported.
5. Proposals should include a buffer of at least 50m to protect WHNCV from development.

Priority 2: Natural assets, environmental quality and biodiversity
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment and tackling the global nature crisis
• **Contributing theme 4:** Contribute to and help improve our landscapes and scenery

5.3 Landscape

The landscape within Perth and Kinross is divided into two main units – Highland Perthshire, and Lowland Perthshire and Kinross – and are distinguished by the Highland Boundary Fault reflecting the geology, topography, vegetation, and land use of those areas. High-quality, distinct and diverse landscapes contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the region.

5.3.1 Protect and enhance the area's important landscapes, wild land areas and wilderness

The Tayside Landscape Character Assessment provides a baseline understanding of landscape variation, helping planners, developers, and land managers make informed decisions and ensuring that development respects the natural and cultural character of the region.

Development and land use change, including forestry and creation of new hill tracks, should be compatible with the distinctive characteristics and features of Perth and Kinross's landscapes.

Wild Land Areas are the most extensive areas of wild land, largely semi-natural landscapes that show minimal signs of human influence. They are identified as nationally important in NPF4 Policy 4 due to their cultural, recreational and nature conservation value. A large proportion of Perth and Kinross (19%) is within the top fifth of overall relative wilderness values. Comparatively just 5% of Scotland falls within this quintile.

The NatureScot Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions identifies five Wild Land Areas partly that largely overlap with the 11 Local Landscape Areas within Perth and Kinross.

The following are **wild land areas** within Perth and Kinross:

- Ben Lawers
- Breadalbane-Schiehallion
- Cairngorms
- Lyon-Lochay
- Rannoch-Nevis- Mamores-Alder

The following are **Local Landscape Areas** within Perth and Kinross:

- Ben Vrackie
- Glen Almond and the Sma' Glen
- Glen Quaich
- Loch Leven and Bishop Hill
- Loch Lyon and Loch an Daimh
- Loch Tay

- Ochill Hills
- Rannoch Forest
- Sidlaw Hills
- Upper Strath Tay
- Upper Strathearn

Proposals within Local Landscape Areas must demonstrate they will not have a significant adverse effect on the special qualities listed in the PKC Landscape Supplementary Guidance and contain a high proportion of native broadleaf species.

To improve landscape aesthetics and amenity, existing woodlands, forests and plantations should be restructured to diversify age and species structures, softer edges and open spaces to create mosaics of colour and form.

5.3.2 Track development

Harvesting and timber extraction may adversely affect landscape and wildness through creation of tracks and haul roads. This should be considered and minimised in proposals.

Development such as the creation of new tracks, alterations to existing tracks or roads, formation of vehicular accesses, erection of enclosures (such as deer fencing) and peatland restoration works may require 'prior notification' or an application for planning permission if permitted development rights do not apply under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992.

Planning applications can be submitted online via the eDevelopment Scotland portal. To minimise errors with an application at validation stage, relevant submission checklists can be found in the Perth and Kinross Council's planning application information guidance. An applicable planning fee may be required. Should you have any general planning queries you can call 01738 475300 during normal office hours and ask for our Duty Planning Officer. They shall be able to offer general advice or might advise you to submit a pre-application enquiry for further review.

PKC Policy Guidance 10

1. Proposals that may impact Wild Land Areas should be accompanied by an impact assessment and any impacts reduced by siting, design or other mitigation.
2. Proposals within Local Landscape Areas must demonstrate they will not have a significant adverse effect on the special qualities.
3. Management of and the creation of tree avenues and orchards in appropriate locations to reflect traditional landscapes in Perth and Kinross is encouraged.
4. Proposals to plant new, and manage existing, site-appropriate woodland and trees alongside and visible from important transport routes will be supported.

Priority 2: Natural assets, environmental quality and biodiversity
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment and tackling the global nature crisis
• **Contributing theme 5:** Help make the most of our historic environment

5.4 Historic environment

Ancient woodlands, veteran trees, earthworks, ruined structures, and buried archaeological features provide useful information about past societies and how they used and managed the land, including forests and woodlands. Ancient woodlands are often associated with designed landscapes and historic buildings serving as living monuments and creating a sense of place. Underneath the soil, historic underground infrastructure such as cundies and culverts assists with drainage.

5.4.1 Continued protection of Tree Preservation Order trees

All tree groups, tree lines and individual trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and within a Conservation Areas are protected from pruning, lopping, and felling. Any management work to trees which are subject to a TPO or within a Conservation Area require consent from the planning authority. Locations of Conservation Areas, TPOs, and Gardens and Designed Landscapes are available on the PKC Heritage Map. Felling operations within Conservation Areas will require more justification and consideration of the impacts to amenity and landscape value. PKC will continue to promote new TPOs where appropriate.

5.4.2 Promote Good Stewardship of the Historic Environment through Design and Management

Historic environment assets

Forestry and woodland proposals should identify and protect designated and non-designated features of the historic environment and their settings and consider preservation and enhancement of cultural landscapes. Proposed woodland creation within Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes and on Inventory Battlefields will require consultation with Historic Environment Scotland.

Good stewardship of the historic environment through forest design and sensitive management using initiatives such as Perthshire Big Tree Country and the Perthshire Conifer Conservation Programme to underpin the long-term future of historic landscapes and tree-related features is encouraged. PKC will continue to protect ancient and veteran trees as living monuments with historical, landscape, amenity and biodiversity value.

Archaeological features

Forestry and woodland proposals can impact on features of the historic environment and considering them early in the design process is vital to mitigate impacts. Early consultation with the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust is recommended. Buffer zones should be used to protect any archaeological features of importance from operations. If any new or suspected features of interest are uncovered during forest management operations, they should be immediately protected by establishment of a buffer zone and findings reported to the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

Geodiversity sites

Rocks, fossils and geomorphological elements such as moraines, eskers and drumlins are important for cultural heritage and biodiversity. Proposals should aim to protect and enhance geological and geomorphological elements on the landscape. Impacts can be avoided by ensuring trees do not affect or block views of important features. PKC has identified potential Geodiversity Sites which following assessment will be designated and published. Locations and outline reason for designation is available on the PKC Local Nature Conservation Sites Map.

PKC Policy Guidance 11

1. Proposals should identify and protect features of the historic environment and their surroundings through consultation with the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.
2. Proposals which adversely impact features of the historic environment, and their settings will not be supported.
3. Proposals should protect ancient and veteran trees as living monuments with historical, landscape, amenity and biodiversity value.
4. Proposals that adversely affect the access to or appreciation of identified geological features will not be supported.

Priority 3: Forests and the economy
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy of Perth and Kinross
• **Contributing theme 6:** Productive forests

5.5 Productive forests

Scottish Government policy supports the expansion and sustainable management of productive forests as a valuable source of timber and wood fuel for energy production. Perth and Kinross have favourable soils and climatic conditions to make a key contribution to creation of new multi-benefit woodlands to meet the Government's aspiration for woodland and forestry to cover 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032.

5.5.1 Promote sustainable forest management and forestry good practice

Well-managed productive forests can deliver multiple benefits and balance the need to produce timber with other policy priorities including biodiversity, climate resilience and creating welcoming forests for people to access and enjoy. All proposals must be in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and must ensure management and contingency plans address the impacts of climate change.

Productive forestry should not conflict with other policies within this Strategy to create climate resilient forests fit for the 21st century. Species diversity, a high proportion of native species and sustainable management of natural resources such as water and soil are all required to achieve this. Introduced and native conifers and hardwoods all have a part to play, and Perth and Kinross have a long and pioneering history of a range of conifer species in early plantations. However recent decades have seen an emphasis placed on a small number of species especially Sitka spruce. Growing a wide range of conifer and broadleaf species with an associated diversity of silvicultural systems will be supported. Proposals to create single species and monocultures will not be supported.

Proposals for productive forestry should include species diversity (see section 5.1.1), seed source and provenance, long term retention areas of native woodland and buffer zones. Long-term Forest Plans and Forest Management Plans should be created as a basis for felling permissions, to assist with the restructuring of existing productive plantations to enhance their landscape, biodiversity, and recreational value. Proposals to manage plantations to increase light levels, enhance structural and species diversity and to provide deadwood will be supported. Deadwood is one of the greatest ecological resources in a forest with a fifth of woodland species dependant on it during a part of their lifecycle.

Harvesting should be carefully planned to minimise impacts to biodiversity and public access. Clear felling should be minimised and seed-bearing native trees retained to ensure some continuous cover forestry. Communities should be forewarned of proposed tree, woodland and forestry proposals likely to impact their local surroundings.

5.5.2 Forestry Expansion

With the management and expansion of Woodlands of High Nature Conservation Value (WHNCV), explained in more detail in section 5.2.6), there is potential for productive forestry to form part of wider woodland habitat networks and Nature Networks, increasing connectivity. The management and expansion of WHNCV will often create a landscape framework within which productive woodland can exist. Expanding the forest area managed under low impact silvicultural systems and continuous cover forestry where natural regeneration is the main recruitment method is encouraged.

Incorporation of natural flood management improvements in association with forest and woodland creation and enhancement, including protecting and enhancing riparian corridors; protecting natural flood storage areas; safeguarding and improving soil conditions, and planting to help reduce the flow of water, can result in multiple benefits and is encouraged.

Early consultation with the Scottish Water Sustainable Land Management Team to determine the location of Drinking Water Protected Areas as well as water and/or wastewater infrastructure is encouraged. Contact information is available on Scottish Water's 'Activities within our catchments' webpage.

5.5.3 Development of timber transport infrastructure

Proposals requiring new roads for timber operations should determine the potential impacts of the route and potential runoff of the proposed roads into watercourses and wetland habitats.

PKC encourages developing timber transport infrastructure through mechanisms such as the Strategic Timber Transport Fund and through partnerships such as the Timber Transport Forum and regional Timber Transport Groups. Details of regional groups and good practice guides are available from the Timber Transport Forum.

The agreed timber routes can be viewed on the Stirling and Tayside Timber Transport interactive map.

PKC encourage early engagement with the Roads Maintenance Partnership.

5.5.4 Development of forestry tracks

Development such as, but not limited to, the creation of new tracks, alterations to existing tracks or roads, formation of vehicular accesses, may require ‘prior notification’ or an application for planning permission if permitted development rights do not apply under permitted development rights.

Planning applications can be submitted online via the eDevelopment Scotland portal. To minimise errors with an application at validation stage, relevant submission checklists can be found in the Perth and Kinross Council’s planning application information guidance. An applicable planning fee may be required. Should you have any general planning queries you can call 01738 475300 during normal office hours and ask for our Duty Planning Officer.

5.5.5 Support for forestry and woodland creation

Financial assistance is available from Scottish Forestry and as part of the due diligence process, require land managers seeking grant assistance to develop their proposal to take account of sensitivities prior to submission to Scottish Forestry. Information on funding from Scottish Forestry is available in the Forestry Grant Scheme guidance.

Perth and Kinross Council are a consultee to Scottish Forestry for long-term forest plans, land management plans, felling permissions and woodland creation proposals. PKC will continue to provide advice directly to landowners and managers as part of the due diligence process.

We encourage early engagement via WoodlandEnquiries@pkc.gov.uk. A checklist of information required to accompany a forestry and woodland consultation request to PKC is provided in Appendix 1. Applicants are encouraged to ensure information is submitted in accordance with this checklist to allow PKC to provide detailed comments.

PKC Policy Guidance 12

1. Proposals that improve age, structure and species diversity and maximise the economic potential of the area's timber resources will be supported.
2. Proposals consisting of a single species or high percentage of non-native conifer species will not be supported.
3. Proposals with a diverse range of species including native conifer and broadleaf species with areas of open ground to deliver multiple benefits will be supported.

Priority 3: Forests and the economy
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy of Perth and Kinross
• **Contributing theme 7:** Sustaining thriving rural communities

5.6 Forests and the economy

Forestry and wood processing contributes to the Scottish economy providing many jobs located in rural and disadvantaged areas. Forest-based sport and recreation as diversification also contributes to the local economy. Rural diversification, integration with other land uses and a diverse range of forest-based enterprises offer opportunities for growth,

5.6.1 Big Tree Country and support for rural diversification

Perth and Kinross's reputation as 'Big Tree Country' helps support a thriving tourism sector using the area's iconic and internationally famous heritage trees as a model of cultural and natural heritage integration.

Development of appropriate tourism infrastructure, such as visitor centres, Core Path Networks and long-distance footpaths that maximise delivery of public benefits are encouraged. All developments must protect and enhance trees, woodlands and forestry (see section 5.9.1).

5.6.2 Promote the use of locally-grown timber

The carbon sequestration potential in productive forestry is enhanced if it is then used for timber as a traditional construction material replacing more carbon-intensive materials that can reduce indirect emissions and help decarbonise construction. Use of locally-grown timber to reduce imports would lead to more sustainable settlements and help protect biosecurity by reducing the risk of importing pests, diseases and invasive non-native species.

PKC will encourage use of Scottish timber in construction through raising awareness and encouraging wider uptake of forest certification such as the Woodland Assurance Scheme and the Forest Stewardship Council.

PKC Policy Guidance 13

1. Proposals that maximise the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy and sustaining thriving rural communities without compromising other land use values will be supported.
2. Development of appropriate tourism infrastructure to maximise delivery of public benefits must also protect and enhance trees, woodlands and forestry.

Priority 4: Forests, woodlands and people
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross
• **Contributing theme 8:** Access for health and wellbeing

5.7 Access for health and wellbeing

Trees, woodlands and forestry help improve the quality of places where we live and work, create opportunities for communities to get involved in managing and owning woodlands, encourage healthier lifestyles and support education, training and social enterprise. There can also reduce exposure to poor air quality and the likelihood of air-quality related health issues.

5.7.1 Urban trees, forestry and woodland

Trees are essential to public health and wellbeing, yet not everyone has good access to trees and their benefits where they live. The Tree Equity Score UK is a map-based application to help address disparities in urban tree distribution by identifying the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees.

The Tree Equity Score currently only covers Perth City and Invergowrie with a proposed extension to an additional eight smaller towns if funding is secured. In Perth City, one third of the data zones require action to increase tree cover and improve tree equity.

PKC commissioned opportunity mapping for Perth and nine other large settlements in 2025 to better understand gaps in canopy cover and target tree planting resources. This will be used to ensure trees and woodland contribute towards the wider social agenda tackling inequalities, ensuring equal opportunities and increased qualify of life.

PKC support the expansion of street trees and urban forests in appropriate areas. Tree planting on PKC-owned and managed land must be in accordance with the PKC Tree Planting Policy and Open Space Strategy. PKC also have tree planting guides for schools and communities.

PKC will continue to engage with communities on tree, woodland and forestry-related issues and promote community ownership involvement in community woodlands.

5.7.2 Outdoor access

The right to take responsible non-motorised access in Scotland is provided by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code explains what is meant by responsible access in many situations for both the 'access taker' and the 'land manager'.

Public access should be considered in the preliminary stages of forestry and woodland proposals and should not be unduly restricted by forestry operations. The Core Paths Plan for Perth and Kinross is available on the PKC core path plan interactive map and Rights of Ways are available on the Scotways heritage paths map.

If present, proposal plans and maps should include Core Paths and Rights of Way. If a temporary diversion of a core path or right of way is required to

facilitate works, the PKC Community Greenspace Team should be contacted via OutdoorAccess@pkc.gov.uk.

Communities should be forewarned of proposed tree, woodland and forestry proposals likely to impact their local surroundings. Contacting the Perth and Kinross Outdoor Access Forum, representative bodies such as The British Horse Society and local community groups is encouraged.

Perth and Kinross Council will support the development of active travel routes through new and existing woodland (where appropriate) to increase access and encourage participation in woodland activities. All developments must protect and enhance trees, woodlands and forestry (see section 5.9.1).

PKC Policy Guidance 14

1. Proposals that aid communities to access their local parks and woodlands and encourage participation in woodland activities will be supported.
2. Proposals that encourage use of woodland through creation of active travel routes, where they do not conflict with other policy guidance, will be supported.
3. Outdoor access should be encouraged via the development of new active travel routes through new and existing woodland where appropriate.
4. All forestry and woodland proposals should include communication and engagement, so communities are forewarned of proposed tree, woodland and forestry operations likely to impact their local surroundings.

Priority 4: Forests, woodlands and people
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross
• **Contributing theme 9:** Integration with other land uses

5.8 Integration with other land uses

Forestry in Scotland for the last century or more has tended to be practiced in isolation from other land uses, rather than being integrated as in most other parts of the world. For much of the twentieth century, the norm was for rural land to be used for single purposes: farming or forestry or nature conservation. More recently diverse objectives and activities have increasingly been required from the same areas of land and multifunctional use is central to Scotland's Land Use Strategy.

5.8.1 Multiple benefits through greater land use integration

This Strategy supports a holistic vision where trees, woodland and forestry form a landscape matrix aligns with policies to develop connected nature networks and offers opportunities to re-integrate woodlands into the landscape. This will enable forestry to play an increasingly multi-functional role in delivering valuable benefits such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, flood protection, recreation and health benefits.

5.8.2 Agroforestry

Agroforestry is the integration of agriculture and forestry at a field scale. Woodland creation and management can be complementary to farming when designed to deliver shared outcomes where trees are used to provide shade, shelter, improved soil and water health, and support diversified rural incomes. Agroforestry and the planting of field margins, riparian buffers and shelterbelts can enhance productivity, resilience, and biodiversity. Woodland grazing systems (such as silvopasture) where appropriate can balance livestock management with habitat and soil health goals. Further advice is available in the Tree Council's agroforestry guide.

Enhancing existing and creating new riparian woodlands on farmland can create nutrient and sediment buffer zones, and to help ensure that watercourses on farms and crofts are in good ecological condition (see section 5.1.4).

PKC will support rural diversification and promote a diverse range of forest-based enterprises by working with landowners, communities and stakeholders to promote whole-landscape approaches that integrate woodland creation with farming, biodiversity, water management and cultural heritage. PKC will continue to raise awareness to explain the many functions that woodlands and forestry have beyond the trees themselves and support agriculture where funding becomes available.

5.8.3 Blue-green infrastructure

Blue-green infrastructure (BGI) is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas integrated into the built environment to deliver multiple environmental and social benefits. The name emphasizes its dual function: "blue" refers to managing water resources, including stormwater, rivers, and ponds, while "green" refers to the vegetation, soil, and

greenspaces. NPF4 Policy 20b requires developments to incorporate new or enhanced BGI.

The Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3) will seek to identify and protect existing blue and green infrastructure (BGI) assets and consider where resources can be expanded, enhanced and better connected, including to new or existing forests and woodlands to achieve the objectives of NPF4 Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises.

The approach will be guided by the Council's Open Space Strategy which incorporates insights from the Council's Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment to identify projected changes and future needs of places. This ensures that proposals are designed to be multi-functional and contribute to the objectives of NPF4 Policy 2: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. This includes mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration and the promotion of active travel, as well as adaptation to projected impacts such as through urban cooling and surface water management.

5.8.4 Trees and woodland in planning and development

NPF4 aims to create sustainable, liveable and productive places and trees can deliver all these. NPF4 Policy 6 aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees by ensuring existing woodlands and trees are protected, cover is expanded and woodland and trees on development sites are sustainably managed. This FWS is a material consideration to the PKC planning process.

Trees, woodland and forestry are opportunities in development and can add asset value for years to come. Early engagement with an Ecologist and Arboricultural Consultant is encouraged to ensure trees inform the layout allowing more to be retained and incorporated into plans.

Existing woodland, trees and hedgerows should be protected, restored and expanded to connect to other habitats. The mitigation hierarchy of avoid, reduce and compensate should be followed to reduce impacts of development to woodland, trees and biodiversity.

Clearing proposed sites pre-emptively prior to applying for planning permission has increased over the last decade and is against NPF4 Policies. Any clearance of trees and woodland on development sites should only begin when planning permission has been granted and all relevant pre-commencement conditions have been discharged.

Two documents turn 'retain the trees' from an aspiration into a buildable specification:

1. the Tree Protection Plan provides a picture of the development proposed onsite, identifies the Construction Exclusion Zone, and provides details of protection measures to be secured

2. the Arboricultural Method Statement sets out the methodology for construction of the development considering the protection of trees and woodlands through clear sequential steps.

During construction, trees should be protected in accordance with British Standard BS: 5837 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction and the manual for managing trees on development sites. Employing an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) and ArbCOW to audit and advise is encouraged.

Utilities routes should be informed by root protection and constraints mapping. Utilisation of shared service space and existing road corridors to co-ordinate utilities, reduce excavation and support efficient construction is encouraged. Planting trees and woodland as key green infrastructure features for any future land development for settlement extension, for new housing development, or both is encouraged. Landowners and developers are encouraged to take proactive steps to deliver and implement woodland strategies as part of long-term master planning for sites and assets.

Compensatory planting

Newly planted trees can take 20 to 30 years to replace the habitat lost depending on species and type. Therefore, protection of existing trees, hedgerows and woodland that are healthy and structurally sound is prioritised.

Where tree loss is unavoidable, compensatory tree planting is required on a ratio of 1 to 3 for every tree loss as outlined in the PKC Planning for Nature Supplementary Guidance.

Compensatory planting should use native trees, recognise site characteristics, be compatible with existing trees and woodland, and the proposed development, and seek to bring amenity and biodiversity enhancements to the site. Guidance on species selection is provided in the PKC Open Space Supplementary Guidance.

Landscaping plans should include, species selection, stock size, stock type, planting density, plant protection measures, planting preparation, and a proposed maintenance schedule to ensure successful establishment of new planting. Adequate after-care, maintenance and monitoring are essential especially ensuring young trees are kept weed free. Proposals should be in accordance with the British Standard BS: 8545 Trees from Nursery to Independence.

5.8.5 Food growing

The PKC Food Growing Strategy encourages people to grow food locally including on Council-owned and managed land. The Council supports planting and management of fruit trees or small orchards in suitable locations where community groups have shown interest and are able to maintain them. PKC will continue to require large housing developments to plant community orchards for the benefit of people and nature and to provide locally-grown fruit.

5.8.6 Renewable energy

Renewable energy has an important role to play in helping to achieve the Scottish Government target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Potential exists for the creation of renewable energy developments, such as wind and hydro schemes, in appropriate locations across the Perth and Kinross area. Advice is provided in the Council's Draft Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Planning Guidance (2025).

Forestry can help to mitigate climate change through the production of woodfuels, which when used close to source, can be almost carbon neutral. The main systems used are short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry. Both offer a range of broader biodiversity benefits. PKC will continue to encourage use of coppicing as an ancient form of woodland management in existing and newly created forests and woodlands.

PKC Policy Guidance 15

1. Proposals to diversify and integrate trees, woodland and forestry with farming, biodiversity, water management and cultural heritage will be supported.
2. Existing woodland, trees and hedgerows should be protected, restored and expanded to connect to other habitats. The mitigation hierarchy of avoid, reduce and compensate should be followed to reduce impacts of development to woodland, trees and biodiversity.
3. Clearance of development sites should only begin when construction of the approved proposal is about to commence.
4. Development proposals should be informed by early engagement with an Ecologist and competent Arboricultural Consultant ideally one year in advance to avoid all ecological constraints and collect robust and comprehensive information.
5. During construction trees should be protected in accordance with BS: 5837 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction and the manual for managing trees on development sites.
6. Where tree loss is unavoidable, compensatory tree planting is required on a ratio of 1 to 3 for every tree loss as outlined in the PKC Planning for Nature Supplementary Guidance.

Priority 5: Expanding our forest and woodland resource

- **Contributing theme 10:** Identifying preferred and potential areas for new woodland creation

5.9 Identifying preferred and potential areas for new woodland creation

5.9.1 Identifying areas suitable for woodland creation

While it is important to protect and restore existing woodlands, it is also necessary to identify locations which might be suitable for woodland expansion. The guidance provided in this Strategy will help inform decisions about the locations of new woodland. Guiding forestry towards appropriate locations minimises the likelihood of undesirable environmental and social outcomes.

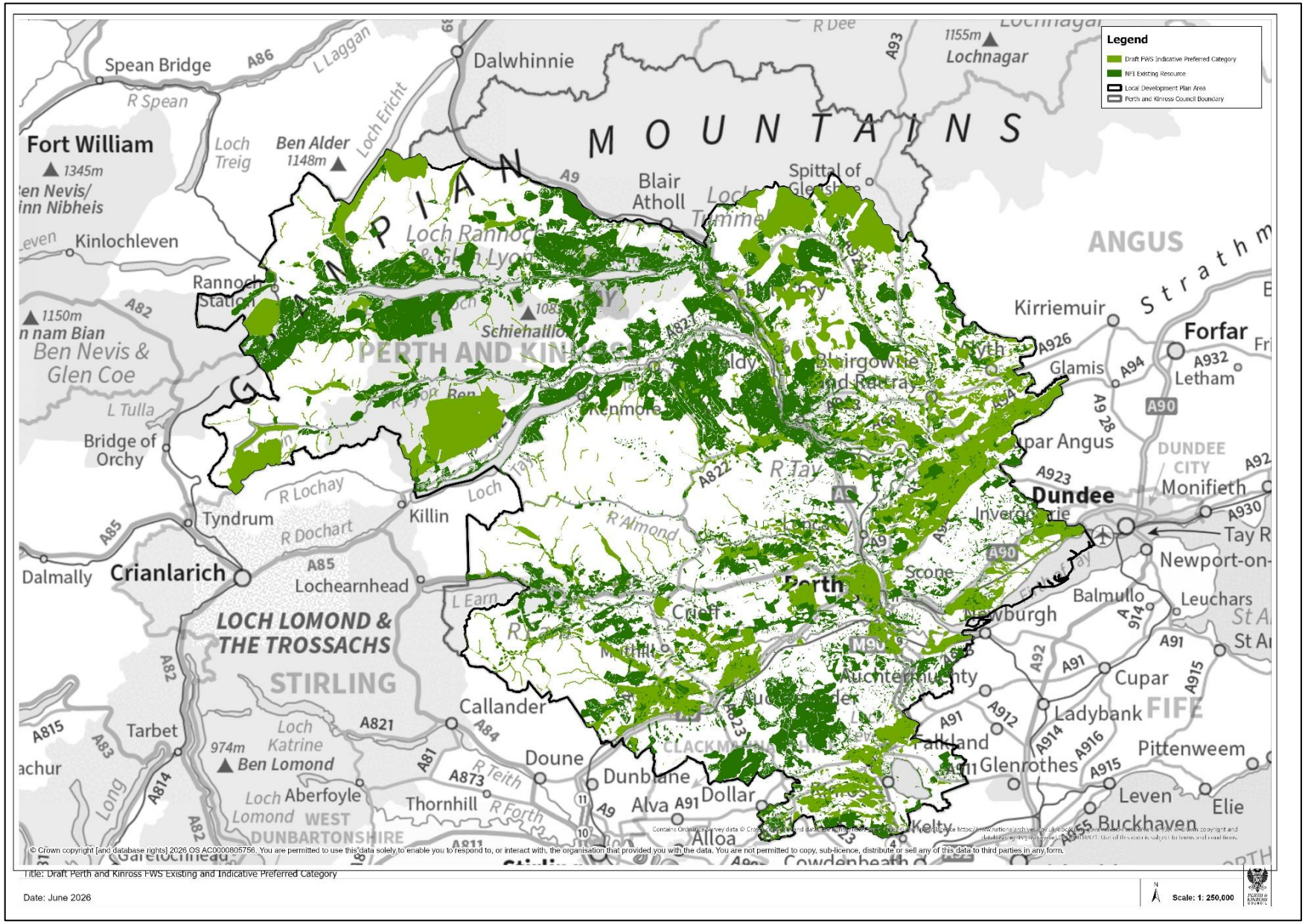
Perth and Kinross have been assessed using various datasets (Table 2) and maps used to identify areas according to how easily they could accommodate new woodland. These are categorised as 'preferred', 'potential', and 'sensitive' and definitions are provided in Table 1.

Maps are strategic and case-by-case surveys and analysis will continue to determine whether proposals are appropriate. The analysis provides a starting point for the identification of the potential to accommodate woodland planting of different types. It is likely that some areas identified as being suitable for softwood forest for timber production, for example, could be equally suitable for the development of native woodlands or the creation of new habitat network links. Diverse forests will be more resilient and provide a wider range of multiple benefits and are to be encouraged as part of the 'Perthshire' forestry tradition.

Table 1 provides descriptions for land types used in maps 4, 5 and 6

Land type	Description
Existing	The current woodland resource identified in the National Forest Inventory.
Preferred	Land with the greatest scope to accommodate the expansion of a range of woodland types and so deliver a wider range of benefits. Preferred areas are likely to have fewer considerations to address.
Potential	Land with considerable potential to accommodate future creation of a range of woodland types but with at least one significant consideration to address. The extent to which these can be addressed at the design stage will determine if a woodland creation proposal can be accommodated.
Sensitive	Land with limited scope to accommodate further woodland creation because of a combination of considerations. Limited expansion might be possible in these areas but only if it is of a scale and character that can be accommodated without significant negative impacts on those considerations and/or where it would positively enhance features of local interest.
Unsuitable	Land which is considered unsuitable for woodland creation.

Map 4 describes indicative ‘Existing’ and ‘Preferred’ areas in Perth and Kinross.



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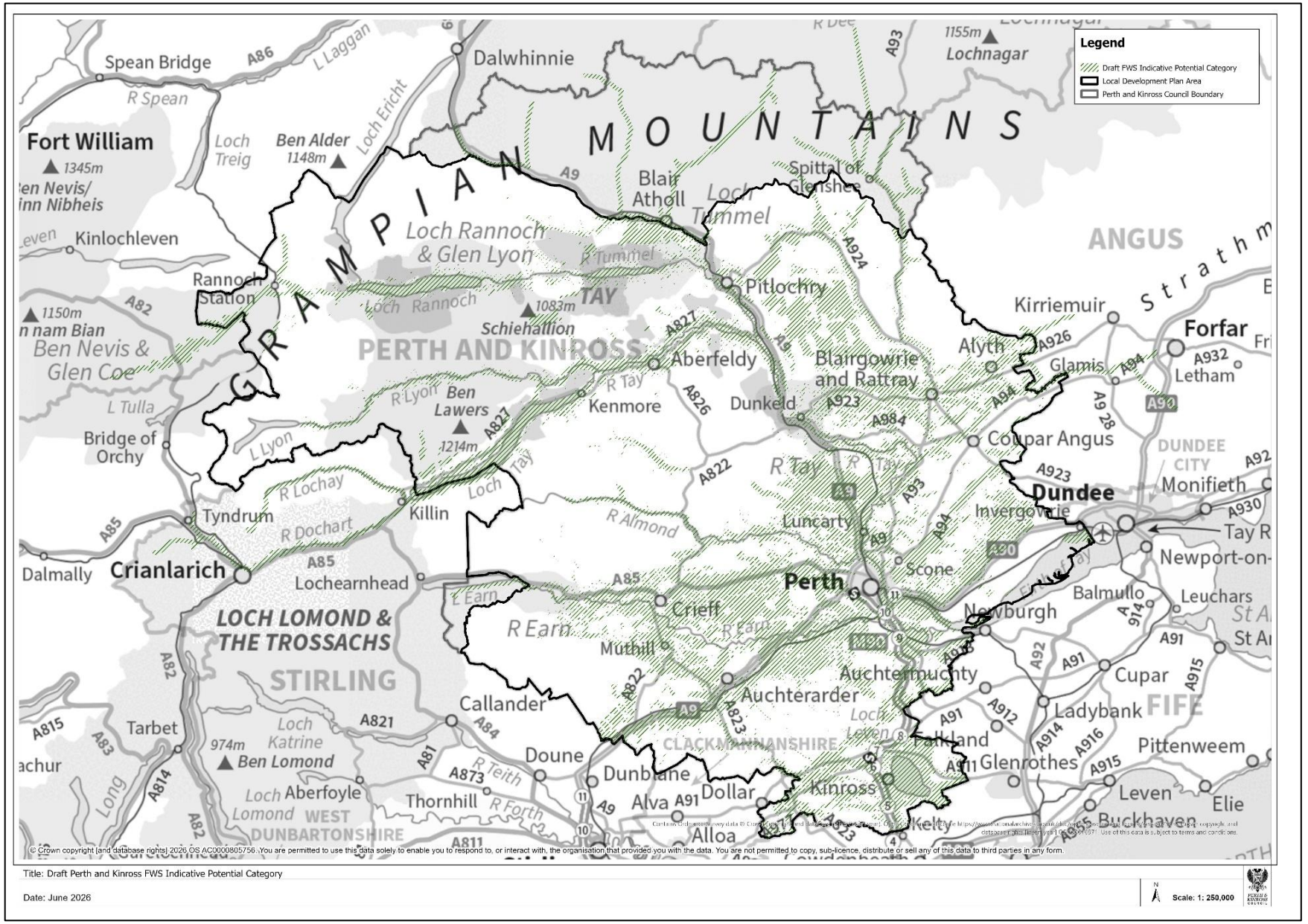
Map 5 describes indicative ‘Potential’ areas in Perth and Kinross.



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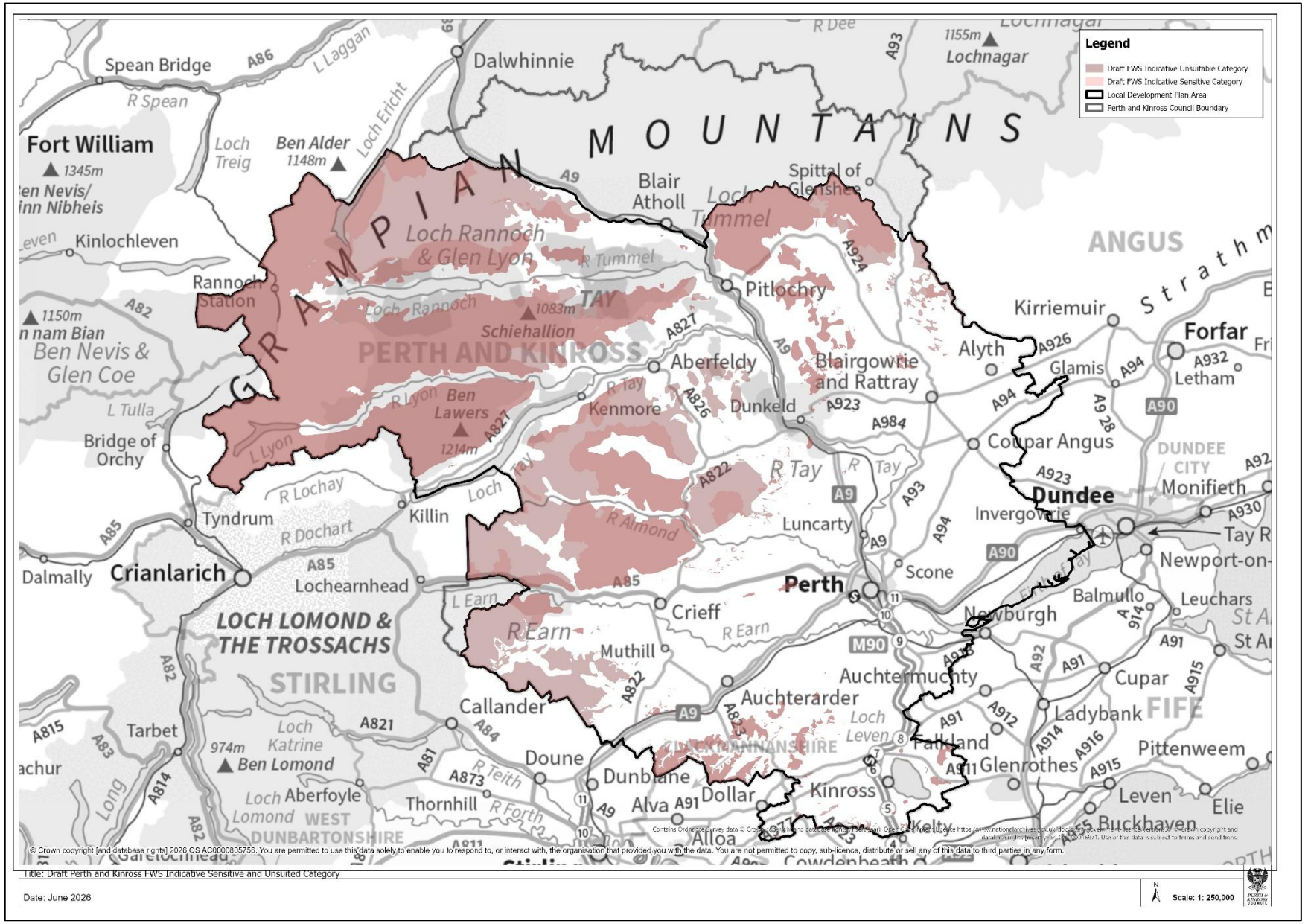
Map 6 describes indicative ‘Sensitive’ and ‘Unsuitable’ areas in Perth and Kinross



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5.9.2 Cross-boundary opportunities

Catchments, ecological networks and land use pressures extend well beyond administrative boundaries. A coordinated, cross-boundary approach to woodland creation and management is therefore essential to maximise environmental, social and economic benefits.

A key opportunity lies in aligning delivery with the ambitions of Climate Ready Tayside, which promotes a catchment-scale approach to climate adaptation and nature-based solutions. Within this framework, woodland expansion can play a critical role in addressing shared regional challenges, particularly flood risk, water quality, biodiversity loss and carbon sequestration. Collaborative planning with neighbouring local authorities, regional partnerships, SEPA, Scottish Forestry and delivery organisations will ensure woodland interventions are targeted where they deliver the greatest cumulative impact. There is strong potential for cross-boundary woodland creation for natural flood management.

Catchments such as the Tay, Earn, Isla and their tributaries traverse multiple jurisdictions, requiring co-ordinated upstream and downstream action. Woodland establishment in upper and mid-catchments - through riparian planting, floodplain woodland creation and targeted shelterbelt design - can help to slow water flow, increase infiltration, stabilise soils and reduce peak flows across administrative boundaries. Cross-boundary collaboration can strengthen woodland corridors linking high-value habitats, including connections to Cairngorms National Park, Angus glens, and Fife lowlands. This will support species movement and resilience in response to climate change, consistent with Nature Network ambitions.

Further opportunities include:

- integrated land use planning, ensuring woodland expansion complements agricultural activity, peatland restoration and river basin management across neighbouring areas
- shared funding and delivery mechanisms, including joint bids and coordinated use of funding streams to scale up impact
- knowledge exchange and partnership working, to support best practice in design, community engagement and monitoring

Table 2 describes data used to inform maps 4,5 and 6 describing preferred, potential, sensitive and unsuitable areas.

Preferred areas	Potential areas	Sensitive areas	Unsuitable areas

• National Forest Inventory 2025
• Land capability for forestry (Categories F1 to F3)
• Proposed woodland of high nature conservation value (PKC)
• NWSS: Native woodland and scrub
• AWI: Ancient woodland and ancient semi-natural woodland, including Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and Long-Established woodlands of Plantation Origin (LEPO)
• SAC, SPA, SSSI, Ramsar sites, NNR: Woodland that is integral to the value of designated or special sites
• NWSS: Wood pasture
• Potential woodland of high nature conservation value expansion zones (PKC proposed WHNCV layer with 50m buffer)
	• James Hutton Institute Perth and Kinross carbon sequestration potential (gain)
	• PKC proposed nature networks:
	  ○ woodland networks
	  ○ riparian networks
	• Prime agricultural land class 3.2
	• NatureScot mountain woodland restoration projects (HabMoS)
		• Ramsar
		• Special protection area
		• Special area of conservation
		• Sites of special scientific interest
		• National nature reserve
		• Local nature reserve
		• RSPB important bird areas
		• Gardens and designed landscapes
		• Inventory of historic battlefields site
		• National scenic area
		• Local landscape area
		• Provisional local nature conservation sites (biodiversity and geodiversity)
		• Ancient tree inventory site
		• Caledonian pinewood inventory site
			• Carbon and Peatland Map 2016: Nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and peatland habitats
			• Wildland area
			• Landscape character type – summits and plateaux
			• Land capability for forestry (LCF) (Category F7)

Preferred areas	Potential areas	Sensitive areas	Unsuitable areas
• Floodplains and areas predicted to be at flood risk (SEPA flood risk and future flood risk maps – medium likelihood to flood (river) • FGS target woodlands for riparian benefits • Scottish Forestry woodlands in and around towns (WIAT) target areas		• Tree Preservation Order • Scottish Water drinking water protected areas • Prime agricultural land (Classes 2 and 3.1)	

Note:

There are several overlapping designations/data layers between the preferred, potential, sensitive and unsuitable layers.

- Land capability for forestry (LCF) categories F1 to F3 in the 'Preferred' category overlaps with Prime agricultural land (Classes 2 to 3.2) which are included in the potential and sensitive FWS categories. The extent to which specific proposals in potential areas will be permissible will depend on how well sensitivities can be addressed within the proposals. The design of schemes in such areas will require careful consideration.
- The James Hutton Perth and Kinross carbon sequestration potential data spatially mirrors the LCF F1 to F3 categories as it was based upon the previous FWS preferred and potential areas.
- WHNCV and potential expansion zone – several of the designated sites included under the sensitive FWS category also form part of the proposed WHNCV and its potential expansion zone. As per above, the extent to which specific proposals in potential areas will be permissible will depend on how well sensitivities can be addressed within the proposals. The design of schemes in such areas will require careful consideration.
- Where parts of the sensitive category overlap with the unsuitable category, these areas have been removed from the sensitive category to provide clarity that they are unsuitable for woodland creation.
- Where parts of the sensitive category overlap with the preferred category, these areas have been removed from sensitive and added to the potential category to reflect that there may be potential to accommodate future woodland creation within these areas, but there is at least one significant consideration present which will need to be addressed through the site-specific scheme design.

6: Indicators of progress

The following indicators including PKC's key performance indictors (KPIs) and in combination with PKC's annual review with Scottish Forestry will be used to measure progress. The priorities are grouped under four topics: Forests and climate change; Natural assets, environmental quality and biodiversity; Forests and the economy; and Forests, woodlands and people. Indicators include measures of greenhouse gas emissions, woodland cover, biodiversity, environmental quality, heritage protection, economic activity, woodland access, health and wellbeing.

Priority: Forests and climate change – improving the resilience of our forests and woodlands, and maximising their role in addressing climate change

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
1. Climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience	PKC Climate Change Action Plan KPIs: • Perth and Kinross area-wide territorial greenhouse gas emissions (kt CO2e - Net) • percentage of the total land area and total number of hectares of Perth and Kinross covered by woodland (including subset breakdown) • total area-wide LULUCF greenhouse gas emissions • total area-wide LULUCF sequestration carbon dioxide emissions (ktCO2e) Other: • number of forest management and restoration plans which build in adaptation to climate change and provide protection from flood risk, and mitigation against the effects of flooding and drought • number of FGS grants awarded for 'Target woodlands for riparian benefits' proposals/projects • percentage change in the areas of land covered by carbon-rich, deep peat and priority peatland habitats as a result of forest and woodland planting in those areas covered by forest management plans • area (ha) of peatland restoration

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
	• area (ha) of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat lost to forest and woodland planting (Nationally Important Soils, Classes 1, 2, and 5)

Priority: Natural assets, environmental quality, and biodiversity – maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment, and tackling the global nature crisis

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
2. Protect and enhance the environmental quality of our natural resources (air, water, soil)	• Mean annual levels of key air pollutants within Perth and Kinross. • Number of days air quality exceed legislative limits in Perth AQMA.
3. Help to protect, restore, maintain, and enhance biodiversity across Perth and Kinross	PKC Climate Change Action Plan KPIs: • amount of land protected for nature within Perth and Kinross Council Boundary • number of trees planted on Council land and maintained open space • percentage of PKC's Local Biodiversity Action Plan Actions that are on track or completed • percentage of Scottish Pollinator Strategy Actions delivered or on-target Other: • proportion of protected woodland and forest natural features in favourable condition • percentage of Perth and Kinross Nature Network actions delivered • area (ha) of WNHCV sites lost to development

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
	• percentage of the Perth and Kinross Council area identified as having 'at risk' soils based on Scotland's Soil Map • percentage of waterbodies in forested catchments classified as having overall high, good, and bad quality status • percentage of groundwater area in forested catchments failing to meet quality standards • percentage of waterbodies for which forestry operations or activities have resulted in direct pollution of the water environment • percentage of forest management and restorations plans which include protection for the water environment and sustainable water use • number of Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) grants awarded for water quality management projects/initiatives
4. Contribute to and help improve our landscapes and scenery	
5. Help make the most of our historic environment	• Percentage of forest management and restoration plans which provide for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. • Area (ha) of AWI and semi-natural woodland sites lost to development. • Number of key archaeological sites within core woodlands. • Number of forest management plans environmental statements identifying where there are potential conflicts between proposals and the protection of the historic environment.

Priority: Forests and the economy – maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy of Perth and Kinross

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
6. Productive forests	• Percentage of land area in FWS 'Preferred' and 'Potential' areas taken up for new planting. • Number and length (Km^2) of agreed timber transport routes within PKC area. • Number and length (Km^2) of consultation timber transport routes within PKC area. • Number of Strategic Timber Transport Fund funding awarded within Perth and Kinross. • Number of FGS grants awarded for sustainable creation, production, harvesting and processing, and infrastructure projects/initiatives.
7. Forest-based enterprises and tourism	• Number of annual visits to forests and woodlands within Perth and Kinross. • Number of forest-based enterprises within Perth and Kinross. • Contribution of woodlands, forests and the forest sector to the economy of Perth and Kinross (GVA and jobs).

Priority: Forests, woodlands and people – maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
8. Access for health and wellbeing	PKC Climate Change Action Plan KPIs: • number of trees planted on Council land and maintained open space ScotPHO health and wellbeing indicators: • area (ha) of community woodland created and managed under FGS WIAT funding scheme • percentage increase in Tree Equity Score for urban areas across Perth and Kinross

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
	• percentage of vacant and derelict sites reused for tree planting or food growing opportunities • percentage of population who live within 500m or less from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size (Woodland Access Standards) • percentage of population who have at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20km in size within 4km of their home (Woodland Access Standards) • percentage of data zones within Perth and Kinross ranked most deprived (SIMD) • percentage of data zones within Perth and Kinross ranked most access deprived (SIMD)
9. Integration with other land uses	PKC Climate Change KPIs: • number of trees planted on Council land and maintained open space Other: • area (ha) of woodland created in and around towns, villages and Perth City • Area (ha) of community woodland created and managed in and around towns under FGS WIAT funding scheme

Priority: Expanding our forest and woodland resource

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
Identifying Preferred and Potential Areas for New Woodland Creation	• Percentage of land area in FWS 'Preferred' and 'Potential' areas taken up for new planting. • Area (Ha) of woodland cover in Perth and Kinross. • Percentage area of woodland cover in Perth and Kinross and diversity breakdown. • Percentage change in woodland cover since baseline year (2014 FWS adoption).

Contributing themes	Indicators of progress
	• Area (Ha) of new woodland and forest creation • Area (Ha) of new native woodland and forest creation

Conclusion

This Strategy sets out a clear vision for a resilient, connected, and thriving network of forests, woodlands, and trees that will deliver lasting environmental, social, and economic benefits for current and future generations. The opportunities and policies identified in this Strategy aim to make requirements clearer for the benefit of all in line with the Scottish Forestry Strategy's 50-year vision. It aims to create tree, woodlands and forests that future Scottish generations will be grateful for -healthy, resilient, diverse woodlands that contribute to the socio-economic and environmental wellbeing of the country.

This Strategy sets out ways in which PKC will protect and restore trees, woodland and forestry as much as is within our control. Main opportunities are through the development management and planning processes, Council-owned and managed land and greenspaces and as a consultee to Scottish Forestry on future forestry and woodland proposals.

Considering the complex challenges faced, protecting, enhancing, restoring and connecting our trees, hedgerows, woodlands and forests and expanding our woodland resource has never been more important. The priorities and themes reflect these challenges and the many opportunities presented to deliver well-managed sustainable multi-functional role in delivering valuable outcomes such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, flood protection, recreation and health benefits.

The successful delivery of this Strategy will depend on strong partnerships between the Council, landowners, communities, environmental organisations, businesses, and other stakeholders. Perth and Kinross Council will continue to be a consultee to Scottish Forestry for long term forest plans, land management plans, felling permissions and woodland creation proposals. PKC will also continue to provide advice to applicants prior to submission to Scottish Forestry as part of the due diligence pre-application process. Eary engagement is encouraged with PKC to ensure comments can be integrated into plans and proposals. A checklist of information required to accompany a forestry and woodland consultation request to PKC is provided in Appendix 1.

The Strategy focuses on a 20-year period (2026 to 2046) but policy and forest policy will of course continue to change, and society's future demands are also likely to be different. It is therefore proposed that the Strategy will have a 'working life' of 10 years. The indicators of success including PKCs Key Performance Indictors and PKCs annual review with Scottish Forestry will be used to measure progress.

Trees and woodlands are among our most valuable natural assets. This Forestry and Woodland Strategy establish a long-term framework for protecting, enhancing, and expanding these assets for the benefit of communities and nature and to allow people to connect with nature around them.

Glossary and acronyms

Quick reference

Woodland	An area dominated by trees, often with a more open canopy, allowing more light to reach the ground. Woodlands are often smaller and can support a rich ground flora.
Forest	Generally, a larger area of tree cover, often perceived as having denser tree cover and being managed for timber, conservation, recreation, or other purposes.
Forestry	Sustainable management of forests and woodlands for people, nature, and the economy.
Productive forestry	Management of woodlands and forests primarily for the sustainable production of timber and other forest products, while also delivering environmental and social benefits.

Ancient woodland	Semi-natural woodland continuously wooded since 1750 or 1860. More unambiguously referred to as ancient semi-natural woodland. The Ancient Woodland Inventory also includes PAWS and LEPO. “Roy” woodlands are on 1750 but not 1860 maps but may still retain ancient woodland features.
At risk soils	Soils at risk from compaction, erosion, leaching and run-off.
Biodiversity	The variety of life on Earth at all levels (from genes to ecosystems), and the natural patterns that it forms. It is essential to the processes which support all life on earth ecosystem services.
Carbon sequestration	A natural or artificial process through which carbon dioxide is removed from the earth’s atmosphere and held in either a solid or liquid form.

Climate resilience	The ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change whilst preventing those impacts from growing worse.
Conservation area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, judged to have special character by virtue of their particular arrangement of the townscape, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Ecosystem services	The benefits for people provided by the natural environment.
Flood risk management	The process of identifying, evaluating, and mitigating the potential effects of flooding on communities, infrastructure, and natural systems.
Forest management plan	Provides a template that demonstrates sustainability for smaller woodlands under 100 hectares.
Forestry grant scheme (FGS)	Scottish Government initiative that supports woodland creation and sustainable management of existing woodlands, contributing to environmental, economic, and social benefits such as biodiversity enhancement, climate change mitigation, and rural development.
Fragmentation	Where habitat is divided creating increased edges and creating barriers to wildlife movement.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils, and the natural processes which form them.
Green (and blue) infrastructure	The network of natural and semi natural areas and features which provide multiple benefits including water-based (blue) features such as SuDS.
Habitat regulations appraisal (HRA)	A legally required appraisal of the effects of a plan or proposal on SACs and SPAs.
Invasive non-native species (INNS)	A plant, animal, fungus or microorganism that has been introduced outside its natural range by human activity and subsequently spreads, causing harm to biodiversity, ecosystems, the economy, human health, or quality of life.
Local biodiversity action plan (LBAP)	Sets out the biodiversity objectives, and actions for biodiversity at a site (Site BAP) or regional (LBAP) level.

Local development plan (LDP)	A plan which sets out, for the land in the part of the district it relates to, a spatial strategy; any other such matters as may be prescribed by the Scottish Ministers, and any other matters which the planning authority consider appropriate to include.
Local development plan (LDP) area	Perth and Kinross Council boundary does not include the areas within the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park boundaries.
Long-established woodland of plantation origin (LEPO)	A form of ancient woodland from 1750 or 1860 where semi natural woodland characteristics may develop.
Lower impact silvicultural systems (LISS)	Includes group selection, shelterwood or underplanting, small coupe felling, coppice or coppice with standards, minimum intervention and single tree selection systems.
National nature reserve (NNR)	A statutory national designation applied to sites of national importance for wildlife, habitats, geology or geomorphology, where nature conservation is the primary land use and which are managed to high standards for conservation and public benefit.
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)	NPF4 is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out the Scottish Government's spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments, and includes a suite of national planning policy. NPF4 was adopted in February 2023.
Native woodland	Native woodlands are woods where the canopy cover is mainly made up of native species, for example over 50%.
Natural flood management (NFM)	An approach to reducing flood risk by working with natural processes rather than relying solely on engineered structures such as concrete walls, culverts, or embankments. It aims to slow, store, and filter water across the landscape so that less water reaches rivers and communities at the same time.
Nature-based solutions	Refer to the use of nature and natural environments to help tackle socio-environmental challenges, providing benefits to people and nature. In particular, these solutions can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.
Nearly native	Nearly Native Woodlands are where native tree species make up between 40% and 50% of the canopy. These woods have the potential to be converted into native woodlands through changing their species mix.

Open ground	In forests and woodlands, refers to land that is not occupied by trees and is maintained as open habitat, either permanently or temporarily. It can include rides, glades, heathland, grassland, wetlands, ponds, rock outcrops and powerline corridors.
Open space	Space within and on the edge of settlements comprising green space or civic areas such as squares, marketplaces and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function.
Peatland code	A voluntary certification standard for UK peatland projects wishing to market the climate benefits of restoration. It provides assurances to carbon market buyers that the projects they are investing in are credible and deliverable.
Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)	PAWS are surveyed in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS), where they are recorded in the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory. These woodlands seem to have originated as a result of natural regeneration sometime prior to the mid-19th Century but were later converted to planted woods. These may be able to be restored with appropriate management.
Priority habitats and species	Protected and non-protected habitats and species as listed in the Tayside LBAP and those on the Scottish Biodiversity List.
Scottish biodiversity list	Official list of species and habitats that are of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland. It is intended to help public bodies and others prioritise conservation action.
Site of special scientific interest (SSSI)	A national designation to protect an area for its special wildlife, habitats, geology, or landforms.
Special area of conservation (SAC)	An international designation to protect an area for important habitat and the species it supports.
Special protection area (SPA)	An international designation to protect an area for its importance for birds.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	A TPO is made by the Local Authority, under Section 160 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, and within the procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 to 1984.
Uk biodiversity action plan	Although the UK BAP itself is no longer active, the terms "UK BAP Priority Habitat" and "UK BAP Priority Species" are still commonly used in ecological surveys, planning applications and biodiversity assessments.
Veteran tree	A tree showing features associated with ageing and ecological maturity that contribute to its high biodiversity, cultural, historic or landscape value, irrespective of its chronological age.
Wild land areas	Semi-natural landscapes with minimal signs of human influence and a strong sense of wildness.
Woodland carbon code	Quality assurance standard for woodland carbon projects in the UK which sets out requirements for voluntary woodland creation projects which tackle climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
Woodland of high nature conservation value (WHNCV)	A woodland of high nature conservation value can be described as: native woodland and scrub identified by the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS); ancient woodland and ancient semi-natural woodland, including plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO); woodland that is integral to the value of designated or special sites (SACs, SPAs, SSSIs, Ramsar sites, and National Nature Reserves (NNRs)), and wood pasture.

Appendix 1: Checklists for woodland and forestry proposals

- ☐ All Woodland Forestry Management Proposals
- ☐ All proposals must adhere to the UK Forestry Standard.
- ☐ Early consultation with PKC Woodland Enquiries Team WoodlandEnquiries@pkc.gov.uk.
- ☐ Ascertain if proposed is within land categorised as 'preferred', 'potential', and 'sensitive' on PKC map.
- ☐ Proposals protect sensitive catchments in Perth and Kinross in accordance with supplementary guidance.
- ☐ Proposals within or adjacent to affect designated protected areas developed in consultation with NatureScot and HRA completed if required.
- ☐ Proposals informed by ecological surveys to ascertain the presence of and impact to protected species, important habitats and wider biodiversity.
- ☐ Proposals likely to impact on waders accompanied by a survey and impact assessment to waders and their habitats.
- ☐ Proposals within 30m of a watercourse accompanied by an otter survey.
- ☐ A detailed soil survey used to avoid and protect areas of deep peat (over 50cm) and avoid Class 1 and 2 soils.
- ☐ Proposals protect, enhance and restore sensitive, open and rare habitats and breeding bird areas of high conservation value.
- ☐ Proposals avoid habitat fragmentation by incorporating open glades, rides, transitional habitats, peatland restoration and riparian planting where appropriate.
- ☐ Proposals likely to impact on traditional orchards are accompanied by a survey, impact assessment and measures to restore and extend the habitat.
- ☐ Proposals likely to impact on species-rich grassland are accompanied by a survey and impact assessment with measures to restore the habitat by managing it to maintain a diversity of species.
- ☐ Proposals that may impact wild land areas are accompanied by an impact assessment and mitigation measures.
- ☐ Proposals covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or within a Conservation Area are protected and retained.

- ☐ Early consultation with the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust to consider the historic environment.
- ☐ Proposals within Local Landscape Areas must demonstrate they will not have a significant adverse effect on the special qualities.
- ☐ Geological and geomorphological elements not obscured by planting.
- ☐ Long-term forest plans and forest management plans created as a basis for felling permissions.
- ☐ Existing woodlands, forests and plantations are restructured to diversify age and species structures and create softer edges, deadwood, areas of open ground, shrub layer and natural understory.
- ☐ Removal of non-native and conifer species along riparian areas and replacing with native species.
- ☐ Proposals contain diverse range of species and avoid reliance on single species and uniform planting create buffer zones, stepping stones and habitat corridors.
- ☐ Proposals include removal of invasive non-native species and bracken if present onsite.
- ☐ Clear felling minimised and seed-bearing native trees retained to ensure some continuous cover forestry.
- ☐ Communities are forewarned of proposed tree, woodland and forestry proposals likely to impact their local surroundings.
- ☐ Public access is considered in the preliminary stages of proposals. If present, proposal plans and maps include Core Paths and Rights of Way. If a temporary diversion of a core path or right of way is required, PKC Community Greenspace Team contacted.
- ☐ Perth and Kinross Outdoor Access Forum and representative bodies such as The British Horse Society contacted.
- ☐ Robust deer management, preferable sustainable deer control should be proposed and not rely wholly on deer fencing. Large sites and those adjacent to protected areas should be accompanied by a Deer Management Plan.
- ☐ Fencing should consider badger gates and measures to avoid bird strike.
- ☐ Impact of new tracks, alterations to existing tracks or roads, formation of vehicular accesses may require ‘prior notification’ or an application for planning permission.

- ☐ Proposals requiring new roads for timber operations should determine the potential impacts of the route and potential runoff of the proposed roads into watercourses and wetland habitats.
- ☐ The agreed timber routes can be viewed on the interactive map covering Stirling and Tayside TTG.
- ☐ Early engagement with the Roads Maintenance Partnership.
- ☐ Cross-boundary opportunities are considered.

Additional checklist for proposals within WHNCV

- ☐ Avoid damage, loss, fragmentation and adverse impacts to woodlands of high nature conservation value (WHNCV) by enhancing and connecting.
- ☐ PAWS and LEPO are restored to diversity species, age and structure, retain veteran trees and provide deadwood.
- ☐ Proposals for LEPO contain low impact silviculture systems, long-term retention areas with a diverse species mix and high proportion of native species.
- ☐ Granny pines retained and non-native species from old Caledonian forest replaced with Scots pine.
- ☐ Removal of bracken and invasive non-native species from HHNCV.

Additional checklist for proposals within upland areas

- ☐ Proposals seek to protect, enhance and restore sensitive and rare upland habitats informed by NVC and bird breeding surveys.
- ☐ Proposals protect, restore and enhance montane woodland and scrub habitats.
- ☐ Proposals include a diverse range of native species, gradual transitions of habitats and feathered edge forestry.

Additional checklist for development proposals

- ☐ Early engagement with an Ecologist and Arboricultural Consultant to ensure trees inform the layout and are retained.

- ☐ Existing woodland, trees and hedgerows protected, restored and expanded to connect to other habitats.
- ☐ The mitigation hierarchy of avoid, reduce and compensate followed to reduce impacts of development.
- ☐ Trees are not felled pre-emptively prior to applying for planning permission.
- ☐ A Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement submitted.
- ☐ During construction, trees should be protected in accordance with BS: 5837 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) and ArbCOW employed to audit and advise.
- ☐ Where tree loss is unavoidable, compensatory tree planting is required on a ratio of 1 to 3 for every tree lost.
- ☐ Compensatory planting uses native trees, recognises site characteristics, is compatible with existing trees and woodland and seeks to deliver amenity and biodiversity enhancement. Species selection is in accordance with the Open Space Supplementary Guidance.
- ☐ Landscaping plans include species selection, stock size, stock type, planting density, plant protection measures, planting preparation, and proposed maintenance schedule. Adequate after-care, maintenance and monitoring ensure young trees are kept weed free.
- ☐ Proposals in accordance with BS: 8545 Trees from Nursery to Independence.
- ☐ Community orchards provided in major housing sites.
- ☐ Native and berry producing hedgerows are created that connect to existing habitats.
- ☐ Management of and the creation of tree avenues to reflect traditional landscapes in Perth and Kinross.
- ☐ Proposals contain diverse range of species and avoid reliance on single species and uniform planting.
- ☐ Proposals create buffer zones, stepping stones and habitat corridors.
- ☐ Tree planting on PKC-owned and managed land is in accordance with the PKC Tree Planting Policy and Open Space Strategy.

Appendix 2: Sites designated for natural heritage within PKC boundary area

Special protection area (SPA)

- Caenlochan
- Cairngorms Massif
- Drumochter Hills
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary
- Forest of Clunie
- Loch Leven
- Rannoch Lochs
- South Tayside Goose Roosts

Special area of conservation (SAC)

- Beinn a' Ghlo
- Ben Heasgarnich
- Ben Lawers
- Black Wood of Rannoch
- Caenlochan
- Craighall Gorge
- Drumochter Hills
- Dun Moss and Forest of Alyth Mires
- Dunkeld-Blairgowrie Lochs
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary
- Glenartney Juniper Wood
- Keltneyburn
- Methven Moss
- Pitkeathly Mires
- Rannoch Moor
- River Tay
- Shelforkie Moss
- Shingle Islands
- Tulach Hill and Glen Fender Meadows
- Turflundie Wood
- Upper Strathearn Oakwoods

Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)

- Aldclune and Invervack Meadows
- Almondbank
- Ardblair and Myreside Fens
- Ballo and Harperleas Reservoirs
- Ballyoukan Juniper Wood
- Balnaguard Glen
- Beinn a' Chuallaich
- Beinn a' Ghlo
- Ben Chonzie
- Ben Heasgarnich
- Ben Lawers
- Ben Vrackie
- Birks of Aberfeldy
- Bishop Hill
- Black Loch (Cleish)
- Black Wood of Rannoch
- Blair Atholl Meadow
- Bog Wood and Meadow
- Bolfracks Wood
- Brerachan Meadows
- Caenlochan
- Cairnleith Moss
- Cairnwell
- Cardney Wood
- Carey
- Carie and Cragganester Woods
- Carn Gorm and Meall Garbh
- Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs
- Coille Chriche
- Coire Bhachdaidh
- Comrie Woods
- Connachan Marsh
- Craig More
- Craig Rossie
- Craig Tronach
- Craighall Gorge
- Craigs of Lundie and Ardgarth Loch
- Croftintygan Meadow
- Dalcroy Promontory
- Den of Airlie
- Den of Alyth
- Den of Riechip
- Devon Gorge
- Drummond Lochs
- Drumochter Hills
- Drumore Loch
- Dun Moss
- Dunalastair Reservoir
- Dupplin Lakes
- Fearnan Cowpark
- Fintulich
- Forest of Alyth Mires
- Forest of Clunie
- Fungarth Juniper Wood
- Gartwhinzean Meadow
- Glas Tulaichean
- Glen Fender Meadows
- Glen Garry

- Glen Lyon Woods
- Glen Queich
- Glen Tilt Woods
- Glenartney Juniper Wood
- Gleneagles Mire
- Hare Myre, Monk Myre and Stormont Loch
- Inchcoonans Claypit
- Inner Tay Estuary
- Keltneyburn
- Kincardine Castle Wood
- Kings Myre
- Kinnoull Hill
- Lacesston Muir and Glen Burn Gorge
- Laird's Loch
- Linn of Tummel
- Little Ballo
- Little Glenshee
- Loch Con
- Loch Freuchie Meadows
- Loch Leven
- Lochindores
- Lochmill Loch
- Lochs Clunie and Marlee
- Lochs of Butterstone, Craiglush and Lowes
- Logierait Mires
- Lurg and Dow Lochs
- Meall Dail-chealach
- Meall Ghaordie
- Meall Reamhar
- Meggernie and Croch na Keys Woods
- Meikleour Area
- Methven Moss
- Methven Woods
- Mill Dam
- Milton Wood
- Monzie Wood
- Morenish Meadow
- Pass of Killiecrankie
- Pitarrig Meadow
- Pitkeathly Mires
- Pitlowie
- Quoigs Meadow
- Rannoch Lochs
- Rannoch Moor
- Redmyre
- River Lyon Bank
- Romadie Wood
- Schiehallion
- Shingle Islands
- Shochie Burn
- Straloch Moraines
- Struan Wood
- Tay Bank Section
- Thistle Brig
- Tomnadashan Mine
- Tulach Hill
- Turflundie Wood
- Weem Meadow
- Wether Hill

National nature reserve (NNR)

- Ben Lawers
- Loch Leven

RAMSAR Sites

- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary
- Loch Leven
- Rannoch Moor
- South Tayside Goose Roosts

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