

# Perth and Kinross LDP3 2027 - Evidence Report

## TOPIC PAPER NO. 021: BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



July 2024



# Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
1.1	Relevant Policies.....	5
1.2	Legal and National Policy Requirements and Expectations .....	5
2	Information Sources and Implications .....	6
2.1	Up to Date Audits and Strategies .....	6
2.2	Identify and Protect Existing Blue and Green Infrastructure .....	7
2.3	Enhance and Expand Blue and Green Infrastructure .....	8
2.4	Identify Priorities for Connectivity .....	10
2.5	Encourage Use of Unused of Underused Land.....	11
2.6	Safeguarding and Promoting Access to Green and Blue Spaces and Active Travel .....	12
2.7	Identifying Land for Temporary Greening or Food Growing .....	16
2.8	Strategy and principles for delivering blue-green networks .....	16
3	Gaps and Key Issues Raised.....	17
4	Implications for the Proposed Plan.....	18

# 1 Introduction

1. This topic paper sets out the key information relating to Blue and Green Infrastructure which will be covered by the Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan (LDP) 3, as required under Section 16B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the 1997 Act) <sup>1</sup>. It will, alongside a range of other topic papers, contribute towards the preparation of the Council's Evidence Report, which is programmed to be submitted to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division during November 2024 for the 'Gatecheck' process.
2. The purpose of an Evidence Report is to provide the local authority's interpretation of the evidence it has gathered and the likely implications of that evidence for the preparation of the LDP. The Report will provide a summary of what the evidence means for the plan, rather than contain all the detail of evidence collected.
3. Blue and Green Infrastructure as defined in NPF4 relates to multifunctional features in the natural and built environment that provide a range of ecosystem services. Examples include:
  - A play park that doubles as flood storage during heavy rain
  - Sustainable Drainage Systems such as drainage ponds, raingardens and permeable paving
  - Natural Flood Management measures such as wetlands and peatland that both reduce run off and provide a resource for biodiversity.
  - Street trees that provide biodiversity benefit and shade
  - Accessible Parks and open space that provide opportunities for both people and nature. This may include town squares with trees and planters.
4. NPF4 Policy 20 also refers to the priority of connectivity with other blue and green infrastructure assets and the safeguarding of active travel routes including core paths. Green Networks are connected areas of green infrastructure and open space that together form an integrated and multifunctional network. Connections between these areas often provide for the movement of both people and nature. Note these may overlap with but are distinct from Nature Networks which are specifically for the movement of plants and animals between nature rich sites and also allow nature to move through settlements. Within settlements, Green Networks will have a variety of functions and may include these urban nature networks. Green Networks also connect people and wildlife within settlements to the wider countryside and active travel networks are great opportunities to deliver these.
5. NPF4 Policy 20 Blue and Green Infrastructure also refers to the benefit of accessible, high-quality blue, green and civic spaces (such as town

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<sup>1</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

squares) and to the Open Space Strategy. Where these are multifunctional, they can be considered green infrastructure.

6. In developing our LDP3 it is crucial to recognise that it will also be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan. The current [Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#) sets out the Council's vision for a Perth and Kinross 'where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality.'
7. The Corporate Plan identifies 7 Priorities delivered through a range of Key Actions. The Principles include:
  - Tackling climate change and supporting sustainable places
  - Supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing
8. Key Actions in the plan include:
  - To conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our natural environment.
  - Improve health and wellbeing in Perth and Kinross by increasing overall participation in sport and physical activity and promoting the wellbeing benefits of time spent in our natural surroundings.
9. Developing our Local Development Plan 3 in alignment with National Planning Framework 4, should help support the delivery of all of the Corporate Plan's Priorities, with the exception of 'Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people' which is not within the remit of the land use planning system.



**Figure 1: Perth & Kinross Council Corporate Plan Priorities**

10. In November 2022 the Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and is a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration on the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In December 2021 the Council adopted its first [PKC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan \(CCSAP\)](#). It sets out the next steps and an initial route map to take us to a net zero carbon and climate resilient Perth and Kinross. Further detail on the CCSAP is available in Topic Paper 004 Tackling the Climate and Nature Emergency.
11. The Strategy contains 27 Council Commitments which are needed to achieve the outcomes guided by Six Overarching Climate Change Strategy Principles which include, as relevance to green and blue infrastructure actions to:

- promote land use practices and landscape scale changes that contribute to natural flood management including maximising the use of Blue Green Infrastructure in urban area
- utilise our school grounds where possible to promote an understanding of biodiversity, food growing and healthy eating

12. The Climate Change [Action Plan](#) sets out the measures being undertaken. Further information is available in Topic Paper 004 Tackling the Nature and Climate Emergencies.

### 1.1 Relevant Policies

13. This topic is covered by the following policies in National Planning Framework 4: Policy 20 Blue and Green infrastructure.

14. Other relevant policies which overlap with this topic include:

- NPF4 Policy 3 Biodiversity
- LDP2 Policy 14: Open Space Retention and Provision.
- LDP2 Policy 15: Public Access
- LDP2 Policy 42: Green Infrastructure
- NPF4 Policy 13: Sustainable Transport
- NPF4 Policy 14: and the Six Qualities of Successful Places in Annex D
- NPF4 Policy 15: Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods with reference to accessibility of green spaces
- NPF4 Policy 21: Play, Recreation and Sport

### 1.2 Legal and National Policy Requirements and Expectations

15. In line with the requirements of the Act, this paper will use the information sources discussed in section 2 to provide important background information for the Plan area regarding the principal and environmental characteristics of the district in relation to green infrastructure.

16. Regulation 9 of the Development Plan Regulations<sup>2</sup> requires planning authorities to have regard to any open space strategy published under s 3G (3) of the 1997 Act. This requires an audit of existing open space provision and an assessment of current and future requirements along with any other matter the planning authority considers appropriate.

17. Policy 20 of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) expects LDPs to:

- be informed by relevant, up-to date audits and/or strategies, covering the multiple functions and benefits of blue and green infrastructure
- identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks
- enhance and expand existing provision including new blue and/or green infrastructure. This may include retrofitting.
- identify priorities for connectivity to other blue and/or green infrastructure assets, including to address cross-boundary needs and opportunities, should also be identified.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Planning\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#)

- encourage the permanent or temporary use of unused or under-used land as green infrastructure. Where this is temporary, this should not prevent future development potential from being realised.
  - safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks.
18. Scottish Government (2023) [Local Development Planning Guidance](#) states that the spatial strategy should identify opportunities for new, enhanced or improved provision of blue and green infrastructure, or improved access to green and blue spaces, taking account of the areas that can best contribute to enhancing and delivering key green networks and priorities.
19. Plans may identify land that could be used for localised, temporary greening and / or community food production, including community growing spaces, especially in urban areas.
20. This topic is closely aligned to:
- Topic 5: Biodiversity and Natural Places particularly with reference to Nature Networks.
  - Topic 15: Infrastructure (incorporating Sustainable Transport)
  - Topic 23: Flood Risk and Water Management particularly with reference to natural flood risk management

## 2 Information Sources and Implications

21. This section sets out the evidence which is needed so that the Proposed Plan can address the issues raised in the Act and in NPF4. Evidence is grouped under headings reflecting the requirements of NPF4 policy 20.

### 2.1 Up to Date Audits and Strategies

22. **Draft Open Space Quality Audit.** A survey to inform an Open Space Quality Audit has been carried out of over 500 accessible open spaces within or adjacent to settlements including all designated open spaces. The results of this are to be revised and confirmed to finalise the OSQA and inform the Council's Open Space Strategy. The draft audit includes an assessment of each site for:
- Accessibility
  - Place quality
  - Care and maintenance
  - Biodiversity – including connectivity within and outwith the open space.
  - Community Use
23. The audit to date has found that there are 1360ha of open space in or adjacent to settlements of which 704ha was considered public maintained open space and surveyed. Even excluding naturalised land, private land and sport facilities this amounts to over 95m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling and over 4.5ha per 1000 people which is well over the quantity standards set in the Council's 2021 [Adopted Open Space](#)

[Provision for New Developments Supplementary Guidance](#). Further work is required to finalise the methodology, audit, conclusions and recommendations.

24. **Forest and Woodland Strategy.** The [Forest and Woodland Strategy](#) 2020 provides information about where and how new woodland and forestry should come forward. This informs the identification of areas appropriate for new green infrastructure particularly outside settlements. The strategy will be updated for LDP3. See Topic Paper 006 for further details.

## 2.2 Identify and Protect Existing Blue and Green Infrastructure

25. Perth & Kinross has a wealth of natural rivers, lochs, and woodland habitats along with peatland and grassland. Perth and our towns and villages also often benefit from multifunctional greenspaces and natural corridors. These provide significant ecosystem services including pollination, flood mitigation and water purification, cultural and identity benefits along with physical and mental wellbeing. We will use the sources below to identify existing blue and green infrastructure and use that knowledge to inform how and where development will come forward.
26. **Scotland's Greenspace map.** The OS MasterMap Greenspace Layer provides vital geospatial data to support planning, management and research. OS MasterMap Greenspace Layer covers all settlements with a population over 500 people and includes a 500-metre buffer around the settlement. It uses the greenspace typology as set out in Planning

Advice Note 65, to categorise all urban greenspaces into 22 different types and provides up to two form and two functional types for each greenspace polygon. This was used to support Green Infrastructure mapping that was used to develop Perth & Kinross (2020) Green infrastructure Supplementary Guidance. This will inform the Open Space Strategy which will inform sufficiency of improvements to and linkages of open spaces.

27. **Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Guidance.** This current [guidance](#) sets out the principles for protecting and delivering Green and Blue Infrastructure as well as priorities for action in the main settlements in Perth & Kinross. An online Green Infrastructure map showing existing green infrastructure and opportunities including potential linkages. This will be further developed and refined with the sources below.
28. **Forest and Woodland Strategy.** The Forest and Woodland Strategy includes existing woodland and where new woodland is preferred. The strategy will be developed alongside identification of green infrastructure to ensure that development protects and supports important trees and woodland.
29. **Other Existing Green Infrastructure.** Topic Paper 005 and 006 with regards biodiversity and trees and woodland set out sources for mapping existing green infrastructure in more detail, particularly outside settlements. These will help identify existing green infrastructure which is protected by Policy 20:
  - Native Woodland Survey of Scotland

- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Tree Protection Orders
- Ancient Tree Inventory
- National Soil Map of Scotland
- NatureScot’s Habitat and Land Cover Map of Scotland
- NatureScot’s Mountain Woodland Restoration Areas
- Existing Restoration Projects

30. **Existing Mapped Open Space.** Current open space for nature, recreation and amenity is mapped in LDP2. These will be considered and reviewed for LDP3. NPF4 Policy 20 and 21 do not address open space for purposes of amenity, where that may be for residential amenity separation or for landscape purposes. This needs to be considered in both drawing boundaries of settlements or whether a local policy is required for Open Space.
31. **SEPA surface water flood risk layers** identify land which may have potential to be part of the blue network. It is considered that the low-risk layer will be the most appropriate one to use, before a climate change surface water risk layer is available. This layer used the medium likelihood flood event with an increase in rainfall intensity of 20% nationally. This layer may provide a first indication of those areas potentially at risk from surface water flooding in the future, however due to projected changes in rainfall intensity it may not show all locations that may be affected in the future.
32. [Scotland Wetland Inventory](#) is generated from data supplied to SEPA by NatureScot. The [wetland inventory database](#) comprises a number

of fields that include the main WFD95 wetland type, the original habitat survey information and whether the wetland polygon is within a statutory designated site. The inventory has been completed using available digital data for wetlands that have been surveyed. It is very likely that there are wetlands in Scotland that have not been surveyed or where the survey data is currently not available in a digital format suitable for geographic information system (GIS). However, it will be a useful resource.

### 2.3 Enhance and Expand Blue and Green Infrastructure

33. **Development Enhancement Measures.** Blue and Green Infrastructure is protected from harm by development under NPF4 Policy 20(a) and proposals for incorporating new or enhanced BGI is supported by Policy 20(b). The requirement in NPF4 Policy 3 to conserve and enhance biodiversity is expected to contribute to positive measures for blue and green infrastructure. Further information on enhancement beyond site requirements can be found in Topic Paper 005.
34. **Big Place Conversation Results:** During this engagement settlement specific comments were noted and often drawn on maps as to not only where valuable green infrastructure was but where interventions could take place such as natural flood management, increases in tree planting or improvements to green spaces. This information will help inform the open space strategy.

35. **Grow Wild.** This [campaign](#) is reviewing the way Council managed greenspaces are cut with potential benefits for nature. A survey currently covering the wider Perth area also invites comments on further suggestions for biodiversity improvements as well as food growing suggestions. This feedback will be included within the Open Space Strategy and settlement audits and will help identify opportunities to support valued sites.
36. **Other Blue and Green Infrastructure Opportunities.** Opportunities exist where there are gaps in existing green infrastructure. Topic Paper 005 also sets out sources for mapping restoration opportunities for the purposes of identifying Nature Networks. Where not included in Nature Networks this data will help identify opportunities for restoring or enhancing green infrastructure:
- Investment Ready Projects
  - Natural Flood Management Studies
  - SEPA Riparian Vegetation Planting Opportunities
  - SEPA Obstacles to Fish Migration.
  - SEPA Natural Flood Management mapping
  - SEPA Geomorphic Risk layer
  - SEPA Recommended Riparian Buffer layer
  - SEPA Water Environment Framework Projects
37. **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** considers/identifies and collates information on natural flood risk opportunities for all the settlements within LDP2. It considers, Local authority Flood Studies, to help identify proposed Natural Flood Management, and then SEPA low surface water flood risk layer, and SEPA Natural Flood Management mapping to identify future potential opportunities. A draft SFRA will be appended to topic paper 23 Flood Risk.
38. As an example of the SFRA analysis of Natural Flood Management opportunities within a settlement, it is useful to consider Blackford. In terms of the SEPA Natural Flood Management opportunities mapping there is both substantial floodplain management and sediment management opportunities related to the Allan Waters. Unfortunately, we cannot publish this mapped information due to licensing restrictions. However, you can view the Natural Flood management maps on the [SEPA map viewer](#).
39. Whilst SEPA mapping of opportunities is a starting point the Blackford flood study which was carried out in 2020 identified Natural Flood Management as part of the preferred option. The Natural Flood Management could aid in storing flows within the upstream catchment as well as having wide catchment benefits. It is suggested that if alternative options are put in place to enable flood risk reduction, natural flood management measures could be incorporated at a later date to provide some additional attenuation to the higher flows predicted as part of future climate change.
40. Areas where Natural Flood Management may be considered include north and south of Drumfad on the Allan Water. This is different from the areas identified in the SEPA opportunity mapping, as detailed analysis resulted in a different approach. The delivery of this scheme is subject to capital funding being made available by the Scottish

Government and within Perth and Kinross Council's capital programme.

41. **Surface water management plans (SWMP)** there is a completed Milnathort Plan, and a Blairgowrie and Rattray and Perth plan is ongoing, and a South Kinross plan will be in progress.
42. **Flood studies** sometimes identify Natural Flood Management opportunities, and where they do, these will be recorded in the SFRA, whilst further studies that become available at Proposed Plan stage will also be considered. Any confirmed Natural Flood Management will be identified and protected in the Proposed Plan and will inform the green blue network. Studies have been carried out for:
  - Aberfeldy
  - Blackford
  - Comrie
  - Invergowrie
  - South Kinross
43. There are currently no Perth and Kinross Council implemented natural flood management within the area, however Alyth, Blackford and potentially Aberfeldy Flood Protection Schemes once confirmed may include natural flood management areas. The Blackford and Aberfeldy schemes are currently at preferred option stage. Whilst the Alyth natural flood management flood study is currently being reviewed by SEPA. Also, there are lots of landowners undertaking their own natural flood management works, examples include Blackford Farms, in

collaboration with Forth Rivers Trust, and Bamff Estate upstream of Alyth.

44. [Perth Integrated Catchment Study](#) considers the complex interactions between rivers, surface water drainage and combined sewer systems and identifies at risk areas, and potential interventions to reduce risk. Consideration will be given to any interventions which will add to blue network, with options including both grey and green/blue solutions.
45. [River basin management plans for Scotland](#) (RBMP) set out a framework for protecting and improving the water environment and consequentially the benefits provided by the water environment across Scotland. It focuses on reducing resource use, eliminating waste and restoring natural capital. It covers rivers, lochs, transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters, groundwater, and groundwater dependant wetlands, and sets out actions for public bodies, industry and land managers in Scotland. Information on the current status of a water body, pressures affecting it, measures required to address those pressures, and deadlines for achieving those measures are available on the SEPA's [water environment hub](#). Analysis of the RBMP will inform the spatial strategy and may identify additional blue green network opportunities.

## 2.4 Identify Priorities for Connectivity

46. **20-minute neighbourhood and local living analysis and settlement audit work** will be carried out to support the preparation of the

Proposed Plan. This analysis will inform the spatial strategy and may identify additional blue green network opportunities within the settlement. It is planned as part of the Settlement Audit work for the Proposed Plan to develop a Localities Profile template which will set out those factors which officers need to take account of in developing their understanding of each place and its needs to satisfy the requirements of the Planning Act, Regulations, LDP Guidance and NPF4 policies. These settlement audits will be informed by results of our LDP3 Big Place Conversation exercise (using the Place Standard Tool) which are being collated to produce summaries for each of the localities. These summaries will be available for inclusion in the Evidence Report and considered through our Settlement Audit work for the Proposed Plan.

47. **Green Networks / Nature Networks.** Having identified existing green infrastructure networks for nature and people, connections between them will be discussed with communities as we consider the Local Development Plan. This will build on information gathered during the Big Place Conversation around valued spaces and active travel priorities. Current engagement to identify priorities for Nature Networks is taking place alongside these Topic Papers which includes a question regarding the prioritisation of habitats with which to connect nature rich sites via nature networks.

## 2.5 Encourage Use of Unused or Underused Land

48. The temporary use of unused or underused land as green infrastructure is currently encouraged under LDP2 Policy 42 reflected

in NPF4 Policy 21 (d) for temporary proposals. LDP3 may be able to encourage temporary uses through identifying suitable land for blue and green infrastructure opportunities both for direct community use or supported by development.

- **The Food Growing Strategy** supports the temporary use of land for food growing.
- **The Open Space Quality Audit** will help identify areas of land that could provide a greater functionality of green spaces for both biodiversity and food growing.
- **Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey.** Council data is available on the [Open Data portal](#) and provides opportunities where green infrastructure could be utilised.

49. **Urban Capacity and Brownfield study** - A pilot exercise has so far been undertaken for a specific area of Perth and Kinross which considered vacant and derelict land, vacant properties, community land audit, car parks, underutilised open space, land in council ownership, land allocated for employment safeguarding in LDP2, land allocated in LDP2 and the housing land audit but not yet fulfilled, and officer identified sites. The main purpose is to identify sites for affordable housing, including small sites that could be brought forward for development immediately or considered for the longer term via the LDP review process. The initial scope of this has been focussed on identifying potential sites for housing, however when it is taken forward across the Council area, it should also consider whether sites have potential

for use as blue or green infrastructure. This could be on a temporary or long-term basis.

## 2.6 Safeguarding and Promoting Access to Green and Blue Spaces and Active Travel

50. **20-minute neighbourhood and local living analysis and settlement audit work** mentioned in more detail under Identify Priorities for Connectivity paragraph 46, this work will also inform the spatial strategy in relation to active travel.

51. **Open Space Quality Audit and Open Space Strategy.** An accessibility statement will be produced as part of the Open Space Strategy. While initial data on accessibility of individual open spaces has been collated a wider picture of access to open spaces will be incorporated into the 20-minute neighbourhood analysis.

52. **Active Travel Routes** will provide connectivity within the network. LDP2 Policy 15: Public Access currently safeguards core paths, disused railway lines, asserted rights of way and other well-used routes and connectivity proposals identified in the Regional Transport Plan. The Proposed Plan should safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks.

53. This will require consideration of the following existing and proposed recreational routes:

### Existing routes

- Core paths
- Rights of way
- National Cycle Routes
- the extensive network of signposted paths (Perth and Kinross Council data)
- the Catheran Trail

### Proposed future routes/priorities

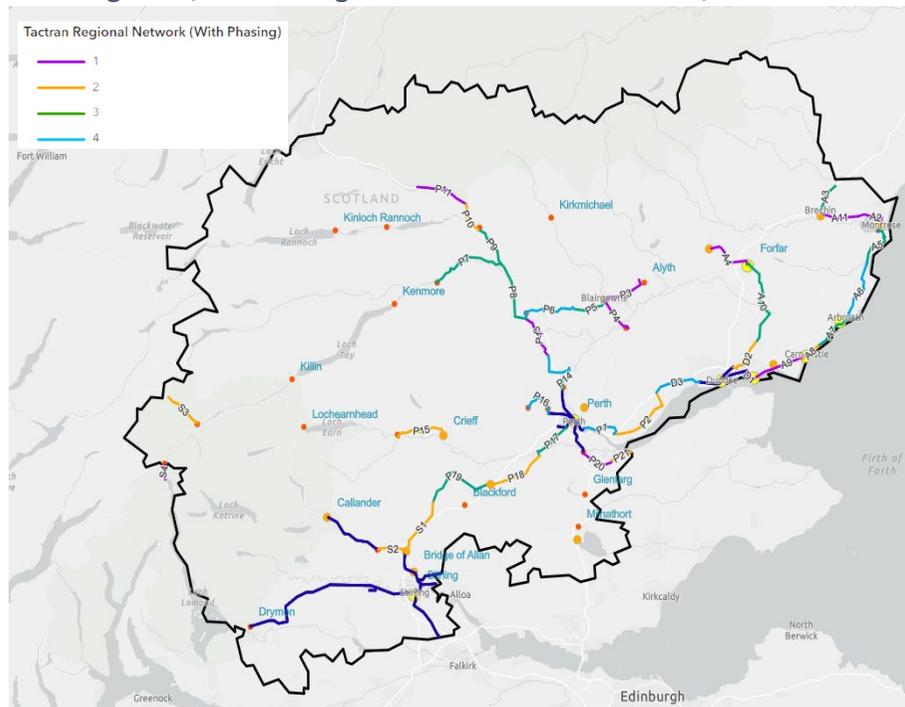
- National long-distance routes: Routes identified in LDP2 are Crieff to Comrie as part of the Pilgrim Way, and Crook of Devon to Kinross via Balado.
  - Future Potential Routes for footpaths: Perth and Kinross Council data.
  - Disused railway lines: Safeguarded in LDP2 from inappropriate development. Where there is not a reasonable prospect of being reused for public transport, consideration will then be given to their potential for active travel / green networks. Perth & Kinross Council Data.
  - The [Tactran Regional Network](#): A spatial prioritisation of the pipeline of strategic active travel projects.
  - The Mobility strategy action plan (from emerging PKC mobility strategy)
54. [A Core Paths Plan](#) was adopted by the Council in January 2012 and revised in 2017. The Plan shows a system of paths, 2043km in total, which provide reasonable public access throughout Perth and Kinross.

55. The emerging [Mobility Strategy](#), the [Active travel Strategy 2018](#), the [Tactran Regional Active Travel Network 2024](#) (currently submitted to Ministers), and the emerging Kinross-shire Active Travel Masterplan will also be considered, particularly in context of identifying any additional spatial data on existing and proposed access routes or other active travel infrastructure. Progress on the Active Travel Strategy including the Cycling Walking and Safer Routes Projects can be found in the May 2024 [report to Council](#).

56. The [Tactran Regional Network](#) provides a spatial evidence base for prioritising and planning a pipeline of strategic active travel projects, to further develop the regional walking and cycling network. It will also include consideration of the Mobility Strategy Action Plan.
57. The Mobility Strategy commonly known as a Local Transport Strategy, sets out Perth & Kinross Council's vision for managing and developing the transport network. The Mobility strategy considers and incorporates on going schemes and projects such as [Perth People Place](#), which takes forward delivery of the [Perth cycle network](#).
58. The programme of active travel routes including shared use and cycling paths provides an opportunity to identify routes which best support access to blue and green infrastructure and active travel routes which present an opportunity for delivering multiple benefits through the use of sustainable drainage, vegetation alongside the hard surfaces.
59. **Strategic Green Networks.** An aspirational green route was set out in TAYPlan along both coasts of Tay Estuary linking Dundee and Newburgh to Perth. In addition, following the requirement in TAYPlan to identify strategic green networks, further work was carried out prior to LDP2 (see p68 of [LDP2](#)) resulting in Strategic Green Networks throughout Perth & Kinross centred around the national cycle ways. Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust have established the River Tay Way following core paths from Kenmore to Perth, with a cycling route which follows NCN 7 and 77 from Kenmore to Dundee. PKCT are also currently developing the Bridge of Earn to Newburgh active travel

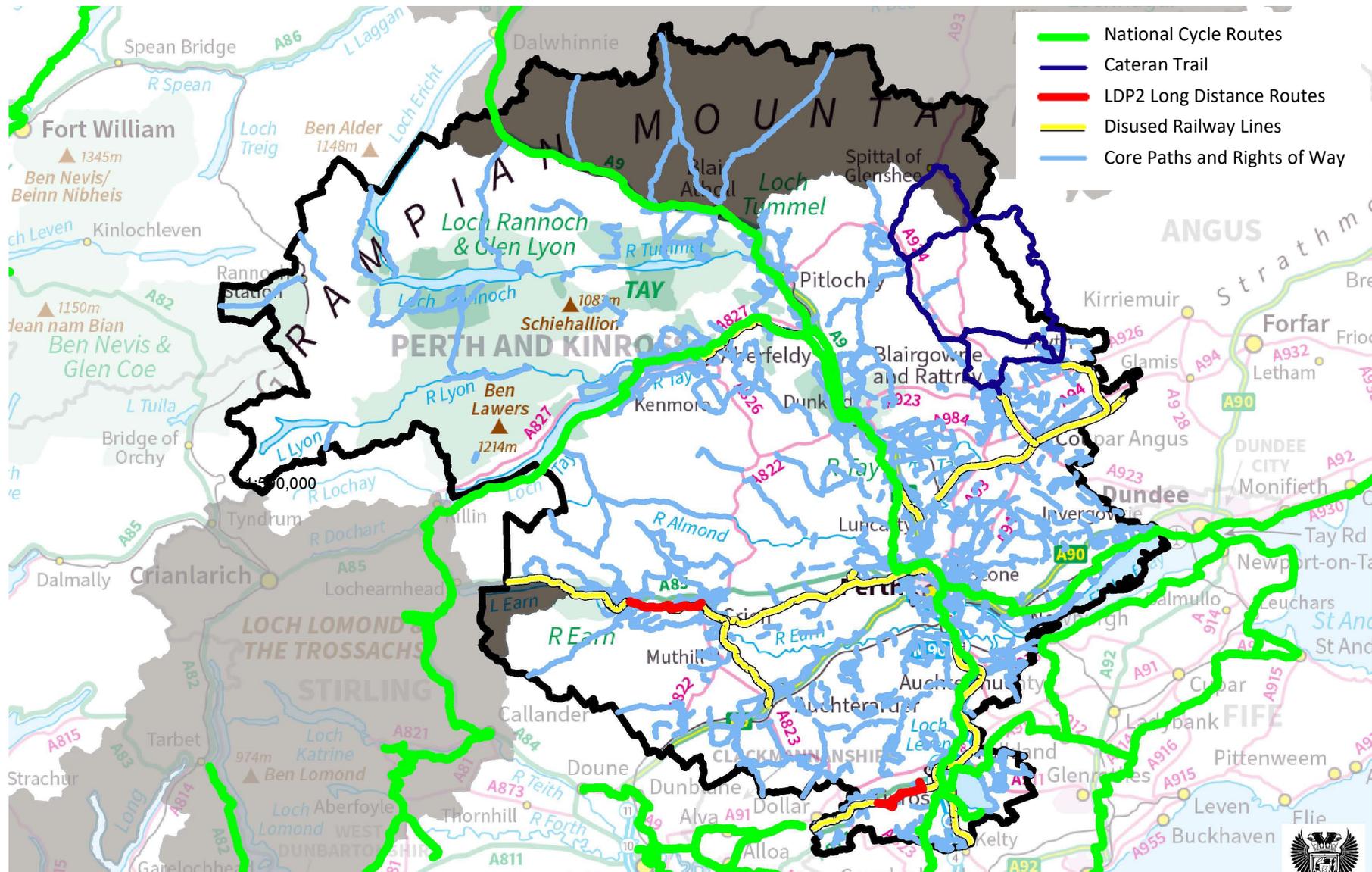
**Figure 2: Tactran Regional Network.**

[tactran.gov.uk/tactran-regional-active-travel-network/](http://tactran.gov.uk/tactran-regional-active-travel-network/)



route. These routes should be reviewed, and consideration given to whether there are additional networks strands which should be added.

Figure 3: Active Travel Routes



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## 2.7 Identifying Land for Temporary Greening or Food Growing

60. **Food Growing Strategy.** [The Food Growing Strategy 2021](#) for Perth and Kinross responds to the Government's vision to increase the health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities by encouraging more people to grow and eat fruit and vegetables. The two main barriers to growing food is the lack of knowledge and lack of suitable growing space.
61. The Local Development Plan states that new developments should incorporate allotments where there is a proven demand in the local area. By identifying areas where there is a shortfall of growing spaces and a proven public demand, the Food Growing Strategy will provide the basis for fulfilling this requirement for future development proposals. Providing other community growing spaces through the planning process is also encouraged, especially for proposed residential developments which will lead to the creation of new communities. This approach is being trialled at Bertha Park near Perth, which will incorporate large community growing spaces.
62. There is a relevant action within the strategy to, 'Incorporate any potential allotment site, identified by the Food Growing Strategy, into the next revision/update of the Local Development Plan and any development brief work. Encourage/require all large residential development proposals to provide food growing opportunities.'

63. Identification of land for food growing is being sought during the first phase of the Grow Wild consultation. Further opportunities will arise during development of the Open Space Strategy.

## 2.8 Strategy and principles for delivering blue green networks

64. [Water-resilient places](#) Scottish Government paper considers what improvements we can make to surface water management in communities across Scotland by building on existing policy and by improving how we work together.
65. It highlights blue green infrastructure can bring multiple benefits and meet a wider range of policy objectives including flood risk management, city regeneration, environmental improvement and enhanced wellbeing and health. Scottish Water's "no more in; what's in out" surface water policy stating that they will not normally accept any surface water connections into their combined sewer system also requires a shift in favour of blue-green interventions. Resolving surface water flooding issues requires a coordinated effort across organisations which could be difficult to achieve given the current policy and legislative framework.
66. All the actions in this paper are relevant, however the most directly relevant actions for the land-use planning process (development planning and development management) are:
- We should take a placemaking approach to achieving blue-green cities and water resilience involving partners in the public and private sectors, the third sector, individuals, and communities.

- Climate impact assessments applying to public policies/activities should include assessing the impact of the proposed policy/activity on water resilience i.e. considering if the activity adds to flooding and drainage issues, helps manage flooding and drainage or has no effect on flooding and drainage.
  - Where appropriate, include a requirement for all sites and development proposals to be assessed and report on how they will contribute positively to the climate emergency and water resilience.
  - Place-making (and masterplanning) should establish blue-green infrastructure needs from the outset where planning authorities' decisions are informed by a comprehensive water strategy where:
    - The natural infrastructure is defined;
    - Strategic flood risk and drainage assessments are carried out;
    - A blue-green infrastructure plan is defined
  - The drainage of surface water from all new sites wherever practicable should be by blue-green infrastructure. Land for blue-green infrastructure should be a site pre-requisite and all designs should presume no rainwater connection to sewer.
67. Green infrastructure development will also be guided by the 6 qualities of successful places set out in [Annex D of NPF4](#) and Scottish Government Guidance; and
68. PKC's own Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Guidance sets out the principles for protecting and delivering Green and Blue

Infrastructure. This is complemented by Council's 2021 [Adopted Open Space Provision for New Developments Supplementary Guidance](#) which sets out principles for the delivery of open space and associated blue infrastructure.

### 3 Gaps and Key Issues Raised

69. This section identifies known gaps or uncertainties in the evidence base and issues they raise.
70. At the time of writing the Open Space Quality Audit has not been finalised. This is expected to be complete by December 2024. The Open Space Strategy will be finalised mid-2025.
71. Green and Blue infrastructure was mapped for the Blue and Green Infrastructure Supplementary Guidance. This will be reviewed and updated to consider the information sources mentioned in this paper alongside wider public and stakeholder input. As there will be no statutory guidance documents anymore, it is considered that the mapping will need to be in the LDP Proposed Plan in some form.
72. Both the Green Infrastructure mapping and OSQA will address accessibility and connectivity. This will be supplemented by consideration of nature networks to develop Green Networks. Prioritisation of how Green Networks connect people and nature to green spaces and through settlements will be developed through discussion with key stakeholders and communities as the Plan is developed. An initial consultation on priorities for Nature Networks is taking place alongside the consultation on topic papers.

73. Identifying and protecting blue and green infrastructure and green networks in the Local Development Plan is the first stage. This will also help development deliver opportunities and connections as part of site planning. NPF4 Policy 3 requires development to deliver enhancement for biodiversity and this may raise opportunities for the realisation of green networks both on and offsite. Offsite delivery however is hampered by the current law around conditions.
74. [Planning Circular 4/1998: the use of conditions in planning permissions](#) sets out 6 tests for conditions as on several occasions the Courts have laid down the general criteria for the validity of planning conditions. In addition to satisfying the Courts' criteria for validity, conditions should not be imposed unless they are necessary and effective, relevant to the development to be permitted and do not place unjustifiable burdens on applicants. This limits the scope for requiring enhancement particularly where it is offsite.

#### Key discussion points for feedback

- Please provide comment on the proposed evidence base and the potential methodology for considering green and blue infrastructure, and preparing the Proposed Plan as set out in this paper.
- Consider how the planning system can assist with the delivery of offsite improvements and strategic actions of the blue and green network?

## 4 Implications for the Proposed Plan

75. The initial implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan which have been identified so far are set out below. This will be revised and updated following consultation on this Topic Paper.
76. The Proposed Plan will be informed by the audits and strategies, covering the multiple functions and benefits of blue and green infrastructure considered in this paper. The blue green infrastructure mapping will synthesize biodiversity, food growing, natural flood risk management, active travel, and local living opportunities into both strategic scale and settlement-based mapping and analysis. This will identify existing green and blue infrastructure to be protected, opportunities to increase and improve green and blue infrastructure, and networks which connect areas for people and nature.
77. The Proposed Plan will identify blue infrastructure by considering existing Natural Flood Management, and opportunity Natural Flood Management with consideration given to: SFRA outputs, flood studies, SEPA Natural Flood Management opportunity mapping, wetland inventory mapping, RBMP, and settlement audit and urban capacity and brownfield assessments.
78. The Proposed Plan will identify green infrastructure by considering the results of the Open Space Quality Audit and the recommendations of the Open Space Strategy. The sources discussed will also add to the picture additional natural spaces not considered in the open space strategy including how connections for wildlife can be made through

settlements to provide corridors out to form or connect to wider Nature Networks.

79. The Proposed Plan will also safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks. Its spatial strategy will identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks; and seek to enhance and expand existing provision including new blue and/or green infrastructure.
80. Engagement on the Open Space Strategy will draw together these strands to inform how green infrastructure and blue networks can be identified incorporating assets to be protected and enhanced, and opportunities to be delivered. This will involve community bodies, community groups, stakeholders, and community greenspace colleagues.
81. The Proposed Plan will identify objectives and actions, which will inform how blue and green infrastructure is delivered through site allocation and requirements. Also requiring consideration is the extent to which the planning system can contribute to improvement, particularly in relation to offsite improvements and strategic interventions. The Planning Circular 4/1998: The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions prevents delivery where the need for the action would not be created by the new development.

#### Summary of the Implications for the Proposed Plan:

Improving connectivity within and delivery of a successful green and blue network will require the Proposed Plan mapping and associated policy to provide:

- **A strong strategy and objectives** which focus on identifying improvements which would deliver multi-functional benefits.
- **A good evidence base**, identifying the existing infrastructure (blue, green and accessibility) with analysis of the relevant datasets, and engagement with communities, and other stakeholders to bring different perspectives, and expertise;
- **Priorities for connectivity** within the network using collective experience and expertise of stakeholders;
- **A focus on delivery** with appropriate linkages from identified priorities and improvements to development opportunities by tying actions to development sites, and where possible utilising the planning system to assist in offsite and strategic improvements, whilst also recognising the role of other delivery mechanisms.

The Council will update existing Blue & Green Infrastructure mapping by:

- considering the information sources mentioned in this paper; and
- working with the wider public and stakeholders.