



Forest & Woodland Strategy

2014-2024

(Adopted
March 2020)

Contents

Executive Summary	3	5 Geographic Priorities for Woodland and Forestry	20
1 Introducing the Strategy	5	Guiding the Location of New Woodlands	20
2 Woodlands and Forestry in a Scottish Context	6	Strategy Map	24
Scottish Government Objectives	6	6 Priorities, Themes and Actions	25
Background	7	Monitoring and Review	25
3 Woodlands and Forestry in Perth and Kinross Today	10	Theme 1 - Climate Change	26
Current Resource	10	Theme 2 - Timber	28
Current Woodland Map	12	Theme 3 - Business Development	30
Current Opportunities and Challenges	13	Theme 4 - Community	32
Sensitivities Map	15	Theme 5 - Access and Health	34
Opportunities Map	16	Theme 6 - Environmental Quality	36
4 Achieving the Vision	17	Theme 7 - Biodiversity	38
Our Vision	17		
Achieving the Vision	18		

Executive Summary

The Forest & Woodland Strategy is one in a series of Supplementary Guidance documents developed to support the Local Development Plan and is a guide to the future development of woodlands and forests in Perth and Kinross. This Supplementary Guidance expands on policies set out within the Perth and Kinross Adopted Local Development Plan (2019) and provides additional guidance on the priorities to be delivered through themes and objectives, which in turn will guide the actions of the Council, partner agencies and other stakeholders. These themes and objectives relate closely to the Scottish Forestry Strategy and aim to promote sustainable forest management with a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

This guidance has links with and complements other Supplementary Guidance developed or being developed including guidance on Landscape, Renewables including Wind Energy, Placemaking, Green & Blue Infrastructure and Planning and Biodiversity.

The Strategy's vision is to ensure that:

'Perth and Kinross will be 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.'

The following seven themes contribute to delivery of the vision:

- **Theme 1 - Climate Change**
Increasing the contribution of forests to help tackle climate change.
- **Theme 2 - Timber**
Encouraging a diverse forest estate and maximising the economic potential of the area's timber resources.
- **Theme 3 - Business Development**
Supporting rural diversification and promoting a diverse range of forest-based enterprises.
- **Theme 4 - Community Development**
Improving the quality of life and wellbeing of people by supporting community development.
- **Theme 5 - Access and Health**
Encouraging public access and enjoyment through woodlands and forests to help improve physical and mental health.
- **Theme 6 - Environmental Quality**
Protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of our natural resources (water, soil and air), contributing to and improving our scenery, and helping to make the most of our unique historic environment.
- **Theme 7 - Biodiversity**
Helping to restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity, and increasing awareness and enjoyment of it.

A number of key stakeholders, including Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland), gave invaluable help in writing this Strategy encompassing a wide range of interests and opinions regarding the area's forest estate. Consequently, the Strategy aims to:

- *guide and support Policy 40 of the adopted Local Development Plan (2019);*
- *inform Development Management decisions that include proposals for woodland removal and woodland creation;*
- *ensure woodland removal and creation is developed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and such proposals are accompanied by a Forest Design and Management Plan;*
- *guide development of Regional Priorities for SRDP and our views on planting proposals and applications for grant support;*
- *inform and guide the screening and scoping of proposals that fall within the scope of the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017;*
- *assist with the development and approval of Forest District Strategic Plans, long-term Forest Design and Management Plans.*



Introducing the Strategy

On first impressions many of the woodlands within the area look like they have existed for many hundreds of years, however, very few are natural in origin, and all bear the effects of land management dating back many centuries. As the *'cradle of the Scottish forest renaissance'* instigated by the planting lairds of Perthshire in the 18th century, Perth and Kinross has a strong forestry tradition and heritage as well as some of the oldest, most attractive and most productive forests in the British Isles hence its reputation and renown as *'Big Tree Country'*.

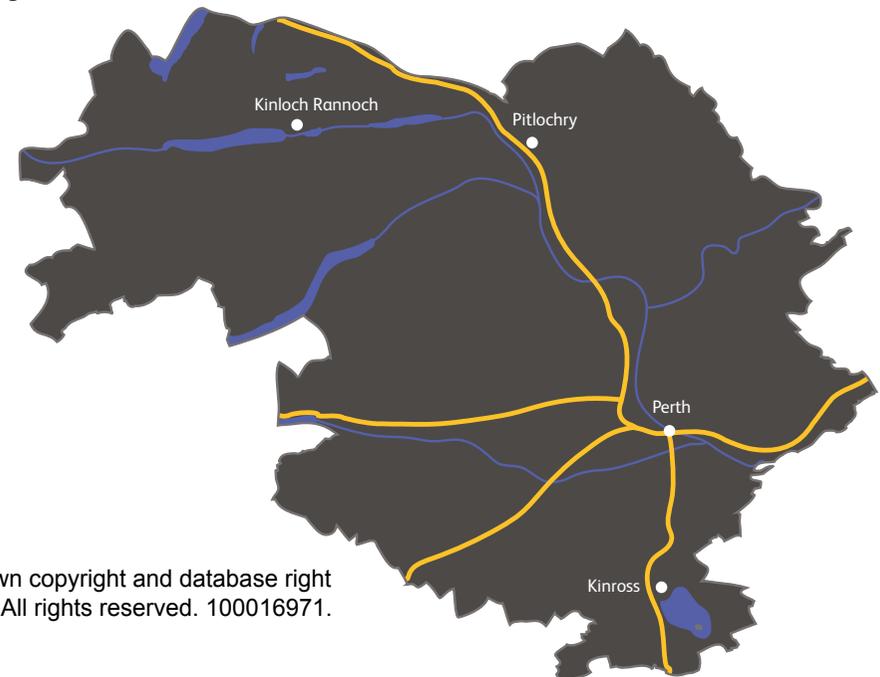
Woodlands and forests therefore make a significant contribution to the Perth and Kinross way of life, both supporting the area's economy through timber production and as an important backdrop to the tourist industry. They also have a critical and linked role in providing opportunities for recreation and healthy exercise as well as contributing to the high-quality landscape and woodland-related biodiversity while playing a part in the economic competitiveness of the area.

Consequently, this strategic framework seeks to balance forestry and other land uses by identifying appropriate locations for woodland expansion and supporting those management activities in existing woods which optimise the contribution that our woods and forests can make to social, environmental and economic benefits. However, we recognise that this strategy alone will not be able to deliver all aspects of the vision we have for the area. Nonetheless, the Forest & Woodland Strategy will inform policy and action across a wide range of bodies including public agencies,

landowners, forest and land managers, businesses and individuals, voluntary organisations and community groups; indeed anyone with an interest and stake in the development of Perth and Kinross.

We have developed the Strategy in partnership with Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland) and with advice from a range of key stakeholders with interests in forestry and the countryside.

The Strategy covers the whole of Perth and Kinross but excludes those areas within the boundary of the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Parks which have their own strategies.



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Woodlands and Forestry in a Scottish Context

Scottish Government Objectives

Woodland has a distinct role to play in helping to deliver the Scottish Government's strategic objectives of a Greener, Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier and Safer and Stronger Scotland.

Scottish Ministers have affirmed their desire, through the Scottish Forestry Strategy (2019-2029), to increase the amount of woodland in Scotland to help meet Scottish Government strategic objectives, particularly in relation to tackling climate change and to stimulate sustainable economic growth. A valuable debate is also emerging on wider land use and Ministers published Scotland's first ever Land Use Strategy in 2011, followed by the second Land Use Strategy in 2016. It sets the long-term directions we need to pursue to get the best from Scotland's land and contribute to a more prosperous and successful nation.

The Resource

There are 1.46 million hectares of woodland in Scotland, of which 68% is managed by private owners and 32% by Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland) on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

Despite excellent conditions for growing trees, Scotland has significantly less woodland than many other countries. Today, woodland and forestry cover stands at nearly 19% of Scotland's land area. This is about half of the average of other EU countries.



Background

For the last 90 years or so there has been a positive Government policy supporting the establishment of new woods. The Scottish Forestry Strategy (2019-2029) has reinforced the previous strategy published in 2016 and the Scottish Government gave it a fresh impetus with its desire to see a rising woodland creation target from 10,000 hectares of new woodland per year in 2018 to 15,000 hectares per year from 2024/5. The overall national target is to increase forest and woodland cover to 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032. This Forest & Woodland Strategy sets out a vision for trees, woodland and forests in Perth and Kinross from 2014 to 2024 and how it can contribute to national aspirations. Priorities outlined in the Scottish Forestry Strategy (page 28) provide a focus for the delivery of, and align with, the themes and objectives of the Perth and Kinross Forest & Woodland Strategy. This updated version of the FWS (2020) is to reflect updated national policy and guidance as well as an update in the Local Development Plan policy framework.

The previous Strategy for Perth and Kinross was part of the Perth and Kinross Structure Plan produced in the mid-2000s. Since then, many of the conditions that governed the nature of forestry have changed significantly - for example climate change and renewable energy have now become major drivers for extending woodland cover and appreciating the real value of Scotland's woodland resource. The role of woodlands, in particular community woodlands, has increased in importance due to an increased recognition of the associated health and education benefits whilst the concept of Forest Habitat Networks is recognised in supporting important linkages in woodland expansion. In addition there is much more interest in adopting an integrated approach to land use.



Purpose and Scope

The Forest & Woodland Strategy is one in a series of Supplementary Guidance documents developed to support the Local Development Plan and is a guide to the future development of woodlands and forests in Perth and Kinross. This Supplementary Guidance expands on policies set out within the Perth and Kinross Adopted Local Development Plan 2019 and provides additional guidance on the priorities to be delivered through themes and objectives, which in turn will guide the actions of the Council, partner agencies and other stakeholders. These themes and objectives relate closely to the Scottish Forestry Strategy and aim to promote sustainable forest management with a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

The guidance has links with and complements other Supplementary Guidance developed or being developed including guidance on Landscape, Renewable Energy (including Wind Energy), Placemaking, Green & Blue Infrastructure and Planning and Biodiversity.

The Strategy aims to address uncertainties for land managers by identifying areas where we will support proposals for woodland creation and woodland management. It also identifies priority activities that we will encourage and for which funding will be available from Government agencies. It also identifies those areas where there may be sensitivities or constraints to woodland or forest expansion.



Consequently, the purpose of the Perth and Kinross Forest & Woodland Strategy is to:

- *provide a strategic framework for the development of forestry in Perth and Kinross;*
- *set out a local interpretation of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (2019-2029);*
- *inform Development Management decisions that include proposals for woodland removal and woodland creation;*
- *ensure woodland removal and creation is developed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and such proposals are accompanied by a Forest Design and Management Plan;*
- *ensure a balance of forestry with other land uses by identifying appropriate locations for a variety of types of woodland expansion and management practice;*
- *ensure forestry activity contributes across the range of Council policy objectives;*
- *guide development of Regional Priorities for SRDP and our views on planting proposals and applications for grant support;*
- *ensure that the public benefits of managing and expanding the area's forest estate are optimised;*
- *inform and guide the screening and scoping of proposals that fall within the scope of the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017;*
- *assist with the development and approval of Forest District Strategic Plans, long-term Forest Design and Management Plans.*



Woodlands and Forestry in Perth and Kinross Today

Current Resource

Planted Woodlands

The area has a rich legacy of planted woodland and some of the earliest initiatives to re-establish woodland in Scotland. The Planting Dukes of Atholl started reforesting bare land, in what was probably the first example of establishing significant new conifer plantations in the British Isles more than 250 years ago using European larch. 22 of Scotland's recognised heritage trees are located in Perth and Kinross which is more than any other area in Scotland.

With this woodland heritage and tradition it is perhaps not surprising that these long-established woodlands have been a major contributor to the area's tourism industry, helping provide much of the scenic backdrop which attracts local and overseas visitors alike.

There is 88,315 hectares of woodland in Perth and Kinross covering 16% of the land area. Private owners manage 65% and 35% is managed by Land and Forestry Scotland (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland) (**Table 1**).

Table 1

Design Life (Years)	Area (Hectares)	%
FC Woodland	30,704	35
Non-FC Woodland	57,611	65
Total Woodland	88,315	100
Total Land Area	541,890	
Woodland Cover %		16

Source: SF (2014)

Reflecting a diverse legacy of commercial planting, the species composition of more mature woodland as noted in **Table 2** overleaf is 57% conifer, 10% broadleaved, and 15% mixed woods and associated open ground. Just under a fifth of woodland cover is of young trees from both woodland creation and restocking operations. Sitka spruce (33%), Scots pine (14%) and Birch (10%) are the most common species in these woodlands but many others are grown including larch, historically associated with Atholl Estates, and Douglas fir which have historic and unique connections to Perthshire and which are valuable timbers in their own right. This degree of diversity, particularly of planted conifers, makes Perth and Kinross quite distinct from many other areas of Scotland with a younger woodland resource and reflects both the long tradition of forestry practice and the suitability of much of the area for growing such a diverse range of timber trees. Oak woods

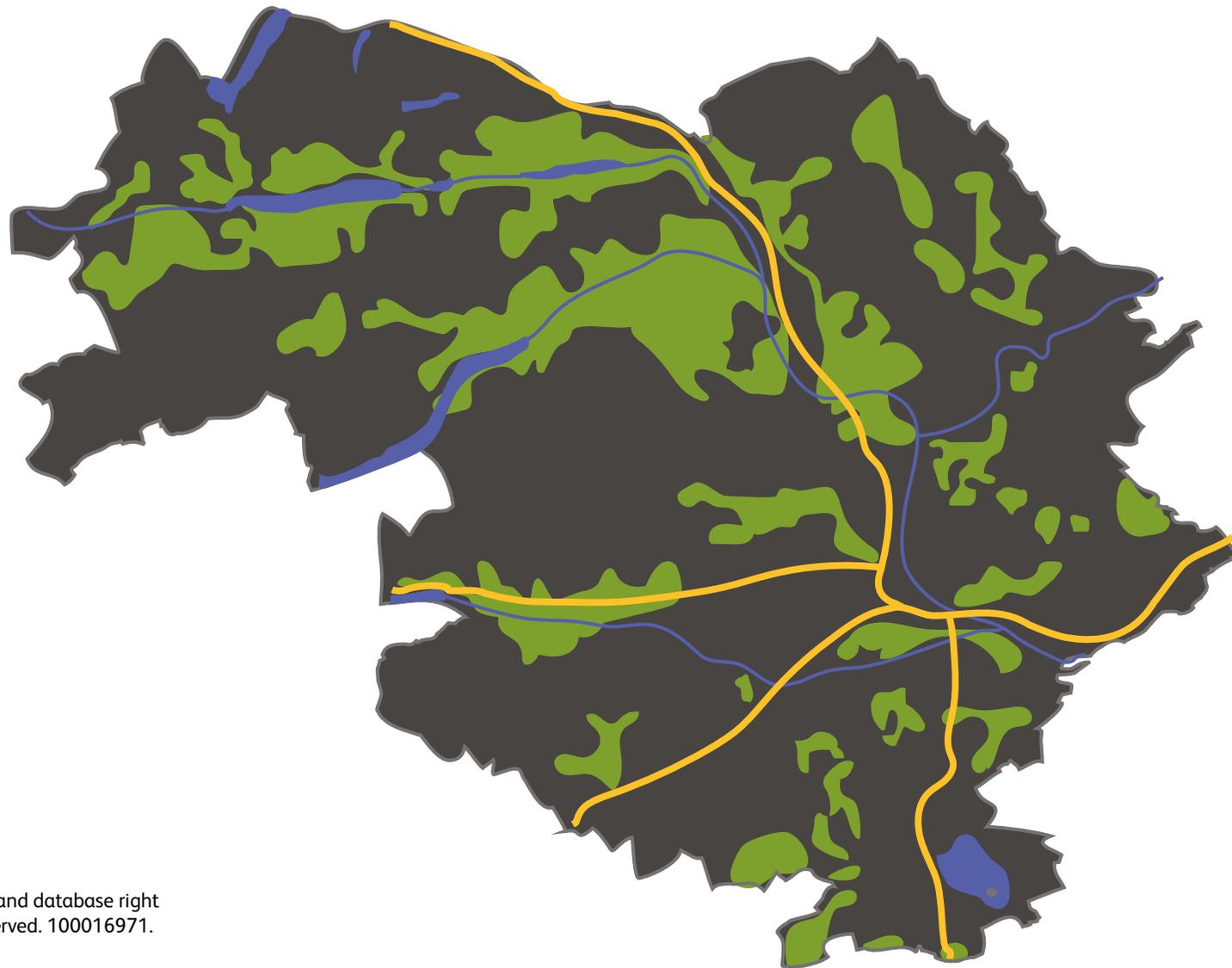
and broadleaved woodlands in Perthshire provide a similar function and overall provide a greater contribution to biodiversity.

Table 2

Design Life (Years)	Area (Hectares)	%
Coniferous	50,561	57.0
Broadleaved	8,592	10.0
Mixed	13,149	15.0
Shrub	217	0.2
Young Trees	15,796	17.8
Total	88,315	100.0

Source: SF (2014)

Map 1: Current Woodland



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Current Opportunities and Challenges

The overriding rationale of the strategy could be expressed as “*more of the same*” - with all sectors of forestry expanding, slowly and carefully, taking due consideration of other land uses. However, there are some specific opportunities and challenges including:

- **Our woodland heritage:** *there is significant pressure on some of our most rich and ancient woodlands from development. These need to be preserved and enhanced as part of our most valuable heritage and biodiversity.*
- **Woodland expansion:** *Perth and Kinross has favourable soils and climatic conditions to make a key contribution to creation of new woodlands that will help to tackle climate change and meet the Government’s aspiration to increase woodland and forestry cover to 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032.*
- **Woodland removal:** *whilst there is an expanding woodland resource many individual types of woodland have been removed over the last few decades as part of a deliberate change in land use associated with landscape design, restoration of priority habitats and development such as wind farms. This strategy will allow for appropriate woodland removal and replacement. In the first instance it is expected that any replacement woodland should be provided in Perth and Kinross.*
- **Softwood timber production and processing:** *softwood timber production is forecast to increase. However, there is a need to ensure continuity of timber supply and to look for opportunities to establish significant processing within the area as well as any transport impacts from timber haulage. Wood fuel represents a realistic new opportunity to add value locally to timber grown in the locality.*
- **Broadleaves for quality timber:** *Perth and Kinross is well-suited for the growing of broadleaves for quality timber, and this should be encouraged to expand to form a significant part of the future forest and woodland resource.*
- **Farm forestry:** *making the best of opportunities presented by the reform of CAP to draw more farmers into forestry and integrate forestry and farming.*
- **Fuelwood and short rotation crops:** *there is rapidly expanding interest in energy production from wood (referred to as biomass or wood fuel). Short rotation woodland, coppiced broadleaves will both be supported alongside the potential to maximise fuelwood production from traditional forestry as well as opportunities for traditional crafts.*
- **Community and urban-fringe forestry:** *there are opportunities to build on progress of recent years and expand woodlands in and around towns and to foster community engagement in the management of woodlands.*

- **Connecting and protecting habitats at a landscape scale:** *it is now clear that all aspects of biodiversity - native woodlands, designated sites, open ground habitats - need to be managed conserved and enhanced at landscape as well as site scale in order to provide ecosystem connectivity.*
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** *woodland absorbs CO²; timber products lock up CO² and wood fuel can replace fossil fuels as a source of energy. Accordingly, woodland creation and sustainable woodland management have a key role in delivering the Scottish Government's climate change targets. Woodland can also help us adapt to a changing climate by helping us manage the water environment to reduce flooding.*
- **Climate Change Mitigation:** *The management and protection of carbon-rich soils is a key element to Scotland's Climate Change mitigation strategy and these soils should be protected in line with LDP Policy 51 (Soils) and national guidance.*
- **Landscapes:** *there are opportunities to redesign inappropriate historical forest planting to ensure woodland which complements landscape character and enhances its quality.*
- **Placemaking:** *trees and woodlands can make an important contribution to successful places. Incorporating trees and*

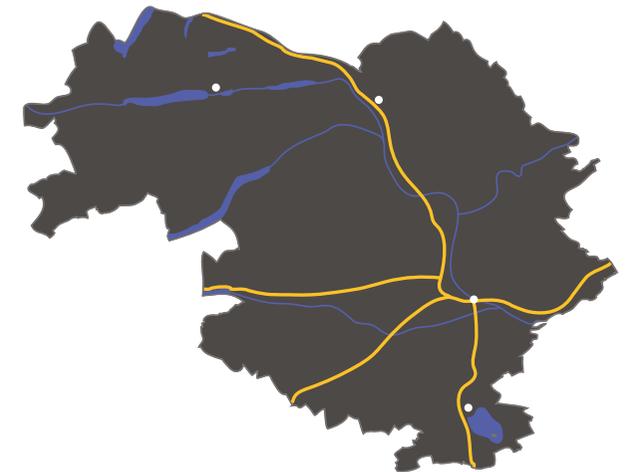
woodlands into new and existing places that link with existing habitat networks can provide a range of benefits for people and nature.



Map 2: Sensitivities

This map is an indicative map of opportunities and sensitivities at a strategic scale and is for illustrative purposes only. Hover over legend entries to see individual map layers and [click to show all](#) to toggle on all layers.

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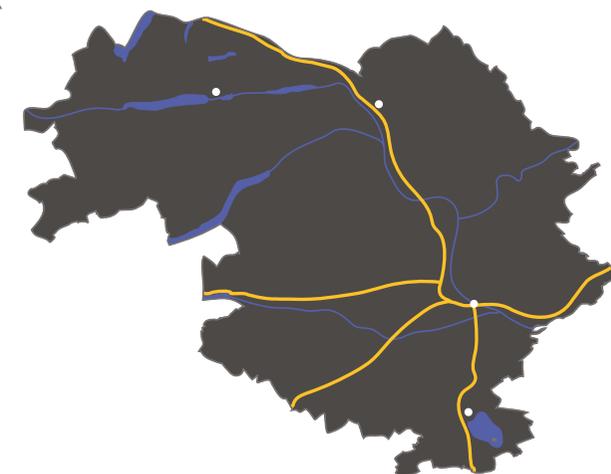


Map 3: Opportunities



This map is an indicative map of opportunities and sensitivities at a strategic scale and is for illustrative purposes only. Hover over legend entries to see individual map layers and [click to show all](#) to toggle on all layers.

- Best Forestry
- Forest Habitat Network
- Water Management Through Planting
- Enhancing Existing Woodland
- Transport Corridor



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Achieving the Vision

Our Vision

Our vision is to ensure that:

'Perth and Kinross will be 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.'

The following paragraphs describe how Perth and Kinross could be in 20 years' time if the vision is realised.

This is our vision....

It is 2034 and the Perth and Kinross countryside is more beautiful, more varied and, in parts, more tranquil than it was 20 years before. Great care is taken to ensure that new woodland and forests enhance local distinctiveness and the sense of place. Both rural and urban communities benefit from a thriving and wooded countryside.

Many more people work in the countryside, and visit it for pleasure. Rural communities are stronger and more diverse with the local timber sector taking advantage of the area's well-managed forest

resource. The number of local businesses deriving income from forest products and services has increased significantly. Many villages have grown but woodland around our towns, villages and within the Green Belt has played a vital role in safeguarding their setting. Woodland around our towns and villages is more attractive and more accessible, providing an invaluable breathing space for those who live and work in the area or are visitors to it and wood is now a major contributor to commercial and domestic heating. Perthshire'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 integration of cultural and natural heritage.

Perth and Kinross's foresters and farmers are valued once more for the food and timber they produce, but also for managing the landscapes we cherish. While farmland still dominates our countryside, there is much more woodland (including priority native woodland habitats as identified in the Tayside LBAP), which helps sustain the local economy and is rich in wildlife and many farmers have diversified into forest-related businesses. These forests are connected by a network of wildlife-friendly green corridors, including hedgerows and trees. Rare species such as black grouse are returning benefitting from woodland creation, careful management and more connected habitats. Large-scale felling and restructuring of conifer plantations has recreated open habitats, temporary and permanent, in some places. And some remote upland areas have been deliberately left to nature and natural processes, becoming wilder in character.

In 2034, Perth and Kinross’s forests and woodlands make an important contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to helping people and wildlife adapt to climate change. The land is managed to prevent the flooding but some countryside is wetter than before, benefitting leisure and wildlife.

To achieve our vision, we have four strategic priorities and seven themes which are listed opposite.

Achieving the Vision

Priority	Contributing Theme
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in addressing climate change and adapting to its impacts.	Theme 1 - Climate Change <i>Increase the contribution of trees, woodlands and forests to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.</i>
	Theme 2 - Timber <i>Encourage a diverse forest estate and maximise the economic potential of the area’s timber resources.</i>
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy of Perth and Kinross.	Theme 3 - Business Development <i>Support rural diversification and promote a diverse range of forest-based enterprises including forest tourism.</i>
	Theme 4 - Community Development <i>Improving the quality of life and wellbeing of people by incorporating trees and woodlands into new developments whilst supporting community development.</i>
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross.	Theme 5 - Access and Health <i>Encouraging public access and enjoyment through woodlands and forests to help improved physical and mental health.</i>

Priority	Contributing Theme
Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment.	Theme 6 - Environmental Quality <i>Protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of our natural resources (water, soil and air), contributing to and improving our scenery, and helping to make the most of our historic environment.</i>
	Theme 7 - Biodiversity <i>Helping to restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through the creation of habitat networks, and increasing awareness and enjoyment of it.</i>

It is recognised that many of the priorities and themes are cross-cutting and will deliver multiple benefits.

In addition, the guidance set out in the Right Tree in the Right Place and the UK Forestry Standard together with the Scottish Government’s Woodland Removal Policy will be ‘*material*’ in the consideration of all proposals highlighted in or developed as a result of the Forest and Woodland Strategy.

As a consequence we would wish to ensure woodland removal and creation is developed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and proposals are accompanied by a Forest Design and Management Plan.

Geographic Priorities for Woodland and Forestry

Guiding the Location of New Woodlands

Research by Forest Research and the James Hutton Institute indicates that 128,818 hectares (around 25% of the land area) in Perth and Kinross are potentially suitable for woodland taking into account biological and land use constraints (such as non-woodland designated sites, blanket bogs, priority areas for heathlands, landscape sensitive areas and archaeologically sensitive areas). In reality other land uses, especially farming on the better, improved land of the lowlands, offer alternative, more viable options for managing land.

The guidance provided in this Strategy will help inform decisions about individual planting schemes and the location of all types of new woodland. Guiding forestry towards appropriate locations minimises the likelihood of undesirable environmental or social outcomes.

The strategy will also help to guide strategic enhancement of the natural capital and ecosystem functions of forests. This could include woodland creation on flood plains to improve soil stability and water quality or enhancing riparian habitats to help minimise erosion and support a better habitat for fisheries interests. Woodland planting could also be used to stabilise hillsides and reduce the risk of landslides. The sustainable management of woodland/forestry can also play a significant role in protecting carbon rich soils.

A simple and pragmatic approach to guiding the expansion of woodlands is proposed and the development of the suitability of sites for tree growth based on climatic and soil factors identifying areas with greater and lesser flexibility for supporting a range of different woodland types.

The categories shown below are indicative and 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. In fact, as is evidenced by the existing forest cover, many of the most highly valued forests exhibit a variety of woodland types within the individual forest area. Such diverse forests will be better able to deliver the range of multiple benefits outlined in the Scottish Forestry Strategy and are to be encouraged as part of the *'Perthshire'* forestry tradition.

As new woodlands are developed and existing blocks restructured, the capacity of the landscape to accommodate further expansion will change - therefore careful case-by-case analysis will continue to determine whether proposals are appropriate. However, the analysis does provide a starting point for the identification of the potential to accommodate woodland planting of different types. The Strategy map (shown on page 24) is visualised at a strategic scale and is to be used for illustrative purposes only. The detailed strategy map is available on the [Scottish Forestry website](#) alongside other Council's FWS maps.

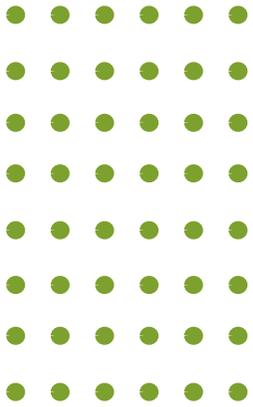
Not all types of woodland are equally appropriate in all places and a key aim of the strategy is to make clear which woodland types are considered most appropriate in different broad locations. In many situations a combination of different types of woodlands may offer the best design compromise between owner's objectives and compliance with the UK Forestry Standard. Perth and Kinross has many good examples of such diversity to inspire future woodland managers.

It is emphasised that proposals for woodland restructuring, creation and expansion need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to take account of local sensitivities in line with the most up-to-date data and guidance.



Table 3: The different classes of land describing the appropriateness of different woodland types and the criteria used to define them

Type	Description
Preferred	Land will be that which offers the greatest scope to accommodate future expansion of a range of woodland types, and hence, to deliver on a very wide range of objectives. Within preferred areas sensitivities are, in general, likely to be limited, and it should be possible to address any particular site specific issues within well designed proposals that meet the UK Forestry Standard and associated guidelines. Most expansion is therefore likely to be focused on preferred areas.
 Potential	Land will be that which offers considerable potential to accommodate future expansion of a range of woodland types, but where at least one significant sensitivity exists. The extent to which specific proposals in potential areas will be supported will depend on how well sensitivities can be addressed within the proposals. The design of schemes will require careful consideration.

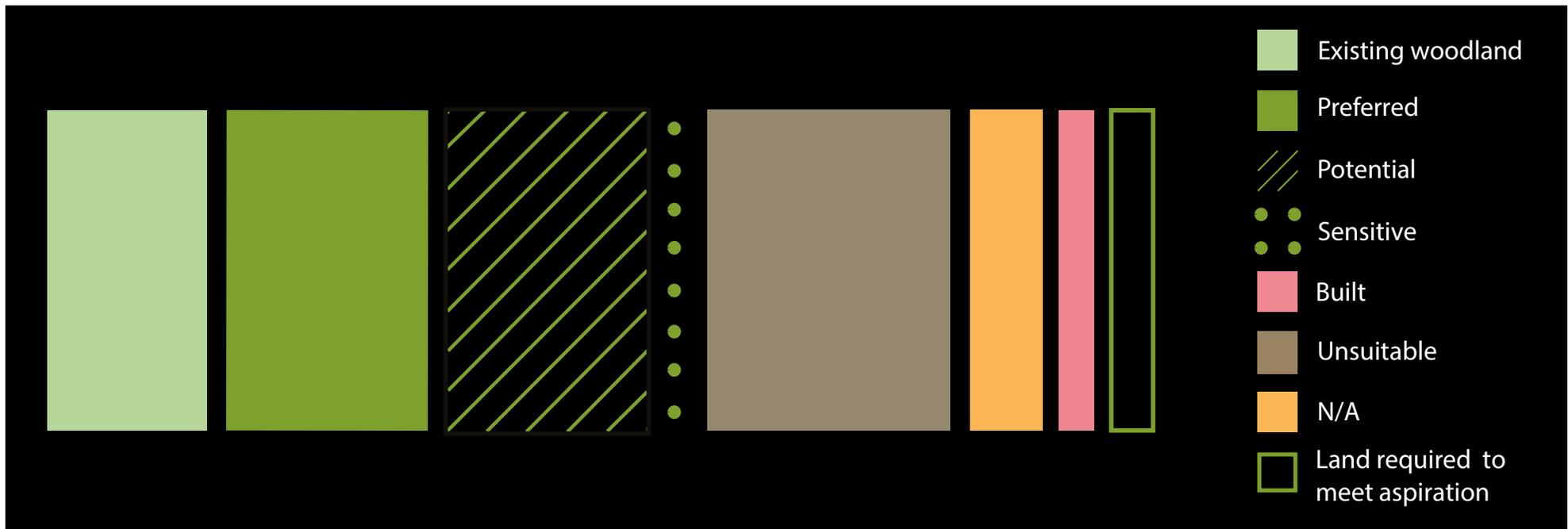
Type	Description
 Sensitive	Areas where a combination of sensitivities means there will be limited scope to accommodate further woodland expansion unless that expansion demonstrably does not impact negatively on the identified sensitivity. Limited woodland expansion may be possible within sensitive areas where it is of a scale and character which can be accommodated without significant negative impacts and/or where it would positively enhance the features of interest locally. In some areas cumulative impact may also be a relevant consideration.
Unsuitable	Areas assessed as being physically unsuitable for the growth and management of trees (based on the Land Capability for Forestry Map).
Existing	The current woodland resource identified in the National Forest Inventory.

Not all types of woodland are equally appropriate in all places and a key aim of the strategy is to make clear which woodland types are considered most appropriate in different broad locations. In many situations a combination of different types of woodlands may offer the best design compromise between owner's objectives and compliance with the UK Forestry Standard. Perth and Kinross has many good examples of such diversity to inspire future woodland managers.

It is emphasised that proposals for woodland restructuring, creation and expansion need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to take account of local sensitivities and constraints.

The diagram below shows the proportion of land identified by category and amount of land required to meet our aspirations.

<i>Existing</i>	88,300ha
<i>Preferred</i>	158,100ha
<i>Potential</i>	129,025ha
<i>Sensitive</i>	2,830ha
<i>Aspiration</i>	10,000ha

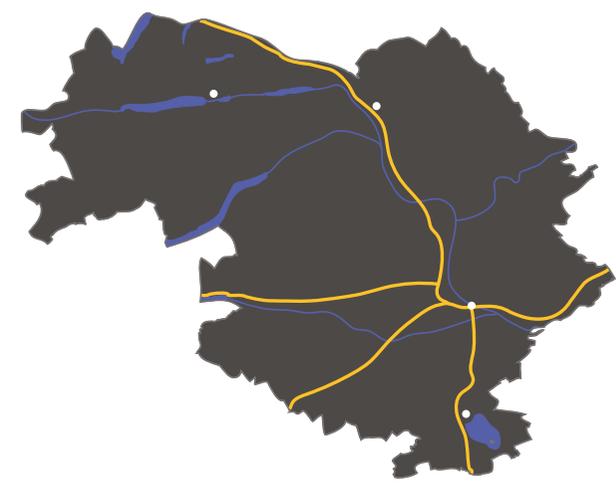


Map 4: Strategy



This map is at a strategic scale and is for illustrative purposes only. The detailed strategy map is available on the Scottish Forestry website: <https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/scottish-forestry-map-viewer> alongside other Council's FWS maps. Hover over legend entries to see individual map layers and **click to show all** to toggle on all layers.

A black rectangular legend box containing three white text entries: "Preferred", "Potential", and "Sensitive".



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Priorities, Themes and Actions

The Strategy focuses on a 20 year period (2014-2034). 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 with a provision for a 5 year review which is the purpose of this update.

Monitoring and Review

We are keen to monitor and review the Strategy and the extent to which it is being implemented. This will involve contributions from in-house experts, partner agencies, external consultants and other stakeholders.

We envisage that the following groups, elements and indicators will be part of the monitoring and review process.



Priority 1 - Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in addressing climate change and adapting to its impacts

Trees, woodlands and forests have a crucial and important role in addressing climate change. The latest modelling suggests that winters are likely to become milder and much wetter, while summers will become warmer and drier. Trees and woodlands can help us adapt to some of the challenges that will result from this changing climate.

Theme 1 - Climate Change

Increase the contribution of trees, woodlands and forests to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Opportunities for Action

- *Encourage the expansion of appropriate new woodlands to secure carbon sequestration benefits and minimise woodland removal.*
- *Optimise the potential for forestry in Perth and Kinross to contribute to carbon management across the range of land uses and to contribute to fully accredited and audited carbon off-setting schemes.*
- *Support the development of renewable energy, particularly heat but utilising the potential for small-scale CHP where appropriate from wood in line with Scottish Government policy.*
- *Expand forest habitat networks.*
- *Encourage the management and expansion of riparian and floodplain woodland and protection woodland to adapt to the effects of climate change as part of a catchment approach.*
- *Encourage sustainable forest management as defined by the UK Forestry Standard and associated guidelines and seek to minimise future risks from climate change, for example from tree pathogens, through the creation of forest habitat networks, and using diverse tree species, including hardwoods, and continuous cover silvicultural systems.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Area of new planting.	SF	1 year
Annual net carbon sequestration by new woodlands.	SF	1 year
Installed capacity of week energy plant (megawatt thermal and electrical).	DECC/ ofgem/SF	1 year



Priority 2 - Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy

Trees and woodlands will make an increasingly important contribution to the area's economy. As well as supporting a healthy timber sector, trees and woodlands will help create an environment which attracts investment and encourages high-quality development.

Theme 2 - Timber

Encourage a diverse forest estate and maximise the economic potential of the area's timber resources.

Opportunities for Action

- *Plant and promote the planting of diverse tree species which enhance the landscape, recreational and biodiversity value of new productive woodland. This should include:*
 - *the planting or regeneration of native species;*
 - *maintaining the traditional wider mix of species and age ranges of non-native timber producing trees;*
 - *the planting of broadleaves for timber where appropriate; and*
 - *woodland structure.*
- *The inclusion of open spaces in the forest.*
- *Tailor financial incentives and Forest Design Plans for new productive woodland towards encouraging these objectives.*
- *Encourage use of long-term Forest Design Plans as a basis for felling approval, to assist with the restructuring of existing productive plantations to enhance their landscape, biodiversity and recreational value.*
- *Adopt 'best practice' silviculture in forest areas designed with timber production as an aim, in order to produce a high-quality, high-value future crop.*
- *Develop the timber transport infrastructure through mechanisms such as the Strategic Timber Transport Fund and through partnerships such as the Timber Transport Forum and Timber Transport Group.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Actual wood production.	SF	1 year
Area of new coniferous woodland.	SF	1 year
Area of new broadleaved woodland where timber production is a significant management objective.	SF	1 year
Area of certified woodland in Perth and Kinross forests.	SF	1 year



Priority 2 - Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in supporting the economy

A high-quality environment is essential in supporting sustainable economic development within Perth and Kinross. The area competes at a national scale and the quality of the environment is one of the factors influencing investors' decisions. A high-quality environment also helps attract and retain a skilled workforce - an important factor for existing businesses and potential.

Theme 3 - Business Development

Support rural diversification and promote a diverse range of forest-based enterprises.

Opportunities for Action

- *Encourage value-added processing within Perth and Kinross especially the new opportunities offered by biomass heating.*
- *Support farm diversification through encouraging the expansion of farm forestry and agro-forestry and related on-farm enterprises.*
- *Promote local co-operation and clusters such as the Carse of Gowrie Initiative to secure new markets and increase the business potential of woodland-related activity including sustainable non-timber forest products and services.*
- *Support the role of the area's forests and tree heritage in supporting rural tourism particularly in supporting the 'Big Tree Country' initiative.*
- *Encourage forest-based, sport and active recreation as a way of diversifying and contributing to the rural economy.*
- *Encourage the development of local timber markets by local businesses, particularly markets based on wood fuel and added value craft products.*
- *Promote increased use of sustainably produced timber and timber products in construction.*
- *Encourage wider uptake of forest certification.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Forestry's contribution to Perth and Kinross gross value-added.	SF	4 years
Employment supported by the forestry-related sector.	SF/PKC	4 years
Economic impact of day visits.	SF	4 years
Number of businesses associated with wood fuel.	SF	4 years
Numbers of residents enrolling or registering for forestry-related short courses, qualifications and Modern Apprenticeship programmes.	Lantra/ SDS/SQA	4 years



Priority 3 - Maximising the role of forests and woodlands to improve the quality of life of residents of Perth and Kinross

Trees and woodlands have a key role to play in creating healthy and sustainable communities. They will 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 enterprises.

Theme 4 - Community Development

Improving the quality of life and wellbeing of people by supporting community development.

Opportunities for Action

- *Promote the provision of welcoming and well-managed woodlands in and around communities that contribute to quality of life and provide opportunities for exercise, learning, relaxation and enjoyment.*
- *Encourage significant woodland expansion within the Perth greenbelt and around other towns and villages and promote new street trees and urban tree planting through development opportunities.*
- *Support the use of woodlands as a way of improving derelict, underused and neglected land.*
- *Encourage greater use of woodlands for outdoor learning.*
- *Maintain constructive and proactive engagement with communities on forestry-related issues.*
- *Encourage and promote community management and involvement in community woodlands.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Number of schools involved in woodland based learning activities.	SF/PKC	1 year
Number of community groups involved in owning or managing woodland.	CWA	5 years
Proportion of adults and/or family members who attended an organised learning activity or event linked with Perth and Kinross woodlands in the previous 12 months.	SF	2 years
Area of new woodland planting delivered as part of planning consent for new development.	PKC/SF	1 year



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Theme 5 - Access and Health

Encouraging public access and enjoyment through woodlands and forests to help improve physical and mental health.

Opportunities for Action

- *Improve access to high-quality open space for the local population and contribute to the health, quality of life and social inclusion agendas.*
- *Encourage the implementation of responsible access (Scottish Outdoor Access Code) and the development of multi-use local and Core Path Networks as well as promoting the role of woodlands through the Local Access Forum.*
- *Encourage the development of new active travel routes through new and existing woodland where appropriate.*
- *Encourage participation in woodland activities, eg woodland management and new tree planting for exercise and wellbeing and support the development of a 'forests for health' partnership programme.*
- *Encourage the development of appropriate tourism infrastructure, such as interpretive centres, Core Path Networks and long-distance footpaths that maximise delivery of public benefit.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 2 hectares within 500 metres of their home.	WTS	3 years
Proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 20 hectares within 4 kilometres of their home.	WTS	3 years
Proportion of adults (16 years +) who visited woodland in previous 12 months.	SF	2 years
Proportion of adults who used woodland, forest or tree covered park for exercise at least twice per week in the last four weeks.	Scottish Health Survey	2 years
Number of 'volunteer days' associated with woodland activity.	SF	5 years



Priority 4 - Maximising the role of forests and woodlands in contributing to the quality of the environment

Trees and woodlands make an important contribution to the environmental character and quality of Perth and Kinross. They support internationally important wildlife habitats, help shape the wider landscape, contribute to our cultural heritage and help maintain the quality of air and water resources. The strategy aims to increase this.

Theme 6 - Environmental Quality

Protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of our natural resources (water, soil and air), contributing to and improving our scenery, and helping to make the most of our historic environment.

Opportunities for Action

- *Encourage the use of UK Forestry Standard and relevant Forest Guidelines to protect water and soil resources particularly in sensitive catchments (such as the Lunan Lochs).*
- *Collaborate with SEPA, Scottish Forestry and private landowners to deliver woodland-related benefits in support of the River Basin Management Plan.*
- *Protect and support the environmental functions and benefits of forests particularly where they underpin other national and local strategies.*
- *Recognise unique local landscapes and safeguard and restore sensitive landscapes.*
- *Encourage sensitive forest management to enhance the visual impact of woodlands on internal and external views.*
- *Plant new, and manage existing, site-appropriate woodland and trees alongside and visible from important transport routes whilst ensuring that important views are retained.*
- *Encourage good stewardship of the historic environment through forest design planning process and sensitive forest management using initiatives such as 'Perthshire Big Tree Country', the Historic Orchards and the 'iCONic' projects to underpin the long-term future of historic landscapes and tree-related features.*
- *Encourage the use of archaeological and historical sites for interpretation and education.*
- *Allan Water Catchment Project which includes riparian planting and is a partnership project with SEPA, SNH, Forth Fisheries Trust and RSPB Scotland.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Length/area of baseline rivers/ lochs in forested catchments where ecological quality is of good or high status.	SEPA	1 year
Length/area of baseline rivers/ lochs affected by acidification where forestry is a significant exacerbating factor.	SEPA	1 year
Woodland-related actions undertaken under the WFD to help mitigate diffuse pollution and flooding on the River Tay and its catchments.	SEPA/SF	
Proportion of woodlands covered by approved forest plans in areas designated for their landscapes.	SF/PKCT	1 year
Status and condition of Perth and Kinross' listed heritage trees.	SF/PKC/ PKCT	



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Theme 7 - Biodiversity

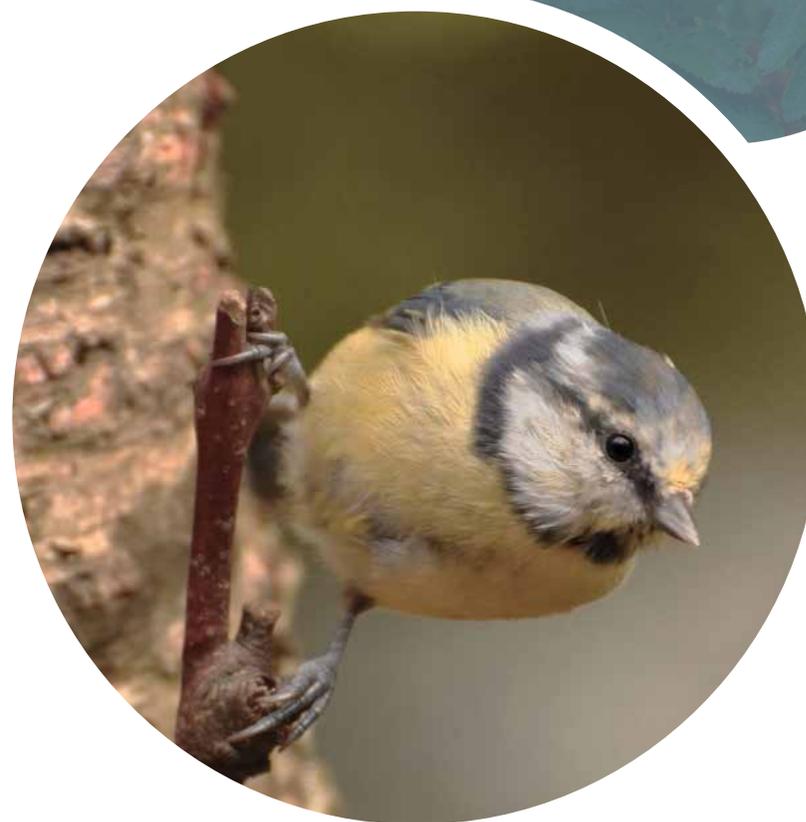
Helping to restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity, and increasing awareness and enjoyment of it.

Opportunities for Action

- *Promote, encourage and increase planting of native trees, either as the main element or as a component of new woodland planted for any of the purposes described in this Strategy, including as a substantial component associated with woodland which has timber production as a key objective in line with UKFS and which contribute to forest habitat network proposals for Perth and Kinross.*
- *Encourage good management of all habitats including the enhancement of habitats for key species including red squirrel, black grouse and montane forest edge species (including juniper and other treeline montane species) in line with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the provisions for management of designated sites.*
- *Manage existing areas of native woodland for a range of benefits, with sustainable woodland regeneration and biodiversity as key outcomes.*
- *Promote connectivity through the development and expansion of forest habitat networks whilst maintaining networks of adjacent open ground habitats such as Forest of Clunie and Rannoch Moor.*
- *Encourage woodland expansion in areas which would not impact on priority non-woodland habitats and key sites.*
- *Restore priority open ground habitats in forested areas where there are clear environmental benefits for so doing.*
- *Restore and improve the condition of ancient, native and semi-natural woodlands in line with the priorities identified by the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and in helping bring all woodlands designated for conservation up to favourable conservation status.*
- *Increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity value of all woodland types.*

Indicators of Progress

Indicator	Data Source	Reporting Interval
Area of native woodland.	SF	1 year
Proportion of woodland SSSIs in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition.	SNH	1 year
Progress against Habitat Action Plan targets for native woodland restoration.	SF	1 year
Area of PAWS with a commitment to restoration under long-term plans.	SF	1 year



All photos courtesy of Scottish Forestry
(formerly the Forestry Commission).

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