STIRLING COUNCIL

ALIVE WITH NATURE PLAN

2021-2045

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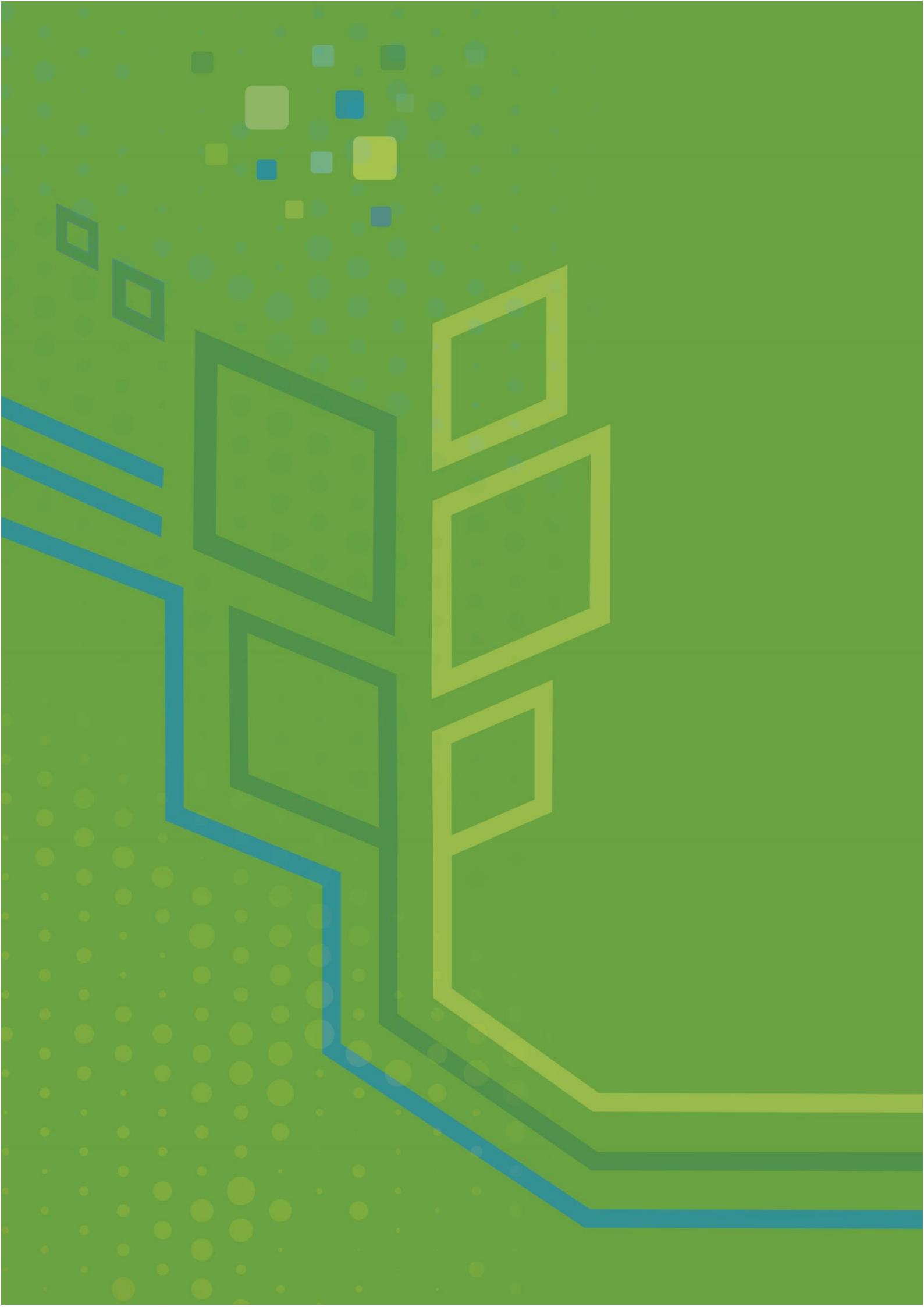
Stirling Council



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Foreword:

Jim Thomson, Convenor of the Environment and Housing Committee

For people, like myself, who live or work in the Stirling area the beauty of our natural environment is an everyday joy. Whether it is the stunning landscapes that cradle our rich heritage, the many rivers that flow from our hills or the woodland closest to our homes, we are fortunate to have ready access to nature.

Our natural environment influences Stirling's identity. It underpins our wellbeing and contributes to our economic prosperity.

However, human impact on the natural environment, locally and globally, is significant and growing. Climate change and habitat loss are having a negative impact, damaging the ability of ecosystems to sustain themselves and deliver the services on which we ultimately depend.

In May 2019, the UK became the first national government to declare a climate and environmental emergency, days after a similar declaration came from Scotland. Stirling Council recognised this and declared a Climate and Nature Emergency in October 2019.

More recently in January 2021, the Council was one of the first Scottish local authorities to sign the Edinburgh Declaration to meet the challenge of delivering the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Our Alive with Nature Plan will ensure that the Council achieves the commitments within the 'Edinburgh Declaration'.

While we recognised the twin emergencies in late 2019 we didn't stand still. We have been working closely with partners and key stakeholders to develop the Alive with Nature Plan. It has taken time but it is has enabled us to agree a range of key priorities and identify a way forward.

This Plan forms a key element the Stirling Council Climate & Nature Emergency Plan. Our natural environment has a key role to play in ensuring Stirling and Scotland meet their target to become a net zero carbon economy by 2045, specifically by sequestering atmospheric carbon through woodland creation and tree planting.

Securing investment in our natural environment can also aid climate change adaptation, through natural flood management, increased urban tree cover and a strengthened habitat network that allow wildlife to move as conditions change.

It is not too late for us to turn things around, but to do so requires transformative change. This is not something that only affects Scotland and is not just about the Council taking action. We all have a part to play.

Our Plan on Two Pages

What is the Alive with Nature Plan?

This Plan sets out the actions that Stirling Council and partners have identified as being central to combatting the local impacts of the global climate and nature emergencies. The Plan aims to reduce or reverse the impacts across the entire Stirling Council area (see Appendix 1) and ensure that we play our part in tackling the issues at a national and international level.

Delivering the actions and achieving the aspirations set out in the Plan present significant opportunities for Stirling Council and partners to show leadership in implementing the Scottish Government's commitment to increasing natural capital, improving health and wellbeing, and strengthening social inclusion, using investment in our natural environment to achieve transformational change.

We can realise significant benefits from having a healthier and more resilient natural environment. We can reduce atmospheric carbon, reduce social and health inequalities, generate economic benefit, repair the physical environment and increase the resilience of our communities to extreme weather events.

Why do we need to take action?

Human impact on the natural environment, locally and globally, is significant and growing. Over the past hundred years in particular, we have begun to over-exploit natural resources and further intrude into fragile ecosystems.

We can see these impacts in our intensively managed, deforested landscape that contains only isolated areas of natural habitat. A fragmented landscape that offers limited potential to mitigate carbon emissions, alleviate flooding and to help people and wildlife adapt to our changing climate.

Recent reports on climate change **(IPCC 2018)** and global species extinction **(IPBES 2019)** make stark reading. They highlight the damage human beings are causing to the planet, with the effects of climate change already being experienced and 1,000,000 species threatened with extinction.

Both these reports highlight that it is not too late for us to turn things around, but to do so requires immediate and transformative change. We all have a part to play.

A clear vision

Our **Vision** is that within the Stirling area we place **Nature at the heart of life – Here and Now.**

Through this Plan we aim to transform the Stirling area into Scotland's **greenest region**, where our thriving **natural environment** is enjoyed and valued by everyone. We will work to protect and restore the ecosystems upon which we depend, from landscape scale woodland creation to wildflower meadows in our urban parks. These actions will help us **halt biodiversity loss**, contribute to the achievement of a **carbon zero society** and create of **healthier, wealthier and happier** people and places.

Delivered through eight aims:

- Utilise Natural Climate Solutions to enhance our natural environment thereby helping to combat the primary drivers of biodiversity loss whilst contributing to the achievement of a carbon zero society.
- Contribute to the successful delivery of the Stirling Council Climate & Nature Emergency Plan 2021-2045.
- Ensure that the Council achieves the commitments within the 'Edinburgh Declaration on post-2020 global biodiversity framework' that the Council signed up to in January 2021.
- Define the ecosystem services and natural capital that our environment provides.
- Contribute to the principles of the Central Scotland Green Network to achieve a 'step change' in the quality of the environment, woodland and recreational opportunities.
- Better connect the people of Stirling with nature where they live, work and play and help them to value nature and what it does for them.
- Enable all stakeholders, including communities and volunteers, to play a key role.
- Deliver action that is recognised as best practice.

The successful delivery of this plan, will be achieved through a partnership approach. In particular, the participation and support of the communities and landowners of Stirling will be essential.

Our Natural Environment

Stirling is fortunate in the quality of its natural environment. While this is most evident in the landscapes of the area, from Loch Lomond & the Trossachs to the Carse of the Forth, it is also revealed in the impressive range of habitats and wildlife, including:

- One of the largest and most important lowland raised bog habitats in the UK in Flanders Moss;
- Important upland habitats and botanical resources;
- A network of designated river systems, and the upper estuarine section of one of Scotland's most diverse and important marine inlets - the Firth of Forth;
- Significant areas of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Lowland farmland important for nationally declining populations of birds, mammals and wintering wildfowl;
- A key position in Central Scotland in terms of habitat networks and habitat-related climate change adaptation; and
- Geology that contains a detailed record of relative sea-level change in Scotland covering the last 13,000 years.

The River Forth in Stirling, viewed from the Abbey Craig.

The beauty and quality of the natural world influences Stirling's identity. It underpins our wellbeing – helping to make Stirling one of the UK's most liveable areas - and contributes to our economic prosperity by forming a key part of the Stirling area's tourism offer and helping to attract businesses and international investment.

This Plan covers the entire Stirling Council area of over 800 square miles, or over 2,000 square kilometres (see Appendix 1). It involves a diverse landscape, from Glen Lochay and the botanically-rich hills in the north, which contain upland habitats and species not found elsewhere, through to the river valleys of the Teith, Endrick, Allan and upper Forth, which support otters, beavers and internationally protected fish species, including salmon, trout and lamprey.

The extensive flat lands of the Carse and the Forth estuary contain the internationally-important lowland raised bogs of Flanders Moss, as well as much agricultural land. Where the Carseland narrows at Stirling, three small but dramatic volcanic intrusions (Abbey Craig, Castle Rock and Craigforth) punctuate the landscape. Overall the contrast between the low flat Carse and the flanking hills, mountains and escarpments gives the area much of its character and habitat diversity.

However, human impact on the natural environment, both locally and globally, is significant and growing. Our landscapes, habitats and wildlife are all being negatively impacted by climate change, land use changes, pollution, and habitat fragmentation.

Action is needed now to halt and reverse these impacts. While there are many challenges to overcome, there are also many benefits to be secured through investing resources to ensure a healthy and vibrant natural environment.

Purpose of this Plan

The Alive with Nature Plan is a key supporting document that will help to deliver the Council's Climate & Nature Emergency Plan. It will do this by providing a framework for the Council and partners to deliver action, at both an area-wide level and on a settlement-scale, to halt biodiversity loss, contribute to the achievement of a zero-carbon economy, and create healthier, wealthier and happier people and places.

This Plan will address the twin climate and nature emergencies through the protection and restoration of our natural environment to ensure healthy and connected habitats that can mitigate carbon emissions and help people and wildlife adapt to our changing climate.

This Plan will also be the primary mechanism for Stirling Council to achieve the commitments it has signed up to in the Edinburgh Declaration - an international agreement to ensure that action is taken at all levels to protect biodiversity.

Development of this draft Plan

The draft Alive with Nature Plan has been developed by a Nature sub-group of the Sustainable Stirling Partnership. A group of officers from Stirling Council, NatureScot, SEPA and Green Action Trust has met regularly to agree the draft plan. The vision, aims and objectives have been influenced by the policy context (set out on page 10 and Appendix 2) and more detailed background information collected from a number of sources, including a workshop in December 2019 and subsequent input from key stakeholders.

All elements of the draft Plan have been further refined through public consultation. The information and opinions gathered have helped to shape the final Alive with Nature Plan.

Collaborative working and consultation has enabled the development of a set of key priorities and identified the way forward. The objectives, key performance indicators and actions listed on pages 12-16 show how we intend to achieve the Plan's aims and vision.

Implementation and Monitoring

We recognise that we are in the midst of global climate and nature emergencies. The time to take action is now and so implementation of some of the priority actions has already begun. By working with a range of partners, this year, we have already planted over 7,000 native trees and created 12 new ponds.

Successful delivery of this Plan's vision, goals and actions will be achieved through a partnership approach, building on work already being undertaken through initiatives such as the Sustainable Stirling Partnership, Central Scotland Green Network, and Inner Forth Futures. The participation and support of the communities and landowners of Stirling will also be essential.

Implementation of this Plan is dependent on the allocation of Council and partner resources and successful funding applications. Positive partnerships with other organisations, local communities and landowners and aligning the actions with existing resources, commitments and statutory duties will ensure we make the best possible use of limited resources, including external funding.

Monitoring of progress will be the responsibility of the Alive with Nature Plan Steering Group. This group will include representatives from all key sectors, from national bodies to local communities. Annual monitoring reports will be produced and presented to the relevant Council Committee. As well as giving an overview of delivery, these reports will provide the opportunity to introduce new commitments, priorities or actions in response to changing circumstances.

Challenges to overcome

Industrial and agricultural pressures on the natural environment are significant and increasing, both locally and across the planet. This means that, through pollution, direct exploitation of organisms, and changes in land and sea use, we are damaging the ability of ecosystems to sustain themselves and provide the environmental services on which we all depend.

Major infrastructure projects and housing growth means that large areas of natural habitat, including farmland, woodland and wetland, are lost every year.

Alongside land use changes and pollution, climatic changes from human activity are also a key driver of biodiversity loss.

Our intensively managed landscape and supporting habitats are susceptible to a changing climate and insufficiently resilient to the impacts of more volatile and extreme weather.

Treeless landscape and fire damage at North Third reservoir.

Social inequalities mean that the most vulnerable in our communities will be hardest hit by the impacts of climate change as they will find it more difficult to minimise the impacts of flooding, over-heating and extreme weather events.

Environmental vandalism, including littering, pollution and fly-tipping, show that some people are disconnected from nature and do not understand or appreciate the benefits that a healthy natural environment can provide.

Invasive non-native species have become established across our landscape and are having an increasing impact on our terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems.

A lack of policy and land use guidance, such as regional spatial and land use strategies, has resulted in an uncoordinated approach to land management and reduced opportunities to deliver landscape-scale change.

This lack of recognition means that the value of our natural capital and the ecosystem services that the natural environment provides is infrequently recognised in decision-making or economic arguments.

The lack of detailed, reliable data on species and habitats means that monitoring progress and measuring the success of actions can prove difficult.

Dealing with these challenges and minimising the most serious impacts will require significant changes to our habits and lifestyles to reduce our impact on the natural environment.

Opportunities to embrace

Sitting at the heart of Scotland, Stirling occupies a strategically important location in terms of habitat networks and opportunities for habitat-related climate change adaptation. Stirling is fortunate in the quality of its natural resources, from the landscapes of the area to the impressive range of habitats and wildlife.

The Green Recovery will provide tremendous opportunities for our people and businesses to acquire new skills and employment linked to the creation of a healthy natural environment and sustainable, resilient communities.

Our commitment to increase the amount of carbon taken up and sequestered by the natural environment presents significant opportunities for the restoration of habitats and species, particularly through woodland creation and peatland conservation. Such natural climate solutions will harness multiple benefits for biodiversity, communities, and our economy.

A large proportion of the area covered by this Plan sits within the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park and we will work closely with the Park Authority to help achieve their goals on the conservation and enhancement of our natural environment.

Residents and key stakeholders have shown their support for the principles detailed within this Plan and recognise the need to act quickly.

Emerging local policy and strategies present an opportunity for land managers, including Stirling Council, to adopt management practices that will benefit biodiversity and help to remove carbon from our atmosphere.

Research shows that a healthy natural environment has positive impacts on our health and wellbeing. Recognition of these benefits of healthy green spaces provides the opportunity to create more natural, healthy green spaces within our settlements, from small pocket parks to larger urban parks, and to reconnect our residents with nature.

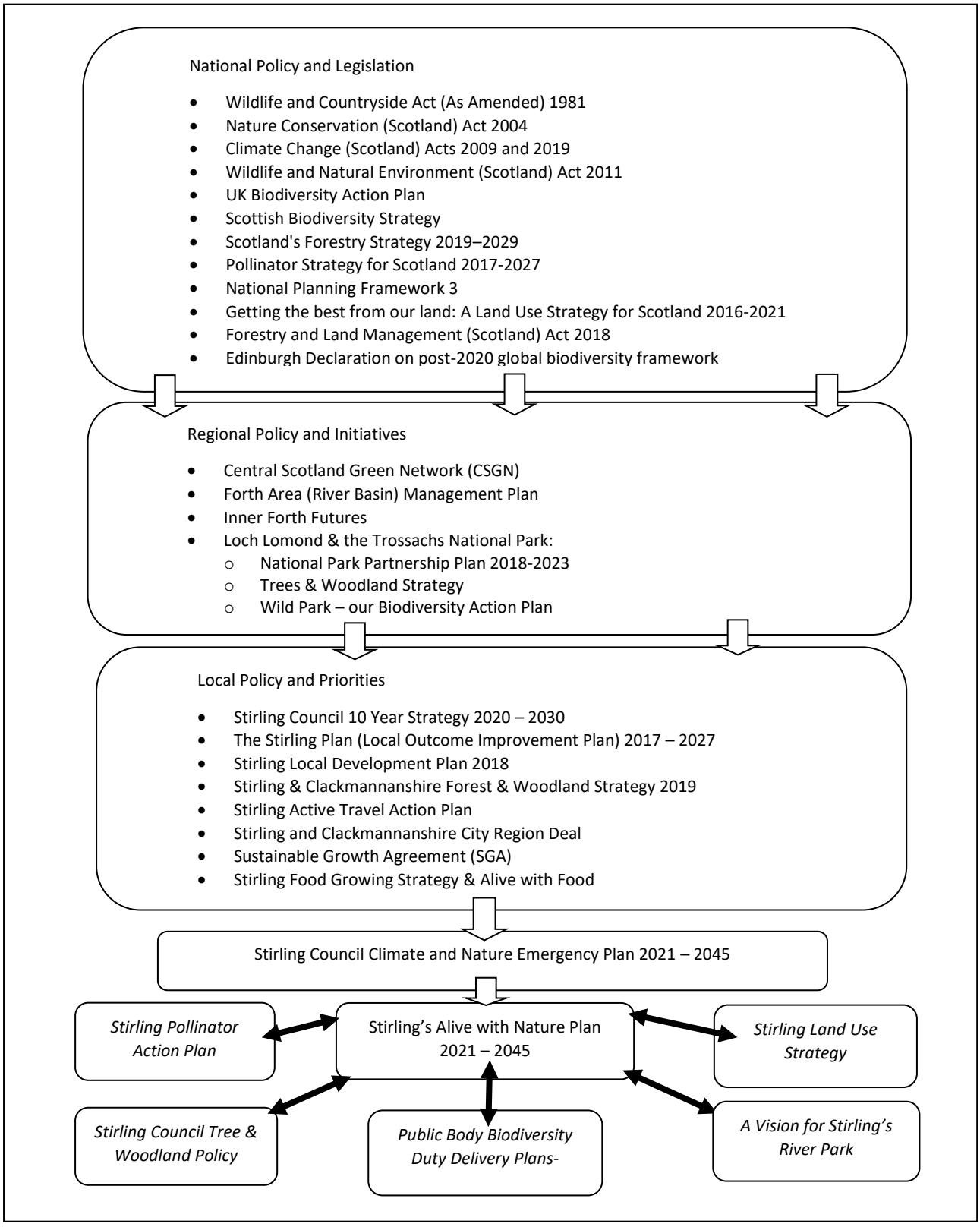
Improved path at Fallin Bing installed as part of the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (Photo by IFLI/RSPB)

Within the lifetime of this Plan, Stirling Council and partners will receive significant funding from a variety of sources. Investment in green and blue infrastructure will form a key element of a number of significant projects, including the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal, Stirling Flood Alleviation Scheme, and a range of major Active Travel Projects. The Vision for a Stirling River Park is one example of our partnership approach to securing multiple benefits for our people and wildlife.

Successful delivery of this Plan will also ensure that Stirling Council meets its statutory biodiversity and Climate Change Duties, as well as the commitments made as signatories to the Edinburgh Declaration and the Central Scotland Green Network.

Strategic and Legal Context

The Alive with Nature Plan links to a range of strategies, policies and plans at the national, regional and local levels. It is important to consider these links as this not only ensures compatibility and reduces conflict but is also necessary to provide justification for the delivery and funding of emerging projects within this Plan. Further information on these links can be found in Appendix 2.



Our Plan for Action

Our Vision

Nature at the heart of life – Here and Now

Through this Plan we aim to transform the Stirling area into Scotland's **greenest region**, where our thriving **natural environment** is enjoyed and valued by everyone.

We will work to protect and restore the ecosystems upon which we depend, from landscape scale woodland creation to wildflower meadows in our urban parks.

These actions will help us **halt biodiversity loss**, contribute to the achievement of a **zero-carbon economy** and create **healthier, wealthier and happier** people and places.

By 2045, at the end of this Plan's lifetime, the ecosystems of the Stirling area are **healthy and resilient**, supporting the region's aim to live within one planet limits. Our **restored and enhanced natural environment** is providing a wide range of benefits to people and businesses. The Stirling area has a well-functioning, **integrated habitat network** and a natural environment that will help everyone **cope with climate change**. The people of Stirling are **better connected with nature**, particularly where they live, work, and play, and they value nature and what it does for them.

This is as vital for the Stirling area as it is for the country and the rest of the world.

Lowland raised bog at Wester Moss, Fallin. Restored by Butterfly Conservation Scotland and volunteers (Photo by Paul Kirkland)

Our Objectives

The Stirling Council Climate & Nature Emergency Plan 2021-2045 includes Objective 4: Optimise biodiversity and increase the carbon storage potential of nature.

To support delivery of the Climate & Nature Emergency Plan and deliver the Alive with Nature vision we have established a set of Plan objectives. Each objective has key performance indicators, which will support robust monitoring, identify progress, and help us understand where improvement is required.

Plan objectives are divided into four themes that reflect the multi-functionality of our natural environment:

Protecting and Restoring Nature (Enhance):

EN1: We will maximise the carbon sequestration potential of our natural environment (peatlands, soils, trees, woodlands and wetlands) by creating functioning carbon sinks that contribute to the achievement of net zero carbon emissions;

EN2: We will ensure that key ecosystems, habitats and species are safeguarded, enhanced and sustainably managed.

Connecting People and Nature (Connect):

CO1: We will create an integrated habitat network across the region with green and blue corridors connecting people and wildlife to important sites and habitats;

CO2: We will ensure that everyone can and does access, enjoy and connect with nature and that the benefits from nature are accessible to all.

Nature at the Heart of Life (Embed):

EM1: We will ensure that nature is embedded in all key strategies, policies and plans, so that nature becomes a mainstream consideration in all decision making;

EM2: We will maximise the value that the environment adds to our economy and society, creating healthier, wealthier and happier people and places.

Engaging with Nature (Involve):

IN1: We will make the best use of technology and citizen science to involve all in documenting our journey, monitoring change, delivering action and sharing experiences;

IN2: We will maximise opportunities for stakeholders, including communities and volunteers, to contribute, collaborate, drive change and deliver action.

Key Performance Indicators

Monitoring and measuring the benefits to the natural environment derived from actions included in this Plan is challenging. Much of the baseline information for our chosen indicators is not currently available. Establishing these baselines will be early actions in Plan delivery.

The following indicators have been selected to allow decision-makers and others to see clearly how well the delivery of our vision and associated objectives are progressing. Stirling Council will be the lead authority to deliver this Plan, working closely with key partners on the Alive with Nature Steering Group to track progress. Progress towards meeting our targets will be reported annually to the Council's Environment and Housing Committee.

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target	By
EN1: We will maximise the carbon sequestration potential of our natural environment by creating functioning carbon sinks that contribute to the achievement of net zero.	Forest and woodland cover (in line with the Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2029).	18% (SCFWS 2019)	21%	2032
	Number of new trees, including trees in hedgerows, planted in the Council area (1,000,000 trees needed to achieve net zero target)	N/A	Increase by 80,000 360,000 1,000,000	 2023 2030 2045
	Number of sites where project work delivered to restore to actively-forming peatland	2	5	2035
	% of residual carbon absorbed (sequestered) by our natural environment to achieve net zero emissions	25% (2018)	100%	2045
EN2: We will ensure that key ecosystems, habitats and species are safeguarded, enhanced and sustainably managed.	Local Nature Conservation Sites (previously Local Wildlife Sites) assessed and, where appropriate, designated	18	200	2045
	Area of Council land managed for biodiversity	26%	50%	2045
	Proportion of water bodies in the Stirling Council area achieving water quality status of good or high (SEPA data) 75% (82 out of 109) in 2014 86% (94 out of 109) good or high condition by 2027	75% (2014, SEPA)	86%	2027
CO1: We will create an integrated habitat network across the region with green and blue corridors connecting people and wildlife to important sites and habitats.	Habitat connectivity (based on metric being developed with partner organisations)	TBD/Being worked on	Increase by 50%	2045
	Active travel routes that have incorporated nature-rich features (inclusion of native planting and green and blue infrastructure)	TBD	100%	2035

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target	By
CO2: We will ensure that everyone can and does access, enjoy and connect with nature and the benefits from nature are accessible to all.	Residential properties within 500m of an accessible semi natural area or green corridor.	36% (2009/2010 SC open Space Audit)	100%	2045
	% of school and pre-school children that have regular access to the natural environment as part of their education	Survey being developed	100%	2035
	Biodiverse areas exist within all school grounds and business parks	Survey being developed	100%	2040
EM1: We will ensure that nature is embedded in all key strategies, policies and plans.	Proportion of relevant committee decisions that are accompanied by detailed information on how each decision supports the aims of the Stirling Council Climate & Nature Emergency Plan.	N/A	100%	2025
	Members of the Sustainable Stirling Partnership that have a Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan.	Survey being developed	100%	2024
EM2: We will maximise the value that the environment adds to our economy and society, creating healthier, wealthier and happier people and places.	Tree canopy cover within each settlements and council ward	Assessment methodology being agreed	Min. 20%	2035
	Net number of trees, including trees in hedgerows, planted in and around settlements in the Stirling Council area.	N/A	Increase by 180,000.	2045
	Number of Vacant & Derelict Land sites brought into productive use for nature or green infrastructure.	N/A	3	2027
IN1: We will make the best use of technology and citizen science to involve all in documenting our journey, monitoring change, delivering action and sharing experiences.	Biological records generated and available via TWIC and/or NBN.	TWIC 323,313 NBN 908,750	500,000 increase	2045
	Proportion of residents taking action for biodiversity (Monitored through online pledges and commitments)	Web portal under development	50%	2045
IN2: We will maximise opportunities for stakeholders, including communities and volunteers, to contribute, collaborate, drive change and deliver action.	Number of people participating in partner-led activities	N/A	1000 per year	2035

Programme of Improvement

Delivery of this Plan is dependent on the availability of resources and the establishment of positive partnerships with other organisations and local communities.

Success in meeting the objectives of this Plan will be demonstrated by measurement of performance indicators above. Where actual performance does not align with targets set, particularly if the performance is not meeting expectations, then corrective actions will be pursued.

Highest priority actions

The following table contains high priority actions that will be delivered within the next 2 to 5 years. The action plan will be regularly reviewed by the Alive with Nature Steering Group.

Action	By when	Linked Objective
Establish the Alive with Nature Plan Steering Group	**2021**	**EM1, IN2**
Climate change		
Plant at least 80,000 new trees, including trees in and around settlements. Planting will include fruit trees and hedgerows. Stirling Council is commitment to planting the 'Right Tree in the Right Place'. Where possible these will be native species but there are situations where non-native species are more appropriate.	**2023**	**EN2, CO1, CO2, EN1, EN2**
Plant at least 160,000 new trees, including trees in and around settlements.	**2025**	**EN2, CO1, CO2, EN1, EN2**
Use our planning system to encourage zero-carbon infrastructure and developments.	**2024**	**EM1, CO2, EN1**
3 new active travel routes incorporate green infrastructure (piloting nature-rich active travel routes)	**2024**	**CO1, CO2**
Peatland restoration project delivered at 1 new site	**2025**	**EN1, EN2**
Biodiversity		
Deliver changes to land management, include grass and verge maintenance, tree planting and use of pesticides, in line with Stirling's Pollinator Strategy	**2022**	**EM1, IN1**
Assess and, where appropriate, designate at least 20 Local Nature Conservation Sites.	**2022**	**EN1, CO2**
Generate 10,000 new biological records for the CRD area and upload to national databases.	**2022**	**IN1, EN1**

Action	By when	Linked Objective
Land Use		
Complete an audit of Council land use and land management, including road verges, to identify changes that can be made to benefit biodiversity and sequester carbon.	**2022**	**EM1, EN1, EN2**
Establish a landowner forum to encourage altered land management, habitat restoration and woodland creation.	**2022**	**CO1, EN1, EN2, IN2**
Create a Stirling land use strategy to guide woodland and habitat creation and restoration.	**2024**	**EN1, EM1**
Bring 3 Vacant & Derelict Land sites into productive use for nature, business and community.	**2027**	**CO2, EM2**
Community		
Engage 1000 volunteers per year to generate engagement from currently under-represented communities.	**2023**	**CO2**
Create a community champion forum where community members can participate in helping to drive forward strategic planning and community action plans	**2022-3**	**CO2, IN2**
Create biodiverse areas within 10 school grounds and 5 business parks	**2024**	**CO2**
Research and Development		
Undertake stakeholder mapping to identify key stakeholders and how they can best be involved.	**2022**	**IN2**
Develop a community engagement platform to capture action and facilitate discussions e.g. on land management alterations	**2021**	**IN1, IN2**
Develop metric for the assessment of the impacts of activities on our natural capital.	**2022**	**EM2**
Undertake a policy gap analysis to identify areas where policy needs to be developed or amended.	**2022**	**EM1**
Assess the habitat connectivity of the Stirling area using the most appropriate methodology.	**2022**	**CO1**
Working with the CSGN Blueprint approach, produce maps showing prioritised opportunities for improved habitat connectivity.	**2023**	**CO1**
Biodiversity Duty Action Plans created and delivered by all members of the Sustainable Stirling Partnership.	**2024**	**EM1**
Work with partners and volunteers to map the locations of invasive non-native species across the Stirling Council area and develop an INNS control action plan.	**2025**	**EN2, EM2, IN1, IN2.**

Glossary

Active Travel: Any method of non-motorised travel, such as walking and cycling.

Biodiversity: The variety of all forms of life on Earth and the habitats on which they rely. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Biological records: a point on a map showing you that a certain species/organism was found at that location by someone on a certain date.

Carbon sequestration: The process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Climate change adaptation: Actions taken to limit harmful consequences and exploit beneficial opportunities of impacts of actual or expected climatic change.

Climate change mitigation: Reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and reducing activities which emit greenhouse gases to help slow down or make less severe the impacts of future climate change.

Ecosystem: A community of living organisms in conjunction with the non-living components of their environment, interacting as a system.

Ecosystem services: The many and varied benefits to humans provided by the natural environment.

Green and blue infrastructure: strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas (usually within urban settings) designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem service.

Habitat fragmentation: The process during which a large expanse of habitat is transformed into a number of smaller patches of smaller total area isolated from each other.

Integrated habitat network: Corridors that connect fragmented natural areas to meet the needs of several habitats and species.

Invasive non-native species: Species which have been introduced into areas outside their natural range through human actions and are posing a threat to native wildlife.

Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS): A non-statutory designation made through the Local Development Plan which highlights to planners and developers areas important locally for biodiversity or geodiversity.

Natural capital: the value of the elements of the natural environment which provide valuable goods and services to people.

Natural climate solutions: conservation, restoration and improved land management actions that increase carbon storage or avoid greenhouse gas emissions in landscapes and wetlands across the globe.

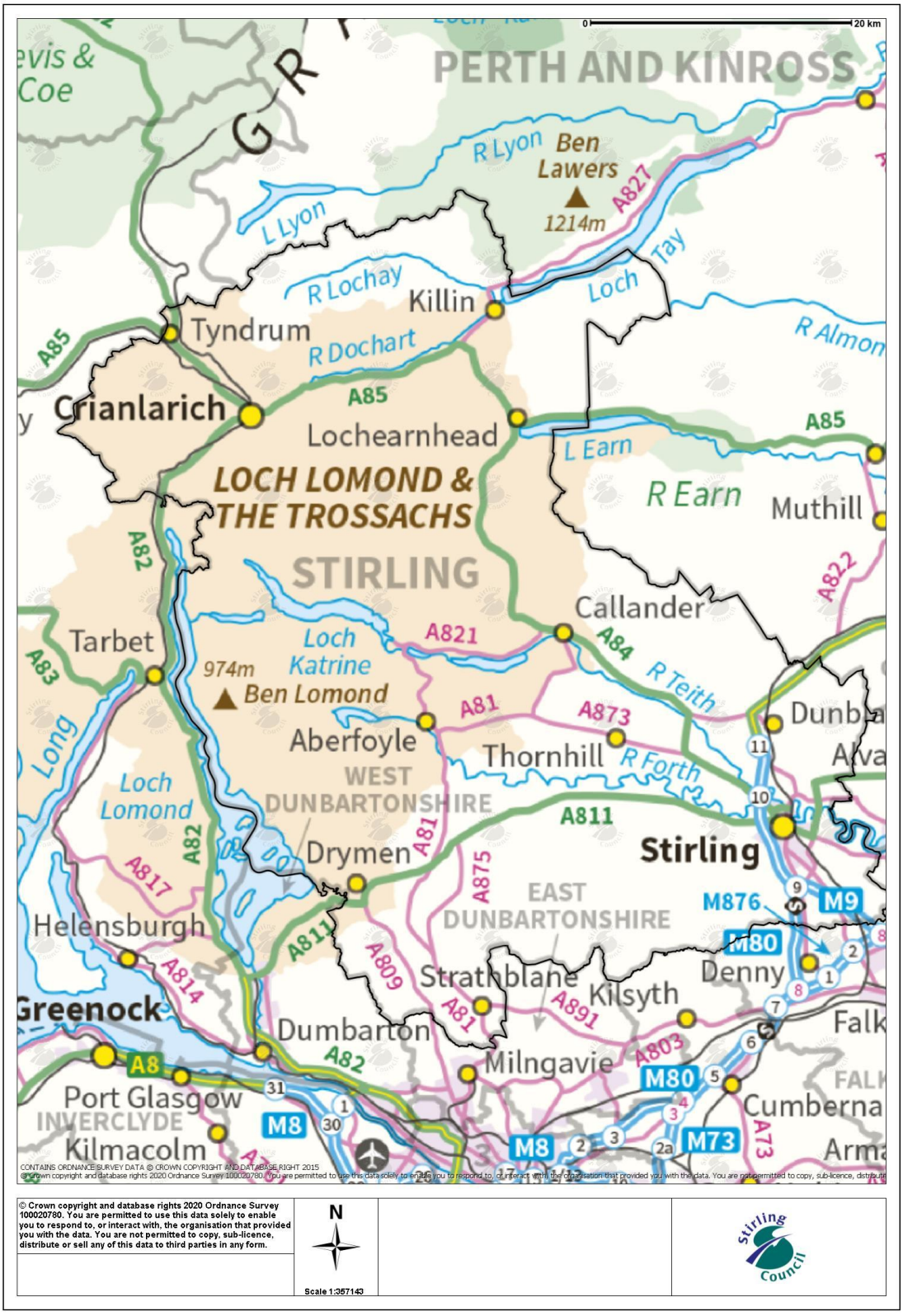
Natural flood management: when natural processes are used to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

Net-zero carbon economy: any residual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the economy are completely offset by removals, through activities such as reforestation or bioenergy with carbon capture and storage.

Open Space: Area of greenspace within and on the edge of settlements as set out by the Local Development Plan.

Vacant and Derelict Land: Land which has previously been developed but currently has no productive use.

Appendix 1 – Map of the Stirling Council area



Created by Guy Harewood on 05 November 2020

Appendix 2 – Strategic and Legal Context

National Policy & Legislation

The **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** was enacted primarily to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain and additional legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) is considered to be the main mechanism for legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain.

The **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004** places a statutory duty on all public sector bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity.

"It is the duty of every public body and office holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions".

The **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** details The Scottish Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and creating a low carbon economy. The Act also places duties on public bodies relating to climate change. In 2015 the Scottish Government also introduced a Statutory Order requiring larger public bodies to submit an annual report detailing their compliance with the climate change Public Bodies' Duties to reflect the expectation that the public sector will lead by example in addressing climate change.

The **Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011** (commonly known as the WANE Act) came into force on 1 January 2012 and introduced a requirement for all public bodies to make a report publicly available on their compliance with biodiversity duty. Biodiversity duty reports are required every three years.

Guidance for **Biodiversity Duty** Reporting (SNH and Scottish Government, 2016) recommends that all public bodies develop **Biodiversity Duty Action Plans**. These Plans should set out the actions a public body is planning to undertake in order to contribute towards the conservation of biodiversity within the next three years.

The **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** (UK BAP) was published in 1994, and was the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which the UK signed up to in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The CBD called for the development and enforcement of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible.

The original strategy – Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands – was published in 2004. In 2013, it was supplemented by the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity. The two documents together now constitute the **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy**. The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity sets out the major steps needed to improve the state of nature in Scotland. The work needed to deliver this is, however, complex and challenging. This strategy emphasises the need for an ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation and that people are part of these ecosystems, benefitting from the services they provide.

Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029 sets out the long-term approach to expanding, protecting and enhancing Scotland's forests and woodlands, so that they deliver greater economic, social and environmental benefits to Scotland's people, now and in the future.

The **Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027** aims to address the causes of decline in populations, diversity and range of our pollinator species, and sets out how Scotland can continue to be a place where pollinators thrive.

National Planning Framework 3 sets out a strategy for the long term development of Scotland's towns, cities and countryside under four main themes: A successful, sustainable place; a low carbon place; a natural, resilient place; and a connected place. These themes encompass much about the overall benefits of green networks. The document also designates the Central Scotland Green Network and the National Walking and Cycling Network as national developments.

Getting the best from our land: A Land Use Strategy for Scotland 2016-2021 recognises land as a fundamental resource which is vital for a successful economy, for the environment and for communities. The strategic vision and objectives and the long term goal of the strategy and are to achieve well integrated sustainable land use delivering multiple benefits to all of society. The strategy emphasises the need for an ecosystem approach to land use decision-making and encourages this through the use of three basic principles: consider natural systems; take account of the services that ecosystems provide and; involve people.

The Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 provides the legislative framework to enable delivery of a package of other policy initiatives that the Scottish Government is introducing to increase forestry's contribution to the Scottish Ministers' economic, environmental and social ambitions.

The **Edinburgh Declaration on post-2020 global biodiversity framework** sets out the aspirations and commitments of the Scottish Government, Edinburgh Process partners, and the wider subnational constituency of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in delivering for nature over the coming decade.

Regional Policy & Initiatives

The area of Stirling that is not covered by the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park is within the **Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN)** area. The CSGN is a national development within Scotland's National Planning Framework 3 and extends across 19 local authority areas. CSGN's vision is:

'by 2050, Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality'.

The purpose of the **Forth Area (River Basin) Management Plan** is to maintain and improve the ecological status of the rivers, lochs, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters in the Forth advisory group area (Map 1). This plan supplements the river basin management plan for the Scotland river basin district and will help to deliver Water Framework Directive requirements.

Inner Forth Futures (IFF) has been formed to take forward the legacy of the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, and work with local people to build on those achievements in the future. The project area includes the parts of Stirling, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Fife that surround the Inner Forth, and the Partnership aims to make the area a better place to live, work, visit and invest in, by helping to promote its natural and cultural heritage, and sustainable transport options. They also want to support communities so that they feel confident to take a greater role in managing and promoting the area's heritage for themselves.

The **Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority** have a number of key plans and strategies that will form key delivery mechanisms for the Alive with Nature Plan. These include:

The **National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023** is the overarching vision to guide how all those with a role in looking after the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park will work together over the next five years to ensure a successful, sustainable future for this iconic place. The plan guides the work of not just the National

Park Authority but of all the organisations and other partners involved in managing the area and making the overarching vision a reality.

The **Trees and Woodland Strategy** sets out our vision for how trees and woodlands in Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park are to be protected and enhanced over the next 20 years. The strategy will guide woodland enhancement and creation within the National Park

Wild Park – our Biodiversity Action Plan is the biodiversity action programme for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. First produced in 2014, the original plan, Wild Park 2020 set out a vision and a series of outcomes associated with protecting and enhancing biodiversity, along with five 'Wild Challenges', which were focuses for awareness raising and action.

Local Policy & Priorities

The Stirling Plan (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) 2017 – 2027 been produced by the Stirling Community Planning Partnership (CPP). It shows how public sector organisations will work together with communities and voluntary groups, to improve people's lives, encourage fairness and making things more equal for everyone in Stirling over the next 10 years. The ambition is to make Stirling a great place to live, work, study and visit and make life better for those who are experiencing the greatest challenges.

The Stirling Plan has a simple, yet powerful, vision that our communities in Stirling will become places 'where everyone can thrive'.

The outcomes reflect social, economic, health and sustainability issues. The delivery of the Alive with Nature Plan will make a contribution to achieving these outcomes.

The **Stirling Local Development Plan 2018** sets out a spatial strategy, policies and proposals to guide development, including housing, business and employment and infrastructure within the East Dunbartonshire Council area.

The implementation of spatial policies within the development plan provides the opportunity for environmental protection and enhancement.

The **Stirling & Clackmannanshire Forest & Woodland Strategy 2019** (SCFWS) sets out the Councils' vision, strategy and objectives for the future of woodlands and forestry. It also helps to aid in woodland creation applications.

It contains a vision that through expansion, protection and sustainable management, the forests and woodlands of Stirling and Clackmannanshire will provide a range of benefits for local people and visitors and contribute to economic, environmental and social well being.

The **Stirling Active Travel Action Plan** outlines a number of actions to improve the access infrastructure for walking and cycling both utilising on-road routes and off-road. The upgrading or creation of new off-road routes presents an opportunity to deliver other green network benefits such the creation of associated path side habitat for biodiversity.

The **Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal (CRD)** seeks to bring about a step change in the economic performance of the region, and provide more opportunities and a fairer society for all. The CRD

has, at its heart, the development and delivery of a number of key projects and masterplans. These activities present a significant opportunity to invest in our natural environment through the delivery of high profile examples of green infrastructure in development e.g. green roof on Tartan Centre, exemplar Public Service Innovation Hub and **regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Land**.

The **Vision for Stirling River Park**, developed through the CRD process, is an ambitious yet practical plan for the creation of a unique, world-class city park that redefines the relationship of Stirling with its river. The **Stirling Flood Alleviation Scheme**, a major infrastructure project, sits within the boundary of the River Park. Delivery of the SFAS will provide an opportunity to improve access, viewing points and habitat diversity, and progress significant elements of the Vision.

A multi-million pound investment saw the creation of **Scotland's International Environment Centre (SIEC).** Through research and innovation, enhancing collaborations between researchers, businesses and regulators, and providing new training and educational opportunities, SIEC provides a unique source of clean, locally driven and socially inclusive growth.

The **Sustainable Growth Agreement (SGA)** is a voluntary, non-legally binding, formal agreement between SEPA and Stirling Council. The SGA contains a joint vision for "the Stirling City Region to live within one planet limits. The Stirling City Region will act as a beacon to all regions, cities and towns on how to achieve the needs of its people, communities and businesses, consistent with environmental excellence".

The **Stirling Food Growing Strategy** recognises the key role that our biodiversity, particularly pollinators, play in our local food network. It will be implemented alongside the Forth Valley and Lomond Leader Food and Drink Strategy '**Alive with Food**' and the recently adopted Stirling Food Framework. These three documents will contribute to Stirling achieving its ambition to become a Sustainable Food City.

If you need help or this information supplied in an alternative format please call 01786 404040.

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