

ENVIRONMENT PATHWAY

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| Stakeholders consulted / date | Mark Findlay Community Operations, Joanne Glennie Community Operations, Hayley Andrew Community Operations, Laura McCrorie Community Operations, Gary Wood Community Operations, Gordon Laing Place, Lynda Stevenson Assets and Procurement |

| Strategic Alignment |
|---|
| <p>Strategic Alignment The Environment Pathway supports a number of the council's priorities and ambition statements.</p> <p>Improve economic opportunities and outcomes Ambition 2: Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities Ambition 3: Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure Ambition 4: Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit</p> <p>Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Ambition 15: Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities</p> <p>Enhance participation, capacity and empowerment across our communities Ambition 16: Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations Ambition 17: Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive</p> |

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Foreword

The vision for North Lanarkshire to be a place of inclusive growth and prosperity for all was founded on the evidence presented in the report, A Shared Ambition for North Lanarkshire, in September 2018. This report also set out the operating framework required for the council to enhance the alignment of, and synergies between, strategic and operational functions to successfully deliver on the vision which was thereafter formalised through approval of The Plan for North Lanarkshire in February 2019. This set a very clear focus and compelling narrative in terms of what the council is working towards.

The purpose of the Environment Pathway is very much aligned to this approach as this document brings together separate but related strategies, policies and plans to ensure a one council approach to the environment and that we continue a route of inclusive growth. Significant resources are deployed in the management, maintenance and construction of our environment and it is essential that these are deployed to deliver the best possible outcomes for North Lanarkshire's communities.

In these challenging times, it is essential that the council recognises the importance that the environment plays in the day-to-day life of people who live, work and visit North Lanarkshire. This will include everything from the air we breathe to how we travel throughout the area and how we maximise the use of our green and open spaces. The importance of this has recently been recognised in the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the setting of a challenging net-zero target for 2030 with the importance of high quality, local environments highlighted during the recent pandemic.

We ASPIRE that North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit and a key aspect of this will be to ensure that we have an environment that allows us to deliver on this ambition.

Helen Loughran, Convener of Environment and Climate Change Committee

Introduction and Context

1.1 North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire is Scotland's fourth most populated local authority in Scotland with a population of 341,400 , living within 153,643 households . North Lanarkshire covers an approximate land area of 470 square kilometres with a population density of 726 persons per square kilometre and it is critical that we value the environment that the local population resides within.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire is the council's shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity

for all. It sets the direction for us, our partners, North Lanarkshire businesses and residents and is our commitment to improving the lives and the environment of everyone who lives, works, or visits here.

We have affirmed our commitment to the environment by declaring a Climate Emergency with a challenging net-zero target for 2030 as well as being a signatory of the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity. We have done so in recognition that

climate change is a threat to many of our native species and habitats. Locked-in changes to our seasonal weather and an increase in significant weather events are all indicators of climate change.

This Environment Pathway summarises our strategic priorities and the documents that are contained within.





1.2 National Context

The approach we take to environment and climate change policies will play an essential role in our nation's success over the coming decades. It will protect the beauty and uniqueness of Scotland's landscapes and nature, which are precious in their own right, and it will create new opportunities to strengthen our economy, social wellbeing, health and equality. The ambition is to continue to establish Scotland's place in the world as a country ready to lead global action to address current and future environmental challenges, and to collaborate with others as we do that.

It is important to recognise that The Global Climate Emergency and the Nature Emergency are intrinsically linked. Climate change accelerates the destruction of the natural world and all it provides us with, while the loss and unsustainable use of nature are in turn, key drivers of climate change. However, just as the crises are linked, so are the solutions. Nature is a vital ally in the fight against climate change. Nature regulates the climate, and nature-based solutions, such as protecting and restoring wetlands and peatlands, or sustainably managing woodlands and greenspaces, will be essential for emission reduction and climate adaptation. Planting trees and deploying green infrastructure will help us to cool urban areas and mitigate the impact of natural disasters such as flooding. Human activity is pushing 1 million species of plants and animals towards extinction.

This century must see an urgent scaling-up of action to tackle global environmental challenges – climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource depletion and waste – to safeguard the wellbeing and prosperity of people around the globe, and the natural world we belong to. Current patterns of consumption and production exceed the levels pre-COVID-19. It simply is not sustainable. If everyone in the world lived as we currently do in the UK, it would require the resources of nearly 3 planets. We need to adapt to prosper – socially, economically, environmentally and become climate resilient – within planetary limits: to work towards a world where no country uses more resources than the Earth can support and to replenish the natural systems that sustain us. This transformation will require commitment, collaboration, innovation and political leadership.

In individual areas of environmental policy, Scotland already has strong, ambitious strategies in place.

- The Environment Strategy for Scotland makes a commitment that by looking after and restoring nature, and no longer being a contributor to climate change, Scotland will be transformed, benefitting people and the environment. The six outcomes are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well the National Performance Framework reflecting the interdependency of environment with other aspects of policy (Children & young people;

Communities; Culture; Economy; Education; Environment; Fair work & business; Health; Human rights; International; Poverty).

- The Just Transition (a national mission for a fairer, greener Scotland) looks at how the changes in work life, business, travel, energy use, what we buy and what we eat will lead Scotland to net zero by 2045. Whilst this represents an opportunity for change, inequalities must be addressed whilst further improving our wellbeing and communities, ensuring that we all share in the benefits realised and the people of Scotland are key to this. The pace of the transition must ensure that no-one is left behind, noting it affects aspects of life, business and policy.

- The Circular Economy Bill is expected to be introduced in the next Scottish Parliament. Based on the principles of the UN SDG no. 12 'Responsible Consumption and Production', the Bill is expected to:

- reduce waste and reduce litter by targeting unnecessary production of single-use items;
- reduce the footprint of waste;
- increase and improve recycling; and
- have potential to create additional jobs.

• In 2019 the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, amended the original Scottish 2050 target to an ambitious net zero target by 2045 with a new set of interim emission reduction targets for 2030 (75%) and 2040 (90%).

• The Scottish Government have a pioneering Land Use Strategy (2016) with a strategic vision on how to realise the full potential of Scotland's land in ways that result in multiple benefits for the economy, environment and communities.

• Scotland has the most stringent air quality targets in the UK and the Government's Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy (2015) sets out how we will reduce air pollution to protect human health and fulfil EU legal commitments.

• National Planning Framework 4 sets six spatial principles Just transition, Conserving and recycling assets, Local living, Compact urban growth, Rebalanced development and Rural revitalisation. These principles are expected to play a key role in delivering on the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national outcomes.

Translated into a National Spatial Strategy, underpinned by 33 National Planning Policies, the spatial principles will support the planning and delivery of: sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

• The National Planning Policies are to be applied to all applications for Planning Permission, but each Policy Principle also describes Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and an expectation for future Local Development Plans. These policies and expectations will impact or be impacted by every element of the current Environment Pathway.

To continue with its environmental commitments the Scottish Government recently published their 'Developing an Environment Strategy for Scotland' discussion paper. The purpose of this paper was to start discussion on how Scotland will develop a strategic approach on environmental policy to protect and enhance Scotland's environment, safeguard natural capital and continue Scotland's leading role in addressing environmental challenges.

In particular, the Government outlined the following six draft outcomes which it would aspire to achieve:

1. We are a climate leader and play our full role in limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C.
2. We are a zero waste, resource efficient nation.
3. Our biodiversity is protected and enhanced, supporting healthy ecosystems.
4. Our air, freshwater, seas and soils are of excellent quality.
5. Everyone can access, enjoy and connect with nature.
6. The global footprint of our consumption and production is sustainable.

It is important therefore that the local ambitions of the council reflect these national ambitions where appropriate.

1.3 Local Context

At a more local level, the Environment Pathway will deliver on a number of priorities and their underlying ambition statements as detailed in the Plan for North Lanarkshire:

Improve economic opportunities and outcomes

Ambition 2: Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities

Ambition 3: Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure

Ambition 4: Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit

Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition 15: Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities

Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities

Ambition 16: Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations

Ambition 17: Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive



1.4 Supporting Strategies

The council has a number of strategies, action plans and policies which all contribute to the development and protection of the environment within North Lanarkshire. However, the concern is that many of these strategies, policies and plans were working in isolation. The purpose of the Environment Pathway is to bring all of these policies under the one umbrella to ensure that all such documents take account of, and are aware of, common factors across the other strategies throughout the council and that this is reflected within the individual documents. This will ensure that the council maximises the impact in achieving its own priorities and contributes to the overall national environmental objectives detailed above.

To ensure this one council approach is delivered, the following strategies and plans will be included under the Environment Strategy:

| Title | Summary |
|--|---|
| Active Travel and Access Strategy | <p>In North Lanarkshire, and Scotland as a whole, there is continuing drive to create a sustainable transport system. This system should recognise the challenges before us, particularly in terms of reducing inequalities and taking climate action. To this end, the Council is fully engaged in responding to the global climate emergency by supporting increasing mode shift toward low and zero carbon transportation. The publication of the Council's Active Travel Strategy in August 2021 was timely, not least because these challenges have been furthered by the need to continue to adapt to life after COVID-19. This may bring permanent changes to the way people will live, work and travel around our area. Therefore, the Council needs to provide a targeted approach to enhancing the provision of active and sustainable travel opportunities. This will then support a mode shift in favour of walking, wheeling and cycling. This will also help to deliver improved health and wellbeing and environmental, social inclusion and public access benefits.</p> <p>Further details of this strategy can be found at the following weblink - Active Travel Strategy North Lanarkshire Council</p> |
| Air Quality Action Plan | <p>Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, as areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas. The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion. The council is committed to reducing the exposure of people in North Lanarkshire to poor air quality to improve health. The Air Quality Action Plan has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the action we will take to improve air quality in North Lanarkshire.</p> <p>A copy of the current Air Quality Action Plan is available here: Air Quality Action Plan</p> |
| Biodiversity Action Plan | <p>The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (NLBAP) sets out a partnership approach to guide the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in North Lanarkshire to 2027. It details the actions needed to safeguard vulnerable species in North Lanarkshire, and to protect and enhance key habitats at an ecosystem scale.</p> <p>A copy of the plan is available at: Our local biodiversity North Lanarkshire Council</p> |

| Title | Summary |
|---|--|
| Climate Plan ACT 2030 | <p>Climate Change is an important issue for us all. Changes in our weather and an increase in severe weather events is a symptom of climate change. Greenhouse gases caused by humans have been found to be responsible for these changes. In the future they are likely to become more severe. Climate change will not just affect humans. There is a risk that we may lose native species of animals and plants.</p> <p>The Climate Plan ACT 2030 conveys the council's commitment to climate change and its own carbon management actions and targets with supporting carbon budgets. The Plan is supported by the other strategies, plans, programmes and reports as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of Work • Local Development Plan • Biodiversity Action Plan • Open Space Strategy • Single Use Plastic Policy • Procurement Strategy • Active Travel Strategy • Food Growing Strategy • Local Housing Strategy • Capital Programmes • Revenue Budget <p>A copy of the Climate Plan is available at: Climate Plan ACT2030 North Lanarkshire Council</p> |
| Climate Ready Clyde Adaptations Strategy | <p>As a member of Climate Ready Clyde (CRC) Board and subgroup, the council has contributed over the past three years to the development of a Regional Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan. With a good understanding of the climate challenges and opportunities facing the region, the strategy focuses on becoming climate ready through sixteen Flagship Actions. These actions include the Clyde Climate Forest and a retrofit housing energy efficiency project. Along with other members of CRC the council will contribute to the strategy's delivery through continued participation and resourcing.</p> <p>Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (climatereadyclyde.org.uk)</p> |
| Contaminated Land Strategy | <p>Under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the council has been given duties and responsibilities regarding contaminated land in its area. In summary, the council's duties under the legislation are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspect the district for land that may be contaminated • inspect individual sites which may be contaminated and • ensure the appropriate action is taken to remediate the land. <p>The Contaminated Land Strategy details how we will fulfil our duties under the above legislation and in turn protect human health and assist in the regeneration and development of such sites.</p> <p>A copy of the current Contaminated Land Strategy is available here: Contaminated Land Strategy</p> |

| Title | Summary |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Core Paths Plan | <p>A statutory requirement under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, this plan provides a basic framework of paths, giving the public reasonable access throughout North Lanarkshire. Linking with the Active Travel Strategy to support a wider network of paths and all other areas of land and inland water where access rights are exercisable. The revised and updated Core Paths Plan will be published in 2023.</p> <p>A copy of the Plan is available at: Core paths in North Lanarkshire North Lanarkshire Council</p> |
| Food Growing Strategy | <p>A statutory requirement of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The document seeks to identify land that could be used for allotments and community food growing, and identifies how NLC intends to increase the provision of these spaces. The strategy also highlights the benefits of 'Growing Your Own'. The plan is scheduled for review in 2025.</p> <p>A copy of the strategy is available at: Community food growing and allotments North Lanarkshire Council</p> |
| Local Development Plan | <p>The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan was adopted in July 2022 after a lengthy process of consultation and Examination by Scottish Government Reporters. As a statutory document, it plays a key role in contributing towards the Council's aims of delivering an environment where development is sustainable and inclusive, through protecting our natural and built assets, whilst providing opportunities to deliver new housing, enhance our centres, embrace digital technology, create a climate where businesses can locate, invest and grow and where opportunities for leisure and tourism are maximised.</p> <p>A copy of the Plan can be viewed at - The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan North Lanarkshire Council</p> |
| Local Transport Strategy | <p>Our road network exists, not as an end in itself, but to provide access to jobs, education, health services, leisure, shops and a range of other activities. An efficient transport system helps to connect communities and contribute to a better quality environment and is critical for stimulating economic activity and ensuring business competitiveness throughout North Lanarkshire; we cannot deliver local jobs and prosperity without effective transport networks.</p> <p>North Lanarkshire is located in the heart of Scotland's central belt and is crisscrossed by many strategic transport corridors, both road and rail. These facilitate strong economic and social links with Glasgow and other communities throughout the Clyde Valley as well as commuting links to the west and with Edinburgh and the east. The Local Transport Strategy document therefore reflects the need to continue working with national and regional transport agencies and companies in order to ensure that the needs of, and links to, our local communities and businesses are fully considered in the development and implementation of strategic transport systems through the Council area.</p> <p>The Council's last published Local Transport Strategy can be found here - Local Transport Strategy 2010.pdf (northlanarkshire.gov.uk)</p> |
| Open Space Strategy | <p>The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced new statutory duties upon the council to prepare and publish an Open Space Strategy (OSS) and to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in our area.</p> <p>The OSS is under development and will set out a strategic framework of North Lanarkshire's policies and proposals for the development, maintenance and use of green infrastructure, including open spaces, sports pitches and green networks.</p> |

| Title | Summary |
|--|---|
| Single Use Plastics Plan | <p>The plan was presented as the first phase of actions to reduce SUP and it focused on the catering service of the council. Plans to reduce plastic in other areas of the council require to be put in place in subsequent phases. The second phase will contain the implementation of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) which starts on the 16 August 2023. Scottish Government are introducing the scheme to encourage the return of empty single-use containers for collection for recycling. It will help tackle climate change, increase quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling and decrease litter. The Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020 set out the legal requirements of the scheme. They apply to drink producers, drink importers and anyone marketing or offering for sale drinks in Scotland. The Deposit Return will cover all drinks sold in PET plastic, metal and glass which are between 50ml and 3 litres in size (inclusive).</p> <p>Single Use Plastics Plan</p> |
| Tree Asset Management Plan and Operational Woodland Plan. | <p>North Lanarkshire Council adopted a Tree Asset Management (TRAM) Plan in 2021 to manage the risks associated with its tree stock in a proactive way. The plan sets out a strategic approach to inspecting trees in a systematic way based on risk zones. An Operational Woodland Plan is due for publication in 2023 and this document will look at the future delivery of tree planting, remediation works (associated with the TRAM strategy and Ash Dieback Disease) and the longer term planning of woodland investment for carbon reduction.</p> <p>Tree Asset Management Plan</p> |

1.5 Oversight and Impact Assessments

1.5.1 Governance

The Environment Pathway will be monitored and approved through the council's Environment and Climate Change and each sub-policy shall be approved and monitored at the relevant council committee.

1.5.2 Performance Indicators

Within each sub-policy there will be a range of indicators that will allow performance against the outcomes of the strategy to be carefully monitored. As in 1.5.1 details of this performance shall be reported at appropriate intervals to the relevant council committee as part of the Council's Performance Framework.

1.5.3 Equalities and Fairer Scotland

The principle of equality of opportunity cuts across all themes of the Environment Strategy and indeed the work of the council. Our corporate commitment to equality is outlined within the council's Single Equality Scheme, which sets out our approach to meeting the duties laid out by the Equality Act 2010.

An equalities impact assessment (EQIA) has been completed to assess the impact of the strategy on these groups. The assessment concluded that the impact assessment carried out did not produce any significant issues to warrant further actions.

The outcomes of this strategy will also not have any effect on the Fairer Scotland framework.

Further to the above however, individual EQIAs will also be undertaken for each sub-policy within the overall Environment Strategy.

1.5.4 Risk Management

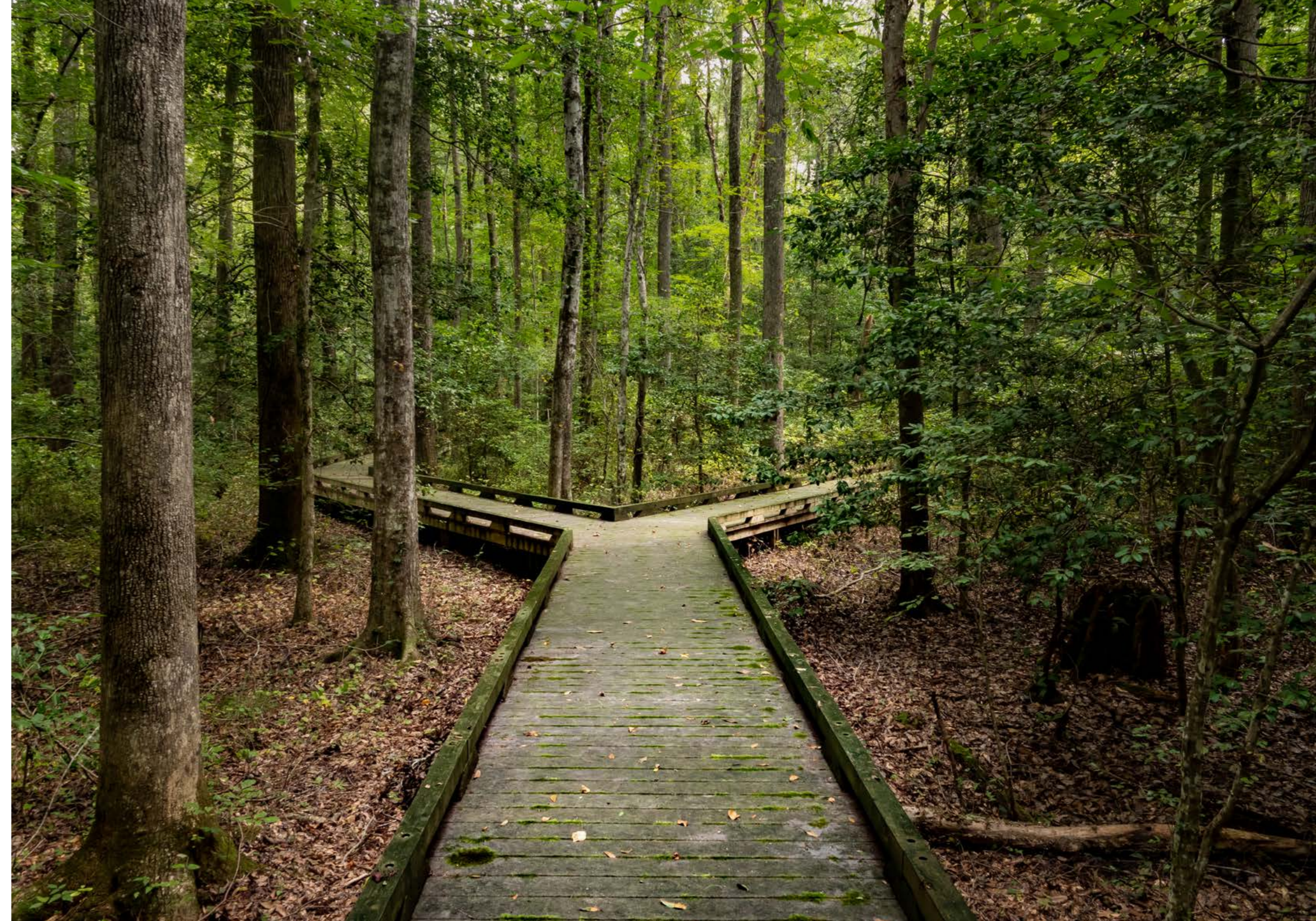
Each sub-policy will be subject to standard risk assessment.

1.5.5 HR and Legislative

Each sub-policy will comply with any relevant legislative requirement.

1.5.6 Environmental

Each sub-policy will have its own specific focus to directly impact on the environment.



SUPPORTING STRATEGIES



This document can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.

To make a request, please contact Corporate Communications at: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

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