

## Healthy...achieving good environmental and silvicultural condition in a changing climate

National Key Commitment (Healthy)	District Specific Action for Leanachan Forest
<p><b>We are committed to high quality silviculture and, increasingly, to using alternatives to clearfelling</b></p>	<p>High quality silviculture, which creates attractive woodlands with smaller scale felling coupes, will be important in the main visitor zone. The development of visitor management zones should be considered as part of the LMP development.</p> <p>In addition Leanachan is more sheltered and suitable for productive conifer management. Most of the older crops have now missed the thinning window. Priority will be given to maintain the thinning regime where it has been started, and bring young crops into a thinning cycle where conditions allow.</p> <p>A management programme to continue the silvicultural management of the regenerated stands will be developed out of this LMP. The initial phase of this will focus on re-spacing and tending young crops.</p>
<p><b>We are exploring how to best steward the carbon resources locked up in the Estate's trees and soils</b></p>	<p>Leanachan has some 430ha of peatland according to the BGS data. This includes the Lon Leanachain SSSI.</p> <p>Review the future restocking of the existing afforested peatland areas in line with the Peatland Policy 2016.</p> <p>Maintain forest cover unless there is strong landscape or environmental reasons for open habitat. Fast growing conifer stands will contribute to rapid sequestration of Carbon. Plan for a high proportion of sawlog for the construction market in the final crop.</p> <p>Changes in the carbon held in the trees is one of the ecosystem services being</p>

National Key Commitment (Healthy)	District Specific Action for Leanachan Forest
	monitored through a Forest Research project. (See Treasured section below)
<p><b>We will help the Estate adapt to climate change and become more resilient to pressure</b></p>	<p>A soil survey to 1:10k has been carried out for Leanachan and a partial attribute survey (10% of area). This data will help to inform our silviculture choices, such as choice of species and thinning potential.</p> <p>The District has a wet temperate climate (which is unlikely to become drier under climate change scenarios) and is especially suitable for Sitka spruce (SS). A broad range of tree species currently grow well in the District but these will be kept under review as climate change research and advice develops.</p> <p>Leanachan supported good SS stands in the past and likely to do so again but need to check the soil fertility.</p> <p>Opportunities for diversification of the timber producing species will be taken using the principles of the ecological site classification (ESC) in order to increase disease and climate change resilience and to provide visual diversity.</p> <p>On-going restructuring of the forest will create a more even timber flow in the future and increase reliance through a wider age structure and the creation of a semi-permanent framework of open space and broadleaves. Future coupe boundaries need to be designed to increase the resilience to wind damage.</p> <p>There is some steep ground in Leanachan forest but there are no priority unstable sites.</p> <p>SEPA Flood maps indicate that Leanachan forest may offer opportunities for natural flood management through floodplain storage and runoff reduction. The</p>

National Key Commitment (Healthy)	District Specific Action for Leanachan Forest
	<p>management of the forest will need to take this into account in the felling and restocking proposals.</p>
<p><b>We are committed to dealing with invasive plants and animals that threaten habitats and biodiversity</b></p>	<p>In 2016 Lon Leanachain SSSI was cleared of invasive non-native conifer regeneration. The forest as a whole is a low priority for rhododendron eradication.</p> <p>Monitor for the presence of feral pigs, known to be in Killiechonate to the east, moving into Leanachan. Monitor the impact on habitats.</p>

## Productive...providing sustainable economic benefits from the land

National Key Commitment (Productive)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We aim to increase the contribution of the National Forest Estate to the economy of Scotland and its regions, and recognise the potential of the Estate to assist transition to a low carbon economy</b></p>	<p>The Nevis Master plan with its proposals for the development of a Nevis Forest and Mountain Resort is being taken forward with partners. In parallel, improves the amenity and visitor experience in the western end of Leanachan Forest also need to be addressed. This will be a major driver for the management of the forest in the west of the forest.</p> <p>In addition to the recreation and timber production there are economic activities within the forest associated with the quarry (leased) and the Lochaber Rural Complex (private but surrounded by the forest). Discussion with the relevant stakeholders will be undertaken.</p> <p>There is a strategic haulage route in Leanachan from Killiechonate forest.</p>
<p><b>We aim to provide at least three million cubic metres of softwood timber per year on a sustainable basis</b></p>	<p>Leanachan is a key softwood timber producing area in the forest district – due to terrain suitable for wheeled harvesting systems, good road access and proximity to markets. The current production forecast is for 22km<sup>3</sup> over the next 10 years (84% Sitka spruce). This clear fell volume production will currently drop to c9km<sup>3</sup> in 10 years and then to &lt;1km<sup>3</sup> by year 15. A review of rotation length and thinning potential to reduce this dramatic change in production and structure, if possible, is required.</p>
<p><b>We intend to manage at least a quarter of our expanding broadleaf woodlands to produce quality hardwoods and woodfuel</b></p>	<p>The potential for broadleaf timber production will be considered in Leanachan in relation to the existing broadleaf areas which are mainly of birch of firewood grade. Where broadleaf woodland is proposed in the future, timber production will also be considered as an objective.</p>

National Key Commitment (Productive)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We will market timber in ways that encourage value adding and job creation, and contribute to local economic activity</b></p>	<p>Hardwood production could provide an opportunity for a local business.</p> <p>Leanachan is one of the main conifer timber producing forests for the FD and the coupe size will tend towards being suitable for large scale harvesting operations. The proximity and material available is suitable for processing in the local Kilmallie sawmill as well as mills further afield</p>
<p><b>We will use our work programmes to promote the development of the forestry and land management sectors</b></p>	<p>All work programmes are tendered in accordance with government procurement rules on the open market.</p> <p>The main steep ground area in Leanachan occurs on the slopes beneath Anoch Mor and Cairn Dearg Mor. There is also a short section in the Chapman Wood area. The risk to infrastructure is low. The visual impact of the upper tree line, the desire to see the creation of a more natural treeline and the economics of working these slopes will all be considered in the preparation of the plan.</p> <p>Leanachan forest does not directly border the A82 although there is one section where mature trees could reach the carriageway. However, the railway from Fort William to Spean Bridge does form the north- west boundary and this does impact on harvesting operations. Discussion with the rail operator will be required.</p>
<p><b>We plan to increase agricultural use of the Estate where this is consistent with environmental objectives</b></p>	<p>Limited opportunity for grazing within the forest due to other land use priorities and a lack of infrastructure for management. The principle area is the Decoy field currently used of pony grazing</p> <p>There are neighbouring agricultural land managers as well as an internal area of privately owned farmland.</p>

National Key Commitment (Productive)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We aim to realise the Estate’s renewable energy potential in balance with other objectives</b></p>	<p>The upper burns of Leanachan forest have contributed to hydro energy production for the aluminium smelter since the 1920s. The construction of a new hydro scheme by Nevis Range is currently underway with part of the penstock, the powerhouse and export cable within the Leanachan forest boundary.</p> <p>The need for electricity transmission routes impacts on the forest with the Skye/Aluminium smelter pylon lines running through the forest. The need to increase the resilience of this line is likely to require an increase in the width of the wayleave. Mitigation for this will be reviewed with SSE and any agreed additional work built into the plan.</p>
<p><b>We will work with partners to find new ways to harness our natural and cultural heritage and develop the Estate’s potential for tourism</b></p>	<p>Fort William has been promoted as the Outdoor Capital of the UK since 2002 and Leanachan forest is an element in the ongoing success of attracting visitors to the area to enjoy all that it has to offer.</p> <p>The Nevis Range Development Company lease land from the Forestry Commission for the operation of their gondola (the car park, the base station and café and wayleave for the gondola line). In addition they have entered into a lease for the management of the mountain bike trails and for the High Wire course. The District will continue to work closely with the Company to ensure continued support for the local visitor economy.</p> <p>This is a key objective and drive in the development of Leanachan forest. It will guide the management of the existing forest and the future appearance of the forest both for visitors within the woods and those viewing it from above. E.g. Alpine view framed by spruce and other conifers from the café and the gondola.</p> <p>The aerial view of the whole of the forest from the view point at Sgurr Fhinniosg-aig</p>

National Key Commitment (Productive)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We will support the Scottish Government's woodland expansion policy</b></p>	<p>There may be opportunity to expand the native woodland further up the slopes of Aonach Mor and Carn Mor Dearg. The crag below Sgurr Fhinniosg-aig may hold remnants of montane woodland.</p>

Treasured...as a multi-purpose resource that sustains livelihoods, improves quality of life, and offers involvement and enjoyment

National Key Commitment (Treasured)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We want to encourage local people to get involved in using and managing local Estate woodlands, so we will actively engage with local communities and be open to work in partnership</b></p>	<p>Leanachan forest is very important to the local area through the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and employment through forest management and harvesting, through contributing directly to outdoor activity tourism and indirectly as part of the landscape for tourism to the locality.</p> <p>There are currently no specific community initiated projects in Leanachan. The District will respond to any approaches for projects working with community groups at an early stage to understand their aspirations, help formulate their proposals and assist with delivery.</p>
<p><b>We will continue to use the Estate as a place for volunteering and gaining employment skills</b></p>	<p>There are currently no volunteer groups working within Leanachan Forest but there may be opportunities in the future.</p>

National Key Commitment (Treasured)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We are committed to creating more uniquely special places across the Estate and to delivering benefits to an increasingly diverse range of Scotland's people</b></p>	<p>Leanachan Forest is a core visitor destinations and a key objective of the LMP will be to build a programme of forest management that is aimed at improving the visitor experience of the wider visitor zone.</p> <p>This is a key objective of the plan and will guide the management and species prescriptions for the visitor zone areas. Some work has already been done on the entrance road to the Nevis range and further work will be identified to maintain and enhance this.</p> <p>Only the upper unplanted areas of Leanachan forest are included in the NSA, however, the forest forms the lower frame to the high mountains. The design of the upper margin in particular needs to be sensitive to the landscape. There is scope for developing a more natural transition from forest to open hill.</p> <p>There is one designated site, Leanachan Motte. The remains are limited but the site is important as a rare example of this type of defensive structure in the area and the wet conditions may yield some well-preserved artefacts.</p> <p>The native woodland habitats within Leanachan forest are associated with the upper margin of the forest and along the burns, in particular the Cour and to a lesser extent the Lundy. The plan will look for opportunities to further enhance this important woodland habitat.</p>
<p><b>We recognise the value of the Estate as a place for research and development of best practice</b></p>	<p>Forest Research are modelling the impact of different forest management options on the delivery of a range of ecosystem services at a landscape-scale using Leanachan forest as the case study.</p>

Accessible...local woodlands and national treasures that are well promoted, welcoming and open for all

National Key Commitment (Accessible)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We will continue to invest available resources into high quality facilities that encourage and help visitors experience and enjoy the outdoor environment</b></p>	<p>The findings of the independent review of the Forests Around Fort William Visitor Experience Plan will be used to inform the development of this plan.</p> <p>Nevis Range, developed in the 1970s as a ski centre and now expanded to a wide range of outdoor activities, is the key focus for recreation activities in Leanachan Forest.</p> <p>The majority of visitors to the Gondola come to enjoy the views and the café rather than participate in ski-ing or downhill mountain biking.</p> <p>There are a wide range of mountain bike trails from blue family routes through to extreme downhill courses. The trails are managed by Nevis Range on behalf of FCS.</p> <p>There are rights of way and core paths through the forest and also up onto the open hill.</p> <p>The Puggy Line (former tram way used during the hydro scheme construction) is a popular walking and cycling route which starts off NFE at Inverlochy and continues on east beyond NFE although in poorer condition here.</p> <p>Very important mountain access to the North Face of Ben Nevis with a car park and good quality footpath through the forest to the open hill along the Allt a Mhuilinn.</p> <p>There is a lack of shorter walking routes in the forest. There is potential for creating</p>

National Key Commitment (Accessible)	District Specific Action
	<p>a destination on the North Face access path and an aspiration to upgrade and expand this car park and walking trails.</p>
<p><b>We will continue to encourage use of the Estate for health benefits and outdoor learning</b></p>	<p>The District supports High Life through the summer programme of Ranger-led events, working with The Highland Council Ranger Service and the Nevis Landscape Partnership, sharing resources as appropriate.</p> <p>We will continue to work with event organisers to ensure events take place in a sustainable, safe and enjoyable setting for participants and other forest users.</p> <p>Leanachan forest is an important venue for significant national and international events. The first World Mountain Bike Championships were held here in 2007. The plan needs to take this into account in planning operations as well as improving the appearance of the forest as the backdrop.</p> <p>The Forest School project (Tree Tribe) using Leanachan as an outdoor learning resource, is looking to restart after a break of a couple of years.</p> <p>There are a couple of areas in Leanachan that are used regularly for small scale events. These need to be more clearly identified and enhanced.</p>
<p><b>Through our Woods in and Around Towns (WIAT) programme, we aim to provide more opportunities for more of Scotland's people to enjoy high-quality countryside, and find health, education, skills and community involvement benefits</b></p>	<p>Although not a WIAT woodland, Leanachan Forest offers many opportunities for access to the countryside from Fort William as well as an important back drop</p>

## Cared for...working with nature and respecting landscapes, natural and cultural heritage

National Key Commitment (Cared for)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We are restoring around 85% of areas on ancient woodland sites to largely native species – the remaining areas will be enhanced through our management</b></p>	<p>The largest area of PAWS is called Coille Leanachain on the pre-afforestation maps. It was probably moribund birch woodland by 1930s and has been replaced by a stand of Sitka Spruce with only low ecological potential remaining. However, other birch woodland remnants are in better condition and woodland restoration and expansion will be focused on the upper margins. There is also scope for restoring and building on the remnants along the riparian corridors.</p> <p>Deer management will continue to be an important part of the woodland restoration work. The existing deer fence is no longer functioning and consideration needs to be given to the future requirement for a strategic deer fence.</p>
<p><b>We aim to increase broadleaf tree cover from the current 8% of woodland cover to around 20%</b></p>	<p>Conifers will remain the principle species for Leanachan forest as a key softwood timber producing area, to enhance the alpine feel to the ski facility and to support the red squirrel stronghold.</p> <p>There may be scope for the expansion of native woodland at the upper margins of the forest and onto the open hill where this is compatible with the objectives of the SSSI. The priority for planting native broadleaf species (including Scots pine) on restocking sites will be on the PAWS areas where the conditions are suitable.</p> <p>There may also be scope for managing broadleaf areas with good access productively. There is a steady local demand for firewood.</p>
<p><b>We are committed to maintaining the</b></p>	<p>The open areas on NFE are not let for grazed by domestic stock and likely to remain</p>

National Key Commitment (Cared for)	District Specific Action
<p><b>best open habitats in good ecological condition</b></p>	<p>that way. In practice there is some sheep incursion from neighbouring leases particular above the stock fence. Opportunities to improve the condition of the open habitat will be considered in the development of the plan.</p> <p>Restoration of the Lon Leanachain SSSI (low altitude blanket bog) by the active removal of encroaching woodland, and maintain a buffer zone around the most vulnerable areas will continue. The recent SSSI condition monitoring identified the deer impact has high on the bog.</p> <p>Further work is needed to identify the hydrological units around the SSSI and the conifer areas with the highest priority for removal to restore these. The buffer requirements also need to be defined to reduce the level of seeding on non-native conifers onto the bog.</p> <p>The Plan will take into consideration the requirements of the Water Framework Directive for the water courses with the forest i.e. The Cour, Allt Choille Rais, the Lundy, Allt na Caillich, Allt-na-h-Aire and Allt an Loin themselves tributaries of the Spean and the Lochy. The Lundy is an important spawning tributary.</p> <p>These systems are all highly modified due to the removal of all the water from the hills above for the aluminium smelter. All however are in good ecological condition with the exception of the river Lundy (classed as poor) and the Allt a Mhuilinn (classed as bad) whose catchment includes part of the forest to the west. Both are downgraded because of abstraction.</p> <p>The River Lundy was modified in the 1940s and 50s for the generation of power for Inverlochy Castle and also to provide water for Torlundy. These dams were removed in 2010 under a SEPA river restoration fund.</p>

National Key Commitment (Cared for)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We will identify particularly vulnerable species for which the National Forest Estate is important and take specific conservation action</b></p> <p>We will identify particularly vulnerable species for which the National Forest Estate is important and take specific conservation action (continued)</p>	<p>Leanachan Forest is designated as a red squirrel stronghold, although the populations are low. 'The Management Advice for the Leanachan Red Squirrel Stronghold' will be taken into account in preparing the plan. This includes establishing species that will provide a sustainable food source as well as mature trees, especially Norway spruce, for habitat and to maintain linkage between suitable habitats over the rotation of the forest.</p> <p>Black Grouse strongholds lie to the east and west of Leanachan forest. There is potential black grouse habitat on the upper margin of the forest.</p> <p>Juniper is only found in small and isolated numbers in the forest here.</p> <p>Chequered skipper and pearl bordered fritillary are present in the vicinity of the pylon line wayleave and also around the wet birch woodlands of the Cour. Both sites have national butterfly transects.</p> <p>Barn owl nest box scheme has recently been established by Nevis Landscape Partnership recognising the lack of nest sites in an otherwise suitable habitat.</p> <p><b>Dragonfly pool?</b></p> <p>Designated sites –Lon Leanachain SSSI, an area of blanket bog; the Parallel roads of Lochaber SSSI, of particular importance here are the glacial features recording within the wider SSSI boundary; Beinn Nebhis SSSI and SAC for open habitat and pinewoodland.</p>
<p><b>We will safeguard archaeological sites through our planning and management, and recognise special places and features with local cultural</b></p>	<p>Leanachan motte, thought to be a medieval clan castle, has been cleared of planted conifers and the open area managed under an agreed plan with Historic Environment Scotland.</p> <p>Locally important sites e.g. the remains of corn kilns and buildings associated with</p>

National Key Commitment (Cared for)	District Specific Action
<p><b>meaning</b></p>	<p>the settlement of Tomnafet, will be safeguarded, as appropriate within local and national contexts. Other known sites of local interest included the Puggy line, a sawmill site, the site of wartime decoy site for the smelter, Wade's military road and battle field site. The Puggy line is a popular cycling and walking route and has been adapted over the years for this purpose. Remnants and artefacts of the original line are becoming scarce and should be retained wherever possible. Where appropriate interpretation will be provided.</p> <p>In line with FCS's Gaelic Language Policy, Gaelic place names will be used where these are recorded on the OS maps.</p>

## Good value...exemplary, effective and efficient delivery of public benefits

National Key Commitment (Good value)	District Specific Action
<p><b>We will seek a diverse range of income sources to underpin the cost of managing the Estate, and we will continually look for ways to achieve best value in delivery of public benefits</b></p>	<p>Maintain the deer cull challenging in the recreation area but necessary to protect the trees and habitats. The venison produced from deer management on the National Forest Estate will continue to be marketed to local and national outlets.</p> <p>Leith's quarry in Leanachan is leased from FCS for the purposes of lime and gravel extraction. An expansion of the quarry has planning approval</p>
<p><b>We will make progressive reductions in the emissions from our Estate</b></p>	<p>Main forest district office is at Torlundy</p>

<b>management activities</b>	
------------------------------	--