

NHS Highland



Meeting: Board Meeting
Meeting date: 24 September 2024
Title: Highland Charter for Climate, Nature and Health
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Richard MacDonald, Director of Estates, Facilities & Capital Planning
Report Author: Richard MacDonald, Director of Estates, Facilities & Capital Planning

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Endorsement and further action

This report relates to a:

- 5 Year Strategy, Together We Care, with you, for you.
- Emerging issue
- Government policy/directive
- Legal requirement
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective

Start Well		Thrive Well		Stay Well		Anchor Well	
Grow Well		Listen Well		Nurture Well		Plan Well	
Care Well		Live Well		Respond Well		Treat Well	
Journey Well		Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well	X	Progress well	X				

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

This report is to inform the Board about the Highland Charter for Climate, Nature and Health; and to gain endorsement for NHS Highland to become a formal signatory of this Charter.

2.2 Background

[The Highland Charter for Climate, Nature & Health](#) is a partnership between the Highland Green Health partnership (led by NHS Highland), The Highlands & Islands Climate Hub, Highland Adapts and the Highland Environment Forum. It is an invitation to pledge to put climate, nature, and the benefits of green and blue health at the centre of decision-making and action, in order to protect the natural environment and ensure people have improved health, wellbeing, and resilience. A signatory to the charter would commit to take at least one action that is positive for climate, nature and health. The intention is that this inspires, creates action and encourages accountability. Both individuals and organisations can sign. In this way, the Charter can be used as a tool both to raise awareness and ultimately to support policy and decision making. It will also raise the profile and importance of this area of work.

Launched in Green Health Week, May 2024, the Charter has increasing numbers of organisations and individuals signing up to it. These include High Life Highland, Cairngorms National Park Authority, and a specific departmental pledge from NHS Highland Renal Department

2.3 Assessment

It will be a powerful statement for NHS Highland as an organisation to sign up to the Charter. This demonstrates awareness and commitment to our own staff and patients, as well as to the wider public. The opportunity to make an organisational pledge, in line with existing objectives, reinforces that commitment. It is suggested that the pledge from NHS Highland would be to fulfil and report on our obligations as set out in the NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy. We would call on the involvement and participation of all staff, and utilise existing structures to support actions through the Energy, Environment and Sustainability Team.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment on level of assurance: While the level of assurance offered today is Moderate, we anticipate that this assurance will move to Substantial when the Charter is signed and our action plan developed and under implementation.

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

Improved sustainability and environmentally sensitive practices also support quality; and supporting patients to opportunities for health and wellbeing within nature enhances patient care and improves patient outcomes.

3.2 Workforce

A workforce motivated through positive action enjoys enhanced health and wellbeing as well as increased motivation, sense of purpose and care across their work

There are numerous examples of staff across different roles expressing concern around the impact on the environment of some healthcare practices, and building energy towards changing those practices. Signing the Charter as an organisation will provide opportunities to nurture that energy and work in partnership with staff to achieve mutual goals.

3.3 Financial

No additional spend is required for the Board as a whole beyond what is necessary to fulfil NHS Highland's existing commitments within the NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy.

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

All actions undertaken fulfil NHS Highland's existing commitments within the NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy are fully risk assessed.

3.5 Data Protection

N/A

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

We know that pressures on the natural environment, from climate change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss are a threat to all human health, as they damage the systems that protect our wellbeing. The changing climate adversely impacts some people in our society more than others: it exacerbates health inequalities. By promoting action at individual and organisational level we can help to reduce inequalities and create a Highland that is in good health for climate, nature and people. Reducing inequalities in access to green and blue health opportunities, and increasing motivation, also prevents future illness and service burden.

3.7 Other impacts

Positive impact on health & wellbeing. Significantly positive reputational impact

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Significant opportunities for positive communication, both internal and external. This can engage staff across the organisation in designing and developing specific actions, and include the voices and experiences of patients and the wider community.

3.9 Route to the Meeting

NHS Highland – Environment & Sustainability Board

4 Recommendation

- **Action** – The Board is asked to endorse the signing by NHS Highland of the Highland Charter for Climate Nature and Health, along with the expressed pledge to fulfil and report on our obligations as set out in the NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy.

4.1 List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Associated presentation



Highland Charter for Climate, Nature and Health

Proposal to Finance Resource and Performance Committee

Richard MacDonald, Director of Estates,
Facilities, and Capital Planning

ABOUT THE CHARTER

The Charter is a pledge to put climate, nature, and the benefits of green and blue health at the centre of decision-making and action, so that the natural environment and people have improved health, wellbeing, and resilience. It builds upon the previous Climate Charter by bringing together three elements that are essential for the wellbeing of the planet and people.

HOW TO SIGN

When you sign the charter, you commit to take at least one action that is positive for *climate*, *nature* and *health*, and will report back to us each year on how you are meeting that commitment.

We acknowledge that nature contributes to our wellbeing and quality of life and that it shapes our cultural heritage and landscapes. Pressures on the natural environment, from climate change and biodiversity loss are a threat to our health, as they damage the systems that protect our wellbeing.

By signing this charter we demonstrate from this moment on our *commitment* to Highland becoming a region where:

- Businesses, public bodies & third sector organisations are fully engaged in making a just transition towards net zero and supporting a climate ready Scotland.
- Our responsibility to care for the natural environment is recognised and acted on, so that our habitats, ecosystems and species are diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change
- The natural environment is valued as essential for people's health and wellbeing. Individuals and communities are able to connect with and enjoy nature wherever they live.

We pledge to take at least one action that will keep Highland in good health for climate, nature and people, and to report back each year on how we are meeting that commitment.

Signing the Highland Charter

- NHS Highland scale of reach, influence and support for regional health
- NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy
- NHS Highland is a leading partner in the Highland Green Health Partnership
- Reinforces broad range of initiatives around sustainability and preventative health
- Increased staff motivation and value

What signing the Charter means for NHS Highland

- Commitments are already in place through existing obligations around the sustainability agenda – NHSH is committed to produce its own climate emergency and sustainability strategy by 31st March 2025 ... **this is our pledge!**
- No additional financial commitment
- Governed through existing processes
- Significant positive reputation and communications opportunities