

# Public Document Pack



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2020

A MEETING of the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE will be held on FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2020 at 10.00 am. The meeting will be conducted by Microsoft Teams Live Event.

The meeting will be live streamed to the public and a link will be on the Council website.

J. J. WILKINSON,  
Clerk to the Council,

27 November 2020

<b>BUSINESS</b>		
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2.	<b>Order of Business</b>	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
4.	<b>Minute</b> (Pages 3 - 6) Consider Minute of Meeting held on 4 September 2020 (copy attached).	5 mins
5.	<b>Biodiversity</b>	45 mins
	(a) <b>Biodiversity Duty Report</b> (Pages 7 - 36) Consider report by Chief Planning Officer (copy attached).	
	(b) <b>Local Biodiversity Action Plan update</b> Consider update by Ecology Officer.	
6.	<b>Managing Our Open Space</b> Presentation by Chief Officer Roads and Urban Designer.	20 mins
7.	<b>Engagement with Young People</b> Consider update by Corporate Policy Advisor.	15 mins
8.	<b>Potential Amendments to Committee Report Implications Section</b> (Pages 37 - 46) Consider report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory (copy	10 mins

	attached).	
9.	<b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>	
10.	<b>Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>	
11.	<b>Date of next meeting</b>  Friday, 12 March 2021 at 10.00 am.	

#### **NOTES**

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**
2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

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**Membership of Committee:-** Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman), H. Anderson, K Chapman, G. Edgar, J. Greenwell, S. Haslam, H. Laing, D. Paterson and S. Scott

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

MINUTE of Meeting of the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held remotely by Microsoft Teams on Friday, 4 September 2020 at 10.00 am

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Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman), H. Anderson, G. Edgar (from para 3), J. Greenwell, S. Haslam (from para 3), H. Laing, D. Paterson, E. Robson and S. Scott

In Attendance:- Service Director Customer & Communities (J. Craig), Chief Planning & Housing Officer (I. Aikman), Corporate Policy Advisor (M. Cook), Ecology Officer (A. Tharme), Environmental Strategy Officer (L. Cox), Chief Officer Roads (J. Hedley), Energy & Building Services Officer (J. Caldwell), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

**WELCOME**

Chairman, Councillor Aitchison, welcomed Members, officers and members of the public to the on-line meeting of the Sustainable Development Committee. In his introduction, he referred to the first meeting of the Committee held in January and the proposal at that meeting to take a report on the climate emergency to Council. That report had been produced but delayed due to being overtaken by events in the form of the Covid-19 outbreak. Hopefully the report would now go to Council at the end of this month. The paper had been amended slightly in reflection of the emergency response to the pandemic and Councillor Aitchison referred to the question “was Covid-19 a dress rehearsal for the climate emergency?” He explained that the purpose of this meeting was to catch-up and to gather information. He welcomed the guest speakers to the meeting and strongly recommended that Members accessed all the supporting papers referred to in the presentations via the links provided in the agenda (also included in the text below).

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting of 31 January 2020.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

**MEMBERS**

Councillors Edgar and Haslam joined the meeting during the discussion below.

2. **BIODIVERSITY**

2.1 The Chairman introduced Charles Dundas, Chief Executive of Borders Forest Trust (BFT) and Chair of Scottish Environment LINK. Mr Dundas was in attendance to give a presentation, accompanied by slides, entitled “The Climate and Biodiversity Crises – globally and at home”. He explained that, in 2019, the UN established Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a global assessment of humanity’s relationship with nature. This was written by more than 500 experts from over 100 countries. It concluded that such was the rate of decline that the risks posed by biodiversity loss should be considered on the same scale as those of climate change. This alarming trend endangered economies, livelihoods, food security and the quality of life of people everywhere. It was estimated that we were losing around 135 plant, animal

and insect species every day. The seven principle drivers of loss were identified as: the changing use of the land and sea; over-exploitation of species; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and indirect effects arising from people's disconnect with nature; and a lack of value and importance placed on nature. Mr Dundas explained that, on a more local level, Scottish Environment LINK was the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK and SNH's the State of Nature Scotland report 2019 revealed that, since recording began, 49% of Scottish species had decreased whilst 28% had increased. The presentation went on to look at historical losses incurred within Scotland, relating to changes in land use within the 20th century. Between the 1940s and 1980s the area of broadleaved and mixed woodland fell by 23% and 37% respectively and native Caledonian pine forests now covered less than 90,000 hectares – just over 6% of the original area. The current situation, in terms of woodland, was that just 22% of the total woodland area in Scotland was native, the rest was non-native. In the Scottish Borders just 7% of the total woodland area was native, which represented 1.4% of the total land area of the Scottish Borders. Mr Dundas concluded his presentation by showing slides of areas of the borders where work was being carried out to plant native woodland. BFT owned over 3000ha of land in the border area and to date 738ha of that land had been planted with native woodland and over 1000ha planted on privately owned land. With most of the work being carried out by volunteers, BFT worked alongside landowners and other organisations in the borders to restore and protect natural habitats.

- 2.2 Members welcomed the presentation and discussed the challenges raised, with Mr Dundas answering questions on particular points. Members expressed concern about the south of Scotland's wooded area being dominated by non-native species and an apparent national policy for the planting of large areas of commercial woodland in this area. Mr Dundas referred to the need for an alternative vision to present to landowners and to Scottish Government to look at longer term rewards by supporting the planting of commercial broad-leaved trees. He emphasised the importance of strategic land use planning and that an agreed Land Use Strategy should be at the top of the land use planning structure overriding the Local Development Plan, Forestry and Agriculture. Mr Aikman confirmed that regional land use planning was on the agenda for discussion with partners, including with the new South of Scotland Enterprise agency, Dumfries and Galloway Council and as part of the Borderlands initiative. It was anticipated that a regional land use strategy would follow. Discussions included looking at a pilot programme with Scottish Forestry to develop more effective ways of producing woodland which could be formulated into a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which could perhaps be used as a grant funding base. The Chairman thanked Mr Dundas for his presentation.

Supporting Documents:

1. IPBES report <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>
2. State of Nature Scotland <https://www.nature.scot/state-nature-scotland-report-2019>
3. ScotLink: Nature on Red Alert <https://www.scotlink.org/publication/scotlands-nature-on-red-alert-climate-change-impacts-on-biodiversity/>

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the presentation**

### **3. CLIMATE CHANGE: A JUST TRANSITION**

- 3.1 The Chairman introduced Kate Rowell, who in addition to being a Just Transition Commissioner, was Chair of Quality Meat Scotland, a livestock farmer in the Scottish Borders and qualified vet. She was also on the South of Scotland Enterprise agency Board. The Just Transition Commission was established by Scottish Ministers in January 2019 to advise on how just transition principles could be applied to climate change action in Scotland. As an explanation Ms Rowell referred to the quote: "The imperative of a just transition is that Governments design policies in a way that ensures the benefits of climate

change action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those less able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes". Just Transition was an internationally recognised movement but Scotland was first to look at the principles on a whole country basis and, with climate change as a focus, to also use opportunities presented to adjust existing inequalities. The Commission was made up of academics, environmentalists and representatives from organisations including Trade Unions, agriculture, industry including oil and gas and representing youth groups - the 2050 Climate Group. The Commission had also been asked by the Cabinet Secretary for advice on a green recovery from the Covid-19 outbreak. To gather information and with the realisation that it would be useful to meet groups on an informal basis, meetings had been held in different locations within Scotland, focusing on different groups and sectors; for example a meeting was held in Melrose focusing on land use and agriculture. The Commission's interim report, summarising emerging themes, initial recommendations and plans for the year ahead, was published in February 2020 (see link below to the interim report). During the summer in a 'Call for Evidence', the Commission invited written submissions to inform the development of final recommendations. The submission from Scottish Borders Council had been circulated with the agenda.

- 3.2 Ms Rowell referred to three main themes, described within the interim report:
- Planning ahead – the need for clear transition plans to be developed. Ms Rowell emphasised the importance of a strategic vision and transition plans for each sector to provide certainty and empowerment to encourage buy-in from all stakeholders.
  - Engagement - the need for on-going and proactive dialogue with all areas of society as the behaviour of everyone would need to change to meet Scotland's climate change ambition.
  - Equity – action to tackle climate change had the potential to create both winners and losers – this transition must be fair. An example was the potential inequality faced in rural communities and the importance of paying attention to connectivity when changing transport systems, where networks in rural areas may be less resilient.

- 3.3 In the ensuing discussion Members expressed their keen support for the principles behind the Just Transition movement and asked Ms Rowell for more information about particular issues. With regard to help that could be given to farmers for transition Ms Rowell emphasised that farmers were part of the solution to climate change and not the problem. She gave the example of Rumbleton Rigg Farm in the Scottish Borders where it was being demonstrated that there were lots of small changes in practice that could be put in place to make a difference and bring about improvements in the environment whilst maintaining production. In response to a question about the cost of conversion to low carbon heating systems in houses Ms Rowell advised the scale and cost of transition of heating throughout Scotland had not yet been identified. In terms of carbon efficiency there may be more inequalities in rural areas and it may be prudent for houses not on the gas network to be converted first. Members discussed the use of money routinely provided by companies involved in commercial renewable developments for the benefit of the local community. Rather than this being used to fund individual projects it was suggested that it could be used strategically and in a more constructive way, within the area of the development, for example to pay for house insulation. In a conclusion of the discussion Mr Aikman confirmed that many of the points raised by the presentation aligned with work being developed by officers and the report being put forward to Council. The next steps, once the report had been considered, would be to establish baseline indicators, formulate an action plan and set targets and ambitions. The Chairman thanked Ms Rowell for her presentation.

Supporting documents:

1. Just Transition Commission Interim Report, February 2020  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-interim-report/>
2. SBC Response to the Just Transition Commission Interim Report (copy attached)

3. Just Transition Commission Advice for a Green Recovery, July 2020  
<http://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-advice-green-recovery/>
4. Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/>
5. Infrastructure Commission: Key Findings Exec Summary (Jan 2020)  
[https://infrastructurecommission.scot/storage/278/Phase1\\_ExecutiveSummary.pdf](https://infrastructurecommission.scot/storage/278/Phase1_ExecutiveSummary.pdf)
6. CERG – Climate Emergency Report (Aug 2019)  
<https://www.changeworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/Climate-Emergency-Statement.pdf>
7. CERG – 8 policy Packages for a Green Recover (July 2020)  
[https://www.changeworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/CERG\\_Green%20Recovery\\_Final%20report\\_July2020\\_0.pdf](https://www.changeworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/CERG_Green%20Recovery_Final%20report_July2020_0.pdf)

**DECISION**  
**NOTED the presentation**

*The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm*



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## **BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2018-2020**

**Report by Ian Aikman**

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### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Council publishes the Biodiversity duty report and submits to Scottish Government by 1 January 2021.**
- 1.2 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 placed on all public bodies in Scotland, including local authorities, a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty. The next report is to be published by 1 January 2021 covering the period 2018-2020.
- 1.3 Previous Biodiversity duty reports were submitted by the Council to Scottish Government by 1 January 2015 (Reporting period 2011-14) and 1 January 2018 (reporting period 2015-17)  
[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/2211/biodiversity\\_duty\\_delivery\\_report](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/2211/biodiversity_duty_delivery_report)

#### **2 STATUS OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report presents the summary of activities the Council has been undertaking between 2018-20 to further the conservation of biodiversity. This report is based on consultation responses received from relevant services within the Council.

#### **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 I recommend that the Committee:- Notes the submitted report and acknowledges that it is to be:**
  - i) published on the Council's website and**
  - ii) submitted to Scottish Government,****by 1 January 2021**

## 4 THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY – NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Scottish Government published Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands in 2004 which aims to "conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and well-being of the people of Scotland, now and in the future". This Scottish Biodiversity Strategy was updated in June 2013 with the 2020 *Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity*. The update to the Strategy reflected international commitments to the Aichi Targets and the European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020. It focuses on the desired outcomes for 2020 to halt the loss of biodiversity in Scotland and to restore the essential services and benefits to society that a healthy natural environment provides.
- 4.2 In May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) issued a report warning about the damage human beings are causing to the planet. The IPBES report shows that the pressures on nature are increasing, and that the loss of species and ecosystems is not only catastrophic for species but also a global and generational threat to human well-being. The Scottish Government's Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets out the framework for national action to meet the Aichi targets. This is reflected in the Council's Local biodiversity Action Plan and this links directly to the Council's Biodiversity duty and is reflected in the Council's declaration of a Climate emergency on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 4.3 Recent guidance on the Biodiversity duty has been published by NatureScot (formerly SNH) on behalf of Scottish Government. This includes a new set of report templates and guidance tailored to the role of a public body <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/biodiversity-duty> The Council conforms to a Level One public body i.e. we own or manage land, regulate land use, and one of our main responsibilities linked to biodiversity and the Council has opportunity to implement a wide range of activities for biodiversity. The Level One template is used in the attached report.
- 4.4 The Local Biodiversity Action Plan was revised in 2018 to provide an up to date framework for action to further the conservation of biodiversity for the Council and its partners in the region.
- 4.5 Activities that safeguard biodiversity and enhance the biodiversity of the region continues to be delivered across many services of the Council including Planning, Neighbourhood Services, Major projects, Education and Community Planning, despite this being a period where resources have been rapidly diminishing. In part this has been achieved by cross-cutting approaches and in some instances, this has received national recognition as exemplars of good practice. The Council has been able to meet its duty in challenging financial circumstances.
- 4.6 During the next reporting period (2021-23) availability of diminishing resources is likely to be even more challenging particularly in the phase of a post-Covid recovery. The role of the Sustainable Development Committee and its supporting officer group will be key to ensure that creative approaches are adopted to ensure effective use of resources enables the

Council to continue to meet its biodiversity duty, safeguarding and enhancing the region's biodiversity and providing opportunities for local businesses and communities. This will require that we continue to mainstream biodiversity conservation by embedding this in our decision making and we continue to work in partnership with Community Planning partners, business, community and environmental across the region to achieve this.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report as it reflects past activities. However, costs may arise as a result of maintaining a programme of action for the next reporting round 2021-23.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There is a reputational risk if the Council fails to publish its Biodiversity duty report by the 1 January 2021. Scottish Government may contact public bodies who have not met their reporting requirements.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out on this proposal.

### **5.4 Acting Sustainably**

The activities in this report are entirely consistent with the Council's duty to further the conservation of biodiversity and demonstrate how it is acting sustainably.

### **5.5 Carbon Management**

The report includes measure such as tree planting and other habitat measures such as management of wetlands which will have enhanced carbon sequestration and built resilience to climate change with the region's environment.

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

This report does not create a new or amended policy or strategy

### **5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report

#### **Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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Andy Tharme	Ecology Officer, 01835-826514

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. The contact can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Andy Tharme, Tel No. 01835 826514





## THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORTING TEMPLATE: LEVEL ONE ORGANISATIONS

### Report Outline

Bodies are encouraged to use the following structure for their report. This is set out in the template below, which you can either type directly into, or copy into a separate document.

- Section 1: Introductory information about your public body
- Section 2: Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature
- Section 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity
- Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity
- Section 5: Public engagement and workforce development
- Section 6: Research and monitoring
- Section 7: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

### Completion Notes

These completion notes offer guidance to support your public body to complete your Biodiversity Duty Report. Taken together with the associated hyperlinks, they provide suggestions on the breadth of actions that could be included in your report. They may also assist with forward planning on how biodiversity can be taken into account in future.

While they incorporate the key elements on which you may wish to report, they are not an exhaustive list and it is likely that there will be a range of additional work that your organisation carried out in support of biodiversity on which you may also wish to report. To find out more on the Biodiversity Duty see the [NatureScot website](#).



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PUBLIC BODY

Please describe your organisation’s role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

	<p><u>Governance and management structures</u></p> <p>Scottish Borders Council comprises 34 elected Councillors representing 11 wards. The Administration since May 2017 has been a coalition of the Conservative Group and Aligned Independents Group.</p> <p>The Administration’s vision for delivering better communities is set out in “Connected Borders 2017 - 2022”, with their commitments based on 4 key principles: consensus, equality, innovation and community. Over the lifetime of the vision, the aim is to build communities that are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected – improved physical and digital connectivity;</li> <li>2. Enterprising – maximised investment; new and supported businesses;</li> <li>3. Beautiful – high quality development; high quality environment;</li> <li>4. Well – education for everyone; focus on mental &amp; physical health;</li> <li>5. Caring – patient pathways; support for families and carers; and</li> <li>6. Empowered – strong community partnerships taking decisions at local level.</li> </ol> <p>Within “<i>Communities of Beauty</i>” there is a commitment by the Administration:  <i>“We will, building on SBC’s localities work, pilot a biodiversity project to manage communal land, opening it up for more innovative approaches to enhancing our communities.”</i></p> <p>The Single Outcome Agreement has now been replaced by the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership’s Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (The Scottish Borders Community Plan). The vision of the Partners is “working together with our communities and through targeted partnership action, the quality of life will improve for all who live, work or study in the Scottish Borders.”</p> <p>All committee reports include a section on sustainability to ensure that new policies and actions are assessed against environmental impacts.</p> <p>In 2019 a new Sustainable Development Committee has been established supported by an officer Sustainable Development Group to embed sustainable development within the Council’s strategies, polices and service delivery. A key focus of the Committee will be to develop and implement a Climate Change Action Plan and</p>
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<p>prioritise actions to further the conservation of biodiversity. Following consideration of report to entitled 'Embedding Sustainable Development' Report on 29th August 2019 <a href="https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=4753&amp;Ver=4">https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=4753&amp;Ver=4</a> Council agreed formally to commit to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they related to local government; and to establish a new Sustainable Development Committee, supported by an officer Sustainable Development Group, to embed sustainable development within the Council's strategies, polices and service delivery. A key focus of the Committee will be to develop and implement a Climate Change Action Plan and prioritise actions to further the conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 25 September and is to set a target for reduction in carbon emissions consistent with Scottish Government's target of net zero by 2045. The Council will work with Community Planning partners and other stakeholders to develop the Scottish Borders response to the Climate Emergency and loss of biodiversity based on an ecosystems approach.</p>
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## SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

	<p><u>Heritage &amp; Design</u></p> <p>The biodiversity function is included within the Heritage &amp; Design section, which leads the co-ordination of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership. Advice is provided to inform the statutory planning process including development of the Local Plan policies and the production of the Supplementary Guidance for biodiversity and a Local Biodiversity Sites programme. Recommendations to protect biodiversity interest have been provided for over 789 development management consultations in the period 2018-20 to date.</p> <p>The Council has been liaising with partners in Edinburgh and Lothian Councils (Edinburgh, Lothian &amp; Borders Natural Heritage Planning group) to share good practice in biodiversity and planning and develop consistent approaches in south east Scotland.</p> <p>The Council's Landscape Architects are working with the Council's Flood Protection Scheme to inform the design and strong mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to protect riparian habitats and recreate habitats affected by the scheme. Potential biodiversity losses will be compensated for by re-establishing vegetation and trees, with a ratio of 2: 1 for replacement tree planting. Where the urban nature of the scheme precludes two trees being planted for every one removed, there are proposals to plant the excess trees higher up the river catchment to provide Natural Flood Management benefits. The protection of riparian habitats and the recreation of habitats affected by the scheme is a core principle of the scheme mitigation measures.</p> <p>Coldstream Cemetery is being developed by the Council. The design objective is to create a cemetery on the edge of the town that will be attractive, provide an appropriate setting for burials and is largely planted with native species. The site is being enclosed by a native hedge and there will be grass maintenance regime that favours meadow grassland species, as well as a simple SUDs scheme planted with native species. It is hoped that the design and the location will together result in an attractive spot for contemplation and memorials. The Landscape Architects have been consulted on 640 planning applications in the period 2018-20 to date.</p>
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Local Record Centre

The Council continues to have a Service Level Agreement with The Wildlife Information Centre <http://www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/> to maintain a biological records database for the region, provide information to support Planning and site and operational management, support for the LBAP, holding educational events and supporting biological recording in the region.

Invasive non-native species

The Council has a Service Level Agreement with Tweed Forum to support their control of Invasive non-native species within the region and on the Council's estate.

Greenspace management

Scottish Borders Council have ceased the provision of annual bedding across the region as part of the Neighbourhoods Review. Alternative planting proposals have been developed with our communities, involving more sustainable and pollinator-friendly planting, and removing the Council's use of peat-based compost in the process. The reduced requirement for transportation of bedding plants by the producer and SBC staff's planting and ongoing maintenance activities reduces the level of harmful carbon emissions produced by the vehicles involved.

The department now has an electric vehicle within the fleet, in use as part of the management at Wilton Lodge Park, also contributing the reduction in carbon emissions.

Also included in the Neighbourhoods Review, the Council have reduced amenity grass cutting frequency by 50%, thus reducing use of machinery and vehicles and the resultant carbon emissions, and allowing a longer sward between cuts. Many grass areas have been identified where either no, or a single, cut is carried out resulting in hugely beneficial habitat opportunities for a wider variety of biodiversity to exist.

Tree risk management is ongoing with tree surveys and remedial works contracted out to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. The procurement of this work includes requirements for biodiversity-supporting measures such as retention of tree



stumps as habitat creation. The identification of both protected and sensitive wildlife habitats, such as bat roosts and badger setts, is part of the survey activity.

Play facilities – Scottish Borders Council are rationalising play provision, with significant investment in key Play Parks and the decommissioning of 56 smaller play facilities. This creates opportunities for alternative uses such as community planting, food growing, etc. Additionally, it reduces the amount of vehicle use to undertake the inspection regimes which contributes to the lowering of carbon emissions.

#### Biodiversity awards

As part of the Council's annual Floral Gateway Competition, the Border Biodiversity Award recognises community projects or initiatives that increase the biodiversity of the Scottish Borders through areas such as, e.g. local food production, recycling, or changes to environmental management or maintenance.

#### Wildflower area development

Parks & Environment are piloting further wildflower cultivation within amenity grass areas, with 2 nominated sites across each locality within the region.

#### Food Growing Strategy

Under the Community Empowerment Scotland Act (2015), the Council has developed its first ever Food Growing Strategy which is out for consultation until December 2020. This promotes and supports community growing of all types from orchards to allotments, with advice and guidance on good practice. The Volunteer Co-ordinator post is being brought back in-house to enhance the development of support for community growing projects. Integral to this is the continued development of the Community Growing project at Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden, which includes cultivation of local food and pollinator friendly planting. Development of this includes investment in a new replacement glasshouse, which will sustain the project and increase the scope for volunteers to get involved in local growing.

#### Roadside verges



Rural roadside grass cutting – our operations are undertaken only once throughout the season, they are timed to commence in June and given the size and scale of the network means that some verges may not be maintained until late July. The specification is to cut the grass 1m into the verge. We extend this at critical junctions and to maintain vision splays at sections of roads which are higher traffic/higher speed. Some unclassified roads verges are not always cut and are left untouched all summer where safety is maintained. We also modify our approach to maintenance at areas where we understand naturalised plants are in bloom e.g.at Yetholm.

#### Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes

As part of the design process for new housing development consideration is given to the creation of SUDS basins. These contribute to the slowing the flow of water to burns and rivers. Also as part of General Roads Maintenance, where there are specific issues with localised road drainage flooding and if it is deemed efficient to do so, we consider the installation of attenuation to accommodate the excess surface water during period of intense rainfall. This in turn reduces the impact on the existing surface water piped systems and also any discharges to water courses. To facilitate our waste management of road gully arisings, we use settlement lagoons at our material recycling centre at Langlee to deal with the treatment of the waste water from this process.

Working in and around water courses/rivers – The Council always engages with third parties including SEPA when it is required to work in and around bodies of water and rivers etc. Most recently at Dawston bridge a fish pass was included in the rebuilding of the bridge located on the B6357 towards Newcastleton. The fish pass maintains safe passage for aquatic life and demonstrated how we consider and design into our maintenance programmes biodiversity matters.

SBc Contracts is recognised for its efforts in environmental maintenance and is accredited under the ISO 45001 for environmental management. This recognises the approach taken to ensuring management systems comply and support minimising the impacts on the environment the activities undertaken by SBc Contracts.

#### Community Planning



A Community Plan is in place to meet the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, with an emphasis on improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for the Scottish Borders including a focus on sustainability and climate change. The Council established 5 Area Partnerships to help deliver this with a focus on community empowerment and locality planning with an aim to form a community engagement platform to develop priorities and outcomes for the area. As part of the Community Fund application process, there are criteria based on biodiversity plans within the community if appropriate (greenspace, parks & flower areas, community gardens etc.). The revised Local Biodiversity Action Plan was consulted on at the 5 Area Partnerships across the Borders.

#### Legal Services

Legal services provide advice with regard to wildlife legislation including Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Conservation Regulations (1994). Legal advice has been a vital component in the development of the mechanism for biodiversity offsets and the service plays a key role in delivery of these projects. Legal Service help produce Service Level Agreements with key partner organisations including The Wildlife Information Centre.

#### Partnerships

The Council co-ordinates the Community Plan partnership and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership. The Council is a long-standing and original member of the Tweed Forum which has a catchment management planning focus, and works closely with the Southern Upland Partnership, a south-Scotland NGO with a focus on rural communities and renewables, and with Borders Forest Trust.

The Council is a responsible authority on the Solway-Tweed River Basin Management plan (Tweed Area Advisory group, North Solway AAG) and Scotland River Basin Management Plan (Forth AAG)

The Council continues to support marine initiatives as a responsible authority under the cross-Border Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership <http://www.xbordercurrents.co.uk/new-partnership/> and the Berwickshire Marine Reserve



## **SECTION 3: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY**

**Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.**



The conservation of biodiversity is embedded within the Council's Regulatory Services, particularly Planning and Building Standards and Major Projects.

The Local Development Plan provides a robust policy framework to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced through developments. This is supported by Supplementary Guidance notably the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Biodiversity, Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy, Trees and Development, Renewable energy and design guidance.

The conservation of biodiversity is embedded in the functions of the Planning and Implementation section including within Ecology, Access, Landscape Architects and Paths to Health. Examples of mainstream activities from the reporting period are set out below:

#### Land Use and Forestry

The Council has explored opportunities to build upon the Land Use Strategy pilot (2013-15). As part of the Council's Woodland Strategy, the Council has been working with Scottish Forestry since 2018 on a Regional Strategic Woodland Creation pilot project <https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/woodland-creation/regional-strategic-woodland-creation-project>. The pilot project seeks to explore opportunities for new woodland in the region and develop a more integrated approach to land use. Scottish Government has set ambitious targets for woodland creation as part of the Climate Change Plan and Scottish Borders and the south of Scotland are key areas where there is pressure to create new woodland. There has been an extensive phase of local stakeholder engagement working with partners at The Southern Uplands Partnership and Borders Forest Trust, to identify the main issues associated with large, scale woodland creation and potential solutions. The next phase of the project will develop this into a Woodland Creation Framework and Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide locational guidance and promote integrated land use and activities that maximise the benefits. This work may inform national guidance to local authorities developing woodland strategies.

In response to Scottish Forestry's new Woodland creation application process, the Council produced an advisory note to sign-post woodland scheme applicants to relevant sources of information and key criteria that should be considered in drawing up a scheme:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory\\_record/54705/woodland\\_creation\\_advice\\_note/category/28/approved\\_planning\\_guidance](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory_record/54705/woodland_creation_advice_note/category/28/approved_planning_guidance)



#### Local Development Plan

The adopted Local Development Plan 2016 (LDP), includes a number of policies relating to the natural environment, which help direct potentially adverse development away from locations whose intrinsic value might be affected, but also acts as a signpost to direct resources towards the improved management of these areas. There are also a number of policies, which assist in helping people connect with nature.

Policy PMD1: Sustainability, contained within the adopted LDP underpins all the policies contained within the Plan, outlining a number of sustainability principles, including the natural environment. Policy PMD2: Quality Standards, includes standards for green space, open space and biodiversity, which all proposals should take into consideration. A number of other policies within the LDP make reference to the natural environment within criteria for the assessment process.

Chapter 'Environmental Promotion and Protection' (EP) sets out a series of policies specifically covering the natural environment, these include; biodiversity, landscape designations, protected greenspaces and green networks. There are a number of specific policies within the 'Infrastructure and Standards' (IS) chapter which are relevant too, covering flooding and SUDS.

The main policy changes within the last 3 years, have been in the production of the Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP2), which will be subject to a period of representation from 2 November 2020 until 25 January 2021. The aims of the Proposed LDP2 include;

- *Protect and enhance the built and natural environment*
- *Make provision for waste management*
- *Promote climate change adaptation*
- *Protect key greenspaces within built up areas*
- *Encourage better connectivity*
- *Extend and improve green network opportunities and links.*

The chapter 'Environmental Promotion and Protection' (EP), states that the Scottish Borders is an attractive place to live and work and this puts a clear responsibility on the Council to maintain the intrinsic qualities of the area whilst seeking the balance of promoting the economic stability and growth essential to the future viability of the area. The policies within this chapter place an emphasis on placemaking and design in relation to new



development. It confirms the various landscapes, natural environment and nature conservation designations within the Scottish Borders and lays down a range of criteria tests to be applied to ensure their protection and/or any potential appropriate mitigation measures.

The main policy changes, in respect of the natural environment, since the adopted LDP are the inclusion of Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS) and Local Geodiversity Sites (LGS), which have been identified within the LDP2 as non-statutory designations (Local Nature Conservation Sites). Technical Notes covering both these designations accompany the Proposed LDP2 consultation.

The main policies contained within the Proposed LDP2 which are relevant are;

- Policy PMD1: Sustainability
- Policy PMD2: Quality Standards
- Policy EP1: International Nature Conservation Sites and Protected Species
- Policy EP2: National Nature Conservation and Protected Species
- Policy EP3: Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy EP4: National Scenic Areas
- Policy EP5: Special Landscape Areas
- Policy EP11: Protection of Greenspace
- Policy EP12: Green Networks
- Policy EP13: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- Policy IS8: Flooding
- Policy IS9: Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage

#### Local Biodiversity Sites

The Council working with The Wildlife Information Centre and a Steering Group of partner organisations and biological recorders has been reviewing and assessing sites that within the region that are candidate Local Biodiversity Sites (local nature conservation sites, of regional importance). A total of 188 sites have been assessed as meeting the criteria and are now subject to consultation as part of the new Local Development Plan.



#### Placemaking

It should be noted that placemaking principles underpin the policies contained within the Proposed LDP2. Delivering sustainable development and ensuring high quality design from all development via good placemaking principles are key requirements which the LDP supports. The Council places a very strong emphasis on placemaking and design principle when assessing new development proposals, including respecting the character, appearance and amenity of the built and natural heritage of the area.

#### Tweedbank Expansion Area

The site is allocated for mixed use development within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016 (MTWEE002). Supplementary Planning Guidance is being produced which sets out to guide and inform the future expansion of Tweedbank within the site of the former Lowood Estate. As part of this process an Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken to inform the developable areas of the site and to inform the need for further assessments.

#### Engineering and Infrastructure

In engineering infrastructure projects the Council undertakes ecological surveys as appropriate and then implements measures to protect wildlife. For example during refurbishment works on Boghall Bridge an active dippers' nest was discovered so works were delayed until the young had fledged, monitored by ecological contractors and the Council's ecologist. Works were successfully undertaken and a nesting box provided the Dipper in future years. The Council also undertook major road improvement works on the A72 at Dirtpot Corner and these too incorporated many measures to protect wildlife and the River Tweed system. Ecology survey were undertaken and an Environmental Clerk of Works was employed to monitor the successful implementation of the works. Upon completion of the civils work a suitable complementary riparian planting scheme was undertaken.

Protection of bat roosts, birds' nests and otters during bridge works whilst also complying with environmental standards and restrictions. In the reporting period 2018-20 a total of 16 Environmental Surveys have been undertaken prior to certain bridge works commencing and, works were carried out under 5 CAR Licences obtained to allow bridge works to proceed in accordance with SEPA accepted Method Statements. A further 17 bridge projects where in stream working is required will be completed under SEPA General Binding Rules. For other asset maintenance 1 Environmental survey was carried out, works were carried out under 17 CAR licences



including emergency works in relation to flood damage, 17 schemes were also carried out under General Binding Rules and fish rescue operations were carried out at 3 locations.

#### Major Projects

##### Hawick Flood Protection Scheme

Construction works are planned and implemented with safeguarding and enhancement of local ecosystems made a priority. These include; extensive ecological surveys undertaken as part of the planning and consenting process prior to construction works as well as regular monitoring and evaluation follow up during construction; extensive planting of trees and landscaping of new habitats across the project footprint; the introduction of a new Biodiversity Park at Weensland; and the deployment of a number of specialist 'in river' working techniques such as silt mitigation and fish protection, all done in close partnership with SEPA, River Tweed Commission and local ecology groups. A key feature of the project is the introduction of a new Active Travel Network throughout the town of Hawick which will see a significant increase in active travel by foot/cycle within the community and the corresponding reduction in carbon emissions from previously chosen modes of motorised transport. The project also aims to operate throughout its 3.5 year programme in as sustainable a manner as possible by operating a stringent recycling policy across its delivery contracts, use of electric vehicles across the construction site, as well as use of 'paperless' contract management systems.

##### Jedburgh Campus

The development of a new intergenerational campus at Jedburgh was subject to a detailed ecological impact assessment and a range of other environmental surveys. Key ecological sensitivities included badgers and potential bat roosts in trees and existing buildings. An Ecological Clerk of works was appointed to oversee mitigation under licence. Post construction monitoring with camera traps has shown continued use of the area by badgers. A number of trees were required to be felled and they were subject to detailed surveys for bats, red squirrel and breeding birds prior to felling. The demolition of the existing primary school was carried out after detailed bat and bird surveys had been completed.

There was potential connectivity with the Jed water (part of River Tweed SAC) surface water mitigation was a priority. A surface water mitigation plan was implemented in agreement with SEPA, regularly updated as the works progressed. The main measures that were put in place were cut off trenches leading to settlement ponds and silt barriers were also erected throughout the course of the works. A water quality specialist visited the site regularly and recorded the pH levels at the outlets and also upstream from the site.



### Economic Development

The Borderlands Growth Deal has committed to the production of an Energy master plan for the Local Authorities involved including Scottish Borders Council, the first stage is the development of an energy baseline, a strategic action plan and stakeholder engagement strategy.

The Council acts as lead partner in the Scottish Borders LEADER Local Action Group (LAG), and LAG staff work within the Economic Development section of the Council. LEADER is European funding for local development, and is allocated by the Local Action Groups as a part of Scotland's Rural Development Programme.

The 2014-2020 Scottish Borders LEADER programme was allocated approximately £3M to support community, business and diversification projects with 5% of the budget to be spent on co-operation projects with other LAG areas in Scotland, UK or Europe. The overarching aim of the Scottish Borders Local Development Strategy in this LEADER programme is 'Enterprising Communities'. Its strategic aims are: Growing our economy, reducing inequalities and maximising the impact from the low carbon agenda. Its development themes are a focus on enterprise, innovation, revenue generation and sustainability, support for small and micro rural businesses and social enterprises, including key Borders sectors of tourism, food & drink, renewables and creative industries. There is also a focus on supporting projects that create employment, developing community capacity and leadership and supporting skills and training development.

Five projects have been supported by LEADER in the 2014-2020 programme which specifically supports biodiversity and enhancements to the environment. The projects have total values of £1,272,560 and attracted grant support of £839,355. These LEADER project decisions include:

- South of Scotland Golden Eagles project – co-operation project between Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway LEADER.
- Change of land use for sustainability Tweed Valley Mountain Biking Development
- Bird Garden Scotland – creation of coffee shop/educational facility/play area to support development of bird sanctuary at Oxton.



- Change of land use from hay meadow to create memorial wooded area for walking and ash burial at Neidpath, Peebles
- Marine Seabed Interpretation Project – Provision of detailed mapping of the St. Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve for development of virtual visitor centre.



## SECTION 4: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

How has your organisation integrated biodiversity into nature based solutions to the climate emergency and other socio-economic outcomes?

	<p><u>Nature-based solutions</u></p> <p><u>Biodiversity Offsetting</u></p> <p>A further series of implementation projects have been developed by the Council to deliver biodiversity offsets arising from major wind farms. A key focus of these implementation projects has been a multiple benefit approach providing examples of nature-based solutions. This approach features in the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity. This includes the Penmanshiel Compensatory Replanting Scheme to deliver 110ha of new woodland through a bespoke grant scheme launched in 2016 working with SAC (<a href="https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120104/forestry_and_estate_management/1704/penmanshiel_compensatory_replanting_grant_scheme_pcrs">https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120104/forestry_and_estate_management/1704/penmanshiel_compensatory_replanting_grant_scheme_pcrs</a>) to compensate for loss of woodland in accordance with Scottish Governments Control of Woodland Removal policy. This is being achieved by creating new native woodland, amenity woodland and productive woodland (broadleaf and conifer) that deliver multiple benefits including biodiversity, landscape, water quality improvements, natural flood management and recreation benefits, targeted using the Land Use Strategy pilot decision support tool. 25 woodland schemes totalling 110ha have been approved to date with two more proposals in the pipeline, to exceed the planting target. Four of the sites are on the Council's estate including at Eyemouth, Galashiels and Lauder.</p> <p>A Langhope Rig biodiversity offset project was launched in 2016 in partnership with Tweed Forum, SEPA, NatureScot and Scottish Forestry, to create new wetland areas in the Ale water catchment, a nationally important area for basin mire habitat and to create riparian woodland in the catchments of the upper Teviot to provide natural flood management benefits, which links this to the Council's Flood Protection Scheme at Hawick. Adopting a blended funding approach, 77ha of new native and riparian woodland has been planted in 7 schemes and the locations have included a set of additional natural flood management measures including attenuation ponds and leaky barriers. A further set of woodland creation schemes will be drawn up in 2020/21 to complete the project. Multiple benefits have been delivered for biodiversity, natural flood management, water quality improvements, habitat connectivity and landscape enhancement.</p>
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In the Ale water project, 9 ponds have been created within the Ale water target area, a further large pond was drawn up under the Ale water scheme but created under a SRDP grant. The ponds provide benefits for biodiversity, water flow management, water quality enhancements, carbon sequestration and will help maintain the range of successional states from open water through to wet woodland in an area of national importance for mire habitats.

Two further offset projects are about to be launched associated with Quixwood windfarm, the Borders Wader Initiative to create wader habitat in core areas within the region, the Council working in partnership with Tweed Forum and RSPB Scotland. The Council also continues to further support the Borders Tree Planting Grant scheme in partnership with Tweed Forum, Borders Forest Trust, Scottish Forestry and NatureScot.

#### Flood Risk Management

Consideration of opportunities for sustainable flood management including natural flood management, delivering multiple benefits, is included in the Council's Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP) (Tweed Flood Risk Management Plan where the Council is lead authority in 2016, the Forth Estuary Local Flood Risk Management Plan (lead: City of Edinburgh Council) and Solway Local Flood Risk Management Plan (Lead: Dumfries and Galloway Council) to align with its relevant land use strategies.

The Hawick Flood Protection Scheme is under construction with completion due by 2022. The scheme was subject EIA and a HRA, with works being carried out in a highly sensitive watercourse (River Teviot, part of the River Tweed SAC/SSSI). A number of working groups are overseeing construction of the development including a water course impacts group and environmental consents working group.

#### Borderlands Growth Deal Initiative

The Council is working with Tweed forum who are leading development of a Destination Tweed HLF proposal under a HLF development grant. The proposal includes projects for the native and riparian woodland in the Upper Tweed, a pollinator project, enhancement of designed landscapes, control of invasive non-natives and environmental education.

The Council is working with partners in Dumfries & Galloway Council to develop a Borderlands Natural Capital proposition as part of the Borderland Growth deal to trial natural capital pilot projects.



Supplementary Guidance: Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes

In August 2020 the Council approved Supplementary planning Guidance (SPG) on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) which sets out good practice procedures for the design of SUDS. The SPG is intended to highlight that the disposal of surface water requires early consideration in the development process and provide guidance on the measures and opportunities available to developers to integrate sustainable surface water management into their developments.



**What steps has your organisation taken to incorporate biodiversity outcomes into partnership initiatives, wider strategies or initiatives of relevance to climate change?**

	<p><u>Local Biodiversity Action Plan</u> The Council updated and reviewed the Local Biodiversity Action which was approved as Supplementary Guidance in 2018. The updated plan was subject to extensive consultation with LBAP partners and a full public consultation including with the five Area Partnerships of the Community Plan. The LBAP is based on ecosystem approach incorporating the key themes of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and builds on the Council's Land Use Strategy pilot work focussing on key drivers in response to climate change. It sets out a programme of action for LBAP partners until 2028 with key themes of ecosystem restoration, investment in Natural Capital, quality greenspace, conserving wildlife &amp; habitat, land and freshwater management and marine and coastal ecosystems.</p>
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**Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years?**

	<p>In relation to the Council's functions, key challenges related to Climate Change over the next three years will be related to flood protection and maintenance of infrastructure and the road network, management of Greenspace and wider countryside issues such as woodland creation. The Council will complete the construction of the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme during this period and will be investigating the development of Flood Protection Schemes and surface water management plans in other settlements. The Council will continue its review of Greenspace management considering opportunities to reduce inputs and build resilience in the environment in and around towns. The Council will continue to work with Scottish Forestry and stakeholders in the region to develop an integrated approach to land use and forestry to safeguard the natural environment and maximise the benefits to businesses, communities and land managers in the region.</p>
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## SECTION 5: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Public Engagement

	<p><u>Education</u>          Programmes of environmental education have continued within schools, with 10 schools awarded Eco Schools Green flag during 2018-20. Thirteen schools have been involved in the John Muir Award programme with 696 pupils signed up to the scheme in total (2017/18 and 2018/19) and 663 Awards gained in this period.</p> <p><u>Customer Advice &amp; Support Service</u>          Part of the work carried out by the Customer Advice and Support Service is to develop internal and external customer digital technology. The Digital Customer Access project has introduced digital ways to access our services and will continue to expand those options.</p> <p>Digital information distribution and collection using means such as social media, the Council website, online accounts and email will reduce significantly the need for paper distribution of information to our customers.</p> <p>The ability of customers to access Council services via self-service portals and our telephony service allows customers to do so utilising digital technology thereby reducing the need for travel to our Contact Centres, site visits by staff, the use of paper, postage and other resource consumption and disposal. Customers are sign-posted to relevant sources of environmental information including biodiversity resources.</p> <p><u>Good practice</u>          The Council will continue to promote good practice and has given presentations on its work at national events including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy stakeholder event in 2018, CIEEM conference in 2019, CIEEM Scottish conference in 2020 and input into guidance for indicative Regional Spatial Strategies in 2020.</p> <p><u>Access and Transport Team</u>          The Access and Transport Team continue to maintain an extensive network of paths throughout the Scottish Borders and promote and encourage use for walking, cycling and horse riding, through the provision of dedicated websites: <a href="http://www.walkscottishborders.com">www.walkscottishborders.com</a> <a href="http://www.cyclescottishborders.com">www.cyclescottishborders.com</a> and supporting Southern Uplands Partnership project <a href="http://www.ridescottishborders.com">www.ridescottishborders.com</a> These websites and related publications promote and interpret the nature and landscape of the Scottish Borders.</p>
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	<p>The Access Team ensure that the annual Scottish Borders Walking Festival is hosted by a Border town each year. In 2018 Hawick were the hosts and in 2019 it was held in Selkirk. The Access Rangers and volunteers lead a week-long series of walks many with the aim of interpreting the areas natural and cultural history.</p> <p>The Team manage Lindean Loch Site of Special Scientific Interest near Selkirk, in a manner which enhances the biodiversity and public enjoyment of this site. A breeding bird survey is undertaken each year.</p> <p>Coldingham Bay is a very popular Council owned beach and we work in partnership with the Berwickshire Marine Reserve, Sea the Change and Butterfly Conservation Scotland to ensure that the biodiversity interest of the site is managed and maintained and that environmental activities are organised for the public.</p> <p>The Walk It project is supported by NHS Borders and Paths for All and continues to be very successful at encouraging many people to take exercise and to enjoy the outdoors. Across the Scottish Borders there are currently 30 Walk It groups meeting weekly. In 2019 the project delivered 850 walks attended by over 11300 participants and has been successful in training many new walk leaders, which encourages people to be more aware of their environment.</p>
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**Workforce skills and training**

	<p><u>Training</u>          Training events have been held for Council officers and partner organisations including training on Invasive Non-Native Species held during INNS week in 2019 with presentations by SEPA and Tweed Forum, training on Wildlife Crime provided by SASA for Council officers and Police Scotland and training for the Council's Planning Officers on bats and planning.</p>
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**Identify any opportunities that are available to your staff to take part in practical actions**



## SECTION 6: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken to help develop understanding and awareness of biodiversity

	<p>This section is intentionally left blank</p>
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What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this? If you do not carry out any monitoring activities, please explain why.

Does your monitoring show any significant trends or highlight any areas of concern?

Have you added any data collected to the National Biodiversity Network or your Local Records Centre?



## SECTION 7: BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Describe your organisation’s main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

	<p>Key highlights during this period include the successful delivery of the Penmanshiel Compensatory Replanting Scheme which has successfully delivered 110ha of new woodland, providing a range of woodland types including productive conifer and broadleaved, amenity and native woodland enhancing local areas, and providing improvements to manage water flow and water quality.</p> <p>The Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-20 was adopted as Supplementary Guidance during this period and provides an exemplar of an LBAP based on an ecosystem approach which links the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to the Land Use Strategy.</p> <p>The declaration by the Council of a Climate Emergency and the establishment of a new Sustainable Development Group and development of a Climate Change Action Plan will focus actions to address the impacts of climate change and seek to reverse the loss of biodiversity.</p>
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**Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?**

	<p>Resources are likely to be increasingly scarce and opportunities will be sought to draw in further resources including further investment in Natural Capital.</p> <p>Developing integrated approaches to delivery for biodiversity as part of the Green Recovery will be both a challenge and a great opportunity. Approaches should seek to help develop the economy, which also enhances the natural environment and improves the health and well-being of local communities.</p>
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**POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE REPORT  
IMPLICATIONS SECTION**

**Report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory**

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**4 December 2020**

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**1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report suggests some changes to the Implications section of committee reports to take account of UN Sustainable Development Goals and requests feedback from the Committee.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 25 September 2020, Scottish Borders Council decided that the 'implications' section of Council reports would be reviewed and updated generally, with a specific objective of addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This review and updating is to be overseen by the Sustainable Development Committee with recommendations for a finalised format and approach to the 'implications' section of reports to be brought to Council for decision by 31 January 2021 at the latest.
- 1.3 The implications section of committee reports covers a number of specific areas: Financial, Risk and Mitigations, Integrated Impact Assessment, Acting Sustainably, Carbon Management, Rural Proofing, and changes to the Schemes of Administration and Delegation. The paragraphs which are being reviewed are the ones relating to Acting Sustainably and Carbon Management.
- 1.4 To ensure officers take account of the UN Sustainable Development Goals when drafting reports, it is proposed that a checklist is completed and details are given in a new section, "Sustainable Development Goals", on the specific UN goals which are being impacted. A draft checklist is attached as an Appendix to this report. Subject to Members' views, the intention is that report writers complete the checklist and draw the most salient issues into a brief narrative in the 'Sustainable Development Goals' section of the report, explaining relevance and (where appropriate) how the recommendations in the report support progress against the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 1.5 While 'taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' is a UN SDG (SDG 13), it is recognised that, national legislation, the Scottish public policy context (e.g. the Programme for Government 2021-2022), and Scottish Borders Council's own commitments manifested in the Responding to the Climate Emergency Report of 25 September 2020 require specific reference to be made to the Council's efforts and progress in this area.

Accordingly, it is proposed that a paragraph in the implications section is retained under the title 'Climate Change' with report writers setting out details of the impact of the report in this area, and (where appropriate) how the recommendations in the report support progress against Climate Change objectives.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee considers the proposed amendments to the implications section of committee reports, in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change, as set out in Section 4 of this report, and provides feedback for a final report to Scottish Borders Council in January 2021.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 25 September 2020, Scottish Borders Council considered a report 'Responding to the Climate Emergency'. During the discussion on the report, Councillor H. Anderson, seconded by Councillor Haslam, proposed an amendment, adding a new recommendation "that the 'implications' section of Council reports shall be reviewed and updated generally, with a specific objective of setting out the UN Sustainable Development Goals addressed by the actions proposed in the recommendations of the report. This review and updating will be overseen by the Sustainable Development Committee with recommendations for a finalised format and approach to the 'implications' section of reports to be brought to Council for decision by 31 January 2021 at the latest".
- 3.2 Councillor Aitchison and Councillor Fullarton, the original mover and seconder of the recommendations in the report, agreed to accept the additional recommendation. A further amendment to the recommendations in the report was proposed and seconded by Councillor Jardine and Councillor Edgar. After a roll call vote, the Council decided to accept the recommendations in the report and the new recommendation on the proposed review of the implications section of committee reports to take account of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **4 IMPLICATIONS SECTION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 4.1 The implications section of committee reports covers a number of specific areas: Financial, Risk and Mitigations, Integrated Impact Assessment, Acting Sustainably, Carbon Management, Rural Proofing, and changes to the Schemes of Administration and Delegation. When officers are drafting reports they need to consider any implications or consequences of either carrying out or not carrying out the proposals in the report, and detail these in this section. The paragraphs which are being reviewed are the ones relating to Acting Sustainably and Carbon Management.
- 4.2 Guidance given to officers on these paragraphs is as follows:
- (a) Acting Sustainably – in order to help meet the duties set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, all reports are required to demonstrate how the three facets of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) will be taken into account in the development and implementation of your project/activity. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that you have considered the long term sustainability issues related to your report. You should describe succinctly how your project or activity contributes to each of these elements, or where it specifically undermines any of these goals. This should help the reader check that the overall impacts of a proposal have been considered and that an integrated solution is being recommended.
  - (b) Carbon Management - Alongside its duty to 'act sustainably', the Council must also reduce its carbon footprint. As well as meeting key national targets, this is also a major cost issue for the Council now, and in the future. You need to state in this section of the report if

there will be any impact on the Council's carbon emissions of doing or not doing what is proposed, and evaluate any impact and/or mitigation efforts. If there are no significant effects on carbon emissions or if these are not known, then say so.

4.3 On 25 September 2015, the Member States of the United Nations agreed on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which will guide global action on sustainable development until 2030. The Goals are:

- SDG1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- SDG3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
- SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all potential.
- SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- SDG6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- SDG7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- SDG8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- SDG9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
- SDG10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- SDG12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- SDG13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- SDG14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- SDG15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- SDG16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- SDG17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

4.4 On 29 August 2019, in considering the Embedding Sustainable Development Report, Council agreed (inter alia) 'formally to commit to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to local government'. To ensure officers take account of the Goals when drafting reports, it is proposed that a checklist is completed and details are given in a new paragraph "Sustainable Development Goals" on the specific UN goals which are being impacted. A draft checklist is attached as an Appendix to this report. The intention will be to replace the current paragraphs on Sustainable Development and Carbon Management in future committee reports.

4.5 While 'taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' is a UN SDG (SDG 13), it is recognised that, national legislation, the Scottish public policy context (e.g. the Programme for Government 2021-2022), and

Scottish Borders Council's own commitments manifested in the Responding to the Climate Emergency Report of 25 September 2020 require specific reference to be made to the Council's efforts and progress in this area. Accordingly, it is proposed that within the implications section, the paragraph on 'Carbon Management' is replaced with one on 'Climate Change', with report writers setting out details of the impact of the report in this area, and (where appropriate) how the recommendations in the report support progress against Climate Change objectives. 'Climate Change' better reflects the fact that action on Climate Change is not limited to carbon emission, but must include action to reduce all greenhouse gases, as well as adaptation to those Climate Change impacts such as 'hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters and increased flooding' that we have already begun to experience.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not address the UN Sustainable Development Goals. By including details in committee reports, this will evidence the seriousness with which the Council is taking its responsibilities.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

No Integrated Impact Assessment is required as the report is applicable to everyone.

### **5.4 Acting Sustainably**

The change to committee reports will help address any negative economic, social or environmental impacts.

### **5.5 Carbon Management**

There are no effects on the Council's carbon emissions.

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

The changes proposed are applicable to everyone.

### **5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Service Director HR & Communications, have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**



**PROPOSED UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS CHECKLIST**

Consider each of the UN Sustainable Development Goals below, and decide whether your project/action plan/recommendations will make a difference to any of these. If the answer is yes, then you need to comment on the specific goals and what the impact/difference is likely to be in the Sustainable Development Goals paragraph in your committee report.

	<b>UN SD Goal</b>	<b>Potential SBC Impact examples</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to service provision</li> <li>• Encourage local action</li> <li>• Retain or improve local income</li> <li>• Encourage &amp; support community enterprise</li> </ul>		
2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to service provision</li> <li>• Encourage local action</li> <li>• Promote local food chains, including transport to market</li> <li>• Encourage &amp; support community enterprise</li> <li>• Multi-agency approach to tackle child and adult malnutrition</li> </ul>		
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to service provision</li> <li>• Encourage communitiy involvement</li> <li>• Work with partners</li> <li>• Use planning and public transport to reduce pollution</li> <li>• Manage natural resources and protect the environment</li> <li>• Encourage walking and cycling</li> </ul>		
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and tackle the barriers to school attendance</li> <li>• Integrate technical and vocational training programmes into local economic development strategies</li> <li>• Reach out to vulnerable and marginalized individuals and communities to ensure access to education and training to meet their needs</li> </ul>		
5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure non-discriminatory service provision to citizens</li> <li>• Tackle violence and harmful practices to women</li> <li>• Encourage women into elected office</li> <li>• Mainstream gender equality</li> </ul>		

	<b>UN SD Goal</b>	<b>Potential SBC Impact examples</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure natural resource management and urban planning</li> <li>• Ensure private water supplies are fit for purpose</li> <li>• Establish joined up approach to water resources management</li> </ul>		
7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify gaps in access to affordable energy, particularly to vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Ensure Council buildings are energy efficient, making best use of renewable resources wherever possible</li> <li>• Identify areas for improvement for transport and carbon emissions</li> <li>• Generate energy from renewable resources or waste</li> </ul>		
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate growth and employment through local economic development opportunities</li> <li>• Provide safe and secure working environments with equal pay for equal work</li> <li>• Work with local communities to develop strategic tourism plans</li> </ul>		
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote small scale start ups in economic development strategies taking account of local resources, needs and markets</li> <li>• Identify gaps in access to IT and the internet in communities</li> </ul>		
10	Reduce inequalities within and among countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build capacity to identify and tackle poverty and exclusion</li> <li>• Promote the participation of minority or under represented groups in public consultations</li> <li>• Provide services in a non-discriminatory way</li> <li>• Align budgets to boost employment opportunities and income in the poorest communities</li> </ul>		
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to make access to affordable housing attainable</li> <li>• Promote public transport</li> <li>• Provide citizens with safe, green public spaces</li> <li>• Promote re-use and recycling</li> <li>• Protect cultural heritage</li> <li>• Take action to mitigate the effects of climate change</li> </ul>		

	<b>UN SD Goal</b>	<b>Potential SBC Impact examples</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support short supply chains to reduce transport and carbon emissions</li> <li>• Effect sustainable procurement policies and conditions</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the importance of sustainable production and consumption</li> <li>• Monitor the impact of tourism</li> </ul>		
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sufficient capacity to deal with climate related hazards and natural disasters and protect communities</li> <li>• Raise awareness of climate change at local level</li> <li>• Integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into urban and regional planning</li> </ul>		
14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure coasts and rivers are protected from pollution and run off</li> <li>• Develop planning and building regulations to allow construction in suitable areas</li> </ul>		
15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect natural resources and habitats by raising awareness to gain behavioural change in communities</li> <li>• Have biodiversity as an integral part of urban planning and development strategy</li> <li>• Multi agency approach to the creation of biodiversity and wildlife corridors</li> <li>• Encourage involvement of communities in halting biodiversity loss and prevent extinction</li> </ul>		
16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle corruption and increase public access to information</li> <li>• Expand efforts on participatory budgeting and planning</li> <li>• Encourage local action &amp; decision making</li> <li>• Become more responsive to communities</li> <li>• Reduce violence</li> </ul>		
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct budget to sustainable development</li> <li>• Develop policies to address poverty reduction and sustainable development</li> </ul>		

	UN SD Goal	Potential SBC Impact examples	YES	NO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage partnerships between public and private sector and communities</li> <li>Ensure local data is available to monitor progress</li> </ul>		

