
BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2018-2020

Report by Ian Aikman

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

4th December 2020

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

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 25th 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

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