

# Report

Report to:	<b>Climate Change and Sustainability Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>28 February 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>The Biodiversity Strategy (2024 to 2030) and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan (2024 to 2026)</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ present the council's new Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan (BDIP) as required under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Climate Change and Sustainability Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation (s):-

- (1) that the summary of achievements and key actions from the Biodiversity Strategy 2018 to 2022 be noted;
- (2) that the Biodiversity Strategy (2024 to 2030), be approved; and
- (3) that the Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan (BDIP) (2024 to 2026), be approved and submitted to the Scottish Government by 31 March 2024.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act, 2004 places a duty on public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Biodiversity Strategy and BDIP sets out how South Lanarkshire Council and the biodiversity partnership will contribute to the targets set out in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and identifies priorities for action.
- 3.2. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (commonly known as the WANE Act), requires every public body in Scotland to produce a publicly available report, on compliance with the biodiversity duty. This must be completed once every three years. The latest [biodiversity duty report 2023](#) was presented to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee on 29 November 2023 and submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2023. The report can be found on NatureScot's and the council's webpage.
- 3.3. In December 2022, the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) was held in Montreal, Canada. Governments came together from around the world to agree a new set of goals to guide global action to halt and reverse nature loss. Two hundred countries agreed to guide action on nature through to 2030. The Global Biodiversity Framework aims to address the biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems. The plan includes measures to halt and reverse nature loss, putting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030.

- 3.4. South Lanarkshire's previous Biodiversity strategy covered the period 2018 - 2022. A summary of achievements and key actions against strategic objectives is presented in Appendix 1. The new South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy covers the period from 2024 to 2030 aligning with guidance from Scottish Government, The [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) 2045 'Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland' published in December 2022. The Strategy sets clear ambitions for Scotland to be [nature positive](#) by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity by 2045. The Strategy is attached in Appendix 2.
- 3.5. The Biodiversity Strategy has been developed by the council, in conjunction with the Biodiversity Partnership which brings together various groups including Government agencies, advisory bodies and non-Governmental organisations with an interest in biodiversity in South Lanarkshire. Key partners include NatureScot, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network, Butterfly Conservation and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- 3.6. The council is a key member of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership and the Biodiversity Strategy sets an agreed framework for furthering the conservation of biodiversity across South Lanarkshire. The Strategy focuses on key ecosystems and sets out objectives and actions for delivery by various partners.
- 3.7. The council has a significant influence on biodiversity as a major landowner, as a planning authority and through the impacts of its wider service delivery. Direct council delivery of the biodiversity duty is managed and monitored through the council's Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan (BDIP). The BDIP is presented in Appendix 3.
- 3.8. The BDIP sets out objectives and outcomes that have been agreed with resource representatives. The BDIP represents the council's statement of its delivery against the biodiversity duty; monitoring of the BDIP informs the council's statutory reporting to the Scottish Government.

#### **4. Key points**

- 4.1. The fourth Biodiversity Strategy for South Lanarkshire takes a long-term approach to ecosystem conservation and restoration, with short and medium-term actions contributing towards the long term aims and overall vision of the strategy. The strategy's vision will look towards 2030 and beyond, in line with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- 4.2. The overall vision of the Biodiversity Strategy is: "The future of South Lanarkshire will consist of a suite of robust ecosystems which can adapt to climatic changes without the wide scale breakdown of local ecosystem services, habitat fragmentation and species extinction."
- 4.3. Several cross-cutting themes have been identified which set out how the council and its partners will protect and enhance biodiversity in South Lanarkshire through an ecosystems approach. This will ensure that species are conserved through wider conservation action such as habitat management and restoration.
- 4.4. The ecosystems identified in South Lanarkshire are:
- ◆ Freshwater and Wetland
  - ◆ Lowland and Farmland
  - ◆ Peatland

- ◆ Upland
- ◆ Urban
- ◆ Woodland

4.5. The Strategy also considers the following cross cutting themes:

- ◆ Key Sites
- ◆ Invasive non-native species (INNS)
- ◆ Soils and geology
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ People and nature.

4.6. The BDIP reflects the priorities and outcomes within the Biodiversity Strategy and articulates how the council will achieve its duty to conserve biodiversity. The BDIP acknowledges the South Lanarkshire Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, which emphasises the importance of achieving the councils biodiversity duty.

4.7. The BDIP reflects guidance from Scottish Government and includes examples of our achievements to date and actions going forward:

<b>Actions to protect biodiversity</b>	<b>Includes examples of our achievements.</b>
Governance	How the council manages biodiversity and ensures compliance with the duty.
Mainstreaming, nature-based solutions and climate change	How the council incorporate biodiversity, nature-based solutions and climate change measures across a wide range of services, policies, plans and strategies.
Public engagement and workforce development	How we continue to work with partners, including our communities and staff to promote and raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance.
Actions, monitoring and review	Sets out our key planned actions for the next three years and how we will monitor our actions and activities to meet reporting commitments.

4.8. Implementation of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy, together with the Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan, will have direct impact in stemming the decline of biodiversity assets within South Lanarkshire. Both plans will help ensure the effective management of these assets, which in turn will help to improve the quality and richness of the local environment across all ecosystems.

## **5. Employee Implications**

5.1. There are no direct employee implications with this report. The Council's Biodiversity Officer works in conjunction with all Council Resources and partners to deliver the Council's objectives around biodiversity.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1. There are no additional revenue implications associated with this report. NRF funding of £0.545m was received for 2023/24. An update on NRF spend to date was provided in the BDIP report presented to Climate Change and Sustainability Committee on 29 November 2023 and can be found in the background papers.

## **7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 7.1. Improvements to biodiversity have the potential to help mitigate the effects of climate change for example through natural flood management and carbon storage. There is also a need for biodiversity to be improved to make natural systems better able to cope with the impacts of a changing climate, such as improving habitat networks to increase species resilience.
- 7.2. Biodiversity actions are incorporated in the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. Measures are reported on through statutory Climate Change Duties.
- 7.3. The existing Biodiversity Strategy and BDIP have both undergone a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Reports and post-adoption statements are available on the Council website. South Lanarkshire Council has undertaken screening for the proposed South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy and BDIP with regard to the requirements of section 9 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 7.4. The Screening Report was submitted and approved to the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway in May 2023, the report sets out the views of South Lanarkshire Council on the likelihood of significant environmental effects for the proposed Strategy and the potential for requiring an SEA.

## **8. Other Implications**

- 8.1. Reporting requirements under the biodiversity duty have implications for all Resources. Targets and measures set out in the Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan are agreed with all Resources. The Countryside and Greenspace Section offer support and guidance and undertake the collation of measures and preparation of the statutory reports.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 9.1. Equality impact assessments were carried out for the existing Biodiversity Strategy and the SLC Biodiversity Implementation Plan.
- 9.2. There were no consultation arrangements attached to this report.

**David Booth**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

8 February 2024

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

#### Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable

#### Priorities

- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve

#### Outcomes

- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live

- ◆ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible

### **Previous References**

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Implementation Plan: Community and Enterprise Resources Committee – 22 May 2018
- ◆ Edinburgh Declaration: Climate Change and Sustainable Development Committee – 28 Apr 2021
- ◆ Biodiversity Duty Report: Climate Change and Sustainable Development Committee – 4 Nov 2020

### **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ [South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- ◆ [South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan](#)
- ◆ [South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Duty Reports](#)
- ◆ [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2045 Tackling the Nature Emergency Scotland](#)

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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