

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	4 November 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 to 2020
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request approval for the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report for 2018 to 2020, as required under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the Council's statutory Biodiversity Duty Report for 2018 to 2020 be approved for submission to the Scottish Government.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity. This biodiversity duty is about taking care of nature all around us, not just in specific protected sites and for particular species.
- 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. Scottish Government sets the schedule for reporting, which is every three years since 1 January 2015; the report covers activities in the preceding three years. The Council's next report is therefore due on 1 January 2021, which covers activities completed during calendar years 2018 to 2020 inclusive.
- 3.3. The Council has complied with the statutory reporting requirement since its introduction. A summary of previous responses of public bodies to the biodiversity duty can be found on the [NatureScot website](#).
- 3.4. 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 2018 to 2022 (BDIP). This was approved by the

Community and Enterprise Resources Committee (28 May 2018) and the Executive Committee (21 November 2018).

- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. The Council is a key member of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership, and has produced a Biodiversity Strategy (2018 to 2022) which sets an agreed framework for furthering the conservation of biodiversity across South Lanarkshire. This was approved by the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee (28 May 2018) and the Executive Committee (21 November 2018).
- 3.7. The Partnership 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 Forestry, Green Action Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

4. Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 - 2020

- 4.1. The report requires approval by the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee and to be published on the Council's website by 1 January 2021; Scottish Government are sent a link to the report.
- 4.2. The report comprises of six parts:-

1	Introduction	The Council's role in relation to biodiversity as a public body. Our role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities. This section establishes how governance of biodiversity is recognised within the Council.
2	Mainstreaming Biodiversity	Steps our organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into wider policies. This section describes how Resources work to mainstream the consideration of biodiversity and how biodiversity measures have been incorporated into various policy areas.
3	Biodiversity Action	A description of actions we have undertaken to benefit biodiversity directly or achieve wider outcomes for nature and people over the last three years.
4	Partnership Working	Working with external partners to deliver various projects that have been developed and implemented over the last three years to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.
5	Communication	The Council make use of their regular contact with the general public to communicate, educate and promote

		biodiversity. Within the Council, staff are kept aware of and up to date with biodiversity issues, changes and opportunities. Training and learning opportunities for staff are included here.
6	Biodiversity highlights and challenges	This section highlights some of the work we are most proud of, and identifies current and future challenges to completing biodiversity based work.

4.3. A copy of the biodiversity report for 2018 to 2020 can be found at appendix 1.

4.4. Some highlights from the report include:

- ◆ The identification of 15 new proposed Local Nature Reserves, and an extension to the existing LNR at Langlands Moss.
- ◆ Continued support of local volunteers and community groups across South Lanarkshire through a range of mechanisms. This includes regular work sessions, carrying out site improvements, events and activities, and committee meetings.
- ◆ Continued creation and improvement of habitats for pollinators, including new projects with Buglife and Butterfly Conservation to create wildflower meadows.
- ◆ Supporting outdoor play by providing access to funding for training and equipment, building capacity to help groups run their own outdoor activities and providing opportunities for children to explore nature close to their homes.
- ◆ The start of peatland conservation and conifer plantation removal at Langlands Moss, to help ensure the long term viability of the site as a peat bog that can contribute to biodiversity, flood management and carbon storage.
- ◆ The opening of Fernbrae Meadows and Glen Esk has celebrated the transformation of the sites into places accessible for people with improved biodiversity value such as new meadows, waterways and woodlands. Milton is currently undergoing similar work to improve access and biodiversity. These sites were abandoned, vacant or derelict; significant resources have been input to create quality greenspaces. Fernbrae Meadows and Milton are proposed LNRs.

4.5. The next steps to fulfil our Biodiversity Duty are:

- ◆ Approval of the Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 to 2020 by this Committee.
- ◆ Publication of the Report on the Council website.
- ◆ Notifying the Scottish Government by email with a web link to the report, by the statutory deadline of 1 January 2021.

5. Employee Implications

5.1. The Council's Biodiversity Officer currently prepares the biodiversity report in conjunction with all Council Resources that provide the relevant information. The statutory reporting regime has elevated the importance and accountability of biodiversity reporting within the Council and improved communications and awareness of biodiversity with staff.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Collection of climate change information is a core management task and therefore is absorbed into the daily business operations. As such there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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 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.

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 through their representatives on the Sustainability Development Co-ordination Group. The Countryside and Greenspace Service offer support and guidance for all Resources 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 SL Biodiversity Strategy and the SLC Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

20 October 2020

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

Previous References

- ◆ Community and Enterprise Resources Committee – 22 May 2018

List of Background Papers

- ◆ [South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- ◆ [Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan](#)
- ◆ [Biodiversity Duty Report 2015 – 2017](#)
- ◆ [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#)

Contact for Further Information

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

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