

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 August 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Revising the Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan 2018 to 2022
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the Committee on the Council's biodiversity activity and propose a postponement of one year to the revision of the two biodiversity Council plans.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the revised timeframe for completing the development of the Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan, as outlined on section 3.10 be approved; and
- (2) that the proposal to prepare a 1-year Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan for 2022/2023 be approved.

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 or 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. The Council has complied with the statutory reporting requirement since its introduction in 2014.
- 3.3. 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).
- 3.4. 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.

- 3.5. The Biodiversity 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 (previously Scottish Natural Heritage), Scottish Forestry, Green Action Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- 3.6. The Council is a key member of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership and has produced a Biodiversity Strategy which 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. Both biodiversity documents cover the five-year period 2018 – 2022, and therefore preparation of new plans for 2023-2028 should now be commencing. However, the proposal to postpone the production of new documents to 2023 and therefore have plans in place for the period 2024-2029 will allow cognisance of a new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to be taken for the reasons set out below.
- 3.8. The UN Biodiversity Conference (CoP15) will be held in China in October 2021; this international meeting is expected to negotiate new targets that will replace the existing Aichi targets. There are 20 Aichi targets which generally aim to address the causes of biodiversity loss, for example reducing loss of natural habitats, improving the sustainability of agriculture, and reducing pollution. The new framework will outline what countries need to do to set a course for the overall vision of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity of “living in harmony with nature” by 2050.
- 3.9. The Scottish Government is continuing to develop a new biodiversity framework, goals and targets to 2030. Some commitments have already been made internationally and agreed to in Scotland, for example to designate 30% of Scotland’s land and sea by 2030.
- 3.10. The Scottish Government has committed to publishing a new, policy-focused Scottish Biodiversity Strategy no later than 12 months after CoP15; by October 2022. This will replace existing plans and reflect international goals. Postponing the revision of the South Lanarkshire biodiversity plans will allow the Council to align with the direction of travel in Scotland and ensure our objectives contribute to national and international targets.
- 3.11. As a consequence of postponing the development of the next Biodiversity Strategy, a one-year Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan will be developed for 2022/2023. This will be a continuation of existing objectives and actions as they remain relevant to South Lanarkshire and continue to contribute to local and national biodiversity targets. This will encompass outstanding actions from the two existing plans alongside any potential new projects that tie in with existing themes. Given this is in effect a continuation of the approved plan with associated actions, it is considered that this ‘interim’ 2022/2023 plan does not require, in this instance, a separate Committee approval. However, progress will be reported through the normal IMPROVE reporting framework

4. Employee Implications

- 4.1. The Council’s biodiversity officer currently prepares the biodiversity documents in conjunction with all Council Resources and the Biodiversity Partnership.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no additional revenue implications associated with the production of these documents.

6. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. Biodiversity actions are incorporated in the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. Measures are reported on through statutory Climate Change Duties.
- 6.3. 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.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. 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 Section offer support and guidance for all Resources and undertake the collation of measures and preparation of the statutory reports.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. Equality impact assessments were carried out for the existing SL Biodiversity Strategy and the SLC Biodiversity Implementation Plan.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

2 August 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ 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

- ◆ SL 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](#)
- ◆ [Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan](#)
- ◆ [Biodiversity Duty Reports](#)
- ◆ [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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