



Glasgow City Council

Environment Sustainability & Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee

Report by Acting Executive Director, Land and Environmental Services

Contact: Stevie Scott Ext: 78292

**GLASGOW LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN,
BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT AND POLLINATOR PLAN**

Purpose of Report:

To provide committee with –

1. details of work being undertaken to update the Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan;
2. details of the Biodiversity Duty Report outlining progress made in relation to the previous Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and
3. details of work being undertaken to prepare a Pollinator Plan.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that committee notes the contents of this report and considers further areas for review.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) (Appendix 1) and Implementation Plan (Appendix 2) are being refreshed and updated for the period 2018 to 2028.
- 1.2 Glasgow City Council carries out its statutory Biodiversity Duty primarily through the implementation of the LBAP, with a Biodiversity Duty Report sent to the Scottish Government every three years. In line with statutory requirements, the most recent Biodiversity Duty Report was submitted to the Scottish Government in January 2018 and is now published online at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40155&p=0>
- 1.3 A Glasgow Pollinator Plan has also been prepared to support the national 'Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027' and contributes to the Glasgow LBAP aims, objectives and actions (see Appendix 3).
- 1.4 The LBAP makes a vital contribution towards a Sustainable and Low Carbon Glasgow, specifically by promoting and enhancing our city's natural resources including nature reserves and public parks, and also towards a Vibrant City, specifically towards the outcomes:
- Glaswegians are active and healthier
 - Glasgow acknowledges and promotes its history, heritage and culture.
- 1.5 Biodiversity is important because it contributes to essentials of life such as clean air, food and clothing. Its economic contribution includes wild plants which may provide cures for diseases while green tourism is a benefit to Scotland. Biodiversity habitats can contribute to carbon management and can also help reduce flooding risk to residential areas. Greenspace has been shown in various studies to be beneficial to mental and physical wellbeing. The biodiversity process aims to protect and enhance Glasgow's natural environment for wildlife and for people.

2. Background

- 2.1 A council Biodiversity Steering Group was set up in 1996 and the first LBAP was launched in 2001.
- 2.2 The LBAP is a partnership of 17 organisations (detailed in Table 1 below).

Table 1 – Glasgow LBAP Partnership

1	Glasgow City Council
2	Glasgow Life
3	Scottish Natural Heritage
4	Forestry Commission Scotland
5	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
6	Scottish Enterprise
7	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

8	Scottish Canals
9	The Woodland Trust
10	Butterfly Conservation Scotland
11	Botanical Society of the British Isles
12	Scottish Wildlife Trust
13	Froglife
14	Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group
15	Glasgow Natural History Society
16	Scottish Ornithologists' Society
17	The Conservation Volunteers

The LBAP Partnership also works very closely with the Clyde River Foundation; Friends of Glasgow's Local Nature Reserves; and Urban Roots.

- 2.3 The designated Scottish Biodiversity Strategy comprises two documents – ‘Scotland’s Biodiversity: It’s in Your Hands (2004)’ and ‘2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity (2013)’. The second document updates and complements the first and takes account of the Aichi goals and targets which have been set internationally (adopted by the Conference of the Parties at Nagoya, Japan and covering 2011-2020).
- 2.4 A further document ‘Scotland’s Biodiversity- a Route Map to 2020’ has been produced by the Scottish Government which sets out six ‘Big Steps for Nature’ and a number of priority projects which are being taken forward to help deliver the 2020 challenge and to improve the state of nature in Scotland. The refreshed Glasgow LBAP refers to the ‘Big Steps for Nature’ to help streamline local action to contribute to achieving the national strategy.
- 2.5 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) created a duty on public bodies, including Glasgow City Council, to ‘further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions’. In so doing, public bodies must regard the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- 2.6 The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE Act) amends the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) and places an additional obligation on public bodies to report on compliance with the Biodiversity Duty every three years.
- 2.7 National biodiversity guidance encourages local authorities to refresh LBAPs using the Ecosystems Approach. The Ecosystems Approach has 3 objectives:
- conservation of biodiversity;
 - its sustainable use;
 - equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of natural resources.
- 2.8 Glasgow has a number of statutory and non-statutory protected biodiversity sites within the city boundary. Glasgow has 5 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 12 Local Nature Reserves and 95 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The sites are considered to be the best areas for

wildlife in the city with ecological, scientific, recreational and educational value. These sites are mapped within the interactive mapping section of the GCC website within CityPlan - SG7 Natural Environment.

- 2.9 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designated for their biodiversity value and for public access and enjoyment of nature. Glasgow (as Scotland's largest city) is the local authority with the most LNRs in Scotland. Glasgow currently has an LNR area of 0.89 hectares per 1,000 population of the city and aims to increase this hectarage through new and extended designations.

3. Key Actions

- 3.1 The Seven Lochs Wetland Park, spanning across Glasgow and North Lanarkshire, has vast potential to provide for biodiversity and people. Encompassing seven lochs, five local nature reserves, a country park and one of Glasgow's oldest buildings, its miles of walking and cycling routes provide for active and passive recreation. The Park is home to populations of water voles, the only site for green hairstreak butterfly in Glasgow, key populations of the uncommon small pearl-bordered fritillary (butterfly) and other special species and habitats.
- 3.2 Glasgow has always been a stronghold for water voles within the central belt with populations recorded in wetlands including ditches, marshes, ponds, rivers and canals. In 2008, water voles were discovered living away from water and since then large populations have been recorded in the east end of the city living in long grassland in parks, road verges, gardens and derelict land. These non-aquatic water voles are termed 'fossorial' which means mole-like as they spend more time underground. This behaviour in an urban environment is unique and the population is of national significance. A thesis on Glasgow's non-aquatic water voles was completed by a University of Glasgow student, funded by the council (Sustainability Innovation Fund and Greening Fund) and Glasgow Natural History Society. Its author has also undertaken an SNH-funded water vole project aimed at raising awareness of this species. Glasgow's water voles featured on the 'One Show' in November 2015 and in BBC Wildlife and RSPB magazines. A scientific article on Glasgow's fossorial water voles has been published in the Journal of Urban Ecology.
- 3.3 Ponds and wetlands are crucial for a whole range of wildlife, both on the surface and hidden below. Over the past fifteen years, 13 park ponds have been naturalised, 22 ponds enhanced and over 55 new ponds created. The pond naturalisation programme has continued in Alexandra Park boat and duck ponds in 2015/16 and the introduction to Hogganfield Loch of 10 floating islands, creating 176 square metres of new wetland habitat.
- 3.4 Woodland management in the city focuses on ensuring no net loss in the extent of existing woodlands and amenity tree cover while encouraging regeneration, new planting and appropriate management to increase the amount and quality of tree cover habitats. Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) grant-aided works have benefited a number of Glasgow's valuable woodlands. Development of Urban Woodland Management Plans for eight key woodlands

(listed in Table 2 below), covering over 500 hectares, has begun which will set objectives and work programmes. Forestry Commission Scotland has also developed Land Management Plans for the council woodlands they lease in Drumchapel and Easterhouse covering over 150 hectares.

Table 2 – Glasgow LBAP Partnership

1	Castlemilk Park and Woodlands
2	Carmunnock Short Rotation Coppice
3	Cathkin Braes Local Nature Reserve
4	Cart & Kittoch SSSI
5	Crookston Woodlands
6	Dawsholm Park Local Nature Reserve
7	Linn Park Local Nature Reserve
8	Pollok Country Park

- 3.8 The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Habitat Restoration Project, a partnership between GCC and TCV, delivered 12000 volunteer days in improving the city’s biodiversity habitats between 2010-2015. Volunteering initiatives with TCV, the Seven Lochs Wetland Project and Glasgow’s Countryside Ranger Service continue to enhance biodiversity across Glasgow.
- 3.9 Raising public awareness of biodiversity is vital to its protection and enhancement for future generations. Glasgow’s Countryside Ranger Service remains the key provider for environmental education and awareness through community engagement, events, activities and other promotional work.
- 3.10 Land & Environmental Services and RSPB collaborate on the ‘Giving Nature a Home in Glasgow Project’, connecting children, families and community groups to create a citywide wildlife garden, and to celebrate nature within Glasgow.

4. Pollinator Plan

- 4.1 The Glasgow Pollinator Plan supports the national strategy by detailing local action to help halt pollinator declines and reverse losses. The aim of the plan is to have, as an outcome, a robust, healthy and diverse population of pollinating invertebrates in Glasgow.
- 4.2 The LBAP includes aims/objectives and actions which will help protect and enhance pollinator habitats and species. The Pollinator Plan supports the LBAP and provides more detailed information about the city’s pollinators, the threats and opportunities, and what is required to prevent their destruction or loss.
- 4.3 Habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation are likely to be the main threats to pollinator species, for example, the loss of semi-natural flower-rich habitats. Pesticides are also a key threat and can damage non-target pollinator species.

4.4 Our wildflower meadows are colourful, attractive and full of life. Over 22 hectares of park grasslands have been enhanced and are now managed as meadows. 80 hectares of species rich wildflower meadows have been enhanced and managed on farms in Glasgow. Wildflower meadows are vital habitat for native pollinators.

5. The Way Forward

5.1 Following consideration of this report, the LBAP and Pollinator Plan will be available on the Council's website later this year.

5.2 It is intended to renew the LBAP Partnership by asking organisations and groups to reaffirm their commitment to the biodiversity process in Glasgow and by approaching other relevant organisations, such as Buglife and the Seven Lochs Wetland Project, to join the Partnership.

5.3 The refreshed LBAP will continue to support the city's climate change adaptation agenda, volunteering opportunities, health and wellbeing through community involvement and will contribute to national biodiversity aims and objectives.

5.4 Biodiversity Duty Reports will continue to be submitted to the Scottish Government every three years with the third report due in 2021.

6 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: None at this time, although specific projects arising from the LBAP Action Plan may do so.

Legal: Statutory Duty to deliver under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) and the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (2011).

Personnel:
None

Procurement:
None

Council Strategic Plan:

The LBAP will contribute to the following:

A Vibrant City- Outcomes:

- Glaswegians are active and healthier
- Glasgow acknowledges and promotes its history, heritage and culture

A Sustainable and Low Carbon City- Priorities:

- To promote and enhance our city's natural resources including nature reserves and public parks.

Equality Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22 Yes

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? A screening has been undertaken (see link below) which highlighted the positive role of outdoor volunteering in addressing health inequalities. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40245&p=0>

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: The implementation of the LBAP will have a positive effect on the environment.

Social: Environmental volunteering has been found to have a proven impact on participants' health & wellbeing and to be an effective way to create sustainable places and communities.

Economic: The implementation of the LBAP will have a positive effect on the regeneration of key areas of the city.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: None

7 Recommendations

It is recommended that committee notes the contents of this report and considers further areas for review.