



## BIODIVERSITY DUTY DELIVERY PLAN

2010 – 2014



## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 created a duty on public bodies “in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”
- 1.2 In addition, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (referred to as the *WANE Act*) makes it a duty for all public bodies to publish a report on the actions they have taken to meet their biodiversity duty every three years. Reports must be available by 2014. The Scottish Government has issued guidance and a reporting template for use by local authorities.
- 1.3 The term ‘Biodiversity’ is short for biological diversity and, put simply, it is *the variety of life*. It includes every plant and animal including humans. Biodiversity is the range of habitats on which all flora and fauna depend. It is not just the rare and endangered; it encompasses all life from the common to the threatened.
- 1.4 Protecting biodiversity is increasingly important as it is essential for sustaining the natural living systems or ecosystems that provide food, fuel, health, wealth, and other vital services. People use plants and animals to produce food, drink, clothing, building materials, fuel and medicines. Living systems also provide the services which are taken for granted such as clean air, fresh water, fertile soil, breakdown of natural waste, plant pollination and regulation of climate. Biodiversity is all around; it shapes and enriches ways of life.
- 1.5 The natural character and biodiversity of the Outer Hebrides is a valuable asset, providing the basis for many social and economic activities of direct benefit to the local community. There are a range of jobs involved in the management of the islands’ natural heritage, with a large number of jobs in the islands’ tourism industry also dependent on the quality of biodiversity and the natural heritage.

## **BIODIVERSITY REPORTING**

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has produced draft guidance and a reporting template for local authorities on Biodiversity Duty Reporting. This focuses on 6 key areas as follows:

- Governance - providing clear leadership and management on biodiversity
- Action - taking action to protect and enhance biodiversity
- Mainstreaming - integrating biodiversity into corporate projects, plans and strategies
- Monitoring- recording data and reporting trends
- Partnership - developing effective partnership working through the Local Biodiversity Partnership and other stakeholders
- Communication - raising awareness and building capacity amongst stakeholders

3.2 In order to make reporting as effective and efficient as possible public bodies are encouraged to use this reporting template to report top-level information and to use web-link references to more detailed information. Local Authorities using the reporting template are encouraged to provide information in a transparent and easy to understand format.

3.2 The BDDP at Appendix 2 has been structured to reflect the 6 key areas as set out in the Government guidance. The Comhairle's first Biodiversity Duty Report to comply with the requirement of the WANE Act will be published on the Comhairle website by 2014.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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## **BIODIVERSITY DUTY DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2014**

The result of the staff / Members survey re bio-diversity awareness that was carried out in May 2012 has been published on the intranet. Reporting on actions allocated to other departments to be achieved through Interplan internal report on Comhairle functions received. An internal working group has been convened to take forward recommendations.

Biodiversity Article published in the September 2012 issue of e-Ceangal highlighted the results of the Biodiversity Awareness Survey and Eco-schools Conference. Availability of the exhibition has been highlighted to all schools in the Outer Hebrides. Surprise Residents and Visitors to the Outer Hebrides Exhibition have been on display in Vatersay, Benbecula and Stornoway, and in Northbay, Barra.

Action in schools: Discovery visit to identify good practice has taken place. Links with Grounds for Learning firmed up. School Estate Management Plan (SEMP) developments underway with new section on external areas and natural play. The Education Energy Efficiency Officer attends the Biodiversity Meetings and provides support to individual Schools as they work towards Eco schools targets.

Biodiversity Events programme co-ordinating a range of events held throughout the islands in May 2012. An Lanntair delivered series of workshops for schools.

Wording to highlight the importance of biodiversity has been incorporated into all Comhairle funding application forms. An advice booklet for Comhairle tenants and staff has been produced in relation to actions for biodiversity. Published on Intranet and article to be published in Spring 2013 edition of e-Ceangal and distributed to all households.

An Eco-schools workshop was held in conjunction with Education Department on 14 March 2013 - 12 rural Lewis schools attended. The 2nd LBAP progress report for 2008-2011 launched at the Eco schools Workshops in March 2013

A section on biodiversity has been included in Corporate Asset Management Plan

Biodiversity Duty Presentation was given to all Departmental Management Teams in 2012 and was circulated to all departmental staff.

Progress in implementing the BDDP is presented in Appendix 1. Implementation of the actions is ongoing and some of the achievements are highlighted below.

Another online biodiversity awareness survey was undertaken in May 2012 to gauge the effectiveness of awareness raising efforts since 2010. The results have been compared with the results of the survey in 2010 and the findings published on the intranet. The Biodiversity Awareness Survey Report shows that overall there is a greater interest in the Outer Hebrides' biodiversity among staff and Members since 2010. An article published in the September 2012 issue of e Ceangal highlighted the results of the Biodiversity Awareness Survey and Eco schools Conference. Reporting on actions allocated to other departments is being achieved through Interplan internal report on Comhairle functions received. An internal working group has been convened to take forward recommendations.

Wording has been drafted for incorporation into Comhairle business and community funding application forms in relation to actions for biodiversity. Grant applicants are requested to consider how their project proposals may impact or enhance biodiversity. Only projects with a positive or negligible impact on biodiversity will be supported.

A showcase event, an Eco-schools Workshop was held in conjunction with Education Department on 14 March 2013. Entitled Local Action – Global Impact for schools it was held in Sgoil nan Loch on 14 March 2013. The event enabled 12 rural Lewis schools to come together to share good practice and learn more about global citizenship through workshop activities and presentations. Workshops included Outdoor learning/school grounds; Crofting Connections; Carbon Reduction, Carbon Footprints; Co-op Green Schools Revolution, and Fair Trade. The Biodiversity Events programme co-ordinated a range of events held throughout the islands in May 2012. An Lanntair delivered series of workshops for schools.

The biodiversity duty has been incorporated into the Corporate Induction Course presentation delivered to all Comhairle new employees.

A guidance booklet entitled Tips for reducing our impact on Biodiversity – Advice for Comhairle staff and tenants has been produced and was published at the end of March 2013. It provides targeted, relevant, practical biodiversity guidance on dealing with waste, energy use, purchase and use of materials, and grounds and gardens. . This has been published on Intranet and in an article published in Spring

2013 edition of e-Ceangal. As well as being published in the September 2012 issue of e-Ceangal which has highlighted the results of the Biodiversity Awareness Survey and the Eco-schools Conference.

Biodiversity Duty Presentation given by the Biodiversity Duty Working Group representatives to Development Departmental Management Team on 8 November 2012 and circulated to all departmental staff.

The second Western Isles Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Progress Report for the period 2008-2011 has been produced and was launched at the Ecoschools Workshops March 2013; it has been published in English and Gaelic

Development of the Schools Estate Management Plan is underway and includes a new section on external areas and natural play. The Corporate Asset Management Plan also includes a section on external areas and natural play. Education Department is represented on Comhairle working group regarding play areas.

The “Surprise Residents and Visitors to the Outer Hebrides” Exhibition has been on display in Vatersay, Benbecula, Stornoway, and in Northbay, Barra. Availability of the exhibition has been highlighted to all schools in the Outer Hebrides.

5.11 A Section on biodiversity has been included in Corporate Asset Management Plan

The current grounds maintenance contract expires 31/03/2015. Over the coming year the Procurement and Technical teams will be reviewing delivery options and specifications for a new contract to run from 01/04/2015. It is suggested that the Biodiversity Officer is involved in the procurement process to advise on potential changes to specification and practice that may be desirable to include in the new contract and to meet with the Technical Services Project Managers to discuss key themes for consideration in design options.

Partnership projects have included Outer Hebrides Biological Recording Project [www.ohbr.org.uk](http://www.ohbr.org.uk), the Machair life Project <http://www.machairlife.org.uk/>, with the R.S.P.B. and with Scottish Natural Heritage the Hebridean Mink Project <http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-wildlife/hebridean-mink-project/> and the Uist Wader Project.

## COMHAIRLE BIODIVERSITY DUTY DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2014

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
<b>Section 1. Governance, Leadership and Management</b>				
1.1	Integrate biodiversity into the Investors in people (IIP) Process and the Corporate Improvement Plan.	Chief Exec's	Biodiversity considered by all and reflected in performance - achieved through current reporting structures	Completed
1.2	Identify biodiversity as a <u>Core Value</u> and highlight during staff inductions; Incorporate into Corporate Induction Checklist for Line Managers.	Chief Exec's – Human Resources	All new staff are made aware of the Biodiversity Duty. - now part of Corporate Induction training	Completed
1.3	Appoint an elected member as Biodiversity Champion for the Comhairle	Development	Promote and raise awareness of biodiversity issues and the duty among staff and elected members	
<b>Section 2. Action for Biodiversity</b>				
2.1	Implement CnES led actions as set out in the Western Isles Habitat and Species action plans.	Development Technical services	Actions implemented according to the timescale specified in the Action Plans.	

2.2	Continue promotion of biodiversity and sustainable development education in schools through Eco-schools and Curriculum for Excellence.	Education	Biodiversity is incorporated into activities across the school curriculum. Increase number of schools with Eco-schools Awards Following on from the successful eco-schools conference held in Uist many more Schools are working towards their next Green Flag. The Education Department's Energy efficiency Officer continues to provide support to schools in this area.	
2.3	Consider school grounds and outdoor spaces within the School Estate Management Plan being developed in 2013 and make best use of these areas as an integral part of the learning environment. Enhance these where possible.	Education	Provision of enhanced outdoor learning areas within school grounds to help deliver the vision for Outdoor Learning as set out in <u>Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning</u> and in line with the principles set out in the School Estates Strategy: <u>Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future</u> . The Education department has developed close ties with Grounds for Learning and Keep Scotland Beautiful as we prepare for an audit of school grounds.	
2.4	Review Grounds Maintenance Contract specification – consider grass cutting regimes which would improve biodiversity and minimise negative impacts. Take steps to implement regimes which will improve biodiversity.	Technical Services	Specification will be reviewed and changes to grass cutting regimes will be incorporated into contract specification for next contract – from 2014 onwards. The current grounds maintenance contract expires 31/03/2015. Over the coming year the Procurement and Technical teams will be reviewing delivery options and specifications for a new contract to run from 01/04/2015. It is suggested that the Biodiversity Officer is involved in the procurement process to advise on potential changes to specification and practice that may be desirable to include in the new contract.	

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
2.5	Review Winter Maintenance (gritting) specifications to assess if negative impact on biodiversity can be reduced e.g. through minimising salt loadings and minimising spray angles. Take steps to seek improvements.	Technical Services	Specification will be reviewed and changes which minimise impacts will be incorporated into contract specification. Technical Services officers are undertaking a feasibility study on the provision of a salt barn. The barn would keep the salt dry and hence enable the reduction in spreading rates.	
2.6	Promote awareness of best practice in sustainable design and construction, such as the BRE Green Guide to Specification (an Environmental Profiling System for Building Materials).	Technical Services	Comhairle encourages best practice for building and maintenance works so that this becomes “the norm” and minimise environmental impacts.	
2.7	Provide targeted, relevant, practical biodiversity guidance to tenants in leased premises and premise managers in Comhairle buildings. Include guidance on dealing with waste and energy use. Examples of what can be done easily and useful contacts list.	Development	Guidance produced and issued. Comhairle encourages its tenants to consider biodiversity and to make improvements to minimise negative biodiversity impacts. Completed. ‘Tips on Biodiversity’ published and distributed.	Completed
<b>Section 3. Mainstreaming</b>				

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
3.1	Provide organic waste uplift to Comhairle premises (e.g. school canteens, care homes, Sandwick Road canteen), in areas where there is a separate organic waste collection service available.	Technical Services Zero Waste Western Isles	Comhairle leads by example in encouraging householders to recycle waste. Increased quantity of waste composted, recycled and diverted from landfill. Reduction in landfill tax. This has been implemented and will be followed up again with all Comhairle premises as part of the waste collection contract renewal process currently being carried out.	Completed
3.2	Provide dry recyclates (paper, cans, and plastics) uplift to Comhairle premises in areas of the Islands where such a service option exists.	Technical Services Zero Waste Western Isles	Comhairle leads by example in encouraging householders to recycle waste. Increased quantity of waste composted, recycled and diverted from landfill. Reduction in landfill tax. This is now a Legal Duty, following the implementation of new obligations on commercial waste producers from 1 January 2014 as part of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012.	Completed
3.3	Obligate active participation in recycling collection service by all Comhairle Departments, where such service options are available	Technical Services Zero Waste Western Isles	Comhairle leads by example in encouraging householders to recycle waste. Increased quantity of waste composted, recycled and diverted from landfill. Reduction in landfill tax. Partly superseded by the new regulation but the obligation to recycle food waste (not a legal duty in the Islands under the new Regulations) is currently being delivered as part of the waste collection contract renewal process.	Completed

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
3.4	Encourage outdoor learning opportunities through the provision of in-service training, support and resources for teaching staff.	Education Development	Increase confidence of teaching staff so that outdoor learning becomes embedded in the curriculum. All pupils participate in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences as set out in <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> through outdoor learning. Education staff have attended playground seminars and workshops in Berlin and Glasgow. The networking and information gain from these workshops is being fed through the play park steering group resulting in a far better understanding of the importance of biodiversity and the positive impact that this can have on pupils.	
3.5	Produce short briefing for twilight sessions in schools and include on GLOW and CnES website	Development	Teaching staff have improved access to biodiversity resources to assist with eco-schools and embedding biodiversity within the curriculum.	Completed

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
3.6	Ensure Carbon Management Plan exploits all potential opportunities to positively impact biodiversity. This will include practical energy efficiency measures as well as integrating renewable technologies within Council properties.	Technical Services	<p>Opportunities to maximise positive impacts on biodiversity are exploited. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has already undertaken a number of measures which have had a measurable impact on our carbon footprint since 2009, including:</p> <p>Completion of the Western Isles Schools Programme, which has replaced 12 old schools buildings with a smaller number of new, energy efficient schools.</p> <p>Disposal of surplus properties within the Council's Estate.</p> <p>Initiation of an Energy Efficiency Champions programme for staff across the organisation.</p> <p>Introduction of an 'Electric Vehicle' for use by staff based at Comhairle Offices in Stornoway and Balivanich.</p>	Completed
3.7	Ensure development of the new Western Isles Waste Strategy incorporates opportunities to positively impact biodiversity and/or minimise negative impacts.	Technical Services	Negative environmental impacts of Waste Management in the Outer Hebrides are minimised. The Comhairle Waste Strategy was approved in 2012 and many of the actions have been implemented	Completed

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
3.8	Incorporate biodiversity consideration into application process for Business Gateway and Community Grant and Loan Schemes.	Development	Wording has been incorporated into Comhairle business and community funding application forms in relation to actions for biodiversity. Grant applicants are requested to consider how their project proposals may impact or enhance biodiversity. Only projects with a positive or negligible impact on biodiversity will be supported.	Completed
<b>Section 4. Monitoring</b>				
4.1	Produce and publish report on implementation of Biodiversity Duty by 2014	Development	Comply with the requirements of the WANE Act	Completed
4.2	Highlight biodiversity achievements in annual Comhairle Performance Calendar	Chief Exec's Development	Increased awareness of biodiversity projects. Biodiversity action achievements highlighted within the Comhairle and externally.	Completed
4.3	Use Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) to report on implementation of the LBAP actions. Publish 3 year progress report in 2012.	Development Technical Services	Implementation of action plans is reported and used to produce monitoring reports.	
<b>Section 5. Partnership Working</b>				

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
5.1	Engage with partner agencies to organise and publicise a programme of events annually as part of Scottish Biodiversity Week	Development	Increase understanding of biodiversity and its importance to our lives (economy, health, wealth etc) amongst citizens of the Outer Hebrides. Events programme in May 2012. An Lanntair delivered series of workshops for school. Series of local events held as part of Year of Natural Scotland Machair Life and RSPB events and Scarecrow competitions. Western Isles Support for the Environment Group.	Completed
5.2	Lead LBAP Steering Group and liaise with partners on implementation of actions	Development	Contributes towards delivery of the Comhairle's biodiversity duty and encourage implementation of biodiversity actions among partners. 2nd LBAP progress report for 2008-2011 published <a href="http://187.187.1.42/INTERNET/biodiversity/progressreport0711.asp">http://187.187.1.42/INTERNET/biodiversity/progressreport0711.asp</a>	Completed
<b>Section 6. Biodiversity Communications</b>				
6.1	Undertake online surveys to assess level of biodiversity awareness within Comhairle to gauge effectiveness of awareness raising efforts and compare with findings from 2010 survey	Development	Effectiveness of biodiversity awareness raising actions since 2010 assessed. Survey undertaken in May 2012 and published on intranet <a href="http://187.187.1.42/biodiversity/duty.asp#AwarenessSurvey">http://187.187.1.42/biodiversity/duty.asp#AwarenessSurvey</a>	Completed

Ref	Action	Lead Partner	Outcomes	
6.2	Promote availability of Western Isles Crofting & Biodiversity Exhibition as a community resource and encourage organisations and businesses to host display	Development	Highlight the important links between traditional crofting practices and biodiversity. Biodiversity articles have been published in issues of e Ceangal highlighted the results of the Biodiversity Awareness Survey and Eco schools Conference. Availability of the exhibition has been highlighted to all schools in the Outer Hebrides. Surprise Residents and Visitors to the Outer Hebrides Exhibition have been on display in Vatersay, Benbecula and Stornoway, and in Northbay, Barra.	Completed
6.3	Increase awareness through targeted articles in e-Ceangal, Slainte, Siar News and Planning Services updates, Business Gateway e-bulletins.	Development	Increased awareness of biodiversity issues among Comhairle staff, elected Members and the public.	Completed
	Deliver biodiversity presentation to colleagues in all Departments through existing departmental meetings	All Departments	Increased awareness of biodiversity issues among Comhairle staff.	Completed