

**SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY – DELIVERY PLAN:**

**Tackling the Nature Emergency: Consultation on Scotland’s Strategic Framework for Biodiversity**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1** The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Tackling the Nature Emergency consultation is seeking views on a range of topics and actions to halt the loss of biodiversity and tackle the nature emergency in Scotland. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-nature-emergency-consultation-scotlands-strategic-framework-biodiversity/>

This consultation will be an officer response and as the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy – Delivery Plan progresses, further reports will be brought forward to Committee with updates on what the implications are for the Council.

This paper is a summary of the actions that Local Authorities (LAs) will be expected to deliver in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan which is a five year rolling plan.

**1.2** In terms of Argyll and Bute Council, the overall aims and principles of the consultation and documents is one that would be difficult not to support. Indeed some of this work is already ongoing such as Peatland Restoration, Native Tree planting, Biodiversity Duty Reporting and various Guidance documents are currently being drafted.

However of the 100 actions, 50 have been identified for delivery by Local Authorities, it is likely these will create a significant amount of new work for LAs, much of which is not yet set out in detail, nor have the costs and resource implications been properly considered.

There will be an ongoing requirement for monitoring and reporting of the various actions proposed and a need to agree standardised methodologies which has not yet been done.

**1.3** Some of the areas which will be impacted with additional work include; GIS & Data Storage / Local Development Plan / Biodiversity Officer work load/ Development Management/ Estates Management / Roads & Flooding Team/ Developers.

**1.4** Further time and cost burdens along with the added complexity in determining planning applications will be a challenge to the aim of assisting growth, and for developers requiring management and maintenance plans for blue/green infrastructure is a potential added financial burden to them.

**1.5** In terms of the proposed targets under the draft Natural Environment Bill, these have yet to be agreed, however, the consultation has provided information on criteria for selection. The Scottish Government needs to identify what support, or resourcing, will help achieve them and what sanctions may be in place if there is a failure to do so.

**1.6** In addition there will be a variety of new and existing staff training needs.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Tackling the Nature Emergency consultation is seeking views on a range of actions to halt the loss of biodiversity and to tackle the nature emergency in Scotland.

This paper is a summary of the 50 actions that Local Authorities will be expected to deliver either as individual authorities or in partnership. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy- Delivery Plan is a five year rolling plan.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the committee:-

- A:** Recognise the implications for Local Authorities as set out in paragraph 4.2 in delivering the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy - Delivery Plan actions including Nature Networks 30 x 30 in terms of resources, funding and timescales.
- B:** Recognise the implications for Local Authorities as set out in paragraph 4.5 in meeting any of the targets (which have yet to be agreed) in the draft Natural Environment Bill.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1** The overall aims and principles of the consultation and associated documents contained within is one that would be difficult not to support.

However, the key Actions outlined below bring with them a significant amount of work for Local Authorities, much of which is not yet set out in detail, nor have the costs and resource implications been properly considered. There will be a requirement for monitoring and reporting of the various actions proposed and a need to agree standardised methodologies which have not yet been drafted.

**4.2 IMPLICATED ACTIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**

The implications for LAs have been identified in the following Actions and Key Actions:

- a) **Action-** Implement Scottish Plan for Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) Surveillance, Prevention and Control (encompasses various actions).
- b) **Action -** Improve Resilience in Coastal and Marine Systems: Develop Coastal Change Adaptation Plans (CCAPs).

- c) **Action** - Enhance water and air quality- mainly Sustainable urban Drainage systems SUD's.
- d) **Key Action** - Expand and enhance Nature Networks and ecological connectivity by 2030 within each Local Authority. NPF4 Nature Networks Policy Framework sets out proposals for connecting nature-rich areas and LDPs primary mechanism for establishment.
- e) **Key Action** - Champion new planning and development measures for protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
- f) **Key Action** - Enhance biodiversity in Scotland's green and blue spaces.
- g) **Action** - Embed biodiversity and nature in curriculum development.
- h) **Action** - Mainstream and integrate biodiversity policy across government.
- i) **Action** - Address unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts.
- j) **Action** - Contribute to the 30 by 30 draft Policy Framework - Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).
- k) **Action** - Possibility of being required to deliver the Statutory Targets for Nature Restoration - Statutory Targets – The Natural Environment Bill .

4.3 Some of the Council areas which will be impacted with additional work include; GIS & Data Storage / Local Development Plan / Workload of the Biodiversity Officer / Development Management/ Estates Management / Roads & Flooding Team/ Developers.

4.4 Further time and cost burden and complexity in determining planning applications will not assist growth, and for developers requiring management and maintenance plans for blue/green infrastructure is a potential added financial burden.

4.5 The consultation Delivery Plan and the associated Natural Environment Bill (currently under the drafting process) do not indicate which bodies will be covered by the restoration targets; what support or resourcing will help achieve them nor what sanctions may be in place.

4.6 In addition, there will be a variety of new staff training needs.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This report recommends that the Council should submit a response to the consultation in light of the implications for Local Authorities. The council's response needs to take the opportunity to highlight some of their concerns in terms of the resource implications to Local Authorities. In particular, in delivering actions set out in the Delivery Plan and the targets (as yet to be agreed) in the draft Natural Environment Bill, Nature Network contributing to the 30 X 30 objectives, the proposal for additional National Parks and the legal implications that appears to be in-bedded in all of the above.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 **Policy** - There are some policy implications in relation to Nature Networks- as set out in National Planning Framework 4, 30 x 30 and the proposed new National Park(s).

6.2 **Financial** - There are no direct financial implications arising from this report; but whilst a funding plan is proposed as an action in the consultation, there has been no indication of the costs involved in delivering this 5 year rolling plan.

6.3 **Legal** - There are currently no direct legal implications arising directly from this report- the draft Natural Environment Bill targets and the new National Park proposal as well the addition of new biodiversity sites may introduce some at a later date.

6.4 **HR** - There is a personnel resource requirement for council staff to implement some of the Delivery Plan Actions.

6.5 **Fairer Scotland Duty**

- 6.5.1 **Equalities** – as set out in the consultation document as per the question on Human Rights.
- 6.5.2 **Socio Economic Duty** – Yes, there are implications in relation to this duty under the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment - BRIA
- 6.5.3 **Islands** – Yes, there are actions that can be implemented on the islands within Argyll and Bute.
- 6.6 **Risk** - There is a risk of not delivering actions including Nature Networks and 30 x 30 or meeting the yet to be determined targets in the Natural Environment Bill.
- 6.7 **Climate Change** – The aim of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan is to halt the loss of biodiversity and encourage nature recovery to help address climate change.
- 6.8 **Customer Service** – communities across Argyll and Bute will benefit from this as they are included in some of the actions - an example of this is the development of Nature Networks in NPF4.

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