



ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY FOR THE COMMUNITY OF ARGYLL AND BUTE





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Images courtesy of Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Community Action for Biodiversity Projects, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

Foreword

Biodiversity is vital to our wellbeing and key to our quality of life in Argyll and Bute. A healthy and stable environment is central to economic prosperity and the area's desirability as a place to live, work and visit. The state of our biodiversity is a fundamental indicator of whether we are achieving a sustainable future for Argyll and Bute. The council is committed to embedding sustainable development into all services, and conserving biodiversity under its duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Conserving Biodiversity for the Community will greatly assist delivery of this commitment. Argyll and Bute has some of the 'best examples of biodiversity in Britain, it embraces a remarkably varied landscape, a diversity of habitats unparalleled in the west of Scotland. Biodiversity is central to environmental education and lifelong learning about the world around us; fundamental to our heritage, culture and sense of place; and provides relaxation and inspiration.

Providing access to biodiversity is important for delivering first-class services to the community. Argyll and Bute Council aspires to be Scotland's Leading Rural Authority for its service delivery including conserving biodiversity. We operate a wide range of environmental programmes and are known as a responsible, caring authority concerned about the natural environment.



Signed by: _____

Executive Summary

The Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan sets out to ensure the sustainability of our biodiversity under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 for our community. The plan provides a framework for strengthening existing capacity for biodiversity and documents the entire range of council strategies and plans that support biodiversity conservation. The Plan is split into three parts providing three distinct approaches to conserving our biodiversity:

Part 1 outlines the key aims and objectives that support our statutory obligations, engage with council services, Argyll businesses and the wider community;

Part 2 documents the extensive range of programmes that already support and will in the future support our biodiversity conservation work; and

Part 3 sets out key actions and targets reflecting an operational based approach for the five Argyll and Bute Council Services.

This plan is by no means stand alone and supports Argyll and Bute Council's Strategies and Plans, including the Corporate Plan, the Structure and the Local Plan and the Climate Change plan to mention a few.

The Strategy and Action Plan reflects the Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Council's biodiversity priorities to ensure that we are supporting Scottish Government initiatives particularly as Argyll and Bute Council aspires to be Scotland's Leading Rural Authority.

Introduction

Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan - Conserving Biodiversity for the Community - has three main aims:

- To assist the council in conserving and enhancing the natural environment of Argyll and Bute.
- To use the benefits of biodiversity in delivering services such as education, social welfare and operational needs
- To raise public and staff awareness of biodiversity

The Plan provides a framework for strengthening existing capacity for biodiversity. It documents for the first time the entire range of Council programmes that support biodiversity conservation, encourages partnership working between departments, and promotes positive planning for biodiversity.

The Action Plan focuses on strategic activity as well as detailed actions for each department. It will require annual review to assess success and re-evaluate priorities. A cross-departmental Biodiversity Group will drive implementation and monitor progress.

Added value of Argyll and Bute's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Outstanding Environment – The biodiversity of Argyll and Bute is valued by residents and visitors to the county. Publishing a plan of action for biodiversity presents a positive image of the council and maintains our reputation for high quality environmental services.

Vibrant Communities – Looking after Argyll and Bute's biodiversity is an essential part of the council's environmental programme and is directly related to many of our services to the community. A central thrust of Conserving Nature for the Community is to broaden access to nature to all of society.

Forward Looking – Activity for biodiversity cuts across departmental responsibilities and will inspire inter-departmental partnership working.

Staff – As the largest employer in Argyll and Bute, promoting the conservation of biodiversity directly to Council staff helps spread environmental awareness to a wide range of Argyll and Bute residents.

Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan - Conserving Biodiversity for the Community - aims to broaden understanding throughout the authority and promote cross-departmental working. There are many excellent initiatives already underway that provide a solid basis for consolidating and expanding the Council's action for biodiversity. This document provides a means for delivering Argyll and Bute Council's duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

The state of biodiversity is a key measure of sustainable development. The Council is committed to embedding sustainable development into all services and conserving biodiversity is fundamental to this. Conserving Biodiversity for the Community will assist delivery of the corporate aim, prioritising our cultural, social and natural heritage and protecting our unique area, which is recognised for its high quality environment, and support the implementation of the Corporate Plan.

- a) **Part 1 – Argyll and Bute Council’s Strategy and Policy Plan for Biodiversity - Outstanding Environment:** outlines the relationship between biodiversity and achieving quality of life, the Council’s statutory obligations, the rapidly developing role of local authorities in conserving biodiversity and the corporate context.

- b) **Part 2 – The Role of Argyll and Bute Council as a Local Authority - Vibrant Communities:** documents the extensive range of council programmes that support biodiversity conservation.

- c) **Part 3 – Forward Looking (Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Action Plan):** provides a proposal of comprehensive set of key actions and targets for 2009-2014. Many of these build on current work and most can be delivered through improved efficiency or changes in approach and by working in partnership across departments. The range of action and associated targets is ambitious and wide ranging. A set of headline indicators has also been developed for key areas of work. The indicators and action targets will be monitored annually to track progress. (Annex 1 and 2)



Figure 1 Kilkenzie Park

Part 1 - Argyll and Bute Councils' Strategy and Policy Plan for Biodiversity – Outstanding Environment

Aim – To protect and enhance our biodiversity for the enjoyment of our community and to continue to provide for sustainable economic development.

Objectives:

- Working in Partnership, protect, conserve and manage priority habitats and species in Argyll and Bute Council owned lands
- Enhance and restore habitats to increase biodiversity assets
- Enrich public understanding of the natural environment
- Engender awareness amongst children and young people
- Increase access to biodiversity
- Relate nature to fundamental issues such as health and wellbeing and to cultural, social and economic welfare
- Encourage lifestyle changes that help to protect the natural environment
- Set an example to the rest of the community
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to biodiversity
- Stimulate a greater understanding of biodiversity amongst staff



Figure 2 Loch Awe

1.1.0 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the great variety of life. Biodiversity includes all plants and animals, their habitats, and the complex ecosystems that sustain them. The conservation of biodiversity is one of the most fundamental and crucial issues of our time. Biodiversity is a global life support system and underpins many essential commodities that we take for granted such as fresh water, fertile soil and clean air. It also provides the raw materials for our food, our fuel, and many other necessities.

The value of biodiversity is undisputed. In the UK, we have a long history of initiatives to protect nature and natural areas, but we are only beginning to fully understand the real value of nature to the economy, to the environment and to our quality of life. This has shifted nature conservation from a narrowly focused discipline to an area of relevance to educationalists, health professionals, social care teams, politicians and policymakers.

Biodiversity is a finite resource that needs to be conserved. In recent decades in the UK, great numbers of species and their habitats have been lost or destroyed as a result of development and changes in land-use practices. This loss has slowed but it remains vitally important to ensure that future development is sustainable, that land is managed to maintain biological diversity and that access to nature and the benefits of biodiversity are readily available to everyone.

1.1.1 Biodiversity is key to quality of life in Argyll and Bute

The natural world is the fabric of Argyll and Bute's landscapes and the places we like to visit in the countryside. It surrounds us in our daily lives in urban and rural areas. A healthy and stable environment is central to the economic prosperity of the area and its desirability as a place to live, work and visit.

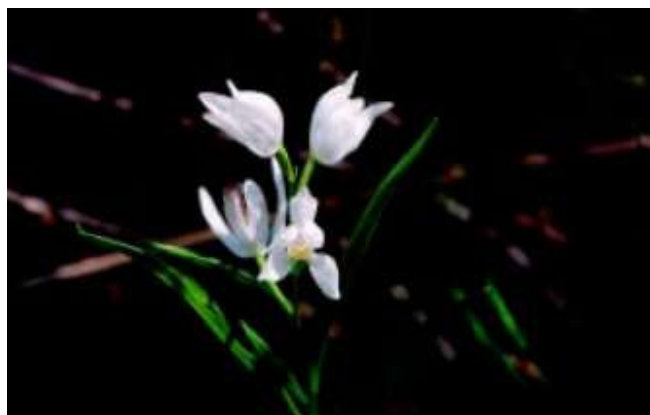


Figure 3 Sword Leaved Helleborine

1.1.2 Maintaining the environment

- Biodiversity plays a fundamental role in global processes and has the capacity to influence climate change
- Plants assist with land drainage and flood control and help filter pollutants from air, water and soil a vibrant economy
- Biodiversity provides many essential commodities – food, fuel and construction materials
- An attractive natural environment is fundamental to tourism and inward investment
- Many jobs depend on maintaining biodiversity – rural industries such as agriculture and forestry; services connected with tourism; jobs in the environmental sector
- Biotechnology is a global industry developing new medicines from natural sources

Social, cultural and educational

- The natural environment is a major source of inspiration for people of all ages
- Biodiversity is fundamental to our heritage, culture and sense of place
- Biodiversity is central to environmental education and lifelong learning about the world around us



Figure 4 Kilkenzie Community Project

1.1.3 Health and wellbeing

- Natural areas encourage outdoor recreation and healthy
- Nature gives inspiration, enjoyment and 'no cost' entertainment
- The natural environment provides relaxation and respite from stress
- Nature has intrinsic value and should be conserved for its own sake
- We have a responsibility to protect and conserve nature for future generations – biodiversity is essentially irreplaceable
- Biodiversity provides the building blocks for historical analysis and scientific discovery

1.1.4 Public Support for Biodiversity

In the UK, public opinion polls consistently reveal strong support for biodiversity. In the Survey of Public Attitudes to Quality-of-life and to the Environment 2011 50% of respondents were very worried about the loss of plants and animals in the UK, a greater number than those concerned about ozone layer depletion, climate change, traffic congestion or household waste disposal. The same survey found that more than half of respondents encourage wildlife in their garden and a third acknowledge that plants and wildlife make the countryside a place where they want to spend time.

The Community Planning Partnership Citizen Panel (1000 participants) Survey Number 11 carried out in 2006 found that:

- 16% Aware of Biodiversity Initiatives
- 31% Involved
- 5% Answered the questions on biodiversity.

1.1.5 Links with other Argyll and Bute Plans.

Biodiversity is reflected in many of Argyll and Bute Council's Plans including the Corporate Plan, Structure Plan, Local Plan, Community Planning Plan, Climate Change Plan, the Carbon Management Plan, Argyll and Bute Contaminated Land Strategy, Transport Plan and Access Strategy. The Local Housing Strategy and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan will take the principles of biodiversity into account in the new plan under development. Inclusion of biodiversity in these plans demonstrates the importance of this resource to Scotland's aspiring Leading Rural Authority.

1.2.0 Argyll and Bute's Biodiversity

Argyll and Bute is exceptionally rich in wildlife, embracing a remarkably and varied landscape which includes 26 islands along with a diversity of habitats unparalleled anywhere in Scotland. Our pristine atlantic woodlands, machair, hill and lowland ecosystems, rivers and convoluted coastal habitats reflect a healthy environment. Argyll and Bute also encompasses part of Scotland's First National Park- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. Together these habitats support an impressive array of plants and animals, supporting our accolade of 'having some of the best examples of biodiversity in Britain'

1.2.1 Habitats and Species

The Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan has 67 Species and Habitats Action Plans. **See Annex 1.**

1.2.2 Some Biodiversity Facts about Argyll and Bute

- Argyll and Bute supports almost 24 % of the Scottish proportion of Machair or 19% of the total world resource.
- Argyll and Bute is one of the most wooded local authority areas in Scotland with 198,236 ha. comprising of 159, 200 ha. of conifer and 18.720 ha of broadleaved trees. A programme of management is now reverting many of these areas back to native broadleaved trees species.
- 32.7 % of the land surface of Argyll and Bute is Unimproved Grassland which is 19.3 % of the Scottish total.
- Argyll and Bute has the greatest diversity of species of any in Scotland. The Biodiversity Preliminary Audit of Priority Habitats and Species for Argyll and Bute has identified over 361 species and 33 habitats of particular concern, including plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles, insects and mammals.
- For a full account of Argyll and Bute's biodiversity see the Biodiversity Action Plan for Argyll and Bute. Go to www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/biodiversity/.

Over 45% of Argyll and Bute is designated for its nature conservation importance, reflecting Britain's most valuable wildlife habitats with:

- 116 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- 26 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs),
- 8 Ramsar sites are legally protected, twice the national average.

Many of these areas are also important internationally and have additional protection through European law. But this is only part of the picture. A further 5% of Argyll and Bute is covered by Area Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) – valuable wildlife sites that do not have statutory protection. Even outside all of these specially recognised areas, much of Argyll and Bute’s rural landscape, urban areas and marine environment is rich in biodiversity.

1.2.3 Nature Conservation Sites in Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute Council has 161 Local Nature Conservation sites and includes one Local Nature Reserve.



Figure 5 Machair

Local Authority	Number of SSSI	Number of cSAC	Number of SPA	Number of Ramsar	Number of HGDL	Number of NSA	Number of NP	Number of CP	Number of LNR	Number of NNR
Argyll and Bute	116	26	16	8	19	7			1	8

Figure 6 SNH Site Designations (courtesy of SNH)

1.2.4 Conserving Biodiversity

On a global scale and in recent decades the loss of biodiversity has been significant and serious. Huge areas of habitat have been destroyed and many species have become extinct. In the UK large areas of habitat and great numbers of species have been lost – for example 448,000 km of hedgerows, over two million skylarks and 95% of high brown fritillary butterflies have been lost in less than a lifetime.

Loss of biodiversity in Argyll and Bute is not significant; however, for agriculture, changes in land management mainly due to the reduction in the numbers of grazing animals has had an adverse effect on maintaining habitats for a number of rare species. In order to arrest loss of biodiversity a policy of encouraging a mosaic of habitats, thereby reducing fragmentation, is essential as a key aim of productive land management, benefiting both biodiversity and agricultural interests. Other actions that affect biodiversity are wide-ranging and complex, including pressure from development, lack of habitat management, pollution and changes to water regimes and climate change.

It is essential that the Argyll and Bute's biodiversity is protected from any further loss or damage, that habitats in poor condition are enhanced and that wildlife areas previously lost are restored wherever possible. Reversing threats to wildlife habitats requires strategic planning, detailed monitoring and long-term commitment to appropriate management and enhancement.

Achieving long-term sustainable management of habitats is a particular challenge and should not be onerous as we have a number of initiatives in place to support delivering biodiversity benefits. All habitats such as woodland, peatland and grassland require specific management to maintain their value to wildlife. Traditionally this was achieved as an integral part of the rural economy and involved mixed farming, native woodland management and common grazing for the supply of local products. Modern agriculture and forestry methods have dictated the need for specific programmes, initiatives and agri-environment support schemes to maintain habitats in the countryside. Argyll and Bute Council plays a significant role in providing this support.

Management of the environment, particularly in rural areas, is undergoing considerable review and change. This includes changes to the planning system, increased environmental legislation, changes in the way that funding for agri-environment schemes is accessed, promotion of an accessible countryside and the Government's new delivery arrangements set through the Regional priorities **See Annex 2**.

1.3.0 The Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute Council coordinates the Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Partnership – over 30 public and voluntary agencies work together to conserve Argyll and Bute's biodiversity. The Partnership has developed a ten year plan of action which is being reviewed in 2009.

The Biodiversity Action Plan for Argyll and Bute identifies priority issues and sets a comprehensive agenda for all partners. Individual plans have been prepared for many of Argyll and Bute's priority habitats and species and topics such as:

- Eco-tourism and Biodiversity Plan
- Lichens and Bryophytes in Argyll and Bute
- The Importance of Small Islands in Argyll and Bute
- Catchment Management Plans.

The biodiversity process in Argyll and Bute is focused on implementation, monitoring and unpinning this is community involvement. The review of the LBAP will rejuvenate the process and bring forward a new suite of projects. Each biodiversity partner assesses and prioritises their activity in response to the range of actions set out in individual action plans.

The work of the council is fundamental to the delivery of many biodiversity objectives and targets. The council has a commitment to other partners and the public to undertake a broad range of activity and lead by example. Community Action for Biodiversity and the Argyll and Bute Council Local Plan sets out the Council's current activity and future priorities for delivering biodiversity objectives. (Local Plan – Written Statement <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/planning/developmentpolicy/localplan/PIMs/PIM-WS> Maps - <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/planning/developmentpolicy/localplan/PIMs/PIM-map's>)

Further information can be found on www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/biodiversity/



Figure 7 Black Grouse

1.3.1 International and National Context

Relationship between International, National and Local Biodiversity Programmes

- 3.1 Convention on Biological Diversity (Earth Summit 1992)
- 3.2 Agreements on Biodiversity, Gothenburg (2001), Johannesburg (2002) Malahide (2004)
- 3.3 Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2003)
- 3.4 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994)
- 3.5 Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2001) under review (2009)
- 3.6 Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2009-2014



Figure 8 Coastal Saltmarsh in Argyll

A comprehensive range of international and national imperatives drive the biodiversity process in Argyll and Bute:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity signed by 150 nations at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. Each signatory pledged to take action to conserve biodiversity. The UK was one of the first nations to respond with a national Biodiversity Action Plan in 1994.

- Argyll and Bute Council supports local government's sustainable development obligations under The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003). This commits the Council to undertake policies and projects to best profile our approach to sustainable development. Promoting and increasing biodiversity is essential to achieve this.
- At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 world leaders agreed to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Biodiversity action plans and strategies were endorsed as central to this process.
- The European Union has set itself the ambitious goal of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 at the EC meeting in Gothenburg in 2001. A subsequent EC meeting at Malahide in 2004 agreed priorities, targets and implementation arrangements to meet the Gothenburg goal. Agreements at Gothenburg and Malahide are driving the UK biodiversity programme.
- Since the publication of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in 1994 the UK has developed a detailed and sophisticated biodiversity action planning process that includes specific plans for 45 habitats and almost 400 species. Significant progress has been made in engaging communities and raising the profile of biodiversity conservation in society as a whole.
- Government expects local authorities to contribute to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan by taking a lead in the establishment of local biodiversity partnerships and the development and implementation of local biodiversity action plans (see 'Biodiversity Action Plan for Argyll and Bute').
- The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets specific targets, milestones and indicators for key sectors such as forestry, business, agriculture, education and local government (see 'Role of Local Authorities' - Page 25)
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Bill 2004 places a duty on all government and Local Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in exercising their functions.
- Government promotes biodiversity as a core indicator of sustainable development and quality of life.



Part 2

The Role of Argyll and Bute Council as a Local Authority - Vibrant Communities

2.1.0 Action for Biodiversity by Argyll and Bute Council

Scottish Government programmes for biodiversity (Scottish Biodiversity Implementation Plans) and sustainable development increasingly emphasise the role of local authorities. Concurrently, there are changes taking place in the structure and functions of local government which presents new challenges and opportunities to take account of biodiversity.

Action taken by local authorities is central to the Scottish biodiversity process. Local government has intimate knowledge of the natural environment within its boundaries, direct contact with the community, a particularly wide portfolio of services involving biodiversity, and discretion to take initiative on environmental matters including the coordination of local biodiversity partnerships.

- CoSLA advises local authorities to integrate biodiversity across their functions, including land use planning, development control, education and social and economic development.
- The Association of Local Government Ecologists has produced guidance on local authority best practice for biodiversity. The vision statement for biodiversity in local government clearly sets out the hallmarks of a well-performing authority.
- The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy includes a set of specific indicators to measure local authority performance on biodiversity:
 1. Delivery of local biodiversity targets
 2. Degree of integration of biodiversity objectives into regional programmes and strategies
 3. Community strategies with biodiversity policies, objectives and targets for action
 4. Condition of SSSIs in local authority ownership
- The Scottish Government has developed a system Pyramid for incorporating biodiversity measures into local government Comprehensive Performance Assessment.



2.2.0 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Argyll and Bute Council has a pivotal role to play in the conservation of the natural environment, the pursuit of economic prosperity and the securing of equal chances for everyone in all aspects of life. 'Developing quality of life for everyone' is the overarching aim of the Council's Corporate Strategy. The conservation of Argyll and Bute's biodiversity and using the benefits of biodiversity in the delivery of Council services such as social care are central to achieving this corporate goal.

Biodiversity is key to stewardship of the environment with Argyll and Bute Council's Corporate Plan: Aim 2 "Protecting our environment by promoting the principles of environmental sustainability and ensuring that Argyll and Bute continues to be a place where people of all backgrounds want to live, work and visit". The Corporate Strategy states that priority areas of work include improving areas of nature conservation interest, maintaining biodiversity and protecting habitats and species. National indicators have been developed to measure the extent of protection of biodiversity through the planning process and the amount of land in Argyll and Bute under appropriate management for biodiversity.

- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Bill 2004 legislation places considerable duties on local authorities to ensure the protection and management of biodiversity.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note Pan 65 *Planning and Open Space*: seeks to secure the effective conservation of wildlife and natural features. Nature conservation objectives should be taken into account in all planning activities that affect rural and coastal land use and urban areas with wildlife of local importance. The guidance also aims to ensure that nature conservation is a significant material consideration in determining planning applications.



2.2.1 Planning and Development

- Local authorities are adapting to changes in the planning system. This presents a challenge and new opportunities to ensure that biodiversity is comprehensively addressed in the portfolio of development plans, including the Structure Plan and Local Plan.
- Argyll and Bute Council is currently working on “Biodiversity Advice for Developers (in Draft) and Quarry Owners”.

2.2.2 Land Management

- Under the national Public Service Agreement target for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), local authorities are expected to achieve favourable condition of SSSIs in their ownership by 2010.
- Local authorities have an increasing role in rural land management

2.2.3 Education

- The study and understanding of biodiversity is fundamental to achieving education for sustainable development (ESD). The Scottish Government has stressed the importance of ESD through the Curriculum for Excellence.
- Studies have shown that improving the biodiversity of school grounds has a remarkable effect on pupils’ behaviour and achievement. Young children spend up to 50% of their school day outdoors and first-hand experience of the natural world can leave a lasting impression.



Figure 9 Rivers in the Classroom Project

2.2.4 Data

- Data on biodiversity underpins the planning and land management functions of local authorities. National planning guidance expects local authorities to have comprehensive information on the natural environment. A key principle of planning policy is that planning decisions should be based on up-to-date information on biodiversity resources. Access to this information in relation to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found on BARS (www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/) the NBN Gateway (www.nbb.org.uk/) and other localized information on Islay, Jura and Colonsay (www.islaynaturalhistory.org/ and www.brc.ac.uk/vcSquares)

2.2.5 Community strategies

Quality of life, sustainable development and involvement of the community have become the hallmarks of good local government practice, exemplified by the introduction and importance of community planning and the Community Planning Partnership. All local authorities must produce a community plan. For further information: <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/yourcouncil/partnerships/cpphomepage1/>

The Scottish Government is promoting biodiversity as a cross-cutting theme relevant to all key aspects of community planning including social wellbeing, business and economy, lifelong learning and the environment in Life-Support – Incorporating Biodiversity into the Community Planning process. Ensuring links between community planning and local biodiversity partnerships is also being advocated. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy includes a performance indicator to measure the success of integrating biodiversity into community planning.

Informing the community of the importance and benefits of biodiversity is an important role for local authorities during the community planning process. Argyll and Bute's Community Planning Plan states that a natural environment rich in wildlife is important for relaxation, enjoyment, health and wellbeing and central to ensuring quality of life. The plan also makes the link between a healthy natural environment, tourism and the rural economy.



Figure 10 How to Lead a Guided Walk Training Event

The Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership has assisted in the process of engaging with the community through its successful European and Partner-funded "Community Action for Biodiversity – Phase I and II" projects. This project assisted 45 community groups and also 8 demonstration projects and 22 training courses.

2.2.6 The Argyll and Bute Council published Local Plan (2009)

Biodiversity is one of the many themes that each Department must consider by integrating sustainable development into all operations and activities. Conserving Biodiversity for the Community will assist each Department in formulating the biodiversity elements of their sustainable development agendas.

(<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/planning/developmentpolicy/localplan/PIMs/PIM-WS>)

2.2.7 Building on a Strong Foundation

Argyll and Bute Council has an excellent track record in conservation of the natural environment as it scores highly in Best Value for Local Agenda 21. The Council can build on this strong foundation. Argyll and Bute Council can strengthen and extend existing good practice through its:

- functions of development control, forward planning and as a highway authority
- landholdings and property, and influence of others who own and manage land
- influence on strategic land management
- role as coordinator of the Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Partnership
- influence at regional and national level
- role as a community leader, advocate and catalyst and through setting examples of good practice
- wide range of service areas related to the environment, including waste
- management and recycling, energy conservation, use of water, and travel and
- transportation
- role as education authority
- role in providing social services to the community
- position as one of the largest employers in Argyll and Bute

Part 3 – Forward Looking

This Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan contains the actions that will ensure that the Council is delivering the biodiversity duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. This is what the Scottish Government’s guidance asks for. However, it is likely that many issues will arise directly relating to the Council’s Biodiversity Duty, which will become more prevalent. Where our capacity to deliver this duty must be a shared responsibility with all departments signing up to support it

The Argyll and Bute Council Biodiversity Officer’s role is a strategic and coordinating one rather than operational. Further guidance is in hand for building developers; this will encourage as well as assist them to do their bit for biodiversity. There are a range of publications on Business and Biodiversity; How to Lead a Guided Walk; Demonstration Projects on Land, Freshwater and Marine; and Marine & Coastal Educational Resources, of which some are available in Gaelic.



Figure 11 Biodiversity School Grounds Project – Strath of Appin PS



Figure 12 Tiree Garden and Biodiversity Project

3.1.0 Argyll and Bute Council's Action Plan

Action	Department	Target	New/ Ongoing	Complete by	Resources	
					Staff	Financial
<p>1.1 Corporate Strategy Ensure that biodiversity continues to be addressed in Argyll and Bute Council's Corporate Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and Strategy Service (Environment PPG) 	<p>The Biodiversity targets in the Corporate Plan will be monitored by the Local Biodiversity Officer (LBO) and report to the Environmental PPG as necessary</p>	Ongoing	▲	1+ Environment Committee	n/a
<p>1.2 Council Strategies Ensure that the biodiversity is taken into account in all strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and Strategy Service LBO 	<p>Incorporate Biodiversity Targets into Community Planning Partnership Initiatives. (Reference CPP Action Plan for Outstanding Environment) http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/yourcouncil/partnerships/cpphomepage1/3197752/3201225?s=0&a=0</p>	Ongoing	Input by LBO	1	n/a
<p>1.3 National Biodiversity Initiatives Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Ecosystem Group. Assist National Initiatives in developing biodiversity work of local authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dev. Services (DS) 	<p>Represent Argyll and Bute Council on the Farmland and Lowland Ecosystem Group – 4 meetings per year.</p>	Ongoing	Four meetings annually attended by LBO	1	n/a
<p>1.4 Performance – Local Biodiversity Duty Plan Assist with LBAP review and make links with the Single Outcome Agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DS Environment PPG 	<p>Make links with the Single Outcome Agreement and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan</p>	New	End Dec. 2009	1	Partnership funding. 3k A&BC contribution

Action	Department	Target	New/ Ongoing	Complete by	Resources	
					Staff	Financial
2.0 Guidance on Biodiversity and Development Increase awareness and accessibility of information on biodiversity and development to assist planners and developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS • LBO 	Prepare Guidance on biodiversity for planners and developers (including quarries)	On Target Draft 2	August 2009	1	
2.1 Maintenance Schemes Ensure that all maintenance schemes (grass cutting areas; borders and beds). Take full account of biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS 	Ensure up-to-date biodiversity information is available for inclusion in maintenance plans	On target	Ongoing	Maintenance Staff	Savings have been made due to change in cutting regime
2.1 Roadside Verge Biodiversity Action Plan Develop and implement good practice for biodiversity across the Argyll and Bute Council road network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS/DS • LBO 	Develop a roadside verge Biodiversity Action Plan	New	October 2009	1	
2.3 Invasive Species Ensure compliance with government guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS/DS 	Guidance published by GB in conjunction with the Scottish Government Working Group. A&BC CoSLA Representative. Information on website Campaign about to begin	Complete	May 2008	2	
2.4 Community Services Continue to support the Eco – schools initiative on school grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services (Education) • LBO 	Encourage schools to develop their school grounds in a way that supports biodiversity	Complete New Ongoing	Ongoing Started Ongoing Started	A number of agencies involved	Grant Aid

Annex 1 – LBAP Habitats and Species

LAND USE HABITATS

Atlantic Woodland
Improved Grassland
Machair and Dune
Native Caledonian Pinewoods
Peatlands
Planted Conifer Forest
Unimproved Grassland



Atlantic Woodland

LAND USE SPECIES

Alpine Woodsia
Barnacle Goose
Bats
Black Grouse
Brown Hare
Capercaillie
Chough
Corncrake
Dune Gentian
Golden Eagle
Greenland White-fronted Goose
Hen Harrier
Lichen
Marsh Fritillary Butterfly
Nightjar
Otter
Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly
Red Deer
Red Squirrel



Red Squirrel

LAND USE SPECIES CONT'D

- Rock Whitebeam
- Skylark
- Slender Scotch Burnet Moth
- Song Thrush
- Sword-leaved Helleborine
- Transparent Burnet Moth
- Water Vole
- White-tailed Eagle
- Wildcat
- Wych Elm



Transparent Burnet Moth

FRESHWATER HABITATS

- Controlled Waters
- Fens and Reedbeds
- Flowing Waters
- Freshwater Lochs



Freshwater Lochs

FRESHWATER SPECIES

- Atlantic Salmon & Sea Trout
- Brown Trout
- Allis Shad
- Black-throated Diver
- Dragonflies and Damselflies
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel
- Great Crested Newt
- Medicinal Leech
- Powan
- River Jelly Lichen
- Twaite Shad



Black-throated Diver

MARINE AND COASTAL HABITATS

- Coastal Saltmarsh
- Mud Habitats in Deep Water
- Mudflats
- Knotted wrack-ecad mackaii Beds
- Horse Mussel Beds
- Seagrass Beds
- Tidal Rapids Inshore Sub-littoral Sediment
- Sheltered Muddy Gravels
- Sub-littoral Sands and Gravels
- Serpulid Reefs



Serpulid Reefs

MARINE AND COASTAL SPECIES

Cetaceans – all species *Delphinapterus sp.*
etc.

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*



Basking Shark

Table 1

Broad and Key Habitat Types Occurring in Argyll and Bute		
Group	Broad Habitat	Key Habitat
Woodland	Broadleaved woodland Native pine woodland Planted coniferous woodland	Upland oakwood Native pine woodland
Grassland	Unimproved neutral grassland Upland acid grassland Calcareous grassland	Purple moor grass/rush pasture Lowland/upland calcareous grassland
Lowland peatland	Lowland raised bog	Lowland raised bog
Upland	Upland heathland Upland acid grassland Blanket bog Montane	Upland heathland Blanket bog Montane
Freshwater	Marshes, fens, reedbeds Marshes, fens, reedbeds Lochs Lochs	Fens Reedbed Mesotrophic lochs Oligotrophic and dystrophic lochs
Coastal	Maritime cliff & slope Shingle Saltmarsh Sand dunes Machair	Maritime cliff & slope Coastal vegetated shingle Saltmarsh Sand dunes Machair
Marine	Saline lagoons Islands, archipelagos & sea Lochs Sea grass beds Sea loch, shelfbreak & Offshore seabed	Saline lagoons Maerl beds <i>Ascophyllum nodosum</i> <i>mackaii</i> beds Sea grass beds Deep mud

Table 2

Key Points from the Land Cover of Scotland Survey (LCS88): Data for Argyll and Bute		
<p>The following summarises some key points from the Land Cover of Scotland Survey. The figures should be interpreted with care as the data is now almost ten years old. However, in the absence of more recent survey information, it provides a useful indication of the main land cover classes in Argyll and Bute.</p> <p>Points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll has a high proportion of the total broadleaved woodland resource; only 2.6 % of Argyll but almost one fifth of the Scottish total. • High proportion of commercial forestry; 21% of Argyll and 16% of the Scottish total. • Extent of good rough grass/bracken mosaic; 4.5 % of Argyll and 48.5 % of Scottish total. • Five main features and four mosaics account for approximately 75% of the total land cover, as follows: 		
Land Cover	Km²	Total Land Cover (%)
Heather moor/peatland	1,533	21.7
Coniferous plantation	748	10.6
Recent planting	731	10.3
Poor rough grass/heather moor	615	8.7
Improved grassland	443	6.3
Good rough grassland/bracken	321	4.5
Remaining mosaic	311	4.4
Good rough grassland/heather moor	271	3.8
Peatland	245	3.5
Total	5,218	73.7

* LCS88 data is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO

Annex 2 - Rural Priorities-Scottish Rural Development Programme relevant to A&B

* Numbers correspond to the priorities as listed on the Scottish Government Rural Development packages (see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/RuralPriorities/Packages>)

4. Development and Restructuring of Agricultural and Forestry Businesses
5. Safeguarding and Enhancing the Landscape
6. Safeguard and Enhance the Historic Environment and Landscape
7. **Supporting Biodiversity ****
8. Arable Fields and Hedgerows
9. **Machair****
10. Coastal Habitats - except Machair
11. Species-rich Grasslands
12. Wetland - Lowland Raised Bogs
13. Wetland - except Lowland Raised Bogs
14. Upland and Peatland
15. **Native woodlands and Associated Habitats and Species****
16. Non-native Woodland and Associated Habitats and Species
17. Running and Standing Waters
19. Corn Buntings
20. Corncrakes
21. Improving Conditions for Golden Eagle
22. Hen Harriers
23. Seed Eating Birds
24. Farmland Waders
25. Capercaillie
26. Black Grouse
37. Access, Recreation and Community Development

Annex 3 – Internal and External Local Biodiversity Action Linked to the National Outcome

NATIONAL OUTCOME	POTENTIAL BIODIVERSITY ACTIONS ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL OUTCOMES
Outcome 1: We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	Greenspace and road verge management. Planning and development; maximise the biodiversity benefits and minimising the impacts
Outcome 2: We realise our full economic potential with more & better employment opportunities for our people	Local Biodiversity Officer in post.
Outcome 3: We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research & innovation	Workforce learning new skills e.g. ground maintenance squads on meadow mowing regimes and techniques.
Outcome 4: Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	Delivery of Eco-schools to all suitable establishments.
Outcome 5: Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	Changing and creating diverse greenspaces with opportunities for informal play and discovery.
Outcome 6: We live longer, healthier lives	Greenspace and access works maximise their biodiversity benefit whenever possible.
Outcome 7: We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	All communities have access to high quality and biodiverse access routes and greenspace.
<i>Outcome 9: We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger</i>	Action for climate change mitigation; soft flood management structures/ land management/ SUDS. Reducing the risk from flooding and its attendant disorder and danger.
<i>Outcome 10: We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need</i>	Greenspace and road verge management. Planning and development; maximise the biodiversity benefits and minimising the impacts

NATIONAL OUTCOME	POTENTIAL BIODIVERSITY ACTIONS ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL OUTCOMES
<i>Outcome 11: We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others</i>	Locally based projects adding to this in a small way.
<i>Outcome 12: We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations</i>	Greenspace and road verge management. Planning and development; maximise the biodiversity benefits and minimising the impacts
<i>Outcome 13: We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity</i>	Biodiverse local habitat is seen as a key part of local identity. These local identities are what really make up our national identity not a few remote, iconic images.
<i>Outcome 14: We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production</i>	Peatland conservation in policies and enacted on owned peatlands. Peat free plants used in any planting schemes. Awareness and education of the workforce to these issues.
<i>Outcome 15: Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs</i>	The writing and subsequent review of a Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan. Will ensure this happens in relation to biodiversity, e.g. Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (review to be completed in December 2009).