



Scottish Government:  
Biodiversity Duty Compliance  
Report-

Argyll and Bute Council-

2021-2023.



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**The report follows the headings as set out in the current Scottish Government template.**

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1. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PUBLIC BODY
2. ACTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE
3. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY
4. NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
6. RESEARCH AND MONITORING
7. BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

## 1. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

- 1.1 Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. Following an amendment in the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011; every three years public bodies are also required to publish and make publically available their report on the actions they have taken to meet their biodiversity duty (Biodiversity Duty Compliance Report). Our last report was published online in January 2021. The current report must be available on line by January 2024, it follows a Scottish Government recommended template and is a summary using the headings for easy of reading.
- 1.2 Overview of Argyll and Bute Council organisation's regulatory role- Governance.  
Overall governance is provided by the elected Members of Argyll and Bute Council. All policies and key strategies are reported to Council for discussion and approval. Environmental policies and initiatives which include biodiversity are reported to the relevant Council committee. Progress on delivering the Argyll and Bute Council Biodiversity Duty Action Plan is updated annually.
- 1.3 How biodiversity feeds into Argyll and Bute Council decision-making structure.  
Our elected members have championed biodiversity through representation on: the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee, the Local Nature Reserve Management Team at Holy Loch, the Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership and the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust with the latest Peatland Restoration Project. Our Chief Executive, Directors and the relevant Heads of Service have also recognised the importance of environmental initiatives and given their support to a wide range of projects. Since our last reporting round the Council continues to represent the Local Biodiversity Officers Network on the working group involved in 'Future Land Management Business Models Working Group', the National Peatland Action Group, the Scottish Group for Invasive Non-Native Species and the A83 Environmental Steering Group.

## 2. ACTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE

As a Level One reporting organisation, you may wish to report on activities across your organisation, including any actions that you have undertaken on the ground on land that you manage alone or with others.

- **Development Management:** Through our planning process, we apply our Local Development Plan Policies for biodiversity as it underpins place making by ensuring that existing habitats and species are protected and the appropriate enhancements through careful planting and natural features and contributes to our Green Network. The Local Biodiversity Officer has developed a framework to capture developer contribution to benefit biodiversity through a detailed checklist for the 24 measures as outlined in NPF4 supported by the guidance from NatureScot. The Planning Authority have been involved in a number of Peatland Action Projects in North, Mid-Argyll and Islay where the area amounts to about 500-800ha.

The Council promotes and has had many successes over the last three years including:

- **Local Development Plan (LDP2):** [https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated\\_files/finalpldp2writtenstatementdepositv2\\_ac1.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated_files/finalpldp2writtenstatementdepositv2_ac1.pdf)
- The LDP2 is a key document in the delivery of biodiversity conservation through land use and management policies, protection and designation of a range of International, National and Local sites. This ensures that land use planning and the management of Council-owned land delivers protection and enhancements for biodiversity.
- **The Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan has 29 ongoing projects** being delivered by partners, this is due to be refreshed in line with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan when the latter is published.
- **Estates (Argyll and Bute Council):** work in partnership with the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust in a native woodland expansion project. The service worked with Breedon (Quarry Company) to provide nesting sites for Sand Martins in a Sand Pit which had recently ceased operating- the land is owned by the Council and has since been restored with a grass seed and wildflower mix. In terms of contributing to pollinators, the Estates service has provided land for a local Beekeeper to place his hives on land on Islay.
- **Roads and Amenity Services:** They have carried out INNS control on some roadside verges and assisted with promoting wildflower verges by modifying the cutting regime to encourage two to three flushes of native wild flowers and by doing so have contributed the B-Line project on the Argyll and Bute islands mainland. Reed bed restoration at Glengorm and Gartbreck landfill sites- restoration of reed bed filtration systems which are in place to filter and treat leachate from landfill Sites. Coastal and Marine Management Perennial Plants –Bowmore Public Realm £25k Roads and Infrastructure. The purchase of native shrubs and perennial plants for the flower beds at Bowmore Public Realm.
- **Habitat Restoration Advice to community groups:** through our Community Development officer and the Local Biodiversity Officer an example of this is the Loch Craignish – by Ardfern for advice on Seagrass and Native Oyster bed creation. Advice on Citizen Science using OPEL information to community groups who contacted the Council. The Council is working with the Kintyre Climate Action Group in relation to their Atlantic Rainforest initiative.
- **Schools and MAKI Pups (outdoor nursey):** Wildflower meadow project, seeds funded by a local business; sampling trees- donated by The Woodland Trust. The Local Biodiversity Officer facilitated a Tourism and Biodiversity event as part of the Curriculum for Learning at Lochnell P.S. for Primary 5-7, the event was divided into short information talks and pupil activities in order to experience and challenge how habitats could be managed to include the visitor experience as well as being a responsible tourist.
- **Partnership working** with the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust on the Atlantic Rainforest. Providing advice on the Peatland Action Project on Islay and advice on facilitating a Native Tree Nursey on Argyll and Bute property.

### 3. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

1. Lochgilphead Front Green- Landscaping which will retain the majority of the site as natural grass; retain the avenue of trees along Poltalloch Street by keeping healthy trees and replacing damaged trees with a more salt tolerant species; and include additional tree and shrub planting.

Plan: [https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/erz\\_18\\_17\\_p07\\_general\\_arrangement\\_plan\\_-\\_core\\_scheme\\_k.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/erz_18_17_p07_general_arrangement_plan_-_core_scheme_k.pdf) contd...

- SUDs on all medium/large new housing development – Helensburgh: Glenoran Road: Ref. 17/00837/PP and Sawmill Field Helensburgh: Ref. 19/02604/PP and Dunbeg Corridor: Ref. 19/01464/PP
- New Community Woodland in the Dunbeg Corridor by Oban
- Local Nature Reserve at the Holyloch, Sandbank by Dunoon. Management Plan has been updated to include additional mixed tree native species planting pond creation and some tree clearance to accommodate grassy glades. The volunteers to continue to monitor the site for bird species and Otter activity as well as remove Japanese Knotweed.

#### 4. NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sustainable-development-and-climate-change>

- Solar panels which can generate up to one megawatt of energy have been installed on suitable buildings owned by Argyll and Bute Council;
- We use wood to heat 12 of our buildings following the installation of biomass boilers;
- We operate a 50 kilowatt wind turbine which helps to power our Glengorm Waste Disposal Site on Mull;
- The change to LED lightbulbs in our street lighting is expected to save more than 1,100 tonnes of Carbon dioxide every year;
- 99 schools and nurseries across Argyll and Bute (both Council and other providers) are registered with Eco-schools and 47 have green flag status;
- Our Sustainable Procurement Policy ensures that our procurement minimises its contribution to Climate change: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/selling-council/procurement-useful-links-and-documents>
- Green Infrastructure Strategy: Green roofs and living walls- Document updated to reflect NPF4 and the Argyll and Bute Council LDP2; <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-plan-2>
- Buildings and Biodiversity- Information and advice contained within the draft refreshed Biodiversity Technical Note.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems: we have three examples: Helensburgh: Glenoran Road: Ref. 17/00837/PP and Sawmill Field Helensburgh: Ref. 19/02604/PP and Dunbeg Corridor: Ref. 19/01464/PP
- Transport and other infrastructure: all towns
- Nature-rich Towns and Cities- 6 Green networks in our towns, Oban, Dunoon, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Rothesay and Helensburgh.
- Pollinator strategy- actions for pollinators are integrated into our management of amenity spaces/gardens and roadside verges. The Community Food Growing Strategy promotes biodiversity and Argyll and Bute have contributed to the National Project B-lines: map:

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/news/buglife-launch-b-lines-acr>

- LNCS: are mapped within the LDP2.

<https://data-argyll-bute.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/argyll-bute::open-data-local-nature-conservation-site/explore?location=55.861446%2C-5.540972%2C10.02>

- Local Records (Keeping) Centres- there are a number of LRC operated by Trusts- Islay Wildlife Trust, Mull, the Lorne Natural History Society, Argyll Bird Club and The Dunbartonshire Botanical Society.
- Local Nature Reserves: Duchess Wood and the Holyloch have made habitat enhancements, water features, new tree planting, INNS management and habitat and species monitoring.
- Woodland Creation at Dunbeg expansion in partnership with the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust. Re. 19/01464/PP.
- Woodland and Green Burials: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-marriages/deaths/woodland-and-green-burials>  
Woodland Burial Policy –  
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s90833/Policy%20for%20Provision%20of%20Woodland%20and%20Green%20Burials%20-%20July%202014.pdf>  
promoting sensitive panting to promote biodiversity.

Re. Soil Management we as a Local Authority apply and or have contributed to the following:

- Scottish policy / guidance
- National Planning Framework 4 (2023)
- Final-draft Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 (2022)
- Land use - getting the best from our land: strategy 2021 to 2026 (2021)
- River Basin Management Plans (2021)
- Flood Risk Management Strategies (2021)
- Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 - update (2020)
- The Environment Strategy for Scotland: vision and outcomes (2020)
- Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation programme 2019-2024
- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 (2019)

- Valuing Your Soils (2016)
- National Peatland Plan (2015)
- Natural Flood Management Handbook (2015)
- Guidance on suitable organic material applications for land restoration and improvement (2015)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidance (2013)
- Planning Advice Note 33 (Development of Contaminated land) (2000) and the
- Scottish Soil Framework (2009)

4.1. Flood defences: e.g. Campbeltown Flood Protection Scheme.

An example of this project can be found by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/roads-and-maintenance/campbeltown-flood-protection-scheme-project-updates>

4.2. Argyll and Bute Council Shoreline Management Plan- Pilot Project- Islay Project brief being currently implemented- the site is a Dune and Machair system.

## 5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Supporting volunteering; the council as an advisor to the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust support volunteering initiative, examples are Rhododendron bashing, Bat sightings recording and other recording initiatives and Citizen Science in relation to the Marine and Terrestrial Environment
- Events: Citizen Science event at COP 26, promotion of Marine Litter recording through the Scottish Coastal Rowing Society. School outreach; Tourism and Biodiversity School workshop and Growing Wild.
- Outdoor learning; Interpretation - Forestry Walk at Glen Creran
- Citizen Science initiatives; Loch Linnhe Group supported with information

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/environment/countryside/guidance-gardeners-invasive-or-harmful-plants>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/argyll-marine-natura>

[https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated\\_files/ecosystem\\_gardening\\_for\\_biodiversity\\_leaflet\\_2018.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated_files/ecosystem_gardening_for_biodiversity_leaflet_2018.pdf)

**5.1 Training:** Planning and PPSL training events for planners and the planning committee on ... NPF4 Biodiversity Policy and Biodiversity Net Gain- Senior Officer group training on Biodiversity and Climate Change

**5.2 Events and Activities:** Supported various community events including highlight areas for permanent pollinator planting.

**5.3 Ranger service out with Argyll and Bute Council:** Working with the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust with regards to Ranger activities

**5.4 Collaborative Working:** on a range of projects lead by the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust in relation to Peatland Restoration and Invasive Non-Native Species eradication.

**5.5 Volunteering opportunities:** Yes- through the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust, Local Development Trusts i.e. Appin Community Development Trust and the Rhododendron ponticum clearance project up Glen Creran, Loch Craignish project on Native Oyster and Seagrass restoration projects and citizen science projects including seabed species recording. Loch Linnhe Marine and Coastal Group- MCCOLL.

## 6. RESEARCH AND ASSOCIATED MONITORING.

As a Local Authority, we are not a research institute and it is not within our remit or our capacity to analysis the effectiveness of partner lead projects.

### 6.1 Partner Projects:

- The Rain Forest initiative is being managed through the Argyll and the Isles Coastal and Countryside Trust, the council is one of its partners.
- Encouraging Citizen Science- OPAL project information is still very relevant.
- Growing Wild, a Kew Gardens initiative- schools and community groups encouraged to apply for wildflower seeds and mushroom growing kits.
- The Woodland Trust – free native bare root trees- information sent to a range of community groups including Community Councils.

**6.1 Reporting Data:** Agencies, clubs and trusts tend to do this, the council does not have capacity. The council promotes citizen science i.e. various campaigns and native plant species opportunities and sign post records to the appropriate record centre.

## 7.0 BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES.

Examples of key achievements in this context might include:

- Development Management implementation of NPF4 Biodiversity Measures (Biodiversity Policy 3 (c) draft spread sheet for Developers to populate) as part of
  - Planning Conditions- examples: SUDs, Tree and Shrub planting as part of Green networks.
- Native Woodland planting on the Council estate- Nature Restoration Fund and the allocation of funds to enable the following projects to be delivered:
- Control of invasive non-native species on Council land. For example, spraying or removal of Japanese Knotweed, Rhododendron ponticum etc.
- Competitive tree planting fund to grant funding to local groups, schools or community organisations to plant native trees across Argyll and Bute.
- Woodland clearance and native replanting at Kilmory Estate. School food waste composting for schools that do not have food waste uplift.
- Woodland Planting at Dalinlonghart in Dunoon
- Peat Bog restoration.
- Open up some areas of invasive vegetation to allow wildlife and other users access to open water at the former skating pond in Helensburgh



- LDP2 - NPF4 Biodiversity Measures-
- Time invested in Community groups through our community development officers and allocating areas of grassland/lawn for native species planting.
- Extended National B-lines on the following islands- Mull, Bute, Colonsay, Lismore, Tiree and Coll
- Schools curriculum- Curriculum for Excellence- <https://education.gov.scot/media/jcxpmwd5/sciences-eo.pdf> –
- Biodiversity and Interdependence is already imbedded, schools continue to ensure pupils learning includes Learning for Sustainability as a key theme within their curriculum. With an eye on future opportunities, develop an understanding of the Earth’s resources and the need for responsible use of them.
- Shoreline Management Pilot study on Islay under the following guidance set out in the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan.

### **7.1 LIST OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.**

- Economic and resource pressures; these are an ongoing issues in terms of personnel and funding.
- Delivery of cross-cutting actions; these will involve cross department co-operation with a limited staff resource
- Preventing further loss of habitats and species; we manage this through protective measures in Development Management and council property.
- Pilot Shoreline Management Plan currently being drafted for a site on Islay

### **7.2 We have applied for funding to draft and implement the following Flood Management Plans:**

- Helensburgh, Garelochhead and Cardross (as identified in the Flood risk management plans: Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Plan District (LPD 11))
- Rothesay and Port Bannatyne, Kilchattan Bay (as identified in the Flood risk management plans: Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Plan District (LPD 11))
- Campbeltown (Highland and Argyll Local Flood Risk Management Plan (2022-2028))
- Dunoon West Bay (identified in the Surface water management plans: Dunoon SWMP 2019)
- Cullipool (isle of Luing) (University of Glasgow report).
- Islay (Dynamic coast report)
- Tiree (Dynamic coast report)
- Effective management of invasive non-native species; we carry this out controls as and when required and work with land owners as when appropriate
- Pressures for space; only an issue within established built-up areas.

- Need to meet targets; resource implications for personnel and funding.
- Encouraging enhanced partnership working: from previous experience, partnership working is effective but we can be limited to the same people being involved in a wide range of associated projects.

End.