

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item	19
Report No.	PED 21/14

12 February 2014

HIGHLAND COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This paper presents a draft Biodiversity Communications Plan that aims to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity among staff, tenants and Members of the Council. The draft Plan also proposes that Members consider becoming "Species Champions" by which means they would agree to becoming advocates for a particular species of importance found in the Highlands. Members are invited to:

- (a) consider and approve the attached draft Biodiversity Communication Plan; and
- (b) consider their role as species champions and, if they wish to do so, contact biodiversity officers for further information and guidance on how they can carry out their role most effectively.

1. Background

- 1.1 Biodiversity is the variety of all life on earth and all the places where it is found. It is also the name given to a process of focussing conservation efforts on the rarest, most important or most threatened species and habitats in an area.
- 1.2 All public bodies have a statutory duty to "further the conservation of biodiversity". Since 2008 Highland Council has been delivering a Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan to work towards doing this.
- 1.3 One of the actions of the second Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan (2011-14) was to produce a Communications Plan for biodiversity. The draft Communications Plan is presented at Appendix 1.

2. Biodiversity Communication Plan

- 2.1 The draft Communications Plan is straightforward and its actions are directed at three main audiences. These are Members, Highland Council staff and Highland Council tenants.
- 2.2 For Members there will be the opportunity to attend short (30 minute) presentations on subjects such as Highland's biodiversity, protected species and planning and invasive species. If further presentations are requested they

will be delivered around the topics suggested.

- 2.3 Members will also be invited to become Species Champions. This follows on from the successful initiative that Scottish Environment Link undertook with MSPs. The choice of species will come from a list of over 80. The role of a species champion will be to take an interest in “their” species and act as an advocate for it, highlighting its importance and the issues affecting it in relevant debates or where other opportunities arise. The list of species is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.4 A key part of the Communication Plan is determining how successful it is. Success will be assessed via a short, annual questionnaire for Members and staff, which will be circulated after Committee approval. The results of this will be included in the 2014 biodiversity duty reporting. From 2015 onwards the questionnaire will be circulated in early Autumn, before each round of biodiversity duty reporting. Results will be contained within the biodiversity duty report.
- 2.5 Following each biodiversity duty reporting round an annual Highland Council biodiversity newsletter will be published. It will highlight the work undertaken by the Council for biodiversity, the results of the questionnaire and also interesting news from the world of Highland biodiversity. The first newsletter will appear this Spring.
- 2.6 Biodiversity presentations will continue throughout. They will be open to Members, staff and members of the public and each will consider a specific Highland biodiversity topic. Presentations will last around 30 minutes.
- 2.7 Council tenants will receive a suite of SNH leaflets highlighting nature on their doorstep and, for those that have gardens, what can be done in the garden for wildlife. Tenants will also be asked what the Council can do to improve their area for biodiversity.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The Communication Plan will evolve over the next year guided by feedback from Council Members, staff and tenants. Its aim is to increase understanding of biodiversity and to increase the number of those actively involved in doing something for Highland’s biodiversity.

4. Fit with the Single Outcome Agreement

- 4.1 Delivering the Communications Strategy as part of the Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan will help deliver SOA National Outcomes 1, 10 and 12. The local outcome is, “Our natural heritage is protected and enhanced enabling it to deliver economic, health and learning benefits”.

5. Fit with the Programme for Highland Council 2012-17

- 5.1 Biodiversity actions support commitments 7, 8, 11, 13, and 18 within the

“Working Together to Empower Our Communities” theme.

4. Implications

- 4.1 There are no resource, legal, equality or risk implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 If the Communication Plan is successful then it should deliver positive actions to help the Council deliver Climate Change and Carbon Clever targets.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

- (a) consider and approve the attached draft Biodiversity Communication Plan; and
- (b) consider their role as species champions and if they wish to do so, contact biodiversity officers for further information and guidance on how they can carry out their role most effectively.

Signature:

Author: Jonathan Willet (Ext 2274)

Designation: Biodiversity Officer

Date: 27 January 2014

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Highland Council’s Biodiversity Communication Plan.

Appendix 2. The Highland Species Champions List.

Appendix 1: Highland Council Biodiversity Communication Plan 2014

Background:

The Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan (2008 to date) has engaged directly with a limited number of Council staff on specific biodiversity projects. This means that the vast majority of staff have no contact with the Biodiversity Officers or are aware of the projects that have been or are being delivered. To rectify this situation a Communication Plan has been drafted and forms part of the Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan. This plan will be updated in Autumn 2014 when it will become part of the 2015-18 Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan.

Aim: This Biodiversity Communication Plan aims to raise awareness and understanding of Highland biodiversity, the issues affecting it and the actions needed to increase both staff and elected members' involvement in practical action to conserve biodiversity.

Audience: Elected members, Highland Council staff and Highland Council tenants.

Baseline: An online survey of all staff and elected members will take place in February 2014. This will be used to determine if the Communication Plan has been successful.

Review: The online survey will be repeated annually in early Autumn. The results of this will be reported through the annual Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan Report to the PED Committee in November.

Communication Plan 2014

Action	Group	Information	Date
1. Biodiversity Talks	For members of Staff	These talks give staff the opportunity to hear about a specific species group or biodiversity issue from an expert in the field and hear what they could do to get involved should they wish to do so. These are currently held in the Council Chamber, it is planned that they will be webcast from February 2014 onwards.	Ongoing until December 2014
	For Elected Members	There will be the initial offer of three short, 30 minute, talks on Highland's Biodiversity, Protected Species and Planning and Invasive Species. These subjects were chosen as they are issues that many elected members are dealing with on a regular basis. After the initial talks the elected members will be asked if they wish further talks on other subjects.	Spring 2014
2. Species Champions	For Elected Members	The elected members will be invited to become a species champion. This follows on from the successful initiative that Scottish Environment Link undertook with MSPs. The choice of species will come from a list of over 70. The role of a species champion will be to take an interest in "their" species and act as an advocate for it, highlighting its importance and/or the issues affecting it in relevant debates or other opportunities that arise. The current list can be seen in Appendix 2.	Ongoing
3. Leafleting Tenants	Council Tenants	All Council Tenants will receive a suite of SNH leaflets highlighting: 1) nature on their doorstep and 2) what can be	Spring 2014

		done to garden for wildlife. It is understood that not all tenants have gardens. Tenants will be asked what the Council can do to make their area better for biodiversity.	
4. Biodiversity Awareness Survey	All	Determining how successful the Communication Plan is essential. A short, annual questionnaire/survey for both elected members and staff will be issued to gauge success. The first survey will take place in February 2014 and will act as a baseline to measure progress against. The survey will be repeated each Autumn. The questions can be found at the end of this paper.	February 2014
5. Review	Biodiversity Officer	The results of the annual survey will be reviewed when available and any required changes will be incorporated into the Communication Plan.	October 2014
6. Reporting	Biodiversity Officer	The Communication Plan will be reported to PED as part of the annual Biodiversity Duty Reporting cycle.	November 2014
7. Newsletter	All	After each Biodiversity Duty Reporting Round an annual Highland Council biodiversity newsletter will be published. The newsletter will highlight the work undertaken by the Council for biodiversity, the results of the questionnaire and also interesting news from the world of Highland Biodiversity. The first newsletter will appear this Spring 2014 and then each subsequent Autumn.	December 2014

Questionnaire

1. Are you an elected member or member of staff?
2. Have you heard of the word biodiversity? Y/N
3. Do you know what it means? Y/N
4. Is biodiversity:

Another word for nature conservation?
The variety of all life on earth?
A new washing powder?
(tick all that apply).

5. Biodiversity is the variety of all life on earth and the places where it lives and also a process to deliver nature conservation, but with urban sites and settlements being included in this approach. With this in mind is Highland's Biodiversity important to you? Y/N.

6. Is Highland's Biodiversity important for:

Tourism? Y/N
The Economy? Y/N
Helping combating the effects of climate change? Y/N

7. Do you enjoy watching wildlife documentaries? Y/N
8. Do you spend time watching wildlife in you garden or elsewhere? Y/N
9. Are you actively involved in nature conservation activities? Y/N. e.g. Biological recording, feeding birds, volunteering for or contributing to a wildlife charity?
10. What is your favourite Highland plant, animal, fish, fungi etc? Please name just one.

Jonathan Willet.

January 2014.

Appendix 2: Species Champions List

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Amphibian	Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCCommonToad.pdf
Amphibian	Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCGreatCrestedNewt.pdf
Bat	Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	W	Development of old buildings with complex roofs.	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCBrownLongearedBat.pdf
Bee	Great Yellow Bumblebee	<i>Bombus distinguendus</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-action-framework/species-action-list/bumblebee/
Bee	Moss Carder-bee	<i>Bombus muscorum</i>	L	Habitat, food sources	http://www.bwars.com/index.php?q=category/taxonomic-hierarchy/bee/apidae/bombus/bombus-muscorum&page=1
Bee	A solitary bee	<i>Andrena marginata</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.hbrg.org.uk/FoHW/SolBees/texts/AmargScotland.pdf .
Beetle	Violet Oil Beetle	<i>Meloe violaceus</i>	W	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCVioletOilBeetle.pdf
Bird	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	L	Uncertain, but possibly predators e.g. Mink, Climate Change, or change in food supply	http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/239777-the-breeding-ecology-of-common-scoters
Bird	Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCCorncrake.pdf
Bird	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	W	Habitat, illegal persecution	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCGoldenEagle.pdf
Bird	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	L	Grouse moors and predators	http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-action-framework/species-action-list/hen-harrier/

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Bird	Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i> subsp. <i>bensonorum/pipilans</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/t/twite/index.aspx
Bird	Black Grouse	<i>Tetrao tetrix</i> subsp. <i>britannicus</i>	W	Habitat, deer fencing	http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-action-framework/species-action-list/black-grouse/
Bird	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	W	Habitat	http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/263911-investigating-the-causes-of-curlew-declines-
Bird	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.gwct.org.uk/research/species/birds/grey-partridge/
Bird	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	L	Rat predation in certain colonies.	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCManxShearwater.pdf
Bird	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/220840-strathspey-wetlands-and-waders-initiative
Bird	Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i> subsp. <i>scotica</i>	W	Habitat, co-existence with other species	http://www.gwct.org.uk/research/species/birds/red-grouse/
Bird	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	W	Habitat, possibly climate change, research underway.	http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/259965-diagnosing-the-causes-of-ring-ouzel-declines-
Bird	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/293774-ecology-of-the-declining-wood-warbler
Bird	Capercaillie	<i>Tetrao urogallus</i>	L	Habitat, disturbance, deer fencing	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCCapeercaillie.pdf
Bird	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCCornBunting.pdf
Bird	Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	L	Food	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCPuffin.pdf

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Bird	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	L	Indirect persecution	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCRedKite.pdf
Butterfly	Chequered Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCChequeredSkipper.pdf
Butterfly	Large Heath	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>	W	Habitat	http://butterfly-conservation.org/679-884/large-heath.html
Butterfly	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCPearlFritillary.pdf
Butterfly	Small Blue and Dingy Skipper	<i>Cupido minimus and Erynnis tages</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCSmallBlue.pdf
Butterfly	Mountain Ringlet and Northern Dart	<i>Erebia epiphron and Xestia alpicola subsp. alpina</i>	L	Habitat	http://butterfly-conservation.org/679-859/mountain-ringlet.html
Butterfly	Marsh Fritillary and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCMarshFritillary.pdf
Cetacean	Bottlenosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	L	Offshore development, food supply	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCBottlenoseDolphin.pdf
Cetacean	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	W	Offshore development, food supply	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCHarbourPorpoise.pdf
Cetacean	Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCKillerWhale.pdf
Cetacean	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCMinkeWhale.pdf

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Cnidarian	Tall Sea Pen	<i>Funicularina quadrangularis</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance	http://www.marlin.ac.uk/speciesfullreview.php?speciesID=3353
Dragonfly	Northern Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion hastulatum</i>	CNPA	Habitat	http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/species/northern-damselfly
Fish	Atlantic salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	W	Habitat, climate change	http://www.snh.org.uk/salmonlifeproject/index.asp
Fish	Basking Shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, Tourism +/-	http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/species/fish/sea-fish/basking-sharks/
Fish	Sea Trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	W	Habitat, climate change	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCSeaTrout.pdf
Fungi	Hazel Gloves	<i>Hypocreopsis rhododendri</i>	L	Habitat, woodland management	http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-action-framework/species-action-list/hazel-gloves/
Fungi	Splendid Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe splendidissima</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCSplendidWaxcap.pdf
Fungi	Crimson Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe punicea</i>	L	Unimproved but cropped grassland management	http://www.first-nature.com/fungi/hygrocybe-punicea.php
Fungi	White Stalkball	<i>Tulostema niveum</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCWhiteStalkball.pdf
Fungi	Soil Fungus	<i>Scutellospora dipurpurescens</i>	W	Habitat/ woodland management. Provides phosphate to Bluebells	http://www.slef.org.uk/the-bluebell-mycorrhiza.asp
Insect	Narrow-headed Ant (and the other 3 sp of Wood Ants)	<i>Formica exsecta</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCNarrowheadedAnt.pdf

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Insect	Northern February Red (stonefly)	<i>Brachyptera putata</i>	L	Water quality, forestry impacts, abstraction	http://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs-and-habitats/northern-february-red
Insect	Upland Summer Mayfly	<i>Ameletus inopinatus</i>	L	Habitat, climate change	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCUplandsSummerMayfly.pdf
Insect	Pine Hoverfly	<i>Blera fallax</i>	CNPA	Habitat management	http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/C207724.pdf
Mammal	Eastern Atlantic harbour seal/ common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	W	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCHarbourSeal.pdf
Mammal	Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibious</i>	W	Offshore development, food supply	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCWaterVole.pdf
Mammal	West European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	W	Habitat	http://www.mammal.org.uk/hedgehog
Mammal	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCBrownHare.pdf
Mammal	Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>	W	Habitat, culling for tick control	http://www.gwct.org.uk/research/species/mammals/mountain-hare/
Mammal	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	L	Habitat, threat from Grey Squirrel colonisation	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCRedSquirrel.pdf
Mammal	Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	L	Habitat, legitimate predator control	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCWildcat.pdf

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Mollusc	Flame Shell	<i>Limaria hians</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance	http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/species/invertebrates/marine-invertebrates/flame-shell-beds/
Mollusc	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	L	Illegal persecution	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCFreshwaterPearlMussel.pdf
Moss	Rusty Bog Moss	<i>Sphagnum fuscum</i>	W	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCRustyBogMoss.pdf
Moss	Green Shield Moss	<i>Buxbaumia viridis</i>	L	Deadwood management	http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uploads/documents/Green_Shield-moss_and_other_deadwood_mosses_mgt_guide_FINAL_PDF_lr.pdf
Moth	Netted Mountain Moth / Small Dark Yellow Underwing	<i>Macaria carbonaria</i> / <i>Anarta cordigera</i>	L	Habitat management	http://butterfly-conservation.org/51-1084/netted-mountain-moth.html
Moth	Argent and Sable	<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>	W	Habitat management	http://butterfly-conservation.org/51-1063/argent--sable.html
Moth	Dark Bordered Beauty	<i>Epione vespertaria</i>	L	Habitat	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCDarkBorderedBeauty.pdf
Moth	Barred Tooth Striped	<i>Trichopteryx polycommata</i>	L	Habitat	http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/barred_tooth-striped-psf.pdf
Plant	Dwarf Birch	<i>Betula nana</i>	W	Habitat management	http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.dwarf_birch.html
Plant	Eelgrass	<i>Zostera spp.</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCEelgrass.pdf
Plant	Highland Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga rivularis</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wild_plants/important_plant_areas/cairngorms/?cat=22

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Plant	Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	W	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCJuniper.pdf
Plant	Lesser Butterfly Orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCLBORchid.pdf
Plant	One Flowered Wintergreen	<i>Moneses uniflora</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wild_plants/plant_species/one-flowered_wintergreen
Plant	Scottish Primrose	<i>Primula scotica</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCScottishPrimrose.pdf
Plant	Twinflower	<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCTwinflower.pdf
Plant	Whortle-leaved Willow	<i>Salix myrsinites</i>	L	Habitat management, climate change	http://www.mountainwoodlands.org/whortle-leaved-willow.asp
Plant	Woolly Willow	<i>Salix lanata</i>	L	Habitat management, climate change	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCWoollyWillow.pdf
Plant	Downy Willow	<i>Salix lapponum</i>	L	Habitat management, climate change	http://www.mountainwoodlands.org/downy-willow.asp
Plant	Alpine Sibbaldia	<i>Sibbaldia procumbens</i>	L	Habitat management, climate change	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCMountainSibbaldia.pdf
Red algae	Common Maërl	<i>Phymatolithon calcareum</i>	W	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance	http://www.marlin.ac.uk/speciesfullreview.php?speciesID=4121
Red algae	Coral Maërl	<i>Lithothamnion corallioides</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance	http://www.marlin.ac.uk/speciesfullreview.php?speciesID=3710
Reptile	Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCAdder.pdf

Group	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)	Links
Reptile	Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	W	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCCommonLizard.pdf
Reptile	Slow-worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	L	Habitat management	http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/other/LINKSCSlowWorm.pdf

W = Widespread

L = Localised

CNPA