

Biodiversity Duty Report for Clackmannanshire Council, 2015 - 2017

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities:

“It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions... in complying with the duty a body or office-holder must have regard to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy”

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 further requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

This is the second Biodiversity Duty Report for Clackmannanshire Council, covering the three calendar years 2015 to 2017 inclusive.

Bodies are encouraged to report against the following criteria:

- Section 1: Introductory information
- Section 2: Mainstreaming
- Section 3: Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation
- Section 4: Partnership working and biodiversity communications
- Section 5: Biodiversity highlights and challenges
- Section 6: Monitoring
- Section 7: Contribution to targets

Section 1: Introductory information

a) Give an overview of your organisation's regulatory role.

Clackmannanshire Council is the smallest mainland local authority in Scotland, covering an area of 159 square km. Clackmannanshire Council is responsible for providing a range of public services, including: education, social care, roads and transport, economic development, housing and planning, environmental protection, waste management, and cultural and leisure services. More information about the organisation can be found on the Council website, www.clacks.gov.uk

The Clackmannanshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan¹ (BAP) is the local expression of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Following public consultation it was adopted in the Council in autumn 2012 and originally ran to 2017. However, the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership undertook a review and refresh of the BAP to bring it in line with updated requirements of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, extending it to 2020 and aligning it with the themes in that Strategy.

Under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, the Council has to produce a report on progress with the Biodiversity Duty every three years. We made our first Report at the end of 2014². At this time we reported regularly and in detail to the Council's Enterprise and Environment Committee.

Following changes in Council committee structures since then, and in order to allow for greater transparency in our reporting and consistency with comparable public bodies, we have moved to a standalone report based upon the Scottish Natural Heritage Public Body Reporting template, to be submitted following review and ratification by the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership Steering Group, as outlined in the Partnership Agreement.

b) Outline how biodiversity feeds into your organisation's decision-making structure, including any initiatives or groups in which your organisation and its staff, board members, etc. are active.

¹ Available at <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/meeting/227/608/4688.pdf>

² Available at <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/4519.pdf>

Clackmannanshire Council is structured as six services: Development & Environment; Resources & Governance; Housing & Community Safety; Strategy & Customer Services; Education; and Social Work. Under each Head of Service are a number of Service Managers.

Development and Environment Service leads on sustainability including biodiversity as well as climate change, and reports to the full Council. This includes twice yearly performance and progress update reports, and the agreement of business plans for the service³.

Within the Service is an Officer Group counterpart of the county-wide Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership. This is chaired by the Service Manager and provides a link between the Partnership and the rest of the Council.

The Council is the main but not the only body taking forward the Biodiversity Action Plan. The range of other organisations and individuals comprising the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership brings resources and skills beyond those available within the Council. Clackmannanshire was one of the first counties to establish a Biodiversity Partnership and it is now one of the most enduring in the country. This is a testimony to the expertise and commitment of the many groups and individuals contributing their time and expertise, and also to the Council for its ongoing support and recognising the vital role that the partners play.

The Partnership's Steering Group currently meets three times yearly and is co-ordinated by the Council's Development Officer. The current chair is Yvonne Boles, Senior Conservation Officer, RSPB. In addition to the chair, particular thanks go to Dick Clark, the previous chair, and to BSBI, SWT and Wildpix Scotland.

c) Include examples where staff and/or board members have promoted biodiversity initiatives.

Staff and elected members led on the development of the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Action Plan and lead on delivering many of the actions contained within this.

³ The most recent performance report (2016-17) may be seen at <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/meeting/259/787/5696.pdf> for and the current Business Plan is at <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/meeting/227/707/5337.pdf>

Staff and elected members played a key role in establishing and delivering the Ochils Landscape Partnership (including legacy arrangements for the EPIC initiative) and the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, which as large Heritage Lottery Funded landscape partnership projects have been the largest two biodiversity initiatives over the period. The Council also maintains Gartmorn Dam Country Park and its Ranger Service reviewed and updated the Gartmorn Dam management plan in the period to reflect current priorities.

Section 2: Mainstreaming

a) Identify the steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into other areas of policy, strategies or initiatives.

The Council had already unanimously approved the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Action Plan prior to the current 2015-2017 reporting period. The Partnership reviewed it during this period, refreshing the Partnership Agreement, re-establishing an Officer Group for biodiversity, and extending the BAP to 2020 in line with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. A rolling review programme has been proposed in order to keep the plan current beyond this date.

In addition the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan was adopted which includes a range of policies on biodiversity, designated sites, the water environment, woodlands and forestry, green networks and climate change. The Council has also published Supplementary Guidance on Green Infrastructure and on Forests and Woodlands. The Council in conjunction with Biodiversity Partnership partners is also assessing potential Local Nature Conservation sites, with half of the 20 potential sites listed in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan assessed to a professional standard as at November 2017 (the remainder for assessment within the financial year).

The Council has Sustainable Ways of Working guidance on its internal “Clacks Academy” intranet learning resource and all reports to the full Council and its Committees are accompanied by a sustainability checklist which requires authors to indicate whether their proposals will have a positive, neutral or negative effect on biodiversity, greenspace and climate change.

Section 3: Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation

a) Identify any actions that your organisation has undertaken on the ground, on your own land or elsewhere as part of a contribution to a wider project and how these benefit biodiversity.

These actions are principally delivered by the Countryside Ranger Service, working with volunteers, schools and other partners as listed in part (b) on partnerships immediately below, in addition to Grounds Maintenance and Land Services. All of these contribute to the wider Biodiversity Action Plan and the current summary of the action list of this is appended. Highlights have included:

- Woodland works and wildflower planting at Alva Glen, Gartmorn Dam, Woodland Park, Back Wood, Cambus Woods
- Action on invasive species – all reports of invasives on Council land followed up as well as assisting other landowners
- Bat surveys, led bat walks and bat box siting and maintenance
- Otter, Barn owl, Badger, Red squirrel surveys and action
- Pond dipping and other school events
- Monthly volunteer group

The Council's Access Officer, Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Land Services along with Community Payback have supported initiatives such as Sustrans Greener Greenways and IFLI Land Management Trainees and RSPB particularly at the Black Devon Wetland and on the Alloa-Dollar and Alva-Tillicoultry cycleways.

In addition the Planning team have worked with landowners and developers alongside volunteers and regulatory bodies (SNH, SEPA, HES) to enable development in accordance with environmental policies within the Local Development Plan.

b) Include any partnership initiatives on biodiversity that you have been involved in: what these aimed to do, what actions have happened, what you believe the successes were and any plans for future or follow-up work.

This is covered in section 4 on Partnership working below.

Section 4: Partnership working and biodiversity communications

a) Describe and illustrate your organisation's involvement in partnership working on biodiversity.

- Alloa Park Residents' Association: woodland management in Pond Wood area
- Alva Glen Heritage Trust: wildflower planting, woodland management, species monitoring
- Autism Scotland: midweek volunteer group supporting a range of conservation projects
- Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland: survey and monitoring
- Buglife: Mud Snails education and species reintroduction project, wildflower planting
- Central Scotland Amphibian and Reptile Group: survey, education
- CSGNT Central Scotland Green Network Trust: woodland management, education, bat and species ID workshops
- Central Scotland Mammal Group: survey and monitoring
- Central Scotland Raptor Group: survey and monitoring
- Clackmannanshire and Stirling Environmental Trust: support with invasive species records, support for volunteer and community led projects
- Delph Pond Forum: work on Delph Pond and wood, Land Manager Workshop
- EPIC (Enabling Projects in Clackmannanshire): action on invasive species, tree planting
- Fife Council: input to BAP review and red squirrel survey
- Forestry Commission: woodland works, education and awareness
- greenspace scotland: support on #growclacks community growing initiative
- Inner Forth Landscape Initiative: land management trainees, woodland management, wetland creation and management (Black Devon Wetland), education and training, INNS conference, land manager workshop
- RSPB: wetland (Black Devon Wetland) and education projects under IFLI, charring Biodiversity Partnership
- Scottish Natural Heritage: ecological advice, support through BAP Officer Network
- Scottish Wildlife Trust: Cambus Pools management under IFLI and local volunteers, education and training, Inner Forth Inches, action on invasive species, survey and monitoring (Sticky Catchfly)
- Stirling Council: ecological and policy advice
- Stirling University: survey and monitoring (invasive species, Sticky Catchfly)

- The Conservation Volunteers: tree planting and invasives action under OLP/EPIC, support for Sustrans volunteers, Community River Monitoring project
- Sustrans: Greener Greenways project with volunteers and TCV including woodland management, wildflower planting, invasives clearance, hedge planting
- The Wildlife Information Centre: survey and monitoring, technical support for Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Wildpix Scotland: monitoring, species advice, education and use of images
- Woodland Trust: ongoing management at Woodland Park

As noted throughout this report, partnerships are fundamental to the way in which the Council works in meeting its Biodiversity Duty requirements. Officers are proactive in seeking opportunities to work with partners and make efforts with diminishing resources to invest in and retain partners' enthusiasm and knowledge. A very conservative estimate of time input from these various partners gives a total of 1600 person days with a cash equivalent value of £390,000 based on SNH's daily rate equivalents for calculating in kind contributions⁴. This does not take into account the biodiversity, skills development, health and other public benefits arising from this work.

b) Describe any biodiversity communication that your organisation has undertaken to help raise awareness of and communicate about biodiversity conservation, including any partners that you worked with on communication and awareness raising activities.

This has primarily been through partners with whom we are working, most notably the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, RSPB, Sustrans Greener Greenways, TCV and SWT. Our own communications team will place items on the Council website biodiversity pages <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/> as requested but we generally place greater emphasis on promoting particular events via the Council's Facebook and Twitter. In addition we communicate directly with landowners on issues such as invasive species or survey visits, and with developers through the planning team on specifics of development proposals. Ending in 2016 the Council has run a "Clackmannanshire in Bloom" garden competition in which wildlife and sustainability have been promoted as part of the scoring criteria, moving since then to #growclacks in conjunction with greenspace Scotland with CSGN Development Fund support to meet the requirements for community growing under the Community Empowerment Act.

⁴ 1613 person days or £389,244. Based on estimates from partners on time spent, costed on average balance of skills in projects with costings per skill band taken from SNH grants guidance <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/Grants/48370%20Grant%20App%20Form.pdf>

c) Describe any training or learning activities that have been carried out internally or externally relating to biodiversity, for example, CPD seminars or attendance at external events (SNH sharing good practice or Communicate conferences).

Staff have attended a reduced number of training events such as Sharing Good Practice due to reduced complement and budget pressures. Staff have continued to run briefing sessions and/or produce briefing materials as required, including for elected members and planners. With IFLI partners the council has organised and run a conference on invasive species and a workshop for land managers on biodiversity friendly approaches. The Countryside Ranger Service has run a year round events programme although this has been curtailed in the second half of 2017, and ran a training session on identifying invasive species for the Council and TCV partnership Community Flooding Volunteer project.

d) Identify any opportunities that your staff are given to take part in practical action such as volunteering, e.g. with John Muir Trust, British trust for Conservation Volunteers, RSPB.

The Council works in partnership with voluntary bodies but its emphasis is encouraging and supporting volunteering among the community at large rather than volunteering days for staff. Staff from the Countryside Ranger Service and Youth Services have run John Muir Award training for individuals and groups in the county.

Section 5: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

a) Describe your organisation's main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

Partnerships stand at the top of this list. Throughout this report the role that partners play in helping the Council to deliver its Biodiversity Duty stand out, although the Council plays a central supporting and facilitating role in this. The work of the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership featured in the report on 20 years of Biodiversity Partnership launched at the Scottish Parliament in October 2016, alongside the long running otter survey run by the Council's Countryside Ranger Service with volunteers. The Council has provided financial support to and played a major role in the Inner Forth Landscape Partnership which has delivered a range of projects, most notably the establishment of the RSPB Scotland's Black Devon Wetlands reserve on Council land, woodland management works in the Coastal Clackmannanshire Woodlands Network (CSGNT) and reserve management works at Cambus Pools (SWT) in addition to landscape management traineeships (TCV) wildlife recording (IFLI/TWIC) and conservation volunteering (RSPB).

Outside of IFLI, the Council has also been involved in an effective partnership with Sustrans' Greener Greenways project on the Alloa to Dollar and Alva to Tillicoultry cycleways, and with TCV River Monitoring Volunteers who have extended their volunteer flood risk monitoring project to encompass invasive species.

Another success has been the Local Development Plan which features robust environmental policies and supplementary guidance. This does not prevent development so much as influence its formation, improving social as well as environmental outcomes for the area.

b) Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

Resourcing is the standout challenge. The council has made major savings in recent years but this will continue and further pressures on biodiversity and associated areas are anticipated. External partners, both voluntary and professional, make a tremendous contribution to biodiversity in Clackmannanshire and a challenge for the council will be to sustain the enthusiasm and commitment of these invaluable partners in the face of diminishing resources. The Council are considered a key part of the Biodiversity Partnership and without ongoing support to this group it is likely it would collapse. The Countryside Ranger Service is

small but plays a vital role not just in delivering action on the ground and environmental education, but also in working alongside and supporting partners.

The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative has made an outstanding contribution over the period and accounts for approximately 66% of the 1600 person days/£390,000 in kind delivered by partners. The Initiative comes to an end in 2018 and the Council and other partners are actively seeking means to establish a legacy programme but it is not envisaged that this can be on the same scale.

The Partnership has devoted a lot of attention to invasive non-native species over the past three years and although this has resulted in some positive action and awareness raising, this is an area that will require further attention and action with neighbouring counties as well as other partners.

Unauthorised development and fly tipping are recurrent issues, with the latter also possibly linked to the spread of invasive species.

Climate change is of increasing concern, both in terms of increasing frequency of abnormal weather events and in potentially also terms of blips or changes in trends observed in some of the Rangers' survey and monitoring programmes.

Of the six areas on which we report, the area where we can make most improvement, and also where the Council has most control, is Section 3 Mainstreaming: we have some excellent policies and strategies but we can consider how we can make progress on ensuring that these are translated into action on the ground. This includes actions by staff and contractors, and a useful first step could be a workshop of key staff in Development & Environment Services to consider options for quick wins.

With regard to habitats and species in the Biodiversity Action Plan, the area where we most need to improve performance is Forests and Woodlands. In order to address this, we are examining options with CSGNT to review and refresh old management plans for all Council-owned woodlands in order to identify priority actions, and also looking at ways in which we could help community groups looking after woodlands.

Section 6: Monitoring

a) What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this? If you do not carry out any monitoring activities, please explain why.

Our Biodiversity Steering Group meets at four month intervals and a standing item is progress on projects in the Biodiversity Action Plan. All 54 projects are coded green-amber-red along with a short text field to capture progress (appended). In addition we have ongoing survey and monitoring projects for otter, barn owl and kestrel and bats, and one key Partnership partner has a long term Sticky catchfly monitoring project in progress. In addition we have been working with The Wildlife Information Centre and with Inner Forth Landscape Initiative partners to address the need for a local records centre. We are conducting a review of Local Nature Conservation Sites where survey information is providing a valuable baseline for a range of habitats and species. We are still endeavouring to establish a definitive baseline for invasive species with emphasis on Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed.

b) Does your monitoring show any significant trends of highlight any areas of concern?

The otter survey displays surprisingly positive trends suggesting improving water quality in watercourses. Conversely SNH site condition monitoring for Gartmorn Dam indicates reduced water quality putting the SSSI status at risk. Despite ongoing control efforts, we see continuing increase in invasive species. We suspect that climate change may exacerbate this through increased flood events and milder winters.

c) Have you added your data to the National Biodiversity Network Gateway (NBN) or Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)?

Not directly but indirectly via The Wildlife Information Centre. The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative has enhanced reporting significantly during the period, especially through the Forth Nature Counts project, and we have been working with the IFLI team and TWIC to establish legacy arrangements.

Section 7: Contribution to targets

Use the following tables to indicate the biodiversity targets to which your organisation has contributed. You may wish to insert additional targets from the 2020 challenge for Scotland's biodiversity (the Biodiversity Strategy), the Six Big Steps for Nature or the Aichi Targets.

Actions within our Biodiversity Action Plan are aligned with the Six Big Steps for Nature as below.

For further information contact biodiversity@clacks.gov.uk

Appendix: Progress against Clackmannanshire BAP action list as at December 2017

Projects are marked Red-Amber-Green to indicate their status as below. Please note that these status conventions do not reflect the conservation status of any habitats or species, but rather whether the specific actions agreed in the Action Plan require action by the Steering Group in order to take them forward.

Red: The project is at risk and in turn places the overall Plan at risk. Action required by the Steering Group.

Amber: The project may be at risk if action is not taken. Steering Group attention required rather than action at this stage.

Green: The project is currently on track (not necessarily completed). No action is required by the Steering Group at this stage.

Committed versus Aspirational actions: when the Biodiversity Action Plan was drawn up, actions were divided in to Committed and Aspirational categories based upon the priorities and resources of the groups involved at that time. Since then, progress has taken place according to the priorities and resources of groups that have been engaged in delivery of the Plan.

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Actions for Cross-cutting Themes				

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Supporting Strategic Biodiversity Action	Deliver a training session for partners and Council staff on how to use IHN (Integrated Habitat Network) data	Carried forward from Year 1: Internal lead retired and not replaced. This could be subject matter for a SNH Sharing Good Practice event and have flagged up as such.	This should help us develop a more strategic approach to priorities, but in practice priorities are determined by a combination of existing policies and plans including the BAP, partners' priorities, and threats and opportunities.	Step 1 Ecosystem restoration
	Produce an IHN Opportunities Map for Clacks	Still ongoing: as SBA1 above. Meanwhile see http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-the-land/spatial-ecology/habitat-networks-and-csgn/	As above.	Step 1 Ecosystem restoration
Delivering the Biodiversity Duty	Prepare briefing indicating how Biodiversity Duty can be incorporated into Council strategies, plans and actions	Rather than a single internal briefing, significant work has been done to integrate biodiversity into Council processes. Most recent has been briefing to Heads of Service on our Public Body Duties and subsequent meetings on building into business planning, online learning and work plans. Some progress with Procurement although this will be an ongoing process	This should help Council staff build biodiversity into business as usual with major biodiversity benefits. However, it still needs concerted and sustained action to work with staff at all levels to build into business as usual.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Report on compliance with the Biodiversity Duty (Minimum of every 3 years)	First required report was submitted in Dec 2014 http://www.clacks.gov.org.uk/document/meeting/227/608/4688.pdf . Internally, report twice yearly to Council. This report Dec 2017 in line with updated guidance issued Oct 2016	This is a statutory requirement and it is a means to emphasise to Council staff that the Biodiversity Duty is legally required and to encourage the Council to be seen to be performing well.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Provide training for planners to ensure they are able to incorporate biodiversity considerations into decision making to ensure net gain for biodiversity through development	Green. Although we have not run a specific training session the planning team have consistently incorporated biodiversity considerations, although they do not have decision making power. Discussed with SNH as possible Sharing Good Practice item, and produced guidance for comment by SNH. Biodiversity policy and Supplementary Guidance on Green Networks in Local Development Plan.	Inappropriate development is a major negative for biodiversity, so incorporating biodiversity into decision is a major plus. Note though that often at the planning stage this is done, but problems then arise at implementation level often involving subcontractors where the biodiversity responsibility is effectively "outsourced"	Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Collate information on ways to incorporate biodiversity into new development in a simple, single point of reference for planners and developers	See BD4 above. See also Supplementary Guidance on Green Infrastructure https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/sustainability-team/local-development-plan/user_uploads/supplementary-guidance-6---green-infrastructure.pdf Note though that although we have strong policies and accompanying briefing material, they are insufficient on their own to ensure that biodiversity is incorporated.	As above. "Single" and "simple" might be contradictory requirements for this particular purpose because of the wide range of interests that the planners have to balance. A recurrent theme is also that at the planning stage, biodiversity is incorporated but when it comes to implementation it is not and accountability falls down when sub contractors etc are brought in .	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
Biological Data Recording and Management	Produce a training programme jointly with Stirling (and Falkirk if feasible) to meet identified training needs e.g. surveying ponds, birds, invertebrates and amphibians	There is not a single joint programme but there is a wide range of training available and planned via Rangers, IFLI, Greener Greenways, TWIC, Mammal Group etc. IFLI's Forth Nature Counts project has been delivering free wildlife ID workshops, promoting ad hoc wildlife recording and supporting recording volunteers http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/recording-celebrating/forth-nature-counts . Working with IFLI partners to develop a legacy programme	Current status is good but this will be harder following end of IFLI programme although efforts are under way to establish legacy arrangements	Step 4 priority habitats and species

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Survey and Establish Local Nature Conservation Sites	Set up a committee to establish a process and programme for reviewing and designating LNCS in Clacks and Stirling.	Ongoing, funding for TWIC in this financial year, back on track although progress slower than anticipated. Assessment session held with TWIC in September, two more scheduled before end of March	This is seen as a priority by the Partnership. The BAP SEA Environmental Report states that, "a key area of work is to put in place a process for the review of these sites in order to assess and designate them as Local Nature Conservation Sites in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy. This will enable them to be considered as a material consideration when determining planning applications."	Step 4 priority habitats and species
Control of Invasive Species	Deliver 5 talks per year to schools and other interest groups about invasive species and the value of biodiversity	Although Rangers continue to take action on invasives, their outreach role has been reduced and they have more of an emphasis on action where invasives have been reported. Over the period the Council and other partners have exceeded this target	Raising awareness of invasives potentially harmful to people is of interest to schools as well as supporting community engagement and educational attainment.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Provide information on the control of invasive species to landowners as required and make available on the website	Information on current position posted on Council website at http://www.clacks.gov.uk/environment/invasivplants/ Continuing to advise/assist landowners where possible and escalating to empowered authorities (usually SNH) as appropriate. Coded amber because although we are meeting the BAP requirement the issue is not going away	As above. This is perceived as important by some but by no means all landowners and households as well as being an important single step to reduce biodiversity decline. It also reminds landowners of their legal obligations. However, experience in the Council is that advice alone is insufficient.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Deliver a minimum of 2 non-native invasive species related conservation activities per year	We have greatly increased action in this area and are undertaking pioneering initiatives such as partnership with TCV and Community Flood Wardens but the problem will continue to increase. In addition as a landowner the Council takes action on all invasive species reported on Council land.	As above, and it would be good to continue pursuing options for at least one of these actions to have a strategic rather than solely local and reactive emphasis	Step 1 Ecosystem restoration
Awareness Raising, Education and Participation	Deliver annual programme of 5 conservation volunteering activities	The Rangers, as well as partners such as IFLI, RSPB, BSBI, SWT, TCV and TWIC have consistently delivered significantly more than 5 activities.	As resources are reduced across the board the importance of voluntary action and other forms of community engagement keeps growing ever greater. An important question for the Partnership is how we can support volunteering better	Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Deliver a minimum of 10 educational events for schools per ranger	The rangers' outreach role has been reduced pending clarification of future roles	As above	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Deliver an annual Forth Valley Wildlife Forum	Have worked with IFLI and SWT to develop Forth Naturalist & Historian conference over the period. However, although we are working to develop legacy plans, this is the last year of IFLI.	Need to consider what are outcomes, and which is more important: an annual event or ongoing community engagement. In the case of a specific invasives themed event this is much simpler.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Update and maintain biodiversity webpage twice yearly	Information on the site is updated more than twice yearly so the target is met, although the site would benefit from upgrading. Have prepared material for this but plans to refresh the site keep getting put off due to competing priorities, including exponential growth in use of social media over the period	We are increasingly turning to electronic media to reach as wide an audience as possible for the least expenditure. Likewise partners and the wider public and increasingly use social media	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Deliver 10 awareness raising activities each year outside the Biodiversity Partnership	More than 10 activities delivered throughout the course of the year.	There are all sorts of National Days and Weeks throughout the year that we can look to link events to.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Funding, Delivery and Support	Provide advice to businesses on how they can take action for biodiversity as required	Engagement has included input to planning applications, advice on invasive species, workshop event for land managers, or through garden competition up. We have been seeking further engagement with the Business Improvement Districts for IFLI legacy work	We want businesses to play more of a part through positive contribution but also and probably more importantly through avoiding or minimising harm, such as by incorporating biosecurity considerations into development	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
Actions for Habitat and Species				
Rivers and streams	Survey and monitor otter population annually	This has taken place every autumn and most springs since 2004. Featured in publication on 20 Years of Biodiversity Partnerships launched at Scottish Parliament in 2016 G:\Development Services\Sustainability\Countryside Rangers\Otter\Otter Surveys	Key indicator species and will also support the ecosystem health approach SNH are encouraging	Step 4 priority habitats and species

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Ponds	Provide support to communities wanting to restore or create ponds	Rangers supported communities at Gean and Delph ponds. Ongoing work at IFLI sites including new pond creation at Black Devon Wetland, and pond mud snail project with Buglife. Possible new workstream with ARC central belt ponds project. Encouraging ponds as part of broader wildlife considerations in developing Allotments and Food Growing Strategy	Ponds are a UK Priority Habitat and this action arose from the recommendations of the Clacks pond survey carried out under the previous BAP. If capacity exists we should consider those recommendations rather than just where there is identified community demand.	Step 4 priority habitats and species
Woodland	Encourage more scrub species to be planted as part of woodland creation projects and manage existing woodlands to have more scrub	The Council lead on forestry and woodlands has retired, and this action was coded Red for some time. However with work by CSGNT to review old management plans for Council-owned woodlands, and with renewed engagement with the Forestry Commission contact there is better scope for improvement and hence changing coding from Red to Amber	Scrub is not always recognised as being of high biodiversity value compared to eg ancient woodland so tends to attract less attention. In addition with changing land use and maintenance practices it is under increasing pressure and both woodland and grassland creation projects could inadvertently reduce overall scrub	Step 4 priority habitats and species

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Survey for red squirrels	Ongoing, survey at Gartmorn Dam. Some concerns over impacts of forestry works at North and South Plantations, rangers have investigated. New FC planting at Gartmorn includes some Scots pine/Norway spruce for red squirrel habitat	Priority species	Step 4 priority habitats and species
	Join Fife Red Squirrel Forum, extending remit into Clackmannanshire	Made links with Fife Red Squirrel Group. SWT have commenced a major squirrel project.	As above	Step 4 priority habitats and species
Estuarine	Deliver objectives in Management Plan for Alloa Inch SSSI and Tullibody Inch	Monitoring indicates that the Inches are experiencing less rather than more inundation. This is coded green on the basis that SWT and SNH are working to establish objectives, although once objectives are set it will remain a work in progress.	Need for correct management objectives in light of information emerging from monitoring	Step 6 Marine and coastal management
Farmland and lowland	Continue Barn owl monitoring project	Ongoing. Possible predation by other native species	Priority species	Step 4 priority habitats and species

Committed Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records as at 21 December 2017	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Urban Green Spaces	Prepare Park Management Plans for one public park per year to promote biodiversity friendly management practices in Council owned public spaces	Management plan for Devon Way developed in year 3 under Greener Greenways although not "parks". Rangers have updated Gartmorn Dam management plan. Emphasis for other council spaces more likely to be on staff training and procedures. Apparently there are (or once were) spreadsheets with specs for different categories of grassland, shrub etc for areas maintained by Land Services. Also working on a community growing strategy which includes proposal for biodiversity-friendly food growing in council managed spaces	Opportunity for biodiversity gain as well as enhancing green spaces for public benefit. Looking ahead, a set of policies and procedures, and ideally training, for park management may be more deliverable than specific management plans	Step 5 Land and freshwater management

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Actions for Cross-cutting Themes				
Biological Data Recording and Management	Establish a Forth Valley Recording Network (Fulfilling role of a Local Records Centre)	Have been taking this forward through developing a partnership with TWIC The Wildlife Information Centre, and through IFLI "Wildlife Counts" project which we are seeking to extend into IFLI legacy project	This has regularly been raised as an important issue by the Steering Group. In addition having a known records centre operating to quality standards can help planners and also enable developers to operate on an informed basis from the outset of any project	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
Survey and Establish Local Nature Conservation Sites	Identify LNCS that are most at risk and produce management plans for them - minimum of 1 per year	As with LNCS 1 (Review) if capacity available. Flagging up priority species in site statements short of producing management plans	Protected sites remain a priority under the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and are a key strand in SBS Big Step 4. Should the survey and assessment process should also give a sense of risk facing sites: short of producing formal management plans which at a rate of 1 per year could take decades can we get a sense from the survey experience of some basic do's and don't's maybe comparable to Operations Requiring Consent for SSSIs?	Step 4 priority habitats and species
Awareness Raising,	Deliver Fish in The Classroom	Delivered by FFT in 6 schools across Clacks, Falkirk and West Lothian. Unsure of current		Step 2 Investment in

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Education and Participation	programme annually for local schools	status hence amber rather than green, but current emphasis of FFT is on other areas of the Forth catchment.		natural capital
Actions for Habitat and Species				
Upland	Devise a programme of targeted surveying in the Ochils	LNCS group is proposing surveys as part of LNCS process after first tranche of sites listed in BAP has been completed	Upland LNCS sites were proposed as priority in the TWIC funding bid made in autumn and this view has been supported by members of the LNCS review group. In addition IFLI resources may enable some lowland sites to be surveyed.	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Deliver a programme of targeted surveying in the Ochils over a five year period	As above. RS/SWT have been undertaken Sticky Catchfly surveys over an extended period.	See above	Step 2 Investment in natural capital
	Establish extent of Calaminarian grassland in Clackmannanshire	No agreed lead for this project. Because the action is Aspirational this is coded amber as "may be at risk"; if it was a committed action it would be coded red as "at risk".		Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
Rivers and streams	Survey and monitor the population of water vole	No agreed lead for this project. Because the action is Aspirational this is coded amber as "may be at risk"; if it was a committed action it would be coded red as "at risk". RS has advised that there are indications that water vole was present when first Clacks BAP was compiled. Does the Mammal Group want to take this forward?	Water vole is a priority species in the BAP and we have a lack of information on which to base any plans for future action.	Step 4 priority habitats and species
Ponds	Introduce grazing to area around existing pond at Black Devon Wetlands	Grazing requirements depend upon specification within management plan, which is being implemented and on track under RSPB management and Inner Forth Landscape Initiative.		Step 5 Land and freshwater management
Woodlands	Improve 10ha of upland oakwoods for biodiversity.	No agreed lead for this project. Overall picture for woodlands is improving with greater FC involvement and CSGNT review of Council-owned woodlands. Some work with Alva Glen Heritage Trust		Step 5 Land and freshwater management
	Improve 30ha of lowland mixed deciduous woodland for biodiversity.	Back Wood Clackmannan 7.6ha improved 2013, 10ha riparian woodland on lower Devon and Black Devon (10ha) with CSGNT under IFLI in Feb/Mar 2015. Biodiversity work also undertaken Pond Wood, Cambus Wood, Gean Wood, Pleasure Grounds, Lornshill, Kennet (IFLI Trainees) and Devon Way at		Step 5 Land and freshwater management

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
		Fishcross (Greener Greenways), acreage to be confirmed. Forestry Commission 9ha new planting (8.7 in Gartmorn wood and 0.3 in Gartarry)		
Estuarine	Deliver objectives in Management Plan for Cambus Pools	Ongoing under SWT management and Inner Forth Landscape Initiative.	Ongoing management needs	Step 6 Marine and coastal management
Farmland Lowland Urban	Survey for badgers	Ongoing. More setts have been identified than anticipated and survey and monitoring effort exceeds what was originally anticipated or planned.		Step 4 priority habitats and species
	Develop a nest box scheme for kestrels	Ongoing		Step 4 priority habitats and species
	Survey the length/quality of hedgerows in the county with recommendations for improvement (focus on Council owned initially)	Land Services have a map of all the hedgerows that they deal with. LF has it. Also possibility of a map with exact types of hedgerows.	Hedgerows and trees also lost at Glenochil and Collylands roundabout due to roads projects.	Step 4 priority habitats and species

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	If warranted by the results of the survey, develop a project to improve the quality of and/or reinstate hedgerows	Hedgerows were considered in IFLI Woodlands & Designed Landscapes study completed in early 3013 but no Clacks action identified. Stretch on A901 reinstated under Greener Greenways in 2015-16.		Step 4 priority habitats and species
	Establish the extent of Lowland unimproved meadow, semi improved meadow and wet meadow, recording habitat quality for wildlife.	No agreed lead for this project. Because the action is Aspirational this is coded amber as "may be at risk"; if it was a Committed action it would be coded red as "at risk". No action update, but RS advice was that the lowland unimproved meadow which had started to develop a greater butterfly orchid population at Fishcross (the only one in Clacks)has become overgrown and the numbers have declined to just one plant.		Step 4 priority habitats and species
	Work with two communities to increase biodiversity in their local green space	Target met and exceeded in previous years under Community Environmental Improvement Fund, Inner Forth Landscape Initiative and Greener Greenways. Currently through #GrowClacks community growing initiative.		Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Aspirational Actions				
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records	Why do we want to do this, and what happens if we don't?	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 6 Big Steps for Nature
	Extend 'On the Verge' project into Clackmannanshire	Wildflower areas planted by Delph Pond Forum at woodland near to pond, wildflowers planted as part of workday in Menstrie with OLP help and plants donated by Scottish Autism. Also under Greener Greenways. Despite this significant effort, problems remain with ongoing management and public perception		Step 2 Investment in natural capital

Completed Actions		
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records
Actions for Cross-cutting Themes		
	Advocate that a suitable biodiversity indicator is incorporated into the Single Outcome Agreement	Made recommendations concerning biodiversity and other environmental aspects of SOA, but the new format SOA and now LOIP is not compatible with this approach. So although unsuccessful, the action has been discharged and effectively sat within "environment is protected and enhanced" under the SOA.
Actions for Habitat and Species		
Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land	Carry out further investigation of three sites identified by Buglife as potential examples of Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land	Site information obtained for Buglife under Inner Forth Landscape Initiative. Shore and Manor Powis management plans from Buglife, no further action or lead agreed hence May Be At Risk. G:\Development Services\Sustainability\Inner Forth Landscape Initiative\Briefs and Studies (internal). In addition IFLI are looking for OHM sites for (principally moth) surveys as part of the Forth Nature Counts project and it would be good if this could feed into the LNCS review
Reedbeds	Carry out a survey of the extent and current quality of reedbed in Clackmannanshire	Chris Knowles (IFLI, now RSPB) surveyed Black Devon Wetland and Cambus Pools reedbeds with monitoring and management recommendations. The most important Clacks reedbeds (Tullibody and Alloa Inch) had to be missed due to access issues, but SWT with SNH are now reviewing management priorities for the Inches.

Completed Actions		
Action Area	Action & Output	Comment and Status including where to find records
	Manage and control Reed canary grass at Gartmorn Dam in order to preserve the open-water transition fen habitat	There have been workdays to reduce invasives in the Gartmorn area, including a day to reduce Alder carr to prevent its encroachment onto the reedbed area and another to reduce Canary reedgrass in the area.
	Sensitively thin out areas of carr habitat and plant areas of reedbed at Gartmorn Dam to facilitate filtration of surface water run-off.	As RB2 above.
Wetlands	Prepare a Management Plan for Black Devon Wetlands covering hydrology too	Done under Inner Forth Landscape Initiative and active management ongoing.