



North Lanarkshire Council

Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 - 2021

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Coronavirus

Coronavirus represents the biggest challenge to all public sector organisations. It has infringed in all aspects of work during 2020. Many projects, volunteer group and school projects have been delayed this year. Therefore much of this report will only cover 2018-2019.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 placed a statutory duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity. Section 1 of the Act states: “It is the duty of every public body and office holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”.
- 1.2 The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 amends the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and introduced a requirement for all Public Authorities to produce and make available a report, every three years, detailing their compliance with the biodiversity duty.
- 1.3 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is comprised of ‘Scotland’s Biodiversity: It’s in Your Hands (2004)’ and the ‘2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity’. Together, these documents outline the major steps needed to improve the state of nature in Scotland.
- 1.4 North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) achieves its Biodiversity Duty through the delivery of the ‘North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan’, focussing on biodiversity at a service level, coordinating partnership work and facilitating local action to help achieve the ‘2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity’.
- 1.5 Within NLC, there are 4 core council services: Chief Executive’s, Enterprise and Communities, Education and Families and Adult Health and Social Care.

2 Governance

- 2.1 There are 75 councillors within NLC, representing 21 wards and a population of 340,180. The council operates through a system of committees and sub committees.
- 2.2 The Council is the lead partner for the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and coordinates the delivery of the LBAP through the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership. Councillors oversee the production and delivery of the LBAP through the committee reporting process.
<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%202015%20-%202020.pdf>
- 2.3 Greenspace Development, is primarily responsible for meeting key national and local biodiversity responsibilities and objectives, as well as delivering

projects. Officers delivering positive action for biodiversity are: Biodiversity Projects Officer, Countryside Ranger Service, Conservation & Biodiversity Manager and Forestry and Access Manager. Greenspace Development work with several other departments and stakeholders in partnership projects, and in providing advice and guidance.

2.4 The importance of biodiversity in North Lanarkshire is recognised at a Service level and this report highlights the delivery of the Biodiversity Duty from the period 2018 - 2021.

2.5 The delivery of the Biodiversity Duty is highlighted through 6 key areas:

- Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation
- Mainstreaming
- Nature based solutions and climate change
- Public engagement and workforce development
- Research and monitoring
- Contribution to targets

3 Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation

3.1 Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) projects

During the past 9 year period North Lanarkshire Council have utilised the Forestry Commission Scotland initiative, Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) to assist with the management of 18 different urban woodlands.

From the period 2018 - 2021, North Lanarkshire Council secured funding, and delivered a further 2 Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) projects. The WIAT programme provided the focus for Forestry Commission Scotland's work on improving quality of life in towns and cities. The role of urban woodlands in delivering environmental and economic benefits was a key aspect of this programme. The 2 projects were carried out at:

- Broadwood in Cumbernauld where non-native Sitka Spruce were removed and replacement planting of 3900 native broadleaved trees species was undertaken.
- Chapelhall/Calderbank Woodland – Case Study
The site of the WIAT works is at Chapelhall/Calderbank. In terms of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Landscape Assessment, Chapelhall and Calderbank Woods lie in the Incised River Valleys character area. Along the

North Calder Water, the valley sides are generally steep and well defined, with the valley feature being subject to urban fringe pressures. The Landscape Assessment states that woodland is a critical component of this site and that it would be sensitive to any loss of woodland cover.

This enhancement has allowed the establishment of accessible path networks through the woodlands, silvicultural thinning, where appropriate felling and replanting compartments, with improvements to fences, drainage, signposting, elimination of invasive species and biodiversity gains.

Woodland management aims to promote native species and to allow the woodland to develop. Replacement of coniferous groups with young broadleaves will provide long-term benefits to the biodiversity of the area. Treatment of invasive species will prevent their spread and allow native ground flora to become established.

3.2 Local Nature Reserves

North Lanarkshire Council currently has 9 Local Nature Reserves with a further 1 to be designated next year. These community green spaces are designated for their wildlife value and habitat features, as well as the importance they hold for the local communities in terms of education and health and wellbeing benefits. The 9 LNRs are:

- Braedale Hill
- Brownsburn Community Nature Park
- Cambusnethan
- Gartcosh
- Greenhead Moss
- Kingshill
- Mosswater
- Ravenswood
- Dumbreck

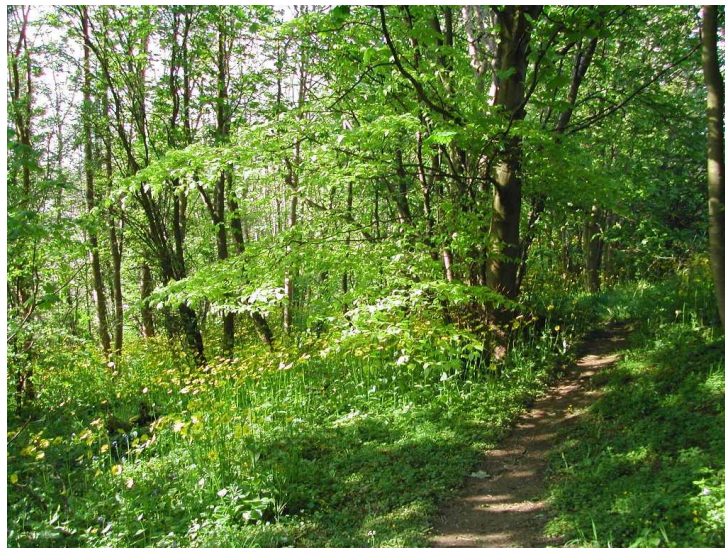
The site to be designated in 2021 is Frankfield Loch which lies on the boundary between North Lanarkshire and Glasgow City Council and is within both local authorities. Habitats consist of a rich and diverse mix of wetland and woodland habitat,

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/directories/local-nature-reserves>

Our priorities are to improve the LNRs for local communities and wildlife. This is taken forward through annual events, improved interpretation, improved access, community consultations, and habitat improvements.

Habitat improvement projects and events have been taken forward at all of the Local Nature Reserves over the reporting period. Including the following:

- Gartcosh LNR - Creation of new ponds, amphibian hibernacula's, habitat creation for the benefit of amphibians, invertebrates and other wildlife.
- Cambusnethan Woodland Management Plan to enable works in order to enhance the site to bring it to a condition where it can be incorporated into the Clyde Valley SAC.
- Greenhead Moss – Pond enhancements, woodland and grassland management.
- Brownsburn– Bog works - scrub removal and damming works.



Cambusnethan Local Nature Reserve



Dumbreck Marsh LNR

The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (NLBAP) covers the period of 2015-2020 and outlines actions and targets for local priority species and

habitats. The Action Plan sets a framework for action to conserve and enhance the biodiversity found in North Lanarkshire. Work has been undertaken to update these plans throughout this year and a new NLBAP will be published in 2021. This will cover the period from 2021-2025.

3.3 Landscape Scale Partnership Projects

During the period 2018 - 2021 North Lanarkshire Council were involved in 3 landscape scale projects.

Seven Lochs Wetland Park

The Seven Loch Wetland Park is a Green Network Project bringing together 20sq km of lochs, parks, nature reserves and woodlands between Glasgow and Coatbridge to create a major new heritage park for Scotland. In early 2014, £250K of development funding from HLF was secured to take forward plans for the park. Led by the Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, other partners include Glasgow City Council and Forestry Commission Scotland. The project has led to many biodiversity improvements in the area, and has contributed to local knowledge and appreciation of greenspaces.

In summer 2016 a further £4.5 million of funding was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which will support the £6.8 million project to develop the Seven Lochs Wetland Park as a major new heritage park for Scotland.

We are now in the implementation phase of the project. The park will become a major new hub for heritage conservation and learning and engagement, and will leave an important legacy for the communities within and neighbouring the park. When complete, the project will enable local people and visitors to experience the natural and cultural heritage of the Seven Lochs area like never before and help local communities to take ownership of the park for generations to come.

Improved visitor facilities have taken place to create gateways to the park at Hogganfield Loch, Provan Hall, Drumpellier Country Park and Glenboig Life Centre.

The project also includes the development of walking and cycling routes linking the gateway sites and improvements to paths, signage, interpretation and management across the whole park, as well as a range of activities for people to enjoy and learn about the area's heritage, including opportunities for training and volunteering.

Cumbernauld Living Landscape (CLL)

Cumbernauld Living Landscape is a partnership project led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council and Forestry Commission Scotland. Initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been secured to develop the Creating Natural Connections project. This initiative aims to make the town's woods, parks and open spaces better for wildlife and people with the support of National Lottery players.

The project works with young people and community groups to build a network of people who care about, and have the skills to care for, the town's greenspaces. The natural environment will be improved through measures including increasing native woodland cover, removing non-native invasive species and creating new wildflower meadows.

Greater connections between local people and the nature in their neighbourhood will be forged through activities and events, imaginative artworks and new interpretation, and practical volunteering.

Creating Natural Connections is a partnership project between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, The Conservation Volunteers, Sanctuary Scotland and the James Hutton Institute.

Achievements since 2018 have included:

- Creation and maintenance of wildflower meadows throughout the CLL catchment area.
- Progression of Invasive Non-native Species survey along the Luggie water.
- Feasibility studies of 3 bogs and submission of grant applications to enable restoration work to be carried out.

Dumbreck and Garrell

The Dumbreck and Garrell project is a partnership between North Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) funded by the Water Environment Fund and North Lanarkshire Council.

The project aims to improve Dumbreck Local Nature Reserve and the adjacent Garrell Burn for the local community and wildlife by providing improved paths with improved protection from flooding. Re-naturalising the Garell Burn and restoring wetland habitat in Dumbreck Local Nature Reserve.

Providing natural and cultural heritage interpretation on site with the local community and contributing to flood alleviation.

In terms of biodiversity the project aims include:

- Habitat improvement over the site. A habitat plan has been developed for the site recommending a number of improvements to be carried forward which benefit nationally rare species such as lapwing, sand martin, kingfisher, water vole and bats.
- River re-wilding: restoration of a natural river channel and alleviation of flooding. The Garrell Burn, as it leaves Kilsyth, is heavily straightened and regularly breaks out of this artificial channel. We will restore the river to a natural shape and create much more valuable wildlife habitat – for fish, insects and birds. It will also be more attractive and visible for visitors.
- Being next to Drumbreck nature reserve gives us the opportunity to allow the river to top over into the wetland– feeding water to these valuable local habitats – and alleviate the pressure of flood risk in the Kelvin catchment. This will be achieved by working with nature rather than artificial structures (e.g. concrete channels and overflows etc.).
- We will also be allowing improved fish and eel access into the Garrell Burn by creating a more natural river and installing fish and eel passes at two small weirs which currently obstruct fish access into the upper Garrell.

Planning permission has been given and work commenced on site in September 2020 and will continue over the next year.

Highlights

The aforementioned partnerships and projects facilitated numerous biodiversity benefits. Here are our highlights over the reporting period:

Barn Owl and Kestrel Project

North Lanarkshire's Countryside Rangers have been working for over a decade to protect populations of barn owl and kestrel. Providing a strategic recovery plan for these declining species to boost a suffering population, with the help of the local community. The initial target was to identify unoccupied areas within our countryside where there is suitable hunting habitat for both barn owl and kestrel species. It was found that there are many appropriate sites that could support territories for either.

Through work and consultation with landowners, permission has been obtained to erect nest boxes on private land. Boxes are constructed in

partnership with local schools, mental health volunteers and other user groups, making links with the Branching Out programme, and local landscape partnerships such as 7 Lochs.

The main goal is to increase the population of both of these declining species. This has been achieved through ongoing work with colleagues and volunteers to construct, erect and monitor over 50 boxes over the last decade.

Over the past seven years, 30 chicks have been reared. North Lanarkshire Council, SSPCA and Central Scotland Raptor Study Group work in partnership to monitor the birds living in the area and identify their movements and breeding patterns.



Photo by Jackie Gilliland, Countryside Ranger

Wildlife Building

In partnership with the Seven Lochs Wetland Park, Greenspace Development took forward a project to create a wildlife tower within Drumpellier Country Park. The tower includes provision for a whole host of wildlife, bats, newts, small birds, invertebrates and barn owl, with opportunities within the build for small birds to nest in gaps and spaces, and for butterflies, bumblebees and other invertebrates to use.

It is planned to include a live camera feed from the tower to the nearby visitor center for public viewing. The tower was built in 2019 and to date it has been actively used by Barn Owl and Tawny Owl.



Gartcosh Habitat Enhancements and Improvements

Gartcosh Local Nature Reserve has been subject to a number of habitat enhancements over the past few years with continuing improvements scheduled for this winter. These works include the creation of 12 new ponds and at least 5 new hibernacula, woodland and hedgerow works. These works seek to improve the site to benefit the population of great crested newt, water vole, other amphibians, *odonata* and other wildlife in general.



Wildflower Meadows

This partnership project between CLL and North Lanarkshire Council transformed three areas of grassland, totaling over 3.5 hectares, into colourful species-rich wildflower grasslands. These wildflower and grassland meadows were created with the help of the local community and volunteers.



The project will continue into 2021 with the creation of a further 3 meadows. This includes an agricultural meadow for the benefit of farmland birds such as grey partridge, skylark, song thrush, house sparrow, tree sparrow, linnet, bullfinch, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting and barn owl. Brown hare will also use the crop and bats will hunt over it, in search of the insects the meadow supports.

Bog Restoration

This partnership project between CLL, NatureScot and North Lanarkshire Council will help re-wet 3 urban bogs within the Cumbernauld area (Broadwood, Sparrow and Abronhill). In 2019 feasibility studies were undertaken on the three bog, which showed that the bogs were in need of work to stop deterioration of the peatland. Applications for grants from NatureScot's Peatland Action Fund have been made and we are awaiting the outcome. If the grants are successful it is the hope that works can be carried out at the start of 2021. The works include damming of drainage ditches and scrub removal, the scrub removal will be taken forward by volunteers.

Cambusnethan Woodland

In order that essential slope stabilisation works could take place upon rail embankments of the West Coast Main Line, 1.1km north east of Overtown, a portion of Garrion Gill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), one of eleven SSSIs that together form the Clyde Valley Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), was subject to tree removal and degradation of habitat

that ultimately caused direct loss of 0.445ha and indirectly impacted upon a further 0.955ha of designated land and EU priority habitat. A 10-hectare area of Cambusnethan Woodland Local Nature Reserve (LNR), known as Hall Gill was selected to be restored to a favourable status. Upon improvement, this area of woodland will ultimately prove suitable for inclusion within the Clyde Valley Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Scotland's largest collection of woodlands designated as the EU priority habitat of mixed woodland on base rich soils associated with rocky slopes.

The procedure of rehabilitating Hall Gill will be overseen by a Habitat Management Group (HMG) formed by members of NLC, SNH and Network Rail. Through tailoring site-specific targets based upon the Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Woodland Habitats (JNCC, 2004), SNH formed the basis for a Compensatory Habitat Management Plan (CHMP) that will be used to work towards Hall Gill attaining a favourable status for designation across the lifetime of the S69 agreement.

The consultation process will begin at the beginning of 2021.

Challenges

Achieving much of what we do requires external funding this is an ongoing challenge, and something which can make it difficult to plan and implement action.

4 Mainstreaming / Nature based solutions and climate change

4.1 Biodiversity and the Planning system

The Biodiversity team, based within Greenspace Development, provide detailed comments in regards to ecology as part of the planning process. Acting as internal consultees to the planning authority, this ensures compliance with wildlife and nature conservation legislation. It also ensures that ecological surveys carried out by developers follow best practice and where appropriate, ensures that any mitigation is carried out to a high standard.

From the period 2018 - 2021, Greenspace Development was consulted on 504 planning applications and 205 land disposals.

In 2018 Greenspace in Partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) provided training to NLC Planning Officers on biodiversity,

protected species, protected sites, relevant legislation and licencing. There were two full days of training to meet the needs of the Planning Team. The training was developed specifically for North Lanarkshire using relevant examples, and local case studies and scenarios.

In 2018 a Modified Proposed Local Development Plan Policy Document was published to update the 2012 Local Plan. This Plan was approved by the Council's Planning Committee in February 2020. It sets out planning policy that will help guide decisions on planning applications that will shape the future of North Lanarkshire, by setting out planning policy and by identifying how land in our area is used.

It looks to achieve regeneration and sustainable growth through delivering the right amount of development in the right places, developed to the right quality, and for the benefit of the communities affected.

The Local Development Plan has Policies that address the environmental protection challenges facing North Lanarkshire. For the creation of safeguarded natural and resilient sustainable places, there is protection for the heritage of historic environment and for the natural heritage of habitats and species. There is also protection for those green network assets that are people-centred and contribute to the well-being of communities.

The key policy objectives of this plan which protect, promote and assess development in support of Natural and Built Environment Issues are;

- **PROT A Natural Environment and Green Network Assets**
This policy sets out to protect local sites, urban green networks and protected species.
- **PROM LOC4 Special Landscape Areas & Green Network Improvements**
North Lanarkshire Council will promote the designated Special Landscape Areas and the enhancement and development of Seven Lochs Wetland Park and the Green Network, as listed in Area Strategies.

4.2 Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs)

Since 2008 sites proposed as SINCs in North Lanarkshire have been assessed in according to each of these five factors:

- **Connectivity** - this is assessed according to a sites proximity to (*physical links between*) broadly similar habitats found in the surrounding

countryside, and ability for the potential of new links (wildlife corridors) to be created.

- Species diversity – this is assessed according to the number and variety of species found on the site compared with what may be expected to occur within similar habitats.
- Species rarity – this is assessed according to the rarity of a habitat within the national and local context, including those on the Scottish Biodiversity List and those listed as priorities in the LBAP.
- Habitat rarity – this is assessed according to the rarity of a habitat within the national and local context, including those on the Scottish Biodiversity List and those listed as priorities in the LBAP.
- Habitat extent - this is assessed according to the amount of a particular habitat found on a site relative to the total found in the local area.

Priority designations are also given to peatlands, riparian corridors and sites with locally/regionally rare species and locally/nationally important populations of common species.

A further SINC review was carried out and updated in 2020. Many of the changes that were made were to rectify mapping errors however one SINC was deleted and one included into the category.

There are currently 380 SINC sites in North Lanarkshire.



Fairy Glen SINC



Calderbank Orchid Meadow SINC



Moodiesburn Glen SINC

4.3 The Plan for North Lanarkshire

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets the direction for the council and partners. Its purpose is to communicate the shared priorities and provide a focus for activities and resources.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire is a high level strategic document that outlines a long-term vision for North Lanarkshire - a vision where North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit.

4.4 The Environmental Strategy

An Environmental Strategy was set out in 2019 for North Lanarkshire. The council already has a number of strategies, action plans and policies which all contribute to the development and protection of the environment within North Lanarkshire. However, the concern was that many of these strategies, policies and plans were working in isolation. The purpose of the Environment Strategy

is to bring all of these policies under the one umbrella to ensure that all such documents take account of, and are aware of, common factors across the other strategies throughout the council and that this is reflected within the individual documents. This will ensure that the council maximises the impact in achieving its own priorities and also contributes to the overall national environmental objectives.

To ensure this one council approach is delivered, the following strategies and plans will be included under the Environment Strategy. These include:

- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Carbon Management Plan
- Air Quality Strategy
- Woodland Management Plan
- Contaminated Land Strategy
- Core Path Plan
- Food Growing Strategy
- Active Travel and Access Strategy
- Local Transport Strategy

The above plans and strategies will retain their particular nomenclature for reasons of convention and statutory status but will be sub policies of the Environment Strategy.

In individual areas of environmental policy, Scotland already has strong, ambitious strategies in place.

In 2018, the Scottish Government published its Climate Change Plan which details how they will continue to drive progress towards the currently legislated emissions reduction target of 80% by 2050. In response to the international Paris Agreement, they have made Scotland's existing climate legislation even tougher, setting a 90% emissions reduction target for 2050 and also that the earliest achievable date for reaching net-zero emissions is regularly reviewed. As soon as a target date for reaching net-zero emissions can be set credibly and responsibly, they will write that date into law.

The Scottish Government have a pioneering Land Use Strategy (2016) with a strategic vision on how to realise the full potential of Scotland's land in ways that result in multiple benefits for our economy, environment and communities.

The Environment Strategy will deliver on a number of priorities and their underlying ambition statements as detailed in the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

- Improve economic opportunities and outcomes

- Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities
- Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure
- Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities
- Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
- Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations
- Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive

5 Public Engagement and Workforce Development

5.1 The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (NLBAP)

The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (NLBAP) covers the period of 2015-2020 and outlines actions and targets for local priority species and habitats. The Action Plan sets a framework for action to conserve and enhance the biodiversity found in North Lanarkshire.

The NLBAP 2015-2020 was developed throughout 2014, and includes 2 new species action plans and 4 new habitat action plans as well as an invasive non-native species action plan and geodiversity action plan.

As previously mentioned work has been undertaken to update these plans throughout this year and a new NLBAP will be published in early 2021. This will cover the period from 2021-2025.

The NLBAP process is led by North Lanarkshire Council's Biodiversity Team. The Countryside Ranger and partner organisations wrote and updated many of the species and habitat action plans.

The NLBAP is the main driver in directing Biodiversity Action in North Lanarkshire, and a key information source for partners and projects operating in the area.

5.3 Biodiversity communication

Year	Number of Schools/Education facilities Events	Number of Pupils Engaged With	Volunteer Sessions held	Number of Volunteers Engaged With	Number of Events held	Events Attendee Numbers	Partnership Working events	Number of Attendees
2018	34	600	33	214	22	383	8	223
2019	50	982	38	280	16	212	11	206
2020	15	450	10	120	0	0	0	0
Total	99	2032	81	614	38	595	19	429

Biodiversity communication in North Lanarkshire Council is taken forward through a number of methods and programmes. We have found that some of our most successful and far reaching biodiversity communication is gained by encouraging people to use our greenspaces. We take this forward through a programme of health walks, through maintenance and provision of interpretation in our Local Nature Reserves, and through working with local community Groups and volunteers to improve local greenspaces for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

Public engagement activities have been limited during the pandemic. However, a programme carefully risk assessed outdoor activities were developed for Primary School pupils in partnership with Active Schools at Strathclyde Country Park: Strathclyde Country Park Outdoor Activity Programme (SOAP). As part of this programme the Countryside Ranger Service provide activities that link to the National Curriculum and provide environmental education in an enjoyable way.

The Countryside Ranger Service is our main service undertaking biodiversity communication with the public alongside other engagement activities.

5.3.1 The Countryside Ranger Service

The Countryside Ranger Service play an important role in delivering local and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets with a range of projects including biological monitoring and recording, habitat improvement and tackling non-invasive species. The Countryside Ranger Service are active within local communities and offer formal and informal learning opportunities within North Lanarkshire.

Branching Out

The Countryside Ranger Service has successfully integrated Biodiversity actions and Health and Wellbeing outcomes through their Branching Out programme of events. The programme has grown over the last three years and we now take forward five 12 week programmes in our Country Parks, each programme involves 10 – 12 participants with a range of mental health conditions.

Branching out consists of twelve 3 hour sessions of conservation work, art creation, and bush craft followed by a 'graduation' ceremony. Health care professionals accompany their patients and take part with our specially trained Countryside Rangers leading the sessions. The progress of participants is clear as the sessions progress. In 2018 a total of 22 sessions and in 2019, 48 session of Branching Out activities were undertaken.

5.3.2 Healthy walking in our Greenspaces

It has been shown by numerous studies that walking and in particular walking in greenspaces has many benefits to both physical and mental health.

Greenspace Development has been working in partnership with Paths for All and NHS Lanarkshire on various projects that promote the enjoyment of walking and the benefits of a more active lifestyle through the Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership.

Get Walking Lanarkshire is a partnership programme between Paths for All, North and South Lanarkshire Council's and their Leisure Trusts and NHS Lanarkshire. The project aims to improve residents health and wellbeing by joining a local health walk group and taking part in short, safe, low-level walks whilst exploring local parks and green space. In North Lanarkshire alone the project has created an average of 26 walks per week.

The project has an active Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/getwalkinglanarkshire>

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-culture/countryside-and-parks/outdoor-access/get-walking-lanarkshire>

5.4 Social media and websites

North Lanarkshire Council provide information on our biodiversity services, project information, consultations and educational material on our website and through facebook and twitter.

5.5 Workforce Development

The Biodiversity team and other staff within Greenspace Development provide expert advice regarding biodiversity issues to colleagues within North Lanarkshire Council.

Staff are encouraged to attend conferences and training events provided by external organisations, such as Nature Scot and Green Action Trust

A Biodiversity Officer attends the LBAP network meeting twice a year to share and learn from good practice examples.

North Lanarkshire Council wishes to encourage high quality development that contributes positively to local environments - including the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and has produced planning guidance to make clear the constraints and biodiversity improvements that should be considered:

Biodiversity and Development (2011)

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/202009/20%20Biodiversity.pdf>

6 Monitoring & Research

North Lanarkshire's Greenspace Development team are working to develop our own internal biodiversity action recording and monitoring systems. In the mean time we currently input data manually and keep on a shared computer drive for the department.

As well as this overarching action reporting and monitoring function. We do monitor individual species and project work where possible.

North Lanarkshire is home to an internationally important species of Taiga Bean Goose and NLC are a partner of the Bean Goose Action Group, contributing to monitoring efforts that have been ongoing since 1990.

A highly successful barn owl project was undertaken to contribute to the barn owl action plan. As part of this project monitoring and ringing of the species is carried out and the project provides additional benefits as it is an effective way

to deliver environmental education. Monitoring of all other raptors has also been undertaken as part of this process, species include: kestrel, tawny owl, peregrine falcon and sparrowhawk.

Annual monitoring of great crested newt is undertaken at Gartcosh LNR and helps to contribute to the long term monitoring and management of the site.

The wildlife tunnels at Gartcosh are also subject to monitoring through a series of camera traps. This is over a 5 year period and the information will be used to inform if the tunnels have been successful and help with management of the future of the tunnels.

The Countryside Ranger Service monitor stewardship sites, noting any issues such as disturbance or potential threats, as well as recording species present during their regular site visits.

The Greenspace Development team holds protected species data and protected area boundary shapefiles within a GIS alongside a recording system. Many of the species records are obtained following ecological surveys conducted in preparation of development.

7 Contribution to targets

The following table indicate the biodiversity targets to which North Lanarkshire Council has contributed.

Targets/key steps from Chapter 1 (Healthy ecosystems) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(1.1) Encourage and support ecosystem restoration and management, especially in catchments that have experienced the greatest degradation	✓	7 Lochs project Dumbreck and Garrell Project
(1.2) Use assessments of ecosystem health at a catchment level to determine what needs to be done	✓	7 Lochs Project & Cumbernauld Living Landscape
(1.3) Government and public bodies, including SNH, SEPA and FCS, will work together towards a shared agenda for action to restore ecosystem health at a catchment-scale across Scotland	✓	Cambusnethan Woodland Project. 7 Lochs Project. Dumbreck and Garrell Project.

(1.4) Establish plans and decisions about land use based on an understanding of ecosystems. Take full account of land use impacts on the ecosystems services that underpin social, economic and environmental health	✓	7 Lochs Project. Local Plan. Community Growth Areas.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 2 (Natural Capital) of the “2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiveristy”	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(2.1) Encourage wide acceptance and use of the Natural Capital Assets Index (2012) ¹² , including a comparable measure for the marine environment.	✓	
(2.2) Use the index to influence decision-making and market based approaches, so that the wider monetary and non-monetary values for ecosystem services are recognised and accounted for	✓	Achieved through consultation with the planning process.
(2.3) Undertake a major programme of peatland conservation, management and restoration	✓	Have undertaken 8 peatland projects within the past 7/8 years and looking to continue this programme with a further 3 within 2020/2021.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 3 (Biodiversity, health and quality of life) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(3.1) Provide opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy nature regularly, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups	✓	Branching Out Programme. Health walks Programme. Greenhead Moss; Palacerigg and 7 Lochs volunteer groups.
(3.2) Support local authorities and communities to improve local environments and enhance biodiversity	✓	9 Local Nature Reserves development and support.

using green space and green networks, allowing nature to flourish and so enhancing the quality of life for people who live there		Advice and recommendations through the planning process.
(3.3) Build on good practice being developed by the National Health Service (NHS) and others to help encourage greenspace, green exercise and social prescribing initiatives that will improve health and wellbeing through connecting people with nature	✓	Branching Out Programme. Health walks Programme. Phoenix Futures. Volunteer Groups at Greenhead, Palacerigg and 7 Lochs..
(3.4) Increase access to nature within and close to schools, and support teachers in developing the role of outdoor learning across the Curriculum for Excellence	✓	Leading in Forest School Education in Central Scotland. Supporting Forest Schools and Forest Kindergartens through encouraging sensitive use of public woodlands.
(3.5) Encourage public organisations and businesses to review their responsibilities and action for biodiversity, and recognise that increasing their positive contribution to nature and landscapes can help meet their corporate priorities and performance	✓	Working with other Council departments such as Roads, Planning and Flooding to incorporate Biodiversity action.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 4 (Wildlife, habitats and protected places) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(4.1) Ensure that the management of protected places for nature also provides wider public benefits	✓	This is mainly achieved through our 9 Local Nature Reserves.
(4.3) Integrate protected areas policy with action for wider habitats to combat fragmentation and restore key habitats	✓	This is mainly achieved through protection of our Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Green Networks.

(4.5) Involve many more people than at present in this work and improve understanding of the poorly known elements of nature	✓	This is mainly achieved through interpretation, events, and community contacts at our 9 Local Nature Reserves. 7 Lochs Cumbernauld Living Landscapes
Targets/key steps from Chapter 5 (Land and freshwater management) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(5.1) Promote an ecosystem approach to land management that fosters sustainable use of natural resources and puts biodiversity at the heart of land-use planning and decision-making	✓	Biodiversity and SINC's are recognised in the Modified Local Plan Policy Document. There is policy and guidance in place to protect these areas.
(5.2) Ensure that measures taken forward under the Common Agricultural Policy encourage land managers to develop and retain the diversity of wildlife habitats and landscape features	X	Out with our control
(5.3) Support 'High Nature Value' farming and forestry	✓	Through our WIAT programme.
(5.4) Put in place the management necessary to bring Scotland's protected areas into favourable condition and improve the ecological status of water bodies	✓	Dumbreck and Garrell Project. Contribution to management of SINC's, and SAC's, and protection of these through the Planning system.
(5.5) Ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem objectives are fully integrated into flood risk management plans, and restore wetland habitats and woodlands to provide sustainable flood management	✓	Project at the Dumbreck & Garrell Burn by Dumbreck, Kilsyth in partnership with Flooding Colleagues.

(5.6) Restore and extend natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change	✓	WIAT projects Upcoming bog restoration projects
(5.7) Provide clear advice to land and water managers on best practice	✓	Biodiversity supplementary Planning guidance provided to Planners, and developers. Guidance and training provided to other departments in management practices, and awareness of biodiversity priority species.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 6 (Marine and coastal) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(6.4) Achieve good environmental status for Scottish seas	✓	Not a priority in this area as we are land bound. Although protection of freshwater taken forward through anti-pollution methods, and re naturalisation projects will contribute to this.