

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

22 NOVEMBER 2001

**SUBJECT: TAYSIDE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN
CONSULTATIVE DRAFT**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report advises members of the publication of the Consultative Draft Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan and proposes continued commitment to the process.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) note the considerable work undertaken and progress made towards producing a Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (TLBAP);
- (ii) agree to officers of the council continuing to contribute to the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan process with a view to negotiating and finalising the proposals in the action plan;
- (iii) agree to make a contribution, of up to £5,000, towards production of the final Tayside LBAP in 2002-03.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Angus Council is a major player in the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership which is compiling a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This work stems from the 1992 Rio de Janeiro "Earth Summit" where Britain, along with over 150 world leaders, pledged commitment to safeguard the global biodiversity resource by signing the "Convention on Biological Diversity". This requires that each signatory should "develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity". A UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) has been produced outlining conservation targets and the actions required to meet them for 391 UK Species Action Plans (SAPs) and 45 UK Habitat Action Plans (HAPs).

2.2 The Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan must help to meet the national targets but at the same time must consider the threatened or highly valued species and habitats important to Tayside but not listed as nationally or internationally important in the UK BAP

3 TAYSIDE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

3.1 After considerable work, undertaken by the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan Co-ordinator and a wide range of partners, a Consultative Draft Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (TLBAP) has now been produced.

- 3.2 The Tayside LBAP has been made available in both paper and mini CD Rom format and is also accessible via the Council's website (www.angus.gov.uk/biodiversity). A copy has been made available for members at 5 The Cross, Forfar. Copies are also accessible via the Council libraries and public offices and an exhibition is currently touring the libraries and other locations around Angus.
- 3.3 A summary document was also produced. The TLBAP had a simultaneous launch at the beginning of September at the Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Fair at Vane Farm; the Dundee Flower and Food Show at Camperdown Park, and at the Local Nature Reserve Visitor Centre at Montrose Basin. A seminar was also held on 14 September to highlight the various elements of the TLBAP to a wide audience.
- 3.4 For the purposes of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan the Steering Group separated the area's great diversity into six habitats:-
- Woodland
 - Farmland
 - Estuarine & Coastal
 - Water and Wetlands
 - Montane and Upland
 - Urban

These headings have been further subdivided and 23 separate Habitat Action Plans prepared (see Appendix 1 for a full listing). These have been voluntarily drafted by individual authors who are either on the Steering Group or involved with one of the six habitat sub-groups. It is recognised that this is very much a draft document and that there are still gaps in information. Included in these HAPs is a brief description of the habitat; its current and past extent; the key species found in the habitat; its importance in nature conservation terms; its significance in UK terms; a description of the ecology of the habitat and its current management; factors causing loss or decline; opportunities and current action for safeguarding the habitat; proposed objectives for each Habitat Action Plan and a schedule of proposed actions.

- 3.5 It should be stressed that the proposed actions in the schedules do not commit any organisation at this stage. In deed Angus Council is earmarked to contribute towards a fair number of proposed actions. Clarification and agreement has still to be negotiated before the final LBAP is produced.
- 3.6 Angus Council can make a significant input to the TLBAP through policy formulation, working practices, project design and implementation, education and awareness raising. The Council's considerable land holding also provides an opportunity to provide examples of best practice. In many cases the Council is already doing much to maintain or enhance the local biodiversity. Examples of these are given in Appendix II along with just some of the potential areas of involvement and some of the proposed actions put forward in the draft Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The Finalised Tayside LBAP will give recognition to this work. Agreement is now sought for officers to work toward finalising the Tayside LBAP and reporting back to Committee in due course.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that the final document will be published in late summer 2002. As a key partner Angus Council will be asked to contribute towards the finalised Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan and any accompanying publications.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is proposed that Angus Council agree to make a contribution of up to £5,000 for the production of the finalised Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002-03 which will be earmarked within the Planning and Transport revenue budget.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Directors of Law and Administration, Finance, Education, Environmental and Consumer Protection, Property, Recreation Services, Roads and Cultural Services have been consulted.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership has made considerable progress in the last year towards compiling a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Tayside. This has involved numerous individuals from various agencies including a range of officers from Angus Council. A consultative draft document was recently launched and widely distributed. Agreement is now sought for the continued involvement of various officers in working towards finalising the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/PJC/SC
12 November 2001

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

APPENDIX 1

TAYSIDE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN CONSULTATIVE DRAFT

List of Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Woodland | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lowland Mixed Broadleaves– Wet Woodlands– Upland Oakwoods– Upland Mixed Ashwoods– Upland Birchwood– Native Pinewood |
| Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Hedgerows and Tree Lines– Stone Dykes– Farm Buildings– Cereal Field Margins– Calcareous Grassland– Wet Grassland |
| Estuarine & Coastal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Estuaries, including saltmarsh and seagrass beds– Coastal Sand Dunes |
| Water & Wetlands | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Standing Open Water– Mesotrophic Lochs– Rivers and Streams |
| Montane & Upland | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Upland Heathland– Montane– Lowland Raised Bog |
| Urban | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Built and Developed Environment– Golf Courses– Businesses with Land |

APPENDIX II**ANGUS COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

This list comprises just some of the ways Angus Council can engage with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process and highlights just some of the 250 + actions put forward for consultation.

Policy

- The Angus Local Plan and emerging Angus and Dundee Structure Plan already take on board a commitment to biodiversity, the Shoreline Management Plan the Council is producing also recognises the important habitats along the Angus coast. A management plan is already in place for Montrose Basin and the Council has already been made aware of the forthcoming need for River Catchment Management Plans required to fulfil the European Water Framework Directive.
- The LBAP calls for Indicative Forestry Strategies to be updated. The Angus area is currently covered by the Tayside Indicative Forestry Strategy which provides a robust strategic framework compatible with the policies contained in the Angus Local Plan.
- One fundamental action is to ensure development plan policies do not adversely affect the various habitats identified and that in some instances there is no net loss or damage to specific habitats. The current Angus Local Plan incorporates policies which seek to protect sites of nature conservation interest.
- It is possible that new Local Wildlife Sites may be designated and these would need to be given due consideration within the planning system.
- The LBAP also highlights that protected species, such as bats and barn owls, need to be taken into consideration particularly where farm buildings are converted or restored. The LBAP seeks encouragement of the incorporation of wildlife friendly features in building design eg loft windows and landing ledges for barn owls.

Activities and Practices

- Many departments of the Council in the course of their day to day work will have an impact on biodiversity. These include:-
- Through the Ranger Service the Country Parks are effectively managed for their wildlife interest and to provide a learning resource frequently used by schools.
- Rangers assist in biological recording and support such groups as the Tay Ringing Group.
- Rangers contribute towards surveys and monitoring of habitats and species.
- Rangers help to control invasive alien species – such as Himalayan Balsam at Forfar Loch Country Park.

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- Rangers raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity through interpretation and numerous events for the public.
 - Schools often have wildlife areas within their school grounds and this is being continued through the Safe and Fair Play initiative which incorporates the ‘Grounds for Learning’ grants scheme.
 - With assistance from the Ranger Services a wildlife corridor has been developed linking Orchardbank Industrial Estate with Forfar Loch Country Park by planting native trees and shrubs and wild flowers and wildlife friendly plants. Similar work is proposed in conjunction with a nearby supermarket to improve their car park area for customers and wildlife.
 - The planting of the Millennium Forest in the burghs of Angus will help to improve the biodiversity in these areas.
 - The LBAP calls for more biodiversity friendly management of green spaces, cemeteries, school grounds and roadside verges etc to encourage eg seeding of wild flowers, small mammals, nesting birds, provision of winter food supplies eg hawthorn berries, invertebrates and fungi habitat in eg log piles.
 - The LBAP promotes the development of “wildlife” areas and “wildlife corridors” and the use of native species in planting schemes.
 - The use of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes) is advocated including swales, infiltration basis, detention/retention ponds, wetlands and reedbeds, as they reduce drainage run off and reduce the potential problems of flooding and pollution whilst providing important habitats.
 - Minimising salt-loading of roads is advocated to reduce salt spray which is particularly damaging near wetlands and semi-natural grasslands.
 - The installation of wildlife bridges/underpasses etc is encouraged where road kill may be negatively impacting on species of conservation importance.
 - Adoption of a peat-free purchasing policy is advocated in the LBAP to preserve one of Europe’s rarest and most threatened habitats, raised peat bogs.

Awareness Raising

- Many of the Habitat Action Plans call for awareness raising of the importance of biodiversity generally and of the various habitats and species found locally for the general public, landowners and managers, policy makers and school children.

This could take various forms for example, inclusion in the school curriculum; talks to community groups; guided walks and events; seminars for certain agency staff on legal responsibilities; wildlife friendly engineering and architectural design; production of leaflets and guidance notes for developers, landowners etc.