

# RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2014



# RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2014

## PART 1: Biodiversity Policy Statement

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 gives all public bodies a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity in the course of exercising their functions.



Renfrewshire  
Council

*Renfrewshire Council is committed to delivering its biodiversity duty and will work in partnership to maintain, enhance and interpret the natural environment and biodiversity of Renfrewshire now and for future generations.*

### Renfrewshire Council will:

- Develop a 3 yearly Biodiversity Delivery Action Plan;
- Seek to conserve and, where possible, enhance local biodiversity;
- Meet the requirements set out in the applicable biodiversity legislation and regulations;
- Communicate, educate and promote biodiversity conservation;
- Support projects and programmes that demonstrate benefits to biodiversity;
- Engage with the local community and other stakeholders on biodiversity conservation;
- Monitor and report progress on its delivery of the Biodiversity Duty and its contribution to implementation of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

## **PART 2: Biodiversity Duty: Progress Report 2011-2014**

The term 'Biodiversity' is short for biological diversity and, put simply, it is the variety of life. It includes every plant and animal including humans. Biodiversity is the range of habitats on which all flora and fauna depend. It is not just about the rare and endangered: it encompasses all life from the common to the threatened.

The natural character and biodiversity of Renfrewshire is a valuable asset, providing the basis for many social and economic activities of direct benefit to the local community.

This report summarises progress in discharging the Council's Biodiversity Duty between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 in the table below.

The Scottish Government has produced guidance on the subjects it considers important for public bodies to include in their Biodiversity Duty Progress Reports. There are six subject headings to be considered:

- Governance - providing clear leadership and management on biodiversity
- Action - taking action on the ground to protect and enhance biodiversity
- Mainstreaming - integrating biodiversity into corporate projects, plans and strategies
- Monitoring- recording data and reporting trends
- Partnership - developing effective partnership working
- Communication - raising awareness and building capacity.

As a result of structural review and reorganisation within Renfrewshire Council, a simplified approach to **Governance** was adopted during this three year period. In this approach, delivery of Renfrewshire Council's Biodiversity Duty is devolved to individual Services.

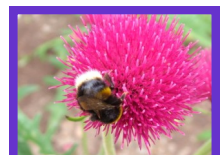
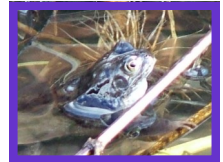
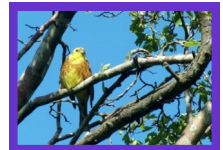
The Council's approach to fulfilling its Biodiversity Duty concentrated on **Action**, using its Local Green Network Projects programme, in particular, to enhance biodiversity directly and indirectly through the projects supported.

Significant progress has been made in **Mainstreaming** the Biodiversity Duty into its core activities, integrating biodiversity into corporate projects, plans and strategies.

**Monitoring** biodiversity is being addressed through the development of a Renfrewshire Green Network Indicator in partnership with the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership to measure and gauge the level of progress being made.

Renfrewshire Council continued to support the **Partnership** approach. Renfrewshire Council coordinated the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group for Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. Reduced resources and a need for voluntary sector groups to become more fully engaged in the biodiversity planning process led to a more devolved approach to management responsibilities. At the same time Renfrewshire Council actively sought project partners for the delivery of individual projects on the ground.

**Communication** was a key function for Renfrewshire Council, particularly Education & Leisure Services, Community Resources and Development & Housing Services.

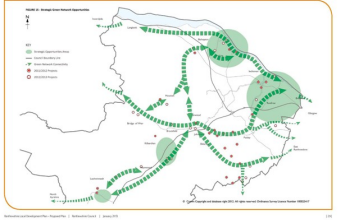


## PART 3: Progress Summary 2011-2014

Section 1: Governance, Leadership and Management			
Ref. No.	Action	Outputs	Outcomes
1.1.	Delivery of Renfrewshire Council's Biodiversity Duty in relation to the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 was delegated to all Services.	Biodiversity referenced in policy statements, strategies, action plans, working practices, etc.	Biodiversity Duty embedded in all Council functions.
1.2.	Biodiversity policy framework is developed and embedded in Council plans and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation produced to demonstrate Renfrewshire Council's compliance with Biodiversity Duty reporting requirements.</li> <li>Draft Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2014.</li> </ul>	People will understand Renfrewshire Council's strong commitment to biodiversity conservation.

Section 2: Action for Biodiversity on the ground			
Ref. No.	Action	Outputs	Outcomes
2.1.	Deliver habitat enhancement works, create new habitats and interpret biodiversity through the Local Green Network Projects programme.	Increased areas of priority habitats; habitat networks extended; gaps between habitat networks reduced.	Implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan objectives stated in specific habitat and species action plans.
2.1.1.	Improve sustainable management of woodland in Council ownership through the Renfrewshire's Urban Forest project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with Forestry Commission at Renfrewshire Green Network Steering Group meetings.</li> <li>Outline project proposal submitted to FCS.</li> </ul>	Positive engagement with FCS/FES could lead to productive results in future.
2.1.2.	Cockelshill Park consolidation works in response to local community .	450m of path constructed to provide access to pond, wetland and grassland habitats.	Local people can now visit and appreciate habitats created by Sustainable Urban Drainage System and environmental engineering.
2.1.3.	Erskine Green Network Project	Paths constructed, hard and soft landscaping undertaken, seats, rest areas and signs installed. New area of grassland habitat created. Existing grassland, woodland and scrub habitats now more accessible.	Local people can enjoy improved benefits from this important area of greenspace.
2.1.4.	Proposed SW Johnstone Integrated Green Infrastructure project.	Design package completed for Phase 1 works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovative SUDS project to be implemented once funding is secured.</li> <li>Concept of opening up culverts and using green infrastructure to alleviate flooding problems well established in Renfrewshire.</li> </ul>

2.1.5.	Network for Newts	27 shallow scrapes created adjacent to the National Cycle Network. Additional spawning habitat created for Palmate Newts and Common Frogs.	Sustrans now fully engaged in a collaborative project to further augment habitats along the NCN in Renfrewshire.
2.1.6.	Simple Trail Heritage Project	Signage project completed at Parkhill Wood. Funding secured for most of project proposals, designs completed and biodiversity surveys commissioned.	Improved access to woodland habitat. Preparations completed for major biodiversity access improvement, interpretation and habitat enhancement initiative, whilst surveys completed to ensure essential biodiversity mitigation measures are undertaken as part of built heritage restoration stages of the project.
2.1.7.	Gleniffer Braes: Glen Park access improvements	Path reconstruction and renovation works, with associated interpretation and woodland management.	Improved access to woodland, open water, wetland and stream habitats.
2.1.8.	Renfrew Riverside Walkway	Sections of path renovated. Others subject to detailed engineering reports to investigate feasibility.	Access maintained and/or reinstated for pedestrians and cyclists.
2.1.9.	Pow Burn, Bridge of Weir	500m path improved and rubbish cleared from burn by volunteers.	Volunteers engaged in habitat restoration, length of burn accessible for Salmonid fish spawning increased.
2.1.10.	River Gryfe: Bridge of Weir to Crosslee	Designs commissioned for enhanced path network along River Gryfe.	Future possibility of more people enjoying and appreciating woodland and riverside habitats
2.1.11.	School Grounds enhancement projects completed.	Projects completed at Lochfield Primary School (Paisley), Auchenlodment Primary (Johnstone), Glendee Pre-Fives Centre (Renfrew), Johnstone High School and Gryffe High School (Houston)	New habitats created in improve biodiversity value of school grounds. Pupils, staff and parents become more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more supportive of practical conservation efforts
2.1.12	Jenny's Well Local Nature Reserve, Paisley.	Path network enhanced, including 422m improved to allow wheelchair and buggy use, seats installed and other landscape enhancements	More people can now access, enjoy and appreciate a variety of habitats within walking distance of the centre of Paisley.
2.1.13	Linwood Lade local heritage project	Construction of 531m of new path and upgrading of other stretches of existing routes.	Improved access for people to enjoy a variety of habitats close to the town centre.

Section 3: Mainstreaming			
Ref. No.	Action	Outputs	Outcomes
3.1.	Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renfrewshire's LDP identifies the "Green Network" as a fundamental development tool and includes an assessment of Green Network Enhancement Opportunities.</li> <li>Habitat Regulations Appraisal completed for the three European Natura 2000 sites located in Renfrewshire.</li> <li>Policy ENV 2 affords protection to biodiversity through a range of mechanisms, e.g. LNRs, SINC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity enhancement work is embedded in the Council's planning processes.</li> </ul>
3.2.	Renfrewshire Community Plan 2008 - 2017	Greener theme states, "We value and enjoy our natural and built environment and protect and enhance it for future generations"	Community support that biodiversity enhancement works provide meaningful benefits to Renfrewshire's communities. Opportunity to engage with Community Planning Partners to participate more actively in biodiversity work.
3.3.	2004 Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.	LBAP guided projects developed through the Local Green Network programme.	Local Green Network projects achieves meaningful biodiversity gains.
3.4.	Procurement policies and practices	Procurement Framework Agreements require an environmental policy to be submitted with tenders.	Increased awareness of biodiversity in some business sectors.
3.5.	Swift Conservation pilot project on Council housing stock undergoing refurbishment through the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Externals Programme.	Engagement with local residents, RSPB and Concern for Swifts.	Opportunities identified to mitigate against decline in Renfrewshire's nesting Swift population.

<b>Section 4: Monitoring</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
4.1.	Renfrewshire Green Network Indicator	Draft report produced by Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership.	Potential for the development of a resource effective, achievable monitoring mechanism to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased areas of key habitats;</li> <li>• habitat networks extended;</li> <li>• gaps between habitat networks reduced.</li> </ul>
4.2.	Linwood Community Woodland	Renfrewshire Council cooperated with FCS funded research project evaluating the benefits of greenspace enhancement projects to local communities	Better understanding of people's motivations in relation to visiting or otherwise using semi-natural habitat areas.
4.3.	St. Columba's Gaelic Chapel Graveyard	"Bioblitz" of the site carried out by members of the Paisley Natural History Society in 2013.	Raised awareness of biodiversity value of the site.

<b>Section 5: Partnership</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
5.1.	Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group for Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.	Renfrewshire Council contributed to ten meetings of the Steering Group	Improved coordination of biodiversity activities across Renfrewshire and resources shared.
5.2.	Active partnerships established for Local Green Network Projects on the ground	Benefitting projects included Gleniffer Braes Cattle Appreciation Project, Network for Newts, St. Columba's Gaelic Chapel Graveyard.	Limited resources were shared, external funding maximised, volunteer opportunities created and the range of benefits expanded.
5.3.	Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum	Creation of a wildlife area at the Green Buds Community Garden, Weavers Linn. Brediland Allotments and Grow in Glenburn participating in Native Aspen Conservation project. Development of Sutherland Street temporary allotments.	35+ community growing organisations participating in the Forum have embraced biodiversity conservation principles and practices as part of their cultivation and site management activities.
5.4.	Gleniffer Braes Green Network Heritage Action Group	Series of projects in response to Gleniffer Braes Green Network Strategic Enhancement Plan	Joined-up action in support of biodiversity by a range of Council services, stakeholders and community groups.

<b>Section 6: Communication</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
6.1.	Delivery of programme of environmental education, interpretation, training and volunteering.	Guided walks programmes, booked school groups, wildlife recording activities, practical scrub management work with volunteers to support Lesser Whitethroat Species Action Plan.	Raised awareness and increased participation in biodiversity conservation.
6.2.	Formal education sector	Promotion of biodiversity and sustainable development education in schools through Eco-Schools and Curriculum for Excellence.	Biodiversity is incorporated into activities across the school curriculum. Increase number of schools with Eco-schools Awards
6.3.	Paisley Museum Natural History Department	<p>Three biodiversity themed exhibitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking the Tannahill Way</li> <li>• Alexander Wilson Bicentenary</li> <li>• A Wing and a Prayer (St Columba's Gaelic Chapel Graveyard).</li> </ul> <p>Plus, environmental education programmes, lunchtime talks programme, drop-in events and support for the Paisley Natural History Society.</p> <p>Research and recording activities included digitising &gt;20,000 moth records, use of the herbarium collection for the "Flora of Renfrewshire" published in 2013, use of the moth collections and records for the national Gelechiid (twirler moths) recording scheme.</p>	Raised awareness and increased participation in biodiversity conservation.
6.4.	Gleniffer Braes Cattle Appreciation Project	Series of events, leaflets, interpretation boards and events to educate people (especially dog walkers) that cattle are good for wildlife. Exclusion areas established for monitoring purposes.	Visitors are more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more sympathetic to requirements of grazing management. Positive partnerships formed with farmer, Pawsitive Action and external funders.
6.5.	Renfrewshire Council's promotional media.	Regular updates on the Council's website to highlight progress being made to protect and enhance biodiversity.	Raised awareness and increased participation in biodiversity conservation.
6.6.	St. Columba's Gaelic Chapel Graveyard, Paisley	"A Wing and a Prayer" exhibition at Paisley Museum and outdoor interpretative panel on wall of site also highlighted biodiversity.	First use of Gaelic for interpretation of biodiversity in Renfrewshire. Effective network of partners formed to develop and deliver the project.



## **PART 4: Biodiversity Delivery Action Plan 2014-2017**

<b>Section 1: Governance, Leadership and Management</b>					
Ref. No.	Action	Outcomes	Action taking place in		
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
1.1.	Biodiversity policy framework will be embedded within Council plans and strategies, including the Local Development Plan	Provision of a robust framework for the maintenance, enhancement and interpretation of biodiversity.	✓	✓	✓

<b>Section 2: Action for Biodiversity</b>					
Ref. No.	Action	Outcomes	Action taking place in		
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
2.1.	Deliver Renfrewshire Council's Local Green Network programme to carry out habitat enhancement works, create new habitats and to interpret biodiversity as resources allow.	Increased areas of priority habitats; habitat networks extended; gaps between habitat networks reduced.	✓	✓	✓
2.2.	Consideration of utilising school grounds and outdoor spaces as an integral part of the learning environment. Enhance these for biodiversity where possible.	Provision of enhanced outdoor learning areas within school grounds to help deliver the vision for Outdoor Learning as set out in Curriculum for Excellence, School Estates Strategy: Building Better Schools - Investing in Scotland's Future.	✓	✓	✓
2.3.	Implement pilot Swift Conservation Project on Council housing stock undergoing refurbishment through the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Externals Programme.	Reported ongoing decline in Renfrewshire's nesting Swift population is reduced.	✓	✓	
2.4.	Develop a "Renfrewshire's Urban Forest" project, in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, to bring Renfrewshire Council's woodlands into sustainable management.	Renfrewshire Council's woodlands are managed more sympathetically for biodiversity.	✓	✓	✓

<b>Section 3: Mainstreaming</b>					
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Action taking place in</b>		
			<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
3.1.	Produce and circulate Renfrewshire Council's Biodiversity Policy statement	Fulfilment of statutory requirement. Increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity.	✓		
3.2.	Target planned biodiversity works to integrate with the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan's Green Network Strategy.	Biodiversity enhancement works will be located to maximise their benefits to Renfrewshire's communities.	✓	✓	✓
3.3.	Target planned biodiversity works to integrate with Renfrewshire's Community Plan 2013 - 2023.	Biodiversity enhancement works will be designed to maximise benefit to Renfrewshire's communities and to take advantage of inputs by Community Planning Partners.	✓	✓	✓
3.4.	Projects delivered through the Local Green Network programme will seek to achieve objectives of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and - where possible - the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.	Local Green Network projects achieve meaningful biodiversity gains.	✓	✓	✓

<b>Section 4: Monitoring</b>					
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Action taking place in</b>		
			<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
4.1.	Circulate the Renfrewshire Council Biodiversity Duty Implementation Report 2011 - 2014.	Fulfilment of statutory requirement. Increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity.	✓	✓	✓
4.2.	Develop Renfrewshire Green Network Indicator.	Maximised biodiversity gain through increased areas of different habitats; habitat networks extended; gaps between habitat networks reduced.	✓	✓	✓

Section 5: Partnership					
Ref. No.	Action	Outcomes	Action taking place in		
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
5.1.	Continue to contribute to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group.	Improved coordination of biodiversity activities across Renfrewshire and opportunities for sharing resources maximised.	✓	✓	✓
5.2.	Secure partners for new biodiversity projects developed through the Local Green Network programme and other Council coordinated initiatives.	Sharing of limited resources and potential expansion of benefits achieved by individual projects.	✓	✓	✓
5.3.	Liaise and cooperate with Sustrans on the "Greener Greenways" project in Renfrewshire.	Focus on Renfrewshire LDP's Green Network Strategy priorities; consolidation of projects implemented through the Local Green Network Programme in 2011-2014.	✓	✓	✓

Section 6: Communication					
Ref. No.	Action	Outcomes	Action taking place in		
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
6.1.	Support local groups in the creation and promotion of biodiversity.	People in Renfrewshire are more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more inclined to become directly involved in biodiversity action.	✓	✓	✓
6.2.	Promote biodiversity and environmental sustainability in schools through Ecoschools - including global education and climate change.	Biodiversity is incorporated into activities across the school curriculum. Increased number of schools with Eco-schools awards	✓	✓	✓
6.3.	Maximise use of Paisley Museum as a venue for biodiversity themed exhibitions, environmental education programmes, meetings of the Paisley Natural History Society, research and recording activities. Maximise important natural history collections by digitising.	People in Renfrewshire are more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more inclined to become directly involved in biodiversity action. Higher profile for Renfrewshire Council as a biodiversity conservation organisation.	✓	✓	✓
6.4.	Maximise opportunities presented by the Paisley Heritage Asset Strategy to highlight biodiversity.	People in Renfrewshire are more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more inclined to become directly involved in biodiversity action.	✓	✓	✓
6.5.	Maximise use of Renfrewshire Council's promotional media to highlight progress on protecting and enhancing biodiversity.	People in Renfrewshire and beyond are more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and more inclined to support the Council's biodiversity action.	✓	✓	✓

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information please contact:

Policy & Regeneration  
Planning & Economic Development  
Development & Housing Service  
Renfrewshire Council  
Renfrewshire House  
Cotton Street  
Paisley  
PA1 1JD

0300 300 0144

[pt@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:pt@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

