

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY: TOWARDS A NATIONAL OBLIGATION – REVIEW OF LDP AND SPG

1) Introduction

To inform thinking on the development of a national obligation for householder and local development, NatureScot has reviewed the content of 34 local and national park authority LDPs, Supplementary Planning Guidance and associated technical notes. Appendix A lists those found to include content identifying specific biodiversity enhancement measures that could be implemented.

In summary, existing guidance includes discussion of the benefits of biodiversity and encouragement to deliver enhancement (often alongside discussion of mitigation and compensation), identifies a number of potential measures that can be taken (sometimes including practical detail on implementing them), and points to sources for further detailed guidance. From this review the range of enhancement measures currently recognised have been listed in section 2.

Note that:

- none of the guidance reviewed requires any particular measures to be delivered – these are commonly expressed as potential ideas, considerations or opportunities;
- some local authorities have set out particular measures against particular types, locations or scales of development (the categories used are shown in Table 1), but very few measures are considered to be exclusive to any particular category;
- the extracted list is focused on measures that potentially deliver positive effects; i.e. it does not include those measures or considerations that are general biodiversity good practice, mitigation or compensation (for example, references to incorporating existing habitat or retaining mature trees does not deliver biodiversity over and above what already exists); and
- due to the age of plans and guidance they do not reflect the most recent reforms to the planning system that will need to be reflected in the future (such as Local Place Plans or the requirement to prepare Open Space Strategies and Forest and Woodland Strategies).

2) Potential Biodiversity Measures for a National Obligation

The following measures have been distilled from those currently identified in Scotland's LDPs and Supplementary Planning Guidance. They are listed here according to a common theme, but they could also be grouped in other ways, for example all those related to buildings and built structures, all those related to the grounds or setting of development, etc.

Enhancement measures that deliver positive effects for biodiversity can include a range of interventions:

- Restore and enhance existing habitats and features – by expanding and improving habitats*
- Create new habitats and features – of greater value than those replaced*
- Link natural features – improve connectivity with appropriate linking habitats providing species 'stepping stones' and a functioning ecological network*
- Incorporate features, habitats and species to support LBAP priorities*
- Incorporate permanent buffer zones and limit access and disturbance – between amenity and nature grassland, along riparian and pond edge*

- vi. *Strengthen habitat resilience – by addressing impacts such as invasive species, fragmentation and barriers to movement, and supporting the habitat and species interests of nearby Local Nature Reserves and Local Nature Conservation Sites*

Measures that deliver positive effects for biodiversity can include:

Providing nesting, roosting and other functional structures:

- *Provide insect boxes / bee hotels*
- *Establish beetle banks, deadwood habitat piles and retain standing dead wood*
- *Build a sand martin wall*
- *Provide external bird boxes, swallow / house martin nest cups, bat boxes*
- *Incorporate swift bricks, bat bricks and other roost sites within structures*
- *Incorporate wildlife crossing points such as hedgehog highways*
- *Create artificial otter holts, badger setts, etc*

Planting native flora of local provenance (preferable) or other wildlife-friendly plants:

- *Planting ‘pollinator highways’*
- *Planting native wild flower and grass species, pollinator and wildlife friendly species, in verges, grassland, amenity and more formal planted areas*
- *Planting climbing plants on walls, fences and structures*
- *Planting native shrubs and trees / copse / woodland, fruit trees / orchard and street-trees*
- *Planting native and wildlife friendly hedgerows in preference to fences, ‘willow fedge’ (fence / hedge) and drystone walls*
- *Incorporate green roof, brown / biodiverse roof, and green / living walls on buildings and structures*

Managing water with nature:

- *Incorporate wildlife friendly species in vegetated SuDS features (including rain gardens, swales, willow and reedbed filtration strips, and ponds)*
- *Incorporate hibernacula*
- *Enhance ditches, burns, marsh, wetlands and ponds*
- *Reinstate / restore canalised or culverted watercourses*

Enhancing existing habitats:

- *Restoration or enhancement of existing habitat (for example through planting, restoring hydrological function and removing invasive species)*
- *Measures in support of the biodiversity enhancements gained to minimise any impacts that could otherwise arise, including:*
 - *‘hedgehog highways’ to enable movement through common obstacles such as solid fencing*
 - *safe wildlife crossing points for roads*
 - *measures to enable wildlife (particularly amphibians) to avoid and escape entrapment from drainage gully pots*
 - *buffer strips and ‘quite zones’ to provide refuges for wildlife from disturbance (for example from traffic and dog walking routes)*
 - *street lighting designed to minimise impact on wildlife on and around site*

Raise community awareness and promote understanding of the biodiversity measures to build support for the long term maintenance of the enhancements, including:

- *establishment and promotion of a ‘show home garden’ exemplar on residential sites to promote wildlife gardening to new residents*
- *inclusion of interpretation boards on the local wildlife and the development’s biodiversity enhancements undertaken*

- *promoting guidance for business occupants / residents of the development on local wildlife, the biodiversity enhancements and what they can do to contribute.*

Provide for appropriate maintenance and management to ensure enhancements remain for the long term, including:

- *establishing a nature-friendly management regime – avoid chemicals, minimise use of plastics, eschew intensive management*
- *detailing any necessary management for specific species*
- *specifying monitoring and survey commitments, and compensatory actions to replace losses*

Table 1: Examples of plans and supplementary guidance that relate specific measures for biodiversity to particular types, location or scales of development

<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>East Dunbartonshire</u>	<u>Glasgow City</u>	<u>Orkney</u>
Conversion of traditional and/or old buildings	Conversions of buildings	Conversions of rural buildings	Conversions of rural buildings
Householder and up to 3 houses	Householder, single plot development	Residential / Business / Mixed Use	Residential and business development
Small scale commercial and industrial buildings (retail, factories, offices, warehouses (<100m ²))	Residential / Business / Retail / Commercial / Mixed Use		
Larger scale development (residential and commercial)			
	Development within Town / Village Centre, town centre / street infrastructure improvements	City Centre	
	Open Space and Recreation	Open Space and Recreation	Public open space and recreational features
	Road schemes	Road schemes	Smaller road schemes
	Large scale energy (eg. wind or solar farms)	Large scale energy (eg. wind or solar farms)	Wind farms

APPENDIX A: PLANNING DOCUMENTS IDENTIFIED THAT INCLUDE RELEVANT CONTENT

Aberdeen: [Supplementary Guidance: Natural Heritage \(2017\)](#) and [Technical Advice Note 7: Natural Heritage Guidance \(2017\)](#)

Aberdeenshire: [Planning Advice 5/2015 Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement in New Development \(2015\)](#)

Angus: [SG Design and Placemaking \(2018\)](#)

Argyll & Bute: [A Biodiversity Technical Note for Planners and Developers \(2017\)](#)

East Dunbartonshire: [Natural Environment Planning Guidance \(2018\)](#)

Falkirk: [Supplementary Guidance SG07 'Biodiversity and Development \(2021\)](#)

Fife: [Making Fife's Places SG \(2018\)](#)

Glasgow City: [SG7: Natural Environment Supplementary Guidance \(2017\)](#)

Midlothian: [Supplementary Guidance - Midlothian Green Network \(2018\)](#)

Moray: [Moray LDP 2020 Planning Policy Guidance part 2 \(2020\)](#)

North Lanarkshire: [North Lanarkshire SPG20 Biodiversity and Development \(2011\)](#)

Orkney: [Supplementary Guidance on the Natural Environment \(2017\)](#)

Perth and Kinross: [A Guide to incorporating biodiversity into development \(2008\)](#)

Shetland: [Shetland LDP Supplementary guidance natural heritage \(2012\)](#)

South Lanarkshire: [Supplementary Guidance 9: Natural and historic environment \(2015?\)](#)
[non-statutory with adoption of LDP2 2021]

West Lothian: [Planning Guidance: Planning for nature. Development management and wildlife \(2020\)](#)

Loch Lomond National Park: [Supplementary Guidance: Design and Placemaking \(2018\)](#)

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