

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2002

AYRSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request the Committee to adopt the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Biodiversity refers to the variety of life forms, the ecological roles they perform, the genetic diversity they contain, and the habitat they occupy. Biodiversity is important to the East Ayrshire economy and quality of life, and is an important measure of a healthy environment and sustainable society.
- 2.2. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are seen by Government to be a key mechanism in supporting their policies for biodiversity and so fulfilling Scotland's commitment to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. All 32 Scottish authorities are actively pursuing the development of LBAPs as a mechanism for delivering the national targets as well as addressing local priorities.
- 2.3 Officers from Community Services and Development Services, through the Ayrshire Biodiversity Steering Group, have been involved in developing the Ayrshire LBAP along with representatives from North and South Ayrshire, Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and representatives of the farming and forestry industries. Reports have been submitted to this Committee on a number of previous occasions.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The LBAP is the result of the work of seven specialist habitat sub-groups, co-ordinated by a core audit team. The document takes the form of a comprehensive, structured plan that has the aim of maintaining and enhancing the rich biodiversity of the waters of the Firth of Clyde to the hills of the Muirkirk Uplands.
- 3.2 The LBAP carries no statutory force, but it is seen as an important document in the context of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, as well as a valuable document for Planning Officers and others concerned with Development Control.

3.3 The Steering Group will continue to work in partnership with groups and individuals to promote projects, attract funding, set targets, measure progress, and ensure the objectives of the Action Plan are implemented.

3.4 A copy of the draft Plan has been placed in the Members Lounge and individual copies are available from the Director's office if required.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Funding for the publication of the LBAP has been secured from Scottish Natural Heritage, SCORE Environment Ltd and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

4.2 Sponsorship for future conservation projects will be sought from the appropriate grant awarding bodies and other appropriate organisations.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The adoption of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan will contribute to meeting the objectives established in the Council's Environment Strategy.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The adoption of the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan will assist in the protection and conservation of many locally and nationally important habitats and species.

7.2 This Plan contributes to the success of the national Government in meeting its obligations arising from the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) adopt the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/MB

17 January 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2002

Anyone wishing to view the above paper should contact the Council's Environment Officer on (01563) 554041.

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AGENDA