

SEA Screening Report

Details of the Plan

Responsible Authority:	Orkney Islands Council.		
Title of the plan:	Orkney Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2022		
Purpose of PPS:	The purpose of the Plan is to encourage and enable biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Orkney.		
What prompted the PPS (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)?	Administrative. By helping prepare and implement the LBAP, Orkney Islands Council goes some way towards fulfilling its public bodies 'biodiversity duty' which is a requirement under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.		
Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005			
Based on boxes 3 and 4, our view is that:	An SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant.		
Please indicate which section of the Act the plan falls within:		Section 5(3)	Section 5(4)
	An SEA is not required, as the effects are unlikely to be significant.		
Please indicate which section of the Act the plan falls within:		Section 5(3)	Section 5(4) √
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Date:	31 May 2018		

Context and description of the Plan

Context of the Plan:	This is the third targeted revision of the Orkney Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2002. Preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans is prompted by the Convention on Biological Diversity 1992.
Description of the Plan:	<p>The Orkney LBAP 2018-2022 identifies priorities to protect and enhance biodiversity across the Orkney Islands. Its key functions are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Orkney; • raise awareness of statutory duties and policies which underpin biodiversity conservation; and • identify a range of actions for biodiversity to be undertaken during the five years to 2022.
Key components of the Plan:	<p>The Plan is set out in three sections:</p> <p>Section one explains the term ‘biodiversity’ and the many benefits it provides to society. It also provides a brief overview of recent changes to international and national Biodiversity Action Planning policy.</p> <p>In Section two, the main part of the Plan, biodiversity planning in Orkney over the period 2018-2022 is addressed through a set of four themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greenspace 2. Farmland 3. Peatland 4. The Marine Environment <p>For each theme, objectives, targets and actions are identified which will seek to bring benefit to biodiversity in Orkney during the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>Section three comprises the following set of appendices</p>

	<p>Appendix 1: Relevant plans and strategies and recent changes to environmental legislation.</p> <p>Appendix II: Species considered to be of conservation concern in Orkney.</p> <p>Appendix III: Biodiversity Action Planning habitats found in Orkney.</p> <p>Appendix IV: The Aichi goals and targets.</p>
Have any of the components of the Plan been considered in previous SEA work?	No.
Components of the Plan that are likely to require screening:	Section two is the only part which requires screening. A list of the proposed actions that are identified under the four themes is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Identifying interactions of the Plan with the environment and considering the likely significance of any interactions

Plan component.	SEA receptor.	Assessment.	Potential Environmental Effects	Significance of Environmental Effects
	Climatic factors	+	<p>Reduced frequency of grass mowing in Council-owned open spaces is likely to enable a reduction in carbon emissions from cutting machinery.</p> <p>Planting trees and shrubs for shelter may encourage people to walk or cycle more in preference to driving.</p> <p>Further identification and mapping of habitats which provide blue carbon storage will enable these areas to be protected from types of development and</p>	Minor positive environmental effects.

Plan component.	SEA receptor.	Assessment.	Potential Environmental Effects	Significance of Environmental Effects
			<p>activities that could cause damage to the habitats and risk releasing their stored carbon.</p> <p>Actions to restore degraded peatland and promote sustainable peat cutting will help minimise the release of stored carbon to the atmosphere.</p>	
	Local air quality	0	Implementation of the Orkney LBAP is unlikely to lead to any significant impact on air quality in Orkney.	N/A.
	Biodiversity	+	<p>Many of the actions seek to raise awareness of biodiversity and to add to current knowledge and understanding of the distribution and extent of certain species and habitats, in particular within Orkney's marine environment, where new data will help inform marine planning.</p> <p>Biodiversity enhancement projects featuring wildflower, tree or shrub planting are likely to benefit birds, small mammals and insect pollinators.</p> <p>Actions which seek to address litter will benefit biodiversity.</p> <p>Awareness raising of biodiversity through the educational system in Orkney is likely to lead to long term benefits, e.g. in terms of appreciation of its value and the</p>	Minor positive environmental effects.

Plan component.	SEA receptor.	Assessment.	Potential Environmental Effects	Significance of Environmental Effects
			benefits it provides to society.	
	Water	+	Promotion of water protection measures in land management training courses will benefit the water environment.	Minor positive environmental effects.
	Geology and Soils (including peat)	+	Actions to restore degraded peatland and promote sustainable peat cutting practices will help maintain the integrity of Orkney's peatland habitats and avoid or minimise erosion of peat.	Minor positive environmental effects.
	Landscape	+	Biodiversity enhancement projects and initiatives to remove and reduce litter are likely to lead to landscape / townscape improvements.	Minor positive environmental effects.
	Cultural heritage	0	Implementation of the Orkney LBAP is unlikely to lead to any impact on cultural heritage features.	N/A
	Human health & Population	+	Implementation of the Orkney LBAP is unlikely to lead to any risk to human health or the wider population. However, benefits to people's wellbeing and mental health are possible, through improvements to the environmental quality of ecosystems over time.	Minor positive environmental effects.
	Material assets	+	The LBAP highlights many of the	

Plan component.	SEA receptor.	Assessment.	Potential Environmental Effects	Significance of Environmental Effects
	Interrelationships	+	<p>ecosystem services provided by certain habitat, e.g. flood mitigation, coastal defence and water filtration. This will raise awareness of the value of these habitats as material assets.</p> <p>This also illustrates the potential for interrelationships, where actions to conserve biodiversity are likely to bring about positive effects across many other environmental receptors.</p>	environmental effects.

Legend: + positive effects - negative effects 0 neutral effects ? effects uncertain

Statement of the findings of the screening report

The Orkney LBAP 2018-2022 will provide a framework for delivering biodiversity policies that are set out in the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity. It identifies a range of objectives, targets and actions for biodiversity locally, across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

It is the fourth edition of the existing Orkney LBAP (2002) and brings local priorities and actions for biodiversity into a single document, allowing for improved coordination of biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

The potential for significant environmental effects has already been assessed through SEA of the higher level 2020 Challenge document. Any new or additional environmental effects are unlikely to be significant and will be minor and positive in nature.

Orkney Islands Council is therefore of the opinion that SEA of the Orkney LBAP 2018-2022 is not required.

Appendix 1

Draft Orkney Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2022

List of proposed actions with partners

Greenspace theme

- Endeavour to provide good access to natural and semi-natural environments around settlements through the Orkney Core Paths Plan. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Identify areas for biodiversity enhancement through the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework, with links to information in the LBAP. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Identify paths which would benefit from improved shelter, through planting trees and/or shrubs that are appropriate to the location and are beneficial for biodiversity. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Create a list of nature-friendly plant species for the Council's Development Management team to provide to landscape architects for reference in the design of future developments. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Make the list of nature-friendly plants available at public events such as Family Day at the Orkney International Science Festival. **(OIC, RSPB)**
- Work with schools and community groups to establish biodiversity enhancement projects in existing greenspaces. **(RSPB, OIC)**
- Improve linkages between volunteering groups and opportunities, bringing together groups with suggestions for local projects. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Make opportunities and contacts more visible to the public, as well as improving links with health and social enterprises. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Prepare a pond creation guidance leaflet, adapting available guidance to suit an Orkney context. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Engage with local plant growers / suppliers to investigate the feasibility of establishing a supply of pond and wetland plants grown from locally sourced seed. **(Lead: OIC)**

- Support initiatives to reduce the non-essential usage of single-use products that contain plastics. **(All)**.

Farmland theme

- Raise awareness of farming for biodiversity through the education system. **(RSPB, Orkney College, OIC)**
- Promote the incorporation of low- or no-cost examples of biodiversity conservation and water protection measures into land management practices. **(SNH, SEPA, SGRPID, SAC)**.
- Ensure that good practice examples of biodiversity conservation and water protection measures on farms are highlighted in future farm open days and other training events. **(RSPB, SEPA, Orkney College)**.
- Continue to meet twice a year, as the Farmland Group, to discuss progress on the actions. **(SGRPID, SNH, SEPA, RSPB, NFUS, SAC)**.

Peatland theme

- Undertake a project to restore an area of degraded bog peatland. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Undertake peatland restoration advisory events. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Arrange an event promoting sustainable peat cutting practices. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Prepare advice on fire safety and discuss its incorporation into signage with the Scottish Fire Service and Orkney Local Access Forum. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Raise awareness of the biodiversity of *Upland heathland*, e.g. by upgrading the on-site interpretation facilities at Mull Head Local Nature Reserve. **(Lead: OIC)**.

Marine Environment theme

- Undertake a project to restore an area of degraded bog peatland. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Undertake peatland restoration advisory events. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Arrange an event promoting sustainable peat cutting practices. **(Lead: RSPB)**.
- Prepare advice on fire safety and discuss its incorporation into signage with the Scottish Fire Service and Orkney Local Access Forum. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Raise awareness of the biodiversity of *Upland heathland*, e.g. by upgrading the on-site interpretation facilities at Mull Head Local Nature Reserve. **(Lead: OIC)**.
- Continue to map the distribution, extent and depth of *Maerl beds* in Orkney, through collaboration with the Seasearch volunteer project. **(Lead: Seasearch coordinator)**
- Develop a virtual dive project for the Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas of the North Isles. **(Lead: OIC)**

- Develop a method for estimating the storage of blue carbon in the Wyre and Rousay Sounds MPA. **(Lead: ICIT)**
- Identify a list of potential MSc dissertation projects and/or MPhil research topics relating to *Maerl beds*. **(Lead: ICIT)**
- Build on the findings of previous *Zostera* studies, through ground truthing projects, to determine the distribution and extent of *Seagrass beds* in Orkney. **(Lead: ICIT).**
- Take account of any new data on *Seagrass bed* distribution in the State of the Environment Report for the forthcoming Orkney Regional Marine Plan. **(Lead: OIC).**
- Identify indicator species supported by *Seagrass beds*, for further research and monitoring. **(Lead: ICIT).**
- Undertake surveys to explore the potential presence of non-native species, e.g. *Diadumene lineata*, the orange striped green sea anemone. **(Lead: ICIT).**
- Identify a list of potential MSc dissertation projects or MPhil research topics relating to *Seagrass beds*. **(Lead: ICIT).**
- Undertake a tag and release project for Flapper skate within North Isles waters. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Undertake a project to record Flapper skate egg cases found on North Isles shorelines. **(Lead: OIC)**

- Continue to collect and collate data on Flapper skate from other areas of Orkney by:
 - Recording egg cases, both in situ and washed ashore.
 - Recording skate sightings reported by seafarers, divers and detected by remote underwater cameras. **(Lead: Orkney Skate Trust)**
- Continuing the tag and release project throughout other parts of Orkney, with increased focus on Scapa Flow. **(Lead: Orkney Skate Trust)**
- Undertake habitat surveys of areas displaying higher densities of Flapper skate records, as part of targeted surveys by SCUBA divers and the use of remote video technology. **(Lead: Orkney Skate Trust)**
- Continue to develop a DNA database for Flapper skate populations in Orkney, using tissue from adult captures and stranded egg cases containing embryos. **(Lead: Orkney Skate Trust)**
- Undertake a review of available literature on the effects of marine salmon farming on Sea trout populations, in order to identify information gaps. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Investigate the potential aims and scope of a population study to increase understanding of the abundance and distribution of Sea trout in Orkney coastal waters. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Design and undertake a research study, which will help determine how sea lice burdens in wild Sea trout are influenced by proximity to farmed salmonid species in Orkney waters. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Update Supplementary Guidance Aquaculture to take account of the findings of the project report. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Take account of the findings of the project report in the State of the Environment Report for the forthcoming Orkney regional marine plan. **(Lead: OIC)**

- Continue to support local clean-up initiatives for the collection and disposal of marine litter. **(All)**
- Establish an annual litter removal scheme on each of the populated North Isles. **(Lead: OIC)**
- Support initiatives to reduce the non-essential usage of single-use products that contain plastics. **(All)**
- Raise awareness on the collection of fulmar corpses for the North Sea plastics study. **(Lead: RSPB)**
- Encourage members of the public to submit species records and observations to the Orkney Wildlife Information and Records Centre. **(Lead: ICIT)**
- Devise a simple recording method that is usable in the setting of a working vessel at sea. **(Lead: ICIT)**
- Create a key card identification guide and/or app for specific marine species. **(Lead: ICIT)**
- Publicise the information collated in schools and at public events such as the Orkney Nature Festival. **(OIC, ICIT)**
- Encourage public participation in local events such as the Orkney International Science Festival. **(OIC, ICIT).**