

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
3 SEPTEMBER 2004**

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**The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Scotland's Biodiversity – It's In Your Hands**

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform the Committee of the contents of Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (the Strategy) and its implications for the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 'Scotland's Biodiversity – it's in your hands' represents Scotland's response to its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 6<sup>th</sup> EU Environmental Action Plan which is "to protect and restore the functioning of natural systems and to halt the loss of biodiversity in the European Union".
- 3 The Scottish Executive produced the Strategy with assistance from the Scottish Biodiversity Forum.
- 4 The Strategy supports the work already underway as part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, however rather than concentrating on protecting and enhancing specific species and habitats, which the UK BAP does, the Strategy seeks to address wider policy issues such as biodiversity in education.

THE CONTENTS OF THE SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

- 5 The vision of the Strategy is that by "2030 Scotland is recognized as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched."
- 6 The aim of the Strategy is "to conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future".
- 7 The first half of the Strategy describes Scotland's biodiversity, its importance and some of the issues affecting it. This is essentially an introduction to the 'core' of the Strategy, which is its Objectives and the Actions to implement these.
- 8 The Strategy contains a series of desired 'outcomes' for 2030, based around the following themes:

- Species and Habitats
- People
- Landscapes and Ecosystems
- Integration and Co-Ordination
- Knowledge

For example the objective under the title of ‘People’ is:

“To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity, and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement”.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

- 9 Each of the Objectives is accompanied by an Implementation Plan that gives a series of actions relating to how the Objective will be achieved. Milestones, Suggested leads and Stakeholders have all been identified against each of the actions. Many of the actions are concerned with putting policy or programmes in place to enable the UK Biodiversity Action Plan to be implemented. However, a number of them cover the more general protection of biodiversity.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN

- 10 The main document relating to biodiversity in Ayrshire is the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which was published in 2001. It provides proposals and actions which translate the UK Biodiversity Action Plan into action at a local level. The Strategy is unlikely to lead to any immediate changes in the Ayrshire LBAP and this should continue to be the main guidance document for the protection of specific rare or threatened species or habitats within Ayrshire.
- 11 The Implementation Plans for the Strategy contain some Actions which would have significant implications for policy and planning in Ayrshire. One particular example which would have much wider impacts than just on biodiversity is to “establish an effective strategic and spatial planning system for the marine and coastal environment which takes biodiversity fully into account, including the management of activities and development control”. While there is not an exact date for when this will be put into place, there is an indication that this may be implemented in 2007.
- 12 The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has been identified as the Suggested Lead for a number of the actions in the Implementation Plans. This may include the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee in some instances, for example one of the actions is to “Ensure biodiversity is integrated into open space planning and management” but for the most part the actions are required to be implemented at a local level.

## CONCLUSION

- 13 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is a comprehensive examination of Scotland's wildlife, the issues affecting it and what can be done to protect and enhance it. Whilst most of the actions within the strategy are at a local level and relate to the delivery of Local Biodiversity Action Plans, there are a few which are likely to have wider implications and could affect proposals at the finalized structure plan stage. These will be built into the plan as part of the general changes that inevitably will be necessary.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 14 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Ian Johnson  
Manager  
Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee

Person to contact: Toby Wilson - 01292 673768