



MIDLOTHIAN LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Economy

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's agreement to adopt the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 (LBAP).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The previous LBAP was adopted in 2006 and is in need of review. The new LBAP will supersede the 2006 document and will focus on the following priorities for the period 2019-2024:

- Supporting Pollinators;
- Encouraging Homes for Wildlife;
- Enhancement of the Water Environment;
- Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species;
- Positive Integration of People and Nature; and
- Protected Sites and Species.

- 2.2 The LBAP is attached to this report and sets out actions and a delivery programme designed to protect and enhance biodiversity. It will assist with implementing biodiversity enhancements in Midlothian, help raise the profile of biodiversity and the natural environment and be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. It will also assist the Council in furthering the conservation of biodiversity when delivering a wide range of services as required by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Evidence of delivery on the LBAP's actions will assist the Council in the preparation and publication of its "biodiversity report" a requirement of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. A "biodiversity report" must be published every three years. The Council last published its "biodiversity report" in November 2017. The report is available on the Council's website. The next "biodiversity report" should be published by November 2020.

- 2.3 Although the LBAP has been prepared by the Council, it has been done so in partnership with: the Federation of Midlothian Community Councils; Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH); Scottish Wildlife Trust; the

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA); the Forestry Commission Scotland (soon to be rebranded as *Scottish Forestry*); Scottish Water, RSPB, Buglife; and The Wildlife Information Centre. The identified actions in the LBAP will be implemented by Midlothian Council and its partners.

- 2.4 The publication of a new LBAP is a priority identified in the Single Midlothian Plan 2018-19 and as a consequence a priority for the Council's Planning Service.

3 REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 The LBAP has been subject to consultation with partners and a wider group of bodies and interested parties who have been identified as having an interest in the LBAP and might wish to be part of a Midlothian Biodiversity Partnership.
- 3.2 The bodies identified in paragraph 2.3 collectively form the Midlothian Biodiversity Partnership and work together to support the implementation of the LBAP.

4 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 All Scottish public bodies and a few private companies operating in a 'public character' (e.g. utility companies) within Scotland are required to assess, consult and monitor the likely impacts of their plans, programmes and strategies on the environment. This process is known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 4.2 As required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, screening for likely significant environmental effects from the LBAP as proposed for adoption has been undertaken with the consultation authorities - Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland. The consultation authorities agree with the Council's opinion that no such effects are likely.
- 4.2 The Council is now in a position to make a formal determination that no significant environmental effects are likely, thereby exempting the LBAP from any requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment ('SEA'). The LBAP cannot be considered adopted until such a determination has taken place. The determination requires to be advertised in a local paper within 14 days and copied to the consultation authorities.

5 PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP) seeks to safeguard and enhance Midlothian's natural environment through the policy framework of the Plan. Policy ENV15: Species and Habitat

Protection and Enhancement sets out an expectation that development proposals demonstrate compatibility with the aims and objectives of the LBAP, by identifying appropriate measures to protect, enhance and promote existing habitats and/or the creation of new ones and provide for the effective management of these habitats.

- 5.2 By setting out priorities and actions, the LBAP will assist with the local development plan's position of seeking to safeguard and enhance Midlothian's natural environment.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- a) adopt the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024;
 - b) agree that the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 will not have a significant environmental impact triggering the need for a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment; and
 - c) instruct the Planning Manager to undertake the required notification/advertisement advising that the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 will not have a significant environmental impact triggering the need for a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment.

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Background Papers:	Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 and MLDP 2017 adopted 7 November 2017

As Proposed for Adoption by Midlothian Council on 19 February 2019

2019-2024

MIDLOTHIAN

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN



PUBLISHED BY MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

ON BEHALF OF THE MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

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1. MIDLOTHIAN'S BIODIVERSITY

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The internationally supported Convention on Biological Diversity (1993) recognises that biodiversity is about more than plants, animals and micro-organisms, and their ecosystems. It is about people and our need for food, security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter and a clean, healthy and inspiring environment in which to live.
- 1.2 Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy (2004) and 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity (2013) were developed within the framework of the Convention, particularly the UN Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets. These have all influenced the content of this Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- 1.3 The first LBAP for Midlothian was published in 2006. It contained twenty separate Habitat Action Plans and Species Actions Plans, which together contained more than 140 actions. Progress was made with many of these actions, for example wildflower meadow creation at Vogrie, juniper and upland scrub planting in the Pentlands, peatland restoration in the Moorfoots, woodland management at Roslin Glen and Erraid Wood, scrubland management at Hadfast Valley and aquatic species management at Milkhall pond.
- 1.4 A Steering Group was formed in 2017 to oversee and contribute to the creation of this new LBAP for Midlothian. The group developed a new approach for this LBAP which focuses on a much smaller number of themes and actions than the 2006 LBAP. Working from the agreed outcomes for Midlothian (Single Midlothian Plan 2018-19), particularly those that safeguarding and thriving biodiversity will contribute, a series of priorities for this LBAP were agreed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1.5 Midlothian's landscape is characterised by upland areas (including the Moorfoot and Pentland Hills), upland fringes, lowland river valleys (including the Tyne and Esk rivers) and lowland hills and ridges. This landscape supports a diverse range of habitats and species.
- 1.6 Areas of ancient and semi natural woodlands remain in the steep sided gorges of the Tyne and Esk river systems. Remnants of old wood parkland still exist at Mavisbank and Dalkeith Country Park. There are large areas of unimproved acid grassland in

the Pentland and Moorfoot Hills and traces of unimproved calcareous grassland around Mount Lothian and Middleton. In both the Pentland and Moorfoot Hills, wet and dry heaths are key features, and there are with large bogs at Auchencorth, Kitchen Moss and Fala Flow.

- 1.7 Midlothian's reservoirs support internationally important bird species and provide a range of aquatic and semi-aquatic habitats. The rivers are important wildlife corridors as well as hosting a range of diverse habitats. Farming is a major land use in Midlothian, with farms providing important habitats in hedges, trees and uncultivated field margins. Parks, gardens and other urban greenspaces also provide important habitats for a range of species.
- 1.8 In Midlothian there is one Special Area of Conservation (SAC), two SPAs (Special Protection Areas), two RAMSAR sites, sixteen Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), one Regional Park, four Country Parks, one Local Nature Reserve and sixty six Local Biodiversity Sites and potential Local Biodiversity Sites (January 2019).

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 1.9 [Scotland's Biodiversity: A Route Map to 2020](#) identifies the following seven key pressures on biodiversity: pollution; land use intensification and modification; the spread of invasive species and wildlife disease; a lack of recognition of the value of nature; a disconnection with nature; climate change; and marine exploitation. It also sets out six "Big Steps for Nature" that will deliver significant benefits for biodiversity. These steps are:
 1. [Ecosystem restoration](#) to reverse historical losses of habitats and ecosystems, to meet the Aichi target of restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems.
 2. [Investment in natural capital](#) to ensure the benefits which nature provides are better understood and appreciated, leading to better management of our renewable and non-renewable natural assets.
 3. [Quality greenspace for health and education benefits](#) to ensure that the majority of people derive increased benefits from contact with nature where they live and work.
 4. [Conserving wildlife in Scotland](#) to secure the future of priority habitats and species.
 5. [Sustainable management of land and freshwater](#) to ensure that environmental, social and economic elements are well balanced.
 6. [Sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems](#) to secure a healthy balance between environmental, social and economic elements.

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All except the sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems are directly relevant to Midlothian, and have influenced this LBAP.

MIDLOTHIAN PRIORITIES

1.10 The Midlothian Biodiversity Partnership, which is an informal partnership of organisations involved in supporting biodiversity in the area, has agreed to focus on a few key priorities that will be deliverable over the lifetime of the LBAP, within the context of current resource constraints. Six priorities have been identified:

- Pollinators
- Homes for Wildlife
- Rivers, Streams and Ponds
- Invasive Non-Native Species
- People and Nature
- Protected Sites and Species

The actions listed in this LBAP are in addition to the biodiversity work that is already being undertaken by a variety of partners in Midlothian. Examples of the work already being undertaken are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Work Underway

Organisation	Actions
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Working with land managers to conserve Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Peatland Action project – restoring peat bogs to help flood risk management and enhance biodiversity.
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Maintaining Reserves (Linn Dean Water – juniper habitat; Milkhall Pond – aquatic species; Erraid Wood – secondary woodland enhancement; Roslin Glen – semi-natural woodland; Hadfast Valley – scrubland for birds).
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	SEPA is Scotland’s principal environmental regulator, protecting and improving the environment. River basin planning sets a shared programme of measures; looking for no deterioration and sustainable improvements on water quality, water flows and levels, aquatic INNS, physical condition and the passage of migratory fish.
Midlothian Council	Manage a variety of habitats at Vogrie and Roslin Glen Country Parks, Gore Glen, Straiton Pond, Springfield Mill and the Penicuik to Dalkeith Walkway.

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	<p>Provision of environmental education and volunteer conservation tasks by the Ranger Service.</p> <p>Delivery of an environmental events programme and facilitation of survey work by the Ranger Service.</p> <p>Implementation of the Green Network Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species on Council-owned land.</p> <p>Fulfilling the Council's duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out its responsibilities.</p> <p>Chairing the Local Biodiversity Steering Group that designates sites of local importance for nature conservation (Local Biodiversity Sites).</p>
The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC)	<p>Expanding the knowledge base on Midlothian's wildlife and habitats through collating existing datasets and promoting biological recording and citizen science initiatives e.g. running public surveys, holding conferences and running workshops.</p> <p>Identifying, surveying and assisting with designation of sites of local importance for nature conservation (Local Biodiversity Sites).</p>
Pentland Hills Regional Park	<p>Working with partners and landowners in conservation projects to protect and extend the range of species. Monitoring of rare and protected species, and monitoring of SSSIs, Local Biodiversity Sites and other protected sites. Management of wildflower meadow at Hillend Country Park. Encouraging visitors and the public to get involved with conservation activities.</p>

- 1.11 The following sections of this LBAP set out the actions that will be pursued under each of the six priorities identified in paragraph 1.10. With each action there is a brief explanation of why it is important, how it will be achieved and a list of partners who will to be involved in working together to deliver the action. The 23 actions are then summarised in the Delivery Programme set out in Section 8. The Delivery Programme includes an indicator and target for each action, which will be used to measure progress.

2. POLLINATORS

- 2.1 Pollinators such as bees, hoverflies, flies, moths and butterflies play a vital role in our natural ecosystems and in agriculture, but some species have suffered dramatic declines in recent years. They rely on flower-rich habitats, but many of these are now fragmented patches, isolated from each other by large areas of less suitable land. The intensification of agriculture, including the increased use of pesticides such as neonicotinoids, has contributed to this decline.
- 2.2 The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland (2017-2027) sets out Scotland's response to these threats. Identifying the issues, the Pollinator Strategy sets out what needs to be done and, through its Implementation Plan, a phased plan to deliver a healthy future for our pollinators. The actions below are part of the contribution Midlothian can make to helping pollinator species thrive into the future.

ACTION 1: RESTORATION AND CREATION OF FLOWER RICH HABITATS

What:

Promote the restoration and creation of pesticide free, flower rich habitats in the countryside and urban areas.

Why:

Action that helps to maintain pollinator habitats, in particular reducing habitat fragmentation, will offset some pressures on pollinators.

How:

- a) Manage Midlothian Council maintained greenspaces (including parks, school grounds, active travel routes and roadside verges) through planting, cutting regimes and limiting use of pesticides to improve the quantity and quality of pollinator habitats.
- b) Require planting schemes for new developments, green spaces and active travel routes to include a wide variety of nectar rich plants to help sustain pollinators in urban areas and boost pollinator numbers in areas adjacent to farmland.
- c) Create an insect pathway (B-Line) in Midlothian which connects to the national network of B-Lines being promoted by Buglife.

Who:

Midlothian Council
Developers/ house builders
Buglife
Butterfly Conservation Scotland

Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Pentland Hills Regional Park Service
TWIC

3. HOMES FOR WILDLIFE

- 3.1 Our changing landscape, particularly in areas where there has been increased urbanisation and intensification of agriculture has over time reduced natural opportunities for wildlife to create homes. One way in which species can be supported is to create purpose built nest boxes and other shelters in and around urban areas.

ACTION 2: CREATION OF NEST BOXES AND OTHER WILDLIFE HOMES

What:

Organise events for schools, community groups and members of the public to create nest boxes and other wildlife homes (including bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog hibernacula, amphibian hibernacula, bug hotels and brash piles), and to provide information on how to support wildlife in gardens and local greenspaces.

Why:

Many of our common garden species of birds, insects, mammals and amphibians are under threat. Encouraging people to use their gardens and greenspaces to take action to help support nature is key to reversing this situation. Gardens and greenspaces in urban areas are a very valuable potential biodiversity resource if managed appropriately.

How:

- Run workshops on the construction and installation, maintenance and monitoring of homes for wildlife in gardens and greenspaces for families, community groups and schools, and demonstrations at public events.

Who:

Midlothian Council Ranger Service
RSPB
TWIC
Buglife

Butterfly Conservation Scotland
Bat Conservation Trust
Tayside Swifts
Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

ACTION 3: INSTALLATION OF NESTING AND WILDLIFE HOMES IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

What:

Require the installation of appropriate nesting and wildlife homes in new developments, particularly swift, house sparrow, house martin and bat boxes, and provide gaps under fences to allow the movement of species such as hedgehogs in and out of gardens.

Why:

Biodiversity is not confined to rural areas – it is equally important in urban areas. Certain bird and bat species have become reliant on buildings for roosting. Hedgehogs and other small mammals need to be able to roam between gardens and other greenspaces to search for food. Installation of very low cost nest boxes, roosts and other wildlife homes in new and refurbished buildings can make a significant difference to these species.

How:

- a) Introduce requirement for swift and bat boxes to be installed through statutory Supplementary Guidance to the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017.
- b) Promote the creation and management of wildlife homes and routes as part of wider biodiversity schemes in new development, ensuring connections are made to neighbouring areas to provide opportunities for wildlife to move around.
- c) Provide information on biodiversity in gardens and within new developments to residents.

Who:

Midlothian Council
Developers/ house builders
SNH
RSPB

Scottish Wildlife Trust
Tayside Swifts
Bat Conservation Trust

4. WATER ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 Watercourses such as rivers and streams, and waterbodies such as ponds and reservoirs, are important wildlife corridors and habitats for a wide variety of species. The quality of the water environment is important, not just for humans but also for the species which live in and around watercourses and bodies. Water management in the context of climate change and increasing storm events presents a further challenge. Well managed catchments and water habitats can help manage flood risks.

ACTION 4: POND AND WETLAND CREATION & MAINTENANCE

What:

Encourage pond and wetland creation and management on farmland and in urban areas.

Why:

There was a dramatic loss of ponds and wetlands across the UK in the 20th century, and many of the surviving ponds and wetlands are in poor condition. Two-thirds of freshwater species are supported by ponds, and many other species are supported by wetlands, therefore the protection and creation of high quality ponds and wetlands can be of significant biodiversity value.

How:

- a) Increase the number of managed ponds and wetlands across Midlothian.
- b) Increase the amount of ponds and [rain gardens](#) created through SUDS schemes in new development, ensuring there is wildlife benefit of these structures through utilising best design and management practice.

Who:

SNH	Scottish Water
Scottish Government	Midlothian Council
Froglife	Freshwater Habitats Trust
Developers/ house builders	SEPA
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

ACTION 5: IMPROVING THE ECOLOGY OF WATERCOURSES

What:

Promote local action, in partnership with SEPA, to improve the physical condition of Midlothian's watercourses and the removal of barriers that are preventing or restricting fish migration.

Why:

Many of Midlothian's watercourses, for a variety of reasons, do not currently have "good ecological status" as defined by the Water Framework Directive. In particular the physical condition of the water environment needs to be improved in order to provide good habitats and a sustainable water environment. Removing or modifying man-made barriers which are obstructing fish passage is an important part of habitat improvement.

How:

- a) Promote man-made fish barrier modification and/or removal on Midlothian's rivers

Who:

SEPA

Forth Rivers Trust

Landowners/ Managers

Midlothian Council

5. INVASIVE SPECIES

- 5.1 Invasive non-native species (INNS) are species whose introduction and/or spread threatens biological diversity or has other unforeseen impacts. The majority of non-native species pose little or no risk. However, of the approximately 2,000 non-native species established in Great Britain, about 10-15% cause significant adverse environmental, economic and social impacts. The internationally agreed approach to tackling INNS follows a hierarchy of prevention → early detection and rapid response → long term management and control. In Midlothian INNS affect rivers, woodlands, greenspaces and farmlands. The most predominant invasive species are Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed. They present particular challenges regarding their spread in the river corridors and the Borders Railway. One of the main prevention techniques for reducing the spread of INNS across the UK by water users is through the “[Check Clean Dry](#)” technique.

ACTION 6: TACKLING INNS IN RIVERS, STREAMS AND PONDS

What:

Promote the prevention, containment and eradication of invasive non-native species (INNS) that are impacting on biodiversity in rivers, streams and ponds, particularly when upstream of sites designated for their biodiversity value.

Why:

Invasive aquatic species can have a devastating impact on native plants, animals and ecosystems. Their presence can sometimes be so damaging that it can lead to significant changes to the entire ecology of a water body. River/stream corridors are a high risk of spreading INNS, including terrestrial (land based) species.

How:

- a) Promote the “Check Clean Dry” technique to water users in Midlothian through awareness raising and training
- b) Develop a coordinated plan to eradicate invasive species along Midlothian’s watercourses based on local data on the location and spread INNS.

Who:

SEPA

SNH

Forth Rivers Trust

Esk Valley Trust

Midlothian Council

TWIC

Freshwater Habitats Trust

Landowners/ managers

Woodland Trust Scotland

Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

ACTION 7: TACKLING INNS ON THE BORDERS RAILWAY ROUTE

What:

Work with Network Rail, adjacent landowners and other relevant bodies to prevent the spread of Giant Hogweed along the route of the Borders Railway.

Why:

Linear routes such as road and rail corridors are frequently conduits for the spread of invasive non-native species. The creation of a new linear route between Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders is believed to have resulted in the spread of Giant Hogweed along the route. Coordinated action is required to manage/ eradicate the hogweed and prevent further spread.

How:

- a) Develop a joint strategy for the control of invasive non-native species along the route of the Borders Railway.

Who:

Network Rail	TWIC
Abellio ScotRail	SNH
Scottish Borders Council	Landowners/ Managers
Midlothian Council	Tweed Forum

6. PEOPLE AND NATURE

- 6.1 Biodiversity enriches our lives, getting outside and enjoying nature improves both our mental and physical health. Everybody should have access to well-managed green spaces where they live, work and play, and these spaces should be equally welcoming to a rich variety of wildlife. Getting people actively involved in the planning and management of their local green spaces is great for the individual and for communities.

ACTION 8: MANAGEMENT OF URBAN WOODLANDS

What:

Support biodiversity and community involvement in urban woodlands through improved woodland management.

Why:

UK woodlands create a broad variety of habitats in which native wildlife can thrive. Suitable woodland management is needed to support woodland species and to encourage people to interact with wildlife in a natural setting. Urban woodlands are those in and adjacent to towns, cities and large villages. Their accessibility generally increases their use by the public, which brings with it additional management requirements but also significant opportunities.

How:

- a) Promote urban woodland management which supports biodiversity through the Scottish Forestry's Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) initiative.
- b) Support public access to and engagement with urban woodlands through workshops, guided walks and other events.
- c) Work with stakeholders to explore the potential for a Midlothian Urban Forest.

Who:

Scottish Forestry
Woodland Trust Scotland
Scottish Wildlife Trust

Midlothian Council
Landowners/ Managers
Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

ACTION 9: WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

What:

Enhance Midlothian's wildlife corridors through the protection and enhancement of existing corridors, and the creation of new corridors.

Why:

Midlothian has a broad range of wildlife corridors, but there is a need to protect and enhance them, and to fill in missing links to maximise connectivity and support wider ecosystem resilience to climate change and other pressures.

How:

- a) Promote the creation, protection and enhancement of native hedges in new developments.
- b) Ensure planting along new off-road active travel routes supports and encourages biodiversity and maximises the route's potential as a wildlife corridor.

Who:

Midlothian Council

Sustrans

Developers/ house builders

Landowners/ Managers

SNH

ACTION 10: PROMOTING CITIZEN SCIENCE

What:

Encourage citizen monitoring of wildlife and habitats in Midlothian through local action and participation in local and national initiatives (usually referred to as Citizen Science).

Why:

To help provide local data on species and to increase awareness of the importance of different species, particularly those with declining populations. Citizen science enables individuals, including those with no prior knowledge or experience, to learn about their environment and to contribute directly to research, helping researchers to maximise the amount of data collected.

How:

- a) Promote participation in national surveys such as Butterfly Conservation Trust's Big Butterfly Count, RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, OPAL's Bugs Count survey, the Polli:Nation survey, the Riverfly Partnership's Anglers River Fly Monitoring Initiative, the BTO's Waterways Breeding Bird Survey and the and TCV's Scotland Counts project.
- b) Promote involvement in local wildlife surveys, for example TWIC's hedgehog survey, and encourage submission of information by the public on casual wildlife sightings.
- c) Run workshops to encourage biological recording in Midlothian.

Who:

Buglife	Forth Rivers Trust
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	TCV Scotland
TWIC	Midlothian Council Ranger Service
SNH	Pentland Hills Regional Park Service
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Bumblebee Conservation Trust
RSPB	Bat Conservation Trust
SEPA	

7. PROTECTED SITES AND SPECIES

- 7.1 Ecosystems are made up of a range of habitats, species and processes. Protecting these is essential to support the natural environment and ecosystems. The Scottish Biodiversity List contains all of animals, plants and habitats considered to be most important for conservation in Scotland. All species and habitats on the list should be protected and supported across Midlothian. Local priorities in relation to protected sites and species have been identified to help direct resources and action at the local level. These local priorities are set out in Actions 11 and 12 below.

ACTION 11: MANAGING LOCAL BIODIVERSITY SITES

What:

Improve the management of Midlothian Local Biodiversity Sites through the production of Management Briefs for each LBS.

Why:

Improving the condition of protected sites is a high priority in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Protected places are especially valuable providers of ecosystem services because the ecosystems within them are, or should be, in good condition. Local Biodiversity Sites are often valuable because their owners have been historically managing the sites in a way that encourages biodiversity. These sites can be maintained and possibly enhanced by providing owners with expert advice and information on management to benefit biodiversity. This can be achieved through the production of short Management Briefs based on the site assessment produced as part of the designation process.

How:

- a) Develop a programme for the production of Management Briefs for Local Biodiversity Sites in Midlothian.

Who:

Midlothian Council
Scottish Wildlife Trust
SNH

Landowners/ Managers
TWIC
Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

ACTION 12: LOCAL PRIORITY SPECIES

What:

Undertake targeted action to support local priority species.

Why:

All native species are important to Scotland’s biodiversity. Many are protected through legislation and those of high conservation interest are included in the Scottish Biodiversity List (<https://www.nature.scot>). Action is needed to support all species, including protected species, in Midlothian. Within this context, there are some species that would benefit from specific support at the local level. The identified species are not considered to be any more important than other species, but will benefit from local action to ensure their long term survival and prosperity.

What:

- a) Prepare strategies for the protection and support across Midlothian of the following local priority species: juniper, hedgehog, common toad and large heath butterfly.

Who:

Scottish Wildlife Trust

SNH

Midlothian Council

Landowners/ Managers

TWIC

Forth Rivers Trust

Pentland Hills Regional Park Service

Butterfly Conservation Trust

8. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- 8.1 The actions set out in this LBAP will need a wide variety of stakeholders to work in partnership to deliver them. The delivery programme below identifies specific partners, timescales and indicators for each action. Implementation is reliant on every partner, all of whom are committed to delivering a strong and positive future for Midlothian's biodiversity. The identification of organisations in the delivery programme is not a funding commitment, but is a commitment by the partners to take whatever action they can to achieve the intended outcomes. Actions can only be implemented where resources permit.
- 8.2 For each action an indicator and target has been agreed that will be the basis for monitoring progress in implementing the action. These are shown in Table 2: Delivery Programme (below). Monitoring for each action will be undertaken by the partners involved in the relevant action, led by the partner highlighted in bold text (the lead partner).
- 8.3 Monitoring will be carried out on an annual basis, every 12 months from the publication of the LBAP. Lead partners will be responsible for collecting the monitoring information, which will be collated and published by Midlothian Council. An annual meeting of the delivery and supporting partners will be held to consider progress reported through the monitoring information. It is possible that the actions identified in this LBAP will change over the next five years. Any changes will be agreed through the annual monitoring process.

WIDER BIODIVERSITY MATTERS IN MIDLOTHIAN

- 8.4 As highlighted in Section 1, this LBAP focuses on a limited number of priorities. This does not reflect or minimise the importance of other biodiversity matters in Midlothian. For example, although four species have been identified as local priorities, all the species identified on the Scottish Biodiversity List that are present (or could be) are of equal importance, therefore action to support relevant species is encouraged. Also, significant parts of Midlothian are characterised by high levels of woodland coverage, much of it outwith urban areas. Although this LBAP focuses on woodland in urban areas, improving the biodiversity value of all woodland is important. Partner organisations and others will undertake action beyond those identified in this LBAP, contributing to the overarching aim of "conserving biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland, now and in the future" (Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2004).

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Table 2: Delivery Programme

ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
ACTION 1 – Restoration and Creation of Flower Rich Habitats					
1a – Manage council maintained greenspaces to improve the quantity and quality of pollinator habitats	Amount of pollinator habitat (m ²) created each year	100m ² per year	Annual	Midlothian Council (Land Services & Ranger Service)	Butterfly Conservation Scotland Buglife Bumblebee Conservation Trust Pentland Hills Regional Park Service
1b – Require planting schemes in new development to include a wide variety of nectar rich planting	Number of schemes approved that include a significant amount of nectar rich planting	All approved schemes	On-going	Midlothian Council (Planning) Developers/ house builders	RSPB Scottish Wildlife Trust Buglife Bumblebee Conservation Trust Butterfly Conservation Scotland
1c – Create a Midlothian B-Line as part of national network	B-Line mapped and habitat creation and restoration requirements identified	Mapping completed and action plan prepared	2021	Buglife SNH Midlothian Council (Planning & Ranger Service)	Scottish Wildlife Trust Bumblebee Conservation Trust Butterfly Conservation Scotland TWIC

MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
ACTION 2 – Creation of Nest Boxes and Other Wildlife Homes					
2 – Run workshops on the construction, installation, maintenance and monitoring of homes for wildlife in gardens and greenspaces	Number of workshops held each year	1 workshop per delivery partner per year	Annual	Midlothian Council Ranger Service RSPB Scottish Wildlife Trust Newbattle Abbey College	Buglife Butterfly Conservation Scotland Bat Conservation Trust Tayside Swifts Pentland Hills Regional Park Service
ACTION 3 – Installation of Nesting and Wildlife Homes in New Developments					
3a – Introduce requirements for swift and bat boxes in new developments	Number of swift and bat boxes consented	All approved scheme	On-going	Midlothian Council (Planning)	Bat Conservation Trust Tayside Swifts
3b – Promote the creation and management of wildlife homes and routes as part of wider biodiversity schemes in new development	Number of schemes approved that incorporate wildlife homes as part of wider biodiversity schemes	All approved schemes	On-going	Midlothian Council (Planning) Developers/ house builders SNH	RSPB Scottish Wildlife Trust Tayside Swifts Bat Conservation Trust

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ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
3c – Provide information on biodiversity in gardens and greenspaces to residents	Number of information packs provided	One per newly constructed house	Information packs ready for circulation by end 2019	Midlothian Council (Planning) Developers/ house builders	RSPB Tayside Swifts Bat Conservation Trust Buglife Butterfly Conservation Scotland Bumblebee Conservation Trust SNH
ACTION 4 – Pond Creation & Maintenance					
4a – Increase the number of managed ponds and wetlands in Midlothian	Number of ponds or wetlands created or subject to a management plan	3 ponds or wetlands per year	Annual	Midlothian Council (Land Services & Ranger Service) Scottish Water Freshwater Habitats Trust	Froglife Scottish Wildlife Trust Developers/ house builders Pentland Hills Regional Park Service SNH
4b – Promote creation of SuDS ponds and rain gardens	Number of SuDS ponds and rain gardens created	All approved schemes of an appropriate scale	On-going	Midlothian Council (Planning) Scottish Water SEPA Developers/ house builders	
ACTION 5 – Improving the ecology of watercourses					
5a – Promote removal/ modification of fish barriers	Number of barriers removed or modified	1 per year	Annual	SEPA Forth Rivers Trust Landowners/ Managers	Midlothian Council

MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
ACTION 6 – Tackling INNS in Rivers, Streams and Ponds					
6a – Promote the “Check Clean Dry” technique	Number of local organisations becoming a Check Clean Dry partner	1 organisation per year	Annual	SEPA Forth Rivers Trust	Freshwater Users
6b – Develop a plan for the eradication of INNS along Midlothian’s watercourses	Amount of recorded INNS along rivers	Annual reduction in recorded INNS	Annual	Midlothian Council (Land Services & Ranger Service) SNH Scottish Water Forth Rivers Trust	Freshwater Habitats Trust Esk Valley Trust TWIC Landowners/ managers Newbattle Abbey College Pentland Hills Regional Park Service Woodland Trust Scotland
ACTION 7 – Tackling INNS on the Borders Railway Route					
7 – Develop a strategy for the control of INNS along the route of the Borders Railway	Amount of recorded INNS along route	Annual reduction in recorded INNS	Annual	Midlothian Council Network Rail Abellio Scotrail SNH Scottish Borders Council Landowners/ Managers	TWIC Tweed Forum

MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
ACTION 8 – Management of Urban Woodland					
8a – Promote urban woodland management through the WIAT initiative	Number of active woodland management schemes	1 new scheme per year	Annual	Scottish Forestry	Scottish Wildlife Trust Landowners/ Managers Midlothian Council
8b – Support public access to and engagement with urban woodland	Number of public events held in urban woodlands	20 events per year	Annual	Midlothian Council Ranger Service Newbattle Abbey College	Scottish Forestry Scottish Wildlife Trust Landowners/ Managers Pentland Hills Regional Park Service Woodland Trust Scotland
8c – Explore the potential for a Midlothian Urban Forest	Conclusion of preliminary assessment	End 2020	2019-2020	Midlothian Council (Planning) Scottish Forestry	SNH Woodland Trust Scotland
ACTION 9 – Wildlife Corridors					
9a – Promote the creation, protection and enhancement of hedges	Amount (in metres) of hedges planted, retained or enhanced in new development	100m per year	Annual	Midlothian Council (Planning) Developers/ house builders	SNH Landowners/ Managers

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ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
9c – Ensure planting on off-road active travel routes supports biodiversity	Number of schemes approved which support biodiversity	All schemes	On-going	Midlothian Council Sustrans	Landowners/ Managers Developers/ house builders
ACTION 10 – Promoting Citizen Science					
10a – Promote participation in national citizen science projects	Number of citizen science projects receiving data from Midlothian	All national surveys	On-going	TWIC Buglife Butterfly Conservation Scotland TCV Scotland Bumblebee Conservation Trust Bat Conservation Trust	Scottish Wildlife Trust RSPB SEPA Forth Rivers Trust Midlothian Council Ranger Service Newbattle Abbey College Pentland Hills Regional Park Service
10b – Promote involvement in local wildlife surveys	Number of local surveys receiving data	All local surveys	On-going	TWIC Bat Conservation Trust	Newbattle Abbey College Pentland Hills Regional Park Service Forth Rivers Trust Midlothian Council Ranger Service
10c – run workshops to encourage biological recording in Midlothian	Number of workshops held	2 per year	Annual	TWIC Midlothian Council Ranger Service Bat Conservation Trust	

MIDLOTHIAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

ACTION (summary)	INDICATOR	TARGET	TIMESCALE	DELIVERY PARTNERS (lead partner in bold)	SUPPORTING BODIES
ACTION 11 – Managing Local Biodiversity Sites					
11 - Develop a programme for the production of Management Briefs for Local Biodiversity Sites	Number of Management Briefs agreed	3 per year	Annual	Midlothian Council (Planning) Scottish Wildlife Trust SNH TWIC Pentland Hills Regional Park Service	Landowners/ Managers
ACTION 12 – Local Priority Species					
12a - Prepare strategies for the protection and support of local priority species	Number of strategies agreed	1 per year	Annual	Midlothian Council (Planning) Scottish Wildlife Trust SNH TWIC Pentland Hills Regional Park Service	Landowners/ Managers Forth Rivers Trust