

HIGHLAND BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Introduction

The Highland Biodiversity Partnership comprises 20 - 30 representatives from local groups and key organisations committed to understanding, safeguarding, restoring and celebrating biodiversity within the Highland Council area.

Its purpose is to provide guidance and support to the existing network of local biodiversity groups, and to make progress on the key strategic biodiversity issues in the Highlands.

Our Aims

The aims of the Highland Biodiversity Partnership are:

- 🌿 To identify and address strategic and / or pan-Highland biodiversity issues.
- ★ To review and monitor biodiversity actions contained within the seven Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs), with reference to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plans.
- ↓ To provide a link between local groups and national biodiversity strategies, action plans and reporting procedures.
- 🐾 To raise awareness and promote biodiversity by championing individual LBAPs and biodiversity issues generally.

Our Commitment

In recognition of the above, we the undersigned pledge our co-operation, commitment and support to the Highland Biodiversity Partnership and undertake to use our best endeavours to:

- 👤 Take cognisance of the Highland LBAPs in the day-to-day business of our organisations.
- 🌿 Identify sources of funding to deliver an improved Highland Biodiversity Network, provide support to local groups and finance future grant schemes.
- ★ Produce a Highland Biodiversity Action Plan identifying the key strategic actions emerging from the 8 Highland LBAPs and for each action, identify a 'SMART' target that can be delivered in the next three years.
- ↓ Provide guidance and support to local biodiversity groups and help them produce an Implementation Plan that, building on their LBAP, identifies who will undertake which actions and when.
- 🐾 Monitor and report on progress with the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan and constituent LBAPs at local, regional and national levels.

Governance

The Partnership will operate on the following principles:

- 🌿 Legal Status: The Partnership itself will hold no legal status, but in signing this Agreement members agree to work together to deliver the Highland LBAPs and address individual biodiversity issues as they arise.
- ★ Membership: Meetings will be open to Partnership members and members have the ability to introduce new members as deemed appropriate. Co-opted representatives may be invited to attend to discuss specific items of business.
- ↓ Meetings: The Partnership will meet on an infrequent basis – i.e. once or twice per annum, although further meetings may be required at the outset and from time to time to deal with large issues.
- 🐾 Sub Group: A Sub Group comprising 6 - 8 Partnership members will meet more frequently to undertake agreed tasks and report back to the wider membership.
- 👤 Project Management: The Sub Group will put in place separate arrangements for funding and managing any individual projects under the auspices of the Highland Biodiversity Partnership as appropriate.
- 🌿 Working Groups: The Partnership will convene smaller Working Groups as necessary to address specific issues arising from the Highland LBAPs.
- ★ Chair: Initial meetings will be chaired by Cllr Ian Ross, Chairman of Highland Councils Sustainable Development Select Committee. Once the Partnership is established, members will elect a new Chair from amongst their number, rotating on a three year basis or as otherwise agreed.
- ↓ Administration: The Partnership will be serviced by the Councils Biodiversity Officers.
- 🐾 Budget: Unless otherwise agreed, the Council will hold and manage any associated budget and finances.
- 👤 Voting: Every effort will be made to reach decisions by consensus but where a vote must be taken, the minimum number of members required at meetings is 15.
- 🌿 Reporting: The Partnership will report regularly to the Highland Wellbeing Alliance, Sustainable Development Select Committee and other Groups and Forums as deemed appropriate by members.
- ★ Relationship to other Groups: The Partnership will promote new and existing relationships with other groups and forums operating in the biodiversity arena.
- ↓ Badenoch & Strathspey: The Partnership will liaise with the Cairngorms Biodiversity Steering Group over relevant issues and projects in Badenoch & Strathspey.
- 🐾 Highland Biodiversity Forum: The Partnership will set up and manage a Forum of stakeholders and local enthusiasts, which will be open to anyone with an interest in biodiversity to join.
- 👤 Annual Seminar: An annual seminar will be held to listen to views from, and report on progress to, members of the Highland Biodiversity Forum.
- 🌿 Publicity: The Partnership will publicise progress updates twice a year through a newsletter and the website www.highlandbiodiversity.com.
- ★ Acknowledgements: The Partners agree that in conducting the Partnership and in publicising its work, full recognition will be given to the support of each Partner.
- ↓ Termination: Any member will be entitled to withdraw from the Partnership on giving one month written notice to its Chair.