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Highland Council

HIGHLAND LBAP REVIEW: Executive summary

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Project manager Dr Peter Cosgrove

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EnviroCentre
Craighall Business Park
Eagle Street
Glasgow, G4 9XA

t 0141 341 5040

f 0141 341 5045

w www.envirocentre.co.uk

e info@envirocentre.co.uk

Job No : 11854J

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGHLAND LBAP REVIEW

In January 2006, The Highland Biodiversity Partnership issued a contract entitled 'The Highland LBAP Review'. The contract specified three main project objectives:

- To produce a single, simple Highland Biodiversity Action Plan that identifies and sets targets for the main strategic issues arising out of the Highland LBAPs.
- To review the habitats and species present in each of the LBAPs and identify those where there is potential to add real value locally and contribute towards UK biodiversity targets through survey work, awareness raising or habitat enhancement.
- To work with seven local biodiversity groups across Highland to help them produce short, focused Implementation Plans that prioritise locally important habitats, species and projects.

EnviroCentre Ltd. won the contract and much work has subsequently gone into delivering the three project objectives. The outputs largely follow the tender specification as originally outlined, but these have been adapted or changed in agreement with the Highland Biodiversity Partnership where necessary. For example, the Inverness and Nairn area has an LBAP, but no properly functioning group at present, so no local Area Implementation Plan could be developed for this area within the timescale of the contract.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Highland Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) review is a milestone in terms of the conservation of biodiversity of Highland, the issues affecting it and the solutions necessary. For the first time ever, the Highland LBAP has reviewed all the important habitats and species present in Highland and has identified that Highland is the most important area in the UK for nationally threatened, declining and rare species and their habitats.

The Highland LBAP review is not the first time that interested organisations and individuals have come together to conserve biodiversity in the Highlands. The Highland Biodiversity Partnership, the Highland Biodiversity Forum and local area biodiversity groups have been working together for many years and the production of this Highland LBAP review is part of an on-going process that can be traced back to the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

The Highland LBAP review covers the eight Highland local area Biodiversity Action Plans (Skye and Lochalsh; Lochaber; Wester Ross; Easter Ross; Sutherland; Caithness; Inverness and Nairn and Cairngorms), assessing the important issues and actions within them. In doing so it identifies a series of seven key strategic Highland issues that affect and influence biodiversity across the Highlands and these form the basis of the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan (Highland BAP). The key Highland strategic issues are:

- Lack of information;
- Lack of awareness;
- Lack of appropriate policy or strategic measures;
- Habitat and species loss and fragmentation;

- Inappropriate management;
- Pollution, erosion and climate change; and
- Invasive non-native species.

The Highland BAP sets out proposals for addressing these strategic issues at the Pan-Highland and local area levels. These proposals include costed delivery projects that will deliver a range of benefits to UK and Scottish BAP targets across Highland within the next five years.

The following paper and electronic outputs have been produced to fulfil the requirements of the contract:

The Highland LBAP folder

The Highland Biodiversity Action Plan document and an associated Annex containing details of the review process that took place on Highland Issues and Actions.

The Local Area Implementation Plan folder

Under the heading of Local Area Implementation Plans there are seven documents and two associated Annexes:

- The Sutherland Implementation Plan;
- The Caithness Implementation Plan;
- The Lochaber Implementation Plan;
- The Skye and Lochalsh Implementation Plan;
- The Wester Ross Implementation Plan;
- The Easter Ross Implementation Plan;
- 2 detailed Annexes of actions and activity produced for the Easter Ross Implementation Plan; and
- A table detailing all the Pan-Highland projects and Local Area Implementation Plan projects. This table makes specific links between the proposed Highland actions and UK BAP and Scottish BAP targets.

The Highland Habitats and Species Review folder

Under the heading of the Habitats and Species Review there are three documents:

- A document providing an explanation of the Excel databases;
- A database of UK BAP and LBAP habitats in Highland; and
- A database of UK BAP and LBAP species in Highland.