

Appendix 1



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Your reference

Our reference T47

Chief Executive

Natural Heritage Policy
Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy
Division,
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1st February 2021

Valuing Nature - A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020. Report on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy

Dear Chief Executive,

The current Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy was published on 1 July 2015. As you are aware, the Biodiversity Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 (the WANE Act). The WANE Act also requires the Department to publish a report on the implementation of the Strategy and, **as the current strategy finished on 31 December 2020, we require “a Final Progress Report”** detailing how well each action has been undertaken.

We therefore need an update from you in relation to the actions detailed in the Strategy’s implementation plan which fall within your area of responsibility.

For your convenience, the actions you are responsible for are included in the table below. You may also wish to review the strategy and full implementation plan at the following link - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0> .

I should be grateful if you can give this matter your consideration and complete the report at your earliest convenience, before **28th February 2021**. It is important that your actions and achievements are recorded to determine the overall effectiveness of the Biodiversity Strategy. In particular, it is important to explain the extent to which targets have been met and quantified where appropriate. Where they have not been met, an explanation is also required, together with a revised target date if appropriate.

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Please send your report to Biodiversity.policy@daera-ni.gov.uk . If you need to discuss further please contact Mark Preston mark.preston@daera-ni.gov.uk /028 90569314 or Alan Hamilton alan.hamilton@daera-ni.gov.uk /02890905603

This final report will aid the Department in developing a new Strategy, along with new international agreements/targets to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our natural environment. As has been highlighted during the current pandemic, our natural environment is providing vital services to us all, and it is clear that working together is vital in protecting it for future generations.

With this in mind, it is our intention to begin reviewing the current strategy and the preparation of a new Post 2020 Strategy mid-2021, with a view to having a draft strategy ready for consultation in late 2021. I will therefore be inviting you to give your input during this process as a key stakeholder.

I will contact you again shortly to let you know our plans and timetable, etc.

Yours faithfully

Natural Heritage Policy, DAERA

Appendix 1

Table – Related Actions

Implementation Plan					
No	Associated Actions	Target Date for Actions	Lead Body	Related Aichi Target	2020 Progress Report
47	Review Local Biodiversity Action Plans to assist in the promotion and conservation of biodiversity at a local level	Dec 2020	Local Authorities	1, 2, 18	

Appendix 2

Natural Heritage Policy
Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division,
DAERA
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Lower Ormeau Road
Malone Lower
BELFAST BT7 2JA

26th March 2021

Your Ref: T47

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Valuing Nature - A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020.
Report on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy**

Mid Ulster District Council would like to thank DAERA for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the report on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.

As detailed in the Strategy, Local Authorities are the Lead Body for Action 47 – “Review Local Biodiversity Action Plans to assist in the promotion and conservation of biodiversity at a local level.”

In addition to fulfilling obligations under Action 47, through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process, Mid Ulster District Council is making positive contributions to a number of other Actions within the Strategy. This includes: (A43) - positive management of land for biodiversity benefit: (A45) - grassland conservation training: (A31) - contributing to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: (A27) - management of non-designated land to maintain and enhance priority habitats and species: (A51) - increasing volunteer engagement in biodiversity management: (A52) - increasing the number of individuals actively involved in Citizen Science recording projects. Should further information relating to these be required, Mid Ulster District Council is happy to discuss the various aspects with the relevant Lead Body responsible for reporting on these actions.

The Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan has been, and continues to be successful in delivering biodiversity gain in the Mid Ulster area. In addition to undertaking projects on council properties, partnerships have been established with public, private, voluntary and community sectors, to encourage and engage participation in action for our local biodiversity in the wider countryside.

In a typical year, twenty to thirty themed information, training and practical sessions covering habitat creation and management, species management, and biodiversity recording are organised through the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan process. Through this public engagement, local people are encouraged to learn about, enjoy, care for, and be inspired to take action for our local biodiversity.

Themed information events and guided walks encompass a wide range of topics including: woodland walks; winter tree identification; mammal tracks and signs; birdwatching for beginners; garden wildlife; bat nights; butterflies, bugs and bumblebees; urban biodiversity; an introduction to biodiversity recording.

It is recognised there is a lack of data on the presence and abundance of species throughout Northern Ireland. One of the underlying themes within the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan is to encourage local people to “record what you see”, and submit their records to the appropriate data centre. These records help build a better picture of what species there are in the area and where they are living. They help determine the status of a species (both at local and national level), and guide specific action to protect our most threatened habitats and species. A range of training events are held covering a variety of aspects of biodiversity recording, tailored to specific target audiences. This includes: General biodiversity records of species observed in gardens, parks, school grounds, etc.; participation in Citizen Science recording projects such as Big Garden Birdwatch, Big Butterfly Count, All Ireland Daubenton’s Bat Survey; through to taking part in highly technical and specialised recording such as the Mid Ulster Bird Ringing Project.

Practical projects have included; woodland creation; hedgerow creation and management; grassland management; wetland management; urban habitat management for biodiversity; homes for pollinators; bird, bat and biodiversity boxes; growing native trees from seed; non-native invasive species management; etc. While these habitats may not be classified as Northern Ireland Priority Habitats, and some of the species benefiting from these projects are not all Northern Ireland Priority Species, they certainly make a positive contribution to biodiversity in the Mid Ulster area, with some even making a significant contribution on a Northern Ireland scale.

In addition to biodiversity gain undertaken through public participation, a number of actions identified in the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan have been incorporated into council systems. Where suitable, biodiversity areas are being created and managed on council sites. This includes, woodland copses, hedgerows, grasslands and wider wetland habitats. The provision of ‘wildlife homes’ is being implemented across a range of sites. Biodiversity enhancement is also considered for all capital projects, with appropriate actions incorporated wherever feasible.

Mid Ulster District Council is of the opinion that actions implemented through the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan process are a valuable mechanism by which a positive contribution is made to the promotion and conservation of biodiversity at a local level.

Yours faithfully

Mid Ulster District Council