

Report on	NI Biodiversity Strategy 2032 – DAERA Consultation Response
Date of Meeting	11 th January 2022
Reporting Officer	Raymond Lowry - Head of Technical Services
Contact Officer	Mark Edgar – Biodiversity Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	Mid Ulster District Council have been asked by DAREA to input into the Strategic Targets set out for the new NI Biodiversity Strategy 2032. The consultation requests are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. Appendix 3 is the draft responses covering questions 5(i) – 5(iv) and specified strategic targets 1, 3, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 15.
2.0	Background
2.1	With the previous NI Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 now elapsed, the Executive agreed to the development of a new Strategy. It is intended to develop this new Biodiversity Strategy to meet the challenges faced by the natural environment.
2.2	The scientific evidence points to an on-going decline in the world's overall biodiversity; with that trend very much mirrored in Northern Ireland. Internationally the United Nations, through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is refocusing its intention on reducing the loss of biodiversity through a Global Biodiversity Framework. This framework has been developed internationally with DEFRA representing the UK. Work is ongoing but it is likely that the framework will include the 21 strategic targets shown in Appendix 1 Annex A.
2.3	The CBD intends to get international agreement to the framework at the Council of the Parties meeting (CoP15) in May 2022 in China. In the meantime the four UK countries are refreshing their strategies, based on the draft framework.
2.4	The framework is very cross cutting and while the targets focus on many of DAERA's responsibilities, there are aspects of the targets which are relevant to Mid Ulster District Council.
2.5	Mid Ulster District Council are already taking actions which support and fulfil obligations in the NI Biodiversity Strategy. Through biodiversity initiatives both on council's own properties, and working with local community groups, local residents and schools, positive contributions are being made to a range of targets laid out in the Strategy.
3.0	Main Report

3.1	<p>Biodiversity Strategy to 2032</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council would like to thank DAERA for the opportunity to feed into the development of a new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy to 2032.</p> <p>As throughout the rest of the world, Northern Ireland is undergoing biodiversity loss. The evidence of this is clear to see, with many once familiar species and habitats becoming increasingly rare, and a few now even extinct from Northern Ireland. This loss of biodiversity impacts the way we live.</p> <p>Biodiversity represents the foundation, and the building blocks for the ecosystem services that we rely on in our everyday lives. The services ‘gifted’ to us by the natural environment include; purification of air and water, mitigation of floods and droughts, pollination of crops, generation and renewal of soil, as well as the sense of wellbeing provided by nature. Too often, the goods and services that a healthy natural environment provides for us are taken for granted.</p> <p>Most significant threats to our biodiversity are often caused by human activity. Fortunately, this means we are in a position to adapt our behaviour to manage and enhance our natural environment to safeguard our biodiversity for ourselves and for future generations.</p> <p>It is recognised that many targets set out in the previous Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy failed to be met. While some improvements have occurred, the decline of our natural environment continues.</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the development of a new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. This new strategy is an opportunity to set out how Northern Ireland could meet its commitments to protect nature, and ensure the environment can continue to support people and the economy. The strategy must recognise the biodiversity emergency we are currently facing, and the increasing public concern for our wildlife. To ensure the outcomes of the new strategy are implemented a strong, coordinated and adequately resourced effort will be required. In some cases, new or refined legislation will be required, (coupled with enforcement) to ensure action is taken to fulfil the new commitments.</p> <p>The responses to the specified questions with the comments on the Strategic Targets identified as being relevant to Mid Ulster District Council are in Appendix 3.</p>			
4.0	<p>Other Considerations</p>			
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <table><tr><td>Financial: None</td></tr><tr><td>Human: None</td></tr><tr><td>Risk Management:</td></tr></table>	Financial: None	Human: None	Risk Management:
Financial: None				
Human: None				
Risk Management:				

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members to note the content of the draft responses as fully detailed in Appendix 3 and agree for Officers to respond to DAERA before the deadline of 31 st January 2022
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 – Consultation request to CEO dated 8 th November 2021 Appendix 2 – Consultation request to Biodiversity Officer dated 8 th November 2021 Appendix 3 – Draft Consultation response to DAERA – combined response for Appendix 1 and 2