

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: Glasgow's local biodiversity – the way forward?

Carol MacLean¹ and Cath Scott²

Glasgow City Council, Land and Environmental Services, 231 George Street, Glasgow, G1 1RX.

¹E-mail: carol.maclea@glasgow.gov.uk

²E-mail: catherine.scott@glasgow.gov.uk

There were 24 attendees at the 'Glasgow's Local Biodiversity – the way forward?' workshop, where people were asked to consider the following four questions:

1. Do you consider that the Glasgow Biodiversity Partnership is doing enough for biodiversity in the City?
2. What does your local greenspace need to make it good for biodiversity?
3. How can the Partnership best communicate and engage with 'hard to reach' groups?
4. What can *you* personally do to improve and enhance local biodiversity?

The results of the workshop, combined with a concurrent on-line questionnaire about biodiversity provision in the City (at www.glasgow.gov.uk/biodiversity) will help shape the future direction of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), which is being updated. Due to time constraints, only questions 1-3 were considered and as the first two questions were linked the responses to them have been combined. The key responses are summarised here:

Q. Do you consider that the Glasgow Biodiversity Partnership is doing enough for biodiversity in the City?

Q. What does your local greenspace need to make it good for biodiversity?

'More work needed in city centre areas. Everything happens north of the river.

Use the Commonwealth Games to showcase biodiversity to visitors. Need better biological recording, brownfield sites need surveyed. Need better co-ordination between conservationists and contractors. Make sure greenspaces are high quality. Push for more allotments in the City. Provide more awareness of sites that communities can work on. Provide biodiversity interpretation in local parks. Combat vandalism by encouraging community participation and schools involvement.'

Q. How can the Partnership best communicate and engage with 'hard to reach' groups?

'Engage more with local industries and companies and make better business links overall. Raise biodiversity profile by establishing a volunteer system linking various organisations. Target unemployed people at job centres to encourage volunteering – advertise. Give youth group talks and activities. Use social media such as facebook. Think about unusual media like drama groups, art and music groups – put on a biodiversity theatre production. Link more with secondary schools. Wider community work with different ethnic groups, taking 'whole' communities out on site. Use radio shows, places of worship and other venues to promote biodiversity.'

The update of the LBAP will include the development of a Community Engagement Plan which will allow local people and interest groups to help set local targets for biodiversity, and to consider the topics and queries above. The programme of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) designation and development will help achieve many of the concerns raised. Linn Park on the south side, will soon be designated as an LNR. Darnley Mill is a proposed LNR, also on the south side of the City. There are LNR leaflets which are designed to raise awareness of biodiversity and the importance of these sites for people and nature. There are already a number of volunteers helping at our LNRs and it is hoped these numbers will increase in the years ahead.

New ideas such as using drama and social media to raise awareness of biodiversity could add a different strand of actions to the updated LBAP.

There are clearly a number of issues which have been raised by discussion within the Workshop and opportunities for these issues to be addressed by the new LBAP and any related policies and strategies.