

# SLCC Reporting on the Scottish Biodiversity Duty

2015 to 2017



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### A. Biodiversity and the SLCC

The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC) is a Non Departmental Public Body employing 57 staff at our office in central Edinburgh. As an office based organisation, our primary contribution to the conservation of biodiversity continues to be focused around resource efficiency, the use of sustainable suppliers and encouraging staff engagement with green issues.

The SLCC has an obligation under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) to consider biodiversity while carrying out day to day responsibilities, and to produce a publicly accessible report every three years detailing the steps taken to meet the duty. This report covers the period from January 2015 to December 2017, and follows on from our first Biodiversity report, published in January 2015.

In 2015, we reported that our Board and Senior Management Team were committed to improving resource efficiency within the organisation, and in this paper we hope to illustrate how that commitment has been maintained, and how we have built on our previous actions to achieve continuous improvement.

### B. Actions Taken and Change Monitoring

One of the primary aims to come from our previous report was the development of a sustainability policy. Our formalised policy was added to our policies register in September 2016, and it sets out our primary aims around reducing paper consumption, minimising corporate travel, sustainable procurement, reducing wasted energy and recycling. The policy is reviewed annually, is easy to read and readily accessible to all staff. Highlighted in the policy is our sustainability promise to continue to look for improvements in our way of working, to provide bi-annual updates to staff and the Board on our sustainability performance, and to support internal engagement events.

Our secondary aim from the last reporting period was to look for opportunities to boost staff wellbeing while also benefitting the environment. We joined the Cycle to Work scheme in 2015, and four people have made use of the service to buy a bike. This has provided them with a clean mode of transport and a chance to get out in green spaces, and we continue to fully support the scheme. We also provide travel loans, to encourage the use of shared public transport to work, and increase walking to and from public transport drop off points. Shared public transport is also encouraged for all business travel.

Two projects undertaken since 2015 have been particularly important in terms of our sustainability actions.

Firstly, the replacement of two older devices with new multifunctional printers in the Winter of 2016-17, along with an increasingly paper-lite approach to day-to-day work (for example favouring electronic communication over letters) has helped us reduce our printing. One of the devices replaced was only able to print single sided copies, which wasted resources so replacing it with a duplex enabled machine, provided a clear opportunity to save paper.

Secondly, we have an ongoing destruction project which is concerned with the destruction of paper records that have reached the end of their agreed retention period. This work has provided us with an opportunity to take a substantial step forward in terms of our re-use of filing equipment (folders, file dividers, hanging slings, plastic wallets and even paper clips). As paper files reach their destruction date, all materials that can be reused are retained and used again, while documents are sent for confidential recycling. Our stationery order has gradually reduced as the project has progressed, and there is now a clear preference for re-use where possible<sup>1</sup>.



*Recycled filing materials*

## C. Mainstreaming

The SLCC maintains its commitment to sustainability choices made in previous years, so we still have office plants that use peat free planting systems, our photocopier/printer paper is responsibly sourced and carries the FSC C008924 logo, and the 'think before you print' message is accepted into standard working practices. One example of mainstreaming is how our plastic cup consumptions has gradually reduced<sup>2</sup> and our plastic recycling has increased<sup>3</sup> as people become more aware of the environmental impact of single use plastics.

A recent change has been to a non-toxic and biodegradable brand of liquid handwash in our kitchen area, which has reduced plastic consumption, and is releasing fewer chemicals into the water system. Similarly, switching from standard dishwasher tablets to a plant and mineral based version does not make a discernible difference to the cleanliness of dishes, but has reduced our environmental impact.

<sup>1</sup> Files and hanging slings were a regular item on the monthly stationery order in the previous period, in 2017 they were no longer being ordered at all.

<sup>2</sup> 12,000 single use plastic cups were ordered in the 2011-2014 reporting period and only 4,000 have been ordered since.

<sup>3</sup> 109.5kg of plastic was collected for recycling in 2014 compared to 153kg collected in 2017.



*One of many recycling points for staff*

We recognise that a positive way to move forward with our corporate approach to sustainability is to inform and support staff in their individual efforts to live more sustainably. For example, instead of putting empty coffee jars straight in the recycling bin, staff can then take the empty jars home to re-use for food storage (therefore reducing their own plastic consumption) and we have a collection of plastic carrier bags in the kitchen, ready for re-use. Staff organised their own collection point for disposable coffee cups (and rota for taking them to a suitable recycling point) and also recognised that non-confidential papers could be re-used to make notepads, therefore helping us in our aim to reduce unnecessary paper consumption.

We try to minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill as much as possible, so where items can't be re-used, they are recycled and this is evidence by an increase in the number of recycling points in the office and the total kg of CO2 diverted by our recycling efforts<sup>4</sup>.

### D. Working in Partnership

We continue to work with a local café for our catering requirements. Since 2011 deliveries have been made on foot and with minimal packaging and in 2016 our supplier agreed to provide whole pieces of fruit rather than mixed fruit pots in order to further reduce waste. Our milk supplier is a locally sourcing dairy and where possible we try to buy ad-hoc items from local shops rather than order for delivery so that we can reduce our carbon footprint. We also work with other businesses in the building to share resources and re-use items that become available. Our stationery provider is ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certified and has won awards for their own sustainability efforts. They also support our aim to reduce our environmental impact by providing environmentally friendly product options and bundling deliveries so that carbon emissions can be reduced.

As part of our Climate Week events in 2016, we invited a speaker from Home Energy Scotland to give a presentation to all staff on renewable energy options and reducing energy consumption in the home. Home Energy Scotland were invited back to give another Climate Week presentation in 2017 which really helped to engage staff in thinking about the small every-day changes that they could make to reduce waste and save money. We have also utilised resources provided by Scottish Government, Resource Efficient Scotland, Greener Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful and Home Energy Scotland to inform our internal engagement campaigns and to signpost colleagues to services and further information.

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<sup>4</sup> The average amount of CO2 diverted by our office recycling in 2014 was 91kg per month, in 2017 the monthly average was 154kg

## E. Communication

Active participation in national campaigns such as Pass it On week, Earth Hour and Climate Week gives us a structured opportunity to refresh staff awareness of resource efficiency and sustainability issues. Our campaigns usually focus on changing behaviours (both at home and in the office) because we recognise that that is where real change stems from. We've used Climate week as a platform to launch our sustainability policy, and Pass it On Week events such as book and DVD sales have highlighted opportunities for re-use while helping us raise money for our nominated staff charity. We aim to reinforce the message that small changes can make a big difference to local communities and to the country and environment as a whole.

Event themed noticeboard displays are accompanied by emails and verbal updates at team meetings to ensure that all staff understand what each event is about and what we are trying to achieve. Quizzes and other techniques are used to increase engagement and aid learning.

We provide links to external organisations for further information and we undertake annual surveys on recycling and staff travel, so that we can report back to the team on our progress.



2017 Staff notice board for Pass it On Week



An energy saving incentive

We have also tried to find different ways of reinforcing positive behaviours. As part of Climate Week 2017, instead of simply auditing how many staff had remembered to switch off their PC and monitor at night, we left a chocolate on the desks where the devices were switched off. Colleagues were left to speculate as to why some people had treats and others didn't. At the end of the week, following reminders about switching off items to reduce energy waste, we repeated the audit and found that our switch off policy was much better adhered to. By tailoring our campaigns to suit our people we increase engagement, and ultimately have better compliance.

## F. Highlights and Aims for the Future

The SLCC's highlight of the past three years is the way in which staff have embraced a culture of reducing consumption, re-using items and recycling where necessary. This has been clearly reflected in small changes to our way of working and the staff-lead actions taken during the period.

Our primary biodiversity aim is to continue to think about the way we work so that we can achieve continuous improvement in reducing our environmental impact. We are also interested in working with our Landlord's agents and other tenants in the building to drive forward plans for more energy efficient lighting and heating systems as well as the introduction of shared facilities for food waste recycling. We look forward to building on staff engagement events year on year, and are exploring ways to further engage our Board Members as well as possible volunteering opportunities for staff.