

Scottish Government submission of 5 October 2022

PE1966/B: Formally recognise and incorporate local knowledge in Scottish Government policy

The Scottish Government recognise that local knowledge can form an important part of the evidence base in taking local action for biodiversity. That is why we are taking a co-design approach to developing the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS), and its underpinning Delivery Plan. We have carried out a significant programme of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including specific engagement with groups such as the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, during our recent consultation on the strategy. We will continue to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders as we develop our strategy further and as we commence work on our Delivery Plans. In addition, we are carrying out specific engagement on particular policy commitments, including Nature Networks, National Parks and 30x30.

The SBS will set out approaches to address biodiversity loss at landscape scale. It recognises that a 'whole of society' and 'whole of government' approach is needed to make the transformational changes required to halt and reverse biodiversity loss

We are leading the Edinburgh Process on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bringing together a global partnership to advocate for the Edinburgh Declaration, which sets out the ambition and commitments of the subnational constituency. The Declaration calls for adoption of a renewed Plan of Action for Biodiversity for Subnational and Local Governments which will be discussed at CoP15 in relation to the Mainstreaming of Biodiversity. This recognises the critical contribution made at local level to implementing global policy frameworks and targets for biodiversity.

Furthermore, Scottish Government Ministers and officials regularly meet with stakeholders to discuss a wide range of wildlife issues offering opportunities for both formal and informal consultation. This includes charring meetings and facilitating discussions with, e.g. the Scottish Beaver Forum and the National Goose Forum, which are made up of relevant individuals and organisations. Where policy decisions impact particular communities, the Scottish Government, or one of our agencies

such as NatureScot, will engage with local area experts who can provide specific knowledge and advice.

We also consult with stakeholders seeking their views on various issues, such as grouse moor licensing and other recommendations from the [Grouse Moor Management Group \(Werritty\) Report](#), and [Scotland's Beaver Strategy 2022-2024](#), which was published on 22 September 2022 and involved more than 50 stakeholder organisations.

Finally, before introducing new legislation we always undertake a public consultation. For example full, public consultations were undertaken prior to introducing the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Powers and Protections) Act 2020 and the Hunting with Dogs Bill. We encourage participation from key stakeholders, local communities and the general public.

I hope this information is useful to the Committee in their consideration of PE1966.