
BIODIVERSITY REPORT

2017-2020

1. The Standards Commission's Role and Purpose

- 1.1 The Standards Commission for Scotland (Standards Commission) is a statutory body which was established under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended. The 2000 Act created an ethical standards framework whereby councillors and members of devolved public bodies are required to comply with Codes of Conduct, which are approved by Scottish Ministers.
- 1.2 The Standards Commission's vision is to achieve the highest possible ethical standards in public life so that the public in Scotland has confidence in those elected to local councils and those appointed to the board of devolved public bodies. Our aim is to promote awareness of, and adherence to, the Codes of Conduct by providing guidance, support and training to key stakeholders and by maximising engagement opportunities with the public and media.
- 1.3 The aims of the Standards Commission are to:
 - Encourage high ethical standards in public life; including the promotion and enforcement of the Codes of Conduct and to issue guidance to councils and devolved public bodies; and
 - Adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, and where a breach is found, to apply a sanction.
- 1.4 The Standards Commission comprises of five part time Members, who are appointed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. The Standards Commission employs three members of staff.
- 1.5 The Standards Commission's role and remit does not include any particular environmental responsibilities.

2. Biodiversity Duties and Actions

- 2.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 requires all public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requires all public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.
- 2.2 The Standards Commission's office is located within the Scottish Parliament building and, as such, its staff and members support the actions the Parliamentary Corporate Body takes to improve its environmental performance and benefit biodiversity. These include:
 - Ensuring all building users fully understand the contribution they can make to improving the Parliament's environmental performance;
 - Mitigating against climate change by measuring and reducing the Parliament's carbon footprint;
 - Adapting for climate change by preparing contingency plans to deal with a changing climate, adverse weather conditions and the associated impacts;
 - Adopting a strategy for managing the energy consumption of the Parliament incorporating energy efficiency, efficient technology and on-site renewables;

- Using water efficiently;
- Safeguarding resources by minimising waste and identifying ways to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle materials;
- Purchasing in an environmentally responsible manner in line with the Responsible Purchasing Policy and Strategy;
- Reducing the need to travel and develop and promote the use of sustainable travel by people working in and visiting the building;
- Supporting and encouraging biodiversity within the parliamentary grounds; and
- Complying with environmental legislation.

In addition, the Parliament maintains its grounds with the aim of supporting the biodiversity of the area.

- 2.3 The Standards Commission has incorporated biodiversity measures into its own policies and procedures over the last four years. In particular, the Standards Commission now undertakes the vast majority of its engagement via digital means, through the use of email and by publishing news, updates and training material on its website and through social media. The Standards Commission no longer creates paper copies of its case files, which has significantly decreased its paper usage and printing and postage requirements (which will have had an impact in term of the associated travel emissions). The Standards Commission’s data retention and disposal policies have been amended to reflect these changes.
- 2.4 In the past year, the Standards Commission has reduced travel by holding its Hearings (to adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct) online, where some or all facts are not in dispute. The Standards Commission also promotes the use of sustainable travel for staff travelling to and from office, and for Members and staff when they are attending Hearings and external meetings.
- 2.5 Where appropriate, the Standards Commission has aimed to conduct its meetings and workshops online. Going forward, it aims to make more use of the online facilities in the Parliament’s digitally enabled meeting rooms to reduce or negate the need to print meeting papers.
- 2.6 The Standards Commission’s work to promote and enforce requirements the Code of Conduct assists in ensuring planning decisions are made on their merits and in the public interest, which includes the requirement to reflect the Scottish Government's commitment to sustainable development.



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