

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN
2025

VERSION 1.1

MARCH 2025

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Introduction

The university recognises the impact that its operations have on the natural environment and as a component of the [UWS Sustainability Statement](#) and [UWS Sustainability Plan 2025-30](#) have developed a Biodiversity Action Plan.

This plan focuses on the Ayr, Lanarkshire, and Paisley campuses of which the university operates and controls directly. Our Dumfries and London campuses are shared with other educational institutions and organisations, and we support the delivery of their own respective plans.

Acknowledgements

The UWS Sustainability team acknowledges support for the development of this plan document and on-going collaboration on Biodiversity from many colleagues, a special thanks to:

- Professor Abeer Hassan, School of Business and Creative Industries, University of the West of Scotland. Professor Hassan has provided continual support and guidance via research and through degree programme delivery inclusive of the use of the *Biodiversity Disclosure Index*, adapted from Atkins and Atkins, 2018; Atkins and Maroun, 2018; Hassan et al. 2020; Hassan et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2022 which has aided in identifying key areas for this plan to encompass.
- Dr Richard Thacker, School of Health and Life Sciences (HLS), University of the West of Scotland and HLS colleagues. Dr Thacker, as programme leader in BSc Applied Bioscience and Zoology has coordinated linking student projects to this plan document.

The university estate

Each campus is unique, constituting differing designs, size and scale.

- Our Ayr campus is sited east of the town centre within the former Craigie estate on the river Ayr. It constitutes a single main campus building, A-listed Craigie House, and modern student residences.
- Our Paisley campus is within Paisley town centre, constituting 25 named buildings although many are interconnected. The age of the various buildings' ranges from B-listed 19th century to 21st century.
- Our Lanarkshire campus is within Hamilton International Technology Park, west of Hamilton and south of Blantyre. It constitutes three interconnected buildings.
- Our Dumfries campus is co-located with Dumfries and Galloway college.
- Our London campus is within the Docklands area constituting partial occupancy of two modern buildings.

Each campus has a differing geography and physical landscape make-up resulting in different impacts on the local environment.

UWS' campuses have evolved over recent years and the university also has a number of greenspaces under its current list of assets.

Wider context

This plan is developed in the context of the growing climate risks affecting the UK. Recent years have seen an increasing number of weather extremes, ranging from record-breaking

temperatures in the summer to milder and wetter winters. A growing number of storms are impacting the UK which have brought damaging conditions that have affected our campuses.

The university recognises the importance of protecting the natural environment on and around its campuses and this action plan identifies measures to deliver this.

This action plan document is part of the Biodiversity and environmental adaptation operational action area, a theme as set out within the Sustainability Plan. UWS' role in practicing environmental adaptation, that is adjusting to and managing the climate change induced impacts to our campuses and wider operations is being further developed and this plan will reflect considerations on this in the future.

This plan is formed in the context of the Scottish Government's biodiversity strategy, namely the draft [Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency](#).

This plan aims to link collaboratively with the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) of the Local Authorities in which our campuses are based.

The LBAPs provide a range of benefits in outlining the strategic actions taking place at a local level which the university can be partner to and use to influence the decisions made on our campuses.

Each LBAP is different in its structure but generally outlines actions which support habitat types and the species which interact with the habitats. This may be delivered through re-wilding activities, changes to land use and a wide range of other initiatives.

Priority habitat and species are defined including respective actions to protect these.

As we move forward, our actions and intentions will seek to complement the direction set by these respective strategies, using the information and expertise which they provide on our local areas.

Habitat desk survey

A desk-based habitat survey of the campuses was conducted with a summary of the identified Joint Nature Conversation Committee (JNCC) habitat classifications detailed below. This includes obvious classifications such as buildings and walls which aren't outlined here. The total area of the external natural space at each campus is included within the table.

	Ayr (10.5 acres)	Lanarkshire (0.6 acres)	Paisley (3 acres)
Habitat			
<i>Cultivated/disturbed land – amenity grassland</i>	X	X	X
<i>Introduced shrub</i>	X	X	
<i>Broadleaved Parkland/scattered trees</i>	X		X
<i>Mixed Parkland/scattered trees</i>		X	

<i>Standing water</i>	X		
<i>Hedges</i>	X		
<i>Hedges with trees</i>	X	X	X
<i>Other tall herb and fern – ruderal</i>			X

Reviewing sector practice

A review of the Biodiversity Action Plans of other institutions also informed the priorities of this plan.

To complement this review, the targets have been partially informed through support by students as part of the delivery of the UWS Management Accounting 3 programme.

Students undertook a coursework assignment, ‘Biodiversity reporting practices in UK Higher Education Sector’. The assignment outcomes allowed for a compilation of effective Biodiversity Action Plan delivery areas to support informing UWS aims and priorities.

Plan aims and priorities

A series of targets have been outlined across four headings – Landscaping, Habitats, Development and Engagement.

These link with relevant the UNSDGs including SDG13, Climate Action; SDG14, Life below water and SDG15, Life on land.



Landscaping

- Collaborate with the university’s landscaping contractor to continually assess grounds maintenance practices.
- Bespoke landscaping activities per campus, to align with the needs of species at each campus.
- Deliver grounds projects on campus, balancing ornamental and aesthetic landscaping activities with those which best support the natural environment.

Habitats

- Improve understanding of our habitats and their species through habitat surveys.
- Annual survey to inform habitat quality assessment and any required action
- Ensure any changes to campus grounds are complementary for relevant habitat list.

Development

- Assess impacts that changes to the university estate may have on our natural environment.
- Introduce biodiversity considerations into future estates planning, maintaining awareness of any potential net gain requirement introductions.
- Maintain and develop engagement with external partners.

Engagement

- Maintain and develop biodiversity student facing initiatives.
- Grow the level of interactions on engagement platforms centred around biodiversity.

Campus flora and fauna

The table below details from two sources the species observed¹ on campus across a multi-year period.

Species summary

Item	Ayr	Lanarkshire	Paisley
Animal species From NBN Scotland Atlas From iNaturalist observations	<i>Eastern grey squirrel</i> <i>Common toad</i> <i>River Ayr species</i> (salmon, brown trout, grayling, eel, stickleback, minnow, stone loach) Grey Heron Robin Song Thrush Nuthatch Common Kestrel	<i>Red Fox</i> Cucumber Spiders European Garden Spider Forest Bug	<i>Scarlet Lily Beetle</i> <i>Rosy woodlouse</i>
Plant species From NBN Scotland Atlas From iNaturalist observations	Dicots Oxeye Daisy Guelder Rose Bluebell Primrose Common Dandelion Dog Violet Lesser Periwinkle Wood Anemone Colt's Foot Giant Hogweed	Wood Avens Buttercups Common Spotted Orchid Scots Pine Shaggy Inkcap	<i>Spring Vetch</i> <i>Sweet Alison</i>

¹ Observations have been provided by UWS campus users via NBN Scotland Atlas and iNaturalist.

Campus deliverables

Ayr

Activity	Target output	Status/Timeline	Delivery period	Stakeholders	Requirements for implementation
Habitats					
Species surveying Conduct surveys across species including birds, amphibians and reptiles, bats, small mammals and otters, terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates.	Collect data via surveys to inform management plans.	Every year	Spring/Summer	Estates HLS	Budget
Campus tree survey	Assess health of trees and perform reactive and proactive cuts and/or felling where appropriate.	(Established) Ongoing	As required	Campus Services	None – activity ongoing
Tree management Dead wood	Leave dead wood in situ where appropriate.	Ongoing	As required	Campus Services	Landscapers to be consulted.
Landscaping					
Greenspace development					

Assess and grow the areas of wildflower 'drifts' around grounds to support pollinator and invertebrate habitat as identified. (Map image of opportunity areas below).	Increase level of flowering plants on campus	Ongoing	Spring/Summer	Campus Services Estates Sustainability	Budget
Interventions					
'No Mow May' No grass cutting during May as part of the <u>No Mow May</u> programme.	Increase level of flowering plants on campus. Increase terrestrial habitats.	Every year	May	Campus Services	Landscapers to be consulted.
Development					
Campus future					
Net gain Maintain awareness of any future net gain requirements		Ongoing		Estates	
Engagement					
Partner collaboration					
Work with Ayrshire Rivers Trust to assess invasive non-native species along the river bank habitat	Outputs to add to species list.	To be initiated		Estates Sustainability	TBC

within proximity of campus.					
Work with South Ayrshire council to link UWS work with wider local objectives. <u>LBAP</u>		Ongoing		Estates Sustainability	None
Develop iNaturalist platform to grow the number of staff and student observations across campus projects.	Increase number of users and recordings.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Estates Sustainability Marketing	Comms/Marketing
Maintain Estates/BCI department engagement on Biodiversity reporting.			Ongoing	Estates Sustainability BCI	

Ayr campus wildflower development connectivity zones

Existing



Potential development areas

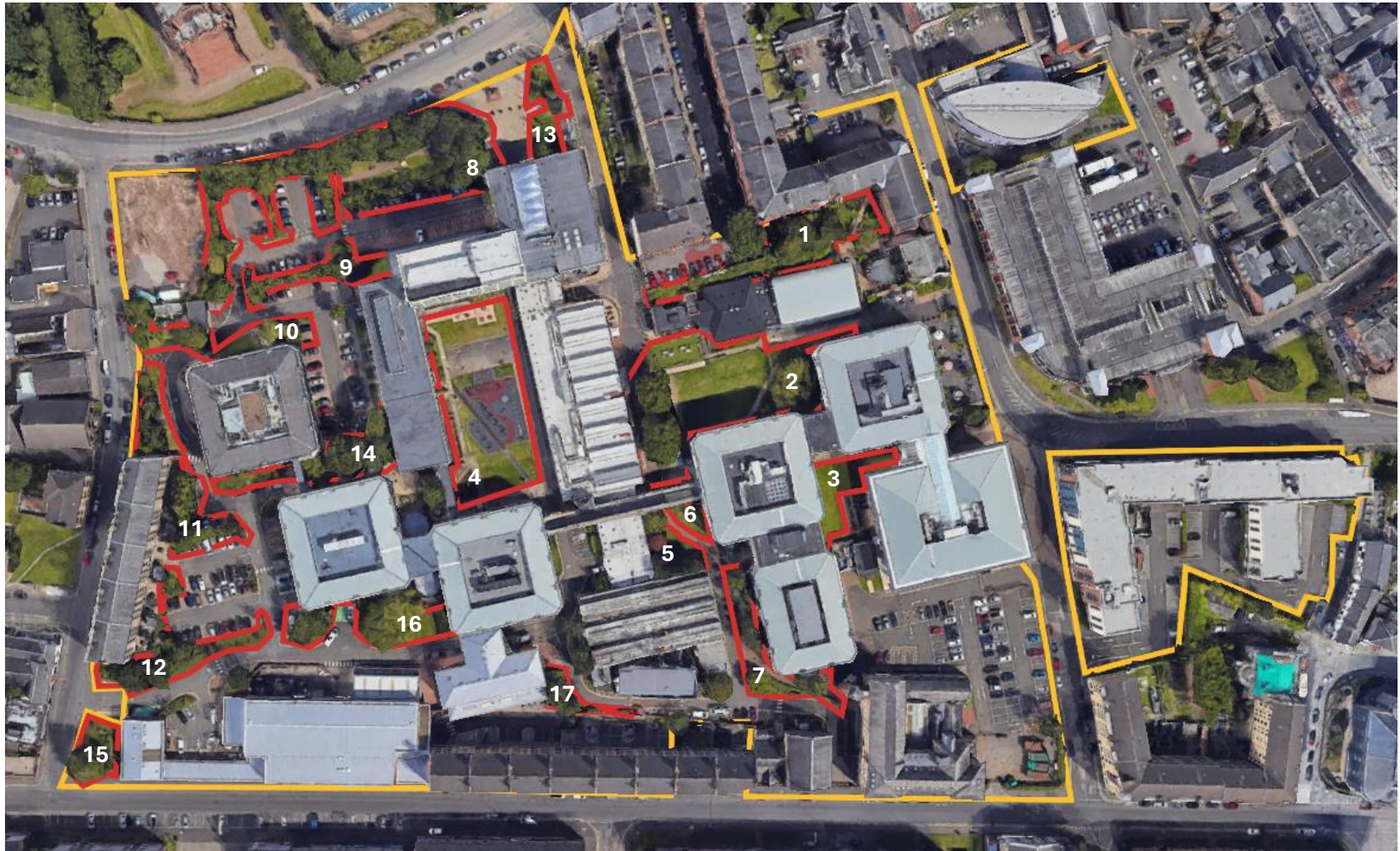


Paisley

Activity	Target output	Status/Timeline	Delivery period	Stakeholders	Requirements for implementation
Habitats					
Species surveying Conduct surveys across species including Birds, Small mammals and Terrestrial Invertebrates.	Collect data via surveys to inform management plans.	Every year	Spring/Summer	Estates Sustainability HLS	Budget
Campus tree survey	Assess health of trees and perform reactive and proactive cuts and/or felling where appropriate.	(Established) Ongoing	As required	Campus Services	Ongoing
Landscaping					
Greenspace development					
Pilot projects Implement pilot projects, redeveloping redundant external space towards areas which better support habitats across campus areas 3 and 10. (In map image).	Increase level of flowering plants on campus	Ongoing	Spring/Summer	Estates Sustainability Campus Services	Budget
Unmanaged growth		To be initiated		Campus Services Estates	

Make assessment of accumulation across campus area 1. (In map image).					
Interventions					
'No Mow May' No grass cutting during May as part of the <u>No Mow May</u> programme.	Increase level of flowering plants on campus Increase terrestrial habitats	Every year	May	Campus Services	Landscapers to be consulted.
Development					
Campus future					
Net gain Maintain awareness of any future statutory net gain requirements.		Ongoing		Estates	
Engagement					
Partner collaboration					
Work with Renfrewshire council to link UWS work with wider local objectives. LBAP	Establish more formal linkages with Renfrewshire LBAP	Ongoing		Estates Sustainability	
Develop iNaturalist platform to grow the number of staff and student observations across campus projects.	Increase number of users and recordings	Ongoing		Estates Sustainability Marketing	Comms/Marketing
Maintain Estates/BCI department engagement on Biodiversity reporting.		Ongoing		Estates Sustainability BCI	

Paisley campus external space segments



Lanarkshire

Activity	Target output	Status/Timeline	Delivery period	Stakeholders	Requirements for implementation
Habitats					
Species surveying Conduct surveys across species including Birds, Small mammals and Terrestrial Invertebrates.	Collect data via surveys to inform management plans.	Every year	Spring/Summer	Estates HLS	Budget
Student projects <i>(The outputs from this exercise undertaken in 2024 are detailed in the appendix.)</i>	Increase the number of student projects delivered in Lanarkshire woodlands focus area.	Annual	As appropriate for programmes	Estates HLS	Ongoing
Campus tree survey	Assess health of trees and perform reactive and proactive cuts and/or felling where appropriate.	(Established) Ongoing	As required	Campus Services	Ongoing

Landscaping					
Greenspace development					
Assess opportunities for growing the number of wildflower 'drifts' across campus.	Increase level of flowering plants on campus	Ongoing	Spring/Summer	Estates Campus Services	Budget
Engagement					
Partner collaboration					
Work with South Lanarkshire council to link UWS work with wider local objectives. <u>LBAP</u>	Provide outputs of student project	Ongoing		Estates Sustainability	
Develop iNaturalist platform to grow the number of staff and student observations across campus projects.	Increase number of users and recordings	Ongoing		Estates Sustainability Marketing	Comms/Marketing
Maintain Estates/BCI department engagement on Biodiversity reporting.		Ongoing		Estates Sustainability BCI	

Appendix

Lanarkshire work placement field survey outputs

A collaboration between the School of Health and Life Sciences and Estates allowed for a student to undertake a fieldwork surveying exercise of an area of woodland north of the university's Lanarkshire campus as part of their programme.

This area of woodland is managed by South Lanarkshire Council.

The surveying exercise aiding in informing the terrestrial invertebrate species within proximity of campus and hence what is anticipated to also be partially present on campus.

The familiae list and abundancies over all the observations are detailed in the table below:

Family	Abundance proportion
Carabidae	~70%
Staphylinidae	~10%
Muscidae	~10%
Syrphidae	~2%
Lumbricidae	~2%
Milacidae	~1%
Helicidae	~1%
Calliphoridae	~1%

Fieldwork of this style will aim to be continually delivered and expanded to allow for other observations.