

## SCOTTISH LAW COMMISSION REPORT ON THE SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY DUTY: 2015 – 2017

### *Biodiversity and the Scottish Law Commission*

1. The Scottish Law Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body. The Commission was established by the Law Commissions Act 1965 for the purpose of promoting law reform, in particular making recommendations to Ministers for the improvement and modernisation of Scots law.
2. The Commission comprises 5 Scottish Law Commissioners, who are appointed by Scottish Ministers; and a small number of legal and administrative staff who are Scottish Government employees assigned to work at the Commission.
3. The Commission works from an office at 140 Causewayside, Edinburgh.
4. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 placed a statutory requirement on all public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 placed a further requirement on all public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every 3 years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.
5. The Commission's statutory functions in relation to law reform are unlikely to have implications for biodiversity unless a particular law reform project is designed to review some aspects of environmental law. In the past 3 years, the Commission has not undertaken any law reform project on an aspect of environmental law, or any other project with implications for biodiversity.
6. The Commission's main contribution to the conservation of biodiversity is therefore as an office-based organisation; the use of sustainable suppliers and the efficient use of resources.
7. The Commission are committed to operating efficiently as an organisation, and in how the office is managed. The Commission aims to use resources effectively, minimise waste, re-use materials where possible, and invest in efficient equipment. The Commission is open to changing office procedures further in order to improve sustainability.
8. In the period 2015-2017, the Commission has carried out audits to establish our environmental performance. The information gathered has been used to set annual objectives and targets where practicable, in areas such as waste minimisation, paper use, water use, and energy efficiency. A recycling scheme provides recycling of paper, cans, plastic, and items such as toner cartridges.
9. This information is contained in the Commission's environmental policy. The environmental policy is available on the Commission's website at the following link: <https://www.scotlawcom.gov.uk/about-us/environmental-policy/>. The objectives and targets in it are kept under regular review by the Commission.
10. Particular activities and achievements during the period 2015-2017 include:

- As regards purchasing products and services, continuing to use the collaborative contracts negotiated by the Scottish Procurement Directorate: covering supply of electricity; water and sewerage services; taxi services; travel; IT supplies; provision of paper and stationery; and furniture.
- Continuing efforts to reduce waste, with the development of the recycling schemes; and the donation of superseded books from our library for reuse in Malawi and in Zambia (as requested by authorities in these countries).
- Disposal of surplus stationery supplies by donation to a local primary school.
- For in-house printing and photocopying paper, the Commission uses 100% recycled paper.
- A key decision in 2016 was to publish Scottish Law Commission reports and discussion papers online only on our website; as part of the modernisation of our operations, for environmental reasons and to save costs. Our paper consumption and publishing costs fell by 40% during 2016-17, with consequent savings in subsequent years, as a result of no longer publishing discussion papers and reports in hard copy.
- On consumption of water, achievement of the water consumption per person per year target in accordance with Government guidelines on good practice.
- To reduce the need to travel, the Commission purchased a conference phone in 2015 for telephone conferencing; and Skype has been installed in all PCs to make communications with colleagues more efficient. The Commission also has a travel plan in place to encourage sustainable travel arrangements where possible.

**2018**