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Transport Scotland Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan

October 2026

Contents

Contents..... 2

Objectives, Actions and the Delivery Plan..... 3

Actions 4

Objectives, Actions and the Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan for the [Transport Scotland Biodiversity Strategy](#) requires a set of achievable and relevant targets. Some of the actions proposed in the table below will be relatively straightforward to achieve whilst others will be more challenging. This may be due to the scale of the actions proposed, or because they rely on budget availability that cannot currently be guaranteed. Many of the actions depend on collaboration and partnership working between Transport Scotland and others, whether this is from within the established supply chain, other organisations and stakeholders, or neighbouring landowners.

The tables below list all the objectives, actions, and the activities of those actions currently identified. It is important to note that this Delivery Plan is not a static document and the actions, and any supporting activities, will continue to be reviewed and refined on a rolling basis. As a result, the targets will also be reviewed and refined, as necessary. Indicative delivery timelines have been proposed for the actions and the activities associated with them, where this is feasible to do so. It should be noted that some activities are already underway whilst others will be ongoing over multiple years for the duration of the Strategy and the Delivery Plan.

Actions

The seven objectives, underpinned by actions and associated activities which define how they will be delivered, and their delivery dates, are as follows:

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity protection and enhancement further into Transport Scotland's activities and decision making and those of its sub-contractors and consultants

ID	Action	Delivery Date
1.1	Update the Trunk Road Information Manual	
1.1.1	Develop and agree biodiversity prioritisation text within the first year and a more detailed update before the next round of Network Maintenance Contracts	Sept 2027
1.2	Provide suitable information to Transport Scotland staff on biodiversity and soil management	
1.2.1	Prepare suitable internal guidance notes for biodiversity enhancement opportunities and the management of soil	Sept 2027
1.2.2	Transport Scotland to engage with further and higher education providers to encourage nature literacy as part of engineering, planning, and other transport-related courses	Sept 2028
1.2.3	Seek to champion biodiversity within the agency by increasing ecological competence and awareness across all areas.	Mar 2028
1.3	Examine opportunities to further enhance and reinforce the Trunk Road maintenance contracts to prioritise outcomes in support of biodiversity	
1.3.1	Encourage Operating Companies to prioritise biodiversity considerations across all their actions and seek to incorporate this as a requirement of the next generation of Trunk Road maintenance contracts	Sept 2027

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity protection and enhancement further into Transport Scotland's activities and decision making and those of its sub-contractors and consultants

ID	Action	Delivery Date
1.3.2	Establish Key Performance Indicator(s) related to biodiversity improvements, which could be measured using a combination of tools such as the Transport Scotland's Natural Capital assessment, the Scottish Planning Biodiversity Metric (SPBM) (under development) and / or habitat condition and connectivity indicators	Sept 2028
1.3.3	Reinforce the efforts within Transport Scotland for implementing 'green' procurement policies, such as supporting vendors / suppliers with sustainable practices and Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) standards and targets	Sept 2028
1.4	Review opportunities within Trunk Road maintenance contracts to enhance collation and analysis of ecological information	
1.4.1	Improve clarity in the future Trunk Road maintenance contracts on ecological information to be collated, the criteria for updating asset records, and evidencing site verification	Sept 2029
1.4.2	Monitor compliance, review evidence and update processes	Sept 2029
1.5	Greater recognition / celebration of Trunk Road Network Operating Companies' biodiversity successes	
1.5.1	Develop opportunities within the next generation of Trunk Road maintenance contracts to incentivise biodiversity improvements (incentives could be provided through recognition of individual beneficial outcomes, and/or an annual overall assessment of positive outcomes for biodiversity)	Sept 2029

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity protection and enhancement further into Transport Scotland's activities and decision making and those of its sub-contractors and consultants

ID	Action	Delivery Date
1.5.2	Encourage Operating Companies to consider incorporating suitable enhancements for biodiversity and blue/green infrastructure in all operations, in recognition of the Scottish Government commitment	Sept 2028
1.5.3	Seek commitment to secure annual biodiversity delivery budgets for all Trunk Road units	Sept 2027
1.5.4	Prepare a business case for the Transport Scotland Professional Services Register (PSR) to include appropriate grades for people in the biodiversity industry (Chartered ecologists, landscape architects and arboriculturists)	Mar 2028
1.5.5	Encourage Operating Companies to take advantage of opportunities for positive media coverage, e.g. participate in Biodiversity Challenge Awards, publicise successes on social media, install information boards in suitable locations, like rest areas, explaining local biodiversity improvements.	Dec 2027
1.6	On the Trunk Road Network, maintain an accurate inventory of landscape and ecological assets in order to measure and monitor progress towards targets	
1.6.1	Continue to re-validate existing information, including evidence of ground-truthing exercises with photographs, site notes etc. linked to the asset management system (AMPS)	Ongoing, annual review
1.6.2	Develop a baseline using the asset records in spring 2028 to form a foundation against which to measure biodiversity progress; to include habitat types, condition and wildlife fencing and crossings, and any other ecological features	Sept 2028

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity protection and enhancement further into Transport Scotland’s activities and decision making and those of its sub-contractors and consultants

ID	Action	Delivery Date
1.6.3	Explore opportunities to enhance ecological data gathering and analysis across Transport Scotland assets, through innovation, research, and engaging with the supply chain and technology industry.	Jun 2028
1.6.4	Engage with the Roads, Delivery & Operations Asset Management team to enable greater functionality of the database to record and monitor ecological information and condition, allowing for information to be passed between Operating Companies in the event of contracts changing hands and for engineers to see high-level ecological constraints at initial phases of scheme development	Jun 2028
1.6.5	Ensure habitat condition ratings in the Trunk Road Maintenance Contracts are clear and understandable	Sept 2027
1.6.6	Seek to improve recording and analysis of wildlife casualties from vehicle collisions to inform potential mitigation opportunities.	Dec 2027

Objective 2: Promote soil health, storage, and management

ID	Action	Delivery Date
2.1	Implement proactive natural soil protection strategies such as use of lightweight machinery and protective mats to reduce soil compaction during construction	
2.1.1	Develop management systems / toolbox talks to promote good practices, especially in sensitive areas	Mar 2027
2.1.2	Record biologically important / sensitive soils in the Trunk Road asset management system using available data from infrastructure schemes, third-party open sources including citizen-science, and nationally available data layers	Sept 2027
2.1.3	Ensure the requirement for efficient assessment and establishment of soil protection zones around any construction works is understood and delivered	Dec 2026
2.1.4	Ensure the requirement to avoid storage of potential contaminants, such as fuel, near soils is appropriately discharged	Dec 2026
2.1.5	Adopt soil erosion and sedimentation control plans where sites are deemed to be at high risk – e.g. steep slopes and sandy soils	Mar 2027
2.1.6	Create a procedure for the regular monitoring of soil compaction levels on construction sites and establish remedial actions to take when issues are noted.	Mar 2027
2.2	Identify areas of biologically rich or peat soils within the existing network and on new schemes, ensure these are recorded and characterised appropriately within EIAs, and protected from disturbance as far as possible	
2.2.1	Implement soil DNA testing on new schemes	Sept 2027

Objective 2: Promote soil health, storage, and management

ID	Action	Delivery Date
2.2.2	Targeted testing of soil DNA in the relevant protected areas on the existing Trunk Road Network to help identify biologically valued soils	Mar 2028
2.2.3	Develop suitable soil health indicators within identified protected areas of biologically valued soils, and ensure these are monitored annually	Mar 2028
2.3	Identify and assign any surplus biologically valued soils or peat soils to appropriate locations/ habitat restoration areas and reuse as soon as possible	
2.3.1	Ensure suitably qualified specialist input	As required
2.3.2	Undertake research to identify and develop a network of potential donor sites across the country	Sept 2029
2.3.3	Incorporate into new works contracts the requirement for identifying appropriate locations for soil protection and/ or donor sites, in advance of construction	As required
2.3.4	Seek to identify alternative (off-site) opportunities for use of surplus sensitive soils, such as peatland restoration projects	As required
2.3.5	Learn lessons from ongoing projects and develop / adopt techniques for sustainable management of peat and other biologically-valued soils	Ongoing, by Dec 2028
2.4	Minimise soil storage	
2.4.1	Develop relevant guidance and ensure that Soil Management Plans are included in all major new infrastructure contracts	Mar 2028
2.4.2	Explore opportunities for Soil Management Plans for existing assets prior to planned major developments. This might be triggered due to the scale of works or presence of biologically valued soils	Sept 2028

Objective 2: Promote soil health, storage, and management

ID	Action	Delivery Date
2.4.3	Ensure suitably qualified specialist input	As required
2.5	Where semi-natural grassland vegetation is to be established anywhere within Transport Scotland assets, soils should be sampled and analysed to inform appropriate management techniques are adopted	
2.5.1	Engage suitably qualified specialist input for each major project to ensure understanding of optimum nutrient levels, topsoil depths, and specific requirements for any proposed plant communities	As required
2.5.2	Monitor compliance with Soil Management Plans and provide adequate training / toolbox talks, and supervision of operatives on the ground	As required
2.6	Increase awareness of soil biodiversity importance	
2.6.1	Develop guidance for planners, designers, and site staff on good practice soil management and protection, including advice on stripping, stockpiling, restoration and reuse. Incorporate best practice protocols where available	Mar 2028
2.6.2	Provide adequate training to relevant contractors / operatives	As required

Objective 3: Manage the risk from invasive non-native species

ID	Action	Delivery Date
3.1	Manage and update a list of non-native plant and animal species that are common or relevant to Transport Scotland estate for inclusion in new and, where possible, existing contracts	
3.1.1	Develop a list of target INNS based on NatureScot, Scottish Government and SEPA advice as appropriate, for species for priority action and for those of a medium/long-term risk. Review the list annually to ensure relevance	Mar 2027
3.1.2	Engage with stakeholders such as National Park authorities and landowners to identify other species which are a local issue and to develop opportunities for partnership working	Ongoing
3.1.3	Develop a process for Identifying / characterising the biology and ecology of locally identified species for action to enable an understanding of their future behaviours and potential management requirements	Sept 2028
3.2	Raise awareness of the importance of non-native plant and animal species control / biosecurity, including species identification	
3.2.1	Ensure contractors, operatives and consultants have the relevant knowledge, understanding and training	Mar 2028
3.2.2	Raise awareness of non-native species among neighbouring landowners, local schools and conservation groups	Ongoing
3.3	Identify locations of the priority action non-native / invasive species within the Transport Scotland estate	

Objective 3: Manage the risk from invasive non-native species

ID	Action	Delivery Date
3.3.1	Assess, review, and reinforce protocol for reporting sightings and accurately recording the locations of non-native species and their abundance / extent across the Trunk Road Network and other infrastructure; maintain the records with up-to-date information	May 2027
3.3.2	Ensure the Trunk Road Network asset inventory includes all significant locations of non-native / invasive species	Mar 2028
3.4	Ensure the delivery of robust management plans for non-native / invasive species across the Transport Scotland estate including setting targets for their control / removal	
3.4.1	Ensure all new infrastructure projects, including existing asset improvements, identify any significant instances of non-native invasive species within or adjacent to the footprint of the works and prepare a suitable management plan for control / eradication	As required
3.4.2	Assess, review, and reinforce requirements for annual delivery of robust invasive and injurious species management plans, as part of the Trunk Road maintenance contracts, with a focus on control of non-native species	Sept 2027
3.5	Develop options and opportunities to promote agreements with neighbouring landowners and other stakeholders for the management of non-native / invasive species	
3.5.1	Include provisions in future Trunk Road maintenance contracts for management of non-native species in partnership with stakeholders	Sept 2030
3.5.2	Encourage Trunk Road management companies to seek opportunities for working in partnership with adjacent landowners to better manage non-native invasive species	Ongoing

Objective 4: Preserve and increase landscape scale connectivity

ID	Action	Delivery Date
4.1	Embed landscape scale connectivity as a design requirement into major infrastructure projects and other improvements	
4.1.1	Establish a procedure for adoption in future contracts requiring the identification of opportunities for ecological connectivity improvements, including blue-green infrastructure	Sept 2027
4.1.2	Include the requirement in future contracts for engagement with neighbouring land managers, as part of the scheme development process, to explore opportunities to achieve ecological impact beyond the project's available land	As required
4.1.3	Ensure NatureScot's habitat connectivity indicators for woodland, heathland, grassland, and fen/marsh/swamp are monitored and taken into account prior to and on completion of a major project	As required
4.2	New major infrastructure projects to consider opportunities for incorporating wildlife crossings, taking into account local species types and usage	
4.2.1	Prepare guidance for maximising the opportunities for wildlife connectivity as a requirement to include in all future contracts	Mar 2028
4.2.2	Ensure suitably qualified specialist input	As required
4.3	Identify landscape scale connectivity hotspots / barriers on existing infrastructure and improve permeability for wildlife	

Objective 4: Preserve and increase landscape scale connectivity

ID	Action	Delivery Date
4.3.1	Interrogate the Trunk Road inventory and wildlife collision data to identify hotspots and explore opportunities to provide safe crossing points such as underpasses or wildlife bridges	Sept 2027
4.3.2	Ensure suitably qualified specialist input	As required
4.3.3	Review the LD 118 biodiversity design standards to facilitate connectivity (e.g. dry mammal underpass requirements)	Sept 2028
4.3.4	Explore opportunities, when planning new works or maintenance schemes, to engage with managers of land neighbouring existing assets to achieve benefit beyond the asset boundary	As required
4.3.5	Promote partnership working and appropriate agreements with neighbouring landowners and relevant stakeholders to link hotspots and remove barriers	Sept 2029
4.3.6	Prepare guidance for drainage systems to best accommodate amphibians	Dec 2026
4.4	Manage (avoid and reduce) light and noise pollution to improve habitat quality for species	
4.4.1	Reduce extent of lighting where possible	Ongoing
4.4.2	Require all new lighting installations to use angled / cowled lighting to reduce light-spill and investigate opportunities for using intelligent Lighting Control Systems	As required
4.4.3	Seek advice from NatureScot on the local species most affected by light or noise pollution on different parts of the trunk road estate and the most appropriate mitigation methods	Dec 2026

Objective 4: Preserve and increase landscape scale connectivity

ID	Action	Delivery Date
4.4.4	Monitor light pollution, for example by assessing the satellite data showing light pollution from the trunk road estate	Annually

Objective 5: Manage existing habitats to improve condition and biodiversity benefits

ID	Action	Delivery Date
5.1	Improve the condition of existing habitats through appropriate management	
5.1.1	Identify existing habitats and species, relevant to Transport Scotland assets, which are most at most risk to climate change, disease or other threats	Sept 2028
5.1.2	Develop a set of principles and location-specific criteria for measuring short-term improvements in different habitat conditions	Sept 2028
5.1.3	Ensure suitably qualified specialist advice is followed	As required
5.1.4	Adjust management regime to improve habitat condition	As required
5.1.5	Monitor improvement annually	As required
5.2	Identify existing old and veteran trees within the Transport Scotland estate	
5.2.1	Develop criteria for defining and recording old and veteran trees	Feb 2027
5.2.2	Accurately map trees and develop management plans specifically for them	Sept 2028
5.3	Reinforce good practice requirements for the maintenance and management of Trunk Road network roadside trees and woodland	
5.3.1	Ensure suitably qualified arboriculturist or landscape architect advice is followed in relation to maintenance of existing roadside trees, taking due cognisance of operational and safety requirements.	As required
5.3.2	Follow the minimum offset distances between the carriageway, hard shoulder, or hard strip and tree and shrub planting (refer to LD 117 National Application Annex for Scotland)	Ongoing

Objective 5: Manage existing habitats to improve condition and biodiversity benefits

ID	Action	Delivery Date
5.3.3	Explore opportunities to propose and deliver new native planting on Scottish Ministers' land that is surplus to operational requirements	Ongoing
5.3.4	Explore opportunities to and deliver new native planting outside Scottish Ministers' ownership through landowner agreements where insufficient space for planting exists within the boundary	Ongoing
5.4	Promote grassland and roadside verge management practices that encourage good ecological condition, where practicable	
5.4.1	Where appropriate and safe to do so, reduce mowing frequency and collect arisings (either by bailer or by hand) on roadside verges and other suitable grassed elements to allow wildflowers and species-rich grasses to set seed and support pollinators	Ongoing
5.4.2	Where practicable and appropriate, raise the height of the cuts to protect amphibians, reptiles and at least some small mammal species	Ongoing
5.4.3	Undertake specialist research to determine and implement localised maintenance regimes for improved biodiversity	Ongoing
5.4.4	Review and, if necessary, amend Trunk Road contract grass cutting obligations (including KPIs etc.) to facilitate greater flexibility in the requirements for specific local conditions.	Sept 2027
5.4.5	Encourage operating companies and contractors to use the appropriate machinery for the local conditions and required frequencies of verge maintenance	Dec 2026

Objective 5: Manage existing habitats to improve condition and biodiversity benefits

ID	Action	Delivery Date
5.4.6	Where appropriate, consider a longer-term approach for managing widened verges e.g. a 3-5 year mowing cycle (late in the year), dependent on local biodiversity priority objectives	Sept 2027
5.4.7	Encourage operating companies to clear roadside ditches little and often without compacting the spoil on their banks	Sept 2027
5.4.8	Avoid carrying out management to assets in unsuitable conditions when machinery will damage the verge	Ongoing
5.5	Manage road verges and other habitats to encourage species which have been identified as being of local conservation interest / importance	
5.5.1	Using the Scottish Biodiversity List, or local priority lists where available, identify species likely to benefit from trunk road estate habitats, either currently or after further management	Jun 2027
5.5.2	Identify key management changes or interventions required to encourage these species	July 2027

Objective 6: Restore and create high quality habitats

ID	Action	Delivery Date
6.1	Assess and understand relevant local ecosystems and ensure any management and maintenance interventions are appropriate	
6.1.1	When considering new interventions, identify the key components of the ecosystem, its habitats and species, both as it exists and as intended	Ongoing
6.1.2	Identify changes to be made in species composition (or other metric) and / or maintenance activities required to support the ecosystem in a healthy condition	Ongoing
6.1.3	Ensure that all planting and seeding is appropriate for Scotland and the specific local circumstances, prioritising species that are most resilient to climate change, disease or other threats	Ongoing
6.1.4	Consider opportunities for delivering associated improvements to amenity or air quality, at the same time, (e.g. shading, light, open space, active travel routes)	As required
6.2	Design and manage planting for structural, species, and age diversity	
6.2.1	Ensure that tree management plans required for the Trunk Road Network identify the type of woodland/ planting present and its needs	Sept 2027
6.2.2	Encourage the development and progression of planting management programmes that deliver a mix of age groups, of open areas, young saplings, older trees and dead wood	Ongoing
6.2.3	Use thinning and coppicing to improve structural diversity, where appropriate; ensure it is suitable for the site, undertaken at the correct time of year and in rotation to create areas at different stages	As required

Objective 6: Restore and create high quality habitats

ID	Action	Delivery Date
6.3	Expand priority habitats as part of new construction based on the updated Scottish Biodiversity List habitats	
6.3.1	As part of the scheme development, ensure adjacent priority habitats, and habitats in sub-optimal condition that could become priority habitats, are identified	As required
6.3.2	Identify potential interventions to improve appropriate interconnectivity for any adjacent priority habitats and make them more ecologically functional as units	As required
6.4	Encourage the exploration of innovative methods for habitat restoration	
6.4.1	Explore innovative and best-practice techniques for habitat restoration, such as inoculation of new woodland areas with ancient woodland soil cores	Sept 2029
6.4.2	Investigate opportunities for novel restoration approaches with research groups / practitioners	Sept 2029
6.4.3	Monitor and report accurately on delivery of any innovative methods used to identify and disseminate information on successful and cost-effective approaches	As required
6.5	Use the Trunk Road inventory to record potential high-value areas / conservation opportunities for restoration priorities	
6.5.1	Interrogate available datasets to identify locations associated with the Trunk Road Network which are or have the potential to be high-value areas. This includes locations adjacent to the estate	Mar 2028
6.5.2	Incorporate potential high-value areas such as Scottish national or local priority habitats, or habitats that support / benefit national or local priority species	Mar 2028

Objective 6: Restore and create high quality habitats

ID	Action	Delivery Date
6.6	Protect ecosystems against pollution by adopting innovative solutions and improved monitoring	
6.6.1	Ensure the Trunk Road maintenance contract requires the adoption of appropriate machinery and practices that are non-polluting.	As required
6.6.2	Road carriageway improvements to include replacing existing carriageway surfacing with low-noise surfacing to enhance habitats	As required

Actions needed to achieve Objective 7: Promote public and stakeholder engagement and partnership working

ID	Action	Delivery Date
7.1	Raise public awareness of the importance of biodiversity and how Transport Scotland and especially the trunk road estate supports enhanced biodiversity	
7.1.1	Publish the Strategy in full and as a non-technical summary in an easily located part of the Transport Scotland website	September 2026
7.1.2	Engage with stakeholders and the wider public and explain how the Transport Scotland Biodiversity Strategy links in with the national strategy and policies	Feb 2027
7.1.3	Seek opportunities for making publicly available relevant information regarding the ecological resources, habitats, and ecosystems supported by the Trunk Road Network to increase biodiversity awareness, enable collaboration, enhance transparency and facilitate tracking progress on delivering the national targets	Ongoing
7.1.4	Establish a Biodiversity Forum for Transport Scotland, our agents and supply chain, and representatives of other transport modes to report on biodiversity outcomes, ensure a consistent approach, and share good practice across the Trunk Road Network units and DBFO schemes	Apr 2027
7.2	Promote partnership working with statutory bodies, landowners and other stakeholders	
7.2.1	Identify potential external stakeholders and relevant groups / teams within Transport Scotland	Apr 2027
7.2.2	Establish communication pathways / channels	May 2027
7.2.3	Investigate opportunities to engage in wider, national programmes such as 30 x 30, Nature30, and Nature Networks	Sept 2027

Actions needed to achieve Objective 7: Promote public and stakeholder engagement and partnership working

ID	Action	Delivery Date
7.2.4	Identify specific shared aims / projects / goals	Dec 2027
7.5	Improve active travel opportunities	
7.5.1	Identify opportunities for blue-green infrastructure benefits and landscape connectivity enhancements along existing and proposed active travel routes	Sept 2027
7.5.2	For any new wildlife crossings, or other landscape connectivity improvements, also consider accessibility improvements to active travel routes and vice versa	As required
7.5.3	Ensure biodiversity consideration is a key feature of Active Travel infrastructure planning	As required
7.5.4	Consult with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and the Scottish Environment Link umbrella group in relation to any significant proposals	Dec 2026



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