

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

DEER MANAGEMENT STATEMENT 2019 – 2024 Working Plan

PREFACE

This document sets out a number of Actions that should be undertaken by Scottish Borders Council in relation to deer management planning. The actions are prioritized as appropriate, and it is anticipated that this document will be updated on an annual basis.

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CURRENT DEER MANAGEMENT PLANNING AT SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

The following Action points have been developed in Appendix 1: Background Information & Analysis. All actions are prioritized as follows:

- Priority 1 Action **MUST** be undertaken
- Priority 2 Action **SHOULD** be undertaken, but rationalized where this is not done
- Priority 3 Action **COULD** be undertaken if resources allow and circumstances permit.

1. Area & Boundaries

Action Points

- 1.1 SBC staff will, on an ongoing basis, make an assessment of any additional areas where deer control may become relevant within a rolling five year period. **PRIORITY 1**
- 1.2 SBC staff to develop a process for determining whether deer management is applicable at a given site if approached by a third party to consider this. **PRIORITY 1**

2. Membership

Action Points

- 2.1 SBC to consider whether it is appropriate to join Borders DMG. **PRIORITY 2**

3. Meetings

Action Points

- 3.1 Produce short annual report on deer management on SBC owned land, if deer management has taken place. **PRIORITY 1**

5. Deer Management Plan

Action Points

- 5.1 Endorse Deer Management Statement at 2019 SBC committee meeting as appropriate, following consultation on the draft plan. **PRIORITY 1**

6. Code of Practice on Deer Management

Action Points

- 6.1 Ensure adherence to code at all times, both by the Council, and by individual stalking personnel as appropriate **PRIORITY 1**
- 6.2 At any subsequent meetings, SBC staff, elected members and stalking personnel will have the opportunity to raise any issues relating to deer welfare or other problems that they are aware of within the SBC area. All such issues to be

recorded. **PRIORITY 1**

9. Data & Evidence gathering- Deer Counts

Action Points

9.1 SBC to monitor deer numbers on any areas which are deemed worthy of assessment, prior to any actions being taken. This may involve use of Borders DMG or other personnel, depending on circumstances. **PRIORITY 1**

10. Data & Evidence Gathering- Culls

Action Points

10.1 All cull information to be collated and presented in April annually. **NO PRIORITY AT PRESENT**

11. Data & Evidence Gathering- Habitat Monitoring

Action Points

No particular actions.

12. Competence

Action Point

12.1 SBC will ensure that DSC Level 2 plus necessary experience and local knowledge are required for any personnel shooting deer on Scottish Borders Council property. **PRIORITY 2**

13. Training

Action Points

13.1 SBC to promote and facilitate the uptake of appropriate deer management qualifications and skills where this is deemed necessary **PRIORITY 3 AT PRESENT**

13.2 Be aware of the ongoing development of Best Practice Guidance and any new techniques or standards that arise from that **PRIORITY 2**

13.3 Review training needs on an annual basis. **PRIORITY 3 AT PRESENT**

15. Communications

Action Point

15.1 Implement the communications strategy as agreed, and ensure a mechanism is in place for dealing with business and issues between meetings **PRIORITY 1**

PUBLIC INTEREST ACTIONS WITHIN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL AREA

PI 1. Develop mechanisms to manage deer

Action points

PI 1.1 Endorse and publish the new SBC Deer Management Statement in 2019
PRIORITY 1

PI 1.2 Assign roles and lines of communication between SBC members and elected members as required. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 1.3 Review the Working Plan on an annual basis and minute progress and changes. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 2. Delivering designated features into favourable condition

Action point

PI 2.1 Be aware of ongoing SNH monitoring of sites and whether pressure from deer becomes noted in any of those involving SBC. **PRIORITY 2**

PI 3. Manage deer to retain existing native woodland cover and improve woodland condition in the medium to long term.

Action point

PI 3.1. It is not apparent that deer numbers are having any significant impact on native woods within the area, and this is not a priority in the context of this plan. **PRIORITY 3**

PI 3.2 SBC staff may wish to ascertain the current situation in their own woods if they have resources to do so. **PRIORITY 3**

PI 4. Demonstrate DMG contribution to woodland expansion target

Action points

PI 4.1 A record will be kept of all woodland creation activity within the area.
PRIORITY 3

PI 4.2 SBC staff will be encouraged to share future plans for woodland creation with neighbours and others within the area so that they can plan around this if necessary. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 5. Monitor and manage deer impacts in the wider countryside

Action point

No action points for this element.

PI 6. Improve Scotland's ability to store carbonAction points

PI 6.1 Put in place a habitat monitoring scheme to determine the current status of blanket bogs within the SBC- owned area, and take action necessary to lower impacts on these as required. Determine the relevance of deer to these sites.

PRIORITY 3

PI 6.2 Discourage any burning that might impact on peatland sites **PRIORITY 2**

PI 7. Reduce or mitigate the risk of invasive, non-native deer speciesAction points

PI 7.1 PI 7.2 SBC staff to report any sightings of suspected muntjac deer or non native deer species more generally to SNH. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 8. Protection of historic and cultural featuresAction points

PI 8.1 SBC to maintain communication with the local community and look to address any issues that are identified with regards to sites of cultural interest and herbivore grazing **PRIORITY 3**

PI 8.2 As required by Forestry Commission, all potential woodland creation projects, including natural regeneration schemes, will be assessed by the applicants for any negative impacts on cultural or archaeological sites. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 9. Delivering higher standards of competence in deer managementAction points

PI 9.1 SBC will only engage with deer management personnel who have the necessary levels of experience and qualifications, and who are familiar with the area. **PRIORITY 1**

PI 10. Contribute to public health and well-beingAction points

PI 10.1 Liaise with local Community Councils regarding DVCs. Information on road accidents should be sent to www.deercollisions.co.uk. SBC will seek to improve deer management with landowners should any hotspots for deer-vehicle collisions on public roads become apparent or instigate mitigation measures such as cutting roadside vegetation if this is more practicable. **PRIORITY 2**

PI 10.2 SBC to highlight the risks of ticks and Lyme's Disease to their staff and the public more generally through all appropriate channels. **PRIORITY 2**

PI 10.3 SBC to promote a positive and welcoming message to all those visiting the area throughout the year. **PRIORITY 2**

*PI 10.4 SBC to consider whether greater attention needs to be paid to deer larders within the area, to ensure greater inspection and their registration as food businesses, where appropriate. **PRIORITY 2***

PI 11. Maximize Economic benefits associated with deer

Action points

*PI 11.1 Increase awareness of the value of deer in and around areas of population, to emphasise the point that deer in these areas provide positive outcomes as well as some negative ones, but only if the population is within manageable limits. **PRIORITY 3***

Larder/ infra- structure sharing

Action point

No action points as such.

PI 12. Minimize the economic costs of deer management

Action points

No actions points as such.

PI 13. Ensure effective communication in deer management issues

Action Point

*PI 13.1 Publish the Deer Statement on a dedicated website space in spring 2019. **PRIORITY 1***

*PI13.2 Ensure that community councils, elected members and other relevant interests are aware of the existence of the deer plan/ position statement, and that they have the opportunity to contribute to it going forwards if they wish to do this. **PRIORITY 1***

PI 14. Ensure deer welfare at individual and population level

Action point

*PI14.1 Maintain liaison with Police Scotland should unlawful or inappropriate use of firearms or dogs become evident within the area. **PRIORITY 2***