



Biodiversity Report 2018–20

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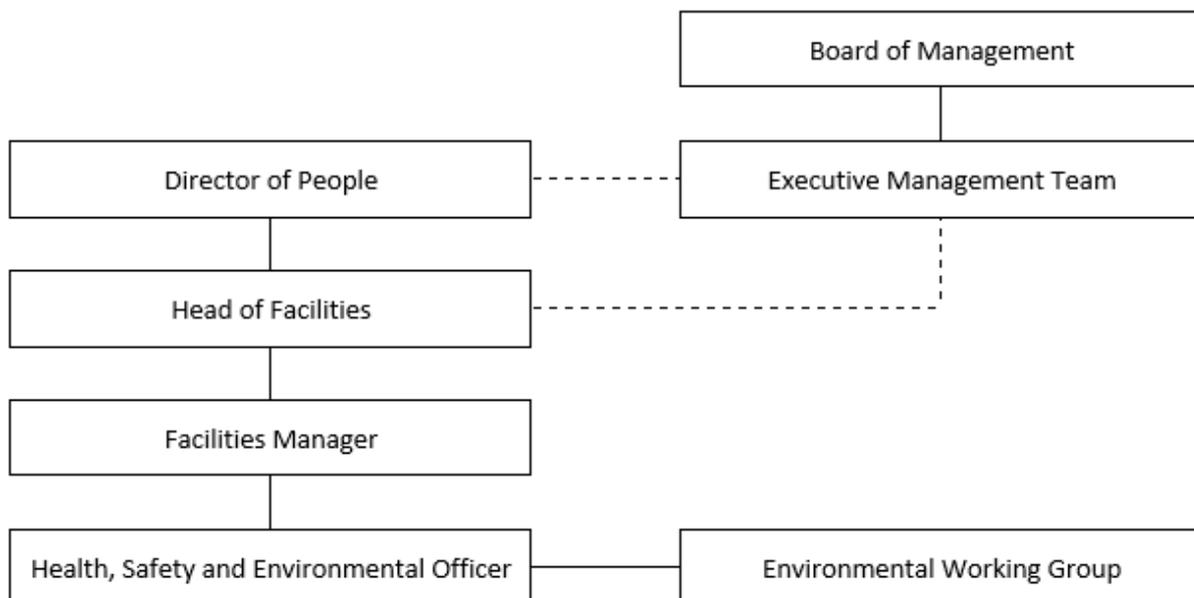
1. Background and context

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is Scotland's national body responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees, and also operates across the UK and internationally.

The Director of People has overall responsibility for environmental management within SQA. The Head of Facilities reports to the Executive Management Team and Board of Management on environmental matters. Reporting to the Head of Facilities, the Facilities Manager ensures that the organisation works towards its corporate environmental objectives.

The Health, Safety and Environmental Officer is the focal point for environmental issues and facilitates the Environmental Working Group, which contributes to environmental projects and initiatives.

These projects and initiatives are then reported to the Scottish Government as part of our annual Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting.



2. Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature

The Lowden site in Shawfair Business Park has a variety of hedging, shrubs and trees. These are located within the car park area and surrounding the office location.

There is also a dedicated wildlife area within the park. This includes a small loch, which is managed and maintained by the park managing agent.

Lowden window recesses are home to a colony of house martins each spring and summer. In order to protect them, communications are issued, and warnings displayed on all window nest sites to ensure the colony is not disturbed.

The Newtongrange storage facility is located within a small industrial estate which has a small wildlife garden maintained by the site management.

Through our Responsible Business team, SQA staff have volunteered on various projects where they have worked on outside green space projects.

These include:

- Beach cleaning — 15 colleagues volunteered with the Marine Conservation Society at Musselburgh
- Gardening — a total of 36 volunteers have spent time at Gartnavel Royal Hospital, Midlothian Hospital Garden and The Hidden Gardens Glasgow.
- Litter picking
- Canal cleans
- Tree planting — 15 colleagues took part in a tree planting event organised with Carbon Footprint. Along with a group of Royal High School pupils, over 200 trees were planted in the school's grounds.

3. Mainstreaming biodiversity

During the procurement contract tendering process, a percentage of the awarding score is given to sustainable practices.

4. Nature-based solutions and climate change

Our opportunities to exert influence in this area are very limited due to the nature of our operations and properties. We currently have no opportunities to use such solutions.

5. Public engagement and workforce development

Several members of our Environmental Working Group have been on Green Champions training with Resource Efficient Scotland. Members of the group are encouraged to attend.

We regularly attend and contribute to Sustainable Scotland Network conferences, seminars and training events, building a network of contacts across the public sector to share knowledge and good practice.

Regular informative communications are shared and readily available on our organisation's intranet page, including seasonal, eco-friendly tips on gardening and composting, and advice on how to attract and protect native wildlife.

RSPB have visited our sites on several occasions. Their pop-up information stall has provided staff with information on encouraging a diverse range of wildlife in gardens and local areas.

6. Research and monitoring

Research is carried out to inform our guidance campaigns which seek to improve our colleagues' understanding of nature and biodiversity. For example, when promoting National Bee Day, we gathered and communicated information on local bee species, their nesting habits and preferred diet, so that we can show how to best help their populations flourish.

7. Biodiversity highlights and challenges

SQA recognises its responsibilities under the relevant Acts and its biodiversity duty, and will continue to do what it can within its area of responsibility.

The nature of our activities and locations present some constraints on making substantial contributions but we continue to seek out opportunities.