

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 5 December 2017

Edinburgh Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-2017

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards All	
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requires the publication of a report, every three years, on how public bodies are meeting this duty. The next report is due on 1 January 2018.

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the City of Edinburgh Council Biodiversity Duty Report for the period January 2015 to December 2017. The report details the activities across the Council to support and conserve biodiversity and demonstrates the great variety and range of the work being carried out, and is included in Appendix 1.

The work reported on in Appendix 1 is guided by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, a city wide partnership initiative which supports the aims of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The action plan is delivered by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership, chaired and led by the Council.

Edinburgh Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:
 - 1.1.1 approves the Edinburgh Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-17 for submission to Scottish Government and publication on the Council's website; and
 - 1.1.2 notes the contributions and achievements made across the Council to meet Edinburgh's biodiversity duty.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on all public bodies, including the City of Edinburgh Council, to further the conservation of biodiversity in the course of carrying out their responsibilities.
- 2.2 In complying with this Biodiversity Duty, public bodies must have regard to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The 2004 document 'Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands' and the 2013 supplement '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity', together comprise the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy in turn supports efforts to meet the global Aichi targets for biodiversity.
- 2.3 The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 places a further obligation on public bodies to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty. This second report has to be made available by 1 January 2018. The first report covering 2012 to 2014 was approved by this Committee in November 2014 and submitted to Scottish Government in December 2014.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Biodiversity is the variety of all life and includes wildlife, habitats and other forms of nature.
- 3.2 On a global scale, human activity is causing biodiversity to be lost at a greatly accelerated rate with irreversible losses that can damage the vital ecosystem services on which human life depends. International targets to halt biodiversity loss are reflected in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- 3.3 The Biodiversity Duty aims to do more than safeguard ecosystem services by improving habitats and species. It is also about connecting people and their environment, contributing to health and wellbeing and inspiring communities.

- 3.4 Appendix 1 of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-17 contains a summary of work carried out by Council services to comply with the biodiversity duty. This includes details of projects on the ground, the inclusion of biodiversity in policies and plans and examples of partnership working.
- 3.5 The report demonstrates the breadth of activities delivered by the Council which help to protect and increase Edinburgh's biodiversity. Particular strengths in Edinburgh are the high level of community involvement in greenspace projects and the extent of partnership working both within and outwith the Council.
- 3.6 The work of the Council and the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership links clearly with the emerging City Vision, which has identified Edinburgh as a city of great natural beauty, with excellent green spaces and wild areas and a proposed goal to create the "greenest city in the world, with our seven hills connected by roof-top meadows, community gardens and tree-lined streets".
- 3.6 Particular initiatives which are highlights of the last three years are:
- production of a fourth Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2016 which has over 250 actions to be delivered by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership;
 - development of the Edinburgh Living Landscapes initiative; and
 - multiple examples of local community greenspace projects.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The status of biodiversity and activity on biodiversity conservation in Edinburgh is monitored through:
- The submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report to Scottish Government by 1 January 2018;
 - Annual progress report on the delivery of the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The production of the Biodiversity Duty Report is met within existing budgets.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There is a risk the Council could fail in its statutory duty for biodiversity. The submission of the attached report to Scottish Government, supporting the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018 and the expansion of the biodiversity duty actions will help ensure the Council complies with the duty.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no predicted infringements of rights or negative impacts on equalities.
- 7.2 The conservation of biodiversity directly enhances the rights to life and health by protecting the essential ecosystem services our natural environment provides. There is also the potential to enhance other associated rights such as education and standard of living through local biodiversity projects.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered, and the outcomes summarised below. Relevant Council sustainable development policies have been taken into account and noted at Background reading (see below).
- 8.2 Compliance with the statutory biodiversity duty will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh by incorporating biodiversity into many of the Council's existing activities and actions, thus helping to create a resilient natural environment, reduce carbon emissions, improve social justice, economic wellbeing and good environmental stewardship.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 No external consultation or engagement is required in the preparation of this report on internal activity. All Heads of Service were invited to provide information for their service area in preparation of this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Scotland's Biodiversity: It's In Your Hands – A Strategy for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Scotland 2004
- 10.2 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity – A Strategy for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Scotland 2013
- 10.3 Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018
- 10.4 Edinburgh Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report 2012-2014
- 10.5 Scottish Government guidance and template for biodiversity duty reporting.

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 City of Edinburgh Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-2017

City of Edinburgh Council Biodiversity Duty report 2015-2017

Section 1: Introductory information

Governance, Leadership and Management

The City of Edinburgh Council is a local authority with responsibility for an area including the city of Edinburgh, surrounding countryside and the Pentland Hills Regional Park. The Council is made up of 63 elected councillors representing 17 wards. The Council is currently led by a coalition of the SNP Group and the Labour Group. The Council operates through a system of committees and sub-committees with officers reporting to committees on relevant matters.

All committee reports include a section on Sustainable Impacts. This requires all officers to consider the environmental impact of the contents of their report through the use of a sustainability worksheet. Biodiversity is a consideration under the climate change adaptation and environmental good stewardship sections of this worksheet.

The Council is the lead body for the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership. The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership was one of the first in Scotland and has been in place for 18 years. The Council employs a Biodiversity Officer to facilitate the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP). Councillors oversee the production and delivery of the Edinburgh LBAP through the committee reporting process.

The Council is also a signatory to the Central Scotland Green Network Declaration, the Climate Change Declaration, the Scotland Landscape Charter and Scotland's Geodiversity Charter, which was recently re-signed.

Section 2: Mainstreaming

The conservation of biodiversity is embedded in the delivery of Council services such as Planning and Building Standards and Parks and Greenspace. This ensures that land use planning and the management of Council-owned land deliver protection and enhancements for biodiversity. The role of the natural environment and biodiversity is reflected in the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Framework.

The Planning and Building Standards policy framework supports the protection and enhancement of designated nature conservation sites, protected species and biodiversity in the wider landscape. The statutory Strategic Development Plan, Local Development Plan and non-statutory planning guidelines reflect the overarching aims of the Central Scotland Green Network of delivering connected green corridors, and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

The Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative seeks to create resilient green networks on the Council Parks and Greenspace estate, delivering a healthy environment and increased accessibility for people. The inclusion of biodiversity in assessments such as Parks Quality Standards and Green Flag Award for parks and greenspace is also integral to the management of Council land.

The Council's best sites for nature are identified as Natural Heritage Parks and managed by a dedicated Natural Heritage Service team. Six of these sites are designated as Local Nature Reserves. Programmes such as Eco-schools and the outdoor play project help deliver biodiversity gains within schools and education.

A list of plans, policies and strategies which reflect biodiversity objectives are given below:

[Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

Open Space 2021

Edinburgh Adapts: Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2016-2020

Resilient Edinburgh Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2014-2020

[Allotments Strategy](#)

SESplan Strategic Development Plan

Edinburgh Local Development Plan

[Edinburgh Design Guidance](#)

[Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy](#)

[Trees in the City: Trees and Woodland Action Plan](#)

[Sustainable Edinburgh 2020](#)

[Sustainable Timber Policy](#)

[Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)

Sustainable City Food Plan

Section 3: Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation

The Council has five main directorates:

- Chief Executive
- Place
- Resources
- Communities and Families
- Health and Social Care

Relevant activities within each directorates are detailed below.

Chief Executive Directorate

Strategy and Insight

The Strategy and Insight Team leads on carbon, climate change and sustainability work within the Council. The team co-ordinate various policies, action plans and projects which have clear links to biodiversity conservation.

Sustainable Edinburgh

Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 is the Council's Framework for the sustainable development of the city until 2020. One of its objectives for 2020 is to ensure that "Edinburgh will have preserved and enhanced its biodiversity, landscape and coastal environments".

The Climate Change Adaptation Framework mentioned above was approved in 2014. An Action Plan, Edinburgh Adapts, was approved in 2016 to take forward the high-level actions in the Framework. The Edinburgh Adapts Action Plan's section on Natural Environment and Greenspace aims to protect and enhance Edinburgh's biodiversity and green spaces, providing nature-based solutions to climate-related problems. It was developed in close collaboration with the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan.

A combined sustainability and equalities e-tool under development specifically addresses biodiversity in the context of adapting to a changing climate.

All the above help the Council to comply with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.

The Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership is co-ordinated from this service. The team also lead on related initiatives such as Edible Edinburgh. Edible Edinburgh is a cross-sector

partnership advocating the transformation of our food systems to promote sustainable development. One of six key aims of the Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Strategy focuses on land use: *'to grow, produce and distribute food more locally while conserving and protecting our natural resources and environment'*. A range of food growing and community projects are ongoing including the [Gracemount Grow Stronger](#) and [Granton Walled Garden](#) projects.

Place Directorate

Place Development Service

Planning and Transport

This is a key service which leads the delivery of the EBAP. It also delivers biodiversity conservation through land management policies, protection and designation of local sites.

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP) is the main delivery mechanism for biodiversity conservation across the city. The action plan is prepared by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership, supported and chaired by the Council. The fourth EBAP was produced in 2016 and includes over 250 actions to be delivered from 2016-2018. These are a range of positive actions for biodiversity across the City. The Council's Place Development has a lead role in the co-ordination of delivery and monitoring of the actions by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership, in collaboration with other departments.

SES Plan and the Local Development Plan

The Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan (LDP) include a range of planning policies to deliver biodiversity protection and enhancements. Locally important sites are protected through the Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) system within the LDP, together with Local Nature Reserves (LNR). LDP policies also recognise the value and potential of biodiversity outside designated sites. The Plans aims to enhance, safeguard and avoid fragmentation of the City's green network.

Edinburgh Design Guidance

In conjunction with the LDP, the Edinburgh Design Guidance sets out the Council's expectation for the design of new development in Edinburgh. This outlines expectations for landscape proposals and how biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through development.

Open Space 2021

The new strategy takes a co-ordinated approach to protecting and developing the city's network of open space, helping to deliver Edinburgh's contribution to the development of the Central Scotland Green Network. The Strategy is aligned with the Local Development Plan and co-ordinates with related strategies, including those for parks and gardens, allotments, play, sports facilities, active travel, climate change adaptation and biodiversity.

Key proposals in the draft included:

Continuing to manage the city's parks to a good standard and preparing management plans and funding bids to improve Leith Links and Calton Hill;

Creating a network of good quality green corridors, large and local parks as the city grows, with better design advice for developers;

Extending access to play areas through the Play Area Action Plan; requiring new developments to meet 'play value' standards and promoting informal play within street and open space design;

Improving the value of existing greenspaces for people and wildlife, by expanding the Edinburgh Living Landscape project;

Empowering communities to establish community gardens, orchards and woodlands in under-utilised spaces, in particular for local food growing, with growing space and allotments also promoted in new developments; and

Extending annual quality checks and the Friends Group network to include cemeteries in recognition of their value to local history and potential for informal recreation. The Council will work with Edinburgh World Heritage to improve five burial grounds in the World Heritage Site.

In-house Training

Training and advice are provided by Citywide Transport and Planning to Council departments on a range of biodiversity topics. For example, training sessions on biodiversity have been offered to Planning, Building Standards and Transport staff. In addition an updated Advice Note relating to swifts in new developments was produced for distribution to developers.

External Partnerships

Citywide Transport and Planning officers represent the Council on external partnerships and groups which have a biodiversity remit, such as the Lothian and Fife Green Network Partnership, Central Scotland Green Network and Forth Estuary Forum.

Housing – Development and Regeneration

Community Gardens Pilot

Project development is underway for four community gardens, primarily for CEC tenants, across the four Council Locality areas, as a pilot to establish best practice before potentially rolling out a wider programme across the city. These gardens will be managed and maintained by tenants. Work is currently underway to identify pilot sites with the intention to begin work on the ground in 2018.

Community Gardens in Affordable Housing Developments

Development and Regeneration is proposing three new community gardens as part of new affordable housing developments at Greendykes, Crewe Road Gardens and Craigmillar Town Centre. The essential infrastructure for growing will be provided as part of each housing development and it is anticipated that residents and/or neighbours will build upon this and manage and maintain the community gardens to suit their needs, once they have moved into their new homes.

Place Management Service

Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries

This is a key service in the delivery of biodiversity conservation through greenspace management and habitat creation projects.

Living Landscape

The Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL) initiative is led by Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries in partnership with Scottish Wildlife Trust, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Green Surge and Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust. It advocates the development of an ecosystem approach to the management of the Council's open space estate in order to realise the benefits to both biodiversity and public amenity. It aims to create resilient green networks to deliver a healthy, accessible and attractive environment.

As part of Phase 3 of the ELL initiative in 2017, Parks, Greenspace & Cemeteries maintained 72 annual/perennial meadows across the four Council Localities citywide. Naturalised grassland now accounts for approximately 10% of the Council's amenity grass estate. An emphasis in 2017 was to not increase the area of naturalised grassland but to ensure that these areas were better maintained and further developed. This has been achieved by bulb planting in naturalised grass areas and incorporating ELL into our Landscape Quality Standards (LQS) assessments. In 2017 Trinity Primary School became the latest school to get involved with the ELL programme, bringing the total amount of schools involved to seven.

Allowing grassland habitats to develop in a more natural manner in urban settings by reducing grass cutting or sowing flowering plants offers these benefits:

- biodiversity will increase as birds, mammals and insects are attracted to more natural, wilder areas;
- costs of managing intensively maintained areas of grassland can be reduced;
- planting flowering species will add colour to the cityscape throughout the seasons; and
- less regular cutting slows rainwater run-off and helps lock-up carbon in soils, reducing CO2 release

Natural Heritage Service – site management and community involvement

The Natural Heritage Service manages the Council's natural heritage parks, including six Local Nature Reserves and the Pentland Hills Regional Park. These sites represent the most important natural areas owned by the Council, which lie at the core of Edinburgh's green network. The service runs volunteer activities including practical conservation tasks and wildlife surveys. There is a key programme of events and monitoring which is significant in terms of community engagement in biodiversity conservation. In one year in the Pentland Hills Regional Park alone, 49 volunteers helped with 26 days of biodiversity surveys.

Pentland Hills Woodland Expansion

The Natural Heritage Service has helped to secure funding for a landscape-scale habitat creation project in the Pentland Hills Regional Park. Three sites, including Bonaly Country Park, have been planted with a total of 62 hectares of new woodland, funded by Forestry Commission Scotland. This new woodland connects and expands existing areas of woodland and helps to deliver the vision of the Central Scotland Green Network and meet woodland expansion targets in the Scottish Forestry Strategy.

Friends of Parks

Edinburgh has a network of 54 Friends of Parks groups, supported by Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries staff. These groups are made up of volunteers who work closely with the Council and play a key role in enhancing and protecting local parks, woodlands and green spaces. The Friends groups meet 3-4 times per year at a regular Friends Forum. An AGM, hosted by CEC is held, usually in November where various issues and current practices across the UK are discussed and information sharing takes place between groups. Given the current political and financial climate Friends groups are a crucial link with an engaged group of citizens in the city who will undoubtedly play an ever-increasing role in their respective parks and communities going forward.

Allotments

Implementation of the Allotments Strategy by Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries staff has resulted in the creation of new allotment sites on Council land across the city. Some of these were supported by funding through the Neighbourhood Environment Programme. Gardens and allotments offer a valuable habitat, particularly in urban areas.

Urban Pollinators

The Council has been part of the UK Urban Pollinators initiative in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. Wildflower meadows were created in Edinburgh parks and school grounds as part of this scientific collaboration between universities, city councils and wildlife trusts, researching insect pollinators in urban habitats in the UK. The meadows created as part of this project continue to be managed for biodiversity now that the project is complete. Other meadow areas have also been created on Council land.

Invasive Non-Native Species on Council land

Invasive non-native species (INNS), that are a threat to natural habitats and species, are controlled on Council land. These include giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Localities

Many community parks and greenspace projects which support biodiversity conservation are delivered across the four Localities, supported by local parks staff. Some examples are:

- Community gardens in the North East Locality, initiated by demand from local residents for food growing
- Tree planting in Diaches Brae
- Bulb planting in naturalised grass areas across localities
- Hailes Quarry Park wetland creation with interpretation
- Annual and perennial meadows across all localities as part of Edinburgh Living Landscape
- Tree planting throughout South West Locality through area board funding
- Street tree planting funded by NEPs
- Creation of a South West community gardening network hub
- Community clean ups in new woodlands and along watercourses
- First stage of Saughton Park restoration project
- Balgreen Triangle improvements carried out by Water of Leith Conservation Trust on Council-owned land.

Resources Directorate

Corporate Procurement Service

The Council has had a comprehensive Sustainable Procurement Policy in place since 2012. The sustainable procurement policy and objectives are addressed within every procurement plan, which is at the start of each procurement process. Thus, the policies build awareness and are discussed with stakeholders. There is also a mandatory sustainability risk assessment of procurement projects as part of the individual procurement plan. This is a practical tool to ensure compliance with climate change duties (attached).

The Sustainable Procurement Policy also informs the Council's terms and conditions of contract. For example in schedule 8 section 1.1g a duty is placed on service providers to assist the Council on climate change.

The Commercial and Procurement team also use sustainability as selection and award criteria and seek to constantly evaluate processes that minimise the impact of the procurement for example in construction off-site fabrication, use of electric vehicles and use of local suppliers to reduce transport emissions are encouraged and scored accordingly.

The Policy has 4 main Outcomes

Outcome 1: the social and economic benefits from our procurement are maximised

Outcome 2: the environmental impacts are minimised and the environmental benefits maximised from our procurement

Outcome 3: Edinburgh has a more sustainable supply chain

Outcome 4: sustainable procurement is embedded within the Council

To give an example, the Council procures timber and timber-based goods from verifiable sustainable sources that evidence clear chains of custody in line with the Council's [Purchasing Policy for Sustainable Timber and Timber Products](#), to help protect the natural environment and reduce biodiversity impacts.

Communities and Families directorate

Eco-schools and Outdoor learning

Environmental education in schools is delivered by this service, helping to support the Curriculum for Excellence. Additional biodiversity-related activities include the development of outdoor play projects within school grounds and delivery of the Eco-schools programme.

The Eco-schools programme is supported by the Outdoor Learning team. 84% of all nurseries, primary and secondary schools in Edinburgh have been accredited with an Eco-schools award. 93% of all schools are registered for the programme.

The Council is also providing support to external partners engaging with schools as part of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy project to engage 100 schools across Scotland in learning in their local greenspace.

Many schools have carried out biodiversity improvements within their grounds and are engaged in outdoor learning. Examples of work in schools:

Cramond Primary School have created a natural outdoor play space within their grounds which offer enhanced play opportunities as well as biodiversity benefits.

Currie High School has won awards for eco-work. There are wind turbines on campus, managed woodland and they are part of the Edible Edinburgh Food for Life programme. Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, visited the school in January 2017 to find out more about their recent work.

Section 4: Partnership working and biodiversity communications

Partnership working

As stated above, the Council is lead partner for the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership. The Partnership comprises approximately 30 organisations and bodies, including government agencies, conservation bodies, environmental trusts and local volunteer conservation groups. The group is responsible for the production and delivery of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan. The current Plan runs from 2016 to 2018 and includes over 250 actions for priority habitats, species and projects.

More information on the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership's work can be found in the latest [progress report](#).

The Council provides third party funding to the Water of Leith Conservation Trust and Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust. Both organisations deliver a programme of work with outcomes for community engagement and biodiversity. The Council is also a member of the Forth Estuary Forum. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with The Wildlife Information Centre to access wildlife data to support decision making.

Council officers also work in partnership within:

- Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership
- Edinburgh Adapts Steering Group
- Edinburgh Living Landscape Initiative
- Lothian and Fife Green Network Partnership
- SEPA's Area Action Group for River Basin Management Planning
- Lothian and Borders GeoConservation Group

Communication and engagement

Awareness-raising, communication and engagement are a key element of biodiversity work within Edinburgh. The Council has undertaken a range of work to promote biodiversity, including:

- Co-ordination and promotion of an annual Edinburgh Biodiversity Week;
- Publication of web-based information and use of social media;
- Use of e-newsletters to promote projects and events;
- Co-ordination of 'Friends of Parks' programme and support for community projects within parks;
- A council-run website for Edinburgh's parks, EdinburghOutdoors.org.uk, contains a wildlife by month calendar for Edinburgh;

- New guidance for Biodiversity in Parks and Greenspace has been updated;
- A programme run by the Natural Heritage Service of annual events, conservation tasks and wildlife surveys;
- Production of guidance information related to rare and protected species, for internal and external use by staff, developers and architects;
- Work with members of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership on awareness activities and events, such as supporting the RSPB working with schools and communities on annual Bioblitz events and engaging volunteers with wildlife surveys.

Training and learning

Training and learning opportunities have incorporated biodiversity, including:

- Internal training sessions on landscape and biodiversity for Planning, Building Standards and Roads and Transport staff;
- Work-related learning and knowledge sharing provided by Biodiversity Officers working with colleagues across services, e.g. Parks staff.
- Biodiversity Officers and other staff attending biodiversity conferences, workshops and events e.g. Scottish Biodiversity Strategy events, Scottish Green Infrastructure Forum and SNH Sharing Good Practice events.

Section 5: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

Biodiversity highlights

The report above demonstrates the breadth of activities delivered by the Council which help to protect and increase Edinburgh's biodiversity. Particular strengths in Edinburgh are the high level of community involvement in greenspace projects, and the extent of partnership working both within and out with the Council. Specific initiatives that are highlights of biodiversity delivery from the last three years are:

- Production of the fourth Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan in 2016, which contains over 250 actions being delivered by the Council and Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership over a 3 year period;
- Closely aligning biodiversity conservation and climate change work by incorporating the natural environment within the new Edinburgh Adapts: Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2016-2020;
- Securing funding for landscape-scale woodland creation in Pentland Hills Regional Park;
- Development of Edinburgh Living Landscapes initiative; and
- Multiple examples of local community greenspace projects.

Challenges

The main challenges in the next three years will be the continued pressure on resources across all services and any changes to the regulatory framework currently in place for the natural environment, arising from Brexit.

Section 6: Monitoring

The status of biodiversity, and activity on biodiversity conservation, in Edinburgh is monitored through:

- Annual progress report on delivery of the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan;
- The Environmental Quality Indicators report;
- Annual report on Nature Conservation produced by the Parks and Greenspace Natural Heritage Service; and
- A programme of species monitoring and survey work is carried out by Council staff, volunteers and partners to provide the baseline data for indicators. This includes regular

surveying such as butterfly and bumblebee transects, as part of national monitoring programmes, and surveys to support the production of species atlases, as well as site-based monitoring. These data are managed by The Wildlife Information Centre and from there passed to the NBN Gateway.

Section 7: Contribution to national targets

Targets/key steps from Chapter 1 (Healthy ecosystems) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(1.1) Encourage and support ecosystem restoration and management, especially in catchments that have experienced the greatest degradation	Yes	Through the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan
(1.2) Use assessments of ecosystem health at a catchment level to determine what needs to be done	Yes	As appropriate through Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan projects arising.
(1.3) Government and public bodies, including SNH, SEPA and FCS, will work together towards a shared agenda for action to restore ecosystem health at a catchment-scale across Scotland	Yes	Through the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan and as project opportunities arise, e.g. as part of landscape scale woodland creation in Pentland Hills Regional Park
(1.4) Establish plans and decisions about land use based on an understanding of ecosystems. Take full account of land use impacts on the ecosystems services that underpin social, economic and environmental health	Yes	Through the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Development Plan and system for designating Local Nature Conservation Sites.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 3 (Biodiversity, health and quality of life) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(3.1) Provide opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy nature regularly, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups	Yes	Wide range of work such as supporting Friends of parks groups, food growing projects, outdoor learning for schools, community engagement with Local Nature Reserves, and projects such as Green Team working with disadvantaged and special needs young people on nature conservation practical projects.
(3.2) Support local authorities and communities to improve local environments and enhance biodiversity using green space and green networks, allowing nature to flourish and so enhancing the quality of life for people who live there	Yes	Supporting Friends of Parks and Parks and Greenspace colleagues to enhance their local parks. Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative delivering naturalisation of parks. Providing biodiversity guidance and audits for improvements to greenspaces.

(3.3) Build on good practice being developed by the National Health Service (NHS) and others to help encourage greenspace, green exercise and social prescribing initiatives that will improve health and wellbeing through connecting people with nature	Yes	Links through Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership and projects on NHS Lothian estate.
(3.4) Increase access to nature within and close to schools, and support teachers in developing the role of outdoor learning across the Curriculum for Excellence	Yes	Active eco-schools project in Edinburgh, supporting teachers through CPD. Integrating biodiversity into design of new school grounds e.g. Cramond PS. Supporting Edinburgh Outdoor Learning Network. Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership in school partnership working.
(3.5) Encourage public organisations and businesses to review their responsibilities and action for biodiversity, and recognise that increasing their positive contribution to nature and landscapes can help meet their corporate priorities and performance	Yes	Square Metre for Butterflies project to encourage businesses to make green roofs e.g. Glenmorangie.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 4 (Wildlife, habitats and protected places) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(4.1) Ensure that the management of protected places for nature also provides wider public benefits	Yes	The process of creation and management of Local Nature Conservation Sites in Edinburgh includes an analysis of wider public benefits such as access for education and recreation.
(4.3) Integrate protected areas policy with action for wider habitats to combat fragmentation and restore key habitats	Yes	Planning policy and EBAP 2016-2018 takes a habitat network approach to ensure fragmentation is minimised.
(4.5) Involve many more people than at present in this work and improve understanding of the poorly known elements of nature	Yes	Community engagement and encouraging wildlife recording is integrated across the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan. CEC Team Building Days held mainly outdoors with opportunities to learn from other organisations e.g. RSPB. Events held in Council offices to raise awareness of wildlife with colleagues.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 5 (Land and freshwater management) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(5.1) Promote an ecosystem approach to land management that fosters sustainable use of natural resources and puts biodiversity at the heart of land-use planning and decision-making	Yes	Local Development Plan, Local Nature Conservation Sites, Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan and the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative. Management of Local Nature Reserves. Parks

		Officers given training on integrating biodiversity into their parks and greenspaces through audits, advice and a handbook.
(5.2) Ensure that measures taken forward under the Common Agricultural Policy encourage land managers to develop and retain the diversity of wildlife habitats and landscape features	Yes	Natural Heritage Officers working with local landowners and farmers to improve heather moorland for wildlife in Pentland Hills Regional Park. New Muirburn Code distributed to colleagues.
(5.3) Support 'High Nature Value' farming and forestry		n/a
(5.4) Put in place the management necessary to bring Scotland's protected areas into favourable condition and improve the ecological status of water bodies	Yes	Through Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan support for SSSI and SPA protection, LDP Policies, land management on Council estate and through our contribution to the River Basic Management Planning process led by SEPA e.g. Natural Heritage Officers, and Parks and Greenspace staff controlling Himalayan Balsam along Braidburn and Water of Leith.
(5.5) Ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem objectives are fully integrated into flood risk management plans, and restore wetland habitats and woodlands to provide sustainable flood management	Yes	Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme had major element of utilising upland catchment at Threipmuir Reservoir for flood storage and ensure protected species were considered through design & construction.
(5.6) Restore and extend natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change	Yes	Incorporated in Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, Planning policy and Edinburgh Adapts. Climate change and potential invasive species and diseases accounted for in new planting plans e.g. species other than Ash adopting PlantSmart principles.
(5.7) Provide clear advice to land and water managers on best practice	Yes	Biodiversity in Parks and Greenspace guidance. Advising colleagues in Roads and Transport on managing verges for wildlife using good practice from elsewhere e.g. Cornwall.
Targets/key steps from Chapter 6 (Marine and coastal) of the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity"	Contribution to key step?	Justification
(6.4) Achieve good environmental status for Scottish seas	Yes	Marine Conservation Society organises beach cleans along Edinburgh shoreline. Supported project on vertipools. Natural Heritage Service manages beach litter at Cramond SSSI and removal of invasive species.