

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 27 February 2018

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Progress Report for 2017

Item number	8.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	43, 44 and 45

Executive Summary

The [Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018](#) (EBAP) is a city-wide initiative delivered by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership (EBP).

This report updates Committee on EBAP progress and highlights the key activities and outcomes delivered by the partnership in 2017.

Appendix 1 includes a full progress report and gives further information on the current plan. It also shows how the work of the EBP links with the Open Space Strategy, Edinburgh Adapts, Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership, Edinburgh Partnership and helps to meet Scottish and international targets for biodiversity conservation.

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Progress Report for 2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the progress made by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership in the last year in delivering the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-18.

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 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 Local Biodiversity Action Plans are an established and recognised mechanism for delivering local biodiversity outcomes across Scotland. Since 2000, the Council has led and until February 2018 chaired the EBP in the production of successive Edinburgh LBAPs. In this time, the Partnership has delivered a varied and successful programme of biodiversity improvements built on strong community and stakeholder engagement.
- 2.4 The Partnership brings together more than 40 organisations including government agencies, environmental trusts, research bodies, wildlife conservation NGOs, local volunteer wildlife groups and dedicated private citizens. EBP members are listed in appendix 2.
- 2.5 The EBP is a member of the Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership which sits within the overall Edinburgh Partnership remit.
- 2.6 The current EBAP runs to the end of 2018. The Council will undertake extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement this year to co-produce the plan's next phase with the Partnership and to ensure continuity of direction and delivery. The replacement plan will be presented to Committee for approval before being formally launched in early 2019.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The EBAP outlines the partnership approach to biodiversity conservation in Edinburgh and sets out a series of actions to be taken forward. The plan recognises the relationship between the built and natural environment, particularly in terms of water management, flooding and pollution.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 contains the EBAP Annual progress report 2017 and summarises the work carried out by EBP to deliver the actions and outcomes of the EBAP 2016-18. This includes detailed updates of project progress, the inclusion of biodiversity in policies and plans and examples of partnership working.
- 3.3 In Edinburgh, the high level of community and public participation in greenspace projects is a particular strength, as is the extent of successful partnership working across and beyond the Council.
- 3.4 Some highlights from the work of the Partnership in 2017:
- Local Biodiversity Sites network expanded to 99 sites;
 - 13% of grassland in Council parks now naturalised;
 - Six perennial meadows created in school grounds;
 - Partnership and volunteer engagement work on swifts and urban butterflies ;
 - Continuation of long running programmes of species monitoring by trained volunteers;
 - Ongoing support for 50+ Friends of Parks groups by the Council and partner organisations;
 - Three community orchards developed in Saughton Park;
 - Guidance on Biodiversity in Parks and Greenspaces updated;
 - New Geodiversity Charter launched;
 - Four community gardens created;
 - Rare plant populations supported by seed collection and translocating species;
 - Council's Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report for 2015-17 approved by Committee in December 2017;
 - 60 clean-ups along Water of Leith; and
 - Removal of invasive species at Cramond Foreshore.
- 3.5 Looking ahead, many of the actions and programmes will run through to, and beyond, the end of the current EBAP in late 2018. The priorities for 2018 include:
- 3.5.1 Welcoming Max Coleman of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as the new EBP Chair;
- 3.5.2 Working with partners and stakeholders to produce the next phase of the EBAP for 2019-2021;

3.5.3 Seeking, in the Year of Young People, to build on the current successful involvement of young people in the work of the Partnership; and

3.5.4 Raising the Partnership's social media profile.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The status of biodiversity and activity on biodiversity conservation in Edinburgh is monitored through:
- 4.1.1 The submission of a Biodiversity Duty Report to Scottish Government every three years; and
 - 4.1.2 Annual progress report on the delivery of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action plan.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The Council's contribution to the EBP and the delivery of the EBAP is met within existing service budgets.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There is a risk the Council could fail to meet its statutory duty for biodiversity. The preparation of regular reports on biodiversity delivery and supporting the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018 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 and enhancement of biodiversity through delivering the ELBAP directly enhances the rights to life and health by protecting the essential ecosystem services our natural environment provides. It also enhances other associated rights such as education and standard of living through participation in local biodiversity projects.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of 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 in Section 10 below.
- 8.2 Delivering, with partners, the EBAP actions will help achieve a more sustainable Edinburgh by incorporating biodiversity into the Council's existing activities and actions. This helps create a more resilient natural environment, reduce carbon

emissions and improve social justice, economic wellbeing and good environmental stewardship.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Members of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership and Council services contributed to this annual update report. The EBAP itself is built on extensive stakeholder and partner consultation and engagement. The next phase of the plan will similarly be based on this inclusive, collaborative approach.

10. Background reading/external references

[2050 Edinburgh City Vision - One Year On](#)

[Scotland's Biodiversity: It's In Your Hands – A Strategy for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Scotland 2004](#)

[2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity – A Strategy for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Scotland 2013](#)

[Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018](#)

[Edinburgh Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report 2015-2017](#)

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan annual progress report 2017.

Appendix 2 - Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership – list of member organisations.

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan
2016 -18

PROGRESS
REPORT
2017



PROGRESS REPORT 2017

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Chair's foreword

2017 has been a productive year for the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership, delivering a total of 176 actions from the Action Plan to progress positive outcomes for the City's biodiversity and its citizens. These include support for 'Friends' groups by Council and partner organisations, a programme of species monitoring by trained volunteers, development of community orchards, creation of allotments and community gardens and naturalisation of council grassland areas.

The Council submitted its Biodiversity Duty Report (2015-17) to the Scottish Government in December. As well as meeting legal requirements, this demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to biodiversity. In October, the Partnership was represented at the Eurocities Environment Forum held in Essen, Germany. This provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and experience on how biodiversity projects are delivered in other European cities. Following this, the Partnership is keen to support the Eurocities Conference to be hosted in Edinburgh later in 2018. Also looking forward, in the Year of Young People, we will continue to build on existing work such as RSPB's 'Young Roots' project with Edinburgh University students and to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to be engaged with local nature and greenspaces.

Finally, after 20 years of holding the role of Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership chair, the Council will be handing over this role to the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Partnership is delighted to welcome Dr. Max Coleman (Science Communicator) to the position in February 2018. Max will bring his invaluable communications experience and knowledge of biodiversity conservation issues to this role.

Julie Dewar

City of Edinburgh Council Senior Planning Officer
Chair of Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership

Introduction

Think Global, Act Local – facing the challenges

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership continues to deliver an exciting and innovative programme of projects and community events across the city. One of the strengths of the Partnership is its diversity; from government agencies to local volunteer wildlife groups and committed, knowledgeable individuals. The Partnership can empower and act at local levels and also impact on a larger scale. Examples of this are seen with projects such as Swift Surveys and Square Metre for Butterflies – delivering locally to protect and enhance globally endangered species.

2017 has seen a rise in concern and awareness of environmental issues such as plastics, pollution, climate change and habitat fragmentation.

The work of the Partnership continues to provide many examples of commitment to addressing these challenges.

Achievements 2017

This progress report highlights the outcomes and key activities from the last twelve months, delivered by the Partnership.

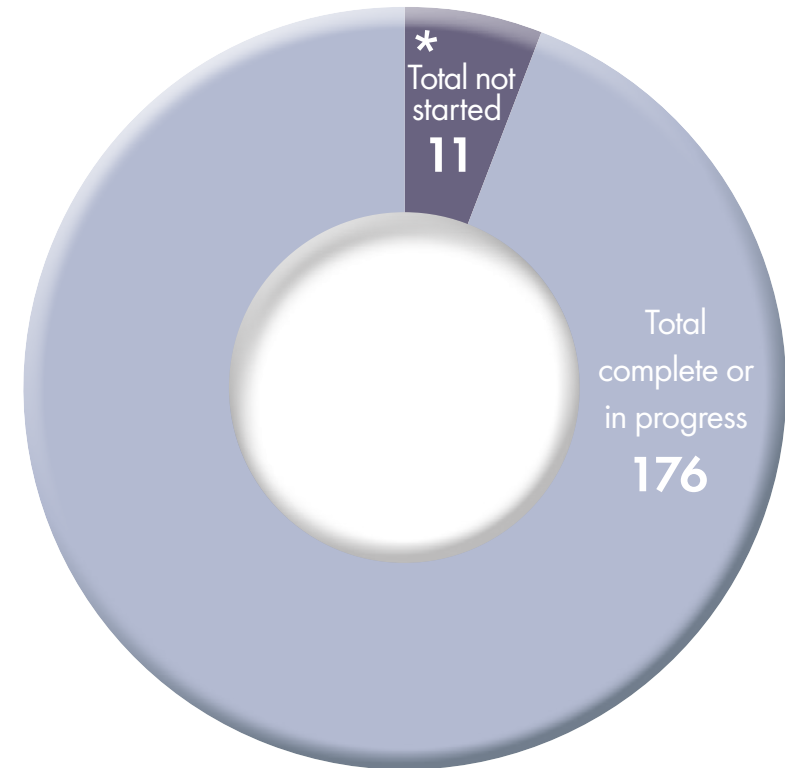
Community and public engagement came to the fore in 2017 with projects such as Swifts Survey, Urban Butterfly Project, community orchards and growing at Saughton Park and Friends groups delivering practical conservation projects in their local area. 13% of grassland in CEC Parks estate has now been naturalised including native bulb planting.

Updated guidance on Biodiversity in Parks and Greenspaces has been produced and is available to Parks Officers and Friends groups.

The Local Biodiversity Sites network across Edinburgh has a total of 99 sites. Biodiversity advice has been offered to protect and enhance these sites including establishing an invertebrate monitoring scheme on a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Work on rare plant populations has taken place including seed collection, site scoping and completing translocation permissions.

The Council's Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report for 2015 - 2017 was compiled and approved by Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2017.



Total actions for 2017: 187

** Actions not started are due either to resourcing eg staff changes, or because they are funding dependent and funding has not yet been secured.*

1,600

EBAP 2017 IN NUMBERS

PEOPLE & EVENTS

1,600 community group interactions at RBGE 'Meet the Gardener'



RSPB worked across **17** sites engaging with **1300** children



9 wildlife recording trips organised by the **Wildlife Information Centre**

20 volunteers involved in **Friends of Saughton Park** initiatives



GEODIVERSITY

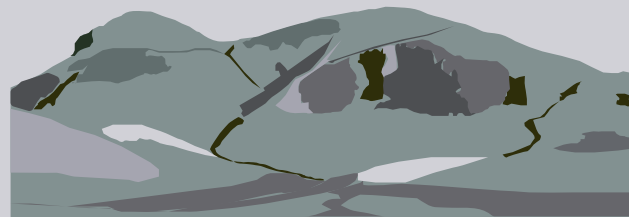
1 Launch of the new **Geodiversity Charter**



excursions in Edinburgh held by **Lothian & Borders Geoconservation Group** **6**



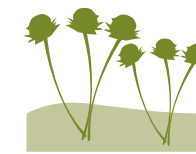
15 site statements completed to new Geoconservation standard



GREEN NETWORKS

SNH provided statutory advice on **16** plans and strategies relating to natural heritage

3 community orchards developed in Saughton Park



13% of the **grassland** on **CEC Parks and Greenspace** estate **naturalised**

6 **perennial meadows** created in school grounds by CEC Parks and Greenspace and ELL

Community gardens created by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust



BLUE NETWORKS

1 **Shoreline** project developed with **SNH** and **RBGE** to increase awareness of Firth of Forth



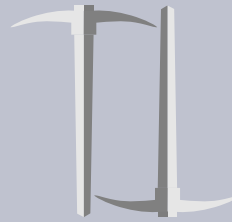
4 days of **removal of invasive species** at Cramond Foreshore by **CEC Natural Heritage Service**



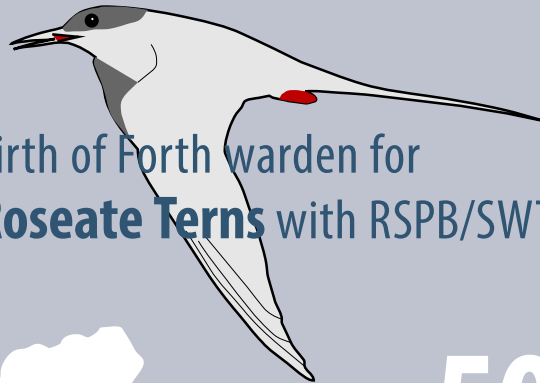
 **clean-ups** completed along Water of Leith by WoLCT

SPECIES

1 **project officer** co-ordinating work on invasive species via **CEC Natural Heritage Service**



1 Firth of Forth warden for **Roseate Terns** with RSPB/SWT



50 **Rock Rose** planted at **Waverley Court** by CEC Planning and Butterfly Conservation Scotland

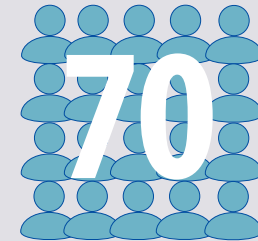


BUILT ENVIRONMENT

34 swift boxes requested/installed in **new developments**



70 people attended **swift survey project event**



1 **lighting scheme** advised on impact of **LED lighting** on **wildlife**



1 **OrganiCity** project launched



Global and national context

Local Biodiversity Action Plans were first produced as part of the UK response to the requirements of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity signed at the Rio Earth summit in 1992.

Local plans continue to contribute to the work required to meet national and global targets. The current UN targets, known as the Aichi Targets, are in place for 2020 and these are summarised below.

Aichi Biodiversity Targets

- **Strategic Goal A:** Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society
- **Strategic Goal B:** Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use
- **Strategic Goal C:** Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity
- **Strategic Goal D:** Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services
- **Strategic Goal E:** Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

In Scotland, these Aichi Targets are translated into national targets in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, and most recently in 'Scotland's Biodiversity: A Route Map to 2020'. The Route Map identifies the Six Big Steps for Nature as a mechanism for meeting the Aichi Targets. These are:

- Ecosystem restoration
- Investment in natural capital
- Quality greenspace for health and education benefits
- Conserving wildlife in Scotland
- Sustainable management of land and freshwater
- Marine and Coastal ecosystems restored.

All of the actions in the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be directly linked to at least one, and in most cases more than one, of these Scottish priorities.

Edinburgh Partnership structures



Looking ahead to 2018

Many of the actions and programmes are valid throughout the duration of the Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018.

Priorities for 2018 will include:

- Welcoming Max Coleman of RBGE as the new Chair of the Partnership
- Working with partners and stakeholders to consult on and produce the Phase 5 plan 2019-2021
- Working with new organisations and individuals in the production and delivery of the new plan
- Noting that 2018 is the Year of Young People and seeking to build on current involvement of young people and further engage this audience where opportunities arise
- Developing a social media profile for the Partnership including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

2018 will undoubtedly be a challenging and exciting time for biodiversity.

PROGRESS REPORT 2017



Appendix 2

List of Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership members including Council departments

BBCT – Bumblebee Conservation Trust

BCS – Butterfly Conservation Scotland

BDS – British Dragonfly Society

BSBI – Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

Buglife – Buglife

CEC – City of Edinburgh Council – Parks, Greenspaces and Cemeteries, Planning and Transport, Localities,

EC – Edinburgh College

Edible Edinburgh

ELGT – Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust

ELL – Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative

ENHS – Edinburgh Natural History Society

ERSG – Edinburgh Raptor Study Group

ESDP – Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership

EWB – Edinburgh World heritage

FCS – Forestry Commission Scotland

FEF – Forth Estuary Forum

FGSES – Fungus Group of SE Scotland

FR – Forest Research

FSG – Forth Seabird Group

HESRS - Historic Environment Scotland Ranger Service

HMPS – Her Majesty's Prison Saughton

HW – Heriot Watt University

LABMAG – Lothian and Borders Mammal Group

LARG – Lothian Amphibian and Reptile Group

LBG – Lothian Badger Group

LBG – Lothians Bat Group

LFGNP – Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership

Lothian and Borders Geoconservation Committee – Lothian and Borders Geoconservation Committee

MS – Marine Scotland

NCW – New Caledonian Woodlands

NU – Napier University

RAFTS – Rivers and Fisheries Trust Scotland

RBGE – Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

RZSS – Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (Edinburgh Zoo)

Saughton Park Project Team – Saughton Park Project Team

SEPA – Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SNH – Scottish Natural Heritage

SOC – Scottish Ornithologists Club

SRUC – Scottish Rural University College

SWT – Scottish Wildlife Trust

TWIC – The Wildlife Information Centre

UoE – University of Edinburgh

WoLCT – Water of Leith Conservation Trust