

**ITEM No ...7.....**

**REPORT TO:** NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2023

**REPORT ON:** BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN - DUNDEE - ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

**REPORT NO:** 158-2023

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To present an update on the progress made on the implementation of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan, reporting on actions progressed during 2022/23.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the committee notes the achievements and progress of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

**4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 Reference is made to Article VII of the minute of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 13th January 2020, which approved the Biodiversity Action Plan (report 14-2020) and to Article IV of the minute of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 11th January 2021 (report 18-2021) and Article II of the minute of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (report 128-2022), which both noted the progress made on the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.2 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on public bodies 'to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.' The publication of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Dundee in 2020 sets out how Dundee City Council fulfils this duty and how it works in partnership with other local organisations to achieve the plan's vision of 'Working together to protect, enhance and raise awareness of biodiversity in Dundee for the benefit of all'.

4.3 The Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan raises awareness of the wildlife (flora and fauna) of Dundee in an international, national and local context. This plan highlights the contribution and influence of Dundee's biodiversity on the quality of life and economic opportunities of everyone who lives in the city. The plan focuses action on important urban ecosystems, habitats and species and ensures prioritisation of resources at a local level. It sets out clear objectives and targets to enable the monitoring of progress and enables measurement of any achievements. It has been agreed that progress on the Biodiversity Action Plan will be reported annually, with this being the third such report.

4.4 Council officers have progressed actions and worked with partners to find a variety of methods to support and improve biodiversity within the city in the last year. However, the timescales for a number of actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan continue to be impacted by previous Covid restrictions.

4.5 Dundee City Council benefitted from £86K of the Nature Restoration Fund available to Scottish Local Authorities for the 2022/23 financial year. This fund has significantly contributed to the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan. The projects implemented as a result of this fund include enhancing naturalised grassland areas at Baxter Park with additional wildflower seed and fruit trees, a second phase of

pond improvement work at Den O Mains (committee report: 252-2022), installation of 100 specially designed amphibian ladders into gully pot drains in two city areas (committee report: 298-2022) and the purchase of additional machinery to assist in the management of biodiversity grassland areas within parks across the city and the restoration of the lades and sluice gate into Trottick Ponds to allow better management of the pond levels in the Local Nature Reserve (committee report: 312-2022).

- 4.6 Additional applications to the competitive strand of the Nature Restoration Funding available to Scottish Local Authorities resulted in an additional award of £262K for Tr-Action- Planting Climate Resilient Woodlands. This was an ambitious project to plant 12 hectares of native woodland at three sites across the city (Committee report: 11-2023). This project aimed to create larger and better-connected woodlands with increased species diversity and therefore increasing resilience of our urban woodland and related biodiversity to climate change. The new woodlands will also assist to increase the amount of carbon storage and sequestration across the city.
- 4.7 Other highlights for 2022 include working in partnership with Eden to create new annual wildflower areas at Morgan Academy and Camperdown Park and a social media and local radio awareness raising campaign focussing on the benefits of longer grass in our greenspaces. In addition, all seven Green Flag sites were assessed and all retained their Green Flag status. Broughty Ferry Beach was successful in achieving the Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Award and retaining an excellent standard of bathing water quality, as measured by SEPA.
- 4.8 Further details on the above and progress on all Biodiversity Action Plan actions identified for 2022 are detailed in Appendix 1.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

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**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

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May 2023



# Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan

## *Progress Report 2022/23*

### Introduction:

As Dundee continues with ongoing plans for a Green Recovery and to honour its commitment to the Edinburgh Declaration, investment has been made through projects which aim to improve biodiversity and people's access to it.

Dundee City Council received funding during 2022-23 from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund. This fund seeks to catalyse action at a scale to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity on land and sea and delivers the priorities set out in the draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. This fund is separated into multiple strands allowing for a range of applicants to deliver projects at various scales. Local Authorities were directly allocated an amount of funding based on area and population; Dundee was awarded £86,000. These funds were used for projects such as installing amphibian ladders in gully pots, dredging silt from a pond at Den O Mains, restoring historical lades and sluice gates at Trottick Ponds Local Nature Reserve and the purchase of machinery to assist in ongoing management of our biodiversity grasslands and perennial wildflower meadows across the city.

Subsequent successful applications to additional strands of the funding resulted in a further award of £262,000 to deliver the TR-Action- Climate Resilient woodlands in Dundee project. The aims of this project were to increase the size, connectivity and diversity of woodlands in Dundee as well as increasing carbon storage. Despite challenging timescales for the delivery of this project, 12 hectares of new, native woodland have been successfully planted at three sites across the city, Riverside Nature Park, Balgay Hill and within an area adjacent to Clatto Country Park.

Dundee City Council's capital funding has helped to deliver improvements to local greenspaces as identified by local communities and through internal green flag audits. Projects include new pocket parks and additional wildflower areas. Additional Dundee City Council revenue funding in the last year has also assisted in delivering a biodiversity awareness raising campaign through social media and radio, purchased new operational equipment to reduce the amount of herbicide used in the city and allowed for the planting thousands of native bulbs across city parks.

This report highlights progress made on the current actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan but also sets out an intention to review these actions in the coming year to ensure that the plans vision of 'Working together to protect, enhance and raise awareness of biodiversity in Dundee for the benefit of all' can continue to be delivered.

The following tables show the specific progress made by Dundee City Council for each action in the Biodiversity Action Plan in 2022/23.

### Woodland

Actions	Progress 2022/23
To apply for 'Woodlands In and Around Towns' (WIAT) funding from Scottish Forestry for woodland management to increase the diversity and health of our urban woodlands.	Phase 1 of the WIAT project on Balgay is complete with 300 small, mixed native species of trees and 13 large single oak trees planted. Thinning works and path side vegetation management also carried out throughout the park.
To update Dundee's, Tree and Urban Forestry Policy	After further consideration, it would be of greater overall benefit to combine this plan with the Strategic Forest Plan, which is due for update in 2025. This would provide time to gather additional information, e.g. through an iTree survey, and produce a comprehensive overall plan for Dundee's woodland resource. It would also be in line with new guidance on Forestry and Woodland Strategies as identified in the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) guidance to support the next update to the Local Development Plan.
To monitor the health of trees, in particular the species which are potentially at threat from new diseases. Assisting with the promotion and recruitment of volunteers for the Observatree project	Dundee City Council continues to assess and manage the threat to ash trees in the city from Ash Dieback. A new tree management system has been implemented for ash trees and 3 staff members have been trained to locate ash on council property and assess the progress of the disease. This ongoing survey has focused on high risk areas and has already resulted in the felling of some diseased trees which were posing a risk to health and safety. A full update on the progress of this plan was sent to Neighbourhood Services committee in January 2023 (committee report <b>5-2023</b> ). Additionally, information for the general public on this disease has been provided and promoted on the <b><u>Council website</u></b> .
Continue to apply for funding to control grey squirrels	It was not possible to source funding for this in the 22/23 financial year. Council officers continue to seek ways in which to fund this important aspect of invasive species control. Control could be carried out by Dundee City Council Pest Control Officers and would likely target specific areas where grey squirrels are known to be increasing.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
Record, monitor and protect bat populations and known roosts	Officers continue to provide advice on bats in general and assess bat surveys provided as supplementary information in the planning process. When carrying out new projects which may affect bats, Dundee City Council ensures it follows legislation and undertakes appropriate surveys and applies for licences when required.
Apply for WIAT funding from Scottish Forestry to extend current woodland areas and connect smaller compartments in line with the Strategic Forest Plan	The WIAT funding is currently not suited for additional applications for Dundee. Council Officers have sought other funding sources for woodland management and creation and were successful in obtaining an additional £262,000 from the Scottish Government Nature Restoration funding for a Climate Resilient Woodlands in Dundee. This project delivered 28,000 native trees planted over 12 hectares at 3 sites in Dundee, Riverside Nature Park, Balgay Hill and an area next to Clatto Country Park.
Investigate the possibility of an i-Tree project to assess the forestry canopy cover in Dundee and use this to set new targets	Council Officers have been in talks with The University of Dundee to outline and provide costs for such a project. Meetings are due to take place in order to finalise these and identify potential funding. A specialist contractor requires to be procured in order to carry out the project.
To monitor the impact of new development on woodland, seeking to retain and protect as much tree cover as possible, especially in conservation areas and areas with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	Over the last year, tree advice had been provided for 40 planning applications, 14 discharge of conditions, 9 pre-application enquiries and 2 EIA scoping reports. Of these, 5 involved TPO's, 2 were on or near Locally Important Nature Conservation Areas (LINCS) and 15 were in Conservation Areas.
Maintain and manage paths and access within woodland	Storm Arwen and the subsequent tree removal caused significant damage to paths in woodlands and work is ongoing to carry out repairs. In 2022, Countryside Rangers, Access Officer and Animal Control officer worked with Muirhead Stables to deliver two 4- Legged Friends events, talking to regular visitors about sharing the paths responsibly. Green Circular cycle path surveys were completed. Unauthorised Mountain Bike Trail building within woodlands is being monitored. Problems with irresponsible access (uncontrolled dogs and illegal motorcycles) are investigated and responsible access is promoted through the Take Pride in your City Campaign.

## Wetlands

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Investigate and source funding for a project to sensitively deal with silted up areas of the Gelly Burn in Den O Mains	A second phase of a project to deal with silted up areas of the Gelly Burn in Den O Mains was completed at the end of 2022 (committee report: <a href="#">252-2022</a> ). This was funded with Nature Restoration Funding from the Scottish Government. There is a Scottish Environment protection Agency (SEPA) licence in place to repeat this management no sooner than every 10 years.
To investigate management regimes for Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) ponds to ensure their potential for biodiversity is realised	As part of a new ambitious project looking at redesigning St Leonards Park as a blue-green corridor with multiple benefits for people, nature and ongoing flooding issues, Dundee City Council worked with NatureScot, Scottish Water, SEPA and a landscape design consultancy to produce a design guide with multiple options for incorporating biodiversity friendly options into the project. This guide also highlighted important aspects of planting establishment and ongoing management. It is hoped that the guide can be shared as a best practice example to anyone considering new blue green infrastructure. Council Officers from Environment visited a series of rain gardens in Glasgow as part of a sharing best practice event, looking at the management of rain garden build outs on roads. This will help to inform our own management of such features as they are incorporated into SUDS networks within the city.
Identify all rivers and ponds managed by the council including SUDS and record this on the Geographic Information System (GIS) layer. Ensure this information is updated as development occurs	Council Officers from Neighbourhood Services and City Development are working together to build a map of freshwater ponds and wetlands managed by the Council using staff knowledge, existing records and details from planning applications. This will be collated on Council GIS maps and will help co-ordinate timely and appropriate management of all such sites.
Continue to develop new ponds and wetland at suitable sites	Dundee City Council are working with NatureScot and Scottish Water to develop a city-wide strategic SUDS strategy using nature-based solutions to rain and stormwater management to provide a wide range of long-term benefits for people and nature. Existing information held by all partners has been collated and will assist in the formation of a blue-green baseline highlighting future opportunities to improve connectivity and its overlap with strategic drainage flows. The project will also explore the feasibility, scope and design of drainage retrofitting or other opportunities to add to existing blue green infrastructure. This project will be completed in 2023. New SUDS and wetland areas were incorporated into the Our Place Douglas Project. This also involved planting of 100 new trees, perennial and annual wildflower areas, spring bulbs and wetland planting.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
Ensure appropriate access is maintained along rivers and around ponds to protect both wildlife and the safety of the public	SEPA approached Dundee City Council with a proposal to apply for funding to restore parts of the Dighty Burn. The project vision is to deliver significant ecological improvements, enhance the biodiversity and expand the natural habitat of the Dighty Burn. The project will align with the development of the proposed active travel network serving the new East End Campus to create better connected communities and amenity along the river corridor. There are also opportunities to improve surface water drainage across the catchment improving climate resilience for the local community. A feasibility study is anticipated to start in 2023. The giant hogweed control project also supports safe access to our ponds and rivers.
Support communities to develop plans for their ponds/wetlands so actions can develop at grass roots level	Work is ongoing with the local community at Stobsmuir Ponds in order to ensure appropriate management of the ponds for wildlife and to educate the public in ways in which they can assist with looking after the birds that make their home there. The Countryside Rangers worked with the Friends of Clatto to renovate a small pond which sits to the west of the reservoir. This work will ensure that this area remains great habitat for a number of amphibians and invertebrates. Dundee City Council has been working with Froglife to develop a pond project for the city. This will include work on existing and new ponds and will involve working with local communities and volunteers to highlight the importance of these habitats.

### Marine and Coastal

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
To continue to manage the sand dune section of coastal defences at Broughty Ferry in the most natural way possible	Dundee City Council have continued the work to remove self-seeding non-native plants and tree species growing in the dunes and are monitoring this regularly. A review of beach grass growth will be undertaken at the end of the growing period and additional planting of grass will be provided where required. This grass helps to stabilise the dunes and provides habitat for native coastal species.
Project to improve and increase the area of coastal grassland at Broughty Ferry Esplanade	The Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel project continues to progress with additional funding now agreed with Sustrans. Infrastructure works are progressing, works along the Esplanade have allowed for the removal of non-native shrubs, with dunes being planted with Marram and Lime grasses and an avenue of trees has replaced the former hedging. Wildflower meadow planting is expected to progress this Spring, with further areas to be planted in Autumn 2023.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
Continue to keep beaches free of litter and reduce the amount of plastic by organising regular beach cleans	Community action to tackle litter is encouraged and supported via the Council's Take Pride in Your City Campaign. In 2022, a total of 50 litter picks were registered with the Council and Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), more than half of which were carried out on the beach, waterfront areas along the Tay or adjacent to the Dighty Burn. During a series of monthly litter picks which were open to the public, one group removed over 1 tonne of litter from Broughty Ferry beach during 2022. Support of Upstream Battle on the Tay continued in 2022, this KSB campaign has a source-to-sea approach to tackling litter and involves collaboration across the relevant local authority areas and community involvement. There are four community-led Anchor Groups in Dundee, each of which are aiming to raise awareness, gather litter data, and encourage participation.
Continue to encourage establishment of coastal plant species e.g. kidney vetch and sea pea at appropriate coastal locations	This is to be incorporated with the above Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel Project to improve and increase the area of coastal grassland at Broughty Ferry Esplanade.
To manage public access across the sand dunes at Broughty Ferry using chestnut rail fencing	Works have recently been undertaken to erect more fencing to protect the newly established embryo dunes from compaction due to footfall and repair broken or buried sections of fencing.
Monitor summer beach cleaning methods to ensure no damage to the structure of the beach	The beach continues to be managed throughout the Summer as per an agreement with NatureScot which came into effect in 2016. This management balances the need for high levels of cleanliness and hygiene on the award-winning beach with the need to maintain the current habitats.
Continue to achieve Scotland's Beach Award for Broughty Ferry Beach	The Award was retained in 2022, feedback from the assessor recognised improvements, made compared to the previous year, with regards to litter and ongoing improvements to facilities nearby.
Continue to achieve 'Excellent' EU Bathing Water Quality at Broughty Ferry Beach	The Designated Bathing Water at Broughty Ferry retained an Excellent classification for water quality in 2022, sampling was carried out by SEPA during the Scottish Bathing Season which runs from 1 June to 15 September. In December 2022, it was confirmed that the classification for 2023 will also be Excellent.

### **Grassland**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
Reduce the use of herbicide in management practices	Dundee City Council is continuously reviewing herbicide usage with the aim to reduce overall use and to consider suitable alternatives which support biodiversity in Dundee. Mechanical weed rippers have been purchased for use on hard surfaces and additional street sweeping has been carried out in 2022

Actions	Progress 2022/23
	with a review of routes to be carried out in 2023. These methods remove the detritus that builds up allowing weeds to colonise. There was a slight increase in herbicide in 22/23 compared to the previous year due to weather conditions however, the overall volume of herbicide has reduced by 66% in the last 5 years, with a reduction of 45% since the publication of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2.
Increase in the amount of grass managed to improve biodiversity	As part of the review of grassland management, Dundee City Council have continued to liaise with local groups in the management of naturalised and biodiversity grasslands in 27 selected greenspaces across the city. There are currently 49.5 ha of naturalised grasslands and 10 ha of biodiversity grassland which is a slight increase on last year. As part of this review, 2 of the biodiversity areas have been sown with yellow rattle (1.3ha) and 2 have been sown with perennial wildflower seeds (0.6ha). In addition, the direct allocation of Nature Restoration funding allowed the purchase of new machinery to assist in the cut and lift management of these areas. Ways in which to increase areas of grassland managed for biodiversity continue to be sought with a new perennial wildflower meadow created in partnership with the Friends of Balgay on a grass area at Scott Street.
To develop a tool box talk/training/updates to operations staff to ensure successful management of perennial meadows	A toolbox talk on grassland management for biodiversity was successfully delivered to Operational Supervisors in June 2022. Time was given for questions at the end of the talk and a copy was made available for Supervisors to cascade to their staff as appropriate. Education on this topic will continue with the participation in sharing good practice and other educational events as these opportunities arise.
Expand and protect a population of the endangered plant greater yellow rattle at Riverside Nature Park	Due to work with the Friends of Riverside Nature Park to increase the protection given to the area in which it is planted, greater yellow rattle continues to thrive and expand in the area.
Continue to maintain and expand annual flower areas throughout the city	10902m <sup>2</sup> of annual wildflower areas were sown and managed in 2022, which is a slight increase of 800m <sup>2</sup> from 2021. In partnership with Eden, new areas of wildflowers were sown at Morgan Academy and Camperdown Park with interpretation provided to highlight the importance of these areas to pollinators.
Continue to maintain and increase the diversity of bulb panels in the city	50,000 native bulbs and plug plants have been planted into some existing bulb panels and other suitable areas across Dundee's parks.

Actions	Progress 2022/23
To continue to restrict access to dogs off leads at Riverside Nature Park during skylark nesting season	Signs were again placed in Riverside Nature Park during the breeding season in 2022 to remind people to keep to paths and help protect skylark nests. Volunteers from the Friends of Riverside Nature Park, the Access Officer and the Countryside Rangers were all on site periodically to reinforce this message and to speak to park users. These methods continue to be effective and the population of breeding skylarks in this area continues to rise.

### Urban Green Network

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Continue to promote and support the 'Take Pride in Your City' campaign	The 'Take Pride' campaign is regularly promoted and public involvement encouraged via DCC media channels, branded signage and graphics, newsletters and local campaigns. National campaigns which tie into the Take Pride actions have also been promoted, such as the annual Spring Clean. Topics have included how to report an issue, promoting responsible behaviour, highlighting positive action, and encouraging participation in local and national environmental activities. The SMART action plan was revised by the Steering Group and approved by Neighbourhood Services Committee (committee report: <b>198-2022</b> ) in August to take the campaign forward for 2022-24, this encompasses over 100 actions under the four strategic themes of; Local Environmental Quality, Recycling, City Centre and Businesses, and Communications.
Promote the incorporation of swift and bat boxes, both integral and external, into buildings and encourage people to report sightings	Promotion of bat and swift boxes continues to be undertaken through feedback provided on planning applications. It is hoped that uptake of these will increase when NPF4 comes into effect.
Review the management of habitats within older cemeteries to increase their biodiversity value	A management review of these areas is scheduled for 2023, looking at ways in which biodiversity can be allowed to flourish whilst remaining respectful and protecting their historical significance.
Review the management of council-maintained hedges across the city	Dundee City Council continues to manage a variety of hedges across the city. A review of council-maintained hedges is proposed for 2023. Hedges require assessing for their condition, purpose and biodiversity benefits. This would allow for a more tailored approach to hedge maintenance and identify hedges that would benefit from remedial work.
Review the management and storage of green waste in Dundee's parks to reduce fuel costs,	Ways to reduce the amount of green waste in Dundee city parks continues to be explored. This includes reducing the amount of leaves collected in some areas and ensuring that leaves are spread as mulch where appropriate.

Actions	Progress 2022/23
provide a resource and prevent damage to biodiversity	
To find innovative ways to incorporate green infrastructure into new projects across the city. For example, bat and swift boxes, green roofs, rain gardens and establishment of appropriate habitats along cycle and roadways	Work at the new East End Community Campus has begun. The landscape design for this new building will incorporate features for biodiversity such as new trees, including fruit trees, a wildflower grassland area, a community garden area and bat boxes installed in both the building and the surrounding woodland areas. A new 'Wee Forest' was planted in Keswick Avenue. This project, led by NatureScot and supported by the University of Dundee and Dundee City Council creates new woodland spaces in very urban areas, equivalent to the size of a tennis court. These will be looked after by local people, giving them hands-on experience of nurturing nature and learning more about how the natural world can help combat climate change. This project brings the number of 'Wee Forests' in the city up to three with more planned in the coming year.
Identify and correctly manage Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL)	There are a number of brown field sites in the city but it is currently unclear if their current management creates suitable conditions for OMHPDL. A large number of these also privately owned which makes surveys very difficult. Ecological surveys are required for new developments in such sites and any areas with OMHPDL would be identified as part of such surveys.
Promote community growing and identify suitable sites for new projects	Support for existing community projects is ongoing. New projects include growing space at the Rockwell Learning centre and Mill O Mains Primary School. Construction of Camperdown Growing Hub is now complete and is a functional food growing garden with several growing tunnels. The Campy Growers group have taken control of the area and have received funding for 3 new staff members. This project will employ regenerative food-growing practices including no-dig, on-site composting, agroforestry and chemical free production as an example of good stewardship of the land. The Campy Growers will be actively creating habitat and growing with nature, 200 Fruit trees have already been planted and plans to create wetland habitat have begun. The Dundee City Council Community Allotment Officer continues to support the campy Growers community group.
Maintain current cemeteries for both biodiversity and visitors in an empathetic manner	A management review of these areas is scheduled for 2023 along with older cemeteries, looking at ways in which biodiversity can be allowed to flourish whilst remaining respectful and protecting any historical significance.

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Ensure that council managed ornamental flower and shrub beds are appropriately managed for biodiversity- including planting more native, wildlife friendly species and ensuring that cover is maintained for breeding and roosting birds	Ornamental flower beds were updated at Seabraes. Plant species, although not all native, were all pollinator friendly and the site was a haven for invertebrates during the summer of 2022. Other project areas included Baxter Park, Balgay-Blackness Road seating area, Lily Walker Homeless Unit and Camperdown Park. These projects involved new tree planting, creation of perennial wildflower areas and wildlife friendly bulb and herbaceous perennial planting. Two new pocket parks are being created, one at Lorimer Street and one at Moncur Crescent. The planting within these includes new trees and herbaceous perennials and grasses, creating new habitats in very urban areas.
Maintain Green Flag status for current parks and look to increase sites with Green flag	All 7 Sites maintained their Green Flag status in 2022. Work has taken place in partnership with the Friends of Magdalen Green to create a new management plan for Magdalen Green with a view to inclusion in future Green Flag applications.
Investigate a potential project regarding the use of amphibian ladders in roadside gully pot drains	This project was completed using funds from the direct allocation of the Nature Restoration Fund. 100 ladders were installed into gully pot drains in two areas of the city, Ballumbie and Panmurefield. The areas were identified, built and installed in partnership with the Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group. Two workshops were held where volunteers could come along and learn more about amphibians and assist with the assembly of the ladders.
Continue to evaluate all Council parks internally using Green Flag judging criteria	In addition to the seven sites entered into the externally assessed Green Flag Awards, a further twenty-four sites were internally assessed in 2022 using the same criteria; this included the addition of one new site. Results have been fed back to management and actions collated, which have been used to inform potential capital projects.
Continue to support local Friends of groups to improve and manage biodiversity within their parks	Council officers regularly attend meetings of the groups where possible and each group has a named contact within the Environment service. The Community Environment Officer has been working closely with Friends of Magdalen Green as part of a Community Participation Request. This has resulted in a new Management Plan for the park incorporating a range of topics including biodiversity.

## Planning and Development

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Continue to protect and extend designated sites within and adjacent to Dundee, review of the current Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites (LINCS) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) based on the 2018 Biodiversity Survey	LINCS review is ongoing and the information gathered will be put forward for inclusion in the next Local Development Plan.
Update all Local Nature Reserve management plans	Plans for all three Local Nature Reserves are updated annually in January.
To review any planning applications which have an impact on the biodiversity or geodiversity of Dundee seeking to reduce to amount of negative impacts	Over the last year, tree and biodiversity advice had been provided for 40 planning applications, 14 discharge of conditions, 9 pre-application enquiries and 2 EIA scoping reports. Of these 5 involved TPO's, 2 were on or near LINCS and 15 were in conservation areas. The introduction of the National Planning Framework 4 in 2023 will place more importance on protecting biodiversity and will require Developers to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity as well as mitigate for any loss.
Ensure that Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are upheld and that new orders are granted where necessary	No new TPOs have been created in 2022. Nine enforcement cases have been generated for unauthorised felling of TPO trees or trees within a Conservation Area. Two cases have been closed with replacement planting, the rest are currently ongoing.
Agree appropriate mitigation measures to put in place where development leads to a loss of biodiversity	NatureScot has published new guidance for developers in line with NPF4 on suitable mitigation and enhanced biodiversity measures which can be used when designing new development. The local Development Plan for Dundee will include new NPF4 guidelines for enhancing biodiversity in new developments during the current review.
To map Council owned sites across the city which are not recorded as greenspace but are unsuitable for development	Neighbourhood Services - Environment and City Development colleagues have agreed to work together to produce a map and identify suitable sites. This information will be incorporated into the next Strategic Forest Plan and Local Development plan for the city in upcoming years.
All new plans and strategies should show a link to biodiversity. When older plans and strategies are updated efforts should be made to introduce or enhance links to biodiversity	The <b>Council Plan 2022-2027</b> has the vision "Dundee will be a greener city, made up of strong communities where people feel empowered, safe and proud to live". This plan highlights the Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan as one of the key plans focussed on tackling climate change and has "Provide further opportunities for pedestrianised areas, pocket-parks and support empowered

Actions	Progress 2022/23
	communities to be partners and leaders on local plans and initiatives to develop biodiversity, local food growing and community spaces” as a key action.

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Actions	Progress 2022/23
To promote the recording and mapping of INNS within Dundee	Members of the public continue to report giant hogweed when it becomes a health concern. Officers continue to map Giant Hogweed for annual control with a new mobile GIS mapping system now available. Locations not managed by DCC are investigated by DCC Environmental Health Officers, with records shared internally to update any maps.
Work with private landowners to increase the area of control and prevent re-colonisation	Dundee City Council (DCC) Environmental Health Officers ask private landowners to control Giant Hogweed on their property with mixed success. DCC provide information on all known landowners within Dundee, and also in Angus’s Dighty catchment to assist NatureScot in delivering action under the Scottish Government’s legislation. NatureScot has advised that they do not currently have the resources to deliver legal action or grants for landowners as requested.
Encourage awareness of INNS and where our statutory duties lie in regards to them	Dundee City Council continues to look for ways in which to raise awareness of this issue with staff and have sought advise from the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) for assistance with training material.
Ensure effective biosecurity measures are in place for DCC staff	Only fully trained and certificated staff carry out any chemical control. Staff are aware of biosecurity when treating INNS.
Raise awareness of possible new invasive species through regular updates of species threatening Scotland	No new invasive species to report
To carry out an effective programme of eradication of INNS	The 2022 the monitoring and control programme for giant hogweed was delivered. The ongoing mapping shows a significant reduction of this plant particularly in Dundee City Council controlled sites. However, new infestations continue to appear and will do so until control further upstream in Angus is delivered. While the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative has supported advice to private owners up stream of Dundee, NatureScot has advised that they do not have the resources to deliver legal action

Actions	Progress 2022/23
	or grants for landowners. In addition to giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also subject to targeted control.

### Communication and Awareness raising

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Create a group with detailed knowledge of ecology and biodiversity to monitor the progress of the actions in the Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan and to make recommendations on new actions for the future	A meeting was held in early 2023 with a number of conservation organisations such as NatureScot, The Royal Society for the protection of Birds (RSPB), the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the Woodland Trust with a view to increase partnership working and updating the actions within the Biodiversity Action plan in 23/24. All attendees agreed to assist Dundee City Council in this process and would have input into a working group. Other local expertise will be identified to be included and the Convenor for Neighbourhood Services has stated that she would be willing to chair such a group.
The Environment Service continues to work with communities to promote and enhance biodiversity	Environment officers continue to engage with communities to encourage, support and facilitate activities to promote and enhance biodiversity. For example, working in partnership with Dundee's Beautiful Scotland, It's Your Neighbourhood, and other community growing and Friends groups to promote biodiversity to the wider public and support their efforts to encourage biodiversity at their own projects and through their activities.
Develop relationships with schools in terms of environmental education and involvement	The Countryside Ranger Service has been working with Raising Aspirations in Science Education ( <u>RAiSE</u> ), which is a Scottish Government backed project that aims to improve science teaching in Scotland's schools. The Rangers have assisted in outdoor visits to give students memorable experiences that help to educate and inspire them to find out more about nature. With this project and other educational visits, they have engaged with around 1400 children in the last year and assisted in almost 50 hours of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching for educational staff. Sustainable Dundee were part of the Keep Scotland Beautiful 'Source to Sea' school event which saw 40 pupils from across 5 schools in Dundee take part in a morning of activities focusing on the journey of litter down the Tay into the sea and included conducting a survey on attitudes towards litters with members of the public. Pupils from several Dundee schools are getting involved with The Dundee Climate Fund sculpture which will be installed at the University of Dundee Botanic Gardens by creating small ceramic bees to be included on the sculpture.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2022/23</b>
Work with volunteers, including those with physical and mental health issues in biodiversity projects across Dundee	The Countryside Rangers facilitated around 1900 hours of volunteering in 22/23. Volunteers assisted with various practical conservation tasks such as tree planting, litter picking, making bird and bat boxes and survey work. There was a wide range of people who volunteered their time including children, retired people, corporate groups, people with mental health issues and recent refugees. It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) is designed to attract volunteer-led community groups which are cleaning and beautifying their local neighbourhoods. There are 12 groups in Dundee including community gardens, school Eco-groups and Friends of parks groups. Nine of these groups have been awarded an Outstanding level of achievement and two a Thriving level, which are the top two tiers of achievement. Ten were also awarded a Certificate of Distinction for groups which have consistently grown and improved over the years of taking part.
Continue to support and develop the Green Health Partnership to make the links between Biodiversity, greenspace and people's health	Dundee City Council continues to support the Green Health Partnership with the wider partnership of NHS Tayside, the third sector, communities, and universities. The Green Health Prescription has been rolled out to all GP surgeries in Dundee and also takes in many allied health professionals. This links together health care professionals, patients and opportunities for nature-based activities such as therapeutic gardening, woodland management, invasive species removal and citizen science projects.
Set up an annual workshop event on Biodiversity within the Council	All staff continue to be asked to complete Climate Literacy E-modules which include biodiversity as a topic. The Sustain Dundee arranged Climate Resilience Training for a number of staff across the council. This training explained in detail what climate resilience is and how this could be promoted and implemented by all areas of the council for both short- and long-term benefits.
Have an annual programme of events that is widely promoted and well attended	The Countryside Ranger Service carried out 15 events in the last year, including tree planting, marine watching, and family activities. The Council was also represented at a number of local and community events across the city to promote biodiversity and educate people on the wildlife that can be found on their doorsteps.
Set up a group to review current printed material about biodiversity	Although traditional print still remains important, particularly to those who do not have access to web and social media platforms, there is a gradual move away from print to electronically available information, this was particularly highlighted during the Covid Pandemic. Printed information should still be reviewed in order to ensure that the information provided is clear and up to date but it is important to embrace new ways of promoting biodiversity. New signs installed at biodiversity and naturalised grassland sites in Dundee use minimal wording but have a QR code leading to further

Actions	Progress 2022/23
	information online. In early 2023, Dundee City Council ran a social media and radio campaign and produced a short animation highlighting the benefits of longer grass in our parks. Advertising this way reaches a wider demographic and provides engagement analytics. This allows for messages to remain fresh, topical and on brand. This animation can be viewed <a href="#">here</a> .
Review the information on the DCC website relating to greenspace and biodiversity	The Council's <a href="#">biodiversity webpage</a> still continues to receive numerous hits. As well as information on the Biodiversity Action Plan and signposting to other useful sources of information, it includes a short animation highlighting the benefits of our biodiversity and naturalised grassland areas and links to information on Ash Dieback and the recent tree planting project. Information will continue to be updated and added as required.
Collate information and feedback from the public regarding biodiversity	Dundee City Council continue to work with community groups and feedback on biodiversity is often through channels such as local Community Officers, Area Officers and the Greenspace Team. Council Officers respond to enquiries from members of the public on a range of issues relating to greenspaces both directly and through local Elected Members. When an issue is generating, or expected to generate numerous enquiries, additional information is put onto the Council website. Topics where this has happened include Ash Dieback, biodiversity and naturalised grasslands and the recent Climate Resilient Woodland Project.

## Recording

Actions	Progress 2022/23
Explore the establishment of a Regional Hub for biological records in partnership with a number of organisations	The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) recently received Scottish Government funding for 'The Better Biodiversity Data' project. This project seeks to establish a national recording hub for Scotland as a co-ordinating body, secure funding for local record centres and recording groups and establish a single, Scotland wide data management system. Officers to lead this project have been recently appointed and it is hoped that Council Officers can connect with the project to achieve good outcomes for data collected in Dundee.
Engage people in monitoring and surveying of nature across Dundee, creating a volunteer base which is enthusiastic and knowledgeable	The Countryside Rangers and Community Environment Officer support a number of volunteers to conduct bumblebee and butterfly transects across the city. Dundee has signed up to take part in the <a href="#">City Nature Challenge</a> in 2023. This challenge is an international event, motivating people around the world to find and record wildlife in their cities. Dundee is one of 3 Scottish Cities participating this

Actions	Progress 2022/23
	year and the Community Environment Officer has been carrying out promotional work in the lead up to the event.

### Geodiversity

Actions	Progress 2022/23
To survey and assess the condition of the current geodiversity sites in Dundee, making recommendations on any remedial action required Dundee City Council will consider becoming a signatory to the Scottish Geodiversity Charter	Geodiversity work has been impacted by recent Covid restrictions and focus on other areas within the Biodiversity Action Plan. It is hoped that resources can be found to take these actions forward in the coming year.
To survey any potential new geodiversity sites.	
To ensure that geodiversity is taken into consideration when new planning application are considered	No applications have been received which adversely impact on Dundee's Local Geodiversity sites.

### Looking Forward

Since this Biodiversity Action Plan was published over three years ago, there have been some significant changes. Although the pandemic is slowly starting to fade from people's minds, the long-term effects on people's connection to nature and greenspaces and on Council resources continues to be felt. As the country continues to work towards a 'Green Recovery', additional funding streams for biodiversity have been made available. Although this funding is very welcome and allows for more ambitious projects, it also further stretches resources to obtain and manage. Issues such as Ash Dieback have become more pressing and should require to be at the forefront of the plan going forward. The Council's technological capabilities have improved as more people work remotely; updates to GIS software in particular, mean that information can be shared more widely and used to plan more effectively.

Several changes to national and international strategies and targets have happened over the last 3 years. 2022 saw the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) which took place in Montreal, Canada. This meeting led to a landmark agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and a new set of global targets for biodiversity, called the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, was signed by more 200 countries including the UK. The Scottish Government published a new draft of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy last year to incorporate these new anticipated targets

and a final version of the strategy along with a delivery plan will be published in 2023. In addition, Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was published and recognised that decisions about development will impact on generations to come and has put the global climate and nature crises at the heart of its vision. Therefore, it is recognised that it is timely to review the actions within Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan. This should be carried out in consultation with relevant conservation organisations and local groups over the next year. Along with ensuring that the actions continue to align with current national and international strategies and targets, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that our actions are flexible and able to adapt to any further changes. The outcomes should be measurable and reportable, both internally and to Scottish Government. The format could also be improved to make the plan more engaging and appeal to a wider audience in an effort to encourage wider participation in meeting the actions.

Upcoming potential and planned initiatives which will improve / affect biodiversity:

- **Nature Restoration Fund**

The Scottish Government will be awarding Nature Restoration Funding to all Local Authorities again in the coming years. Detail of Dundee's allocation for 23/34 is yet to be announced.

- **Ash Dieback Plan**

It has become apparent in the last few years that ash trees within Dundee are now being significantly affected by Ash Dieback disease. Survey work to identify to breadth and scope of this issue and the resources that might be required to deal with it began last Summer. This survey will be ongoing in 2023 and will allow further work to be carried out in managing affected trees. Planning on mitigation for the loss of these trees will also continue.

- **Eden Wildflower Areas**

Dundee City Council has been working in partnership with Eden, with funding from the Alexander Moncur Trust to enhance previously identified biodiversity areas in the city. Work to expand the areas of wildflowers at Camperdown Park and along Riverside Drive will continue in 2023.

- **Urban Re-leaf**

Urban Re-Leaf is a new four-year cross-cultural EU project supported by Horizon Europe funding, that aims to co-create citizen-powered data ecosystems to support climate change adaptation, green infrastructure, and urban design planning. The University of Dundee will collaborate with Dundee City Council to deliver a two-year citizen sensing pilot monitoring a range of environmental issues which relate to Dundee's green transitions for the built environment.

## **Challenges**

The challenges faced in the delivery of this plan remain unchanged. Dundee City Council continues to carefully balance resources to maintain high quality services. Careful planning and continuing collaboration between Council services and external partner organisations is required in order to ensure the best use of staff time and resources moving forward and to ensure that local, national and international obligations and targets can be met.

Officers will continue to apply for suitable funding, ensuring that all projects fit with current plans and strategies to ensure an overall benefit for the City and the wider environment with a focus on partnership working. Collaborative planning will be essential to allow Council officers to submit applications quickly and successfully and will ensure that sufficient resources are available to carry out the work on the ground.

Dundee City Council will continue to work on ways in which to deliver appropriate training to staff, seeking advice from external organisations where appropriate.

## APPENDIX 2

### The use of herbicides in Dundee

Herbicides have been traditionally used to control grass and weed growth both in the built and greenspace environment.

Through regulation, the variety of herbicides available for use has gradually declined over time but the range of tasks which it is required for has not, particularly in the built environment. Dundee City Council controls weed growth in hard landscaping / streetscape in areas such as pavements / paving, drainage channels, lamp post / road sign bases, gratings, wall bases, and many other situations where weeds can grow. Without weed control, detritus can quickly build up and cause issues such as potential trip hazards and exacerbate flooding.

Herbicides are also used in parks and other greenspace environments to control excess growth at grass / path and road edges, along fenced areas and to control weed growth in newly planted tree / shrub areas. Herbicide is also used to spot treat pernicious weeds in grass and planted areas. More recently, herbicide has been used to treat non-native invasive species such as Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. Control of these species is necessary to protect Dundee's biodiversity. Giant Hogweed also is a public health risk, especially adjacent to paths and publicly accessible spaces.

The City Council regularly monitors herbicide application use and application. The aim is to reduce use through the increased sustainable management and design of streetscape and greenspace environments. In 2022, new equipment was purchased to mechanically remove weeds from hard surfaces and the effectiveness of these over time will be monitored.

**Table 1.** Herbicide use by Dundee City Council over the last 5 years

Product	Litres/year				
	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
<b>Round Up Provantage</b>	2880	2500	2150	1010	1020
<b>Pistol</b>	20	20	0	0	0
<b>Nomix Dual</b>	0	75	0	0	0
<b>Glymark - Nomix</b>	115	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Litres</b>	<b>3015</b>	<b>2595</b>	<b>2150</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>1020</b>

The table above summarises Dundee City Council's overall use of herbicides since 2018/19. It is noted that there has been a slight increase of 10 litres from 21/22 to 22/23. This is mainly due to the weather conditions, which were favourable to greater weed growth in 22/23. However, there has been a reduction of around 45% since the Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 2020 with an overall reduction of 66.5% since 2018/19.

Whilst this represents significant progress in reduced herbicide volumes, the use of glyphosate remains under continuous review with the aim to further reduce the reliance on this herbicide and to consider the introduction of alternative weed control options, where possible.

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