

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE–
20 NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT ON: BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2021-2023

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 321-2023

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Dundee City Council's Biodiversity Duty Report, highlighting biodiversity action from 2021-2023, in compliance with its legal duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the requirement to make the report publicly available, under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee approves the report, notes the achievements and remits the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to make the report publicly available.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Reference is made to Article VI of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 16th November 2020 - report [286-2020](#) refers, which approved the Biodiversity Duty Report 2017-2020. This report presents a further update and provides Dundee City Council's Biodiversity Duty Report for the most recent reporting period 2021-2023.

4.1.2 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.' In addition, Local Authorities in Scotland have a requirement to report on their Biodiversity Duty every three years as outlined in the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. The report should be publicly available and should outline the actions the public body has taken to meet this biodiversity duty. This report is due to be submitted by 31st December 2023 and is attached at Appendix 1. The Biodiversity Duty Report format reflects the latest templates provided by the Scottish Government through communication from Lorna Slater (Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity) on 7th September 2023. It is noted that the reporting format is to be reviewed for subsequent periods and will reflect feedback and updated policy drivers.

4.1.3 The implementation of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2030 provides a basis for the reporting required. Annual reports on the progress of actions are submitted to committee with the Biodiversity Duty Report being an amalgamation of these.

4.2 Context

4.2.1 There have been a number of significant amendments and additions to national and international policies relating to biodiversity during the current reporting period.

4.2.2 In December 2022, the delayed 15th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) was held in Montreal at which the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

(GBF) was adopted. This framework sets out new global targets for biodiversity for 2030. The mission of the framework for the period up to 2030, towards the 2050 vision is 'to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of the people and the planet'.

4.2.3 Shortly after this, the Scottish Government published an updated draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) which seeks to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and reverse loss with large scale restoration by 2045. The SBS will be implemented through a series of 5-year delivery plans. The first of these, released in late summer 2023, is currently going through a period of consultation alongside frameworks for Nature Networks and protecting at least 30% of our lands and seas by 2030 (30 by 30), which are the key mechanisms for the delivery of targets. The SBS will sit alongside the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan and the transition to Net Zero.

4.2.4 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), adopted by Scottish Ministers in early 2023, is another important mechanism for protecting and enhancing Scotland's biodiversity. This contains policies which focus on methods to manage future development sustainably and to optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including biodiversity. NPF4 must be reflected locally through an updated Local Development Plan and implemented by the planning application procedure.

4.3 Highlights and Achievements

4.3.1 In Dundee, biodiversity encompasses the multitude of species and habitats present within the city. Dundee City Council has progressed and completed actions which help safeguard biodiversity and encourage communities to take an active interest in the local environment. These actions have been guided by Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which focuses on the ecosystems, habitats and species most in need and ensures prioritisation of resources at a local level. The plan sets out clear objectives and targets to enable the monitoring of progress and enables measurement of any achievements. The BAP aligns with other council strategies such as the Climate Action Plan and The City Plan.

4.3.2 The planting of 28,000 native trees in spring 2023 has added a significant area to the woodland habitat of Dundee. The Tr-Action: Planting Climate Resilient Woodlands in Dundee Project was funded primarily by a successful application to the Nature Restoration Fund. The £300,000 project resulted in the creation of 12 hectares of native woodland across three sites, Riverside Nature Park, Balgay Hill and an area adjacent to Clatto Country Park. The main aims of this project were to create bigger, better and more connected woodland in Dundee, increase the amount of carbon storage and sequestration in the city and increase woodland diversity and resilience to climate change.

4.3.3 Other highlights contained within the Biodiversity Duty Report, at Appendix 1, include: -

- Ash Dieback - this fungal disease has become a significant threat to ash trees in the city. A new GIS based tree management platform has been developed and contains a two-year survey of 3,200 ash trees on council property. Identification of £400,000 by Dundee City Council and the subsequent procurement of additional survey and felling contractor services will enable the Council to further the successful management of the disease and ensure the safety of communities. Dundee City Council is one of the Local Authorities leading the way in this work and is providing examples of best practice to others throughout Scotland.
- Camperdown Growing Hub - the £1.2 million project to transform an area of Camperdown Park into a functional food growing area was realised in 2023, with the completion of a 'climate friendly' building. The project is being run in partnership with 'The Campy Growers' and employs 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 group are actively creating habitat and growing with nature, fruit trees have already been planted and plans to create wetland habitat have begun.

- Biodiversity and naturalised grassland - in addition to existing wildflower meadows across parks and greenspaces, EDEN have established an additional 3.3 hectares in Council owned spaces. The Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel project includes the creation of 3 hectares of native coastal grassland. Over 50,000 native bulbs have been planted, as well as 10,000 pollinator friendly allium bulbs.
- Herbicide use - building on the success of previous reporting periods, the Council has reduced its use of herbicide by a further 45%, with an overall reduction of 65% since 2018.
- Community engagement - over of 4,000 hours of greenspace volunteering has been completed, 1,800 school children visited greenspaces, 50 hours of STEM teacher training delivered and 169 litter picks carried out by communities and volunteers. A biodiversity themed awareness campaign received 100,500 digital engagements.
- Awards - in recognition of its biodiversity and wider environmental work, the Council received the Wright Sustainability Trophy and were awarded a Gold medal in the Beautiful Scotland campaign. The Council are also in receipt of 7 Green Flags and a Scottish Beach Award. Beautiful Scotland also recognise a number of It's Your Neighbourhood groups.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to the 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 Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

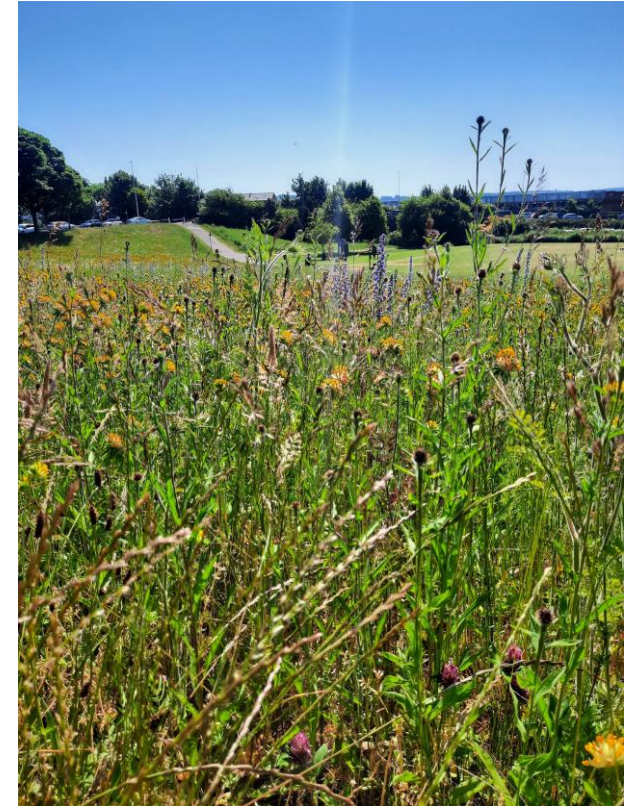
- Article VI of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 16th November 2020 - report [286-2020](#), which approved the Biodiversity Duty Report 2017-2020.
- Article VII of the minute of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 13th January 2020 - report [14-2020](#), which approved the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- The Annual Biodiversity Action Plan Updates-
 - Report [18-2021](#)
 - Report [128-2022](#)
 - Report [158-2023](#)

Elaine Zwirlein
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

Tony Boyle
Head of Environment

16th October 2023

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BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

2021-2023

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Introduction

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 states that “It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”. This requirement is known as the Biodiversity Duty. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (WANE) 2011 requires all public bodies to prepare and publish a report on their delivery of the Biodiversity Duty. Reports should be produced and made public every three years.

As stated in guidance provided by NatureScot, the Biodiversity Duty is not only about protecting biodiversity through managing specific sites, habitats and species, but it also aims to:

- Increase the level of understanding and connection between people and the living environment;
- Promote consideration of all our impacts on the natural world through our actions and decisions, including through procurement and use of resources; and,
- Encourage staff, partners and customers to engage with, understand and consider biodiversity.

This is the third Biodiversity Duty produced by Dundee City Council and covers the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2023. It evidences delivery of Dundee City Council’s Biodiversity Duty during this period and follows the most recent Scottish Government / NatureScot guidance.

Report Outline

Section 1: Introductory information about Dundee City Council

Section 2: Actions to protect and enhance biodiversity

Section 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity

Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity

Section 5: Public engagement and workforce development

Section 6: Research and monitoring

Section 7: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

This report will be made available on the [Council’s website](#), a copy can also be requested via e-mail: environment@dundeecity.gov.uk.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The Dundee City Council area covers 60 square kilometres and is, geographically, the smallest local authority area in Scotland with a population of approximately 149,300. The council is responsible for the management and maintenance of a large amount of land across the city as well as many buildings. It also provides a planning role in regulating development and infrastructure.

Dundee City Council has five direct service areas. Twenty-nine elected members oversee these through various service committees. The delivery of services by Leisure and Culture Dundee and Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership are overseen by boards, on which Dundee City Council is represented.

Dundee City Council service areas:

1. **Chief Executive** - providing strategic leadership for the council, supporting the management team and elected members in the development and delivery of the council's aims and policy objectives, achieving better outcomes for the city. Ensures the council has strong links with partners and the wider Dundee community and national agencies.
2. **Corporate Services** - provide central support functions to all service areas and a number of direct services to the general public.
3. **City Development** - promotion of jobs in the local economy, the maintenance of the city's road network, transportation facilities and council properties and the control of development and building operations.
4. **Children and Families Service** - ensures that children, young people and their families are at the heart of the decision-making process to provide them with the best possible start in life.
5. **Neighbourhood Services** - Services include the management and maintenance of housing and the environment, supporting people to develop their communities and keeping people safe and healthy.

The Environment Service within Neighbourhood Services takes a lead role in delivering the biodiversity duty. The Greenspace Officer has a specific remit to further the conservation of biodiversity through the delivery of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan and provides advice, guidance and support to Council services helping to identify and encourage actions to further the conservation of biodiversity, in line with the Biodiversity Duty.

On 10th July 2023 Dundee City Council agreed the formation of a new committee structure. The Climate, Environment and Biodiversity Committee was created and is responsible for a number of issues including biodiversity strategies, activities and reports and climate change activity and reports. Further information is available [here](#) .

SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Introduction

Dundee City Council has undertaken a range of projects over the last 3 years to directly benefit biodiversity or to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss. The Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan has provided the framework to direct and prioritise work in this area. An update on the actions within the plan are reported back to council committee annually.

Dundee City Council would like to acknowledge the support provided by the Scottish Government through the Nature Restoration Fund. A total of £195K was directly allocated up to April 2023 with an additional £265,000 awarded following a successful application to the competitive strand of the fund in 22/23. This funding has enabled more projects to be completed within a faster timescale or with added value.

Projects

Woodland	Statistics
<p>Dundee City Council continues to manage around 279 ha of urban woodlands. One of the main challenges in the last 3 years has been the damage caused to our woodlands by Storm Arwen and subsequent storms in the winter of 2021/22. Large areas of woodlands were affected, with Templeton Woods, Balgay Hill, Reres Hill and the Law bearing the brunt. Since the removal of fallen and damaged trees, work has been ongoing to address re-planting and regeneration of these areas. Re-planting at Templeton Woods has provided the opportunity to diversify the tree species and habitats, with the Countryside Ranger Service working with volunteers and members of the public to carry out the planting and to enhance educational opportunities.</p> <p>Work has been carried out on Balgay Hill to thin out an area of semi mature woodland and to prune back vegetation from path edges to facilitate access and visitor enjoyment. A number of small native trees have been planted to create a new understory in some parts of the hill and some larger oak trees were planted to replace gaps in the canopy.</p> <p>Trees were planted at Kelly Field Park to help diversify the species mix and to provide additional habitat.</p> <p>The Tr-Action: Planting Climate Resilient Woodlands in Dundee Project. Funded primarily by the Nature Restoration Fund, new native woodland has been created at three sites across Dundee, Riverside Nature Park, Balgay Hill and an area adjacent to Clatto Country Park. Further details provided in Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity.</p>	<p>17 ha of storm damaged woodland managed.</p> <p>4,000 native tree whips planted.</p> <p>45 standard sized trees planted in parks</p> <p>12 hectares (28,000 trees) of native woodland created</p>

<p>An internal Ash Dieback Working Group was set up in 2021 to look at the preparation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan. Ash Dieback has become a significant threat to ash trees in Dundee and an assessment of the resources required to ensure the safety of people and property, as well as safeguarding our tree resource for the future, was required. Survey work and management of affected trees commenced in May 2022. Currently DCC continues to assess and manage the threat to ash trees in the city from Ash Dieback. A new GIS based tree management system has been implemented for ash trees. The survey initially focused on high traffic, high risk areas of the city but all areas have now been assessed. A full update on the progress of this plan was sent to Neighbourhood Services committee in January 2023 (report no. 5-2023). Information for the general public on this disease has been provided and promoted on the Council website here. A further report submitted to Neighbourhood Services in August 2023 (report no. 214-2023) made provision of £400,000 to further the management of the disease through the procurement of survey and arboricultural services.</p>	<p>3200 Ash trees surveyed.</p> <p>60 dangerous Ash trees removed.</p>
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Grassland	Statistics
<p>Since 2020 Dundee City Council has been working with local communities to change grassland management in 27 local greenspaces to better benefit biodiversity. Grassland management in these areas is either naturalised grass (where grass is cut once or twice a year and the cuttings are left in situ), or biodiversity grass (where grass is cut once or twice a year and the cuttings are removed). The assigned management type is based on an assessment of the original grassland quality and areas already with a reasonable mix of species have been designated as biodiversity areas. Using additional funding, such as Nature Restoration Fund, some of these areas have since undergone further enhancement with 2 areas being sown with yellow rattle, 2 areas being sown with a perennial wildflower mix and one area has been planted with a mix of spring bulbs to create a spring meadow. Some of the naturalised areas have also been enhanced with the planting of allium bulbs throughout. Not only does this provide some extra forage for pollinators but also provides a welcome splash of colour.</p> <p>The naturalised / biodiversity grassland areas add to the number of perennial wildflower meadows which continue to be maintained across the city at sites such as Riverside Nature Park, Trottick Ponds Local Nature Reserve and the Law.</p> <p>DCC is working in partnership with Friends of Riverside Nature Park to ensure the successful management of the meadow area. Greater yellow rattle, planted under special license, successfully flowered and set seed in the park for the first time during 2021 and continues to be protected and thrive. Access to the meadow areas is restricted for part of the year to protect ground nesting birds especially skylarks. This restriction and its enforcement by council officers and the Friends of Group has</p>	<p>49 ha naturalised grass. 10 ha biodiversity grass (1.3 ha sown with yellow rattle, 0.6 ha sown with perennial meadow wildflower mix). 50,000 spring bulbs planted. 10,000 allium bulbs planted. 3.4 ha perennial wildflower meadows managed Approximately 20</p>

<p>resulted in increased breeding pairs of skylarks to approximately 20 pairs, up from 7 in 2018.</p> <p>Dundee City Council continues to sow a number of annual wildflower areas along road verges which provide a welcome to the city as well as food and habitat for pollinators and other species.</p>	<p>breeding pairs of skylarks</p> <p>1 ha annual wildflower areas.</p>
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<p>Freshwater</p>	<p>Statistics</p>
<p>Den O Mains is an area of Caird Park, Dundee in which two large ponds have been formed on the Gelly Burn. Whilst originally largely ornamental, the ponds have become more natural over time providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. However, during this time silt has built up reducing the amount of open water, slowing water flow and enabling successional plants such as willow to establish decreasing the water habitat. SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) granted Dundee City Council a license to dredge the area. This work was carried out over two years to minimise disruption to biodiversity.</p> <p>Work was carried out at Trottick Mill Ponds Local Nature Reserve to improve the flow of water into and out of the ponds. This involved removal of silt from historic lades and repairs to the stone walls, replacement of a sluice gate and an outflow grill. There were also repairs made to gabions which reinforced part of the ponds edge. This work will allow the control of waterflow through the ponds, reducing flooding in the winter and prevent drying out in the summer.</p> <p>After consultation with representatives from the Stobswell Community Forum and The Friends of Stobsmuir Park, improvements were carried out at Stobsmuir ponds. These included the installation of rock islands with aquatic plants, new interpretation and wildflower planting to increase the biodiversity of the north pond and surrounding area, improve water quality.</p> <p>As part of the council's internal green flag assessment of our parks, two ponds at Camperdown Park were highlighted as requiring improvements. Some invasive vegetation was removed from around the ponds, new rock islands were created and planted with a mix of water plants and the surrounding areas were improved with new tree planting and wildflower seed. Two new pond dipping platforms and new interpretation signs were installed.</p>	<p>500m3 of silt removed from ponds.</p> <p>4 city ponds enhanced for wildlife through planting, the creation of new rock islands and lade restoration.</p>

Marine	Statistics
<p>Works are ongoing to protect and manage the Broughty Ferry sand dune range to provide effective natural flood protection. Non-indigenous plants have been removed and new native species have been planted to stabilise the sand dunes. The management of the dunes is ongoing and regular inspections are being undertaken to identify additional opportunities to protect and enhance the sand dune habitat. Following recent inspections, there is now confirmation that these works have supported the growth of the dunes and further establishment of grasses and embryo dunes.</p> <p>Upstream Battle on the Tay launched in August 2021, this Keep Scotland Beautiful campaign has a source to sea approach to tackling marine litter and involves collaboration across the relevant local authority areas and community involvement. Community-led Anchor Groups have been identified for Dundee, each of which will raise awareness, gather litter data, and encourage participation.</p> <p>Broughty Ferry Beach continues to achieve Scotland's Beach Award and an 'Excellent' classification for EU bathing water quality.</p> <p>Dundee City Council works with and supports a number of individuals and community groups who help to litter pick along the beach front area. This helps to reduce the amount of litter which is harmful to our intertidal and marine wildlife.</p>	<p>1 ha of sand dunes managed for natural flood defence.</p> <p>5 community Anchor groups in Dundee for Upstream Battle on the Tay.</p> <p>91 litter picks.</p>

Urban	Statistics
<p>Dundee City Council continuously reviews its use of herbicide 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 street sweeping has been reviewed, this removes the detritus that builds up allowing weeds to colonise.</p> <p>In order to improve the biodiversity within our cemeteries, bird and bat boxes have been installed. This provided additional homes for these animals and an opportunity for awareness raising work with the cemetery staff by the Countryside Rangers.</p> <p>Ornamental flower beds were updated and improved at Seabraes. Plant species, although not all native, were all pollinator friendly and the site has become a haven for invertebrates.</p>	<p>Overall reduction in herbicide of over 65% in the last 5 years with a 45% reduction in herbicide usage in the current reporting period.</p> <p>75 bird boxes and 50 bat boxes installed.</p>

<p>New pocket parks were created, one at Lorimer Street and one at Moncur Crescent. The planting here involved new trees and herbaceous perennials and grasses, creating new habitats in very urban areas.</p> <p>Road drains occurring on routes which frogs and toads use regularly have been shown to have a significant effect on their mortality. Working in partnership with the Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group, two areas of Dundee in Panmurefield and Ballumbie were identified as being suitable for the installation of bespoke amphibian ladders. The site at Ballumbie complemented an ongoing Angus Council project. Two workshops were held for volunteers to learn more about amphibians and assist with the assembly and installation of the ladders.</p>	<p>650m² of ornamental flower beds planted with biodiversity friendly species.</p> <p>2 new pocket parks created.</p> <p>100 amphibian ladders in roadside gully pot drains.</p>
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Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	Statistics
<p>Dundee City Council has carried out grey squirrel control across the city for a significant number of years. This has been supported by Scottish Forestry funding but came to an end in 2022. Alternative funding continues to be sought in order to help protect Dundee's population of Red Squirrels.</p> <p>Using available legislation, Environmental Health Officers request that private landowners control giant hogweed on their property resulting in mixed success. More appropriate legislative powers lie with NatureScot. To aid the implementation of this, the Council provided information on all known landowners within Dundee, and also in Angus's Dighty catchment to assist NatureScot in delivering action. Ongoing mapping shows a significant reduction of giant hogweed particularly on Dundee City Council controlled sites, where regular control is carried out. However, new infestations continue to appear and will do so until control further upstream in Angus is delivered. While the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) has supported with advice to private owners up stream of Dundee, NatureScot has advised that they do not have the resources to deliver legal action or grants for landowners within the city boundary. In addition to giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also subject to targeted control.</p>	<p>250 grey squirrels removed.</p> <p>40 ha of DCC owned areas with giant hogweed, mapped and controlled.</p> <p>90 ha of privately-owned areas with giant hogweed mapped.</p>

Planning	Statistics
<p>Council Officers from the Greenspace Team provide advice on trees and biodiversity for appropriate planning applications. In the last 3 years advice on 128 applications has been given. Of these, 6 were on or near Locally Important Conservation Sites (LINCS), 23 involved trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's), 32 were in Conservation Areas. In addition, comments have also been provided for 13 pre-applications, 2 EIA Scoping Reports and officers have assisted in discharging conditions on 25 applications.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement Officers have worked on several cases relating to the unauthorised felling of trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) or those within Conservation Areas. They continue to work with the members of the public, DCC Forestry Officer and the Greenspace Team to investigate such cases and resolve them with replacement planting.</p>	<p>128 Applications assessed in terms of biodiversity in total.</p> <p>11 TPO enforcement cases</p>

SECTION 3: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

In order to effectively carry out the biodiversity duty, Dundee City Council incorporates biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans and strategies. Those most relevant to biodiversity are: -

- [Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2030](#)
- [Dundee Climate Action Plan 2019](#)

Other plans and strategies which incorporate measures for the conservation of biodiversity are: -

- [TAYplan Strategic Development Plan 2016-2036](#)
- [City Plan 2017-2026](#)
- [The Council Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Local Development Plan 2019](#)
 - [Green Network Supplementary Guidance](#)
- [Strategic Forest Plan for Dundee City Woodlands 2015-2025](#)

Other plans and strategies which refer to biodiversity include the [Local Housing Strategy](#) and the [Local Food Growing Strategy](#).

All new policies, plans and strategies are screened for an Environmental Impact Assessment. This process ensures that significant environmental effects (including biodiversity) arising from the development of strategies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision-makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided. All screening determinations and Environmental Reports are publicised on the Council's website [here](#).

In September 2021 Dundee City Council demonstrated their ongoing commitment to tackle climate change and shift towards a lower-carbon, more inclusive society through becoming signatories to a number of pledges. These included C40 Cities: Race to Net Zero, The Edinburgh Declaration and the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration.

SECTION 4: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Climate change is one of the direct drivers of biodiversity loss and also increases the effects of other drivers such as the spread of invasive, non-native species and pests and diseases. Nature based solutions can play an important role in helping and enhance biodiversity whilst working towards achieving net zero targets and improving quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the city.

Completed Projects

Tr-Action: Planting Climate Resilient Woodlands in Dundee	Statistics
<p>The main aims of this project were to create bigger, better and more connected woodland in Dundee, increase the amount of carbon storage and sequestration in the city and increase woodland diversity and resilience to climate change. Native woodland has been planted at three sites across Dundee at Riverside Nature Park, Balgay Hill and an area adjacent to Clatto Country Park. The trees planted are all native to the UK. Some species such as whitebeam and hornbeam are usually native to regions further south in the UK but the decision was made to include them as they are already present in the area and may adapt well to our locally changing climate. The 17 species chosen were mainly broadleaved, with the exception of Scots pine. In addition to being native, the mix of species was chosen based on site conditions as well as consideration given to local residents in terms of final canopy height. This £300,000 project was mainly funded through a successful application to the Nature Restoration Fund (£265,000).</p>	<p>12 ha of new native woodland, 28,000 native trees planted.</p>
Community Growing	Statistics
<p>The Dundee Local Food Growing Strategy was agreed in August 2020 with the aims including ‘to promote good environmental practice within growing spaces’. Growing your own produce has a number of proven benefits for health and the environment. In addition to the traditional allotment sites, there is a wide and inspiring network of community growing spaces throughout Dundee, which have been developed by organisations, as well as Dundee City Council. A number of Council developed projects are now run by local communities.</p> <p>One of the largest projects in the last three years has been the £1.2 million construction of Camperdown Growing Hub at</p>	<p>26 Community Gardens 550 Allotment plots 200 Fruit trees planted</p>

<p>Camperdown Park. This is a functional food growing garden with several growing tunnels. With significant officer support from the Council's Community Allotment Officer, the Campy Growers are progressing the project 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, fruit trees have already been planted and plans to create wetland habitat have begun.</p>	
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Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel Project	Statistics
<p>Work has been ongoing since 2019 to develop and carry out proposals to improve the NCN-01 coastal path between Broughty Ferry Castle and Monifieth. The project involves a number of improvements to the local wildlife and biodiversity in the area. Landscaping and grassland/wildflower planting to create new coastal grassland habitat and improved protection of existing dunes, extending the tree planting along the Esplanade, removal of invasive plant species throughout the area and planting of screening species to protect an important bird roosting area within the Monifieth SSSI. Further information on this project can be found here.</p>	<p>3 ha new coastal grassland.</p>

Ongoing projects

Eden Project

Dundee City Council has been working with the Eden Project to bring an exciting **new development to the city**. This new project will draw on the city's rich history and will play an important role in the ongoing regeneration of the Dundee waterfront area. The proposed project will transform a former gasworks into a beacon for regeneration and tourism. Initial plans show that the proposal will create a number of new habitats on the site including freshwater, woodland and grassland.

In the last 3 years, in preparation for the project, the council has worked with Eden to create several **new wildflower meadows** across the city extending to 3.3ha. Sites include Camperdown Park, Morgan Academy and Riverside Drive. The creation of these new areas has involved community participation in seed growing and collection. Each area has interpretation signage highlighting the benefits that these habitats will bring.

St Mary's/ St Leonard's Park

The St Leonard's Park project is the first phase of a storm water drainage strategy for the St Mary's area of Dundee, developed jointly by Scottish Water and Dundee City Council in consultation with partners such as SEPA and NatureScot. The main focus is to reduce the risk of flooding in this area by **introducing blue-green infrastructure**. The strategy proposes to reinstate the historic Back Burn above ground through St Leonard's Park and surrounding area, which floods regularly during periods of heavy rainfall. Planned landscaping will allow this water to flow into the Dighty Burn, taking with it any excess surface water. This will then enable Scottish Water to disconnect surface water from the combined sewer, freeing up capacity in the system and significantly reducing the risk of flooding. A feasibility study and outline design for the project has now been completed with funding identified to take this on to a more detailed design stage. Further information on this project can be found [here](#).

Water Resilient Dundee: City Wide Blue-Green Infrastructure Project

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, such as health, placemaking and biodiversity benefits. Existing information held 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, and is expected to report in early 2024.

Dighty Restoration Project

Dundee City Council were approached by SEPA to work in partnership on a new project to make improvements to around 4km of the Dighty Burn. Areas for enhancement were identified following morphological surveys of the burn carried out by SEPA. 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 a new school 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 recent successful funding application to the Water Environment Fund (WEF) will allow for an 18-month feasibility report to be developed, starting in 2024, including funds towards a co-ordination resource.

The main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years

As stated in Dundee's Climate Action Plan, Dundee's climate is set to get warmer and drier in the summer and milder and wetter in the winter. It is also expected that Dundee will experience higher incidences of extreme weather events such as flooding and storms and a rise in sea level around the coast. What is considered a heatwave or extremely hot summer today will occur more frequently in future.

In preparation for the Climate Action Plan and as required by the Covenant of Mayors, a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment of ten policy sectors was carried out in small workshops with key resources in each policy sector to determine the nature and extent of climate related risks in Dundee. The expected impacts to Environment and Biodiversity were thought to be ecosystem degradation, species migration, insect infestation, habitat loss due to flooding and access to food.

As the climate changes, species will need opportunities to colonise areas with more suitable conditions. To achieve this and within the Dundee's urban fabric, appropriate routes and areas of habitat are imperative via a network. Dundee City Council currently have supplementary Green Network guidance supporting the Local Plan. This guidance will provide a basis to more accurately map the current Nature Network. Working with the new Scottish Government and NatureScot Nature Network Framework guidance, this process will assist in highlighting future opportunities for improvement and also

identify constraints. One of the main constraints already identified is that Dundee is a small and very urban Local Authority. The opportunities for creating new habitats are therefore limited. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), recently issued by the Scottish Government, sets out how planning authorities can move towards sustainable development. NatureScot has developed guidance to support this and issued biodiversity advice for developers. This new guidance is already being taken forward by Dundee City Council and will be embedded into the next Local Development Plan.

SECTION 5: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Public Engagement

Beautiful Scotland	Statistics
<p>Beautiful Scotland is a long-established environmental improvement campaign and run by Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), under the Britain in Bloom campaign. This competition supports community groups across Scotland which seek to improve and enhance their local environment. The Council is a key partner in the Dundee city entry, known as Bonnie Dundee, and works closely with the local volunteers who take forward the city's application each year. A separate entry has also been submitted by the Broughty Ferry in Bloom volunteer group for the Broughty Ferry ward area in the past, which also has the support of the council. Both entries have had success in recent years having now achieved gold medal level. In the 2022 and 2023 Beautiful Scotland campaigns, Dundee City Council were awarded the Wright Sustainability Award for their work, including the Take Pride Campaign, the biodiversity grassland sites, the community work carried out by a variety of groups across the city and the city's commitment to active travel. Bonnie Dundee also won the RHS Growing Communities Discretionary Award in 2021.</p>	<p>Gold level City Award Wright Sustainability Award RHS Growing Communities Discretionary Award</p>
It's Your Neighbourhood	Statistics
<p>It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) is a sister programme of Beautiful Scotland. This is a non-competitive scheme designed to attract volunteer led community groups who wish to clean and beautify their local neighbourhood. The Council encourages groups to apply, where appropriate, so that they may benefit from the support, advice and encouragement on offer. Dundee's entrants vary from community allotments to out of school groups looking to encourage wildlife and grow fresh vegetables</p>	<p>12 IYN Groups</p>

Take Pride	Statistics
<p>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 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.</p>	<p>169 Litter picks across the city.</p>

Green Flag	Statistics
<p>The Keep Scotland Beautiful Green Flag Awards aim to ensure that everyone has access to high quality green spaces and to ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed by setting a standard of good management. Green flag sites are independently judged against several criteria including biodiversity, landscape and heritage.</p> <p>Dundee has a number of Green Flag sites across the city and new sites are added when resources are available.</p> <p>In addition to the independently judged Green Flag sites Dundee City Council has adopted this standard as a way of monitoring the quality of additional greenspaces across the city. Results have been fed back to local management teams and actions collated, which have been used to inform potential capital projects.</p> <p>Many parks in the city have an associated 'Friends Of' group. These groups are involved in the Green Flag audits and input their ideas and concerns into the resulting actions plans.</p>	<p>7 Green Flag Awards</p> <p>24 internal Green Flag site audits.</p> <p>10 Friends of Parks groups</p>

Countryside Ranger Service and Community Environment Officer	Statistics
<p>Dundee City Council’s Countryside Ranger Service are responsible for activities that benefit both the natural environment and associated public access and recreation. Their role is to encourage people to use their local greenspaces responsibly and promote awareness of the natural environment.</p> <p>The Rangers engage with a wide variety of volunteers from children to retired people, corporate groups, charity groups and recent refugees. Volunteers take on a wide variety of tasks including litter picks, habitat creation, bird and bat box building, butterfly and bee recording transects and invasive species removal. Volunteering increases the public’s knowledge of biodiversity and their local places as well as fostering a sense of stewardship.</p> <p>The Ranger Service run a number of seasonal public events each year. These include tree planting, bat walks, dolphin watching and children’s activities.</p> <p>Rangers work with schools by facilitating and leading trips to local greenspaces as well as informative school-based sessions. In 2022 they worked in partnership with local schools and NatureScot as part of ‘Raising Aspirations in Science Education’ (RAiSE). This Scottish Government backed project aims to improve science teaching in Scotland’s schools. In addition to assisting in outdoor visits to give students memorable experiences that help to educate and inspire them to find out more about nature, they also provided teacher training.</p> <p>Branching Out is an outdoor therapeutic programme for adults who use mental health services in Scotland. This project is run in Dundee by the Rangers and funded by Scottish Forestry. Participants of this programme receive a John Muir Award and are encouraged to continue their connection to nature by joining public volunteer groups. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Dundee City Council received funding that enabled the creation of a short-term Community Environment Officer post in October 2021. This officer raises awareness and promotes actions in Dundee’s parks and greenspaces which contribute to the city’s Climate Action Plan, particularly the role that they have in climate resilience and adaptation. Engaging local groups in the promotion of biodiversity and woodlands in greenspaces is key to this role and has been mainly achieved through engagement in the naturalised and biodiversity grasslands project. Activities have included wildflower seed sowing, bulb planting, bat box building and installation and running the City Nature Challenge for Dundee in 2023.</p>	<p>4,000 hours of volunteering</p> <p>45 Public Events</p> <p>1800 children engaged</p> <p>50 Hours of STEM teacher training</p> <p>6 (12 week) Branching Out sessions</p> <p>15 Public Volunteer Sessions</p>

Social Media and Radio campaign	Statistics
<p>In the spring of 2023 a short animation was produced to run online and via social media (can be viewed here). The animation highlighted the benefits of leaving longer grass areas within city parks. The wording from the animation was also turned into an engaging radio advert which was played on local radio stations through the Bauer Media group.</p>	<p>5600 people reached by Radio advert</p> <p>100,500 Engagements on Social Media</p>

Aligned initiatives	Statistics
<p>Green Health Partnership - together with the wider partnership of NHS Tayside, the third sector, communities, and universities a new referral route of the Green Health Prescription has been established, which links health care professionals, patients and opportunities for nature-based activities together. The Green Health Prescription has been rolled out to all GP surgeries in Dundee and also takes in many allied health professionals. Green health initiatives including SAMH, Wellbeing Works and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) among others have facilitated volunteer activities across a range of local greenspaces. Activities have included therapeutic gardening, general conservation, woodland management, invasive species removal, citizen science projects and food production.</p> <p>Further Information on this project can be found here.</p> <p>An event was held in Slessor Gardens in September 2021 to promote the opening of the new Cycle Hub and the COP26 in Glasgow. This event was well attended and included many stalls from various organisations, including Dundee City Council, highlighting the importance of biodiversity and ways in which members of the public could get involved at home.</p> <p>Green Health Week is run on an annual basis by the Green Health Partnership. Local providers run events and activities to encourage people to get active in their local greenspaces and to get involved with groups working to improve them.</p> <p>The Dundee City Council Sustainability & Climate Change team run several events to celebrate Climate Week. Biodiversity is an integral part of this.</p>	<p>More than 4000 Hours of volunteering</p>

Workforce Development

Council Wide Development Opportunities

Promoted as part of WWF's Earth Hour in March 2021, a series of **online staff briefings on Climate Change** were promoted throughout the organisation. Biodiversity was highlighted as a main topic for one of these briefings.

All staff have been asked to complete **Climate Literacy** e-modules which includes the importance of biodiversity.

In the run up to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow information was made available to all staff from the Council's Sustainability & Climate Change Team including information on biodiversity projects in the city and suggestions of actions that staff can take personally.

Staff Bulletins are prepared monthly for Neighbourhood Services. These bulletins highlight the work of Service Areas including many of the projects mentioned in this report. This ensures that more staff are aware of the projects and their expected outcomes.

Specific Training Opportunities

A number of Council Officers undertook training on **Climate Resilience** organised by the Council's Sustainability & Climate Change team. This training explained what climate resilience is and how this could be promoted and implemented for both short-term and long-term benefits.

A tool box talk was delivered to the Area Supervisors within Environment regarding **management of grasslands for biodiversity**. This covered how grassland management was changing and the reasons why. Potential issues and public perceptions were discussed and information provided to allow officers to speak with confidence to members of the public on the multiple benefits this would have for biodiversity, staff and the public.

Greenspace Scotland's **Park Managers Forum** provides support for people working for local authorities on parks and greenspaces in Scotland. The forum regularly shares information on topics such as nature restoration in parks and greenspaces, Open Space Strategies and best practice. DCC Greenspace Team gave a presentation on the Naturalised and Biodiversity Grasslands project to the forum in 2022.

The **Biodiversity Officers Forum** runs with support from NatureScot to allow Biodiversity Officers or staff responsible for Biodiversity Action Plans to meet quarterly to discuss relevant topics such as NPF4 and Nature Networks and to share best practice. This forum is attended by the Greenspace

Officer.

The **Scottish Tree Officers Group** is organised and run by a number of local authority Tree Officers on a voluntary basis. This group provides training on relevant arboricultural and forestry topics and facilitates the sharing of best practice. This is attended by staff in the forestry team and the Greenspace Officer attends an Ash Dieback subgroup.

SECTION 6: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Invasive Species Control

In order to correctly and efficiently control giant hogweed along the Dighty Burn, annual monitoring and mapping is required. This is carried out by Dundee City Council's Access Officer each spring. This information is then passed to the operatives who spray each section. A re-assessment is carried out in the summer to identify any patches missed or requiring further treatment and this is carried out as soon as possible. These maps are stored in the Council's GIS system. This information has been particularly useful to partnership working with NatureScot, Angus Council and local private landowners allowing for a co-ordinated response at a catchment level and the source of seed highest upstream being identified.

Ash Dieback Disease

The progress of Ash Dieback in the city highlighted the need for an efficient tree management system. Officers have worked to develop the Environmental Systems Research Institute's (ESRI) Tree Management Solution and adapt it for a specific ash dieback survey. Survey work was carried out over the last two years to locate and assess all ash trees on council owned land. As a result, there are now around 3200 trees logged and assessed on the system. A GIS based process has also been set up to allow for future re-surveys at appropriate timescales. This survey work and new system will allow the council to manage their ash trees in a safe and efficient manner and will also inform re planting plans. The new system will be adapted again and rolled out in the future for all council owned urban trees.

Monitoring of Local Plans and Strategies

All local plans and strategies are carefully monitored and progress is reported on through Council Committees. The Biodiversity Action Plan and Climate Plan are both monitored annually with reports being submitted to council committee.

In general Council performance is monitored using **a mix of local and national performance indicators** which cover all core areas including Environment. These performance indicators are used for Council benchmarking against other Scottish Councils, Best Value Assurance Reports, The Council Plan and The City Plan.

Natural Capital Baseline Assessment

Dundee City Council commissioned a natural Capital Baseline assessment for the city in 2023. This report calculated the natural capital assets and ecosystem service flows within the council area. The report used a specially adapted Scottish biodiversity metric to calculate the number of biodiversity units that the natural assets provide with an average of 10.4 units per hectare for Dundee. However, it was highlighted that some areas such as Riverside Nature Park, provide a very high number of units for the size of the area. This report will provide baseline data that will be taken forward in other local plans and strategies to identify opportunities for enhancement, set targets and measure progress in the longer term.

Citizen Science Projects

Dundee City Council supports a number of citizen science projects. The Countryside Ranger Service hold events for the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, they promote various projects to local community groups and assist volunteers in carrying out surveys at nature sites across the city.

Dundee was registered for the City Nature Challenge for the first time in 2023 and was one of only 2 cities in Scotland to take part. This annual global survey focuses on biological recording in urban settings and challenges individuals, in a light-hearted way, to compete to record the most observations of nature and species using the free iNaturalist app. Over the period of the challenge there were: -

- 741 Observations (367 research grade) across all wards.
- 300 Species
- 122 Identifiers
- 30 Observers

The Dundee Page for this event can be viewed here: [CNC Dundee](#)

Urban ReLeaf

Urban ReLeaf is a new four-year cross-cultural EU project that aims to co-create citizen-powered data ecosystems to support climate change adaptation, green infrastructure, and urban design planning. The Horizon Europe-funded project builds on design-led research into citizen observatories. Urban ReLeaf is a collaboration between 15 academic and private sector partners as well as the cities of Athens (Greece), Cascais (Portugal), Dundee (UK), Mannheim (Germany), Riga (Latvia) and Utrecht (Netherlands).

Dundee City Council will collaborate with the University to deliver a two-year citizen sensing pilot monitoring a range of environmental issues that relate to Dundee's green transitions for the built environment. Their research will also support a range of pop up, co-design and insights labs across six cities; the leadership of a community of practice; and storytelling activities.

Thousands of members of the public will be asked to install sensors and use mobile phone apps to capture data on the local environment. By gathering evidence and raising awareness of the problems they face, citizens can organise an effective grassroots, community or local government response. Dundee is one of six cities across Europe to have joined forces to enable people to participate in citizen science for public sector innovation through the implementation of nature-based solutions to decrease issues such as air pollution and improve mental health, among other benefits.

Have you added any data collected to the National Biodiversity Network or your Local Records Centre?

Any records gathered as part of citizen science projects are passed to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) either through the iRecord or iNaturalist apps or through the co-ordinating organisation, such as RSPB or Butterfly Conservation.

Dundee City Council, along with Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Council, is not currently covered by a local Records Centre. This impacts on the flow of biodiversity data among partners within the area. However, Dundee is now a member of the Better Biodiversity Data Project Group. Through this group it is hoped that a solution to this issue can be found to bring the Tayside area into alignment with the rest of Scotland. The Better Biodiversity Data project (BBD), which the NBN Trust will lead and manage, was approved in October 2022. This is a partnership project funded by Scottish Government and NatureScot to develop the first steps in a strategic approach to the collection, collation and sharing of biological data across Scotland.

SECTION 7: BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Describe your organisation's main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

One of the highlights for this reporting period has been **the Tr-Action: Planting Climate Resilient Woodlands in Dundee** Project. This project is expected to deliver several positive outcomes for Dundee and the natural environment including bigger and better-connected woodlands in the city and an increase in the diversity of woodland in the city. There were various challenges to overcome for this project. Short timescales for funding spend limited the meaningful involvement of local communities in planning the project, but opportunities have been identified for the future. Despite this pressure to spend the funding within the financial year, a successful project has been delivered made possible by effective teamwork across Council service areas. The improved relationships, communication and co-operation between council service areas will be utilised in future projects.

Another major project for Dundee City Council has been preparing for the management of **Ash Dieback** disease. It was recognised that this issue will not be 'business as usual' for tree management in the city and that the focus must be on managing the safety and environmental impacts of the decline of ash trees and initiating the recovery process through replanting. An internal Ash Dieback Working Group was set up in 2021 to look at the preparation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan. In order for this to progress, it was recognised that a full survey of Council ash trees was necessary. A generic GIS based tree management system was remodelled to accommodate the collection of appropriate ash tree data. In the future it is anticipated that this system will form the base of a full tree asset inventory for Dundee's trees. Ash trees at greatest risk to the public have been removed by the Council, but it has been recognised that additional resources are needed for successful Ash Dieback management in the future. To this end £400,000 has been identified to procure additional services from external contractors, both for survey and arboricultural works. As a result of this support and commitment Dundee is now one of the leading Local Authorities in dealing with this issue and shares their work with others through the Scottish Tree Officer subgroup for Ash Dieback.

Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

The city is currently undergoing an era of major transformation which provides both challenges and opportunities. As previously discussed in section 4, ensuring that future development is sustainable and supports and enhances the city's Nature Network is vital. Dundee City Council are taking forward work to incorporate new national strategies and policies relating to biodiversity and planning such as the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the National Planning Framework 4 into the upcoming Local Development Plan review. This will involve updating several supporting policies relating to biodiversity such as The Open Space Strategy, Nature Network Guidance and the Urban Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Reliable and well managed data is an integral component for both future planning and in the monitoring and reporting of progress on biodiversity actions. Both internal and external partnership working is key to this process, ensuring that data is used productively and collaboratively to produce multiple benefits and outcomes for the city as a whole. The council is working to improve how data is held and managed internally and partnerships where data is shared between the council and external organisations such as Scottish Water and NatureScot are providing a better picture of our natural assets than ever before. Working with the new 'Better Biological Data' project will help to ensure that relevant biological records are held locally and available to a range of organisations to inform new projects and future development.

As with many other Local Authorities and public bodies, Dundee City Council carefully balances its resources to provide high quality services. External funding, such as the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has enabled greater focus on delivering Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan directly benefitting the city's biodiversity. This funding has allowed delivery of actions more effectively, often with added value and scale. Despite this welcome biodiversity boost, it puts pressure on an already scant officer resource. This added to the requirement to deliver projects within a financial year and the time taken to gain approval and procure services is exceedingly challenging. The challenge in delivering biodiversity projects is also compounded by relatively specialist nature of contractors and equipment, which public sector procurement processes are not able to easily accommodate.