

**ITEM No ...2.....**

**REPORT TO:** NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE –13 JUNE 2022

**REPORT ON:** DUNDEE’S BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

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

**REPORT NO:** 128-2022

**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 2021/22.

**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, which 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 second such report.

4.4 As Covid-19 restrictions have continued to decrease, Council officers have progressed actions and have worked with partners to find a variety of methods to support and improve biodiversity within the city. However, 2021 was still a challenging year with some restrictions impacting on volunteering, available resources and a number of actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.5 Dundee City Council benefitted from £109,000 of the newly established Nature Restoration Fund available to Scottish Local Authorities for the 2021/22 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 (committee report 285-2021):

- Dredging of the ponds at Den O Mains to remove silt build up
- Increasing the floral diversity of the previously identified biodiversity grasslands by planting yellow rattle seeds at Lochee Park and Myrekirk Park.
- Creating spring and summer meadows in previously identified biodiversity grasslands in Dawson Park and Magdalen Green
- Creation and installation of new biodiversity interpretation at a number of naturalised and biodiversity grassland sites across the city
- Tree planting at Kellyfield Park
- Installation of bird and bat boxes at cemeteries across the city
- Biodiversity Improvements at Stobsmuir Ponds

4.6 Further external funding has also been instrumental in enhancing access to greenspaces through the Scottish Government's Spaces for People programme and enabling woodland improvements to Balgay Hill through Scottish Forestry funding (£54,000). Dundee City Council capital funding has also supported the implementation of planned actions. Additional Scottish Government funding has enabled the creation of a two-year Community Environment Officer post (report no: 133-2021) to raise awareness and promote 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.

4.7 Other highlights for 2021 include completing the online public consultation on biodiversity and naturalised grasslands. These results showed that around 75% of respondents were in favour of creating these areas. All seven Green Flag sites were assessed this year and all retained their Green Flag status. Broughty Ferry Beach was once again 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 2021 are detailed in Appendix 1.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at [www.dundee.gov.uk/iia](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/iia)

## **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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9 May 2022



# Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan

## *Progress Report 2021/22*

### Introduction:

As Covid-19 restrictions have gradually eased over the last few months there has been a gradual return to normal working practices and carefully organised volunteer sessions. Also, people continue to make good use of their local greenspaces increasingly recognising their importance for connecting with nature and for the physical and mental health benefits they can bring. However, 2021 remained a challenge operationally and a number of the actions within the plan continue to be impacted by previous and ongoing issues due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Dundee continues with its plans for a Green Recovery, investment has been made into projects which aim to improve biodiversity and people's access to it. Dundee City Council received £109,000 of the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund for projects which were completed in the 21/22 financial year. The Scottish Government's Spaces for People programme enabled access improvements to greenspaces for people to appreciate biodiversity. Capital investment of £90,231 from Dundee City Council has been made in environmental improvements and community gardens. A successful application for £54,000 was made to Scottish Forestry for forestry work and path improvements at Balgay Hill. Additional Scottish Government funding enabled the creation of a temporary Community Environment Officer post in Environment Services. Dundee City Council were invited to apply for £300,000 of the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Fund, unfortunately that application was ultimately unsuccessful.

The following tables show the specific progress made by Dundee City Council for each action in the Biodiversity Action Plan in 2021.

## Woodland

Actions	Progress 2021/22
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	Successful WIAT application for £54,000 over 2 years for forestry work, path improvements and new interpretation on Balgay Hill. Forestry work to start this project has been delayed due to the impacts of storm Arwen and will now start in late 2022.
To update Dundee's, Tree and Urban Forestry Policy	Information is required to update this policy to ensure that it would consider other council plans and strategies such as the Climate Action Plan, The Biodiversity Action Plan and the Neighbourhood Services Service Plan. It would also be beneficial to link in with the forthcoming 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	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 in order to ensure the safety of people of property as well as safeguarding our tree resource for the future is currently underway. Survey work and management of affected trees will start in 2022. Further details will be submitted to Committee as soon as they are available.
Continue to apply for funding to control grey squirrels	Dundee City Council has carried out grey squirrel control across the city for a significant number of years. This was most recently supported by £13,000 of funding from Scottish Forestry. The current contract for this funding finished at the end of 2021. Dundee City Council have been advised that future funding through Scottish Forestry is unlikely and alternative funding needs to be sought as soon as possible in order to carry on with this important work to support our red squirrel population.
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).
Investigate the possibility of an i-Tree project to assess the forestry canopy cover in Dundee and use this to set new targets	The cost of an i-Tree project for the city has been investigated and discussions held with The University of Dundee in regards to partnership working. The cost of this project and a staff member to co-ordinate the work formed part of a recent unsuccessful application to the Woodland Trust. This type of survey is being used in cities across the UK and provides information that is useful in a number of strategic areas relating to biodiversity and climate change. Funding will continue to be sought for this.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
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)	From the end of March 22, tree advice had been given for 49 planning applications. Two of these were on/next to Locally Important Conservation Sites (LINCS), 8 involved TPOs and 13 were in conservation areas. Also provided advice in discharging conditions on 4 applications and 4 pre-applications.
Maintain and manage paths and access within woodland	<p>Funding has been received from The Scottish Forestry Woodland Grant scheme of £3680 for maintenance on the Law. Successfully applied for £54,000 for woodland management and path work for Greater Balgay.</p> <p>The Green Circular runs through green spaces and woodland, and is surveyed twice each year. In 2021, funded by Scottish Government's Spaces for People programme, an investment of £341,500 was made in widening and resurfacing sections of the Green Circular based on the surveys. New signage has also been installed. Storm Arwen at the end of 2021 caused significant damage and blocked many popular paths. Work has been ongoing to rectify this and make paths safe and useable again.</p>

### Wetlands

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
Investigate and source funding for a project to sensitively deal with silted up areas of the Gelly Burn in Den O Mains	A license for this work was successfully applied for. Phase 1 of this project (dredging of the upstream pond) was completed in December 2021 at a cost of £7996, funded through the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund. Approximately 350m <sup>3</sup> of silt has been removed from the pond to improve open water habitat and water flow through the den.
To investigate management regimes for SUDS ponds to ensure their potential for biodiversity is realised	Work is ongoing with partners such as Scottish Water and NatureScot to investigate ways of increasing and managing blue infrastructure and SUDS across the city.
Capital project to improve the biodiversity value of the northern pond at Stobsmuir Park	After consultation with representatives from the Stobswell Community Forum and The Friends of Stobsmuir Park, £27,500 of improvements were identified to increase the biodiversity of the north pond and surrounding area, improve water quality and provide new interpretation. This project was funded through the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund and was completed in April 2022.

Actions	Progress 2021/22
Identify all rivers and ponds managed by the council including SUDS and record this on GIS layer. Ensure this information is updated as development occurs	This has been delayed due to the ongoing effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This action will progress as soon as resources allow.
Continue to develop new ponds and wetland at suitable sites	Dundee City Council works with Scottish Water to promote the use of above ground Sustainable Urban Drainage ponds (SUDs) in all new developments. One such proposal is looking at ways in which to better use the greenspace at St Leonards Park in St Mary's to prevent localised flooding.
Ensure appropriate access is maintained along rivers and around ponds to protect both wildlife and the safety of the public	A £28,928 capital project to enhance biodiversity and improve access to ponds at Camperdown Park (committee report 163-2021) was completed in 2021/22. Access to other ponds and rivers within the ownership of Dundee City Council has been maintained, with £51,047 from the Scottish Governments Spaces for People programme used to improve sections of the Green Circular cycle path that runs along the Dighty. 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	Local community groups were consulted on ways to improve the biodiversity at Stobsmuir Ponds. Their ideas and comments were incorporated into the design of new measures.

### Marine and Coastal

Actions	Progress 2021/22
To continue to manage the sand dune section of coastal defences at Broughty Ferry in the most natural way possible	Works are ongoing to protect and manage the Broughty Ferry 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. These works complement the natural flood protection that the dunes provide to Broughty Ferry. <i>Following</i> recent Inspections we are pleased to confirm the growth of the dunes and further establishment of grasses and embryo dunes.
Project to improve and increase the area of coastal grassland at Broughty Ferry Esplanade	Dundee City Council were awarded funding of £9.3 million from Sustrans to create a new travel route along the coast from Broughty Ferry to Monifieth, linking with wider networks in Angus. As part of this project, around £430,000 will be used to transform amenity and rough grass in to biodiverse coastal grassland. Some work on this project has been completed but parts have been delayed due to increasing costs for the new bridge over the Dighty. A further application to Sustrans for additional funding was successful and DCC is now in consultation with Marine Scotland regarding Marine licensing.

Actions	Progress 2021/22
Continue to keep beaches free of litter and reduce the amount of plastic by organising regular beach cleans	<p>More than 26 litter picks were carried out in 2021, in addition at least 10 groups or individuals carry out weekly or regular litter picks in their local area. The number of events has again been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, particular the first half of 2021.</p> <p>During the summer bathing season DCC participated in a pilot 'My Beach, Your Beach' campaign with Keep Scotland Beautiful. This is a stewardship campaign focusing on litter, dog and gull fouling. In addition to this, Upstream Battle on the Tay launched in August 2021, this Keep Scotland Beautiful campaign has a source to sea approach tackling litter and will involve collaboration across the relevant local authority areas and community involvement, four community-led Anchor Groups have been identified for Dundee, each of which will raise awareness, gather litter data, and encourage participation.</p>
Continue to encourage establishment of coastal plant species e.g. kidney vetch and sea pea at appropriate coastal locations	Volunteering projects continue to be affected by Covid-19 restrictions in 2021. However, these species have been included as part of the planting plan for the Broughty Ferry Active Travel project.
To manage public access across the sand dunes at Broughty Ferry using chestnut rail fencing	Chestnut pale fencing continues to be maintained in order to limit access by members of the public. This is to prevent erosion and protect the natural grasses and fragile habitat. 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.
Monitor summer beach cleaning methods to ensure no damage to the structure of the beach	The beach continues to be managed throughout the summer in tandem with the Nature Scot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) agreement . 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	Achieved for 2021.
Continue to achieve 'Excellent' EU Bathing Water Quality at Broughty Ferry Beach	The Designated Bathing Water at Broughty Ferry was given an Excellent classification for water quality again this year. The Scottish Bathing Season ran from 1 June to 15 September, 14 water samples were taken.

### Grassland

Actions	Progress 2021/22
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. The overall volumes of herbicide has reduced by 53% in the last year. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2.

Actions	Progress 2021/22
Review grassland management across the city. Increase in the amount of grass managed to improve biodiversity	As part of an ongoing review 27 greenspaces across the city where less-intensive grassland management practices were proposed, in addition to the existing meadow management at sites such as Riverside Nature Park, Trottick Local Nature Reserve and The Law. Consultation yielded overwhelming public support. As a result, more than 57 ha – some 2.5% of the City's publicly accessible greenspace – are being managed for biodiversity and climate resilience. This is composed of 49 ha of naturalised grassland habitat and 8 ha of specific biodiversity meadow. Additions to these areas will continue to be investigated where appropriate.
To develop a tool box talk/training/updates to operations staff to ensure successful management of perennial meadows	A toolbox talk on grassland management and biodiversity is complete with work continuing on other subjects. Ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the need for self-isolation continues to impact on operations staff and has delayed the delivery of talks.
Expand and protect a population of the endangered plant greater yellow rattle at Riverside Nature Park	DCC is working in partnership with Friends of Riverside Nature Park to ensure the successful management of the meadow area. Greater yellow rattle successfully flowered and set seed in the park for the first time during 2021.
Continue to maintain and expand annual flower areas throughout the city	10,146m <sup>2</sup> of annual wildflower areas were sown and managed in 2021.
Continue to maintain and increase the diversity of bulb panels in the city	As a result of local consultation, an area at Magdalen Green was identified for the creation of a spring biodiversity area as part of a Nature Restoration Project worth £17,373. This area will complement and build upon the existing daffodil displays on site and will feature early and long-flowering bulbs to provide a diverse and enduring source of spring forage for pollinators.
To continue to restrict access to dogs off leads at Riverside Nature Park during skylark nesting season	Completed for 2021, the protected areas have been monitored by volunteers and DCC officers. Breeding skylarks have seen an increase from 16 singing males in 2020 to 18 in 2021. This continues an annual increase from 4 in 2016. Increased protection for the species is in place with access to the NW of the site being restricted in 2021.

### Urban Green Network

Actions	Progress 2021/22
Continue to promote and support the 'Take Pride in Your City' campaign	The 'Take Pride' campaign has been 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. Topics have included how to report an issue, promoting responsible behaviour (e.g. with regards to disposal of waste, recycling, dog fouling, etc.), highlighting positive action, and encouraging participation in local and national environmental activities. A revised 2-year action plan for the Take Pride campaign is being developed by the Steering Group to take forward the campaign for 2021-23.



Actions	Progress 2021/22
Promote the incorporation of swift and bat boxes, both integral and external, into buildings and encourage people to report sightings	Promotion has been undertaken through comments provided on planning applications to developers when considering landscape design. The number of such boxes in new developments is slowly increasing.
Review the management of habitats within older cemeteries to increase their biodiversity value	One of the city's projects funded by £4237 of the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Funding was to provide a number of bird and bat boxes within cemeteries, including older cemeteries.
Review the management of council-maintained hedges across the city	This has been delayed due to the ongoing effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim is to review this as resources allow.
Review the management and storage of green waste in Dundee's parks to reduce fuel costs, provide a resource and prevent damage to biodiversity	This has been delayed due to ongoing effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This issue will be taken up again when resources allow.
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.	<p>Dundee City Council's Housing Asset Management team are incorporating bat and swift boxes during programmed roof maintenance work.</p> <p>Further opportunities will be created with the aim for biodiversity to be considered at the outset of appropriate capital works.</p>
Identify and correctly manage Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL)	This has been delayed due to the ongoing effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim is to commence this as resources allow.
Promote community growing and identify suitable sites for new projects	<p>The <a href="#">Dundee Local Food Growing Strategy</a> was agreed in August 2020. Dundee currently has 26 existing community growing spaces and 550 allotment plots, as well as those in school grounds. Fintry, Whitfield (£36,423) and Lily Walker Centre (£24880, committee report 265-2021) are now under construction. New growing projects have sprung up in Charleston and Coldside and a number of fruit trees have been planted in Lochee, Whitfield and Riverside Nature Park.</p> <p>The Fruit Bowls garden in Lochee has expanded with new raised beds and there are several small projects happening in sheltered housing complexes. A new community Growing Hub at Camperdown has received committee approval and construction on this will begin in the 22/23 financial year.</p>
Maintain current cemeteries for both biodiversity and visitors in an empathetic manner	A number of bird and bat boxes for our cemeteries have been purchased and installed with £4237 of funding through the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
	Capital funding has been approved for additional planting at Pitkerro Grove at the entrance and reflection garden (committee report 163-2021).
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	Officers will work towards integrating biodiversity considerations into all appropriate environmental improvements. Staff briefings are planned, but this has been delayed by COVID19 and will recommence with the easing of current restrictions.
Maintain Green Flag status for current parks and look to increase sites with Green flag	All seven current sites maintained their Green Flag status.
Investigate a potential project regarding the use of amphibian ladders in roadside gully pot drains	Officers are currently in discussion with Tayside Amphibian Group regarding the scope of any initiative to be taken forward in Dundee. External funding will be identified to purchase equipment and run training sessions. This has been delayed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
Continue to evaluate all Council parks internally using Green Flag judging criteria	Twenty-three sites have been assessed in 2021. Results have been fed back to local management teams and Action Plans drawn up, which have been used to inform potential capital projects over the winter / spring. Example actions include: additional tree planting at Drumgieth, Downfield and Dudhope Park and the construction of pond dipping platforms, renewal of duck house and new marginal planting at Camperdown Park ponds.
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. Funding has been received for a temporary Community Environment Officer post. This post will be in place until October 2023. This officer will raise awareness and promote 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 will be key to this role.

### Planning and Development

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
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.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
To review any planning applications which have an impact on the biodiversity or geodiversity of Dundee seeking to reduce to amount of negative impacts	DCC officers provide advice on appropriate planning applications. As of the end of March 2022, biodiversity advice had been given for 49 planning applications. Two of these were on/next to Locally Important Conservation Sites (LINCS), 8 involved TPOs and 13 were in conservation areas. Also, advice was provided in discharging conditions on 4 applications and in discussions relating to 4 pre-applications.
Ensure that Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) are upheld and that new orders are granted where necessary	No new TPO's have been established in 2021.
Agree appropriate mitigation measures to put in place where development leads to a loss of biodiversity	A draft of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) has been consulted on along with supporting guidance from NatureScot 'Developing with Nature'. The final documents will be published later this year and recognise global declines in biodiversity, which are mirrored here in Scotland, with urbanisation named as a key pressure. The new approach set out will play a critical role in minimising further habitat loss through development and support nature restoration and recovery.
To map Council owned sites across the city which are not recorded as greenspace but are unsuitable for development	Discussions have begun between Neighbourhood Services and City Development teams to facilitate this process. Planning Officers have agreed to undertake a project which maps such sites which may be suitable for future tree planting starting in 2022. This will be completed on a ward by ward basis with the aim to start in Whitfield where rates of land being developed are currently high.
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 Neighbourhood Services- Service Plan 2021-2024 (approved by Committee in June 2021, report 161-2021) highlights eleven service priorities, one of which is 'Managing our public open spaces and outdoor sporting and recreational facilities which supports our Biodiversity Action Plan and associated duties.'

### **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
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. Volunteer work has been continued to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in 2021. Officers continue to map Giant Hogweed for annual control.
Work with private landowners to increase the area of control and prevent re-colonisation	Dundee City Council Environmental Health Officers ask private landowners to control GHW on their property with mixed success. DCC provided 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 have advised that they do not have the resources to deliver legal action or grants for landowners as requested although did offer to write to landowners once staff were back in the office.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
Encourage awareness of INNS and where our statutory duties lie in regards to them	Staff briefings are planned, but this has been delayed by COVID19 and will recommence with the easing of current restrictions.
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. Further training in Biosecurity was planned for operational staff but has been impacted by ongoing Covid-19 issues.
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 2021 monitoring and control programme for giant hogweed was delivered. Many areas are showing a significant reduction of this plant. However, new infestations continue to appear and will do so until control further upstream in Angus is delivered. This is being taken forward by the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative and NatureScot. In addition to giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also subject to targeted control.

### **Communication and Awareness raising**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2021/22</b>
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	This action continues to be delayed by Covid-19 restrictions but the aim is to complete this as soon as is possible. Stakeholders are still to be identified, but will include groups with an interest and expertise in natural heritage. It is anticipated that wider partner actions will form part of plan in the future.
The Environment Service continues to work with communities to promote and enhance biodiversity	The Countryside Ranger Service engaged community groups across more than 20 environmental public events in local greenspaces. These events included community summer events such as bird watching and dolphin spotting as well as tree seed collection and tree planting. For these events more than 400 native trees were planted as well as hundreds of locally sourced, native tree seeds. This marks an increase on 2020-2021, however further promotion has continued to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.
Develop relationships with schools in terms of environmental education and involvement	Over 30 schools are now engaging with the Sustainability Team on climate change and actions they can take. 17 schools participated in a recent eco schools conference, hosted by the council, which in

Actions	Progress 2021/22
	<p>included 38 classes and around 700 pupils. A STEM (science technology, engineering and maths) activity related to nature and outdoor learning also took place at Camperdown during COP26 and schools helped to create Moby the whale made from reclaimed materials to raise awareness about plastic in the Ocean and learn how to reduce waste. This will permanently reside at the Wellgate Centre with QR code with information.</p> <p>Dundee schools have enjoyed a longstanding association with the John Muir Trust and have partnerships with local conservation groups such as Dighty Connect and 16 John Muir Award have been completed this year. As part of the European Clean Air at School project, pupils from Mill of Mains Primary School took part in air quality surveys at Trottick Mill Ponds and surrounding area. The Countryside Ranger Service have engaged around 226 children and teachers with 11 educational sessions with schools.</p>
<p>Work with volunteers, including those with physical and mental health issues in biodiversity projects across Dundee</p>	<p>The Countryside Ranger Service facilitated more than 2000 volunteer hours across a number of local greenspaces. Volunteer activities have included wildflower seed sowing, tree planting, invasive species management, citizen science projects, bee bank maintenance, footpath improvement and litter picking amongst others. Building on last year's project with the Community Health Partnership, an additional 40 bird feeder kits were distributed to homeless shelters and children's units across the city during lockdown at the beginning of the year in order to promote mental wellbeing and connections to nature. Branching Out Project, funded by Scottish Forestry for people with mental health issues has resumed, with three 12-week programmes taking place across the year.</p>
<p>Continue to support and develop the Green Health Partnership to make the links between Biodiversity, greenspace and people's health</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Green health initiatives including SAMH, Wellbeing Works, and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) among others have facilitated in excess of 4000 volunteer hours 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>Set up an annual workshop event on Biodiversity within the Council</p>	<p>Promoted as part of WWF's Earth Hour in March 2021, a series of online staff briefings on Climate Change were promoted through One Dundee. 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 Sustainability Team</p>

Actions	Progress 2021/22
	including information on biodiversity projects in the city and suggestions of actions that staff can take personally to do their bit.
Have an annual programme of events that is widely promoted and well attended	Continues to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions but a few events were still held. A small number of COVID-19 secured, ranger-led events were promoted and organised throughout the year. These included minibeast surveys and tree-planting events. Additional online and in-person events were organised as part of Green Health Week in May 2021. The Dundee Flower and Food Festival was once again a virtual event. Online materials which people could watch or download were provided. An event was held in Slessor Gardens in September to promote the opening of the new Cycle Hub and the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow. This event was well attended and included many stalls from a number of organisations, including Dundee City Council, highlighting the importance of biodiversity and ways in which members of the public could get involved at home.
Set up a group to review current printed material about biodiversity	This has been delayed due to ongoing pressures from the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim is to set this up in conjunction with the group to monitor the Biodiversity Action Plan actions, possibly as a sub group.
Review the information on the DCC website relating to greenspace and biodiversity	In 2020 as part of the launch of the new Biodiversity Action Plan a new page focusing on biodiversity was added to the Council's website. This provides a link to the Biodiversity Action Plan and to the relevant parts of the Council that relate to the Key Topics within the plan. It provides links to websites where members of the public can find out more information on how they can help improve and to downloadable leaflets on where to find wildlife within the city. It has also been used to provide information on the biodiversity and naturalised grassland areas and consultation. This website continues to receive hundreds of hits each year. Future updates to the web page could include presenting information on Biodiversity / Naturalised grasslands in an alternative format, giving context of where these areas are across a larger map of Dundee.
Collate information and feedback from the public regarding biodiversity	Feedback was received through the online consultation for the proposed biodiversity and grassland areas in parks and greenspaces across the city. The results of this consultation can be found here: <a href="https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/neighbourhood-services/environment/biodiversity-consultation-results">https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/neighbourhood-services/environment/biodiversity-consultation-results</a> . Although this consultation has now finished, council officers still continue to engage with local groups on this issue.

**Recording**

Actions	Progress 2021/22
Explore the establishment of a Regional Hub for biological records in partnership with a number of organisations	Updates on this issue are received though the Scottish Biological Information Forum (SBIF) who presented the Scottish Government with a programme proposal making the case for sufficient sustainable public funding to transform our recording infrastructure in 2020. However, progress on this has been impacted by ongoing issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.
Engage people in monitoring and surveying of nature across Dundee, creating a volunteer base which is enthusiastic and knowledgeable	<p>Volunteering, has re-started to some degree, however continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. The Countryside Ranger Service have facilitated volunteers signing up to 5 new bumblebee transects across city and the new Community Environment Officer will support communities in monitoring biodiversity in new biodiversity and grassland areas.</p> <p>Regular Volunteering sessions resumed at Trottick, incorporating river quality and pond dipping surveys as well as air quality surveys here and at Clatto Reservoir. As part of the LINCS ( locally important conservation site ) review, initial discussions regarding using the i- Record App took place which would enable records to be submitted by interested individuals. These records would be externally verified and provide an important source of data. A council officer undertook further training to facilitate this but the roll out has been impacted due to ongoing issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be completed as soon as resources allow.</p>

**Geodiversity**

Actions	Progress 2021/22
To survey and assess the condition of the current geodiversity sites in Dundee, making recommendations on any remedial action required	Continues to be impacted by ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
Dundee City Council will consider becoming a signatory to the Scottish Geodiversity Charter	Continues to be impacted by ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Actions	Progress 2021/22
To survey any potential new geodiversity sites.	Has been impacted by ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
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

As to be expected, a number of actions identified for progression in 2021 continue to be impacted upon by the Covid-19 restrictions, and timescales for work have been expanded as result. As more funding is identified through sources such as the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund it is anticipated that further actions will be completed in 2022 onwards.

Actions identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority for 2022 include:

- Continue to apply for funding to control grey squirrels (new funding source for this work to be sought)
- Investigate the possibility of an i-Tree project to assess the forestry canopy cover in Dundee and use this to set new targets

To investigate management regimes for SUDS ponds to ensure their potential for biodiversity is realised

- To develop a tool box talk/training/updates to operations staff to ensure successful management of perennial meadows
- Review the management of habitats within older cemeteries to increase their biodiversity value
- Review the management and storage of green waste in Dundee's parks to reduce fuel costs, provide a resource and prevent damage to biodiversity
- Investigate a potential project regarding the use of amphibian ladders in roadside gully pot drains
- To map Council owned sites across the city which are not recorded as greenspace but are unsuitable for development
- 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
- Set up a group to review current printed material about biodiversity
- To survey and assess the condition of the current geodiversity sites in Dundee, making recommendations on any remedial action required

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. Although the exact format of how this funding will be distributed is yet to be released, a number of projects and further actions from the plan have been identified to potentially benefit from this fund.

- **Ash Dieback Plan**

Ash Dieback is a disease affecting ash trees which has spread rapidly across the country in the last several years. It has become apparent in the last 2 years that trees within Dundee are now being significantly affected. Careful planning is required in order to identify what work is required to deal with this threat, what resources will be required to carry out this work and how to mitigate for the loss of these trees across the city, ensuring a resilient urban tree resource for years to come.

- **Tr-Action- Dundee's Climate Ready Trees**

The application that Dundee City Council was invited to submit to the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, this £300,000 project can easily be split into smaller projects and we will continue to seek funding and partners to help us to deliver them and secure the identified outcomes for Dundee's woodlands.

- **Eden Wildflower Areas**

Dundee City Council will be working in partnership with Eden, with funding from the Alexander Moncur Trust, to enhance previously identified biodiversity areas in the city. The most prominent of these will be at Camperdown Country Park and extensive stretches of Riverside Drive. This will be in addition to privately owned areas identified by Eden for the creation of new wildflower areas, the first of which will be at Seabraes.

## Challenges

As with other Local Authorities and public bodies, Dundee City Council carefully balances resources to provide 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 in this period of Green Recovery.

The Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis has been receiving increased attention by the general public and the Scottish Government. The 26<sup>th</sup> Global Conference of Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow last year also highlighted how urgently action is required to address these emergencies, increased external funding is becoming available for biodiversity and climate related projects. Officers will continue to apply for any 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 for which it is used 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 street scape and greenspace environments.

Table 1. Herbicide use by Dundee City Council over the last 4 years

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

The table above summarises Dundee City Council's overall use of herbicides since 2018/19. It is noted that there has been a reduction in usage of 53% in volume from 2020/21 to 2021/22 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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