

**ITEM No ...4.....**

**REPORT TO:** CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2024

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

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

**REPORT NO:** 146-2024

**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 2023/24, and to remit the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to bring forward an updated Biodiversity Action Plan in Spring 2025.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the committee: -

- notes the achievements and progress of the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- remits the Executive Director to bring forward an updated Biodiversity Action Plan.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 In 2023/24 Dundee City Council was awarded £171,000 from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund enabling further implementation of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan.

**4.0 MAIN TEXT**

**4.1 Background**

4.1.1 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](#)). This report is the fourth annual update presented to Committee, with previous reports considered in 2021, 2022 and 2023. All have noted the progress made on the implementation of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan.

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.' 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'.

4.1.3 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.

## 4.2 Context

4.2.1 In November 2023, elected members agreed Dundee City Council's three-year Biodiversity Duty report, (Article II of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Report [321-2023](#)) required by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. This report set the context within which the Biodiversity Action Plan sits, particularly through significant amendments to international and national policy frameworks, including: -

- targets set out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
- the Scottish Government's draft Biodiversity Strategy and draft delivery plans which sit alongside the Climate Change Plan; and
- implementation of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which provides a policy focus to manage future development sustainably, including biodiversity.

4.2.2 In order to reflect the high level and strategic direction of these documents, noting that the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is currently still in draft, and, as has been previously reported, it is now apparent that the Biodiversity Action Plan (Article VII of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Report [14-2020](#) refers) should be reviewed.

4.2.3 To support the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan, a number of preparatory actions have been taken forward: -

- Nature Network Tool – along with several other local authorities Dundee City Council were asked by Nature Scot to participate in the development of a nature network tool. The results of this, which will provide an indication of the city's current nature network and opportunities for further enhancement, are expected imminently;
- Open Space Audit – additional revenue funding, has enabled an updated open space map to be produced. It also gives an assessment of quality and accessibility. This information will be incorporated into the updated Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Blue / Green infrastructure – Dundee City Council is developing a project focusing on the Dighty in partnership with SEPA which will focus on the re-naturalisation of the watercourse. There are also other potential opportunities regarding Dundee's direction of travel towards becoming water resilient which will be reflected in an updated Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.2.4 Further information regarding the foregoing paragraph is available at section 12 in Appendix 1. It is therefore recommended that, using the results of the above and by carrying out focused consultation with partners, an updated Biodiversity Action Plan be brought forward for consideration by elected members in Spring 2025.

## 4.3 Highlights and Achievements

4.3.1 During 2023/24 Dundee City Council benefitted from £171K of the Scottish Government's directly funded Nature Restoration Fund (NRF). Available to all Scottish Local Authorities for delivering initiatives which contribute towards halting biodiversity decline, this year's allocation also included an enhanced sum to be focused on improving Nature Networks. This fund has significantly contributed to the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan. The projects completed as a result of this funding include the replacement planting of street trees, the creation of new biodiversity grassland areas along Lochee Road, entrance improvements to Riverside Nature Park and Broughty Ferry Local Nature Reserve, (Article XII of the Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Report [322-2023](#) refers), access and biodiversity improvements at Camperdown Park, Templeton Woods and an area of recent tree planting at Brackens, referred to in report no. (Article XIII of the Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure

Committee of 8th January 2024, Report [3-2024](#) refers). Finally, the purchase and installation of swift nesting boxes and amphibian ladders for drains, referred to in report no. (Article V of the Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee of 8th January 2024, Report 2-2024 refers).

- 4.3.2 Additional revenue funding also enabled initiatives such as repeating the successful local radio awareness raising campaign focussing on the benefits of longer grass in our greenspaces, contracting an audit of all open spaces in the City in preparation for an Open Space Strategy and a programme of invasive non-native species control. In line with the ash dieback action plan, a procurement framework has been agreed, appointing contractors to manage diseased ash trees across the city, report no. ([214-2023](#)) refers. In addition, all seven Green Flag sites were assessed and all retained their Green Flag status. Broughty Ferry Beach was successful in achieving the Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Award, retaining an excellent standard of bathing water quality, as measured by SEPA. The partnership with EDEN was also developed with further meadow creation projects at Riverside Drive and Camperdown Park. A significant area of coastal grassland is being developed as part of the Broughty Ferry to Monifieth Active Travel project using locally sourced meadow seed and implemented without the need for herbicide.
- 4.3.3 Further details on the above and progress on all Biodiversity Action Plan actions identified for 2023/24 are detailed in Appendix 1.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

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

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

Tony Boyle  
**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

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# Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan

## *Progress Report 2023/24*

### Introduction

- 1.1 Dundee City Council continues to look for innovative ways to become more climate resilient and to honour its commitment to the Edinburgh Declaration. Significant investment has been made into projects which aim to improve biodiversity and people's access to it.
- 1.2 The council received £171,000 funding in the 2023-24 financial year from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Funding (NRF). The fund will seek to deliver the five strategic priorities through sub-national delivery, in line with the principles of the Edinburgh Process declaration. This approach can deliver multiple benefits, supporting health and well-being, green jobs, air and water quality improvements in addition to supporting nature recovery. This year, there was also additional funding in order to promote action by Local Authorities to develop projects that contribute to the establishment and enhancement of Nature Networks in their area.
- 1.3 Projects were identified to improve nature network links; these included the replacement of street trees in locations across the city and the creation of new biodiversity grasslands along Lochee Road. A number of projects were also identified to enhance the current nature network, these included improvements to the entrance of Riverside Nature Park by planting native trees along the boundary to the recycling centre, at Camperdown Park where an area of invasive shrub, laurel, has been removed and replaced with a mix of small native tree species to help diversify the woodland, and path improvements and the sowing of native wildflowers at Templeton Woods and through a newly created woodland at Brackens. Additionally, two projects were completed with the aim to protect species at risk. These were the installation of Swift nest boxes on the Social Work building at Jack Martin Way and 100 additional amphibian ladders have been installed in gully pot drains in Ballumbie after the success of last year's project.
- 1.4 The council's capital funding has helped to deliver improvements to local greenspaces as identified by local communities and in internal green flag audits. Projects include tree planting at Magdalen Green and Dawson Park, improvements to the ponds at Stobsmuir Ponds and new planting on roundabouts along Riverside Drive.
- 1.5 Additionally, this year a £100,000 revenue budget was also identified to support implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan, ([Article X of the Policy and Resources Committee of 26th June 2023, Report 194-2023](#) refers). This enabled control of invasive, non-native grey squirrels at nine locations across the city, mink trapping along the Dighty Burn in partnership with the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative and rabbit control in the Howff Cemetery. An informative radio campaign was run on local radio to raise awareness of the benefits of longer grass in local parks. A contractor was procured to complete an Open Space Audit for the city, this important information will provide a robust basis for the upcoming Open Space Strategy with is required under planning legislation for the Local Development Plan. In partnership with the University of Dundee, the council worked with Treeconomics to complete an Urban Forest Audit and Policy Review for tree management in the city. This information was then used to complete a project proposal for a full city iTree project which will be used to apply for suitable funding in the coming year.

- 1.6 This report highlights progress made on the current actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan but also sets out an intention to review these actions in the coming year to ensure that recent changes to international and national policies and strategies are taken into consideration and that the vision of 'Working together to protect, enhance and raise awareness of biodiversity in Dundee for the benefit of all' can continue to be delivered.
- 1.7 Along with several other local authorities, Dundee City Council were asked by Nature Scot to participate in the development of a nature network tool. The results of this, which will provide an indication of the city's current nature network and opportunities for further enhancement, are expected imminently. Additional revenue funding has also enabled an updated open space map to be produced. It also gives an assessment of quality and accessibility. This work will support the upcoming review of the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 1.8 The following tables show the specific progress made by Dundee City Council for each action in the Biodiversity Action Plan in 2023/24: -

## 1. Woodland

Actions	Progress 2023/24
To update Dundee's Tree and Urban Forestry Policy	It is recommended that this is aligned with the Strategic Forest Plan, due for update in 2025. This would enable additional information to be incorporated, e.g. through an iTree survey, and produce a comprehensive overall plan for Dundee's woodland resource. It would also align with new guidance on Forestry and Woodland Strategies as identified in NPF4 guidance to support the next update to the Local Development Plan. The updated policy will also reflect adaptation to climate change and consider the selection of species which are more resilient to the impacts of change such as increased temperatures.
<p>To monitor the health of trees, in particular the species which are potentially at threat from new diseases.</p> <p>Assisting with the promotion and recruitment of volunteers for the Observatree project</p>	Dundee City Council continues to assess and manage the threat to ash trees in the city from Ash Dieback. A new tree management system has been implemented for ash trees and a procurement framework has enabled contractors to be appointed to carry out future tree management and surveys. There are currently 3200 ash trees identified and assessed and 65 dangerous trees already removed.
Continue to apply for funding to control grey squirrels	Grey squirrel control was carried out utilising DCC revenue funding in 2023 at 9 locations with known grey squirrel populations present.
Record, monitor and protect bat populations and known roosts	Officers continue to provide advice on bats in general and assess bat surveys provided as supplementary information in the planning process. When carrying out new projects which may affect bats, Dundee City Council ensures it follows legislation and undertakes appropriate surveys and applies for licences when required.
Investigate the possibility of an iTree project to assess the forestry canopy cover in Dundee and use this to set new targets	DCC revenue funding was used to work in partnership with The University of Dundee to bring together a comprehensive project proposal for an iTree project in Dundee. Funding is now being sought to take this project forward in 2025. The European iTree conference is to be held at the University of Dundee in June 2024 and the council have been working to support the University of Dundee and Treeconomics with this.
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 TPO's	For the year 2023-24 tree advice had been provided for 37 planning applications, 5 discharge of conditions and 3 pre-application enquiries. Of these, 6 involved TPO's, 1 was on or near LINCS and 6 were in Conservation Areas.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
Maintain and manage paths and access within woodland	In 2023, Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) funding was used at Templeton Woods to repair approx. 400m paths damaged in storms and for volunteers to create wildflower areas in the clear-felled area. NRF has contributed to a long-term volunteer project to create a diverse area (wetlands, native copse, fruit orchard) where previous storms created space. Dundee Countryside Ranger Service is leading this project. Dundee Council fenced and planted a new native climate resilient woodland in 2022/23 at Sidlaw Avenue. Local people requested further improvement work and NRF supported the construction of paths (approx. 1.2km) and creation of wildflower banks (approx. 1ha). In adjoining green spaces, public access was improved to established native woodland.
*Additional action	Camperdown Country Park is one of Dundee's largest green spaces and a Locally Important Nature Conservation Site (LINCS) for its diverse woodland. Several areas of woodland suffer from dense non-native understorey, and these areas are gradually expanding. In 2023, Dundee City Council used NRF to carry out a removal of Laurel in the northwest corner. Mature Laurel was cut from an area of approximately 6000sqm. 150 native trees (light standards and tube/staked whips) were planted to add diversity to the woodland which is a mature pine and larch plantation. The intention is to continue the clearance of Laurel and enrichment planting around the park in 2024, and to look at methods of reducing other non-native plants such as Snowberry.
*Additional action	NRF has also supported the planting of native trees and shrubs in an area at Riverside Nature Park. This planting will help to reinforce the boundary between the park and the recycling centre and add to the habitats within the park.



## 2. Wetlands

Actions	Progress 2023/24
<p>To investigate management regimes for Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) ponds to ensure their potential for biodiversity is realised</p>	<p>Work continues to research methods of good practice for SuDS management. Now that the project to map council managed SuDS has been completed it will be possible to assess the most appropriate methods for Dundee's city context.</p> <p>The upcoming citywide SuDS project, as part of the Water Resilient Dundee partnership, will also identify opportunities to improve and add to the city's SuDS network and acknowledge the need to adapt to the impact of increasing temperatures on the climate to increase resilience to wetter winters and more frequent and intense storms and flooding. See paragraph 13.6 for further details.</p>
<p>Identify all rivers and ponds managed by the council including SuDS and record this on GIS (Geographic Information Systems) layer. Ensure this information is updated as development occurs</p>	<p>A project to identify all council-maintained SuDS and map them on a GIS layer was completed in 2023 and will assist in the effective management of these areas.</p>
<p>Continue to develop new ponds and wetland at suitable sites</p>	<p>The Countryside Ranger Service worked in partnership with Froglife and local volunteers to create a new wetland area at Templeton Woods. This project took advantage of space created during recent storms and included planting additional wetland plants and building a hibernaculum for amphibians. Initial design work is ongoing for the St Mary's Storm Water Drainage project. This project will develop a number of new ponds and wetland areas at St Leonards Park. See paragraph 13.5 for further details.</p>
<p>Ensure appropriate access is maintained along rivers and around ponds to protect both wildlife and the safety of the public</p>	<p>A feasibility study has commenced which will identify a potential project on the Dighty Burn. The project vision is to deliver significant ecological improvements, enhance the biodiversity and expand the natural habitat of the Burn. The project will align with the development of the proposed active travel network serving the new East End Campus to create better connected communities and amenity along the river corridor. There are also opportunities to improve surface water drainage across the catchment improving climate resilience for the local community.</p> <p>The giant hogweed control project also supports safe access to our ponds and rivers.</p>
<p>Support communities to develop plans for their ponds/wetlands so actions can be developed at grass roots level</p>	<p>Advice and support have been provided by the Greenspace Team to support the development and enhancement of the ponds at Broughty Ferry Library.</p>

### 3. Marine and Coastal

Actions	Progress 2023/24
To continue to manage the sand dune section of coastal defences at Broughty Ferry in the most natural way possible	The council have continued the work to remove self-seeding non-native plants and tree species growing in the dunes and are monitoring this regularly. A review of beach grass growth will be undertaken at the end of the growing period and additional planting of grass will be provided where required. This grass helps to stabilise the dunes and provides habitat for native coastal species. This project acknowledges the need to adapt to the climatic impact of increasing temperatures and the need to increase resilience to more frequent and intense storms / flooding on the coastline.
Continue to keep beaches free of litter and reduce the amount of plastic by organising regular beach cleans	Community action to tackle litter is encouraged and supported via the Council's Take Pride in Your City Campaign. In 2023/24, a total of 66 litter picks were registered with the Council and Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), these took part across the city, including the beach, parks and local neighbourhoods. During a series of monthly litter picks which were open to the public, one group removed over 1 tonne of litter from Broughty Ferry beach during 2023. Support of Upstream Battle on the Tay continued in 2023/24, this KSB campaign has a source-to-sea approach to tackling litter and involves collaboration across the relevant local authority areas and community involvement. There are four community-led Anchor Groups in Dundee, each of which are aiming to raise awareness, gather litter data, and encourage participation.
Continue to encourage establishment of coastal plant species e.g. kidney vetch and sea pea at appropriate coastal locations	The Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel project is nearing completion, including the creation of significant new coastal wildflower meadows (3.3ha). The seed mix for the new meadows includes kidney vetch along with a list of other important native wildflower species.
Monitor summer beach cleaning methods to ensure no damage to the structure of the beach	The beach continues to be managed throughout the summer as per an agreement with Nature Scot which came into effect in 2016. This management balances the need for high levels of cleanliness and hygiene on the award-winning beach with the need to maintain the current habitats.
Continue to achieve Scotland's Beach Award for Broughty Ferry Beach	The Award was retained in 2023, feedback from the assessor noted that the beach is an important community resource for the people of Dundee and beyond.
Continue to achieve 'Excellent' EU Bathing Water Quality at Broughty Ferry Beach	The Designated Bathing Water at Broughty Ferry retained an Excellent classification for water quality in 2023, sampling was carried out by SEPA during the Scottish Bathing Season which runs from 1 June to 15 September. In November 2023, SEPA confirmed that the classification for 2024 will also be Excellent.

## 4. Grassland

Actions	Progress 2023/24
Reduce the use of herbicide in management practices	The council is continuously reviewing herbicide usage with the aim to reduce overall use and to consider suitable alternatives which support biodiversity in Dundee. Additional street sweeping has been carried out again in 2023. This is effective in removing the detritus that builds up and enables weeds to colonise. The overall volume of herbicide has reduced by 55% in the last 5 years, with a reduction of 65% since 18/19. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2.
Review grassland management across the city. Increase in the amount of grass managed to improve biodiversity	The council currently maintains around 49 ha of naturalised grassland, 10 ha of biodiversity grassland and in the last year 3.3 ha of native coastal grassland was sown at Broughty Ferry as part of the Broughty Ferry to Monifieth Active Travel Project. An area of grassland at Broughty Ferry Local Nature Reserve has been fenced off using Nature Restoration Funding to allow for natural regeneration of wildflowers in this ancient dune system.
Expand and protect a population of the endangered plant greater yellow rattle at Riverside Nature Park	Partnership work with the Friends of Riverside Nature Park to increase the protection given to the area in which it is planted, greater yellow rattle continues to thrive and expand in the area.
Continue to maintain and expand areas of native perennial meadow	Approximately 3.4 ha of native perennial wildflower meadows are managed by the council and 3.3ha of native meadows are managed in partnership with Eden.
Continue to maintain and expand annual flower areas throughout the city	Approximately 1 ha of annual flower areas are sown and managed by the council.
Continue to maintain and increase the diversity of bulb panels in the city	Dundee City Council continues to maintain numerous bulb panels across the city and continues to look for opportunities to diversify these. Additional revenue funding was used in 2023 to plant further pollinator friendly Allium bulbs in naturalised grassland areas.
To continue to restrict access to dogs off leads at Riverside Nature Park during skylark nesting season	Signs were again placed in Riverside Nature Park during the breeding season in 2023 to remind people to keep to paths and help protect skylark nests. Volunteers from the Friends of Riverside Nature Park, the Outdoor Access Officer and the Countryside Rangers were all on site periodically to reinforce this message and to speak to park users. These methods continue to be effective and the population of breeding skylarks in this area appears to have stabilised at around 18-20 pairs, bucking the trend for the species' decline in the UK.

## 5. Urban Green Network

Actions	Progress 2023/24
Continue to promote and support the 'Take Pride in Your City' campaign	The 'Take Pride' campaign is regularly promoted and public involvement encouraged via DCC media channels, branded signage and graphics, newsletters and local campaigns. National campaigns which tie into the Take Pride actions have also been promoted, such as the annual Spring Clean. Topics have included how to report an issue, promoting responsible behaviour, highlighting positive action, and encouraging participation in local and national environmental activities. The SMART action plan was revised by the Steering Group and approved by Neighbourhood Services Committee (committee report:198-2022) in August to take the campaign forward for 2022-24, this encompasses over 100 actions under the four strategic themes of; Local Environmental Quality, Recycling, City Centre and Businesses, and Communications. The steering group will review the action plan in summer 2024 and submit a 2024-26 action plan to Committee in late summer 2024.
Promote the incorporation of swift and bat boxes, both integral and external, into buildings and encourage people to report sightings	Promotion of bat and swift boxes continues to be undertaken through feedback provided on planning applications. In addition, the Nature Restoration Fund supported the installation of swift boxes at the Social Work office building at Jack Martin Way. Some boxes were also donated to the University of Dundee and have been installed on University buildings.
Review the management of habitats within older cemeteries to increase their biodiversity value	It has not been possible to carry out a for a review in of habitat management in cemeteries in 2023. However, opportunities to adapt management methods to be both efficient and beneficial for biodiversity are taken where possible.
Review the management of council-maintained hedges across the city	Dundee City Council continues to manage a variety of hedges across the city. In 2023 a survey of hedges was conducted using a rapid assessment survey designed by the Peoples Trust for Endangered Animals. This allows hedges to be categorised and provides advice on future maintenance of each category. This data will be reviewed in 2024 with a view to changing some management of hedges where there would be a clear operational and biodiversity benefit.
Review the management and storage of green waste in Dundee's parks to reduce fuel costs, provide a resource and prevent damage to biodiversity	Ways in which to reduce the amount of green waste in Dundee city parks continues to be explored. This includes reducing the amount of leaves collected in some areas and ensuring that leaves are spread as mulch where appropriate.
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.	NRF supported the replacement of a number of street trees across the city. These biodiversity friendly trees were planted into empty tree pits in pavements or used to replace damaged or dead trees. NRF was also used to create additional biodiversity grassland areas along Lochee Road. These areas were seeded with a native perennial wildflower mix to provide colour along this busy road as well as new

Actions	Progress 2023/24
	habitat for pollinators. These green infrastructure projects will provide habitat 'Stepping stones' between our green spaces and increase connectivity in the city's nature network.
Identify and correctly manage Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL)	There are a number of brown field sites in the city, but it is currently unclear if their current management creates suitable conditions for OMHPDL. A large number of these also privately owned which makes surveys impractical. Ecological surveys are required for new developments in such sites and any areas with OMHPDL would be identified as part of such surveys.
Promote community growing and identify suitable sites for new projects	Dundee City Council continue to support 26 community gardens and 550 allotment plots (through directly managed and leased sites) across the city in line with the Dundee Food Growing Strategy.
Maintain current cemeteries for both biodiversity and visitors in an empathetic manner	Resources have not been available for a formal review in of habitat management in cemeteries in 2023, however opportunities to adapt management methods to be both efficient and beneficial for biodiversity are taken where possible.
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	<p>As part of the Broughty Ferry Active Travel project two new ornamental flower beds were installed at the entrance of Windmill Gardens. The planting will not only look attractive but is climate resilient and will support pollinators and other wildlife.</p> <p>Capital funding for environmental improvements was used to plant herbaceous perennials on roundabouts along Riverside Drive and ornamental beds along the Perth Road at Sinderins and Millar's Wynd. Again, not only will this planting provide amenity benefits, but will be climate resilient and wildlife friendly.</p>
Maintain Green Flag status for current parks and look to increase sites with Green Flag	All 7 Sites maintained their Green Flag status in 2023. Work has taken place in partnership with the Friends of Magdalen Green with a view to inclusion in future Green Flag applications.
Investigate a potential project regarding the use of amphibian ladders in roadside gully pot drains	After a successful project in early in 2023 additional ladders were built and installed using funds from the Nature Restoration Fund. Another 100 ladders were installed into gully pot drains in Ballumbie. The areas were identified, built and installed in partnership with the Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group. A workshop was held where volunteers could come along and learn more about amphibians and assist with the assembly of the ladders.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
Continue to evaluate all Council parks internally using Green Flag judging criteria	In addition to the seven sites entered into the externally assessed Green Flag Awards, a further twenty-four sites are internally assessed using the same criteria. Results have been fed back to local management teams and actions collated, these have been used to inform potential capital projects.
Continue to support local Friends of groups to improve and manage biodiversity within their parks	Council officers regularly attend meetings of the groups where possible and each group has a named contact within the Environment service. The Community Environment Officer has been working closely with Friends of Magdalen Green as part of a Community Participation Request.
Tree replacement in parks *Additional action	Capital funding for environmental improvements was used to plant new trees and shrubs in Dudhope Park and Magdalen Green. These new park trees will replace diseased or damaged trees and help to diversify the age and species of trees within these local parks.
Development of Nature Network Tool *Additional action	Along with several other local authorities, Dundee City Council were asked by Nature Scot to participate in the development of a nature network tool. The results of this, which will provide an indication of the city's current nature network and opportunities for further enhancement, are expected imminently. This tool will be rolled out to all local Authorities across the country later this year.

## 6. Planning and Development

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</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	The LINCS review is ongoing and will be informed by recently published (April 2024) guidance from Nature Scot. All updated information will be included in the upcoming review of the Local Development Plan.
Update all Local Nature Reserve management plans	Plans for all three Local Nature Reserves are updated annually in January.
To review any planning applications which have an impact on the biodiversity or geodiversity of Dundee seeking to reduce to amount of negative impacts	For the year 23-24 tree advice had been provided for 37 planning applications, 5 discharge of conditions and 3 pre-application enquiries. Of these, 6 involved TPO's, 1 was on or near LINCS and 6 were in Conservation Areas.

Actions	Progress 2023/24
Ensure that Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) are upheld and that new orders are granted where necessary	One new TPOs was created in 2023. 9 enforcement cases have been generated for unauthorised felling of TPO trees or trees within a conservation area. Two cases have been closed with replacement planting; the rest are ongoing.
Agree appropriate mitigation measures to put in place where development leads to a loss of biodiversity	Dundee City Council continues to follow and highlight the Developing with Nature Guidance produced by Nature Scot in 2022, which reflects the more proactive measures required by NPF4 and the need to restore and regenerate biodiversity.
To monitor progress on introducing biodiversity net gain to new developments across the UK and research how this might be implemented in Dundee	A review into the implementation of a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, similar to that already employed in England was completed in September 2023. Nature Scot are currently consulting on a paper outlining how this system should be adapted for Scotland. Dundee City Council will feed into this consultation and any ongoing work in this area.
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	As the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Climate Action have become embedded into council processes, they have become an integral part of any new strategies and policies. In 2023, Dundee City Council agreed the formation of a new committee structure. The Climate, Environment and Biodiversity Committee was created and is responsible for strategies, activities and reports relating to biodiversity and climate change.
Progression of Open Space Audit  *Additional action	Additional revenue funding supported the appointment of a contractor to carry out an Open Space Audit across the city. This audit includes an assessment of both quality and access of the city's open spaces and will inform the upcoming Open Space Strategy. This strategy will have direct links to the Biodiversity Action Plan and Nature Network planning.

## 7. Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Actions	Progress 2023/24
To promote the recording and mapping of INNS within Dundee	Members of the public continue to report giant hogweed when it becomes a health concern. Officers continue to map Giant Hogweed for annual control with a new mobile GIS mapping system now available. Locations not managed by DCC are investigated by DCC Environmental Health Officers, with records shared internally to update any maps.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
Work with private landowners to increase the area of control and prevent re-colonisation	Environmental Health Officers ask private landowners to control GHW on their property with mixed success. DCC provide information on all known landowners within Dundee, and also in Angus's Dighty catchment to assist Nature Scot in delivering action under the Scottish Government's legislation. Nature Scot has advised that they do not currently have the resources to deliver legal action or grants for landowners.
Encourage awareness of INNS and where our statutory duties lie in respect of them	Environment staff continue to look for ways in which to raise awareness of this issue with staff and have sought advice from the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) for assistance with training material.
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	Dundee City Council carry out a programme of giant hogweed removal across the city, but the main area of infestation is along the Dighty Burn corridor. Areas are assessed twice a year, once prior to spraying and again after spraying to identify areas which require further treatment. Revenue funding was available in 23/24 which allowed for the trapping of grey squirrels to recommence at nine locations across the city. Also, in partnership with the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI), mink trapping was carried out along the Dighty and its tributaries.

## 8. Communication and Awareness Raising

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
The Environment Department continues to work with communities to promote and enhance biodiversity	Environment officers continue to engage with communities to encourage, support and facilitate activities to promote and enhance biodiversity. For example, working in partnership with Dundee's Beautiful Scotland, It's Your Neighbourhood, and other community growing and Friends groups to promote biodiversity to the wider public and support their efforts to encourage biodiversity at their own projects and through their activities. The Community Environment Officer has been working closely with a number of community groups in 2023. These include Friends of Magdalen Green, Friends of Balgarthno Stones, Friends of Baxter Park, Stobswell Forum and Root and Branch.
Develop relationships with schools in terms of Environmental education and involvement	The Countryside Ranger Service have engaged with around 715 children across 14 schools in the last year.



<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
Work with volunteers, including those with physical and mental health issues in biodiversity projects across Dundee	The Countryside Rangers facilitated around 600 hours of volunteering in 23/24. Volunteers assisted with various practical conservation tasks such as tree planting, litter picking, making bird and bat boxes and survey work. There was a wide range of people who volunteered their time including children, retired people, corporate groups, people with mental health issues and recent refugees.
Set up an annual workshop event on Biodiversity within the Council	An event was held at The Howff in 2023 to encourage staff to learn about biological recording and participate in the City Nature Challenge.
Have an annual programme of events that is widely promoted and well attended	The Countryside Ranger Service carried out 19 events aimed at the general public in the last year, including tree planting, marine watching, and family activities.
Collate information and feedback from the public regarding biodiversity	Feedback from the public is reported to the council through a number of avenues such as through local councillors, direct emails, community groups and through corporate complaints on Firmstep. Although not collated in a central area, trends are identified and incorporated into future projects as required.
Commission repeat radio campaign *Additional action	Revenue funding was used for a repeat radio campaign on local radio highlighting the benefits of longer grass in parks.

## 9. Recording

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2023/24</b>
Explore the establishment of a Regional Hub for biological records in partnership with several organisations	The Better Biodiversity Data project (BBD), led and managed by the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Trust and supported by Nature Scot and The Scottish Government, commenced work in March 2023. It aims to develop the first steps in a strategic approach to the collection, collation and sharing of biological data across Scotland. Dundee City Council is represented on the Project Group. It is anticipated that this work will assist in establishing a method of storing and accessing biological data for the area.
Engage people in monitoring and surveying of nature across Dundee, creating a volunteer base which is enthusiastic and knowledgeable	The Countryside Rangers and Community Environment Officer support a number of volunteers to conduct bumblebee and butterfly surveys across the city. Dundee took part in the City Nature Challenge in 2023 and is signed up again for 2024. This challenge is an international event, motivating people around the world to find and record wildlife in their cities. Dundee is one of 3 Scottish Cities

Actions	Progress 2023/24
	participating and the Community Environment Officer has been carrying out promotional work in the lead up to the event.

## 10. Geodiversity

Actions	Progress 2023/24
To survey and assess the condition of the current geodiversity sites in Dundee, making recommendations on any remedial action required	Council officers continue to seek resources to enable this work to be carried out.
To survey any potential new geodiversity sites	Council officers continue to seek resources to enable this work to be carried out.
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.

**\*Additional actions** - These are actions which have taken place which encourage biodiversity. They are additional to the current actions within the plan but are aligned with the overall BAP objectives.

## 12. Looking Forward

- 12.1 Since the current Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 2020, there have been some significant changes to both international and national policies and strategies. Other issues such as Ash Dieback have become significant, requiring Dundee City Council to take action, which is not reflected in the current plan. In addition, the Council's technological capabilities have improved, updates to GIS software in particular enable information to be shared more widely and are used to plan more effectively. These factors have prompted the need for a review of the Biodiversity Action Plan which will be brought to elected members in Spring 2025.
- 12.2 In 2022, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) took place in Montreal, Canada. This meeting led to a landmark agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and a new set of global targets for biodiversity, entitled the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This replaces the Aichi Targets. The framework has 23 action-oriented global targets for urgent action over the decade to 2030. The review of Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan will directly contribute towards approximately nine of these global targets. These nine targets focus on topics such as protecting and enhancing habitats, reducing the impacts of invasive species and pollution, protecting ecosystem services, enhancing nature networks, environmental education and full integration of biodiversity into all processes.
- 12.3 In 2022, the Scottish Government published a draft of the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) to incorporate these new targets. The strategy aims for Scotland to be nature positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. The six objectives of the plan are: -
- Accelerate restoration and regeneration;
  - Protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond protected areas;
  - Embed nature-positive farming, fishing and forestry;
  - Protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats;
  - Invest in Nature
  - Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss
- 12.4 The SBS has a section focusing on Urban Landscapes as well as other habitats. The Scottish Government had advised that this would be published in 2023 and the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan was planned to take this into account. However, this was delayed and in late 2023 a further consultation was launched, which included an updated draft of the SBS, a draft 5-year delivery plan and elements to be included in the Natural Environment Bill. This delivery plan focuses on two main frameworks Nature Networks and 30 X 30 (protecting 30% of the planet for nature by 2030). New actions within a refreshed Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan should reflect these new objectives and frameworks.
- 12.5 In addition, Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was published and recognised that decisions about development will impact on generations to come and has put the global climate and nature crises at the heart of its vision. NPF gives biodiversity significant weight to ensure that it is recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions. Policy 3 plays a critical role in ensuring that development secures positive effects for biodiversity. It rebalances the planning system in favour of conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and promotes investment in nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature.
- 12.6 In preparation for the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan a number of projects have been undertaken. The council took advantage of an opportunity to be involved with the development of a GIS based Nature Network Tool developed by AECOM in partnership with Nature Scot as part of a CivTech Challenge. Involvement in this project at such an early stage has ensured that the tool will be suitable for very urban local authorities such as Dundee and to ensure that the data would be at sufficient resolution. The first Nature Network maps have been provided with further opportunity mapping elements to be released imminently. This will provide evidence-based support for updated actions identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

- 12.7 In addition, with funding provided from the Additional Revenue budget a contractor was appointed provide an audit of all open spaces in the city for the upcoming Open Space Strategy. This information will also inform biodiversity actions.
- 12.8 The upcoming projects highlighted below will also be incorporated into the review and will align with the information outlined above.
- 12.9 Along with ensuring that the actions continue to align with current national and international strategies and targets, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that actions are flexible and able to adapt to any further changes. The outcomes should be measurable and reportable, both internally and to Scottish Government. It is intended that a focussed consultation is carried out with appropriate organisations.

### **13. Upcoming potential and planned initiatives which will improve/affect biodiversity**

- 13.1 Nature Restoration Fund; the Scottish Government have advised that Nature Restoration Funding will be awarded to all Local Authorities in 2024/25. The extent and scope of this funding is yet to be announced.
- 13.2 Ash Dieback Plan; A contractor framework is in place to provide management and ongoing monitoring for diseased trees. The next step in the Ash Dieback plan will planning for recovery and to identify resources for appropriate replacement planting for trees lost.
- 13.3 Urban Re-leaf; Urban Re-Leaf is a new four-year cross-cultural EU project supported by Horizon Europe funding, that aims to co-create citizen-powered data ecosystems to support climate change adaptation, green infrastructure, and urban design planning. The University of Dundee will continue to collaborate with Dundee City Council to deliver a citizen sensing pilot monitoring a range of environmental issues that relate to Dundee's green transitions for the built environment.
- 13.4 SEPA Dighty 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 enable an 18-month feasibility report to be developed, starting during 2024, including funds towards a coordination resource.
- 13.5 St Leonard's Park project; this 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 NatureScot. The main focus is to reduce the risk of flooding in this area by introducing blue-green infrastructure. This will 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 been completed and Sustrans funding secured to take this on to a more detailed design stage.  
  
Further information on this project can be found here: <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/About-Us/News-and-Views/2022/06/170622-St-Leonard-Park>.
- 13.6 City Wide SuDS project -The council are working in partnership with Scottish Water to develop a city-wide strategic SuDS strategy using nature-based solutions for 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 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 begin in late 2024.

## **14. Challenges**

- 14.1 The challenges faced in the delivery of this plan remain unchanged. Dundee City Council continues to carefully balance 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 and to ensure that local, national and international obligations and targets can be met.
- 14.2 Officers will continue to apply for suitable funding, ensuring that all projects fit with current plans and strategies to ensure an overall benefit for the city and the wider environment with a focus on partnership working. Collaborative planning will be essential to allow council officers to submit applications quickly and successfully and will ensure that sufficient resources are available to carry out the work on the ground.
- 14.3 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, the breakdown of paths and roads infrastructure 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. In 2022 new equipment was purchased to mechanically remove weeds from hard surfaces and the effectiveness of these over time will be monitored. Herbicide use in parks continues to reduce.

Table 1. Herbicide use by Dundee City Council for grounds maintenance over the last 5 years

Product	Litres/year				
	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Round Up Provantage	2500	2150	1010	955	1040
Pistol**	20	0	0	0	5
Nomix Dual	75	0	0	0	0
Chikara**	0	0	0	0	112
<b>Total Litres</b>	<b>2595</b>	<b>2150</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>955*</b>	<b>1157</b>

\* Figure differs from previous reporting (1020ltrs) due to some chemical being unused and returned.

\*\*alternative herbicides were trialled in 2023 with the aim to support further overall reductions. However, the trial confirmed this product did not support further reductions. These products will not be used going forward.

The table above summarises Dundee City Council's overall use of herbicides over the last five years. It is noted that there has been a slight increase for 23/24. This is mainly due to the weather conditions. However, there has still been an overall reduction of 55% since 2019/20 when the Biodiversity Action Plan was published and a reduction of 65% since 18/19.

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.