

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

**REPORT TO:** NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 JANUARY 2021

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

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

**REPORT NO:** 18-2021

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To present an update on the progress made by Dundee City Council towards Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan, reporting on actions progressed during 2020.

**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 There are no direct financial implications associated with the agreement of this report. The costs associated with the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan are already contained within existing service budgets.

**4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 Reference is made to Article VII of the minute of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, which approved the Biodiversity Action Plan (report 14-2020).

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 was a major step forward in setting out how Dundee City Council will fulfil this duty and how working in partnership with other local organisations will 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 It is intended that the Dundee Biodiversity Action Plan will raise awareness of the wildlife (flora and fauna) of Dundee in an international, national and local context. This plan aims to highlight 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 first such report.

4.4 This year has been particularly difficult with the Covid-19 pandemic, and related restrictions, impacting on volunteering and partnership working. However, Council officers have progressed actions and have worked with partners to find alternative methods to continue to support and improve biodiversity within the city.

4.5 Highlights for 2020 include the new proposed biodiversity and naturalised grassland areas in parks and greenspaces across the city, maintaining Green Flag status for six parks and gaining a new Green Flag for Riverside Nature Park, as well as a successful funding bid for £10,000 to Scottish Forestry's Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) scheme for woodland management on the Law and an increase in

breeding skylarks at Riverside Nature Park. Improving and protecting existing habitats has also been a focus of the natural flood defence work on the sand dunes in Broughty Ferry. The beach in Broughty Ferry has also retained its Keep Scotland Beautiful Scottish Beach Award. This award celebrates clean, well-managed and sustainable beaches.

- 4.6 Despite the ongoing coronavirus related restrictions of lockdown, officers were able launch a 'Lockdown Bird Feeder' initiative. Bird feeders and a supply of food were distributed to occupants of sheltered housing complexes who were encouraged watch and record the birds visiting the feeders.
- 4.7 Further details on the above and progress on all Biodiversity Action Plan actions identified for 2020 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 Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

Elaine Zwirlein  
**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

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3 December 2020



# Dundee's Biodiversity Action Plan

## *Progress Report 2020*

### Introduction:

The following tables show the specific progress made by Dundee City Council for each action in the Biodiversity Action Plan in 2020.

A large number of actions this year have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. These restrictions, whilst helping to keep us safe, have meant that many volunteer opportunities and sessions had to be cancelled or modified. This has included supporting volunteers with PPE, advice and equipment to work alone or in much smaller groups. Online networking has increased dramatically, with increased use of emails, blogs and virtual meetings and workshops taking place allowing staff and community organisations to maintain communication. This year has also provided opportunities for people to take stock of their local greenspaces and discover what they mean to them, recognising their importance in connecting with nature and for our physical and mental health. This sense of importance and awareness of the nature around us should be nurtured and taken forward as we continue to work towards the Biodiversity Action Plan's aims and objectives in the future.

## Woodland

Actions	Progress 2020
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 £10,000 for forestry work, signage and benches on the Law in partnership with the Law Heritage Project. This work was completed in September.
To monitor the health of trees, in particular the species which are potentially at threat from new diseases. Assisting with the promotion and recruitment of volunteers for the Observatree project	Dundee City Council Forestry Team continue to monitor the health of the city's urban tree population. This is assisted by members of the public reporting potentially diseased trees to them. The setting up of an Observatree project has been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, arrangements will be progressed when current restrictions are relaxed.
Continue to apply for funding to control grey squirrels	Dundee City Council carried out grey squirrel control across the city and reported to Scottish Forestry and Scottish Wildlife Trust as set out in our current funding agreement with Scottish Forestry (approx. £13,000 pa).
Record, monitor and protect bat populations and known roosts	Officers have provided advice on bats in general and assessed bat surveys (provided as supplementary information in the planning process). Advice was also given regarding the impact on bats resulting from staging events in greenspaces.
Apply for WIAT funding from Scottish Forestry to extend current woodland areas and connect smaller compartments in line with the Strategic Forest Plan	A funding bid for Greater Balgay was submitted in November 2020. A decision on this application to Scottish Forestry is awaited and due in early 2021.
Investigate the possibility of an i-Tree project to assess the forestry canopy cover in Dundee and use this to set new targets	This initiative has been progressed through completing an electronic i-Tree Canopy assessment for all wards in Dundee in 2020. This tool estimated that the average canopy cover for Dundee was around 16.5% with Dundee's trees storing around 304kt of carbon and sequestering 12.12kt annually. DCC also worked with Scottish Forestry to assist a student from Dundee University to work with Dundee Botanic Gardens and assess the feasibility of full i-Tree Eco project in Dundee. A planned workshop on the i-Tree package has been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
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)	As of September 2020, tree advice had been given for 39 planning applications. Two of these were on/next to Locally Important Conservation Sites (LINCS), 10 involved TPOs and 4 were in conservation areas. Also provided advice in discharging conditions on 7 applications. Of the applications that have been submitted and approved in 2020 (to September), 316 trees were/are planned to be removed and 321 have/are planned to be planted.

Actions	Progress 2020
Investigate a project to plant an urban orchard and oak woodland area at Riverside Nature Park.	Officers met with community representatives from Riverside Nature Park / Scottish Forestry to discuss proposals prior to a funding bid being submitted. However, the project is currently on hold and no funding applications have been submitted.
Maintain and manage paths and access within woodland	Funding has been received from The Scottish Forestry Woodland Grant scheme of £3680 for maintenance over the next 5 years on the Law and a new application for woodland management and path work for Greater Balgay has also been submitted. Dundee City Council manages a large amount of path network through woodland within the city. It has been noted that maintenance to these was often not possible during initial Covid-19 restrictions but staff have worked hard to address this. Feedback regarding paths through woodland provided by both external and internal Green Flag judging will be taken on board and issues addressed through environmental improvement works and updated individual action plans.

#### Wetlands

Actions	Progress 2020
Investigate and source funding for a project to sensitively deal with silted up areas of the Gelly Burn in Den O Mains	SEPA has been contacted for advice regarding this project and any dredging will require licensing, this will be progressed further in 2021. The aim is for planned work to complement the environmental improvements to paths agreed at Neighbourhood Services Committee in November 2020 (report No 290-2020). Any further capital works will be brought to committee for approval in due course.
Capital project to improve the biodiversity value of the northern pond at Stobsmuir Park	A bore hole has been installed which now provides a fresh water supply to the ponds. Aeration pumps have been installed in the pond to improve the water quality and have been successful in oxygenating the ponds. Further consideration is being given to a pond survey with potential involvement of volunteers to assess the level of biodiversity now within the ponds and to look for ways to make further improvements at this location.
Continue to develop new ponds and wetland at suitable sites	Investigation of suitable sites and project work has been impacted upon by Covid -19 restrictions in 2020.
Ensure appropriate access is maintained along rivers and around ponds to protect both wildlife and the safety of the public	Spaces for People funding of £400,000 has been secured for upgrades to the Green Circular cycle path which runs for 26 miles around Dundee. It is planned that some of this work, including re-surfacing and path widening, will take place on the sections which are adjacent to both the Dighty Burn and the River Tay. Control of Giant Hogweed along the Dighty was delayed this year due to Covid-19 restrictions but was completed. This area will continue to be monitored.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
Support communities to develop plans for their ponds/wetlands so actions can develop at grass roots level	Delayed by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020

### **Marine and Coastal**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
To continue to manage the sand dune section of coastal defences at Broughty Ferry in the most natural way possible	Since 2019 a programme of dune restoration works has been implemented, with the ongoing objective to manage the 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.
Project to improve and increase the area of coastal grassland at Broughty Ferry Esplanade	Dundee City Council were awarded funding of £500,000 from Sustrans to investigate the feasibility of and design of an active travel project, complementing the current flood defence work at Broughty Ferry. This has resulted in a plan to create a new travel route along the coast from Broughty Ferry to Monifieth, linking with wider networks in Angus. As part of this £9.6 million project, around £430,000 will be used to transform amenity and rough grass in to biodiverse coastal grassland. The proposal is now in the final stages of the funding application and a decision from Sustrans is imminent. If successful, work will commence in 2021.
Continue to keep beaches free of litter and reduce the amount of plastic by organising regular beach cleans	Participation in litter picks and national campaigns to reduce littering and encourage participation have been promoted via the Take Pride in Your City campaign. A minimum of 24 litter picks have been carried out in 2020 to date, of which 13 were beach cleans. The number of events has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. Initial meetings were held with Keep Scotland Beautiful in summer 2020 regarding DCC's involvement in a new Source to Sea litter awareness campaign.
Review the viability of the sand martin nesting bank at Broughty Ferry	An assessment has concluded that the nesting bank is no longer viable as a sand martin nest site, due to pest infestations. However, as part of the proposed Active Travel Project, the nest bank will be transformed into large sand dunes with natural coastal planting. Alternative suitable sand martin nesting sites will be investigated for future development.
Continue to encourage establishment of coastal plant species e.g. kidney vetch and sea pea at appropriate coastal locations	Volunteering affected by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
To manage public access across the sand dunes at Broughty Ferry using chestnut pale fencing	Chestnut pale fencing has been installed to limit access by members of the public, with the aim of preventing erosion and protecting 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 as per the agreement with NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage). 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 2020, although process slightly delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
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 start of the Scottish Bathing Season was postponed following a consultation by the Scottish Government, this year it ran from 15 July to 15 September. SEPA's water quality sampling programme will continue for 2020, however fewer samples will be taken this year due to the shorter season and Covid-19 restrictions at analysing laboratories.

### **Grassland**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
Reduce the use of herbicide in management practices	An initial review is in progress and this will inform areas for action. 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 over 25% since 2018/19. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2.
Review grassland management across the city. Increase in the amount of grass managed to improve biodiversity	In response to the positive comments that the Council received about the wildlife attracted to the longer grass in the City's parks and open spaces during lockdown, 27 areas covering 75,000qm were identified as potential biodiversity grasslands / naturalised grasslands. Over the summer officers engaged with interested groups and residents. As a result of this, a citywide consultation has been underway from mid-October until 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020. Once the survey has closed, the information will be analysed and evaluated. It will be used alongside existing plans and strategies to make recommendations. These recommendations will also consider the biodiversity assessments that have been carried out at each site, as well as the results of dialogue with Friends groups, community groups and local residents.
To develop a tool box talk/training/updates to operations staff to ensure successful management of perennial meadows	Talk by Butterfly Conservation on creating and managing meadows attended by Operations Managers in early 2020, further updates planned upon easing of current Covid-19 restrictions.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
Expand and protect a population of the endangered plant greater yellow rattle at Riverside Nature Park	DCC working in partnership with Friends of Riverside Nature Park to ensure this rare species is protected. Arrangements are being made to ensure that all staff are briefed and that mechanical maintenance of the greater yellow rattle location does not occur going forward. A specific plan will be developed in consultation with the 'Friends' group.
Continue to maintain and expand annual flower areas throughout the city	Covid-19 restrictions prevented areas being sown in 2020. Further updates planned upon easing of current Covid-19 restrictions.
Continue to maintain and increase the diversity of bulb panels in the city	This has been affected by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020. Further updates planned upon easing of current Covid-19 restrictions.
To continue to restrict access to dogs off leads at Riverside Nature Park during skylark nesting season	Completed for 2020, the protected areas have been monitored on a semi -regular basis by volunteers and DCC officers working under Covid-19 restrictions guidelines. The exact numbers of breeding pairs of Skylarks are not known but at least 16 singing males were seen, which is an increase from 11 in 2019..

#### **Urban Green Network**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
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, newsletters and local campaigns, plus a staff briefing note was developed. National campaigns which tie into the Take Pride actions have been promoted. The public have been encouraged to report incidents of fly-tipping via DCC social media and the message reinforced periodically, if successful the same approach will be applied elsewhere, such as graffiti. The 'Take Pride' message was reinforced throughout lockdown to promote responsible behaviour, such as disposing of waste correctly, advise of HWRC closures and encourage the public to look after their local open spaces.
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. In 2020 some developers agreed to incorporate bird and bat boxes into external landscapes. Developments agreed so far in 2020 have not yet reached the installation stage.
Review the management and storage of green waste in Dundee's parks to reduce fuel costs, provide a resource and prevent damage to biodiversity	No progress due to impact on operations by Covid-19 restrictions. This issue will be taken up again when resources allow.



Actions	Progress 2020
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.	The SUDs at the new Baluniefield Nursery will incorporate native plant species. The proposed Broughty Ferry Active Travel project will incorporate a significant proportion of natural landscaping, creating natural coastal grassland to the north of the dunes along much of The Esplanade. Dundee City Council's Housing Asset Management team have been investigating ways to incorporate bat and swift boxes during roof maintenance work. Further opportunities will be created with the aim for biodiversity to be considered at the outset of appropriate capital works.
Promote community growing and identify suitable sites for new projects	The <a href="#">Dundee Local Food Growing Strategy</a> was agreed in August 2020. Although Dundee currently has 26 existing community growing spaces and 550 allotment plots, as well as those in school grounds, potential areas for expansion have been identified in communal greenspaces and the western side of Caird Park. During 2020 a community garden has been established in Fintry and discussions are at an advanced stage for a community growing space in Whitfield. The Stobswell Forum are also consulting local people about creating growing spaces in roadside greenspaces.
Maintain current cemeteries for both biodiversity and visitors in an empathetic manner	Early implementation of action planned for 2021. Work has already started with 10% reduction in the amount of grass cutting at Western and Balgay Cemeteries as well as a significant reduction in the amount of herbicide applied.
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 were planned for Autumn 2020, 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 current sites maintained their Green Flag status and Riverside Nature Park was awarded a Green Flag after its first application in 2020.
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 Covid-19 restrictions.
Continue to evaluate all Council parks internally using Green Flag judging criteria	Over 20 sites have been assessed in 2020. Results have been fed back to local management teams and action plans drawn up, which will be used to inform potential capital projects over the winter / spring.
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. A Friends of Friends group was set up in in 2019, which participated in the Dundee Flower and Food Festival 2019. The promotional display produced by the group toured a number of public libraries in early 2020. Volunteer activities have been

Actions	Progress 2020
	suspended/restricted due to Covid-19 restrictions.

### Planning and Development

Actions	Progress 2020
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 started in July 2020. Successful Zoom meeting held in which DCC officers and local conservation groups were in attendance. A number of actions were identified and will be taken forward.
Update all Local Nature Reserve management plans	Plans for all three Local Nature Reserves were updated at the beginning of 2020.
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. Up until September 2020 comments have been provided for 39 planning applications. Two of these were on/next to LINCS, 10 involved TPOs and 4 were in conservation areas. Also provided advice in discharging conditions on 7 applications.
To continue to update and promote the Green Network Guidance	Last updated in 2019 this guidance continues to be promoted through the Local Development Plan and on the council website. Links to this guidance are provided via the council's biodiversity webpages.
Ensure that Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) are upheld and that new orders are granted where necessary	No new TPOS's have been established in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Two enforcement cases have been generated for unauthorised felling of TPO trees. Other cases have been investigated for trees in conservation area.
Agree appropriate mitigation measures to put in place where development leads to a loss of biodiversity	Review of planning conditions relating to the environment was started in 2020 but has been put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. Currently there are no set standards of mitigation, cases are decided on a case by case basis.
To map Council owned sites across the city which are not recorded as greenspace but are unsuitable for development	Although initial discussions have been held, work to progress this action has been delayed due to the impact of Covid-19.
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	<a href="#">Local Housing Strategy</a> (Neighbourhood Services Committee Report No 260-2019) and <a href="#">Local Food Growing Strategy</a> (recovery sub-committee report No 178-2020) both provide links to biodiversity.

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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</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 impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020. Officers continue to map Giant Hogweed for annual control. In addition to giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also subject to targeted control.
Work with private landowners to increase the area of control and prevent re-colonisation	Discussions between officers, NatureScot and Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) regarding giant hogweed control at Baldovan Estate. There are plans to accurately map all areas treated by different parties along the Dighty. Further progress impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020
Encourage awareness of INNS and where our statutory duties lie in regards to them	Impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020
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. A biosecurity statement was produced in 2019 and there are plans to roll out awareness raising via tool box talks to Operations staff.
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 annual monitoring and maintenance programme of giant hogweed, which was delayed by Covid-19 restrictions in 2020, is now complete.

### **Communication and Awareness raising**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</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 has been delayed by Covid-19 restrictions, but will be prioritised in 2021. Stakeholders are 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 around 261 people over 10 environmental public events in local greenspaces. These events included bird watching and dolphin spotting events. However further promotion has been severely impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

Actions	Progress 2020
Develop relationships with schools in terms of environmental education and involvement	There are currently 12 primary and secondary schools in the city actively working towards their Eco-Schools Green Flag award. In pursuit of this award they are involved in a number of initiatives. Litter picks and recycling in schools have a high profile. Schools actively and regularly participate in competitions related to conservation and the environment, such as the European Clean Air at School project, helping to raise awareness of pollution around their schools. Dundee schools have enjoyed a longstanding association with the John Muir Trust and have partnerships with local conservation groups such as Dighty Connect. Some primary schools have been part of a programme, funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) to increase participation in learning in outdoor spaces. The Countryside Ranger Service have engaged around 159 children and teachers with 7 educational sessions with schools.
Work with volunteers, including those with physical and mental health issues in biodiversity projects across Dundee	This has also been severely affected by Covid-19 restrictions. However, the Countryside Ranger Service facilitated around 54 hours over 3 conservation volunteer sessions in local greenspaces. Tasks have included wildflower planting; tree planting; litter picking; invasive species removal and citizen science projects. During lockdown the Countryside Rangers in partnership with the Green Health Partnership provided around sixty bird feeders, with food and ID sheets to four sheltered housing complexes around the city in order to help improve shielded and vulnerable groups' wellbeing during COVID-19 by facilitating a connection to nature. 'Branching Out' sessions for people with mental health issues, funded by Scottish Forestry and run by the Countryside Ranger Service were initially put on hold but with some careful planning a 10-week session has started at Templeton Woods.
Continue to support and develop the Green Health Partnership to make the links between Biodiversity, greenspace and people's health	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 is being rolled out to all GP surgeries in Dundee and also takes in many allied health professionals.
Set up an annual workshop event on Biodiversity within the Council	A workshop was planned by the environment service and Trellis but this has been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. It is now being planned for March 2021 to tie in with Earth Hour Week.
Have an annual programme of events that is widely promoted and well attended	Impacted by Covid-19 restrictions but a few events still held, some have moved to an online format.
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 also provided 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. This website has had over 500 hits since it was set up in May. Other relevant webpages including the Countryside Ranger Service

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
	and local greenspaces received 1621 hits between January and September in 2020.
Collate information and feedback from the public regarding biodiversity	Feedback has been received regarding the 27 proposed biodiversity grasslands and naturalised grasslands. A city-wide consultation is underway and an online survey is open until 31 <sup>st</sup> December.

### **Recording**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
Engage people in monitoring and surveying of nature across Dundee, creating a volunteer base which is enthusiastic and knowledgeable	All volunteering events have been curtailed due to Covid-19 restrictions for a number of months in 2020. As part of the LINC review, initial discussions regarding using the i- Record App have taken place which would enable records to be submitted by interested individuals. These records would be externally verified and provide an important source of data. This is currently in a trial phase and once set up can be promoted across Volunteer groups in Dundee.

### **Geodiversity**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Progress 2020</b>
To survey and assess the condition of the current geodiversity sites in Dundee, making recommendations on any remedial action required	No progress, impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. Geological information provided on the biodiversity website.
Dundee City Council will consider becoming a signatory to the Scottish Geodiversity Charter	This action will be picked up again in 2021, following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.
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 2020 have been impacted upon by the Covid-19 restrictions, as detailed above. It is intended that these are picked up as when conditions allow.

Additional actions identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan for 2021 onwards include:

- To update Dundee's Tree and Urban Forestry Policy
- 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 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) ponds to ensure their potential for biodiversity is realised
- Implementation of the recommendations from the herbicide review
- Review the management of habitats within older cemeteries to increase their biodiversity value
- Agree appropriate mitigation measures to put in place where development leads to a loss of biodiversity
- Set up a group to review current printed material about biodiversity

Upcoming potential and planned initiatives which will benefit biodiversity:

- **Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Active Travel Improvements Project**  
Dundee City Council is working with Angus Council and Sustrans to improve connections from the city centre to other outlying neighbourhoods and towns outside the authority's boundary. This is part of a sustained effort towards the promotion of sustainable and healthy transport solutions for local residents and visitors alike. This project runs along the coast of the Tay Estuary from Broughty Ferry castle to Blue Seaway Park in Monifieth. As well as providing a fully segregated cycle lane and widening access across the Dighty Burn, it will improve access to the beach front, connect local greenspaces, provide extensive landscaping and the creation of coastal grassland areas as well as new interpretation of natural features and wildlife. Sustrans have funded the design and consultation process and the outcome of a further funding to take the project forward is awaited.
- **St Mary's Stormwater Management Strategy**  
Dundee City Council, Scottish Water, SEPA and NatureScot are developing proposals for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) within St Leonards Park as part of this strategy. Using a 'One Planet Choices' decision making/option appraisal strategy this project aims to reduce surface water flooding, enhance capacity for future waste water connections, reduce the cost of treating sewage and deliver multiple benefits for the community and environment including improved quality of space, access to greenspace and enhanced biodiversity.

- **Eden Project**

The Eden project is beginning work on a feasibility study for a proposed new project in Dundee, provisionally known as Eden project Scotland. A successful project, like every other Eden project, will be transformational and regenerative with an overarching theme of humanity's connection to the natural world.

## **Challenges**

As with other Local Authorities and public bodies, Dundee City Council carefully balances resources to provide high quality services, this has become more of a challenge in light of the current global pandemic. However, with challenges there are often opportunities. The Council will continue to work to improve communication between services and with partners in order to design efficient ways of collaborative working which benefit biodiversity as it works towards a green recovery. External funding will be sought to help us deliver new projects which will help to restore and improve habitats in the city.

In order to maximise the outcomes from the Biodiversity Action Plan, briefings will be delivered to members of staff so that cost effective biodiversity solutions and opportunities are explored throughout the Council. Dundee City Council will continue to work on ways in which to deliver appropriate training, seeking advice from external organisations where appropriate.

The Council recognises that ecological monitoring of biodiversity actions is important to ensure that actions are effective. Good partnership working is required in order to make the most of local expertise and to maximise the opportunities for external funding. Progress made by The Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum on seeking a solution to the issue of local recording centres will be closely monitored and assistance offered where possible.

## 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 3 years

Product	Litres/year		
	18/19	19/20	20/21
Round Up Provantage	2880	2500	2150
Pistol	20	20	0
Nomix Dual	0	75	0
Glymark - Nomix	115	0	0
<b>Total Litres</b>	<b>3015</b>	<b>2595</b>	<b>2150</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 14% in volume from 2018/19 to 2019/20. A further reduction of 17% in volume is detailed between 2019/20 when compared with 2020/21.

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.