

## REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2022-2027

#### **1 Executive Summary/Recommendations**

1.1 The Environment Team are leading on drafting of the Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027. Comments are being sought from all Area Committees during January prior to seeking subsequent approval from the Sustainability Committee.

#### **1.2 The Committee is recommended to:**

**1.2.1 Provide comments on the objectives, key priorities, and on-going commitments outlined in the draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027.**

#### **2 Decision Making Route**

2.1 The draft pollinator action plan was discussed at the Planning & Economy Member Officer Working Group on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and supportive comments were provided. No changes to the action plan were requested.

2.2 Once comments have been collated from all of the Area Committees, the final Action Plan will be submitted to the Sustainability Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022 for final approval.

#### **3 Discussion**

3.1 Aberdeenshire Council was one of the first local authorities in Scotland to produce a pollinator action plan in 2015. This plan elapsed in 2017 and was subsequently followed by the 2019 to 2021 action plan. These action plans set out the work the Council would undertake to protect, promote, and enhance pollinator populations. They recognise the need for urgent action.

3.2 Pollinating insects are essential to healthy, functioning ecosystems as they have a key role in the reproduction of many plant species. They are also important to humans - fertilising crops, providing food, and also pollinating plants in our gardens.

3.3 Pollinator populations have generally been declining over the last 50 years. There are known to be multiple pressures including pesticide use, changes in land use resulting in patchy distribution of natural and semi-natural habitats, and disease. Population impacts linked to climate change are also suggested.

- 3.4 See **Appendix 1** for the draft Action Plan.
- 3.5 In preparation for a new pollinator action plan, the Environment Team carried out a review of the 2019 to 2021 plan. A report of the review is provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.6 The review found that the majority of the actions in the plan had been completed despite the obvious impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The action plan structured and catalysed work to protect and enhance pollinator populations and also provided a means to promote the work of the Council. It was concluded that there was a strong value in having the action plan.
- 3.7 The review did note that many of the actions captured were essentially on-going and, while they are very worthwhile to identify, the new action plan should also aim to introduce more measurable, time limited actions. This has been addressed in the draft 2022-2027 plan with the introduction of measurable 'Key Priorities'.
- 3.8 The review also indicated that the time period covered by the action plan should be extended. It was felt that a longer time period would be beneficial so that the revision/renewal process does not get in the way of action. The new action plan has been drafted to match the period remaining on the national pollinator action plan hence running up to 2027. However, a yearly monitoring process will be carried out to ensure the actions are on track, but also remain current and relevant. We will report yearly on action plan progress to the Sustainability Committee.
- 3.9 The draft 2022-2027 action plan is a cross Service document with key actions for the Ranger Service, the North East Biological Records Centre (NESBReC), Landscape Services, and Education & Children's Services in addition to the Environment Team. Actions are also identified for the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership of which the Council is a partner. As with previous plans, it presents the work of Aberdeenshire Council to protect, enhance, and promote pollinator populations. A number of key priorities are proposed, including:
- At least 10% of public greenspace to be enhanced and managed for pollinators
  - 80 school grounds to provide habitat for pollinators
  - A pilot project on the River Don to explore pollinator habitat enhancement
  - 150 Ranger Service sessions per year with schools, groups, and communities to raise awareness of pollinators
  - A yearly NESBReC training course on pollinator identification

#### **4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk**

- 4.1 The proposals in this report helps to deliver strategic priorities:

- ‘Education’ and ‘Health and Wellbeing’ within the Our People pillar, by engaging and educating all ages on pollinator populations and the natural world.
- ‘Infrastructure’ and ‘Resilient Communities’ within the Our Environment pillar, by addressing the impacts and mitigating the effects of climate change, and other impacts, on the natural world.
- ‘Estate Modernisation’ within the Our Economy pillar, by modifying and modernising our approach to the management of public and Council estate greenspace.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the Action Plan is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	IIA attached as Appendix 3		
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 3		
Climate Change and Sustainability	IIA attached as Appendix 3		
Health and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 3		
Town Centre First		IIA attached as Appendix 3	

4.3 There are financial implications resulting from agreement to progress a number of the actions in the plan. For example, changes to the management of public greenspace has cost implications. However, the action plan captures on-going work to both cost and implement changes across Aberdeenshire with the aim of an overall reduction in costs over time. All other projects in the action plan have been costed and are considered deliverable based on current budgets. No staffing implications are predicted.

4.4 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 3**. No negative impacts were identified. There are positive impacts in the following areas:

- Children’s Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities
- Sustainability and Climate Change

4.5 No Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level.

4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

- Directly contributes to mitigation of Infrastructure Services Risk 005 'Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles by identifying and focusing measures to aid delivery of the Greenspaces project to increase biodiversity across the public owned spaces in Aberdeenshire.
- Directly contributes to the mitigation of Infrastructure Services Risk 007 'Safeguard the built and natural environment' by focusing, structuring, and monitoring delivery of a range of work which will benefit public greenspace, pollinators, biodiversity, and & the natural environment.

## 5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report. They are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section B.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the request is to consider, comment on, make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its Area.

**Alan Wood**

**Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services**

Report prepared by James Davidson, Environment Planner

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027

Appendix 2 Review of Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2019-2021

Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Assessment

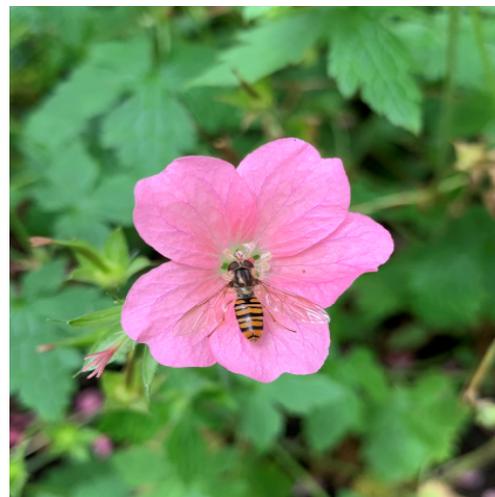
## REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2022-2027

#### Appendix 1 Draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is Aberdeenshire Council's third Pollinator Action Plan, with past plans running from 2015 to 2017 and 2019 to 2021. This and previous plans recognise the need for urgent action to protect and enhance pollinators populations. This Action Plan is a cross-Service document that identifies key areas of Council work up to March 2027 in alignment with The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland which runs until 2027 also.
- 1.2. Pollinating insects are essential to healthy, functioning ecosystems as they have a key role in the reproduction of many plant species. They are also important to humans - fertilising crops, providing food, and also pollinating plants in our gardens.
- 1.3. The main insect pollinators are bees. While honeybees are the best known, there are many other bee species, including a wide range of bumblebees and solitary bees that contribute significant pollinating services to crops and natural plant communities. Other groups of insects such as flies, wasps, beetles, moths, and butterflies also include important pollinators.
- 1.4. Pollinator populations have generally been declining over the last 50 years. There are known to be multiple pressures including pesticide use, changes in land use resulting in patchy distribution of natural and semi-natural habitats, and disease. Population impacts linked to climate change are also suggested.
- 1.5. Different types of pollinating insect have different requirements, but in order to survive and flourish, they generally require well-connected sources of pollen and nectar throughout the flowering season together with suitable sites for breeding or nesting to enable development of early life cycle stages and shelter throughout the year, including for winter hibernation.
- 1.6. Providing good habitats for pollinators will also help to support a



wide range of other invertebrates as well as seed and insect eating birds and small mammals for example.

## 2. Policy

- 2.1. All public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity as defined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.
- 2.2. The [Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027](#) aims to address the causes of decline in populations, diversity, and range of Scottish pollinator species, and to help them thrive in future. Objectives include making Scotland more pollinator friendly by preventing further loss of flower rich habitat, creating new areas of suitable habitat and enhancing connectivity between them, raising awareness and encouraging action across all sectors.
- 2.3. Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Priorities identify the need to protect our valuable natural resources.

## 3. Taking Action

- 3.1. Aberdeenshire Council will take action across Services to meet 4 key objectives:

**Objective 1:** Create habitat for pollinators

**Objective 2:** Contribute to the monitoring of pollinator populations

**Objective 3:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators

**Objective 4:** Protect existing habitat for pollinators

- 3.2. There are two types of action identified under each Objective. First, our Key Priorities which are the focus for effort driven by the Action Plan. Second are our Ongoing Commitments, the work Council Teams and Services continue to progress day-to day which benefits pollinator populations.
- 3.3. The document has been produced by the Environment Team within Planning & Economy with input from other teams and Services including the Ranger Service, NESBReC, Landscape Services, Property & Facilities Management, and Education & Children's Services. For each year of the strategy, we will carry out monitoring of actions and planning for the coming 12 months to assess and focus progress.
- 3.4. Notes on the Action Plan acronyms:
  - NESBReC is the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
  - NESBiP is the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership

### 3.5. **Objective 1:** Create habitat for pollinators

We have lost around 97% of ancient wildflower meadows in the UK over the last 80 years. Where wildflower meadows do still exist, they are often small and isolated from each other, making it difficult for populations of insect pollinators to colonise new areas. Larger areas and better connectivity of suitable wild or cultivated habitat is needed. Council-owned and managed land presents an opportunity to improve habitat for pollinators. In addition, we can influence others through our Development Management policies and process for example.

#### **Key Priorities**

<b>Key Priority</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1.1 Implement habitat enhancement for pollinators on Council owned/managed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 10% of Council managed public greenspace to be enhanced and managed for pollinators &amp; biodiversity</li> <li>Maximise opportunities for pollinator habitat at Corporate Offices as part of maintenance review</li> <li>Measures for pollinators introduced in 80 school grounds</li> </ul>	Greenspace Officers	March 2027
		Property and Facilities	March 2023
		Education	March 2027
	Modify road verge management policy and process to further benefit pollinator populations	Landscape Services	March 2025
	Explore habitat creation at Council owned woodland sites – shrub planting in open rides or woodland edge	Environment Team	March 2024
	Share information and experience from works to date/demonstration sites both within Aberdeenshire and from other areas	NESBiP	March 2023
1.2 Use and supply pollinator friendly plants	Supply community groups with native wildflower seed to trial on 100 to 200m <sup>2</sup> areas	NESBiP	When requested
	Explore opportunities for Council plant nursery facilities to produce alternatives to annual bedding – perennial plants, wildflowers or native trees for example	Landscape Services	March 2024

	Develop guidance on native plant seed collection and propagation	NESBiP, Environment Team	April 2022
1.3 Use Buglife identified 'B-lines' as a catalyst for habitat creation in Aberdeenshire	Run River Don B-lines delivery mechanism project with Buglife. Use findings/outputs to shape further work.	Environment Team	April 2022

### Ongoing Commitments

Action	Detail	Lead
Managing existing pollinator habitat on Council-owned/managed land	Manage existing habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in public greenspace</li> <li>at offices including Woodhill House and Gordon House</li> <li>other sites including paths and road verges</li> </ul>	Landscape Services  Landscape Services & Environment Team  Landscape Services & Environment Team
	Provide online courses and toolbox talks to Council staff and elected members to raise awareness of pollinators and pollinator friendly management practices	Ranger Service
	Continue to reduce annual bedding on Council owned/managed land – replace with native pollinator friendly seed mixes and/or perennials	Landscape Services
Development Management enhances pollinator habitat	Ensure developments provide and enhance habitats for pollinating insects through complying with Local Development Plan policies on biodiversity enhancement, landscaping (including landscaping maintenance) and watercourse buffer strips	Development Management and Environment Team
Minimise herbicide use	Herbicides only to be used where absolutely necessary in managing vegetation encroachment in graveyards, roads and footpaths and for controlling invasive non-native plant species	Landscape Services
Community and land manager advice and support	Provide support and guidance to community groups and land managers seeking to improve their local sites for pollinators	Ranger Service, NESBiP, and Environment Team

3.6. **Objective 2:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators

Pollinating insects have a higher profile with the general public than a few years ago. There is a fairly broad awareness that they are threatened and that they are valuable. However, it is a message that does need to be reinforced and often what can be lacking is clear actions that the public can take to help. Aberdeenshire Council will aim to raise public awareness in the ways identified below.

**Key Priorities**

Key Priority	Target	Lead	Deadline
2.1 Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service to raise awareness of pollinators	150 Ranger Service sessions per year with schools, groups, and communities to raise awareness of pollinators	Ranger Service	Annual monitoring

**Ongoing Commitments**

Ongoing Commitment	Detail	Lead
Make available materials which promote pollinating insects	Pollinator identification leaflet and '5 steps for pollinators' leaflet available on website and in printed form	Environment Team
	Butterflies of NE Scotland leaflet produced by Butterfly Conservation in conjunction with Ranger Service & NESBReC available on Butterfly Conservation website and printed copies	Ranger Service
	Promote biodiversity education pack for schools and provide teaching staff training on the pollinator activities	Ranger Service
Aberdeenshire Council pollinator champions	Continue working with Councillor pollinator champions to promote and protect pollinators	Environment Team
Use social media to raise awareness of pollinators	Use Aberdeenshire Greenspace, Ranger Service and NESBReC social media to promote pollinating insects	Greenspace Officers, NESBReC, and Ranger Service
Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators	Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators and pollinator habitat ensuring the situation in Aberdeenshire is well represented	Environment Team

Work with partners and communities to protect and promote pollinators	Work with partners, including neighbouring local authorities and the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership, to promote and protect pollinators	Environment Team
	Provide advice to communities, where asked, regarding pollinators	Ranger Service and Environment Team
	Work with Area Managers teams on getting advice and information on pollinators and greenspace to communities	Area Managers, Greenspace Officers, and Environment Team

3.7. **Objective 3:** Contribute to the monitoring of pollinator populations

Pollinators are a highly diverse group of insects that are subject to variable levels of recording and monitoring. Many are difficult to identify without some specialist knowledge, however others, like butterflies and moths, have successful national recording schemes. NESBReC is the local biological records centre and welcomes & encourages recording of pollinating insects. Monitoring provides a base-line measure for assessing the impacts of our actions to improve habitats for pollinators

**Key Priorities**

Key Priority	Detail	Lead	Deadline
3.1 Increase pollinator monitoring and identification skills in the community and encourage participation in monitoring	Run at least one NESBReC training course per year which focusses on volunteer recording of certain pollinating insects.	NESBReC	At least one training course per year
	Highlight pollinators at annual Recorders Forum	NESBReC	Every year at annual recorders forum

**Ongoing commitments**

Action	Detail	Lead
Process and manage records of pollinating species from local recorders	NESBReC to identify pollinating species from submitted photographs, and to manage and process any records of pollinators received from local recorders by inputting into the NESBReC database	NESBReC
Input into national recording schemes and citizen science surveys for pollinating species	Promote (through sessions and social media) and provide support and guidance for volunteers and community groups on national recording schemes for butterflies and moths, and citizen science surveys for pollinators	NESBReC, NESBiP, and Ranger Service
	Take part in national recording schemes for butterflies and moths and citizen science surveys for pollinators	Ranger Service
	Provide local records to national recording schemes	NESBReC

3.8. **Objective 4:** Protect existing habitat for pollinators

Many of Aberdeenshire’s richest wildflower grasslands have been identified as sites of national or local importance for biodiversity. These sites are protected through policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The Local Development Plan also contains policies to protect areas rich in biodiversity within the wider countryside from inappropriate development and identifies green networks within major settlements. Continued habitat survey will assist with identifying areas of existing species rich grassland.

**Ongoing commitments**

Action	Detail	Lead
Survey for wildflower rich grassland sites and other pollinator habitat	NESBReC to continue habitat surveys in Aberdeenshire to identify valuable grassland sites and other valuable pollinator habitats	NESBReC
Protect valuable pollinator habitat in the development management process	Ensure development complies with Local Development Plan policies on natural heritage/biodiversity protection	Development Management and Environment Team
	Where undesignated wildflower rich grassland or other key pollinator habitat is identified (through NESBReC survey work or the development management process for example) consider designating these areas as a Local Nature Conservation Site	Environment Team
Protect pollinator habitat from inappropriate afforestation	Consider impacts on pollinator habitat when responding to forestry planting consultations from Scottish Forestry	Environment Team

#### **4. Monitoring and Reporting**

- 4.1. This Draft Action Plan covers the period 2022 to 2027. The document has been produced by the Environment Team within Planning & Economy with input from other teams and Services including the Ranger Service, NESBReC, Landscape Services, Property & Facilities, and Education & Children's Services. The actions cross a number of teams and services. The Environment Team will have oversight of the plan and monitor achievement of the actions yearly, including assessing the need to review the strategy prior to 2027. We will report on progress with the action plan yearly to the Sustainability Committee.
- 4.2. Following consultation, the final version of the Action Plan will go to Aberdeenshire Council's Sustainability Committee for approval. Achievement of actions in the approved Action Plan will be reported to Sustainability Committee annually.

## REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2022-2027

#### Appendix 2 Review of Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2019-2021

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2019 to 2021 identified the work that Aberdeenshire Council would undertake to address the decline of pollinating insects. The Action Plan outlined the work the Council would take on the land it owns and manages, as well as how it would work with and influence others. The Action Plan period ended in March 2021 and progress against the actions is detailed below. The review will assist in preparation of the next action plan.
- 1.2. The Action Plan can be found at this link:  
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/24875/aberdeenshirecouncilpollinatoractionplan2019to2021.pdf>
- 1.3. Pollinating insects are essential to healthy, functioning ecosystems as they have a key role in the reproduction of many plant species. They are also important to humans - fertilising crops, providing food, and also pollinating plants in our gardens. The available data continues to strongly indicate that pollinating insects are declining across the world – including in Scotland.
- 1.4. The Action Plan identifies the opportunities for Aberdeenshire Council to play its part in addressing this decline. The Environment Team within Planning and Environment took the lead role in developing, implementing, and monitoring the Action Plan. The actions identified were delivered by a number of Teams and Services in addition to the Environment Team, in particular Landscape Services, the Ranger Service, and NESBReC.

##### 2. The Review

- 2.1. The Action Plan was structured around the 5 Objectives detailed below.

**Objective 1:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators in food production and in ecosystems

**Objective 2:** Contribute to the monitoring and recording of pollinator populations

**Objective 3:** Reduce Aberdeenshire Council's use of pesticides and other chemicals for pest and weed control that may have an effect on pollinator populations

**Objective 4:** Create habitat for pollinators, including improving habitat connectivity

**Objective 5:** Protect existing areas of wildflower rich grassland

- 2.2. Each of the 5 Objectives was further broken down to the series of actions with nominated leads and deadlines identified. Progress in achieving these actions is reviewed below with a red/amber/green assessment provided of action progress.

2.3. **Objective 1:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators in food production and in ecosystems

There was a wide range of pollinator awareness raising through the strategy period lead by the Ranger Service, NESBReC and the on-going Greenspace project (a project which is looking to modify the Council’s management of public greenspace to benefit nature and communities). The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic were certainly felt with face-to-face events with schools and communities being cancelled. This resulted in increased use of social media as a promotional tool, with notable successes including Grassland Watch which was created during the lockdown restrictions when the cessation of Council grass-cutting greatly increased community engagement on greenspace management. In general, pollinator awareness has grown greatly in the public consciousness in recent years with people very aware of the declines and threats. Moving forwards, communication needs to continue its focus on practical action. Despite the impact of the pandemic, all actions are reviewed as green with coronavirus adaptations successfully made where required.

**Table 1: Objective 1 review detail**

Action	Detail	Lead	Deadline	Review
1.1 Raise awareness of pollinators through Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service and NESBReC events.	1.1.1 The Ranger Service run a range of events throughout the year, many of which include awareness raising in relation to pollinating insects	Ranger Service	Yearly events programme	Yearly Rangers events programme was severely impacted by covid during strategy period and only one on the ground pollinator event was able to take place. However, strong awareness raising through social media including video on pollinators, encouraging recording of wildflower species in areas of reduced management and interactive online Question and Answer session on Wildlife Gardening and encouraging pollinators to gardens. National recording schemes for pollinators also promoted.
	1.1.2 Add information on pollinators to Rangers summer events programme	Ranger Service	March 2020	

	1.1.3 NESBReC to highlight pollinators at their events	NESBReC	Ongoing	Nesbrec held two recorders forums in the period both of which covered topics of relevant to pollinating insects. In 2019 NESBReC held one course on the identification of Hoverflies and another on the identification of coastal plants. NESBReC recording training events impacted by covid in 2020 but grassland watch, national recording schemes and pollinating insect awareness generally strongly promoted through social media. One notable occurrence over the last couple of years that NESBReC has highlighted has been the arrival of Tree bumblebee in the area.
1.2 Work with schools to raise children's awareness of pollinators	1.2.1 Ranger Service to raise awareness of pollinators when working with schools	Ranger Service	Ongoing	School events impacted by covid during strategy period but Rangers will continue to raise awareness of pollinating insects in their work with schools
	1.2.2 Greenspace Officers to work with schools to create pollinator habitat in school grounds or local area	Greenspace officers	September 2020	A number of schools are engaged with Greenspace officers in modifying their grounds to benefit biodiversity including pollinators. Work on-going with Newtonhill and Banff primary schools being seen as an excellent example

1.3 Seek opportunities to use Council facilities such as visitor centres and libraries to raise awareness of the importance of pollinating species.	1.3.1 We have 2 pollinator banners - circulate one banner around libraries in Aberdeenshire	Libraries Centre, Oldmeldrum	Ongoing	Banner remains with library service for future use - libraries close for much of the strategy period.
	1.3.2 Use second banner at relevant events – it is on display at the Bennachie centre but can be used elsewhere	Ranger Service, Environment Team	Ongoing	Banner remains for use at Bennachie Centre
1.4 Create materials which promote pollinating insects	1.4.1 Create an appropriate sign to identify Council sites which are being managed for pollinators	Greenspace Officers	December 2019	Sign created and used in Greenspace project
	1.4.2 Produce materials which identify good garden plants for pollinators suitable to growing conditions in north east Scotland	Environment Team	March 2020	Previous leaflet refreshed and re-printed. Used in Greenspace project and elsewhere
1.5 Aberdeenshire Council pollinator champions	1.5.1 Aberdeenshire Council to have two Councillor pollinator champions (currently Cllr Argyle and Cllr Wilson)	Environment Team	Ongoing	Engagement with the two pollinator champions on-going. A refresh of the process in 2021 is increasing engagement. Links with tree planting, Swifts, and hedgehog champions also made.
1.6 Seek opportunities for positive press and social media coverage for planting and management for pollinators	1.6.1 Use Aberdeenshire Council Leader-funded Greenspaces project as an opportunity to promote pollinating insects through press and social media	Greenspace Officers	September 2020	Pollinators promoted in materials, signage, social media, and directly by greenspace officers throughout the greenspace project
	1.6.2 Use Rangers and NESBReC social media to promote pollinating insects	Ranger Service	Ongoing	Both NESBReC and Ranger social media used to raise awareness and promote recording of pollinating insects - increased use of social media as a result of covid

1.7 Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators	1.7.1 Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators and pollinator habitat ensuring the situation in Aberdeenshire is well represented	Environment Team	As required	Environment Team continue to feed in progress on our pollinator action plan to NatureScot when they review the national pollinator action plan where requested. A key process in the period was the Buglife B-lines project where key routes for enhancing pollinator habitat were identified nationally - we fed into this process for Aberdeenshire identifying the larger river corridors and the coast as our B-lines.
1.8 Work with partners and communities to protect and promote pollinators	1.8.1 Work with partners, including neighbouring local authorities and the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership, to promote and protect pollinators	Environment Team	Ongoing	Environment Team continue to work with partners, including the local biodiversity partnership who have strongly supported the greenspace project.
	1.8.2 Provide advice to communities, where asked, regarding pollinators	Ranger Service and Environment Team	Ongoing	Responded to requests where they have come through - much of the contact has been directed to the greenspace officers

2.4. **Objective 2:** Contribute to the monitoring and recording of pollinator populations

Recording of local pollinator populations continues – primarily by members of the public (citizen science) strongly supported by NESBReC and the Ranger Service. The Marr Area Ranger was nominated for a national recording award for contributions in recording butterflies and moths in particular. The aim to derive local pollinator status information has been hampered by lack of data, particularly the regular monitoring over long time periods, hence the need to continue to promote and support recording.

Action	Detail	Lead	Deadline	Review
2.1 Run identification courses for pollinator species	2.1.1 Run at least one NESBReC training course per year which focusses on pollinating insects	NESBReC	At least one training course per year	NESBReC held two recorders' forums in the period both of which covered topics of relevant to pollinating insects. In 2019 NESBReC held one course on the identification of Hoverflies and another on the identification of coastal plants. NESBReC recording training events impacted by covid in 2020 but Grassland watch, national recording schemes, and pollinating insect awareness generally strongly promoted through social media. One notable over the last couple of years that NESBReC has highlighted has been the arrival of Tree bumblebee in the area
2.2 Promote and distribute Aberdeenshire	2.2.1 Reprint pollinator identification leaflet	Environment Team	November 2019	Leaflet reprinted and made available to for use
	2.2.2 Put pollinator identification leaflet on website	Environment Team	November 2019	PDF placed on website

Council pollinator identification leaflet	2.2.3 Promote and distribute pollinator identification leaflet	Environment Team, NESBReC and Ranger Service	Ongoing	Leaflet made available for use. Used by greenspace officers in particular during strategy period. Limited use by Ranger Service due only to the restrictions on face-to-face sessions and the closure of outlets
2.3 Process and manage records of pollinating species from local recorders	2.3.1 NESBReC to identify pollinating species from submitted photographs and to manage and process any records of pollinators received from local recorders by inputting into the NESBReC database	NESBReC	Ongoing	Core job of NESBReC - ongoing
2.4 Input into national recording schemes for pollinating species	2.4.1 Promote (through events and social media) national recording schemes for butterflies and moths	NESBReC and Rangers Service	Ongoing	National recording schemes promoted through both Ranger and NESBReC social media. Marr Area Ranger nominated for National recording award
	2.4.2 Take part in national recording schemes for butterflies and moths	Ranger Service	Ongoing	Ranger team continue to contribute to national monitoring scheme for butterflies and moths
	2.4.3 Provide local records to national recording schemes	NESBReC	Ongoing	Records provided by NESBReC
2.5 Provide information on the status of pollinating insects in Aberdeenshire	2.5.1 Investigate whether local status information can be derived from national monitoring scheme data (e.g. butterflies)	NESBReC	April 2020	Investigated. Not enough records from Aberdeenshire area in any of the recording schemes to derive local status information. Recording levels need to be increased - continue to promote and contribute.

2.5. **Objective 3:** Reduce Aberdeenshire Council's use of pesticides and other chemicals for pest and weed control that may have an effect on pollinator populations

The use of a number of pesticides has now been banned due to their detrimental effect on the environment (particularly pollinating insects) or human health, but there remains a general concern over the levels and range of chemicals used. Aberdeenshire Council's use of pesticides is in compliance with relevant regulations and code of practice. Aberdeenshire Council's Landscape Services have reduced chemical use by around 40% over the past 10 years, and will continue to investigate opportunities to further reduce its use. Reduction continued through the Action Plan period with the pandemic in particular allowing for a real time 'test' of the impacts on maintenance of there being no spraying. The use of Glyphosate continues in certain applications, but the Greenspace project aims to trial alternatives going forwards. As further work is required here, this action is assessed as amber.

Action	Detail	Lead	Deadline	Review
3.1 Continue to reduce the use of chemicals in weed and insect control	3.1.1 Identify where it is appropriate and cost effective to reduce the use of chemicals in weed and insect control	Landscape Services	September 2020	Landscape Services continue to minimise their use of biocides. Generally, spraying was greatly reduced during the pandemic allowing for a 'test' of the impact of no use on maintenance. Glyphosate is still used, particularly on footpaths and graveyards. Further consideration of usage suggested for next pollinator action plan
	3.1.2 Identify and trial alternatives to chemical plant and weed control	Landscape Services and Environment Team (Invasive Non-native species project)	September 2020	Minimising usage has been the successful focus to date rather than exploring alternatives. However, the Greenspace project aim to trial alternatives

2.6. **Objective 4:** Create habitat for pollinators, including improving habitat connectivity.

Existing meadows at Aberdeenshire Council properties are now valuable pollinator habitats although the pandemic impacted on annual maintenance in 2020. As sites at Gordon House and Kincardine O’Neil were not maintained in 2020, these actions are assessed as amber – maintenance needs to be re-started in 2021. Maintenance reduction at Woodhill House during the pandemic did highlight options for significant and ambitious biodiversity enhancement here with planting and reduced grass cutting to be implemented in 2021 and going forwards. It is hoped this can be a catalyst for other sites – further liaison is required, hence the amber status.

The Leader-funded Greenspace project concluded. Although the public engagement element of the project was impacted by the pandemic, work on identifying sites for reduced maintenance was completed and the value of the work and the need to engage meant the project was rolled over with 2 Greenspace officers in post for 2021. Planting of pollinator-friendly perennials and the sowing of amenity wildflower seed mixes is becoming the default position for flowerbeds previously planted with annual bedding.

Work on stalled development sites proved to be difficult to progress, with no uptake from developers and issues with the single Council site trialled. Action elsewhere is likely to yield more benefits.

Action	Detail	Lead	Deadline	Review
4.1 Create demonstration sites on Council owned/managed land	4.1.1 Maintain meadow at Aberdeenshire Council’s Gordon House and explore options to expand the area	Landscape Services and Environment Team	Ongoing	Meadow now excellent wildflower and pollinator habitat. However, covid prevented the annual cut in 2020. Maintenance likely to resume in 2021.

	4.1.2 Maintain meadow at Aberdeenshire Council's Woodhill House and explore options to enlarge area	Landscape Services	Ongoing	Woodhill house ground left entirely uncut for much of 2020. Results have inspired an ambitious programme of habitat enhancement on site with greenspace officers, Environment Team, Landscape Services, and Property contributing to plan of reduced grass cutting and native planting in 2021.
	4.1.3 Explore options for meadows and existing and new Aberdeenshire Council premises	Landscape Services and Environment Team	Ongoing	Further identification of opportunities required - hopefully changes at Woodhill House can be a catalyst. Liaise further with Property.
	4.1.4 Maintain Deeside Way meadow at Kincardine O'Neil	Landscape Services and Environment Team	Ongoing	Meadow now excellent wildflower and pollinator habitat. However, covid prevented the annual cut in 2020. Maintenance likely to resume in 2021.
4.2 Complete Leader funded Greenspace Project	4.2.1 Identify Council owned/managed greenspace sites to trial reduced maintenance and environmental enhancement	Greenspace Officers	October 2019	Opportunities for reduced maintenance, tree planting, and wildflower meadows successfully identified across Council greenspace. A number of trial areas and fully implemented changes made as a result of project
	4.2.2 Engage with the public and Council staff on reduced greenspace management and chosen sites	Greenspace Officers	March 2020	Local communities and Councillors engaged on proposals to date. Public events impacted by pandemic. However, a method of direct engagement - lettering homes

				adjacent to proposed reduced maintenance is to be trialled
	4.2.3 Implement reduced maintenance	Greenspace Officers	April 2020	Implementation of reduced maintenance on-going in 2021 after covid related delays in 2020
	4.2.4 Write up project summary and lessons learned including identification of reduced maintenance engagement and implementation process	Greenspace Officers	September 2020	Final reports of Leader-funded greenspace project completed. The value of the project and some delays due to covid mean the project has been extended using internal resources with two officers employed for 2021
4.3 Review the production and use of annual bedding plants	4.3.1 Review the use and supply of annual bedding plants in the Council to see if pollen and nectar rich perennial plants (or some other pollinator beneficial planting type) would be a suitable alternative	Landscape Services/ Greenspace Officers	September 2020	Offering of perennial plants to communities being trialled in 2021. Use of bedding plants directly by the Council being greatly reduced with wildflower planting being put in place in a number of places
	4.3.2 Identify if Council plant nursery facilities can produce alternatives to annual bedding – perennial plants, wildflowers or native trees for example	Landscape Services/Green space officers	September 2020	Use of nursery facilities still under review with trial of perennial plant supply being carried out in 2021. Facilities geared up to the supply of annual bedding so any changes would require investment.
4.4 Stalled development sites - seek opportunities to sow wildflower mixes	4.4.1 Explore opportunities to sow temporary wildflower seed mix at stalled development sites in Aberdeenshire Council ownership	Environment Team/Planning Information	April 2020	Initial requests sent to a number of developers but no opportunities arose. Planting done on Council owned site in Alford in 2019 but was

on sites with planning permission that are not likely to be developed for some time	former – for example at Ellon Academy site	and Delivery Team		impacted by very dry summer. Enquiries and progress halted during covid - need to re-evaluate for next strategy
4.5 Development Management enhances pollinator habitat	4.5.1 Ensure developments provide and enhance habitats for pollinating insects through complying with Local Development Plan policies on biodiversity enhancement, landscaping (including landscaping maintenance) and watercourse buffer strips	Development Management and Environment Team	Ongoing	Local Development Plan policies applied. 2021 Local Development Plan will include policies on biodiversity enhancement as well as protection of important habitats
4.6 Aberdeenshire Council infrastructure projects provide pollinators habitat	4.6.1 Work with relevant services (e.g. Roads or Property) to promote the inclusion of pollinator habitat in new infrastructure projects	Environment Team	Ongoing	Environment Team liaison with Property on-going. It is now essentially default that new school projects in particular will see opportunities for habitat enhancement. No new road project during the strategy but confidence that enhancement measures would be built in here also.
4.7 Review Council roadside verge management to see if benefits to pollinators can be increased	4.7.1 Carry out a review of roadside verge management policies and procedures to see if benefits to pollinators can be increased. Issues to explore include the timings of cuts, liaison with contractors and the use of yellow rattle	Landscape Services	September 2020	Road verge maintenance policy was reviewed during strategy period. However, habitat benefitting measures were largely carried over due to various constraints. Waiting to see if post-covid budgetary issues mean a fresh opportunity to engage.

	4.7.2 Survey road verges near Pitmedden that have previously been planted with Yellow rattle	Environment Team	August 2020	Site visit opportunities limited in 2020 - one visit made and some Yellow rattle remains. Need further in-season assessment to see if supplementary seeding required.
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2.7. **Objective 5:** Protect existing areas of wildflower rich grassland.

Nesbrec habitat surveying was paused as a result of covid but will continue with an increased programme in 2021. For both Planning and forestry application, the Environment Team continue to promote protection of valuable pollinator habitat. New Local Nature Conservation Sites will be confirmed through the adoption of the 2021 Local Development Plan.

Action	Detail	Lead	Deadline	Review
5.1 Survey for wildflower rich grassland sites and other pollinator habitat	5.1.1 NESBReC to continue habitat surveys in Aberdeenshire so as to identify valuable grassland sites and other valuable pollinator habitats	NESBReC	Surveys carried out yearly in summer months	Habitat surveying took place in 2019. Paused in 2020 due to covid but will resume in summer 2021
5.2 Protect valuable pollinator habitat in the development management process	5.2.1 Ensure development complies with Local Development Plan policies on natural heritage/biodiversity protection	Development Management and Environment Team	Ongoing	Environment Team continue to input to planning application to assist policy compliance and to seek enhancement
	5.2.2 Where undesignated wildflower rich grassland or other key pollinator habitat is identified (though NESBReC survey work or the development management process for example) consider designating these areas as a Local Nature Conservation Site	Environment Team	Ongoing	A number of new Local Nature Conservation Site are proposed in the 2021 Local Development plan which include a range a natural and semi-natural habitat of benefit to pollinators. These will be confirmed with the adoption of the LDP.
5.3 Protect pollinator habitat from inappropriate afforestation	5.3.1 Consider impacts on pollinator habitat when responding to forestry planting consultations from Scottish Forestry	Environment Team	Ongoing	Environment Team continue to respond to forestry planting consultations - valuable grassland habitat highlighted in relevant applications

### **3. Concluding comments and next steps**

- 3.1. The Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action plan 2019-2021 has structured and catalysed work to protect and enhance pollinator populations and also provided a means to promote the extensive and successful work of the Council. Undoubtedly the coronavirus pandemic impacted on some of the actions – reducing face-to-face public engagement and limiting site maintenance for example. However, it also presented opportunities such as the public became strongly engaged on the management of greenspace and the increased audience reach of social media messages on pollinators.
- 3.2. The majority of the actions of the strategy have been achieved. It is felt that the structured approach provided by the 5 overall objectives was appropriate and helpful.
- 3.3. A number of the actions captured in the strategy are essentially on-going. It is beneficial to identify these as they are key in achieving its aims. It is felt that highlighting the time-limited actions more fully in the future strategies would be helpful. Indeed, integrating more actions with specific targets would be beneficial overall.
- 3.4. Consideration should be given to the period of time covered in a new strategy. It is felt that a longer time period would be beneficial so that the revision/ renewal process does not get in the way of action. The time period will be driven by the necessary action to an extent, but having a three-year strategy, with regular monitoring, and possibly a yearly review process, is suggested as an initial model.
- 3.5. There is certainly strong value in having a pollinator strategy and thus the Environment Team will now begin the process of creating a new Strategy with the input of other Services and Councillors.

# Aberdeenshire Council

## Integrated Impact Assessment

### Draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027

Assessment ID	IIA-000196
Lead Author	James Davidson
Service Reviewers	David MacLennan
Subject Matter Experts	Susan Forbes, Claudia Cowie, Lynne Gravener, Christine McLennan
Approved By	Paul Macari
Approved On	Wednesday November 03, 2021
Publication Date	Thursday November 04, 2021

# 1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

IIA of Area Committee report seeking comments and feedback on Draft Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027

During screening 5 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 4 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities
- Sustainability and Climate Change

In total there are 7 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by paul.macari2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

## 2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	No
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

## 3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No Negative Impacts Identified
Climate Change and Sustainability	No Negative Impacts Identified
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	Not Required

## 4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

### 4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe		Yes		
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving		Yes		
Nurtured		Yes		
Active	Yes			
Respected		Yes		
Responsible		Yes		
Included		Yes		

### 4.2. Rights Indicators

UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy	Article 24 - Health and health services Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture
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### 4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Active	High quality, attractive, interesting biodiverse greenspaces provide places for children to to be active and thus promote health
Healthy	High quality, attractive, interesting biodiverse greenspaces provide places for children to to be active and thus promote health

### 4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Extensive external material and studies	Significant evidence on the benefits of high quality, attractive, biodiverse greenspaces on mental and physical health	Significant evidence on the benefits of high quality, attractive, biodiverse greenspaces on mental and physical health

### 4.5. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

No specific survey/involvement but there is a strong awareness of the benefits of high quality, biodiverse public greenspaces on children's health and well-being.

### 4.6. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Help to provide attractive, biodiverse greenspaces for public use.

## **4.7. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights**

Help to provide attractive, biodiverse greenspaces for public use.

## **4.8. Overall Outcome**

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Positive impact of improving public greenspace on health and activity of young people

## 5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

### 5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)		Yes		
Disability		Yes		
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

### 5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income		Yes		
Low wealth		Yes		
Material deprivation		Yes		
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background		Yes		

### 5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	Provide attractive, natural, biodiverse greenspaces to encourage activity, learning and health in young people

### 5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	External data and studies	Extensive evidence and data on the health benefits of high quality, attractive, biodiverse public greenspaces.	Extensive evidence and data on the health benefits of high quality, attractive, biodiverse public greenspaces.

### 5.5. Engagement with affected groups

No specific engagement/surveys but general knowledge of the benefits of high quality public greenspaces

## **5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups**

No specific engagement/surveys but general knowledge of the benefits of high quality public greenspaces

## **5.7. Evidence of engagement**

No specific engagement/surveys but general knowledge of the benefits of high quality public greenspaces

## **5.8. Overall Outcome**

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Positive impacts on health and activity of young people resulting from improvements in public greenspace

## 6. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

### 6.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating		Yes		
Exercise and physical activity		Yes		
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol		Yes		
Substance use – drugs		Yes		
Mental health	Yes			

### 6.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Mental health	Attractive, natural greenspaces and access to nature are proven to improve mental health. Enhancing for pollinators will improve attractiveness and improve access to nature for communities.

### 6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	NatureScot - <a href="https://www.nature.scot/guidance-health-benefits-green-exercise">https://www.nature.scot/guidance-health-benefits-green-exercise</a>	Evidence of the benefits or exercise and access to attractive, nature-rich greenspace	Shows the benefits or exercise and access to attractive, nature-rich greenspace

### 6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Action Plan will improve public greenspace and access to nature. No negative health impacts from the plan identified.

## 7. Sustainability and Climate Change Impact Assessment

### 7.1. Emissions and Resources

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Consumption of energy	Yes			
Energy efficiency		Yes		
Energy source		Yes		
Low carbon transition		Yes		
Consumption of physical resources		Yes		
Waste and circularity		Yes		
Circular economy transition		Yes		
Economic and social transition		Yes		

### 7.2. Biodiversity and Resilience

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Quality of environment	Yes			
Quantity of environment		Yes		
Wildlife and biodiversity	Yes			
Infrastructure resilience		Yes		
Council resilience		Yes		
Community resilience		Yes		
Adaptation		Yes		

### 7.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Quality of environment	Action plan commits to protecting and enhancement pollinator habitat and populations thus improving the quality of the environment
Wildlife and biodiversity	Action plan includes commitments to protect and enhance habitat and pollinator populations
Consumption of energy	Action Plan identifies reduced intensive maintenance of at least 10% of public greenspace this reducing emissions form grass cutting activities for example. Alternative measures such as tree planting will actually sequester carbon.

### 7.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	General knowledge/ evidence	Reducing intensive management of greenspace using petrol/diesel powered machinery will reduce emissions. Tree planting and other habitat measures can sequester carbon.	Reducing intensive management of greenspace using petrol/diesel powered machinery will reduce emissions. Tree planting and other habitat measures can sequester carbon.
External Data	Extensive external data on habitat protection and enhancement	Shows how the protection and enhancement of habitat for pollinators can benefit not only pollinator populations but biodiversity generally.	Shows how the protection and enhancement of habitat for pollinators can benefit not only pollinator populations but biodiversity generally.

## 7.5. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Action plan outlines a number of measures which reduce emissions and protect and improvement environment as a core focus. No negative impacts as a result.

## 8. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
Production, yearly monitoring and reporting of progress with Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027. Final review at end of strategy period with reporting to Sustainability Committee.	<p><b>Lead Officer</b> James Davidson</p> <p><b>Repeating Activity</b> No</p> <p><b>Planned Start</b> Friday April 01, 2022</p> <p><b>Planned Finish</b> Wednesday March 31, 2027</p> <p><b>Expected Outcome</b> Action plan monitored yearly. Actions delivered and reported on. Pollinators and communities benefit from the work.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b> Some cost implications to proposed work. All activities proposed are within current work plans or are costed as deliverable. No staffing implications.</p>