

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Cluster:</u>	Strategic Place Planning
<u>Date:</u>	04/06/2024
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Aberdeen City Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2023
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This Service Update is to inform Members about the successful submission of the Aberdeen City Council (the Council) Biodiversity Duty Report 2023 (BDR2023) to the Scottish Government on 19th December 2023. Also, to share with Members the finalised 'design' version used for wider communication (refer to Appendix A). This Service Update was instructed by Members at the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 31st October 2023, report number COM/23/333 <https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=685&MId=8509&Ver=4>.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 requires the Council to consider and further the conservation of biodiversity whilst carrying out its responsibilities as a local authority - the Biodiversity Duty. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 adds the duty to report every three years on the Council's actions to fulfil the Biodiversity Duty. The submission was required by the 31st December 2023 and covers the period from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2023.

The Biodiversity Duty Report 2023 has been published and can be viewed on the Council's Natural Heritage webpage <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/natural-heritage>

Some highlights from the 2023 Report are the new green roof bus shelters which are being deployed in the City, the Aberdeen City Climate and Nature Pledge (<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/net-zero-aberdeen/aberdeen-climate-and-nature-pledge#:~:text=As%20an%20individual%20%20commit,action%20to%20reduce%20my%20emissions>), the biodiversity enhancement to the landscaping of the Union Terrace Gardens refurbishment and the up-and-coming Den Burn Restoration Project.

Major steps in mainstreaming biodiversity:



Net Zero Environment and Transport Committee formed to monitor delivery of all services and functions relating to net zero, environment and transport, ensure delivery of Council environmental targets and the meeting of related statutory obligations.



Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration signed. The Council responded to the global climate change and nature loss crises by declaring a climate and nature emergency.



Local Outcome Improvement Plan refresh now includes: Stretch outcome 15: Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026.



Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2023 now includes the following: *"Particular emphasis is placed on the protection and ongoing management of Ancient Woodlands"*. This will protect woodlands with ancient trees and preserve woodlands that have been sustainably felled and replanted over hundreds of years.



Environmental Services grounds maintenance management plans and policies approved such as The Strategic Tree & Woodland Implementation Plan approved in June 2022.

As with previous reports, the design version of the Report has been published on the Council's website and it will be promoted more widely through to the Council's partners and citizens. A copy is appended to this Service Update for Members information.

Appendix A: Aberdeen City Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2023