

**Comment**

It's a fantastic idea to provide more trees especially since a lot of existing trees were devastated by the last storm.

I would be particularly keen to introduce more established trees to some of the playgrounds in Aberdeen schools as we often go and play in a small area in our setting that has greenery and trees. The children love it there and enjoy engaging in climbing trees, looking for mini beasts and having a picnic there.

The area we frequent is small and it would be lovely if we could expand it so that the whole school could develop outdoor learning.

I feel more could be done by rangers if they had funding. Running more groups for children on bushcraft, appropriate firefighting and area conservation etc would encourage the younger generation to develop a caring nature towards woodlands and decrease the likelihood of damage being caused.

I notice that the school estate has not really been mentioned in these plans. When you look at the map of Aberdeen, the least forested areas are in the centre of the city. Supporting schools and ELCs to plant and care for trees, particularly where there are playing fields of a good size could make a difference to both the biodiversity of schools grounds but also to wildlife corridors throughout the city. The current SIP doesn't really emphasis this need sufficiently.

P5 "Of particular importance is the expansion of woodlands providing multiple benefits to the physical, cultural economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area." I'd like to see health and wellbeing specifically referenced as it is a prime motivator for action.

How many trees will a child pass as he or she walks to school?

How will this benefit the child, e.g. reduction in asthma rates?

In Priority 4, p13 one of the performance indicator measures for "Provide outdoor education and learning, social and corporate responsibility experiences within the Granite City Forest." is the number of Forest School programmes implemented in Granite City Forest Woodlands. This is a poor measure. It fails to acknowledge the many ELC settings using local woodlands, the use of Hazlehead and Duthie Park by the Outdoor Nurseries and therefore grossly underrepresents the activity taking place and subsequent potential impact for managing these woodlands.

Why were all those old trees cut down for the redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens, I am not against this refurbishment generally, but could it not have been done incorporating them rather than destroying them?

I am very concerned about the development at Nigg Bay and the plans to use St Fitticks park for industrial development. Also up by Girdleness Lighthouse. This will likely result in the loss of natural habitat, destroying a green space used by the citizens of Torry. This is not being done with the approval of the population. It seems to be getting steam- rolled through without proper consultation and with many conflicts of interest.

Private gardens within the city harbour valuable trees and green habitat or have the potential for it. The plan does not mention any measures to encourage owners to preserve existing trees or to increase plant and tree growth in their gardens. Unfortunately, more and more gardens are covered by stone surfaces or artificial lawns.

Plan seems good in principle. Expansion of woodland means change of land use and this may conflict with food production or housing development. Agree strongly that woodlands are important for health and wellbeing.

- The ELC sector as a key user of local woodland needs to be identified in this report i.e. pre-pandemic, at least weekly Wee Green Spaces running by many settings across the city - use of local green space by ELC children, staff and families. Every Local Authority nursery provision has an identified green space within walking distance of their provision (survey work done by Countryside Rangers)
- Green spaces on school/nursery grounds need to be acknowledged i.e. wild walled garden at Culter, woodland space attached to new Kingsford Nursery, woodland onsite at Stoneywood etc.
- Alongside the Wee Green Spaces programme, schools and ELC, particularly in city centre (i.e. least forested area) could be more supported in planting and caring for trees/green spaces. Learning programmes and working partnerships with the Countryside Rangers team?
- Opening of two new Outdoor ELC settings - Duthie Park and Hazlehead Outdoor Nurseries. Both of these have a focus on working community partnerships to enrich children's learning experiences, develop life-long skills and to have a positive impact on taking responsibility for our community spaces. Both provisions have already made connections with the Environmental Service team and have plans to centre their pedagogy/curriculum around woodland/green space sustainability and care. These will be two prime education settings that could pilot an Early Years woodland care programme. Another focus of the outdoor learning which takes place across all our ELC provisions is to support the Health and Wellbeing of all - children, staff and families - people and place. I am currently studying my Masters Early Years Pedagogue and have a keen interest to research this area further i.e. I would be eager to track and monitor the first cohort of children's connection to the space and evaluate how their sense of belonging to the place impacts the natural environment around them. We should start to see our youngest learners being pioneers of conservation across our city. I'm more than happy to support this pilot through my central role/research, as well as give further information on the use of woodlands within Early Learning and Childcare.
- Possible use of large school playing fields to plant trees/woodland around the edges/in a corner to promote biodiversity and offer wild spaces for children in the area to explore.
- "Forest School Programmes" are not the only indicator to measure performance against, - there are many types of outdoor provisions taking place across the education sector in our city i.e. Wee Green Spaces, daily outdoor play (which is a core principle of quality practice advocated by national guidance), Mud Pies, Adventure Aberdeen, daily practice of the outdoor nurseries at Duthie Park and Hazlehead. This needs to be taken into account to then look at the potential impact for managing the green spaces/woodlands used.

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| <p>It is truly confusing and contrary, to be advocating trees and woodland advantages while threatening and diminishing the areas we already have; namely the Torry green sites. Camouflaging this under a mask of environmental advantage is hypocritical in the extreme.</p> <p>There are brown sites everywhere without taking over parts of an already sparse green area in Torry.</p> <p>Then, another reaction. Building an incinerator in the shadow of a slightly wooded area; Diamond Woods on Tullos hill is another anomaly which gives average citizens no trust in the existing council.</p> <p>Building an incinerator in a hollow, where fumes will spread to local homes, a primary school, and businesses, is in total disregard of known disadvantages, personally, I despair of fair treatment either by local government, or in the wider sphere, Holyrood and Westminster. It was ever so.</p>   |
| <p>I currently see street trees that are lifting pavements and other trees that need trimmed but as the council tree surgeons are so stretched it can take up to a year for this work to be done. Will the relevant staff to care for new tree and woodland planting be taken on?</p>   |
| <p>•quote from report Targeting urban planting in areas of highest social deprivation Where do you think the greenspace will come from. If you take Torry for instance the council is doing its best to try to sell off greenspace for industrialisation</p>  |
| <p>I glanced at the document. However, it is very densely written and not easily understood. I'm afraid I lost interest as it would take me too long to read.</p> <p>My biggest concern with regard to trees in public places is that some areas of trees, eg in parks such as Seaton Park become festooned in inappropriate tributes to the deceased. This can be very upsetting for members of the public out for a walk in a public space. I know that Aberdeen has a policy with regard to this but it is often just disregarded. Ashes have also been scattered around trees. Again, this is upsetting.</p> <p>The appropriate place for this is at the Garden of Remembrance at Hazlehead. However, that can be challenging for anyone without a car to reach. The Garden of Remembrance may also not have any significance for those who wish to remember a loved one.</p> <p>I wonder if any thought has been given to creating small areas in some of the proposed woodlands which could be given over to memorial trees where relatives could go to remember loved ones. If these were in the city centre or in some of the housing areas on the outskirts, they would provide focal points for people to go. The trees planted would also help to fulfill the quota of trees and woodlands to meet the challenges of climate change.</p> |
| <p>The recent binge planting of trees on small green areas has been ridiculous. The ones around Dyce are massively over-planted and look very much like someone trying to hit a quota rather than actually thinking about what they are doing. They are also going to result in impractical mini-forested areas that block visibility for traffic junctions and destroy current grass areas.</p>  |
| <p>The areas that are being planted don't seem to have any thought as to why or what effects those areas will have on other local nature provision or accessibility either.</p>   |
| <p>Too many trees blew down what are councils going to do</p>   |
| <p>Spend more on smaller woodland instead of just parks, upgrading paths etc. Greenfern woods and the howes road are used by many communities and could do with a tidy up, maybe involve the schools to teach them about woodlands.</p>   |
| <p>Not the easiest plan to understand- would have welcomed a simpler outline with key points.</p> <p>Support the aim to increase tree planting within the city, preserve and maintain current woodland and encourage natural regeneration of native species.</p> <p>Street trees - would welcome. Anything to reverse trend of tarmac of front gardens for parking. Shrubs, hedges and small trees best</p> <p>Maintain wonderful stock in our parks, green spaces.</p> <p>River Dee trees need to be maintained and protected</p> <p>Ditto R Don</p> <p>Yes - to protect from deer damage</p> <p>Sadly lost many trees in recent storm damage. But will regenerate given time.</p>   |
| <p>Good to see that there is a strategy. Lots of green opportunities, but the risk I see is ACC is handing (or already handed) a lot of these opportunities to large developers who seem to be allowed to build thousands of houses on green conservation land. Individuals do not get anywhere near this level of 'privilege' that developers see...</p> <p>Suggest any building on green belt area comes with a much stricter requirement for tree and green planting (really stringent to try catch up with the 18% Scotland coverage) so make it 25% of the land must be planted.</p> <p>Also, stop building new developments and business parks on green land (anything undeveloped). Its just lazy! There is so much run down areas in Aberdeen that should be demolished and re-used for grey development works.</p> <p>Time to start rebuilding form within and not keep going outwards to the green lands where trees can be.</p> <p>Potential with sensitivity areas: Is this simply we've given it to developers and we might struggle to get any trees on now? Counteswells for example has seems to have a very poor houses to green ratio. This was green land with no substantial trees and green development on it, just grey. Again stop building outwards and re-build from within.</p>   |
| <p>Lot's of trees are now very old and we need to prepaid to replace them. In some cases they need felling an replaced. Lot's of areas that have been left to decay, they need clearing of fallen trees and replanted for the future.</p>   |

When you are finalizing this, please take into consideration the poor state of the pavements for disabled or poor mobility persons due to the root systems of trees taking up and breaking up the pavement surfaces and making it hazardous for persons passing by.

Please STOP destroying any more green and brown belt areas in and around Aberdeen and shire . STOP cutting down anymore trees . No more housing on these precious areas

I think it's wonderful that the Council are being proactive in making sure trees and forests are maintained and increased - this can only benefit the population in terms of good mental health and cleaner air. These spaces are vital for the population's general wellbeing.

Well done Aberdeen Council.

The report covers the important areas for a Strategic Woodland Plan for Aberdeen.

I wish to emphasise some aspects based on my professional knowledge of trees and my involvement with Friends of the Allan Park , Cults in order of priority :

1. Much more active management of the existing trees and woodlands needs to be undertaken. Many woods have not been thinned , trees removed and gaps replanted to optimise the current woodland areas.

Improving the Quality of the woodland area is very important to achieve the best results.

2. New tree planting is the next most important task and the right tree in the right place an on the right soil type is critical to achieve the optimal long term benefits on new area. Some of the recent worst damage from storms has been due to the wrong trees planted in the wrong soil type and then not well managed.

3. Deer control needs to be much more aggressive . For example , trees planted in the Allan Park were eaten by deer and had to be replanted. Tree protection is also critical.

More green space and trees the better. Should turn Union Street into a public park.

Who I am: member of the public residing in Aberdeen

Aspects of TWISP that stand out, and that as a resident I want to see more of:

- managing and expanding Aberdeen City's tree and woodland resource
- ensuring the aims of TWISP are measurable, with particular attention to "maintaining", "protecting" any trees that contribute to the planned expansions. As well replacing any damaged trees. e.g., It is easy enough to plant the trees and give a metric of number of trees planted, but will there be a metric aiming to have a minimum baseline percent of trees that were planted surviving into early maturity?
- planning green corridors
- using \*healthy\* street trees and urban tree planting towards connectivity and green corridors
- Protecting and enhancing the condition of the City's native woodlands, new woodlands, street trees, and green corridors
- connecting and protecting habitats at a landscape scale in order to ensure ecosystem connectivity

Areas of concern:

- balancing the age range of trees so that the woodlands have continuity
- balancing the tree species so that woodlands, street trees, corridors are resistant to disease, floods, climate change, extreme events
- trees are not always protected. This is particularly noticed in case of young street trees. When cars run into them, they are not replaced.

Would support:

- a tree warden scheme.
- encouraging and promoting community management and involvement in community woodlands. The more we can engage community appreciation of trees we can hope individual citizens will be concerned with their maintenance

I have read the above documents with great interest and appreciate that the public stakeholders' opinions are sought at a critical time of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

As a mother of two young children, I am particularly aware of what is at stake for future generations.

We are constantly out and about in all weathers. Our local woodlands in Peterculter are a godsend to strengthen our family's physical and mental well-being, especially during more recent times of lockdown.

I also run my own Forest School Business for parents and their pre-school children, combining all the benefits of outdoor play, natural crafts, and storytelling.

It is important for anybody of any age to connect with nature, to experience seasonal changes, to get to know local flora and fauna, and to discover how to look after our natural surroundings.

It saddens me immensely when I read documents such as the Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan, which couldn't stress more the importance of preserving our local woodlands and green belt areas, whilst at the same time being faced with a planning application for 250 houses on green belt here in Peterculter ("Land at Tillyoch"). This development would see much of Peterculter's protected ancient woodland destroyed for the access road. How a planning application suggesting the destruction of trees with preservation orders, and the fragmentation of woodlands, fields and wetlands, resulting in an enormous loss of biodiversity, can even be considered, is beyond me, especially when there are brownfield sites in Aberdeen much better suited and already connected to established road networks.

In the light of planning constantly getting away with recklessly destroying nature, ACC's promises to protect our woodlands seem hypocritical until stronger legislations are in place to protect our woodlands from destruction, and don't allow for exceptions for those seeking personal profit.

I enthusiastically support the city's ambitious plan to increase the number of trees in Aberdeen. They will help to counteract the effects of climate change and will greatly improve and enhance the environment for residents. I note that care will be taken to plant species that do not suffer from the diseases currently doing so much damage to woodlands. I also believe that there should be green spaces within walking distance of all residents.

I have one suggestion that does not feature in the plan: it concerns memorial trees. At the moment grieving relatives may arrange for a tree to be planted in one of the city parks, and I appreciate that this must be a comfort to them. However, it is clear that the guidelines are very often not adhered to, and rather than blending with other trees in the park, the memorial trees are draped with wreaths, messages, ribbons, bells, etc. and are actually turned into shrines. The number of such trees is on the increase (at least in my local park--Seaton Park). I do not want our parks to resemble cemeteries, and would like the city to make sure that the guidelines for current memorial trees are adhered to, and in addition, to consider incorporating space for memorial trees in a large dedicated woodland area which is easy to access.

My particular concern is ancient woods. Benefits of Ancient Woodland are numerous but for local residents, the woods provide a range of social benefits, including improving physical and mental wellbeing. The following extracts from information found online from better qualified people than myself, reflects my concerns quite eloquently:

According to the Aberdeen County Council - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022 - 25: "The trees and woodlands in and around our cities have a vital role to play in promoting sustainable communities and provide numerous environmental, economic and social benefits and contribute enormously to the physical health and mental well-being of everyone who lives and works in urban environments. In essence, urban trees and woodland make places work, look and feel better.

As concerns grow about the quality of the urban environment in many towns and cities throughout the world, so does the importance of protecting and expanding our urban green networks including trees and woodland and enhancing their contribution to combatting the effects of climate change."

Woodland Trust : "We can't replace the complex biodiversity of ancient woods which has accumulated over hundreds of years. Many species that thrive in ancient woodland are slow to colonise new areas. All ancient woodlands are unique, and are distinctive of their locality.

"Once what little we have left is gone, it's gone for good."

Further they warned, if threats too woodland aren't tackled, the UK's ability to tackle climate and nature crises will be "severely damaged". Ancient and long-established woodlands are really important in terms of their ability to tackle climate change whilst providing that real specialist and irreplaceable habitat for declining wildlife. Ancient woodlands continue to be lost and damaged by new housing developments, new road etc. Fragmentation is the major issue with this development and the loss of wildlife corridors.

Areas of ancient woodland are a treasure of high biodiversity, but it is difficult to conclusively identify and value of the ancient woodland. They cannot be recreated, as their composition is a product of environmental conditions and historic management that will not occur again. Opinion varies on which measures could effectively contribute to environmental compensation if ancient woods are unavoidably lost to development.

In addition, many environmental and cultural benefits provided by ancient woods cannot be replicated. The Woodland Trust argues that the irreplaceable status of ancient woodland is not adequately recognised at present and that all sites should be fully protected from development.

The Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice is:

"You should refuse planning permission if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless:  
there are wholly exceptional reasons  
there's a suitable compensation strategy in place"

The plan seems to have many good points, I particularly like the idea of community orchards and developing a tree warden scheme. I was surprised at the percentage of mature woodland, ancient woodlands are crucial for habitat and biodiversity, I thought they should be a priority over compensatory planting. The city has lost its elms and other mature trees in my area have been removed leaving a bleak urban view. Some have been replaced but with non native saplings.

Access to the natural environment is vital for human health, physical and mental. Trees and the wildlife they support within the city are so important. The destruction of Union Terrace Gardens is an appalling tragedy. I avoid the centre of town now, it's so depressing. Protecting/creating green spaces in the city centre and residential areas would be very welcome.

Hedges weren't mentioned in the report. They are of great benefit for biodiversity and being low level, are good at trapping and absorbing carbon monoxide and other car pollution. Could they be promoted/protected? Both the domestic and public hedges.

Are there other ways of managing deer rather than killing them? They are such beautiful animals, it's a treat to encounter them.

Thank you for your consultation which we received on 24 December 2021 about the above and its Environmental Report (ER). We have reviewed these documents in relation to our main area of interest for the historic environment. The first part of this response relates to the plan, with part two focusing upon its environmental assessment. To note, this response has also been uploaded to your online consultation hub.

Part 1: Aberdeen City – Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-25

We understand that the Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan (TWSIP) sets out the vision and strategic priorities for Aberdeen’s tree and woodland resources and an action plan and spatial guidance for their management and future creation.

We welcome that the proposed Spatial Guidance for Woodland Expansion has considered both Scheduled Monuments and Gardens and Designed Landscapes as sensitive areas. The 20m buffer put forward in order to protect both the site and setting of scheduled monument is welcomed. However, it is important to recognise that the setting of individual scheduled monuments can vary greatly and may extend to beyond 20m. This will require to be taken account of as part of ACC’s consideration of proposals.

In terms of the consideration of the wider historic environment the plan does not offer detail with regard to this, instead relying on proposal level assessment. It will therefore be important that the requirements and guidance from both the UK Forestry Strategy (UKFS) and the Scottish Forestry Strategy are fully embedded into the criteria to be used by Aberdeen City Council when assessing woodland creation and management proposals, as noted under the actions put forward for Priority 2.