

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 June 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Nature Awareness Campaign: Plans for a citywide collaboration
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CR&E/24/164
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Richard Brough
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	NZET 9.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on Plans for a Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign, previously reported to [NZET 31/10/202 Item 12 Recommendations \(d\) to develop and lead projects in partnership with other public bodies in the City to ii\)](#) To develop, implement and monitor a public and wider stakeholder awareness and engagement campaign on the value of nature to the City, its citizens and businesses, the risks to nature locally and the need for local action, what the Council and partners were doing and what others could also do in support of nature recovery across Aberdeen.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 approve the outline Plans for the Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to continue working on the Campaign with citywide partners and provide a service update within 12 months of this report

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In March 2023, Aberdeen City Council added its voice to the growing number of local authorities around the world to have responded to the global climate change and nature loss crises by declaring a climate and nature emergency. Details of the declaration are available in the [minutes of the full Council meeting of 22 February 2023](#) (see item 18) and the Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration
- 3.2 Understanding, protecting and recovering nature is key to ensuring we meet the ambitions set out in the [Council's Climate Change Plan 2021-25](#) and our citywide collective ambitions set out in the [Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap](#) and

place-based strategies, specifically the [Natural Environment and Empowerment Strategies](#)

3.3 The Net Zero Aberdeen Empowerment Strategy reports the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the locality plans for the North, South and Central areas of the city saw communities and individuals highlighting the need to embrace greener more sustainable ways of working and living. The Nature Awareness Campaign links closely to the Empowerment Strategy which aims to set out a framework for public engagement with people at the heart. Building on the strong community empowerment networks, and the existing organisations and partnerships active in the city with a key focus on being inclusive and ensuring that all voices are heard as we work together to ensure that the ambition for Net Zero Aberdeen is turned into action.

3.4 Nature plays a major part in Scotland's economic growth and quality of life providing us with water, clean air and food, raw materials for medicines, industry and buildings. Our crops rely on insect pollination and the complex biological processes that create soil. Enjoying parks, landscapes and wildlife improves our health and wellbeing.

- Sustainable tourism is one of seven growth industries in Scotland – it brings in more than £4 billion each year.
- Sustainable use of our environment contributes over £17 billion a year to Scotland's economy.
- NatureScot's [Valuing our Environment report](#) reveals the economic value of the environment. Its sustainable use supports 11% of Scotland's total economic output – worth £17.2 billion a year – and one in seven full-time jobs.

3.5 The draft Open Space Audit Report 2024 (CR&E/24/162) reveals that:

- 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to see more greenspaces managed in a more natural way for the benefit of wildlife and nature.
- 49% of respondents said they would be encouraged to visit spaces more often if they were managed for wildlife and nature.

Although perceptions are changing, there remains for some, a misconception around the way we manage land for nature. Land managed for nature may appear overgrown or unmanaged, but this is often intentional, as it provides important habitats for wildlife. It is important to raise awareness about the value of natural habitats and the role they play in supporting biodiversity, to address this misconception and foster a greater appreciation and awareness of nature's role. The Nature Awareness campaign seeks to achieve this.

3.6 In Scotland, the data and evidence regarding the extent of nature loss are constantly increasing. This information comes from various sources.

- Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy Indicators [Scotland's Indicators | NatureScot](#)
- [Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index - 2023 \(data to 2021\) - Update Summary | NatureScot](#)

- State of Nature Scotland Report; [State of Nature Scotland Report | NatureScot](#)
  - North East Scotland Biological Records [NESBReC Species distribution maps - NESBReC](#)
- 3.7 [The Biodiversity Duty Report 2023](#) included the recommendation that the Council develop, implement and monitor a public and wider stakeholder awareness and engagement campaign on the value of nature to the City, its citizens and businesses, the risks to nature locally and the need for local action, what the Council and partners were doing and what others could also do in support of nature recovery across Aberdeen.
- 3.8 [In October 2023 the NZET committee instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning](#) to develop, implement and monitor a public and wider stakeholder awareness and engagement campaign.
- 3.9 The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the significance and value of nature, the risks to nature locally and the need for local action. The campaign will identify what the Council and partners are doing and what others could do in support of nature recovery across Aberdeen. Additionally, the campaign will showcase community action and highlight the efforts of local groups and individuals in supporting nature recovery.

### **Campaign Progress**

The Council in collaboration with stakeholders and partner organisations has commenced engagement on the development of a Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign as follows:

The first step was to conduct a stakeholder analysis, which was completed in March 2024. Following invitations to various stakeholders to take part in the campaign a stakeholder workshop was held on April 26th, 2024, which was attended by a diverse group of stakeholders, including nature and communications specialists, health and wellbeing professionals, and landowners.

During the workshop, participants discussed the outcomes and aims identified in the [refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#).

It was agreed that the campaign aims could be expanded beyond the LOIP through collaboration with stakeholders and communities. The group also reviewed key initiatives and strategies for increasing public awareness about nature and identified potential community engagement/change ideas including:

1. Collaborative Storytelling Projects: Create a platform where all individuals can contribute their personal stories about nature, wildlife encounters, or environmental conservation efforts.
2. Develop a branding campaign that emphasises the importance of nature. Collaborate with artists, influencers, and environmental organisations to create visually appealing content that promotes nature awareness and highlights the need for conservation and sustainable living practices.

3. Host a series of interactive workshops and webinars for communities and groups to help shape the campaign narrative and raise awareness.
4. Install interpretation panels with QR codes on sites managed for nature to explain why we are managing the land this way.
5. Host lunch and learn sessions for staff and businesses to raise awareness and serve as a platform to help shape the campaign narrative.
6. Nature-Themed Online Challenges: Launch online challenges that encourage individuals of all ages to participate in nature-related activities and raise their awareness and understanding. These challenges will also help shape the campaign narrative. Children and young people will support the design of challenges for their class or school.

The above change ideas will be tested as follows:

- Tests 1, 2 and 3. Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton including children and young people via schools in the locality.
- Test 4. sites managed for nature starting in Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton
- Test 5 and 6. Test with a CPA partner initially and reach out to responsible business partners. BP or NHS.
- Test 1, 2 and 6: design and test children and young people versions with children and young people via schools in Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton.

A project team has now been set up to take the campaign forward. The team includes health professionals, landowners, nature experts, and community engagement specialists. In collaboration with stakeholders and communities a draft charter framework is being developed for the campaign. A service update will be provided within 12 months of this report.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Campaign as it is currently defined does not require additional budget. The Council and external stakeholders and partners will provide incidental financial and in-kind staff resources as part of a Citywide collaborative effort. Where required, opportunities to apply for external funding will be explored.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. This biodiversity duty is about taking care of nature all around us, not just in specific protected sites and for particular species. Fulfilling our Biodiversity Duty can help address wider outcomes such as:
  - Helping Scotland halt biodiversity loss and address the climate and nature emergency, contributing to a green recovery and a net zero future.
  - Ensuring compliance with legislation and helping Scotland to meet its national and international biodiversity targets.
  - Contributing to sustainable development and the quality of life in Scotland.
  - Demonstrating we are working in a socially responsible and ethical way, by safeguarding biodiversity and environmental assets for future generations.
- 5.2 [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) places duties on the public sector to:
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Put in place measures to adapt to a changing climate.
- Work in a sustainable way.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign has the potential to have both positive and negative impacts on the environment. On the positive side, the campaign can lead to increased conservation efforts, improved management and quality of nature in and outwith nature sites, and a greater sense of responsibility towards conserving natural resources and ecosystems. Additionally, increased public awareness of nature and its interconnectedness with human life can lead to more sustainable and eco-friendly practices. On the negative side, there is a potential for increased human activity in natural areas to have unintended consequences, such as habitat destruction, pollution, and disturbance of wildlife. It is important for the campaign to promote responsible and sustainable interactions with nature to minimise negative impacts.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified			<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	Not delivering the campaign undermines our ability to deliver our strategic climate and nature ambitions at council and city levels, especially the Net Zero Aberdeen environment and empowerment strategies.	Continue to work with partners on the Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	Not carrying out the campaign undermines our ability to operationally manage council land for nature in line with our	Continue to work with partners on the Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign	L	<b>Yes</b>

	duties and ambitions.			
<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	A general risk to reputation for not being seen to be taking action, including should we fail to implement a recommendation of our Biodiversity Duty Report 2023	Continue to work with partners on the Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Not delivering the campaign could undermine our ability to deliver on our climate and nature strategies, plans and outcomes.	Continue to work with partners on the Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign	L	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</a></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to deliver a just transition to net zero and plan to make Aberdeen a net-zero city by no later than 2045, and earlier if that is possible.</li> <li>• Work with communities to review the management of council-managed open spaces to create more sustainable and safer green areas and open spaces and develop a Community Environmental Improvement Fund, for communities to access, to implement their own small-scale local environmental improvements.</li> <li>• Recognise the importance of Aberdeen's Green Belt, green spaces and open spaces so they can be enjoyed for purposes of leisure, sport and environmental wellbeing, and investigate the creation of new pocket parks.</li> <li>• Promote and improve woodland in our city and in particular launch a "A Million Trees for Aberdeen" programme to plant, with partners, a further one million trees in Aberdeen by 2032 at minimal cost to the Council.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in Aberdeen's green future by maintaining and planting street trees and ensuring the right trees are planted in the right places</li> </ul>
<u><a href="#">Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u>	
<b>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</b>	Whilst not immediately supporting the Prosperous Economy stretch outcomes, raising the awareness and the protection of nature and biodiversity within the city will help create an attractive place where people will want to live and work.
<b>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</b>	Raising awareness of the importance and value of nature will contribute to achieving the stretch outcomes for Prosperous People. The positive effect on the wellbeing and health of people from interactions and closeness to nature are well documented.
<b>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</b>	<p>The proposals in this report support the delivery of the following LOIP Stretch Outcome 15 and project aims.</p> <p>26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected for nature and 60% of citizens report that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026</p> <p>LOIP Improvement Project Aim 15.2 - 100 people to be socially prescribed nature by 2026 to support positive outcomes in relation to their health and wellbeing</p> <p>LOIP Improvement Project Aim 15.3 - 25% of citizens report that they understand the importance of nature on both their neighbourhood and individual wellbeing by 2026</p> <p>LOIP Improvement Project Aim 15.4 - at least 23 organisations across all sectors in Aberdeen pledge to manage at least 10% of their land for nature by 2023 (23by23) and at least 26% by 2026 (26by26)</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<p>The Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign supports both national and regional priorities such as the: Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, emerging Delivery Plan and allied Nature Networks and 30 x 30 ambitions. Delivery of the Aberdeen Adapts framework, Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and associated place-based strategies, specifically the Natural Environment and Empowerment Strategies.</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Principles of our Northeast Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP), which is a regional strategic partnership with Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils and public and private sector partners.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed. The impacts are generally perceived as neutral. If successful, the campaign could have positive impacts on individuals with protected characteristics. Negative impacts could occur if protected groups are unable to access online media or for people with visual impairment. Care will be taken to utilise appropriate media for communicating with protected groups.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [NZET 31/10/202 Item 12 Recommendations \(d\) to develop and lead projects in partnership with other public bodies in the City to ii\)](https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=685&MId=8509&Ver=4)  
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develop, implement and monitor a public and wider stakeholder awareness and engagement campaign on the value of nature to the City, its citizens and businesses, the risks to nature locally and the need for local action, what the Council and partners were doing and what others could also do in support of nature recovery across Aberdeen; and iii) report back to Committee within 12 months with the outcomes of these projects.

### 10.2 URL Links

- [NZET 31/10/202 Item 12 Recommendations \(d\) to develop and lead projects in partnership with other public bodies in the City to ii\)](https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=685&MId=8509&Ver=4)  
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=685&MId=8509&Ver=4>
- [minutes of the full Council meeting of 22 February 2023](https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=8658&Ver=4) (see item 18).  
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=8658&Ver=4>
- [Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/news/aberdeen-city-council-declares-climate-and-nature-emergency#:~:text=Aberdeen%20City%20Council%20has%20added,a%20climate%20and%20nature%20emergency)  
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/news/aberdeen-city-council-declares-climate-and-nature-emergency#:~:text=Aberdeen%20City%20Council%20has%20added,a%20climate%20and%20nature%20emergency>
- [Council's Climate Change Plan 2021-25](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/%20Council%20Climate%20Change%20Plan%202021-25%20Towards%20a%20Net%20Zero%20and%20Climate%20Resilient%20Council.pdf)  
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/%20Council%20Climate%20Change%20Plan%202021-25%20Towards%20a%20Net%20Zero%20and%20Climate%20Resilient%20Council.pdf>
- [Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Net%20Zero%20Aberdeen%20v1.0.pdf)  
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Net%20Zero%20Aberdeen%20v1.0.pdf>



- Natural Environment and Empowerment Strategies <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/net-zero-aberdeen/strategy-documents>.
- NatureScot's [Valuing our Environment report](https://digital.nls.uk/pubs/e-monographs/2020/216588518.23.pdf) <https://digital.nls.uk/pubs/e-monographs/2020/216588518.23.pdf>
- [Scotland's Indicators | NatureScot](https://www.nature.scot/information-hub/indicators-trends/scotlands-indicators) <https://www.nature.scot/information-hub/indicators-trends/scotlands-indicators>
- [Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index - 2023 \(data to 2021\) - Update Summary | NatureScot](https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-natural-capital-asset-index-2023-data-2021-update-) <https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-natural-capital-asset-index-2023-data-2021-update->
- [State of Nature Scotland Report | NatureScot](https://www.nature.scot/doc/state-nature-scotland-report) <https://www.nature.scot/doc/state-nature-scotland-report>
- [NESBReC Species distribution maps - NESBReC](https://nesbrec.org.uk/biomaps/) <https://nesbrec.org.uk/biomaps/>
- [The Biodiversity Duty Report 2023](http://councilcommittees/documents/s150386/Biodiversity%20Duty%20Appendix.pdf) <http://councilcommittees/documents/s150386/Biodiversity%20Duty%20Appendix.pdf>
- [In October 2023 the NZET committee instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning](http://councilcommittees/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=101931) <http://councilcommittees/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=101931>
- [refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\).](https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Consultation-Draft-Refreshed-LOIP-2016-2026.pdf) <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Consultation-Draft-Refreshed-LOIP-2016-2026.pdf>
- [Nextdoor Nature Project](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/nextdoor-nature) <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/nextdoor-nature>
- [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/contents) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/contents>

## 11. APPENDICES (None)

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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