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Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report

East Dunbartonshire Council

2024 - 2026

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Statutory Biodiversity Duty Delivery Report

Jan 2024 – Dec 2026

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 further requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report every three years on the actions they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty. This report sets out how East Dunbartonshire Council has delivered biodiversity conservation across a range of functions during the period January 2024 – December 2026. The format used is based on a suggested reporting template produced by the Scottish Government. Where relevant, progress recorded below is related back to commitments made in the Council's previous report covering the years 2021 – 2023.

Introduction to organisation

Land and Estate Management

East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC) is one of the 32 council areas of Scotland. Located to the north of Glasgow, the Council area contains many of the city's suburbs, commuter towns and villages. The majority of the Strathkelvin District became part of East Dunbartonshire in 1996. The Council is comprised of seven wards, represented by 22 locally elected councillors, and operates through a system of committees which officers report to on relevant matters. Over 30% of built-up areas in East Dunbartonshire are parks and other types of open space which the Council manages together with road verges, roundabouts, civic spaces, cemeteries and school grounds. The Council area has three Local Nature Reserves, 76 Local Nature Conservation Sites and six SSSI.

Regulation of Land Use and Development

The development of policy regarding land use and development is undertaken by the Council's Land Planning and Development service, which includes the Land Planning Policy (LPP) and Sustainability Policy teams. The LPP team consists of 1 Team Leader of Land Planning Policy, 2 Policy Planners and 1 Greenspace and Biodiversity Policy Officer. The Sustainability team consists of 1 Climate Change Policy and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Officer, and a Sustainable Transport Policy Officer. There is also 1 Environmental Planner whose role is split 50:50 between the LPP and Sustainability Policy teams.

The Climate Change Policy and SEA Officer ensure compliance with SEA requirements across the Council. They conduct SEA on a number of Council plans, policies and strategies which highlight impacts on the natural environment and propose mitigation to eliminate or reduce those impacts where they are likely to be significant. For further information regarding relevant policies, plans and strategies regarding land use and development that impact biodiversity, see the Mainstreaming Biodiversity section. Decisions regarding the implementation of policies that affect land use and development are normally made at meetings of the Council's Place, Neighbourhood and Corporate Assets Committee.

Providing public information, community learning and education around nature and environment

The Council employs a variety of staff whose role specifications either include or are related to the provision of public information and community education for nature and the environment. There are nine full-time equivalent staff and two graduate plus staff on three-year contracts within the Streetscene Technical Support team, including the Team Leader. There is also one full-time equivalent Team Leader, one Development Manager, one Warden, two Assistant Wardens,

two Countryside Rangers and one seasonal Assistant Warden at Mugdock Country Park. Full details on providing public information, community learning and education around nature and the environment are listed in the public engagement and workforce development section.

Actions to protect and enhance biodiversity

Biodiversity is under increasing pressure from a complex range of environmental and human-driven factors. Land use change is contributing to the loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats and undermining the health and resilience of our local ecosystems. The expansion of the built environment and the conversion of greenfield land is eroding natural habitats, while urban pollution – such as air, noise, water and light – further degrade ecological systems. The dominance of hard, impermeable surfaces like roads, buildings and car parks fragments landscapes and disrupts natural water and soil systems. At the same time, climate change intensifies these impacts, and the spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) places additional strain on already vulnerable ecosystems.

The Council is taking action to protect and enhance existing habitats while actively working to promote positive outcomes for biodiversity across the natural and built environment. This section will discuss the measures the Council is taking to mitigate for biodiversity loss, enhance biodiversity and the partnerships the Council engages in to achieve these actions.

Mitigation for biodiversity loss

Land use change

The Council has reflected the need to mitigate for land use change in the implementation of policy for development. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity has been further strengthened in the latest Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) and draft Greenspace Strategy, see the Mainstreaming Biodiversity section for further details.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

INNS management is a priority in Policy 17: Natural Environment of the LDP2, stating: *"Where invasive non-native species are present on a development site, or where planting is planned as part of a development, developers must take account of legislative provisions relating to non-native species."*

The Council actively seeks to identify, control and remove INNS and prevent its spread. Ongoing programmes delivered by the Streetscene team and Countryside Rangers include:

- Birch and bracken control at Drumclog Moor and Lenzie Moss continues from the previous reporting period and is now managed in-house.
- The removal of *Rhododendron ponticum* at Mugdock Country Park by Countryside Rangers and volunteer groups.
- Various invasive control programmes for *Impatiens glandulifera* (Himalayan balsam), *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed) and *Reynoutria japonica* (Japanese

Knotweed) across Mains Park, Templehill Woods, Kilmardinny Loch, Barloch Moor and a large number of open spaces.

- Streetscene staff have undertaken an extensive programme of herbicide control of *Reynoutria japonica* (Japanese Knotweed) at 114 sites across EDC. A significant increase from 60 sites in the previous reporting period.
- The Council has undertaken drone works at Manse Burn to assess the extent of invasive non-native species. The results of this will inform control works in 2027.
- The ongoing removal of *Geum macrophyllum* identified at Mugdock Country Park and Bishopbriggs Park which is impacting native ground flora and hybridising with our native *Geum urbanum*.

Pollution

Pollution from industry, agriculture and road traffic can impact on waterways, air quality and sensitive ecological habitats.

Air pollution is an environmental pressure that can affect biodiversity, ecosystem services, harm human health and contribute to climate change. The primary source of air pollution in East Dunbartonshire is emitted by road vehicle traffic. The Council monitors air quality continuously at four sites in East Dunbartonshire in Kirkintilloch, Milngavie, Bishopbriggs and Bearsden. The main pollutants of concern are NO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_1. Numerous passive NO_2 diffusion tubes also measure monthly average NO_2 levels throughout the area. In accordance with the statutory requirements of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, a yearly Air Quality Annual Progress Report (APR) is published by the Council to provide updates on monitoring and mitigation. The 2026 APR has been submitted to the Scottish Government and SEPA for approval and reports for previous years are available online for perusal at https://www.scottishairquality.scot/laqm-reports/east-dunbartonshire-council.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an identified pollutant or air quality objective. There were two AQMAs operational in Bearsden and Bishopbriggs for several years. The former was revoked in September 2022 due to consistently improved air quality. Air quality is a material consideration for all proposed developments, and the local authority has produced Air Quality Planning Guidance, however this is due to be updated mainly to address references to more recent council Plans and Policies.

Litter pick-ups continue to be conducted throughout greenspaces in East Dunbartonshire. This benefits flora and fauna while preventing items from entering nearby watercourses. Anti-litter initiatives have been implemented in schools across the Council area, working with Keep Scotland Beautiful on the National Spring Clean Campaign and in partnership with Community and Friends of groups.

Enhancing Biodiversity

Habitat creation and restoration

The Council has been involved in the following efforts to create and restore a variety of habitats to promote biodiversity:

Meadow creation projects:

East Dunbartonshire has established approximately 18ha of wildflower meadows – an increase of 1ha from the previous reporting period. An additional 2ha of *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow rattle) has been sown at key sites – an increase of 1ha from the previous reporting period.

Tree planting and management:

The Council has planted approximately 5,600 trees (a mix of standards and whips) in the last three years in greenspaces across East Dunbartonshire. In response to ash die-back, where 95% of *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) trees in East Dunbartonshire likely require felling, the Council has committed to replacing each tree with a suitable native alternative. An Ash Die Back Plan has been prepared to guide and support the Council's response to ash-die back. Approximately 100 trees on Council owned land have been felled in the reporting period.

Funding from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has supported the Council in delivering tree planting across parks, street verges and other greenspaces to promote positive outcomes for biodiversity, mitigate pollution from vehicular traffic and provide multiple climate resilient and community co-benefits. Funding has also helped deliver tree and understory shrub planting in woodlands, such as at Cairnhill Woods.

Watercourse management and restoration

- **Pond creation and restoration projects:** A number of new ponds have been created in Cairnhill Woods, Langfaulds Park, Templehill Woods and Twechar to improve local habitat and improve ecological connectivity. The Council has created 50 *Odonata* pools at Lenzie Moss to support local dragonfly and damselfly populations. Larger ponds have also been created are successfully supporting wildlife in the area.
- **Peatland restoration works:** Building on peatland restoration work at Lenzie Moss in the previous reporting period, a series of hydrological surveys have been undertaken and a management plan prepared with an action plan which will inform future works. Ongoing adjustments to dams have been carried out to retain water and re-wet the main bog area.

- **Kelvin Valley Project:** The Council commissioned the Kelvin Valley Green Network, Wetland and Habitat study in 2024 to identify nature-based solutions and climate adaptation opportunities to increase the long-term resilience of the River Kelvin and its tributaries. The study focussed on natural flood management, wetland creation and restoration, habitat enhancement and connectivity opportunities, water quality improvements, riparian habitat creation, and opportunities to increase community access to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Encouraging nature in urbanised areas

The Council has undertaken the following actions to improve biodiversity, visual amenity and add value to greenspaces in urban areas:

- **Landscaping:** The Council has a total of 18ha of wildflower meadows across parks, greenspaces and roadside verges, of which an additional 1ha was delivered in this reporting period. A total of 3000m^2 of parks, greenspaces and roadside verges has also been planted up with bulbs for naturalisation, including *Camassia*, *Chionodoxa Crocus*, *Muscari*, *Narcissus* and *Tulipa*. This includes a 500m^2 increase from the previous reporting period.

- **Enhancing biodiversity features in Council buildings:** On an annual basis, schools continue to develop and enhance their school grounds to encourage biodiversity. Many schools are working with parent bodies or local groups such as Milngavie in Bloom to introduce new planting, create ponds and grow food locally. A living green roof has been installed on the roof of Woodland View School as part of the new build project.

Management practices

Grass cutting:

- The Council currently undertakes up to 12 cuts annually to amenity grass areas across East Dunbartonshire. Where appropriate there have been changes in sward height to provide a mix of different sward heights in parks and greenspaces.
- The Council has changed its approach to traditional amenity grass management in many areas as part of the creation of wildflower meadows in parks and greenspaces.

Glyphosate use:

- The Council has significantly reduced its use of glyphosate. A single application has been applied annually on roads and footpaths since 2025. This equates to a 50% reduction in glyphosate use. The Council only applies glyphosate around hard edges and no longer sprays around the base of the trees or shrubs.

Management plans:

- Five Management Plans have been prepared for the following sites: Cairnhill Woods, Bishopbriggs Park, Heather Avenue, Lenzie Moss and Whitefield Pond.
- The Council's draft Greenspace Strategy proposes the preparation of Landscape Care Plans for all parks and publicly-owned greenspaces by 2030 to meet the requirement set out in Action 13.1 of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan 2024–2030. As part of this, landscape succession planning will be embedded within Care Plans to guide long-term planting and management, ensuring that greenspaces are resilient to the impacts of climate change and continue to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits over time. Actions to reduce chemical use, modernise equipment, and invest in staff skills will further enable a transition towards more sustainable and ecologically informed management practices.

Working in partnership

The Council is a member authority of Glasgow City Region, which includes the Green Network Partnership, and sits on the board of Climate Ready Clyde. The Council is also a signatory to the revised Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2025 – 2030.

The Land Planning Policy team regularly attends Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Officers' network meetings to stay abreast of developments in this area.

A partnership with Scottish Water at the Milngavie Reservoirs site which funded two full-time equivalent posts based at Mugdock Country Park ended on 31st January 2026. These roles involved visitor engagement work at the reservoirs.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity

Biodiversity conservation is embedded throughout the Council in line with the commitments outlined in previous Biodiversity Duty Reports. The Council's duty to enhance biodiversity is demonstrated through its incorporation in policies, strategies, projects and initiatives across the Council.

Impact Assessment Checklist and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

All new policies, strategies and plans must be presented and approved to the relevant Council committee. At the beginning of this process an Impact Assessment Checklist must be completed which includes consideration of whether a SEA is required. The Climate Change and SEA Officer proactively engages with staff involved in the preparation of policies and strategies across the Council to aid compliance and understanding of SEA and to integrate environmental and sustainability considerations into strategic decision-making as effectively as possible.

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017 – 2027

The LOIP is the shared plan for the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), consisting of 5 public bodies with a legal duty and 10 partner organisations. The LOIP details out the strategic direction, priorities and outcomes in response to local needs and aspirations. The document contains seven overarching Guiding Principles and six Local Outcomes. The next iteration of the LOIP is currently being prepared by the Council.

The seventh listed guiding principle is Sustainability which aims to:

"...create the conditions for a better quality of life for East Dunbartonshire residents, by recognising their health and wellbeing needs without compromising the quality of our built, natural and historic environment. In doing so, we will build resilience to a changing climate, use our natural resources prudently and consider the long-term implications of our decisions for present and future generations."

This guiding principle includes a five-point sustainability charter and four point list to measure success. The theme of Sustainability reflects the CPP's desire to create high-quality places for residents to live, facilitate sustainable economic growth, improve our town centres, maximise our tourism and business potential and protect the quality of our local historic, natural and water environment (through the focus on its vision and outcomes for 2027). It also ensures that essential infrastructure for energy, broadband, minerals and waste is provided. Local Outcome 5 is relevant to biodiversity and states:

"Our people experience good physical and mental health and wellbeing with access to a quality built and natural environment in which to lead healthier and more active lifestyles."

This is an important change from the previous LOIP with the addition of the natural environment within the outcomes and the Partnership's recognition of the importance of good quality open space and healthy eco-systems for the health and wellbeing of East Dunbartonshire residents. The Sustainability Guiding Principle seeks to ensure the recognition and protection of the natural environment when delivering all six of the local outcomes.

The preparation of the next iteration of the LOIP is currently underway. A short life working group will be created with representatives from community planning partners and other relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the Sustainability Policy team.

Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP) was approved in June 2026, following extensive evidence gathering and engagement. The CAP sets out East Dunbartonshire's pathway to net zero to meet our statutory requirements as a public body and to advance the Council's climate resilience in a warming world. The CAP's mission stems from the dual opportunity of climate action - to harness the well-documented economic benefits of the green transition while maintaining a tenacious commitment to advancing climate equity and a just transition. The CAP sets out a bold ambition to accelerate action at a pace commensurate with the escalating threat of rising global temperatures. At the same time, it is also transparent about the enabling conditions required to take action at the scale and pace necessary to meet the Council's net zero and adaptation targets, including availability of adequate resources and the low cost of zero emission technologies being passed on to end users.

Through the CAP the Council has a range of corporate and area-wide actions to deliver on the following Council targets:

- To reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2036 for our direct greenhouse gas emissions and energy that the Council purchases
- To reach net zero by 2045 for all other emissions including those for the East Dunbartonshire area
- To improve resilience to the on-going impact of climate change.

The Net Zero and Resilience Action Plan (NZRAP) is the main programme management tool for the Council's CAP governance framework to place delivering on the Council's net zero and climate resilience targets at the heart of decision-making at the Council through Strategic Leadership Team and Member Officers Group oversight. Each action in the NZRAP has been

assigned to an Executive Officer or other senior officers who will oversee implementation and report progress against its corresponding completion date. With support from the Council's Sustainability Team, the NZRAP will enable Council services to entrench robust governance arrangements and integrate climate change into decision-making across all areas of Council activity. This direct accountability will be crucial to respond to ongoing policy developments, maximise funding opportunities and create new actions where necessary.

The CAP recognises that: *"The scale of human impacts is incurring tangible damage to biodiversity. Wildlife populations have decreased by an average of 73% over the past 50 years[1]205 and core Scottish species numbers have declined by 15% since 1994.[2] This biodiversity loss is disrupting natural cycles, resulting in intensifying environmental inequities, such as food and water insecurity."*[3]

The CAP also takes cognisance of the fact that biodiversity acts as a key natural defence against climate change. Rich and varied ecosystems pull carbon dioxide from the air, buffer extreme weather, and protect human communities. That is why biodiversity protection and enhancement are incorporated into the CAP Mission, Foreword, Objectives and Actions (primarily Theme 4: natural Environment).

A report with progress updates on the CAP actions is going to Council on 1 October 2026, the Community Planning Partnership Board on 8 October 2026 and then bi-annual progress thereafter to monitor CAP Delivery. Council and Committee agendas and papers can be accessed online.[4]

Local Development Planning

Through Climate Action Plan: Action 4.8, and in alignment with NPF4 policy framework, climate change and biodiversity considerations and requirements of the emerging LDP3 proposed Plan and associated workstreams will be further strengthened.

This work has already begun by creating a robust site appraisal methodology for all proposals being considered as part of the Proposed Plan. This methodology incorporates all relevant criteria from a biodiversity protection, management and enhancement perspective, while also integrating fully with the wider Strategic Environmental Assessment process and requirements. This process has undergone extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including NatureScot, to ensure it is robust and transparent. The Site Appraisal Methodology will

[1] BBC News (2024) Nature decline is now nearing dangerous tipping point WWF warns. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y3j0vzpl3o
[2] State of Nature Partnership (2023) https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP26056-SoN-Scotland-summary-report-v5-1.pdf
[3] East Dunbartonshire Council (2026) Climate Action Plan
[4] East Dunbartonshire Council (2026) EDC Council - Committee Agenda and Papers

be submitted to the DPEA along with the LDP3 Evidence Report in 2026 for approval to progress to the Proposed Plan stage.

Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was adopted in November 2022 and remains the adopted Local Development Plan for East Dunbartonshire (in conjunction with National Planning Framework 4). LDP2 includes specific policies on Nature Conservation, Green infrastructure and Green Networks which supports the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. The Council has developed Supplementary Guidance and Planning Guidance intended to support the implementation of the LDP. The guidance supports the provision of good practice that supports the enhancement of biodiversity, e.g. Green Infrastructure and the Green Network, Invasive Non-Native Species and Natural Environment.

Local Development Plan 2 is guided by key themes, including: the need to ensure high-quality design and place-making, climate adaptation and mitigation, and the delivery of climate change duties. Policy 9 in the LDP outlines the Council's commitment to contributing to national climate change targets and objectives and the promotion of sustainability in practice. The policy requires planning applications for major developments to include the submission of a Sustainability and Energy Statement. Developments will be required to meet all 14 essential characteristics listed and are encouraged to meet as many of the 6 desirable standards as possible. Of the essential characteristics, four relate to improving biodiversity through planning.

Policy 17: Natural Environment outlines the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in development. It states that:

"All development must protect, enhance, and maintain existing biodiversity assets and deliver at least a no net loss for biodiversity. Development will contribute positively to biodiversity conservation and achieve at least no net loss through siting and design, avoiding and minimising any adverse impacts on habitats, species or network connectivity, either resulting from the development or as a result of the cumulative effects of development locally."

Developments that avoid habitat fragmentation and isolation, restore adjacent habitats, and create new habitat links in the surrounding area will be supported. Where possible adverse effects on biodiversity arise, an ecological appraisal will be required. The appraisal will identify potential impacts at local, national and international scales to the surrounding area and provide mitigation.

Work is currently underway on the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for the area – Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3). LDP3 will support National Planning Framework 4 by providing further local detail and protections for biodiversity. The Proposed Plan for LDP3 is expected to be published in 2027.

Economic Development

The Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) was developed in 2020/21 in response to the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. Actions linked to biodiversity under the priority area of Community included upgrades to parks and greenspaces, the creation of the Twechar outdoor centre and regeneration and management of outdoor community and tourism assets. Relevant actions under the Environment priority included the creation of a Circular Economy Strategy (CES) which was published in March 2023 and future strategy development, such as the Climate Action Plan (CAP), which was adopted in 2026.

Early work on the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy to replace the ERP has commenced in this reporting period. The baseline review and early engagement conducted for the strategy in 2025 indicates that there will likely be a continued focus on sustainability and the integration of a 'Wellbeing Economy' concept, in line with economic policy at the national level.

Draft Greenspace Strategy

The draft Greenspace Strategy replaces the existing Open Space Strategy 2015-2020 and Green Network Strategy 2017-2022. The Strategy has been prepared in response to the requirements of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and the National Planning Framework 4 (2023). It also follows the guidance in Planning Advice Note 65 (PAN 65), which provides a framework for protecting, enhancing and promoting accessible, high-quality open space as an essential component of successful placemaking. The Strategy aligns closely with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045, which highlights the urgent need to restore nature and create connected, healthy and resilient ecosystems through the delivery of nature networks, blue and green infrastructure and nature-based solutions across both urban and rural environments.

The draft Greenspace Strategy marks a decisive step forward, by introducing a bold new approach that reimagines East Dunbartonshire's parks, play spaces, woodlands, waterways and streetscapes as part of a wider, connected network of blue and green infrastructure — woven into the fabric of everyday life and working harder for people and nature alike. At its heart, the Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for greenspaces that are climate resilient, biodiversity rich and socially inclusive. It recognises that access to high-quality greenspace should be equitable, welcoming and safe for everyone, supporting physical and mental wellbeing, providing opportunities for play and learning, and cultivating a strong sense of local identity and civic pride. At the same time, it acknowledges the vital role greenspaces play in tackling climate risks, regulating temperature, managing water sustainably, improving air quality and restoring ecological connectivity across our urban and rural landscapes.

The Strategy embraces the challenge of tackling the twin climate and nature crises with an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) metric which will seek to secure an increase in the quantity and quality of blue and green infrastructure in new development and retrofit projects. The metric will incentivise nature-based design innovation and encourage multifunctionality, while providing a

structured, measurable mechanism to assess contributions to urban cooling, surface water management, air quality, landscape design, and ecological connectivity, while creating attractive social and recreational spaces.

The UGF metric will set out a range of blue and green infrastructure surface cover types, assign a score to each type, and include relevant design standards and principles to be applied by developers when calculating their site's greening score. In addition, an accompanying guidance document will be prepared to support applicants in delivering meaningful and place appropriate urban greening. It is proposed that the UGF be adopted and applied through the LDP3.

To support the UGF metric, the Strategy proposes the development of a nature-based design model to ensure our blue and green infrastructure maximises functionality, resilience and inclusivity, while actively supporting ecological recovery and climate adaptation. To support a shift towards a care-based approach to greenspace management, the Strategy proposes the creation of a Greenspace Care Practice Framework. The framework will focus on improving ecological function, enhancing biodiversity and improving accessibility, while strengthening local landscape identity and delivering greenspaces that are both beautiful and resilient.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

A number of actions from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) 2016 – 2020 have been delivered across the four ecosystems (Urban, Rural, Freshwater and Woodland) identified as priority areas. Work on the development of the next iteration of the LBAP is expected to begin in 2027.

Business Improvement Plans (BIPs)

Action for biodiversity is encouraged across the Council via the Business Improvement Plan (BIP) Corporate Guidance document which requires all teams to list the ways in which they address issues around sustainability (including the natural environment and biodiversity) through annual BIPs. To ensure robust consideration for these issues, the Sustainability Policy Team reviews and comments on the sustainability commitments made in draft BIPs. The team then makes recommendations for improvements or additional commitments. Since 2018, BIP commitments have been included in the monthly How Good Is Our Service (HGIOS) performance reporting allowing for a regular update on how these commitments are being delivered.

Nature based solutions, climate change and biodiversity

Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The CAP Evidence and Options Report[5] estimated that approximately 8% of current emissions will remain as unavoidable residual emissions in 2045, primarily from owned buildings and supply chains. Companies and governments have addressed residual emissions through offsetting, the practice of investing in nature-based solutions to claim additional carbon sequestration as a reduction measure against total corporate emissions. As noted in the Scottish Government's statutory guidance, carbon offsetting does not reduce emissions at the source and should be used as a last resort after all other measures to reduce or avoid emissions have been explored.[6]

In May 2025, the Scotland's Carbon Budgets - Climate Change Committee further bolstered the CAP evidence gathering setting out that nature-based solutions need to be scaled up and that:

"Nature-based measures, including restoring peatland and planting new woodland, are integral in growing land-based carbon sequestration."

"Nature-based measures are vital for Scotland to achieve its longer-term targets, contributing 8% of the emissions reductions required by 2035. This increases to 13% by 2045. There is a delay between the planting of woodlands and the time it takes for them to reach peak rates of absorbing CO_2, so immediate action is needed to capture these benefits later in the pathway. Scaling up these nature-based actions allows agriculture and land use together to reach Net Zero emissions by 2045."

Supported by external funding (Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund and Climate Ready Regions Funding), the Council started the development of a Nature-Based Investment Study (NBIS) in August 2026 (with the Study due for completion in early 2027. The Study aims to identify effective direct and indirect offsetting opportunities for East Dunbartonshire (see Climate Action Plan: Action 4.1). The core focus of this Study is to maximise nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement and other wider co-benefits and explore every available opportunity in East Dunbartonshire through both public and private funding mechanisms to deliver the opportunities identified.

Crucially, the Study will need to evaluate the potential for attracting private investment from organisations that are interested in demonstrating corporate social responsibility by supporting

[5] East Dunbartonshire Council (2023) Climate Action Plan: Evidence and Options Report
[6] WWF Understanding carbon offsetting and your footprint (2022) https://www.wwf.org.uk/myfootprint/challenges/understanding-carbon-offsetting-and-your-footprint

biodiversity and carbon sequestration projects. These investments will be mutually beneficial, contributing to respective companies' emission targets and East Dunbartonshire's area-wide emission reduction. This will require consideration of land ownership in areas which have the greatest emission reduction potential for investment, such as damaged peatlands or suitable land for rewilding and biodiversity-based enhancement projects. Accordingly, it will contribute to a range of Climate Action Plan: Actions 4.1 to 4.10.

Local Nature Conservation Sites

The Local Development Plan 2 has designated 76 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) for biodiversity and 34 LNCS for geodiversity.

Infrastructure Upgrades

To improve access to nature and promote health and wellbeing the following upgrades and repairs to tracks and paths have been made:

- Upgrades to paths were undertaken across several sites, including Barloch, Allander, Cairnhill Woods, Luggie Park, Mains Park, Bishopbriggs Park, Kilmardinny Loch and Lenzie Moss.
- Countryside Rangers have overseen the maintenance and improvements to paths and boardwalks across Mugdock Country Park.
- The creation of enhanced path networks has improved accessibility for local communities and visitors to greenspaces across East Dunbartonshire.

Flood and Surface Water Management

The development of flood risk and surface water management plans have afforded opportunities to find nature-based solutions that benefit biodiversity. Examples of nature-based solutions include the installation of retention ponds, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and open culverts, which create habitat features and linkage corridors for wildlife. To help support the on-going integration of biodiversity considerations into flood management work, the Sustainability Policy and Land Planning Policy Team meets several times a year with relevant Council officers, including the Flood Risk Engineer.

Flood Management Plans

The Council is part of the Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Plan District which, during this reporting period, has published Cycle 2 of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan (LFRMP) 2022-2028. The aims of the plan are currently being delivered alongside partner organisations, such as SEPA, Scottish Water and Local Authorities within the catchment area. Bishopbriggs East, Kirkintilloch

South and Lenzie have been identified as areas at risk of surface water flooding and the LFRMP sets out proposals for Natural Flood Management studies and the delivery of SuDs projects to mitigate and reduce the impact of flooding on communities and businesses in East Dunbartonshire.

Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP)

Surface Water Management Plans for three areas in East Dunbartonshire are currently being progressed in Cycle 2 of the LFRMP. Our feasibility studies are being reviewed with these being moved to concept studies which is currently ongoing. Detailed design stage with construction planned in the current Flood Risk Management cycle 2022 – 2028 will be dependent on Scottish Government (SG) priorities and available funding. This work will deliver co-benefits for biodiversity, health, and well-being, achieved through habitat creation and open space enhancements, including food alleviation, such as open culverts, SuDs and rain gardens. As an example, the Council has completed its first Climate Ready Park at Etive Park in Bishopbriggs.

Watercourse Management and Restoration

- Biodiversity enhancements were a key a part of the landscaping and planting plans of two flood alleviation schemes (FAS) which have been built at Golf View and Heather Avenue to help minimise flood risk.
- The Council is currently working on two river restoration projects with SEPA and other stakeholders. Both are at different stages in the design and tender process which are jointly being funded by the Council and Water Environmental Fund (WEF). The river restoration projects include multiple benefits, including restoring natural river processes, enhancement of biodiversity and woodland management opportunities.
- The Glazert River Restoration project has received planning consent and is currently out to tender. The project includes positive biodiversity interventions, including woodland management and in-channel enhancements to support wild Atlantic salmon, brown trout and other key aquatic species.

Climate Ready Park

Following on from the preparatory work in the previous reporting period, Streetscene Technical completed a new Climate Ready Park in Bishopbriggs in 2026. The upgraded park includes new allotments, pump track, wildflower meadow areas and flood attenuation in the form a new SuDs. This builds on the creation of 2.7ha of wildflower meadow creation and ongoing management of INNS in the previous reporting period.

Nature Networks

As part of a coordinated, region-wide approach to nature recovery, the Council has worked in partnership with the Glasgow City Region Green Network (GCRGN) on developing a spatial framework for nature networks, focussed on restoring and strengthening connections between nature-rich sites both within local authority areas and across boundaries. The Council has worked closely with the GCRGN to identify where the most meaningful opportunities for habitat restoration and creation lie and developed opportunity mapping for four priority habitat types – woodland, wetland, grassland and peatland – across the Council area. These mapped datasets provide a robust, spatially informed evidence base to identify where targeted intervention can deliver the greatest benefit for biodiversity, climate adaptation and ecological connectivity. The mapping outputs underpin the delivery of major regional initiatives, such as the Clyde Climate Forest, Clyde Wetlands, Clyde Peatlands and Clyde Grasslands.

As part of the development of an East Dunbartonshire Nature Network, the EDC Green Network and GCRGN Nature Network datasets will be integrated into a single coherent map comprising of a Local Nature Network (LNN) and Strategic Nature Network (SNN). The LNN will focus on enhancing connectivity within settlements at the local scale, while the SNN will reflect the regional priorities established through the GCRGN habitat framework. Together, these elements will form a joined-up spatial network that aligns local priorities with wider regional ambitions for nature recovery.

Public engagement, life-long learning and workforce development

No formal staff training was organised in this reporting period for Streetscene Technical and Operations staff. A member of the Land Planning Policy team attended the Urban Greening Symposium II at the Garden Museum in London, at their own expense, to learn about how the Council can improve the management of greenspaces and work in partnership to deliver positive outcomes for people and nature.

Practical tasks with volunteers

The Countryside Rangers led volunteer groups on practical tasks at Mugdock Country Park and other greenspaces across East Dunbartonshire during the reporting period. Volunteers supported woodland management, heathland management, access improvements and invasive non-native species removal work. The groups varied from local volunteers, corporate volunteers to occasional participation by community groups or individuals.

Education

Biodiversity in Schools

East Dunbartonshire Council is responsible for 8 secondary schools and 33 primary schools. Biodiversity education is integrated into the curriculum and experienced through activities both in school and through external partner organisations. Training and professional learning opportunities for staff is advertised to schools and learning centres through KSB and Learning through Landscapes.

Learning centres throughout the Council take ownership of their outdoor spaces, retrofitting them to improve health and wellbeing, boost biodiversity and aid local food production where possible. Schools with restricted outdoor spaces are working in partnership with local community groups in community gardens, church gardens and local wooded areas. Most schools have engaged in the creation of a range of wildlife habitat features, such as bug hotels and bird boxes and installed raised beds or planters for food growing. Four schools (Craigdhu, Gartconner, Milngavie and Twechar) have also installed polytunnels to further support food growing initiatives. Food growing in schools has been funded by a range of providers, such as CCAF, KSB, Food for Thought and Tesco. In 2025, The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund commissioned the New Roots project to support schools to work in partnership with parents to create gardens to grow food. So far, six new community gardens have been created in Gartconner, Hillhead, holy Trinity, Oxgang, Lennoxtown and St Machan's Primary Schools. Teams are now connecting with the EDC Climate Hub to make this project more sustainable. Half of learning centres have planted pollinator friendly plants to support bees and butterflies. Eco-committee groups are developing outdoor spaces and developing recycling initiatives with a focus on sustainability, such as school uniform, Halloween and Christmas jumper recycling.

- **Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB):** Schools within East Dunbartonshire are involved in a number of programmes that benefit the environment and biodiversity. These include working toward Eco School Green Flag Status, Climate Ready Classrooms (supporting learning about climate change and biodiversity), Luggiewatch and Upstream Battle (reducing litter and plastics). The Climate Ready Classrooms primary school one-day workshop is now an annual fixture with two-thirds of schools participating over the past three years. Workshops are created in collaboration with EDC Biodiversity and Sustainability officers in order to promote local initiatives. Over the three-year period, 41% of our establishments are engaging with Eco School projects (compared to 27% national average).
- **The John Muir Award and Duke of Edinburgh programme:** Young people are encouraged to connect with nature and conservation messaging through outdoor learning. Senior pupils in secondary schools are working towards their award by managing or conserving a local chosen greenspace.
- **Clyde in the Classroom:** A hands-on project that uses brown trout as a way of engaging and educating young people about river ecology across the River Clyde catchment.
- **Awards:**
- In Session 2025/26 - St Ninian's High School were awarded a commendation for their Eco-Schools application, one of only 19 commendations in this period. Milngavie Primary School had a winning KSB Pocket Garden design and was awarded first place in the 'My favourite Pocket Garden' public vote.
- Colquhoun Park Primary School received their 10th consecutive Green Flag in 2026.

Target 2030:

Central officers work directly with the Education Scotland Learning for Sustainability team and directly cascade professional learning resources to staff via the EDC LfS Learning Community online. A self-evaluation audit tool has been created and launched to all schools and early years centres in May 2026. Feedback and action plans will be completed by February 2027 outlining supports required for all settings to be sustainable by 2030. The audit is broken down into the 4C's – campus, curriculum, culture and community. The National Curriculum Improvement Cycle is underway, and sustainability is being further embedded and made more explicit in the curriculum.

Outdoor Learning

The Countryside Rangers provide outdoor learning opportunities for every age bracket in the Council. They often lead school and college groups (including for awards such as John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh) and clubs, such as the Cubs and Scouts. Practical conservation tasks include biodiversity enhancements, such as wildflower or tree planting, pond creation and putting up bird or bat boxes; habitat management, such as scrub removal or control and removal of invasive non-native species; and the monitoring of previous biodiversity projects. During the reporting period the number of education sessions delivered is set out below:

Climate Emergency Training

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to tackling climate change - working with others to reduce carbon emissions and to increase resilience. The Council's Climate Action Plan recognises the crucial role of behaviour change and the importance of raising awareness and empowering communities to act.

In 2023 Keep Scotland Beautiful was contracted to develop, promote and deliver a community Carbon Literacy Training programme (incorporating the twin climate and nature crises), in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council and East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action, during the financial years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 feeding into the Council's emerging Climate Action Plan. The programme of training was fully funded by £42,175 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

People representing local organisations, communities and businesses were encouraged to get involved, but anyone with ties to the East Dunbartonshire was able to attend one of the courses or workshops. People across East Dunbartonshire embraced the opportunity to learn more about the Climate and Ecological Emergency with 179 attending free training to find out what positive action they can take and more than 150 pledges to act being made. The final report summarising the key achievements, learnings and recommendations for the future is available at Keep Scotland Beautiful website.

Corporate Communication

The Council has social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube which are used to promote biodiversity initiatives and projects where relevant. The Communications & Engagement Team also routinely issue press releases, raising awareness of biodiversity projects the Council has delivered. Since 2024, communications have been issued relating to range of biodiversity projects including the Climate Action Plan, Food Growing Strategy, Green Skills John Muir Way and events at Mugdock Country Park, including creating materials to promote red squirrels and pine martens.

Council Website

The Council's website contains pages on greenspace and biodiversity with links to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Open Space Strategy and Green Network Strategy. A web page for the draft Greenspace Strategy consultation, which combines and updates the existing Open Space Strategy and Green Network Strategy into one strategic vision for greenspaces and biodiversity, has been created to gather the views of the community, key agencies and other relevant stakeholders via the promotion of an online survey and series of in-person drop-in sessions.

Research and Monitoring

The main monitoring activity of biodiversity actions is the ongoing monitoring of strategy delivery, including the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Green Network Strategy and Open Space Strategy. The draft Greenspace Strategy proposes establishing a Greenspace Strategy Steering Group which will meet biannually to review progress against the delivery programme. Additionally, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, overseen by the Steering Group, will focus on outcomes, quality of delivery and continuous learning.

All biological records generated by the Council are sent to the Local Records Centre and from there are entered onto the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway. Further information regarding research and monitoring is set out below:

- **Invertebrate Surveys:** The Countryside Rangers have undertaken surveys for species of interest across the Council area. Two Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly surveys were carried out at Drumclog Moor in 2025.
- **Bat Surveys:** Countryside Rangers conducted two Pipistrelle Bat Field Surveys in Mugdock Country Park, Tannoch, Milngavie and Drumclog Moor, and Merkland, Waterside and Kirkintilloch in 2025 and 2026. Two Daubenton's Bat Waterway Surveys were carried out in 2025. Two Pipistrelle Roost Surveys undertaken at the Visitor Centre in Mugdock Country Park recorded a total count of 174.
- **INNS Surveys:** For the Mugdock Land Management Plan (2022-2027), audit work was carried out on *Reynoutria japonica*, *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Rubus spectabilis*, *Impatiens glandulifera* and various bamboo species and these are managed within the park by Countryside Rangers and volunteer groups. *Reynoutria japonica* is also managed via herbicide control in Merkland and Lenzie Moss.
- **Tree surveys:** Tree surveys have been undertaken at Barloch Moor, Cannerton in Milton of Campsie and Peel Park. Surveys have also been undertaken at various school sites across East Dunbartonshire.
- **Delivery of restoration projects:** Countryside Rangers, Streetscene and Friends of Lenzie Moss have continued to monitor raised bog restoration work at Lenzie Moss. This includes the removal of tree seedlings and scrub, the installation of new, and ongoing management of existing, dams, pond creation and the monitoring of water levels.

Biodiversity Highlights and Challenges

Contribution to national biodiversity targets

The following tables detail the Council's contributions to programmes or projects that directly support some of the key actions from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan:

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 2: Objective 1: Accelerate Restoration and Regeneration	Contribution to target achieved	Contribution made
Take action to ensure pathways for the introduction and spread of INNS are managed to prevent or reduce their rate of introduction and establishment and prevent further damage to eco-systems.	✓	Various control programmes for INNS across parks and green spaces by Streetscene staff.
Raise public awareness of the impact of INNS and embed INNS biosecurity practice across industries and recreational activities linked to the most important pathways of introduction and spread by 2030.	✓	Countryside Rangers work with volunteer groups to remove INNS, such as *Rhododendron ponticum* at Mugdock Country Park.
Take an adaptive approach to abstraction and flows management to protect freshwater biodiversity from the impacts of water scarcity in response to future climate change pressures, using the Controlled Activity Regulations ad review of abstraction.	✓	River Restoration Projects.
Develop a mechanism to promote positive management of rural and urban SuDs for biodiversity benefits.	✓	Flood and Surface Water Management. Preparation of an Urban Greening Factor metric to increase the quantity and quality of blue and green infrastructure, including a range of SuDs.

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 3: Objective 2: Protect Nature on Land and at Sea across and beyond Protected Areas	Contribution to target achieved	Contribution made
By 2030, ensure that at least 30% of land and sea is protected or conserved as protected areas or OECMs, and effectively managed to support nature restoration.	✓	Local Nature Reserve, Local Nature Conservation Sites.

Establish a programme to enable protected woodlands to be brought into favourable condition with clear targets and a clear framework for decision making.	✓	NRF funding for tree and shrub planting in woodlands INNS control at Mugdock. Creation of management plans for woodland sites.
Undertake mapping of opportunities for creating local authority wide Nature Networks by 2030.	✓	GCRGN nature networks opportunity mapping.
Incorporate and embed Nature Networks into policy frameworks and decision-making processes as a component of Local Development Plans and Regional Land Use Partnerships nationally by 2030.	✓	Climate Action Plan, Local Development Plan. Nature Networks have been embedded into the Greenspace Strategy.
Prepare and implement nature positive amenity grassland management strategies for the public estate in towns and cities by 2030, incorporating improved technical guidance for practitioners and access to suitable machinery for local authorities.	✓	Changes to management practices of amenity grassland as part of meadow creation projects, including laying of pictorial turf and bulb planting for biodiversity.
Every local authority should consider the need to prepare and implement a vision for surface water management including appropriate actions for blue-green infrastructure by 2030.	✓	Surface Water Management Plans and Cycle 2 of Flood Risk Management

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 4: Objective 3: Embed Nature Positive Farming, Fishing and Forestry	**Contribution to target achieved**	**Contribution made**
Increase biodiversity through diversifying age and species mixes, increasing woodland extent and connectivity (and edge habitat), increasing deadwood, and managing grazing and browsing to help facilitate natural regeneration and development of a ground/shrub layer as part of Sustainable Forest Management.	✓	Removal of INNS. Native tree and shrub planting, bulb planting, closing desire lines to encourage natural regeneration. Creation of dead hedges.

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 5: Objective 4: Protect and Support	**Contribution to target achieved**	**Contribution made**

the Recovery of Vulnerable and Important Species and Habitats		
Deliver the actions set out in the Wild Salmon Strategy Implementation Plan 2023-2028 to improve habitat and reduce pressures on salmon and other fish species.	✓	Kelvin Valley Green Network, Wetland and Habitat study has highlighted Wild Atlantic Salmon as a priority species.

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 6: Objective 5: Invest in Nature	**Contribution to target achieved**	**Contribution made**
Scale delivery of the Peatland Action programme, restoring the condition of peatlands as a key ecosystem in line with Net Zero targets and supporting the expansion and upskilling of the peatland restoration workforce.	✓	Continuation of peatland restoration works at Lenzie Moss and other sites.

Target from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Chapter 7: Objective 6: Take Actions on the Indirect Drivers of Biodiversity Loss	**Contribution to target achieved**	**Contribution made**
Develop a communication and engagement programme by 2024 to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and its links to climate change and the changes needed to ensure a just transition to a net zero and nature positive Scotland.	✓	Strategies and events are made available on the Council website.
Increase public connection and action for nature through expanding the reach of the Make Space for Nature campaign and develop a national nature volunteer and citizen science frameworks by 2025.	✓	Countryside Ranger events, including schools outdoor learning, volunteer removal of INNS and survey work.
Progress delivery of the outdoor learning elements of the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan, including nature connectedness and learning, to meet Target 2030 so every 3-16 place of education becomes a Sustainable Learning Centre.	✓	Environmental and outdoor education, school ground improvements and incorporation of biodiversity into new schools, Forest Schools, Clyde in the Classroom and John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Highlights for biodiversity in the Council

- The protection and enhancement of biodiversity through Local Development Plan 2 policy and a commitment to further improve the conservation of biodiversity in the Local Development Plan 3.
- A commitment to a range of NBS measures in the evidence-based Climate Action Plan to improve resilience to the effects of climate change.
- Delivery of key projects which further the conservation of biodiversity in the LBAP, Green Network Strategy and Open Space Strategy.
- Successful creation of biodiversity features, such as ponds, meadows and tree planting.
- On-going successful control of invasive non-native species.
- Preparation of the draft Greenspace Strategy which sets out an ambitious vision for our greenspaces, play spaces and communities.

Challenges and aspirations for biodiversity in the Council

Challenges and aspirations for the next three years include:

- The ability to source and access funding to enhance greenspaces and protect and restore priority habitats to deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity remains an ongoing challenge.
- Biodiversity education remains a key issue. It is the ambition of the Council to re-establish the Biodiversity Partnership Group following the adoption of the Greenspace Strategy to engage with relevant stakeholders and build support for greenspace enhancement and projects aiming to deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity.
- There is growing pressure on land arising from proposed development and land use change, resulting in pressure, fragmentation and loss of existing habitats. The Council proposes to strengthen the protection of habitat and conservation of biodiversity through new land use policy in Local Development Plan 3.