



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire Council

Natural Heritage Strategy

2019 - 2022

“We will protect, enhance and promote Aberdeenshire’s natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations.”



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Visit

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/natural-heritage/>

1 Introduction

Aberdeenshire's environment and natural heritage are some of its most valuable assets. From the high mountains of the Cairngorms, past iconic rivers, through moorland, woodland and farmland to an extensive and diverse coast – there is a wealth of habitats supporting a wide range of species. These are nationally, indeed internationally, important, irreplaceable assets that contribute to the high quality of life enjoyed by local residents, attract visitors and underpin the local economy.

Aberdeenshire's natural heritage resource is finite and as such must be carefully managed in a sustainable way. The Environment Team aims to protect, enhance and promote Aberdeenshire's natural heritage by providing advice, producing guidance and through working with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council, other public sector bodies and communities.

There is a strong legislative basis for Aberdeenshire Council's involvement in natural heritage with the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2003 placing a duty on all public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out all their roles and responsibilities.

2 Scope of Strategy

This Strategy is primarily an Aberdeenshire Council working document to help manage the Environment Team's work and deliver national and local priorities in relation to the natural heritage. The Strategy provides a structured approach to service delivery for the next 3 years and covers our natural heritage work in relation to development management, tree protection, site management, biodiversity and partnership working.

Through the period of the Strategy there will be a requirement to consider the challenges of our changing environment and the changing needs of our present, and potential, user groups. To reflect these changes and challenges, an Annual Action Plan will be prepared, which will provide detailed actions on the delivery of the Strategy and reflect new and emerging priorities. A report will be prepared each year to highlight progress.

There are separate strategies covering other areas of the Environment Team's work.

3 Policy Context

The Council currently has **11 key priorities** of which three are particularly relevant to this Strategy:

- **Support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy**
- **Protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Encourage active lifestyles and promote well-being with a focus on obesity and mental health**

The table below identifies the relationship between national, Council and team policies in relation to natural heritage.

Table 1: Environment Team Natural Heritage Strategy Policy Context

Scottish Government Purpose	To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth				
Scotland Performs Scottish Government National Outcomes	<i>National Outcome</i> We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	<i>National Outcome</i> We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	<i>National Outcome</i> We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	<i>National Outcome</i> Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	
Scottish Government National Plans, Policies & Strategies	Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004		National Planning Framework 3		Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
	Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in your hands		Scottish Planning Policy 2014	Planning performance framework	
Aberdeenshire Council Vision	Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland				
	Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-27				
	Council Plan 2017 - 22		Council Priorities		
	Infrastructure Services Service Plan 2017-20				
	Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017				
Environment Team Vision	We will protect, enhance and promote Aberdeenshire's natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations				
Environment Team Plans	Aberdeenshire Council Natural Heritage Strategy 2019 - 2022				
	Annual Natural Heritage Strategy Action Plans		Individual Work Plans		

4 Aberdeenshire Council and Environment Team Visions

It is Aberdeenshire Council's vision to be the best area and the best Council in Scotland.

It is the vision of the Environment Team that the natural heritage of Aberdeenshire is protected and enhanced, and that the need to protect and enhance it for current and future generations, is widely understood. The benefits of Aberdeenshire's unique natural environment should be available to those who live, work and visit Aberdeenshire,

"We will protect, enhance and promote Aberdeenshire's natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations."

5 Aberdeenshire Council Environment Team Resources

Aberdeenshire Council's Environment Team is part of the Planning and Environment Service within Infrastructure Services.

6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Environment Planners are employed to predominantly carry out the diverse natural heritage portfolio identified in this Strategy. Staff are spread between North and South teams each serving 3 administrative areas. These are supported by 2 FTE Team Leaders (who are also involved in supporting staff on other aspects of the team's work, such as public access and built heritage). Currently staff are primarily based in Stonehaven, Banff and Inverurie.

The Environment Team's revenue budget 2019/20 for the natural environment is £37,500. This money levers in either external funding or contributes towards the delivery of projects delivered by external partners. This is summarised below.

Table 2: Environment Team Budget – Natural Environment

Budget Line	Aberdeenshire Budget (Revenue)	Total Project Expenditure
Natural Environment	£22,000	£148,000 (2018 – 2021 Invasive Non-Native Species Project)
Forestry Planting	£0	£13,000
Tree Preservation Orders	£4,000	£0
North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership*	£8,500 (grant)	£38,500
Dee Catchment Partnership*	£3,000 (grant)	£50,000 - £70,000

* Other Bodies and Organisations budget line

Staff from other teams also contribute and perform tasks in support of the vision, including:

- Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service
- Aberdeenshire Council Specialist Services Team, including NESBReC
- Aberdeenshire Council Economic Development
- Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services

Staff from other external bodies also contribute and perform tasks in support of the vision, including:

- River Dee Trust (partners in the invasive non-native species project)
- North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (via James Hutton Institute)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Our work also benefits from valuable input from a range of experts from across the region and beyond, some of whom give their time voluntarily, such as the panel convened for the Local Nature Conservation Site review process. The Environment Team also work in collaboration with neighbouring authorities to support delivery of the vision.

6 Natural Heritage Strategy Aims, Objectives and Key Priorities for Action

The Natural Heritage Strategy has been drawn together to reflect the strategies, plans and policies listed in section 3. The Strategy's aims and subsequent objectives for delivery provide a common framework for a customer and performance focussed programme, which works in partnership with stakeholders to deliver a high quality efficient service that provides best value.

The Annual Natural Heritage Action Plan (Appendix 1) provides the detailed actions the Team will take to achieve the aims and objectives and indicates how the core outcomes of the Team will be measured. The Environment Team will use the Strategy and the Action Plan to develop individual annual work programmes, which will reflect the specific natural environment needs and aspirations of Aberdeenshire.

In order to achieve our vision, we have four principal aims:

1. **Protection of the Natural Heritage** – use statutory powers and provide advice to manage and protect Aberdeenshire's natural heritage in recognition that it is a valuable and irreplaceable asset to the region.
 2. **Enhancement of the Natural Heritage** – use available resources, and attract new resources, to enhance Aberdeenshire's natural heritage providing social, environmental and economic benefits
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- 3. **Promotion of the Natural Heritage** - promote the natural heritage of the region to residents and visitors so that the benefits of this valuable asset are fully realised
- 4. **Continuous Improvement** – ensure the Environment Team’s work in the natural heritage is high quality, efficient, responsive to customer needs and continually improving.

Key Priorities for Action

In order to provide a focus on the most pressing issues for each three-year Strategy period, key priorities for action, significant and relevant to a number of objectives in the Action Plan, have been identified.

1.	Protection
	Ensure natural heritage data sets are up to date to assist the delivery of sound decision-making to protect Aberdeenshire’s natural heritage.
	Work with other Council teams and sections who manage Council assets to raise awareness and understanding about the importance in the protection of Aberdeenshire’s natural heritage.
2.	Enhancement
	Support community groups and work with partners to enhance local natural heritage assets in Aberdeenshire.
3.	Promotion
	Ensure that more people can access good quality information and advice on Aberdeenshire’s Natural Heritage online and through social media.
4.	Continuous Improvement
	Develop and monitor the Natural Heritage Strategy and Action Plan to ensure teamwork meets the needs and expectations of customers.

7 Natural Heritage Strategy Objectives

Aim 1 – Protection of Natural Heritage

Use statutory powers and provide advice to manage and protect Aberdeenshire's natural heritage in recognition that it is a valuable and irreplaceable asset to the region.

Table 3

Objective	Description	Outcome	Monitoring
1.1 Development Plans protect and enhance natural heritage and landscape	Provide input to Strategic Planning and Local Development Plan processes	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage assets and landscape	Number of Strategic Planning and Local Development Plan consultation responses
1.2 National policy reflects the need and nature of Aberdeenshire	Input to relevant consultations from Scottish and UK Governments	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage assets and landscape	Number of national consultations responded to
1.3 Development Management (DM) protects and enhances natural heritage, trees and landscape	Provide consultation advice and support to the Development Management process	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage assets and landscape	Number of DM consultations responses Number of DM training events and DM team meetings attended Percentage of Formal consultations within target timescale
	Work with Development Management and Enforcement to improve the protection of trees on development sites	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage and landscape	Number of Enforcement training events and team meetings attended

<p>1.4 Support Scottish Forestry in the protection of natural heritage</p>	<p>Provide consultation advice and support for forestry applications</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage</p>	<p>Number of forestry consultations</p>
<p>1.5 Protect trees of visual and cultural importance</p>	<p>Make Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape</p>	<p>Number of TPOs made Number of TPOs reviewed</p>
	<p>Manage works to protected trees application process</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape</p>	<p>Number of applications for works to protected trees Percentage of applications for works to TPO protected trees dealt with in 8 weeks</p>
<p>1.6 Protect locally significant sites for nature conservation</p>	<p>Maintain and review list of Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage</p>	<p>Up to date list of LNCS Number of new LNCS</p>
<p>1.7 Support other Council teams and sections in the protection of natural heritage and landscape</p>	<p>Work cross-service to ensure protection of natural heritage associated with Council assets (e.g. Housing, Property, Roads & Bridges, Flooding)</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage and landscape</p>	<p>Number of responses to other Services</p>
	<p>Provide internal training (e.g. Structures and Housing)</p>	<p>Protection of natural heritage and landscape</p>	<p>Number of training events run for other teams/services</p>
	<p>Work with Flooding team to identify opportunities to protect and enhance natural heritage</p>	<p>Protection and enhancement of natural heritage</p>	<p>Number of responses to Flood Team</p>

Aim 2 – Enhancement of Natural Heritage

Use available resources, and attract new resources, to enhance Aberdeenshire's natural heritage providing social, environmental and economic benefits.

Table 4

Objective	Description	Outcome	Monitoring
2.1 Use Council managed land to enhance natural heritage and engage communities	Enhance natural heritage and involve communities in the management of sites which Planning and Environment Service has a responsibility for	Enhancement of natural heritage and community empowerment	Number of community groups and sites supported Amount of external money accessed Number of volunteer days
	Work cross-service to enhance natural heritage on Council managed greenspace	Enhancement of natural heritage and community empowerment	Number of sites enhanced Amount of external money accessed Number of volunteer days
2.2 Implement management of invasive non-native plant species across Aberdeenshire through partnership working	Participate in the management and delivery of Leader funded invasive non-native species project	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage	Number of people trained Number of volunteer days
2.3 Protection and enhancement of pollinators in Aberdeenshire	Implement and monitor Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage	Pollinator Action Plan reviewed/updated yearly
2.4 Creation and management of woodlands in Aberdeenshire delivers	Implement and monitor Aberdeenshire Forestry and	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage	Progress in achieving Strategy's objectives

multiple benefits	Woodland Strategy		
2.5 Provide advice and support to community groups and the public	Respond to requests for natural heritage advice from community groups and the public	Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage	Number of community groups supported

Aim 3 – Promotion of Natural Heritage

Promote the natural heritage of the region to residents and visitors, so that the benefits of this valuable asset are fully realised.

Table 5

Objective	Description	Outcome	Monitoring
3.1 Aberdeenshire Council engages in and promotes key natural heritage issues	Aberdeenshire Council Councillor Biodiversity Champions in place	Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage	Number of Councillor Biodiversity Champions
	Involve Councillor Biodiversity Champions in relevant projects/process – have a focus on a sub-set of Champions each year as part of a 3 year programme		Number of events/projects/processes involving Councillor Biodiversity Champions directly by Environment Team
	Support Aberdeenshire Council Rangers Service in their promotion of natural heritage issues	Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage	Number of Ranger events supported
	Work with Economic Development to promote climate change and sustainability issues within and out with the Council	Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage	Input to Climate Change Duty report Number of Green News items
	Ensure that all promotional activity is identified as being work of the Environment Team	Be a local authority exemplar	Number of sessions delivered promoting the work of the Environment Team

<p>3.2 Promote, protect and enhance natural heritage through cross-organisation partnership working</p>	<p>Participate in key partnership projects which aim to protect and enhance natural heritage (e.g. North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan, NESBReC and Scottish Wildcat Action).</p>	<p>Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage</p>	<p>Number of partnership projects we participate in</p>
	<p>Work with other organisations such as SNH, RSPB, SEPA, Scottish Forestry and James Hutton Institute to ensure the most efficient use of our collective resources and the most effective advice/guidance on ecological and environmental issues</p>	<p>Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage</p>	<p>Number of partnership projects we participate in</p>
<p>3.3 Ensure that more people can access good quality information and advice regarding Natural Heritage online for Aberdeenshire and through social media</p>	<p>Ensure natural heritage web pages are maintained and up to date and produce promotional material to support our activities</p>	<p>Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage</p>	<p>Number of social media posts/followers/ views</p> <p>Number of press releases</p>
<p>3.4 Promote prevention and management of invasive non-native species</p>	<p>Deliver annual invasive non-native species forum</p>	<p>Promotion of key issues to protect and enhance natural heritage</p>	<p>Annual invasive non-native species forum held</p> <p>Number of attendees at annual invasive</p>

spread in Aberdeenshire			non-native species forum
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Aim 4 - Continuous Improvement

Ensure the Environment Team's work in natural heritage is high quality, efficient, responsive to customer needs and continually improving.

Table 6

Objective	Description	Outcome	Monitoring
4.1 Develop and monitor the Natural Heritage Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the team's work meets the needs and expectations of customers	Undertake customer satisfaction reviews and ensure Strategy is reviewed, monitored and up to date	Efficient and effective working	Up to date Strategy and Action Plan Feedback from customer reviews
4.2 The planned outcomes of the Strategy are delivered and reported on	Identify relevant performance indicators for all activities and produce annual reports on performance	Monitored and accountable work outcomes	Completed annual performance report
4.3 Ensure consistency of working across the Environment Team	Develop and maintain Team Best Practice Manual to provide one easy to find location for all common team processes and procedures	Efficient working and consistency between bases	Up to date Environment Team Best Practice Manual
	Hold quarterly meetings of cross team working group	Efficient and effective working	Number of cross team meetings
4.4 Ensure that staff have the correct and up to date knowledge and skills, in order to give proper advice and deliver	Maintain staff training to meet the needs of the service and CPD requirements. Identify individual and group training needs for	Maintained professional standards	Completed Personal Performance Plans Training courses undertaken

projects as required	staff and councillors		
4.5 Be an exemplar in the protection and management of protected and designated species on the council estate	Work with SNH to develop and implement protected species projects and/or process on the Council estate	Be a local authority exemplar Protection of natural heritage	Number of protected species projects and/or process on the Council estate
4.6 Consistent and effective working with neighbouring planning authorities and other statutory agencies	Engage with other planning authorities and statutory agencies to share good practice and improve processes	Be a local authority exemplar Protection and enhancement of natural heritage, trees and landscape	Meetings/ engagement/ projects with neighbouring local authorities and statutory agencies
4.7 Report on natural heritage work to Scottish Government	Submit to Scottish Government public section biodiversity duty monitoring every three years	Be a local authority exemplar Increase visibility and knowledge of the team and the good work carried out	Scottish Government reporting completed every three years Annual report to Sustainability Committee
4.8 Build resilience and mitigate against the impacts of climate change throughout the work of the Environment Team	Develop a Climate Change Action Plan for the work of the Environment Team	Protection and enhancement of natural heritage	Completion of Environment Team Climate Change Action Plan

Appendix 1: Natural Heritage Strategy Action Plan

Natural Heritage Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2020			
Aim 1: Protection of Natural Heritage	Actions	Completion Date	Annual Monitoring
1.1 Development Plans protect and enhance natural heritage and landscape	1.1.1 Review and provide comments to Policy Team on LDP Main Issues Report	Ongoing	Number of Strategic Planning and Local Development Plan consultation responses
	1.1.2 Review and provide comments to Policy Team on proposed policies in LDP that affect natural heritage		
1.2 National policy reflects the need and nature of Aberdeenshire	1.2.1 Relevant consultation responded to on time	Ongoing	Number of national consultations responded to
1.3 Development Management protects and enhances natural heritage, trees and landscape	1.3.1 Provide input to development management cases as requested by development management colleagues	Ongoing	Number of DM consultations responses
	1.3.2 Provide formal development management consultation responses within agreed timescales	Ongoing	Number of DM training events and DM team meetings attended
	1.3.3 Update procedure for consulting SNH on bat licences	March 2020	

	1.3.4 Update procedure for consulting Scottish Forestry in development management cases involving woodland	March 2020	Percentage of Formal consultations within target timescale
	1.3.5 Engage with Enforcement Team on potential project on enforcement of tree protection on development sites	Dec 2019	
	1.3.6 Write Project Initiation Document for tree protection project	Dec 2019	
1.4 Support Scottish Forestry in the protection of natural heritage	1.4.1 Provide comment where required on forestry grant scheme applications and felling licences	Ongoing	Number of forestry consultations
	1.4.2 Review Forestry and Woodlands Strategy and provide update to Strategy Management Group	Dec 2019	
1.5 Protect trees of visual and cultural importance	1.5.1 Complete TPO review process	Dec 2019	Number of TPOs made
	1.5.2 Process works to protected trees applications	Ongoing	Number of TPOs reviewed
	1.5.3 Make new TPOs	Ongoing	
	1.5.4 Review 'not preferred' LDP bid sites for tree protection	March 2020	Number of works to protected tree applications Percentage of applications for works to TPO protected trees dealt with in 8 weeks

1.6 Protect locally significant sites for nature conservation	1.6.1	Review list of Local Nature Conservation Sites	Ongoing	Up to date list of LNCS sites
	1.6.2	Survey and assess sites for designation as new Local Nature Conservation Site required	Ongoing	Number of new LNCS sites
	1.6.3	Protect Local Nature Conservation Sites through response to development proposals and forestry consultations	Ongoing	
1.7 Support other Council Teams and Sections in the protection of natural heritage and landscape	1.7.1	Review and renew Council Housing Bat Licence with Housing colleagues	Nov 2019	Number of responses to other Services
	1.7.2	Provide training on protected species for Structures and Flood teams	Nov 2019	Number of training events run for other teams/services
	1.7.3	Provide advice on protected species in relation to Council works/buildings/structures	Ongoing	

Aim 2: Enhancement of the Natural Heritage	Actions	Completion Date	Annual Monitoring
<p>2.1 Use Council managed land to enhance natural heritage and engage communities</p>	<p>2.1.1 Community projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gauchill - path improvement and interpretation • Battlehill, Huntly - forest management • Meadows, Huntly – path improvement and community orchard • Portlethen Moss and Woods – path improvement and management plan • Inch Meadows – habitat improvement and management plan • Arnhall Moss, Weshill – Discovery Trail interpretation • Boddam – environmental improvement • Ury Riverside Park, Inverurie – environmental improvement • Wrack Woodlands, Banff – work in partnership with other Council Services as required <p>2.1.2 Participate in management group of LEADER funded Council owned Greenspace project</p> <p>2.1.3 Provide natural heritage advice and support to LEADER Greenspace officers</p>	<p>Oct 2019</p> <p>March 2020 March 2020</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>Ongoing Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of community groups and sites supported</p> <p>Amount of external money accessed</p> <p>Number of volunteer days</p>
<p>2.2 Implement management of invasive non-native</p>	<p>2.2.1 Provide training for community groups to facilitate control of invasive species</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of people trained</p>

<p>plant species across Aberdeenshire through partnership working</p>	<p>2.2.2 Provide equipment for community groups to facilitate control of invasive species</p> <p>2.2.3 Practical site control of invasive species at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muchalls • Newtonhill • Ury Riverside Park, Inverurie <p>2.2.4 Raise awareness of invasive issues throughout the area</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sep 2019 Sep 2019 June 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of volunteer days</p>
<p>2.3 Protection and enhancement of pollinators in Aberdeenshire</p>	<p>2.3.1 Produce and oversee the delivery of Annual Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan</p> <p>2.3.2 Delivery of Environment Team actions associated with Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan (and not covered elsewhere in the Environment Team Action Plan):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and trial alternatives to chemical plant and weed control • Demonstration sites of good practice at Gordon House and Woodhill House • Explore opportunities to sow wildflower seed mix at former Ellon Academy site • Survey road verges near Pitmedden that have previously been planted with Yellow Rattle • Scottish Pollinator Strategy Progress Report 	<p>Annually</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	<p>Pollinator Action Plan reviewed/updated yearly</p>

2.4 Creation and management of woodlands in Aberdeenshire delivers multiple benefits	2.4.1 Monitor and review Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy	Annually	Progress in achieving Strategy's objectives
2.5 Provide advice and support to community groups and the public	2.5.1 Respond to requests for natural heritage advice from communities and individuals	Ongoing	Number of community groups and sites supported

Aim 3: Promotion of the Natural Heritage	Actions	Completion Date	Annual Monitoring
<p>3.1 Aberdeenshire Council engages in and promotes key natural heritage issues</p>	<p>3.1.1 Ensure Councillor Biodiversity Champions have effective links with species experts</p> <p>Biodiversity Champions cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Bottlenose Dolphin • Community Tree Planting • Farmland Birds • Freshwater Pearl Mussel • Hedgehog • Invasive non-native species • Peatlands • Pine Marten • Pollinators • Ponds • Red Squirrel • Wildcat • Swift <p>3.1.2 In 2020 we will focus on working with Community Tree Planting, Pollinator, Hedgehog, Invasive non-native species and pollinator Champions.</p> <p>3.1.3 Support Aberdeenshire Council Rangers Service in their promotion of natural heritage issues</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of Councillor Biodiversity Champions</p> <p>Number of Ranger Service events supported</p> <p>Input to Climate Change Duty report</p> <p>Number of Green News items</p> <p>Number of events/projects/processes involving Councillor Biodiversity Champions directly by Environment Team</p>

	3.1.4	Work with Economic Development to promote climate change and sustainability issues within and out with the Council		
	3.1.5	Develop and implement a monitoring process to ensure that all promotional activity is identified as being work of the Environment Team		Number of sessions delivered promoting the work of the Environment Team
3.2 Promote, protect and enhance natural heritage through cross-organisation partnership working	3.2.1	Continue role as key partner in North East Biodiversity Partnership	Ongoing	Number of partnership projects
	3.2.2	Continue role as key partner in Dee Catchment Partnership	Ongoing	
	3.2.3	Represent Aberdeenshire Council on Dee Fishery Board	Ongoing	
	3.2.4	Continue role in Management and Advisory Group at NESBReC	Ongoing	
3.3 Ensure that more people can access good quality information and advice on Aberdeenshire's Natural Heritage online and through social media	3.3.1	Update of Natural Heritage Planning Advice	Nov 2019	Number of posts/followers/views
	3.3.2	Monitor and review Natural Heritage web pages	Dec 2019	Number of press releases
	3.3.3	Update North East Biodiversity Partnership website	Dec 2019	
	3.3.4	Facebook updates		

3.4 Promote prevention and management of invasive non-native species spread in Aberdeenshire	3.4.1 Delivery of North East Invasive Non-Native Forum 3.4.2 Delivery of presentations and distribution of promotional material and display boards around Aberdeenshire	March 2020	Number of attendees at forum
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Aim 4: Continuous Improvement	Actions	Completion Date	Annual Monitoring
4.1 Develop and monitor the Natural Heritage Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the team's work meets the needs and expectations of customers	4.1.1 Produce a 3-year Natural Heritage Strategy 4.1.2 Produce an Annual Action Plan 2019-2020	Nov 2019 Nov 2019	Up to date Strategy and Action Plan
4.2 The planned outcomes of the Strategy are delivered and reported on	4.2.1 Produce an annual review report and send to Infrastructure Services Committee and Sustainability Committee	March 2020	Completed annual performance report
4.3 Ensure consistency of working across the Environment Team	4.3.1 Produce Best Practice Manual for all generic natural heritage processes 4.3.2 Hold quarterly meetings of Natural Heritage Cross Team Working Group	March 2020 Quarterly, ongoing	Best Practice Manual complete Number of cross team meetings held
4.4 Ensure that staff have the correct and up to date knowledge and skills in order to give proper advice	4.4.1 Ensure staff have the opportunity to carry out required CPD and attend relevant workshops and training	Ongoing	Completed Personal Performance Plans Training courses undertaken

and deliver projects as required			
4.5 Be an exemplar in the protection/ management of protected/ designated species on our estate	<p>4.5.1 Review and renew Council Housing Bat Licence with SNH</p> <p>4.5.2 Produce and disseminate Aberdeenshire Council statement of protection of nesting birds</p> <p>4.5.3 Assist Housing Service in implementing 'flag' system for properties with known Swift nests</p>	<p>Nov 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p>	Number of protected species projects and/or process on the Council estate
4.6 Consistent and effective working with neighbouring planning authorities and other statutory agencies	<p>4.6.1 Cairngorms National Park Authority liaison</p> <p>4.6.2 Aberdeen City Council liaison</p> <p>4.6.3 Statutory agency liaison – SEPA, SNH, Scottish Forestry</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Meetings/ engagement/ projects with neighbouring local authorities and statutory agencies
4.7 Report on natural heritage work to Scottish Government	<p>4.7.1 Gather data required for Scottish Government reporting annually</p> <p>4.7.2 Report to Scottish Government every three years as required on Public Sector Biodiversity Duty</p> <p>4.7.3 Report to Sustainability Committee annually on Public Sector Biodiversity</p>	<p>January 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Scottish Government reporting completed every three years</p> <p>Completion of Annual Report on Public Sector Biodiversity Duty to Sustainability Committee</p>

<p>4.8 Build resilience and mitigate against the impacts of climate change throughout the work of the Environment Team</p>	<p>4.8.1 Commence the development of a Climate Change Action Plan for the work of the Environment Team, to be reported to Sustainability Committee</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Up to date Environment Team Climate Change Action Plan</p>
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