



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022 to 2027



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is Aberdeenshire Council's third Pollinator Action Plan, with past plans running from 2015 to 2017 and 2019 to 2021. This and previous plans recognise the need for urgent action to protect and enhance pollinators populations. This Action Plan is a cross Service document that identifies key areas of Council work up to March 2027 in alignment with The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland which runs until 2027 also.
- 1.2. Pollinating insects are essential to healthy, functioning ecosystems as they have a key role in the reproduction of many plant species. Without them, the landscapes and habitats of Aberdeenshire would be very different with the knock on effects of their loss meaning biodiversity would be greatly reduced. They are also hugely important to humans by fertilising a number key crops as well as providing honey and pollinating plants in our gardens.
- 1.3. The main insect pollinators are bees. While honeybees are the best known, there are many other bee species, including a wide range of bumblebees and solitary bees that contribute significant pollinating services to crops and natural plant communities. Other groups of insects such as flies, wasps, beetles, moths and butterflies also include important pollinators.
- 1.4. Pollinator populations have generally been declining over the last 50 years. There are known to be multiple pressures including pesticide use, changes in land use resulting in patchy distribution of natural and semi-natural habitats, and disease. Population impacts linked to climate change are also highly likely.
- 1.5. Different types of pollinating insect have different requirements, but in order to survive and flourish, they generally require well connected sources of pollen and nectar throughout the flowering season together with suitable sites for breeding or nesting to enable development of early life cycle stages and shelter throughout the year, including for winter hibernation.
- 1.6. Providing good habitats for pollinators will also help to support a wide range of other invertebrates as well as seed and insect eating birds and small mammals for example.



2. Policy

- 2.1. All public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity as defined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

- 2.2. The [Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027](#) aims to address the causes of decline in populations, diversity and range of Scottish pollinator species, and to help them thrive in future. Objectives include making Scotland more pollinator friendly by preventing further loss of flower rich habitat, creating new areas of suitable habitat and enhancing connectivity between them, raising awareness and encouraging action across all sectors.
- 2.3. Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Priorities identify the need to protect our valuable natural resources.

3. Taking Action

- 3.1. Aberdeenshire Council will take action across Services to meet 4 key objectives:
- Objective 1:** Create habitat for pollinators
 - Objective 2:** Contribute to the monitoring of pollinator populations
 - Objective 3:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators
 - Objective 4:** Protect existing habitat for pollinators
- 3.2. There are two types of action identified under each Objective. First our Key Priorities which are the focus for effort driven by the Action Plan. Second are our Ongoing Commitments, the work Council Teams and Services continue to progress day-to day which benefits pollinator populations.
- 3.3. The document has been produced by the Environment Team within Planning & Economy with input from other teams and Services including the Ranger Service, NESBReC, Landscape Services, Property & Facilities Management and Education & Children's Services. For each year of the strategy, we will carry out monitoring of actions and planning for the coming 12 months to assess and focus progress.
- 3.4. Notes on the Action Plan acronyms:
- NESBReC is the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
 - NESBiP is the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership

3.5. Objective 1: Create habitat for pollinators

We have lost around 97% of ancient wildflower meadows in the UK over the last 80 years. Where wildflower meadows do still exist, they are often small and isolated from each other, making it difficult for populations of insect pollinators to colonise new areas. Larger areas and better connectivity of suitable wild or cultivated habitat is needed. Council owned and managed land presents an opportunity to improve habitat for pollinators. In addition, we can influence others through our Development Management policies and process for example.

Key Priorities

Key Priority	Detail	Lead	Deadline
1.1 Implement habitat enhancement for pollinators on Council owned/managed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10% of Council managed public greenspace to be enhanced and managed for pollinators & biodiversity 	Greenspace Officers	March 2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise opportunities for pollinator habitat at Corporate Offices as part of maintenance review 	Property and Facilities	March 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures for pollinators introduced in at least 80 school grounds 	Education	March 2027
	Modify road verge management policy and process to further benefit pollinator populations	Landscape Services	March 2025
	Explore habitat creation at Council owned woodland sites – shrub planting in open rides or woodland edge	Environment Team	March 2024
	Share information and experience from works to date/demonstration sites both within Aberdeenshire and from other areas	NESBiP	March 2023
1.2 Use and supply pollinator friendly plants	Supply community groups with native wildflower seed to trial on 100 to 200m ² areas	NESBiP	When requested
	Explore opportunities for Council plant nursery facilities to produce alternatives to annual bedding – perennial plants, wildflowers or native trees for example	Landscape Services	March 2024
	Develop guidance on native plant seed collection and propagation	NESBiP, Environment Team	April 2022
1.3 Use Buglife identified 'B-lines' as a catalyst for habitat creation in Aberdeenshire	Run River Don B-lines delivery mechanism project with Buglife. Use findings/outputs to shape further work.	Environment Team	April 2022

Ongoing Commitments

Action	Detail	Lead
Managing existing pollinator habitat on Council owned/managed land	Manage existing habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in public greenspace • at offices including Woodhill House and Gordon House • other sites including paths and road verges 	Landscape Services Landscape Services & Environment Team Landscape Services & Environment Team
	Provide online courses and toolbox talks to Council staff and elected members to raise awareness of pollinators and pollinator friendly management practices	Ranger Service
	Continue to reduce annual bedding on Council owned/managed land – replace with native pollinator friendly seed mixes and/or perennials	Landscape Services
Development Management enhances pollinator habitat	Ensure developments provide and enhance habitats for pollinating insects through complying with Local Development Plan policies on biodiversity enhancement, landscaping (including landscaping maintenance) and watercourse buffer strips	Development Management and Environment Team
Minimise herbicide use	Herbicides only to be used where absolutely necessary in managing vegetation encroachment in graveyards, roads and footpaths and for controlling invasive non-native plant species	Landscape Services
Community and land manager advice and support	Provide support and guidance to community groups and land managers seeking to improve their local sites for pollinators	Ranger Service, NESBiP and Environment Team

3.6. **Objective 2:** Help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators

Pollinating insects have a higher profile with the general public than a few years ago. There is a fairly broad awareness that they are threatened and that they are valuable. However, it is a message that does need to be reinforced and often what can be lacking is clear actions that the public can take to help. Aberdeenshire Council will aim to raise public awareness in the ways identified below.

Key Priorities

Key Priority	Target	Lead	Deadline
2.1 Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service to raise awareness of pollinators	150 Ranger Service sessions per year with schools, groups and communities to raise awareness of pollinators	Ranger Service	Annual monitoring

Ongoing Commitments

Ongoing Commitment	Detail	Lead
Make available materials which promote pollinating insects	Pollinator identification leaflet and '5 steps for pollinators' leaflet available on website and in printed form	Environment Team
	Butterflies of NE Scotland leaflet produced by Butterfly Conservation in conjunction with Ranger Service & NESBReC available on Butterfly Conservation website and printed copies	Ranger Service
	Promote biodiversity education pack for schools and provide teaching staff training on the pollinator activities	Ranger Service
Aberdeenshire Council pollinator champions	Continue working with Councillor pollinator champions to promote and protect pollinators	Environment Team
Use social media to raise awareness of pollinators	Use Aberdeenshire Greenspace, Ranger Service and NESBReC social media to promote pollinating insects	Greenspace Officers, NESBReC and Ranger Service
Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators	Respond to relevant national consultations on pollinators and pollinator habitat ensuring the situation in Aberdeenshire is well represented	Environment Team
Work with partners and communities to protect and promote pollinators	Work with partners, including neighbouring local authorities and the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership, to promote and protect pollinators	Environment Team
	Provide advice to communities, where asked, regarding pollinators	Ranger Service and

		Environment Team
	Work with Area Managers teams on getting advice and information on pollinators and greenspace to communities	Area Managers, Greenspace Officers and Environment Team

3.7. **Objective 3:** Contribute to the monitoring of pollinator populations

Pollinators are a highly diverse group of insects that are subject to variable levels of recording and monitoring. Many are difficult to identify without some specialist knowledge, however others, like butterflies and moths, have successful national recording schemes. NESBReC is the local biological records centre and welcomes & encourages recording of pollinating insects. Monitoring provides a base line measure for assessing the impacts of our actions to improve habitats for pollinators

Key Priorities

Key Priority	Detail	Lead	Deadline
3.1 Increase pollinator monitoring and identification skills in the community and encourage participation in monitoring	Run at least one NESBReC training course per year which focusses on volunteer recording of certain pollinating insects.	NESBReC	At least one training course per year
	Highlight pollinators at annual Recorders Forum	NESBReC	Every year at annual recorders forum

Ongoing commitments

Action	Detail	Lead
Process and manage records of pollinating species from local recorders	NESBReC to identify pollinating species from submitted photographs and to manage and process any records of pollinators received from local recorders by inputting into the NESBReC database	NESBReC
Input into national recording schemes and citizen science surveys for pollinating species	Promote (through sessions and social media) and provide support and guidance for volunteers and community groups on national recording schemes for butterflies and moths and citizen science surveys for pollinators	NESBReC, NESBiP and Ranger Service
	Take part in national recording schemes for butterflies and moths and citizen science surveys for pollinators	Ranger Service
	Provide local records to national recording schemes	NESBReC

3.8. **Objective 4:** Protect existing habitat for pollinators

Many of Aberdeenshire’s richest wildflower grasslands have been identified as sites of national or local importance for biodiversity. These sites are protected through policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The local development plan also contains policies to protect areas rich in biodiversity within the wider countryside from inappropriate development and identifies green networks within major settlements. Continued habitat survey will assist with identifying areas of existing species rich grassland.

Ongoing commitments

Action	Detail	Lead
Survey for wildflower rich grassland sites and other pollinator habitat	NESBReC to continue habitat surveys in Aberdeenshire to identify valuable grassland sites and other valuable pollinator habitats	NESBReC
Protect valuable pollinator habitat in the development management process	Ensure development complies with Local Development Plan policies on natural heritage/biodiversity protection	Development Management and Environment Team
	Where undesignated wildflower rich grassland or other key pollinator habitat is identified (though NESBReC survey work or the development management process for example) consider designating these areas as a Local Nature Conservation Site	Environment Team
Protect pollinator habitat from inappropriate afforestation	Consider impacts on pollinator habitat when responding to forestry planting consultations from Scottish Forestry	Environment Team

4. Monitoring and Reporting

- 4.1. This Action Plan covers the period 2022 to 2027. The document has been produced by the Environment Team within Planning & Economy with input from other teams and Services including the Ranger Service, NESBReC, Landscape Services, Property & Facilities and Education & Children's Services. The actions cross a number of teams and services. The Environment Team will have oversight of the plan and monitor achievement of the actions yearly, including assessing the need to review the strategy prior to 2027.
- 4.2. Action plan monitoring will be reported yearly to Sustainability Committee via a bulletin. The bulletin will combine action plan reporting and the annual biodiversity reporting. The bulletin will include details of works/projects for each Area Committee area and will be made available to all Members via Ward pages.