

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



3 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2025



3 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

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OUR GOAL FOR THE FUTURE

By 2045, biodiversity in the north east of Scotland will be recovering well, safeguarding our environment for future generations.

Key habitats for nature will be protected and once degraded habitats will be restored and re-connected to form green networks, increasing the resilience of ecosystems to external pressures.

Awareness of and positive action for biodiversity will have become part of every citizen's daily life.

Communities, businesses, and individuals will be empowered and supported to drive local action based on expert knowledge from a strong network of environmental professionals and organisations.

Nature-based solutions will be commonly utilised to reduce and provide resilience to climate change impacts, while improving both human wellbeing and biodiversity.



PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

The following three objectives guide the work we carry out, and are used as the basis for developing our detailed work plan and actions.

Delivery Through Collaboration

To collaborate with partner organisations, land managers, developers, businesses, communities and individuals in the identification, development and implementation of opportunities for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, sharing in the delivery of mutually-agreed outputs.

Information Exchange

To provide a regional professional forum for public bodies, environmental organisations, individuals and all relevant stakeholders as a focus for information exchange on the biodiversity of the north east of Scotland. This includes developing priorities and methods for action as well as sharing good practice, such as the promotion of innovative case studies.

Awareness & Positive Action

To raise awareness across the north east of Scotland of the ongoing decline of biodiversity and the urgent need for action from all sectors, whilst motivating all stakeholders to actively participate by demonstrating that everyone can make a difference. This includes utilising all communication channels (e.g. our website, press, social media, professional and public events) to disseminate up to date information on current trends and highlight practical actions to achieve biodiversity successes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Members of the Partnership's Steering Group came together during a workshop in August 2021 to collaboratively identify and develop our range of Strategic Priorities. The priorities identified during this workshop will be used to inform work spanning the entire three-year period for the Strategic Action Plan 2022-2025. The Management Group then annually develop a more detailed one-year Action Plan based around these priorities.

- Develop a set of "ready to go" projects at varying scales for funding opportunities. Create a list of funding sources for different project scales, Agency, Gov., Charitable, Business, Private and keep this updated.
- Continue to build on our online resources and advice, making them useful for a variety of stakeholders:
 - Build a webpage of links to external advice on nature-based solutions, habitat restoration etc.
 - Develop a section on our website which celebrates examples of best practice including the comparative benefits/impacts of these compared with 'standard' practice
 - Provide more information on local citizen science initiatives
- Continue to raise awareness of all the multiple benefits of biodiversity, why it is important to absolutely everyone.
- Develop awareness and practical projects for the adaption to or mitigation of climate change impacts which also include positive effects on biodiversity, e.g., Peatland Restoration.
- Show the simple actions that anyone can undertake and the genuine benefits that these can bring for biodiversity.
- Engage with the farming sector to identify opportunities to support or develop biodiversity projects.
- Influence businesses, land managers and developers as to the benefits of protecting and promoting biodiversity, not just the minimum they are required to do, but the benefits of going above and beyond (to nature and themselves).
- Undertake a review of awareness of both the Partnership's work over the past 25 years and also general attitudes to Biodiversity Loss. Use this information to consider future Strategic Plan Priorities - focusing and prioritising our effort where we are most likely to have a meaningful impact.
- Build on the successful Wild North East- Scotland's Natural Gem video.
- Continue to promote the value of biodiversity to placemaking.
- Encourage more participation in citizen science through our communication networks.
- Continue to use all available scientific data to drive our actions and strategies.

ACTION PLAN

2022-2023

Actions relating to each strand of the Partnership's objectives:

Delivery Through Collaboration

To collaborate with partner organisations, land managers, developers, businesses, communities and individuals in the identification, development and implementation of opportunities for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, sharing in the delivery of mutually-agreed outputs.

REF.	ACTION
A1	Continue to work with key collaborators on existing projects, resolving conflicts when they arise, and to explore ideas for new projects and new collaborators
A2	Continue to prioritise collaborative working and projects which demonstrate good practice in the enhancement and management of biodiversity and mitigate climate change effects
A3	Help develop and deliver joint funding bids from 'Big Ideas' list
A4	Collaborate with EGCP around SEaCoR (State of the East Coast Review)
A5	Engage with the farming sector around opportunities for support in future projects e.g. POBAS pilots
A6	Engage with developers in terms of going above and beyond minimum biodiversity requirements
A7	Engage with Scottish Forestry and other planting initiatives on the quality of schemes
A8	Create/ update a stakeholder database for targeted engagement
A9	Continue to support the national school's camera trap project which evolved out of our pilot
A10	Re-visit progress on the ponds project assessing what is needed to continue to support schools and community groups in using the educational materials and submitting records
A11	Continue/complete the low-cost Green Wall project at Inverdee House in Aberdeen
A12	Continue to promote small blue butterfly survey and recording effort and following survey identify any conservation measures for this species
A13	Continue to support all three local authority Environmental Services with implementation of biodiversity enhancements through grounds maintenance for green space, roadside verges and other areas of managed ground

ACTION PLAN

2022-2023

Information Exchange

To provide a regional professional forum for public bodies, environmental organisations, individuals and all relevant stakeholders as a focus for information exchange on the biodiversity of the north east of Scotland. This includes developing priorities and methods for action as well as sharing good practice, such as the promotion of innovative case studies.

REF.	ACTION
B1	Continue regular meetings of the Steering, Management and Awareness & Involvement (A&I) Groups
B2	Continue role as the voice of NE Biodiversity in the Scottish Biodiversity Forum, Sharing Good Practice events and other national networks
B3	Throughout the year, undertake regular maintenance of the NESBiP website to ensure the relevance and accuracy of content
B4	Undertake a review of NESBiP's key achievements / progress over the last 25 years
B5	Build a webpage of links to advice on nature based solutions (NBS), restorations etc. promoting their use to tackle climate change
B6	Provide information on our website and social media on local citizen science initiatives
B7	Provide information on projects for climate change which help biodiversity mitigate / adapt to climate change impacts
B8	Create/ update a stakeholder database for targeted engagement
B9	Continue to publicise the Habitat Statements available on the NESBiP website to developers and other key parties
B10	Assist in progressing the completion of 'Locally Important Species' lists and the circulation and promotion of these lists for widespread use
B11	Develop section of website celebrating examples of best practice contrasted with standard practice and include the comparative costs/impacts of each
B12	Provide training sessions to all three local authority Planning Departments around positive / best practice planning for biodiversity
B13	Provide training and information to all three local authority Landscape Services in collaboration with ranger services / greenspace officers

ACTION PLAN

2022-2023

Awareness & Positive Action

To raise awareness across the north east of Scotland of the ongoing decline of biodiversity and the urgent need for action from all sectors, whilst motivating all stakeholders to act by actively demonstrating that everyone can make a difference. This includes utilising all communication channels (e.g. our website, press, social media, professional and public events) to disseminate up to date information on current trends and highlight practical actions to achieve biodiversity successes.

REF.	ACTION
C1	Undertake a review and update of the current Communication Plan - reviewing our current media outlets and identify any gaps in terms of reach / effectiveness / key audience etc.
C2	Hold an annual seminar focusing on an issue and its relevance to biodiversity in the local area
C3	Link awareness raising to national and international campaigns, while also giving a local flavour
C4	Use our communications network to encourage more citizen science related to biodiversity
C5	Continue to engage with the wider community through presentations at relevant events
C6	Ensure relevant Partnership Projects are submitted for local or national awards and support others to submit projects with innovative and effective biodiversity elements
C7	Demonstrate the simple actions that anyone can undertake and genuine benefits that these can bring - helping other understand how biodiverse an area can be
C8	Assist with training events and materials for Councillors post 2022 elections
C9	Continue to engage and update policy and decision makers through presentations to relevant committees and meetings. This will include Local Authorities, Partner Organisations, Regulators and Business Organisations
C10	Look to build on Wild North East video - investigate possibilities for a follow-up video
C11	Continue/complete the low-cost Green Wall project at Inverdee House in Aberdeen
C12	Continue our Partnership's regular Biodiversity Champion or Challenge Awards to recognise significant local achievements
C13	Continue to build on positive engagement in our Facebook Wildlife Gardening Group

ANNEXE 1 - PARTNERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS

The North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership employs a full-time Co-ordinator responsible for the day-to-day running of the project. This post is hosted and line managed by the James Hutton Institute. The finances and general direction of the project is provided by a Steering Group, which is made up of representatives of Partner organisations. Day-to-day decision making and guidance of the project continues to be delegated to a smaller Management Group.

The Awareness & Involvement Group is the Partnership's largest group, comprising of a wide network of environmental professionals who deliver on-the-ground projects across the north east. This group promotes, publicises and celebrates the work of the Partnership as a whole, the work of individual Partners as well as key biodiversity messages to the widest range of audiences, which is crucial to the effectiveness of our Partnership.

MANAGEMENT GROUP	
NAME	ROLE + REPRESENTATIVE FOR / INDEPENDENT MEMBER
Robin Pakeman	Chair of Group + James Hutton Institute (JHI)
Roger Owen	Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
Ewen Cameron	Independent Member
Lina-Elvira Back	Aberdeen City Council
Emma Williams	Aberdeenshire Council
Emma Gordon	Moray Council
Fiona Cruickshank	Nature Scot
Annie Robinson	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)
Alex Stuart	NESBiP Co-ordinator

ANNEXE 1 - PARTNERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS

STEERING GROUP

NAME	ROLE + REPRESENTATIVE FOR / INDEPENDENT MEMBER
Roger Owen	Chair of Group + Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
Ewen Cameron	Independent Member
Robin Pakeman	James Hutton Institute (JHI)
Gordon McLean	Aberdeen City Council
Malcolm White	Aberdeenshire Council
Emma Gordon	Moray Council
Fiona Cruickshank	Nature Scot
Annette Ross	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Hywel Maggs	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
TBC.	Scottish Forestry (SF)
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers Union Scotland - North East (NFUS)
Ian Hay	East Grampian Coastal Partnership (EGCP)
Alex Stuart	NESBiP Co-ordinator

ANNEXE 1 - PARTNERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS

AWARENESS & INVOLVEMENT GROUP	
NAME	ROLE + REPRESENTATIVE FOR / INDEPENDENT MEMBER
Ewen Cameron	Chair of Group + Independent Member
Annie Robinson	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)
Susan Cooksley / Sally Wallis	Dee Catchment Partnership (DCP)
Jackie Cumberbirch	Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)
Kathy Dale	Tarland Development Group
Doug Gooday	Outdoor & Woodland Learning North East Scotland Group (OWLNEG)
Jodie Rhodes	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service
Roddy Hamilton	National Trust for Scotland Ranger Service
Stephen Reeves	EDF Dorenell Wind farm Ranger Service
Simon Whitworth	Aberdeen City Council Ranger Service
Mark Johnson	Glenlivet Estate Ranger Service
Ged Connell	Moray Council Countryside Officer
Jane Lilley	The River Dee Trust
Alison Stuart	Aberdeen Climate Action
John Malster	Curam Fyvie
Claire Marsden	Countesswells to Cults Active Woodland Group (CCAWG)

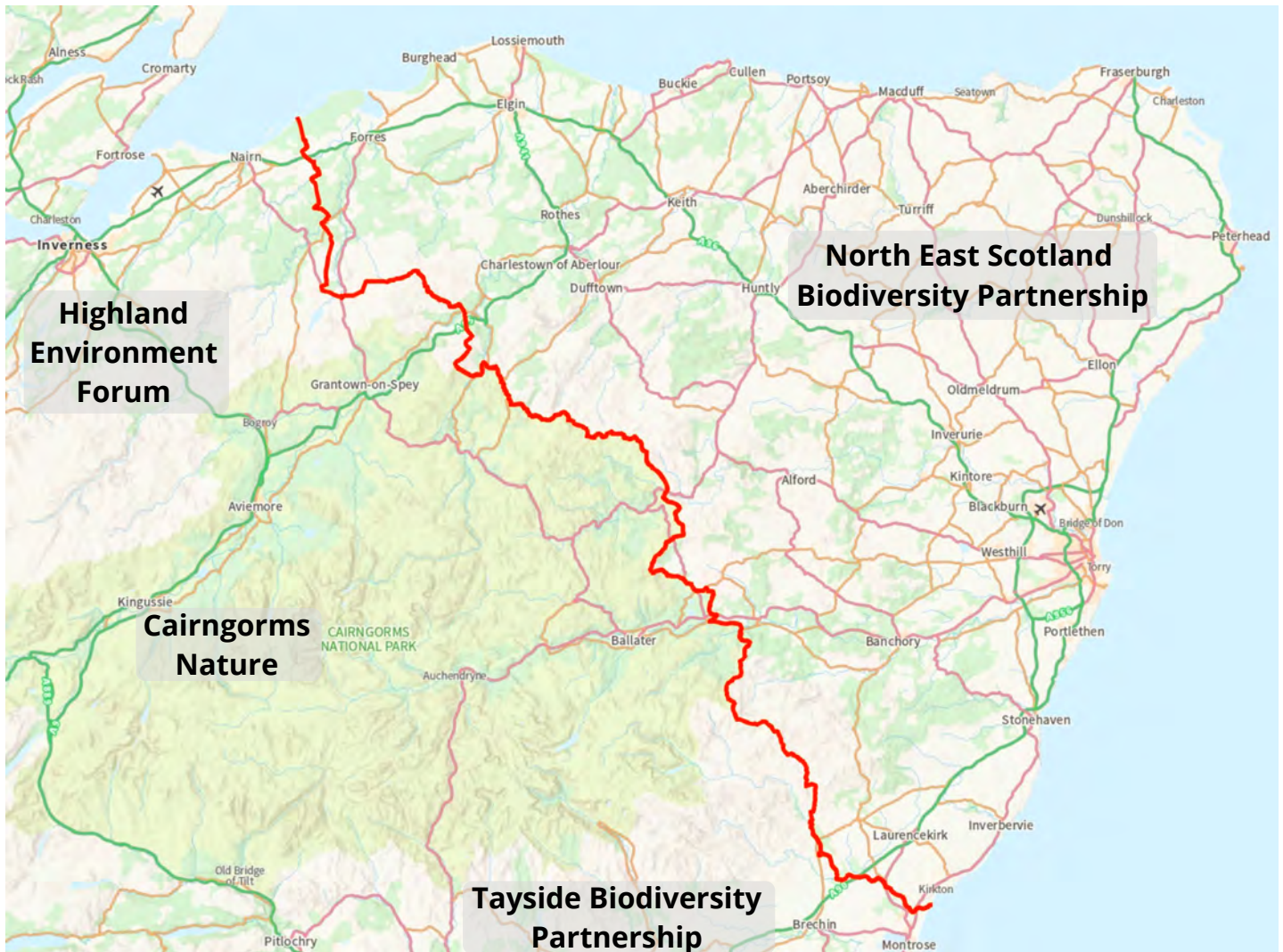
ANNEXE 1 - PARTNERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS

AWARENESS & INVOLVEMENT GROUP (Cont.)

NAME	ROLE + REPRESENTATIVE FOR / INDEPENDENT MEMBER
Toni Watt	Birse Community Trust (BCT) / Grampian Fungus Group
Glenn Roberts	North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC)
Karen Muller	Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) / Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Trust
Emma Sheehy	Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS)
Sadie Gorvett	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Colin Hardacre	Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
Ian Talboys	Ury Riverside Park SCIO
TBC.	Aberdeen University Biodiversity Centre
Alex Stuart	NESBiP Co-ordinator



ANNEXE 2 - MAP OF PARTNERSHIP AREA



ANNEXE 3 - BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Scottish Local Biodiversity Partnerships exist to promote the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of Scotland's environment at the local level. Detail on the international and national steps leading to the formation of Biodiversity Partnerships can be found in [Annexe 4](#). It began with the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan \(1994\)](#); the UK Government's considered response to the [1993 International Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and included the UK's commitments and obligations.

Set up in 1997 as one of the four Scottish pilot Partnerships, the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP) brought together three Local Authorities and a range of conservation, research, farming, forestry & land agencies, as well as interested individuals (See [Annexe 1](#) for current membership) to provide the framework for the exchange of information and collaborative action on both national and local biodiversity priorities. Our Partnership is unique in Scotland as it is not hosted by a Local Authority but an independent research body, the James Hutton Institute in Aberdeen. North east Scotland ([Annexe 2](#)) comprises the local authority areas of Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City covering 8,700 square kilometres (approximately 11% of Scotland). Much of the upland lies in the Cairngorms National Park with its own Cairngorms Nature Action Plan and with whom we collaborate closely.

Partners are all committed to their individual biodiversity duties and responsibilities under the [Nature Conservation \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), but also recognise the added value available through partnership working, especially in achieving co-operation, collaborative working and direct engagement with organisations, businesses, land managers as well as the wider public.

Additionally, having a dedicated and proactive Co-ordinator has been vital in ensuring the successes we have achieved so far and in raising awareness of improving biodiversity outcomes, especially with local and national politicians. For example, the extent to which our very small camera trapping pilot for north east Scotland schools (shortlisted for the 2015 Nature of Scotland Awards) has grown to countrywide success led by Nature Scot - and now widely praised by the Scottish Government and others. These activities and actions, which the Partnership has delivered over more than 20 years, has led to our gaining a reputation as one of the [most successful, innovative and cost-effective Biodiversity Partnerships in Scotland](#).

Through its ethos of collaboration and co-operation, NESBiP is able to pool limited resources and co-ordinate effort to provide a mechanism for shared action. Recently we undertook the production of local Habitat Statements which are used by all three Council Planning Departments (and indeed other regulatory or advisory agencies) without the need for each organisation to produce their own statement. This also makes things clearer

ANNEXE 3 - BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

and more consistent for developers and land managers by providing a single source for basic biodiversity information.

Beyond immediate partnership members, NESBiP's Co-ordinator plays a vital role in developing collaborative projects with neighbouring Biodiversity Partnerships in Tayside, the Cairngorms and Highland to deliver some projects where local intervention can have significant impact. Therefore, the Partnership's role is complex but in essence spans informing, co-ordinating, facilitating and influencing roles in many sectors - from development planning to land management. It also plays a key role both in demonstrating what is possible through its own practical and pilot projects and by encouraging and supporting actions and projects of others.

[Annexe 4](#) also shows the very wide range of policy/strategy documents produced by National and Local Government, as well as National and Local priorities set by Government organisations, from which work of NESBiP is derived. In some cases, there will be a simple, obvious link between our actions and the outcomes we aim for, while in others it may not always be so. For example, a camera trapping project may provide information on the status of an elusive species, but it will probably also achieve wider public involvement and wider understanding of the services the natural world provides. Improving biodiversity can also deliver multiple benefits such as more effective flood protection and support healthier lifestyles.



ANNEXE 4 - CONTEXTS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP'S WORK

The work of our Biodiversity Partnership is determined by a complex set of Plans and Strategies, as well as ever-evolving policies and agreements produced at International, National and Local level. Our partner members also develop their own priorities, targets and commitments linked to those Plans and Strategies. In turn, our Partnership identifies the local level actions which we are best placed to deliver, in either a lead or support role, and which contribute to that wide range of priorities and targets. The following describes the main Plans and Strategies which drive that process for us.

The [UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (UK BAP), published in 1994, was the UK Government's response to the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD), calling for the development of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In 1996, the Scottish Biodiversity Forum (formerly Scottish Biodiversity Group) was setup to implement the objectives of the UK BAP in Scotland.

In 2004, the Scottish Executive published [Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands](#) (2004), followed in 2013 by the [2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#) which was published in response to the Aichi Targets set by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and the [European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020](#). The two documents together comprise the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Local Biodiversity Partnerships are highlighted in the Strategy as having a key role in stimulating and co-ordinating action for biodiversity at a regional and local level.

The COVID-19 global pandemic unfortunately delayed the Conference of the Parties 15th Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), which was originally due to occur late 2020, and which will set the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. This international framework will obviously inform the Scottish Government's future Strategy and therefore also the Partnership's future work, once it has been set in 2022. In the meantime, the Scottish Government produced the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Post-2020: Statement of Intent](#), which *"will respond to the increased urgency for action to tackle the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change."*

There has been renewed emphasis in recent years at a national and international level in tackling the climate crisis **alongside** the biodiversity loss crisis. [Nature based solutions \(NBS\)](#) form a key part of the updated Scottish [Climate Change Plan](#) (2018) with many actions to restore biodiversity intrinsically linked to climate actions, and vice versa, within the updated plan.

ANNEXE 4 - CONTEXTS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP'S WORK

The Biodiversity Duty was introduced as part of the [Nature Conservation \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) and gives all public bodies a duty to *"further the conservation of biodiversity"*. Delivery of biodiversity actions through Local Biodiversity Partnerships is one way that public bodies can help fulfil this duty. From January 2015, all public bodies were required to provide a publicly available report, every three years, detailing the actions which they have taken to meet their biodiversity duty.

The Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) identifies 11 National Outcomes for Scotland and we contribute to several of these, including, but not limited to *'We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment'*, *'We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe'*, *'We are healthy and active'*, *'We are well educated, skilled, and able to contribute to society'*.

Natural Capital is now well accepted. The [2017 World Forum](#) in Edinburgh is referred to by the Scottish Government in several Strategies, Policies and Frameworks, including their 2015 [Economic Strategy](#) which explicitly acknowledge the wide ranging socio-economic benefits that nature can have from helping to achieve sustainable economic growth, through to tackling inequalities.

Many of our Partnership actions support outdoor learning in schools and communities, as outlined in the Scottish Government's [Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning](#) policy, which recognises that *"Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime.... whether through play in the immediate grounds or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors."*

Local Authority Planning Policies also support protection and enhancement of biodiversity into new development. They also recognise NESBiP's key role in assisting with the development of materials, such as [Habitat Statements](#), to inform and guide developers in putting forward proposals and supporting effective development management decisions. Regulators such as the [Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#) and [Scottish Forestry](#) also have their own Biodiversity Delivery Statements to which our Partnership contributes.

Several of our annual events have been structured to compliment [Scotland's Theme Years](#) and this focus will continue where appropriate.

ANNEXE 5 - OUR APPROACH TO WORK PLANNING

While the Partnership follows a long term vision, it does so within a work planning and funding environment which operates on three- and one-year cycles respectively. Our 3-year Delivery Plan and 1-year Action Targets respectively show the range of work areas we will focus on over the next 3-year planning period and the detailed targets we plan to achieve in the first of those years.

In 2016, the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) published [Biodiversity Net Gain – Principles and Guidance for UK construction](#) and developments. Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before and while it does not yet enjoy the formal endorsement of Government or Agencies, it is an important underlying principle for our Partnership and our ethos of improving local biodiversity. We have adopted that principle as another key element in our approach to work planning.

Other key principles underpinning our approach are to avoid duplication and optimise the alignment and contribution of the individual efforts of Partners and others. For example, where Scottish Forestry (SF), Nature Scot, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and others are undertaking a major, national project on capercaillie conservation, there is less likely to be anything of significant value we could add. In such instances, we will not devote much of our limited resources. However, where co-ordinated action can make a difference and especially where NESBiP's Co-ordinator is well placed to take such a role and enable a good project to be delivered effectively and efficiently, we will act.

Despite the importance of good planning, the Partnership recognises the importance of flexibility and adaptability - the need to respond to high-value unplanned opportunities that arise. In such cases, the Co-ordinator agrees changes by email with the Management Group. It is essential that these decisions also include work to be dropped to make room for unplanned work.

Reporting/reviewing is an equally important stage in the planning process and the Coordinator will report to the Management Group at the end of each Financial Year (March) against the budget and Action Plan.

