



HELPING POLLINATORS LOCALLY

**DEVELOPING A LOCAL
POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN
OR STRATEGY**



Table of Contents

Pollinators need our help!	2
1. Why develop a local Pollinator Strategy or Plan?	2
1.1 How can local authorities help our insect pollinators?	3
2. What are native pollinators?	4
2.1 How useful are our pollinators?	4
2.2 Are our pollinators in trouble?	4
2.3 Why are our pollinators in decline?.....	5
2.4 The benefits to local authorities of conserving our pollinators include.....	6
3. Government Pollinator Strategies and other relevant legislation and guidance	7
3.1 Pollinator Strategy for Scotland.....	7
3.2 Local Authority Duties and obligations.....	7
3.3 Other relevant policies.....	8
3.4 Buglife's Pollinator Manifesto.....	8
4. Developing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan	9
4.1 Key elements of a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan	10
4.1.1 Helping Pollinators through regulatory functions	11
4.1.2 Using Land to benefit pollinators (Land Management).....	13
4.1.3 Raising awareness in the wider community	17
4.1.4 Wider opportunities on the Local Authority estate.....	18
4.1.5 Monitoring action and publicising success	19
5. Buglife and Pollinators	20
5.1 The B-Lines Programme	20
5.2 Get Britain Buzzing.....	20
5.3 Urban Buzz	20
Annex 1: Useful sources of information:	22
Annex 2: Example Pollinator Plan template	23

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Pollinators need our help!

This message is coming from scientists, wildlife organisations and Government. The National Pollinator Strategy for England, the Action Plan for Pollinators in Wales, the Scottish Pollinator Strategy and the All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan all highlight serious declines in our native pollinators and make a call for action from everyone to help conserve these species. Local authorities across the country are being asked to use their regulatory powers and other functions to deliver, promote and enthuse others to participate in work which will benefit pollinators. Local authorities are well placed to make a significant contribution directly through land management and development control, whilst also providing leadership on this issue across their local communities.



1. Why develop a local Pollinator Strategy or Plan?

Local authorities with their wide ranging responsibilities, services and land holdings are in a unique position to help safeguard our native pollinators. Significant opportunities exist in local authority work, including in their role in local planning and as managers of public green space and green infrastructure, and land such as schools, roadside verges and roundabouts.

A Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan provides an opportunity to review current management of parks and other green space, often identifying new more attractive and potentially cost saving opportunities. Making changes will not only benefit pollinators but will provide higher quality public green space; helping to bring people closer to nature, with the health and wellbeing benefits this provides.

The development of a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan provides local authorities with an opportunity to offer advice and leadership to local communities on an issue directly relevant to everyone, and which has the potential to improve the local environment in which people live. Developing and implementing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan shows commitment from the local authority that it is doing its part in conserving our pollinators and is accepting Government challenges to take action.

The development of a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan will:

- Ensure the needs of pollinators are enshrined across the breadth of local authority work
- Increase awareness of pollinators across all sections of the local authority
- Widen the awareness of pollinators and their requirements within local communities
- Help identify previously unknown opportunities for pollinators
- Ensure the conservation of pollinators is at the heart of land management
- Help ensure that local pollinator populations recover and are able to provide beneficial pollination services to farming and other food producers
- Identify opportunities for collaborative and locally-owned initiatives

Developing and implementing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan is much more beneficial than carrying out small-scale, piecemeal work, as it will help ensure whole urban and rural landscapes become fit for purpose to support pollinators and other wildlife for many years to come.

1.1 How can local authorities help our insect pollinators?

Local authorities are uniquely placed to take positive action for pollinators. The range of local authority responsibilities and activities, along with often large landholdings offers an abundance of opportunities for pollinator conservation. Key areas of work include:

- **Conserving pollinators through Local Planning and Green Infrastructure works**

Local authorities can use planning tools such as Local Plans and other planning policies, Section 75 planning obligations, planning compensation, avoiding development on high quality urban wildlife sites etc. to protect and enhance local pollinator populations and the habitats upon which they rely.

- **Managing land to benefit pollinators**

Local authorities can make a significant contribution to pollinator conservation by implementing and enabling positive management on Local Nature Conservation Sites, Local Nature Reserves and managing other areas of land such as parks, roadside verges and other green space more sympathetically. They can also provide guidance to other land owners and farmers, encouraging wider work on pollinators.

- **Enthusing others to take action**

Schools, businesses, local communities and private individuals can all help to develop the flower-rich environments which our native pollinators need. Local authorities have a major role to play in raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding our pollinators and enthusing and working with local people to help conserve these pollinators and other wildlife.



2. What are native pollinators?

Our native pollinators include bumblebees and other bees (250 species), butterflies and moths, flies, beetles and wasps. In all there are over 4,000 species of insect in the UK that carry out the pollination of our native wild plants and our food crops.



2.1 How useful are our pollinators?

Many plants rely on insects to pollinate their flowers and so complete their reproductive cycle – most plants cannot set seed without being pollinated (receiving the pollen, usually from another flower). It has been calculated that one out of every three mouthfuls of the food we eat depends on pollination and the annual benefits of insect pollinators to the British Economy have been valued at £691 million (Living with Environmental Change, 2014).

2.2 Are our pollinators in trouble?

- Half of our 27 bumblebee species are in decline.
- Three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct.
- Across Europe 38% of bee and hoverfly species are in decline.
- Two-thirds of our moths are in long term decline.
- 71% of our butterflies are also in decline.

Without bees, hoverflies and other insects visiting flowers, there would be no strawberries, apples, avocados, chocolate, cherries, olives, blueberries, carrots, grapes, pumpkins, pears, cotton, plums or peanuts....

And very few flowers in our gardens and countryside.

2.3 Why are our pollinators in decline?

Habitat loss – The most significant cause of pollinator decline is the loss and degradation of habitats which provide food, shelter and nesting sites for pollinators. The loss of wildflower-rich grasslands is one of the most important issues. Over 3 million hectares of these habitats have been lost in England alone since the 1930s, through modern farming and urban or industrial development. Many wildflower-rich habitats now exist as small areas separated from each other by more hostile land uses, making it more difficult for insects to move around our countryside and towns. Brownfield sites which often provide refuges for species which have already suffered because of other habitat losses are also now disappearing at an alarming rate. In London over two thirds of the important brownfield sites were redeveloped between 2005 and 2013.

Pesticides – Increased use of pesticides has had a major impact on pollinators and the plants on which they depend. The use of neonicotinoid pesticides is of particular concern. These are systemic pesticides which can be applied as a seed dressing (the preferred delivery mechanism in England) or spray and have a high toxicity to insects. Even when applied as a seed treatment the insecticide is taken up by the whole plant and so can expose pollinators via nectar and pollen. Three neonicotinoid pesticides have been banned by the EU from use on flowering crops since 2013 when a high risk to honeybees was identified. Since this ban was put in place the scientific evidence that neonicotinoids harm bees has grown even stronger, and has found that wild bees could be even more at risk than honey bees. It's worth remembering that honeybees are just one of the many species of pollinator in the UK and wild bees actually do more crop pollination. Evidence is also growing that the use of neonicotinoids on non-flowering crops such as wheat could be a risk to bees because of the way these pesticides leach into the environment and are taken up by other plants such as wildflowers next to crops.

Herbicides are not usually directly harmful to pollinators in themselves, but their excessive use can diminish the supply of flowering plants on which pollinators depend.

Climate change – by disrupting seasonal patterns and shifting the flowering periods of plants, climate change can deprive pollinators of crucial food supplies, especially if they are specialists that depend on one or very few species of plant. Extreme weather events such as floods or droughts are a threat. There may also be more subtle effects such as increased survival of parasites in milder winters; or wet springs and summers which promote vigorous grass growth and change the microclimate in which some insects thrive.

These factors can act in combination and reinforce each other. For example pollinators may need to move to a different area in response to a changing climate, but cannot do so if habitats are fragmented. Loss of flower-rich habitats enforces dependence on intensively-farmed crops, where pollinators are more vulnerable to the effects of pesticides.

2.4 The benefits to local authorities of conserving our pollinators include

- Increased public engagement and awareness in pollinators increases support for local authority pollinator and/or wildlife work
- Improved and increased biodiversity
- An improved local environment for the enjoyment of local people with associated health and well-being benefits
- Improved access to nature, by bringing nature into the heart of urban green spaces
- Potential savings on management of parks, verges and other local authority managed green space
- Helping to develop and improve green infrastructure
- Safeguarded local horticulture and other food production through avoidance of pollination deficit
- An opportunity to shout about the good work for pollinators already happening in your area

Local authorities already helping pollinators

Aberdeenshire Council's Pollinator Action Plan commits to "Reviewing the use of annual bedding plants which are very poor for pollinators and replacing with perennials which are beneficial to a range of insects.

Edinburgh Living Landscape project's 'Pollinator pledge' is aiming to get the residents of Edinburgh to make simple changes to their gardening routine so that they are better suited for pollinators. To help people engage with the project an online map has been developed where people can highlight when they have made a change to encourage pollinators to their garden; visually showing the network being created as more people sign up.

Falkirk Council is working with Buglife to deliver the Bridgeness Biodiversity project. This project will manage a brownfield site known locally as Bridgeness Ship Breakers for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat 'Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land' (OMH), as well as creating and managing a wildflower meadow in the Grangepans area which was previously amenity grassland. Both Bridgeness Ship Breakers and Grangepans grassland act as an important green corridor that functionally links important habitat and allows the movement and mixing of wildlife throughout Bo'ness.

3. Government Pollinator Strategies and other relevant legislation and guidance

3.1 Pollinator Strategy for Scotland

The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland (2017) sets out a 10 year plan (2017-2027) to help pollinating insects survive and thrive across Scotland. The strategy sets out a variety of ways in which pollinator populations can be supported and protected which are highly important due to their contribution to our food production industry and the diversity they bring to our natural environment. The strategy calls on everyone to work together to protect and understand pollinators' needs as major part of how land and the habitat they rely upon is managed.

Local authorities can take a lead in helping achieve the strategies objectives through their role in local planning and by managing public spaces in urban and rural areas, brownfield sites, roadside verges, local nature reserves and development of green infrastructure.

By taking action in the areas above the Scottish Government is aiming to achieve the following:

- Creating and restoring natural flower-rich habitats in urban and rural area to create a network for pollinators.
- Protecting and enhancing habitat for pollinators by including pollinator's needs in land management and development planning and management.
- Recognising the importance of woodlands and brownfield sites and manage them for pollinators.
- Providing additional habitat for pollinators through developments and the inclusion of green infrastructure.
- Encouraging the use of pollinator-friendly pest control such as Integrated Pest Management.

3.2 Local Authority Duties and obligations

Local authorities have a Duty to further the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions under the **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004**. This Biodiversity Duty requires all public bodies to make biodiversity an integral part of policy and decision making. This includes the restoration and enhancement of pollinator populations and habitats.

Developing and implementing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan will help to demonstrate local authorities' commitment to biodiversity and help to fulfil their legal duty whilst also contributing toward delivery of key objectives outlined in the Scottish Pollinator Strategy.



**By helping pollinators you
will also help other wildlife
and make local
environments more
attractive for local
communities to live in.**

3.3 Other relevant policies

Across Scotland, frameworks are already in place that work to support healthy and productive wild pollinator populations, their habitats and ecosystems. Setting these clear frameworks is important and they currently include:

- The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity which recognises the benefits of using agro-ecological approaches to sustain insect-mediated pollination.
- The Route Map to 2020 which includes priority actions for Scotland's biodiversity.
- The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP), which link payments for farmers to 'green' management options which will directly and/or indirectly benefit pollinator habitats, for example through Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs).
- The Scottish Land Use and Forestry Strategies, both of which provide opportunities and potential management challenges to pollinators, for example replacement of flower-rich habitats with trees.
- Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3), which includes priorities for greening urban areas, thereby providing a rich and varied invertebrate fauna.



Sympathetic management of roadside verges can provide increased food and nesting opportunities for pollinators and other wildlife

3.4 Buglife's Pollinator Manifesto

Buglife's Get Britain Buzzing: a Manifesto for Pollinators produced in 2014 outlines 7 key principles and 27 actions to arrest the alarming decline in UK pollinator populations. This manifesto highlights the dire state of many of our pollinators and the need to take action now otherwise our children and grandchildren will not be able to enjoy and rely on the many benefits these species provide. The Manifesto is clear that we need 'sustainable populations of all pollinators' and that it is essential to work towards the 7 principles if we are to save and sustain our pollinators.

"Governments and Local Authorities should develop and implement Pollinator Action Plans".

Other key actions outlined in the Manifesto include:

"Local and national planning guidance should be clear that developments are expected to incorporate pollinator friendly green infrastructure"

"Management of public open space must provide more shelter and nesting areas for pollinators"

4. Developing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan

Developing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan does not need to be a massive undertaking, however it is important that it seeks commitment and involvement from across the local authority, so that awareness and subsequent actions for pollinators are enshrined into all parts of local authority work. Local Biodiversity Partnerships and wildlife organisations should all be in a position to provide further advice and information on local habitats and species, and to help to join up work on the ground.

A Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan should sit alongside other Local Biodiversity Action Plans, greenspace and green infrastructure strategies, and link into existing Local Development Plans or policies. It should outline a range of positive principles and associated actions which can be applied across the management of local authority projects, assets and decision-making processes. At its core, it should be about providing pollinator food and shelter across all types of land so that our pollinators can survive and thrive.

A Pollinator Strategy or Plan is a call for action – inviting all parts of the local authority and local community to do something to help pollinators.

The message is:

“Everyone can do something and every little thing can help”.

The current financial climate and pressures in which local authorities are working in may discourage some local authorities from considering developing a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan. There is however a lot that can be achieved without additional expenditure and a lot that can be done by others through the provision of advice and support. Work for pollinators does not have to result in any budget implications in fact in some areas there may be potential for cost savings to be made. For example Burnley is one of the most deprived districts in the UK and is facing the largest cuts of any. Their “Re-thinking Parks” project has brought about new approaches to managing woodland, meadows and perennial planting. While popular with the public and increasing volunteer involvement, it has saved £58,000 initially plus a further £43,000 each year.

The UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology point out that “Investment in green infrastructure has a greater positive effect in economically deprived areas than affluent areas. Economically deprived communities spend more time in their neighbourhoods, and the quality of these green spaces has a larger impact on their health and wellbeing”.



Annual wildflowers providing a nurse crop for a perennial meadow at Grangepans meadow, Bo'ness

4.1 Key elements of a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan

A good Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan should work across all aspects of local authority work and responsibilities, aiming to influence work at all levels. It should aim to utilise local authority assets for the benefit of pollinators and work with the local community to ensure the general public, local businesses and other landowners are made aware of the positive things they can all take and encourage them to take action.

Ideally a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan will include key actions and targets, however even a simple statement of intent recognising the value of pollinators and identifying some simple key messages and actions for the local authority and the local community will go some way to helping raise awareness of the plight of pollinators and initiate a longer-term change in approach/appreciation. An example Local Pollinator Plan template is provided in Annex 2.

There are many ways local authorities can take action for pollinators.

We recommend that a good Strategy should include objectives and actions under the following themes:

- 1. Helping pollinators through regulatory functions - Local Planning/Development control**
- 2. Using land for the benefit of pollinators (land management)**
- 3. Raising awareness in the wider community**
- 4. Wider opportunities on the local authority estate**
- 5. Monitoring actions and publicising success**

Further information on these themes along with some suggested actions are given on the following pages.



Wildflower meadows provide food for pollinators such as solitary bees and the Common carder bee

4.1.1 Helping Pollinators through regulatory functions

The planning system can play a vital role in the conservation of our wildlife habitats and species, including the protection and enhancement of pollinator populations and habitats. Local planning and development control has an essential function in protecting existing, and creating new pollinator habitats. Key elements of, or commitments within a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan should include:

- 1. A review or revision of existing plans and planning policy to ensure the habitats (including brownfield sites) which support, or could support pollinators are recognised and given adequate protection.**

All local authorities will have plans and policies relating to the protection of habitats, species and greenspace. It is important to adjust or utilise existing policy frameworks to recognise specific habitats of pollinators and to create new habitats and/or improve existing areas in which pollinators can thrive. The current pressures to secure economic growth and new housing will constantly threaten many habitats of importance for pollinators and our brownfield habitats in particular are under increased threat, however development needs to be balanced with the direct value of pollinators to our food production and the value of flower-rich habitats to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

- 2. Mapping of existing pollinator habitat and identification of new sites where land could be better managed, or new habitats created to help pollinators move around urban areas.**

Maps of current habitat resources, potential pollinator habitat and ‘networks’ should be developed and promoted to developers and local communities. Ideally these maps should be integrated with existing initiatives such as green infrastructure plans and national pollinator initiatives such as B-Lines.

- 3. Ensuring key populations of priority-listed pollinators and habitats (ie those on the Scotland Biodiversity List), as well as locally threatened species are protected through the planning process.**

These species and habitats have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action across the country.

- 4. Developing planning guidance to ensure development results in net gain for pollinators.**

The Mitigation Hierarchy (avoid, mitigate and as a last resort compensate) should always be strictly adhered to, however further guidance should be provided to ensure development also provides a quantifiable benefit for pollinators

- 5. Using Section 75 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and other measures to ensure pollinator friendly habitats are created as part of developments.**

The needs of pollinators and potential enhancement opportunities should be considered early in the planning and/or design process. Planners should be more proactive in requirements for planting schemes, to advocate species of local provenance and known value for wildlife.

- 6. Ensuring planning officers have training in, or access to ecological expertise to ensure that the needs of pollinators are considered in their work.**

Reductions in local authority staffing have reduced the capacity of local planning officers in some areas. It is essential that councils retain ecological expertise within their workforce and that this includes expertise relating to pollinators and their habitat needs.

Case Study - Creating the John Muir Pollinator Way

The B-Lines programme is developing a network of wildflower-rich areas across the UK, from the coast up into our hills and mountains and from the countryside into our towns and cities. The John Muir Pollinator Way project mapped Scotland's first B-Line to highlight opportunities for reconnecting fragmented habitats across the central belt of Scotland from Dunbar to Helensburgh.



Working within the nine council areas that the John Muir Way intersects, the project was able to undertake this important mapping exercise and carry out some habitat creation to benefit pollinators. This provided an essential first step for a much wider habitat creation partnership project. These newly connected habitats will help to improve important pollinator populations in the Central Scotland Green Belt allowing them to be more resilient to climate change and habitat loss in our ever changing world.

The map that was produced from this project has identified where wildflower forage and nesting habitats for pollinators and other wildlife could be created, enhanced and managed along the John Muir Way including school grounds, golf courses, cemeteries and public parks. Through this mapping exercise, it was possible to engage local communities and other organisations as well as the local authorities to help identify initial stretches along the John Muir Way where wildflower meadow creation will provide the biggest benefits to their community. Training has been provided to local authority staff to increase understanding as to how simple changes to grassland management can help pollinators.



The aim is to create Scotland's first B-line connecting Dunbar in the east to Helensburgh in the west. The John Muir Pollinator Way is an essential first step to identify where wildflower meadow creation will bring multiple benefits for local communities and our declining pollinator populations. In 2017 the Scottish Government committed to develop the John Muir Way as Scotland's first pollinator friendly urban corridor in their Programme for Government.



The John Muir Pollinator Way is funded and supported by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Central Scotland Green Network Trust.

4.1.2 Using Land to benefit pollinators (Land Management)

The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland promotes actions for gardeners, farmers, local authorities and landowners, such as the adoption of pollinator friendly management of road verges, increasing the diversity and connectivity of flower-rich areas in the countryside and urban areas, and restoring and creating native flower-rich habitats in urban greenspace. These actions should be both enshrined across the work of local authorities and promoted to local communities, however more detailed management guidance will produce increased benefits for pollinators and key elements are outlined below:

- 1. Ensuring Local Nature Conservation Site protection and management - ensure appropriate management of pollinator habitats including accommodating nesting/shelter and forage requirements, as well as seasonal changes in need.**

These sites play a significant role in supporting populations of common and rare pollinators and it is essential that they are managed appropriately. Local authorities should commit to managing sites in their ownership and provide guidance to other land owners. Note it is not just wildflower-rich grasslands which are important for pollinators; woodlands, ditches and ponds, hedges and trees all offer important forage, shelter and nesting areas.

- 2. Reviewing parks management and looking for opportunities to manage land for the benefit of pollinators - (for example reducing frequency of grass and hedgerow cutting regimes, removal of cut grass from wildflower-rich grasslands etc.).**

It is not only Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are of value to pollinators. There are considerable areas of other land such as parks which with relatively minor changes to management can provide food, shelter and nesting for pollinators. There is also strong evidence to show that improving people's access to nature in these areas can provide significant benefits to people's quality of life and health. Some local authorities have demonstrated that the cost of creating and managing wildflower meadows can be cheaper over time than maintaining regular amenity mowing regimes.



Reducing cutting frequency on some parkland areas in South Tyneside has increased flowering of common wildflowers which in turn provide valuable pollen and nectar for insects

3. Reviewing amenity planting schemes (including tree planting and bedding planting) aiming to increase the value of these for pollinators.

Some plants can provide very useful supplies of pollen and nectar whereas others can be of no use at all. Native plants are important as they can provide both adult and larval food sources. The Royal Horticultural Society has developed a useful list of plants ‘Perfect for Pollinators’ https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/rhs_pollinators_plantlist. Other options include the use of annual meadow mixes which can provide cost savings over traditional bedding plants, and also provide significant additional benefits for pollinators. Also consider which trees and shrubs to plant as these can provide significant quantities of pollen and nectar.



Trees and shrubs such as Cherry-plum, Goat willow and Blackthorn, Plum, Wild cherry, Crab apple and larger willows provide important pollinator food in early spring

4. Changing mowing regimes on road verges etc. to allow more wildflowers to bloom naturally.

Roadside verges and roundabouts are often maintained as short grassland. This may be required for road safety purposes but often it is just carried out as it has always been done this way. Reducing cutting frequencies, or creating wildflower lawns or meadows can be an effective way to provide attractive areas beneficial to pollinators and potentially reduce management costs. Likewise hedge cutting regimes can be changed to allow better structure to develop in hedgerows and flowering shrubs to bloom for longer.

The precise timing of mowing regimes depends on the vegetation being managed. As a general rule nectar-rich plants should be allowed to finish their flowering period. Early flowering species such as Dandelion and Primrose are of particular value for pollinators as they emerge in the spring. Cuttings should be removed where practicable to keep fertility low and prevent growth of rank vegetation.

Isle of Wight Council plans to reduce verge cutting, saving £11,000 a year. This will allow more wildflowers to bloom, benefitting pollinators, while essential road safety standards are maintained

5. Reviewing pesticide policy and looking to cease use of neonicotinoids and reduce usage of other pesticides.

There is growing evidence of the harmful effects that pesticide use can have on pollinators and other wildlife. Local Authorities should aim to use pesticides only if absolutely necessary (for example the control of Japanese Knotweed where reliable alternatives are not yet fully developed) and avoid using pesticides on flowering plants or where pollinators are active or nesting.

Of particular concern is the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Local authorities should ensure that bedding plants, bedding plant seeds or amenity turf have not been dressed with neonicotinoids. This policy will need to be implemented through procurement both from external contractors and in-house services.

Aberdeenshire Council introduced a pollinator action plan in 2015.

6. Providing training to staff (ground maintenance, parks departments, estate management, pest control, highways) to raise awareness of the needs of pollinators and the impact of management regimes such as mowing.

Often only small changes to the management of land can make a significant difference to the value of land for pollinators and other wildlife. An increased awareness across staff (and contractors) can result in new opportunities or ways of working being identified leading to benefits to wildlife and people and potentially cost saving as well.

Case Study – Fife’s Buzzing

As part of the national Get Britain Buzzing project Buglife worked with Fife Council to improve the local environment for native pollinators. This work has included creating 12ha of wildflower meadow, at 16 different sites throughout the Kingdom of Fife helping create more healthy functioning ecosystems for invertebrates and for people.



In Fife, there has been a significant loss of species-rich grassland to urbanisation, industrialisation and agriculture. Many of the remaining grassland areas are managed strictly for amenity use and consequently, support very little wildlife and few plant species.

As well as being important for wildlife, meadows also offer enormous benefits for people. The wildflower meadows will create stunning natural areas that will improve the quality of greenspace for local residents and visitors to enjoy and this in turn will improve people's health and well-being.

Additionally, meadows will also be used as an educational tool by community groups and schools. Through the meadow creation events, bug walks and other activities, these meadows will bring communities together through their creation, management, use and enjoyment.



Fife’s Buzzing is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Fife Environment Trust.

4.1.3 Raising awareness in the wider community

1. Providing advice to local gardeners, allotment holders and community groups regarding positive works for pollinators.

Private gardens and allotments can be incredibly important for pollinators and other wildlife. Small changes to management, for example growing more pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs, or reducing the use of pesticides can massively increase the value of the millions of gardens which adorn our towns and countryside. Providing simple clear advice to gardeners and demonstrating the Council's own 'pollinator friendly' land management can promote millions of small changes which all add up to significant changes for pollinators.

2. Raising awareness of pollinators to local residents and businesses.

For pollinator conservation to be successful we need to let people know how important pollinators are. There are many ways to raise public or business awareness such as mailings, events, flower/meadow creation, garden-pollinator awards etc. Businesses may also be persuaded to sponsor local pollinator work.



Annual wildflowers and wildflower plug planting can be a great way to engage with local communities.

3. Working with schools to create pollinator-friendly habitats on school grounds and educate schoolchildren about pollinators.

Schools grounds are a substantial resource which could 'work harder' for pollinators by creating wildflower-rich areas or planting pollinator friendly plants. There is growing evidence that children benefit from outdoor learning, so there are both educational and health benefits from involving schools in pollinator conservation. Lessons learned at school often lead to new things being tried at home.

4. Participating in and supporting any wider pollinator projects and initiatives, including integrating pollinator needs into pre-existing schemes and initiatives.

Many pollinator projects and initiatives are already happening around the country (for example see below for information on B-Lines and Urban Buzz). Providing local authority support for these initiatives and helping to enable local delivery may be more useful than developing separate new projects.

5. Working with Local Biodiversity Partnerships, Wildlife Organisations and others to raise awareness with farmers and landowners.

Pollinators in our countryside are under threat from pesticide use and habitat loss. More joined up work is required to raise awareness in our farming communities and to encourage participation in pollinator conservation, including agri-environment schemes.

4.1.4 Wider opportunities on the Local Authority estate

- 1. Look for opportunities for ‘greening’ buildings and other estates.**

Green roofs, green walls, rain gardens, and other sustainable urban drainage systems are just a few of the opportunities to help pollinators. However smaller scale work such as installation of bee hotels or pollinator friendly hanging baskets are all worthwhile.



Bee hotels provide great nesting spaces for many bee species. Pollinator friendly formal plantings can provide valuable pollen and nectar.

- 2. Review management of other local authority land, for example farms.**

As landlords, local authorities can encourage tenants to adopt pollinator-friendly farming and land management practices, for example through moving to Integrated Pest Management, sowing and planting to benefit pollinators, providing clean open water, and entering into agri-environment schemes. A policy of restricting the use of harmful neonicotinoid pesticides with the aim of their eventual elimination should be clearly set out, although local authorities may not have the legal means at their disposal to enforce such restrictions within existing tenancy agreements.

- 3. Look for opportunities to help pollinators across local greenspace.**

A wide range of activities are possible across local greenspace, for example planting pollinator friendly street trees such as pussy willow, alder and hawthorn which provide a valuable source of pollen and nectar for pollinators.

4.1.5 Monitoring action and publicising success

1. Annually review actions/success.

It is important to keep track on progress of the Pollinator Strategy or Plan, to share and promote success, and to learn from mistakes. Where relevant, information on pollinator activities should be communicated to wildlife organisations or recorded on systems such as the B-Lines map.

A Pollinator Plan is only as good as its implementation. Some actions, such as changing mowing and cutting regimes, will depend on contractors for their successful adoption in practice. So it's important that the effectiveness of the Plan is regularly monitored.

It is a good idea to establish a local pollinator forum so that successes and problems can be shared and fed back into the development of the Pollinator Plan over time.

Some pollinator-friendly features, such flower strips and meadows, or “bee hotels”, do degrade over time. So at the outset a commitment needs to be secured to their ongoing maintenance and replacement as needed.

2. Carry out Habitat assessments of pollinator habitats and targeted pollinator surveys.

In many areas there will be limitations in the understanding of pollinator populations. At present there is no national standard for monitoring pollinators, however there are a number of monitoring schemes co-ordinated by wildlife organisations and carried out by volunteers such as Bumblebee Conservation Trust (Bee Walk) and Butterfly Conservation (Big Butterfly Count). Local authorities should utilise their local communications channels to enthuse local people to participate in these national initiatives as a first step in increasing knowledge of pollinators in the local area. Buglife has an urban habitat assessment for use by local communities (see [https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Urban%20Buzz%20Pollinator%20Potential%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Urban%20Buzz%20Pollinator%20Potential%20(1).pdf)). Local Environmental Records Centres provide an essential service in providing baseline species and habitat data and helping with surveys and monitoring and should be used and supported.

5. Buglife and Pollinators

5.1 The B-Lines Programme is working to develop a network of wildflower-rich areas across the UK helping to support our native pollinators and helping them to move more easily around the country.

B-Lines is being developed as a response to recommendations made in Sir John Lawton's 'Making Space for Nature' review; identifying and creating linkages between our key wildlife sites. B-Lines also provides a framework within which we can make a major contribution towards the national pollinator strategies.

The B-Lines are being mapped across the UK in partnership with local authorities, Local Nature Partnerships, Statutory Agencies and other conservation partners. B-Lines are identified as 3 km wide linear pathways which link together existing important wildflower-rich areas (e.g. SSSI, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, nature reserves, BAP habitats) – these habitat areas forming the foundations of the new B-Lines network. Further guidance on how the B-Lines are mapped and should be developed to provide the greatest benefits to wildlife and people is provided in other Fact Sheets. B-Lines aims to create and restore at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across the UK. Making this happen will take time and will need local authorities, farmers, land owners, wildlife organisations, businesses and the general public to work together to create flower-rich grassland in the best locations.

For further information - www.buglife.org.uk/b-lines

5.2 Get Britain Buzzing - The 'Get Britain Buzzing' campaign aims to highlight the crisis facing British pollinators and to transform amenity grassland in our urban parks and along road verges into colourful species-rich wildflower and grassland meadows.

Through this campaign Buglife have delivered 'Buzzing' projects in Glasgow, York, Muirton (in Perth), Plymouth, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Torbay and Peterborough. Buglife currently have active 'Buzzing' projects in Falkirk. Additionally, Buglife 'Buzzing' projects have included the creation of living green roofs, improving habitat on brownfield land and encouraging people to create bee hotels in their gardens.

Many of Buglife's 'Buzzing' projects have involved:

- Planting plug plants and seeds of a variety of native wildflower and grassland species with the help of local communities and schools
- Planting Yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) which is a hemi-parasite of grasses and reduces their growth thus improving wildflower species diversity in a meadow
- Altering grass cutting regimes
- Creating bee banks for ground-nesting solitary bees
- Planting flowering trees and hedgerows
- Improving management of grasslands
- Attending events to enthuse about the importance of grasslands for pollinating insects, other wildlife and people.

For further information - www.buglife.org.uk/buzzing-projects

5.3 Urban Buzz is an exciting project using innovative techniques to create 'Buzzing Cities' for pollinators, transforming mown and unused urban sites into 200 hectares of rich and vibrant habitat for pollinating insects, and engaging 80,000 people with their local Buzzing Hotspots. Urban areas provide enormous opportunities for habitat creation and can contain a remarkable number of species; for example 35% of UK hoverfly species were recorded in a single garden. Urban Buzz is creating and modifying habitat throughout the urban landscape for pollinating insects, providing more high quality nesting and forage sites. This includes the planting of trees, shrubs, formal beds and native meadows, as well as the installation of living roofs and walls, nesting habitat walls, bee banks and bee hotels. Sites are being selected to improve habitat connectivity, making pollinators more resilient to changes such as development, climate change and pollution; allowing their movement across a city. Everyone can get involved and

there is an interactive web map for each city, where people can add their local Buzzing Hotspots, as well as help to choose, create and design Buzzing Hotspots for pollinators. The eight Buzzing cities chosen to benefit so far through this project are: Birmingham, Cardiff, Plymouth, York, Bristol, Ipswich, Leeds and Leicester. These cities have been chosen for their potential to deliver the National Pollinator Strategy which sees improving habitat in urban areas as key to tackling pollinator decline. With more flowers and wildlife, these cities will be more attractive, and healthier and happier places to live.

For further information - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/urban-buzz>

Annex 1: Useful sources of information:

Buglife – Get Britain Buzzing: A manifesto for pollinators <https://www.buglife.org.uk/pollinator-manifesto>

Scottish Pollinator Strategy

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A2360102.pdf>

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A2360103.pdf>

National Pollinator Strategy for England 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409431/pb14221-national-pollinators-strategy.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/474386/nps-implementation-plan.pdf

Action Plan for Pollinators - Wales

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/conservationbiodiversity/action-plan-for-pollinators/?lang=en>

All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan

<http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/All-Ireland%20Pollinator%20Plan%202015-2020.pdf>

Buglife B-Lines Pollinator sheets - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/advice-and-publications/publications/b-lines-resources> and local authority guidance

Buglife information on Neonicotinoid insecticides <https://www.buglife.org.uk/campaigns-and-our-work/campaigns/neonicotinoid-insecticides>

Buglife Urban Buzz information - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-2>

‘Managing Transport Corridors for Pollinators’ and ‘Managing Urban Spaces for Pollinators’ (Buglife)
www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Transport%20Corridors%20Pollinator%20Sheet%20Final.pdf

www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Urban%20Pollinator%20Sheet%20Final.pdf

Living with Environmental Change: Managing urban areas for insect pollinators. As town and cities continue to grow how can land managers help insect pollinators in urban areas?

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/partnerships/lwec/ppn/ppn20/>

Planning for a healthy environment: good practice guidance for green infrastructure and biodiversity”, TCPA and the Wildlife Trusts, 2012

www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA_TWT_GI-Biodiversity-Guide.pdf

DEFRA advisory notes – urban, transport gardens, industrial etc <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/bees-needs/information-sheets>

Status and value of pollinators and pollination - A report to DEFRA

<http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/505259/1/N505259CR.pdf>

Friends of the Earth - Local Authority Bee Guide <https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/local-authority-bee-guide-46885.pdf>

Bumblebee Conservation – Local Authority Pack

https://bumblebeeconservation.org/images/uploads/Local_authorities_pack_full.pdf

Annex 2: Example Pollinator Plan template

XXXXX POLLINATOR STRATEGY 20xx – 20xx

A Commitment from the xxx Council

xxx is committed to helping to conserve the UK's pollinators by ensuring the council will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. xxxx will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make xxxx more pollinator friendly.

Our vision: *Our local environment will be rich in flower-rich habitats, helping support sustainable pollinator populations and making places more attractive for people to live and work in*

Aims: The Council and its partners will work together to:

- Ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance
- Protect, increase and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in xxx to prevent extinctions and improve the status of any locally threatened species
- Increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners
- Increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by the Council
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area

Background to the Strategy

The Importance of Pollinators

Our native pollinators include bumblebees and other bees (250 species), butterflies and moths, flies, beetles and wasps. In all there are over 4000 species of insect in the UK that carry out pollination of our native wild plants and our food crops. Insect pollination is extremely important to the UK economy, with estimated values of £691 million annually. Without pollinators we would struggle to grow many vegetables and fruits including apples, pears, strawberries, beans and peas.

Pollinators under threat

Our pollinators are in trouble

- Half of our 27 bumblebee species are in decline
- Three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct
- Two-thirds of our moths are in long term decline.
- Across Europe 38% of bee and hoverfly species are in decline
- 71% of our butterflies are in decline

The most significant factors leading to these declines in pollinator numbers include:

1. Habitat loss – The most significant cause of decline is the loss and degradation of habitats which provide food, shelter and nesting sites for pollinators. The loss of wildflower-rich grasslands is one of the most important issues. Over 3 million hectares of these habitats have been lost in England alone since the 1930s, the loss being attributed to more intensive farming and urban/industrial development.
2. Pesticides – There is growing evidence that the use of pesticides is having harmful effects on pollinators including honeybees, wild bees and butterflies. Wider effects throughout ecosystems are also of concern

and pesticides have been implicated in other declines such as farmland birds and soil organisms. The use of neonicotinoids is of particular concern. These are systemic pesticides which can be applied as a seed dressing (the preferred delivery mechanism) or spray and have a high toxicity to insects.

3. Climate Change – long term changes can deprive pollinators of food supplies at times when they need them, increase their exposure to parasites and diseases, or change habitats so that they are no longer suitable. There may be gains as well as losses but a resilient network of good pollinator habitat across the area is needed for them to be able to adapt and take advantage of changes.

What pollinators need

Pollinators need many of the things we need – food, shelter and nesting areas.

Food – Pollinators need food (nectar and pollen) throughout the season from March through until September. Many plants and trees can provide these food resources, including many so called ‘weeds’ such as dandelions and thistles. In addition to flowers, many pollinators need other food resources to support their different life stages – for example butterfly and moth caterpillars need particular plants to feed on.

Shelter and nesting - Dense vegetation such as tussocky grassland, scrub, mature trees, and piles of wood and stone can provide essential habitat for hibernating pollinators. Many species overwinter as adults including queen bumblebees, and some butterflies and hoverflies, others as eggs, larvae or pupae. Old burrows and dense vegetation are used by bumblebees, with sunny slopes and dry ground used by ground-nesting bees such as mining bees.

Pollinator Strategy for Scotland

The Scottish Government’s Pollinator Strategy for Scotland (2017) sets out a 10 year plan to help pollinating insects survive and thrive across Scotland. The Strategy outlines actions to support and protect the many pollinating insects which contribute to our food production and the diversity of our environment. It is a shared plan of action which looks to everyone to work together and ensure pollinators’ needs are addressed as an integral part of land and habitat management.

In particular the Strategy asks local authorities to take a lead across many of their work areas and duties, including their role in local planning and also as managers of public and amenity spaces, brownfield sites, schools, car parks, roadside verges and roundabouts.

Pollinators in xxxxxxxx

Key principles of the Strategy

This strategy has been developed to raise awareness of the plight of pollinators and to ensure the Council and its local residents, businesses and landowners are provided with information to help us all protect and increase our pollinator populations. This strategy is designed to ensure the needs of pollinators are enshrined across the breadth of Council work and to increase awareness of pollinators across our local community.

Working with partners and partners initiatives

Where possible the Council will join forces and participate in other local, regional or national pollinator programmes or projects. More joined up collaborative action for pollinators will help ensure a future for these very important species. Key national initiatives include Buglife’s B-Lines programme which aims to create a network of wildflower-rich areas across the UK.

Strategy Objectives and Actions

Aim 1: To ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance

	Objective	Specific Actions	Target	Start and End Date
1.1	Increase the protection afforded to pollinator habitats and the species they support by ensuring appropriate recognition in local plans and policies	Carry out a review of existing surveys and biodiversity mapping to identify key pollinator habitats present in the area		
		Take forward a review, and where required revise current policies to take account of the needs of pollinators		
1.2	Increase the profile of habitats of value to pollinators in biodiversity asset, green infrastructure and other maps	Survey habitats, including brownfield, parks, verges etc. to assess their importance for pollinators		
		Review and revise biodiversity asset maps to recognise importance of pollinator habitats		
1.3	Recognise and capitalise on opportunities to create pollinator friendly habitats as part of new development	Raise awareness of and promote the creation of pollinator friendly features with developers		
		Use Planning Obligations to ensure greenspaces in new developments are made pollinator friendly		

Aim 2: To protect, increase and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in **xxx** and prevent any extinction and improve the status of any locally threatened species

	Objective	Specific Actions	Target	Start and End Date
2.1	Increase the value of Local Wildlife Sites for pollinators	Ensure the needs of pollinators are taken into account in the management of all Local Nature Conservation Sites which are owned or managed by the Council		
		Provide information on the needs of pollinators to other owners /managers of Local Nature Conservation Sites		
2.2	Increase the value of parks and other greenspace for pollinators	Identify areas of parkland which will benefit from a reduced cutting regime		
		Work with local communities to develop a balanced approach to park management to support a range of uses and wildlife benefits		
		Reduce grass cutting on 25% of public green space		
2.3	Reduce the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other wildlife	Review use of pesticides by the Council and aim to reduce this significantly		
		Cease use of neonicotinoids including in seed dressings, plants and turf.		

Aim 3: To increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners

	Objective	Specific Actions	Target	Start and End Date
3.1	Increase awareness of pollinators in the local community and within local businesses	Provide information on pollinator friendly gardening activities to local residents and local allotment holders		
		Create pollinator friendly flower beds in parks and link these to interpretation about pollinators		
		Promote pollinators to local business forums and individual businesses as a way to help biodiversity and improve the local environment		
3.2	Increase the number of young people who understand the value of their local pollinators	Encourage local schools to develop wildflower areas in school grounds		
		Develop a pollinator award for schools		

Aim 4: To increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by the Council

	Objective	Specific Actions	Target	Start and End Date
4.1	Make council owned land and buildings more pollinator friendly	Establish and maintain a network of “Bee Hotels” across the parks and public open spaces.		
		Ensure plants in flowerbeds around Council offices, etc., are pollinator friendly		
		Ensure green roofs and or pollinator nesting features are installed on new Council buildings and publicise this work as good practice		
4.2	Reduce use of neonicotinoids across the local authority estate	Provide all tenants with advice on pollinator-friendly farming including information on the harmful effects of neonicotinoid pesticides. Prohibit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides which have been linked to the decline in pollinators on Council land where the power to do this exists.		
4.3	Increase the area of pollinator habitats on local greenspace managed by local groups	Work with and support ‘friends of groups’ to manage and create pollinator habitats		

Aim 5: To improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area

	Objective	Specific Actions	Target	Start and End Date
5.1	Establish effective monitoring of work being carried out in our area	Carry out a brief review of achievements annually and publicise success to local communities		
		Encourage staff and contractors to feed back on actions they take for pollinators and provide an award for best practice		
5.2	Increase information on the status of pollinators	Encourage local people to support national pollinator monitoring schemes		



Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust is a registered charity

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