East Lothian Council

Improving Nature Networks for East Lothian's Communities

Enhancing Nature Networks and Biodiversity in our Parks and Greenspaces

Project Report and Action Plan, July 2023

Project funded from the Scottish allocation of the Levelling Up Parks Fund provided to the Scottish Government by the UK Government, and managed on behalf of the Scottish Government by Greenspace Scotland

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1 Executive Summary

'Nature Networks East Lothian' is a project developed by East Lothian Council to identify, explore, provide advice on and deliver nature network opportunities supported by our communities, in suitable areas of Council owned and managed parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's towns and villages.

The objective was to identify areas which have the potential for development of enhanced and connected nature networks and biodiversity enhancements with community support, and produce an Action Plan which we will aim to deliver over the coming years. This will bring a wide range of benefits to nature and people.

Connected nature networks will support and enhance biodiversity within our towns and villages, linking to wider green networks across the county, and will increase access to nature for our communities. By incorporating and preserving natural habitats within our urban and semi urban spaces, we can create more liveable and sustainable communities.

Through public consultation and engagement, we identified public support for nature network enhancements across East Lothian. We received 370 responses to our consultation survey, and 455 additional comments and suggestions about the project.

Key findings:

- 92% of survey respondents felt strongly that local parks and greenspaces were important to them.
- 63% of respondents live less than a 5 minute walk away from their nearest park / greenspace, and 83% of respondents have visited their local park / greenspace more than once a week or more often within the last 12 months.
- 88% of respondents use East Lothian's parks and greenspaces to get outdoors and 75% use them to be close to nature.
- 81% of respondents strongly agreed that they wanted to see more nature and biodiversity enhancement across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces.
- 89% of respondents strongly agreed that nature is important to them.
- All of the nature network options were strongly supported by respondents. Survey respondents wanted to see more pollinator friendly planting (87% of respondents), meadows (84%), tree planting (82%), street trees (80%) and hedgerows (79%), woodland (77%), raingardens (74%), naturalised grassland (73%), shrubs / bushes (69%), 'wee forests' / 'tiny forests' (66%), wetlands (62%) and bog gardens (56%) enhanced and expanded across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces.

The Top 5 habitat types that respondents wanted to see more of across all the East Lothian parks and greenspaces listed within the survey are:

1. Pollinator friendly planting
2. Naturalised longer grassland
3. Meadows
4. Hedgerows
5. Tree planting

Other habitat types / nature networks suggested by respondents included orchards, allotments, green walls / roofs, bird boxes and sensory and natural play spaces for both people and wildlife. Concerns about developing nature networks raised by respondents included dog fouling, litter, ticks and untidiness of areas.

Analysis of survey responses identified that overall there is support for existing natural habitat areas and support for more biodiversity within our parks and greenspaces, and that people do want to see nature networks developed, extended and enhanced in suitable sites.

The responses and feedback received enabled us to identify and categorise actions in an Action Plan under the following objectives:

Create: Creating new areas of habitat in our parks and greenspaces.

Enhance: Improving the quality of current networks through better/alternative habitat management in our parks and greenspaces.

Connect: Connecting habitats to ensure continuous networks of vital habitats, and connecting people with nature. Enhancing connections between sites through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones', as well as working in partnership with private landowners, local community groups, organisations or community members to extend nature networks to other greenspace opportunities.

Restore: Repairing or renewing areas of habitat that may have been subjected to land changes that could be restored to their past condition.

The actions in our Action Plan will be delivered over the coming years, aiming to create meaningful nature networks that ensure habitat connectivity, are ecologically meaningful, support community, health and wellbeing, and create resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Ultimately these local nature enhancements can help to create better places for people, and to create a connected network of spaces for nature, which will help East Lothian to play its part in tackling the global nature and climate emergencies.

Figure 1: Holly Blue butterfly (*Celastrina argiolus*) (Photo by A. Marland).

The funding for this project was provided by Greenspace Scotland from the Scottish allocation of the Levelling Up Parks Fund provided to the Scottish Government by the UK Government, and managed on behalf of the Scottish Government by Greenspace Scotland[1].

[1] Funding boost for £1million Scotland's parks initiative | Greenspace Scotland

2 Introduction – Nature Networks East Lothian

East Lothian Council is keen to bring nature closer to our communities, by enhancing and extending our nature networks and boosting biodiversity in our parks and greenspaces. This will bring wide ranging benefits not just to nature, but also to the health and wellbeing of our local communities, and will help us tackle the climate emergency.

Parks and greenspaces are at the heart of our communities, as social spaces, places for sports and exercise, group activities, spaces for play and as spaces to get outdoors and into nature. They also play an important role as vital areas of habitat for wildlife within urbanised and developed areas.

Following the success of nature restoration projects across East Lothian's countryside sites, this Nature Networks East Lothian project aims to improve nature networks for East Lothian's communities, by identifying, exploring and providing advice on opportunities in Council-owned and managed parks and greenspaces in our towns and villages, supported by our communities. We aim to improve Nature Networks for East Lothian's communities by surveying, assessing and developing parks and greenspaces across the area for nature restoration and enhancement, including wildflower planting and tree planting at pilot sites.

Local community engagement and feedback received during this project has enabled the development of the Action Plan within this Project Report, which sets out actions we aim to deliver across our communities over the coming years, bringing a range of benefits to people and nature.

It is hoped that delivering these actions in Council owned and managed greenspaces will encourage others across the county to develop and enhance nature networks on their land, bringing a connected green network to East Lothian and beyond.

'A Nature Network is effectively just a network that connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people.'
NatureScot, Nature Networks Explained

3 Background and Context

Globally and within Scotland, biodiversity is in decline due to various factors including climate change, changes in land use, pollution, and human activity. The Scottish Government's draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy[2] (published in December 2022) sets out priority actions for 2030, including the following action: "*ensure that every local authority area has a nature network improving ecological connectivity across Scotland*". The strategic outcomes further expand on this: "*towns and cities will include nature-rich environments close to all communities, contributing to nature networks and measurable increases in urban biodiversity*".

East Lothian's population is growing and has experienced increased urbanisation, bringing pressures on how open space and green space land is used for formal and informal recreation, active travel and space for nature. Strategies including the Council's Open Space Strategy, Green Network Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Tree and Woodland Strategy (in preparation) and Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and new national planning guidance (National Planning Framework 4), are fundamental in ensuring access to nature, enhancement and improvement of biodiversity, greenspaces and blue/green infrastructure for the growing community.

Parks and greenspaces are important spaces to communities across East Lothian, providing health and wellbeing, social, economic and environmental benefits. People use East Lothian's parks for sports, exercise, getting outdoors, social spaces, and more. But these spaces also play an important role in providing vital habitat supporting biodiversity in our towns and villages. Urban greenspaces designed and managed with biodiversity in mind can benefit both wildlife and the communities living alongside them.

Connected nature networks will bring opportunities to connect nature corridors across East Lothian and beyond, and support biodiversity within our towns and villages, as well as increasing access to nature for our communities. By incorporating and preserving natural habitats within our urban and semi urban spaces, we can create more liveable and sustainable communities. These habitats offer benefits including resilience to environmental changes, helping us to tackle the climate emergency, recreational opportunities, and educational value, bringing people closer to nature.

East Lothian Council has already undertaken successful nature restoration projects across East Lothian's countryside sites[3]. In addition, pilot projects in our towns and villages have already been undertaken, introducing alternative management for nature and wildlife into some of our parks and greenspaces, assessing community feedback. These have provided useful experience, learning and feedback to inform the current project, including the types of nature enhancements that our communities may support in their local areas.

Ultimately these local nature enhancements can help to create better places for people, and to create a connected network of spaces for nature, which will help East Lothian to play its part in tackling the global nature and climate emergencies.

[2] Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-2045-tackling-nature-emergency-scotland/

[3] See example Scottish Government funding received for grassland habitat restoration project | East Lothian Council

4 East Lothian's Parks and Greenspaces

East Lothian is a semi-urban and rural local authority, with a wide variety of important habitat and open space. It is also experiencing significant development and housing growth. As urban areas are expanding, access to greenspace and nature is vital, benefitting the health and wellbeing of our communities, biodiversity, resilience to climate change, economic development and place identity.

Public parks and greenspaces across East Lothian, which are owned and managed by East Lothian Council, consist of public parks and gardens, play space, sports space, recreational space, naturalised grassland areas, trees, woodlands and tree-belts, allotments, cemeteries, green corridors and amenity greenspace areas. These are used by many people across East Lothian, for a variety of purposes including play, sports and exercise, social interaction, and informal recreation in the outdoors.

In some of our parks and greenspaces, the Council has undertaken small pilot projects to enhance and support biodiversity. These include areas of alternative grass cutting regimes and planting wildflowers. Learnings from these pilot projects have enabled the opportunity to explore more parks and greenspace areas where nature networks and biodiversity enhancement could be suitable with community support.

We recognise the importance of parks and greenspaces to our communities, including their multi-use functions and amenity value to the local areas, therefore we wish to ensure that any nature network proposals are supported by our communities.

Public greenspace is particularly important for those who do not have access to private greenspace such as gardens. We also recognise that, at a national level, access to local greenspace is not equitable. Nationally, people from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to live in areas within a 5 minute walk of a greenspace. Urban greenspaces and nature are less accessible to people with disabilities. People from low income households are also less likely to have good access to greenspaces across the UK as a whole[4].

As part of this project we took cognisance of this by ensuring we selected parks and greenspaces for this project located across all of East Lothian's main communities, to ensure everyone across our communities has the opportunity to participate and access these areas locally, and experience the benefits that nature brings.

[4] Equity in access to urban nature: Out of Bounds - Groundwork

5 The Project: Nature Networks East Lothian

5.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to identify, explore and provide advice on nature network opportunities supported by our communities, in suitable areas of Council owned and managed parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's towns and villages.

The objective is to identify areas which have the potential for development of enhanced and connected nature networks and biodiversity enhancements with community support, and produce an action plan which we will aim to deliver over the coming years, to enhance and improve nature networks in our communities and urban areas closer to where people live, bringing a wide range of benefits to nature and people.

Public consultation and engagement is a key aspect of this project, enabling us to find out what local people would support and would like to see in their local parks and greenspaces.

5.2 What is a Nature Network?

'A Nature Network is effectively just a network that connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people.'- *NatureScot, Nature Networks Explained*[5].

Nature networks can include the following examples (for explanations of what these types of habitats and nature networks are, please see the Glossary at Appendix 1):

- Nature rich gardens,
- Wildflower and grassland meadow patches,
- Hedgerows,
- 'Wee forests' and tree planting,
- Wetlands, ponds, bog gardens,
- Green roofs,
- Green walls,
- Raingardens.

Figure 2: Common Carder (*Bombus pascorum*) pollinating a Dandelion.

[5] Nature Networks explained | NatureScot

6 Benefits of Nature Networks

6.1 A Space for Nature

Biodiversity is in decline. Almost half of Scotland's species have seen decreases in abundance[6]. Drivers of biodiversity decline can be attributed to factors including land use change, habitat fragmentation, climate change, pollution, agricultural change and urbanisation, leading to loss of suitable habitat for many species.

As urbanisation is increasing to support population growth, habitats can become fragmented, broken up into smaller isolated patches, making it harder for species to migrate, find food and maintain healthy populations. But urban landscapes can play an important role in providing Nature Networks ensuring connection between larger habitats that may be fragmented, and creating stepping stones of suitable habitats to benefit species.

Connectivity amongst natural ecosystems maintains ecological functions and supports ecosystem services, by increasing the resilience of habitats and species in a changing environment, helping them to adapt to impacts of climate change and habitat loss.

Nature Networks will help meet Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets and support Local Biodiversity Action plans. The 30x30 target relates to 30% of land designated for wildlife (i.e. SPA/SSSI/Local Biodiversity Sites). The Nature Network will support connectivity between these sites but is not part of the 30x30 area itself.

6.2 A Space for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The climate emergency will impact almost every aspect of our everyday lives, with projections of hotter and drier summers and warmer and wetter winters. Mitigating emissions and adapting to impacts that historic and future emissions will cause, are imperative. Greenspaces and enhancing nature networks will help mitigate climate emissions, but also build resilience to present and future impacts.

Green infrastructure such as greenspaces and parks with trees, hedgerows and other different habitats, help reduce urban 'heat island' effects. They store carbon, can provide sustainable drainage and reduce water run-off during heavy rainfall, and provide shelter and refuge during heatwaves, providing a space to be outdoors for people that may not have access to a garden. Furthermore, access to greenspaces positively influences satisfaction of active travel options, encouraging more walking, cycling, running and sustainable travel, and green infrastructure as integral aspects of active travel routes help mitigate pollution and emissions released from vehicular travel.

[6] State of Nature Scotland Report 2019 | NatureScot

6.3 A Space for Community

Access to nature and greenspace can provide social and economic benefits, cultural identity, recreation and tourism.

Nature and cultural identity are intimately related, with names of towns and local industries influenced by the surrounding natural environment often shaping the identity and culture of a community. Access to nature and preservation of biodiversity as development continues, allows for new cultural identities to evolve in the future, while maintaining historic links.

Access to nature and greenspaces enables increased social connection and cohesion, providing intergenerational meeting places and recreational spaces for social connections for people of all ages, creating spaces for individual social interactions and for organised groups and activities.

Potential economic benefits associated with access to nature and greenspaces include encouragement of inward investment, generating employment, tourism opportunities, and reducing costs of healthcare provision through health and physical activity improvements.

Allotments and local food growing areas contribute to local green network connectivity, forming important areas of natural diversity that can benefit pollinators in particular, and also function in fostering community engagement, intergenerational enjoyment of the outdoors and physical activity, and increased community resilience.

6.4 A Space for Wellbeing

Increasing access to nature and greenspaces has a positive influence on our physical and mental health. A walk in a greenspace and in nature can improve cognitive function and memory, while also lowering levels of stress, and reducing rates of depression and anxiety.

Greenspaces and nature can promote physical activity. Having an area that is safe, attractive and free to access can be a place where people can walk, run, play and exercise close to where they live, improving and supporting physical health.

Additionally, access to nature can contribute to children's emotional and physical development, creating areas for play and socialisation. Benefits of nature-based play[7] include strengthening creativity, encouraging physical activity, and self-exploration of nature can lead to children having a strong sense of environmental citizenship and connectedness to the natural environment.

[7] Nature-based play publication - Play Scotland

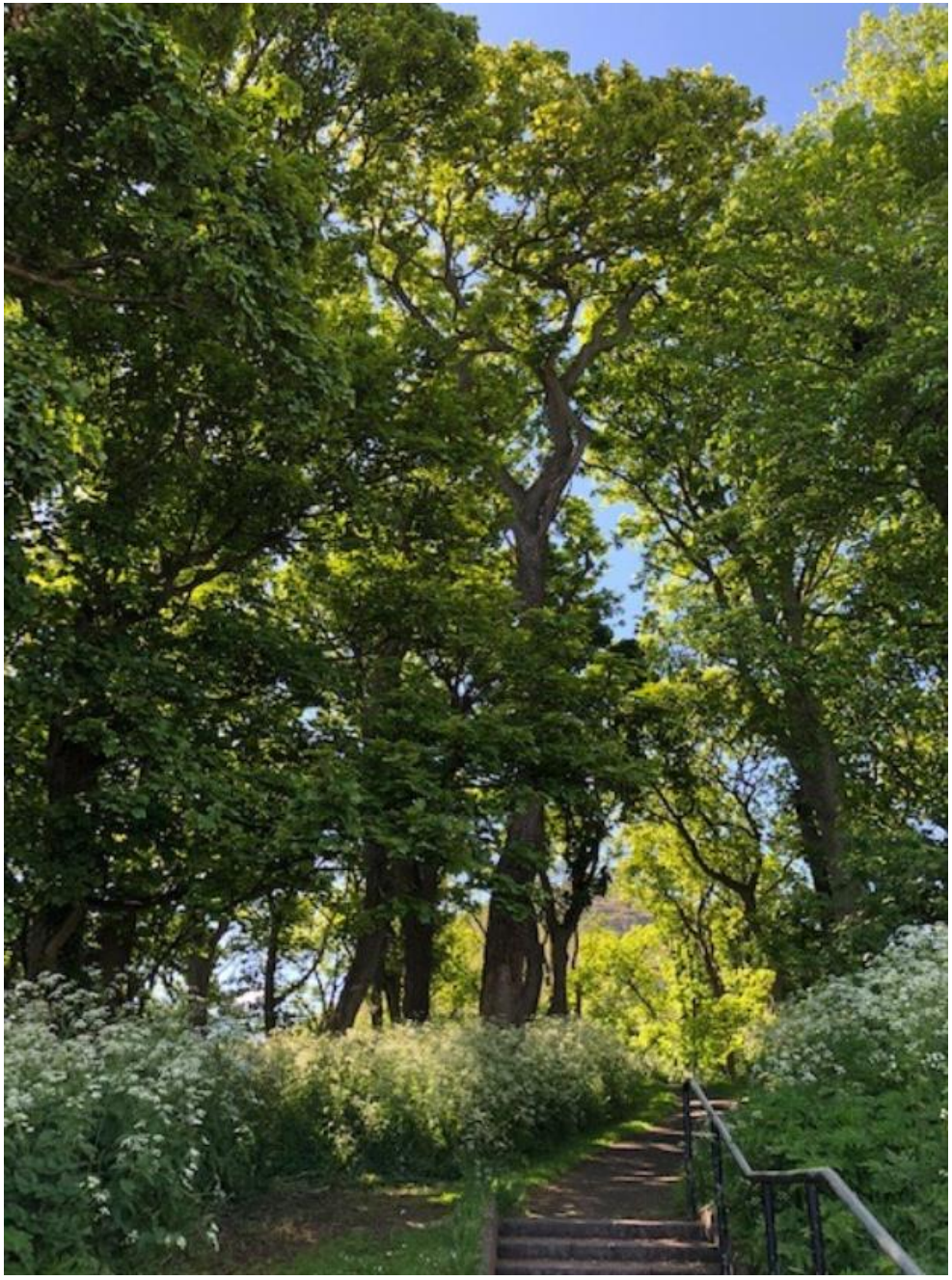
7 Development of the Project

7.1 Identification of Sites

Council owned and managed parks and large greenspace areas across East Lothian were initially assessed using the knowledge of the Council's Local Amenity Officers and Biodiversity Officer. Suitable sites were determined based on their potential benefits to biodiversity, capacity for maintenance of nature network development and management (including previous pilot projects undertaken), and predominant current use of the spaces, for example, whether the space is used for sports, events, formal play or informal recreational open space.

This enabled identification of a list of East Lothian parks and greenspaces across all our main communities to put forward within a public consultation survey, giving members of the public the opportunity to share their views and help us identify which types of nature enhancements people would support and would like to see in their local area.

A total of 27 greenspaces across East Lothian were identified for potential nature network development and biodiversity enhancement. Parks included within this project were represented within every local ward: Musselburgh area, Fa'side, Preston Seton Gosford, Haddington & the Lammermuirs, North Berwick Coastal and Dunbar and East Linton. The list of parks included in the survey is set out in Appendix 3.



7.2 Identifying potential Nature Network opportunities

Identifying nature network types to be represented within the public consultation survey to guide the development of potential actions was a crucial step. By collaborating with the Biodiversity Officer and Local Amenity Officers, we ensured that suitable habitat types for the locality were represented. It was important to consider local and regional factors. Many of the parks and greenspaces are within urban landscapes, as well as rural villages and towns, including coastal and inland areas. By representing a variety of suitable habitats within the survey we could gain an understanding of what communities would like to see in their local area.

Habitats and nature network types identified for the consultation survey were as follows (for explanations of what these types of habitats and nature networks are, please see the Glossary at Appendix 1):

- Hedgerows, shrubs and bushes
- Tree planting
- Street trees
- Woodland habitat
- Meadows
- Naturalised grassland
- Wee forest/tiny forests
- Pollinator friendly planting
- Raingardens
- Bog gardens
- Wetlands

As part of the public consultation, respondents had the opportunity to suggest other types of nature networks, not included within the survey, which they would like to see in their local area.

8 Communication and Engagement

Involving the local community in this project was crucial to engage people with the action planning process and hear the views of local people, to ensure the nature network actions proposed are supported by local people. Engaging local residents, groups and organisations can help ensure that this project reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Publicity about the project aimed to provide clear and accessible information about the project's goals, objectives and process with a dedicated project webpage on the Council's website, flyers, pull-up banners, signage and social media promotion.

8.1 Branding

Branding played a significant role in recognition of the nature network project. Having a strong and defined brand helped create awareness and built a recognisable identity. 'Nature Networks East Lothian' is not exclusive to East Lothian Council. We had an aim that to achieve nature networks across the area we are keen to encourage others to create their own nature networks, and they can use the logo to identify the habitat on their land.

The branding was developed in-house. A Holly Blue butterfly (*Celastrina argiolus*) was chosen, as a popular and recognisable species. Butterflies are popular pollinating species that many people recognise, with Holly Blue habitat found in East Lothian's parks, greenspaces and gardens, representing where our nature networks will be developed.

The logo was included on our communication materials, including flyers, pull-up banners distributed to libraries and community centres, on printed surveys and on the project website. It can continue to be used at outreach and promotional events, any future consultations and by others who want to get involved with the project.

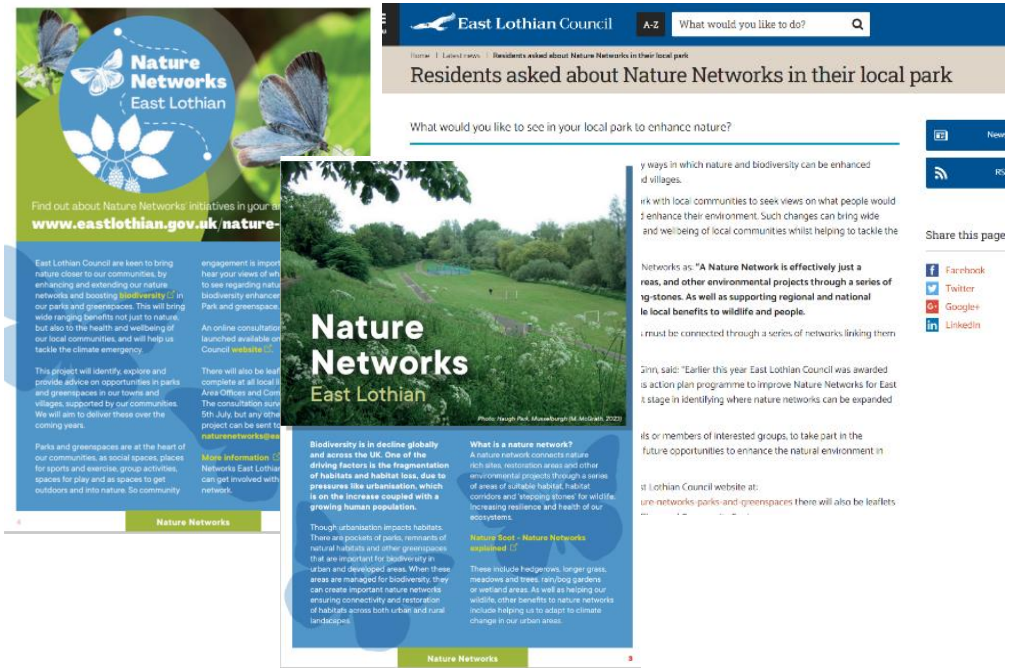
It is also intended that the Nature Networks East Lothian logo and a QR code will feature on signage to identify and highlight nature network sites developed in our parks and greenspaces in due course, as a result of this project and action plan.

8.2 Webpage

A dedicated page was created on East Lothian Council's website (Nature Networks in our parks and greenspaces | Nature Networks | East Lothian Council) as a central hub for information about the Nature Network project, including aims and objectives of the project. This provided resources, updates and public consultation information, how to get involved to create your own nature network, FAQ's and enquiry details, as well as creating visibility and raising awareness for anyone who may be interested to learn about the project or get involved.

8.3 Publicity

The project was publicised via two news releases and shared on East Lothian Council's social media platforms. Other council services shared news release links upon their platforms.



8.4 Consultation Survey

The survey aimed to help the Council to identify opportunities where nature and biodiversity can be enhanced and which nature networks could be expanded across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces in our towns and villages, including which types of nature enhancements people would support and would like to see in their local area.

An online public consultation survey was published on Citizen Space. The 27 identified parks were included, and respondents could provide feedback about what nature networks they would want to see developed in those locations, what options they think would not be suitable, with the option to suggest any other public open spaces that they would like to see included.

Printed hardcopies of the survey were created and distributed to libraries and community centres around the county, to ensure that the survey was accessible to all.

The consultation survey was publicised with a news release and social media promotion. It was shared with relevant internal and external stakeholders, community members, organisations and groups, including local Area Partnerships and Community Councils.

The survey was open from 13 June 2023 until 5 July 2023.

9 Project Findings

9.1 Results of the Consultation Survey

There were **370 responses** to the survey through East Lothian Council's online consultation hub and via printed surveys.

455 additional comments were received as part of the consultation, including comments about the project, suggestions of other areas to include, and information on how people use the greenspaces in East Lothian.

There were 672 page views of the nature networks consultation survey news release on the Council's website and a further 437 page views of the Council's Nature Networks webpage with information about the project. There were 6,100 views of the launch of the consultation survey on the Council's social media (Facebook and Twitter). Further, there were 1,840 views of a social media reminder for the consultation survey halfway through consultation period, and 1,700 views of a reminder of the consultation closing date, on Facebook and Twitter.

Representation of local areas: where respondents said they live

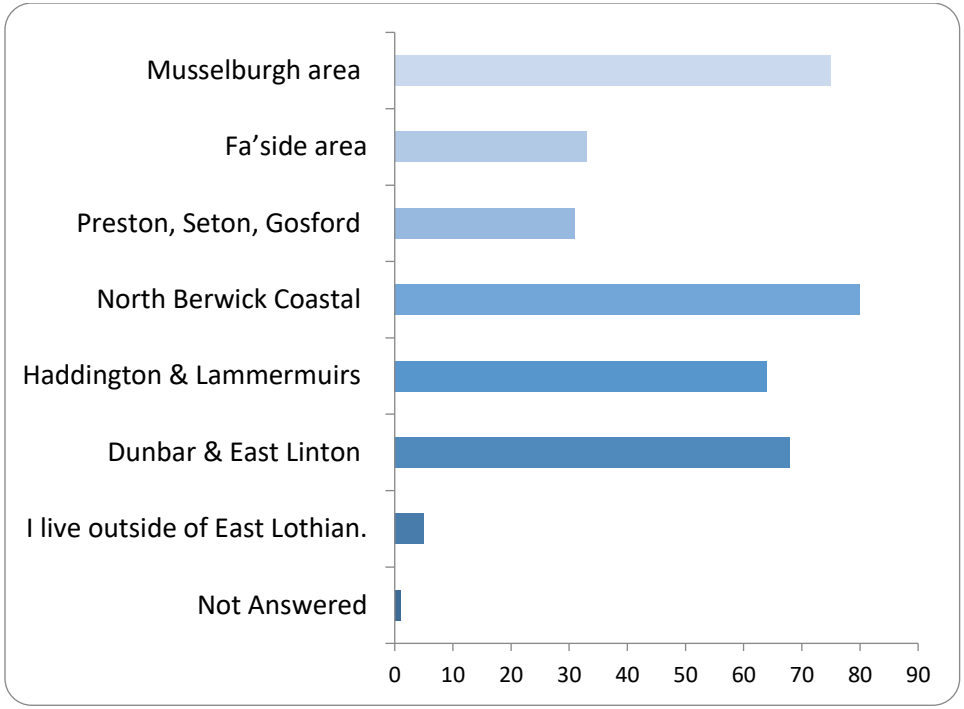


Figure 3: Number of respondents and the areas that they reside in.

98% of respondents resided within East Lothian. Proportionately largest representations were from Musselburgh area (20%), North Berwick Coastal (22%), Dunbar & East Lothian (20%) and Haddington & Lammermuir (18%). Fa'side area and Preston, Seton, Gosford area each had 9% representation.

5% of respondents lived outside of East Lothian.

Uses of parks and greenspaces

Figure 4: Respondents' use of parks and greenspaces in East Lothian.

88% of respondents said that they use local parks and greenspaces in East Lothian for getting outdoors, 75% said they use these spaces to get closer to nature and 72% said they exercise within these spaces.

Other uses provided by respondents, that were not listed within the survey, included dog walking, maintaining mental health, commuting, wildlife and nature watching.

How far away from your home is your nearest parks/greenspace?

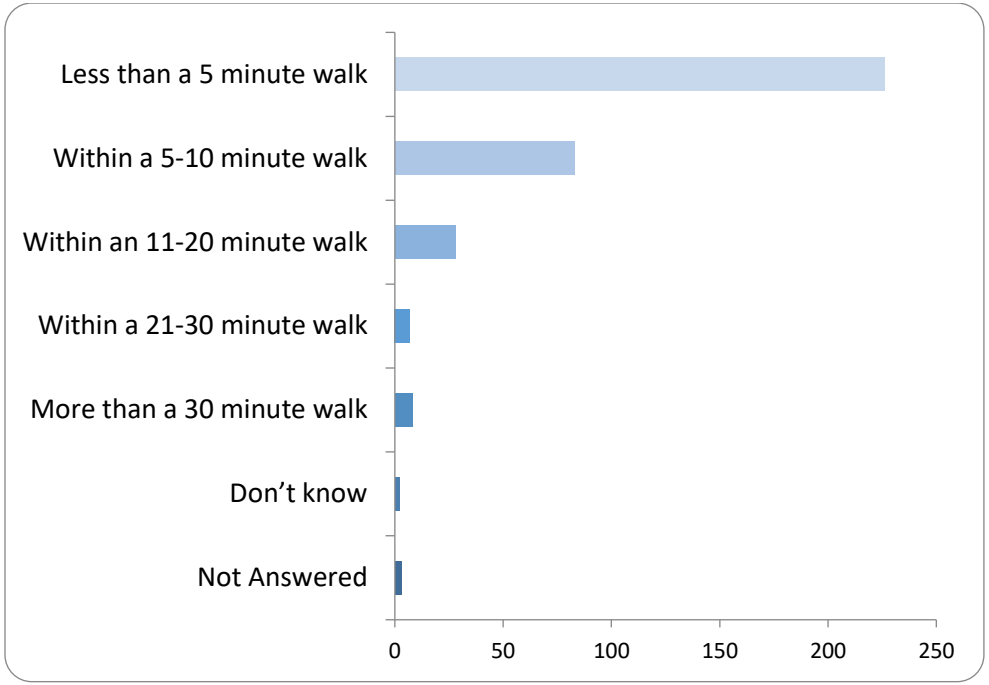


Figure 5: How far respondents' nearest park/greenspace is to their home.

63% of respondents lived less than a 5 minute walk away from their nearest park/greenspace, i.e. have access to parks or greenspaces close to where they live.

In the last 12 months, how often on average have you visited your local park or greenspace areas in East Lothian?

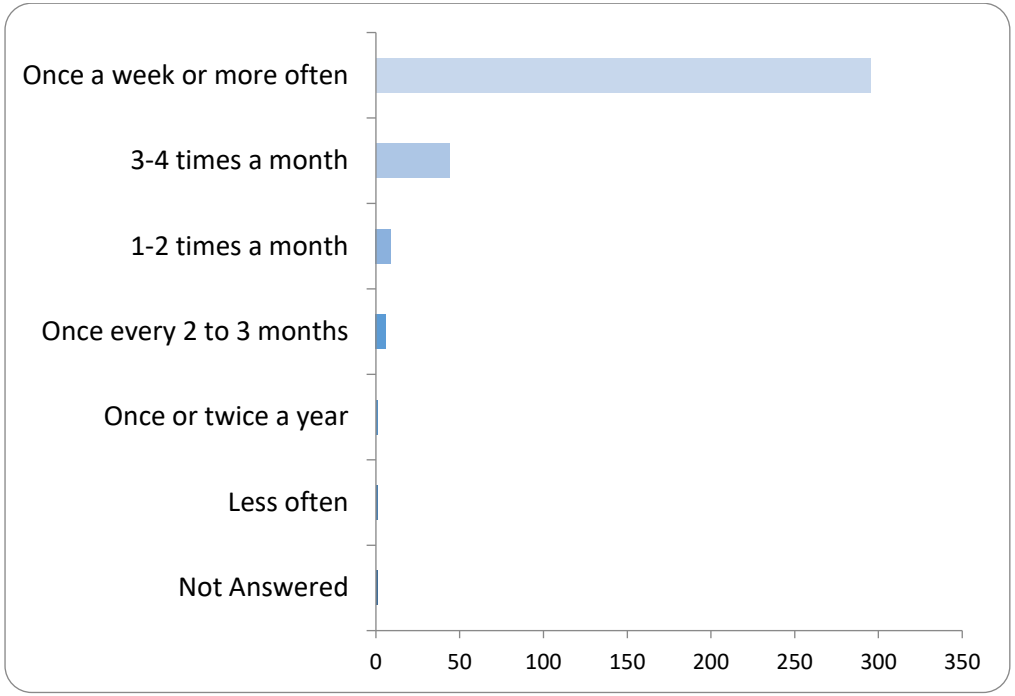


Figure 6: How often respondents visited their local park / greenspace within the last 12 months.

83% of respondents have visited their local park/greenspace more than once a week or more often within the last 12 months.

Perceptions and importance of parks, greenspaces and nature

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/unsure	Not Answered
In general, my local parks and greenspaces are important to me	92%	8.00%	0.28%	0%	0%	0%	0.28%
In general, nature is important to me	89%	7%	0.84%	0.28%	0%	0%	1.96%
I like to be able to get close to nature in my local park/greenspace.	84%	11%	3.92%	0.56%	0.56%	0.00%	0.28%
In general, I would like to see more biodiversity/nature enhancement across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces	81%	12%	4.20%	1.12%	1.12%	0.28%	0.28%

Table 1: Percentage of responses to questions about the importance and perceptions of parks / greenspaces and nature to respondents.

We wanted to gain an understanding of how respondents generally feel about parks, greenspace and nature. 92% of respondents felt strongly that local parks and greenspaces were important to them, and a further 89% of respondents strongly felt nature was important to them. 81% of respondents would like to see more biodiversity / nature enhancement across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces.

What people would like to see more of across East Lothian's parks/greenspaces

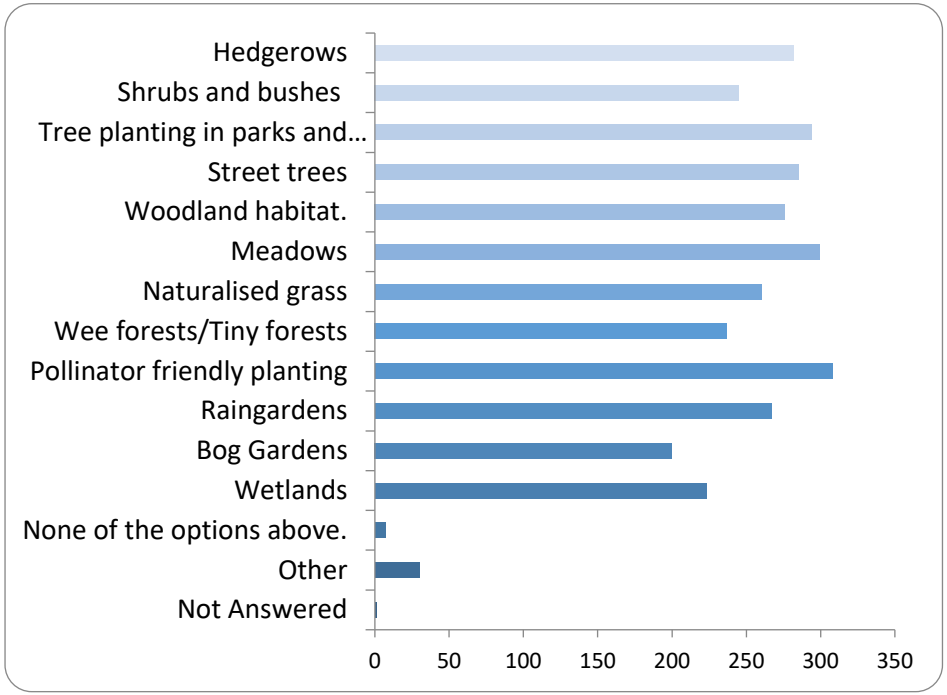


Figure 7: The types of nature / biodiversity enhancements respondents wanted to see more of across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces (nos. of respondents to each).

All of the nature network options were strongly supported by respondents. Survey respondents wanted to see more pollinator friendly planting (87%), Meadows (84 %), Tree planting (82%), Street trees (80%) and hedgerows (79%), woodland (77%), Raingardens (74%), Naturalised grassland (73%), Shrubs, bushes (69%), Wee forests / Tiny forests (66%), wetlands (62%), bog gardens (56%) enhanced and expanded across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces.

Top 5 existing nature networks / biodiversity enhancements that respondents like to see across specific parks & greenspaces

The Top 5 existing habitats / nature areas that respondents like to see at present within their local parks and greenspaces are:

1. Tree planting
2. Hedgerows
3. Pollinator friendly planting
4. Naturalised grassland
5. Woodland habitat

Top 5 nature networks / biodiversity enhancements that respondents want to see more of across specific parks & greenspaces

Although some sites already have existing habitats / nature areas, the Top 5 habitat types that respondents want to see more of across all parks and greenspaces listed within the survey are:

1. Pollinator friendly planting
2. Naturalised longer grassland
3. Meadows
4. Hedgerows
5. Tree planting

Other habitat types / nature networks not listed within the survey that respondents stated they wanted to see included:

- Orchards / fruit trees
- Allotments
- Wildlife bridges
- Green walls/roofs
- Bird boxes
- Freshwater features for both people and wildlife
- Sensory and natural play spaces for both people and wildlife

9.2 Consultation Survey Results for Individual Parks and Greenspaces: Views on Existing Nature Networks / Natural Habitats

The consultation survey asked respondents for their views on **existing** nature networks / natural habitats within a range of individual public parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's main towns and villages. Respondents were asked: **"What EXISTING nature networks or nature do you like in the below parks?"** [for each park, respondents could select more than one option from a list].

The results for all parks and greenspaces included within the consultation survey are set out in Appendix 4.

The findings indicate that the following existing nature network / natural habitat types already found in our parks and greenspaces were particularly popular with members of the public who responded:

- Tree planting, street trees, hedgerows / shrubs / bushes;
- Pollinator friendly planting;
- Longer naturalised grass and meadows.

However, all of the nature network types were selected by respondents across all the parks and greenspaces included the survey. These are areas where the Council's local Amenity Services squads have worked to enhance nature and create nature network / natural habitat areas already – in some cases developing these over many years, and often with the input, participation and support of members of local communities, including 'In Bloom' groups and 'Friends Of' groups.

9.3 Consultation Survey Results for Individual Parks and Greenspaces: Views on Future Nature Networks

The consultation survey also asked respondents for their views on what nature networks / natural habitat options they would like to see in **future** within a range of individual public parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's main towns and villages.

Respondents were asked: **"Which of these nature network or nature options would you like to see MORE of in the following parks?"** [for each park, respondents could select more than one option from a list].

In this section, results are presented for some key destination parks in the main towns. Results for all the other parks and greenspaces included within the consultation survey are set out in Appendix 5.

Lewisvale Park, Musselburgh: There were 91 respondents for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of were: pollinator planting (83%), naturalised longer grass (60%), meadows (52%) and more tree planting (52%). In Lewisvale Park there is potential to enhance the landscape with more pollinator friendly planting with nectar bars or increasing perennial and flower density within planted beds, connecting and enhancing the pollinator networks, as well as utilising suitable space to enhance and naturalise amenity grass, increasing plant biodiversity.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	76	83%
Naturalised longer grass	55	60%
Tree planting	48	52%
Meadows	48	52%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	46	50.5%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	42	46%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	36	39.5%
Street trees	29	31%
Wetlands	22	24%

Table 2: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in Lewisvale Park, Musselburgh (no. of responses).

Cuthill Park, Prestonpans: There were 40 respondents for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of were: pollinator friendly planting (77%), meadows and naturalised longer grass (62%), and more tree planting. There is a woodland network adjacent to this area, so woodland habitat could be enhanced and maintained to ensure quality and connectivity. There also may be potential for increasing flower density through pollinator friendly planting or creating areas of meadow with wildflowers.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	31	77%
Meadows	25	62%
Naturalised longer grass	25	62%
Tree planting	24	60 %
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	52%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	19	47%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	17	42%
Wetlands	16	40%
Street trees	14	35%

Table 3: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in Cuthill Park, Prestonpans (no. of responses).

Polson Park, Tranent: There were 48 responses for this park identifying which nature networks they wanted to see more of within this area. The top 4 habitat types respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (79%), naturalised longer grass (69%), tree planting (66%), meadows (64%), and woodland habitat (60%). These results bring opportunities to plant more trees, and develop areas under trees for woodland with either meadow, grassland or pollinator friendly bulb planting. Although within Polson Park, developing these habitats may require specific management due to mature sycamore trees efficiently seeding within the establishing grassland/meadow. Bedding areas could be enhanced with more perennial flowers, creating 'nectar bars'.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	38	79%
Naturalised longer grass	33	69%
Tree planting	32	66%
Meadows	31	64%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	29	60%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	27	56%
Street trees	23	48%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	23	48%
Wetlands	20	41%

Table 4: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in Polson Park, Tranent (no. of responses).

Neilson Park, Haddington: There were 67 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types that respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (67%), naturalised longer grass (58%), woodland habitat (58%) and tree planting. These results identify opportunities to increase perennial pollinator friendly planting within the landscaped bedding areas, as well as the potential to introduce wildflowers. The hedgerows within this area could be enhanced and maintained as both food resource and shelter, as they provide habitat for many bird species and invertebrate species. Naturalised grassland areas could be added under tree canopies around the boundary of this area, but also include suitable wildflower species or bulbs to enhance the look of these areas.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	46	69%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	39	58%
Naturalised longer grass	39	58%
Tree planting	37	55%
Meadows	35	52%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	31	46%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	25	37%
Street trees	23	34%
Wetlands	16	24%

Table 5: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in Neilson Park, Haddington (no. of responses).

Winterfield Park, Dunbar: There were 58 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types that respondents wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (82%), naturalised longer grass (76%), tree planting (67%) and meadows (62%). These results identify potential to increase the amount of flowering species within this area, with either pollinator friendly species within bedding areas or meadow creation. As this habitat is coastal, the species planted would have to be suitable for coastal planting, for example, coastal meadow mixes or species tolerant to salt water and coastal conditions. There is a tree belt planted within the park, and there could be potential to enhance this, providing shade and shelter from an often windy coastline.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	48	82%
Naturalised longer grass	44	76%
Tree planting	39	67%
Meadows	36	62%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	34	59%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	30	51%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	25	43%
Street trees	23	39%
Wetlands	19	33%

Table 6: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in Winterfield Park, Dunbar (no. of responses).

The Lodge Grounds, North Berwick: There were 85 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types respondents wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (71%), naturalised longer grass (67%), meadows (63%) and woodland habitat (55%). These results identify the potential to increase and expand pollinator friendly planting across this greenspace. There are currently planted beds within the Lodge Grounds, which are popular with visitors. Species planted in the future could include more flowering species supporting more pollinators. Areas of the Lodge Grounds could be used to create wildflower meadow with grasses to increase plant species, provided feeding and sheltering habitat for both bird and invertebrate species. The woodland habitat that is currently present could be enhanced.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	61	71%
Naturalised longer grass	57	67%
Meadows	54	63%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	47	55%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	45	53%
Tree planting	45	53%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	41	48%
Wetlands	33	38%
Street trees	22	25%

Table 7: Nature network options respondents would like to see more of in The Lodge Grounds, North Berwick (no. of responses).

9.4 Feedback and Comments Received

As part of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to provide comments and feedback to further describe what nature network options they wanted to see and to provide comments on the project.

A selection of the comments / feedback is provided below:

"I would love to see more of all these habitats wherever they are suitable. Still lots of big empty areas of grass."

"I would like to see natural planting or natural management practice depending on the sites. I would like to see encouragement of natural corridors for wildlife"

"There are so many opportunities for encouraging and then increasing biodiversity on all council maintained strips of green space. Be it road verges, town centres or the lawn-like green spaces. Invertebrate life cycle friendly mowing schedules, No mow May, wildlife tunnels across busy arterials, green roofs, rain recapture around old schemes…. On and on!!"

10 Findings: Specific Habitat / Nature Network Types

10.1 Meadows and grassland

Meadows and naturalised grassland in parks and greenspaces were strongly supported by survey respondents. 84% of respondents wanted to see more meadows in parks and greenspaces, and 73% wanted to see more naturalised grassland. This was also demonstrated by many written comments received within the results.

> *"All of the meadow areas I've seen in Dunbar are beautiful. Have had family visiting (one a very keen gardener) who stopped to enjoy it for ages. Thanks for planting them."*

> *"Generally very happy with the increase in grass being allowed to grow longer around East Lothian. Specifically the railway walk between Haddington and Longniddry."*

Meadows as an open habitat with a mix of longer grasses and wildflowers can generate biodiversity benefits within urban landscapes, especially if there is a mosaic of meadow types with varying vegetation height and plant richness. These habitats can be designed to enhance the landscape with paths mown around and through the meadow, enabling people to continue to utilise the space and interact with the habitat.

Areas of naturalised longer grassland can support a diverse range of plant and animal species, providing habitat and food sources for a range of wildlife. They also provide ecological services such as soil erosion control and water filtration. Though similar to 'living lawn', longer amenity grass with low diversity of species would not benefit biodiversity. It is important to note that intervention (management) to increase diversity of the grassland may be needed to achieve the benefits of longer grassland.

> *"I'm very glad to see the revised attitude to the grass mowing in public areas and allowing the trees to retain their trunk base suckers which provides such important refuge and habitat for fledglings and the hedgehogs.*

> *Noticeable especially in the rugby ground and the grass areas next to the river and roads, so beautiful."*

10.2 Hedgerows

A significant amount of feedback was received on hedgerows, including support for enhancing and extending hedgerows across parks and greenspaces, as well as acknowledgement of the importance of hedgerow undergrowth and leaf litter providing habitat for mammals and invertebrates.

> *"The Heugh in Tranent - wildflowers, pollinators*
> *The path network in Tranent - gaps in hedges in particular*
> *The Ormiston railway cutting - gaps in hedges and trees."*

> *"PLEASE plant more trees, hedgerows/shrubs/bushes, pollinator-friendly meadow patches around council flats - some of these areas are terribly bare and depressing."*

Hedgerows are strips of densely planted trees, shrubs or bushes forming a border, creating ideal habitat for many birds, invertebrates and mammals throughout all seasons. Woody hedges such as hawthorn are good habitat for bird and mammal species. Longer hedgerows benefit invertebrates, while also increasing habitat areas and habitat heterogeneity.

Vegetation adjacent to hedgerows can also be very important to biodiversity. Rural hedges, with infrequently mown strips of abundant, diverse wildflowers on either side of the hedge, provide considerable benefit for biodiversity. This habitat management could also be applied within the urban environment.

10.3 Tree planting

Respondents strongly supported more tree planting in parks and greenspaces (82% of respondents). The presence of trees within urban spaces play important roles in the health and wellbeing of our communities as well as being habitat resources for wildlife. Trees can improve air quality, reduce the heat island effect, provide shade, and they can benefit physical and mental health by providing stress reduction, improve cognitive function, enhance mood and encourage physical activity.

It is important to select carefully where trees could be planted in urban spaces and what species are most suitable – planting 'the right tree in the right place' to be most meaningful for biodiversity and to be suitable for the community it is planted in.

> *"Increased tree planting of small native trees within the green spaces within our settlements should be encouraged. Small native trees would more suit the size of the small green spaces within many settlements. With large species trees saved for the large parks and open spaces. This would avoid the pressure on the council to remove trees in 20/30 years' time when large species trees begin to become an issue for local residents."*

Feedback was also received supporting orchard planting, fruit trees and community food growing. This would also benefit biodiversity, as many fruit trees are early senescent, meaning they mature quickly developing veteran features such as hollow trunks and dead wood, which is important habitat for many invertebrates and birds, and the fruit is a food resource.

> *"In general there could be more provision of fruit trees, fruit bushes and veg growing opportunity for communities to learn about food and enjoy healthy produce while supporting more biodiversity."*

10.4 Pollinator friendly planting

Considerable support was received from respondents for more pollinator friendly planting, identifying an opportunity to plant more flowering, native and perennial species within our parks and greenspaces.

Figure 8: Female Common Blue butterfly (*Polyommatus Icarus*). Photo by A. Marland.

Pollinator friendly planting is defined as areas of nectar rich plants/flowers which support pollinating insects. Ensuring native, nectar rich, high flower density and diverse planting within urban spaces can provide vital habitat for diverse communities of pollinators such as solitary bees and hoverflies.

> *"The roundabouts across East Lothian have looked good in recent years with pollinator friendly flowers - more please!"*

These pollinator habitats will help enhance existing green / nature networks such as the 'John Muir Pollinator Way', a 'B-line'[8] project to enhance pollinator friendly grassland along the John Muir Way route.

10.5 Living Lawns

Not every area of amenity grassland will be suitable for longer vegetation, however this does not mean that these spaces could not be enhanced for biodiversity.

'Living lawns' or 'biodiversity lawns' can increase plant diversity within amenity lawns while also maintaining practical use of the space, as it can be cut shorter than a meadow or naturalised grassland. Traditionally an amenity lawn is cut regularly depending on the use of the space. Maintenance of a more biodiverse lawn can still require regular cutting, although with a raised blade height of 7-10mm, so that the species of

[8] John Muir Pollinator Way - Buglife projects

flowers that are planted adapt to the cutting regime and grow and flower shorter than they would if they were left to grow taller. Cutting can continue although not as intensively as normal amenity cutting that is traditionally very close to the ground. This regime can be applied without planting any meadow seed if the lawn shows signs of some diversity. However if the lawn is a monoculture with only one species of grass it may require the sowing of native meadow seed to introduce more diversity.

Increasing plant diversity within a lawn can increase heat mitigation, which contributes to adapting our greenspaces to the changing climate. Raising the blade cutting height can also help the lawn retain moisture during more frequent dry and hot spells.

10.6 Freshwater habitats

Respondents were supportive of seeing more freshwater habitats and presence of water within parks and greenspaces. Freshwater habitats support a rich variety of plant and animal species, providing homes for fish, amphibians, birds and invertebrates. This is especially important as the climate is already becoming drier and warmer in summer months, and freshwater habitats can suffer during droughts. Freshwater habitats provide critical ecosystem services, aiding water filtration, water retention areas, mitigating flood risk and regulating water flow during heavy rainfall events, which are more likely to occur with climate change, as well as being important to wildlife during dry spells.

Within greenspaces, freshwater habitats could include mini ponds, bog gardens or raingardens. Freshwater habitat enhancements or additions should be suitable for the site's environment and use.

> *"More fresh water for wildlife is absolutely essential given the switch to dry summers - increased wetlands and ponds in parks, advice and incentives for gardeners to add wildlife ponds specifically, but even just incentivising bird baths. Also adding soakaway strips to all hard paved areas, e.g. strips of gravel with alpines like thrifts or thyme planted through them. And putting at least one demonstration raingarden in every town, tied in e.g. with drainage from roof gutters, and information boards. Subsidised swift boxes for appropriate properties, with assistance fitting them."*

10.7 Concerns

Comments were received through the consultation survey regarding concerns about and impacts of potential nature networks.

8 comments expressed concern that dog fouling could be more prevalent within areas of longer vegetation. 3 comments expressed apprehension about potential increases in ticks around longer vegetation, 7 commented on vegetation trapping litter, 5 comments were received about tidiness of an area where there is longer vegetation, and 37 comments were received about glyphosate and pesticide use.

> *"Long grass = dog poop, hard to pick up, so not everyone can or does, plus ticks."*

Dog fouling

It is important to note that dog owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. It is against the law for anyone who is responsible for a dog not to clean up after the dog has fouled. However, meadows and longer naturalised grassland can be managed and maintained with wide paths with buffer edges so that pet owners can see what their pets are doing and ensure they remove any dog waste.

Litter

Littering is an offence in Scotland, and people are responsible for disposing of their own waste responsibly. We do however have an East Lothian litter initiative, to help provide and encourage safer cleaner streets and a clean green environment. The Council will deal with litter according to routine cleaning procedures.

Ticks

We appreciate concern about ticks around longer vegetation. There are increases in tick incidents across Scotland, due to milder wetter winters. Ticks can be found anywhere from woodland and moorland to parks and gardens. Most ticks do not carry infection: infection rate in the UK varies from 0 to 1 in 5 ticks. Unfortunately we cannot remove them from the environment, so we need to be aware of the risks and take steps to protect ourselves, such as following advice from Lyme Disease Action UK on how to protect yourself from tick bites and what to do if you are bitten. However, any meadow or longer grassland will be maintained with buffer edging and wide pathways so people can enjoy these habitats and avoid walking through long vegetation.

Tidiness

Regarding tidiness, the look of an area is subjective to each individual. However, every habitat and network should and will be maintained and managed accordingly. 'Framing' of long/meadow grass areas, by maintaining a buffer strip of cut grass around the edges, is also used and this helps to keep an area looking tidier.

Weed control - glyphosate spraying

We continue to take opportunities across the county to reduce the use of glyphosate. While glyphosate is used in certain locations where necessary to enable us to continue to meet our duties to keep specified areas including public footways and other hard surfacing free of weeds, and to ensure we meet equalities and outdoor access duties and responsibilities, it is only one aspect of our integrated weed control programme around East Lothian, which also includes hand-pulling and encouraging communities to participate in weed control, where communities are engaged with this and supportive, actively participating in weed control.

11 Next steps

11.1 Council owned/managed greenspaces

Analysis of survey responses has identified that there is support for more biodiversity within our parks and greenspaces, and that people do want to see nature networks extended and enhanced in suitable sites. Accordingly this feedback enables us to identify suitable actions to create and develop East Lothian's Nature Network.

Through an **Action Plan**, we can help deliver nature network restoration, creation, connection, and protection in our parks and greenspaces over the coming years, to enhance and develop East Lothian's Nature Networks.

Based on the feedback from survey respondents, we have identified that **wildflower meadow creation/enhancement** and **tree planting** are two key aspects of Nature Networks that were supported across our communities. Funding awarded to East Lothian Council as part of this project grant has therefore enabled us to purchase quantities of native wildflower seed mixes and young trees for tree planting, enabling us to take forward key actions arising from this project already to support development of East Lothian Nature Networks in parks and greenspaces across our communities, which are supported by our communities.

We have produced **signage** with our Nature Networks East Lothian logo (see example left), to inform the public of the areas and habitats which are part of the Nature Network and undergoing biodiversity enhancement.

We are also producing **Operational Amenity Guidance** to advise on best practices for creating / enhancing the most appropriate Nature Networks for each area of East Lothian.

11.2 Additional opportunities across East Lothian

There are other opportunities that will hopefully arise from this project, as nature networks are not restricted to Council owned/managed land. We hope to encourage other landowners such as private developers and homeowners to participate in creating nature enhancements too, which will further support and develop East Lothian's Nature Networks. We hope to encourage and inspire private landowners to create and support connected habitats networks, no matter how small or large their land area is, from private gardens to new housing developments.

Obligations arising through National Planning Framework 4 support development that helps to secure positive effects for biodiversity, with policies ensuring biodiversity is enhanced and better connected including through strengthened nature networks and nature-based solutions. There is the opportunity to work closely with developers to implement connected nature networks within their landscape designs to benefit both the community and wildlife across East Lothian.

Other greenspaces and areas of nature networks opportunities include road verges, golf courses, cemeteries, school grounds and private gardens. Working in partnership, publicising and promoting opportunities and providing advice on suitable nature enhancements for particular areas, would help ensure the expansion of nature networks and habitat connectivity.

Training and learning opportunities regarding management and maintenance of nature networks and biodiversity can be explored and promoted, helping ensure that suitable habitats are developed with the appropriate maintenance regime. Similar to 'climate literacy', this would ensure that landowners and land managers have an understanding of the state of nature within Scotland and how to enhance and support biodiversity on their land and within the services they provide.

There were many responses within the survey regarding community involvement and volunteering to create and support nature network projects. We are keen to encourage others to enhance biodiversity and create their own nature networks. There is also opportunity to involve the local community with helping to deliver actions outlined within the action plan. This could be with Council supported volunteer groups, local community groups, schools or other local organisations that may wish to get involved with the creation or management of a nature network.

> *"I am interested to know if the project is doing any outreach work in the community and if groups or individuals can be involved."*
>
> *"It would make a big difference if children and teenagers were actively involved in developing and advancing Nature Networks - by linking it to their school curricula."*
>
> *"I would really like to be involved in this project. I feel very strongly about climate change and biodiversity loss and am always looking for ways to make a personal contribution to the crisis."*

12 Action Plan

This Action Plan has been developed taking cognisance of the results from the consultation survey and feedback from stakeholders involved with maintaining suitable parks and greenspaces, along with advice provided by the Council's Biodiversity Officer and best practice examples from other Local Authorities. This has enabled the identification of actions to work towards the objectives of **connecting, enhancing, restoring and creating habitats as part of East Lothian's Nature Network** that we will aim to deliver over the coming years.

The action plan sets out actions to be achieved, categories of the type of works to be achieved, lead person/service responsible for the action and measurable indicators ensuring that actions are meaningful and can be monitored and evaluated.

Categories of Actions

Developing Nature Networks can require conserving, restoring, enhancing or creating a mosaic of nature habitats depending on the existing environment and local conditions. Therefore, actions can be categorised as follows:

Create: Creating new areas of habitat in our parks and greenspaces.

Enhance: Improving the quality of current networks through better/alternative habitat management in our parks and greenspaces.

Connect: Connecting habitats to ensure continuous networks of vital habitats, and connecting people with nature. Enhancing connections between sites through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones', as well as working in partnership with private landowners, local community groups, organisations or community members to extend nature networks to other greenspace opportunities.

Restore: Repairing or renewing areas of habitat that may have been subjected to land changes that could be restored to their past condition.

To create meaningful Nature Networks, the actions outlined within this Action Plan should meet targets of:

1. Ensuring habitat connectivity.

- Connectivity of habitats is essential for healthy, functioning ecosystems and biodiversity. Nature networks will ensure that nature rich sites and larger restoration areas will be connected through a network of habitat, habitat corridors and stepping stones.

- The ongoing Nature Network project and actions will aim to advise and work with other services across East Lothian Council, ensuring nature networks join up across service areas.

- The ongoing Nature Network project will aim to advise and work with private landowners on nature network enhancements which might be suitable in their areas, ensuring nature networks join up across Council and privately owned land across East Lothian, as well as cross-border collaboration with neighbouring local authorities on nature network projects.

2. Being ecologically meaningful.

- Habitats are meaningful and support biodiversity. Nature Networks should be designed and maintained appropriately for the surrounding environment and ecosystem, i.e. the correct tree species in the right place, native planting, etc.

3. Supporting community, health and wellbeing.

- Bringing the community along with development of nature networks; ensuring projects have community support.
- Increase access to nature equitably.
- Benefit health and wellbeing. Create a safe and attractive space to encourage people to use the space more.
- Support communities' cultural identity linked to nature and the environment.
- Benefits socioeconomic aspects of communities, ensuring there is equitable distribution of nature networks across different communities. Nature networks can increase investment opportunities within an area as well as attracting business and tourism into an area.

4. Creating resilience and adaptation to climate change.

- Maintaining healthy connected habitats increases resilience of ecosystems to changes, ensuring that biodiversity is supported and communities are more capable of adapting to climate change.
- Healthy habitats sequester more carbon, helping to mitigate climate change.

ACTION PLAN - EAST LOTHIAN NATURE NETWORKS

1. Create: Creating new areas of habitat in our parks and greenspaces					
Ref.	Action	Lead	Explanation	Indicator	Timescale
1.1	Naturalise amenity grassland to enhance local biodiversity, improve natural habitats and support wildlife.	Amenity Services	Increasing area of managed naturalised grassland.	Area of amenity grassland naturalised. As per Climate Change Strategy	Annually
1.2	Increase area of meadows created and maintained to support quality habitat.	Amenity Services.		Contribute to the target in the Council's Climate Change Strategy of planting 40,000m^2 of wildflower meadows in East Lothian each year.	Annually
1.3	Plant trees and hedgerows in suitable locations in and around urban areas including parks and greenspaces, to create natural areas of shade and shelter as well as habitats.	Landscape Planning, Amenity Services.	Including urban hedgerows, trees within parks and greenspaces and street trees.	Length of hedgerow planted (metres) No. individual trees planted. No. of Street trees. As per ELC Tree and Woodland Strategy & Climate Change Strategy.	2025 / ongoing
1.4	Create 'Wee Forests' in appropriate locations.	Amenity Services, Landscape Planning.	Create and manage wee forests/tiny forests in suitable areas.	Area of Wee Forest created.	2030
1.5	Increase orchard and local community food growing sites.	Amenity Services	Orchards and allotments can be important habitats. They provide shelter and food resources for many invertebrates, birds and mammals and are important for community benefits.	As per Climate Change Strategy: Preparation of Local Food Growing Strategy. No. of apple trees / fruit trees planted and managed.	2025
1.6	Create / increase nectar bars / areas of pollinator rich flowered areas with native flowering perennial species within amenity parks and greenspaces.	Amenity Services	Prioritising perennial flowering species that are beneficial to pollinating species will increase flower density, look attractive and add to 'B-line' pollinator network.	Area of nectar bars/pollinator rich species areas created.	2025 / ongoing
1.7	Develop / increase freshwater habitats across public parks and greenspaces.	Amenity Services	Increase the number of mini ponds, ponds, bogs gardens and raingardens for community benefit and wildlife benefit.	Number of mini ponds, raingardens, bog gardens created.	2030
1.8	Employ best practices and management techniques to create nature networks and enhance biodiversity.	Amenity Services, Countryside Services	Achieved through reviewing of machinery, learning and sharing best practices, upskilling and training.	Investment in training and procurement of appropriate equipment / machinery.	2024 / ongoing

2. Enhance: Improving the quality of current networks through habitat management in our parks and greenspaces					
Ref.	Action	Lead	Explanation	Indicator	Timescale
2.1	Improve quality of pollinator habitats across council maintained parks and greenspaces.	Amenity Services	Reviewing planted sites, flower beds, wildflower areas, nectar bars within amenity greenspace. Enhancing and increasing planting of native pollinator friendly plants, increasing flower density.	Area of pollinator habitats managed and enhanced with pollinator friendly planting.	2026
2.2	Maintain and manage allocated biodiversity ponds to quality habitat.	Countryside Service, Amenity Services		As per management plans.	Annual
2.3	Prioritise native planting of trees and wildflowers, to support biodiversity.	Planning, Amenity Service, Countryside Service	Ensuring native planting is prioritised when planting is planned.	No. of native trees planted. Area of native meadow mixes sown.	2024 / ongoing
2.4	Continue to control and manage invasive non-native species.	Countryside Service, Amenity Services	Work towards eradication of non-native invasive plant species.	As per management plans for invasive species control.	Annual
2.5	Continue to manage naturalised grassland appropriately to support biodiversity.	Amenity Services	Alternative amenity grassland management, promoting naturalised grassland habitat.	As per grass management regimes and plans.	Ongoing
2.6	Enhance and improve hedgerow habitats through planting.	Amenity Services, Countryside Service	Where hedgerows have gaps or are of poorer quality, planting in gaps will enhance this habitat type / connectivity.	As per Tree and Woodland Strategy.	2030
2.7	Review management practices for hedgerows to ensure hedgerow habitats are maintained with biodiversity in mind and allow for flowering and fruiting of hedgerows.	Amenity Services, Countryside Services	Avoiding vegetation works from February until August protects nesting birds and can align with flowering season for hedge species, supporting pollinating species.	As per amenity operational management regimes.	Ongoing
2.8	Maintain and enhance vegetation adjacent to hedgerows for biodiversity where possible and suitable.	Amenity Services	Vegetation adjacent to hedgerows can act as important undergrowth habitat. Maintaining and enhancing these areas of hedgerows will	Area of maintained hedgerow undergrowth.	Ongoing

			support invertebrates, mammals (hedgehogs) and birds.		
2.9	Enhance and maintain existing orchards for biodiversity.	Amenity Services		As per amenity management and maintenance regimes and plans	Ongoing
2.10	Enhance play areas with suitable areas of natural habitat as part of nature networks to support and promote natural play.	Amenity Services	Habitats that could enrich natural play include grassland areas with different textures, natural wooden structures (logs, deadwood), freshwater (ponds, swales, raingardens), trees.	Develop and implement opportunities through play areas management strategy and amenity management	Ongoing

3. Connect: Connecting habitats to ensure continuous networks of vital habitats, and connecting people with nature					
Ref	Action	Lead	Explanation	Indicator	Timescale
3.1	Partnership and collaboration with relevant stakeholders including in new developments to create nature networks and biodiversity friendly landscaping of amenity greenspaces.	Planning Service, Amenity Services, Biodiversity Officer	Nature networks are not restricted to Council owned / managed land. Partnering with stakeholders will help extend development, enhancement and connectivity of the nature network across the county.	As set out in the Green Network Strategy, NPF4 planning framework and Tree and Woodland Strategy.	Ongoing
3.2	Green Network Working Group to oversee the implementation of Green Network Strategy, and to build partnership on nature network projects to develop and enhance habitat networks.	Green Network Working Group.	Green Network Working Group has been convened to oversee and coordinate delivery of green network projects on the ground, including investigating methods of financing these. This should include delivery of nature networks, to ensure correct projects connect the wider county nature network.	As set out in Green Network Strategy SPG.	Ongoing
3.3	Support and work in partnership with community members/organisations, businesses etc. who may want to create their own nature network or get involved with Council projects.	Amenity Services, Countryside Service,	Community members, groups, businesses may want to get involved with Council nature network projects, such as meadow creation, tree/orchard planting etc.; or create their own	No. of community created nature network projects / community groups involved with Council projects.	Ongoing

		Connected Communities	project as part of the wider East Lothian nature network.		
3.4	Increase interpretation and signage about Nature Networks, and biodiversity information in parks and greenspaces.	Amenity Services	Members of the community use parks and greenspaces to get outdoors and closer to nature. Information about nature network areas / what wildlife they may see within their park can help build that connection to nature.	No. of interpretation boards and signage. No. of hits on Nature Networks website via QR codes on signage.	2026
3.5	Ensure maximum dispersal distance between habitats does not exceed Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) guidance wherever possible, i.e. maximum dispersal distances are: for woodland habitats: under 500m; for neutral grassland habitats: under 300m; for wetland habitats: under 150m; and for bog and heath habitat: under 500m.	Biodiversity Officer	Under Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) each type of habitat has a maximum dispersal distance, which is predicted based on the distance that a Generic Focal Species from that habitat can travel beyond a patch.	Refer to and monitor CSGN habitat networks (Earthlight mapping).	Ongoing
3.6	Mapping nature network at a local and landscape scale to identify blue & greenspace connectivity.	Biodiversity Officer	Identify biodiversity opportunity areas. This would be informed by the CSGN habitat network and other data sources and enable us to consider maximum dispersal distances above.	CSGN habitat network	
3.7	Utilising smaller areas of suitable amenity greenspace where possible for nature networks.	Amenity Services	Where possible, utilise and manage small pockets of amenity greenspaces (path verges, roundabouts etc.) for nature networks, creating smaller 'stepping stones'.	No. of smaller nature network projects / area of habitat created.	2024 / Ongoing
3.8	Create buffer zones (transitional areas) around priority or nature network habitats to protect them from development/recreational disturbance.	Amenity Services, Biodiversity Officer, Planning		Number/ area of buffer zones.	2024 / Ongoing

4. Restore: Repairing or renewing areas of habitat that may have been subjected to land changes that could be restored to their past condition					
Ref.	Action	Lead	Explanation	Indicator	Timescale
4.1	Allocate existing ponds within parks and greenspaces for biodiversity.	Countryside Service	Reviewing existing ponds and wetland spaces, allocating ponds and wetland habitats to be managed solely for biodiversity. Creating biodiversity ponds and wetlands.	Number of ponds allocated.	2025
4.2	Manage and restore allocated 'biodiversity ponds'	Countryside Service	Managing these areas to improve the habitat for biodiversity to support establishment of species.	Site management plans.	2025 / Ongoing
4.3	Replacement tree planting to replace ash trees lost to Ash Dieback tree disease.	Forestry Squad (Amenity Services)	Ash Dieback is widespread in East Lothian and has been found on some of our sites. Removing diseased trees leaves large gaps within our woodland and tree cover habitats. Replanting should restore some of these impacted areas.	As per Tree and Woodland Strategy	Ongoing

13 Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Biodiversity: The variety of plants and animals, and the habitats in which they live.

Bog gardens: A piece of land laid out and irrigated to grow plants which prefer damp habitat.

Ecosystem services: Services provided by the natural environment and healthy ecosystems that benefit humans.

Hedgerows: A strip of densely planted trees, shrubs and other plants forming a border.

Living Lawn: A lawn that has flowering plant diversity which benefits biodiversity, but can be cut close to the ground.

Meadows: An open habitat with a mix of longer grasses and wildflowers.

Naturalised grass: Areas of longer amenity grass that encourages biodiversity.

Nature Network: A nature network connects nature rich sites and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and 'stepping stones' for wildlife. These include hedgerows, longer grass, meadows and trees, rain/bog gardens or wetland areas. Other benefits to nature networks include helping us to adapt to climate change in our urban areas. – NatureScot, Nature Networks Explained.

Pollinator friendly planting: Areas of nectar-rich plants/ flowers which support pollinating insects such as butterflies and bees.

Raingardens: Habitats or landscaping designs that collect rainwater, slowly releasing it back into the soils, with the ability to adapt to wet and dry conditions, providing habitat for wildlife.

Riparian tree planting: Planting trees along riverbanks and areas alongside rivers or streams.

Street trees: Individual trees planted in or alongside streets / civic spaces.

Wee forests / Tiny forests: Small, dense and fast growing native woodland.

Wetlands: Areas which are permanently or seasonally inundated with water, such as ponds, scrapes or wet grasslands.

Appendix 2: Consultation Survey Questions

1 Where do you live?
Musselburgh area/Fa'side area/ Preston, Seton, Gosford/ North Berwick Coastal/ Haddington & Lammermuirs/ Dunbar & East Linton/ Outside of East Lothian

2 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?
If yes, please indicate which one

3 I use my parks and greenspaces for:
(Please tick all that apply)
Sports/Exercise/The play areas/Social Spaces/ A meeting place/To get outdoors/To be close to nature/ For passing through/ Organised groups/ Sports/Exercise/The play areas/Social Spaces/ A meeting place/To get outdoors/To be close to nature/ For passing through/ Organised groups events/ A place to relax/ For community food growing areas or allotments/ Outdoor classrooms or education events/ None of the above/ Other
If you picked other, please suggest below:

4 In the last 12 months, how often on average have you visited your local park or greenspace areas in East Lothian?
Once a week or more often/ 3-4 times a month/ 1-2 times a month/ Once every 2 to 3 months/ Once or twice a year/ Less often/ Never

5 How far away from your home is your nearest park/greenspace?
Less than a 5 minute walk/ within a 5-10 minute walk/ within 11-20 minute walk/ within a 21-30 minute walk/ More than a 30 minute walk/ Don't know

6 To what extend do you agree with the following statements?

'In, general my local parks and greenspaces are important to me'
'In general, nature is important to me'
'I like to be able to get close to nature in my local park/greenspace'
'In general, I would like to see more biodiversity/nature enhancement across East Lothian's parks and greenspaces'

Strongly agree/Agree/Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree/ Don't know or unsure.

7 I would like to see more of these nature networks types and biodiversity enhancement in East Lothian's parks and greenspaces (please select all that apply).
Hedgerows/ Shrubs and bushes/ Tree planting/ Street trees/ Woodland habitat/ Meadows/Naturalised grassland/ Wee forests or tiny forests/ Pollinator friendly planting/ habitat/ Meadows/Naturalised grassland/ Wee forests or tiny forests/ Pollinator friendly planting/ Raingardens/ Bog gardens/ Wetlands/ None of the options above/ Other

8 What EXISTING nature networks or nature do you like in the below parks (For each park any/ all that apply)
Hedgerows/shrubs/bushes/Tree Planting/ Street Trees/ Woodland Habitat/ Meadows/ Longer naturalised grass/ Pollinator friendly planting/ Raingardens & bog gardens/ Wetlands
Any comments

9 Which of these nature networks or nature options would you like to see MORE of in the following parks (For each park any/ all that apply)
Hedgerows/shrubs/bushes/Tree Planting/ Street Trees/ Woodland Habitat/ Meadows/ Longer naturalised grass/ Pollinator friendly planting/ Raingardens & bog gardens/ Wetlands
Any comments

10 Other than the areas proposed in this survey, are there any other Council owned/managed locations where you would like to see more biodiversity enhancement or nature networks?

11 Please let us know if there is any other feedback about the Nature Network project that you would like to give.

[Equalities monitoring questions were also included within the survey]

Appendix 3: Sites (Council owned / managed parks and greenspaces) included within the consultation survey

Musselburgh Local Area	Haddington & Lammermuirs	Preston, Seton, Gosford	Fa'side	North Berwick Coastal	Dunbar & East Linton
Lewisvale Park, Musselburgh	Athelstaneford Park	Cuthill Park, Prestonpans	Polson Park, Tranent	The Lodge Grounds, North Berwick	Pine Street Park, Dunbar
St Ninians Park, Musselburgh	Neilson Park, Haddington	Polwarth Park (Cemetery Park), Prestonpans	Macmerry Park	Memorial Park (Recreation Park), Gullane.	Lochend Rd park (Ashfield), Dunbar
Haugh Park, Musselburgh	Whittinghame Drive greenspaces, Haddington	Goolwa Park, Port Seton	Pencaitland Park		Winterfield Park, Dunbar
Wallyford Park	Gifford Park	King George V Park, Port Seton	Tranent greenspace behind George Johnstone Centre		Seafield greenspace, West Barns
Whitecraig Park	Garvald Park	Longniddry Park	Ormiston Park		East Linton Memorial Park

Appendix 4: Consultation Survey Results for Individual Parks and Greenspaces: Views on Existing Nature Networks / Natural Habitats

The consultation survey asked respondents for their views on existing nature networks / natural habitats within a range of individual public parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's main towns and villages. Results are presented here for all parks and greenspaces included within the consultation survey.

Respondents were asked:

What EXISTING nature networks or nature do you like in the below parks? (For each park, please select any / all that apply)

Haddington & Lammermuirs local area:

Athelstaneford Park:

There were 28 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	19	68%
Tree planting	18	64%
Pollinator friendly planting	15	54%
Longer naturalised grass	12	43%
Woodland habitat	10	36%
Meadows	10	36%
Street trees	9	32%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	9	32%
Wetlands	8	29%

Neilson Park, Haddington:

There were 85 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	62	73%
Tree planting	62	73%
Pollinator friendly planting	53	62%
Woodland habitat	30	35%
Longer naturalised grass	27	32%
Street trees	24	28%
Meadows	24	28%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	10	12%
Wetlands	8	9%

Whittingehame Drive greenspace, Haddington:

There were 50 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	35	70%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	30	60%
Street trees	26	52%
Pollinator friendly planting	26	52%
Woodland habitat	23	46%
Meadows	22	44%
Longer naturalised grass	22	44%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	8	16%
Wetlands	8	16%

Gifford Park: There were 53 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Woodland habitat	35	66%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	26	49%
Tree planting	26	49%
Pollinator friendly planting	24	45%
Longer naturalised grass	21	40%
Street trees	20	38%
Meadows	20	38%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	14	26%
Wetlands	13	25%

Garvald Park: There were 35 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	24	69 %
Tree planting	21	60%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	20	57%
Woodland habitat	19	54%
Longer naturalised grass	17	49%
Meadows	16	46%
Street trees	15	43%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	10	29 %
Wetlands	9	26%

North Berwick Coastal:

Lodge Grounds, North Berwick:

There were 128 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	93	73%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	88	69%
Pollinator friendly planting	87	68%
Woodland habitat	81	63%
Longer naturalised grass	68	53%
Meadows	52	41%
Street trees	38	30%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	20	16%
Wetlands	13	10%

Memorial Park (Recreation Park), Gullane:

There were 37 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	27	73%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	24	65%
Pollinator friendly planting	21	57%
Woodland habitat	20	54%
Longer naturalised grass	19	51%
Meadows	15	41%
Street trees	14	38%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	10	27%
Wetlands	9	24%

Dunbar & East Linton local area:

East Linton Memorial Park:

There were 48 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	33	69%
Tree planting	32	67%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	26	54%
Street trees	21	44%
Meadows	21	44%
Longer naturalised grass	18	38%
Woodland habitat	17	35%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	7	15%
Wetlands	7	15%

Pine Street Park, Dunbar:

There were 35 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	24	69%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	20	57%
Longer naturalised grass	19	54%
Tree planting	18	51%
Woodland habitat	18	51%
Street trees	16	46%
Meadows	16	46%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	10	29%
Wetlands	9	29%

Winterfield Park, Dunbar:

There were 64 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	49	77%
Longer naturalised grass	39	61%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	35	55%
Tree planting	32	50%
Meadows	28	44%
Woodland habitat	23	36%
Street trees	20	31%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	12	19%
Wetlands	12	19%

Seafield greenspace, West Barns:

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	25	60%
Woodland habitat	23	55%
Tree planting	22	52%
Longer naturalised grass	22	52%
Pollinator friendly planting	21	50%
Meadows	18	43%
Wetlands	17	40%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	12	29%
Street trees	11	26%

Lochend Rd Park (Ashfield), Dunbar:

There were 43 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Woodland habitat	28	65%
Pollinator friendly planting	24	56%
Longer naturalised grass	23	53%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	22	51%
Tree planting	22	51%
Street trees	19	44%
Meadows	19	44%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	14	33%
Wetlands	13	30%

Musselburgh Local Area:

Lewisvale Park, Musselburgh:

There were 88 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	63	72%
Tree planting	57	65%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	54	61%
Woodland habitat	43	49%
Meadows	38	43%
Longer naturalised grass	31	35%
Street trees	25	28%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	16	18%
Wetlands	8	9%

Haugh Park, Musselburgh:

There were 61 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	38	62%
Pollinator friendly planting	37	61%
Tree planting	36	59%
Woodland habitat	29	48%
Longer naturalised grass	28	46%
Street trees	22	36%
Meadows	22	36%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	14	23%
Wetlands	10	16%

St Ninians Park, Musselburgh:

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	22	71%
Tree planting	19	61%
Pollinator friendly planting	19	61%
Street trees	18	58%
Meadows	16	52%
Woodland habitat	15	48%
Longer naturalised grass	15	48%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	7	23%
Wetlands	6	19%

Wallyford Park:

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	18	58%
Pollinator friendly planting	18	58%
Tree planting	15	48%
Street trees	15	48%
Longer naturalised grass	14	45%
Meadows	12	39%
Woodland habitat	11	35%
Wetlands	6	19%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	5	16%

Whitecraig Park:

There were 17 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Street trees	12	71%
Pollinator friendly planting	10	59%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	9	53%
Tree planting	8	47%
Woodland habitat	8	47%
Longer naturalised grass	8	47%
Meadows	7	41%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	5	29%
Wetlands	5	29%

Fa'side local area:

Polson Park, Tranent:

There were 33 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	23	70%
Tree planting	20	61%
Pollinator friendly planting	17	52%
Street trees	16	48%
Longer naturalised grass	12	36%
Woodland habitat	11	33%
Meadows	11	33%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	7	21%
Wetlands	7	21%

Macmerry Park:

There were 13 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	10	77%
Street trees	9	69%
Woodland habitat	8	62%
Pollinator friendly planting	7	54%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	6	46%
Meadows	6	46%
Longer naturalised grass	5	38%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	4	31%
Wetlands	4	31%

Tranent greenspace behind George Johnstone Centre:

There were 23 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	14	61%
Pollinator friendly planting	14	61%
Tree planting	13	57%
Street trees	13	57%
Woodland habitat	9	39%
Meadows	9	39%
Longer naturalised grass	9	39%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	6	26%
Wetlands	6	26%

Pencaitland Park:

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	16	62%
Woodland habitat	16	62%
Street trees	13	50%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	12	46%
Longer naturalised grass	12	46%
Pollinator friendly planting	12	46%
Meadows	11	42%
Wetlands	5	19%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	4	15%

Ormiston Park: There were 34 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	22	65%
Woodland habitat	20	59%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	19	56%
Pollinator friendly planting	18	53%
Longer naturalised grass	17	50%
Street trees	13	38%
Meadows	11	32%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	7	21%
Wetlands	5	15%

Preston, Seton & Gosford local area:

Cuthill Park, Prestonpans:

There were 28 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	20	71%
Pollinator friendly planting	15	54%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	14	50%
Woodland habitat	13	46%
Longer naturalised grass	12	43%
Street trees	9	32%
Meadows	8	29%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	4	14%
Wetlands	4	14%

Polwarth Park / Cemetery Park, Prestonpans:

There were 15 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Street trees	10	67%
Pollinator friendly planting	10	67%
Tree planting	9	60%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	7	47%
Meadows	7	47%
Longer naturalised grass	6	40%
Woodland habitat	5	33%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	5	33%
Wetlands	4	27%

Goolwa Park, Port Seton:

There were 21 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	12	57%
Pollinator friendly planting	12	57%
Tree planting	11	52%
Street trees	10	48%
Woodland habitat	7	33%
Longer naturalised grass	7	33%
Meadows	6	29%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	6	29%
Wetlands	4	19%

King George V Park, Port Seton:

There were 18 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Tree planting	12	67%
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	9	50%
Meadows	8	44%
Pollinator friendly planting	8	44%
Longer naturalised grass	7	39%
Street trees	6	33%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	5	28%
Woodland habitat	4	22%
Wetlands	3	17%

Longniddry play & recreation ground:

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Hedgerows/ shrubs/ bushes	17	65%
Tree planting	16	62%
Street trees	13	50%
Pollinator friendly planting	13	50%
Woodland habitat	8	31%
Longer naturalised grass	8	31%
Meadows	6	23%
Raingardens & Bog Gardens	6	23%
Wetlands	4	15%

Appendix 5: Consultation Survey Results for Individual Parks and Greenspaces: Views on Future Nature Networks

The consultation survey asked respondents for their views on what nature networks / natural habitat options they would like to see in future within a range of individual public parks and greenspaces across East Lothian's main towns and villages. Results are presented here for all parks and greenspaces included within the consultation survey.

Respondents were asked:

Which of these nature network or nature options would you like to see MORE of in the following parks? (For each park, please select any / all that apply)

Musselburgh Local area:

Lewisvale Park, Musselburgh: There were 91 respondents for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of were: pollinator planting (83%), naturalised longer grass (60%), meadows (52%) and more tree planting (52%). From these results, in Lewisvale Park there is potential to enhance the landscape with more pollinator friendly planting with nectar bars or increasing perennial and flower density within planted beds, connecting and enhancing 'B-line' network, as well as utilising suitable space to enhance and naturalise amenity grass, increasing plant biodiversity.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	76	83%
Naturalised longer grass	55	60%
Tree planting	48	52%
Meadows	48	52%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	46	50.5%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	42	46%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	36	39.5%
Street trees	29	31%
Wetlands	22	24%

St Ninians Park, Musselburgh: There were 57 responses for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of within this area were: pollinator friendly planting (86%), naturalised longer grass (65%), hedgerows (65%) and tree planting (61%). From these results there may be potential to connect and enhance areas of hedgerow, as well as plant trees for shelter and shade; and also create a network of woodland and hedgerow habitat. There is grassland network adjacent to either side of the railway line at Wallyford. Creating 'stepping stones' and expanding habitat areas of naturalised grassland for biodiversity could help this area's grassland network, as well as supporting invertebrate populations with meadows or more pollinator friendly planting.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	49	86%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	37	65%
Naturalised longer grass	37	65%
Tree planting	35	61%
Meadows	25	57%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	28	49%
Street trees	24	42%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	22	38%
Wetlands	16	28%

Haugh Park, Musselburgh: There were 72 responses for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of within this area were: pollinator friendly planting (78%), naturalised longer grass (64%), hedgerows (61%) and tree planting (60%). Haugh Park has grassland, woodland and wetland areas which are key habitat networks. There could be potential to continue to enhance the habitat within this park by increasing grass species through grassland management, maintaining hedges, shrub and riparian tree cover, as well as increasing flowering species present within the area to support pollinating insects and management of invasive species.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	56	78%
Naturalised longer grass	46	64%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	44	61%
Tree planting	43	60%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	39	54%
Meadows	36	50%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	31	43%
Street trees	29	40%
Wetlands	26	36%

Wallyford Park: There were 53 responses for this park. The top 4 nature networks respondents wanted to see more of within this area were: pollinator friendly planting (83%), hedgerows (68%), tree planting (68%), naturalised longer grass (66%). From these results there is potential to increase planting of species that benefit pollinators, such as more flowering species, and also increase hedgerow habitat and plant more trees for shade and shelter. We acknowledge that Wallyford Park, like many other areas, is used for activities that may not be suitable for large areas of nature networks. However, there are opportunities around edges to create hedgerows and plant trees.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	44	83%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	36	68%
Tree planting	36	68%
Naturalised longer grass	35	66%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	32	60%
Meadows	31	58%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	22	41%
Street trees	20	38%
Wetlands	16	30%

Whitecraig Park: There were 36 responses for this park. The top 4 nature network types people wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (77%), woodland habitat (66%), hedgerows & shrubs (64%), naturalised longer grass (63%). These results could bring opportunities for more tree cover and hedgerows. Whitecraig is located between two large woodland habitats with no green network connection. There would be a beneficial opportunity to enhance and create hedgerow and woodland habitat to connect these two large areas of habitat, while also providing shade and shelter within the park. There may also be an opportunity to create grassland or meadow with wildflowers, benefiting pollinators and increasing flower density.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	28	77%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	24	66%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	23	64%
Naturalised longer grass	23	63%
Meadows	22	61%
Tree planting	21	58%
Street trees	17	47%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	15	41%
Wetlands	14	38%

Preston, Seton & Gosford local area:

Cuthill Park, Prestonpans: There were 40 respondents for this park. The top 4 nature networks they wanted to see more of were: pollinator friendly planting (77%), meadows and naturalised longer grass (62%), and more tree planting. There is a woodland network neighbouring this area, so this habitat could be enhanced and maintained to ensure quality and connectivity. There may also be potential to increase flower density through pollinator friendly planting or creating areas of meadow with wildflowers.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	31	77%
Meadows	25	62%
Naturalised longer grass	25	62%
Tree planting	24	60 %
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	52%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	19	47%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	17	42%
Wetlands	16	40%
Street trees	14	35%

Polwarth Park (Cemetery Park), Prestonpans: There were 33 responses for this park. The top 5 biodiversity enhancement and nature networks they wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (72%), naturalised longer grass (60%), woodland habitat and/or wee forests (60%) and tree planting and meadows (57%). These results could bring opportunities to enhance and create habitat mosaic, as currently there is some amenity grass and few trees. Cemeteries are valuable habitat to biodiversity, and enhancing the neighbouring park with some tree planting and meadow or grassland. It could support wildlife found within the cemetery and provide summer and wintering habitats. Increasing tree cover and creating areas of meadow or grassland will help provide a diverse range of habitat within the area, and also provide shade and shelter during extreme weather.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	24	72%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	20	60%
Naturalised longer grass	20	60%
Tree planting	19	57%
Meadows	19	57%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	17	51%
Street trees	14	42%
Wetlands	14	42%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	11	33%

Goolwa Park, Port Seton: There were 31 responses for this park. The top 5 habitat types people wanted to see more of included: pollinator planting (67%), naturalised longer grass (61%), tree planting (54%), hedgerows and woodland (51%). These results could bring potential for more flowering species through pollinator planting within the bedding plants, as well as areas of naturalised grass which encourages more plant biodiversity. The trees and hedgerows along the south side of the park should be maintained and enhanced to support biodiversity relying on this habitat.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	21	67%
Naturalised longer grass	19	61%
Tree planting	17	54%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	16	51%
Meadows	16	51%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	15	48%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	13	42%
Wetlands	12	39%
Street trees	10	32%

King George V Park, Port Seton: There were 31 responses for this park. The top 4 biodiversity enhancements/nature network types that people wanted to see more of within this included: pollinator friendly planting (67%), naturalised longer grass (64%), tree planting (61%) and hedgerows (54%). These results identify opportunities to increase flowering species planted, finding areas to enhance naturalised grassland, and planting trees for shade, as well as planting and enhancing hedgerows.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	21	67%
Naturalised longer grass	20	64%
Tree planting	19	61%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	17	54%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	17	54%
Meadows	16	51%
Street trees	14	45%
Wetlands	11	35%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	10	32%

Longniddry play & recreation ground: There were 37 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat/nature types respondents wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (62%), naturalised longer grass (62%), tree planting (62%), and woodland habitat and/or wee forests, identifying potential increased tree planting and woodland habitat. There is network of 2 areas of woodland habitat either side of Longniddry. However, the distance between these two habitats is more than the maximum dispersal distance of 500m, so there is opportunity to create 'stepping stones' between these two key habitats. Increasing flowering plant species will help extend B-line network, supporting pollinators and may also make the area look appealing when flowering areas are in full bloom.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Tree planting	23	62%
Naturalised longer grass	23	62%
Pollinator friendly planting	23	62%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	56%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	19	51%
Meadows	19	51 %
Street trees	18	48%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	12	32%
Wetlands	11	29%

Fa'side local area:

Polson Park, Tranent: There were 48 responses for this park identifying the nature networks respondents wanted to see more of within this area. The top 4 habitat types that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (79%), naturalised longer grass (69%), tree planting (66%), meadows (64%), and woodland habitat (60%). These results bring opportunities to plant more trees, develop areas under trees for woodland with either meadow, grassland or pollinator friendly bulb planting. Although within Polson Park, developing these habitats may require specific management due to mature sycamore trees efficiently seeding within the establishing grassland/meadow. Bedding areas could be enhanced with more perennial flowers, creating 'nectar bars'.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	38	79%
Naturalised longer grass	33	69%
Tree planting	32	66%
Meadows	31	64%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	29	60%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	27	56%
Street trees	23	48%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	23	48%
Wetlands	20	41%

Macmerry Park: There were 35 responses for this park identifying what nature network respondents wanted to see more of within this area. The top 4 habitat types that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (68%), tree planting (66%), hedgerows (60%), woodland (60%) and meadows (60%). These results could bring opportunities to increase tree cover and create hedgerows. Macmerry has large areas of open space with short amenity grass. Increasing tree cover and planting hedgerows will help provide shade and shelter, as well as diversify the types of habitats found within that area. Increasing pollinator friendly planting could bring colour and increase flower density to the areas, which will support pollinating species that use the surrounding farmland with food resources and shelter.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	24	68%
Tree planting	23	66%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	21	60%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	60%
Meadows	21	60%
Naturalised longer grass	19	54%
Street trees	13	37%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	13	37%
Wetlands	10	28%

Pencaitland Park: There were 41 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (78%), hedgerows & shrubs (63%), naturalised longer grass (60%) and tree planting (58%). Pencaitland Park is surrounded by woodland habitat network, so enhancing and maintaining this habitat to support biodiversity will be beneficial. Enhancing and increasing areas of naturalised grassland will help to support species that use small patches of grassland habitat surrounding this area as well.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	32	78%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	26	63%
Naturalised longer grass	25	60%
Tree planting	24	58%
Meadows	23	56%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	19	46%
Street trees	15	36%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	15	36%
Wetlands	11	27%

Tranent greenspace behind George Johnstone Centre: There were 44 responses for this park, identifying what nature networks they wanted to see more of within the area. The top 4 habitat types people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (79%), naturalised longer grass (61%), meadows (61%), and tree planting. These results will help develop potential actions including increasing tree planting, developing and creating wildflower and naturalised grassland areas as design and planning for development of this park takes place for the future.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	35	79%
Meadows	27	61%
Naturalised longer grass	27	61%
Tree planting	25	57%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	24	54%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	22	50%
Street trees	17	39%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	16	36%
Wetlands	15	34%

Ormiston Park: There were 45 responses for this park, identifying what nature networks they wanted to see more of within the area. The top 4 habitat types people want to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (75%), meadows (64%), naturalised longer grass (51%) and tree planting (45%). The local community in Ormiston has previously been involved with nature network enhancement in Ormiston Park, developing areas of longer grass around newly planted trees. However, these results identify that there are opportunities to build on this. Planting more trees can help connect areas of woodland network that surrounds this area, as well as creating and enhancing wildflower meadows, benefiting not only biodiversity as feeding and sheltering habitat, but also enhancing the attractiveness of the area when in bloom.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	34	75%
Meadows	29	64%
Naturalised longer grass	23	51%
Tree planting	25	45%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	20	44%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	20	44%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	17	38%
Street trees	16	35%
Wetlands	15	33%

Haddington & Lammermuirs area:

Athelstaneford Park: There were 30 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (73%), tree planting (63%), naturalised longer grass (63%) and meadows (60%). These results identify the potential to enhance the tree planting within the area, as well as develop areas of naturalised grassland and meadow.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	22	73%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	70%
Tree planting	19	63%
Naturalised longer grass	19	63%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	18	60%%
Meadows	18	60%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	14	46%
Street trees	13	43%
Wetlands	13	43%

Neilson Park, Haddington: There were 67 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (67%), naturalised longer grass (58%), woodland habitat (58%) and tree planting. These results identify opportunities to increase perennial pollinator friendly planting within the landscaped bedding areas, as well as the potential to introduce wildflowers. The hedgerows within this area could be enhanced and maintained as both food resource and shelter, as they provide habitat for many bird species and invertebrate species. Naturalised grassland areas could be added under tree canopies around the boundary of this area, but also include suitable wildflower species or bulbs to enhance the look of these areas.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	46	69%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	39	58%
Naturalised longer grass	39	58%
Tree planting	37	55%
Meadows	35	52%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	31	46%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	25	37%
Street trees	23	34%
Wetlands	16	24%

Whittingehame Drive greenspace, Haddington: There were 49 responses for this greenspace. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator planting (71%), tree planting (69%), hedgerows (65%), meadows (63%), identifying the potential to increase the amount of flowering species within this area either through more pollinator friendly species or wildflower meadows, while also maintaining and enhancing hedgerows, connecting nearby woodland and grassland habitats.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	35	71%
Tree planting	34	69%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	32	65%
Meadows	31	63%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	30	61%
Naturalised longer grass	30	61%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	20	41%
Street trees	18	37%
Wetlands	16	33%

Gifford Park: There were 42 responses for this park. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (76%), tree planting and meadows (57%) and naturalised longer grass (54%). These results identify that there is opportunity to enhance existing woodland and tree habitat within the area. There is also the potential to increase meadow and grassland habitat within this area, diversifying the mosaic of habitats in this area.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	32	76%
Tree planting	24	57%
Meadows	24	57%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	23	54%
Naturalised longer grass	23	54%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	21	50%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	20	47%
Street trees	19	45%
Wetlands	19	45%

Garvald Park: There were 35 responses for this park. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (74%), meadows, grassland and tree planting (60%). These results identify opportunities to enhance and increase planting for pollinating species and increasing amount of flowering plants, as well as planting more trees for shelter and shade.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	26	74%
Tree planting	21	60%
Meadows	21	60%
Naturalised longer grass	21	60%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	20	57%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	18	51%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	17	48%
Wetlands	16	46%
Street trees	15	43%

North Berwick Coastal area:

The Lodge Grounds, North Berwick: There were 85 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types respondents wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (71%), naturalised longer grass (67%), meadows (63%) and woodland habitat (55%). These results identify the potential to increase and expand pollinator friendly planting across this greenspace. There are currently planted beds within the Lodge Grounds, which are popular with visitors. Species planted in the future could include more flowering species supporting more pollinators. Areas of the Lodge Grounds could be used to create wildflower meadow with grasses to increase plant species, provided feeding and sheltering habitat for both bird and invertebrate species. The woodland habitat that is currently present could be enhanced.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	61	71%
Naturalised longer grass	57	67%
Meadows	54	63%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	47	55%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	45	53%
Tree planting	45	53%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	41	48%
Wetlands	33	38%
Street trees	22	25%

Memorial Park (Recreation Park), Gullane: There were 40 responses for this park. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements respondents wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (75%), meadows (75%), naturalised longer grass (65%), and tree planting (55%). These results identify opportunities to enhance and plant more trees, increase flowering plants for pollinators and create meadows.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	30	75%
Meadows	30	75%
Naturalised longer grass	26	65%
Tree planting	22	55%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	21	52%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	21	52%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	17	42%
Street trees	16	40%
Wetlands	14	35%

Dunbar & East Linton area:

East Linton Memorial Park: There were 51 respondents for this park. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (80%), meadows (68%), hedgerows (65%) and tree planting (63%). These results identify opportunities to enhance woodland habitat within this space, and also maintain the hedgerows for biodiversity. As pollinator friendly planting and meadows were the top 2 habitats highlighted by respondents, more pollinator supporting planting and creation of meadows could be expanded in appropriate spaces within this area.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	41	80%
Meadows	35	68%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	33	65%
Tree planting	32	63%
Naturalised longer grass	32	63%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	31	60%
Street trees	23	45%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	21	41%
Wetlands	16	31%

Pine Street Park, Dunbar: There were 46 responses for this park. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (80%), naturalised longer grass (67%), tree planting (63%) and hedgerows (61%). These results indicate the opportunity to enhance and increase naturalised grassland areas, plant species that benefit pollinators, as well as enhancing hedgerows and planting more trees, creating shade and shelter.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	37	80%
Naturalised longer grass	31	67%
Tree planting	29	63%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	28	61%
Meadows	27	59%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	26	56%
Street trees	22	48%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	21	46%
Wetlands	13	28%

Lochend Road Park (Ashfield), Dunbar: There were 50 response for this park. The top 5 nature/biodiversity enhancements that people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (88%), hedgerows (72%), naturalised longer grass (66%), tree planting and meadows (62%). These results indicate that there may be opportunities to increase tree planting and enhance hedgerows within this areas, which would help to connect the adjacent woodland network, as well as creating areas of wildflower meadows and areas of naturalised grassland.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	40	88%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	36	72%
Naturalised longer grass	33	66%
Tree planting	31	62%
Meadows	31	62%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	27	54%
Street trees	26	52%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	24	48%
Wetlands	20	40%

Seafield greenspace, West Barns: There were 47 responses for this greenspace area. The top 4 nature/biodiversity enhancements people wanted to see more of included: pollinator friendly planting (79%), naturalised longer grass (74%), meadows (68%) and hedgerows (64%). These results identify opportunities to maintain and develop the existing woodland habitat within this area, as well as create areas of meadow and/or naturalised grassland. There is a pond within this area that supports species of wildfowl, and with appropriate management this could become valuable habitat for freshwater species such as dragonflies or amphibians.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	37	79%
Naturalised longer grass	35	74%
Meadows	32	68%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	30	64%
Tree planting	28	59%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	27	57%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	22	47%
Wetlands	19	40%
Street trees	18	38%

Winterfield Park, Dunbar: There were 58 responses for this park. The top 4 habitat types that respondents wanted to see more of within this area included: pollinator friendly planting (82%), naturalised longer grass (76%), tree planting (67%) and meadows (62%). These results identify potential to increase the amount of flowering species within this area, with either pollinator friendly species within bedding areas or meadow creation. As this habitat is coastal, the species planted would have to be suitable for coastal planting, for example, coastal meadow mixes or species tolerant to salt water and coastal conditions. There is a tree belt planted within the park, and there could be potential to enhance this, providing shade and shelter from an often windy coastline.

Option	Total responses wanting to see more of this habitat type	Percent
Pollinator friendly planting	48	82%
Naturalised longer grass	44	76%
Tree planting	39	67%
Meadows	36	62%
Hedgerows/ Shrubs/ bushes	34	59%
Woodland habitat and/or Wee forests	30	51%
Raingardens/ bog gardens	25	43%
Street trees	23	39%
Wetlands	19	33%

Appendix 6: Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of a Nature Network?

Connectivity and restoration of habitats across urban and rural landscapes. This will help resilience and healthy ecosystems, supporting East Lothian's biodiversity and bringing the positive benefits of nature closer to where people live.

What do Nature Networks look like?

Nature networks can include a variety of habitats and can be created not just within parks and greenspaces, but within gardens and across rural areas.

They may look like:

- Hedgerows
- Grassland
- Ponds
- Rivers
- Meadows
- Orchards
- Heathland
- Woodland
- Wetlands

This list of the type of habitats that can be nature networks is not exhaustive.

Where will the Nature Networks be?

This project has focussed on locations within Council owned or managed parks and greenspaces, so you may see nature networks enhanced across local parks and recreational greenspaces. However, nature networks are not restricted to only Council owned or managed land, as we would like to see a connected mosaic of habitats across East Lothian and across Scotland. We encourage those who want to create a network of habitats on private land or a space they may look after or have access to, to get involved with this project. 64

Will longer grass attract litter and hide dog fouling?

All sites should be maintained to current standards and management plans. Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. It is against the law for anyone who is responsible for a dog to not clean up after the dog has fouled.

Littering is an offence in Scotland, and people are responsible for disposing of their own waste responsibly. Please contact us if people are letting their dogs foul in your area.

Will there be an increase in ticks within longer grass and meadows?

We appreciate concern about ticks around longer vegetation. There are increases in tick incidents across Scotland, due to milder wetter winters. Most ticks do not carry infection- infection rate in the UK varies from 0 to 1 in 5 ticks and unfortunately we cannot remove them from the environment, so we need to be aware of the risks and take steps to protect ourselves. Please follow Lyme Disease Action UK for information of how to protect yourself from tick bites and what to do if you are bitten.

How can I find out more?

Details of the Nature Networks project can be found on East Lothian Council's Nature Networks website page:

Nature Networks in our parks and greenspaces | Nature Networks | East Lothian Council.

If you have any enquiries, please contact us by email at: naturenetworks@eastlothian.gov.uk

14 References & Further Reading

East Lothian Council's Open Space Strategy

East Lothian Council's Green Network Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance

East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020–2025

Nature Networks explained | NatureScot

National Planning Framework 4

State of Nature Scotland Report 2019 | NatureScot

Scottish Government's Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Equity in access to urban nature: Out of Bounds - Groundwork

Nature-based play publication - Play Scotland

Home - Edinburgh Living Landscapes

Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) - Habitat Connectivity Map Guides | NatureScot

15 Acknowledgements

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East Lothian Council