

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
26 FEBRUARY 2001**

**REPORT ON: APPRAISAL AND EVALUATION OF URBAN NATURE CONSERVATION
SUBJECT LOCAL PLAN 1995, INCORPORATING RESULTS OF
HABITATS AND SPECIES SURVEY 2000**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 66-2001

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report back the results of an in-house appraisal and evaluation of the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan 1995 (UNCSLP), incorporating the findings of the Habitats and Species Survey 2000 commissioned from external Consultants.
- 1.2 To obtain a remit for undertaking a formal Review of the UNCSLP 1995, based on the appraisal and evaluation exercise.
- 1.3 To advise on the most appropriate method by which the Plan will be taken forward.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the appraisal and evaluation and remits the Director of Planning and Transportation to undertake a formal Review of the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan, based on its findings.
- 2.2 That a limited number of private landowners are consulted on relevant nature conservation sites recommended in the Habitat and Species Survey 2000.
- 2.3 That the key findings of the appraisal and evaluation are discussed with the Community Planning Sustainability Sub Group (Nature Conservation) to raise awareness.
- 2.4 That the UNCSLP Review is incorporated into the Review of the Dundee Local Plan 1998 which is also due to commence this year.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Habitats and Species Survey was completed within budget at a cost of £7,500. Provision was made for £2,500 within the Planning and Transportation Department's 2000/2001 Revenue Budget. The Director of Arts and Heritage contributed £2,500 towards the costs of the Survey from the Changing Nature Project Budget 2000/2001 (Heritage Lottery Fund). Scottish Natural Heritage provided grant assistance for the remaining £2,500.
- 3.2 Provision has been made in the Planning and Transportation Department's 2000/2001 and 2001/02 Revenue Budget subject to the provision of resources to cover the costs of statutory press adverts associated with the formal Review process.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The UNCSLP 1995 has succeeded in safeguarding and enhancing the City's non-statutory wildlife resources. Based on the Consultant's recommendations, the UNCSLP Review will

consider a revised network of non-statutory sites of interest to nature conservation across the City, supported by community wildlife sites and wildlife corridors.

4.2 This will encourage more effective promotion and enhancement of Dundee's nature conservation resources for future generations, with emphasis on engaging local communities in active stewardship and management of sites. The Review will also seek to maximise local biodiversity objectives across non-statutory nature conservation sites, via the development process and broader partnership activities of the Council. This will further enhance the image of the City and improve informal recreation, interpretation and educational opportunities for communities and visitors alike.

4.3 The following key themes of Local Agenda 21 are therefore supported:

- The diversity of nature is valued and protected;
- Diversity and local distinctiveness are valued and protected;
- Places, spaces and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility;
- Opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily accessible to all;
- Health is protected by creating safe, clean, pleasant, environments and health services which emphasise prevention of illness as well as care for the sick.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The appraisal and evaluation exercise will be discussed with the Community Planning Sustainability Sub-Group (Nature Conservation) to raise awareness of its key findings. A limited number of private landowners will be consulted on relevant nature conservation sites recommended in the Habitats and Species Survey 2000. Wider public consultation will occur during the Dundee Local Plan Review process.

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Director of Planning and Transportation was remitted to undertake an in-house appraisal and evaluation of the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan, to assess its performance and effectiveness since its adoption in 1995 (Report No 368/1999 refers). The appraisal and evaluation was put back until Summer 2000 so that it could have regard to the Habitats and Species Survey commissioned from external Consultants.

6.2 Key issues arising since the adoption of the UNCSLP include:

- local government reorganisation in 1996, giving rise to a modified administrative boundary, the subsequent loss of part of the UNCSLP area to neighbouring authorities and changes in the wider responsibilities of the Council;
- various national planning policy influences including the production of National Planning Policy Guideline 14; Natural Heritage and the commencement of joint working towards a Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan to meet national biodiversity objectives;
- local policy developments including adoption of the Dundee Local Plan 1998, Dundee's Public Open Space Strategy 1999 and the Dundee 21 : Planning for

Sustainability document, along with more recent preparatory work for the emerging Community Plan;

- repetition of UNCSLP land use based nature conservation policies in the Dundee Local Plan 1998, leading to a degree of duplication, particularly in respect of Committee reports dealing with non-statutory nature conservation sites;
- a lack of dedicated financial resources to assist implementation of educational and site enhancement aspects of the Plan;
- disbanding of the Dundee Urban Wildlife Project Working Group in 1996;
- the onset of Best Value and Performance Management Planning within Local Government services.

6.3 Against this background a Consultant's Habitats and Species Survey was commissioned in July 2000 from "NAIAD" Environmental Consultancy. This sought an independent reassessment and re-evaluation of 41 non-statutory sites designated in the UNCSLP 1995 and 14 new sites recognised as having local nature conservation importance. The Habitats and Species Survey forms a core element of the appraisal and evaluation exercise.

6.4 The Survey was completed in December 2000, with assistance from the Dundee branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The Consultant's Report provides comprehensive baseline information for sites, of a standard never previously held by the Council. It appraises the site assessment methodology used in preparing the UNCSLP, summarises key findings relating to special nature conservation interest across the City and recommends various changes to wildlife site designations, site boundaries and site management opportunities, as appropriate.

6.5 Core elements of the Habitats and Species Survey are currently being displayed in McManus Galleries as part of the year long "Changing Nature", exhibition, aimed at increasing awareness of the natural environment and engaging local communities in active stewardship.

6.6 The Consultant's Survey adopts a more robust methodology for assessing and evaluating sites, compared to that used in preparing the UNCSLP. This revised methodology is based on core nature conservation criteria, whilst considering the social value of sites. It was developed following comprehensive research into methodologies adopted by other Scottish Local Authorities, in the absence of a standardised approach applied nationally. A discussion paper regarding the site assessment methodology and designation criteria is contained in Appendix 4 of the Part 1 Survey Report.

6.7 Copies of the Part 1 Survey Report are available for inspection in the Members' Lounges, supporting extracts from the survey will be displayed at Committee. The particular nature conservation qualities of the 55 sites surveyed and the Consultant's site designation recommendations have been extracted for the purposes of this Committee Report and are contained in Appendix 1. The main habitats and species found during the Survey are summarised in Appendix 2, along with key conclusions and recommendations.

6.8 In essence, the Consultant recommends simplifying the non-statutory Wildlife Site designations in Dundee, by replacing the existing hierarchy of Category A through to

Category D sites with a network of Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation (SINCs), and Community Wildlife Sites (CWSs), supported by linear wildlife corridors.

- 6.9 SINCs are defined as sites with a minimum nature conservation value obtained from set criteria, representing the most valuable non-statutory wildlife sites across the City. CWSs are sites that meet a less stringent minimum nature conservation value, but which score a minimum social value from established criteria. CWSs generally represent those sites that are considered either to be of existing value to communities in terms of nature conservation, public access and informal recreation or education, or which have the potential to be of greater natural heritage value through local community involvement. SINCs that meet the minimum social value score also qualify as Community Wildlife Sites.
- 6.10 *The UNCSLP Review will consider a revised network of non-statutory sites of interest to nature conservation across the City, supported by community wildlife sites and wildlife corridors.*
- 6.11 The Consultant's Survey did not reassess the Dighty and its immediate environs due to the nature of habitats and species present along the watercourse. Given the overriding contribution of the Dighty to Dundee's local nature conservation resource, a separate habitats and species survey (riparian) shall be commissioned from Consultant's next financial year, to feed into the UNCSLP Review. Key partnership agencies including Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency will be approached in respect of this survey so that it adopts a robust methodology and is carried out comprehensively but timeously.
- 6.12 *Assuming that external funding can be secured, a Report will be submitted to a future Committee outlining proposed funding, survey area and timescales for commissioning a separate riparian habitats and species survey of the Dighty Burn and its immediate environs from external Consultants.*
- 6.13 Overall, the UNCSLP has raised awareness about the local value of non-statutory nature conservation areas within the urban context, both in terms of their contribution to biodiversity and quality of life, The UNCSLP has been broadly successful in safeguarding the City's non-statutory wildlife resources. This is evidenced from the loss of only one Category D Wildlife Site to development and the recent designation of two new Local Nature Reserves at Trottick Ponds and Shiell Street Nature Conservation Area. Development consents have generally secured suitable provision for nature conservation within wildlife corridors, via appropriate landscaping conditions. It is important that these natural resources are retained, where appropriate, to allow citizens to experience the countryside on their doorstep.
- 6.14 *The Review will ensure that any revised network of non-statutory nature conservation sites and corridors in Dundee will be afforded appropriate protection in the Development Plan.*
- 6.15 A range of Council Departments and other bodies are currently involved to some extent with the promotion, protection or enhancement of non-statutory nature conservation sites in Dundee. To date, a lack of dedicated financial resources has impacted on the educational and site enhancement aspects of the Plan. Nonetheless, much has been achieved along the stretch of the Dighty Burn and in Shiell Street by various voluntary groups involved in clean up and restoration activities. These efforts must be commended and show the willingness of communities to get involved in active stewardship. Communities should have an opportunity to learn from and become more actively involved in promoting, protecting and enhancing these areas, wherever appropriate. This approach

is consistent with Dundee's Public Open Space Strategy, which supports local stewardship of appropriate wildlife sites by local community interests.

- 6.16 *In the interests of Best Value, the Review will support better integration between corporate and external activities associated with nature conservation in the City. The Review will also support re-establishment of a co-ordinating group of representatives from the Council, its partner agencies, voluntary groups and local communities to ensure that educational and site enhancement objectives can be delivered in a consistent and integrated manner. This will seek to maximise external funding opportunities to assist delivery of site promotion, enhancement and educational activities.*
- 6.17 The extent of change to habitats and species within non-statutory wildlife sites and corridors designated in the UNCSLP is extremely difficult to quantify in any detail, given the quality of the original survey information collated for the UNCSLP. The comprehensive survey information now held by the Council will resolve this situation, to the benefit of future monitoring and evaluation of policies and procedures. *The Review will encourage robust monitoring and evaluation of the City's non-statutory nature conservation resources, involving local communities in the process where appropriate.*
- 6.18 It is important that the Review revisits the boundary of the UNCSLP to bring it into line with the Council's administrative area. From a strategic perspective, the Review should also have regard to preparatory work towards the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan undertaken by Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils in partnership with various public sector agencies and voluntary bodies. Cross boundary nature conservation and development related activities have an impact on the viability of non-statutory nature conservation areas within Dundee. Preparation of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan will provide a strategic framework for ensuring delivery of national strategic biodiversity objectives.
- 6.19 *The Review will relate to the Council's administrative area, but shall support improved liaison between neighbouring authorities and partner agencies to ensure that activities and proposals outwith Dundee do not adversely affect the viability of non-statutory nature conservation sites within the City. It will also seek to fulfil local biodiversity objectives within non-statutory nature conservation sites, as appropriate, via the development process and broader partnership activities of the Council.*
- 6.20 *Fundamentally, the Review will consider the abandonment of the current Subject Local Plan and its absorption into the Dundee Local Plan. This will be supplemented by a non-statutory corporate strategy document that deals with all aspects of non-statutory nature conservation in the local context. These documents will take into account the provisions of the emerging Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. This approach will ensure that nature conservation and biodiversity considerations are appropriately regarded by the Council and its key partners in exercise of their duties, reflecting National Policy Guidance.*
- 6.21 The UNCSLP appraisal and evaluation exercise will be discussed with the Community Planning Sustainability Sub Group (Nature Conservation) to raise awareness of its key findings. A limited number of private landowners will be consulted on relevant sites recommended for redesignation in the Habitats and Species Survey. Wider public consultation will occur during the Dundee Local Plan Review process.
- 6.22 The UNCSLP Review will be reported back to the Committee before the end of 2001 as part of the Review of the Dundee Local Plan 1998.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, Director of Corporate Planning, Director of Education, Director of Housing, Director of Economic Development, Director of Environment and Consumer Protection (Dundee 21), Director of Leisure and Parks, Director of Neighbourhood Resources, Director of Arts and Heritage, the Legal Manager and the Chief Constable, have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this Report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Planning and Transportation Committee Report No 368/1999 provides the background to the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan appraisal and evaluation exercise.
- 8.2 An Agenda Note on the Planning and Transportation Committee in December 2000 provides background information on the Consultant's Habitats and Species Survey.

Mike Galloway
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19 February 2001

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APPENDIX 1**DUNDEE HABITATS AND SPECIES SURVEY 2000
SUMMARY OF CONSULTANT'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SITES
SURVEYED**

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF HABITATS/SPECIES AND SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Site name</i>	<i>Site interest</i>	<i>Conservation Score</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Anton Drive	Ash-elm woodland on steep slopes with well developed understorey	21	21	SINC (Amended boundary)
Arran Drive/Charleston Drive	Tall grassland and herb site with potential for enhancement	12	12	Wildlife corridor
Baldragon Wood	A native birch and alder wood with scrub and wet grassland on the edges.	26	36	SINC + CWS (Amended boundary)
Balgay Park	Parkland with old plantations, trees and mixed woodland	23	33	SINC + CWS
Barrack Road	Old elm woodland with sycamore now common, some old woodland indicator species	20	20	SINC
Bentley's Fields, Marsh and Treeline (SWT)	Adjoins Trottick Ponds LNR & consists of a marshy grassland, areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland & an abandoned field with potential for management.	20	28	SINC (if managed) & CWS
Birkhill Cemetery	A species rich grassland within a cemetery and outlying native woodlands and plantations	18	18	Open Space
Broughty Ferry Beach (SWT)	A large area of intertidal sand and some rock with seaweed beds	18	26	CWS
Broughty Ferry LNR (Shiell Street) SWT	An area of dune grassland (an uncommon habitat for the area) fringed by dense scrub and ash/elm woodland	22	30	SINC & CWS
Broughty Ferry Railway Station	Small linear grasslands with fine grasses some locally scarce species	13	18	CWS (Amended boundary)
Broughty Ferry Road	Linear grassland, tall herb and woodland site with several locally scarce species	22	22	SINC (Amended boundary)
Buttars Loan	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	-	-	Open space
Camperdown Park	Extensive semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands with birch, oak, beech and mixed woodland/plantations and running water	29	39	SINC + CWS (Amended boundary) + wildlife corridor
Catherine Street	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Clatto Country Park and Templeton Link Field	A large country park with open water, plantations and grasslands with locally scarce species	23	33	SINC + CWS (Amended boundary)

<i>Site name</i>	<i>Site interest</i>	<i>Conservation Score</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Cloan Road/Americanmuir Road	Amenity grassland with some planted trees.	3	3	Open space
Constable Street	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Constitution Street/Hilltown	Developed site	-	-	-
Dalhousie Road/Disused Railway Line	Small linear grasslands with Lyme grass and some scrub	19	19	Wildlife corridor (Amended boundary)
Den o' Mains (SWT)	A range of habitats including running water, two ponds with associated swamp, marshy grassland, a variety of blocks of woodland and amenity grassland	27	35	SINC & CWS
Denhead of Gray	An ash-elm woodland but with disturbed understorey	22	22	SINC (Amended boundary)
Derwent Avenue	Neutral grasslands with scrub on rocky outcrop surrounded by amenity park	17	27	CWS (Amended boundary)
Dickson Avenue	Amenity grassland with small amount of tall herb and plantation	Amenity		Wildlife corridor
Donald's Lane	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	-	-	Open space
Downfield Golf Course	A well manicured golf course with surrounding birch woods, plantations and running water with wetlands	27	30	SINC
Drumsturdy Pond/Woods	An old pond with swamp vegetation dominated by bur reed and canary grass	20	20	SINC
Dundee Environmental Society Site (SWT)	Marshy and semi-improved neutral grasslands with blocks of wet woodland	23	33	SINC + CWS
Dundee to Newtyle Railway (disused)	Diverse grasslands on railway ballast and scrub/tall herb habitat	22	30	SINC + CWS
Dundee Road	Species rich neutral grassland on small roadside verge	15	20	SINC + CWS
East Dock Street	Linear grassland, tall herb and woodland site with several locally scarce species	22	22	SINC (Amended boundary)
Fairmuir Road/ Old Glamis Road	A small redundant waste-ground with some grassland and tall herb	4	4	Open Space

<i>Site name</i>	<i>Site interest</i>	<i>Conservation Score</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Fort Street	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	14	14	Wildlife corridor
Gillburn Road	Semi-improved grassland site with species rich hedge	17	22	CWS
Hilltown	Amenity grassland with some young trees	Amenity		Open space
Keswick Terrace	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Law Crescent	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Law The	A volcanic outcrop dominating the Dundee skyline with calcareous grassland and plantations	23	33	SINC+ CWS
Lochee Road	Ash-elm woodland on steep slopes with basalt outcrops adjacent to Dudhope Resource Centre	21	31	SINC + CWS (Amended boundary)
Longhaugh Quarry (SWT)	An infilled quarry with a central area of grassland and a fringe of broom scrub and ash/sycamore woodland	22	26	SINC & CWS
Mains Terrace	Tall grassland and tall herb site with high diversity	17	25	CWS
Middleton Woods	A diverse and complex hill with grassland habitats and wetland margins along a burn	26	36	SINC + CWS (Amended boundary)
North George Street/Hilltown	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	14		Open space
Nursery Road	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Pentland Avenue	Old elm woodland now with sycamore next to Balgay Park	See Balgay Park 23	33	SINC (Amended boundary)
Pitkerro House Woods	A mixed semi-natural woodland with elm, ash, oak and sycamore common	26	26	SINC
Princes Street	Amenity grassland with little nature conservation interest	Amenity		Open space
Reres Hill	Mature parkland with old trees and some grassland on rocky outcrops	20	28	SINC + CWS
Riverside	Linear grassland and woodland site with high diversity along railway corridor	17	17	Wildlife corridor (Amended boundary)
Robertson Street	Restricted access	-		Open space
Roseangle	Large waste ground with developing grassland habitat	20	26	SINC + CWS
St Leonard Place	Large amenity grassland area with occasional scattered trees	Amenity		Open space

<i>Site name</i>	<i>Site interest</i>	<i>Conservation Score</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Stobsmuir Ponds	Amenity grassland and planted trees with one area of open water and yew woodland	Amenity		Open space
Swallow Hotel Wetland	A diverse and complex swamp and marginal wetland with surrounding grasslands	24	24	SINC (Amended Boundary)
Technology Park/Plantations and Grasslands	A series of open fields with grasslands and ephemeral vegetation with young plantations	23	26	SINC (Amended boundary)
Trottick Ponds LNR (SWT)	Two artificial ponds & a lade with swamp, meadow grassland and broadleaved woodland alongside Dighty Water	21	30	SINC & CWS

APPENDIX 2

DUNDEE HABITATS AND SPECIES SURVEY 2000

SUMMARY OF CONSULTANT'S KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

1.1 The main semi-natural habitats and species of significant nature conservation interest found during the Survey are as follows:

1.1.1 Woodlands

Semi-Natural Broad Leaved

Dundee has a large number of semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands, based on their maturity and the presence of a regenerating understorey of young trees which contribute to the canopy. Many of these higher conservation value woodlands are dominated by native species, including the silver birch and downy birch woodlands with oak that occur in the northern part of Dundee in Templeton Woods, Downfield Golf course and Baldragon Woods. Native oak woods with non-native beech and sycamore were also present in Templeton Woods, along with Camperdown and Pitkerro House Woods.

There are still examples of native ash-elm woodlands in the City, particularly on areas with rich substrates (eg sandstones). Although ash-elm woodlands were once quite common in Dundee and Angus, the rapid decline in wych elm through Dutch Elm disease has reduced the presence of these woodlands in the City. Diseased wych elm tends to have been replaced by sycamore and to a lesser extent other species such as oak and beech. Despite the decline of ash-elm woodlands, there are still good examples within the City at Anton Drive, Denhead of Grey and Barrack Road.

Semi-Natural Mixed

There are several types of mixed Scots pine and larch woodlands in Dundee, with birch, sycamore and oak regenerating throughout.

Scattered Shrub

Extensive patches of scrub occurred along the edge of the woodlands, with Baldragon Woods forming large stands of gorse and whins.

1.1.2 Grasslands

Unimproved Acidic

A few patches of acidic grassland occurred mainly on the hill sites such as the Law, but these grasslands were generally rare in the City. The dominants were typically fescue grasses, with heath bedstraw and sheeps sorrel.

Unimproved Neutral

These were the most common forms of grassland found during the Survey, often representing the neglected grasslands that are no longer grazed or mown. False oat grass and cocksfoot were commonly found. Dundee Road was particularly species rich, unlike most of the other grassland sites which were in a transition to tall herbs and scrub.

1.1.3 **Tall Herbs**

Several areas were covered in tall herbs, particularly along the railway lines, East Dock Street and Broughty Ferry Road, where the most common species were common hogweed, nettle and rosebay willowherb.

1.1.4 **Swamp**

Only two sites surveyed have any swamp vegetation (Swallow Hotel Wetland and Drumsturdy Ponds). Swallow Hotel Wetland was the most diverse and botanically interesting wetland sites, with a variety of swamps and marshy grasslands. On the whole, these swamp habitats are scarce in Dundee.

1.1.5 **Coastland**

Intertidal Mud/Sand

Recorded at Broughty Ferry Beach, this habitat has little vegetation apart from occasional seaweeds.

Intertidal Boulders/Rocks

Also recorded at Broughty Ferry Beach, this category is characterised by dense beds of seaweeds such as wracks.

Sand-Dune, Coastal Grassland

This was recorded at Shiell Street within the recently designated Broughty Ferry Local Nature Reserve. The central part of the Local Nature Reserve is the remnant of a dune system.

Ephemeral/Short Perennial

These short, patchy plant associations are typically found on derelict urban sites with unusual minerals or ballast. Examples were found within parts of the

Technology Park and at Roseangle. In the Roseangle site, grassland had begun to develop after primary colonisation from the ephemeral herbs.

2 KEY CONCLUSIONS

2.1 The main conclusions that can be drawn from the Survey are as follows:

- 2.1.1 Dundee has an abundance in some habitats and a scarcity in others. There are large areas of some habitats such as broad-leaved woodland, tall neutral grasslands and tall ruderal communities, while only fragments of calcareous grasslands, heathlands and swamp vegetation exist. There is a high degree of diversity in the types of woodland, grassland, tall herb and ephemeral vegetation communities present, while the more unusual habitats are less diverse. Nonetheless, these areas are important in the local context given their scarcity within Dundee.
- 2.1.2 Several sites stand out from the rest as being of high conservation value. These include regionally important habitats at Swallow Hotel Wetland (reed and sedge swamp), Middleton Wood (elm woodland), The Law (acid and calcareous grasslands), Baldragon Wood (birch woodland) and Templeton Woods (birch woodland).
- 2.1.3 Several of the sites surveyed are actively managed for public access and education at present. Establishing an appropriate network of Community Wildlife Sites across the City would provide opportunities for citizens to become more actively involved in site management, enhancement, education and interpretation activities 'on their doorstep'. Clear management statements are required for these sites in order that their particular nature conservation interests can be appropriately managed.
- 2.1.4 Wildlife corridors are generally areas of favourable habitat that connect built up areas with the countryside, allowing the movement of animals, birds and plants along them. They represent a valuable resource for maintaining biodiversity. They are also an important resource for environmental education, informal access and interpretation.
- 2.1.5 Dundee does not have many mainstream wildlife corridors, although the sites recommended for non-statutory designation in the Survey and linear routes in particular contribute to their continuity. The Dighty Burn is recognised as an important wildlife corridor within Dundee and is expected to be worthy of Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation (SINC) status. However, it was excluded from the Survey due to the riparian nature of habitats and species present and the sheer timescales involved in undertaking this type of fieldwork survey.
- 2.1.6 It is recommended that a separate riparian habitats and species survey of the Dighty and its environs is carried out by the Council in the future, to evaluate the particular nature conservation qualities of this important stretch of water. "NAIAD" recommends that a partnership is formed between the Council and organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and the Scottish Wildlife Trust to help deliver this initiative. The results of this survey should be taken into account as part of any Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan Review.

- 2.1.7 Large areas of parkland, playing fields and amenity grassland were recorded during the Survey. These areas are generally not representative of any semi-natural habitat. However, some amenity areas could be allowed to develop more naturally by reducing the number of cuts to one or two per year, especially on the periphery of sites to allow some native grasses and herbs to flower. In addition, small discrete areas of native woodland planting could also enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the area, creating better links between wildlife sites.
- 2.1.8 The extent of change to sites and species since adoption of the UNCSLP is very difficult to determine. From the fieldwork survey it was apparent that only one site had been completely lost to development. It is essential that future monitoring procedures are developed to measure the extent of change to sites and their species on a regular basis, to assist future monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.1.9 Of the 55 sites surveyed, 28 qualify for non-statutory designation as Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation (SINCs). Of these, 17 are also recommended for Community Wildlife Site Status (CWS).
- 2.1.10 Of the 27 sites that failed to qualify for SINC status, 5 qualify for CWS designation in their own right, 5 should revert to wildlife corridor status and 16 should revert to open space, without any specific nature conservation status.
- 2.1.11 The Survey only addressed those sites identified by the Council's Planning and Transportation Department, in conjunction with relevant City Council Departments. There may be other sites within the City that merit non-statutory nature conservation designation.
- 2.1.12 Many of the sites surveyed lie close to the boundary of the Council's administrative area. It is important that neighbouring Local Authorities have regard to these wildlife habitats and work with the City Council to achieve their sensitive management.
- 2.1.13 Sites designated in the UNCSLP that are considered to be no longer worthy of non-statutory nature conservation designation should revert to mainstream open space. Improving the diversity of open spaces is consistent with Dundee's Public Open Space Strategy. The Council should consider opportunities for habitat creation on appropriate sites to increase the diversity and landscape value of open spaces of poor recreational or visual amenity value. New native woodland, water and wetland features with associated reedbeds and swamps, or a diverse array of grassland and scrub communities are all examples worthy of consideration.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The following recommendations are based on the Survey findings and broad evaluation of the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan (UNCSLP). Several recommendations highlight the need for dedicated resources to support the promotion, protection and enhancement of the City's natural heritage. Opportunities exist to build on existing working practices or introduce new practices and procedures to this end. The key recommendations are as follows:
- 3.1.1 Replacement of the UNCSLP designated wildlife sites with 28 Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation (SINCs), 17 of which qualify as Community Wildlife Sites (CWS).

- 3.1.2 The addition of five CWS on their own right.
- 3.1.3 Sites that do not qualify for non-statutory nature conservation status should revert to open space.
- 3.1.4 A separate riparian Habitats and Species Survey should be carried out along the Dighty Burn and its immediate environs as a matter of priority. The results of this should be taken into consideration as part of any Review of the UNCSLP.
- 3.1.5 The Survey information obtained from the Habitats and Species Survey 2000 and the Dighty Survey should be recorded in Geographical Information System (GIS) format to assist information retrieval, monitoring and evaluation.
- 3.1.6 Any Review of the UNCSLP should relate to the Council's administrative boundary and reflect the changes and recommendations contained within the Survey Report.
- 3.1.7 Landowners should be consulted at an early stage regarding any proposed site designations, ahead of any wider community consultation process.
- 3.1.8 Land use policies securing the appropriate protection and enhancement of the designated sites should be accommodated in any Review of the Dundee Local Plan 1998.
- 3.1.9 Any Review of the UNCSLP should incorporate a map that identifies all the non-statutory nature conservation sites across the City.
- 3.1.10 The Council should seek to re-establish the Urban Wildlife Group to take forward the promotion, enhancement and protection of wildlife in Dundee.
- 3.1.11 That a monitoring programme is established to better measure the effectiveness of site protection policies, as appropriate. Similarly, monitoring procedures should be established to assess the extent of change to habitats and species of designated sites.
- 3.1.12 The Council should liaise with adjoining Local Authorities to discuss the results and recommendations of the Survey, promoting sensitive management of sites on or close to its administrative boundary.