

## Current Status

Around 20% of the LBAP area is considered to be urban in nature, with the majority of the population resident in the main urban settlements. This concentration of population means that urban habitats are of particular importance in raising awareness of biodiversity and encouraging interest in the environment.

Urban habitats within the LBAP area are, by their nature, subject to development and recreational pressures. Some of these sites are protected by national or local designations. A map of designated sites within the partnership area is shown in the introductory text.

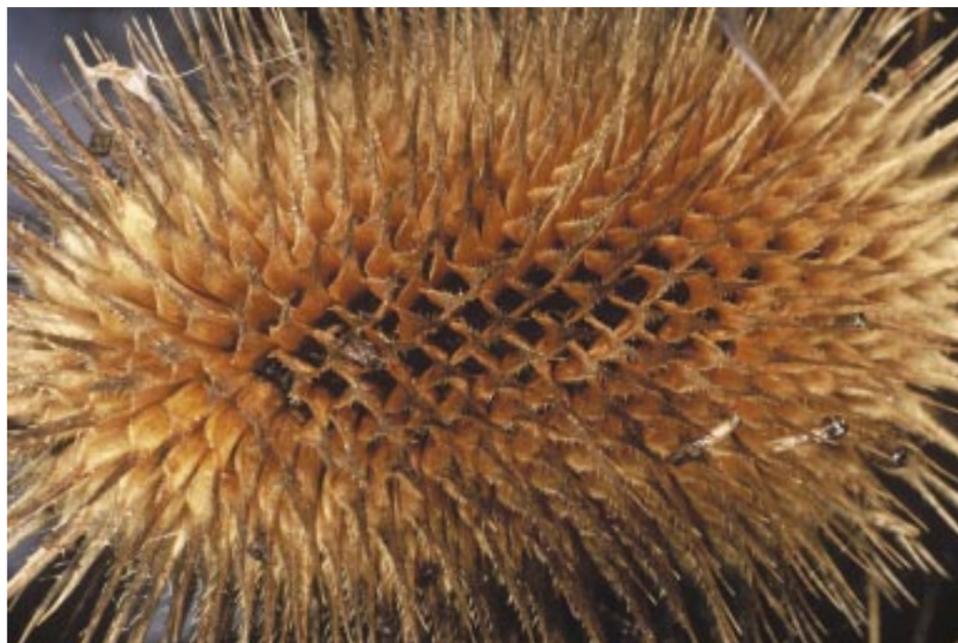
Policies within Local Plans prepared by each individual Council also seek to protect and enhance the environment, including areas which are urban in nature. These include the promotion of Tree Preservation Orders to protect street trees and urban woodland, and policies which seek to protect important urban greenspaces from development. There are however many less obvious 'every day' sites which contribute to biodiversity and nature conservation which are not subject to designations. Household gardens and roadside verges are just two examples.

## Ecology and Management

Although the quality of habitat can vary, the wide variety of urban greenspace throughout the Partnership area provides a range of valuable habitats for small mammals, amphibians, invertebrates and birds. Seminal features such as woodland and watercourses are particularly valuable, forming wildlife corridors within established urban areas and creating a 'Green Network' of habitats. These are important in providing food, dens, roosts and nesting sites and can also serve as migration routes.

Derelict buildings are often used as roosting and nesting sites for birds and bats, as are urban trees and woodlands throughout the Partnership area. Birds such as Swifts and House Sparrows also indicate the quality of the environment, providing an insight into air quality and the food chain of plants and insects on which birds feed. Urban parks, cemeteries and churchyards, with their variety of hedgerows, trees and grassland, provide a rich mosaic of mini habitats for a number of species. Disused railways and road verges in particular may also provide wildlife corridors through urban areas. Scrub and hedgerows in these areas have considerable habitat value.

In urban areas gardens are important for a wide variety of wildlife including mammals such as Foxes, Grey Squirrels and Hedgehogs. Birds are attracted by nest boxes and well stocked bird



tables. Established bushes, shrubs and climbers can be important for shelter and nest sites. Water features such as ponds are well used by birds and provide important habitats for amphibians such as the Common Frog. A variety of plants also provide food for larvae and pollen, nectar for adult insects such as butterflies, bees and other invertebrates. Particularly good plants are meadow grasses, Buddleia, Michaelmas Daisy, Lady's Smock, nettles and ice plant, as well as a variety of annuals.

## Factors Causing Loss or Decline

Greenspaces within built up areas are inevitably subject to pressures which may affect the quality of habitats and species. The main factors affecting urban habitats are:

- ★ Development pressures resulting in fragmentation of habitats and wildlife corridors
- ★ Unsympathetic management of formal and informal greenspace
- ★ Growth of invasive species, for example Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed

## Opportunities and Current Action

Ownership and management of urban greenspaces is varied, with responsibility ranging from local authorities, developers and businesses to individual householders. Working together, there are a number of opportunities to improve management of these greenspaces for the benefit of wildlife. They include:

- ★ Improving the consideration given to biodiversity in everyday actions of agencies, organisations and businesses
- ★ Encouraging householders to use gardens in wildlife-friendly ways such as composting, providing microhabitats and reducing input of chemicals
- ★ Promoting actions which the public can adopt to improve biodiversity
- ★ Declaration of further Local Nature Reserves

Much is already implemented to achieve these aims. The Carts Greenspace and Lower Clyde Greenspace Projects within the LBAP Partnership area, for example, have been established to promote accessible greenspace, including the improvement and enhancement of local greenspace. Initiatives undertaken have seen the creation of new green spaces and the enhancement of those which already exist, with new tree



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# URBAN AREA

## Definition

The scope of this plan covers urban habitats within the LBAP Partnership area.

Urban habitat cannot really be categorised as an ecological unit in the same way as woodland or moorland might as it is a diverse mosaic. The urban environment includes many 'patches' of managed green space that support a range of wildlife, for example business parks, cemeteries, churchyards, golf courses, hedges, public parks, road and railway verges and residential gardens. In addition to these 'managed' areas there are ancient or seminal habitats such as woodland, wetlands and rivers which continue to exist in urban areas. Demolition sites, disused railway lands or unexploited industrial land may also support biodiversity. Together these areas form the urban biodiversity resource.

A Broad Habitat Statement for urban areas is included within 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report' (1995). The statement sets out an objective to:

"Maintain the existing diversity and extent of wildlife in all urban areas, expanding the range and distribution of rare and common species and enabling this resource to be used as an educational tool."

planting, path networks and the creation of new habitats which contribute to biodiversity.

Urban greenspaces have considerable potential to foster interest and appreciation of biodiversity at a local level. The Greenspace Projects have a strong community focus and aim to foster understanding and appreciation of the environment, encouraging communities to become involved and above all to bring a sense of ownership to their green spaces. The Projects also work to promote understanding and awareness of the environment in schools through the development of wildlife gardens.

Similarly rangers at the Country Parks and Regional Park within the LBAP area work to raise awareness through talks, guided walks, school and community projects, and have the potential to foster interest and appreciation of biodiversity.

Further opportunities may include:

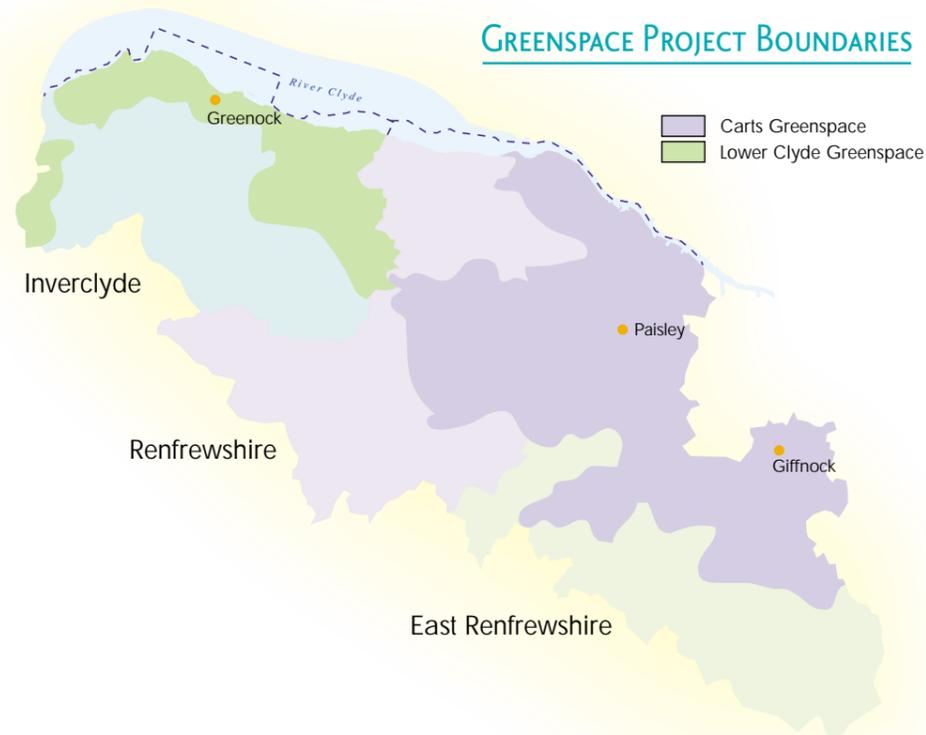
-  Raising awareness of biodiversity in urban areas through environmental education, the LBAP website and working in partnership with key stakeholders, including the community
-  Encouraging the use of urban greenspace for environmental education, for example promoting planting schemes, wildlife gardens, community woodlands and community projects



-  Encouraging the use of parks and raising awareness of biodiversity within parkland areas
-  Promoting guided walks in urban areas to encourage interest in local habitats.

### Action Plan

Greenspaces should be managed in a manner that involves coordination of action between the local authorities, business and local communities. The objectives and targets of this plan seek to realise the potential of greenspaces as wildlife habitats, balanced alongside socio-economic needs and demands. The action plan will seek to maintain the existing diversity and extent of wildlife in all urban areas and expand the range and distribution of rare and common species. An additional target is to enable urban greenspaces to be utilised for education and leisure pursuits.



### Objectives and Targets

- Objective 1 Identify and assess urban habitats (including buildings) of importance to maintain and potentially enhance biodiversity.
- Objective 2 Ensure the implementation of local authority policies to protect and improve the biodiversity of existing urban landscapes.
- Objective 3 Encourage local community action to survey, plan for, and manage urban wildlife habitats.
- Objective 4 Engage the participation of the business community to increase the habitat quality and biodiversity of their greenspaces.
- Objective 5 Increase public awareness of urban biodiversity, the wildlife value of urban habitats and their importance as an asset to the community.
- Objective 6 Review this plan on an annual basis, beginning in 2005.

We will achieve these objectives by:

Action	Actioned by	Timetable
Surveying and evaluating urban habitats and establishing their importance	LAs Paisley Natural History Society SNH	2004 onwards
Protecting important sites and encouraging sympathetic management	LAs	2004-07
Providing guidance on best practice for maintenance and enhancement of greenspaces to local groups and land owners	SNH LAs	2004-07
Promoting an appreciation of the value of urban habitats to business, in terms of marketing and environmental management	LAs Chamber of Commerce SER	2004-07
Promoting an appreciation of the value of urban habitats to local communities and encouraging community action	Greenspace Projects LAs SNH RSPB	2004-07
Encouraging integration of green networks in future development proposals	LAs SNH	2004-07
Monitoring and recording actions towards these objectives	LBAP Steering Group LBAP Officer Local Records Centre	Ongoing / Annual

### Links with Other Action Plans

Rivers and Streams, Standing Waters, Broadleaved and Mixed Woodland, Otters, Pipistrelle Bats.

Further Information can be obtained from The Biodiversity Officer 0141 842 5281