



Entente Florale 2014

The City of Edinburgh





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Edinburgh – sustainable city

In November, Edinburgh hosted the inaugural **World Forum on Natural Capital** following launch of the Natural Capital Declaration at the 2012 Rio Earth Summit. In response to growing global awareness that our ecosystems and biodiversity underpin both wealth creation and human security, CEOs from banks, investment funds and insurance companies announced their commitment to understanding their impacts and dependencies on the natural environment, and promised to incorporate natural capital considerations into their products and accounting.

Ensuring that it practices what it preaches, and based on the ten Aalborg Commitments, **Sustainable Edinburgh 2020** sets out a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2020:

'Edinburgh in 2020 will be a low carbon, resource efficient city, delivering a resilient local economy and vibrant flourishing communities in a rich natural setting'.

This vision and strategy influences various plans across the Council, and includes work with our communities. We are proud of being a green city and work with our many partners throughout the year to ensure that Edinburgh develops a strong economy, strong society and a healthy environment, making it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Our **Edinburgh in Bloom** Committee is therefore made up of residents, key land managers and civic decision-makers, who all work with local groups, organisations and businesses. Members like Edinburgh World Heritage and Historic Scotland ensure that planting schemes balance horticultural attractiveness with historical authenticity and sustainability. Other partners, such as Essential Edinburgh and Greater Grassmarket, provide excellent links with retail and commercial interests, using attractive floral displays to encourage footfall in the city centre; and the Council ensures involvement from educationalists, as well as communities through its Neighbourhood and Friends of Parks network.

Entente Florale 2014 has been able to further Edinburgh's role in supporting communities to improve their local environment for the benefit of us all, a factor recognised by Councillor Lesley Hinds, Convenor of the City's Transport and Environment Committee:

"Representing Edinburgh in Entente Florale is a great honour for the city and provides us with a marvellous opportunity to showcase our outstanding natural and built environment. It also allows us the opportunity to shine a light on all the hard work that the Council, partners, and local communities do to keep the city looking clean, green and beautiful. We look forward to meeting the jury and getting the chance to demonstrate some of the work that makes Edinburgh one of the UK's most popular places in which to live, work and visit."

Edinburgh's environment

Environmental responsibility has always been high on Edinburgh's agenda. Numerous initiatives to support the aims of creating a sustainable city have been implemented.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Water quality

- The Council checks sea water, river water and lochs for quality and the presence of pollution.
- In 2014, Edinburgh's Portobello Beach was awarded the prestigious **Blue Flag Award** by Keep Scotland Beautiful by meeting 32 strict environmental criteria.
- The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has classified Edinburgh's principal river, the Water of Leith, as being of **high amenity** value. It has now become so clean that it can sustain salmon fishing, and otters have now returned to its once heavily-polluted waters.

Responsible use of chemical products

- The Royal Botanic Garden, University of Edinburgh, and the City of Edinburgh Council use **woodchip mulch** as an alternative to herbicide application around young trees, shrubs, and herbaceous bedding.
- The use of chemical products is now limited in city allotments, a number of which are now fully organic. The Bridgend Community Allotment was voted the **UK's Best Allotment** after becoming Scotland's first fully organic allotment.

Rain water collection

- A number of prestigious buildings across Edinburgh **harvest rain water** from their roofs and re-use grey water from showers and sinks. Systems have recently been installed as part of the refurbished Commonwealth Pool; the Royal Botanic Garden; the Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine at Bioquarter; and the Norton Park Conference Centre and charity offices.
- The Inch Plant Nursery and new city allotments incorporate **rainwater collection systems**. Allotment gardeners are also encouraged to add rainwater collection barrels to their growing plots.

Improving air quality

- The whole of Edinburgh is a **Smoke Control Area**. This means that smoke can't be emitted from the chimney of any building.
- To meet national standards, the Council screens, assesses and manages local air quality.
- There are five **Air Quality Management Areas** in Edinburgh. Each of these has an action plan to improve air quality.
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is measured across the city every month using **Passive Diffusion Tubes**. This data is published online.
- **Environmental Wardens** issue a fine of €25 or report a driver to the Procurator Fiscal if they don't switch off their engine when asked to.
- **Ecostars Edinburgh** is a voluntary freight recognition scheme to promote efficient and clean road freight vehicles.





ACTIVE TRAVEL

Encouraging more people to cycle and walk around the city is actively promoted to benefit health, wellbeing, air quality, and to create an attractive city. Indeed, 36% of Edinburgh residents' trips are made on foot or by bike, 7,250 of whom cycle to work, the highest number in Scotland. This has been realised by the construction of 125 km of dedicated cycleway, Scotland's most extensive cycle network, and a number of recent strategic initiatives:

- The city's **Active Travel Action Plan** has been produced by the Council in partnership with Sustrans (Sustainable Transport charity), the National Health Service, Spokes (cycling campaign group), Living Streets Scotland (pedestrian charity), Essential Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh.
- An **Urban Cycling Tourism Strategy** is currently being drafted to encourage visitors to Edinburgh to explore the city beyond the city centre by bicycle, including the canal, beach promenade, parks, woodlands and nature reserves.
- An unprecedented **7% of the Council's transport budget** is committed to cycling infrastructure and projects.
- Edinburgh's innovative **Innertube Map** has been developed to link up Edinburgh's cycle paths with greenspaces.
- **Brake the Cycle** involves criminal offenders repairing old or unwanted bicycles which have been donated or left at Council community recycling centres. The bikes are then given away free to schools, community organisations, youth groups and individual children.
- The **IBike** scheme has been rolled out to encourage more children to cycle to school by developing their skills and raising awareness.
- Mobile **bike mechanic** events have taken place to promote cycling to work.



- Employees from the Council, Forth Road Bridge, The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, SEStran and Lothian Valuation Joint Board all take part in the **Bike To Work** scheme, which is a salary sacrifice scheme to purchase bikes and safety equipment.

Sustainable transport

- In 2014, Edinburgh opened its first section of **tram line** as part of an ambitious programme to link the airport in the west to the city centre. Future sections will link Leith in the north and the university and main hospital in the south.
- Edinburgh's **City Car Club** was established as the first car-sharing scheme in the UK. Over the last year, 5,154 members used its 123 low-emission, electric and hybrid vehicles to drive 308,583km in 6,606 trips.
- As a result of its **Plugged in Places** programme, Edinburgh now has the largest electric car charging infrastructure in Scotland. There are 27 publicly accessible charging points across the city.
- The largest fleet of **diesel-electric hybrid buses** in Scotland now operates across Edinburgh. The 25 new buses produce 30% less carbon than the old buses they replaced, and are projected to reduce the city's carbon footprint by over 1,000 tonnes per year. As a result, Lothian Buses recently won the Best Green Large Company award at the **Scottish Green Awards**.
- One of Edinburgh's largest taxi companies, Edina Cars, has become the city's first **certified carbon neutral business**. It uses hybrid cars and offsets CO2 by planting trees and using its carbon credits for the development of hydro power plants.

WASTE PREVENTION AND RECYCLING

Edinburgh recycles almost 40% of its waste. Work to encourage people to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste is a key part of the city's **Waste and Recycling Strategy**, which aims to make Edinburgh an even cleaner and greener city:

- 5,916 tonnes of waste was recycled in 2013-2014.
- 165,000 households receive a **kerbside recycling collection** for glass, paper, textiles, cans, drinks cartons, batteries and plastic bottles.
- 90,000 households receive **on-street recycling** for paper, glass, textiles, cans, drinks cartons and plastic bottles.
- 230,700 households take part in a **food waste collection** service. 100 tonnes of food is processed every week to create compost and power.

Projects such as the promotion of home composting, **Love Food Hate Waste** and the **Real Nappy Project** are supporting communities to reduce waste. Waste Action Grants are used to educate and engage the public on waste issues, as well as give them financial support to develop their own waste prevention projects. To date, €177,731 has been awarded to 86 projects and over 49,000 people have directly participated in waste workshops, events and other activities.

Local sustainability organisation, **Changeworks**, delivers activities to educate school children to reduce, reuse and recycle. Activities include school waste audits, **Finish Your Food**, classroom workshops on paper-making, paper reuse, **composting**, and food waste; as well as Eco-group training as **Zero Waste Heroes**. Waste education visits were carried out by 130 schools in 2013-2014, with 20,437 pupils directly engaged.



Compost and green waste

Garden Waste is collected from 120,000 households and taken to Forth Resource Management to be **turned into compost**. The end product is sold to recover the processing costs and is offered free of charge to schools. In addition:

- Residents in Craigmillar Castle and Niddrie Marischall became **Waste Wise Volunteers**, helping residents in local communities reduce waste, save money and recycle more by delivering interactive workshops for community groups on composting green waste and food waste.
- Six **compost giveaways** take place every year, where residents are given bags of soil improver made from the garden waste collection. Community groups are also given 100 tonnes of compost each year.
- The Royal Botanic Garden, University of Edinburgh, and the Council's Inch Plant Nursery all compost their own green waste, which is used for its planting programmes.
- The city's 1,364 allotment gardeners are actively encouraged to compost green waste within the terms of their lease.





Sustainable energy use

Edinburgh Council's **Sustainable Energy Action Plan** targets are:

- Reduce carbon emissions by over 40% across the city.
- More efficient energy consumption across all sectors by at least 12%.
- Renewable energy technologies contributing to at least 40% of energy consumed in the city.

Progress towards these targets is underway and includes:

- **Micro-hydro projects** along the Water of Leith river.
- 6,000 street lights currently being replaced throughout the city with **energy efficient LED** and other white light technologies.
- Monitoring of gas, electricity and water usage in sports and cultural venues to establish and reduce each venue's carbon footprint.
- Introducing **energy efficient LED bulbs into city museums, galleries, and other cultural venues.**



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Quality and maintenance of buildings

Edinburgh has a rich history of architectural styles, from the medieval Old Town and the Georgian New Town, to Victorian tenements, post-war housing estates, and modern offices, hotels, civic buildings and homes.

Historical buildings are conserved by rigorous application of **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, Listed Building and Conservation Area regulations, whilst contemporary designs are championed in less sensitive locations, including the award winning Scottish Parliament building and revolutionary Bioquarter. There are over **3,000 listed buildings** and **50 conservation areas** in Edinburgh.

Developers are encouraged to adopt BREEAM standards, the UK's sustainability assessment method that considers waste, pollution, land use and ecology, materials, management, health and wellbeing, energy and transport in new and refurbished buildings:

- The new Edinburgh **International Conference Centre** extension has just achieved **BREEAM Excellent** accreditation. It has green sedum roofs, low energy glazing, energy efficient lifts, electric car charging spaces, an abundance of cycle spaces and it is now home to UK's Green Investment Bank, which was set up with €3.3 billion of public money to help firms establish renewable energy schemes.
- The new **Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation** is the only **BREEAM Excellent refurbished** Listed Building in the UK. Housing university, business, and investment carbon management experts in a converted 18th Century school, it is now a state-of-the-art, energy efficient hub for knowledge, innovation and skills. The centre's unique design used sustainable and recycled materials, a specialised **vapour open system** of insulation to limit energy loss,

but ensure good indoor air quality, heat recovery from the central atrium space, **solar controlled glazing**, energy efficient lighting, and under-floor heating connected to a Combined Heat and Power source.

- Edinburgh World Heritage is working with residents in the Old Town to **retrofit energy conservation** measures into historical buildings, including insulation, glazing and solar power. Similarly, the Council has developed its **Low Energy Apartment Futures** to improve the energy efficiency of tenement flats, including energy surveys and retrofitting energy conservation measures. This includes the recent refurbishment of 96 flats, including the installation of efficient gas boilers, insulated render to the external walls and a new insulated roof.
- Stringent **Carbon Management Plan** targets have led to the University of Edinburgh creating the largest centralised **Combined Heat and Power** system of its type in Scotland, saving €1.7m and 8,500 tonnes of carbon per year across its campus and student village.

Streetscape and street furnishing

Few cities are defined by their physical and built environment to the same extent as Edinburgh. The city's identity and sense of place contribute directly to its economic success and its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

Edinburgh's **Public Realm Strategy** plays a key role, providing a framework for investment in, and delivery and maintenance of, high quality, coordinated, connected and coherent streetscape. **Character maps** identify the use of historically appropriate high quality materials, the **de-cluttering** of over-signed and obstacle-ridden streets and a **City Dressing** policy during festivals and events.



The Council is currently seeking views on the Edinburgh **Street Design Guidance**, which sets out policies on how streets can be improved to make them better places, whilst improving how people get around. It will ensure that Edinburgh's streets are attractive and distinctive, welcoming, inclusive and accessible, helpful in making Edinburgh's transport and ecological systems more sustainable, easy to get around, safe and responsive to the needs of communities.

Heritage buildings and structures

A number of organisations work in partnership with the Council to preserve and enhance the city's heritage buildings and structures. The three most significant are:

- The **Cockburn Association** is a 140 year old charity which works to promote the conservation and enhancement of Edinburgh's landscape and historic and architectural heritage.
- **Edinburgh World Heritage** is a charity with the role of protecting and enhancing the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site and promote its harmonious adaptation to the needs of contemporary life.
- **Historic Scotland** is responsible for safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment.

All three organisations recently collaborated with the Council on the **Twelve Monuments Project**, which ensured the future of some of the city's historical statues and monuments. Restoration included work on three 19th Century statues in Princes Street Gardens, as well as larger structures in popular public parks, like the Nelson Monument and St Bernard's Well.



Derelict buildings and temporary land use

Edinburgh is the best performing of the four major cities in Scotland when it comes to looking after its historic buildings, having the lowest percentage of Category A listed **buildings at-risk**.

Nevertheless, the Council continues to actively work with its partners to restore derelict or degraded buildings. **Repair and restoration grants** are available, recent projects including conservation work on stonework, roof, windows, the clock tower and communal areas at **Well Court**, carried out in collaboration with 55 owners; and restoration of the railings, gates and stonework of **The High School Yards Steps**, which were boarded up in 2003 as they had become a focus for anti-social behaviour. Future projects include bringing the historic **Tron Kirk** back into sustainable use for the first time in 60 years.

The Council supports the **temporary use** of undeveloped spaces for gardening, food growing and green space creation. In advance of a major redevelopment at Fountainbridge, a **community garden**, wildflower meadow, and food-growing space is being created in consultation with the developer and local community.

It also works with unused building owners in the city centre to ensure that quality murals and displays are put in vacant windows and on the frontages of buildings due to be redeveloped. Good examples of this can be seen around St Andrew Square.



CLEANLINESS AND TIDINESS

In 2013, **97%** of Edinburgh's 1,600km of streets achieved the nationally recognised standard of cleanliness. Over €12 million is spent each year on litter collections, litter bin emptying, street cleaning and graffiti removal. Some 250 street cleaning staff are employed by the Council to service 3,500 bins across the city.

As well as litter collection teams, Environmental Wardens patrol litter hotspots and issue fines for littering and dog fouling. Communities also help keep Edinburgh clean by taking part in litter picks across the city as part of the **Clean Up Edinburgh** campaign. In 2013-2014:

- 8,505 people took part in **232 litter picks**.
- Businesses, residents, council officers and other volunteers regularly work together to clean up the Royal Mile. Graffiti is cleared, litter is collected and street furniture is repainted.
- The **Water of Leith Conservation Trust** worked with volunteers to ensure the cleanliness and tidiness of the river. 140 people contributed 5,000 hours service to clean ups and river patrols.
- A number of tolerated graffiti zones have been set up to encourage graffiti artists to express themselves in approved locations.

2014 saw the launch of a **Trade Waste pilot** in the High Street, Rose Street and Leith Walk, including the removal of all trade waste containers from the street and the management of all commercial waste in a more aesthetically pleasing manner. Its success means that it will be expanded to the whole city centre from next year.



Festival city

Edinburgh's population doubles each year as people flock to the city's ten festivals from around the world.

All of the artistic, cultural and scientific festivals that occur in Edinburgh across the year now accurately measure their direct energy and water use and waste/recycling disposal as part of their commitment to the **Festivals Edinburgh Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan**. All have identified Green Champions and adopted action plans for environmental improvement, including encouraging companies involved in the festivals to adopt and promote environmental actions.

Different strategies are used to keep Edinburgh clean and tidy over the festival periods:

- The **Authorised Advertising Project** provides sites where posters and advertising is tolerated. The City Centre Posters Company operates a clean-down zone, removing all graffiti, litter and unauthorised posters around the site. There are currently 1,000 such sites across the city, saving the Council an estimated €85,000 each year as a result of reduced fly-posting.
- Essential Edinburgh employs additional staff to provide a **Rapid Response Team** during summer. Each year they remove 1,480kg of litter from the city centre, almost 50m² of chewing gum, more than 100m² of graffiti and enough cigarette ends to fill 12 large bin bags.
- Large **recycling containers** are installed on the Royal Mile to allow visitors to recycle paper, card and packaging.
- The Festival Fringe Society employ 38 **street stewards** every year to keep open air performance areas on the Royal Mile free from litter.



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Landscape

Edinburgh has a diverse, well protected and actively managed landscape. Protected sites include the internationally important Forth Estuary **Special Protection Area** and **Ramsar Site** (13,819ha), **9 Sites of Special Scientific Interest** (1,392ha), **6 Local Nature Reserves** (221ha); **48 Local Biodiversity Sites** (3,440ha), **12 Natural Heritage Sites** (9,143ha) and **315 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes** (2,925ha).

MANAGEMENT OF LANDSCAPES TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

The **Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Plan** is co-ordinated by the Council and its 250 actions are delivered by the 31 member organisations of the **Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership**. Members include government agencies, environmental charities, conservation organisations, land owners and naturalists. Activities to protect and enhance Edinburgh's biodiversity include:

- **Habitat creation** within the Pentland Hills (10,000 ha), including a wildlife garden that features raised **sensory floral beds**, a wetland area and the planting of 500 **Juniper plants**, a rare priority species.
- Promotion of the **Year of Natural Scotland**, including the **Concert for Bees** with the involvement of local school children, who also sowed wildflower meadows in their local parks, took part in creative arts and learned from experts about the importance of bees.
- Planting **wildflower meadows** in local parks and species surveys at nature reserves.
- **8,000 wildflower plants** produced every year by the Inch Nursery are distributed to schools and community groups as part of the Native Plants Project.
- **37 biodiversity events** last year involving 1,334 volunteers in species surveys, habitat management, burn and litter clean ups, path construction, bird and bat box erection and invasive species management.



Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative

The Council is working with its partners, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspace Trust, in transforming large parts of the city's greenspaces into habitats that encourage wildlife and biodiversity, but also enhance the natural beauty of our neighbourhoods. So far, **26 colourful annual and perennial wildflower meadows** have been established, including 15 wildflower meadows that formed part of the **Urban Pollinators Project**, a scientific research collaboration with Edinburgh University to compare the value of wildflower meadows to standard green space for pollinating insects. 3,480 plant-pollinator interactions, including five bumblebee species, honeybees, solitary bees, sawflies, beetles, butterflies and countless hoverflies, were recorded whilst surveying the meadows, far more than in typical amenity grassland.



Trees

In 2014, the Council launched a new **Trees & Woodlands Strategy** and an active tree management programme to prioritise works across the city's 638,000 trees. Recent creation of the **Edinburgh i-Tree model** for estimating the value of ecosystem services delivered by the city's trees shows that trees cover 17% of the city, store **145,611 metric tonnes of carbon** within their tissues, sequester 5,329 metric tonnes of carbon per year, scrub €2.5m worth of PM10, NOx, SOx, O3 and CO pollutant from the air and provide a structural value of €420m to Edinburgh's economy.

The most scenically valuable trees are protected by **Tree Protection Orders** or **Conservation Area** status. A list of 52 heritage trees has been made public on **www.edinburghoutdoors.org.uk** which is Edinburgh's new website and app to promote the city's parks and greenspace.

The **International Conifer Conservation Programme** is a joint project initiated in 2014 between the Council and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) that is conserving the genes of internationally threatened tree species. Trees collected from Europe, America, North Africa and Japan and cultivated in the RBGE are now being planted across parks in Edinburgh, which will enable a genetic library of conifer trees to be preserved in Edinburgh for future generations. In return, researchers at the RBGE are collecting cuttings from the city's heritage trees and rare Elms, which are being cultivated and replanted to preserve Edinburgh's own genetic tree resource.

The Council also has its own **tree nursery**, where stock is being grown to launch a **Tree for Every Child** initiative later this year. Around 5,000 children are born in the city each year, and the Council intends to plant a tree for every one of them to help offset their lifetime carbon footprint.

Open green spaces

PARKS, BOTANIC AND PRIVATE GARDENS

The Council's **green estate extends for 1,520ha** across parks, housing estates, schools, nature reserves, and roadsides, forming one of the key characteristics of life in Edinburgh. Care is taken to ensure that parks are maintained to a high standard so that users will continue to appreciate their open spaces as places that contribute to health, wellbeing and local biodiversity. Edinburgh has five classifications for its parks:

- **Premier parks** – large diverse parks serving visitor and citywide needs.
- **City parks** – serve citywide and local needs.
- **Natural heritage parks** – semi-natural greenspaces, including woodlands and river valleys.
- **Community parks** – serve local needs.
- **Gardens** – focus on horticulture, flower beds, shrubs and seating.
- **Recreation grounds** – predominately used for sporting activities.

Edinburgh has four Botanic Gardens, including the **UK's largest Japanese Garden** at Lauriston Castle Gardens, and the internationally important Royal Botanic Garden. The Council has recently secured €5.7m to renovate its historic Saughton Gardens, which are now home to project partners, the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, the second oldest horticultural organisation in the world.

The city has thousands of private gardens, including historic **key-holder gardens** across the New Town for householders without their own individual gardens. The Council also supports over 3,000 elderly and infirm people look after their gardens through its Garden Aid service. In recent years, land has become very expensive and so the Council has developed policies that encourage the creation of **rooftop gardens**. These can now be found across the city centre, the best

examples to be found at the Scottish Parliament, the National Museum, The Scotsman newspaper, the City Council, the Omni Entertainment Centre and Tanfield office buildings.

In 2014, the Council embarked on a study to consider the social benefits delivered by parks and green spaces in order to collect robust data which can be used to protect them. This is the first time a UK city has measured the **SROI (Social Return on Investment)** from its whole parks and greenspace system.

Health and wellbeing

Regular exercise is central to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but cost and accessibility can be barriers to an active lifestyle. To improve access to all:

- Outdoor cardio and weights **gym equipment** has been installed in Hailes Quarry Park to give socially excluded residents the chance to work out for free in the fresh air.
- An outdoor **tennis and petanque** hub was opened at Leith Links to provide free leisure facilities in the area and increase participation in outdoor recreation.
- The **Branching Out** programme offers therapeutic activities in woodlands. Staff work with referred patients, delivering activities in woodlands, including green exercise, environmental arts and crafts, conservation activities and woodland guided walks to explore local community woodlands and learn about native animals and birds.
- The Council is supporting a range of healthy community **food-growing projects** by providing land on which to grow food. Recent beneficiaries include Bridgend Growing Communities, The Field Group in Duddingston and the Grove at Fountainbridge. Therapeutic gardening is also delivered by local organisations at the Council's gardens at Saughton, Redhall and by the Cyrenians at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.





Sport and play

- Edinburgh has **157 football, rugby, cricket and multi-use pitches**, including the national rugby stadium at Murrayfield. In addition, there are five public bowling venues, 44 public tennis courts, the national petanque centre, national croquet centre, eight public golf courses, including the oldest public golf course in the world, and countless other indoor and outdoor sports activities across 31 sports centres, 15 swimming pools, and 50 gymnasiums.
- The parks and green spaces also contain **192 children's play areas**, 24 ball courts, 18 toddler play areas and five skate parks. All are designed to be accessible and inclusive for all, some incorporating special equipment for the disabled and infirm.
- Provision is made for **natural play** such as planting, sand, boulders or tree trunks, trees and natural surfaces. In Princes Street Gardens, tree stumps stripped of bark and smoothed have been used as an informal 'enchanted forest' along with rocks and ropes and the manipulation of the rubber safer surface into small dips and hollows, to enhance the play experience.



- The Council's **Play Action Plan 2011-2016** guides the improvement of current play areas, sets out priorities for future play areas, and identifies future investment until 2016.

Cemeteries and kirkyards

- The Council manages **40 cemeteries and churchyards**, and three crematoria. Special areas are dedicated for **Natural woodland burial**, Muslim burial and the scattering of ashes for Hindus and Sikhs.
- Edinburgh World Heritage's **Edinburgh Graveyards Project** is involving local communities in the restoration of historic graveyards suffering at the hands of weathering, erosion and anti-social behaviour. The first five are Greyfriars, Canongate, and St Cuthbert's Kirkyards, and Calton Old and Calton New burial grounds.
- Some graveyards have already been adopted by local communities. Community groups at Warriston Cemetery and Greyfriars Kirkyard are now looking after the grounds and managing them as community green spaces.



Allotments and food growing

There are 1,364 allotment plots across 26 sites in the city. Nevertheless, 2,700+ people are still on the Council's waiting list. To address this demand, an **Allotment Strategy for Edinburgh** has been produced. As well as promoting greater allotment autonomy, investment and good management practices, it has led to six new allotments being built by the Council in the last three years, including Baronscourt and Kirkliston in 2014. The Council also now leases land to communities at a 'peppercorn rent' for the creation of community gardens, including excellent examples in Duddingston, Craigmillar and Fountainbridge.

The Council also now partners the **Federation of Edinburgh and District Gardens and Allotments** in providing food-growing training for new plot-holders, which has greatly reduced the number of abandoned plots. Together, we also hold an annual allotment competition for the best plot and allotment site. These actions have helped raise the quality of allotment plots across the city.



MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Green Flag Award

Each of Edinburgh's 142 public parks is independently assessed every year using Green Flag Award criteria to ensure they meet the **Edinburgh minimum park quality standard**. Assessors include Parks Friends Group members and other volunteers. As a result, Edinburgh now has **25 Green Flag Awards**, more than any other UK local authority, and 96% of its parks are now classed as Good, Very Good or Excellent.

In recent years the Council has won a number of awards for its excellence, including **Best UK Parks and Horticultural Service**, Scotland's **most improved Local Authority service**, and **UK Landowner of the Year**. This last award was given for creating protective dedications for a record 28 parks under the Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge.

Parks management rules

The Council has duties to uphold and promote access rights. To do this and ensure park users behave responsibly, the Council has introduced **Management Rules for Public Parks and Greenspaces**. These have been promoted to user groups and are displayed on the website and in park notice boards. Professional dog walkers and fitness instructors are now required to register as commercial users and adhere to a code of responsible behaviour.

Events in parks

Over the last year, 370 events were held in Edinburgh's parks, from community safety and education events to food and music festivals. The unique **Edinburgh Parks Events Manifesto** ensures that event organisers pay appropriate rental for use of the park, adhere to good management practices, limit impact on other park users and fund any post-event repairs/reinstatement.

Park design

Edinburgh's green spaces have a long and illustrious history, and include some of Scotland's oldest public parks. Early parks were little more than grazing and recreation areas, with designs becoming more formal and complex during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. In recent years there has been increased emphasis on **natural parks** and restoration of some of the more down-at-heal traditional parks.

Buttercup Farm Park is our newest park, currently being created on the site of an old dairy farm. Designed in consultation with the community, it is laid out with meadows, trees, footpath network, play park and exercise area. Further parks are planned to meet population growth in the north, east, south and west of the city as it expands outwards.

Plans for the renovation of **Saughton Park and Gardens** include the creation of a community café and community space within the restored stable block. These facilities are being added following an extensive community consultation and programmed investment of €5.7m.



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Permanent and seasonal planting

The centre of Edinburgh is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. With this comes great responsibility and a tight set of design guidelines to work within. The combined threats of climate change and financial restrictions are also recognised as two of the greatest challenges facing the future of Edinburgh's horticultural ambitions. Planting schemes are therefore carefully designed to balance horticultural attractiveness with historical authenticity and sustainability; ensuring that we get the right plants in the right place is crucial.

The Inch Plant Nursery

Edinburgh is one of only a handful of local authorities that still retains a horticultural nursery, showing continued commitment to producing quality plant material for municipal and touristic purposes. The Inch Plant Nursery produces over **500,000 plants** a year for the city's streets, parks, gardens and green spaces, as well as for civic functions and events. Over the last year, a concerted effort has been made to move away from labour and resource intensive annual bedding plants towards more sustainable perennial plants. As a result, permanent planting has replaced annual planting in many roundabouts, parks, streetscapes and civic buildings, notably in Princes Street Gardens, Broughton Street and Rodney Street.



Care has been taken to choose disease resistant cultivars, eliminating the need for harmful pesticide application. Use of **peat has been reduced** by incorporating green waste into growing mixes for bedding schemes and floral decorations. New cool-growing and drought tolerant plants are increasingly being introduced to reduce heating and watering. The nursery is also a training centre and the base for the Council's **horticulture apprentice programmes**.

Edinburgh's annual planting programme includes:

- The production of **10,000 herbaceous perennials** and **5,000 shrubs** to reduce the use of bedding plants and increase sustainable planting.
- Nearly **300,000 spring bulbs**, planted by staff, community groups and school children.
- Over 40,000 plants to create the world famous, and world's oldest, **Floral Clock** in Princes Street Gardens. Each year the clock represents a different theme, this year celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Edinburgh being a Fairtrade City.



- Each spring, 20 hanging baskets, 171 planters and 42 beds, eight window boxes and 12 private baskets are made-up and maintained by the Inch Plant Nursery for locations across the city. **56 new planters** will be placed on George Street in July 2014 as part of a trial pedestrian and alfresco seating scheme.
- The Inch Nursery is working with **Greater Grassmarket** to provide 60-100 permanent window boxes and planters for businesses.
- During the summer, the city centre blooms with **hanging baskets** and **planters** outside businesses, pubs and hotels. The best examples can be found at The Dome, George Hotel, Cafe Royal, Theatre Royal and the Beehive Inn.
- The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society's annual **Spring Show**, including the popular school daffodil competition takes place at the Royal Botanic Garden at the end of March. This year Blackhall Primary School was declared the winner.
- Through annual plant sales to the public, a record €33,500 was generated in 2013-2014 by the Inch Plant Nursery to reinvest into the city's parks and green spaces.





6

Environmental education

Education and engagement with sustainability issues is a priority for Edinburgh. It forms part of the Council's commitment to the strategic outcome that *our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities*. To support this, communities and young people have access to a range of quality services, activities, award schemes and projects:

Eco-Schools is the Council's international award scheme linked to the national Curriculum for Excellence. It rewards the work schools are doing to improve their environment and to make the wider community aware of sustainability issues. It explores issues of waste, energy, school grounds, biodiversity, food and the environment, health and wellbeing, sustaining our world, water, transport and litter. **269 nursery, primary, secondary and special schools** in the city are Eco-Schools, 96 of which now hold Green Flag status, the highest achievement for an Eco-School.

John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme supported by the Council. It promotes awareness and responsibility for the natural environment in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. Pupils take part in challenges relating to the themes of 'discover, explore, conserve and share'. 686 awards were achieved by schools in Edinburgh in 2013-2014.

Six Edinburgh schools have become **Growing Global Food Citizens**. They share good practice, gain practical skills and receive teacher training delivered by experts in food, horticulture and agriculture. Participating schools are also

funded to develop practical projects in their school grounds, including creating raised beds and buying seeds and plants to grow their own produce.

The **Green Pencil Award** is an annual environmental themed creative writing competition for Edinburgh primary school children. Past themes have been Birds and Beasties, Nature on My Doorstep and Trees. The theme for 2014 is 'Scotland's Seas'. Teachers and pupils are supported with materials, inspiration and creative writing sessions. 812 entries were received from 28 schools in 2013, culminating in a prestigious awards ceremony.

The vision for **outdoor learning** in Edinburgh is that the journey through education for all children must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences. This includes learning in the outdoor environment, outdoor play, school grounds development and residential experiences. It also includes adventure activities, expeditions, team building, leadership training, learning for sustainability, environmental education and nature therapy.

An energy awareness campaign, **Small Steps, Big Difference**, was launched in 2013. Initially working with six city schools, and focussed on achieving positive behaviour change and attitudes towards reducing energy consumption amongst pupils and staff, it aims to reduce water and energy consumption in Council buildings by 20% by 2020. Schools are provided with thermal imaging workshops, teacher training, resource packs, posters, smoothie bike workshops and energy audits and invited to present at a showcase event in April 2014.

Effort and involvement

Edinburgh strives to secure inclusive and supportive communities. Active voluntary bodies, community organisations, the Council, charities and individuals regularly work together to create a clean, green and safe city for residents and visitors to enjoy. Here are just a few examples:

Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

- Horticultural and gardening society, based at Saughton Park.
- Encourages and improves the science, art and practice of all types of horticulture and advances education in gardening and horticulture.
- Runs a demonstration allotment at Bridgend Allotments and is currently establishing a **Master Gardener** horticultural training centre at Saughton Park.
- Works closely with schools to develop the **Plant & Grow** education programme and holds the annual school's daffodil growing competition with Eco-Schools.



Friends of Parks

- **42 groups** of volunteers who work closely with the Council and play a key role in enhancing and protecting local parks, woodlands and green spaces across Edinburgh.
- The groups volunteer their time and energy to get involved with a range of projects, such as fundraising, clean-ups, tree planting, access, leading talks and walks and contributing to the management of the park.
- Established the **Friends of Parks Forum** in 2014 to provide a collective voice for Friends groups and 'Champion' the importance of public parks.
- Hold an annual networking event, newsletters and training sessions.

Edinburgh Garden Partners

- **Matches garden owners** who are unable to manage their gardens with local volunteers who want space to grow their own food and have no garden or allotment of their own.
- Produce is shared between the garden partners.
- Driven by a desire to support people to remain independent in their own homes, often older and disabled people, including carers who do not have time for the garden.
- The project currently works with **60 garden owners and 53 gardeners**. 86% of garden owners eat and share produce that the gardeners grow.





It's your neighbourhood

- A community environmental improvement initiative managed in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society and Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- Non-competitive, with a greater emphasis on community participation than on horticultural achievement.
- Keep Scotland Beautiful rewards participating groups through a series of certificates to acknowledge the good work being done. Six Edinburgh **It's Your Neighbourhood Groups** were awarded certificates in 2013. Inverleith Allotments (Outstanding), Lochend Secret Garden (Thriving), Patrick Geddes Gardening Club (Thriving), The Grove Fountainbridge Community Garden (Developing), Sacred Heart Green Group (Improving), and West Pilton-Circus Clean Up (Improving).



Edible Edinburgh

- Representatives from the public, private and charity sector in Edinburgh working to provide a **Sustainable Food City Plan**. The initiative is engaging with residents to transform Edinburgh into a city where good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment.
- Steering group contributes to the development of **Sustainable Edinburgh 2020**.
- Run by volunteers, the **Feed the 5000** event was held in October to engage the public on sustainable food and food waste.



www.edinburghoutdoors.org.uk

Edinburgh Outdoors is a new website and smartphone app that supports exploration and enjoyment of the city's parks and green spaces. It promotes parks, green spaces, conservation and biodiversity and helps visitors and local communities become more involved in supporting the city's natural heritage and eco-systems. Since the launch last year there have been over 1,000 downloads of the app, 46,000 individual page views and it now has 1,900 followers on Twitter and 3,200 on Facebook.



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Tourism and leisure

Attracting 1.26 million overseas visitors, tourism generates over €1.2 billion for Edinburgh's economy and supports 35,000 jobs. Edinburgh has been judged **Favourite UK City** for 13 years in a row and **Europe's Leading Destination** at the World Travel Awards. Drawn by its history, architecture, culture and landscapes, visitor surveys particularly extol the city's public parks and greenspaces, which at 17% of the urban environment, greatly exceed the quality and quantity of other Scottish cities.

Edinburgh's tourism strategy, **Edinburgh 2020**, is a collaboration between the key tourism bodies in the city. Its key objectives are to increase the number of visits by one third by 2020, increase the average spending of visitors by 10% by 2020 and reduce the seasonality of the sector.

The organisation **Marketing Edinburgh** is responsible for promoting Edinburgh to the world. This year it launched a campaign called **This Is Edinburgh**, aimed at a market within two hours of the city centre.

Edinburgh recently became a **Super-Connected City** after the Council introduced free wifi into city-centre parks and public spaces for visitors and residents. This is intended to reduce reliance on paper-based information.

Most visitors arrive by plane, car, or train. However, having restored the historic Union Canal, the Council is now creating the **Calders Gateway** as an entry to the city for those travelling by canal boat. A Canal College for young unemployed people has recently been set up to develop heritage and landscaping skills on the site, and the **Edible Estates Community Garden** has been established as a food growing hub for the residents of the Calders.

Other initiatives that meet both Edinburgh 2020 and Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 objectives include an active jobs, skills and inward investment programme centred on tourism. In 2013 the Council launched the **Edinburgh Guarantee**, a pledge that school leavers should leave with a positive job or training destination. The tourism organisation **VisitScotland** has set a fine example for the industry, recruiting Modern Apprentices.

Two Edinburgh companies won gold awards at last year's prestigious **Green Tourism Awards**, the Edinburgh Radisson Blu Hotel for its energy-saving programmes and Rabbits Trail Burners for reducing its carbon footprint.



