



# IMPACT REPORT

## NOVEMBER 2014 TO END OF 2017

The Edinburgh Living Landscape is a long-term vision to ensure that nature is at the heart of the city's future. The partnership is working to benefit local people and wildlife with an aim to make the city one of the most sustainable in Europe by 2050 while demonstrating that investment in the natural environment makes economic sense. It is reinforcing and expanding existing green networks and reconnecting the people of Edinburgh to their natural environment.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Several very successful projects were created, enabled or supported through delivery under the Edinburgh Living Landscape partnership. All partners feel it has benefited both their work and the implementation of the concept across Edinburgh for people and the city's biodiversity.

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Impacts were observed across community involvement, habitat delivery and demonstration site creation. Greater synergies across partner organisations and leverage of funding to enable project delivery have all been supported by the partnership. Areas where closer joint working can make an even greater impact towards delivering the Strategic Objectives were identified, and a commitment to achieving these in the longer term was reported by all partners.

## INTRODUCTION

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This report assesses the impact of Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL) over its first 3 years. The aim is to provide an opportunity to review ELL, give rise to questions on how elements are working, and reveal areas where improvements could be made.

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It also gives the opportunity to capture how ELL is working as an influencer. It should also give partners renewed confidence that the partnership strengthens their individual contributions to achieving the goals of greater ecosystem health, connection between communities and their green resources across Edinburgh.

Three years into the initiative the partnership was keen to review progress towards the longer-term milestone indicators of the strategic objectives in the Programme Plan. This report assesses this progress.

## SCOPE

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The period this report covers is from the official start of Edinburgh Living Landscape (November 2014) to the end of 2017.






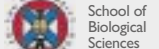


The information that contributed to this report originated from feedback from partners in the format of an impact framework agreed by the ELL Board.

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Constituent organisations in the partnership record their information at different levels of detail, according to their own internal reporting requirements, and this information cannot always be easily translated across into the framework. This report should therefore be read as indicative rather than quantitative, particularly the inputs section. Every effort has been made to be quantitative where the information was available. Additionally, a major partner, GreenSurge came to the end of their funding during the scope period. Some of the information sought was therefore unobtainable, however information on the outputs and impacts have been drawn from GreenSurge's final report and included in relevant sections of this report.

This report is about the impact of the ELL partnership as a whole. It is based on information provided directly by City of Edinburgh Council - Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Service (CEC Parks), Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), University of Edinburgh Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability, and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. There is also some anecdotal and inferred feedback from other departments within the University of Edinburgh.



1.7 FTE ELL project officers				1 FTE biodiversity trainee (funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, via the TCV)		3 weeks 1 FTE student placement			4 months 0.7 FTE Urban Wildlife Officer (trainee)		
Strategic input from 4 Senior Managers	£13,063 on events (310 hours)	Significant time on research, consultation and mapping	c.£35,000 (0.2 FTE RBGE scientists)	Secured funding for – Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Shoreline' (£93,500)	Climate Change Manager input	Secured Natural Environment Research Council funding for Gardeners Dilemma Phd	0.3 FTE of Living Landscape Programme Manager (22 months)	Support for development of the SNH Green Infrastructure Fund application for the Edinburgh Shoreline Project			
4 Parks & Greenspace Officers who manage the parks	£8,250 on contractors, administration, marketing & staff travel		Green Infrastructure Fund for 'Shoreline' (£17,550)	SNIFFER / Adaptation Scotland for 'De-Paving Project' (£10,000)	Social Responsibility and Sustainability Communications team input		0.1 FTE Head of Policy input on Natural Capital advocacy & planning engagement (18 months)	Hosted a Green Infrastructure practitioners group event			
Political support via CEC Environmental Convenor			NERC Public Engagement Pilot Grant for 'Greening the Grey' (£40,000)	People's Postcode Lottery (£1,200) for community gardening (Granton Hub)							
Councillor chairing the ELL Board			National Rail Public Engagement and Habitats Creation Contract (£9,000) for Gogarburn Rail Terminal								
c.100 gardeners who carry out ELL activities			c.£200,000 on horticultural research, support & materials								
440 hours of grassland surveys by University of Edinburgh students											
The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) placements											
£85,000 on flail deck machinery for grassland management											
c.£15,000 on meadow seed											
£50,000 on 600,000 Camassia bulbs											
£96,472 on 36,751m <sup>2</sup> meadow preparation											

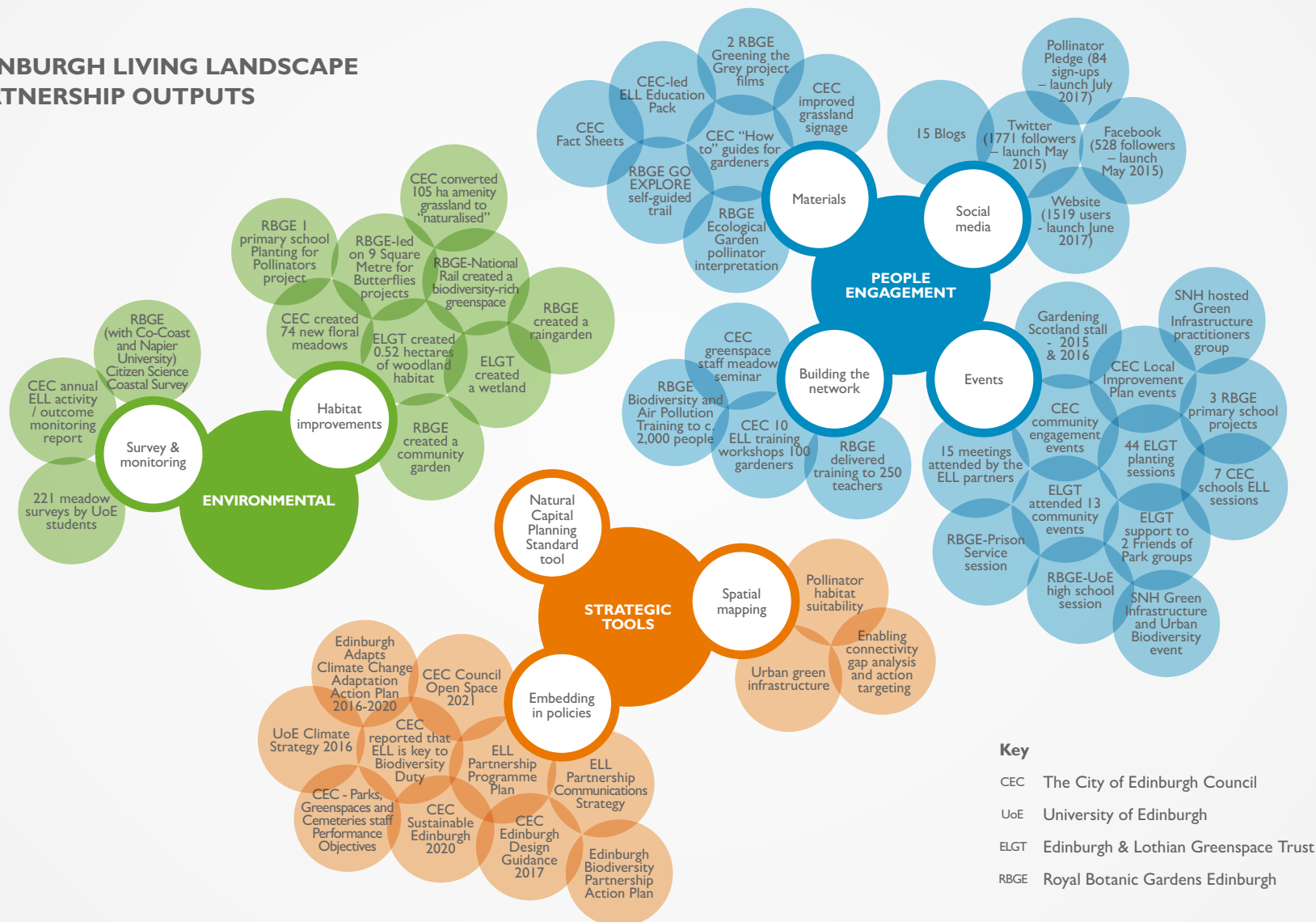
## EDINBURGH LIVING LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP TOTAL INPUTS OVER 3 YEARS

### Key

- Partner Organisation
- Dedicated ELL staff / volunteers
- Input from existing staff / volunteers
- Non-staff Financial Investment
- FTE Full time equivalent



## EDINBURGH LIVING LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP OUTPUTS





## ENVIRONMENTAL OUTPUTS

CEC created 74 new floral meadows. 0.52 hectares of woodland habitat were created by ELGT. RBGE worked with the communities in Granton to develop a community garden at the Granton Hub. An RBGE-led initiative, with Butterfly Conservation Scotland, has been engaging a range of organisations to accommodate Square Metre for Butterflies plots (small areas of pollinator habitats) across 9 city roofs or at ground level. Working with National Rail, RBGE delivered a biodiversity-rich greenspace at the new Gogarburn rail terminal.

Improvements were also made to existing habitats. Several green roofs were improved, including at CEC HQ at Waverley Court. The nature value of 12% of CEC amenity grassland was increased through conversion of 105 ha to “naturalised grassland.” These areas were supplemented by an extensive bulb planting exercise to provide colour throughout the growing season in response to feedback from the public. Hailes Quarry Park was enhanced with the creation of a wetland, and bulb planting in local parks by ELGT. The RBGE implemented a raingarden that contributes to their climate change adaptation by reducing waterlogging and flooding, with planting using primarily native species designed to support and increase biodiversity. It is now being used to promote the concept of ‘climate readiness’ within Edinburgh’s Schools for Gardens project.

221 meadow surveys were undertaken by University of Edinburgh on CEC greenspaces, each taking two hours. Progress is tracked on CEC ground through an annual progress report on ELL by CEC - Parks,



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Greenspace & Cemeteries. RBGE partnered with organisations beyond the core ELL partnership to conduct a Citizen Science Coastal Survey for seaweed indicators of marine environmental health, with Co-Coast and Napier University.

## PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT OUTPUTS

An ELL website was designed and launched in June 2017. It is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust (the Trust) and features all ELL-related projects. It is kept active through blogs, with 15 since launch. The website has had a steady flow of access by 1,519 users and 2,306 page views up until January 2018. The website promoted the Pollinator Pledge that was launched in July 2017 with 84 sign-ups so far. A dedicated ELL Facebook

page was created in May 2015 with some partners having administration rights to post ELL-relevant content. The ELL Facebook page as of February 2018 has 509 “likes” and 543 “followers.” A Twitter account was also created in May 2015.

The physical resources created by the partners included signage at key City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) sites to promote understanding. Interpretation panels explaining the importance of plant-pollinator relationships, and the richness of biodiversity found in a ‘demonstration’ Ecological Garden in Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), suggested actions visitors can take to create their own wildlife rich areas at home. To help take this learning beyond the Garden, two films were produced as part of the NERC funded project Greening the Grey.





© Rory Syme (Scottish Wildlife Trust)

Information materials included a CEC-produced Living Landscape How to Guide, Fact Sheets, maps of ELL locations, and an ELL Education Pack that was promoted to all Edinburgh Eco-Schools. Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT) disseminated ELL-relevant reports and articles. RBGE is producing the GO EXPLORE self-guided trail for the Botanic grounds, to amplify the value of Edinburgh's species and habitats to the wider public.

Training activities helped to raise awareness of the concepts behind ELL. CEC delivered 10 ELL training workshops to approximately 100 gardeners. A meadow seminar was held for CEC greenspace staff involved in the preparation and maintenance of meadows. RBGE delivered Continuing Professional Development courses which have provided outdoor learning plans for approximately 250 teachers a year, who then return to schools to integrate the use of greenspace within their curricula. RBGE, working with Sustrans, also developed Biodiversity and Air Pollution Training and Survey to explain its role in monitoring environmental health. This helped connect communities to the lichens and bryophytes around them giving them the skills to assess the status of these species in their gardens, streets and neighbourhoods. This reached more than 2,000 people and helped train 150 'experts.' Partners SNH and RBGE, with Civic Architects, organised a meeting with landscape practitioners to promote and discuss Green Infrastructure, which attracted 25 attendees. SNH also hosted the Green Infrastructure and Urban Biodiversity meeting with 49 attendees registered.

ELL was integrated into CEC Local Improvement Plan (LIP) events, which involved 4 week-long events. CEC also delivered community engagement sessions highlighting ELL changes, and asking for input, that reached nearly 400 people across the city. ELL partners attended 15 meetings with political groups, LIP events and Friends of Parks groups. A stall was taken at Gardening Scotland in 2015 & 2016 to highlight the ELL programme in collaboration with partners. Additionally, ELGT ran 44 conservation and planting sessions, attended 13 community events, and targeted support to 2 Friends of Park groups - West Pilton Park & Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park. 1,512 people participated in experiencing ELL-related nature activities and events with ELGT.

The RBGE school programme provided outdoor learning for approximately 10,000 school pupils per year, through interdisciplinary programmes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, expressive arts, and health and wellbeing. School Ground Biodiversity Investigations projects were delivered with South Queensferry, and Torphichen Primary Schools. The RBGE Schools Gardening Project provided greenspace for growing vegetables for children without access to these facilities. RBGE also led a Planting for Pollinators project with 1 Primary School. CEC delivered 7 school Planting for Pollinators sessions that led to a change in the grounds maintenance or meadow planting on the school sites. In collaboration with ELL partners at the University of Edinburgh, RBGE delivered a Concrete in the Classroom session at Craigroyston Secondary School to blend engineering for green walls and roofs through the exploration of bioreceptive surfaces.

RBGE partnered with Scottish Government, at their Victoria Quay site, to improve the greenspace management as a contribution to a healthy at work programme. The infrastructure, including benches and planters used in the re-design was built through the vocational training programme within the prison service.

## STRATEGIC TOOLS OUTPUTS

Spatial mapping was identified as a necessary tool for strategic planning of ELL activity. The output of the urban green infrastructure model, developed by GreenSurge, was referred to in CECs Open Space 2021 strategy and presented a geographical visualisation of the distribution of habitat suitability for some pollinators – hoverfly and bumblebees. This map layer was overlaid with social factors to enable targeting of action where both biodiversity and communities benefit the most. The map layers should, with some adaptation and wider access, be a very useful tool for connectivity gap analysis and action targeting.

The Trust led on producing a Natural Capital Planning Standard tool for Edinburgh. This standardises assessment of the ecosystem services provided by a site and is usually used on development sites. This will enable comparison of the green infrastructure benefits provided by different design options. This is currently being trialled by a Masters student at the University of Edinburgh to gain independent feedback.

CEC reported that ELL is a key factor in achieving its statutory Biodiversity Duty. The concept is also now embedded in a number of CEC strategic

and guidance documents including the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP), Open Space 2021 strategy and the wider Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 document (CECs Framework for the sustainable development of the city until 2020).

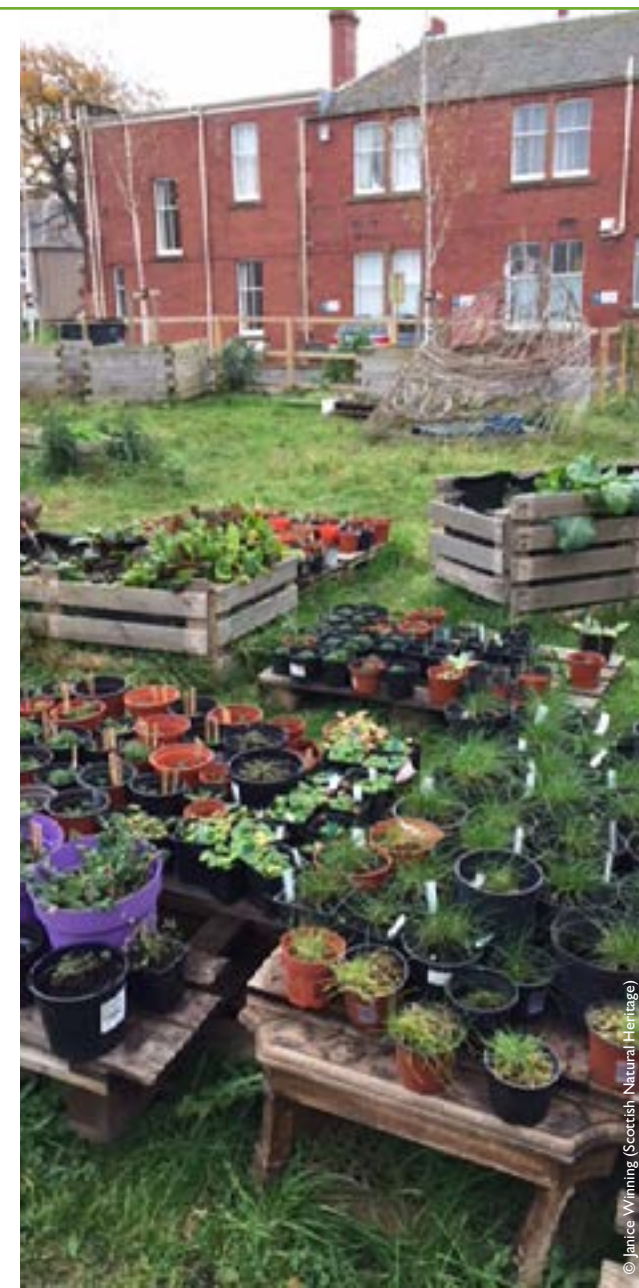


The new CEC Edinburgh Design Guidance 2017 also references ELL in its concepts and sets out the standards that must

be met in the design of new buildings and spaces. Other organisations have embedded the ELL concepts through the University of Edinburgh Climate Change strategies and Edinburgh Adapts Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

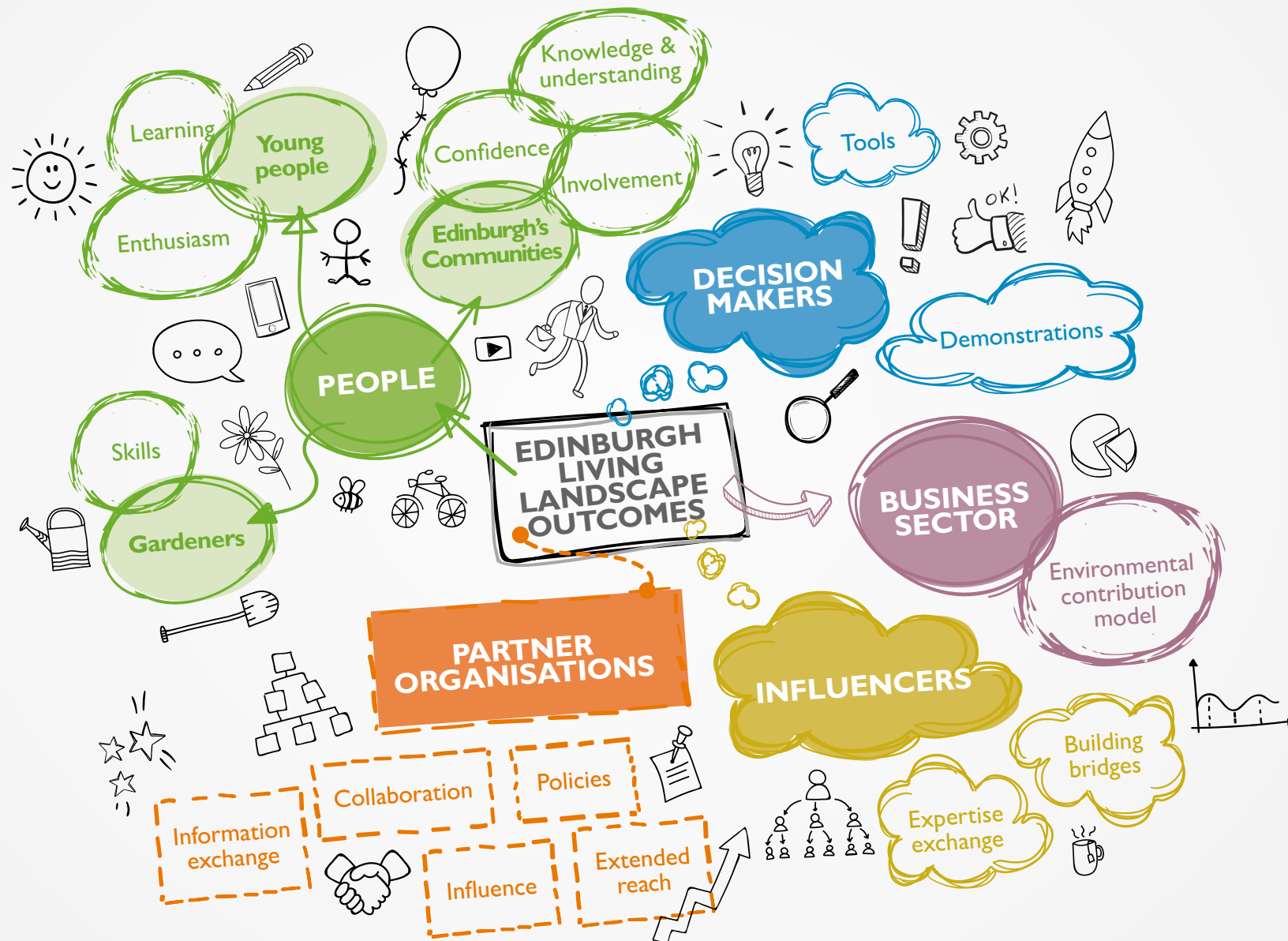
Some partners have chosen to embed ELL internally either by funding dedicated staff or providing staff time. ELL is included in CEC - Parks, Greenspaces and Cemeteries staff performance objectives, one to one meetings and regular internal briefings/discussions. It is also promoted in relevant University of Edinburgh policies and strategies and practical steps, such as engagement with the Estates Department, to trial the Natural Capital Planning Standard at Pollok Halls.

The ELL Board has agreed an ELL Communications Strategy, and CEC has a communication plan/record in place for strengthening and maintaining engagement with Friends of Parks groups.









## GENERAL OUTCOMES

Knowledge and skills have increased across a significant number of people, including professionals who can influence how the aspirations of the ELL partnership are implemented. Practices have changed in the management of partners' land management decision-making, as well as the decisions and behaviours by individuals and businesses. A significant barrier to achieving the ELL aspirations were associated with perceptions of change by the public, organisation staff and organisational culture. Progress was made towards lifting these barriers through the outputs.

Several partners noted that individual projects under the ELL umbrella provide both a great opportunity for delivering specific outputs but can also be a potential barrier to realising the overall ELL strategic objectives. Partners reported that they believe that ELL remains a nebulous concept to the city's residents and this may be a barrier to citizens being able to participate fully. There are excellent examples of projects delivering aspects of the ELL concept, but the challenge is that these higher profile projects has resulted in perceptions by some that ELL's sole purpose is to improve existing greenspaces through discrete projects. There is some concern that the message about the integrated nature of the Living Landscape initiative is getting lost. With stronger, clearer and more consistent messaging, projects could be a better vehicle for communicating the ELL concept to both the community and influencers. This would help secure a longer-term and broader commitment to meeting the ELL strategic objectives.



## PEOPLE

### Edinburgh's Communities

The very positive formal feedback from ELL activity participants indicates that the values and concepts underlying ELL work are motivating a shift in attitudes. Participation in activities promoted an appreciation that everyone can improve their local area for the community as well as for biodiversity. This increase in feelings of empowerment enabled individuals to take action directly whether in their own gardens, by taking part in regular activities or encouraging others to take action. Activities also improved participants' knowledge of wildlife habitat creation techniques, providing skills and improving confidence. The enthusiasm to improve

Edinburgh's ecosystem health spread beyond private gardens to a greater awareness of the greenspaces near them and an intention to visit more. The raised awareness of the connections between green infrastructure, climate change risk, and biodiversity, and the steps that can be taken to tackle these, has challenged individual's understanding, leading to a greater appreciation that these issues affect everyone and that everyone can do something to contribute. The outcome has been greater demand for local communities for neighbourhood improvement support.

The greater community engagement by CEC, for example, through consultations when planting new areas was welcomed.





Communities are engaging with a greater confidence now that they know more about what is possible. This illustrates how the ELL partnership is delivering benefit for both nature and communities. For this to be sustained there needs to be continued support for Friends of Parks groups and continued “buy in” from Council elected members. Public acceptance of change needs to continue to be treated with respect by progressing gradually as this is anticipated to lead to greater acceptance in the longer term. The change process needs support through continuity of websites and social media channels, with communications coordinated across partners.

Partners’ demonstration projects facilitated a shift in attitudes to an acceptance that change is possible. The ‘Greening the Grey’ project showed

the feasibility of adaptive change along Edinburgh’s coast. This has led to support for a visioning exercise through the HLF funded Shoreline Project. It is anticipated that the RBGE rain garden and green roof demonstration will have a similar outcome in time.

Potential negative public reaction was perceived as a barrier to land management change, particularly concerns by the public about less intensively managed grassland. Public feedback about CEC grassland management changes was mixed. The CEC wildflower meadow areas were well-received, but the naturalised grass areas did elicit some negative feedback. By explaining the concept of a Living Landscape or by adjusting the management, including bulb planting to “brighten up” the sites, most public complaints about the untidiness of the

areas arising from the reduced levels of mowing were satisfied. Whilst there is still some opposition to this change and concern about litter/dog fouling in certain locations, the number of complaints received has been relatively low regarding both issues. ELGT found that participants were satisfied with the changes once they saw the plants flowering and understood that the changes were part of a wider initiative. The expectation is that a steady, gradual change in the public perception of more natural grass areas will continue to develop.

### Gardeners

Members of the gardening community have benefited through an improved knowledge of wildlife habitat creation techniques and the choice of plants that can improve their local biodiversity. This has been achieved both through practical experience of planting trees and bulbs and through engagement with, and advice stemming from, the Pollinator Pledge.

### Young People

Young people were supported to get involved in actions to benefit their local community greenspaces. This has resulted in an increase in confidence amongst participants, both creating an opportunity for further engagement in habitat improvement activities and increased use of the greenspaces for activities. The ELL strategic objectives also enabled opportunities to integrate school teaching across several school subjects. The education resource pack is proving useful to support learning both in the formal setting as well as out of school activities.



## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The CEC reported an increase in organisational buy-in, including from senior management, for the ELL concept, and more specifically, a more “relaxed” grass maintenance regime aiming to increase the biodiversity value and operational sustainability of their owned greenspace management. This has enabled changing the management of a significant proportion of owned grassland to promote greater biodiversity value. As these changes fit with the Council’s 2020 framework, 2017 Parks Review and the City Vision, it is expected that the new practices will be supported long-term, and across more CEC land with the inclusion of sports pitches, school grounds, care homes and now cemeteries coming within the scope of ELL. The

more centralised management of CEC gardeners is supporting delivery of the ELL benefits with increased consistency in approach across sites. This is supported by CEC staff uptake of a professional development qualification - an SVQ in horticulture. The outcome is that more CEC gardening staff have a basic knowledge of biodiversity in the areas that they maintain and can take greater “ownership” of the ELL concept through to delivery. CEC report that this is reflected in a significant number of CEC greenspace staff being much more accepting of grassland naturalisation sites and a more holistic approach to horticulture practices.

RBGE also reviewed greenspace management practices and increased confidence by ensuring that the Garden resource is not only promoted as a visitor attraction but is also focused to engage the public with Edinburgh’s wider urban biodiversity. This broadened scope has generated new partnerships; working more closely with the Council and others, to draw on specific RBGE staff expertise leading to knowledge transfer. The existence of the ELL partnership has provided a foundation on which RBGE-led projects could be developed and is considered to have been an important factor in the Shoreline Project emerging. The same is true of the Square Metre for Butterflies project, which provides the opportunity for greater engagement with the private sector. Collaborative work on the RBGE rain garden has created the opportunity to shape the green infrastructure climate change targets for Edinburgh Adapts. The synergy between green infrastructure and climate change adaptation has culminated most recently in funding for the Re-Imagining Streets

public engagement project which is delivering a series of public engagement events in Granton.



ELL inspired changes in practices have also been integrated into the University of Edinburgh Climate Change Strategy, launched in 2017. From this, plans for adaptation and biodiversity are being drafted which cross-refer to the ELL approach and related practices.

Using feedback from the trial of the Natural Capital Planning Standard tool, to further refine and adapt it, it is anticipated that it will be used more widely across the Estate to inform management and development.

ELGT noted that the initiative fitted with the existing objective of creating a network of greenspaces and projects to engage with schools and promote delivery of health and wellbeing outcomes. Additional value, from being part of the ELL partnership, has come from increased information sharing leading to greater collaboration with other partners and avoidance of duplication of projects.

An important outcome for the Scottish Wildlife Trust is progress towards the aim of improving the nature value of development sites. Through ELL there is increasing support for defining the nature value of a site and using that information to make informed choices between different management or development options. The development of the Natural Capital Planning Standard for Edinburgh,



now being trialled by University of Edinburgh, has provided a tool for engaging more directly with stakeholders around this aim. It was noted by some partners that it could be a helpful tool in development planning because it provides a clear measure of the ecosystem services offered by a site.

## DECISION MAKERS

A quote from a final GreenSurge report sums up the outcome for decision-makers; “Changes in attitude, awareness and, as a result, improved Urban Green Infrastructure decision-making ... were considered to be key conceptual outcomes achieved in Edinburgh.” Essential to this shift is the wide representation and commitment from the ELL partnership, leading to a growing confidence that ELL is a long-term strategy with broad benefits across biodiversity, communities and economics.

The aspiration to increase the ecosystem health of Edinburgh is now more embedded in the thinking of decision-makers. The concept of natural capital is more clearly understood, and there is a growing confidence that it can be measured. This was partly due to ELL partners’ projects such as the wildflower meadows, a raingarden, and habitat creation across private and public sector sites.

The Natural Capital Planning Standard tool has been welcomed by climate change-focussed staff in the University of Edinburgh. Piloting a Natural Capital Planning Standard tool in the City of Edinburgh Council Planning service was considered but has not been taken forward at this stage. This is due to concerns from the Council planning department both about the pressures on development management case officers’ time and around the perceived flexibility of the tool

to reliably enable good, overall design outcomes across a range of development contexts. The University trial of the tool will be a real-life example to show the resource implications and ease of use by untrained individuals. The lessons learnt from the trial will support further refinement of, and advocacy around, the value of the tool.

## BUSINESS SECTOR

The Square Metre for Butterflies project has demonstrated to the business sector how they can contribute to ecosystem health even where companies do not own significant land, or their only space are flat roofs. This project now has more potential sites than current resources can deal with. This model of engagement has also demonstrated how business may be able to contribute in other ways, with enquirers seeking advice about enhancement actions they can take.

## INFLUENCERS

Many of the ELL partners are both delivery organisations and influencers. Beyond the partnership, ELL is having a positive effect on individuals who can help influence the delivery of the partnership aims. Across the corporate, local and national government sectors a genuine enthusiasm to contribute to biodiversity in the city was reported.

A pattern of keen individuals who welcome support through ideas, expertise and often practical assistance as to how change can be achieved was also reported. Plant biodiversity value and management knowledge has increased across a broad range of specialist organisations including: Botanical Art, Buglife, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Dean Valley Garden Volunteers, Friends of the Meadows, Green Tease,



International Association of Landscape Ecology, Kew Grow Wild, New Town Gardens, and RSPB. This was achieved through the ELL-partnership facilitating an exchange of expertise. Green Infrastructure concepts and Natural Capital Planning Standard awareness has also been raised through professional information exchange, especially led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and University of Edinburgh.

Enabling a greater partnership between development practitioners, and organisations that could offer support to facilitate greater natural capital in development design, was identified as a need. SNH events have brought these groups together and there is now greater progress towards achieving integrated planning proposals that should deliver net benefit for nature, as well as the primary development goal such as housing or industry.



EDINBURGH  
LIVING  
LANDSCAPE  
PARTNERSHIP  
IMPACTS

sustainable grassland leverage habitat public maximise growing walk  
adaptation delivered new climate greater prioritise  
design resources plan green capacity include  
university funded improve green community  
concept ecosystem indicator policy  
assess sources stronger support change awareness CEC organisation  
city greenspace skills delivering greenspaces knowledge  
health biodiversity change blue  
develop sector development spaces management  
edinburgh benefit engagement greater  
information engage impact gap shift partnership feedback  
action acceptance  
project ELL activities  
create instrument work together  
adaptation participants strategic parks  
important adaptation participants strategic parks  
benefit need private local  
objective RBGE integrated maintaining socio-economic  
management facilitate native game connections



ELL Strategic Objectives are high level, long-term aspirations. After just 3 years since ELL launched, we would expect to see some progress, but not full delivery. This was the case, but it is useful to reflect on the steps so far, to ensure we are travelling in the intended direction.

1. Ecosystem health of Edinburgh is improving year on year.
2. Improved ecosystem health in Edinburgh is having measurable socio-economic benefits for the city, particularly in areas of deprivation.
3. More people are engaged in caring with their local greenspaces.
4. More people are making use of Edinburgh's connected network of green and blue spaces to move around the city by walking and cycling.
5. New developments are planned and delivered in such a way as to create low carbon, walkable neighbourhoods, and workplaces containing high quality green infrastructure.

## INSTRUMENTAL IMPACTS

ELL concepts have been embedded or increased in emphasis in a range of policy and strategic documents. Many partners report that ELL concepts align well with their organisations' existing procedures or policies (e.g. CEC Biodiversity Duty, Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, University of Edinburgh estate management policies). These organisations also report that ELL is inspiring

“...involvement with ELL has increased confidence around green infrastructure projects and has generated an important synergy with climate change adaptation; it has refocused public engagement towards habitat creation and gardening for native biodiversity; it has shifted our activities 'off-site' and into local communities, to facilitate greenspace often through access to new sources of external-funding around multi-functional landscapes; it has created a growing engagement with the private sector in terms of conversations around biodiversity and actions for city greenspace.”

RBGE (Chris)

This should allow a gap analysis which is both a necessity for project prioritisation, and a basis for assessing the current ecosystem health, and assessing the policy support that may still be needed. There is still some work to do on this spatial strategy work.

Biodiversity and greenspace improvements involving people either through on-site activities or through consultation, has meant more people

reviews of approach and helps ensure that ecosystem health maintains an important focus in organisational agendas, even if the term is not explicitly used. A step change is yet to be reported, but tools such as the Natural Capital Planning Standard are expected to facilitate this.

Identifying gaps in ecosystem health has proved a challenge due to the lack of an existing indicator. On the basis that its supporting pillars are communities, economics and biodiversity value, the mapping by Greensurge was a step forward.

are aware of the importance of the urban cityscape as a habitat for native biodiversity. One partner observed that ELL-related interventions are 'proof-of-concept' demonstrations and have yet to transition to a systematic large-scale shift that mainstreams high quality greenspace across the city. Bigger, more integrated projects may take an important step closer to achieving this, such as the HLF funded Shoreline Project.

## CONCEPTUAL IMPACT

The concept behind ELL had already been considered at some level across many partner organisations, but the impact of the partnership has been to create new conceptual links, strengthen existing collaborations, and provided greater support for planning and funding applications for more integrated projects.

The concepts inherent in the ELL approach are better recognised across everyone encountering ELL-related work. This includes many decision-makers, as evidenced by CEC Parks no longer having to explain the concept internally, and a growing proportion of the public. This is being achieved by ELL partners making connections between activities and the ELL concepts. Examples include

“...being a part of ELL provides us with leverage to influence other Estates and relevant colleagues in terms of consideration of ecosystem health and developing and maintaining green and blue infrastructure.”  
University of Edinburgh (Liz)



*...we identify as an important development*

*the growing presence of ELL in shaping Edinburgh's cityscape"*

RBGE (Chris)

through organisational policies, social media and all other forms of outward-facing and inward-facing communications about related work.

There is evidence that ELL concepts are being integrated into the thinking behind design of new developments. CEC Parks reported that their ELL Project Team was involved with identifying sustainable planting along Active Travel Routes planned initially for Granton Foreshore, A8 corridor and along Tram route at Stenhouse.

As noted in the Outcomes section, the ecosystem health concept has not had as much impact amongst some stakeholders as the individual projects delivering actions on the ground. Stronger and clearer messaging may help meet challenges to support this concept. Progress may be further facilitated by targeting actions and resources strategically to maximise 'bang for buck' in terms of benefiting Edinburgh's landscape for its people and biodiversity. The challenges of presenting a spatial assessment may partly have contributed to not maximising the impact of the concepts behind ELL thus far.

### CAPACITY BUILDING IMPACTS

The public is a vital partner in ELL, and several organisations observed that ELL-related activities have increased skills, knowledge and engagement

with greenspaces – private and publicly owned. This enthusiasm needs to be sustained though to ensure this capacity impact continues.

Partners also observed that duplication of projects has been avoided through information sharing at an earlier stage of project development. They also reported that the ELL enables existing resources to be invested more strategically as partners can call upon each other's support and expertise when drawing up and implementing plans.

Capacity often requires resources to effect change. The ELL partnership has assisted with securing



*...ELL has leveraged new sources of funding, especially for 'off-site' activities that build on local community development projects. These are unlikely to have been prioritised were we not involved with ELL."*

RBGE (Chris)

funding for a few of the partner organisations, so increasing capacity for projects. This impact is expected to continue. The benefit of connections between green infrastructure, climate change risk, and biodiversity were particularly highlighted as having had an impact.

The Gardeners Dilemma PhD that started in 2017 is a useful step towards showing ecosystem health in Edinburgh while is also having a measurable socio-economic benefit for the city. The indicators for this multiple benefit objective were difficult to design due to existing data not necessarily being at the right scale, and the need to avoid significant diversion of resources towards long

term data collection. The PhD, led by University of Edinburgh, will include survey work from 2018 onwards and will help provide some socio-economic benefit information as well as biodiversity impacts of the CEC grassland work.

### UNEXPECTED IMPACTS

ELL has been instrumental in pulling together different stakeholders and organisations that have not significantly worked together previously. A reported example is the development of the Pollinator Project which created a stronger relationship between CEC Parks and University of Edinburgh researchers. CEC will benefit through greater knowledge about the impact of their grassland management decisions on the biodiversity, communities and operational costs. Researchers reported benefits through being introduced to a green infrastructure board game that gave them ideas for taking their research into gamification.



## LOOKING FORWARD

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The ELL vision is long-term, and the first 3 years have been an important learning opportunity and development and delivery phase. Feedback was significantly positive with all partners continuing to support their involvement in the initiative.

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The key messages from this evaluation point towards:

- creating a greater connection across projects;
- further strengthening links to the ELL-concepts;
- influencing even more of those with a significant impact across the Edinburgh landscape, particularly planning policy and practice;
- communicating in an even more joined up way as an important element in achieving all the above; and
- being even more strategic with greater spatial prioritisation for action while continuing to take opportunities that present themselves.

The underlying message therefore was that there needs to be even greater connection – between stakeholders, partners, projects, as well as habitats across Edinburgh, to achieve the broad ambition of ecosystem health and engagement with nature.

