



Delivery Plan 2022 – 2027

**This document has been produced by the
Dee Catchment Partnership Management Team**

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Dee District Salmon Fishery Board
James Hutton Institute
NatureScot
River Dee Trust
Scottish Forestry
Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Dee Catchment Partnership Delivery Plan 2022 – 2027

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Chairman's foreword

The burns and rivers, lochs and wetlands of the river Dee catchment play a vital role in sustaining lives, livelihoods and nature. The river and its tributaries lie at the heart of a stunning landscape that's a magnet for tourism and recreation as well as being critical to the wellbeing of the catchment's population. Homes and businesses throughout the NE are sustained by water supplied by the Dee, the catchment's rich array of habitats is home to a vast array of wildlife including many rare and threatened species, and its peatlands and floodplains are vital carbon stores essential in moderating the impact of floods and droughts. The river system is absolutely critical to Scotland's environment, economy, and wellbeing.

Over centuries, the river Dee's ecosystems have been heavily depleted and fragmented - greatly impairing their ability to function naturally. Over time, the natural processes essential for a resilient and a biodiverse river environment have been heavily depleted. Peatlands have been drained, floodplains disconnected and developed, riverbanks stripped of woodlands and tributaries marginalised and incised deep into the landscape. Most of the catchment's watercourses are completely separated from their valleys. These impacts are reflected by nature's indicator species – two of the catchment's most sensitive - Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel populations, both once numerous in the Dee - are on the brink of collapse.

The Dee Catchment Partnership has been committed to the long-term restoration of the river Dee catchment for almost 20 years. Our projects have been extensive, extending their scope as our knowledge and experience grows. We are recognised internationally as an exemplar for catchment management. The DCP is IUCN HELP Basin, runs an exemplar project in the IUCN River Restoration and Biodiversity Initiative, and was the winner of 2021 Nature of Scotland Climate and Nature award. We regularly provide case studies including for the Natural Flood Management Forum, River Restoration Centre, and SWT Riverwoods project. We have been partners in six major EU projects that have made important contributions to biodiversity recovery, carbon storage and climate resilience. Our programme of outreach and education has been extensive, creating approaches and materials have been shared throughout the UK.

This Delivery Plan focusses on river restoration in its broadest sense – the regeneration of functioning ecosystems - targeted to the areas where the benefits will be greatest. Its purpose is to coordinate, support and extend the work of partners, underpinned by a programme of engagement to engage and inspire everyone with a stake in the catchment's future, and building in much-needed evidence gathering to demonstrate the benefits of river restoration for climate, nature and people. In the face of the climate and biodiversity crises and the post-pandemic focus on green recovery, regenerating our catchment is essential and urgent.

Dr Martin Auld
Dee Catchment Partnership chairman
April 2022

Dee Catchment Partnership Vision

A thriving river Dee catchment where water, nature and people connect and flourish as part of a dynamic river system from the headwaters to the sea

In 5
years



A wide range of restoration sites are maturing and new ones are being created throughout the catchment

In 10
years



Restoration sites form networks within sub catchments, and existing sites have been extended

In 25
years



Extensive restoration has taken place involving whole sub-catchments, and these are nature-rich and flourishing

1. Introduction

The Dee Catchment Partnership formed in 2003 when 16 organisations joined forces to improve the future of the rivers, burns and lochs of the river Dee catchment. The first activity of the Dee Catchment Partnership was to publish a Catchment Management Plan (published in 2007) to align, connect and extend partner activities relating to the river. These include roles in regulation, planning, education, advice, access, and research – as well as the delivery on the ground of a very significant and growing number of river restoration projects. The Dee CMP is our partners' commitment to adding value to these activities by taking collective action, delivered through successive Delivery Plan cycles.

With over 20 years of experience our Partnership has a strong track record in river restoration in all its forms. Our partners have undertaken a vast amount of activity to improve the health of the river system, making significant inroads into all pressing problems – diffuse pollution has been reduced, obstructions to migrating fish removed or eased, invasive species systematically controlled, extensive riparian woodland created, and channels re-routed to more natural courses. This work, reinforced by five large scale EU projects and complemented by many other initiatives, has led to the Dee catchment being recognised as an exemplar of effective partnership working recognised as such in the IUCN HELP Basin network and IUCN Biodiversity Initiative.

The results of this work are tangible and evidenced by the research that underpins many of our projects. The repair of degraded peatland and floodplain wetlands is starting to reinstate valuable carbon and water storage. De-canalising constrained and marginalised agricultural streams has reduced high energy flows and siltation lower in the catchment. New native riparian woodland is maturing, and in years to come will shade heating watercourses, slow rates of runoff, and regenerate and connect bankside and instream habitats. All these interventions have been achieved within a diverse and thriving working landscape, using pragmatism, compromise, and an action-taking approach to achieve change on the ground.

The Dee Catchment Partnership is well-equipped and eager to effect change at the most ecologically effective scales possible. Therefore undertaking, communicating and evaluating river restoration at the valley and sub catchment scale is the focus of this 5 year plan. We view this as the essential and urgent step towards net zero carbon, biodiversity gain, climate resilience, community involvement and the wellbeing of the catchment's communities.

Our Statement of Purpose set out our purpose, scope, and governance arrangements in detail.

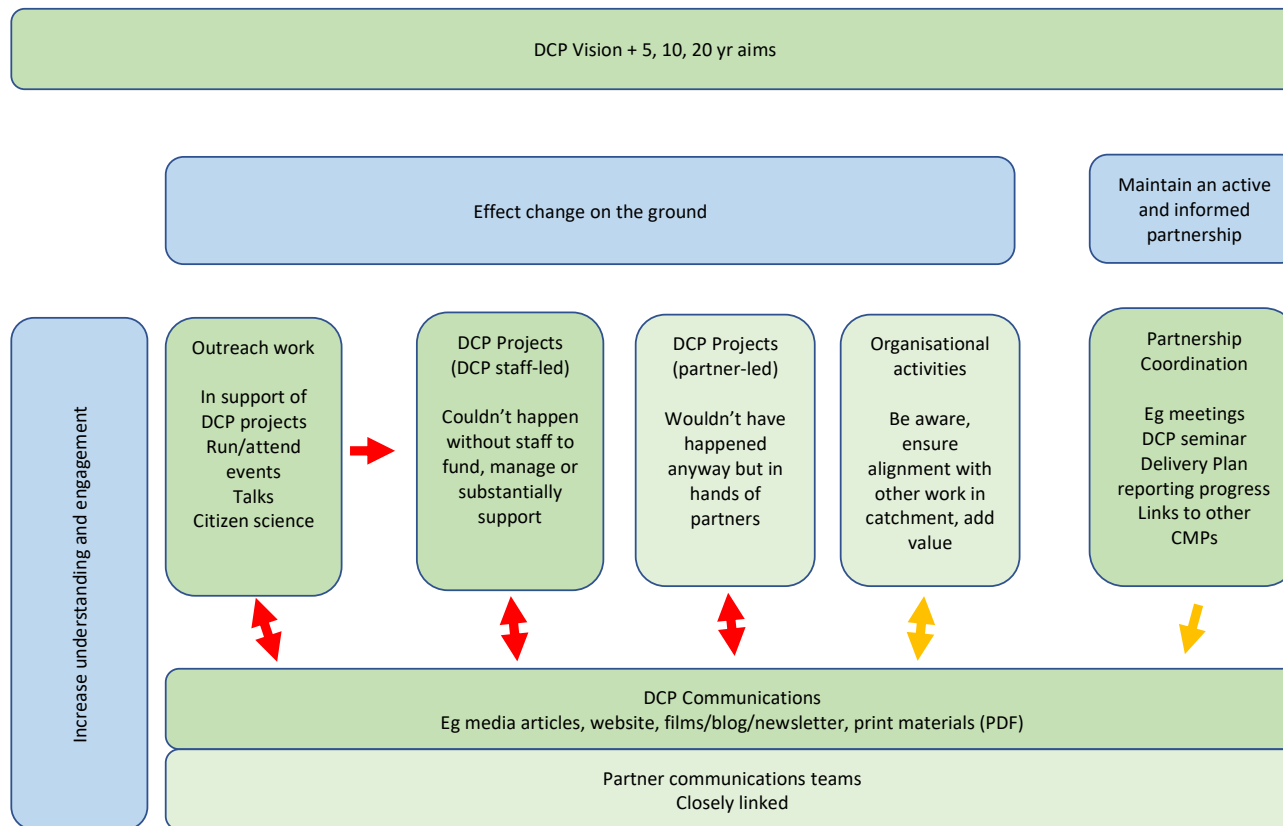


Figure 1 How our aims (blue boxes) are delivered by the work of our staff (dark green boxes) and partner organisation (pale green boxes)

2. Delivery Plan 2022 - 2027

This Delivery Plan 2022-2027 sets out our blueprint for achieving restoration in the river Dee catchment over the next 5 years. It sets a framework for Partnership projects that focus on benefits for climate, nature and people. These projects will be over and above the work of individual partner organisations. They will require our staff to support and coordinate our partners in joining forces to bring about the projects that none could deliver alone.

This plan has its roots in a public consultation held in July 2021. The 300+ responses indicated strong support for an approach to catchment management based on restoration in the river system, driven by concerns about the climate emergency (flooding and droughts), biodiversity crisis and sustainability in land management. In the wake of COVID 19, the impacts of and opportunities for access were also strong themes. Building on this feedback, a DCP workshop in August 2021 identified specific activities that would deliver, accelerate, and add value to the objectives of our partners. The final set of activities was agreed by the DCP Management Team (our funders) in March 2022.

We present this Delivery Plan as the next step towards our vision for a regenerated future for the waters of the river Dee catchment.

3. Purpose

The Purpose of this Delivery Plan to restore naturally functioning river ecosystems in the Dee catchment. We are looking to achieve restoration at scales that will:

- Increase the quality, diversity, and extent of habitats for wildlife
- Contribute to achieving net zero [carbon storage in peatlands, wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, grasslands]
- Increase climate resilience (floods and droughts) and opportunities for climate adaptation (movement of species)
- Support sustainable growth (agriculture, development, communities, tourism)
- Boost community wellbeing by creating a more natural and diverse landscape and providing opportunities to be more involved with the river environment
- Contribute to the evidence for restoration techniques and projects

4. Approach

Our Approach is to focus on restoring natural ecosystem processes. By regenerating a river system that (where possible) can adjust freely through the seasons and as the climate changes the catchment will develop an inherent resilience and be more able to adapt.

Our projects will:

- Aim to involve the whole river corridor (floodplain, riparian zone, channel)
- Maximise linkages in hydrology and habitat at sub-catchment scales

- Include woodland creation and incorporate instream wood
- Address the needs of changing species' ranges
- Incorporate potential NFM benefits and contribute to this where appropriate
- Take account of access considerations

Our priorities over the next 5 years will be three interlinked areas of activity:

- A. Outreach: to increase support and involvement amongst communities, landowners and partner organisations.
- B. Restoration: to develop and deliver restoration projects and support land managers in implementing sustainable land management.
- C. Evidence: to establish the evidence base for undertaking effective river restoration and provide an exemplar for effective catchment management.

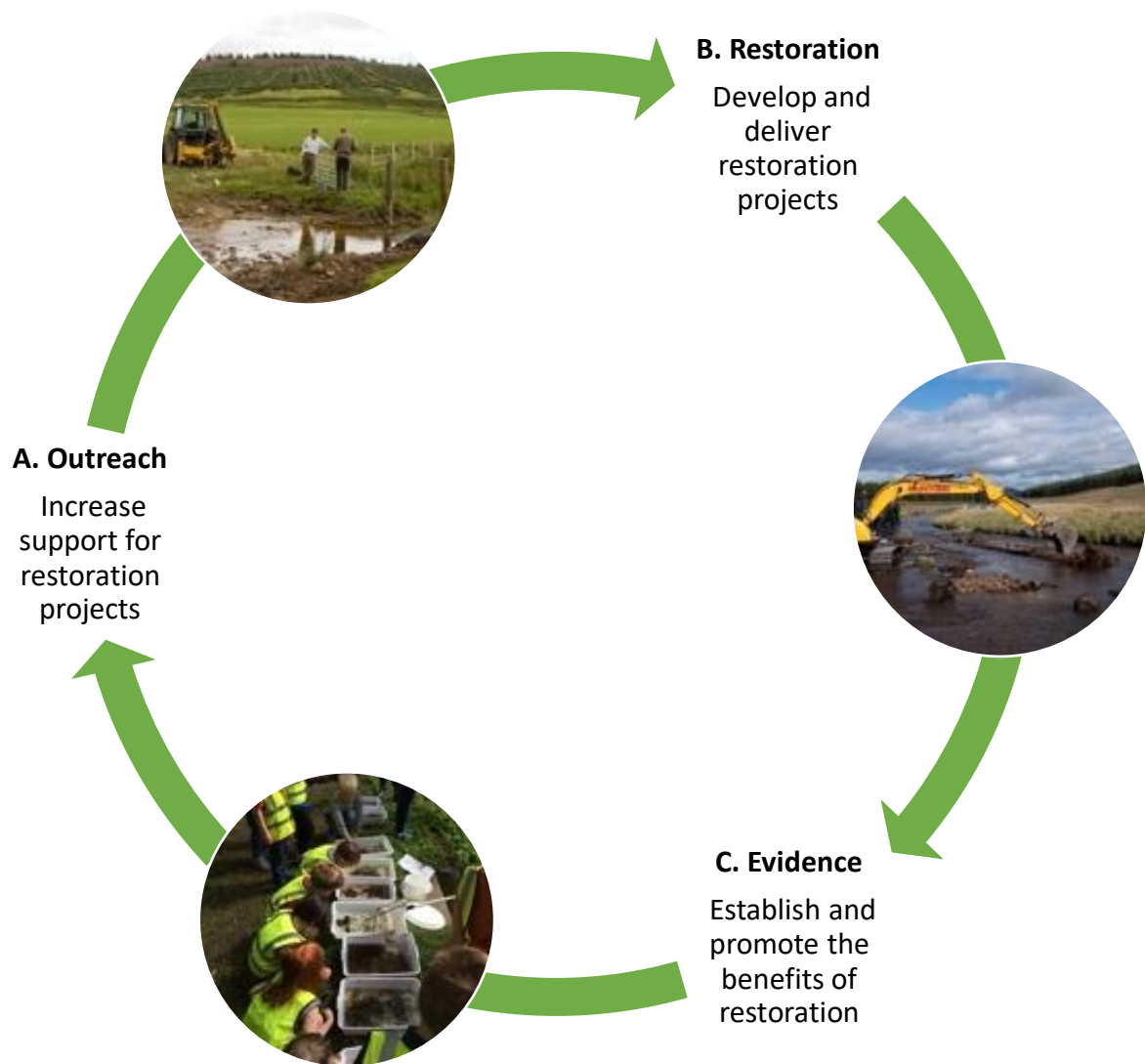


Figure 2 Delivering, communicating and evaluating river restoration at the valley and sub catchment scale is the focus of this 5 year plan.

5. Objectives and Actions 2022 – 2027

Over the next 5 years (2022-2027) the Dee Catchment Partnership will undertake the following activities to extend the network of restored river ecosystems throughout the Dee catchment.

A. Outreach: Increase support for restoration projects	
Objective	Activities
A.1 Strengthen understanding catchment-wide of the need for, and benefits of, river restoration projects	▪ Create and maintain underpinning information and materials for outreach activities and share with partners for their use ▪ Undertake outreach activities to educate and inspire catchment-wide eg via websites, articles, videos, talks, site visits, social media etc ▪ Undertake targeted outreach activities linked to potential/planned projects to explore opportunities, raise awareness, inspire support and enable participation
A.2 Raise awareness among land managers of the importance of river restoration and opportunities	▪ Provide information about river restoration techniques and projects to land managers ▪ Run activities to encourage land manager support for and participation in target river restoration areas and establish collaborative options for integrating river restoration with land management ▪ Engage with local, regional and national government and organisations to secure support for land management incentives that promote restoration objectives
A.3 Create opportunities for people to contribute to the development, management and monitoring of restoration projects	▪ Link with and support existing activities eg RDT volunteers, NENNIS forum, NESBReC, TDG ▪ Create new volunteering and training opportunities ▪ Educate on access responsibilities and promote access opportunities

B. Restoration: Develop and deliver restoration projects	
Objective	Activities
B.1 Strengthen partner understanding, support and involvement	▪ Create opportunities for shared knowledge to ensure awareness of projects, streamline project delivery, drive a more catchment level approach to flood management, improve knowledge of river system and improve urban-rural links ▪ Ensure key regulatory partners are fully informed of restoration plans and activities ▪ Be proactive in encouraging policy decisions that would support or enable more restoration work
B.2 Target and design restoration projects for maximum multiple benefits	▪ Create inventory of potential projects identifying condition, benefits/constraints, conflicts ▪ Match potential projects to delivery partners and potential funding and other opportunities ▪ Address knowledge gaps eg species-rich bankside grasslands, freshwater pearl mussel, beaver, less valued fish species
B.3 Deliver restoration projects and support others in doing so	▪ Identify and develop priority projects to shovel ready stage ▪ Deliver priority projects, including projects within the NL Heritage Horizons project (led by CNPA) ▪ Manage existing sites to maximise success and address any issues

C. Evidence: Evaluate and promote benefits of restoration projects	
Objective	Activities
C.1 Share knowledge with others undertaking river restoration	▪ Exchange ideas with other groups eg via catchment network, RRC, workshops, conferences ▪ Undertake and host site visits to promote discussion and exchange of ideas ▪ Provide information about Dee restoration projects and techniques on DCP website
C.2 Develop restoration techniques	▪ Investigate approaches being used elsewhere and consider relevance and opportunities in Dee ▪ Trial different techniques based on experience, work in other catchments, local knowledge and ideas and assess effectiveness ▪ Share information on design, costs, effectiveness and management with all interested parties
C.3 Evaluate effectiveness of restoration projects	▪ Incorporate monitoring into projects to grow evidence base for environmental effects ▪ Set up citizen science opportunities linked to restoration ▪ Share results of monitoring with all interested parties and promote at meetings, conferences etc

6. Delivery Plan Management

See the DCP Statement of Purpose for Governance arrangements and our Partnership Agreement for details of DCP staff hosting and management.

Restoration Projects

The DCP role is to support project delivery by coordinating ideas and opportunities, extending funding application reach, and increasing project management capacity. The Partnership overview of project opportunities brings a broader context to aid prioritisation, adds value and evaluation of benefits. We bring the opportunity to identify and important underpinning projects eg habitats and species condition and mapping.

Outreach: Communications, Education and Awareness

We have over 10 years of delivering high quality and diverse outreach activities. The aim is to raise awareness of need and benefit of projects, grow and strengthen support, and create opportunities for involvement. We are committed to sharing content wherever this is helpful, our materials and equipment have been used widely in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.

Research and Monitoring

We have excellent monitoring and research capabilities. Activities include targeting projects (to maximise benefits and avoid conflicts), evaluating impacts of restoration activities, and innovation to develop techniques. Sharing this knowledge with others is essential and we will continue to work closely with catchment partnerships and rivers trusts in the delivery of this plan.

Funding

Staffing is funded by contributions from partners in our Management Team. We access project funding through a wide range of sources, from partner funds to grant schemes. Private and corporate funding is a growing source of support for restoration work and we will always carefully evaluate any such opportunities to ensure alignment with DCP and partner objectives. Project funding is applied for by the appropriate DCP partner organisation.

7. Partner priorities

The work of the Dee Catchment Partnership delivers many of the operational priorities of our partners – especially those that focus on biodiversity recovery, climate change resilience and mitigation, and engaging people in nature. By uniting and extending these objectives the Dee Catchment Partnership boasts a 15 year track record of practical, coordinated, and efficient project delivery. See Appendix 1 for the details.

Partner	Responsibilities linked to Dee CMP delivery
Aberdeen City Council	Planning, access, invasive species, flooding, water supply
Aberdeenshire Council	Access, planning, invasive species, flooding, water supply
Aberdeen Harbour Board	Passage of migrating fish, water quality
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Nature restoration; tackling climate change; Park planning; access management
Dee District Salmon Fishery Board	Protection and enhancement of Atlantic salmon and sea trout; Deliver restoration projects
James Hutton Institute	Research on river restoration, diffuse pollution, natural flood management, pharmaceuticals
NFUS	Keeping members informed and supported; Political representation; influencing public opinion
NatureScot	SAC, INNS, Nature Reserves, Rangers
River Dee Trust	River restoration, Riparian Habitat Initiative, Education programme
Scottish Enterprise	Driving a more sustainable, inclusive economy for the wellbeing of all
Scottish Forestry	Responsibility for the crucial role trees have to play in tackling climate change and nature loss
Scottish Government	Responsibilities for environment, rural affairs, housing, health
Scottish Land and Estates	Supporting rural businesses that provide economic, social and environmental benefit to the countryside
SRuC	Partnering locally and globally to benefit Scotland's natural economy through education, research, and consultancy
Scottish Water	Water supply, waste water, abstraction
SEPA	Ensure that the environment and human health are protected, that Scotland's natural resources and services are used as sustainably as possible, and contribute to sustainable economic growth

8. Companion documents

Dee Catchment Management Plan 2007	The detailed Action Plan signed by our 16 partners. This is our underpinning framework for action, with successive Delivery Plans providing focus for direction and effort.
Statement of Purpose 2018	Who we are, what we do – and why
Partnership Agreement 2019	Our agreed working relationships, with a focus on responsibilities for hosting staff
DCP structure	A simple schematic showing the range of DCP activity and how it all fits together
Survey report 2021	The feedback from the 2021 public survey
Workshop Report 2021	A summary of the 2021 partner workshop to discuss projects for the next 5 years
Annual workplan	The agreed actions for staff and partners agreed annually by the DCP Management Team

Appendix 1. How the Dee Catchment Partnership delivers the organisational priorities of partner organisations

TOPIC	PARTNER	Plan	Target	DETAILS	DCP OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES		
					A. Outreach Education, citizen science, volunteering	B. Restoration River restoration for climate, nature and	C. Evidence Monitoring, research, technique development,
Biodiversity	ACC	Local Outcome Improvement Plan	Stretch Outcome	15. Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026.		☒	☒
	NS	Corporate Plan 2018-22	Outcome	The health and resilience of Scotland's nature is improved.	☒	☒	☒
	AC	Natural Heritage Strategy	Vision	We will protect, enhance and promote Aberdeenshire's natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations'.		☒	☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Safeguard the built and natural environment		☒	☒
	JHI	Corporate Plan	Scientific Challenge	Develop new crops and production methods that help deliver food security while better protecting the environment.		☒	☒
	CNPA		Policy	Enhance the resilience of habitats, species and land use to climate change, pest and disease risks, ensuring that the integrity of designated sites is maintained		☒	☒
	CNPA		Policy	Conserve and enhance habitat quality and connectivity while ensuring the integrity of designated sites is maintained		☒	☒
	CNPA		Policy	Conserve and enhance the species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important	☒	☒	

DDSF / RDT	River Dee 2020 – 2025 Fisheries Management Plan	Goal 1	Protect fish stocks and their rivers		☒	☒
DDSF / RDT	River Dee 2020 – 2025 Fisheries Management Plan	Goal 2	Restore fish stocks and their rivers	☒	☒	☒
SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth		☒	
SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a high quality environment		☒	☒
		Priorities	Ensuring Scotland's forests and woodlands are sustainably managed Increasing adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands			
SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029		Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land use objectives Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands	☒	☒	☒
SEPA	Corporate Plan	Priority	Continue to support projects that protect biodiversity and innovative approaches to aid in its enhancement.			
SEPA	River Basin Management Plan	Policy	Via delivery of Scotland's River Basin Management Plan, ensure conditions in the catchment are optimum for biodiversity enhancement.			

Carbon / Climate Change	ACC	<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	Stretch Outcome	13 Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.	☒	☒	☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding	☒	☒	
	CNPA		Policy	The Cairngorms National Park will be net zero by 2045 at the latest and will contribute to the delivery of net zero for Scotland by 2045.		☒	☒
	DDSF / RDT		Goal 1	Protect fish stocks and their rivers		☒	☒
	DDSF / RDT		Goal 2	Restore fish stocks and their rivers		☒	☒
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a high quality environment		☒	☒
			Priorities	Ensuring Scotland's forests and woodlands are sustainably managed			
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029		Increasing adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands		☒	☒
				Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land use objectives			
				Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands			
	SEPA	Sector Plans	Priority	Support innovation and development of new technologies to reduce the impact of climate change.			
	SEPA	National Water Scarcity Plan	Policy	Support businesses and communities to react and adapt to water scarcity.			

Special Places	CNPA		Policy	Conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities of the National Park	☒	
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a high quality environment	☒	☒
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Priorities	Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land use objectives Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands	☒	☒
People	NS	<u>Corporate Plan 2018-22</u>	Outcome	More people across Scotland are enjoying and benefiting from nature.	☒	☒
	NS	<u>Corporate Plan 2018-22</u>	Outcome	There is more investment in Scotland's natural capital and its management to improve prosperity and wellbeing.		☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	To protect and support public health, community mental and physical health and build community resilience as we adapt to life with COVID-19	☒	☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles	☒	☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Safeguard the built and natural environment		☒
	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Placemaking to meet the current and future needs of communities through Participatory Budgeting and Asset Transfer and other ways of supporting communities to help themselves, enabling community wealth building that supports local economic opportunities	☒	☒

AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	People are supported to live healthy active lifestyles focused on Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life at home	☒		
JHI	Corporate Plan	Scientific Challenge	Deliver technical and social innovations that support sustainable and resilient communities.	☒	☒	☒
CNPA		Aim	Protect and improve the environment (environmental success) in ways that, as far as possible, create: health and well-being benefits (social success); and sustainable economic growth (economic success).	☒	☒	
DDSF / RDT	River Dee 2020 – 2025 Fisheries Management Plan	Goal 3	Create thriving fisheries	☒		☒
SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances	☒		
SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Priorities	Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands	☒		
SEPA	Corporate Plan	Priority	Provide regulatory, flooding and science support and advice to communities and businesses.			☒
SEPA	River Basin Management Plan	Policy	Through the delivery of Scotland's River Basin Management Plan, the catchments water environment will be managed and developed to ensure it is a sustainable resource for business and recreation.		☒	
SEPA	Corporate Plan	Priority	Clear guidance and communication will be developed to remove barriers enabling support for individuals, communities, and the business community.	☒		

Agriculture / Food	JHI	Corporate Plan	Scientific Challenge	Develop new crops and production methods that help deliver food security while better protecting the environment.		☒	☒
	JHI	Corporate Plan	Scientific Challenge	Protect and enhance the resilience of ecosystems for multiple benefits.		☒	☒
		Sector Plans	Priority	Support farmers and land managers to reach environmental compliance, and where possible beyond compliance, through the continued delivery of the diffuse pollution Priority Catchment plan.	☒	☒	☒
	SEPA						
	SEPA	Sector Plans	Priority	Support innovation to promote activities that will provide multiple benefits across the agricultural and food sectors		☒	☒
Land Use	CNPA		Policy	The management and use of land should deliver multiple benefits and help deliver the Regional Land Use Framework.		☒	☒
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth			
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Objective	Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a high quality environment			
			Priorities	Ensuring Scotland's forests and woodlands are sustainably managed			
	SF	Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029		Increasing adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands		☒	☒
				Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land use objectives			
				Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands			

	SF						
	SEPA	Sector Plans	Priority	Through the delivery of Sector Plans SEPA will support land managers, communities, and business to deliver multiple benefits.		☒	☒
Partnerships	AC	Council Plan 2020-22	Priority	Develop existing partnerships and build new ones with our key stakeholders	☒	☒	☒
	SEPA	Corporate Plan	Priority	Develop and maintain existing partnerships and promote collaborative working.	☒	☒	☒

Appendix 2. Our 25 year vision for Outreach, Action and Evidence

A. Vision for OUTREACH to Increase support for restoration projects

In 5 years	In 10 years	In 25 years
Landowners, communities and organisations understand and value the benefits of river restoration for climate and nature. The impacts of access are reduced due to increased understanding.	River restoration is valued as essential in addressing the climate and nature emergencies. It is expected that land will be managed to protect and enhance the river. Access on and along the river continues to improve and integrate.	The waters of the river Dee are valued and protected as a vital lifeline that sustains and connects communities and nature. The Dee is a magnet for nature-based business. People are able to easily access and enjoy all of the benefits of a healthy river system.
There are accessible and inclusive opportunities for land managers to be involved in restoration project planning, with meetings, workshops and site visits giving opportunities for discussion.		
There is a range of opportunities for people to get involved with the river eg traineeships, volunteering, citizen science, youth groups.		

B. Vision for ACTION to develop and deliver restoration projects

In 5 years	In 10 years	In 25 years
A rolling programme of restoration projects is underway. Extensive riparian woodland cover has been created with plans and incentives for continued expansion in place. Restoration projects lead to more and improved access on and along the river.	The established restoration programme continues. Natural flood management techniques are built into the landscape, helping to slow flows and provide targeted flood reductions. Riparian woodland covers much of the upper catchment, and earlier planting is starting to shade tributaries and stabilise banks.	Land throughout the catchment is managed to protect and enhance water. The 1 million tree target has been surpassed and extensive riparian woodland is maturing throughout the headwaters. Natural wood is gathering in rivers, increasing habitat diversity and slowing flows. The upland mosaic includes extensive rewetted peatland and native woodland, connecting Dee, Spey and Don catchments.
At all levels partners understand the need and benefit for restoration, the techniques, and target sites, leading to efficient regulatory processes for projects.		
A mapped inventory of restoration sites provides a framework for all to work to, prioritised for benefits for biodiversity, carbon storage, and reducing impacts of floods.		

C. Vision for EVIDENCE to establish and promote the benefits of restoration

In 5 years	In 10 years	In 25 years
We have developed a wide range of restoration techniques and understand which the most effective in different situations. The skill base amongst contractors is growing.	A wide range of restoration projects is maturing, involving many different techniques. This is providing evidence for effectiveness and maintenance considerations. Demonstration.	River restoration is embedded throughout the river system.
Evidence from monitoring is starting to show environmental benefits of restoration. We have expertise in a wide range of restoration techniques. We are sharing this knowledge with land managers and community groups to support them in implementing restoration.	Monitoring evidence continues to show benefits for climate and nature. Land managers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to undertake projects themselves, supported by funding opportunities. Community groups are taking the lead on project development.	There is long-term evidence of the benefits of the regeneration of the river system.
Completed projects are being promoted to demonstrate restoration techniques as an integral element of a working landscape and large valley-scale projects are promoted as flagship sites.	Floodplains and wetlands are more extensive and connected within the river system. Many farmland burns have been de-canalised and have wide riparian areas connected to floodplains, with their meandering courses restored. River banks have large areas of species-rich grasslands.	Throughout the catchment rivers and streams have space to flow naturally and safely. All major floodplains are reconnected, lost wetlands are re-established and new ones created, urban watercourses have been deculverted.

