URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City & County Council

BiodiverCity
URBACT IV

Community based approaches to foster urban biodiversity
INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN
Limerick

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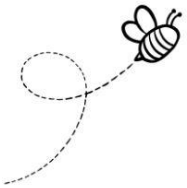
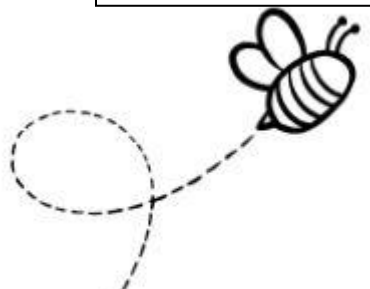


1. Executive Summary



2. About URBACT BiodiverCity

BiodiverCity is an URBACT Action Planning Network of European cities that seeks to develop Community-based approaches to foster urban biodiversity.

An URBACT network consisting of ten partners who will work out community-based approaches to valorise, measure and account urban biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

The BiodiverCity partners will support and enable communities to plan powerful nature based solutions, foster pro-environmental citizen behaviours and draft Urban Greening Plans, contributing to the achievement of the EU Biodiversity strategy as well.

To promote a human connection back to nature in urban areas. How to transform cities relationship with nature in the focus of the network.

The motto of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 “bringing nature back into our lives” is essential

Themes of the BiodiverCity Network:

- Urban biodiversity
- Ecosystem services
- Nature based solutions

Goals of the BiodiverCity Network to:

- Measure urban biodiversity
- Valorise ecosystems services together with local communities to verify, design and scale up nature based-solutions.

The project is running run from July 2023 to December 2025.

LEAD PARTNER: Dunaújváros – Hungary

Project Partners

- Vratsa - Bulgaria
- Veszprém - Hungary
- Poljcane - Slovenia
- Laboratório da Paisagem - Portugal
- Cieza - Spain
- Siena - Italy
- Limerick - Ireland
- S-Hertogenbosch - Netherlands
- Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

3. Why an Integrated Action Plan?

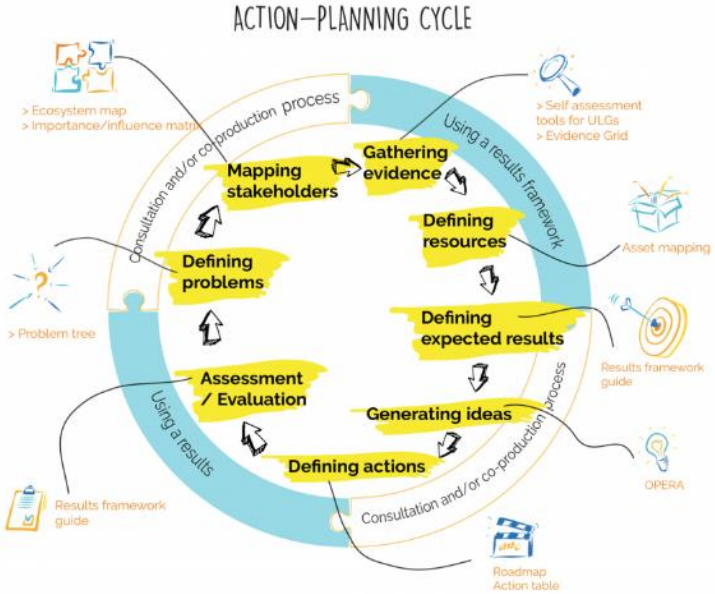
An URBACT Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is a key element of the URBACT methodology. It is a city-level output that defines actions to be implemented within the city in order to respond to a specific urban policy challenge - reflecting the lessons learned from local stakeholders, transnational partners and the testing of actions at local level.

IAPs thus provide both a focal point and end goal of the action planning journey that cities undertake within their URBACT Action Planning Network (APN). IAPs help to ensure that both local-level discussions (within the URBACT Local Group) and transnational exchange (between the network partners) have a practical focus on planning a coherent set of actions to address the local policy challenge in each participating city, embedding an integrated and participative approach.

IAPs are future oriented – setting out the actions that cities will implement beyond the life cycle of the URBACT network. For this reason, each IAP not only sets out what the city intends to do on its specific topic, but also has a strong implementation focus, for example through the identification of specific funding opportunities, governance structures and timelines for how the actions will be implemented and monitored.

The IAP links with the overall URBACT Action Planning Cycle.

Through exchange and learning with European peers, cities can develop and test solutions to the challenges they have identified. Using the URBACT Method of transnational exchange, integrated and participatory approach and co-creation, cites will develop strong integrated Action Plans at local level to include concrete actions to deal with the challenge identified. Ultimately, the cities will improve their integrated urban policies and the delivery of those policies on the ground.



4. Context, Needs and Vision

Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) joined the BiodiverCity URBACT network:

1) To underline Limerick City's commitment to the importance of Biodiversity in urban settings.
2) To further the learnings from the LCCC international conference How Local Authorities can address the Biodiversity Emergency
3) To further the Legacy and Learnings from Limericks City's URBACT III project Health and GreenSpace
4) To further the legacy and learnings from Limerick City's European Green Leaf Year 2020
5) Align with Sustainable Development Goals (3, 14, 11, 15 and 13)

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) will be a 'living' document detailing experiences and learnings from URBACT BiodiverCity partners, a document that continues to evolve over time.
Limerick City and County Council would like to identify ways in which to enhance and monitor biodiversity in the city, through a series of planning activities, educational/public interest workshops/programme of events for this project.
Limericks Local Action Plan demonstrates the journey of consultation with the URBACT Local Group (ULG), how activities/ideas came about and why, key learnings and, how best to scale up or replicate activities across the city (beyond the project lifetime).

The IAP document demonstrates the importance of different habitats in an urban setting for biodiversity. It explores how to measure/document species on site and develop actions to enhance the area further as a habitat. In line with the LCCC Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028. Good levels of collaboration from a variety of internal Council departments, can be seen in Limericks bid to be Green Leaf City 2020 and in previous URBACT III Health and GreenSpace and this continued for BiodiverCity in an Integrated and participatory approach.

Integrated action plan focuses on topic of sustainable urban development,

- Ways of enhancing and monitoring biodiversity in the city through a series of planning activities, education/public interest workshops, including strategies for raising awareness on biodiversity and urban greening related issues

- A focus on facilitating projects on Nature Based Solutions and protecting and maintaining and enhancing green spaces.

4.1. Context

Limerick is the third largest city (95,000 population) in the Republic of Ireland and is located 200 kilometres from the capital, Dublin, and approximately 60 kilometres inland from the Atlantic Ocean.
Limerick City has 73m^2 of urban greenspace per capita, which is above the ideal WHO value (50 m²) and exceeds by far the European average (18.2 m²).
The city's main areas of natural habitats are based around the large network of rivers, including the Shannon Estuary Special Area of Conservation and associated Special Protection Areas, the Abbey River, and the Ballynaclough River with associated wetlands, as well as grasslands and established woodlands.

The three largest economic sectors in Limerick are wholesale and retail trade, construction, and professional, scientific and technical activities. Limerick has had significant jobs growth since 2013 with more than 24,500 jobs announced. It is the home of some of the world's most pioneering and/or established international businesses, including Uber, Dell, Northern Trust, Johnson & Johnson, Analog, General Motors, Regeneron and Viagogo. The city is also host to a number of colleges and universities including; the University of Limerick, Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands West, and Mary Immaculate College .

Limerick is investing over €1 billion in enterprise and investment infrastructure as part of the Limerick 2030 Vision: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick, a 20-year action plan, which aims to transform Limerick through the economic, social and physical renaissance of Limerick City Centre and the wider Mid-West Region. The focus of this document is to complement the original plan's emphasis on transformational sites and projects, as well as capturing emerging projects and opportunity areas.

In terms of employment, the key sectors are human health and social work. Limerick city, has large numbers of people not in work (due to unemployment, inability to work due to illness / disability or otherwise inactive). There are also significant numbers with low

education and lone parent households with young children. However, the goal of the Local Economic and Community Plan for Limerick city and county 2023-2028 to establish the objectives and actions necessary to promote and support the economic development with local communities in mind. The plan aims to achieve the sustainable development of communities in Limerick.

Limerick City and County Council provides ambitious leadership and strive to deliver an innovative, vibrant, as well as a biodiverse, green, safe and inclusive Limerick for everyone. The Council has 40 elected members. Elections are held every five years and are by single transferable vote.

In May 2019, the people of Limerick city and county voted in favour of a proposal for a directly elected Mayor with executive functions. Limerick is the first ever local authority in Ireland where the voters directly elected their Mayor in 2024. The first Mayor in the country's history to have executive powers.

4.2. Relevant Existing Strategies

Limerick is aiming to become a green city region on the Shannon Estuary through engagement, innovation, resilient urban development and self-sustaining communities. This includes developing as an environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy, a pioneer in sustainable growth, and the delivering of key recommendations also found in the **Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.**

Whose main theme is to create a Green City with a strong emphasis on biodiversity protection and enhancement? This plan will guide all developments in the city and will ensure that biodiversity is central to all developments.

In support of the CDP, LCCC has recently adopted a **Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy** for the City which will guide developers and the Local Authority in enhancing existing green spaces, developing new green spaces, linking green infrastructure, protecting & enhancing biodiversity. The GBI strategy also supports the 10-minute City concept in ensuring all communities will have access to high quality green areas.

The GBI strategy identified and prioritised projects and investments in GBI for the city and environs, including;

- projects which can help protect and enhance biodiversity-rich areas,
- safeguard valuable GBI assets,
- enhance the delivery of a city park system,
- enhance delivery of green and blue linkages (including mobility routes),
- Increase the delivery of a range of nature-based solutions (NBS) including key sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS).

LCCC have been a project partner in previous URBACT projects, **Health and GreenSpace** and **Find Your Greatness.** For Limerick city, bringing together horizontal integration (community engagement piece) and vertical integration (aligning that engagement with relevant internal/national policy and strategic plans) is central to the delivery of, for example, the URBACT Health and Greenspace Integrated Action Plan (IAP).
The H&G IAP has provided a framework through which Limerick City can plan, schedule, and deliver on these actions throughout a calendar year. It provides a unique opportunity to continually build and deliver quality greenspaces that are multifunctional, inclusive and community driven, while also supporting habitats, and enhancing biodiversity. The IAP is a living document that has informed funding applications (successful), internal policies related to public realms, and gave confidence to trial and pilot an idea.

Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Well-being (2013 – 2025) details the close relationship between (physical and mental) health and environmental protection, which can include biodiversity.

Limerick was awarded the European **Green Leaf Award (2020)** and will forever be a Green Leaf City

It includes continuing to actively support the aims and objectives of the **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 – 2025**, by encouraging measures to protect and increase the population of bees and other pollinating insects in Limerick.

The **Noise Action Plan 2024-2028** sets out to proactively manage environmental noise where it may have a significant adverse impact on the health and quality of life. The Council supports the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations, through the development and implementation of Noise Action Plans.

In 2024 Limerick recruited a Biodiversity Officer and a draft **Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030** for Limerick is being prepared.

Policy Context

The Limerick BiodiverCity Integrated Action Plan, sits within a hierarchy and wider strategic context of international, national, regional and local policy/programmes

National

Irelands Fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

Climate Action Plan

Regional

Blue Green City –Action Plan (Southern Regional Asssembly)

Mid-West Area Strategic Plan 2012 - 2030

Local

Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025- 2030

Limerick Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy

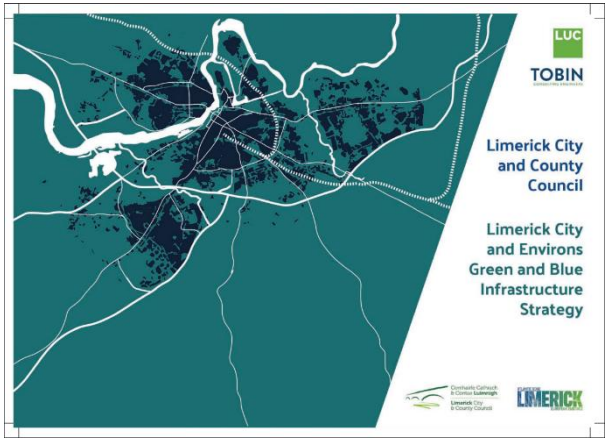
Limerick Tree Strategy

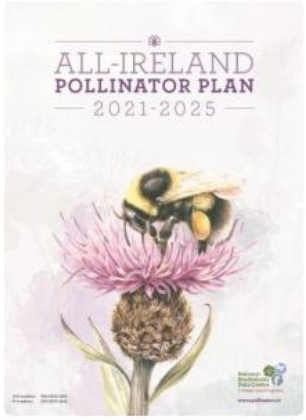
Limerick Climate Action Plan 2024 -2029

Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

Limerick Corporate Plan

Noise Action Plan 2024-2028





4.3. Local Challenge

Limerick's biodiversity faces significant challenges, namely a decline in pollinators and needs support.

The fourth National Biodiversity Plan outlines 30 per cent of our 60 EU-protected species are in unfavourable status. Over half of native Irish plant species have declined in range and/or abundance. More than half of Ireland's 100 bee species have seen substantial declines since 1980, with 30 per cent of species threatened with extinction, 26 per cent of Ireland's 211 bird species are considered to have a high conservation concern. 21 per cent of breeding and 52 per cent of key wintering bird species were reported to have short-term declining trends in 2019.

LCCC in the BiodiverCity project is looking for ways of assigning value to biodiversity and ecosystem services, to protect and enhance the diverse range of greenspace under its remit.
The need to create and maintain places, which enhance biodiversity for both climate, and society is increasingly recognised. Health Benefits from Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure concludes that human health and wellbeing are largely influenced by a healthy environment and that the natural environment and resources significantly contribute to the Irish economy.
Most important local theme:

- Community based approaches to valorise /measure ecosystem services
- In-house training related to nature-based solutions.

Most innovative local actions within a European Context - having a comprehensive, city-wide strategy tackling blue and green infrastructure,

To demonstrate the importance of different habitats in an urban setting for biodiversity by using community-based approaches to valorise ecosystem services. To measure/document species on site and develop actions to enhance the areas further as habitat.

How to encourage and involve stakeholders in recording data. Main challenge for limerick along the implementation of the GBI strategy is to measure and valorise biodiversity and give it economic value.

The main challenges for LCCC related to urban biodiversity are Invasive species, urban sprawl/encroachment, anti-social behaviour, inappropriate use of green space.
More education on the value of green space, signage. Funding/support to address invasive species.

Actions to measure biodiversity and ecosystem services have been carried out to date on an ad hoc basis, some bio blitz of specific areas. Some data is available but nothing consistent or widespread.
LCCC have implemented actions to raise awareness towards the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

- European Green Leaf city winners 2020, was very positive publicity and helped raise awareness of the importance of urban areas for biodiversity.
- BGI strategy held stakeholder consultations and public meetings to raise awareness of the strategy and its key message.
- Let it bee campaign, reduced/ change in grass cutting programme, grass areas were let grow longer between cuts and signage put in place to inform the public.
- Bioblitz held to document amount of biodiversity supported by an urban greenway.
- Swift nest boxes put in place on urban buildings
- No Mow May

LCCC have implemented a number of urban biodiversity projects in collaboration with other European cities;

- Go Green Routes, A Horizon 2020 European project focusing on knowledge nature sharing to green a linear route and nature based solutions.
- URBACT III, Health and Greenspace

4.4. Biodiversity in the working practice of the City.

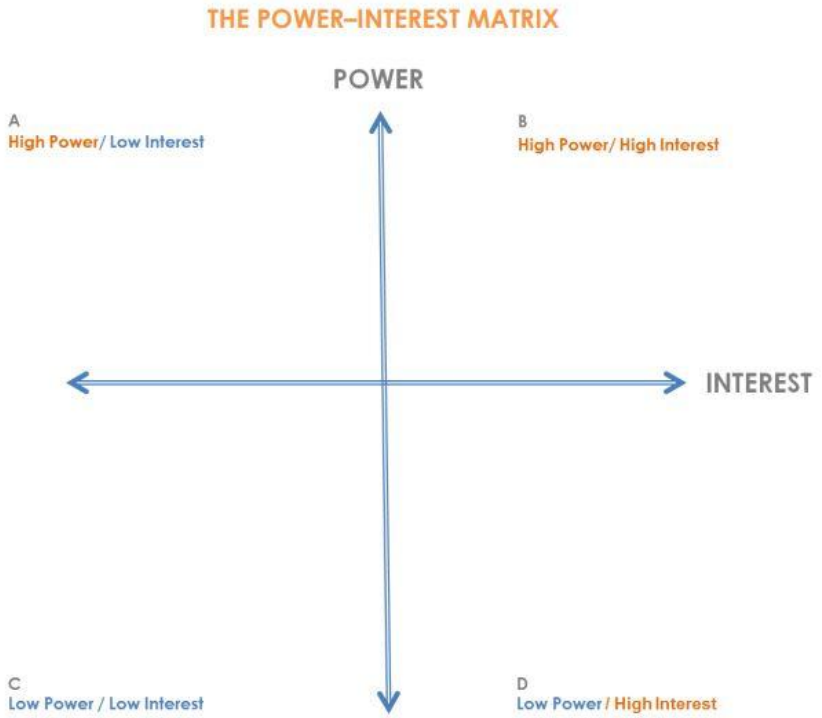
Limerick city has 73m2 of urban greenspace per capita, which is above the ideal WHO value (50 m²) and exceeds by far the European average (18.2 m²). The city's main areas of natural habitats are based around the large network of rivers, including the River Shannon, the Abbey River, and the Ballynaclough River with associated wetlands, as well as grasslands and established woodlands.
Natura 2000 Sites.
SPA - River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries. Some qualifying interests are Cormorant, Whopper Swan, Curlew and Lapwing.
SAC – Lower River Shannon. Some qualifying interests are otter, salmon, lamprey, mudflats and sand flats not covered by seawater at low tide.
Blue/Green Infrastructure.
Elements of the built environment – road verges, street trees, private gardens, amenity space and urban greening. Managed and natural green spaces, public parks, open space, allotments and nature conservation sites. Aspects of the wider landscape include farmland, wetlands, floodplains and wildlife habitat.
LCCC recognises its responsibility to protect and promote local biodiversity and natural heritage in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and a number of the main policies, plans and strategic frameworks in place are listed below.

- Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Tree Strategy
- Council member All Ireland Pollinator Plan

- Local Development Plan
- Strategic policy committee (SPC) Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee, Elected members chair the SPC
- Green Leaf City 2020
- Let it BEE campaign (delayed/reduced grass cutting)

4.4.1. BiodiverCity Urban Local Group ULG, composition of the ULG and its role in the process.

Engaging Stakeholders



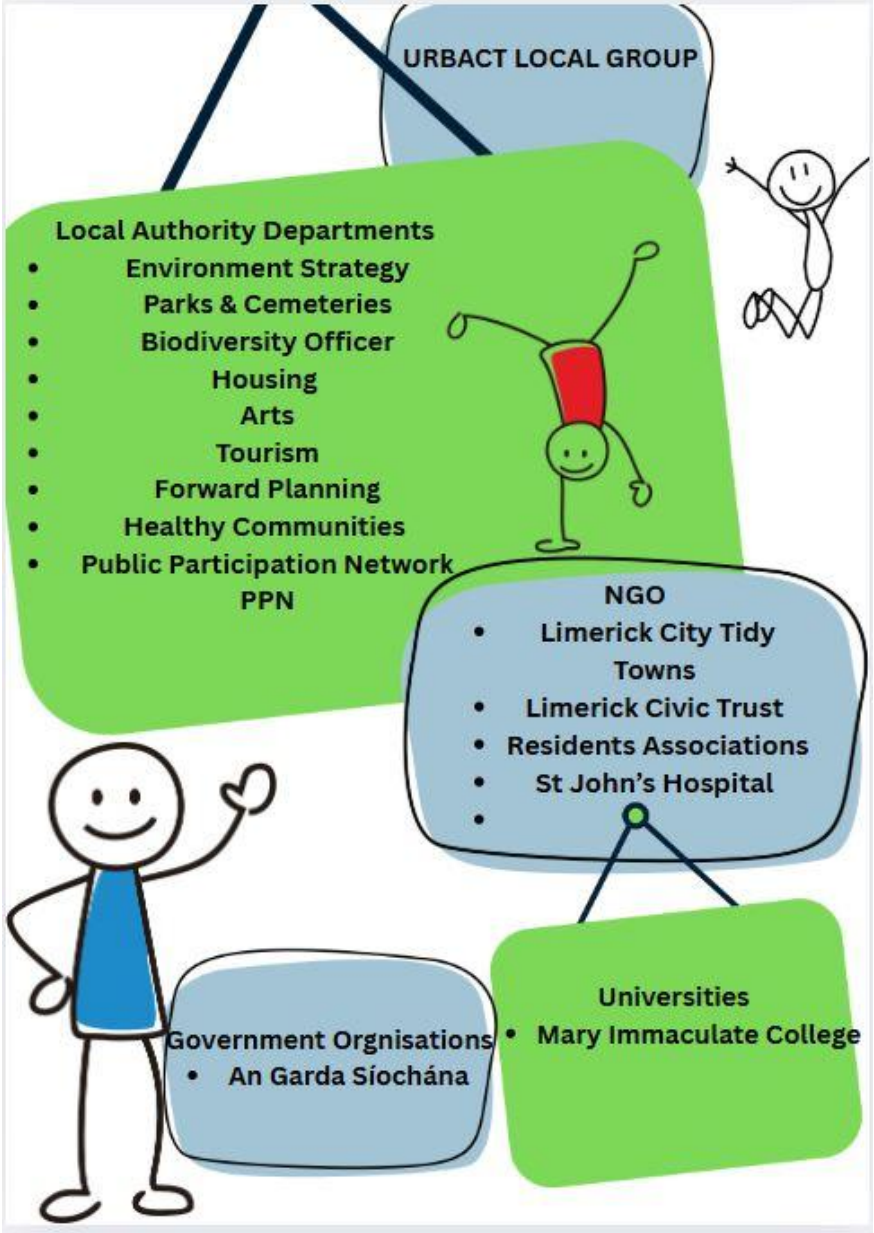
Over the lifetime of the project several meetings were held with the members of the Limerick URBACT Local Group.

BiodiverCity in the working practices of Limerick is delivered by a core group from the Local Authority consisting of a project coordinator, ULG coordinator, communication officer and finance officer.

In addition to the core team, the formation of the URBACT Local Group works to bring together all relevant stakeholders who have a stake in the policy challenge addressed by the city.
Participation is key, the core team organises several ULG meetings throughout the lifespan of the project.

The ULG group is made up of internal LCCC and eternal group member stakeholders, and is strongly based on the legacy from the Health and GreenSpace URBACT network.

For the selection of the members, URBACT methodology tools were used such as the Stakeholder Influence Matrix and Stakeholder Ecosystem Map.




Let it Bee
#beefriendlylimerick #letitbee

4.4.3. Co-Identification of Local Priorities

a) there is a shared vision of what the current situation is and where the city wants to get to amongst the ULG members
b) that the subsequent planned actions are genuinely responding to real needs in the city;
c) That the city has a clear framework also for presenting and explaining the city's plans to external audiences.

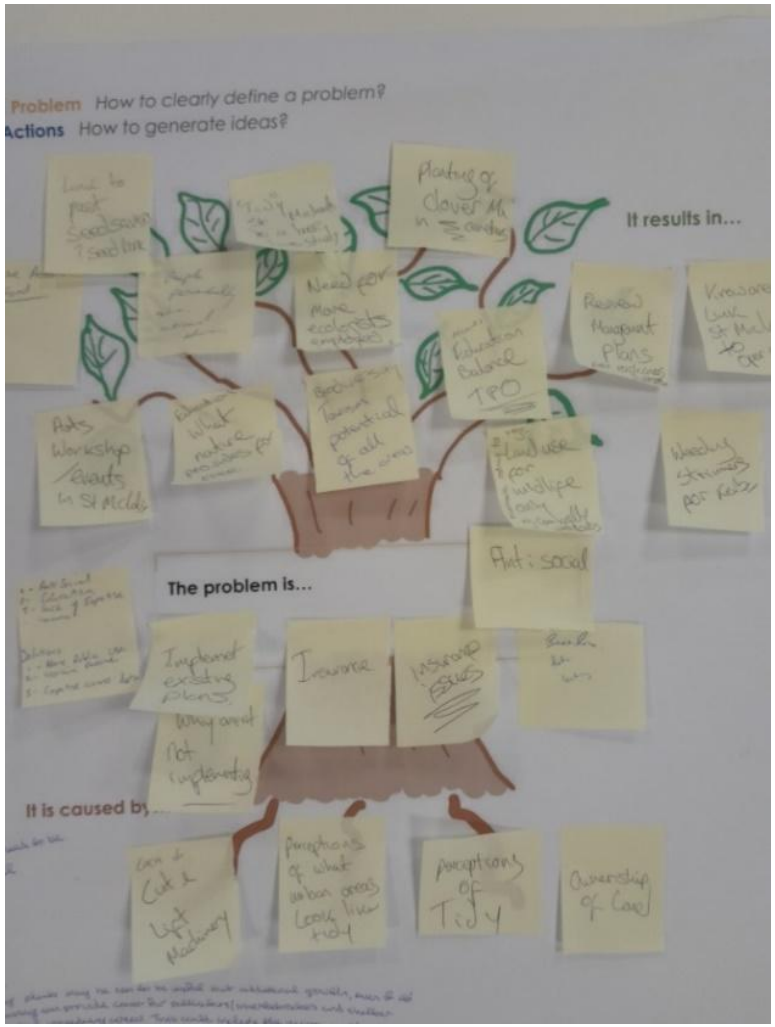
SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis provides the basis for examining the various potentials and challenges for Limericks urban biodiversity and greenspace

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Biodiversity Officer in place • Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy in Place • Council member of the All – Ireland Pollinator Action Plan • Environmental awareness • Have a large amount of council owned greenspace	• Levels of communication between departments • Political support • Public perception • Management plans not implemented • Fragmented green areas
Opportunities	***Threats***
• Local Biodiversity Action Plan • National/international – funding • To improve data collection • To improve greenspace management	• Invasive species • Budget • Staffing/governance • Insurance • Urban sprawl • Use of pesticides • Biodiversity crisis • Anti-social behaviour • Dumping

Working in collaboration with the ULG, the URBACT Problem Tree tool was utilised to verify and confirm the work carried out in the SWOT analysis and create a common vision for the Limerick BiodiverCity project.

BiodiverCity (Problem Tree)		
Problem...	Caused by...	Solution...
Anti-social behaviour	Ownership of Land Seclusion	More public use, arts/workshops, events Biodiversity – tourism potential for all the areas
Baseline Data Lacking	Not Implementing existing plans Lack of shared space for data? Silo? Records being lost Consultants not asked to provide data in usable format from reports. Lack of citizen science events Not enough ecologists in house /lack of expertise	Education, what nature provides for free Arts workshops/events Expertise across departments Implement existing plans Promote more citizen science events
Issues around insurance	Perception of tidy, of what urban areas should look like Lack of cut and lift machinery Risk involved to public for community events	Flowering plants may be seen to be useful, but additional growth, even if it's not flowering can provide cover for pollinators (invertebrates and shelter and potential breeding areas) this could include the micro moths) Risk management Weeding, strimming, still maintaining, just not manicured Land use for wildlife only



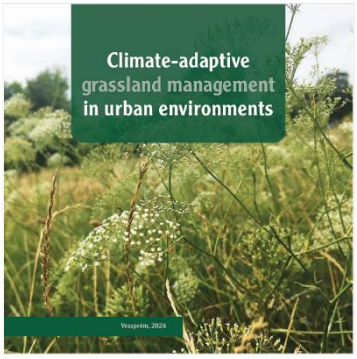
4.4.4. Co-Created a Vision for BiodiverCity in Limerick City

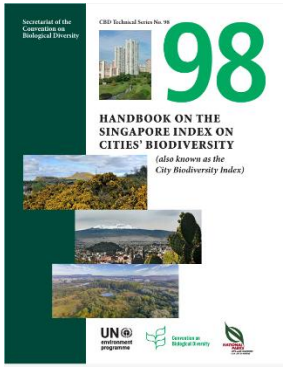
The combination of local ULG and transnational meetings guided the discussion on a vision for the project.

A number of common goals were identified for urban biodiversity management/enhancement.

Some of the suggestions were based around tools for local biodiversity measurement, better management of green space in particular wildflower meadow management.

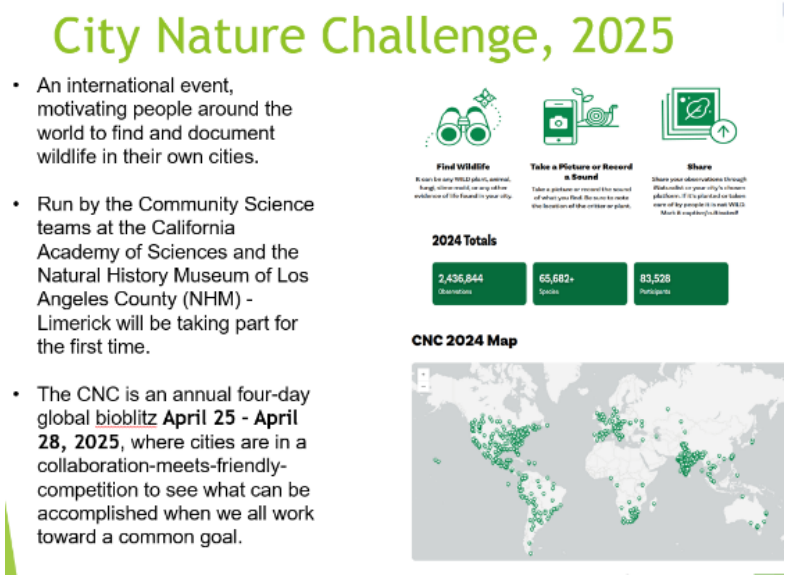
Learnings and inspiration from the core network meetings brought back and shared with the ULG group. Encouragement from network partners who have previously carried out the City Nature Challenge has led to Limerick signing and taking part in 2025.
Limerick will look to adapt the Singapore index for Limerick as a data measuring tool for biodiversity, after a presentation by the Landscape Laboratory. Limerick is very interested in the learnings from the Climate Adaptive Grassland Management plan from Veszprem.





This led to suggestions being put forward for the project with the vision emerging as

A Limerick whose inhabitants understand and appreciate the variety and importance of the biodiversity that call urban green spaces home



4.5. Testing Actions

Testing Actions
Experimentation is key to drive change

Wildflower ID Swatch

Our **rationale** for this testing action to create something unique to Limerick to assist LCCC staff and the public identify and record 25 species of native wildflower. The ID swatch is based on 25 species of wildflower found in Corbally Meadow, one of the most botanical species rich sites in the city. It is hoped the local aspect will help raise/educate public awareness around the value of native local wildflower seed as opposed to buying in non-local flowers that would not be as beneficial to local species in their larval and adult lifecycle as a source of food and habitat.

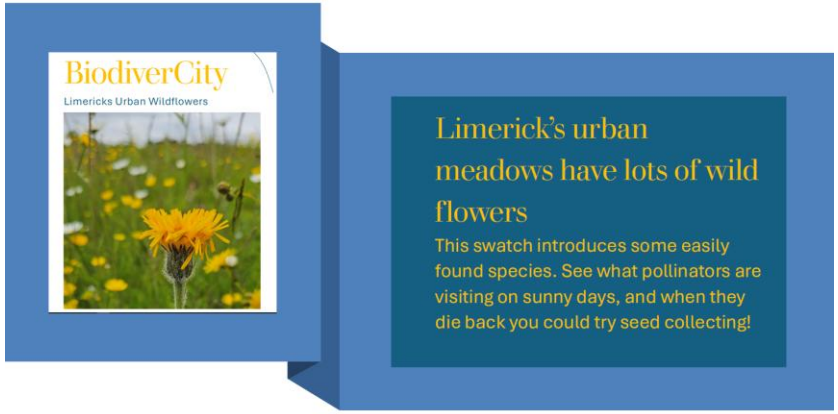
The **Process** involved procuring a local botanist to help determine the 25 species to be included in the swatch and to provide the images and detailed text for the life cycle and interesting species facts for each flower.

Our **Objectives** – that the swatch will be used by local people to start identifying and recording data. It would be a support tool for the City Nature Challenge and future bioblitzs.

That it would show people that these are important flowers that they previously might have identified as weeds.

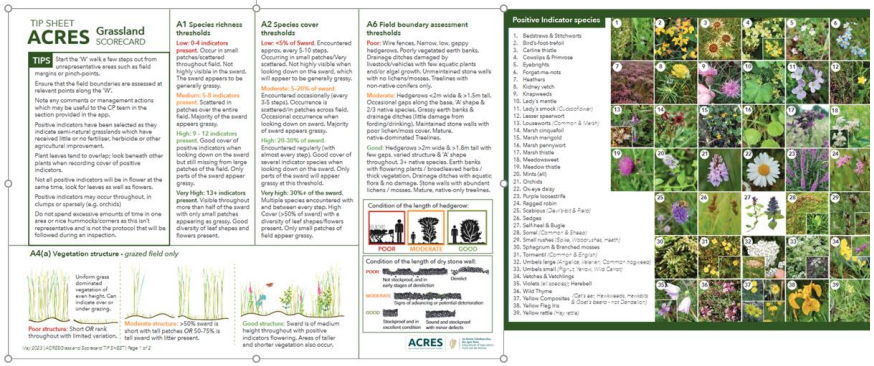
The result of our testing actions, based on indicators on the number of pocket ID swatches distributed to the public. The level of support gained for native wildflower areas. More species recorded year on year.

Should have included QR codes, swatch could be more digitally advanced.



Measuring biodiversity in meadow and amenity grass land and assigning a value to the space using a scorecard.

Acres score card for grass land.



Example type of score card

Seed saving and meadow management

Management of grassland areas in Limerick needs to be more effective.

There is a lot to be learned from Veszprem and their methods for Climate Adaptive Grassland Management. What we want to test is a more effective way of managing our green spaces. Limerick has several campaigns around grassland management, “Let it Bee” campaigns, “No Mow May”. Each year brings challenges in managing and cutting the longer grass areas. The cutting equipment is not suitable, nowhere to store the large amount of grass cuttings, rubbish in the long grass being shredded, man power required to cut and rake.

LCCC are researching different equipment methods of cutting, removing the grass. The options of a zero-grazer cutting machine and Dexter cattle are being looked at. Invasive species are also getting a foothold in our greenspace sites as areas are not being managed correctly.

A workshop was held for ULG members and LCCC indoor/outdoor staff to look at the option of seed saving from the wildflower meadow sites and the viability of relocating seed to other sites.

An ecologist gave an indoor presentation on key actions and then accompanied the group to the Corbally meadow where the correct method of seed saving was demonstrated and discussed. This option would be preferred over the current option of buying in seed which is not native or local to the area. The bought seed gives a false idea of what a native wildflower area should look like and leads to a negative public perception of what actual local wildflowers look like. Using native local collected seed across Council land and awareness raising of the action will hopefully lead to a greater understanding of the value of native wildflower meadow sites across the city.

5. Goal and Structure of the IAP

5.1. Logic of the IAP

Overall logic and integrated approach

Overall Vision

A Limerick whose inhabitants understand and appreciate the variety and importance of the biodiversity that call urban green spaces home

Areas of intervention

Digital Innovation

Public Awareness/ Education

Greenspace Management

Strategic Objective No.1 – To use digitalisation more effectively as a tool for biodiversity measurement/enhancement in Limerick.

Strategic Objective No.2 –To raise awareness on the importance of urban biodiversity amongst the public and the role they can play in planning Nature Based Solutions

Strategic Objective No.3 – To improve the strategic management of Council owned greenspace.

In keeping with the vision for the project to highlight the importance of urban greenspace and its subsequent biodiversity there is a focus on three key invention areas to achieve our vision.

The strategic objectives and key intervention areas have been determined by problems identified in collaboration with the URBACT Local Group and subsequently identifying actions that will help address these issues.

The strategic objectives are broadly based around management of a diverse range of urban greenspaces, how to raise awareness and educate people to the many benefits provided by urban greenspace and how to enhance and protect these areas for biodiversity in conjunction with the local community into the future.

1. ***Strategic Objective No.1*** – To use digitalisation more effectively as a tool for biodiversity measurement/enhancement in Limerick.

Specific Objectives	Actions
1. Set up an effective system of data management for biodiversity datasets.	1.1. Create data management structure. 1.2. Training provided to staff 1.3. Create data collection template common to every department. 1.4. to apply the Singapore index to Limerick
2. To utilise smart apps and technology more effectively among LCCC staff and the public	2.1. promote the LCCC record invasive reporting link 2.2. create a digital library of useful biodiversity apps on Limerick.ie 2.3. Incorporate QR signs on promotional material/signage, to think more digital and innovative.

2. ***Strategic Objective No.2*** – To raise awareness on the importance of urban biodiversity amongst the public and the role they can play in planning Nature Based Solutions

Specific Objectives	Actions
3. To mobilise the public as data recorders	3.1. Compile a list of Limerick data recorders and their field of interest. 3.2. Hold several data recorder training workshops 3.3. Hold several community recording events throughout the year like the City Nature Challenge.
4. Communication campaign on urban biodiversity	4.1. 4 x communication campaign on seasonal urban biodiversity 4.2. Additional urban biodiversity murals to be created in the city 4.3. QR codes to be used on all information signage / materials , to allow for the greatest level of dissemination of data
5. To increase the level and access to green infrastructure and ensure inclusive for all.	5.2. Additional updated signage for Council owned greenspaces. 5.3. Ensure access routes are clear and attractive to the public. 5.4 Hold several public planting workshops, trees /flowers 5.5 Map existing green corridors, which will highlight areas to improve
6. Co creation of green spaces with the community	6.1. Allow groups have more autonomy for their areas, create agreement document to support groups/Council in this. 6.2. Community to be consulted more at design stage, co creation. Go Green Routes Horizon 2020 project to be used as exemplar.

Strategic Objective No.3 – To improve the strategic management of Council owned greenspace.

Specific Objectives	Actions
7. To implement site specific plans for greenspace already in existence.	7.1. Deliver on recommendations for forest management, cemeteries, meadow sites 7.2. Ensure governance is a strategic aspect of all plans created.
8. To highlight the importance of high value wildflower seed sites locally.	8.1. Communication campaign to highlight the importance of local wildflower areas and seed saving 8.2. To harvest local seed and transplant and sow in other green spaces dominated by grasses. 8.3. Hold several public workshops on seed saving. 8.4. Reduce the amount of non-native, non-local seed being brought.
	8.5. Map of areas with high levels of wildflowers created.
9. To create an overall grasslands management plan for Limerick	9.1. To research suitable methods/equipment to harvest wildflower seed. 9.2. Map of grassland areas to be created. 9.3. Areas to be cut and maintained properly on a schedule. 9.4. invasive species controlled

The project decision for the above reason was to look at

- Raising awareness/education – public awareness
- GreenSpace management

5.3. Actions within the specific objectives

Key Partners

- Residents Associations

Lead Organisation

- Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms

Internal Municipal Budget
Local Biodiversity Action Fund

Action, 8.2

To harvest local seed and transplant and sow in other green spaces dominated by grasses.

Results

Increased native biodiversity across the city and county and natural habitat. Using native local seed provides a food source for all stages of local fauna development and habitat.

Description of the Action

- Several workshops to be held on seed harvesting techniques, to highlight the importance of the native seedbank as opposed to buying seed.
- Identifying and mapping areas with large quantities of native seed for harvesting.
- Identifying and mapping areas that could benefit from sowing of additional seed.
- Awareness campaign/information boards to educate the public on what a native Irish wildflower meadow should look like.

Strategic Documents

Local Biodiversity Action Plan
All Ireland Pollinator Plan

Seed fails to establish. Complaints if area looks unattractive to begin with People's perceptions of native wildflowers can be negative

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Key Partners

- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Bat Rehabilitation Ireland

Lead Organisation

- Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms

Internal Municipal Budget
Local Biodiversity Action Fund
Interreg Northwest Funding

Action, 5.5

Map existing green corridors, which will highlight areas to enhance/create connections, wildlife corridors

Results

A map with layers that will provide visual guidance on where important wildlife corridors and green spaces are located within the city for enhancement, preservation. Identify several areas where connections can be created

Description of the Action

Aerial maps of green space within the city environ will be accessed for landbank ownership, private and public. The tree canopy, road, rail, waterways and cycleway network will be overlayed with the green spaces to determine what areas are fragmented and what area have the best green linkages. This information will be combined in one overall map to document the green corridors.

Strategic Documents

Local Biodiversity Action Plan
All Ireland Pollinator Plan
Limerick Tree Strategy
BGI Strategy

Not enough existing data available to create a constructive detailed map.

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Key Partners

National Biodiversity Data Centre

Lead Partner

Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms

Internal Municipal Budget

Action, 1.3
Create a data collection template common to every LCCC Department

Description of the Action

To set criteria, headings, file format for data collected by LCCC Departments in relation to flora and fauna. This will instruct consultants/recorders on how LCCC want the data captured and supplied. Data recorded on flora and fauna as part of LCCC projects to be stored in one repository i.e. the QGIS system

Results

Allows for fluid collection of data in a format that is standardised/accessible to all LCCC Departments and external agencies.

Strategic Documents

All Ireland Pollinator Plan

Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan.

Internal Departments do not comply or use the new data collection form. Departments do not share data received from projects.

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Key Partners

Residents Groups

Lead Partner

Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms

Action, 6.1
Allow public groups have more autonomy for their green areas on Council owned lands.

Results

Groups have more control of the green space in their area. They can apply for funding/enhancement to shape and enjoy their space.
An increase of Biodiversity

Description of the Action

Create a document agreement that allows for resident groups /communities to have more control over the management of the Council owned green spaces in their area. This document would clarify issues around ownership, risk, insurance and terms of usage. It would allow groups to implement and maintain more biodiverse friendly actions

Strategic Documents

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Areas would become neglected.
No consensus among members of groups

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Limerick City & County Council

Key Partners
National Biodiversity Data Centre

Lead Partner
Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms
Internal Municipal Budget
Local Biodiversity Action Fund

Action, 3.2
Hold several data recorder training workshops.

Results
LCCC staff and members of the local public are trained on the correct procedure to record and submit species data.

Description of the Action
Training workshops held to detail the process involved in recording relevant information on local flora and fauna. These workshops will detail areas that require monitoring, species people are to look for, different methods involved and how they can safely record and transmit their data to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Strategic Documents
All Ireland Pollinator Plan
Local Biodiversity Action Plan
Irelands Fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan

People record but do not submit their data.
Not enough interest from people in being recorders

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Key Partners

Lead Partner

Limerick City and County Council

Potential Delivery Mechanisms

Internal Municipal Budget

Action, 5.3
Ensure access routes to green spaces are clear and attractive to the public.

Description of the Action

Poor signage, build-up of rubbish/debris and anti- social behaviour has contributed to several green spaces across the urban area not reaching their potential as spaces for socialisation, recreation, biodiversity activities. Improvement at entry ways with directional/information signage on species present, maps of the area to show routes/distance. Removal of rubbish and clearing of scrub areas where anti-social is recurring.

Results

Green spaces would see an increase in footfall. Geen spaces will be cleaner and more attractive for both people and biodiversity.

Strategic Documents

Local Biodiversity Action Plan
GBI Strategy

Anti-social behaviour would continue, and green areas would be perceived as not safe

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The neglected entrance to Corbally Meadow which attracts anti-social behaviour and dumping.

Corbally Meadow, which is a haven for wildlife with more than 120 species of wildflowers and insects living there.

5.5. The URBACT Cross-Cutting themes in the Action Plan

Relevance of cross cutting themes – tackling anti-social behaviour and inappropriate use of green space is an important goal while implementing the BGI strategy, thus safety of urban (green) spaces can be an important horizontal factor regarding green infrastructure planning in line with the gender equal cities guidebook. Digitalisation might also play a role in community-based approaches to valorise ecosystem services as well as in awareness raising actions.

URBACT's cross-cutting themes for 2021-2027 are Digital Transformation, Green Transition, and Gender Equality.

These cross-cutting themes are all very relevant to the BiodiverCity Network.

In Limerick through the actions in our IAP we will look at digital transformation and how this can be utilised more effectively in Limerick.

A key focus in this network is on our urban green space in Limerick and the project has highlighted issues around how welcoming and inclusive our green spaces are. Are they inclusive, how are they perceived.

People, particularly woman were happy to enter spaces as part of a group activity but commented they would not go into these spaces by themselves. Public spaces should be welcoming to all and actions in the IAP look to address this, we need to create a sense of connection to these spaces.

The experience of safety in relation to green areas plays a very crucial role, often biodiversity rich areas can be isolated, with poor lighting and poor passive surveillance. Anti-social behaviour or a perception that an area is not safe can lead to people avoiding certain green areas. We need to focus on making our green areas more inclusive and catering to a diverse audience.

6. Implementation Framework

6.1 details of governance mechanisms, the processes and the body responsible for implementing the IAP

The URBACT BiodiverCity network will end in December 2025 with the Integrated Action Plan the output from the two-and-a-half-year project. To ensure the delivery of the actions detailed in the IAP governance measures must be put in place to ensure future success. It is envisaged that the URBACT Local Group will continue to meet into 2026 to keep all stakeholders informed. Limerick City and County Council and several of its internal departments will be the main body responsible for delivering and implementing the IAP.

The BiodiverCity IAP is closely linked to the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan years? and the forum established for the BAP can also be utilised to implement actions from the IAP, with collaboration and support where needed.

The project has been pitched to National Funding agencies as part of the National URBACT meeting on the 5th and 6th of November 2024, where it was well received by several funding bodies. The reforming of the LCCC green management team would aid in the identifying of funding for actions and key teams to deliver certain actions into the future. The European projects team also hold several meetings throughout the year, again can help to identify funding streams, potential partnerships.

6.2 how the participatory approach will continue into the implementation phase and after the project closure.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement will take place to ensure the right people are involved at all parts of the project. The Biodiversity forum as well as the LCCC Green Management team will allow for continued participation across all sectors. Public events on biodiversity, and key weeks throughout the year such as National Biodiversity Week, Tree Week, Invasive Species Week, Heritage Week are opportunities will allow for stakeholders to be involved in actions. These themed weeks will help keep local stakeholder groups active on a permanent basis, encouraging them to continue thinking about the city's long-term vision and needs, not just during the project's duration.

6.3 details of the overall costs and funding approach for the implementation of the IAP

The funding for the IAP will be mainly from internal LCCC budget. There are potential funding streams available at local and National level.

- Local Biodiversity Action Fund
- Heritage Week Grant
- Creative Ireland
- Community Climate Action Fund

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Year	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Action																								
1:1																								
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Year	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Action																								
9:1																								
9:2																								
9:3																								
9:4																								

Gantt Chart overall timeline for the implementation of the IAP

Periodic reviews will be conducted to look at what has been achieved regarding the key indicator targets set.

6.5 Monitoring the implementation of the IAP

The 30 actions identified in the Integrated Action Plan will help support and increase the levels of biodiversity in the urban areas of limerick City. The 30 actions vary greatly in their requirements for delivery; therefore, it will be necessary to monitor and identify indicators to ensure delivery of key actions are on track.

Key Performance indicators table

Objectives	Actions	Key Performance Indicator
Objective 1. To use digilisation more effectively as a tool for biodiversity measurement/enhancement/education in Limerick	Action 1.1. Create data management structure. Action 1.2. Training provided to staff Action 1.3. Create data collection template common to every department. Action 1.4. To apply the Singapore Index to Limerick Action 2.1. Promote the LCCC record invasive species reporting link Action 2.2. Create a digital library of useful biodiversity apps on Limerick.ie Action 2.3. Incorporate QR codes on promotional material/signage. To think more digital/innovative.	▪
Objective 2. To raise awareness on the importance of urban biodiversity amongst the public and the role they can play in planning Nature Based Solutions.	Action 3.1. Compile a list of Limerick data recorders and their field of interest Action 3.2. Hold several data recorder training workshops. Action 3.3. Hold several community recording events throughout the year like the City Nature Challenge. Action 4.1. 4 x communication campaigns o seasonal urban biodiversity. Action 4.2. Additional urban biodiversity murals to be created in the city. Action 4.3. QR codes to be used on all information signage/material, to allow for the greatest level of dissemination of data. Action 5.1. Additional updated signage for Council owned greenspaces. Action 5.2. Ensure access routes to green spaces are clear and attractive to the public. Action 5.3. Hold several planting workshops, trees/flowers. Action 5.4. Map existing green corridors, which will highlight areas to improve.	•

Key Performance indicators table

Objectives	Actions	Key Performance Indicator
	Action 6.1. Allow groups to have more autonomy for their areas, create agreement documents to support groups/Council in this. Action 6.2. Community to be consulted more at design stage, co creation. Go Green Routes Horizon 2020 project to be used as exemplar.	▪
Objective 3. To improve the strategic management of Council owned greenspace.	Action 7.1. Deliver on existing management recommendations documents created for forestry, meadow and cemetery green area sites., Action 7.2. Ensure governance is a strategic aspect of all plans created. Action 8.1. Communication campaign to highlight the importance of local wildflower areas and seed saving. Action 8.2. To harvest local seed and transplant and sow in other green spaces dominated by monoculture grasses. Action 8.3. Hold several public workshops on seed saving. Action 8.4. Reduce the amount of non-native, non-local seed being brought. Action 8.5. Map of areas with high levels of wildflowers created. Action 9.1. To research suitable methods/equipment to harvest wildflower seed. Action 9.2. Map of grassland areas to be created. Action 9.3. Green areas to be cut and maintained properly on a schedule. Action 9.4. Invasive species controlled.	•

6.6 Details of overall approach to risk management

Some of the potential risks associated with the delivery of the IAP are identified below

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Lack of suitable and recurring funding	Medium	High	To ensure additional budget funds are sought and all available suitable funding streams applied for
Lack of political buy in to changes in grassland management	High	High	To ensure discussions are had prior to action and all concerns are addressed
Anti-Social behaviour	Medium	High	To ensure spaces have adequate lighting, signage, passive surveillance where possible. Gardai monitoring
Lack of commitment to the project	Medium	High	Ensure regular updates and feedback on project status
Lack of community engagement	Medium	High	Celebrate key weeks throughout the year, and involve the community groups

1. Conclusion

8.1. Local Communication and Dissemination Plan for the IAP

8.2. Next Steps


TIMELINE
QUICK WIN
MEDIUM TERM
LONG TERM


TIMELINE
QUICK WIN
MEDIUM TERM
LONG TERM


TIMELINE
QUICK WIN
MEDIUM TERM
LONG TERM