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Cover image — a visualisation of a green active travel route
1 — Canal & North Gateway visualisation.
Image: Aecom
It has been an incredibly productive year with more CSGN projects happening on the ground, and more people becoming aware of the CSGN and the multiple benefits which it delivers with positive impacts across a range of agendas, policies and themes.

Through the Scottish Government’s third National Planning Framework (NPF3) the Scottish Government has asked us to deliver on improving active travel, the removal of vacant and derelict land (VDL) and to focus on disadvantaged communities. We have collectively made great progress on each of these areas of work. For example, as summarised in this report, this year partners have produced a suite of green active travel route case studies, delivered new greenspace to disadvantaged areas around Greenoakhill near Glasgow and engaged with local authorities to identify VDL sites with the potential to be reclassified as greenspace.

Additionally, this year we completed a governance review which offers us further support in pursuing our vision, and the Scottish Government’s appreciation of the importance of greenspace was further demonstrated by adding a new national indicator to its performance framework ‘Improve access to local greenspace’. So the high level support for the CSGN remains.

Turning towards the task of practical delivery, through our Delivery Plan 2025 (DP25) work we made considerable strides to help us bridge the gap between delivering a 40-year vision for a complex and multifunctional green network and undertaking annual work programmes.

As part of this activity, we conducted a number of stakeholder workshops to create logic models that identify and express the links between what we are collectively doing now and the conditions that will need to be in place for a successful green network in 2050.

This work will be available later in 2017. We anticipate it will be useful in helping us to support the costing and valuing the CSGN work – a project which, for the first time, puts monetary values on the implementation cost of the CSGN and the return value for this investment.

And of course, during this year the John Muir Way was awarded its Scotland’s Great Trail status. This 134-mile route stretching across Scotland’s heartland is fast becoming a source of national pride and international renown. The Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) has been coordinating the management of this fantastic resource since the beginning of this year, continuing its development in partnership with a number of key stakeholders.

Keith Geddes
Chair
Central Scotland Green Network Trust
This year, CSGNT commissioned landscape architect consultants HERE+NOW to research five green active travel route case studies, offering a flavour of what can be achieved within different worldwide contexts. They provide both inspiration and key learnings for others aspiring to implement their own green active travel routes.

Simply put, green active travel routes represent the deliberate choice to combine natural planting, greenery or water systems together with paths for people on foot or on bike. These routes create attractive places and journeys for people and improve the environment.

Green active travel routes can be created by either adding new travel routes to existing green infrastructure or by adding new green infrastructure to existing travel routes – or by integrating green infrastructure and active travel from the start. Five exemplar projects have been published:

— The ‘Grønne Cykelruter’ programme works towards Copenhagen’s aim of becoming the world’s best cycling city. This active travel network consists of over 58km of individual cycle routes which connect green parks, lakes, the harbour and university. The programme’s success has stemmed from almost a century of large-scale urban planning that has focused on the integration of quieter, greener, natural habitats with traffic-free active travel routes.

— Connswater Community Greenway provides an example of how community engagement and partnership working can create a vibrant local asset and leave a legacy for future generations. Opened in April 2017, it has become a living landmark for east Belfast, joining Belfast Lough to the Castlereagh Hills with a 9km wildlife corridor. It aims to create an accessible space for community events, while improving the biodiversity of the city and reducing flood risk.
Little France Park is a key piece of green infrastructure near Edinburgh’s burgeoning BioQuarter and Royal Infirmary in the south east of the city. The park includes high quality cycling and walking paths, as well as three distinct parkland areas. The development demonstrates how active travel and green infrastructure can be integrated from the outset as part of a master-planned project. By providing connections for communities, commuters and hospital patients, Little France Park has formed an important part of the wider regional green network.

The Hamburg Grüne Netz is a city-wide urban masterplan based around green active travel that aims to eliminate the need for cars in Hamburg over the next 20 years. More than a third of Hamburg consists of green spaces and the city also has several rivers. As part of a longstanding city-wide policy, Hamburg is strengthening its existing green framework to create links between these green places.

Greener Greenways aims to improve the biodiversity of 38 traffic-free walking and cycling routes in Scotland, England and Wales. The initiative was designed to increase biodiversity by integrating green infrastructure with existing active travel corridors. The project, managed by Sustrans, aims to survey the biodiversity of the routes to feed into habitat management plans, as well as physically improving the routes for the people who use them.

These case studies highlight how each green active travel route is different and also what is achievable can vary dependant on location, context, budget, political support and range of other factors.

Common themes emphasise the importance of partnership working and engaging with local communities; highlighted is the importance of including green surroundings and safe environments, through either retrofitted or newly planned approaches. Finally, the example case studies teach us to think big and plan early; to be bold in terms of ambition and to think on a city wide scale.

The full suite of Green Active Travel Routes case studies is available to download from our website: centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/greenactivetravel
The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is a national survey of VDL collated and published by the Scottish Government. The dataset is an invaluable source of information relating to vacant and derelict sites and provides evidence and support for policies that focus on the re-use, improvement and regeneration of land which has previously been developed.

In recent years CSGNT has been looking at sites that could be removed from the SVDLS as they could be actively remediated into a green resource, or over time they have become a naturalised asset. CSGNT has been advising with local authorities and the Scottish Government on its findings.

Last year 26 sites covering some 157ha were removed for reasons which contribute towards the development of the CSGN. East Ayrshire had the largest area (93 ha) as the former opencast site of Dunstonhill was removed due to naturalisation.

In South Lanarkshire 36ha across 11 sites were removed from the register. Of these, Redlees Quarry was the largest site (20ha). Much of the remediation and management works undertaken here which enabled it to be removed from the register were delivered by a partnership including Community Links, South Lanarkshire Council and CSGNT utilising monies from the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) WIAT Challenge Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1 — Housing development in Sighthill.
2 — Aerial view of the Sighthill masterplan.
Image: Glasgow City Council
Revitalising areas suffering from economic disadvantage and poor health is a key priority for the CSGN. Over the past year partners have been delivering projects which either indirectly or directly deliver improvements to disadvantaged areas. An example of this is the redevelopment of Sighthill in Glasgow.

The works will cost in excess of £250m and is being funded by Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government. Sighthill is also one of the early action areas to benefit from a £1bn plus City Deal programme. The masterplan recognises that the site has many problems. Its access is tightly constrained by road, rail and canal infrastructure. It also suffers from heavily polluted soil and unbalanced storm water management infrastructure. Local residents also face severe social and economic issues, many are asylum seekers and, in general, the area suffers from a poor reputation.

The masterplan aims to tackle these problems head on, turn negatives into positives and deliver a sustainable solution that maximises its potential.

The delivery of appropriate green infrastructure is at the very heart of the new vision. For example, the masterplan retains as much of the existing natural assets as possible. Despite additional expense and logistic issues, features such as woodland, rocky outcrops and varied topographic levels have been incorporated into the plan. Another example would be the creation of Sighthill Park, a unique, attractive green spine that flows through the development, facilitating active travel and creating recreational and social opportunities.

The local environment and green infrastructure will help to create a desirable and sustainable residential space and through this help to activate market interest.

This year the focus has been on early remediation works to clean the contaminated ground to allow the new park and housing platforms to be created. Detailed designs have been created for the new park, roads and development platforms.

Developers have also been working with the existing community at Fountainwell in the north of the Sighthill masterplan. As a result, a small temporary growing space within their neighbourhood has been created.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is the government’s adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Over the past year, SNH has increased its investment in the CSGN programme and has helped to bring in additional resources.

Working with various partners it has restored and created habitat to improve ecological coherence across central Scotland through the EcoCo LIFE project, supported by the EU’s LIFE+ funding programme.

This includes bringing a cluster of peatland sites around Carnwath in South Lanarkshire under management with Butterfly Conservation Scotland; creating a wetland and constructing a new hide at the Black Devon Wetland reserve near Alloa with RSPB; establishing a green roof and a series of wildflower meadows throughout the Inner Forth with Buglife; improving the Cambus Pools reserve near Alloa using an innovative low ground pressure Softrak cut and collect machine with Scottish Wildlife Trust; and expanding the range of large peatland sites being brought into management with the help of volunteers with East Ayrshire Coalfields Environment Initiative.

The Green Infrastructure Fund is a £37.5m programme of strategic investment using £15m of EU Structural Funds. This year, seven major projects have been awarded funding, including five within the CSGN area, located in west central Scotland at Clydebank, Castlemilk, Fernhill, Easterhouse, the Canal & North Gateway (Glasgow) and Cardonald. In addition, a community engagement fund was launched that will award a further £500K to projects in urban areas of Scotland.

Since 2010, nearly 3,000ha of peatland has been restored within central Scotland, funded by the Peatland Action Fund managed by SNH. Central Scotland is one of the most important regions in Britain for lowland raised peat bogs. Central Scotland is one of the most important regions in Britain for lowland raised peat bogs. These provide a significant carbon store, so the aim of recovering this network will contribute to Scotland’s work on climate change and help to meet international biodiversity targets. The Peatland Action programme won the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management award for the best Large Scale Nature Conservation Programme in 2016.

1 — SNH on site in West Dunbartonshire. Image: SNH

2 — Habitat will be enhanced for Easterhouse’s population of water voles. Image: Dr Mark Hows
SNH is a member of major partnerships which help deliver the CSGN in key locations, for example, the Seven Lochs Wetland Park located across Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. This will bring a significant natural heritage resource to the doorstep of communities in the area. It is also right in the middle of the Gartloch-Gartcosh community growth area, earmarked for 4,300 new homes in its strategic development plan. The project was awarded £4.5m by the Heritage Lottery Fund in June 2016, which, with contributions from other partner organisations, will create new gateway areas, improve connections, and enhance the environment.

The intention is to develop green links into the park from the current urban areas and new housing, so that it is integrated with the whole development. Local residents will be able to look out, and step out into the park, which will also attract visitors from across the region. This project has been driven by the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership and is now led by the local authorities, with support from FCS and The Conservation Volunteers, as well as SNH.

These delivery programmes help to meet the CSGN’s objectives, but fully realising the CSGN vision will require input from across a wide range of stakeholders. SNH ran a sharing good practice event on design for nature as part of 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design. This brought together planners, architects, developers and voluntary bodies to showcase some of the best green infrastructure projects in Scotland.

SNH also works with many partners to promote green infrastructure and place-making. For example, SNH has helped Fife Council to develop its green network strategy and has contributed to site briefs for urban expansion in East Lothian. Working with the planning authorities, SNH has finalised a network of strategic active travel routes across the CSGN area, and through contributing to the CSGN Development Fund, it has helped fund projects bringing forward some of these routes.
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government. Its mission is to protect and expand Scotland’s forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment. FCS is working in partnership to support delivery of the CSGN, including encouraging greening as a legitimate use of VDL and addressing the barriers to woodland creation.

The planning team has been busy this year developing a number of new land management plans (LMP) including at Woodgreen on the edge of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. This sets out future planting to create a woodland capable of producing quality hardwood timber, as well providing a future amenity resource for the town. Over the year, several amendments to local LMPs were made to include recently acquired stock such as Thornton Wood, near Kelty in Fife which brought an area of poorly restored, formerly opencast coal into management. The amended plan sets out the future management of the existing woodland, as well as for proposed new woodland creation which will take place against a background of continued ground preparation improvements to the poorly restored areas.

The civil engineering team have been busy again this year with 80km of road maintenance, 7.5km of upgrade work and 5km new road built at sites such as Carron Valley in East Dunbartonshire and Whitelee in East Renfrewshire.

Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) is creating and managing woodland at Greenoakhill on the outskirts of Glasgow, restoring a former landfill site which is about the size of 100 football pitches. So far, over 20,000 trees have been planted to establish the woodland and greenspace created for walkers, runners, community groups, schools and cyclists.

The new pathways through the site will open up access for the surrounding communities in Baillieston, Broomhouse, Carmyle, Garrowhill, Mount Vernon and Shettleston.

This year, FES worked closely with FCS’s deer management team and had a successful project in partnership with its community and visitor services team and Patersons of Greenoakhill, culling deer on the landfill site. The deer here were being seen in high densities which would have had a detrimental effect on the tree planting that has been carried out so far and for what is planned. Following comprehensive reconnaissance, the team were able to reduce the deer numbers on this site considerably. With a long term deer management plan in place, the site will be ready to resume tree planting safe in the knowledge that deer are not going to have a negative impact.

FES has also been busy this year with many bog improvement projects across the CSGN area. Peatlands provide globally important benefits such as helping to regulate our climate and water and providing valuable wildlife habitats. Several restoration projects were funded by the Peatland Action Fund this year such as ditch blocking at Carnwath Moss West in South Lanarkshire and at Mossband near Shotts in North Lanarkshire. Other techniques to improve water retention included sheep grazing continued at Dun Moss in Cadgerford in Fife which helps to reduce the impact of birch woodland regeneration on the bog.

Autumn also saw the final phase of a bog restoration project at Fannyside Muir completed by Buglife. 140ha of FCS bog (including the Slamannan Plateau SSSI) have benefited from 4,100 dams, removal of 25ha of scrub and conifers and a total of 320 volunteer hours.

At the hugely successful Cunningar Loop on the Clyde, a two night event coincided with the full opening of the park after the installation of the bridge over the Clyde. The ticketed event comprised of a self-led walk through lit up sections of the woodland where Rowanbank performers interacted with the audience and culminated at the play park.

1 — Cunningar Loop.
Image: Becky Duncan - Open Aye Ltd
Our congratulations go to the GCV Green Network Partnership which this year celebrated a decade of work championing the delivery of the Green Network across Glasgow and the Clyde Valley.

GCV Green Network Partnership has published a brochure which gives an overview of the progress made in developing and delivering a green network, showcases the work of the partnership and hints at the journey ahead.

One project of particular note is the Seven Lochs Wetland Park. This year it was one of four major natural environment initiatives to be endorsed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The project is set to create Scotland’s largest urban nature park, spanning the Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire council boundaries, and received £4.5m HLF funding.

Edinburgh Living Landscape

The Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL) is a partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, The City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust (EGLT), the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Green Surge and Edinburgh University. It aims to help make Edinburgh a city fit for the future by fashioning healthy and beautiful environments that are resilient to climate change, as well as being highly valued and accessible to people.

As well as helping to deliver several important CSGN elements, ELL is directly relevant to Scottish Planning Policy which states that: ‘Planning should protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure, including open space and green networks, as an integral component of successful placemaking.’ It is also aligned with the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, particularly with the target of: ‘Better protection and restoration of ecosystems and the services they provide, and greater use of green infrastructure.’

Early achievements of the ELL have included gathering up-to-date information on the extent and type of landscape features maintained by The City of Edinburgh Council. This exercise showed that the council maintains over 1500ha of greenspace. A further study was undertaken which determined that up to one-quarter of parkland could be managed in a less-intensive manner without impacting on amenity or sports use.

A successful example of this naturalisation was tested in Holyrood Park where a once regularly mown grassland is now cut only once per year; to the benefit of both wildlife and public amenity. This new regime also reduces maintenance costs for the site, with the potential for the release of monies to be spent elsewhere on greenspace maintenance.

A series of grassland trials were then undertaken and monitoring activity found that the meadows created attracted large numbers of pollinating species and they proved popular amongst people. Following this over the last year The City of Edinburgh Council has created 219 naturalised grassland sites and 71 meadows representing biodiversity improvements to 9% of the total council amenity grassland estate. Also, at least 10 ‘stalled sites’ have been rejuvenated to deliver benefits for local people and wildlife.

This year, considerable progress has been made promoting the new meadows as an education activity resource. Five city schools were involved with sowing flower meadows close to their schools and the Learning for Sustainability Conference engaged over 150 teachers and involved Education Scotland, the Scottish Government and Living Landscapes partners.

1 — Seven Lochs Wetland Park.
Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership

This year, CAVLP undertook several projects which engaged with local communities and encouraged people to seek out greenspace and use active travel to get around the area.

A great example of this was the Make Your Way project delivered by CAVLP with consultants Icecream Architecture and Systra. Outputs from this project included:

- Street audits and a baseline study of potential active travel routes
- The creation and distribution of active travel and digital trails maps
- 83 art installations across five distinct communities
- A media campaign and 15 active travel roadshow events.

Hundreds of local children and adults took part in active travel challenges, workshops and events which embraced the area’s rich cultural heritage, landscape and greenspace assets.

It is estimated that more than 600 people are now choosing to walk and cycle more as a result of this project, gaining benefits such as improved personal health and also benefits for the wider society and the environment, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

Another project delivered within the CAVLP area during the year was the Employability Programme delivered by Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI). The programme delivered environmental and rural skills training to people from diverse backgrounds and local community groups with a focus on reaching individuals who face significant barriers to employment.

Over the course of the year, 198 volunteering and training sessions were delivered and 58 LANTRA (or equivalent) certificates were gained in areas such as chainsaw maintenance, cross cutting, outdoor emergency first aid and volunteer leadership. This exceeded the original planned targets of 168 and 40 respectively.

The social and wellbeing outcomes of the programme were also exceptional with 66% of people facing significant barriers to inclusion reporting that they experienced an improvement in their health and wellbeing. Moreover, 21 individuals facing extreme barriers to employment moved into further education, training, employment or mainstream volunteering.

In another CAVLP project undertaken in early spring 2016, almost 500 primary school children from across the area took to the Avon Water and its tributaries to set free young fish that they have raised in school.

Children from 21 primary schools participated in Salmon Homecoming, a multi-phase education project that celebrates the return of the iconic Atlantic salmon to their local river, the Avon Water.

The project follows the recent completion of the Avon Barriers project which created two fish passes on the sites of Millheugh and Ferniegair Weirs near Larkhall and Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. Part of Lanarkshire’s industrial legacy includes weirs and other structures which were built to harness water for power. These two large weirs were preventing fish movement upstream and the alterations will open up significant watercourses upstream for migratory fish.

For the first part of the project, children have reared brown trout from eggs to fry, in special classroom hatcheries. Working closely with Clyde River Foundation scientists, the children were responsible for ensuring that hatchery conditions mimicked those of the Avon Water, to prepare their fish for the wild.

2 — 21 schools participated in the Salmon Homecoming project.
Regional Projects

Green Active Travel - Nine CSGN Development Fund projects this year improved opportunities for recreational and active travel, helping people to engage in cycling, walking, running, scootering and paddling.

The Barrhead West Green Link Feasibility Study considered an off road path that would join various existing and planned communities in East Renfrewshire. The project has provided a ‘shovel ready’ green network project plan that can be delivered prior to or alongside new developments and infrastructure in the area.

Greenspace for Health and Wellbeing - The delivery of the CSGN will create attractive places with evidenced benefits in health promotion and ill-health prevention. Our development fund was able to support seven projects focused on mental and physical health and wellbeing this year.

In Wester Hailes, one of the most deprived areas of Scotland, the Calders Community Garden is a successful and valuable community greenspace for local people to relax and unwind. The latest vision for this project was a ‘garden room’, a space that enables site managers to widen activities to more groups, and use the garden in all weathers.

Community Growing - Growing your own food has many advantages; as well as helping to provide greenspace in urban areas, it has a positive role to play in people eating well, improving health and wellbeing and fostering community spirit. Six projects awarded development fund grants this year had community growing as a primary focus and it was a secondary focus for many others.

Beith Street Community Garden in Partick, Glasgow is a great example of how an area of urban derelict land can be transformed into a thriving community space. The grant we provided helped to pay for raised beds, fruit trees and materials for a seating area, with local volunteers delivering much of the construction work.

Urban Greening - Green infrastructure holds significant potential to reduce the impact of climate change. For example, there is clear evidence that trees in urban areas can mitigate the impact of extreme flooding events.

Through our funding, the East Kilbride Community Trust has employed a K-Park Woodland and Community Officer. The officer has progressed the trust’s urban woodland management plan, which has included sourcing funding to improve a woodland site and to engage the locals through a programme of community events.

Employment and Training - The Cassiltoun Trust has used CSGN funding to implement the fourth phase of the successful Castlemilk Community Woodlands Project. This offered 25 participants eight-week work placements where they gained high quality training and valuable qualifications.

These outdoor, environmental placements are successfully engaging participants whilst delivering additional outcomes such as woodland management, path construction and maintenance of a valuable community resource.

Greenspace for Outdoor Learning and Play - Developing play spaces and opportunities for outdoor learning helps children and young people explore and learn about nature and the environment, as well as help to increase activity levels as part of an approach to health improvement.

The SKELF Bike Skills Park in Braidwood, Edinburgh adopted 0.85ha of woodland that was semi-derelict and dominated by anti-social behaviour. As well as improving the condition and accessibility of the site, the CSGN Development Fund completed the final funding package to create a free-to-use cycling facility and pump track.

Woodland Creation - Expansion of woodland cover is a core ambition of the CSGN. It provides a host of benefits, notably as a significant contributor to carbon sequestration, a source of materials for industry and as accessible quality greenspace in which people can enjoy better health and wellbeing.

Woodland also provides biodiverse habitats supporting our wildlife to thrive, as can be seen at the Three Towns Green Network in North Ayrshire. Planting over 400 trees of local provenance has helped connect the towns of Stevenston, Saltcoats and Ardrossan and is increasing local biodiversity.

As well as these larger scale projects, we have funded 39 community projects across all 19 local authorities in the CSGN area, sharing over £34,000 to improve their local greenspace. Supported by the Greggs Foundation and the Central Scotland Green Network Trust, the CSGN Community Project Fund provided one-off grants of up to £1,000 to support small-scale initiatives and to foster community engagement in maintaining and enhancing the local environment.
Regional Projects Map

— 1 Daily Community Gardens
A community growing project helping to bring different generations in the area together.

— 2 Three Towns Green Network
A former railway line repurposed as a green corridor for active travel, biodiversity and recreation.

— 3 Castle Semple Green Woodworking
A woodland skills project within a country park for mental health groups and assisted needs groups.

— 4 Kilmarnock Green Infrastructure Project
The development of a proposal for a 23.5km active travel route connecting communities around Kilmarnock.

— 5 Clydebank Community Greenspace
A contaminated land site transformed into a multi-functional community greenspace/biodiversity park.

— 6 Barrhead West Green Link Study
A feasibility study for an off road path to join local communities.

— 7 Beith Street Community Garden
The development of a community garden to include communal raised beds, fruit trees and a seating area.

— 8 K-Park Woodland & Community Officer
A new woodland officer post delivering a programme of community engagement activities.

— 9 Paths to Employment
An 8-week environmental placement programme for 25 participants to gain training and qualifications.

— 10 Merkland LNR Sculpture Trail
A sculpture trail based in a nature reserve created by local primary school pupils.

— 11 Woodlands Bee Keeping Project
Community bee keeping project led by a local school and nursery parent council.

— 12 Kilmadock Community Allotments
Local allotments project improving biodiversity and a new resource for the local community.

— 13 CATCA Community Growing
Feasibility study assessing the potential of new community growing spaces.

— 14 Black Devon Wetlands
A new boardwalk and screen erected to allow locals and visitors to view birds and wildlife.

— 15 Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown Brighter Neighbourhood
A planting project bringing derelict land into beneficial use in and around two villages.

— 16 Willow Garden Group
The addition of a ‘garden room’ for therapeutic activities in a community garden.

— 17 The SKELF Bike Skills Park
A bike track in a disadvantaged area for use by the local community.

— 18 Kirkcaldy Community Food Hub Pilot
A training garden to deliver community learning and employability objectives.

— 19 Mayfield Park -
Upgrades to a park with path works and native tree planting to increase biodiversity.
Local Authority and Partner Updates

All our 19 local authorities have signed the CSGN Local Authority Concordat which details how each is committed to delivering the CSGN in their areas. Here is a brief snapshot regarding progress made by some of them over the past year.

South Ayrshire Council

South Ayrshire Council undertook an ambitious project to restore badly eroded sand dunes in Troon using natural waste. The waste management team now recycles seaweed washed up on the shoreline to stabilise, restore and fertilise the sand dunes. This prevents 1,000 tonnes of waste from being sent to landfill annually, in a move which saves more than £84,000 a year in associated costs.

The work has reinstated a natural barrier, providing the local area with greater protection from storm damage, while also nurturing natural habitats, encouraging wildlife to return. The project was so successful it won a national award and the method is now being used at Girvan beach and has the potential to be rolled out to other locations.

The City of Edinburgh Council

In response to high maintenance costs and public pressure for community growing sites The City of Edinburgh Council has embarked upon a policy of repurposing underused and unloved bowling greens as land for allotments.

One such site was created in Leith and opened in August 2016. It now houses 16 ‘mini’ allotments, along with a toilet and communal storage unit, plus a community plot for use by pupils of the neighbouring Trinity Academy, encouraging education in food growing, biodiversity and nature.

Similarly, Victoria Park allotments, which came into use earlier this year, have been designed to be easily accessible for people of all abilities and were offered to both local residents and those on the council’s allotment waiting list.

Other bowling greens across the city have been turned into tennis and petanque courts, growing areas and, in one case, a school playing field.

Stirling Council

This year, Stirling Council provided an update on its progress since signing the CSGN Local Authority Concordat in November 2013.

This included updating information on its local development plan, details of the range of forestry and woodland works the council has carried out, a review of community growing projects and also work undertaken to encourage active travel.

One project which has been successful in contributing to the realisation of the CSGN has been the council’s On the Verge project. This aims to provide food sources for ailing bee populations by sowing nectar-rich wildflowers, particularly perennials, in green spaces in and around Stirling.

Falkirk Council

Falkirk has an abundance of parks and open spaces in an area covering over 24km² on 632 individual sites. This year, the council produced a new open space strategy developed with stakeholders and the wider community; it sets out a shared vision for the future of the local authority’s parks and open spaces. Delivery of this vision will make a significant contribution towards realising the CSGN within this area.

It contains 15 proposals to deliver the vision under four key themes: modernising parks and open spaces, addressing inequality and fostering community through open space investment, working and investing more efficiently and generating money for investment in parks and open space.

Crucial to long-term efforts will be the involvement of local communities. Many have already established ‘friends of’ groups to support local parks, several of which are supported through MyParkScotland. MyParkScotland also launched a community growing and food theme in February with several projects based in Falkirk.

1 — Wildflower planting for the John Muir Pollinator Vision project.
Image: Buglife
greenspace scotland

greenspace scotland has continued to make great strides in engaging marginalised community groups on placemaking. In a project which recognises that young people are almost invisible in the public realm and are often a missing voice in local place consultations, Young Placechangers puts young people in the lead role, bringing together the wide community to look at local spaces and plan improvements.

This year, the Young Placechangers programme has used a co-production approach to develop and pilot a training and support programme enabling young people to transform both the place they live, their relationship to it and the wider community.

The pilot project was located in Dunfermline and supported three groups of young people. It used community placemaking tools including the Place Standard and the Town Centre Toolkit and a range of youth engagement and youth work techniques and approaches. The process was led by two young facilitators from Youth Scotland’s ‘Young People Take the Lead’ project.

The project group evaluated local place quality, discussed ideas with the wider public and developed a range of placemaking actions which prioritised improving links between the high street and key local facilities through the town’s greenspaces.

This project was supported by the Scottish Government and features as a case study on the Scotland’s Towns Partnership website.

Buglife Scotland

Buglife is devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates, many of which are under threat. These bugs underpin life on earth and without them the world’s ecosystems would collapse.

It has been busy year for Buglife, it was instrumental in a green roof being installed at CalaChem in Grangemouth. This is a biodiverse green roof over 140m² in size and it is the first green roof to be installed in Grangemouth that has been designed specifically with biodiversity in mind.

The work has been carried out through IFLI’s Glorious Green Roofs project which has been managed by Buglife and is funded by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the EU LIFE programme.

In March, Buglife launched a BeesMakeItGreen campaign to raise awareness of the importance of greening up our cities and urban areas, to benefit air quality, health, biodiversity, pollinators and improve city living.

In 2015 the John Muir Pollinator Vision won the CSGN Ideas Fund. This helped to get the project off the ground and Scotland’s first B-lines project gained some traction. The idea was to identify opportunities for creating, enhancing and managing important grassland habitat along the entire route of the John Muir Way and almost two miles either side.

Having mapped potential sites across nine local authorities, this year delivery started on the ground creating and connecting important grassland meadows for pollinating insects and other wildlife. In addition, over John Muir’s birthday week in April, a total of 20 events were run engaging over 280 people.
In June we were delighted to host our 2016 CSGN Forum with The Glasgow School of Art (GSA). Our event was part of the Festival of Architecture and was designed to support the themes of the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016.

The conference focused on the role of artists and design professionals in working with communities to make or regenerate liveable places. The event aimed to highlight the value of art in supporting sustainable growth and addressing health and other inequalities, and demonstrate how the process of cultural planning and the engagement of artists and designers can support community empowerment.

The programme raised awareness of international practice and highlighted what’s already being achieved around Glasgow. Feedback from delegates both on the day and from a follow-up survey was very encouraging and it was clear that these annual events remain of great value to delegates.

A new publication titled Growing Awareness - How green consciousness can change perceptions and places was launched at the event. This documents five years of research undertaken by the CSGNT through the annual CSGN forum events. Inspiring international projects from New York to South Korea, as well as those closer to home in the UK and central Scotland feature amongst the 15 essays from past CSGN forum speakers.

The book was previewed at a reception following the year’s forum at The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) with the GSA’s Chair of Governors Muriel Grey and authors Brian Evans and Sue Evans.

All speaker presentations and extra resources from the workshop sessions are available to view or download from our website: centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/csgnforum
Green Infrastructure (GI) means many things to many people but in general terms, it is the green features that exist in a landscape. This could be anything from existing parks through to designed environmental features like green roofs.

Better GI brings many environmental benefits. It is widely recognised as a sustainable and environmental friendly way to develop our urban environments. Features such as green roofs, raingardens, green walls and green bridges are increasingly being included into policy and guidance documents. As such, GI makes a valuable contribution towards the delivery of the CSGN’s aims and ambitions.

The Scottish Green Infrastructure Forum (SGIF) is a cross sector association committed to serving the interests of GI development in Scotland. The forum recognises that Scotland has particular environmental drivers with regard to the development of GI systems and is currently working on several projects designed to promote Scotland as a leader in this field.

This year SGIF has been focusing on improving dissemination and communications, and engaging new audiences.

One key project is the 10,000 Raingardens for Scotland. Initially, this was an awareness raising and media campaign. Now it has matured into an exciting project delivered in locations throughout the CSGN area creating innovative and attractive exemplar raingardens which are being used to engage a range of potential private sector stakeholders such as housing developers like Taylor Wimpey and manufacturers such as CalaChem.

For more information on SGIF, visit its website: sgif.org.uk or follow it on twitter: @ScottishGIF
We would like to extend our thanks to all our partners who are contributing towards the delivery of the CSGN, including:

- Ayrshire Green Network Partnership
- Central Scotland Green Network Trust
- East Ayrshire Woodlands
- Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust
- Fife Coast & Countryside Trust
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- GCV Green Network Partnership
- Lothians & Fife Green Network Partnership
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- The City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- East Lothian Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Midlothian Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- West Lothian Council