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Has your planning authority started the process of developing a nature network, and at what stage of development is this work?

The [Edinburgh Nature Network \(ENN\)](#) was finalised in 2023 as part of the Edinburgh Living Landscapes project. The ENN was a pilot partner project led by Scottish Wildlife Trust, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), and University of Edinburgh, with input from Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership. The ENN was developed as a long-term strategic approach to manage, restore, and enhance the urban landscape of Edinburgh. Implementation is led by CEC staff and has delivered several successful outcomes. However, the ENN has not produced a final map, showing the extent and typology of the Nature Network using polygons. Instead, the public mapping output of the project relied on point data, with each point showing a prescribed action to take place in the ENN. The result is no definitive published map showing the exact “area” of the ENN which is problematic, when trying to define Nature Network interaction with Planning and other programs.

CEC has therefore started work to create a new spatially defined Nature Network map to support the next local development plan (CityPlan 2040), fulfilling NPF4 Nature Network obligations. This involves creation of a new map which is consistent with the [NatureScot Nature Network Framework](#).

This new Nature Network will include sites designated for their nature conservation value (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves etc.), Habitats of Principle Importance, and other sites of conservation value, such as Ancient Woodland. The new Nature Network will feature Opportunity Areas, as per the Nature Network Framework. These will consist of areas which have been identified to be potential opportunities for nature restoration. These could include areas which are suitable for habitat creation or enhancement, species specific projects, or areas where current threats could be addressed. The new Opportunity Areas will consider inclusion of the previous ENN Opportunity Areas, as many of these areas are still relevant and were identified through extensive stakeholder engagement.

As at March 2026, CEC is at an intermediate stage in developing the new Nature Network. An outline methodology has been created, which is in a process of review and revision. The development of the Nature Network is dependent on the creation of the CEC Habitat Map, which is a separate linked project that aims to map all Habitats of Principle Importance in Edinburgh. It is anticipated that a draft Nature Network could be produced shortly after completion of the Habitat Mapping Project. After this, new Opportunity Areas could be identified.

By what date do you expect to have fully mapped a nature network within your planning authority?

A completed Nature Network is expected in 2027. A draft Nature Network is anticipated in quarter 3 of 2026, with Opportunity Area mapping taking place in the quarter 4 of 2026.