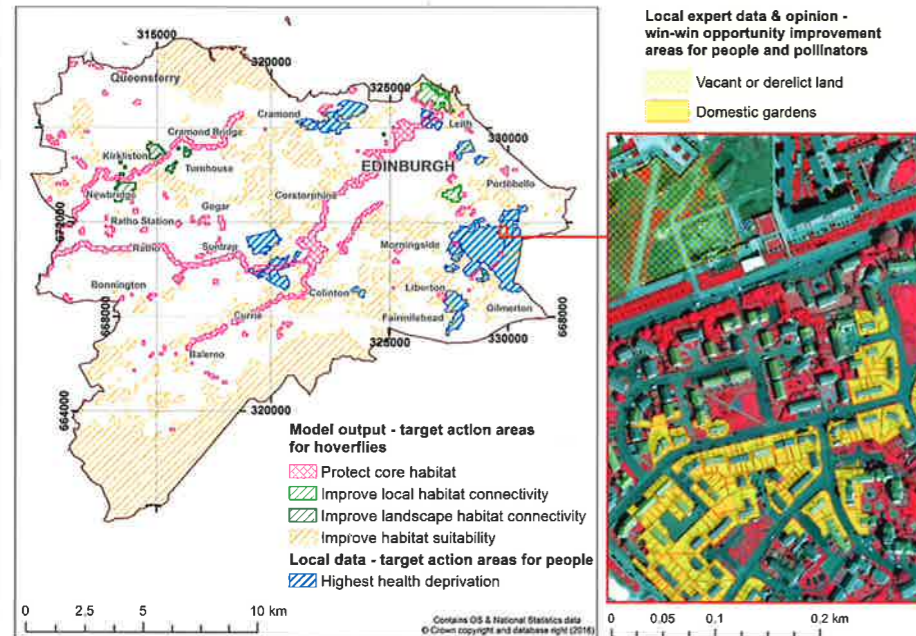


PEOPLE, POLLINATORS AND POOLED RESOURCES

A year after we wrote about Forest Research's work on an important EU urban research project, Alexander van der Jagt returns with an update



Model outputs showing types of action to protect and improve pollinator-friendly spaces in Edinburgh

The GREEN SURGE project is providing knowledge and practical tools to improve the planning and management of urban greenspaces. Since I introduced the project last year, Forest Research has been particularly focused on working with planners and other practitioners in the Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL) partnership.

We have concentrated on the ELL's 'pollinator pledge' project, combining our research with expertise from the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, we are collaborating on an initiative to encourage 10,000 individuals, organisations and businesses to get involved in creating more pollinator-friendly greenspaces in Edinburgh. As well as supporting pollinators such as bumblebees, the visually attractive, species-rich greenspaces provide a biodiversity feel-good factor, improving mental health and wellbeing – both topics discussed at the TPBE3 conference.

An important goal of the research underpinning the pollinator pledge project is to provide insight into areas in Edinburgh where pollinators do, and don't, thrive and to find out why this is the case. This knowledge helps us to communicate with Edinburgh Council and other

landowners about how and where to improve greenspaces for pollinators across the city.

To do this, we looked at what environmental attributes (e.g. trees) helped predict bumblebee and hoverfly presence using the Wildlife Information Centre records. This analysis revealed that the rivers and canals connecting the city from east to west were important habitat corridors for pollinators (Figure 1). Allotments and trees also had a positive effect on pollinator habitat suitability, whereas large, homogeneous areas of improved grasslands appeared to be avoided. The model allowed us to make locally specific suggestions for enhancements, such as improving connectivity with surrounding greenspaces by planting more trees. Because urban planners need to look beyond biodiversity in greenspace decision-making, we also considered health deprivation across the city. This highlighted neighbourhoods where targeting the creation of pollinator-friendly greenspace would provide strong benefits to both pollinators and people.

The results of this study were used in a workshop involving local greenspace managers, ecologists, and community engagement experts, which was aimed at comparing the research findings with



Workshop participants evaluate the outcomes of the model

people's own experiences. This showed a relatively good match, although it was suggested that the models should be tested and improved with new survey data. We also explored what actions to protect and improve pollinator habitat could be included in a pledge. The workshop demonstrated the enthusiasm for action across a wide range of organisations. It became clear that to be successful, the pollinator pledge needs to capture people's attention with a strong core principle and call-to-action, such as a 'pollinator superhighway'. However, it also needs to focus on local interventions such as promoting wildlife-friendly gardening

or community growing. The ELL is continuing to develop the pollinator pledge, using the workshop ideas and other feedback to refine its actions.

Alexander van der Jagt and Chloe Bellamy, Forest Research; Ian Mackenzie, Scottish Wildlife Trust; and Leonie Alexander, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Find out more...

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GREEN SURGE will meet demand for knowledge

GREEN SURGE aims to meet the demand by greenspace practitioners for knowledge and practical tools to improve the planning and governance of urban greenspaces.

It involves researchers from many disciplines, including ecologists, geographers and social scientists together with planners, arboriculturists, and parks managers.

The consortium will deliver knowledge

on the linkages between urban green infrastructure and important societal goals such as health and wellbeing, community cohesion, climate change adaptation and the green economy.

Forest Research leads on the delivery of WP7 – the objective of which is to identify urban greenspace stakeholders and organise regular workshops to engage in knowledge exchange through Urban Learning Labs.