



Glasgow City Council
City Administration Committee

Item 9
25th March 2021

Report by Councillor Anna Richardson, City Convener for
Sustainability and Carbon Reduction

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EDINBURGH DECLARATION

Purpose of Report:
To present Committee with the proposal to sign the Edinburgh Declaration.

Recommendations:
It is recommended that the Committee:
(1) notes the report; and
(2) agrees that the Council signs the Edinburgh Declaration.

Ward No(s): Citywide:
Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Committee with the proposal to sign the Edinburgh Declaration.
- 1.2 Subnational governments, cities and local authorities across the world are invited to sign up to the Edinburgh Declaration which places emphasis on the role of action at the local level within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- 1.3 The Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee considered the proposal to sign the declaration on 16 March 2021. At that meeting, members agreed to refer the report to the City Administration Committee for approval.

2. Background: Edinburgh Declaration

- 2.1 The Edinburgh Declaration, drafted by the Scottish Government, is a statement of intent which calls on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to take bold action to halt biodiversity loss. It is the result of online consultation – the Edinburgh Process – formally mandated by the CBD to collate subnational views. The City Council participated and provided input into this process. This report and the Edinburgh Declaration supports the development of actions to achieve the delivery of Council priorities, in particular those contained within the Climate Emergency Implementation Plan, the Local Biodiversity Partnership Implementation Plan, and the Open Space Strategy.
- 2.2 The Edinburgh Declaration is open for signatory by local authorities ahead of Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD, scheduled to take place in China between the 17th-30th May 2021. It will be presented at COP 15 bringing visibility to its signatories and it is anticipated that a final agreement on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be agreed to support the CBD's 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature'.
- 2.3 Within the Declaration, concern is expressed for global biodiversity loss and it sets out conditions for transformative change. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of local authorities -
 - As key enablers for the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
 - Conserving, restoring and reducing threats to biodiversity.
 - Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and equitable benefit-sharing.
 - Developing the tools and solutions needed for implementing biodiversity protection actions.
 - Monitoring and reporting.
- 2.4 The Declaration calls for greater prominence be given to the role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities to tackling biodiversity loss. It acknowledges the work already done at a local level and recognises that more

can be done to build upon already existing policies and frameworks to ensure the full participation of the whole of society in delivering the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A copy of the Edinburgh Declaration in full can be found in Appendix 1.

- 2.5 Becoming a signatory to the Declaration would give prominence to Glasgow's role in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and in delivering on actions to address biodiversity loss. The Declaration supports the Council's wider policy aims through the Open Space Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), Glasgow Pollinator Plan, Food Growing Strategy, Parks and Greenspace Vision, and the Climate Emergency implementation plan to:
- Help the City adapt to climate change, eg by dealing with surface water flooding, especially during and immediately after heavy rainfall events;
 - Provide habitats for nature, helping enhance biodiversity;
 - Provide opportunities for delivering better, more coherent and connected walking and cycling networks;
 - Provide convenient opportunities for outdoor recreation, sport, food growing and general relaxation, helping promote health and well-being and social cohesion;
 - Mitigate climate change, the urban heat island effect and poor air quality;
 - Contribute to a sense of place and a more attractive urban environment.
- 2.6 Some of the specific work undertaken by the City Council so far to contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity includes:
- Embedded within Placemaking Policy within the City Development Plan.
 - Key deliverable within Climate Emergency Implementation Plan.
 - Delivering a Place based approach with a nature based solutions perspective means that the recently adopted Open Space Strategy aims to ensure that any actions we take do no harm to social cohesion, health & wellbeing, environment, economy and biodiversity.
 - Role as front runner City in H2020 Connecting Nature project, using the Open Space Strategy as an exemplar ensuring that we are mainstreaming nature based solutions.
 - Sustainable Glasgow - Green the City Hub.
 - Delivery of the LBAP as outlined in the recent Duty Report <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=51071&p=0>
 - Creation of additional Local Nature Reserves.
 - Green Urban Connectors Project (biodiversity project).
 - Pollinator Park designation for Queen's Park.
- 2.7 Aberdeenshire Council became the first Scottish Local Authority to sign the declaration. Several other cities across the world have signed the Declaration and these include Quintana Roo in Mexico, Jinja in Uganda and Berlin in Germany.

3. Commitment

- 3.1 Signing the Declaration would signal our commitment to deliver transformative actions in order to achieve the aims and ambitions set out in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- 3.2 The Declaration itself is voluntary, non-binding, has no legal status and does not in itself place additional asks on Councils. It commits the City Council to continue to build upon our previous efforts, to deliver transformative actions by:
- Recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into subnational, city and local planning, management and governance instruments.
 - Implementing appropriate actions that deliver on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework goals and action targets.
 - Aligning biodiversity strategies and actions, and our monitoring and reporting efforts with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), within our subnational, city and local competencies
 - Increasing resource mobilisation for investment in biodiversity action at subnational, city and local levels, and providing incentives to ensure positive outcomes
 - Mainstreaming biodiversity across public, private and business sectors to achieve greater environmental, societal and economic resilience
 - Communicating, educating and raising public awareness with specific efforts to make knowledge available in several languages
 - Strengthening capacity building in order to implement nature-based solutions (NBS) and green and blue infrastructure, particularly through ecosystem based approaches and as a contribution to a green recovery from COVID-19
 - Providing opportunities for knowledge exchange across subnational, city and local levels, and between all sectors of society
 - Sharing best practices across subnational, city and local levels, to efficiently implement transformative actions
 - Delivering convergence with other intergovernmental agreements and processes, taking forward bold and innovative actions at the subnational, city and local level which result in mutually beneficial outcomes.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Council signs the Edinburgh Declaration as it would help to advance and further strengthen the existing biodiversity work within Glasgow through providing opportunities for knowledge exchange and sharing

best practices across different levels of government and society. It would also further enhance Glasgow's reputation on an international stage and promote our positive work around protecting and enhancing biodiversity ahead of COP 26.

- 3.4 All potential signatories will be subject to a short vetting process to authenticate their representation. Further details can be found via the following link: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-biodiversity-framework/>
- 3.5 It is expected that elements of the Edinburgh Declaration may be reflected in the next Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and associated Delivery Plan. Due to the delay to the setting of the new international targets and the impact of the pandemic, the new Biodiversity Strategy is not likely to be published until spring 2022.

4. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no financial commitments in signing the Edinburgh Declaration.

Legal: There are no legal implications as the Edinburgh Declaration is voluntary and non-binding.

Personnel: There are no new personnel requirements expected in signing the Edinburgh Declaration.

Procurement: There are no procurement implications.

Council Strategic Plan: The Edinburgh Declaration supports priority number 71:
Promote and enhance our city's natural resources including nature reserves and public parks.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22 Yes, generally supportive.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? Positive impact. Biodiverse habitats will benefit all of Glasgow's Citizens.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage. The range of biodiverse habitats established across GCC parks, woodlands and greenspaces are free to access for all, potentially improving health and wellbeing outcomes and allowing access to volunteering and skills development.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: The Edinburgh Declaration supports the Local Biodiversity Action Plan which contains activities to manage, maintain and extend habitats. This will bring about a net positive impact on the environment. Projects will contribute to the connectivity and accessibility of greenspace throughout the city for both people and wildlife.

Social, including opportunities under Article 20 of the European Public Procurement Directive: Well managed and accessible habitats have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Economic: None.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: No immediate impacts.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) notes the report; and
- (2) agrees that the Council signs the Edinburgh Declaration.