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**Report to: Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 6 October 2022**

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**Subject: Edinburgh Declaration**

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**Report by: Strategic Director (Place)**

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### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. To seek Council approval for Clackmannanshire Council to adopt the Edinburgh Declaration.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council commit to the Edinburgh Declaration's post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1. The Edinburgh Declaration on biodiversity is a key milestone in the formal recognition of contributions of subnational governments, including cities and local authorities, to the achievement of global biodiversity goals and targets to deliver the aims and ambitions set out in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- 3.2. The goal of the Edinburgh Declaration is for Parties to formalise this role via the adoption of a Plan of Action specifically dedicated to subnational governments. This aims to ensure the 'whole of government' approach advocated for in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is realised over the coming decade.
- 3.3. Edinburgh Declaration commits local authorities to continue to build upon previous efforts to deliver transformative actions by:
- integrating the overall value of nature 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, actions, monitoring and reporting efforts with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans;
  - increasing resource mobilisation for investment in biodiversity action at local levels, and providing incentives to ensure positive outcomes;

- achieving greater environmental, societal, and economic resilience through the mainstreaming of biodiversity across public, private, and business sectors;
- communicating, educating, and raising public awareness while providing opportunities for knowledge exchange between all sectors of society.

#### **4.0 Local Biodiversity and Climate Change**

- 4.1. Biodiversity is a crucial facet of climate change mitigation and adaptation by virtue of its role providing us with food, soil, clean water, health, wealth and other vital services. High quality, biodiverse environments are also better able to provide us with important services such as flood alleviation, pollution filtration, water purification, soil formation, food security and pollination of our crops.
- 4.2. On 11th August 2022, Clackmannanshire Council approved a new target to reach net zero emissions for our own operations by 2040 at the latest and for the Clackmannanshire area by 2045 with one of six themes identified in the Interim Climate Change Strategy being 'Biodiversity, Carbon Storage and Agriculture'.
- 4.3. The Council's new Climate Emergency Board is developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan with specific action points to improve biodiversity in Clackmannanshire while input will be gathered from young people, businesses, residents and communities through the new Climate Change Forums to further entrench biodiversity's contributions to climate change resilience and mitigation.
- 4.4. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 introduced a requirement for all public bodies to report every 3 years on their compliance with their duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Council has previously submitted three Biodiversity Duty Reports with commitments to improve biodiversity with the most recent being approved Place Committee in January 2022.
- 4.5. The City Region Deal includes projects such as Scotland's International Environment Centre with both skills and training facilities and an environmental business incubator in Alloa. The heads of terms for the City Deal also references support for Clackmannanshire Council to work with regional partners and RSPB to explore opportunities and possible synergies for a new wetlands centre on the River Forth.

#### **5.0 Future Opportunities**

- 5.1 The Edinburgh Declaration presents the opportunity to consolidate the Council's on-going work on protecting and enhancing the environment. Specific opportunities include:
  - ensure that land is considered as a finite resource with a significant proportion reserved for biodiversity, sustainable food production and nature-based solutions;
  - work with community groups and other partners to promote sustainable forest management, informed woodland plantation (the right types of tree in the right place) and increase green

spaces that are available while protecting existing wild spaces, coastlines and woods from planned development or against flood risk;

- work with Scottish Forestry and private forestry to identify biodiversity and afforestation to contribute to net zero targets, deliver greater climate resilience and contribute to the Scottish Government's targets of 12,000 hectares of woodland being created annually;
- resources permitting, to investigate and produce recommendations on the creation of a Pollinator Strategy and long term plan and capacity to deal with the decline in pollinators;
- resources permitting, review the Council's local biodiversity action plan to include aims/objectives and actions which will help protect and enhance pollinator habitats and species;
- adopt a Council-wide approach to the conservation of biodiversity that further embeds biodiversity considerations into corporate & service plans, policies, strategies and operations is required so that all decision-making takes account of the potential impacts on local biodiversity;
- explore the extension of cut-and-collect mowing to cultivate biodiversity, reduce the frequency of mowing and improve wildflower corridors;
- continue to deliver biodiversity and countryside awareness in schools and within the community;
- work with communities, developers and landowners to identify and establish new "Local Nature Reserves" or equivalent areas for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment;
- commit where possible to maintaining biodiversity projects and initiatives and also re-evaluating management of greenspace to ensure the best outcome for biodiversity and people;
- commit wherever possible to maintaining the quality of existing greenspaces and provision of quality, accessible greenspace within new development to harness the well-documented socio-economic and environmental benefits that green development offers;
- continue to make the most of accessible grant funding, specifically to deliver landscape-scale conservation.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

### **5.1.1 The recommendation will:**

- support our recently approved (11th August, 2022) Interim Climate Change Strategy and Net Zero Targets as well as our sustainability objectives;
- have a positive impact on current Council demand/ usage/ residents / service users and the geographic / places affected;
- help to help to tackle climate change and contribute towards improved biodiversity;
- contribute towards the development of an improved local well-being economy;
- have a positive impact for residents, vulnerable groups and also contribute towards equalities;
- assist our Countryside Rangers in working with communities to promote awareness of conservation work and manage sites to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the Council area;

- aid the Countryside Rangers in screening planning applications for any potential impacts on biodiversity and advising how to protect and enhance wildlife across a range of Council services including Infrastructure, Roads, Land, Flooding & Bridges and Development Management.

## 6.0 Sustainability Implications

6.1 The action taken aligns with the council's new thematic approach to achieving its net zero targets, as set out in the Interim Climate Change Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

## 7.0 Resource Implications

7.1 Biodiversity actions are currently managed within existing resources. Future initiatives will be dependent on available funding and resources. Where additional resources are required these will be funded from external grants/income streams and will require a business case and appropriate governance before any commitment is made.

7.2 *Staffing*

7.3 There is no impact on existing staffing arrangements, however we will work with partners to encourage and stimulate greater volunteer participation.

## 8.0 Exempt Reports

8.1 Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No X

## 9.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

Interim Climate Change Strategy  
 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2027  
 Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
 Local Development Plan  
 Climate Emergency Action Plan

## 10.0 Equalities Impact

10.1. Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes  No

## 11.0 Legality

11.1. It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 12.0 Appendices

12.1 None

## 13.0 Background Papers

13.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

### Author(s)

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### Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
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Pete Leonard	Strategic Director (Place)	

