Item 2

16th January 2024

Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee

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Draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on progress with the emerging Forestry and Woodlands Strategy, and to share the contents of the draft strategy as the basis for engaging external organisations, stakeholders, and members of the public before finalising the Forestry and Woodlands Strategy.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee notes:

1. The contents of the report, and
2. Notes the intention to use the draft as the basis for engaging external organisations, stakeholders, and members of the public in finalising the Forestry and Woodlands Strategy

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

1. Introduction

1.1 Trees and woodlands play vital roles in urban settings. While offering a home to wildlife and spaces for human recreation, they provide insurance against flooding, manage carbon emissions, control water flow and air quality, regulate temperature and energy usage, create jobs and provide multiple health benefits.

1.2 A report to the Environment, Sustainability, and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee on 8 June 2021 regarding Glasgow's Climate Plan noted Action 35 required the development of an urban woodland strategy for the city. It also noted the 2019 Planning Act (which amends the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997) requires the Council to produce a Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS).

1.3 Committee will also recall a report was brought to the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee meeting on 15th March 2022 in relation to the emerging FWS and the Clyde Climate Plan. It notes work had begun on the strategy, and that it will take a place-based approach using nature-based solutions to create climate adaptive spaces and places across the city. It further notes the Forestry and Woodland Strategy will be prepared in advance of the emerging City Development Plan.

1.4 More recently, a report to the 7 November 2023 meeting of the Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee regarding Glasgow's Tree Plan noted the emerging Forestry and Woodland Strategy will be the primary policy document relating to woodland and tree planting in the City, and it will help direct tree planting to the most appropriate locations. It also indicates Glasgow's Tree Plan for the Council's estate will continue to direct Council resources to the most beneficial locations, in line with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

2 Requirement to produce a Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS)

2.1 This FWS is a response to the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which adds a new duty requiring planning authorities to prepare a Forestry and Woodland Strategy. The strategy is to:

(a) identify woodlands of high nature conservation value in the planning authority's area, and
(b) set out the planning authority's policies and proposals in their area, as to -
(i) the development of forestry and woodlands;
(ii) the protection and enhancement of woodlands, in particular those woodlands of high nature conservation value;
(iii) the resilience to climate change of woodlands, in particular those woodlands of high nature conservation value.

(iv) the expansion of woodlands of a range of types to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area.

(c) any other matter which the planning authority consider appropriate

3. Draft Forestry and Woodlands Strategy

3.1 The Forestry and Woodlands Strategy will be the primary strategy and policy document relating to all woodlands and trees in the City. The Council's Tree Plan is a separate, but associated, plan which relates to woodlands and trees within the Council's estate. It directs Council investment and activities relating to those trees and woodlands and will conform to the Forestry and Woodland Strategy once the latter is finalised during 2024.

3.2 The Draft FWS sets the approach to trees and woodlands in the city within the context of the climate change and biodiversity emergencies, and notes mitigation action in one of these areas will have an impact on the other. The draft strategy is attached to this report.

3.3 Through carbon capture (sequestration), trees and woodlands play an important role in delivering both the Council's and the Scottish Government's, net zero emissions targets. Any net loss in canopy cover within the city, however, would threaten carbon sequestration levels, while enhanced canopy cover would boost carbon sequestration and, therefore, increase their contribution to meeting net zero targets.

3.4 The draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy notes the benefits of trees as being:

- absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby contributing to meeting the net zero target;
- enhanced ecology through increasing resilience to threats, and planting to connect fragmented habitat networks;
- supporting economic development through businesses which provide tree and woodland management services, produce timber products, and support the circular economy. Trees also create attractive places and habitats, thereby increasing an area's ability to retain existing businesses and attract new ones;
- contributing to the character of the surrounding area by creating attractive vistas, adding interest through colour, and softening the visual impact of buildings;
- removing particulates from the atmosphere, thereby improving people's health, particularly those with respiratory conditions;
- providing shade which cools people and buildings thereby reducing energy requirements to cool temperatures in offices, shops, houses and other buildings. They provide shade for animals and their habitats;
- increasing the attractiveness of vacant and derelict sites, removing blight from communities, and assisting in site decontamination;
- helping to reduce the risk of both wider scale and localised flooding, including from surface water flooding when that are incorporated into sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS);

- improving public health by providing opportunities for physical exercise and enhancing mental health and well-being.

3.5 The Draft FWS sets out the following **vision** for trees and woodlands in Glasgow in 2034, that:

- Glasgow's urban area has 20% canopy cover, thereby meeting the Clyde Climate Forest target, and Bridgeton, Dalmarnock, Govan, Levern and District and Possilpark, in particular, have increased canopy cover levels.
- Through increased canopy cover vacant and derelict sites contribute to meeting the net zero target, enhancing biodiversity, and increasing the attractiveness of communities;
- Canopy cover provides multiple benefits to Glasgow's residents and visitors and enhances local neighbourhoods;
- The impact of ash dieback disease is being addressed through the planting of alternative species
- Access to woodlands is increased and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the city's residents;
- More trees and woodlands are protected through the planning system, and related processes, through the identification of new Tree Protection Orders and trees of high nature value.
- Green networks and ecological connectivity will have improved as a result of increased tree planting;
- Trees and woodlands will be more resilient to threats, including those related to climate change;
- New developments enhance existing canopy cover on site, and have effective tree maintenance arrangements in place

3.6 A draft delivery plan setting out the actions which will contribute to increasing the tree canopy cover in the city is incorporated in the draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Section A159 (3) of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019) requires planning authorities to consult the following in preparing a Forestry and Woodland Strategy:
(a) the Scottish Ministers,
(b) such organisations appearing to them to represent those with an interest in the matters listed in subsection (2)(b), and
(c) such other persons as they consider appropriate.

4.2 Consultation on the Draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy will begin following presentation of this report to committee and provide an eight-week period within which the views of those within the Council and, importantly, the views of organisations and individuals external to the Council will also be sought. The main objectives of the process will be to engage with the public, key agencies,

community councils, developers, and internal council services to refine the draft FWS. This will involve

- Press Notice, Press, Social Media, Newsletter;
- Publication of the Draft FWS on the Council's Consultation Hub including details on how to contribute and provide views and feedback;
- Targeted emails to stakeholders and interested groups, including key agencies and the Scottish Ministers, Central Scotland Green Network Partnership, adjoining authorities, Community Councils
- Targeted communication with equalities groups – children and young people, older people, disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, ethnic minorities, women.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	There are no direct financial implications as a result of the emerging Forestry and Woodlands Strategy. Financial resources will be required to meet the targets and ambition set by the Glasgow Tree Plan in terms of the Council's responsibilities for delivery.
Legal:	The production of a Forest and Woodland Strategy meets the Council's statutory requirement in terms of Section 53 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (which amends the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997).
Personnel:	There will be an ongoing requirement for staff to monitor the delivery of the Forestry and Woodlands Strategy.
Procurement:	There are no procurement implications.
Council Strategic Plan:	Grand Challenge Three: Fight the climate emergency in a just transition towards a net zero Glasgow. Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030 **Commitments** 12: Support new 'pocket' or 'wee' forests throughout the city, work with communities to identify opportunities for tree-planting, support the delivery of the Clyde Climate Forest.

21. Support the Glasgow National Park City campaign and support local environmental groups and conservation projects to provide nature-based volunteering opportunities.

33. Develop a tree nursery so we can nurture the saplings, of local provenance, which we would then plant across the city and supply to the wider Glasgow Conurbation while also providing training and employment opportunities via a social enterprise.

34. Deliver increased tree planting across the city as part of a comprehensive Tree Plan for Glasgow, including measures to support replacement when trees are lost to damage or removal, and responding to Ash Dieback disease, and develop a Forestry and Woodland Strategy for the city.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	Tree planting can support outcome 6 (tackling social isolation and loneliness)
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	Potential positive impact – tree planting can provide opportunities for community activities and volunteering
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Increasing tree canopy cover on vacant and derelict sites can reduce blight, improve health and wellbeing, provide leisure and recreation opportunities, and change the way local communities and others perceive disadvantaged areas.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	**Climate plan Theme 1:** Communication and Community Empowerment. To engage with communities about the climate challenge. To foster participation and collaboration

	Climate plan Theme 2: Just and Inclusive Place. Ensure that the transition to a net-zero society is a catalyst for building a fairer, healthier, prosperous, resilient and greener city for all **Climate Plan Theme 4**: Health and Wellbeing. To protect and enhance local habitat connectivity and biodiversity in the city. To support creation and maintenance of good quality, multifunctional green space to help reconnect communities with nature. To support equitable access to good quality, multipurpose open space and green infrastructure in the city. **Climate Plan Theme 5**: Green Recovery. Supporting tree planting and maintenance, peatland restoration, and green infrastructure.
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	Additional tree and woodland planting across the city will sequestrate carbon emissions, help control water flow, improve air quality, and regulate temperature.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Yes
Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	
Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	No impacts have been identified as part of activity to date
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report; and

2. Notes intention to now use the draft as the basis for engaging external organisations, stakeholders, and members of the public in finalising the Forestry and Woodlands Strategy.