



Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee

Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability

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Item 1

24th September 2024

ICLEI CITIES WITH NATURE / URBANBYNATURE AND BERLIN URBAN NATURE PACT

Purpose of Report:

To update Committee on the Council's engagement with Cities with Nature and the lead role for the Scottish Hub of UrbanByNature. To also raise awareness for the proposed invite to sign up to the Berlin Urban Nature Pact

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Note the Glasgow profile on the Cities with Nature Platform and the 32 actions that are currently highlighted.
- Support the continued collaboration with ICLEI Europe to develop the Scottish Hub of UrbanByNature.
- Note that the invite to sign up to the Berlin Urban Nature Pact is expected in early autumn and an update will be brought to a future committee.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Recent international research suggests that to move towards net zero, Cities and Regions require to increase their Nature-Based Solutions, and also understand the levels of carbon sequestered by each intervention or natural environment that we seek to retain, restore and improve. To support collaboration; sharing of knowledge and understanding ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have created the [Cities with Nature](#) and [Regions with Nature](#) platforms.
- 1.2 Committee will recall that a previous [report](#) explained the background to Cities with Nature. In summary, [Cities with Nature](#) is a shared platform for cities and their partners to engage and connect, working with shared commitment towards a more sustainable urban world. Themes are:
- Biodiversity, ecosystems & built environment
 - Climate change & disaster risk reduction
 - Health & social well-being
- It utilises a [Nature Pathway](#) – a comprehensive roadmap for incorporating nature across a city's work and has three phases – Analyze, Act and Accelerate. This is supported by a number of tools and initiatives.
- 1.3 This report will provide an update on our engagement with Cities with Nature. It should be noted that ICLEI and IUCN are the key partners with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in [UN Generation Restoration](#), a catalyst for a nature-based transformation in finance, jobs and cities. Glasgow is one of initial cohort of eleven role model cities selected to strengthen advocacy and share knowledge as champions of restoration.

2 Nature-Based Solutions

- 2.1 IUCN defines nature-based solutions as follows:

“Nature-based Solutions leverage nature and the power of healthy ecosystems to protect people, optimise infrastructure and safeguard a stable and biodiverse future.”

This means that nature-based solutions provide multiple benefits for dealing with urban challenges and creating better cities – including the sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems, flood protection, air quality improvement, social cohesion and local business opportunities. The ideal nature-based solutions go beyond street trees, parks and urban areas to provide a range of natural benefits such as intercepting dust, toxins and noise, sheltering and cooling, sinking carbon and buffering flooding. They also provide spaces for recreation, foster well-being, produce energy, manage waste and generate business opportunities, and ultimately lead to more resilient and sustainable urban living. All of this supports the work that NRS are currently

doing to develop a framework for what it means to live well locally within Glasgow, as per policy 15 in [National Planning Framework 4](#)

2.2 Glasgow's approach to developing scaled-up nature-based solutions is underpinned by its [Open Space Strategy](#), [Forest and Woodland Strategy](#); [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#) and actions embedded in key strategic documents such as the [Development Plan](#) and [Climate Plan](#). Based on a wealth of data and spatial analysis, these Strategies and Plans set out an approach to coordinate the various Nature-based Solutions and open space responsibilities to ensure well-managed, well-located and well-connected nature ecosystems that operate as part of a wider green network, helping to deliver:

- greater awareness of the value of open space / Nature-Based Solutions and of individual open spaces throughout Glasgow, informing their protection and management.
- a strategic rationale for the future use and management of the city's natural environment, providing guidance on priorities for investment in open space, opportunities for using other open spaces less intensively; and an informed basis on which to make decisions about open space reuse, reimagining or reframing, where an open space may be of little value.
- a basis for greater partnership working with other organisations that have an interest – e.g., with the NHS in how the natural environment can support improved health.
- a framework for cross-departmental engagement and the co-ordination of spending plans to help secure best value; and
- a stronger basis for securing additional funding to help maximise the benefits of open space by promoting the value of open space.

3 Cities with Nature

3.1 The Cities with Nature platform helps unite and embrace nature to align with Glasgow's actions towards broader UN Biodiversity goals. It also facilitates initiatives to hold the city accountable for its broader actions. These initiatives recognise and enhance the value of nature in and around cities worldwide.

3.2 Cities with Nature provides a number of tools to support Cities, these are:

- Action Platform
- Nature Pathway
- Guides
- City Biodiversity Index
- Communities of Practice
- UrbanByNature, and
- Berlin Urban Nature Pact

As a city we have actively engaged with the Action Platform and UrbanByNature. We are expecting a formal invite from the City of Berlin to sign

up to the Berlin Urban Nature Pact this autumn. The rest of this report will provide more detail on these engagements and the proposed next steps with the Berlin Urban Nature pact.

4 Cities with Nature Action Platform

- 4.1 What cities do for nature really matters. It matters for healthier, happier and more resilient cities. It matters for people and nature nearby and far away. The Action Platform provides an opportunity to showcase our city's actions and plans, understand how they contribute to global nature goals and easily track our city's achievements. Currently we are one of 31 global cities to upload onto the Platform and you can view [Glasgow's profile](#) on the platform and explore in more detail the 32 actions that Glasgow has committed to. These are actions that we are already taking as part of delivery on the numerous strategies listed at section 2.2 of this report.
- 4.2 It should also be noted that the platform provides a shared space for cities and their partners to engage and connect, working with a shared commitment towards a more sustainable urban world. Glasgow is committed to protecting, restoring, and managing its natural areas to ensure their long-term sustainability and efficacy, while enhancing the city's resilience to climate change.

5 UrbanByNature

- 5.1 [UrbanByNature](#) is an expertise-sharing and capacity-building programme to empower local governments all around the world to harness the boundless potential of nature for sustainable urban development. UrbanByNature offers support to cities to embark on the journey to becoming Cities with Nature. The programme developed by the [Horizon 2020 Connecting Nature](#) project (which Glasgow was one of three front runner cities within) and is now hosted by ICLEI Europe within the [Nature Networks](#) . One of the legacy outputs from Connecting Nature was the request for Glasgow to be the home for the Scottish Hub of UrbanByNature. Over the last two years, with support from the University of Glasgow and other key partners such as the Scottish Government, Nature Scot and SEPA a number of 'Lunch and Learn' webinars have been organised on different themes.
- 5.2 Funding has now been identified for ICLEI Europe, within the [Horizon Europe Nature Network](#) programme, to provide more support to the hubs. Currently they support by collaborating on the planning of programmes; managing the You Tube channel with webinars from all of the European and international hubs and curating the virtual home for the hubs. ICLEI has now offered to support the development of a web home for the Scottish hub similar to what has been provided for the [Nordic hub](#). This would support development of the programme and would allow the Scottish hub to link up with activity in the other nations within the British Isles and become more of a North Atlantic or Britain and Ireland Hub. This would allow a wider ranging programme to be developed

that brings together established and aspiring urban nature pioneers from local governments, civil society and business to co-create a nature-based, sustainable and resilient urban future.

6 Berlin Urban Nature Pact

6.1 In 2021, the City of Berlin initiated [The Berlin Urban Nature Pact](#) to be the next milestone towards the implementation of the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) (which Glasgow is a signatory to), the post-2020 [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and the [Montreal Pledge](#). The final Pact sets out 6 implementation principles that translate the Edinburgh Process' proposed Plan of Action into a sum of ambitious and measurable targets of 7 overarching target areas, which signatories will state and report on in the UN CBD (UN Convention on Biological Diversity) -recognized [Cities With Nature Action Platform](#). The six implementation principals are:

- Commitment to action and ambition
- Link to & enhance policy / governance frameworks and financing for biodiversity
- Berlin Pact Action plan with SMART targets
- Equal and just co-creation with local initiatives and stakeholders
- Capacity building and collaboration of cities, and
- Monitoring and reporting.

6.2 Initial discussions have taken place with the City of Berlin and Scottish Government about Glasgow and the City of Edinburgh being invited to sign up to the Berlin Urban Nature Pact. We are currently expecting the invitation to arrive in the early autumn with an aim to have the Scottish Cities signed up before formal announcements are made about the launch of the Berlin Urban Nature Pact at COP16 in Cali, Columbia in October 2024.

7 Next Steps

7.1 Officers will continue to engage with the Cities with Nature Platform and utilise its tools to support our delivery of Nature-Based Solutions and highlight their vital role in bridging the gap on the journey towards net zero.

7.2 NRS will work with ICLEI and Nature Networks to develop an interactive web presence for the Scottish Hub of UrbanByNature and work with ICLEI, Key Agencies and Scottish Government to expand its reach to encompass and engage with activity in Ireland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England as well as retaining a focus on Scottish activity at its core.

7.3 Glasgow City Council will await the formal invite to sign up to the Berlin Urban Nature Pact, which is expected in early autumn.

8 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no direct financial implications resulting from being part of the ICLEI Cities with Nature; UrbanByNature or signing the Berlin Urban Nature Pact. Financial resources will be required to meet the targets and ambitions within the various nature positive strategies and plans listed in this report.

Legal: The production of the various strategies and plans listed in this report meet the Statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

Personnel:

Procurement:

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 2 Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy
Grand Challenge 3 Mission 2: Become a net zero city by 2030
Grand Challenge 4 Mission 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods..

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. High quality natural environments can support outcome 6 (tackling social isolation and loneliness)

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? Potential positive impact as high quality natural environments can provide opportunities for community stewardship, learning and positive mental wellbeing.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. Nature provides diverse life-supporting and life-enhancing contributions to people in cities and towns. Repurposing vacant and derelict sites; including biodiversity within development or maintain and improving existing open spaces can reduce blight, improve health and wellbeing, provide leisure and recreation

opportunities, and change the way local communities and others seek to improve disadvantaged areas

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

The proposal Builds on Action 12 by participating in Cities with Nature exploring the possibility to sign the Berlin Urban Nature Pact. It delivers towards action 48 by working with partner organisations to fund acceleration of the Open Space Strategy Delivery Plan, and contributes to Action 51 by supporting the livable neighbourhoods plan.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Potential positive impacts by supporting a transition towards a circular economy; supporting tree planting and maintenance, peatland restoration and nature-based solutions. Supports infrastructure for Living well locally.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Potential positive impacts by supporting a transition towards a circular economy; supporting tree planting and maintenance, peatland restoration and nature-based solutions. Supports infrastructure for Living well locally.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No

9 Recommendations

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