

Item 1

28th May 2024

**Glasgow City Council****Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee****Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability****Contact: Gillian Dick****Ext: 78614****Forestry and Woodland Strategy****Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on progress with the emerging Forestry and Woodland Strategy, and to share the results of engagement with external organisations, stakeholders, and members of the public.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee notes:

1. The contents of the report,
2. The requirement to use the strategy as the basis for protecting trees and woodlands in the city and directing investment in new planting to appropriate locations to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.
3. The final document will be presented to City Administration Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to Scottish Ministers as part of Glasgow City Council's documentation for the City Development Plan 2 Gatecheck process.

Ward No(s):

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 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 FWS.
- 1.5 At the 16 January 2024 meeting, the Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee noted a [report](#) which sought to use the Draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy as the basis for engaging external organisations, stakeholders, and members of the public before finalising the strategy. That engagement process ended on 31 March 2024 and the comments received have been incorporated within the finalised Forestry and Woodland Strategy which will be considered for approval by the City Administration Committee. A summary of the representations received and the response to comments is in [Appendix 1](#).
- 1.6 A delivery plan setting out the range of actions which will contribute to increasing the tree canopy cover in the city has been developed and is attached at [Appendix 2](#) of this report. The delivery plan is now incorporated within the finalised Forestry and Woodland Strategy. It is anticipated the delivery plan will be reviewed every two years in order to ensure the important emerging issues are addressed.

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

2.1 Committee will recall the Forestry and Woodland Strategy 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. Finalised Forestry and Woodland Strategy

3.1 The finalised [Forestry and Woodland Strategy](#) sets the approach to trees and woodlands in the city within the context of the climate change and biodiversity emergencies. Once approved, the Forestry and Woodland Strategy will be the primary strategy and policy document relating to all woodlands and trees in the City. The strategy, summary of consultation responses and Delivery Plan are attached to this report as appendices.

3.2 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

3.3 The following activities were undertaken to publicise the consultation to a wide audience and allow feedback on the draft strategy:

- Online consultation hub
- Made available in all city libraries
- Social media
- Targeted email to development plan subscribers
- Targeted email to surrounding local authorities, key agencies, and developers
- Targeted email to all Community Councils
- Meetings with key stakeholders, including Scottish Forestry (the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations)

3.4 Twenty responses were received within the consultation period, including 5 meetings with key stakeholders and the remaining 15 being written responses, 7 of which were from Glasgow residents, 2 from key agencies and 1 from a community group. The remaining 5 were from a developer/landowner/agent (1), member of the public not resident in Glasgow (2) and others (2). In summary, comments related to:

- acknowledging gaps in data, including more mapping to identify spatial priorities,
- a request to engage, collaborate and co-produce with communities more as the strategy is delivered, including looking at stewardship opportunities;
- identification of funding sources for both Tree Plan and Forestry and Woodland strategy actions
- look to identify more opportunities for wetlands and riparian woodlands, and
- understand the ecology of vacant and derelict land.

3.5 In response, the Forestry and Woodland Strategy has been amended as follows:

- Trees of high nature conservation value definition have been defined and mapped in a dashboard;
- The need to fill information gaps has been acknowledged;
- A new section entitled 'Priority Areas' indicates the spatial priority areas through dashboards/mapping, together with links to the Central Scotland Green Network 2021 Habitat Connectivity Map, Clyde Climate Forest Urban Tree Canopy and Target Neighbourhood map, The Glasgow Vacant and Derelict Land supply, and the Council's Tree Plan new woodland creation sites, roadside/grass verges, and street trees (soft landscaping).
- Actions in the delivery plan indicate the Council will capture the 'lived experiences' from the 'Every Tree Tells a Story' project, and explore the potential for community stewardship of woodlands;
- A new 'Grant Support for Woodland Creation' section has been added;
- An action to explore the potential for riparian woodlands with relevant agencies has been included in the delivery plan.
- The requirement for an ecological site appraisal of vacant and derelict land sites prior to planting has been added.

3.6 With respect to funding, although £250,000 has been made available through the LEZ to implement tree canopy expansion in the City, this amount is allocated to delivering the Tree Plan actions on sites under the Council's control. While the Tree Plan will contribute to delivering the FWS, there is currently no budget allocation to deliver the wider FWS aims and actions.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The approved Forestry and Woodland Strategy will form a key part of the evidence base for the emerging City Development Plan 2 and will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers as part of Gatecheck process.
- 4.2 The approved FWS will be a material planning consideration when dealing with development proposals through the development management process.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no direct financial implications as a result of the emerging Forestry and Woodland 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 Woodland 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:

This report has been used to trial the new CCIA process. The outputs of which can be found [here](#).

CCIA Outcome	Yes /No Or / Not At This Stage
Was a significant level of negative impact arising from the decision identified?	Not at this stage
Does the decision require to be amended to have a positive impact?	Not at this stage
Does a more detailed Climate Change Impact Assessment need to be undertaken?	Not at this stage

Does the proposal support any Climate

Climate plan Theme 1: Communication and Community Empowerment. To engage with

Plan actions? Please specify:

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 sequester 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 notes:

1. The contents of the report;

2. The requirement to use the strategy as the basis for protecting trees and woodlands in the city and directing investment in new planting to appropriate locations to provide social, economic and environmental benefits, and
3. The final document will be presented to Council Administration Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to Scottish Ministers as part of Glasgow City Council's documentation for the City Development Plan 2 Gatecheck process.