



Glasgow City Region

Cabinet

Report by Gerry Cornes, Chief Executive, East Dunbartonshire Council

Contact: Max Hislop
T: 0141 229 7747
E: max.hislop@gcvgreennetwork.gov.uk

Item 6

9th February 2021

LAUNCH OF THE 'CLYDE CLIMATE FOREST' IN THE GLASGOW CITY REGION

Purpose of Report:

To propose that the GCR Cabinet support the launch of the 'Clyde Climate Forest' developed for the Glasgow City Region by the GCV Green Network Partnership and Scottish Forestry.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is invited to:

- (1) note and welcome the development of the Clyde Climate Forest project;
and
- (2) agree the formal launch of the project in June 2021.

Background

1. The GCV Green Network Partnership (GCVGNP) was formed in 2006 with the aim to make the Glasgow city region one of Europe's most attractive places to live, work and play through the creation of a large functional Green Network. The Partnership includes the region's eight local authorities as well as Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Public Health Scotland and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health.
2. In the spring of 2019 the GCVGNP launched its 'Blueprint for the Green Network' in the Glasgow City Region, with the endorsement of the Cabinet. Around the same time Scottish Government and many local authorities declared a Climate Emergency. In the general election at the end of 2019 all the major political parties declared significant targets for tree planting as part of their proposals to respond to the Climate and Ecological crises.
3. Since the publication of the Blueprint the GCVGNP has been working with all the GCR local authority partners and other partners to develop a delivery strategy for the ambitions embedded in the Blueprint. This has included exploring the potential to develop major region-wide initiatives which deliver elements of the Blueprint whilst responding to the twin challenges of Climate Change and Ecological Collapse. The first of these initiatives is the Clyde Climate Forest which has been in development since January 2020, with the support of Scottish Forestry. The Clyde Climate Forest is referenced in, and is compatible with the recently approved Clydeplan Forest and Woodland Strategy.
4. Preparations are underway to launch the project in June, with associated inaugural tree planting events in each of the GCR local authorities in March. It is hoped that Council Leaders will visit their local tree planting toward the end of May for a photo call.'

The Clyde Climate Forest

5. Trees, woodlands and forests provide a range of nature-based solutions to the twin and linked challenges of a changing climate and ecological collapse:
 - Urban trees – provide urban cooling in heatwaves, and surface water management for cloud-bursts, whilst also providing some carbon storage and wildlife habitat;
 - Native woodlands – provide essential ecosystem services and habitat for associated species and, when part of a wider network, allow those species to migrate as the climate changes;
 - Plantation forests – are effective carbon sinks, can provide upstream natural flood management, provide construction timber to substitute for high emission steel and concrete and provide wildlife habitats.
6. The Clyde Climate Forest will harness current enthusiasm for tree planting and associated resources and will seek to channel them into worthwhile and well-considered tree planting projects that deliver a broad range of climate and ecological benefits to the Glasgow City Region.

7. The aim of the Clyde Climate Forest is to enable and co-ordinate an approach that will deliver a major increase in tree planting across the GCR by 2032 as a response to the Climate Emergency.
8. Specific objectives for the Clyde Climate Forest are to:
 - Increase average urban tree canopy cover to 20%;
 - Increase the average broadleaved woodland habitat network area by 20%; and,
 - Increase forest and woodland land cover in the region to 20%.
9. This means that over the next decade the Clyde Climate Forest will facilitate and co-ordinate:
 - tree planting schemes in urban neighbourhoods where there are few trees and which are susceptible to the impacts of a changing climate;
 - new native woodlands in identified target locations which join up existing woodland habitats; and
 - a doubling of the current rate of forest and woodland planting in the region to around 1000 hectares per year.
10. The Clyde Climate Forest is already working with several organisations that have a stake in increasing tree planting in the GCR (e.g. Woodland Trust, TCV Scotland, Trees for Cities, Green Action Trust) and there is potential to align other interest groups behind the project. There is also considerable interest in the project from organisations that are looking for local opportunities to invest in tree planting as part of their strategy toward their Net Zero targets.
11. The Woodland Trust has recently granted the Clyde Climate Forest £400k over two years which provides a 'kick-start' for the project. This funding will provide for the recruitment of a small team to progress the objectives of the project in the initial couple of years, as well as some seed corn funding to facilitate the development of new planting schemes.
12. A Programme Board has been established to provide oversight for the project which is co-chaired by the Chief Executives of East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire Councils, representing the GCR Partnership's Land Use and Sustainability Portfolio and the Infrastructure and Assets Portfolio. Other members of the Programme Board comprise senior representatives from Scottish Forestry, Woodland Trust Scotland and Strathclyde University.
13. A Steering Group has also been established to provide direction and co-ordination for the project's programme of work and is chaired by Scottish Forestry. The Steering Group comprises operational representatives from those organisations that have a role in delivering the Clyde Climate Forest's objectives, and the Partnership Manager for the GCR Partnership.

Recommendations

14. The Cabinet is invited to:

- (1) note and welcome the development of the Clyde Climate Forest project; and
- (2) agree the formal launch of the project in June 2021.