

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager****Planning Committee: 12 October 2022**

Subject: Clyde Climate Forest**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek committee approval of a concordat in relation to the Clyde Climate Forest.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Clyde Climate Forest concordat.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Clyde Climate Forest was launched by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet in June 2021 with a headline target of “18 million trees over the next decade”. 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 Glasgow City Region by 2032 as a response to the Climate Emergency.
- 3.2 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 cloudbursts, 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.
- 3.3 Specific objectives for the Clyde Climate Forest are based on the three ‘C’s:
- Canopy: to increase average urban tree canopy cover to 20%;
 - Connectivity: to increase the average woodland habitat network area by 20%;

- Carbon: to increase forest and woodland land cover in the Region to 20%.
- 3.4** This means that over the next decade the Clyde Climate Forest will facilitate and co-ordinate:
- tree planting in urban neighbourhoods where there are few trees, and which are susceptible to the impacts of a changing climate;
 - new native woodlands in target locations which join up existing woodland habitats; and
 - a doubling of the current rate of forest and woodland planting in the Region.
- 3.5** The Woodland Trust granted £400k and Scottish Forestry granted £150k to Clyde Climate Forest over the first two years which provides a ‘kick-start’ for the project. A Programme Board provides oversight for the project which is co-chaired by the Chief Executives of East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire Councils, representing the Glasgow City Region Partnership’s interests in the project. The Programme Board other members comprise senior representatives from Scottish Forestry, Woodland Trust, TCV, Scottish Water and Strathclyde University.
- 3.6** A Steering Group provides 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 Glasgow City Region Partnership.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** At its meeting of 30 August 2022 the Glasgow City Region endorsed a concordat relating to the Clyde Climate Forest and agreed that approval of the concordat be sought from the individual local authorities in order to maintain local democratic oversight. The concordat is attached at Appendix 1. The Clyde Climate Forest/Glasgow City Region Concordat seeks to provide clarification by stating what the Clyde Climate Forest team and Delivery Partners will seek to provide and what the Councils will seek to provide in pursuit of the Clyde Climate Forest.
- 4.2** The concordat is framed in four sections:
- i. **An acknowledgement of** the significant challenge that the climate and ecological emergencies present to the Glasgow City Region; the need for additional and sustained effort across the region as a response to the challenge; and the role of trees, woodlands and forests in this endeavour.
 - ii. **A recognition of** the concept and targets of the Clyde Climate Forest; the wider social, economic, and environmental benefits their delivery will provide; and Scottish Government support for the Clyde Climate Forest.

- iii. **A commitment from the Clyde Climate Forest team and Delivery Partners** to seek additional resources toward the delivery of targets; promote Council activities and interests toward trees; and an alignment of Clyde Climate Forest and Glasgow City Region communications.
- iv. **A commitment from Glasgow City Region Councils** to actively participate in the realisation of Clyde Climate Forest targets and support the work of the Clyde Climate Forest team; ensure the Clyde Climate Forest is embedded in plans and policies; manage, protect, and enhance Council trees; identify opportunities for tree planting on Council owned land; work with the Clyde Climate Forest team to increase urban tree canopy cover in target neighbourhoods; promote and celebrate trees so that they are cherished and protected.

4.3 It is hoped that a high-level recognition of the role of the Councils working in partnership with the Clyde Climate Forest team and Delivery Partners will facilitate an uplift in the delivery of “the right trees in the right places” on Council managed land across the Region, and that this will be supported through Council policy, guidance and projects.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications associated with this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Any Council activity towards Clyde Climate Forest will be met within existing budgets and follow Council procurement rules.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There are no identified risks associated with this report.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 This proposal has been screened and has been judged to not be relevant as it formalises approval of a document that has previously been endorsed, therefore no Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out.

9. Consultation

9.1 The Council’s Greenspace Manager and Sustainability Officer were consulted in the preparation of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 There is no direct connection with any of the Council's strategic priorities

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Date: 12 October 2022

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Appendix: 1. Clyde Climate Forest Concordat.

Background Papers: Equalities Impact screening

Wards Affected: All