



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

2nd MARCH 2022

REPORT OF DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

EDINBURGH DECLARATION

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the Edinburgh Declaration and the role of Local Authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework - ensuring transformative change for nature over the coming decade.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members support the signing of the Edinburgh Declaration by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Declaration strengthens the role of Local Authorities within the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and in particular, the post 2020 global biodiversity framework being developed at the Conference of the Parties (COP15). This meeting was held over from 2020, with virtual meetings in Autumn 2021 and is due to be completed and signed in March 2022.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Welsh Government is a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration, which is a political statement setting out commitments to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework locally. It believes that this is important to encourage a greater involvement of Subnational and Local Authorities internationally within the new framework and has written to Local Authorities welcoming their support (see appendix one).

- 4.2 The 'Edinburgh Process' has been led by the Scottish Government on behalf of the CBD and the Declaration calls upon the CBD Parties to:
- Take the transformative action required to halt biodiversity loss;
 - Recognise the vital role of Subnational and Local Governments;
 - Support a dedicated decision on a new Plan of Action for Subnational Governments, City and Local Authorities. A decision to be taken at COP15: The Conference of Parties, who signed the UN Convention on Climate Change and are meeting in China in Autumn 2022 (see para 3 above); and
 - Develop a multi-stakeholder platform for the implementation of the post-2020 framework.
- 4.3 Members may be aware that Welsh Government declared a Nature Emergency in the Summer and has created a Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Duty for all public bodies through S.6 Environment (Wales) Act. Their Programme for Government and the re-organisation of Cabinet portfolios demonstrates a desire for the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies to be considered in an integrated way.
- 4.4 In their letter, Welsh Government recognises the vital role Local Authorities are playing in addressing the impacts of climate change and habitat loss. They believe it is essential to have a healthy and safe natural environment and to ensure people who live in local authorities across Wales can live in harmony with nature and protect valuable local ecosystems for future generations. The Declaration recognises the increasingly valuable role of Subnational Governments and Local Authorities in translating global targets into local delivery.
- 4.5 In RCT we have a strong 'track record' in taking forward biodiversity action. This includes:
- 'Action for Nature' the former Local Biodiversity Action Plan, currently being revised and re-presented via a website by the Local Nature Partnership,
 - Strong Planning policy which enables development in the right locations and protects and enhances biodiversity and ecosystem resilience
 - A clear S.6 Biodiversity Duty framework integrated into the corporate planning process
 - Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services with Climate Change work; and
 - Delivery of active biodiversity management and community engagement through the Living Landscape project.

- 4.6 Further information about the Edinburgh Process, the Edinburgh Declaration and signing up is available at [Edinburgh Declaration on post-2020 global biodiversity framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework/pages/12.aspx)

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 There are no Equality and Diversity Implications arising from this report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Welsh Language Implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The consultation with the Steering Group will inform the Cabinet decision.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 No financial implications are anticipated arising from this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council has a Biodiversity Duty under S.6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The report reflects the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and demonstrates a long term and precautionary approach, collaboration between tiers of governance and should encourage stakeholder participation. It should specifically assist the Council in promoting the WFG Act Resilience and Global goals but, because biodiversity is central to human flourishing, should contribute to all the goals in the long term.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Edinburgh Declaration strengthens the role of Local Authorities within the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and in particular, the post 2020 global biodiversity framework being developed at the Conference of the Parties (COP15). Having considered the purpose and scope of the Declaration, the Steering Group may wish to recommend to Cabinet that the Council sign the Edinburgh Declaration.

