

# National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 9

## The Edinburgh Declaration & FutureNature

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### *Paper for decision*

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to ask the Board to approve the National Park Authority applying to become a signatory to the international Edinburgh Declaration, as part of our commitment to tackling biodiversity (nature) loss.
- 1.2. We also wish to utilise this commitment, and the developing work that will emerge from it, to demonstrate greater ambition and leadership to help restore biodiversity in the National Park.
- 1.3. We will then use this commitment as a springboard to further engage with our Wild Park Biodiversity Programme partners regarding increasing action for nature in the National Park in the coming years, creating a FutureNature Route Map for action to reverse biodiversity loss.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are requested to:
  - (i) approve National Park Authority applying to become a signatory to the international Edinburgh Declaration, and;
  - (ii) support our ambition to show greater leadership and deliver more for restoring nature in the National Park.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1. In section 7 of the CEO Update Paper to Board in September 2020, Members were given some brief context about the [Edinburgh Declaration](#); a recent statement of intent from the [Convention on Biodiversity](#), agreeing that subnational, regional and local governments across the world commit to taking bolder action to halt global biodiversity loss.
- 3.2. The Cabinet Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham signed the Declaration on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 on behalf of the Scottish Government. It is expected that other public bodies such as Scottish National Park Authorities will also be signatories in time. To date from our portfolio, NatureScot, Scottish Land Commission and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh have already signed as supporters.
- 3.3. The process for applying to sign the Declaration can be found [here](#), but appears straight forward, requiring a simple submission and subsequent vetting of basic organisational details from a representative with the authority to do so. It is suggested that, should Members approve, a submission would come from our Chief Executive.

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### 4. Supporting the Edinburgh Declaration

4.1. Full details of the Edinburgh Declaration can be found [here](#), but in summary the statement of intent outlines how signatories and supporters commit to two main elements of reversing biodiversity loss:

#### **1. Commitment for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities will continue to build upon previous efforts to deliver transformative actions by:

- Recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into regional and local planning, management and governance instruments;
- Implementing appropriate actions that deliver on the [post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) goals and action targets;
- Aligning biodiversity strategies and actions, and monitoring and reporting efforts with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans<sup>1</sup> (NBSAPs);
- Increasing resource mobilisation for investment in biodiversity action at regional and local levels, and providing incentives to ensure positive outcomes;
- Mainstreaming biodiversity across public, private and business sectors to achieve greater environmental, societal and economic resilience;
- Communicating, educating and raising public awareness, with specific efforts to make knowledge available in several languages;
- Strengthening capacity building in order to implement [nature-based solutions \(NBS\)](#) and green and blue infrastructure<sup>2</sup>, particularly through ecosystem based approaches and as a contribution to a green recovery from COVID-19;
- Providing opportunities for knowledge exchange across and between all sectors of society;
- Sharing best practices across regional and local levels, to efficiently implement transformative actions;
- Aligning with other intergovernmental agreements and processes, taking forward bold and innovative actions at regional and local level which result in mutually beneficial outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> In a Scottish context this is the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) and associated plans.

<sup>2</sup> Grey infrastructure refers to buildings, roads, and other urban constructions. Blue infrastructure refers to water elements, like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, water treatment facilities, etc. Green infrastructure refers to trees, lawns, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests, etc. These terms come from urban planning and land-use planning.

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### 2. Call for action

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities therefore call upon Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to;

- I. Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change, as outlined in the [IPBES<sup>3</sup> global assessment report](#), in order to halt biodiversity loss.
- II. Recognise the vital role of regional and local authorities, in delivering the 2050 vision<sup>4</sup> of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2030 mission as set out in the [Zero Draft document](#); and to explicitly place that recognition throughout the framework text, including the monitoring framework for the goals and targets.
- III. Support the greater inclusion of regional and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and significantly raise ambition for regional and local implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework throughout the next decade.
- IV. Be part of a multi-stakeholder platform, and stand ready to meet the challenge of delivering, alongside Parties, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

### 5. How this could increase ambition and action for nature in the Park

- 5.1 The [Conservation and Land Management section](#) of our overarching National Park Partnership Plan contains our current desired outcomes, indicators and targets for nature conservation work. Currently much of the practical project-based nature conservation work across the Park is carried out by ourselves and partner organisations from the [Wild Park](#) Steering Group, which we lead and also provide the secretariat for. The Wild Park Biodiversity Programme which sits beneath the Partnership Plan contains an action plan designed to tackle the key threats to nature in the Park, and therefore work to protect and restore biodiversity. Our [Trees and Woodland Strategy](#) sits within our Wild Park programme and aims to enhance and expand our internationally important woodland resource.
- 5.2 For Wild Park and other nature conservation initiatives within the Park to achieve more and bigger outcomes for nature, we and our delivery partners need to find ways of overcoming long-established barriers. These include unlocking funding sources, securing new landowning partners and creating a regional-scale policy framework that enables a range of stakeholders, including local communities and businesses, to want and need to invest in nature and nature-based solutions that have multiple

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<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

<sup>4</sup> The vision of the Framework is a world of living in harmony with nature where: "By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people, Convention on Biological Diversity.

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benefits. Critically, we also need to be able to report accurately on the 'state of nature' within the National Park and to be able to focus resources on the key issues and at the key locations so as to get maximum return for the investment in time and money.

5.3 We propose to use the Edinburgh Declaration as a platform to help create a stronger identity and common purpose for all those with a stake in nature in the Park to achieve over time, more and bigger outcomes that help reverse biodiversity loss – our 'FutureNature'. Successful examples already exist of large-scale, nature-based partnerships, such as [Cairngorms Connect](#) and the [Tweed Forum](#), which have evolved over several years and are constructed around a number of neighbouring, private estates, communities and willing contributors – with a common theme of collective working towards shared goals and a proven track record of delivery at scale.

5.4 Our ambition is to build on the platform that Wild Park has created and build more momentum and positive impact for nature. Examples of what FutureNature initiatives might look like include:

- New place-based partnerships of landholdings working together with restoring nature as a common goal, similar to [The Great Trossachs Forest Partnership](#) and the [East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum](#);
- New landscape projects that tackle the key threats to nature at scale, improve designated sites and restore native woodland, such as the concept of 'Wild Strathfillan', expanding on the Greater Cononish Glen Management Plan;
- Mapping out the real value of nature (natural capital) with our communities, embedding into their place plans, like the Strathard Initiative;
- Developing the principal of Biodiversity Net Gain<sup>5</sup> and how we might embed into our planning and development approaches in the near future;
- Learning from our Youth Committee and [Backbone Project](#), expand engagement about nature with young people and different communities.

## 6. How will the Edinburgh Declaration help us achieve more for nature?

6.1 Should Members approve our recommendation of signing up to the Edinburgh Declaration, we will undertake the following steps to capitalise on the opportunity presented by this:

- (i) Apply for signatory status, assuming this will be a relative formality for the organisation;

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<sup>5</sup> Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.  
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Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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- (ii) Look to secure agreement with Wild Park Steering Group partners that these organisations also become Supporters of the Declaration;
- (iii) Building on the foundations laid by the Wild Park partnership, create an ambitious joint FutureNature Route Map to tackle Biodiversity Loss within the National Park. This will capture a collective vision and encompass a number of stated aims and actions, including draft examples such as those below:

- *Work so that habitats and species within the National Park are in a better condition than those outside its boundaries (but that our influence spreads out beyond);*
- *Work to embed enhancing nature across all our functions, with Biodiversity Net Gain developed as a key principle;*
- *Measure progress against specific and ambitious targets, using accurate data and Citizen Science;*
- *Attract new funds and build sustainable partnerships for long-term and landscape scale initiatives;*
- *Create a sense of community identity from individuals, businesses and communities themselves within the National Park so as to foster local 'ownership' and support for actions to reverse biodiversity loss;*
- *Map out opportunities for nature restoration and focus funding and resources into the areas with the greatest return for biodiversity;*
- *Communicate across audiences to tell them about our collective work – and why we are doing it;*
- *Look for opportunities to show the value of nature and nature-based solutions in the Green Recovery and tackling the climate emergency.*

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 At a time of global crises the Edinburgh Declaration provides an opportunity to revive and relaunch our commitment to tackling global biodiversity loss. With a new ambition and vision for nature, we plan to build from the foundations of the Wild Park initiative and engage with existing and new partners to develop and deliver more for this precious natural resource.

Members are asked to approve the National Park Authority applying to become a signatory to the international Edinburgh Declaration, and support our ambitious plans.

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