

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

22 JULY 2022

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

#### THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES 2022

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on work to support the Conference of Parties 2022 and to support Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) signing a Declaration to inform the Conference of Parties in 2022.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 In partnership with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Scottish Government are leading on the 'Edinburgh Process', an online, global consultation with sub-national and local governments around the world on their role in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and targets. The outputs of this process, including the Declaration, will inform the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) negotiations at the Phase 2 meeting in December 2022.
- 3.2 A key outcome of the Edinburgh Process is the Declaration which is intended to demonstrate the commitment of subnational authorities across the world to deliver for nature over the next decade. The Declaration has been drafted by the Scottish Government on behalf of regional and local authorities and their representative organisations. It recognises the important role that local authorities play in addressing the impacts of habitat loss and in supporting nature and biodiversity.
- 3.3 Research by the Natural History Museum and RSPB Wildlife Charity, in 2021, identified Wales as one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, ranked sixteenth worst of 240 countries assessed. In 2019, the State of Nature Report identified an ongoing decline in biodiversity, with 17% of assessed species considered to be at risk of extinction from Wales.

## **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 A new biodiversity duty included in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is intended to support efforts to reverse the decline and secure the long-term resilience of biodiversity in Wales. This enhances the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) duty to require all public authorities, when carrying out their functions in Wales, to seek to “maintain and enhance biodiversity” where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to “promote the resilience of ecosystems”.
- 4.2 Welsh Government declared a Nature Emergency in April 2019 and has created a Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Duty for all public bodies through Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act, demonstrating a desire for actions addressing climate and nature emergencies to be considered in an integrated way.
- 4.3 BCBC approved the Bridgend County Borough Council Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan, 2018-2022, in 2018. In contributing to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience targets, Bridgend County Borough Council recognises its duties to protect and enhance biodiversity in several ways:
- In response to the Section 6 Duty placed on all public bodies in the Environment (Wales) Act, the Council has a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan which demonstrates a cross-Council approach to protect and enhance biodiversity. This Plan is currently under review and a new Plan will be produced which will include new and revised actions which further protect and enhance biodiversity across Bridgend County. The range of work carried out by the Council across its services in fulfilling this duty is collated and reported to Welsh Government every 3 years, with the next report due at the end of 2022.
  - A strong Planning policy and Local Development Plan which considers biodiversity and habitat connectivity, enabling development in the right locations whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.
  - Delivering active biodiversity management and community engagement through protect work such as Dunes2Dunes, Local Places for Nature, and the Cwm Taf Nature Network.
- 4.4 Welsh Government is a signatory to the Declaration and supports the Edinburgh Process. Welsh Government has requested that all Local Authorities in Wales consider signing the Declaration. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council became the first local authority in Wales to sign the Declaration, soon followed by several other Councils in Wales. It is now proposed that Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) sign the Declaration.
- 4.5 Further information on the ‘Edinburgh Process’ and Declaration can be found on the Scottish Government website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-biodiversity-framework/pages/how-to-sign/> .

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the Council’s policy framework or procedure rules as a result of this report.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal at this stage.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 This report reflects the priorities of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and demonstrates a long term and precautionary approach, collaboration globally between tiers of governance and should encourage stakeholder participation. Signing the Declaration would directly address the resilient and globally responsible goals of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, but as biodiversity is central to a variety of societal benefits, it should contribute to all of the Act's goals in the long term.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 No financial implications are anticipated arising from this report. It is voluntary, non-binding and has no legal status.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet support the signing of the Declaration to inform the Conference of Parties 2022 and authorise the Cabinet Member – Communities to sign the Declaration on behalf of the Council.

**Janine Nightingale**  
**Corporate Director, Communities**  
**7 July 2022**

**Contact officer:** Zak Shell  
Head of Operations – Community Services

**Telephone:** (01656) 815333

**Email:** Zak.Shell@bridgend.gov.uk

**Postal address:** Bridgend County Borough Council, Communities Directorate,  
Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

**Background documents:**  
None.