

# Business bulletin

## Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, 10 November 2020

Virtual – via Microsoft Teams

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Councillor Adam McVey</p>  <p>Vice Convener: Councillor Cammy Day</p> 	<p>Councillor Adam McVey (Convener)</p> <p>Councillor Cammy Day (Vice-Convener)</p> <p>Councillor Robert Aldridge</p> <p>Councillor Kate Campbell</p> <p>Councillor Nick Cook</p> <p>Councillor Neil Gardiner</p> <p>Councillor Gillian Gloyer</p> <p>Councillor Graham Hutchison</p> <p>Councillor Lesley Macinnes</p> <p>Councillor Melanie Main</p> <p>Councillor John McLellan</p> <p>Councillor Rob Munn</p> <p>Councillor Ian Perry</p> <p>Councillor Alex Staniforth</p> <p>Councillor Susan Webber</p> <p>Councillor Iain Whyte</p> <p>Councillor Donald Wilson</p>	<p><a href="#">Jamie Macrae</a>, Committee Officer</p> <p><a href="#">Louise Williamson</a>, Assistant Committee Officer</p>

### Participation Requests

Since the provision for participation requests under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act came into force on April 2017, the Council has embedded a robust and systematic process to ensure these are managed effectively in line with the legislation. This process was agreed by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2017.

The process ensures a single point of contact for all enquiries and includes ongoing support for service lead officers.

To date, the Council has received a total of 7 requests, all of which have been handled as per the agreed process. 5 were accepted, 1 was refused and 1 did not proceed. Two of the requests were multiple applications from separate groups wishing to influence a similar outcome. This level of take up is similar across Scottish Local Authorities.

The Council's approach to the Westbank Portobello PR is cited as an example of good practice within a recent evaluation of PR commissioned by the Scottish Government. A link to the full evaluation report and case study is included [here](#)

A recent review sought feedback from stakeholders on their experience of the process and about the support they received. Feedback was positive with some suggestions for improvement. These included the need for greater clarity around the role of the stakeholder and what is expected of them and the need for engagement activity that has already taken place at community level to inform any outcome improvement process. These findings will be used to improve the support provided to enable the effective application of the agreed process moving forwards.

We will continue to publish on an annual basis details of all requests received and those in progress to ensure elected members are kept fully informed and updated on this activity.

Contact:

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## **Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership delivery update for 2019**

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership (EBP) has delivered a varied and successful programme of biodiversity improvement and strong community engagement across the city through Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) since 2000. Delivery of the Edinburgh LBAP helps the Council to meet its statutory duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Partnership is currently chaired by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, with facilitation and governance support provided by the Council. The Partnership has around 40 member organisations from statutory agencies and national nature conservation organisations such as RSPB, to local environmental and conservation bodies.

This summary highlights the key activities and outcomes delivered in 2019 by the EBP. Further information is available in the [annual report for 2019](#), circulated to stakeholders and available online. The full report shows how the work of the EBP links to key Council work programmes and strategies, and how the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan helps to meet Scottish and international targets for biodiversity conservation.

The report further outlines the relationship between action for biodiversity, the natural environment and the Council declaration of a climate emergency. A resilient natural environment is a key component in the response to climate change and helps to mitigate and adapt to the predicted impacts on the city. Vegetation stores carbon, absorbs air and water pollution, provides shading and cooling against predicted urban overheating, slows water run-off and flooding in predicted increased rainfall. These benefits are in addition to the well understood health, wellbeing and amenity benefits of nature and greenspaces.

Work is underway to strengthen Planning policy and guidance on green infrastructure and city resilience, in preparation for the City Plan 2030. Strong links exist with the climate and ecological emergency, Zero Carbon 2030, Edinburgh Adapts and the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership. The new cross-council Green Infrastructure Working Group and Edinburgh Adapts Steering Group offer

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opportunities to deliver work which achieves multiple benefits for climate and biodiversity resilience.

### **Key Achievements of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership in 2019**

The annual review highlights some of the outcomes and actions from the past year delivered by the Partnership. Further information about the overall action programme and aims is available from the [Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2021](#).

Public engagement and volunteering opportunities continue to be well supported by the Partnership. CEC Parks and Greenspace, Historic Environment Scotland, Water of Leith Conservation Trust and Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust have collectively delivered a large programme of year-round activity and practical site management for biodiversity. Support and advice to the Friends of Greenspace groups has continued and there is a significant amount of practical conservation work by community groups in the Council's parks, allotments and cemeteries. New contacts with Friends of Newington Cemetery resulted in biodiversity advice principles being implemented at the [Scottish Cemetery](#) in Kolkata.

Much of the species conservation activity within the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan is delivered by volunteer expert groups. One of these, the [Edinburgh Natural History Society](#) celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2019. Starting life as the Edinburgh Naturalists' Field Club, the Society continue to contribute expert knowledge and ecological data for Edinburgh. The expertise within these types of specialist Partner organisations provide the basis for citizen science projects, public engagement and underpins the data used by Council services relating to ecological management and decision making.

2019 saw the opening of the re-developed [Saughton Park](#). After receiving Heritage Lottery Funding in 2016 the park has been transformed into a fantastic greenspace for the local community and beyond. The gardens have been regenerated and there is now a physic garden, rose garden as well as offices, meeting rooms and a café. The park is home to an array of wildlife from butterflies and moths to solitary bees, ladybirds and many species of birds.

## **Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Annual Report 2019-20**

The ESES City Region Deal's second [Annual Report](#) was published in August 2020, approved by the City Region Deal Joint Committee in September 2020, and noted by [Policy and Sustainability Committee in October 2020](#).

The report covered the time period August 2019 to July 2020 and showed that good progress was made across the Deal's programmes and projects. £54.7 million of Government money was drawn down in the 2019/20, with £53.61 million on Capital projects and £1.06 million on the Revenue programme.

The annual report also demonstrated that the Governance structure, established to manage City Region Deal activity, helped the partnership to respond quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic with some effective interventions. Four examples are detailed in the report: a new COVID-19 jobs portal; a new Health and Social Care Skills Gateway Proposition; Contribution to the Report on the Advisory Group for Economic Recovery; and the development of a Regional Transport Transition Plan. These all have strong links with ongoing activity through City Region Deal projects, and are pertinent examples of how the partnership, that normally monitors City Region Deal activity, can work together to deliver added value alongside the delivery of the Deal projects.

### **Elected Member Oversight Committee**

On 12 March 2020, [a paper was submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council](#) with a recommendation for Council to appoint two members on the Elected Member Oversight Committee to oversee the development of the Regional Growth Framework (RGF) and interim Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS). The EMOC will comprise twelve councillors, from the six local authorities representing a fair regional spread, together with representatives from the regional Higher/Further Education consortium and the Regional Enterprise Council. The City of Edinburgh Council appointed Cllrs McVey and Day as its two representatives on the EMOC.

In September 2020, the City Region Deal Joint Committee approved a [supplementary agreement to the Minute of Agreement for the Joint Committee](#), which was required to

allow the Elected Member Oversight Group to be formed. The report was [ratified by the City of Edinburgh Council in October](#) 2020.

### **Transport Transition Group**

Under the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal Transport Advisory Board a specific sub group, The South East Scotland Transport Transition Group, was established in June 2020 specifically to develop and oversee the transition out of emergency lockdown implemented to put in place measures that would address the challenges presented by increasing demand for public transport services at a time when the capacity of those services is severely reduced by social distancing requirements. The group would develop a regional Transport Transition Plan which would contribute to the [National Transport Transition Plan](#) published on 26 May 2020.

Potential measures required to support key regional bus-based movements were set out in a [report to the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 7 August](#). The Joint Committee noted the arrangements for developing the Plan and approve the proposed transport transition measures and interventions for the city region. It authorised the Transport Transition Plan Group to prepare a collective bid by all of the regional local authority partners for submission to Scottish Government for funding from its Bus Priority Fund. Local approval for the measures is also required.

Led by the City of Edinburgh Council, the region secured £1.2 million for measures through the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment fund on 1 September, as detailed in a report to [Transport and Environment Committee on 1 October](#) An additional £0.6 million has been committed subject to additional information being provided. The significant measures affecting the City of Edinburgh within this were taken to Transport and Environment Committee for approval on 12 November. A report detailing all measures will be taken to the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 3 December for approval.

Amongst proposals are the introduction or extension of bus lanes including on the A90 citybound between Cramond Brig and Barnton and on the A89 eastbound approach to Newbridge, various signalling improvements for smoother flow of traffic and enhanced bus stops at key locations. The awarded funding must be drawn down by the end of March

2021. It is understood that hard monitoring data and evidence of positive outcomes achieved will be required for all interventions and that addition 'soft' data will also be beneficial. A Monitoring and Evaluation framework is also being developed by the Transport Transition Group.

The City Region Deal's Transport Appraisal Board continues to meet; and one of its key areas of focus is to put in a comprehensive regional bid into the Scottish Government's £500 million Bus Priority Fund that was announced in the [2019/20 Programme for Government](#).

### **Forward Plan**

The next City Region Deal Joint Committee meeting is scheduled for 4 December 2020. The following items will be considered:

- Standing Orders
- Sheriffhall update – Transport Scotland
- Transport Transition Plan – Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Measures
- City Region Deal Progress Report
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills Programme update
- Regional Growth Framework Update
- Benefits Realisation Plan – Implementation Plan

### **Small Business Champions Network**

Since 28 July 2020, the following Small Business Champions Networks have been established:

10 external and 1 internal Business Champions Networks (BCN) have been established.

The external areas are:

- Portobello
- Queensferry
- Morningside/Bruntsfield/Tollcross
- Old Town
- Greater Grassmarket
- Stockbridge
- Leith/Leith Walk
- Gorgie/Dalry
- Corstorphine
- Southside

These were chosen to coincide with the 'Town centres' used for planning purposes, as also included in the funding application to Scotland's Towns Partnership for the Shop Local project, and also included areas where Business Improvement Districts had previously been in place but now no longer so. There are already established relationships with existing BIDs in West End and City Centre.

### **Forthcoming activities:**

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