

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 12 October 2017

Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2017

Item number	5.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval for the Council to sign Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2017 and support the vision and actions for local authorities within the Charter.

Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 1.1.1 approves the vision and actions for local authorities within the Charter; and
 - 1.1.2 agrees to sign the Charter.

2. Background

- 2.1 In June 2012, the Scottish Geodiversity Forum produced Scotland's first Geodiversity Charter for the period 2012-2017. This was recognised the vital contribution geology makes to the economic, social, cultural and environmental frameworks. The Charter was drawn up to ensure protection of geology for future generations.
- 2.2 Public bodies, commercial business, landowners and managers, academics, teachers, voluntary organisations and individuals signed the Charter to support its vision and deliver its actions. The Council was one of the signatories.
- 2.3 The Charter has now been updated to cover the period 2017-2022 and signatories are being asked to reaffirm their support by re-signing the Charter.

3. Main report

Geodiversity

- 3.1 Geodiversity (rocks, landforms, soil and natural geomorphological processes) is an integral part of the natural environment. Following the launch of the Scotland Geodiversity Charter in June 2012 there has been good progress in raising the profile of geodiversity. As a consequence, there has been increased engagement with local authorities to encourage better awareness of local geodiversity.
- 3.2 The Council, with the support of Lothian and Borders GeoConservation Group and Edinburgh University, has produced a geodiversity audit of 30 sites which are afforded a level of policy protection through the Edinburgh Local Development Plan 2016, policy Env 15 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance. These include Blackford Hill, Craigleith Quarry and Ellens Glen.

Sites are also promoted through various websites and social media to encourage public enjoyment and understanding of geodiversity

- 3.3 In recognition of its continued effectiveness, the Charter has been updated for the period 2017-2022. The original vision has not changed as it is still considered fit for purpose. However, actions for various groups including local authorities have been updated. (See Appendix 1). The Council is requested to agree to these actions and sign up to the new Charter.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The Scottish Geodiversity Forum will periodically monitor the Charter over the five-year period 2017-2022. The Council will provide evidence of how it has contributed to the vision and actions for local authorities, as required through participation as a member of the Lothians and Borders Geoconservation Group.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial implications of signing this Charter.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The Charter encourages the promotion and management of Scotland's geodiversity and better integration of geodiversity into policy and guidance, consistent with the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of Scotland. By signing the Charter, the Council demonstrates its commitment to the sustainable use of its geological resources.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 No infringements of rights or negative impacts on equalities have been identified. The aim of the Charter is to enable the people of Edinburgh to understand and enjoy the City's important geological sites.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The Charter aims to ensure the protection of Scotland's geodiversity and people's understanding of it. These outcomes support more sustainable use of Scotland's important geological resources.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The Scottish Geodiversity Forum has been leading the consultation on the new Charter. The renewed Charter will be launched at a Conference in November 2017. The Council will be represented at the conference and will be sharing its experience of producing an audit of local geodiversity sites.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Scotland Geodiversity charter 2017-22 draft text for signatories](#)
10.2 [Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2012-2017](#)
10.3 [Edinburgh's Geological Sites](#)

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 Scotland's Geodiversity Charters Vision and Aims

Appendix 1 - Scotland Geodiversity Charter - Vision and Actions for Local Authorities

Geodiversity Charter - Vision

Geodiversity is recognised as an integral part of the environment, economy, heritage and future development, to be safeguarded and managed appropriately for this and future generations. There is commitment to maintain and enhance geodiversity, recognising its contribution to Scotland's:

- *natural heritage, valued landscape and sea bed features;*
- *habitats and species, and many essential benefits it provides for society;*
- *adaptation to change in climate and sea level through sustainable management of land and water at landscape /ecosystem scale based on the principles of working and natural processes;*
- *sustainable economic development;*
- *historical and cultural intellectual growth and creative expression;*
- *public health, quality of life and national well-being and its role in reconnecting people with the natural heritage.*

First Charter 2012-17

Aim. Ensure that due consideration, management, enhancement and promotion of geodiversity and Local Geodiversity Sites are an integral part of decision making, and support action by local communities to achieve this.

Action 1. Acknowledge the value and importance of geodiversity in policy and guidance documents at national and local level, including national planning policy and Local Plans, and policies and guidance for biodiversity, nature conservation, climate change, tourism, landscape, greenspace, land & water management and marine conservation, and seek advice from appropriate expert bodies and agencies in decision making where appropriate.

Draft updated Charter 2017-22

Aim. Ensure that due consideration, management, enhancement and promotion of geodiversity and Local Geodiversity Sites are an integral part of decision making, and support action by local communities to achieve this. You can:

Action 1. Promote Scotland's geodiversity as an asset that provides a sense of place for local communities and adds value to visitor experience and enjoyment

Appendix 1 - Scotland Geodiversity Charter - Vision and Actions for Local Authorities

<p>Action 2. Promote Scotland's geodiversity as a tourism asset that adds value to visitor experience and enjoyment.</p>	<p>Action 2. Acknowledge the value and importance of geodiversity in policy and guidance at national and local level, and seek advice from appropriate expert bodies and agencies in decision making.</p>
<p>Action 3. Form partnerships with local geoconservation groups to audit geodiversity sites and develop geodiversity action plans, and involve local communities in collating information about sites of interest (e.g. former quarries, building stones).</p>	<p>Action 3. Form partnerships with local geoconservation groups to audit geodiversity sites and develop geodiversity action plans, and involve local communities in collating information about sites of interest.</p>
<p>Action 4. Encourage developers to allow access to temporary exposures to record and sample, and to contribute borehole and other factual geological data to the British Geological Survey.</p>	<p>Action 4. Encourage developers to allow access to temporary exposures to record and sample, and to contribute borehole and other factual geological data to the British Geological Survey.</p>
<p>Case study: Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2010-2015). The Local Biodiversity Action Plan includes five geodiversity actions linked with 17 targets. These focus on the identification of Local Geodiversity Sites, monitoring site condition, promoting their use for education and public awareness, and developing skills and resources to support the work of Lothian and Borders Geoconservation Group.</p>	<p>Case study: Designation of Local Geodiversity Sites in the Lothians Lothian and Borders Geoconservation has worked with City of Edinburgh Council, West Lothian Council and the British Geological Survey to identify 80 sites with important local geodiversity. The City of Edinburgh Council designated 30 geodiversity sites as Local Nature Conservation Sites in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan adopted in 2016. West Lothian Council have listed 51 West Lothian Geodiversity Sites (WLGS) in Supplementary Guidance that supports the West Lothian Local Development Plan.</p>