

Agenda Item	6
Report No	CCWG/9/21

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Climate Change Working Group

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**Report Title:** Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out the background to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration (the “Declaration”), which has now been signed by The Highland Council following the passing of a Motion at a meeting of the Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- 1.2 The Declaration brings together all types and sizes of local authorities to speak with a unified voice in renewing their commitments to develop sustainable food policies, promote mechanisms for joined-up action and to call on national governments to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency.
- 1.3 The Highland Council has demonstrated leadership by being one of the first local authorities in Scotland to join this global movement and recognising it as an important step forward in our regional climate action journey.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to discuss and note the contents of this report.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** Whilst there are no direct resource implications arising from this report, the signing of the Declaration commits the Council to take action as set out at paragraph 7.1 to this report. It is likely that this will require some staff resource from a number of different services.
- 3.2 **Legal:** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** the signing of the Declaration is reflective of the Council’s commitment to its Equalities and Fairer Scotland duties.
- 3.4 **Climate Change:** Given the nature of the Declaration, there are direct implications in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Signing the Declaration will help raise awareness about the impact of food systems on climate change and encourage behavioural changes in food consumption for employees and residents. It will also encourage the development of actions at different levels, both local and international.

Furthermore, it is an opportunity to learn from other sub-national governments and potentially develop further actions in the Highland Council area.

3.5 **Risk:** There are no direct risk implications arising from this report. However, the signing of the Declaration commits local authorities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from both urban and rural food systems. There is a reputational risk to the Council if actions and priorities in respect of this agenda are not agreed and taken forward.

3.6 **Gaelic:** As part of the Council's commitment to this agenda, the Declaration will be translated into Gaelic and posted on the Council's website. In addition, the Council will offer the Gaelic translation to Nourish Scotland to include on their own website.

## 4. Background

4.1 The Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration (the "Declaration" is a pledge and a call to action by sub-national, local and international governments from all over the world to accelerate the development of integrated food policies as a key tool in the fight against climate change, with co-benefits for biodiversity, ecosystem regeneration, circularity, access to sustainable and healthy diets for all, and the creation of resilient livelihoods for farm and food workers. The Declaration can be found [here](#).

4.2 The Declaration commits all levels of government to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from urban and rural food systems in order to fulfil the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals. This relates to GHG emissions from food in the local authority area including those emitted by the signatory.

4.3 The Declaration was officially launched in December 2020. It was developed in anticipation of for the UN Climate Conference (COP26) that will take place in Glasgow in November 2021. For this reason, it is called the "Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration" and, therefore, it is not a specifically Glasgow City Council (GCC) led initiative, albeit GCC has signed the Declaration. COP26 is seen as an opportunity to place food and local actions at the heart of the global climate response.

4.4 The Declaration has been prepared in partnership between international networks of sub-national governments, UN agencies and non-governmental agencies working with food systems and in consultation with sub-national, city and regional governments. From a Scottish perspective, this has included national organisations such as Nourish Scotland and the Soil Association.

4.5 The Scottish Government signed the Declaration ahead of the launch. Subsequently, Glasgow and South Lanarkshire Council have signed, and some other local authorities have declared a commitment but are yet to make an official announcement. It is anticipated that several more Scottish local authorities will sign the Declaration in the lead up to COP26.

## 5 Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration Rationale and Benefits

5.1 The rationale behind the Declaration is relatively simple; the food system is a significant contributor to carbon emissions - in Scotland, agriculture accounts for 26% of total GHG emissions and emissions related to food and outside the farm gate represents a further 5% to 10%. At a global level, food systems account for 21-37% of total GHGs.

- 5.2 The Declaration recognises a significant role for sub-national governments in forging pathways to reducing the climate impacts of our food systems: for example, councils can and in many instances already are pioneering integrated food policies with actions in several sectors, for example: food waste reduction schemes, healthy and sustainable procurement in public canteens, public campaigns to encourage behavioural change towards sustainable diets, provision of food growing opportunities, support to short supply chains and integrated urban food planning.
- 5.3 However, to achieve sustainable food system transformation, actions must be aligned horizontally across policy areas and vertically between different levels of government. Food necessarily touches many different policy areas, and a holistic food system approach facilitates the development of coherent policies at both the local and national level.

## 6. **Benefits of Signing and Taking Action Under the Declaration**

- 6.1 The signing of the Declaration presents an opportunity for the Council to renew its commitment to tackling climate change and to develop a Good Food Council. The pledge which has now been made directly aligns with the principles of the Carbon Management Plan, the Climate Change and Energy Team's Strategic Control Plan, the Highland Adapts initiative as well as the Council's draft Food Growing Strategy, Growing Our Future. Furthermore, this is an opportunity for the Council to support the work of the Highland Good Food Partnership and demonstrate its commitment to working together across the region.
- 6.2 In addition, signing the Declaration will enable the Council to raise awareness by sharing information with employees and residents about the impact of food systems on climate change and by encouraging positive behavioural changes in food consumption.
- 6.3 Finally, a platform for signatories will be established to share best practices and encourage collaboration through, for example, the organisation of events.

## 7 **Next steps**

- 7.1 The Declaration has now officially been signed by the Leader of the Highland Council and, as a result, the Council has committed to the following:
- **Commitment 1** – developing and implementing integrated food policies and strategies;
  - **Commitment 2** – reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from urban and regional food systems;
  - **Commitment 3** – calling on national governments to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms.
- 7.2 Whilst there is currently no compliance mechanism attached to the Declaration and no selected indicators or metrics connected to the commitment, there is a reputational risk to the organisation if it is not seen to be taking these commitments forward.
- 7.3 To that end, it is proposed that an officer-led working group should be established to map out the work and resources required to deliver against these commitments, in collaboration with the Highland Good Food Partnership. In addition, a

communications plan will be drafted with a view to sharing information about the impact of food systems on climate change and to inform residents and employees about initiatives in the Highland area. Through this communication, officers will seek to make clear that actions undertaken demonstrate the Highland Council's commitment to the declaration in order to avoid any potential confusion that may arise with the use of Glasgow in its title.

7.4 Further progress updates will be provided to the Climate Change Working Group.

**Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance**

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**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

