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| Title of Report: 18 Million Trees Campaign – Update | Officer Presenting: Director of Environment & Regeneration Author: Natural Environment Regeneration Manager |
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To provide an update to Members on the 18 Million Trees Campaign and to outline how Derry City & Strabane District Council can contribute towards this target.
- 1.2 To seek Members approval with regard to a long-list of sites to be included in the campaign.

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will recall that an item was presented to E&R Committee in October 2021 advising that Minister Edwin Poots announced on the 2nd March 2020 an ambitious target to plant 18 Million Trees across Northern Ireland. This would equate to planting c9000 hectares of land in NI over a 10-year period (2020-2030).
- 2.2 The aim of the campaign is to improve levels of tree cover in Northern Ireland and contribute to carbon capture as part of the response to climate change. The Minister's pledge is estimated to cost £80m over the next 10 years.
- 2.3 The Minister has asked Councils to identify publicly owned land for the purpose. In addition, agencies such as NI Water and the Roads Service, which own large swathes of land, will be key to the plan "Forests for Our Future".

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Council formally adopted the Derry & Strabane Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 to 2032 and the associated Green Infrastructure Action Plan. A key action under the Biodiversity Theme of the Green Infrastructure Action Plan is Action 6.8 *'Identify areas of land to increase the number of trees planted and woodland created by an additional 150 ha from the current baseline, to increase ecosystem services, for example, trapping air pollution, habitat for wildlife, recreation provision, store water & carbon.'*

4 Implications

Equality, Rural Needs, Climate Change and Data Protection

- 4.1 Council also adopted a Climate Adaptation Plan in July 2020. The aim of the Plan is to ensure Council is prepared for and resilient to the effects of climate change. The Plan includes a green infrastructure theme in order to maximise nature-based solutions such as trees to manage the risk from flooding, heat, poor air quality and species decline as a result of climate change.

Financial, Legal, HR, Improvement and Other

- 4.2 A long-listed of potential sites are illustrated in Appendix 1. Officers will liaise with Council's Legal Team on the identified sites to ensure compliance with any covenants that may arise.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to approve the long-list of potential sites with officers bringing back a subsequent report on the deliverability of the tree planting campaign at the earliest opportunity.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – 18 million tree campaign