

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 20 April 2021

Title: Climate & Biodiversity Update

Contact Officer: Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

Background

The purpose of this report is to update councillors on the Lake and Country Park. The report was intended to contain a further update on climate matters but due to Officer time commitments, this will not feature in this report.

Current Situation

Lake and Country Park Ecology Study

Frank Lucas (Facilitating Nature) has come back with a proposal to survey the vegetation within the lake. To fully survey the lake would require a boat, substantial equipment and come with a significant increase in cost and H&S risk. There is no industry standard so he has instead recommended using a grapple on a rope to draw in any vegetation to compile a species list. This has been offered at no additional cost on top of the original quote.

Rediscover Nature

The council has received an enquiry from Rediscover Nature to set up a temporary self-guided walk at the country park. It would involve setting up a simple physical trail with a small number of way-points marked for people to find. Each waypoint will feature a QR code that will provide relevant nature-based information/activity suggestions.

This would offer an additional activity for users of the country park which has seen an increase in footfall during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rediscover nature have only requested the use of the area on a temporary basis and have said their activities won't disturb other users.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The markers for the self-guided trails by Rediscover Nature are laminated tags which do raise some concern with them entering the ecosystem. The operator of the nature trails has said they will be securely fastened with ribbons and not stapled to trees. And they will only be installed temporarily for 2 weeks.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Facilitating Nature has offered the additional aquatics survey at no additional cost. If the council would prefer a more thorough survey Officers will have to seek quotes from alternative companies that would come in at a substantial cost.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Accept the aquatics survey offer from Facilitating Nature for the south section of the lake.
2. Approve the use of the lake and country park for Rediscover Nature self-guided walks on a temporary basis.