

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	Lothian Esk Catchment Partnership (LECP) - Update

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Additional information:

Authorised By	Sarah Fortune
Designation	Exec Dir for Council Resources
Date	22/09/25

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COMMITTEE: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Executive Director for Place

REPORT TITLE: Lothian Esk Catchment Partnership (LECP) - Update

REPORT STATUS: Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the progress of the Lothian Esk Catchment Partnership (LECP).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the progress to date on the Lothian Esk Catchment Partnership (LECP).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In August 2019, at a meeting of full Council, Members approved the motion to declare a Climate Emergency.
- 3.2 In October 2023, at a meeting of full Council, Members approved the motion to declare a Nature Emergency.
- 3.3 East Lothian Council (ELC) are progressing the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme (MFPS), which will protect Musselburgh from coastal and river flooding, including flooding from the River Esk.
- 3.4 ELC have developed a vast amount of information on flood risk and the Esk catchment as part of the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme and the MFPS project team and ELC continue to advance the Esk Catchment Invasive Non-Native Species programme on the River Esk in Musselburgh.

- 3.5 In October 2023, the Musselburgh Flood Protection Team presented a report on lessons learned from the Eddleston Water Natural Flood Management project to a meeting of full Council.
- 3.6 At this Council meeting, it was agreed to explore Natural Flood Management / Nature Based Solutions separate from the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme. Members agreed:
- “that further investigation of the potential for NFM measures in the River Esk catchment is undertaken ... through the Local Flood Risk Management Plan processes and not the Scheme”
- and;
- “to encourage and support the formation of a new independent body ... for the River Esk catchment, which would be capable of advancing both NFM [natural flood management] and NbS [nature based solutions] for the relevant local authorities, the regulatory organisations, other interested organisations, and community groups within that area”.
- 3.7 As a further action, ELC officers initiated the setup of the Lothian Esk Catchment Partnership, which brings together expertise from ELC, Midlothian Council, Nature Scot, SEPA, Forth Rivers Trust (FRT) and Scottish Water.
- 3.8 LECP will work on a catchment wide basis and establish a portfolio of nature-based projects to meet their overall aims and objectives.
- 3.9 The purpose of the LECP is to initiate, co-ordinate and scale up the delivery of projects which help restore nature, address climate change and improve the places within the catchments of the North and South Esk Rivers.
- 3.10 The key aims of the partnership include Delivering Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Nature Based Solutions (NbS), Restoring Nature, Embedding Net Zero, Improving Local Places, Supporting Sustainable Land Management and Building Knowledge.
- 3.11 Since December 2023, the Partnership has officially met seven times.
- 3.12 In April 2024, a funding bid was submitted to the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) on behalf of the Partnership. This bid was successful and FRT successfully secured circa £91,000 through Scottish Government’s NRF Fund Grant Bid, with the funding period running September 2024 – September 2025.
- 3.13 This grant funding allowed for an embedded officer within FRT to be paid for and to progress the key outcomes of the bid, which include the development of a “catchment route map” to identify potential actions, tackle these challenges and lay the groundwork for restoration measures in the future. At least ten projects are to be identified within the NRF Grand Bid reporting in September 2025.
- 3.14 In June 2025, the Terms of Reference for the Partnership was officially signed by all partners and the Partnership officially launched. ELC currently act as Co-chair and Secretariat of the Partnership, with FRT.

- 3.15 A media release was published in July 2025, announcing the Partnership and outlining the successful NRF Bid.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The LECP supports the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2025 – 2030 and Tree and Woodland Strategy.
- 4.2 The LECP supports the key objectives outlined within the 2022-28 Forth Estuary Local Flood Risk Management Plan of reducing, avoiding and preparing for flood risk.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: Partners have contributed a small financial contribution and in-kind contributions to the LECP. East Lothian Council committed £4,000 and in-kind contributions towards the LECP's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) Development Phase Grant Bid in September 2024, with SEPA and Midlothian Council also contributing.

Circa £91,000 was awarded to the FRT on behalf of LECP on the back of this successful Grant Bid. This grant funding is managed by FRT on behalf of LECP and the funding period for this grant runs to the end of September 2025.

SPEN have contributed £10,000 to LECP, on the basis of assisting the development of deliverable projects in the catchment.

Future funding of the group is unknown. It is probable that a future financial contribution from ELC and other partners will be required in 2025/26.

- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None.
- 5.4 Risk: N/A

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

X

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

☐

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 None.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Forth Estuary Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-28
- 8.2 Tree and Woodland Strategy for East Lothian (2024)
- 8.3 East Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy 2025 – 2030
- 8.4 Report to Full Council Aug 2019, Motion Climate Emergency.
- 8.5 Report to Full Council Oct 2023, The Eddleston Water Project Site Visit to Explore Natural Flood Management
- 8.6 Report to Full Council Oct 2023, Motion: Nature Emergency Amendment

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

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Date	19 / 09 / 25

Head of Service Approval

Name	Sarah Fortune
Designation	Executive Director for Council Resources
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Confirmed
Approval Date	22/9/25