



Stirling Council *Alive with Nature* Plan

Response from Riverside Community Council

Riverside Community Council (RCC) is an environmentally aware Community Council which works closely with a local environmental organisation ([Riverside Naturally](#)) and a Stirling-wide environmental organisation ([Treelink Stirling](#)). RCC welcomes the publication of this plan. RCC is pleased to note Stirling Council's commitment to the natural world and to viewing it as an asset.

RCC has some outstanding questions and comments and would welcome clarification on the following points:

- Page 5 starts with 'A Clear Vision' but it is difficult to discern what this is. For example what is meant by 'Nature at the heart of life – Here and Now'? What can a Community Council (CC) do to support this? How does Stirling Council plan to empower communities to contribute?
- For example, there is an explicit statement that "Delivery of this Plan is dependent on the availability of resources and the establishment of positive partnerships with other organisations and local communities" How will the Council harness the necessary resources and how will it engage with local organisations and communities (such as CCs)?
- What is meant by 'Scotland's Greenest Region'? How will this be measured? This seems to imply a competitive element rather than the co-operation which RCC believes is necessary to achieve the aims of the plan.
- RCC believes that NHS Forth Valley should be a key partner in realising the implementation of this plan. There is no mention of joint work with colleagues in, for example, health promotion and this is a gap which should be addressed.
- RCC believes that Cowane's Trust should be a key partner in realising the implementation of this plan. RCC has encountered some difficulties in establishing the ownership of land within its area. Land owned by Cowane's Trust (such as the riverbank) appears subject to different priorities and, for example, maintenance schedules, than land owned by Stirling Council. Without the support of significant landowners such as Cowane's Trust there will be a piecemeal approach to land management and a negative impact on the plan.
- The Steering Group appears to comprise organisations which operate at a strategic level. While RCC recognises the importance of engaging such partners it is dismayed that no grass-roots or community organisations (such as CCs) were involved in the drafting of the plan. The key role of community groups is recognised (eg IN1) and they should therefore have been involved from the outset. That they were not is a concerning omission.
- EN2 this appears to be an unambitious target with a very long timescale.
- P16 (Community) locally Riverside PS has a large number of pupils and pressure on outside space. In what ways can such schools be involved in creating biodiverse areas within their grounds?

- P16 (Land Use) RCC welcomes the commitment to use vacant and derelict land in better ways. Its experience has been that, for a CC, establishing land ownership and use is tortuously difficult.
- P16 RCC welcomes the commitment to controlling INNS and some of its members have undertaken work locally to remove Himalayan Balsam. RCC knows of other groups working in similar ways. Again, the involvement of community groups at an earlier stage would have harnessed this local knowledge, expertise and willingness.
- There is a lack of compatibility between plans to enhance spaces for biodiversity and the operational work of various Stirling Council services. What plans exist to change attitudes amongst Council officers so that these plans can be realised?
- RCC operates in the town centre. This plan makes little mention of maintaining and increasing green spaces in towns.
- There is one mention of pesticides. RCC urges the Council to de-commit from its use of pesticide spray and develop greener and more sustainable ways of managing its land.