



Glasgow City Council

Item 4

6th February 2018

Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee

Report by Acting Executive Director of Land and Environmental Services

Contact: Stevie Scott Ext: 78292

SEVEN LOCHS WETLAND PARK UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

To update committee on progress with the Seven Lochs Wetland Park project following commencement of the implementation phase in October 2016, and to note key priorities for the project in 2018/19.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that committee -

- notes progress against the main outputs and outcomes for the Seven Lochs Project;
- notes project priorities for 2018/19;
- notes the proposed approach to the future sustainability of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park; and
- considers further areas for review.

Ward No(s): 18 and 21

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes No

consulted: Yes No

1. Background

- 1.1 The Seven Lochs Project is a 5 year, £11.3 million programme of investment in the Seven Lochs Wetland Park and green network. The Project will -
 - 1.1.1 Develop the Seven Lochs Wetland Park as a new heritage and nature visitor attraction of national significance;
 - 1.1.2 Deliver the Seven Lochs Heritage Project, a £6.8 million partnership project; and
 - 1.1.3 Drive forward the creation of the Seven Lochs Green Network, a high quality, multi-functional network of open spaces and green corridors, which includes the £4.5million Greater Easterhouse Green Infrastructure Project.
- 1.2 The Seven Lochs Partnership was formed in April 2014 to lead development and delivery of the Seven Lochs Project. The Partnership brings together Glasgow City Council (GCC), North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), Forestry Commission Scotland, The Conservation Volunteers Scotland (TCV), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Glenboig Development Trust. GCC chairs the partnership and is the lead partner in the delivery of the project. The Partnership Board meets quarterly to review progress and set future priorities.
- 1.3 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced an award of £4.5million for the Seven Lochs Heritage Project in July 2016. Formal 'Permission to Start' was received from HLF on 6th October 2016.
- 1.4 In October 2016, the Council was awarded £1.25 million from the SNH Green Infrastructure Fund for the Greater Easterhouse Green Infrastructure Project. The grant agreement was finalised in November 2017.

2. Seven Lochs Wetland Park

- 2.1 Spanning the Glasgow City / North Lanarkshire council boundary between Easterhouse, Coatbridge and Stepps, the Seven Lochs Wetland Park is Scotland's largest urban heritage and nature park. Easily accessible from central Scotland's rail and road network, the park spans the Glasgow/North Lanarkshire boundary between Easterhouse, Coatbridge and Stepps. The park vision is "a new wetland park of national significance" that will -
 - *protect and enhance nature and heritage in the area as a national resource;*
 - *promote the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors; and*
 - *have a major impact on the environmental, social and economic regeneration of the area."*
- 2.2 A new Seven Lochs staff team has been established, based in the Lethamhill Golf Clubhouse at Hogganfield Park. The team is made up of 6 staff, with 3 staff employed by GCC, and 3 by TCV Scotland. The team is supported by a Project Team comprising officers from across the project partners.

- 2.3 A key element of the park strategy is to establish 4 visitor gateways – two in Glasgow and two in North Lanarkshire - as the main points for visitor welcome and orientation. These will be at -
- Lethamhill Golf Clubhouse, Hogganfield Park;
 - Provan Hall, Auchinlea Park;
 - Drumpellier Country Park;
 - Glenboig Life Centre.
- 2.4 Costed designs and funding plans have been developed for the gateways, and Seven Lochs staff are working with partners to take these plans forward. Work on the gateway buildings will begin in June 2018, with the four new gateways becoming operational between September 2019 and September 2020.
- 2.5 The visitor gateways will be linked by a network of walking and cycling routes. These will enable visitors of all ages and abilities to access and learn about the park's heritage and nature. A key route is the Seven Lochs Trail, an 8km link between Hogganfield Park and Drumpellier Country Park, via Provan Hall.
- 2.6 Seven Lochs Wetland Park branding (see Figure 1) and a Communication Toolkit has been developed to support clear and consistent promotion of the park as a place to visit and explore. A Communication Advisory Group meets twice a year to bring together communication and marketing officers from the project partners to oversee implementation of the Seven Lochs Communication Action Plan and ensure coordinated communication across the Partnership. In addition, a communication update is a standing item for Partnership Board and Project Team meetings. A range of new communication and marketing information has been developed to raise awareness of the Park.
- 2.7 Key priorities for 2018/19 are -
- Review the Seven Lochs staff team to ensure it has the skills and capacity to deliver the planned work programme;
 - Commission building works to develop the visitor gateways;
 - Complete and launch the Seven Lochs Trail;
 - Increase visibility of the Park through consistent use of park branding on signage and communication material.

Figure 1 – Seven Lochs branding



3. Seven Lochs Heritage Project

- 3.1 The Seven Lochs Heritage Project is an integral part of the development of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park. It is made up of 14 individual projects which aim to protect and enhance key heritage assets across the park area, and enable more people to visit, learn about and celebrate heritage on their doorstep.
- 3.2 Key outputs during the first year of the project include -
- Construction of a bespoke 'Iron Age Crannog' themed play area at Drumpellier Country Park;
 - Creation of 360m² of floating wetland habitat at Hogganfield, Lochend and Garnqueen Lochs. This project was shortlisted in the Innovation category of the Nature of Scotland Awards;
 - Over 30 heritage / nature themed events and activities, attracting over 5000 visits to the Seven Lochs Wetland Park;
 - Over 50 volunteer activities, delivering over 450 volunteer days;
 - 4 programmes to promote health and wellbeing through activities in parks and greenspaces;
 - 9 job-seekers gaining accredited Employability Awards through an 'Employability in the Outdoors' training programme.
- 3.3 The principle Heritage Project output for the Council is the comprehensive repair and restoration of Provan Hall, a category A listed medieval building at Auchinlea Park, Easterhouse. Provan Hall is owned by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), and is currently managed by the Council through a full repair and maintenance lease. A costed schedule of works has been developed, and LES is working in collaboration with DRS to take forward the restoration programme. It is expected that Provan Hall will close for refurbishment in November 2018, and re-open in summer 2020.
- 3.4 Following the restoration works, Provan Hall / Auchinlea Park will be subject to an asset transfer to Provan Hall Community Management Trust, a new Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) set up to lead the future management and development of Provan Hall and Auchinlea Park as a hub for learning about Glasgow's medieval past, and a gateway to the Seven Lochs Wetland Park. To enable the asset transfer, a new lease will need to be negotiated between NTS, the Council and the new Trust.
- 3.5 Provan Hall Community Management Trust was incorporated in December 2017. Seven Lochs and Council staff are now working with the Trust Board to develop a Business Plan and funding strategy for the future operation and development of Provan Hall. To support this, the Council approved funding in September 2016 of up to £500,000 for Provan Hall / Auchinlea Park as an integral part of the Easterhouse Town Centre Action Plan.
- 3.6 Seven Lochs Heritage Project partners and funders have asked that deer management plans are developed for the Seven Lochs Wetland Park area. Work is now underway to collate and assess data on deer populations and their

impact. This will inform the development of deer management plans by landowners, including GCC. The development and implementation of deer management plans for GCC land will be linked to the Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

- 3.7 Heritage project priorities for 2018/19 are -
- Sustain and further develop the Heritage project events, volunteering, and training programmes to promote learning and health and well-being in the outdoors;
 - Begin the restoration of Provan Hall;
 - Develop the Business Plan and funding strategy for the Provan Hall Community Management Trust.

4. Seven Lochs Green Network

- 4.1 A key element of the Seven Lochs' vision is that the park is at the heart of a wider Green Network that extends from the park edge into surrounding communities. These green links will connect local communities to the park, and support environmental enhancement within a wider 'zone of influence' surrounding the park. Vacant and derelict land is a major issue for many communities on the edge of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park in Glasgow, and is a priority for the Green Network in this area.
- 4.2 The £4.5million Greater Easterhouse Green Infrastructure Project will create two new green corridors that extend from the park boundary into surrounding communities. This project is led by DRS working in partnership with the Seven Lochs staff team. It is funded by SNH Green Infrastructure Fund, City Deal and the Vacant & Derelict Land Fund. Design work, including access improvements, habitat creation and signage, was completed in November 2017. The project will also facilitate development on areas of vacant and derelict land by constructing sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) at Cranhill, Croftcraigh and Blairtummock parks. A tender package for the works has been issued and contractors will start on site in April 2018. The works will be completed by March 2019.
- 4.3 The Easterhouse Innovative Greening Project has been developed by the Seven Lochs staff team in partnership with Central Scotland Green Network Trust and Local Housing Organisations to transform areas of vacant and derelict land into useable greenspace. The project is funded by the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund, with work now underway to develop and deliver greening projects at 4 areas of vacant and derelict land.
- 4.4 A further Green Network priority is the need for a strategic approach to the conservation management of water voles in the Seven Lochs area. Water vole are a priority species for conservation action in Scotland, and their habitat is protected by law. Unique populations of water vole were discovered in parks and vacant and derelict sites across Greater Easterhouse in 2008. Planned development will impact upon these sites and mitigation for habitat loss is therefore required. A Water Vole Conservation Strategy has been drafted, and further work is underway with Scottish Natural Heritage and the University of

Glasgow to finalise the strategy and associated action plan. The strategy aims to create a network of suitably managed habitat to support the future conservation management of this unique urban population, while also enabling planned development on areas of vacant and derelict land. The Seven Lochs Partnership will lead the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

4.5 New Housing - Both Glasgow City Council and North Lanarkshire Councils have identified significant areas for new housing in the Seven Lochs Project area, including green belt release for up to 4,500 new homes, and development of a further 1,000 homes on areas of vacant and derelict land. The creation of new, high quality greenspace and multi-functional green infrastructure within these developments is a key measure of success of the Seven Lochs Project. A 'cross boundary' Seven Lochs Green Infrastructure Advisory Group has been established to bring together planners from both local authorities and green infrastructure specialists from the project partners. The Advisory Group will identify green infrastructure priorities, and work with developers and house-builders to integrate planned development into the Seven Lochs Green Network.

4.6 Green Network Priorities for 2018/19 include -

- Deliver the Greater Easterhouse Green Infrastructure and Easterhouse Innovative Greening projects;
- Finalise and begin implementation the Water Vole Conservation Strategy;
- Identify priorities for new green infrastructure within planned developments and integrate these into development masterplans.

5. Project Sustainability

5.1 In order to sustain the Seven Lochs Wetland Park, the Seven Lochs Partnership must develop an approach that enables on-going maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure, future investment in upgraded and new facilities, and continued revenue funding for heritage learning and engagement.

5.2 The proposed model for the Seven Lochs Wetland Park is to continue the current approach whereby each of the partners continue to be responsible for the maintenance and development of heritage assets and sites within their own ownership/control, and seek opportunities for collaboration and coordination through the Seven Lochs Partnership. To support this, it is intended that a new Seven Lochs charitable organisation is developed to:

- Deliver on-going management and maintenance through training programmes and volunteering;
- Coordinate, deliver and promote heritage/visitor activities at sites;
- Seek and secure external funding to support these activities.

6. Project Review

6.1 A project review is scheduled for April – June 2018. This will examine progress against the main project outputs and outcomes, and confirm the resources available to the Partnership for project delivery to March 2021 and beyond. A partnership review is scheduled for April – June 2020. This will examine

options, and develop the Business Plan and associated management structure that will take the Seven Lochs Wetland Park forward from March 2021.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Budgets for delivery of the Seven Lochs Heritage Project and the Greater Easterhouse Green Infrastructure Project are agreed and in place.

A key role for the Seven Lochs staff team is to secure further funding to support the on-going management and development of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park from March 2021 onwards.

Legal: A new lease will be needed to underpin the asset transfer of Provan Hall / Auchinlea Park to the Provan Hall Community Management Trust (para 3.4). This will be the subject of a report to City Administration Committee in 2019.

An Implementation and Collaboration Agreement (to March 2021) is in place between the project partners. Partners will work together to finalise a new agreement setting out arrangements for the future management of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park prior to March 2021 (para 5.2).

Personnel: There are no personnel implications at present, although consideration of future operating models may include consideration of personnel matters.

Procurement: Procurement will generally be through existing frameworks, subject to approval by HLF.

An open tender has been agreed for the Provan Hall restoration works. This is to ensure that contractors with specific skills and knowledge in heritage building works are appointed. This is a funder requirement.

Council Strategic Plan:

The project will support the following outcomes:

A Thriving Economy -

- more Glaswegians are in work or training

A Vibrant City -

- Glasgow is a world class destination for tourism, culture, sport and events
- Glaswegians are active and healthier

- Glasgow acknowledges and promotes its history, heritage and culture

A Sustainable and Low Carbon City -

- Citizens use active travel, including walking and cycling

Equality Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

Yes, specifically outcome 9: Barriers to participation in arts, learning, physical activity, learning and culture have been reduced for people with people with protected characteristics.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Heritage sites and greenspaces are made more accessible, and more people with protected characteristics take part in activities within the Seven Lochs Wetland Park.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The project will deliver significant benefits for greenspace, biodiversity and the historic environment in North East Glasgow. Surface water management in parks and greenspaces supports adaptation to future climate change.

Social:

Volunteering, training and community engagement delivered by the project will increase people's knowledge, skills and employability, and support community cohesion.

Economic:

The development of new visitor facilities, and promotion of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park as a visitor destinations, will create opportunities for new businesses and social enterprises linked to tourism and outdoor activities.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

No data protection impacts identified.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that committee -

- notes progress against the main outputs and outcomes for the Seven Lochs Project;
- notes project priorities for 2018/19;
- notes the proposed approach to the future sustainability of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park; and
- considers further areas for review.