

Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority

**To: Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority
Joint Committee**

On: 13th December 2021

Report by

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Partnership Working Towards Delivery of the Green Network Blueprint

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to update the Joint Committee on progress towards delivery of the Green Network 'Blueprint'.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee consider and note the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Joint Committee at its meeting held on 14th June noted that the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership would evolve into the '*Strategic Environment Partnership*' (SEP) with a remit to support the delivery of the Green Network Blueprint and local and regional spatial planning.
- 3.2 SEP, as did the Partnership Board before it, comprises officer representation from each of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley local authorities and agencies Nature Scot, Scottish Forestry, SEPA, Public Health Scotland, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, and now additionally Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.
- 3.3 The new Green Network oversight and support role of SEP coincided with the retirement of the Green Network Programme Manager and line management of the remaining Green Network Development and Communications officers being taken on by the Clydeplan Manager.
- 3.4 The following provides an update on these new working arrangements and progress towards securing the necessary resources for delivery of the Green Network Blueprint.

4. Strategic Environment Partnership (SEP)

- 4.1 SEP has now met twice with positive engagement and feedback from partners, and constructive and helpful discussion for Green Network and Clydeplan Officers. The format and agenda content, with agencies providing presentations and discussion items after the main business, has worked well and proven useful to partners and officers.
- 4.2 As work towards Blueprint delivery progresses, it is intended that sub-groups of officers with specialist knowledge will be convened to guide particular aspects of the work. The first of these was held in September to provide guidance on framing the wetland habitat network component of the Blueprint.

5. Blueprint Delivery

- 5.1 The Blueprint comprises two core elements:
 - (a) Strategic Access Network - a network of routes completely separated from traffic, using greenspace and green corridors that provide an attractive option for making every day journeys
 - (b) Strategic Habitat Network based on four habitat types:
 - woodland;
 - peatland;
 - wetland; and,
 - grassland.
- 5.2 Progress towards securing the capacity, specialist skills and resources required for delivery of each of the elements is described below.
- 5.3 Strategic Access Network - an application has been submitted to Sustrans' Partnerships funding stream for a two year embedded officer post. This is a competitive fund and we await a decision. If successful the officer will be hosted on behalf of Glasgow and Clyde Valley partners by SPT. The post remit would include:
 - working with partners to identify a portfolio of projects that would address gaps in the Strategic Access Network, particularly cross-boundary, for submission to funders;
 - provide input to the Regional Spatial Strategy; and,
 - provide input to SPT's emerging Regional Active Travel Strategy.

If the application is unsuccessful it is intended to resubmit in the next round.

- 5.4 Strategic Habitat Network - progress towards each of the habitat network strands is described below:
 - Peatland - The role of peatland restoration in contributing to the drive for Net Zero, and to flood mitigation, is well recognised. It is also a UK and Scottish priority habitat and therefore the case is strong for targeting effort and resources at the significant areas of peatland within the Glasgow and Clyde Valley.

To that end Nature Scot's Peatland Action Fund has agreed to fund two officers for two years to lead on regional peatland restoration under the title of Clyde Peatland Action. The officers will be hosted on behalf of City Region partners by South Lanarkshire Council in recognition of the fact it is home to around two thirds of the region's peatlands.

It is hoped the new officers will be in post by March 2022 with the Green Network team working with Glasgow City Region (GCR) colleagues towards a launch of Clyde Peatland Action after the GCR Cabinet meeting in February.

A communications budget of £4,000 has been secured from Nature Scot to produce promotional materials for Clyde Peatland Action and in support of the launch.

- Grassland and Wetland - Both these habitat types were extensively discussed at COP26 in the context of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. Initial discussion with partners, including SEPA, Nature Scot, Buglife and Plantlife, on collaborative working and the pooling of resources to deliver on grasslands and wetlands have been positive.

The approval by the Joint Committee of funding for a new two year Green Network Development Officer post will provide additional capacity and the development of grassland and wetland delivery initiatives will be one of the main focusses of their work.

- Woodland - As previously reported to the Joint Committee, the woodland element of the Blueprint is being driven forward by the Clyde Climate Forest (CCF).

CCF now has its own team of three officers and an operating budget secured through partners, including Scottish Forestry and the Woodland Trust. CCF continues to report to the Green Network on progress towards Blueprint delivery through SEP.

6 Glasgow City Region

- 6.1 Glasgow City Region Land Use and Sustainability Portfolio Group (LUS) is an important forum to the Green Network in which to report on progress. It provides valuable exposure for the Green Network team's work to senior officers as well as support and guidance.
- 6.2 In addition to reporting to the quarterly LUS meetings, the Green Network Development Officer attends fortnightly meetings with the LUS Chair, East Dunbartonshire's Chief Executive, and other senior officers, to discuss work programmes and other pertinent business. These meetings provide a valuable sounding board for ideas.

7 National Planning Framework 4

- 7.1 Responding to the Climate and Ecological Crises through the planning system is central to the recently published draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4).
- 7.2 The role of Green Networks in promoting more sustainable travel, carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation and nature restoration is recognised throughout the document.
- 7.3 The Spatial Strategy section of NPF4 is based on a series of Action Areas with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley forming a significant part of the '*Central Urban Transformation Area*'. The GCV Green Network and the Clyde Climate Forest are explicitly mentioned as being able to achieve a "step change in the quality and benefits of green places across west central Scotland and bring enhanced biodiversity closer to communities".
- 7.4 The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) continues to be a National Development in NPF4. The GCV Green Network is the regional lead for the CSGN. The team provide support and guidance to the Green Action Trust, the organisation charged with delivery of the CSGN, and in particular as it rolls out the Blueprint approach to the rest of Central Scotland, as required through the Programme for Government.
- 7.5 In the coming months the Green Network team will consider the NPF4 consultation draft in detail to inform the environment related elements of Clydeplan's response. This will include consultation with local authorities to ensure partner views are considered as part of the response.