
CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY



Report to: Joint Committee
On: 27th May 2016

Report
By
Regional Park Manager

SUBJECT: UPLANDS PROJECT

1.0 Purpose of Report:

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members of the Joint Committee on the consideration given to a potential "Upland Project" that was subject to a Report to the Joint Committee on 12th September 2014.

2.0 Recommendation:

That members of the Joint Committee:-

- (i) Note that following consideration by officers of the Regional Park and relevant Council staff that the "Upland Project" referred to the Joint Committee in September 2014 will not be pursued, and
- (ii) That the Joint Committee note that the Park Manager will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities for new and emerging projects that support the aims the Regional Park in relation to leisure activity, health, education, outdoor learning and environmental management.

3.0 Background:

- 3.1 Members will recall that on 12th September 2014, a paper was presented to the Joint Committee which summarised a potential partnership opportunity to manage the upland areas of the park.
- 3.2 A proposal that had emerged through discussions with the Park Manager and the private sector related to a range of proposals which sought to, inter alia:
- increase the breeding hen harriers in the Renfrewshire Heights SPA and Site of Special Scientific interest.
 - re-vegetate a heather/grass mix over several thousand acres
 - provide populations of red grouse for commercial activity

- reintroduce black grouse and grey partridge
- work towards the reintroduction of red squirrels in the area
- improve sheep and cattle performance
- provide employment and financial betterment in the rural community
- improve public access across the park area, linking the visitor centres and providing walking and cycling routes that can be accessed by all
- deliver a model for the Scottish Government's 'Land Use Strategy' that reduces reliance on subsidy and improves the viability of rural communities

3.3 A project plan was submitted to Officers which suggested a partnership between land managers, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, Newton Rigg College and the private sector.

3.4 In September 2014, it was recognised that the project plan submitted was incomplete with many elements not fully scoped or costed and it was clear that further investigation was required to ascertain if the plan or parts of the plan were feasible.

3.5 Within this context, after further investigation by Park and Council officers, it is considered that many aspects of the proposal may have been challenging to deliver. In particular this includes:

- The scale of the plan and roles and responsibilities for all suggested parties was unclear. Confirmation of landowners/stakeholders support was not clarified.
- Timescales and programming were not realistic, particularly in relation to obtaining statutory consents and securing the required funding package.
- The business case for elements of the plan eg the proposed distillery, railway track and commercial grouse shooting had not been fully scoped or costed.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The "Upland Project" as presented to the Park Authority on 12th September 2014 will not proceed as further investigation has indicated that, the project is not feasible.

4.2 The Park Manager will however continue to investigate and pursue projects that reflect the key aims and role of the Park in terms of the emerging priorities of leisure activity and health, education and outdoor learning and environmental management.

Members wishing further information regarding this report should contact Mr W David Gatherer, Regional Park Manager, Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority, 01505 614791.