

Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority

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

On: 12th September 2023

**Report by
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Resourcing Delivery of the Green Network 'Blueprint'

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is for the Joint Committee to consider the resources required for delivery of the Green Network 'Blueprint', to produce a Regional Spatial Strategy and provide support to partners.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee extend the Green Network Development Officer fixed term contract, which currently ends on 31st March 2024, for a maximum of one year, or until such times as Clydeplan and Green Network staff transition to Glasgow City Region PMO.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Joint Committee at its meeting held on 13th September 2021 approved use of £95,000 from Clydeplan Useable Revenue Reserves to fund a two year fixed term Green Network Development Officer post to support delivery of the Green Network Blueprint. This was in recognition of the scale of the task and the loss of the Green Network Programme Manager post and the impact this had on capacity.
- 3.2 The officer was appointed in April 2022 restoring the Green Network team staffing level to 2.6 FTE, having a significant impact on the team's ability to drive forward delivery of the Blueprint, and to support partners respond to the requirements of NPF4.
- 3.3 The fixed term contract will end in March 2024 and, with uncertainty over a staff transition to Glasgow City Region PMO, the potential exists for the officer to seek more security elsewhere, with a resultant loss in capacity and the skills developed over the last 18 months.

4. Progress to date and future work

- 4.1. The Development Officer has responsibility for leading on two elements of the Blueprint, grassland and wetland nature networks. Significant progress has been made on moving these workstreams forward including: developing partnerships of local authorities, agencies and NGOs with the skills and expertise to oversee and guide both workstreams; securing funding through the Nature Restoration Fund for work to inform targeted delivery; and project managing that work successfully to completion. The work outlined above will also play a central role in identifying “Nature Networks”, a new requirement for local authorities through NPF4.
- 4.2 The officer is now working with each of the eight GCR local authorities to identify a programme of delivery projects with the intention of applying to the Nature Restoration Fund in Spring 2024 for funding upwards of £250k.
- 4.4 The grassland and wetland initiatives have benefited enormously from having a dedicated resource to drive them forward and are now at a critical point in the transition from development to delivery. The next six months to a year will be crucial in that transition.
- 4.5 More generally, the Green Network team will have a key role in developing the environmental aspects of the Regional Spatial Strategy and in supporting the eight GCR authorities meet the suite of new requirements set out in NPF4, the LDP Guidance and for Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments. This will be a significant workstream for the team and likely to extend over the next two to three years.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 To support ‘Blueprint’ delivery, development of the Regional Spatial Strategy and partners in meeting the requirements of NPF4, it is proposed to utilise circa £47,000 of the Useable Revenue Reserves held by Clydeplan to extend the Green Network Development Officer fixed term post until 31st March 2024. Clydeplan Reserves are currently estimated at £220,000.
- 5.2 If the transition to the GCR PMO happens within that timeframe, then only a proportion or none of that sum would be required.