

To: Planning and Climate Change Policy Board

On: 7 November 2023

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Clyde Peatlands – Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Clyde Peatlands initiative has been developed as part of a wider response to tackling climate change across Glasgow City Region. The purpose of the initiative is the restoration of degraded peatland bogs which deliver climate and ecological benefits across the City Region, supporting Net Zero ambitions.
 - 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update members on the Clyde Peatlands initiative and delivery within Renfrewshire.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
 - (i) Notes development of Clyde Peatlands and the role of the initiative in contributing to the Council's response to climate change;
 - (ii) Notes the opportunity for development of the West Tandlemuir Farm Restoration Project as part of Clyde Peatlands in Renfrewshire;
 - (iii) Delegates authority to the Head of Economy and Development, in consultation with the Convenor, to develop and progress implementation of the West Tandlemuir Restoration Project, including the preparation of bids for capital funding;
 - (iv) Notes that further progress on delivery of the West Tandlemuir project will be reported to the Board as appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Clyde Peatlands initiative was developed in 2022 as part of a wider response to tackling climate change across the Glasgow City Region.

The initiative has been led by the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership (GCVGNP), which includes the region's eight local authorities and key agencies such as NatureScot.

- 3.2. The purpose of the initiative is to directly address the opportunities for peatland restoration which deliver climate and ecological benefits across the Glasgow City Region. Peatland restoration supports the region's Net Zero ambitions through the storage of carbon, assists in reducing the impact of climate change through storing surface water and provides ecological benefits by supporting enhanced habitat networks.
- 3.3. The initiative was endorsed by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet on 16 June 2022 with initial phases of the project funded by the NatureScot Peatland Action programme. The programme has set aside £250 million until 2030 to support peatland restoration across Scotland and enabled a dedicated Clyde Peatlands Officer to be appointed by GCVNP in April 2023.
- 3.4. Renfrewshire Council declared a Climate Emergency on 27 June 2019. A key element of the Council's approach to climate change is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and a Plan for Net Zero was approved by the Planning and Climate Change Board on 23 August 2022. The Clyde Peatlands initiative supports delivery of the plan through storage of carbon and reduction of emissions.

4. Clyde Peatlands – West Tandlemuir Farm Restoration

- 4.1 The Clyde Peatlands Project Officer has engaged with local authorities across the City Region to consider the potential for 'early win' projects which demonstrate the benefits of peatland restoration, maximise use of funding available from NatureScot's Peatland Action Programme and support the restoration of peat bogs across the City Region.
- 4.2 Early engagement with Council officers identified that the most significant opportunity for peatland restoration within Renfrewshire lies within West Tandlemuir Farm, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, Lochwinnoch, as shown on the attached plan.
- 4.3 In this context a specialist feasibility evaluation of peat reserves at West Tandlemuir Farm was funded and commissioned by NatureScot's Peatland Action team. The study concluded that an area of some 216ha of the farm was suitable for restoration, with the potential to sequester 556 tonnes of CO₂ per year. The area concerned represents less than 17% of the farm's total extent and is located on poorer quality grazing land.
- 4.4 The works identified within the feasibility study include the construction of 'wave dams' with reprofiling of ditches and gullies. The estimated cost of works, which will require a specialist contractor to be appointed, is circa £210,000. As with the initial feasibility study, the opportunity exists for delivery to be 100% funded through NatureScot's Peatland Action programme.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Development of a detailed programme of restoration works at West Tandlemuir Farm is being taken forward in partnership with the Clyde Peatlands officer through a Working Group comprising of relevant officers from the Chief Executive's Service and Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Services.
- 5.2 The area of land proposed for restoration is currently let to an agricultural tenant and officers are working with the farmer to secure consent for the works and to assist in seeking external funding for land management practices which protect and enhance the natural heritage, improve water quality, manage flood risk, and mitigate and adapt to climate change in the area of restored peatland.
- 5.3 In tandem, over the coming months Council officers will work with the Clyde Peatlands officer to secure the necessary statutory consents and approvals (including planning permission), submit a formal application to the Peatland Action Programme to secure NatureScot funding and procure an appropriate specialist contractor to undertake works on the ground.

6. Delivery and Reporting

- 6.1 Subject to securing funding and necessary approvals, it is anticipated that works could progress in autumn 2024. Progress on delivery of the project and any future phases of Clyde Peatlands will be reported to the Board as appropriate.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – It is anticipated that the project will be fully funded by NatureScot's Peatland Action Programme.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community Planning** –
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy – Clyde Peatlands will support the Council's response to climate change and delivery of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero and Renfrewshire Biodiversity Strategy 2018-2022 through the storage of carbon emissions and works which support, enhance and connect existing habitats.
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights.

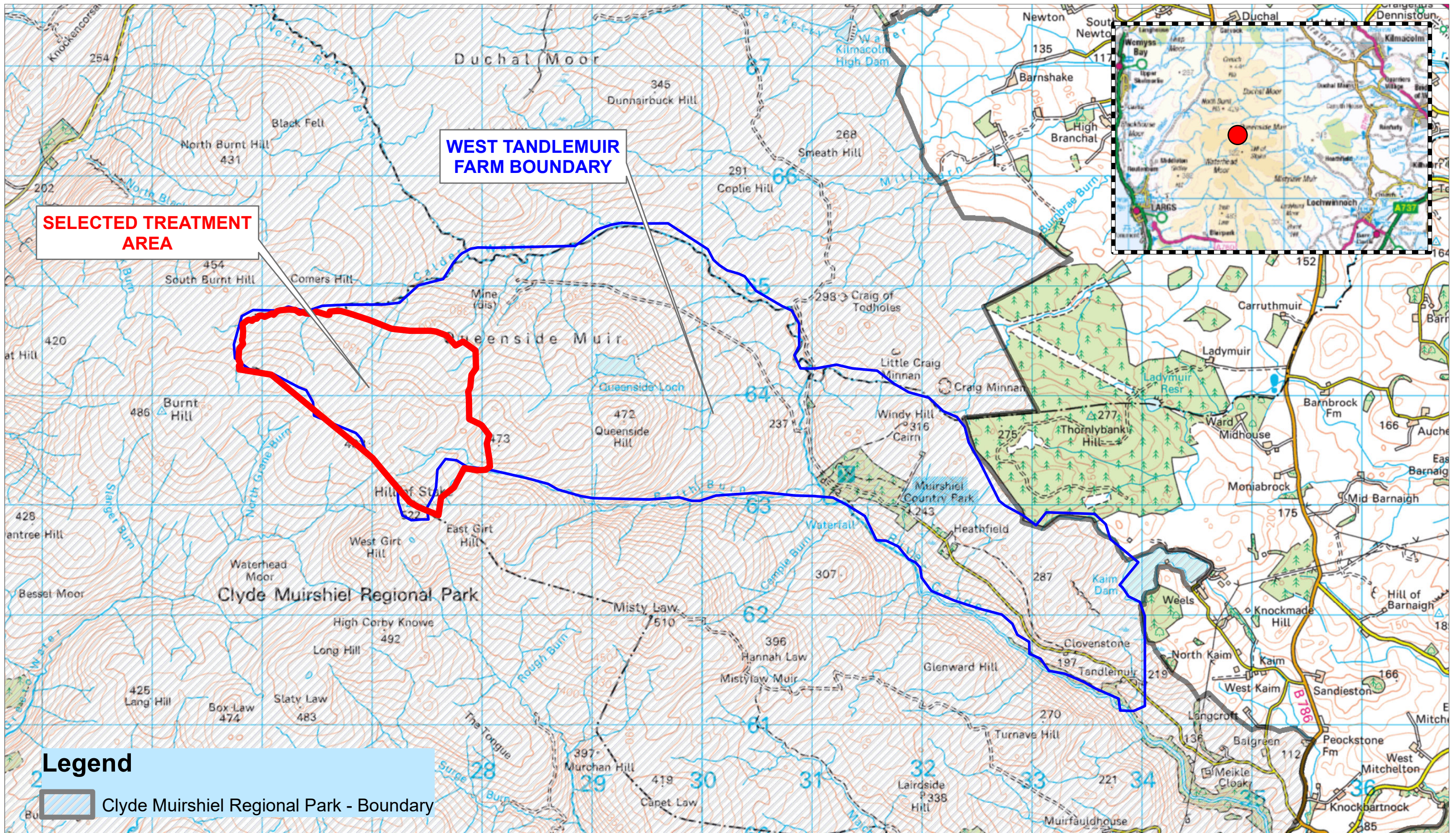
No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
13. **Climate Change** – Implementation of the Clyde Peatlands within Renfrewshire will support the Council's Plan for Net Zero through storage of carbon and reduction of emissions.

Appendices

- (a) Location Plan – West Tandlemuir Peatland Restoration Works

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LOCATION / CONTEXT PLAN



1:32,951

WEST TANDLEMUIR - PEATLAND RESTORATION WORKS

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