

To: Planning and Property Policy Board

On: 24th January 2017

Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

Heading: Semple Trail Heritage Project

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report provides a summary of the key outputs of the Semple Trail Heritage Project, updating on progress made since the last update to the Planning and Property Policy Board on the 10th March 2015.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Board;
- (i) Note the conclusion and successful delivery of the Semple Trail Heritage Project.
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3. Background

- 3.1. Between 2012-2016, the Semple Trail Heritage Project was successfully delivered through a funding package of £860,000 secured from Heritage Lottery Fund, Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire LEADER, Historic Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, RSPB and Legacy 2014.
- 3.2. The main elements of the project which delivered visitor improvements to Castle Semple Country Park and surrounding areas were to:
- Encourage people to explore the area by creating ‘heritage destinations’;
 - Enhance biodiversity;

- Improve access and interpretation;
 - Restore key heritage features (Cascades, ice house, cave and grotto);
 - Deliver a programme of activity for the local communities and visitors.
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4. Key Achievements

- 4.1. The Semple Trail Heritage Project has been a resounding success. The newly defined 15km trail route has improved links between the area's important heritage assets and has improved opportunities for learning and leisure. Key achievements of the project include:
- Over 2km of new or upgraded paths;
 - Two new footbridges and a new fishing/viewing platform;
 - Creation of visitor destinations along the trail route;
 - Restoration of key listed structures, and;
 - Activities involving over 2500 participants, particularly through the Windows on Wildlife project.
- 4.2. The project has fully satisfied the needs and aspirations of all project partners, including funders and community stakeholders. Part of this success was attributable to having a dedicated resource throughout the life of the project in the form of a Project Officer.
- 4.3. All elements have been delivered on budget whilst maximising available grant. The project has also benefitted significantly from added volunteer value, with more than 300 hours of recorded volunteer time.
- 4.4. Recent surveys have shown that more than 90% of visitors believe the improvement works have made the trail more accessible and enjoyable, with new paths showing an increase of up to 135% in visitor use. Results have also shown that 51% of visitors are now aware of the Park's historic cascade complex, up from 8% in 2012.
- 4.5. The Semple Trail will continue to be promoted through established publicity mechanisms of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. Promotional material is available at sites and outlets across Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire.
- 4.6. Anecdotal feedback recorded by staff at Castle Semple Visitor Centre and RSPB Lochwinnoch will inform any subsequent funder reporting requirements. This information will act as a basis for any future developments, driven forward by the continuing enthusiasm of the project group.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None

3. **Community Planning** – None
 4. **Legal** - None
 5. **Property/Assets** - None
 6. **Information Technology** - None.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - 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 because for example it is for noting only.
 8. **Health & Safety** - None
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** - None
 11. **Privacy Impact** - None
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to Planning and Property Policy Board: 10th March 2015 'Semple Trail Heritage Project: Update';
 - (b) Report to Planning and Property Policy Board: 13th May 2014 'Local Green Network Projects 2014/15';
 - (c) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 6th June 2012 'Semple Trail Heritage Project Funding Awards';
 - (d) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 29th November 2011 'Semple Trail Heritage Project – Implementation and Funding Applications', and;
 - (e) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 10th August 2010 'Semple Trail Heritage Project – Heritage Lottery Fund Award'.
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