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**Report to Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 25th June 2015**

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**Subject: Ochils Landscape Partnership**

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**Report by: Head of Development and Environment**

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The report updates the Council on the progress made by the Ochils Landscape Partnership (OLP) and proposals for a successor organisation, *Enabling Projects in Clackmannanshire, Supporting Communities* (EPIC). The report describes the purpose of EPIC, building on the OLP approach of increasing access to the Ochils and the proposed use of Section 75 funding from the Burnfoot Hill Windfarm over the next year.

**2.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:

- (a) Supports the principal to establish a successor organisation (EPIC) whose purpose is set out in paragraph 3.12. of the report.
- (b) Agree to allocate Burnfoot Hill Section 75 windfarm money for the next year to :
  - maintain completed OLP projects
  - fund a Project Manager and related support to maintain OLP projects, support and develop business plan proposals for EPIC and continue to take forward access to the Ochil Hills.
- (c) Agree to a future report setting out proposal for the Council's plan to utilise the S75 windfarm money until 2020, including consideration of EPIC's business plan proposal to access a proportion of the S75 funding.

### 3.0 Considerations

#### Progress

- 3.1. The OLP has been in its implementation phase since August 2011 and is due to end on 31st August, 2015. There are 20 partner organisations, shown as Appendix 2 below, and governance is via an Executive Committee made up of community and other representatives as well as the Council. Support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funding partners is on the basis of a community driven initiative. Day to day activity is facilitated via Clackmannanshire Council as the Managing Partner through a management agreement. It has always been envisaged that a community based organisation would take over responsibility for maintenance commitments and further development once the initial implementation phase ended. The Project has made excellent progress in delivering against its objectives as reported on a regular basis to the Enterprise and Environment Committee.
- 3.2 The OLP area occupies the northern section of Clackmannanshire, roughly from the River Devon up into the Ochil Hills, and from Blairlogie Old Kirk in the west to Muckhart in the east.
- 3.3 There are three different programmes of projects with the Ochils Landscape Partnership:
- **Your Wee Bit Hill and Glen** - a programme dedicated to promoting and enhancing access to the glens of the southern escarpment of the Ochil Hills.
  - **By The Banks of the Devon** - a programme dedicated to enhancing and conserving the meandering River Devon.
  - **The Hills of Time** - a programme that focuses on the cultural, social and industrial heritage of the area.

Appendix 1 describes the projects delivered under each Programme.

- 3.4. All 22 projects forming the Ochils Landscape Partnership programme have started of which the majority are now complete or approaching completion. Ochils Festival 2014 was a great success with an estimate of over 2500 participants across 47 free events. The OLP was visited by HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent on 8th July 2014 where he met the core team, funders and local dignitaries at the Cochrane Hall followed by a short tour of nearby projects. The online engagement materials, The Virtual Visitor and Education Centre, remain extremely popular with smart phone apps also now available. An additional 206 volunteers in 2014 have been added to the database taking the total past the 550 mark.
- 3.5. Core funding for the project has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Burnfoot Hill Wind Farm Recreational Enhancement Fund through a Section 75 Agreement (Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997) with the Council. This agreement was based on an initial payment of £250,000 in the development phase of the project,

followed by a further £250,000 in the first year of implementation. Nine further payments of £85,000 per annum were agreed with a final payment taking place in October 2020, all payments are index linked. Project funding has been secured from a variety of sources as shown in Table 2. To date £801,963 of windfarm money has been given by the Council to OLP to deliver the three programmes. The S75 Agreement states that payments are for a 'Recreational Enhancement Fund' in order to enhance public access to the Ochil Hills in accordance with the Landscape Partnership Strategy.

<b>Table 2 - Funding Sources</b>	<b>£</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)	631,500
Burnfoot Hill Wind Farm Recreational Enhancement Fund (EDF Energy)	801,963
Clackmannanshire Council Community Environmental Improvement Fund	33,921
Clackmannanshire Council	123,000
Clackmannanshire Heritage Trust (£5k)	5,000
Clackmannanshire & Stirling Environment Trust (CSET)	77,263
Scottish Natural Heritage Natural Project Grant (SNH)	74,994
Alva Scouts	490
FVL LEADER	195,543
Logie Old Graveyard Group	6,000
Stirling Council	1,392
Volunteer & In-kind Contribution	109,430
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,060,496</b>

(The figures in Table 2 above are indicative and subject to final costs and claims. These figures do not include contingency or inflation.)

- 3.6. A condition of the funding agreements is that a 10 year maintenance programme should be put in place from the closure of the Programme (2015) in order to ensure that the investment made in projects continues to benefit local communities and visitors to the area. The Maintenance and Management Plan drawn up by OLP estimates total costs of approximately £171,000 over the 10 year maintenance period.
- 3.7. There are six further annual S75 payments (October 2015 - October 2016) generating around £600,000 of revenue. When the maintenance costs detailed in Section 3.6 are paid around £400 - £430,000 of funding will remain to enhancing public access to the Ochil Hills.

- 3.8 In order to deliver its maintenance commitments, as well as continue and further develop its work to improve facilities in the area, the Executive Committee of OLP have been working to create a successor organisation independent of the Council.
- 3.9. Plans to establish a charitable legacy organisation have now been approved with SENSCOT-Legal appointed to assist with forming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The intention is that this organisation will maintain the current projects for a minimum of 10 years, facilitate new community led projects and operate across the whole of Clackmannanshire.
- 3.10. The new organisation is to be called Enabling Projects in Clackmannanshire, Supporting Communities (EPIC). It is envisaged to operate in a similar way to the existing unincorporated association with a two-tier structure of trustees and members.
- 3.11. A Business Plan is being developed by OLP for EPIC. The Council's understanding is EPIC will seek funding from the Burnfoot Hill Section 75 Agreement as part of the business plan. OLP is also negotiating directly with EDF on resources being made available from Phase 2 of the windfarm. Planning consent for this was won on appeal to the Scottish Government and, although no conditions were agreed through a Section 75 Agreement, the OLP Chair and EDF have been discussing a possible additional annual contribution alongside the current agreement.
- 3.12. The broad aims of EPIC are based on :
- providing ongoing maintenance of landscape access projects implemented by OLP for a period of 10 years
  - providing an enabling scheme for projects, working with partner organisations, that will bring benefits to local people and visitors
  - encouraging the exploration of the area's natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the area's economy
  - educating and informing local people and visitors about the natural and cultural heritage of the area
  - facilitating a team of volunteers trained with the appropriate skills to support the aims above
- 3.13 The OLP has noted an interest in EPIC operating initially from the Gartmorn Dam Visitor Centre and is seeking to reach an agreement with the Council on terms of occupation. The OLP Executive Committee has also made a request to the Council to support transitional arrangements for up to a year to OLP/EPIC in the form of existing accommodation in Kilncraigs and ongoing support in the short term on any financial, personnel and legal issues to facilitate the smooth transition from one entity to the other. It is the expectation that

EPIC will arrange for its own advice in these areas to be put in place to support the formal establishment of the new organisation.

#### **4.0. Sustainability Implications**

4.1 Activities supported through EPIC will have a positive impact through:

- Improving the quality of life in Clackmannanshire
- Achieving sustainable economic development
- Conserving Clackmannanshire's built heritage
- Furthering the conservation of biodiversity
- Encouraging outdoor activity
- Protecting and maintaining greenspace
- Encouraging community participation in decision making

#### **5.0. Resource Implications**

5.1. *Financial Details*

5.2. Details of the Section 75 Agreement with the Council and core funding of OLP projects are provided in paragraph 3.5.

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes ☐

5.4. *Staffing*

5.5. A Project Manager will be appointed for up to a 1 year period from S75 money.

#### **6.0. Exempt Reports**

6.1 Is this report exempt?

Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

#### **7.0 Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box ☒)

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are safer  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Vulnerable people and families are supported                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Substance misuse and its effects are reduced                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The environment is protected and enhanced for all                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(2) **Council Policies**

- Clackmannanshire Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023
- Building Clackmannanshire Economic Development Framework 2008-2018

**8.0 Equalities Impact**

- 8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
- Yes ☐ No ☒ Not required

**9.0 Legality**

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.
- Yes ☐ No ☐

**10.0 Appendices**

- 10.1 The following Appendices are attached :

Appendix 1 - Projects Delivered by The Ochils Landscape Partnership  
Appendix 2 - OLP Partner Organisations

**11.0 Background Papers**

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
- Yes ☐ (please list the documents below) No ☐

**Author(s)**

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**Approved by**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
Gordon McNeil	Head of Development & Environment	Signed: G McNeil
Garry Dallas	Executive Director	Signed: G Dallas





## APPENDIX 1

### PROJECTS DELIVERED BY THE OCHILS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

#### Your Wee Bit Hill and Glen

This is a programme dedicated to the promotion of and enhanced access to the glens of the southern escarpment of the Ochil Hills and comprises:

- **The Hillfoots Way** - A new walking route along the foot of the Ochils from Logie in the west to Muckhart in the east.
- **Bonnie Blairlogie** - Improvements to the car park and native species planting.
- **Dumyat Paths** - Improvements to the paths leading towards the summit of Dumyat.
- **Menstrie Glen** - Path improvements, a viewing platform, repairs to the walls and a bridge.
- **Alva Glen** - Promotion of biodiversity, installation of lighting, path improvements, creation of a 'sensory' garden and provision of artwork in the lower glen.
- **Ochils Woodland Park** - Improvements to the car park and paths, and enhancement of biodiversity.
- **Tillicoultry Glen** - Improvements to access, scrub clearance and restoration of the fountain.
- **Dollar Glen** - Archaeological dig on the site above Castle Campbell.
- **Restoration of Mill Green** - Clearance of overgrown scrub to improve access to Dollar Burn.
- **Dollar Education Project** - Installation of a dipping area on the Kelly Burn with production of educational materials about pond dipping.
- **Dollar Burn Water Race** - Restoration/conservation of the stepped water race, and installation of a fish pass.
- **Muckhart Nature Park** - Planting of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to enhance the habitat; creation of a wetland area and a waymarked trail.
- **Control of Bracken** - Systematic control of bracken in areas along the south face of the Ochils.

#### By The Banks of the Devon

This Programme's focus is on the River Devon and its network of streams and burns, linking together projects to improve their quality, benefiting their habitats and recreational appeal.

- **Devon Trail** - A waymarked route along the River Devon from Glenfoot to Vicar's Bridge.

- **Reinstatement of Natural Wetlands** - Re-instatement of wetlands to improve biodiversity.
- **Riverbank Stabilisation** - Stabilisation of the banks of the Devon by removing a gravel bar and tree debris and constructing a berm.
- **Control of Invasive Non-native Species** - Systematic control of invasive Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed along the River Devon.

### **The Hills of Time**

This programme promotes the natural, built and cultural heritage of the OLP area through various forms of interpretation, including on-site information boards as well as more in-depth on-line materials as well as the delivery of events, workshops and training and volunteering opportunities. The Hills of Time programme also includes a number of historic building restoration and research projects.

- **Ochils Orientation** - Working with volunteers to research and interpret the area's built, cultural and social past. Creation of onsite and innovative online interpretive materials.
- **Ochils Festival** - A festival each June – fun events, walks and discovery sessions.
- **Historic Kirkyards** - Conservation of the historic kirkyards, including biodiversity and gravestone data-recording surveys.
- **Mining and Minerals** - Promotion of the industrial heritage of the Ochils area by improving paths to and interpretation at the silver mines near Alva
- **Alva Ice House** - Conservation of this historic underground ice house originally part of Alva House, of which little remains. A young people's archaeology project.

## APPENDIX 2

<b>Table 1 - OLP Partner Organisations</b>	
Alva Community Council	Joint Community Council Forum
Alva Glen Heritage Trust	Logie Community Council
Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership	Menstrie Community Council
Clackmannanshire Council	Muckhart Community Council
Clackmannanshire Heritage Trust	Muckhart Nature Park
Devon Angling Association	Scottish Land and Estates
Discover Clackmannanshire	Stirling Council
Dollar Community Council	Tillicoultry, Coalsnaughton and Devonside Community Council
Dollar Museum	The Conservation Volunteers
Forth Valley College	University of Stirling

