
Report to Council

Date of Meeting: 1 October 2026

**Subject: 2026/27 ALLOCATION OF THE ‘EDINBURGH PROCESS’
STRAND OF THE NATURE RESTORATION FUND**

Report by: Director of Place and Economy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. To inform Council of the successful allocation of funding from the Nature Restoration Fund and to seek endorsement of the proposed programme of works and activities that will be delivered using the funding to support biodiversity enhancement, habitat restoration, and wider environmental objectives within Clackmannanshire.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Council:
- 2.2. Notes the award of funding to the Council through the Nature Restoration Fund and the value of the allocation received.
- 2.3. Notes that the Nature Restoration Fund is intended to support projects and activities that protect, restore and enhance biodiversity, improve ecosystem resilience, and contribute towards tackling the nature emergency.
- 2.4. Agrees that the funding will be utilised to deliver the nature restoration activities outlined in this report, in accordance with the conditions of the funding award.
- 2.5. Notes that all projects supported through the Nature Restoration Fund will align with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and the Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030, which set out Scotland's ambition to halt biodiversity loss and become Nature Positive by 2030, and to achieve significant restoration and regeneration of biodiversity by 2045.
- 2.6. Recognises that achieving these ambitions requires a whole-of-society approach, involving collaboration between national and local government, communities, landowners, businesses, environmental organisations and individuals.

- 2.7. Supports the Council's continued contribution towards national biodiversity objectives through the delivery of nature restoration projects, partnership working and community engagement initiatives.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. In considering this report, Council is asked to recognise the strategic importance of the Nature Restoration Fund in supporting delivery of biodiversity enhancements within Clackmannanshire, contributing to the objectives of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and Delivery Plan to 2030, supporting the development of Nature Networks, and delivering wider environmental, social and economic benefits through a whole-of-society approach to nature recovery.
- 3.2. There is a requirement that the use of funding aligns with the Nature Restoration Fund's five strategic themes, namely:
- **Habitat and species restoration**, including habitat enhancement and ecological connectivity;
 - **Freshwater restoration**, including restoration of natural flows in rural catchments;
 - **Coastal and marine initiatives** that promote restoration, recovery, enhancement and resilience;
 - **Control** and management of **invasive non-native species**;
 - **Urban nature enhancement** and improving ecological connectivity within and between towns and settlements.
- 3.3. While the funding is not ring-fenced to specific projects, the Council must ensure that expenditure aligns with the objectives of the Nature Restoration Fund, contributes to one or more of the Fund's five strategic themes, and supports delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and Biodiversity Delivery Plan to 2030.

4.0 Funding allocation

- 4.1. The Scottish Government has confirmed a 2026/27 Nature Restoration Fund allocation to Clackmannanshire Council of £99,000 capital funding and £27,000 revenue funding. It is proposed that the allocation will be used to support the following activities:

The proposed programme has been designed to align with the objectives of the Nature Restoration Fund, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and the Fund's five strategic themes.

4.1.1 Land Services - £26,000

Alignment with NRF themes: Habitat and Species Restoration, Urban Nature enhancements and development of Nature Networks.

This allocation is for the purchase of wildflower seed (£10,000) and habitat improvements/maintenance along leisure and active travel routes (£16,000).

The planting of wildflower/pollinator seed will enhance nature within parks, greenspaces and urban environments.

The work towards habitat enhancements along active travel and leisure routes will strengthen green infrastructure and improve habitat connectivity between existing greenspaces. The project supports the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) Urban theme by enhancing and connecting nature within settlements while delivering wider health and wellbeing benefits for local communities. Additionally, the works will contribute to local Nature Network objectives by enhancing habitat quality and connectivity along active travel corridors, helping to create linked ecological networks across the council area

Financial considerations:

Allocating £26,000 of Nature Restoration Fund resources to the Land Services Team represents a cost-effective investment that delivers biodiversity enhancement, habitat connectivity and Nature Network objectives while also providing long-term financial benefits to the Council. The proposed measures will reduce maintenance requirements in selected areas, improve the resilience and value of council-owned green infrastructure, help meet biodiversity obligations using external funding, and strengthen the Council's ability to attract future environmental investment. The project therefore provides both ecological and financial value for money.

4.1.2 Planning Services - £10,000

Alignment with NRF themes: Urban nature enhancement and improving ecological connectivity within and between towns and settlements.

This allocation is for the survey of vacant and derelict land to help identify the potential for greening in Alloa and Tullibody. The survey will identify vacant and derelict land opportunities for greening and biodiversity enhancement within Alloa and Tullibody. The project aligns with the NRF Urban theme by supporting the enhancement and connection of nature across towns and communities. It will also contribute to Habitat and Species Restoration and the development of Nature Networks by identifying opportunities for future habitat creation, ecological connectivity and nature recovery on currently underutilised land.

Financial considerations:

The survey of vacant and derelict land within Alloa and Tullibody will provide a strategic evidence base for identifying future biodiversity enhancement and

greening opportunities. The work aligns with the Nature Restoration Fund's Urban and Habitat Restoration themes and supports the development of Nature Networks through the identification of opportunities to improve ecological connectivity. Financially, the project represents a prudent investment that will strengthen future funding applications, support more efficient planning decisions, reduce future land management liabilities and inform delivery of green infrastructure, biodiversity and regeneration objectives within the emerging Local Development Plan.

4.1.3 The Countryside Rangers/The Conservation Volunteers - £15,280

Alignment with NRF themes: Habitat and Species Restoration, including habitat enhancement and ecological connectivity, Control of invasive non-native species (INNS) impacting on nature. Enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities." All of which are Naturescot and Scottish Government priorities to support Nature Networks.

This allocation is associated with a £5,000 allocation for the Countryside Rangers to work on our SSSI¹ site at Gartmorn Dam to deliver habitat restoration, species benefits, invasive species control, public access improvements and protection of a nationally designated biodiversity site in a single package. Works are required on the Dam headwall to control vegetation that is impacting on the structure negatively and is also creating a health and safety challenge for visitors who are tripping and falling on the overgrowth. The allocation will also help the rangers control invasive non-native species and carry out works to protect and enhance the FEN that surrounds the dam (The Fen is a vital freshwater wetland ecosystem that supports rare and nationally scarce plants, filters water, boosts local biodiversity, and provides critical climate and ecological resilience for the dam).

The allocation of £10,280 to The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) is a project which will deliver significant biodiversity, community and financial benefits through the enhancement of habitats along the Council's Core Path and active travel network. By undertaking early intervention to remove invasive Rhododendron, manage self-seeded Beech and improve wildflower meadows, the project will strengthen habitat connectivity and deliver Nature Network objectives while reducing future land management costs. The works will also assist the Council in maintaining safe, accessible and unobstructed core paths, avoiding more costly reactive maintenance and vegetation clearance in future years.

Through the use of TCV volunteers and partnership working with our Countryside Ranger, the project leverages substantial additional value, delivering practical conservation work at a significantly lower cost than traditional delivery methods. The proposal therefore represents excellent

¹ SSSI - A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is a legally protected area designated by [NatureScot](#) because it features the country's best plants (flora), animals (fauna), rocks (geology), or landforms (geomorphology).

value for money by combining habitat restoration, invasive species management, access maintenance, community engagement and visitor asset enhancement within a single coordinated programme.

As Naturescot and the Scottish Government specifically encourage local authorities to use NRF funding to support Nature Networks and improve ecological connectivity, this project is considered to be not just simply habitat management but active implementation of the Clackmannanshire Nature Network.

Financial considerations:

The combined Countryside Rangers and TCV Nature Network projects represent excellent value for money by delivering coordinated biodiversity enhancement, invasive species management, habitat restoration and Nature Network objectives across Gartmorn Dam and Clackmannanshire's wider Core Path network. The projects adopt a preventative approach to land and asset management, reducing future infrastructure repair costs, avoiding more expensive invasive species control measures and limiting long-term maintenance liabilities. In addition, the projects support the Council's duty to maintain safe and accessible Core Paths, protecting important community and visitor assets that are widely used for recreation, active travel and nature appreciation.

The involvement of The Conservation Volunteers further enhances value for money through the substantial contribution of volunteer labour and community participation. Together, these projects protect previous public investment, support future external funding opportunities and deliver long-term environmental, social and financial benefits for the Council.

4.1.4 Community Biodiversity Project fund – £3,170

Alignment with NRF themes - as a strategic biodiversity enhancement and Nature Networks programme this supports the theme “habitat and species restoration through enhancement and connectivity”

This fund will support local communities who have contacted us to create and enhance pollinator habitats through the provision of wildflower seed, perennial plants and limited site preparation works. The project aligns strongly with the Nature Restoration Fund themes of Habitat and Species Restoration and Urban Nature Enhancement by increasing biodiversity and creating species-rich habitats within towns and villages. The programme will also contribute to the development of Clackmannanshire's Nature Network by establishing a series of connected pollinator sites that act as stepping stones between existing habitats.

The groups who have contacted us are:

- Sauchie Residents Community Association
- The Community Shed, Alloa

- Verti-gro Tay Court, Alloa
- Tullibody Community Garden
- Tillicoultry Wildlife group

Financial Considerations:

The proposed Community Pollinator Fund will support local communities to create and enhance pollinator habitats through the provision of wildflower seed, perennial plants and limited site preparation works. The project aligns strongly with the Nature Restoration Fund themes of Habitat and Species Restoration and Urban Nature Enhancement by increasing biodiversity and creating species-rich habitats within towns and villages. The programme will also contribute to the development of Clackmannanshire's Nature Network by establishing a series of connected pollinator sites that act as stepping stones between existing habitats.

The success of previously funded sites in Sauchie and Tillicoultry provides confidence that additional investment in community-led pollinator sites delivers measurable biodiversity benefits while fostering community stewardship of local greenspaces. The proposed programme would build on this proven model by enabling further communities across Clackmannanshire to create and manage pollinator-friendly areas, contributing to the development of the Clackmannanshire Nature Network and supporting the Nature Restoration Fund objectives of Habitat and Species Restoration and Urban Nature Enhancement.

4.1.5 Forth River's Trust – Control of Invasive Non Native Species - £21,550

Alignment with NRF themes - This project fits with the NRF directly as it addresses one of the Fund's five strategic priorities: "Control of invasive non-native species (INNS) impacting on nature".

This funding is to pay for a grant for the Forth Rivers Trust to carry Catchment-wide treatment of Japanese Knotweed across the River Devon catchment, from its known source in Glendevon downstream towards Cambus Weir and associated tributaries. The purpose is to maintain progress already achieved through previous investment by the Council and other funding authorities. Continued treatment in 2026 will protect the value of work already delivered and prevent the catchment from slipping backwards.

Financial Considerations: The project will contribute to the resilience of the River Devon corridor, which passes through and influences communities across the Hillfoots area where flooding and riverbank erosion can have significant impacts on people, infrastructure and the natural environment. By supporting the recovery of native riparian habitats and preventing the spread of Japanese Knotweed, the programme helps protect riverbank stability, public assets, active travel routes and greenspaces. Furthermore, as a landowner adjacent to sections of the catchment, Clackmannanshire Council has a responsibility to manage invasive species on its own land and minimise the risk of spread onto neighbouring landholdings. Continued catchment-scale treatment reduces this risk, protects surrounding landowners and safeguards previous public investment. The proposal therefore delivers strong

environmental, financial and community benefits while reducing future liabilities for the Council.

4.1.6 Forth Climate Forest - £50,000

Alignment with NRF themes: This project aligns very strongly with the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), particularly the Habitat and Species Restoration and Urban themes, while also making a significant contribution to Nature Networks, which the funding guidance specifically encourages local authorities to support.

This funding will be used to pay a grant to the Forth Climate Forest Woodland Creation Project which aligns strongly with the Nature Restoration Fund themes of Habitat and Species Restoration and Urban Nature Enhancement through the creation of approximately 5 hectares of new native woodland and the planting of over 8,000 trees across Clackmannanshire. The project will strengthen ecological connectivity, expand habitat networks and contribute directly to the development of the Clackmannanshire Nature Network. By focusing planting on Council-owned land and sites which enhance habitat connectivity, the project will deliver long-term biodiversity benefits while supporting climate resilience and green infrastructure objectives.

Financial considerations - Financially, the proposal represents excellent value for money, generating approximately £3.40 of nature restoration activity for every £1 of Council investment. Delivery through Forth Climate Forest, TCV volunteers and a dedicated Tree Warden provides significant additional capacity, allowing the Council to achieve substantial woodland creation and biodiversity gains at a fraction of the cost of direct delivery. The project therefore provides both environmental and financial benefits while helping the Council meet its biodiversity, climate and strategic planning objectives.

The provision of this investment will see the Forth Climate Forest apply for and secure further funding from Scottish Government, Government agencies and other 3rd party organisations. This funding will be utilised to deliver a wider programme of community engagement, climate adaptation and nature restoration works across Clackmannanshire, as summarised in the table below.

FORTH CLIMATE FOREST		Project :	Delivered in Clackmannanshire Council area
		FREE TREE SCHEMES	
	a	Free Fruit and Flowering Trees for Gardens	£ 12,835
		SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT	
	b	Tree Planting with schools	£ 25,000
		TREES FOR GOALS	
	c	Phase 3 support - tool kit development	£ 2,667
		DELIVERING TREE EQUITY	
	d	Phase 3	£ 36,000
		DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING WOODLAND NETWORKS	
	e	Farm and Estate Assessments	£ 2,500
	f	Copses, Hedges and Trees	£ 9,500
	g	Woodland Creation Support	£ 19,100
		TREE MAINTENANCE	
	h	maintenance works	£ 8,441
		PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY	
	i	Travel, events, marketing, comms, promotion etc	£ 3,000
		Total	£ 119,042

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. *Financial Details*

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes ☒

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

5.4. *Staffing*

5.4.1 Staffing Implications

Delivery of the proposed programme of works will be undertaken through a collaborative approach involving existing Council staff resources from Land Services, Energy and Sustainability, and the Countryside Ranger Service. The revenue allocation associated with the Nature Restoration Fund will be used, where appropriate, to commission specialist technical support to progress strategic biodiversity projects, including the preparation of a Woodland Strategy, development of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and advancement of Nature Networks.

In addition, a proportion of the funding will support community-based nature restoration projects delivered in partnership with local community groups, volunteers, schools and other stakeholders. This approach reflects the whole-of-society principle underpinning the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Edinburgh Process, enabling local communities to play an active role in nature recovery while increasing local awareness, stewardship and participation in biodiversity enhancement activities.

This approach ensures that the Council has access to the necessary expertise to support delivery of biodiversity objectives, maximises opportunities for community engagement and partnership working, and avoids the creation of additional permanent staffing commitments.

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**

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all ☒

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life ☒

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential ☐

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish ☒

(2) **Council Policies**

Complies with relevant Council Policies ☒

The funding aligns with Clackmannanshire Council's sustainability and climate change objectives by supporting nature-based solutions, ecosystem resilience and environmental stewardship. The proposed programme also contributes to the Council's Pollinator Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan, development of Nature Networks, and the emerging Woodland Strategy through habitat enhancement, ecological connectivity and community-led nature restoration activities. The funding complements the Council's wider ambitions to create greener, healthier and more resilient places for people and nature

8.0 Impact Assessments

8.1 Have you attached the combined equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty and fairer Scotland duty? (All EFSIAs also require to be published on the Council's website)

Yes ☒

8.2 If an impact assessment has not been undertaken you should explain why:

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 ☒

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

EFSIA

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)

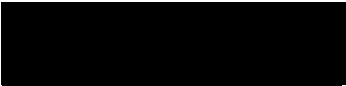
Yes ☒

Nature Restoration allocation of funding

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Kevin Wells	Director – Place and Economy	01259 45 2533
Lawrence Hunter	Energy and Sustainability Team Leader	01259 45 2681

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Kevin Wells	Director – Place and Economy	



Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment (EFSIA) Summary of Assessment

Title: 2026/27 ALLOCATION OF THE 'EDINBURGH PROCESS' STRAND OF THE NATURE RESTORATION FUND

Key findings from this assessment (or reason why an EFSIA is not required):

No direct discrimination impacts have been identified. The proposals are biodiversity and place-based projects that are available for the benefit of all residents and visitors. Temporary restrictions associated with habitat management works may create minor short-term accessibility impacts; however, these can be mitigated through appropriate planning and communication.

Overall, the proposals are expected to have positive equality and Fairer Scotland outcomes through improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces, core paths and nature reserves; enhanced health and wellbeing opportunities; support for volunteering and community participation; and investment in environmental improvements that benefit communities across Clackmannanshire, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Summary of actions taken because of this assessment:

No negative equality impacts were identified. Temporary access restrictions associated with habitat management works will be minimised through appropriate planning and communication. The projects are expected to have positive impacts through improved access to greenspace, enhanced biodiversity, volunteer opportunities, community participation and investment in environmental improvements across Clackmannanshire.

The assessment identified a number of positive impacts and opportunities which will be supported through project delivery:

- Improvements to public greenspaces, nature reserves, woodland habitats and community spaces.
- Improved accessibility and safety through vegetation management and path maintenance.
- Enhanced opportunities for outdoor recreation, walking, cycling and engagement with nature.
- Increased opportunities for volunteering, community participation and skills development through projects delivered by The Conservation Volunteers and Forth Climate Forest.
- Support for community-led pollinator projects that promote local stewardship, community pride and civic participation.
- Delivery of biodiversity improvements in locations accessible to communities across Clackmannanshire, including areas experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

No further mitigation measures are considered necessary at this stage. The projects are expected to have an overall positive impact on equality, community wellbeing and Fairer Scotland outcomes through improved access to high-quality natural environments, strengthened community involvement and enhanced local biodiversity.

Ongoing actions beyond implementation of the proposal include:

The assessment identified no evidence of direct discrimination arising from the proposed allocation of Nature Restoration Fund resources. The projects are designed to enhance biodiversity, improve publicly accessible greenspaces and strengthen nature networks across Clackmannanshire for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

To minimise any potential indirect impacts, project delivery will:

- Ensure that any temporary restrictions to access on core paths, active travel routes or greenspaces are minimised where possible.
- Provide appropriate signage and communication where habitat management works may temporarily affect public access.
- Consider accessibility requirements when planning works on paths and visitor sites.
- Maintain safe access to key recreational assets, including Gartmorn Dam and the wider Core Path network.
- Review of implementation if an unforeseen adverse impact is identified

Lead person(s) for this assessment:

Lawrence Hunter – Energy and Sustainability Team leader

Senior officer approval of assessment:

Kevin Wells – Head of Place and Economy

DATE:

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment (EFSIA)

An Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment (EFSIA) must be completed in relation to any decisions, activities, policies, strategies or proposals of the Council (referred to as 'proposal' in this document). The first stage of the assessment process will determine the level of impact assessment required.

This form should be completed using the guidance contained in the document: ['NAME']. Please read the guidance before completing this form.

The aim of this assessment is to allow you to critically assess:

- the impact of the proposal on those with protected characteristics and, where relevant, affected by socio-economic disadvantage (referred to as 'equality groups' in this document);
- whether the Council is meeting its legal requirements in terms of Public Sector Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty;
- whether any measures need to be put in place to ensure any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised.

The Fairer Scotland Duty requires public authorities to pay 'due regard' to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making **strategic decisions**. Strategic decisions are key, high-level decisions such as decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources, delivery or implementation and commissioning services and all decisions that go to Council or committee for approval.

Step A – Confirm the details of your proposal

1. Describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal.

To inform Council of the successful allocation of funding from the Nature Restoration Fund and to seek endorsement of the proposed programme of works and activities that will be delivered using the funding to support biodiversity enhancement, habitat restoration, and wider environmental objectives within Clackmannanshire

2. Why is the proposal required?

To inform Council of Clackmannanshire Council Nature Restoration funding award for 2026/27 and seek Council's agreement that the funding will be utilised to deliver the nature restoration activities outlined in this report, in accordance with the conditions of the funding award.

3. Who is affected by the proposal?

Directly Affected

- Residents of Clackmannanshire who use local greenspaces, parks, woodlands, nature reserves and community open spaces.
- Users of the Core Path and active travel network, including walkers, cyclists, runners and mobility scooter users.
- Visitors to Gartmorn Dam and other biodiversity sites across Clackmannanshire.
- Community groups participating in pollinator projects and local environmental improvements.
- Volunteers involved in projects delivered by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and Forth Climate Forest.
- Landowners adjoining areas where invasive species control and habitat management works will take place.

- Clackmannanshire Council services responsible for land management, biodiversity, planning, access and greenspace maintenance.

Indirectly Affected

- Local communities benefiting from improved biodiversity, access to nature and enhanced public spaces.
- People with protected characteristics who use accessible greenspaces and path networks.
- Young people and schools who may benefit from outdoor learning and volunteering opportunities.
- Local businesses benefiting from visitor activity associated with destinations such as Gartmorn Dam and the Core Path network.
- Future generations through the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, habitats and Nature Networks.
- Wildlife and protected species that will benefit from habitat restoration, woodland creation, pollinator planting and invasive species control.

The proposals will affect a wide range of residents, visitors, community groups, volunteers, landowners and Council services across Clackmannanshire. The projects will enhance publicly accessible greenspaces, the Core Path network, active travel routes, woodland areas and biodiversity sites including Gartmorn Dam. The primary impacts are expected to be positive through improved biodiversity, habitat connectivity, public access, recreation opportunities, volunteer participation and community involvement. Temporary and localised disruption may occur during the delivery of habitat management works; however, this will be managed through appropriate planning and communication. Overall, the proposals are expected to provide positive environmental, social and wellbeing benefits across the local authority area.

4. What other Council policies or activities may be related to this proposal? The EFSIAs for related policies might help you understand potential impacts.

The proposed allocation of Nature Restoration Fund resources aligns strongly with Clackmannanshire Council's biodiversity, climate change, greenspace, active travel, community empowerment and place-making objectives. The projects will support delivery of the Clackmannanshire Nature Network, Pollinator Strategy, emerging Local Development Plan and wider environmental responsibilities. They will also assist the Council in meeting its duties as a landowner and land manager while protecting important community assets, improving habitat connectivity, supporting volunteer participation and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors across Clackmannanshire.

5. Is the proposal a strategic decision? If so, please complete the steps below in relation to socio-economic disadvantage. If not, please state why it is not a strategic decision:

No. Although the proposal is being submitted to Council for approval, it is an operational allocation of the Nature Restoration fund grant allocation to the Council which requires to adhere to the Scottish Government and Nature Restoration guidelines.

Step B – Consider the level of EFSIA required

You should consider the available evidence and data relevant to your proposal. You should gather information in order to:

- *help you to understand the importance of your proposal for those from equality groups,*
- *inform the depth of EFSIA you need to do (this should be proportionate to the potential impact), and*
- *provide justification for the outcome, including where it is agreed an EFSIA is not required.*

6. What information is available about the experience of those with protected characteristics in relation to this proposal? Does the proposal relate to an area where there are already known inequalities? Refer to the guidance for sources of evidence and complete the table below.

Equality Group	Evidence source (e.g. online resources, report, survey, consultation exercise already carried out)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the proposal? NB Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (Step C).
Age	Countryside Rangers and CLD feedback from previous projects. Community engagement relating to Gartmorn Dam and local greenspaces. Scottish Government and NatureScot recognition that nature restoration can support health and wellbeing outcomes.	Older people and young people are significant users of parks, paths, nature reserves and greenspaces. The projects will improve the quality and accessibility of these environments and provide opportunities for outdoor learning, recreation and volunteering.
Disability	Public access and path management responsibilities. Existing Council accessibility considerations for path networks.	People with disabilities may benefit from improved path conditions, vegetation management and safer access to public greenspaces. No adverse impacts have been identified, although temporary disruption during works should be managed appropriately.
Race		No evidence has been identified that the proposals will directly or indirectly discriminate against people on the basis of race or ethnicity. Access to the benefits arising from the projects will be available to all residents and visitors.
Sex	Past community participation opportunities through TCV, Forth Climate Forest and community-led projects.	No differential impacts have been identified. The projects will improve publicly accessible environments and volunteering opportunities available to all genders.
Gender Reassignment		No evidence has been identified that these groups are disproportionately affected by the proposals. The projects are

Equality Group	Evidence source (e.g. online resources, report, survey, consultation exercise already carried out)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the proposal? NB Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (Step C).
		open to all residents and visitors and do not restrict access on the basis of any protected characteristic.
Sexual orientation		No evidence has been identified that these groups are disproportionately affected by the proposals. The projects are open to all residents and visitors and do not restrict access on the basis of any protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief		No evidence has been identified that these groups are disproportionately affected by the proposals. The projects are open to all residents and visitors and do not restrict access on the basis of any protected characteristic.
Pregnancy or maternity	The Scottish Government recognises the importance of maternal wellbeing and healthy environments in supporting the best start in life for children. The World Health Organization's review of urban green spaces found evidence linking access to greenspace with improved pregnancy outcomes. The report identifies several mechanisms including stress reduction, opportunities for physical activity, and reduced exposure to air pollution, noise and excessive heat.	Improved access to safe, attractive greenspaces may provide positive wellbeing benefits for pregnant individuals and families with young children. No adverse impacts have been identified.
Marriage or civil partnership (only the		No evidence has been identified that these groups are disproportionately affected by the proposals. The projects are

Equality Group	Evidence source (e.g. online resources, report, survey, consultation exercise already carried out)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the proposal? NB Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (Step C).
first aim of the Duty is relevant to this protected characteristic and only in relation to work matters)		open to all residents and visitors and do not restrict access on the basis of any protected characteristic.
Socio economic disadvantage (if required)	The WHO review found evidence that access to greenspace is associated with improved mental health, reduced stress, increased physical activity and broader health benefits. These benefits can be particularly significant for people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, who often experience poorer health outcomes overall.	The projects improve free-to-access community assets, including: • Core Paths. • Active travel routes. • Community greenspaces. • Pollinator sites. • Woodland areas. • Gartmorn Dam Local Nature Reserve. The proposals are expected to have a positive impact on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage by improving access to free, high-quality greenspaces, active travel routes and recreational opportunities across Clackmannanshire. The projects support community participation, volunteering, skills development and local stewardship while enhancing the quality of local environments. Particular benefits are expected through community-led pollinator projects, volunteer programmes, improvements to publicly accessible natural assets and the enhancement of nature-rich spaces that can be enjoyed by all residents regardless of income. The Council will continue to support inclusive participation and accessible delivery of projects to maximise these benefits.

7. Based on the evidence above, is there relevance to some or all of the equality groups? Yes

If yes or unclear, proceed to further steps and complete full EFSIA

No evidence of direct discrimination or significant adverse impacts has been identified. The proposals are expected to have an overall positive impact across protected characteristic groups and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage through improved access to greenspace, healthier environments, volunteering opportunities, community empowerment and enhanced biodiversity across Clackmannanshire.

If no, explain why below and then proceed to Step E:

Step C – Stakeholder engagement

This step will help you to address any gaps in evidence identified in Step B. Engagement with people who may be affected by a proposal can help clarify the impact it will have on different equality groups. Sufficient evidence is required for you to show 'due regard' to the likely or actual impact of your proposal on equality groups.

- 8. Based on the outcome of your assessment of the evidence under Step B, please detail the groups you intend to engage with or any further research that is required in order to allow you to fully assess the impact of the proposal on these groups. If you decide not to engage with stakeholders, please state why not:**

It is not considered necessary to undertake further targeted stakeholder engagement to assess the equality impacts of this proposal. The projects involve environmental improvements, habitat restoration, invasive species management, woodland creation, pollinator planting and enhancement of publicly accessible greenspaces. The proposals do not alter Council services, eligibility criteria, access rights, employment arrangements or decision-making processes in a way that would differentially affect people with protected characteristics.

The projects are intended to enhance publicly accessible assets, including parks, woodland, Gartmorn Dam, active travel routes and the Core Path network, which are available to all residents and visitors. No evidence has been identified to suggest that any protected characteristic group would experience a disproportionate negative impact as a result of the proposals.

Existing evidence from:

- Previous community engagement undertaken through the Clackmannanshire Nature Network programme.
- Engagement relating to the EPIC Nature Networks Project.
- Community participation in existing projects at Sauchie, Tillicoultry and Gartmorn Dam.
- Consultation undertaken through the Local Development Plan process.
- Ongoing engagement with community groups, landowners, The Conservation Volunteers, Forth Climate Forest, Forth Rivers Trust and Council services.
- National evidence regarding the benefits of access to greenspace, biodiversity and active travel opportunities.

provides a sufficient understanding of the likely impacts of the proposals.

Furthermore, the assessment has identified no adverse impacts on protected characteristic groups and anticipates largely positive outcomes through improved access to quality greenspace, enhanced biodiversity, volunteering opportunities, safer and better maintained paths, community participation and improved environmental quality. Any temporary impacts associated with delivery, such as short-term path diversions or restricted access during works, can be mitigated through normal project planning, communication and signage.

On this basis, existing evidence is considered sufficient to assess the equality and Fairer Scotland impacts of the proposals and no additional stakeholder engagement is considered necessary at this stage.

Evidence Sources

- Nature Restoration Fund Guidance 2026/27. [[Nature Res...RD version | Word](#)]
- EPIC Nature Networks Project outputs.
- Clackmannanshire Nature Network engagement activities.
- Local Development Plan consultation and evidence gathering.
- Previous community-led biodiversity projects in Sauchie and Tillicoultry.
- Usage and management information relating to Core Paths and Gartmorn Dam.
- Partner engagement with TCV, Forth Climate Forest and Forth Rivers Trust.

9. Please detail the outcome of any further engagement, consultation and/or research carried out:

Not applicable in this instance as per details above

Step D - Impact on equality groups and steps to address this

10. Consider the impact of the proposal in relation to each protected characteristic under each aim of the general duty:

- Is there potential for discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010? How will this be mitigated?
- Is there potential to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not? How can this be achieved?
- Is there potential for developing good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not? How can this be achieved?

If relevant, consider socio-economic impact.

Age	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals do not discriminate on the basis of age. Improvements to Core Paths, greenspaces, woodland areas and Gartmorn Dam will benefit people of all ages
potential for developing good relations	X			Volunteer opportunities through TCV and Forth Climate Forest encourage intergenerational participation and community engagement.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to both younger and older residents and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Disability	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	Temporary restrictions during works will be minimised through signage and appropriate management. Project managers will consider accessibility requirements when planning works affecting path users
potential for developing good relations	X			Volunteer opportunities through TCV and Forth Climate Forest encourage intergenerational participation and community engagement
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to both younger and older residents and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Race	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals are available to all residents and visitors regardless of race or ethnic background.

potential for developing good relations	X			Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from different backgrounds through shared environmental activities.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all races and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Sex	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals do not create different outcomes based on sex and opportunities to participate in volunteering and community-led projects will be open to all.
potential for developing good relations	X			Improved access to quality greenspace and recreation opportunities can benefit all residents equally. Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from all sexes through shared environmental activities.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all sexes and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Gender Reassignment	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals are unrelated to gender reassignment and no differential impacts have been identified.
potential for developing good relations	X			Improved access to quality greenspace and recreation opportunities can benefit all residents equally. Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from all backgrounds through shared environmental activities.

potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Sexual Orientation	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals do not impact individuals differently on the basis of sexual orientation. Access to the benefits of the projects will be available equally to all users.
potential for developing good relations	X			Improved access to quality greenspace and recreation opportunities can benefit all residents equally. Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from all backgrounds through shared environmental activities.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Religion or Belief	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	The proposals do not affect individuals on the basis of religion or belief and no adverse impacts have been identified.
potential for developing good relations	X			Improved access to quality greenspace and recreation opportunities can benefit all residents equally. Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from all backgrounds through shared environmental activities.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Pregnancy/maternity	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination			X	Improved greenspaces, accessible paths and enhanced recreational areas may provide positive wellbeing and recreation opportunities for families, pregnant people and those with young children. Temporary access restrictions during works will be managed appropriately
potential for developing good relations	X			Improved access to quality greenspace and recreation opportunities can benefit all residents equally. Community projects, volunteering opportunities and improvements to publicly accessible greenspaces may help bring together people from all backgrounds through shared environmental activities.
potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			Volunteering, outdoor recreation, walking and nature-based activities can provide wellbeing benefits to all and in the process create equality of opportunity.

Marriage/civil partnership	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
risk of discrimination (only the first aim of the Duty is relevant to this protected characteristic and only in relation to work matters)			X	The proposals create any impact based on marital or civil partnership status. No further action required.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe any actions you plan to take, eg. to mitigate any impact, maximise positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes
	Yes	No	No impact	
(If required) Will the proposal reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?	X			The proposals are expected to have a positive impact on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage through improvements to free-to-access greenspaces, active travel routes, Core Paths, community pollinator sites and Gartmorn Dam. The projects provide opportunities for volunteering, skills development and community participation. Community-led projects in Sauchie and Tillicoultry demonstrate how relatively small

				investments can improve local environments, strengthen community pride and increase community ownership of public spaces. The proposals also improve access to nature and recreation without creating financial barriers to use.
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11. Describe how the assessment might affect the proposal or project timeline?

Examples of the items you should consider here include, but are not limited to:

- **Communication plan:** do you need to communicate with people affected by proposal in a specific format (e.g. audio, subtitled video, different languages) or do you need help from other organisations to reach certain groups?
- **Cost:** do you propose any actions because of this assessment which will incur additional cost?
- **Resources:** do the actions you propose require additional or specialist resource to deliver them?
- **Timing:** will you need to build more time into the project plan to undertake research, consult or to complete any actions identified in this assessment?

Requiring a full Equality Impact Assessment consultation prior to approval of the funding allocation could result in delays to project commencement and delivery. This may affect seasonal habitat restoration activities, tree planting programmes, invasive species treatment schedules and volunteer-led conservation work. Delays could increase project costs, reduce biodiversity outcomes, impact partner organisations' ability to deliver works and create a risk of underspend within the funding period. Given that the assessment has not identified any significant adverse impacts on protected characteristic groups and that the proposals are expected to deliver largely positive environmental, community and wellbeing benefits, it is considered that the existing evidence base is sufficient to inform decision-making without the need for a separate full consultation exercise.

12. **Having considered the potential or actual impacts of your proposal, you should now record the outcome of this assessment.** Choose from one of the following:

Please select (X)	Implications for the proposal
X	No major change Your assessment demonstrates that the proposal shows no risk of unlawful discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.
	Adjust the proposal and/or implement mitigations You have identified ways of modifying the proposal to avoid discrimination or to better advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations. In addition, or alternatively, you will introduce measures to mitigate any negative impacts. Adjustments and mitigations should be recorded in the tables under Step D above and summarised in the summary sheet at the front of the document.
	Continue the proposal with adverse impact The proposal will continue despite the potential for adverse impact. Any proposal which results in direct discrimination is likely to be unlawful and should be stopped and advice taken. Any proposal which results in indirect discrimination should be objectively justified and the basis for this set out in the tables under Step D above and summarised in the summary sheet at the front of the document. If objective justification is not possible, the proposal should be stopped whilst advice is taken.
	Stop the proposal The proposal will not be implemented due to adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.

Step E - Discuss and review the assessment with decision-makers

13. **You must discuss the findings of this assessment at each stage with senior decision makers during the lifetime of the proposal and before you finalise the assessment. Record details of these discussions and decisions taken below:**

Draft EFSIA prepared for review alongside the draft Council report. To be completed with the dates and outcomes of review by the relevant Senior Manager, Equalities adviser, Legal Services, Service Management Team and other decision-makers.

Step F – Post-implementation actions and monitoring impact

It is important to continue to monitor the impact of your proposal on equality groups to ensure that your actual or likely impacts are those you recorded. This will also highlight any unforeseen impacts.

14. **Record any post-implementation actions required.**

The Equality Impact Assessment will remain a live document and will be reviewed if there are significant changes to the projects, funding allocations or delivery arrangements, or if new information becomes available indicating potential impacts on protected characteristic groups.

15. **Note here how you intend to monitor the impact of this proposal on equality groups.**

The impacts of the projects will be monitored through existing Council monitoring arrangements, including customer feedback, complaints, community engagement and project reporting from delivery partners. Particular consideration will be given to maintaining accessibility of Core Paths, active travel routes and public greenspaces during project delivery. Volunteer participation, community involvement and feedback from users of key sites such as Gartmorn Dam will be reviewed to identify any unintended impacts on people with protected characteristics or those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Should any adverse impacts be identified, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented through project management and operational delivery.

Note here when the EFSIA will be reviewed as part of the post-implementation review of the proposal:

The Equality Impact Assessment will remain a live document and will be reviewed if there are significant changes to the projects, funding allocations or delivery arrangements, or if new information becomes available indicating potential impacts on protected characteristic groups. Project delivery will be monitored through existing Council reporting mechanisms, stakeholder feedback and customer enquiries. In the absence of significant changes or identified impacts, the assessment will be reviewed as part of the annual evaluation of the Nature Restoration Fund programme and prior to any subsequent funding allocation decisions.

Step G – Assessment sign off and approval

Lead person(s) for this assessment:

Signed: Lawrence Hunter – Energy and Sustainability Team Leader

Date:

Senior officer approval of assessment:

Signed: Kevin Wells - Director of Place and Economy

Date:

All full EFSIAs must be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the decision is made to implement the proposal.