
Report to Enterprise and Environment Committee

Date of Meeting: 6 June 2013

Subject: Inner Forth Landscape Initiative

Report by: Director of Services to Communities

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report explains Clackmannanshire Council's involvement in the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, progress made to date in developing an Inner Forth Landscape Partnership Scheme, and requests the agreement of Committee to formalise Council involvement in the Initiative and note the request by the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative for a financial contribution towards delivery of the Partnership Scheme projects.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee:
- a) notes progress made by the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative towards delivery of a four-year Landscape Partnership Scheme for the Inner Forth area and agrees that Clackmannanshire Council continues to play an active role in developing the Initiative by contributing to project development work and officer involvement in the Initiative Board, Steering Group and Working Groups;
 - b) agrees that the Council signs a Minute of Agreement to formalise engagement in the Initiative;
 - c) notes the request of the Board of the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative for a cash contribution of £20,000 per annum during the Delivery Period of the Scheme but declines this request. It is intended that Clackmannanshire Council would continue to support the project through provision of in-kind contributions.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) covers an area of 202km² around the River Forth in Clackmannanshire, Stirling, Falkirk and Fife. Within Clackmannanshire the Initiative area includes the full length of the Forth shoreline to a point approximately 1-2km inland from the shoreline.

- 3.2. The Initiative has been developed by a partnership of organisations, led by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and including the local authorities, SEPA, SNH, Historic Scotland, Central Scotland Forest Trust, TCV Scotland and Sustrans. A key principle of the Initiative is that local communities will play a central part in project development and implementation.
- 3.3. The Vision of the Initiative is of an Inner Forth Landscape where the natural, cultural and historic wealth of the area is revealed, valued, enhanced and made accessible to both residents and visitors. This will be achieved through delivery of a series of related and inter-linked projects that aim to turn perceptions of the Inner Forth around and rekindle local pride in the local environment; connect disparate habitats to create a landscape flourishing with wildlife; conserve, enhance and celebrate the Inner Forth's natural, cultural and built heritage; create opportunities and support people to enjoy, explore and take action to look after their landscape; and provide training opportunities in local heritage skills.
- 3.4. IFLI was successful in its initial application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), securing approximately £75,900 to take forward a 12 month Stage 1 Development Phase. The Council has played a full part in this Phase and, with partners, has developed proposals for environmental projects centred on the Black Devon and Cambus Pools areas including access and biodiversity improvements. The 10 projects in the Clackmannanshire area are likely to include:
- Conservation and enhancement of natural heritage e.g. creation of new and enhanced wetland areas at the mouth of the River Black Devon (led by RSPB) and the improvement of the Cambus Pools Nature Reserve (led by Scottish Wildlife Trust);
 - Conservation and enhancement of built and cultural heritage e.g. Clackmannan Tower; Alloa Tower
 - Improved access to the heritage of the project area e.g. upgrading of existing access routes to Cambus Pools, along the River Black Devon between Clackmannan and the Black Devon Wetland, around the Black Devon Wetland and between Cambus and Alloa;
 - Provision of skills and training opportunities e.g. training in skills related to wetland development and flood management
- 3.5. The overall value of the physical works related to the projects in Clackmannanshire in financial terms is estimated to be approximately £1 million. The Council has an ongoing responsibility for maintenance of the core path network and is also engaged in providing signage for the network. If the Inner Forth Landscape Partnership Scheme did not proceed, or if the Council did not participate in it, we would still anticipate spending around £20k on path repairs and maintenance and the provision of signage for paths which would otherwise be upgraded under Partnership Scheme projects.
- 3.6. These projects would provide significant benefits for both residents and visitors to Clackmannanshire through provision of new and improved access routes to the riverside and to sites of importance for nature conservation. An

important aspect of the project for Clackmannanshire is to boost biodiversity, for example through wetland creation, providing new recreational, educational and tourism opportunities. Provision of skills and training opportunities is an important part of the scheme and the Council aims to create a number of job opportunities for residents of Clackmannanshire through the Initiative and the related Forth Coastal Project which would not otherwise exist. The realisation of these opportunities would be very difficult to achieve without the partnership support offered by the Inner Forth Landscape Partnership Scheme.

- 3.7. Selection of projects to be included as part of the Initiative Stage 2 bid will take place during Summer 2013. Project delivery is expected to begin in May 2014.
- 3.8. Development of the Initiative has been undertaken on an informal basis so far. However, the partners have agreed that a Minute of Agreement should be prepared to set out the intention of the partners to work together and take shared responsibility to successfully develop and deliver the Initiative. Such an agreement is a prerequisite for the Initiative's Stage 2 bid to HLF which it is intended to submit in November 2013. The Minute of Agreement is currently being formulated and discussed by the partners. For the Council to continue to be an active partner in the project the Minute of Agreement requires to be agreed and signed prior to submission of the Stage 2 application in November 2013.
- 3.9. To date the Council has contributed to the development of the Initiative through in-kind contribution of officer time and progression of a linked scheme, the Forth Coastal Project. This Project has attracted £230,000 of funding from the Coastal Communities Fund, part of which could support the objectives of, and provide match funding for, an Inner Forth Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- 3.10. The Initiative Board have now requested that all partners who are signatories to the Minute of Agreement should make a financial contribution to support the delivery of the Landscape Partnership Scheme. The details of the agreed contribution for each partner will be set out in separate agreements between RSPB Scotland (the lead partner) and each contributing partner.

Funding

- 3.11. The Stage 2 application to the HLF will seek £1.9 million (or 49%) of funding towards a £3.8 million Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- 3.12. The funding from HLF has been assigned to five programme areas with indicative budgets associated with each programme –
 - Conserving or Restoring - £1,048,490
 - Increasing Community Participation - £417,365
 - Access and Learning - £1,264,370
 - Training and Skills - £699,187

- Overheads, scheme staffing and running costs - £412,983
 - Total Delivery Cost - £3,842,395
 - HLF Delivery Grant Requested - £1,900,000
- 3.13. The partners have agreed the scheme budget and allocation of the overall budget between the five programme areas. Should Clackmannanshire Council decline to contribute £80k to the Scheme this would potentially also have the effect of removing Falkirk Council's contribution, which that Council has now agreed but which is dependent on Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils also making financial contributions. In this case £240,000 would be lost to the Scheme budget. The Council would continue to support the Scheme through in-kind contributions of staff time and contributions to project development and implementation. However, these in-kind contributions are not eligible as match funding against the HLF grant. The loss of Clackmannanshire Council's contribution may result in a reduction in the scale of the Scheme or an effort may be made by the partners to secure the resulting budget shortfall from other sources. However, there is no guarantee that the projects proposed by Clackmannanshire Council would be supported by the Initiative in the absence of any financial contribution from the Council.
- 3.14. The Initiative is preparing a Fundraising Strategy to provide a basis for securing the remaining funding required to successfully deliver the Scheme. It is anticipated that the balance of the funding will be sourced from a combination of funding providers, trusts and partner contributions. The Initiative Board has recommended that the four local authority partners contribute £100,000 per year for each of the four delivery years as their contribution to the delivery of the Scheme. Fife Council are not proposing any projects of their own (although will benefit from projects led by communities and Scheme partners in their area) and have declined to financially support the Scheme. However, the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative Board have agreed that other local authorities will not need to increase their core contributions to the running of the Initiative in the absence of a contribution from Fife Council. The local authority contribution would therefore be reduced to £80k per annum on the basis of: Falkirk Council £40k; Stirling Council £20k; Clackmannanshire Council £20k.

Partnership Structures and Governance

- 3.15. The Partnership consists of a Board made up of senior officers from the partner organisations. The role of the Board is set out in the draft partnership Minute of Agreement. Partners are currently working to finalise this agreement. The Board will provide strategic direction, monitoring and review during the development and delivery of the Initiative. Scottish Natural Heritage currently chairs the Board.
- 3.16. The role of the Steering Group is to oversee project development and implementation and to provide a key contact point between the Initiative activities and their wider respective organisations. The Steering Group is currently chaired by RSPB Scotland.

- 3.17. Working Groups have been established to provide specific advice to the partnership on particular issues and /or to design and oversee a particular piece of work relevant to the IFLI.
- 3.18. It should be noted that membership of the Board and Steering Group is limited to contributing organisations. A decision not to provide a financial contribution to the delivery of the Scheme would be likely to result in the Council having to relinquish its place on both the Board and the Steering Group.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative will protect and enhance Clackmannanshire's natural and built environment. It will provide volunteering and training opportunities, and is expected to result in an increased level of outdoor activity and improvement in quality of life.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. *Financial Details*

The contribution of £20,000 per annum for 4 years would require to be met from Council reserve.

- 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*

- 5.5. Activity related to the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative will be delivered using existing staffing resources.

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
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment

- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

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

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".

None

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

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