

EXCERPT OF MINUTE OF MEETING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2012**MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND THE ROLE OF GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT IN DELIVERING A GREENSPACE SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROGRAMME IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE**

3. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 14 August 2012 by the Head of Land Services (1) providing details of the newly launched "Well Connected" initiative as part of the Greenspace Social Prescribing Programme, which is being organised in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire; (2) detailing the background relative thereto; (3) advising that "Well Connected" was a new pan-Lanarkshire Programme, which makes it easier for people to take part in and benefit from activities and services to improve mental health and wellbeing; (4) informing that there were currently 8 "Well Connected" themes ranging from the provision of employment and volunteering opportunities, Arts and Culture; "Healthy Reading" in libraries to stress control classes; (5) reporting that the Greenspace Development Section of Land Services had completed a pilot of the "Branching Out" project which was a Forestry Commission Scotland Initiative to provide greenspace and conservation on referral for clients who use Mental Health Services; (6) proposing that, over the next two financial years, Greenspace Development would work in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire to assist in the delivery of the physical activity and leisure opportunities within a newly launched "Well Connected" Programme; (7) reporting that £100,0000 had been secured to undertake delivery of small projects and initiatives, and (8) further advising that Greenspace Scotland, in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage and NHS Scotland, had developed a Greenspace and Health Outcomes Framework which specified intermediate and long term outcomes and details of how specific Service Delivery areas can help to achieve those aims.

Thereon, it was proposed that the report be remitted to the Local Area Partnerships and Area Committees for information.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that the report be remitted to the Local Area Partnerships and Area Committees for information, and
- (2) that the role of the Council in assisting in the delivery of the physical activity and leisure theme in the "Well Connected" Programme and its role in tackling the National Health problems be noted.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: MENTAL HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND THE ROLE OF GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT IN DELIVERING A GREENSPACE SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROGRAMME IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE.
From: HEAD OF LAND SERVICES		
Date: 14 AUGUST 2012	Ref: KW/VA/HA	

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the role that Greenspace Development will be playing over the next two years in delivering a Greenspace Social Prescribing Programme in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire. This programme will contribute to NHS Lanarkshire's Well Connected programme that seeks to deliver mental health and wellbeing improvements throughout Lanarkshire.

2. Background

2.1 There is increasing evidence to show that physical activity has an important role to play in promoting mental health and well-being through both the prevention of mental health problems and improving the quality of life of those with an existing diagnosed mental health condition.

2.2 The health and social benefits of enjoying the natural environment are widely appreciated in Scotland and reflected in the Scottish Government's commitment to a greener Scotland and to increasing the proportion of adults enjoying the outdoors each week¹. Furthermore, the Equally Well report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities 2008²: recommends that, *"the Government, NHS Boards... should encourage and increase the prescription of "greenspace use" by GPs and clinical practitioners"*.

2.3 'Well Connected' is a new pan-Lanarkshire programme, sometimes referred to as social prescribing or community referral. It makes it easier for people to take part in and benefit from activities and services (community assets) that are known to improve mental health and well-being. There are eight 'Well Connected' themes, ranging from the provision of employment and volunteering opportunities, to arts and culture and from 'healthy reading' in libraries to stress control classes – the focus for Greenspace Development will be physical activity and leisure opportunities in local greenspaces.

2.4 North Lanarkshire Council's extensive greenspace resource (from paths and woodlands to country parks and community allotments) has an essential role to play in the delivery of the Well Connected programme and achieving the overall goal of a healthier, more active population.

2.5 Greenspace development has recently completed a pilot of the 'Branching Out' programme, led by the Countryside Ranger Service. 'Branching Out' is a Forestry Commission Scotland initiative, which provides greenspace and conservation on referral for clients who use mental health services. The service provides approximately 3hrs of activities per week for 12 weeks, in a woodland setting – activities can range from health walks to environmental art and from bushcraft to nature conservation activities. The pilot was very successful with very positive feedback from clients and NHS staff.

3. Proposal

3.1 Over the next two financial years Greenspace Development will work in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire to assist in the delivery of the physical activity & leisure opportunities theme within the newly launched 'Well Connected' programme.

3.2 £100,000 has been secured from NHS Lanarkshire for:

- The development and delivery of small projects and production of new materials to support those projects e.g. the development of a North Lanarkshire Accessibility Pack, providing users of greenspaces with information on slopes and rest areas; steps; barriers (e.g. gates); surface type and path widths to assist individuals in making an informed choice about visiting a particular site in our area.
- The provision of training for NHS staff on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and information on greenspaces within their area and what they have to offer.
- Assisting in the provision of health walks within North Lanarkshire, both through supporting existing schemes and the potential of setting up new ones, which in turn may provide volunteering opportunities for members of local communities.
- Continuing and increasing the provision of 'Branching Out' in North Lanarkshire following the very successful pilot project that was recently delivered by the Countryside Ranger Service, through both full programmes for clients and taster days for mental health staff.

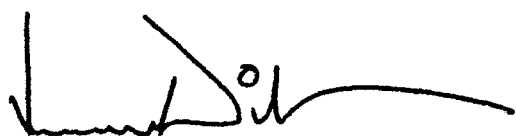
3.3 Greenspace Scotland (a social enterprise and charitable company) have developed, with assistance from Scottish Natural Heritage and NHS Scotland, a 'Greenspace & Health Outcomes Framework'. The model specifies intermediate and long term outcomes and how specific service delivery areas can help to achieve these aims. The principle behind the framework is that if targeted outcomes and better coordinated activities are set then the likelihood of delivering successful health outcomes will be maximised, this can be achieved through the delivery of linking activities on the ground to high level outcomes contained in the National Performance Framework.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The programme will be delivered within the £100,000 budget secured from NHS Lanarkshire and utilising existing staff resources where appropriate.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That Members note the role that Greenspace Development is taking in assisting in the delivery of the physical activity and leisure theme in the 'Well Connected' programme and the important role that greenspaces play in tackling the nation's health problems and in making all of Scotland 'Equally Well'.



**KENNETH WILSON
HEAD OF LAND SERVICES**

Local Government Access to Information Act: For further information please contact (Vicky Abernethy 01236 780636)

¹ Creating a 'greener Scotland' is one of the Scottish Government's strategic objectives. Valuing Scotland's natural environment is a national outcome: "we value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations" and increasing the proportion of adults enjoying the outdoors each week is now a key performance indicator

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25104032/0>