

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: Gartcosh Local Nature Reserve Management Plan	
From: HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND ESTATES		
Date: 21 APRIL 2015	Ref: VA/PC	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek committee approval for a revised management plan for Gartcosh Local Nature Reserve from 2014 – 2019.

2. Background

- 2.1 Great Crested Newts (GCN) were discovered at the former Gartcosh steelworks site in 1998, during the ecological appraisals as part of the development of the Gartcosh Strategic Investment Site. A feasibility study was undertaken to develop the reserve around the edge of the Strategic Investment Site. An Amphibian Conservation Area was established and the principal of translocation of amphibians to a purpose built reserve was agreed through the site masterplan.
- 2.2 In 2002 planning consent was granted for groundwork's to establish the reserve, this included 24 new ponds, 40000m² new woodland planting and footpaths. Works were complete by 2004 and the population of great crested newts and other amphibians were translocated into the reserve. It is now estimated to be the largest population of great crested newts in Scotland.
- 2.3 Under Section 32 of the Enterprise and New Town (Scotland) Act 1990 an agreement was drawn up between Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and North Lanarkshire Council. In 2006 the site was transferred to North Lanarkshire Council ownership along with a sum of money for the next 20 years management of the site.
- 2.4 The Minute of Agreement between SE, NLC and SNH includes the transfer of the nature reserve to NLC and also includes NLC commitment to maintenance of the Reserve: 'NLC shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Nature Reserve and the conservation of the self-sustaining population of the Great Crested Newts on the Nature Reserve in accordance of the Management Plan'. The agreement also prescribed periodic review of the plan by the parties.
- 2.5 The management plan established as part of this agreement expired in 2014.

3. Progress to date

- 3.1 During 2014 Greenspace development officers have drawn up a revised plan in consultation with Scottish Enterprise (and their ecological advisers) and Scottish Natural Heritage to guide management of the reserve for a further 5 years.
- 3.2 The revised management plan continues to focus on sustaining the population of great crested newts as its priority for the next five years. It also include management prescriptions focused on offering opportunities for both environmental education and community involvement and delivering a wide range of benefits to local communities and to visitors.
- 3.3 The revised plan is available in the members' library.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Management of the reserve as described in the reserve management plan is funded from the commuted sum transferred to the council at the time of the land transfer. Greenspace development staff coordinate reserve management and undertake required reserve monitoring. The balance at present is £270,000.

5. Corporate considerations

- 5.1 Management of the reserve contributes to the regeneration priorities in the corporate plan and particularly to local outcome 'Enhanced network of greenspace and woodland for local communities and wildlife.'

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Committee approve the revised management plan for Gartcosh Nature Reserve 2014 – 2019



Kenneth Wilson
Head of Environment and Estates

Local Government Access to Information Act: For further information please contact Vicky Abernethy, Assistant Business Manager (Greenspace Development) 01236 780636.