

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Environment & Transportation Committee

approval noting

Ref NP/VA/LMcC

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Dumbreck and Garrell Restoration and access improvements

From Nicole Paterson, Head of Environmental Assets

Email AbernethyV@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** 01698 402080

Executive Summary

Significant external funding has been secured to improve river quality and habitat at Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve. As with most of our Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) it is close to schools, nurseries, and residential areas. This project provides opportunities for health and wellbeing benefits, flood alleviation, and cultural and natural heritage conservation and education.

One of the major habitat improvements will be the re-naturalisation of the Garrell Burn and improvement of access for fish. This will be of great benefit to migratory fish such as salmon and eels, provide habitat for otter, water vole and fresh water invertebrates, as well as significantly improving and sustaining the wetland habitat in Dumbreck Local Nature Reserve. The improved wetland habitat will support a range of wetland birds.

A network of new and improved paths with features of interests, viewing platforms and interpretation will improve and encourage community access to the site.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment & Transportation Committee:

(1) Approve the contents of this report and the ongoing project development.

Supporting Documents

Council business plan to 2020	Improving relationships with communities and the third sector Improve engagement with communities to maximise involvement and empowerment. Provide a safe and attractive environment that supports the wellbeing of communities
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Appendix 1	Community Consultation Summary
Appendix 2	Indicative layout

1. Background

- 1.1 The council's Greenspace development service works to improve North Lanarkshire's Greenspaces for the benefit of our communities. The service manages nine Local Natures Reserves spread over the North Lanarkshire area and takes forward projects to carry out improvements using grant funding and through partnerships with other organisations guided by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 1.2 At Dumbreck LNR in Kilsyth the main ecological interest is the wetland habitat and associated wildlife such as otter and kingfisher. Access to this diverse and attractive site is via a network of paths that link to other local and national walks such as the John Muir Way, and the canal tow path.
- 1.3 Greenspace development has successfully developed a project which has been awarded significant funding through the Water Environment Fund. This is provided by the Scottish Government annually to improve the physical condition of water bodies that have been damaged by historical activities. This includes financial support for the removal or easement of redundant structures that are barriers to fish migration, and projects to restore natural river shape and function (morphology). This fund is administered by SEPA.
- 1.4 The project will restore the river channel back to its original course through Dumbreck Local Nature Reserve, restoring and maintaining the wetland character of the site, and providing further quality habitat for wildlife, while providing some flood storage for the immediate area.
- 1.5 The surrounding paths will be upgraded, and engineered so they are more resilient to flooding. Although it is important to note that the area will flood on occasion due to its location in a flood plain.
- 1.6 Similar / previous projects:

A similar project was carried out at Stane Gardens in Shotts, this was also largely funded through the Water Environment Fund.

2. Report

- 2.1 The river restoration work on the Garrell is planned to start this year pending planning permission. Designs have been informed by thorough ground investigations and hydrological modelling.
- 2.2 The current line of the Garrell was formed for agricultural purposes. This straightened deep channel often overtops its banks causing flooding of paths. This causes issues for the local community and schools who wish to utilise the paths to access the Local Nature Reserve and the wider path network.
- 2.3 Appendix 2 shows the existing straightened river channel redirected in to a meandering channel in Dumbreck Marsh LNR. Within the LNR the river has the space to move and overtop its banks with less impact on access routes. The meandering river through the LNR is more akin to the natural position of the river before it was directed in to the current straightened channel. This was

verified by ground investigations which found deposits of alluvium over the LNR site.

- 2.4 Erosion of the current channel is also a problem. Large sections of the path have fallen in to the river as the banks have become eroded by the restricted channel. On the south of the river is an area of council owned landfill. There is a concern that this will also become eroded by the river, releasing waste in to the water course.
- 2.5 The river is home to a diverse range of wildlife including salmon and eels. The work will improve the habitat for wildlife and will include a fish pass at the weir next to St Patricks School. This will allow the fish to utilise further upstream habitat. We work in partnership with The Clyde River Foundation through the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership and are arranging further educational opportunities with the schools and events with the local communities to promote the project and the valuable resource the Local Nature Reserve provides in terms of education and health and wellbeing opportunities.
- 2.6 The project is being taken forward by a cross service partnership including:
- Environmental Assets,
 - Regulatory Services and Waste Solutions.

With input from Education, Youth & Communities and support from Legal and Property services.

A contractor - WSP - was appointed in 2017 for survey, design, and site construction and project management.

- 2.7 Community consultation has been carried out since 2017 and continues through presentations at Community Council meetings, presentations at other local meetings in Kilsyth, public consultation events, leaflet distribution, social media, NLC website and events at Dumbreck Local Nature Reserve. A summary is included in Appendix 1. Consultation found that access is very important to the local community, who are keen to see access maintained and improved through the project. Wildlife in the area was also highly valued. These points have been well considered and carried through in to the design.
- 2.8 Outcomes of the Kilsyth and the Kelvin Valley Framework and Action Plan were also considered in the development of the project. This led to the addition of a small car park off Gavell Road in the design, and a plan for the improvement of interpretation through the LNR.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

The content of this report or the associated project is not considered strategic decision-making or policy development.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

As this project does not involve a change to any policy/strategy/function, it is felt that an equality impact assessment is not relevant. If, however, at any time during the development of the project, it is determined that a change to a policy/strategy/function is taking place, then an impact assessment shall be initiated.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

The project has been awarded significant funding of up to £2,615,000 through the Water Environment Fund. This is provided by the Scottish Government annually to improve the physical condition of water bodies that have been damaged by historical activities. This includes financial support for the removal or easement of redundant structures that are barriers to fish migration, and projects to restore natural river shape and function (morphology). This fund is administered by SEPA.

Additional funding has been secured from the councils capital programme over the 5 year plan

£103,000 from Infrastructure Health and Wellbeing projects

£167,868 from Flood Risk Management

£115, 000 from Local Development Programme

Spend to date

	2017	2017/18	2018/19	Totals
SEPA (WEF)		£62,502	£40,000 (estimate)	£102,502
Infrastructure Health and Well being		£3,000	£20,000	£23,000
Flood risk management		£67,868	£20,000	£87,868
LDP funding	£15,000			£15,000

The majority of spend will be delivered in 2019/20 over the construction period pending planning approval. Landscaping works will run to financial year 2020/21 following construction work and new river corridor establishment.

Additional funding for specific habitat works for kingfisher, sand martin, bats, and wetland birds such as lapwing is being sought from external funders with an application currently with Wren, Scottish Landfill Communities Fund with a decision due in mid-June 2019.

Additional funding is being sought from Sustrans for further access improvements to link up with the wider path networks.

Additional funds are being sought for a fully accessible circular route to the north west of the site off Gavell Road. This will be connected to the planned car park to allow access for wheelchair users and those with impairments that may make access to the LNR currently difficult. Targeted consultation with relevant groups will start this year to inform this proposal.

The reduced flooding impact and improved drainage on paths will lead to a reduction in overall maintenance costs. However, new structures associated with the fish pass on the weir by St Patrick's School, and a section of path drainage will require maintenance to prevent blockages. The detailed design of these features will minimise maintenance requirements.

4.2 **HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

No impact

4.3 **Environmental Impact**

The environmental impact is positive. Habitat for wildlife such as otter, water vole, lapwing, salmon and kingfisher within the Local Nature Reserve will be restored and enhanced.

Additional habitat is to be provided for other North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan Species including bats, barn owl and pollinators.

Functioning wetlands contribute to carbon sequestration.

The river condition is expected to improve, this is monitored by SEPA.

4.4 **Risk Impact**

A detailed risk register has been drawn up as part of the project management and is reviewed and monitored. A summary of risks are provided here:

- Lack of suitable land owned by the council - Investigate a wide range of options. The council may have to purchase and/or exchange small areas of land.
- Delays to delivery of project results in loss of funding - Ongoing discussion within project team to ensure programme can deliver within the funding period.
- Unable to deliver within budgets available- Consider adjusting scope, scaling down projects, or seek additional funding.

5. Measures of success

5.1 River quality improves

5.2 The site is used by more people more often - this will be measured by site stewardship visits by the Countryside Ranger Service and people counters

5.3 Biodiversity improves– this will be monitored by site stewardship visits and wildlife surveys.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole Paterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Nicole Paterson,
Head of Environmental Assets**

Appendix 1 - Dumbreck and Garrell restoration and access improvements Consultation Summary 2017 - 2019

After initial meetings with local contacts such as the Friends of Kelvin Valley we decided on a two phase approach to the consultation.

First phase ran from 11th August 2017 to gather views as draft designs were being developed, allowing incorporation of public views and addressing concerns, while informing the community of the project and its aims.

Second phase continued engagement with interested parties, and via identified media platforms: local press, social media, and website.

The following events were arranged with the local community. These were advertised in local press, on social media, through posters in local shops, door to door leaflet drops.

Phase 1 consultation:

Friday 11 August, 10:00am to 12 noon - Garrell Gamble. A four mile ramble along the Garrell Burn and its tributaries from Colzium Estate to Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve.

Wednesday 16th August, evening meeting - presentation to Kilsyth Community Council

Saturday 19th August 10am – noon - Event at Dumbreck LNR – information and activities.

Wednesday the 23rd August and Saturday the 26th August, both from 2pm – 4pm at Burn Green Hall, Kilsyth. Open community consultations.

4th September, evening meeting. Kilsyth Community Forum – Presentation and discussion.

Awareness

Advertising via fliers, council website, face book, twitter, Instagram.

Summary outcomes

The Community Council events (between 20 – 40 people at each), walk (12) and outdoor event (32) all had a good attendance.

The two standalone drop in events at Burngreen Hall on the 23rd and 26th August were poorly attended. On the Saturday the 26th we also spoke to people in the adjacent park; this was more successful.

The process was useful in not only gathering a range of views and publicising the project, but also in developing our next phase of consultation.

Survey response

What do you value in the area?



■ Path network ■ Major attraction ■ Wildlife ■ Peace ■ Heritage

What do you use the site for?



■ Walking ■ Cycling ■ Wildlife watching ■ Running
■ Playing with kids ■ Star gazing ■ Dog walking

What improvement would you like to see?



■ Path improvements ■ Celebration of local history
■ Signage ■ Flood alleviation
■ Information on history ■ Educational opportunities
■ Improvements for wildlife

Community Council meetings and events

Comments from the Community Consultations were broadly similar. Access was the main concern, with people keen to see access improvements. Particular issues not raised in the survey were related to accessibility for everyone. One member of the public was keen to see paths that could be used with a child's buggy. People were overwhelmingly pleased to hear that there was an opportunity to make improvements in the area.

At each event at least one member of the community raised concerns over making alterations to the river channel. We had experts on hand to explain the extensive survey work and modelling that would be done to ensure there would be no increase in flooding events through any of the work we plan to take forward. That the works will reduce flooding of local paths, and will reduce flooding downstream.

Upcoming community consultation events

Dumbreck LNR event Saturday the 30th March 2019, 2:30pm to 4pm Birch circle off South Dumbreck Road.

Kilsyth Community Council presentation Wednesday 17th April 2019, 7pm, Burngreen Community Hall.

Appendix 2 – indicative design

