

# Report

Report to:	<b>Climate Change and Sustainability Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>2 February 2022</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Directors (Community and Enterprise Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Clyde Peatland Action</b>
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## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ◆ seek approval to host two posts on behalf of the City Region that will contribute to the restoration of damaged peatlands, locking up carbon contributing to Net Zero targets, and addressing a UK and Scottish priority habitat.
- ◆ seek approval to increase the Facilities Waste and Grounds Service establishment by the addition of two Peatland Officer posts for a fixed term period of 23 months, fully funded by NatureScot.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s)

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) that the proposal to increase the Facilities Waste and Grounds Service by the addition of 2 Peatland Officer posts for a 23-month fixed term period, as detailed in section 4 of this report, be approved.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Climate and Ecological Emergencies have brought into sharp focus the key role that peatland restoration has to play in the drive for Net Zero, climate change adaption, and in arresting and reversing the decline of a priority wildlife habitat. Glasgow City Region has around 56,000ha of peatland, largely in upland areas that surround the Glasgow conurbation and the Clyde Valley. Around two thirds of that peatland is found in South Lanarkshire.
- 3.2. Degraded peatlands emit carbon, however, when brought into positive management they can lock up large amounts of carbon in relatively short timescales. Additionally, functioning peatlands can deliver Natural Flood Management to help deal with increased rainfall and the impact that has on downstream flooding.
- 3.3. Healthy peatlands are rich in biodiversity and home to an array of specialist flora and fauna. However, up to 80% of Scotland's peatland is degraded and is, therefore, deemed a priority habitat for restoration. Recent analysis on where to target peatland restoration to improve habitat connectivity for wildlife identified 85 locations across the City Region, 52 of which are in South Lanarkshire.
- 3.4. If peatland is to play a key role in the City Region's response to Climate Change, both in terms of contributing to Net Zero and adaptation, then action at scale is

required in the short term. While there is good work on peatland restoration happening across the country, and in the City Region, a step change in the scale and speed of delivery is required.

- 3.5. Currently the dedicated resource required to drive that change does not exist. In recognition of this, the GCV Green Network Partnership (GCVGNP) has secured approval from NatureScot's Peatland Action Team for two new fully funded Peatland Officer posts.

#### **4. Clyde Peatland Action**

- 4.1. Clyde Peatland Action is a new initiative, the aim of which is to bring about a step change in the rate and scale of peatland restoration across the Glasgow City Region. Delivery of this aim would make a significant contribution to reaching Scotland's net zero carbon target by 2045 and addressing the ecological crisis through positive management of a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.
- 4.2. GCVGNP and NatureScot approached the Countryside and Greenspace Manager asking if South Lanarkshire Council would be willing to host the Peatland Officer posts on behalf of the wider City Region.
- 4.3. The proposal is for the creation of two officer posts with differing roles and remits. The initial focus of their work would be the development of an extensive programme of peatland restoration projects across the Glasgow City Region identifying quick wins. These would then be developed into a significant Peatland Action Fund delivery bid to deliver at scale.
- 4.4. The proposed remits as developed by GCVGNP and NatureScot are:

##### **Peatland Strategy and Restoration Officer Remit**

- ◆ Review previous analysis survey work
- ◆ Engage with key stakeholders, largely landowners and land managers in rural locations
- ◆ Develop a prioritised programme of restoration projects
- ◆ Develop bid to Peatland Action Fund (and other funders as appropriate)

##### **Peatland Community Officer Remit**

- ◆ Review data and survey work on lowland raised bogs
- ◆ Engage with local authority officers to identify key sites (circa 10 bogs)
- ◆ Develop programme of community engagement and restoration works
- ◆ Develop bid to Peatland Action Fund (and other funders as appropriate)

- 4.5. The posts would be fully funded including salary costs, employer's costs for NI and pension, along with travel and subsistence with the Council providing office accommodation and day to day line management of the officers. All workplans would be set by NatureScot.
- 4.6. Currently the funding offered by NatureScot is for a period of 23 months, therefore, the posts would be advertised as fixed term.

#### **5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1. The job descriptions have been developed by GCVGNP and NatureScot on behalf of the Glasgow City Region and have been approved by Personnel Services.

- 5.2. Interviews will be conducted in partnership with GCVGNP and NatureScot and although the staff will be managed through lead officers in these organisations, South Lanarkshire will host the posts and contribute office and day to day management services
- 5.3. It is proposed that the following are added to the establishment of the Facilities, Waste and Grounds Service for a 23-month fixed term period.

Post title	Number of posts	Grade / SCP	Hourly Rate	Annual salary (excluding on-costs)	Gross salary (including on-costs 30.3%)
Strategic Peatland Officer	1	Grade 3 level 2	£18.44-£18.97	£33,651 - £34,618	£43,847-£45,107
Community Peatland Officer	1	Grade 2 Level 2-3	£13.12£14.77	£23,942 - £26,953	£31,197 - £35,120
Total (23 months)				£68,986 - £118,011	£143,834 - £153,768

## 6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. These posts will be funded by the NatureScot via a Memorandum of Understanding.

## 7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. These findings will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, and Biodiversity Strategy.

## 8. Other Implications

- 8.1. The Countryside and Greenspace Section will host these posts and agree a work programme with officers from GCVGNP and NatureScot.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required
- 9.2. There is no requirement to undertake any consultation at this time in terms of the information contained in this report.

**Alistair McKinnon**

**Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

**Paul Manning**

**Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)**

12 January 2022

**Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

**Previous References**

- ◆ None

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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