

# **PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**

## **Climate Change & Sustainability Committee**

**24 August 2022**

### **NATURE RESTORATION FUND 2022-2023**

#### **Report by Head of Planning & Development (Report No. 22/192)**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report provides information on the Nature Restoration Fund allocation received by Perth and Kinross Council in 2021 and 2022. The report sets out the proposed approach to use of the funds in the current financial year, including proposed nature restoration work to be carried out by Community Greenspace. The report seeks approval of the proposed split in funding between Community Greenspace and community led projects, and requests that delegated authority be given to the Executive Director (Communities).

<b>2. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
2.1 It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• approves the ratio of Nature Restoration Funding of 60% to Community Greenspace projects and 40% to community led projects.</li><li>• approves the delegation of authority to approve community led projects to the Executive Director (Communities).</li></ul>



#### **3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background
- Section 5: Proposals
- Section 6: Conclusion
- Appendices

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) is a 5-year commitment to funding projects aimed at “restoring nature and improving biodiversity on land and in the seas.” The fund includes capital grant funding for local authorities which is now known as the “Edinburgh Process” strand of the NRF. Originally announced in the Scottish Government budget 2021/2022, £5m was granted to local authorities. Of this, Perth & Kinross Council received £166,000. In 2022-2023, the total allocation remains £5m but, with a different distribution methodology, the Council received £176,000 on 15 July as General Capital

Grant, as set out in Appendix 1. The Scottish Government has afforded discretion to Local Authorities to apply the grant within their own rules.

- 4.2 In 2021-2022, the allocation was notified in August 2021. Community Greenspace identified £90,000 of projects to take forward which met the purposes and criteria of the fund. In addition, schools and community groups were invited to apply for funding for their own projects. A briefing was circulated to elected members on 6 July 2022 describing the outcomes of the fund. The 2021-2022 report is now available on the Council website at [www.pkc.gov.uk/naturefund](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/naturefund) and is attached as appendix 1.
- 4.3 While the purpose of the fund remains the same, there have been some changes to the criteria and themes of the fund for Local Authorities . In 2021, there were two themes for projects, focusing on either urban or rural biodiversity enhancement. In 2022, there is an increased focus on outcomes which address the main drivers of the decline in biodiversity - particularly rural biodiversity. Urban areas are not excluded but must meet the themes and purpose of the fund, which no longer specifically address urban biodiversity. The themes of this year's fund are:
- Habitat restoration – management for enhancement and connectivity
  - Freshwater restoration, including hydrological change
  - Eradication of invasive non-native species impacting on nature
  - Coastal and marine management to promote restoration and resilience
- 4.4 The funding allocation is to support approaches that further biodiversity and which adhere to the main criteria to:
- deliver positive effects for biodiversity and enhance local ecosystems
  - address the climate emergency and its impacts through mitigation and adaptation, and by promoting nature-based solutions
- 4.5 However, a further criterion of the 2021-2022 allocation was to “promote the health and well-being of local communities and reduce inequalities”. This is no longer part of the 2022-2023 allocation.

## **5. PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 In 2022-23, and subsequent years, there is a renewed opportunity to achieve outcomes at scale which address both the biodiversity and climate change crises. An internal process has been established by teams within the Communities Service to provide the best results for biodiversity across Perth and Kinross.
- 5.2 A detailed process document is attached as Appendix 2. The main points of the proposed process are:
- funding is made available to Community Greenspace for projects which meet the criteria of the fund and provide additional benefit for biodiversity in addition to business as usual

- funding is made available to organisations in the community to put forward projects which meet the criteria, purpose, and themes of the fund
  - a working group of relevant officers, including members of the Climate Change Board, reviews the submitted applications and makes recommendations to approve or decline community projects
  - the recommendations are then approved under delegated authority from the Executive Director (Communities) to the Service Managers for Planning & Housing Strategy and Climate Change & Smart Investment.
- 5.3 The process ensures that there is sufficient funding for Community Greenspace both to deliver on obligations in accordance with the Biodiversity Duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004; and empower communities to undertake projects that will make a significant difference in areas that are of value to them, in line with the Perth and Kinross Offer. Approval of applications under delegated authority will allow for timely allocation to projects to ensure work can progress without delay.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the funding in 2022/23 is divided 60/40 between Community Greenspace and community projects. This recognises the need for biodiversity enhancements within Council-owned land, while also aligning with the Offer. It reflects the success of the community-led Nature Restoration Fund projects last year, and enhances the approach of the Council's Community Environment Challenge Fund, in empowering communities to actively enhance the biodiversity value of their area.
- 5.5 Community Greenspace have identified a range of ambitious projects which would meet the purpose, criteria, and themes of the fund. £106,000 (60%) of funding has been provisionally allocated for Community Greenspace proposed projects including:
- implementation of Forest Plans through habitat restoration work including removal of non-native species, planting of native species and creation of native coppice (~£25,000)
  - removal of invasive species on Craigie Burn and the Tay (~£26,000)
  - investment in cutting equipment for community group use for meadow management (~£21,500)
  - heathland and meadow restoration work on St Magdalene's Hill (~£10,000)
  - natural flood protection works through tree planting in Jeanfield Cemetery (~£5,000)
  - creating new large areas of pollinator friendly planting. (~£18,500).
- 5.6 The remaining £70,000 (40%) of funding has been provisionally allocated for organisations in the community to apply for. Project applications have been invited with a value of between £1,250 and £12,500. This ensures projects are of a sufficient size to meet the purpose of the fund while allowing funding to support a number of projects. Projects over £25,000 have already had the opportunity to apply for the NatureScot led public competitive fund earlier in 2022. For comparison in 2021/2022, when there was no set upper or lower

limit, community led projects funded by the Perth & Kinross allocation ranged in value from £1,750 to £10,000 with a total value of around £65,000.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council has been allocated £176,000 to support Nature Restoration in 2022-2023. To support outcomes for nature and communities in line with the criteria, it is proposed that 60% of this funding be utilised by Community Greenspace and 40% provided to projects in the community. The allocation of funding between Community Greenspace and community organisations in the next year of NRF funding (2023-2024) can be changed, following analysis of the projects funded this year. It is further proposed that to enable community projects in a timely manner, that authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Communities) to approve such projects.

### Authors

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### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Communities)	11 August 2022

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Letter from Scottish Government to Chief Executive Perth & Kinross Council 26 May 2022.
- Appendix 2 – Nature Restoration Fund 2021-2022 Report
- Appendix 3 – Nature Restoration Fund 2022-2023 Process

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>None</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>None</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>Yes</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>None</b>
Risk	<b>None</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>No</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>Yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The outcomes of the proposal whether led by Community Greenspace or organisations in the Community will help create a safe and sustainable place for future generations by enhancing areas of nature so that people can enjoy these into the future. Habitat restoration accompanied by additional planting also provides climate change mitigation; and by restoring native habitats wildlife and plant life is provided resilience in the face of a changing climate supporting their ability to in turn sustain their ecosystems and the services they provide. The proposal to support communities in delivering nature restoration projects of importance to them, helps develop educated and informed citizens, and supports people to lead independent healthy and active lives by increasing awareness of and engagement with nature, and promoting ownership and a sense of inclusion and ownership of projects they and their communities are involved in.

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 See above.

## **2. Resource Implications**

### Financial

2.1 None

### Workforce

2.2 None

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 None

## **3. Assessments**

### Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

3.2 This proposal was considered under the Council's Integrated Appraisal Toolkit. No impacts on equality were identified and the document was assessed as not relevant for the purposes of EqIA. A full EqIA was not needed.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

3.4 The proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

### Sustainability

3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:

- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;

- in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes; and
- in a way that it considers most sustainable.

3.6 Following an assessment using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit it has been determined that the proposal is likely to contribute positively to the following Sustainable Development Goals.

- SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 13 Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land

#### Legal and Governance

3.7 None.

#### Risk

3.8 None.

### **4. Consultation**

#### Internal

4.1 This report has been informed by discussions with members of Planning & Housing Strategy, Climate Change & Sustainable Development, Community Greenspace, Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Community Planning & Policy.

#### External

4.2 N/A.

### **5. Communication**

5.1 A webpage has been set up on the Council website at [www.pkc.gov.uk/naturefund](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/naturefund). Social media has been used by the Council and TBP to promote the success of the previous year's fund and inviting applications for the current year. A press release has been sent to Communications and should go out week ending 5 August 2022. Further ongoing communications will inform the public of key stages of the fund as well as progress of projects.

### **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2.1 Letter to Local Authorities from Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform (2 August 2021).