

Environment and Forestry Directorate
Deputy Director
Nature Division



Scottish Government
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Mr Thomas Glen
Chief Executive
Perth and Kinross Council

By e-mail only

29 June 2023

Dear Mr Glen,

ALLOCATION OF THE 'EDINBURGH PROCESS' STRAND OF THE NATURE RESTORATION FUND AND SEED FUNDING FOR NATURE NETWORKS

I am writing to inform you that the Scottish Government and Local Authority Leaders have reached an agreement on the proportion of this year's allocation of the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) to Scottish Local Authorities, known as the *Edinburgh Process* strand of the NRF. This constitutes £5 million of capital funding to be spent in 2023-24 to support new, or to enhance existing, approaches to restoring biodiversity, complemented this year by an additional £5 million with a specific focus on creating Nature Networks.

Purpose of funding

The draft [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) defines the Outcomes we need to see in order to achieve our high-level goals of being nature positive – halting biodiversity loss – by 2030, and substantially restoring it by 2045. The Strategy also sets out the need for a whole-of-society approach to achieving these goals, in line with the Edinburgh Process. NRF-funded projects are a key delivery mechanism for the Strategy.

The strategic goal of the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) is to catalyse action at scale to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity on land and sea, with a focus on outcomes which address the main drivers of the decline in biodiversity: over-exploitation of the natural environment and addressing its consequences; habitat loss and fragmentation; and invasive non-native species.

The Fund has five strategic themes that will be delivered across all the funding streams:

- **Habitat and species** restoration: Management for enhancement and connectivity.
- **Freshwater** restoration, including restoration of natural flows in rural catchments
- **Coastal and marine** initiatives which promote restoration, recovery, enhancement or resilience
- Control of **invasive non-native species** (INNS) impacting on nature
- **Urban**: Enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities.

The fund will seek to deliver the five strategic priorities through sub-national delivery, in line with the principles of the Edinburgh Process declaration. This approach can deliver multiple

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benefits, supporting health and well-being, green jobs, air and water quality improvements in addition to supporting nature recovery.

Nature Networks

The high level expectation for projects being delivered through the Edinburgh Process strand remains the same. However, this year, we are also providing an additional £5 million capital funding with a view to Local Authorities beginning to develop projects which will contribute to establishing Nature Networks in their area. The fourth National Planning Framework set out the Scottish Government's expectation that Nature Networks will be put in place in every local authority in order to enhance biodiversity and better connect areas for nature. Ecological connectivity is provided by wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stones, landscape features, watercourses, green and blue spaces that together form integrated nature networks. More information on nature networks can be found at Annex B.

Funding Mechanism

All Local Authorities, plus the National Parks, will receive a capital allocation directly from the Scottish Government. The total value of the allocation to Local Authorities is £10 million in 2023-2024, an increase of £5 million from the previous two years. Given the strategic themes and the priority of ecological connectivity, the distribution methodology this year is once again based on:

- 50% on 'area of natural greenspace' and 50% on NatureScot composite indicator.

The allocation of funds for Perth and Kinross Council in 2023-24, which will be paid as General Capital Grant on 15 July, is £0.353 million rounded, at least half of which should be directed towards projects which contribute to a Nature Network.

In addition to this direct allocation through the Edinburgh Process strand, the NRF includes a competitive grants scheme run by NatureScot. Partnerships which include local authorities will also be eligible to apply to the competitive schemes but local authorities and other public bodies will not be eligible as sole applicants.

As in previous years, Local Authorities will be required to complete and return a short form to the Biodiversity Unit at the Scottish Government within a year of the allocation of funding.

I would like to thank you all for your collaboration in delivering these key outcomes for our Biodiversity Strategy and would be most grateful if you could pass a copy of this letter onto any persons that would be responsible for administering the NRF in your local authority.

Yours sincerely,



Cate Turton
Deputy Director, Nature Division

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NATURE RESTORATION FUND – EDINBURGH PROCESS STRAND – 2023-24

LOCAL AUTHORITY	ALLOCATION (£m)
Aberdeen City	0.270
Aberdeenshire	0.445
Angus	0.306
Argyll & Bute	0.489
Clackmannanshire	0.195
Dumfries & Galloway	0.490
Dundee City	0.171
East Ayrshire	0.206
East Dunbartonshire	0.266
East Lothian	0.223
East Renfrewshire	0.121
Edinburgh, City of	0.272
Eilean Siar	0.255
Falkirk	0.348
Fife	0.612
Glasgow City	0.247
Highland	0.676
Inverclyde	0.306
Midlothian	0.211
Moray	0.246
North Ayrshire	0.355
North Lanarkshire	0.556
Orkney	0.106
Perth & Kinross	0.353
Renfrewshire	0.199
Scottish Borders	0.328
Shetland	0.161
South Ayrshire	0.189
South Lanarkshire	0.545
Stirling	0.228
West Dunbartonshire	0.257
West Lothian	0.368
	10.000

NATURE NETWORKS FOR SCOTLAND

We are facing both a climate and nature crisis. The biodiversity crisis is of urgent concern within Scotland where 49% of species are in decline. Climate change and nature are inextricably linked, and we cannot address one without the other. In order to create a nature-rich, climate resilient, net zero Scotland we must restore and connect our valuable habitats and appropriately value the ecosystem services that nature provides.

The [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#) (SBS) sets out actions needed to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and to restore and regenerate biodiversity by 2045. Nature Networks across our landscapes will underpin the resilience and health of our habitats and species.

A priority action within the SBS is to ensure that every local authority area has a nature network to improve ecological connectivity across Scotland. We aim to develop an evolving, flexible nature network for Scotland, connecting nature-rich areas to allow wildlife and natural process to adapt to land use and climate change pressures. A wide range of exemplars already exist and the fourth National Planning Framework states that nature networks will help build people's connection to nature, providing biodiversity-rich spaces that deliver local benefits, and meet the priorities of local communities for nature and climate change.

Nature Networks will allow Local Authorities to;

- Deliver the commitments of the Edinburgh Declaration;
- Contribute towards global and national biodiversity and climate targets;
- Meet Biodiversity and Climate Duty obligations;
- Deliver positive effects for biodiversity through NPF4 policies;
- Potentially achieve multiple co-benefits for local communities, including provision of high quality green and blue spaces including active travel networks, flood risk mitigation, cleaner waterways, cleaner air, increased biodiversity, sustainable local food production.

Local partnerships are needed to drive forward nature network development and Local Authorities can play a key role, facilitating partnership working and involving communities in identifying local priorities for nature, ensuring that local knowledge informs those priority areas.

Whilst delivery of Nature Networks is not the sole responsibility of Local Authorities, many of the levers to inform and enable the spatial identification of areas that provide opportunity for addressing biodiversity loss already exist, e.g. Local Development Planning, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Partnerships, Climate Adaptation Networks. Where nature restoration priorities align with local priorities, e.g. Climate Adaptation, Transport, Active Travel, Public Health, etc., there may be opportunity to develop new, or better integrated delivery partnerships.

We recognise there are challenges which Local Authorities will need to overcome to develop their Nature Network and we are committed to help address those where possible. The Scottish Government is exploring options to provide a central advice/ expertise hub which partnerships can draw upon as needed, and we are allocating capital funding through the NRF in 2023-24 for local nature restoration projects that contribute to nature networks.