

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 7 May 2008**

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**Subject: Environmental Capital Budget 2008-2009**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the proposed programme of environmental projects in 2008/2009 and to seek authority for the allocation of funds to undertake the projects listed.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Council has prepared a number of key strategic documents that set a context for a programme of environmental improvement works that enhances West Dunbartonshire as an area to live, visit, work and invest in. These strategies have been prepared with key partners and have been the subject of public consultation and engagement, and include the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan, the Draft Core Paths Plan, various area access plans, whilst the Nature Conservation Strategy is currently being prepared and in March the Committee agreed that an Open Space strategy should be taken forward.
- 2.2** In accordance with developing and implementing these strategies a programme of capital projects is proposed. These works will ensure maximum benefit for the community, and it is expected additional funding will be forthcoming from the Council's partners. A capital allocation of £90,000 has been agreed for environmental projects throughout West Dunbartonshire in the current financial year, whilst there remains £32,000 in committed funds from last year's budget.
- 2.3** Additional funding has been secured from external sources, particularly Scottish Natural Heritage, who currently support the work of the Council with regard to access, nature conservation, the West Dunbartonshire Ranger Service and West Dunbartonshire Greenspace. Further sources of funding for specific projects will also be sought in the coming year from key partners and funding sources identified by the Council's external funding unit.

### **3. Main Issues**

#### **3.1 Committed funds**

With regard to the committed funds from last year's budget, as a result of funding secured through the Cities Growth Fund and Clydebank Rebuilt, considerable investment has taken place to the Forth and Clyde Canal, and in order to secure the implementation of the access and signage strategy for the canal £20,000 has been committed to help deliver this key project.

**3.2** As the Committee will recall from its meeting in March the Council is committed to preparing an Open Space Strategy as required by Scottish Planning Policy 11 and therefore a contribution of £10,000 from the environment budget has been committed to deliver this key strategy.

**3.3** Work is ongoing to complete the review of the Nature Conservation Strategy in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage. A final phase of site inspections to record key species and set out future management arrangements is to be completed this spring. This information will assist the Council in preparing evidence at the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan, Public Local Inquiry, and assist the Ranger Service and West Dunbartonshire Greenspace in delivering environmental education programmes. £4,000 has been committed from the environmental budget to complete this work, and £2,000 income from SNH has also been secured to assist this.

**3.4** As outlined in paragraph 2.2 above, to develop and implement key strategies a programme of capital works is proposed utilising the allocation for the capital programme and using this to lever external funds to maximise the benefits to West Dunbartonshire.

#### **3.5 Enviro Squad - £16,000**

The Enviro Squad is a valuable training resource for local people and contributes to the enhancement of the environment of West Dunbartonshire through focused environmental improvement projects. The Council has supported the activities of the Enviro Squad for a number of years and it is intended to continue such support.

### **3.6 Greenspace & Environmental Education - £34,000**

The West Dunbartonshire Greenspace Project continues to be successful in developing and implementing environmental improvement projects throughout West Dunbartonshire. It undertakes a series of works including working with schools and community groups and is very successful in securing external funding for a number of projects. Last year its work was recognised with the Duntocher Village Green being short listed for the Scottish Government/RTPI national planning awards. The level of support offered by this allocation will match the funding that has been secured from Scottish Natural Heritage for 2008/09. It is therefore proposed to continue to support the valuable work carried out by the project.

### **3.7 Woodland Management & Nature Conservation - £10,000**

The Council's award winning Pappert Well Community Woodland continues to be developed and managed to provide an important resource for West Dunbartonshire. Management operations are also proposed for Auchentoshan Woodland and funding from the Forestry Commission for Woodland in and Around Towns is also being pursued. As a result of work undertaken by West Dunbartonshire Greenspace and the Council's Ranger Service, The Saltings at Old Kilpatrick has been recognised as a Local Nature Reserve, West Dunbartonshire's first such designation. It is intended to extend the activities and management operations at this location. The Council is completing a review of its Nature Conservation Strategy, and management operations emerging from this will be pursued and linked to environmental education projects.

### **3.8 Access & Environmental Improvements - £30,000**

The Council also has a statutory responsibility to prepare a Core Path Plan and the Draft Core Path Plan will be prepared for public consultation in June 2008. As a result of previous consultation exercises a number of projects have emerged to extend and expand the Core Paths within West Dunbartonshire. A number of key projects have already been undertaken and it is intended to develop these further. The Council has been successful in securing external funding to assist the delivery of these projects and the allocation of funds will assist in leveraging external sources of funding. Environmental improvements enhance the appearance of West Dunbartonshire and it is intended to continue with such projects together with a number of the Council's key partners. In particular it is intended to build upon the success of the recently created Duntocher Village Green project, which, through joint working, has brought an area of derelict land back into productive public use and similar type projects are being investigated for the coming years.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

4.1 There are no known personnel issues.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 Provision has been made for these projects within the approved General Services capital programme. The allocation of funds to West Dunbartonshire Greenspace assists in matching grant funding from Scottish Natural Heritage.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

6.1 The preparation of the Core Paths Plan is a statutory responsibility and the provision of funding will assist in the delivery of this key document.

#### **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The proposed programme of environmental improvements sets out the project priorities that will ensure maximum benefit for the community. It is also intended that external sources of funding will be secured further assisting this process of improvement and enhancement.

#### **8. Recommendations**

8.1 **It is recommended that the Committee agree to support the proposed programme of capital projects through the following;**

- **£16,000 for the Enviro Squad;**
- **£34,000 for Greenspace and Environmental Education;**
- **£10,000 for Woodland Management & Nature Conservation; and**
- **£30,000 for Access & Environmental Improvements.**

**Elaine Melrose**  
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**Date: 14 April 2008**

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**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All