

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE - 16 MAY 2019

DEE CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP – PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

1 Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

1.1 Approve the continued support for the Dee Catchment Partnership.

2 Background / Discussion

2.1 The Dee Catchment Partnership (DCP) was set up in 2003 bringing together bodies with an interest in the River Dee. This includes the two Local Authorities, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Council, with other relevant agencies and a range of conservation, farming, forestry and land agencies. The Partnership has an independent Chair. The vision for DCP is “to return the River Dee (and its catchment) to good order throughout, with sufficient high quality water, habitat and amenity to allow its inhabitants, flora and fauna to flourish”. The DCP plays a key role in co-ordinating partnership working which has proven to be an efficient mechanism for delivering shared action utilising available resources.

2.2 A Partnership Assessment and Annual Risk Assessment have been carried out for DCP and are attached (**Appendix 1**). Over the past 3 years DCP has delivered a wide range of projects and initiatives, with a summary provided below:

- Worked with the River Dee Trust to deliver a programme of invasive non-native species control on the lower Dee funded by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road (AWPR) Mitigation Fund;
- Assisted with awareness raising in relation to the North East Invasive Non-Native Species Project;
- Raised awareness of, and promoted, natural flood management;
- Worked with farmers within the Tarland catchment to deliver small scale flood alleviation schemes;
- Undertaken preliminary studies on a potential river restoration site in Deeside;
- Advised Aberdeenshire Council on potential natural flood management options as part of the Ballater Flood Scheme;
- Delivered aspects of the BEGIN Green Infrastructure Project with Aberdeen City Council involving developing an education pack and a video log of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- Undertaken educational activities with various schools in Aberdeenshire, including the development of a river education sheet for Kincardine O’Neil Primary School;

- Taken a Model Catchments model to events throughout the North East;
- Produced a quarterly newsletter CATCH UP that is circulated widely via email and in paper form.
<http://www.deepartnership.org/userfiles/file/newsletters/DCP-newsletter-summer-2018-a4.pdf>

2.1 The work of the DCP is set out in the Dee Catchment Management Plan (DCMP) - http://www.deepartnership.org/userfiles/file/dee_catchment_management_plan/DCMP-SummaryFORWEB.pdf. This document sets out 37 objectives which relate to improving water quality, improving the morphology of the river and its tributaries, protecting and enhancing riparian habitats and the species they support, and encouraging responsible access. Delivery plans and action cards have been prepared for each of the objectives, and partner organisations report on these every five years. Several of the objectives tie in with Council objectives, and in particular, the aim to 'protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating against the impact of climate change storms and droughts'. These objectives also link to other Council strategies such as the Natural Heritage Strategy (currently being reviewed) and the Outdoor Access Strategy. Focused 3 year Delivery Plans are prepared to detail the current priorities and the third of these came to an end in March 2019. Activities for the coming three year plan will include:

- A review of the DCMP, following a workshop to set priorities. Council Officers will be involved in the development of the delivery plan and will seek to ensure that all actions and targets are measurable. The aim will be to publish the revised DCMP in December 2019;
- Maintaining and increasing levels of awareness through a programme of outreach activities such as the Yellow Fish Project which is aimed at children and raises awareness of how our drains work, where they go and what items can cause harm;
- Promoting awareness of natural flood management through showcasing a new erosion model at two major events;
- Continuing to promote awareness about the dangers of invasive species through attendance at events and assisting with the development of a leaflet aimed at gardeners;
- Publishing monthly articles in the Deeside Piper covering issues relevant to the River Dee and its catchment. Recent articles have covered the importance of species rich grasslands along the margins of the watercourse, and the importance of woodlands and forests within the river ecosystem;
- Maintaining an active website, making available information and resources relating to the work of the Partnership. This will include hosting dedicated pages for the North East Invasive Non-Native Species Project which Aberdeenshire Council is leading on; and
- Achieving the restoration of 1.5km of previously re-aligned water course along one of the tributaries to the River Dee. Funding is currently being sought for this work which will act as a demonstration site.

- 2.4 The DCP has a part time Partnership Manager (2 days a week) employed by the James Hutton Institute which also supports the management of the DCP finances. A part time post of Dee Catchment Outreach Officer (3-4 days a week depending on available funding) is hosted by the River Dee Trust.
- 2.5 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated in this Report.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F.1.1.c. of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the use of resources in Planning and Building Standards

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the recommended actions will not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics. A Town Centre Assessment is not required as there are no impacts on any of the identified town centres.
- 4.2 It is not expected that there will be any significant additional staffing requirements for the next 3 years of the DCP Delivery Plan. There is no specific Member involvement in DCP but Councillors within the Dee Catchment are invited to events highlighting the achievements or guiding the future work of the Partnership. At present, an Environment Planner from the Council's Planning & Building Standards Service, sits on the DCP Management Group (a small group of the Partnership's funders) which is the body that oversees the delivery of the activities and actions and supports the DCP staff. Input is provided by Aberdeenshire Council's Flood Risk and Coastal Protection Team as required.
- 4.3 A Partnership Agreement between the James Hutton Institute and the funding partners is currently in preparation, and will cover the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations in relation to hosting arrangements for the staff together with funding and budget management.
- 4.4 Funding for the Partnership is sourced from a number of partners, including the two Local Authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), but is also supplemented, where possible, through applications for funding for specific projects to charitable trusts and national funding bodies, for example, SEPA and Aberdeen Harbour Board.

4.5 Aberdeenshire Council currently contribute a total of £9,000 per annum to the Partnership. £3,000 from the Planning – Environment, Other Bodies and Organisations and £6,000 from Flood Management budgets. The average annual expenditure of DCP is £55-70K depending on the scale and nature of the projects that are delivered directly by the Partnership. Many projects are delivered through individual partner organisations with specific funding for that project.

4.6 The following Risk has been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

ACORP005 – Working with organisations.

A Risk Mitigation is set out in **Appendix 1**.

4.7 The following Risk has been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)):

Climate Change: Conserve the natural and historic environment by protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and historic assets. It is recognised that there is a heightened risk of the natural environment being damaged or lost as a result of climate change. The Planning and Building Standards, Planning Environment Team will continue to provide support, advice, and promote best practice to residents, visitors, developers, groups and communities within Aberdeenshire to ensure that they are aware of the natural environment so that it is preserved and to further the conservation of biodiversity.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by: - Judith Cox, Environment Planner
Date: 1 May 2019

Start-Up Assessment
Dee Catchment Partnership

Appendix 1

Criteria	Assessment	Comment/Proposed Action
The partnership's aims fit with the Council's strategic plan and priorities	Yes	
The partnership's has set outcomes to be achieved that fit with the Aberdeenshire Single Outcome Agreement	Yes	
The partnership has an agreed relationship with the Community Planning Partnership	No	
Appropriate status and voting rights are accorded to the Council in the partnership	N/A	DCP is a voluntary partnership with no formal constitution although a formal Partnership Agreement is currently in preparation. Aberdeenshire Council has a representative on the Management Group and wider Partnership Group who is a member of staff. Activities are agreed through consensus - no voting takes place.
Any transfer of budget to the partnership is compatable with the strategic direction of the Council and the Community Planning Partnership	Yes	Council contribution is made based on a three year Business/Delivery Plan so outcomes are broadly agreed in advance of funding being transferred. Regular newsletters provide details of activies undertaken to support the implementation of the Delivery Plan.
All other appropriate bodies have been invited to participate in this partnership	Yes	All key bodies with a water management focus are involved. These include Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Aberdeen Harbour Board, Forestry Commission Scotland and Dee District Salmon Fishery Board.
The partnership makes a formal annual report that includes annual accounts and performance to its members and other bodies if necessary	N/A	No formal annual reporting. However, host organisation JHI provides an end of year financial spreadsheet on income and expenditure.
The partnership ensures equality of opportunity for all and complies with statutory equalities duties as required	Yes	
Members of the partnership's top-level decision-making group can be recalled by their nominating bodies	Yes	
The risks faced by the partnership are shared between partners	Partly	This will be detailed in the Partnership Agreement that is currently in preparation.
The partnership has a complaints process or agrees to adopt the complaints process of a member organisation	Yes	Follows the complaints process of the James Hutton Institute.

**Start-Up Assessment
Dee Catchment Partnership**

Meetings of the partnership's top-level decision-making group are open to the public	Partly	DCP Management Group meetings are not open to the public but periodically wider meetings are held where a range of interested parties are invited to attend. This includes members of the public who have expressed an interest in the work of the Partnership.
The public is entitled to see reports considered by the partnership's top-level decision-making group	Yes	Reports would be made available to the public upon request. Summaries of DCP activities are available via the quarterly newsletter Catch Up.
Minutes of the partnership's top-level decision-making group are made publicly available	No	Minutes would be made available to the public upon request.
The partnership has a document such as a remit or memorandum of association to define its role, powers and how it carries out its business	Partly	Purpose and a Hosting Agreement which Aberdeenshire Council will be asked to sign.
The partnership's top-level decision-making group has a quorum for meetings	No	
Members of the partnership's top-level decision-making group are appointed for a limited period of time	No	
The partnership follows the Account Commission's Code on Following the Public Pound and agrees appropriate arrangements for allocating start-up and running costs	Yes	The James Hutton Institute prepares its accounts in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, known as UK GAP. Internal accounting processes and procedures are designed to maintain control and accountability over public funds.
There are agreed arrangements for dissolving the partnership	Partly	This will be detailed in the Partnership Agreement that is currently in preparation.
There are clear arrangements for the Council to exit the partnership	Partly	This will be detailed in the Partnership Agreement that is currently in preparation.
There is a procedure for ensuring members who declare conflicts of interest take no part in decision	N/A	Councillors are not represented on the Steering Group/Management Group.
The requirements on council representatives on the top-level decision-making group of the partnership are compatible with the code of conduct for councillors	N/A	
Cost / Benefit Analysis	Response	
Please detail the staffing and financial implications of running the partnership, including those on other Council Services and partners	Annual contribution by P&BS £3,000 plus Annual contribution by Flood Team £6,000. A Member of Planning and Building Standards staff sits on the DCP Management Group	

**Start-Up Assessment
Dee Catchment Partnership**

Please state the source of any funding received by the partnership	Scottish Natural Heritage, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, and various external funding sources.
Please describe the benefits of the partnership	Provides a co-ordinating role for the delivery of a range of projects to protect and enhance the water environment of the River Dee Catchment.
The partnership is sustainable and is the best way of achieving its aims and outcomes	Yes <input type="button" value="v"/>

Annual Risk Assessment
Dee Catchment Partnership

Partnership Name:	Completed by:	Date:
Dee Catchment Partnership	Judith Cox	04/04/2019

All partnerships must be recorded in the partnership register

This table assesses whether your partnership should be recorded as a **significant** partnership requiring a Risk Register.

Please enter the score in the last column for the statement which most closely represents your partnership.

Impact No.	Description	Minor (Score 1)	Important (Score 2)	Significant (Score 3)	Major (Score 4)	Score
1	The Council contributes to the partnership by direct funding and/or indirectly through staff resources, work done etc.)	< £10K per annum	£10K to < £50 k per annum	£50K to < £100k per annum	> £100k per annum	1
2	The partnership's success is critical to the achievement of one or more of the Council's Strategic objectives.	Not directly linked to a Strategic objective	Linked to a Strategic objective.	Significant contributor to success of a Strategic objective.	Essential to the achievement of a Strategic objective.	2
3	Failure of the partnership would have an impact on the Council's reputation.	Threat of adverse comment in local press or the equivalent that Corporate Communications consider to be of material concern to the Council.	Actual adverse comment in local press or the equivalent that Corporate Communications consider to be of material concern to the Council.	Individual press reports in national media that Corporate Communications consider being of material concern to the Council	Concerted, widespread or recurrent critical coverage of the Council or for a specific event in the media	1
4	The extent to which partnership expenditure is controlled by the Council.	The Council has full control over expenditure decisions.	The Council has veto on expenditure decisions.	The Council is a party to expenditure decisions.	The Council has no control over expenditure.	3
5	The partnership takes decisions on behalf of or which are binding on the Council	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council.	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council but Council representatives with decision-making authority attend the partnership and consider and influence its recommendations.	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council but Council representatives with decision-making authority attend the partnership and agree to be bound by its decisions.	The partnership has decision-making responsibilities directly delegated to it from the Council.	2
6	The Council has set up the partnership in order to receive additional funding and/or meet Statutory or Regulatory requirement.	Not required by law or to receive funding.	Indirect or limited links to successful achievement of funding.	Direct links to successful achievement of funding.	The Council is required to participate in this partnership by law or to receive specific funding.	2

Total Score

Maximum Possible Score

Impact %

Evaluation

11

24

45.83%

Not Significant