Destination to become Scotland’s largest urban wildlife site, the Seven Lochs Wetland Park is an exemplar of Green Network planning and delivery. Straddling the Glasgow/North Lanarkshire boundary at Gartloch Gartcosh the Wetland Park sits at the heart of a Spatial Priority for Green Network delivery. Integrating new green infrastructure into planned development and regeneration will protect and enhance the Green Network and support the creation of a major new visitor attraction.

**Context**

The Gartloch Gartcosh area includes important Green Network assets including many nationally and locally protected lochs, wetlands and woodlands, and a number of well used public parks. The area also includes valuable cultural heritage sites, including Iron Age Crannogs, Provan Hall (Glasgow’s oldest surviving building) and the archaeological site of Bishop’s Palace.

The area’s existing greenspace resources will come under pressure in the coming years due to regeneration initiatives and Community Growth Areas (CGAs) that will see up to 4,500 new homes constructed in the period to 2025. Communities around the Wetland Park experience significant deprivation, including high unemployment and poor health and new development and housing renewal is a vital part of the area’s ongoing regeneration. However, the need to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage assets of the area as part of the regeneration process must also be recognised.

“**The Seven Lochs Wetland Park demonstrates that focussing on green networks can bring about new opportunities and deliver benefits at a national and local scale.”**

**Cathy Johnston, Group Manager, Development & Regeneration Services, Glasgow City Council**

**Project Background**

In 2008, working with Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire Councils, the GCV Green Network Partnership (GCVGNP) formed the Gartloch Gartcosh Strategic Delivery Partnership, and commissioned the development of a Green Network Strategy for the area. This set out a framework for developing a high quality Green Network and proposed a new wetland park at the heart of a wider network of green spaces.

A detailed hydrological study sought to understand the area’s complex hydrology and Site Selection and Development Guidance identified key constraints and opportunities associated with proposed development sites.
Seven Lochs Wetland Park

A separate Project Development Report examined the socio-economic context for the park and identified key priorities and potential funding sources. A year-long communication and stakeholder engagement project sought to raise awareness of the Wetland Park project. To support this the GCVGNP teamed up with TCV Scotland to employ a Seven Lochs Community Engagement Officer to develop volunteered, training and community participation activity. Initial stakeholder consultation sought feedback on the Vision and Masterplan from public bodies, voluntary sector organisations, community groups and others. Further consultation focusing on the proposed park boundary targeted landowners and developers. Stakeholders were positive about the Vision and Masterplan, but a number of concerns were identified. Finding the right balance between conservation and development was highlighted as a critical issue. Another was the need for the park to have a ‘porous boundary’, with green networks to support urban greening and community engagement extending into surrounding communities. Taking views expressed in the consultation process into consideration, a final Vision and Masterplan to be taken forward to Council planning committees for approval was published in March 2013.

CSGN Learning & Support

The comprehensive approach to the development of the Vision and Masterplan combined with the thorough engagement process have created a secure platform upon which to create a Green Network project of local and international significance. This strategic process has also been advantageous in obtaining support and funds to implement the proposals.

Awards:
The Seven Lochs Wetland Park Vision and Masterplan (consultation draft) received a silver award in the ‘masterplanning’ category of the Roses Design Awards 2011.

Future

The focus is now to deliver the Wetland Park Vision ‘on the ground’ and the CSGN Development Fund has supported this with a £46,215 grant. Other successful funding applications have been made and major funding applications to Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Government are in development. Physical improvements, including lowland raised bog restoration, woodland management, path-work and wetland habitat creation are underway. A varied volunteering programme has started and skills training and employability projects are being developed. A detailed Green Network/Green Infrastructure plan is being developed to identify key strategic actions and inform development frameworks and planning guidance for CGAs. On-going communication with developers aims to ensure that integrated green infrastructure is a key element of CGA masterplans. One key strategic action is to create a habitat and access link over the M73 between Drumpellier Country Park in North Lanarkshire and Commonhead Moss in Glasgow. In June 2013, the GCVGNP secured further funding from the CSGN Ideas Fund to run a design competition to develop plans for, and assess the feasibility of, a new ‘green bridge’ across the motorway.

Outcomes

Improve Biodiversity: The Wetland Park will protect the rich biodiversity of the area and enhance habitat networks and ecosystem services.

Better Health: Improved access networks and a range of recreational opportunities will promote and improve the general health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

Better Economy: With planned, sustainable development, the Wetland Park will contribute to the environmental, economic and social regeneration of the area.

Seven Lochs Wetland Park
What is the CSGN?

The CSGN is a national development within the National Planning Framework which aims to make ‘a significant contribution to Scotland’s sustainable economic development’. It involves public agencies and stakeholders (those with an interest in our work) working together to align their policies, programmes and actions to achieve a common aim. That aim is to change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area.

Getting in Touch

To discuss this case study please contact: Stephen Hughes, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager, Central Scotland Green Network Support Unit. E-mail: stephen.hughes@centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

For further information on other case studies please visit: www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

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Location

The location of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park in Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire is shown in the map below within the context of the CSGN area.

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Project Partners

Forestry Commission Scotland
Glasgow City Council
International Resources and Recycling Institute
Jobs and Business Glasgow
North Lanarkshire Council
Scottish Natural Heritage
TCV Scotland

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Seven Lochs Wetland Park