

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Cluster:</u>	Strategic Place Planning
<u>Date:</u>	10 th June 2024
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Den Burn Restoration
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UPDATE: Den Burn Restoration Project May 2024

The Den Burn Restoration Project involves re-naturalising a previously straightened section of the Den Burn located between Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve and Stronsay Park to benefit people, nature and climate resilience.

The project was previously reported to Aberdeen City Council (ACC's) Net Zero, Environment & Transport (NZET) Committee on [20th June 2023](#) where it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA); and seek additional funding to evolve the project scope.

Since June 2023, ACC entered into the MoU with SEPA to agree broad collaboration principles for the approx. £1 million of SEPA Water Environment Funding (WEF) for this project. ACC also accepted the immediate grant offer from SEPA for £25,000 of WEF to complete concept design. The concept design stage of the project went out to competitive tender in September 2023 and Cbec, a river restoration specialist contractor, was appointed to complete this. This work was funded through a mix of SEPA WEF matched with Nature Restoration Fund's Edinburgh Process Fund, and NESTRANS funding.

A Steering Group has been formed for the project. This comprises representatives from SEPA, NHS Grampian, Dee Catchment Partnership, River Dee Trust, ACC's Countryside Ranger Service, Structures, Flooding & Coastal Engineering and Climate and Environment Policy Service. Together they cover biodiversity, outdoor access and community engagement aspects of the project. The Steering Group meets once a month to discuss project updates, risks and finances and to decide on appropriate actions regarding these. A Project Board has also been established to help with local governance and has representation from SEPA and internally from the Climate and Environment Policy Service and Environmental Services.

The final concept design report was completed in April 2024. This has provided a greater understanding of the position of the adjacent sewer pipe and how this will influence detailed design later on in the project. This work also highlighted previously unknown landownerships within the reach of the project which hadn't

previously been identified. Work is now ongoing internally to complete land ownership checks adjacent to the burn.

The concept design phase helped identify the important balance between designing in appropriate path links in the right locations, whilst being aware of the associated capital and revenue costs this will result in. Design of an active travel route will need to be carefully considered to ensure the Project Objectives are met, and that appropriate path links, and any desire lines, are in place at detailed design to gain the greatest impact from the project.

Being conscious of the essential value of community awareness and participation in this project, information on it will be promoted on the Council's and Dee Catchment Partnership websites. The project will also be discussed by Countryside Rangers at appropriate community events held within the area. This will help start the conversation about the project in advance of fuller community consultation.

The next key step for the project will be to secure the funding required for the detailed design and construction stages. Funding applications will be submitted later this year. A further Report will be presented to Committee if and when this milestone has been successfully achieved.

Background paper

Den Burn Restoration – Project Continuation COM/23/024

<http://councilcommittees/documents/g8504/Printed%20minutes%2010th-Jan-2023%2010.00%20Net%20Zero%20Environment%20and%20Transport%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

Den Burn Restoration – Funding Update COM/23/175

<http://councilcommittees/documents/g8507/Printed%20minutes%2020th-Jun-2023%2010.00%20Net%20Zero%20Environment%20and%20Transport%20Committee.pdf?T=1>