

REFERS TO AGENDA ITEM 6

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CARRON DAMS: LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION
Meeting: LEISURE, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
Date: 19 FEBRUARY 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are areas of open space given statutory protection because of their special local natural interest. They are established to offer protection to the plants and wildlife they contain and to provide opportunities for people to enjoy, appreciate and manage their local natural heritage. LNRs are declared by local authorities in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).
- 1.2 Local authorities have statutory powers to set up and manage LNRs under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. When establishing a LNR local authorities must consult with SNH on the natural heritage context and value of the site.
- 1.3 At the meeting on 20 November 2012 this Committee supported the designation of Carron Dams as a Local Nature Reserve, subject to consultation with (SNH).
- 1.4 The site of the proposed LNR includes almost the entire Carron Dams Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) plus the neighbouring Forge Dam. It is located adjacent to the urban areas of Stenhousemuir and Carron to the north, Larbert High School immediately to the west, with industrial land uses to the east and Carron landfill site to the south. The site is partially drained and was originally a holding dam, supplying water for power and cooling purposes to Carron Iron Works. The site contains a range of wetland, fen and brownfield habitats and deciduous woodland.
- 1.5 The land of the proposed LNR is owned by Falkirk Council and held on Development Services account.
- 1.6 SNH has now formally supported the designation stating it is satisfied that the proposed area of Carron Dams meets the following criteria, against which it assesses applications for designation :
 - It provides accessible, positive, current (or potential) informal opportunities for raising people's awareness, understanding and enjoyment of, and involvement with, their local natural heritage; and
 - It is, or has the potential to be, of special natural heritage interest in the area, through good management and safeguarding of the site.

2 IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 **Legal:** If this report is approved, the Council will be required to declare Carron Dams a Local Nature Reserve in accordance with Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. This involves placing a notice of the declaration in the local

newspaper, in Larbert Library, on the proposed reserve site and in Council offices for a period of 30 days.

- 2.2 **Financial:** Maintenance and development of the proposed LNR can be met from existing budgets, augmented where possible by SNH grants and the partnership funding activities of the Local Management Group and Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT).
- 2.3 **Personnel:** Development Services staff will liaise with SNH and, where appropriate, assist SWT in the management of the reserve. This will not add significantly to current workload. Education Services colleagues at Larbert High School continue to assist with the Local Management Group.
- 2.4 **Policy:** Declaration of the site as a LNR is in accordance with the environmental quality policies laid out in the Falkirk Council Local Plan. It would also help the Council meet its Strategic Community Plan, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Open Space Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Core Paths Plan objectives.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **That Committee agrees to recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that Carron Dams be designated as a Local Nature Reserve in terms of Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.**

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Director of Development Services

Date: 18 January 2013

Contact Officer: Mandy Brown, Planning Officer (Environment), Ext 4716

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1) Carron Dams – Proposed Local Nature Reserve, Leisure, Tourism & Community Committee Report, 20 November 2012
- 2) Falkirk Area Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2014.
- 3) Falkirk Council Local Plan.
- 4) Carron Dams Management Plan 2008 – 2018 (SWT).
- 5) Site Condition Monitoring of Fen, Marsh and Swamp Features at Carron Dams SSSI (SNH 2012).

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 504716 and ask for Mandy Brown, Planning Officer (Environment).