LOW CARBON FUND

VACANT & DERELICT LAND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS AT STAGE 1

(FOR 2022-23 FUNDING)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document is intended to help applicants prepare and submit their stage 1 applications to the £50 million low carbon Vacant & Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP) which is being delivered from 2021-22 over an initial five years. Applications are being sought for 2022-23, the second round of funding.

1.2 The document provides further information on:

- the background and strategic context of the VDLIP
- the application process
- eligible organisations
- eligible project types / sites
- example projects and case studies

1.3 The programme was first launched in 2021/22 and this guidance may be subject to further development and refinement in future years.

2. ABOUT THE VDLIP

2.1 Scotland has almost 11,000 hectares of vacant and derelict urban land sites which can blight communities, harm wellbeing, and limit opportunities. However those sites could offer so much more - they could help solve some of society’s biggest challenges, including around climate change and inequality.

2.2 By prioritising the reuse of persistent vacant and derelict land, and protecting our existing natural capital, we can ensure that future investment goes into areas where it is needed the most, supporting shared ambitions for place, community regeneration, town centres, and 20 minute neighbourhoods.

2.3 The £50 million VDLIP is a capital programme scheduled over the next five years to help with tackling persistent vacant and derelict land and supporting place based approaches to delivering regeneration and sustainable inclusive growth, as part of a ‘just transition’ to net-zero by 2045. It is being established in the context of our economic recovery being a green recovery – where we are tackling climate change and providing opportunities for new work and growth in today’s challenging global market.
2.4 The VDLIP complements the new Place Based Investment Programme. It aims to link and align all place-based funding initiatives to ensure we have a coherent approach to sustained longer term renewal, promoting the resilience, health and wellbeing of communities across Scotland.

2.5 The overarching intent is to better orchestrate what happens in each place in order to collectively improve the circumstance of people’s lives - improving the rights, equalities, and wellbeing of all communities. Translating what has already been achieved in some locations into a new normal, which includes innovative approaches that prioritise putting vacant and derelict land to appropriate new uses, and enhancing the quality of places.

2.6 The VDLIP is being established in the above context and with four pillars of action:

- **Sustained place-based approaches**
- **Urban green spaces**
- **Community-led regeneration**
- **Low carbon developments and renewables**

**VDLIP budget profile**

2.7 The budget for the VDLIP in financial year 2022-23 is £5 million, then it is planned to increase in subsequent years in line with anticipated growing demand for funding. The following schedule is indicative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2022-23</th>
<th>2023-24</th>
<th>2024-25</th>
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<td>£5m</td>
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<td>£10m</td>
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2.8 The budget forward plan allows for multiyear project delivery, where appropriate and justified in project proposals, recognising that some sites are more complex than others to be tackle and takes more time.

3. **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

3.1 It is imperative that our economic recovery is a green, inclusive recovery – not just because it is the right thing to do in the face of the climate crisis and the pandemic, but also because it provides opportunities for new work and sustainable growth in today’s challenging global market.

3.2 In the latest Programme for Government we have set out plans for new investment that increases the momentum for Scotland’s transition to net zero. We are doing this because the opportunity is now greater than ever for Scotland to be at the forefront of global action. Governments around the world are reinforcing their commitment to building back better, inclusive growth and net zero. Financial markets and investors are working towards greening their investment and making sure they provide social benefit.

3.3 The VDLIP is part of the confirmed investments from the £2 billion Low Carbon Fund which underpins our commitment to achieve net-zero, strengthen supply chains, attract inward investment, encourage businesses to innovate and diversify, and promote new opportunities for people to retrain and upskill in new and high growth areas – while protecting and enhancing the environment that we all rely on, strengthening and building better communities.
3.4 Projects supported from the VDLIP will reflect these following strategic areas of priority and core principles (and will deliver across the National Outcomes):

- Climate Change Plan
- Climate Action Towns
- The Place Principle
- Regeneration Strategy
- Town Centre Action Plan and Town Centre First Principle
- Scotland’s Economic Strategy
- Community Wealth Building
- National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement
- Securing Positive Effects for Biodiversity
- Public Health Scotland’s Strategic Plan
- Fair Work and Pay

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 The VDLIP is being delivered on a competitive basis, with project proposals invited over two stages from eligible applicants across Scotland – those include all of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities and Clyde Gateway URC. Note that there is no specific limit set for the number of applications that may be submitted by each organisation but please bear in mind the above point about the reach of the investment programme and that the budget is £5 million for 2022-23, so your project proposals will need to be prioritised each year. We are asking to see only the most developed project proposals at stage 1, those that will be ready to be delivered in 2022/23 if funded. Long-lists of project proposals, including still at feasibility stage, will not be invited through to stage 2.

4.2 The application process is supported by an Investment Panel (further details will be published on our website about this) which will agree recommendations to Scottish Ministers on which project proposals should progress to stage 2 and, ultimately, which should receive an offer of grant. That ensures a fair and transparent process, so the Investment Panel will not be prepared to revisit any of its recommendations after they have been made.

4.3 Applicants are expected to bring forward project proposals that have been developed with the involvement and support of relevant communities, as well as third sector, private and public sector partners as appropriate. Place based approaches and community empowerment are at the heart of our regeneration strategy.
4.4 The purpose of stage 1 is to establish which project proposals are sufficiently developed to meet the aims and objectives of the fund, and also crucially able to make use of available grant in 2022-23. The Investment Panel will agree which of the project proposals they would like to see in more detail.

4.5 **The deadline for stage 1 proposals is 5pm on 12th November 2021.** Further information on practical considerations for preparing and submitting your stage 1 proposal is included at Annex A. It includes the template that is required to be completed to demonstrate the proposed project’s eligibility, alignment with the aims and objectives of the funding, wider strategic fit, and ability to draw down the requested amount of grant in 2022-23.

4.6 See Annex B for further information on how stage 1 applications will be assessed and prioritised.

4.7 Note that we will publish separate guidance for stage 2, including the extra detail required in project proposals and how the Investment Panel will assess them, in due course.

**Indicative timeline for 2022-23**

4.8 The timeline with respect to 2021-22 funding is indicated as follows (but may be subject to change):

- Stage 1 applications deadline – 12 November 2021
- Stage 1 Investment Panel recommendations agreed – early December 2021
- Stage 2 applications deadline – February 2022
- Stage 2 Investment Panel recommendations agreed – March 2022
- Projects for 2022-23 funding announced – April 2022
- Grant drawdown / project delivery (year 1) - from April 2022

4.9 Like 2021/22, the timeline for the two stage application process for 2022/23 is compressed. This was because VDLIP was first opened to applications in April 2021 which meant managing two rounds in the same year. For 2023/24 applications there will be a much longer lead in time for Stage 1 and Stage 2 with the overall process commencing from the spring.

4.10 Community involvement is an important part of the criteria for the funding, so applicants should be thinking about this now/in advance of preparing project proposals for future rounds of funding.

5. **READINESS TO DELIVER IN 2022-23**
5.1 The VDLIP was a new programme for 2021-22 and the application process for both 2021-22 and 2022-23 has been compressed. Therefore clear readiness to deliver in 2022-23 will again be an important point of consideration in the application process.

5.2 Projects offered grant support in 2022-23 will be required to spend or at least fully commit the grant on offer (by end of March 2023) and there will be no facility to carry over to the next financial year.

5.3 Multiyear project proposals will be accepted, where appropriate and justified, recognising that the process of tackling vacant and derelict land is often complex and takes time. Where project proposals are presented over multiple years, the Investment Panel will consider the profile of the grant request, and being front loaded for year one will demonstrate readiness to deliver. They will also consider the longer term deliverability of proposals if covering more than one year.

5.4 We would encourage applicants to also start thinking ahead in terms of preparing future stage 1 project proposals including for 2023-24 funding. We anticipate an increasing level of competition for available funding each year and that the VDLIP will develop a pipeline of project proposals over the years.

6. ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

6.1 Eligible organisations/lead applicants for VDLIP funding are all of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities and Clyde Gateway URC. Project proposals are expected to be brought forward with the involvement and support of relevant communities, and also third sector and private partners where appropriate.

6.2 We are not seeking applications directly from community or other organisations, recognising the important strategic role that local authorities play in registering vacant and derelict land and taking forward the necessary activities to be able to tackle it.

6.3 We are however wanting to see project proposals brought forward by local authorities that align with the high level criteria agreed with COSLA for the Place Based Investment Programme, including net zero, wellbeing and inclusive economic development, the place principle, tackling inequality and disadvantage, community involvement and ownership, as well as support for town centre revitalisation, better places, and 20 minute neighbourhoods.

6.4 Where eligible organisations are submitting applications on behalf of others (e.g. community organisations) they are still responsible for ensuring that the information presented is accurate, realistic, and that the project proposal aligns with the latest aims and objectives of the investment programme. Successful applicants to the VDLIP will in turn be the grant offer recipients and primarily responsible for meeting the agreed grant offer conditions.

7. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS / SITES

7.1 Eligible projects are those looking for capital grant, primarily for 2022-23, to cover capital costs associated with unblocking long-term vacant and derelict land sites. Applicants should provide evidence of how the treated site will be managed and maintained to attract further investment (community or development) to secure and sustain its productive future use.
In terms of defining “long term” vacant and derelict land, 15 years registered provides an objective marker for a length of time that is significant enough that it is improbable the land would be brought back into use by market forces alone.

Where a site has obvious potential to become long term vacant and derelict by that definition, a project proposal may be able to justify bringing forward investment to unblock its reuse.

The Investment Panel may give priority to proposals for suitable projects that will tackle DUSTE (Derelict Urban Sites since Two thousand (2000) or Earlier) sites, as identified by the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce. Essentially they are Scotland’s ‘stuck sites’ which are areas of land located in urban areas and which have been derelict since the 2000s – in some cases even earlier.

Many DUSTE sites have been on the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Register for decades and are located in areas of multiple deprivation, which are negatively impacting the area and wellbeing of residents. These sites are captured here: DUSTE map - Scottish Land Commission

There are however many sites that meet the DUSTE criteria (derelict, urban and unused since 2000 or earlier) but because of their size (>0.1 ha) have never been formally recorded on the register. We would be keen to see proposals for both registered and unregistered DUSTE sites.

DUSTE sites offer significant potential for nature based solutions e.g. sustainable urban drainage, renewables or are already some way towards naturalisation - and with a little investment could be transformed into functional green infrastructure and removed from the register.

8. PROJECT TYPOLOGIES AND CASE STUDIES

We are looking for project proposals that share our aspirations for place, community regeneration, revitalised town centres, and 20 minute neighbourhoods. The possibilities for reuse of vacant and derelict land are wide ranging and so the VDLIP will not be restricted to particular project types.

As a rough guide, possible land reuses may include e.g.:

- Generation of renewable energy/heat
- Green spaces and parkland
- Community growing spaces/allotments
- Meanwhile initiatives
- Urban farms
- Local Nature reserves
- Community woodland
- Low carbon, affordable homes – particularly in town centres
- Low carbon commercial and industrial developments
- Sustainable urban drainage and flood prevention measures

See Annex C for a variety of case studies where capital investment was used to unblock reuse of vacant and derelict land for new uses that generally align with the aims and objectives of the VDLIP.
ANNEX A – SUBMITTING YOUR STAGE 1 APPLICATION

The deadline for completed stage 1 application forms is 5pm on **12 November 2021**

- Application forms must be submitted by eligible organisations.
- The Stage 1 Application Form template is included below, and a clean copy is available to download in an editable format from our website.
- A separate application form should be completed for each project proposal. However we do not require a separate application form per site that is part of a portfolio / place based programme of activity – one single form covering those will suffice.
- Completed project proposal templates should be emailed electronically to: vdlip@gov.scot
- Please ensure that the project proposal is submitted by an appropriate official from your organisation and that the individual is available to respond quickly to any requests for clarification that might follow. If possible, please include details of an alternative contact in the allotted space.

Prioritising your project proposals

- Applicants submitting multiple project proposals are asked to number them in order of priority.
- There are limited funds available and so that means we are asking applicants to be realistic about the number of project proposals they submit and the amount of grant that they are requesting.
- At stage 1 and stage 2 of the application process, a key consideration will be whether the proposed project is ready to be delivered in financial year 2022-23, so please consider that when prioritising.

Demonstrating eligible costs/expenditure

- Please provide clear information including an estimated breakdown of costs that the requested grant will be used for, i.e. eligible capital expenditure. A more detailed breakdown of costs will be required at stage 2.
- Project proposals can request 100% of the cost of the project. However the Investment Panel will view project proposals containing evidence of other investment favourably as it indicates stronger support and collaboration.
• Additional information on any other costs, e.g. wider programme activities, should only be included within the project description. This is to avoid confusion around what the grant on offer will be used to deliver.

• Include details on expenditure beyond the funding period (including if multiyear) where possible – e.g. if onward development is planned, how it is expected to be financed.

• Note that any grant offered will generally be paid in arrears and must relate to spend actually incurred or legally committed. Please ensure expenditure figures are consistent with start and end dates of the project. Grant cannot be claimed for costs incurred prior to 1 April 2022.
1. Applicant Organisation

2. Total Number of Submissions
   | Number of this submission in order of priority
   |   

3. Project Title

4. Project Start Date

5. Project Completion Date

6. Has this project been submitted to Previous Calls
   | YES / NO   | Previous Ref(s)/ Call
   |           | VDLIP-01-INSERT or N/A

7. Project Costs:
   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | Total |
   | Project costs to which the grant will contribute |   |   |   |
   | Costs funded by other sources |   |   |   |
   | Total |   |   |   |

8. Funding
   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | Total |
   | VDLIP grant requested |   |   |   |
   | Please detail any sources of funding other than VDLIP | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | Total |
   |   |   |   |   |
   | Total |   |   |   |

9. Project Officer – Lead Contact
   | Additional Contact |
   | Name |
   | Position in Organisation |
   | Contact e-mail |
   | Contact Telephone Number |
PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY – Maximum 3 Page – minimum font size 12.

VACANT AND DERELICT LAND STATUS
Please briefly outline the status of the project site

What is the site?

Who owns the site / any issues around that?

How long has it been registered vacant/derelict? Confirm if DUSTE

FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY
See the separate stage 1 guidance for applicants for this section.

Please keep your summary short and concise – use bullet points. Be clear on what the project will actually deliver using grant from the VDLIP. The Investment Panel will not consider information that is provided beyond the 3 page limit.

Please try to capture how the project proposal meets the aims and objectives of the VDLIP, and wider strategic fit, using the following major headings as a guide (the text in italics provides a basic prompt).

- SITE AND LAND OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

  What is the site?

  Who owns the site / any issues around that?

  How long has it been registered vacant/derelict?

- WHAT THE PROJECT WILL DELIVER

  How much vacant and derelict land will be tackled, in hectares?

  What is the proposed productive re-use?

  How will its reuse help meet the aims and objectives including around net-zero (note we will ask for more on CO2 emissions savings at stage 2) while promoting inclusive growth and tackling disadvantage ('just transition')?

  Economic impacts regarding green jobs or similar would be helpful to state even if indicative

  Future income from the activity including any potential receipt from on-sale, and how that could support further VDL activity and regeneration?

- WHY THE PROJECT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN

  Evidence of need and aspiration / Community led approach?
How it will tackle disadvantage/promote inclusive growth/support just transition/build sustainable communities

Place based approach? Evidence of other investment in support of this proposal and wider plans

Town centre action / 20 minute neighbourhoods aspirations

- PROJECT COSTS AND ANY OTHER FUNDING

Please provide clear information (and detailed evidence) around the cost of taking this project forward.

Please include a breakdown of costs that the requested grant will be used for, i.e. eligible capital expenditure.

- DELIVERY TIMELINE

Overall project delivery timeline

How the grant offer would be utilised in the required timescale – tender process, contracts signed, work commencing on site, etc. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate they can be under way by end of December 2022.

Availability of resource to deliver: how delivery will be managed.

If you wish to include a map to illustrate the area to be developed, you can do so. This should be submitted as a separate document. Please do not embed files within this document. Please be succinct – information provided beyond 3 sides may not be considered by the Investment Panel.
ANNEX B – HOW YOUR STAGE 1 APPLICATION WILL BE ASSESSED

- All stage 1 applications will be considered by the Investment Panel – currently expected to meet towards the end of the calendar year.

- Stage 1 project proposals will be assessed against basic eligibility criteria, against the aims and objectives of the VDLIP and within broader context of strategic priorities, evidence of ability to be delivered using grant offered in 2022-23, and anticipated outcomes from the project.

- The Investment Panel will use stage 1 of the application process to agree recommendations on those project proposals to be invited to submit a detailed stage 2 application.

- Further information will be published in due course with respect to what the investment panel will be looking for at stage 2 as well as guidance for applicants.

- Please note that there is expected to be a short turnaround between stage 1 and stage 2 following notification by the end of the calendar year.

- The Investment Panel will not be prepared to revisit its recommendations following the conclusion of stage 1 or stage 2 – those recommendations are final.

- Feedback will be offered to applicants with respect to unsuccessful project proposals at stage 1, to help inform whether to submit a revised proposal to a future round.

Legal requirements

- Project proposals are invited on the basis that necessary legal requirements are covered and will flow through to the contents and conditions of a grant offer. That means Public Procurement, Subsidy Control, Environmental Impact, Equalities Impact Assessment, Planning Permission, Fairer Scotland Duty (as part of the Equality Act 2010,) and any other legal requirements that are specific to individual projects.

- All projects will need to comply with all relevant legislation relating to the implementation of projects. Local authorities/ Clyde Gateway URC will be responsible for ensuring these elements. Further information may be required from applicant organisations at stage 2 and potentially prior to any offer of grant being issued.
ANNEX C – CASE STUDIES

1. RAINING STAIRS, INVERNESS (Housing/Vibrant Town Centres)

Once a thriving part of the medieval core of Inverness, this had become a complex derelict site in the heart of the city encompassing a 27m rise, suffering from poor access and attracting anti-social behaviour.

A series of aborted redevelopments over nearly 50 years had failed to bring the site back into use, until a collaborative approach of private, public and third sector interests working in partnership took the chance to increase the supply of desperately needed affordable low carbon, energy efficient housing.

The close working relationship was critical to the success of the project, which now boasts 16 new homes available on a mix of affordable and mid-market rents, as well as providing an attractive pedestrian link within the town centre.

2. GUARDBRIDGE ENERGY CENTRE, ST ANDREWS (Renewable Energy)

The 40GWh Guardbridge Energy Centre project is a biomass plant and heat distribution network developed by St. Andrews University at Guardbridge, Fife.

It saw the remediation of part of a disused brownfield site for the energy centre and wood processing facility, acting as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider site.

The project forms part of the University's green energy strategy aimed at achieving its objective of becoming the first carbon neutral higher education institution in the United Kingdom. The project is now operational and is saving up to 10,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum, as well as delivering significant cost savings to the University over its life by reference to the “do nothing” scenario.

The project is providing a wide range of benefits, including:

- Facilitating the injection of £21m of capital investment into the local area.
- Supporting in excess of 225 Construction and supply chain-related jobs
- Providing a variety of full time equivalent operational positions to manage the operational phase of the project.
- The procurement of up to 17,000 tonnes per annum of locally sourced roundwood.

3. SAUGHTON PARK, EDINBURGH (Greenspace and Renewable Energy)

Spread over 48 acres, Saughton Park is a large tract of well managed open space with playing fields and an athletics track, the biggest skateboard park in Scotland and a modern creative play area. It also boasts a classic formal garden.
But just below the surface it is home to two ground source heat pumps, which provide all the heat needed for the facilities, café, and greenhouses. Additionally, a 36kW micro hydro scheme provides electricity for the parks lighting and buildings.

Both sources combined save over 150 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year, making it Edinburgh’s first green powered park. Although not a vacant and derelict site, this approach demonstrates what could be done with sites that are retuned to amenity use or allowed to naturalise.

4. LOCAVORE, GLASGOW (Greenspace/Community Space/Inclusive Growth)

Converting overgrown tennis courts into an urban market garden has helped Locavore build a successful social enterprise – supplying their shop, delivering veg boxes to local customers, as well as wholesale supply of fresh veg to cafés and restaurants. The enterprise continued to grow, taking on a plant nursery vacated by the Council.

With a clearly defined mission to scale up, becoming a large social enterprise grocery store which offers a viable alternative to supermarkets, they aim to shape a food system which is better for society and our environment. This includes supporting local growers by providing starter plots, facilitating volunteering and informal training opportunities, and reinvesting profits locally.

The fact that the short supply chain is resilient, demand for fresh local produce outstrips supply, that two vacant sites have been brought back into use, and that the business is thriving, demonstrates the value of this approach.

5. WISHAWHILL WOOD PUMP TRACK, NORTH LANARKSHIRE (Community Space/Wellbeing)

Creating a world-class community facility in an area of multiple deprivation was the work of a partnership between Central Scotland Green Network and the Wishaw MTB Club, with the long term vision of providing an outlet for positive engagement with young people and discouraging anti-social behaviour in the area. Since opening in 2018, police and fire service call outs to the previously derelict site have dramatically reduced, and neighbours report a drop off of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The Wishawhill Wood Pump Track facility has also brought the community together, and inspired the launch of a new social enterprise to support track based activities.

It’s clear that this development has been successful in changing perceptions, outlooks, and lives by providing a place where young people are welcome and are free to learn new biking skills.
6. SHETTLESTON GROWING PROJECT, GLASGOW (Community Space/Inclusive Growth)

Originally owned by a local housing association, this site was not needed for housing and had lain unused for years. The site was an eyesore and a magnet for anti-social behaviour so local residents decided to form a committee to look at how it could be incorporated into everyday living.

The Shettleston Community Growing Project emerged from those early discussions. The project uses raised beds (ideal for sites where ground contamination is an issue) to provide growing space for local residents.

Today the project is a successful community enterprise that provides opportunities for local people to grow their own food as well as training on how to cook it. It provides valuable opportunities for social interaction for users and a popular after school club for local children.

7. BALTIC STREET PLAYGROUND, GLASGOW (Community/Wellbeing Space)

Recognising the demand for a safe outdoor space to play for children in one of Scotland’s most deprived areas, an arts and architecture led project set out to create the Baltic Street Adventure Playground. Collaborating with the community, not least the children, they formed a Community Interest Company, took over a plot of derelict land, and created a facility that has become a cornerstone of community life.

Crucially, the supervised playground allows children to freely learn and develop at their own pace and in their own way without adult intervention or direction, building confidence, resilience, and strong personal relationships – all in a safe space.

Ultimately the aim is to help break a cycle of chronic deprivation by investing in and trusting children, making space for them to grow, learn.

8. RED TREE MAGENTA, CLYDE GATEWAY (Commerce/Inclusive Growth)

Occupying part of one of the most complicated remediation sites in Europe, Red Tree Magenta is the first Grade A major office building on the 64ha Shawfield site being redeveloped by Clyde Gateway. It is a new 4,501sqm (48,448sqft), Grade A commercial development, BREEAM Very Good.

The cost of remediating the sprawling former chemical works made it unattractive to the private sector but public sector leadership and the creation of the Clyde Gateway Urban Regeneration Company has been able to overcome market failure and begin development of a new, nationally significant business district.
Within six months of completion the office building was fully occupied, supporting 340 jobs, and saving business around 37% in costs compared to city centre offices.

Improved infrastructure and connectivity, especially for active travel, are the icing on the cake, and the wider site has the potential to bring 12,000 jobs to one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow when complete.

9. FERNBRAE MEADOWS, SOUTH LANARKSHIRE (Community/Biodiversity/Wellbeing Space)

Fernbrae Meadows is a newly created c.40 hectare contemporary greenspace on the south-east edge of Glasgow. The main objectives of the project were to increase opportunities for outdoors activity for all members of the local community; to preserve, celebrate and protect a local greenspace which had fallen into disuse, and to improve and create biodiverse habitats.

The project re-imagined a redundant golf course by ‘enhancing what nature would do’, working closely with the local community and ensuring their ideas were incorporated. Continued community involvement has been encouraged and will continue, giving a real sense of identity and ownership which will help to support upkeep and reduce vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.

The park is currently being used by an average of 220 people/day, the active ‘Friends of Fernbrae Meadows’ group runs regular events and the 50 allotments that were created are all let and in use. Local primary and secondary schools actively use the sites for outdoor learning, and the ‘Friends of..’ group are working with the Council to achieve Local Nature Reserve status.

Overall, the project has achieved a fantastic range of outcomes including walking and cycling routes and tracks, diverse habitat for wildlife, increased community growing space, creation of wetland habitat and woodland, hedgerow and wildflower meadows. The natural flood management measures incorporated into the wetland creation have already been tested during recent flooding events both on-site and downstream, and have successfully helped to manage water in environmentally and aesthetically sympathetic ways.

The project was developed and managed by South Lanarkshire Council, and was jointly funded by the NatureScot ERDF Green Infrastructure Fund, South Lanarkshire Community Benefit Fund and South Lanarkshire Council to the value of £975,000. The project has created a strong sense of place celebrating the site’s natural and physical heritage with a robust, well-considered, high quality but low maintenance and inclusive design. The project’s legacy will be to improve both health and equality outcomes for local people in tandem with increasing the biodiversity value of the site, and the ecosystem services it provides.