

Committee Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

Swanston Golf Club, Edinburgh
22 June 2010

Present:-

Members:-

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillor Keir (Chair)

Midlothian Council – Councillor Thomson.

West Lothian Council – Councillor Carl John.

In Attendance:-

A McGregor (Regional Park Manager), K Logie (City of Edinburgh Council), G Cormack (Midlothian Council) and D Emerson (City of Edinburgh Council).

1 Appointment of Convener

Councillor Thomson had indicated his wish to resign as Convener of the Joint Committee, in light of recent changes to Midlothian Council's position on the funding of the Regional Park. He was of the view that the chair should be held by the City of Edinburgh Council.

The Joint Committee was therefore requested to appoint a Convener to the Joint Committee.

Decision

To appoint Councillor Keir (City of Edinburgh Council) as Convener of the Joint Committee and, in consequence, as Convener of the Consultative Forum, and with Councillor Paisley as Vice-Convener of the Joint Committee.

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2 Minutes

2.1 Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 28 May 2010

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record.

2.2 Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 11 June 2010

The minutes of the meeting were noted.

Matters arising:

Community Council Representation (item 9.2)

The Consultative Forum, having considered a request from Balerno Community Council for representation on the Forum, had agreed to recommend to the Joint Committee that Balerno Community Council, and all of the other community councils covered by the area of the Regional Park, should be given an invitation to attend meetings.

(There were 9 community councils covered by the Regional Park area, of which 3 were currently represented on the Consultative Forum.)

Decision

To ask the Clerk to write to all of the community councils to ask whether they would wish to be represented on the Consultative Forum, and otherwise to continue consideration pending the responses received from the community councils.

3. Wind Monitoring Masts at Fauchs Hill, Colzium

The Regional Park Manager reported that an application for planning permission had been made to West Lothian Council for erection of three wind monitoring masts at Colzium, near to Harperrig Reservoir. (This matter had been raised by members of the Consultative Forum at their last meeting.)

As had been reported in the press, it was understood that the applicants were also considering whether to make application for a wind farm on the site and to that end had contacted the Scottish Government as to any requirements for submission of an application.

The Regional Park Manager reported that although the site was outwith the Regional Park boundary it was likely that the park authority would be consulted by the planning authority, were an application to be made, and in this respect he would report on the matter to the Joint Committee.

Decision

To note the information.

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4 Site Visits and Economic Development Issues

The Committee visited various sites in the Regional Park, including Swanston Farm, and with particular relevance to issues of diversification and economic development. (The information was noted.)

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**Regional Park Headquarters, Biggar Road, Edinburgh
24 September 2010**

Present:-

Members:-

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Keir (Convener) and Paisley.

Midlothian Council – Councillor Thomson.

West Lothian Council – Councillor Carl John.

Scottish Water – A Fail

Scottish Natural Heritage – J Winning

In Attendance:-

A McGregor (Regional Park Manager), K Logie (City of Edinburgh Council), J Kinch (Midlothian Council) and D Emerson (City of Edinburgh Council).

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The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record.

2 Regional Park – Operational Update

The Regional Park Manager gave an update on matters affecting the Regional Park. The Regional Park had secured another Green Flag award for 2010/11, this being for the third year. As regards commercial dog walking, the focus was to be on engagement of the parties involved – the dog walkers, and the Police, Environmental Services and Dog Wardens – the emphasis on promoting a code of conduct (rather than trying to license which was felt to be outwith the scope of the Regional Park).

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On liaison with the other regional and national parks, managers had met with SNH on 6 September 2010 to discuss strategic matters in Scotland. It had been agreed that the Conveners of the Pentland Hills and Clyde Muirshiel Parks should meet later this year.

Decision

To note the report on operational matters.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, circulated)

4 Community Council Representation

The Joint Committee had continued consideration of a request by Balerno Community Council to be represented on the Consultative Forum, with the Clerk being asked to write to all of the community councils to ask whether they would wish to be represented on the Consultative Forum, and otherwise to continue consideration pending the responses received from the community councils.

There were 9 community councils covered by the Regional Park area i.e. Penicuik/ Damhead/ Roslin and Bilston/ West Linton/ Carlops/ Balerno/ Fairmilehead/ Currie/ Kirknewton, of which 3 were currently represented on the Consultative Forum i.e. on a basis of one for each local authority areas – Damhead, Fairmilehead and Kirknewton Community Councils.

Decision

1. To agree that all the community councils covered by the Regional Park area be kept informed, by the circulation of agenda and papers, of all meetings of the Consultative Forum, with it being left to the Clerk to invite a community council to attend any future meetings of the Forum where a matter of area interest was contained in the agenda, or in cases where a community council had made a specific request to make a presentation - and to respond to the request by Balerno Community Council in these terms.
2. To ask the Clerk to clarify the position regarding Damhead Community Council which it was understood was no longer in existence.

(Reference – report by the Clerk, 24 September 2010, submitted)

5 Policy for Memorials in the Regional Park

Following earlier consultation with the Consultative Forum, the Regional Park Manager was proposing a policy to deal with requests for erection of

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memorials within the Regional Park, as follows –

- a presumption against installation of items which served solely as a memorial function (stones, plaques, panels or other purely memorial structures);
- constructions that required planning permission would not normally be supported unless they met an operational need;
- items of access infrastructure or countryside furniture for which there was an existing requirement, and which would enhance public enjoyment of the hills, would be considered. This included but might not be exclusively limited to seats, benches, gates, stiles, paths and dry stone walls;
- dedications on such items were to be discreet;
- neither the Regional Park service nor the Councils guaranteed to maintain or replace the item if damaged or destroyed, and
- the generous donations scheme for the Regional Park would be promoted as an alternative to a memorial item. Donations could be attributed to a specific project within the Pentland Hills.

Decision

To continue consideration, to allow the report be forwarded to the member councils, community councils and other interested bodies, for any comment on the proposals.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, circulated)

6 Woodland Action Plan – Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership

The Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership had made a successful bid to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund to develop a woodland action plan for the Pentland Hills and surrounding area. An award of £32,000 had been given, with which to develop an action plan.

The Joint Committee now received a presentation from Mr I Whitehead, Project Manager, on the stages for development of the project. Stage one would involve further scoping, site investigation, landowner consultations and identification of opportunities. Stage two would involve the development of up to ten projects on the ground. Mr. Whitehead explained the rationale behind the selection of areas, based largely on consolidation of existing woodland, and the linking of areas to provide habitats. The Regional Park would have a

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key role in the identification of potential projects and in facilitating consultation with land managers.

Decision

1. To note the report.
2. To ask that the report be referred to the member authorities (and to Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee, CEC) for any comment.
3. To note that landowners/farmers in core areas would be contacted shortly by the Project, to raise awareness – and that the matter might also be raised by the Regional Park, through stakeholder meetings.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, together with Draft Woodland Action Plan Proposal, circulated)

7 Wind Farm Proposals

The Parks and Greenspace Manager submitted a report on wind farm proposals in areas that could affect the Regional Park, as were either under consideration or due to be submitted to the relevant planning authorities in the next year. There were three proposals at the present time -

Fauchill – a proposed development of 43 of 100-metre high turbines at Fauchill, to the south-west of Harperrigg reservoir, in West Lothian, with a capacity of 50 MW. A full planning application had yet to be submitted. If so, it could raise issues in terms of the landscape setting of the Regional Park.

Harburnhead – a proposal to develop a 28 turbine wind farm of over 50 MW capacity, east of Cobbinshaw reservoir, in West Lothian. An application had yet to be submitted.

Harrow's Law – a proposal for a 37 turbine development, subsequently revised to 17 turbines, to the south of Tarbrax, in South Lanarkshire. An application had been submitted to South Lanarkshire Council. The site was outside of the Regional Park.

The first two sites would fall to be determined by the Scottish Government, in view of the capacities at over 50 MW each, whilst the site in South Lanarkshire would be determined by the local planning authority.

Decision

To note the three proposals and that the Regional Park authority would be consulted in due course, as the developments could possibly impact on the

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landscape setting of the Regional Park and the wider Pentland Hills Area of Great Landscape Value.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, circulated)

8 Mr L Denholm – Retiral

The Joint Committee recorded their thanks to Mr Linn Denholm, Midlothian Council, who had recently retired from post, for his support to the Joint Committee over the years.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Friday 14 January 2011 at 10.00 a.m. in the Regional Park Headquarters.