



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: 1 JUNE 2011

## CONSERVING SCOTTISH MACHAIR LIFE+ PROJECT

Report by Director of Development

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To update Members with progress on the Conserving Scottish Machair EU LIFE+ Project.

### COMPETENCE

- 1.1 The Comhairle has committed financial provision of £35k per annum for four years from 2010-2014 from the Revenue Match Fund subject to a number of conditions. A legal co-financing agreement and a Memorandum of Agreement have been entered into with regard to the Comhairle's participation in the project.

### SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Comhairle is a key funding partner in the Conserving Scottish Machair LIFE+ Project along with RSPB Scotland who are leading the project, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and EU LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity Fund while the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) is a key stakeholder in the project.
- 2.2 The four year project, that aims to secure and improve the conservation status of 70% of the world's machair habitat and its associated species, began in January 2010. It will bring in over £2 million of funding to the machair areas and will implement and demonstrate sustainable land management methods that both optimise the conservation interest whilst being fully compatible with local crofting practices.
- 2.3 The project is based in Balivanich, Benbecula and is focussing on the machair within the designated Natura 2000 sites in the Uists, but also encompasses machair areas on Barra, Lewis, Islay, Coll and Tiree, Oronsay and South Colonsay. The project employs 3.5 FTE staff in Uist comprising a Project Manager, Advisory Officer, Project Assistant and a Part-time Administrator.
- 2.4 Funding for the Uist Greylag Goose Scheme is currently included within the project and is therefore secure until 2014. The Goose Scheme worked well in 2010 due to implementation of an effective scaring strategy.
- 2.5 The Comhairle is a member of the Project Steering Group which meets twice yearly. The Comhairle has two representatives on this group, one Member and one Officer. The role of the Steering Group is to oversee the project and review progress against the set objectives.
- 2.6 Further information on the project can be obtained from the website [www.machairlife.org.uk](http://www.machairlife.org.uk).
- 2.7 A presentation will be given to Committee on progress with the project to date. This was a condition of the Comhairle's funding for the project.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note progress with the project.**

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Background Papers:	None	
Appendix:	None	