



**2020 Climate Group:
Land Use and Forestry Sub Group**

Peatland: Carbon Sequestration and Peatland Restoration Initiatives

1 Background

- 1.1 Simon Thorp met Bruce Keith (SSE Head of Property) on 23 May to discuss the proposals provided by SSE for the above initiative.
- 1.2 This note is a summary of the discussion and outlines the next steps.

2 Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 The project will be developed under the aegis of the 2020 Climate Group and will feed into the 'leading by example' initiative.
- 2.2 A pilot project will be established to demonstrate the benefits arising from peatland restoration.
- 2.3 The work will deal with practical issues but scientific and policy input will be encouraged.
- 2.4 Stakeholder engagement will be a key part of the work and the project will provide information and experience to support the development of a Peatland Carbon Code.

3 Choice of Area

- 3.1 The initial proposal was to find a suitable site in the Flow Country of Caithness.
- 3.2 In discussion, it was agreed that it would be worth considering the possibility of setting up the project in a new area. This might offer the following attractions:
 - 3.2.1 There are many peatland initiatives in the Flow Country and if the project operates in a new area it would have a greater impact.
 - 3.2.2 The location of the Flow Country initiatives makes it difficult to attract many visitors. A more accessible location would make it easier to engage with a wide range of stakeholders.

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- 3.3 There would be logic in seeking to establish a project in an area that is part of, or close to, a SSE windfarm.
- 3.4 The project site should include an area of deep peat that has been drained where it will be possible to improve its carbon carrying capacity through rewetting aimed at encouraging active growth of sphagnum mosses.
- 3.5 The target size of the selected area should be 500 - 1000ha. This is large enough for the benefits from improved peatland management to be significant, but not so large as to stretch resources.
- 3.6 It will be important that the site has good access for management purposes, but also for visitors.
- 3.7 The landowner and land managers should understand the aim of the work and be able to see the benefits that would arise from it. It may be that the selected area will be part of a larger estate.

4 Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1 A key part of the work will be to involve a range of stakeholders. This will be achieved through the Peatland Working Group and Moorland Forum, but the project will also engage with people locally.
- 4.2 The work will be integrated with other similar projects throughout Scotland and beyond.
- 4.3 It will be essential that the project feeds into the developing debate about peatland management, the carbon trading potential of these areas, and the development of a Peatland Carbon Code.

5 Project Management

- 5.1 Effective management of the project is essential and how this is achieved will need to be considered from the outset.
- 5.2 The landowner or land manager would be expected to organise the management work, but the additional activities associated with the project (monitoring, communication & demonstration) will need separate input.
- 5.3 Depending on the scale of the work, a part-time project manager may be required.
- 5.4 The role of the Peatland Working Group would be to oversee the project and act as an impartial and independent facilitator.

6 Other issues

- 6.1 Monitoring
 - 6.1.1 A key element of the work should be to monitor the project area to establish the effect of management work on the peatland.

6.1.2 A baseline survey should be planned and regular surveys carried out to monitor progress. A protocol will be developed with a scientific partner.

6.2 Funding

6.2.1 The aim will be for any management work to be carried out using resources available to all landowners. This would allow the work to be demonstrated to other landowners in the area as something they could also carry out.

6.2.2 The project funding will be allocated to monitoring, demonstration and dissemination of the details of the results.

6.3 Integrated Land Management

6.3.1 The aim will be to manage the project area in an integrated way with consideration given to all issues such as: ecosystem services (including water management), sporting, muirburn, grazing, carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

7 Actions

7.1 The first step will be to agree the location for the work and SSE will work with the Peatland Working Group (PWG) to identify options in the Flow Country and elsewhere.

7.2 Criteria for site selection should be agreed with members of the PWG and a small task group from PWG members may need to be established.

7.3 Once a project area has been identified the proposals for the project can be worked up in more detail.

7.4 A discussion will take place at the 2020 Land Use & Forestry sub-group meeting on 18 June.

7.5 Further meetings and discussions will take place in July to work up the plans for this work.