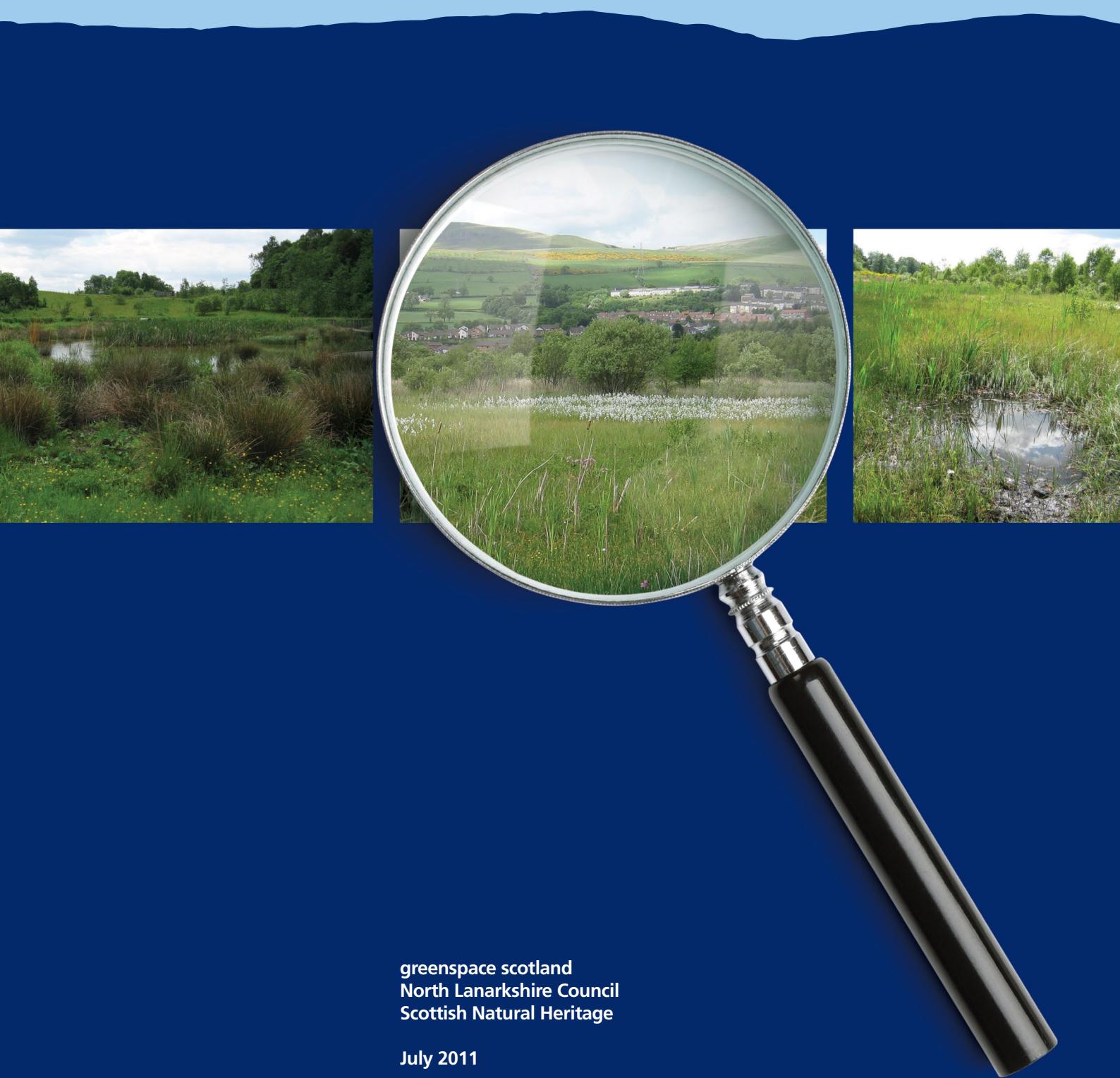


Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve Kilsyth



greenspace scotland
North Lanarkshire Council
Scottish Natural Heritage

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Executive Summary

The report provides an evaluation of the social return from investing in a school EcoClub's use of Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve. The report forms part of a series of four Social Return on Investment (SROI) analyses of urban nature sites. The analysis was undertaken during 2010/11 by greenspace scotland supported by North Lanarkshire Council Greenspace Service.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value. It enables the social, environmental and economic benefits a project delivers to be calculated.

Dumbreck Marsh lies to the west of Kilsyth in North Lanarkshire. As a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) it is a valuable wetland site close to an urban population that offers a haven for wildlife and an area for public recreation. The reserve offers pupils in the school EcoClub a place to learn more about the environment and biodiversity. It also provides an opportunity for children to gain the health and wellbeing benefits from being outdoors in a greenspace area.

The analysis identified those most affected by the activity and recorded and valued some of the changes they experienced. These include:

- pupils are more confident and better able to communicate
- children take part in more outdoor activities
- teachers have increased understanding of the benefits local biodiversity can bring to the curriculum
- young people have increased awareness of the wildlife of Dumbreck Marsh
- parents learn to value their environment by sharing experiences with their children

It should be noted that this is only a partial SROI analysis. Staff changes at North Lanarkshire Council meant that it was not possible to involve a number of stakeholder groups in the study. This meant that a number of identified outcomes could not be valued. As a consequence, the social value calculated is probably much lower than the true value created by the EcoClub's use of the LNR. Even with these constraints, the limited SROI calculation produced a positive return on investment. It should be noted that the data used to form the basis of the calculations on which the ratio is based is limited in nature and so should only be used for indicative purposes in any other SROI analyses.

It was found that every £1 invested generated £3 (applying a sensitivity analysis puts the benefits figure in a range from £2 to £4).

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1. Introduction

This report presents an evaluation of the social return from investing in St Patrick's Primary School EcoClub's use of Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This offered pupils the opportunity to learn more about the environment and biodiversity. It also provided the children with opportunities to gain health and wellbeing benefits from being outdoors in a greenspace area. The report looks at the social value created by the initiative, from the perspective of those for whom the project is making a difference.

The work carried out for this report was undertaken during 2010/11 by a team of people from greenspace scotland and North Lanarkshire Council Greenspace/Countryside Ranger Service.

1.1 Background to the SROI of urban nature sites programme

In 2010, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) provided funding support to enable greenspace scotland to test the application of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach on four urban nature sites.

The aim of programme was to apply Social Return on Investment at four urban nature sites and to inform the future application of SROI to urban nature sites. The programme objectives were to:

- test the SROI approach for urban nature sites (refining the methodology as required)
- develop a broader understanding of the wider social outcomes of urban nature sites
- establish a core set of indicators and proxies for valuing urban nature sites
- develop case studies and guidance material to support the wider application of the SROI approach at other sites
- build the skills and capacity of site managers, project partners and SNH to carry out SROI analysis of sites and to enable them to use this to support the case for continued (or new) investment

More information on how these objectives were fulfilled, learning and recommendations from the programme can be found in the programme overview report¹.

This analysis explores the value of a defined activity on the Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve. It is important to stress that this SROI report reflects and values only one of the many activities that take place on this site. The cumulative value of the myriad of activities that urban nature sites can offer would be likely to be significantly higher.

The SROI analyses in relation to urban nature sites are part of a more comprehensive body of evidence that has been produced by greenspace scotland on the potential of using an SROI approach to demonstrate the value of a wide range of greenspace activities in different settings. Further information on this, and other SROI developments, can be found at www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/SROI/

1.2 Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve

Dumbreck Marsh lies to the west of Kilsyth in North Lanarkshire. It is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) of some 72 hectares and is a valuable wetland site forming part of a chain of similar sites along the Kelvin Valley. It is a valuable area of peri-urban greenspace

¹ The Programme Overview report and other project reports in the series can be downloaded at www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/urbannatureSROI/

both as a haven for wildlife and as an area for public recreation. Managed by North Lanarkshire Council Greenspace Services, Dumbreck Marsh is a former open cast coal mining site. It is crossed by disused railway lines and on the south of the site is bounded by the River Kelvin. Open water and a mix of woodland and grassland areas make it a diverse and attractive site².

The Marsh's close proximity to Kilsyth and the presence of the nearby St Patrick's Primary School make this an ideal site for close community engagement. A range of infrastructure is in place on the site which includes well managed paths, informal paths and trails, built board walks, interpretative installations and public art features. These all contribute to the overall appeal of the site.

St Patrick's School has been using the site since at least 2006 for a number of educational activities. The school EcoClub is the main focus for regular activities on the site. Supported by the Countryside Ranger Service, members have undertaken regular walks to the site. Activities undertaken on site include pond dipping sessions, wildlife recording, helping to arrange LNR Celebration Days, supporting weekend events and encouraging greater local public awareness and use of the Marsh. The close and regular use of the Marsh has been beneficial in encouraging a 'whole school ethos' and environmental appreciation of the wildlife of the marsh has been a substantial element of the school achieving recognition through the EcoSchools³ programme and it has gained second green flag status.

1.3 Policy context

For the EcoClub members, Dumbreck Marsh LNR became an 'outdoor classroom'.

In 2010, the Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning: "*Outdoor education can be a fantastic tool for bringing learning to life, stimulating young people's interest in a way that complements and enhances teaching in the classroom*"⁴

The initiative is in line with the Curriculum for Excellence and will help achieve the national outcome that young people are "*successful learners; confident individuals; effective contributors and responsible citizens*".⁵

Increasing public access to Scotland's natural environments is a policy objective which directly impacts on other policy areas such as improved health and environmental sustainability. At a national level key policies include: Scottish Government's 'Let's make Scotland more active'⁶ and SNH's 'Enjoying the Outdoors'.⁷

North Lanarkshire Council's Open Space Strategy⁸ outlines their commitment to provide accessible and high quality open spaces across its communities that are multi-functional. As Councillor James Coyle stated: "*It [open space] contributes to a number of crucial issues including health, social inclusion, wellbeing, regeneration, environmental sustainability (and) life-long learning*"

² Site Stewardship Report 2008/9, Ruth McGuire, NLC Ranger Service

³ <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/>

⁴ [Great outdoors helps young Scots learn](#)

⁵ Delivered through various Scottish Government strategies: [Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy, More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland, Determined to Succeed National Update - March 2011 - Publications - Publications](#)

⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16324/17895>

⁷ <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A129984.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHtpHandler.ashx?id=2126&p=0>

The strategy reaffirms the position of the Council of Europe⁹ that open spaces “are important for enabling social interaction and fostering community development, as well as providing an outdoor classroom for biological and ecological studies. Public greenspaces help to conserve natural systems, including carbon, water and other natural cycles, within the urban environment, supporting ecosystems and providing the contrast of living elements in both designed landscapes and conserved wildlife habitats within our urban settlements.”

1.4 Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value.

SROI measures social, environmental and economic change from the perspective of those who experience or contribute to it. It can be used to identify and apply a monetary value to represent each change that is measured. The resultant financial value is then adjusted to take account of contributions from others. In this way the overall impact of an activity can be calculated and the value generated compared to the investment in the activities. This enables a ratio of cost to benefits to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 1:3 indicates that an investment of £1 in the activities has delivered £3 of social value.

Whilst an SROI analysis will provide a headline costs to benefits ratio, it will also deliver a detailed narrative that explains how change is created and evaluates the impact of the change through the evidence that is gathered. SROI is based on clear principles and progresses through set stages. SROI is much more than just a number. It is a story about change, on which to base decisions, and that story is told through case studies, qualitative, quantitative and financial information.

There are two types of SROI analyses: a forecast SROI predicts the impact of a project or activity and an evaluative SROI which measures changes that have taken place. This report is an evaluative SROI.

1.5 Purpose of this analysis

The main purpose of the analysis was to demonstrate one of the many benefits that Dumbreck Marsh LNR can offer to locally based groups and organisations. An ancillary purpose was to raise the profile of the Ranger Service and to demonstrate how their support can bring about positive change for others. It was hoped that by demonstrating the value of the partnership between the Ranger Service and St Patrick's Primary School new partnerships might be formed with others who use (or could use) and benefit from the LNR.

A range of ‘interested audiences’ for this SROI report were identified. These are third parties that have an interest in the scope of the SROI analysis but are not integrally involved in it. These include:

- the EcoSchools Network
- the Friends of Kelvin Valley
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- other local primary schools (such as Balmolloch Primary School, Kilsyth Primary School and Queenieburn Primary School)
- local community organisations such as the Community Council
- a number of departments involved in the management of specific issues (such as dogs) from North Lanarkshire Council

⁹<https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/com.intranet.IntraServlet?command=com.intranet.CmdBlobGet&IntranetImage=551137&SecMode=1&DocId=74010&Usage=2>

2. Scope and stakeholders

2.1 Project activity

The project activity that was selected for study is the use of Dumbreck Marsh LNR by children in the EcoClub at St Patrick's Primary School. Countryside Rangers from North Lanarkshire Council support the EcoClub in a wide range of activities on the site including pond dipping, wildlife recording and the annual LNR Celebration Day event.

2.2 Scope

This SROI analysis was originally intended to consider the benefits delivered by the LNR Celebration Day. These events have been held each summer on a weekend in early June since 2006. However, difficulties arose when key personnel left and were not replaced. The organisations and individuals it had been expected would participate in the event were unable to attend. As a result it was agreed to focus on the opportunities and benefits a local nature reserve offers to a school EcoClub.

This is an evaluative SROI covering the period August 2009 to July 2010.

2.3 Stakeholder identification and engagement

The analysis focused on three stakeholder groups:

- pupils at St Patrick's Primary School
- St Patrick's Primary School
- the wider community (primarily made up of parents of pupils in the EcoClub)

As highlighted above, changes in staffing at North Lanarkshire Council meant that it was not possible to engage with some stakeholder groups. Appendix 1.1 provides details of stakeholders and outcomes that were identified but subsequently excluded from the analysis.

Stakeholders in the project have been engaged in the SROI process in a variety of ways.

Meetings were held between greenspace scotland and North Lanarkshire Council to agree and amend the scope of the SROI analysis, identify stakeholders and their potential outcomes and regularly review the findings at each stage of the SROI process.

North Lanarkshire Council, initially via the Ranger Service and latterly via the Biodiversity Officer, acted as the main point of contact with other stakeholders and undertook internal liaison within the Greenspace Services of the Council and directly with teaching staff at the school. This has taken the form of agreed questions that have been completed in one-to-one interview situations.

St Patrick's Primary School has undertaken a series of surveys of the wider pupil community and the EcoClub which have identified potential changes and ways of measuring them.

greenspace scotland undertook a community survey during the annual Celebration Day on site at Dumbreck Marsh. Further details of the survey and findings are included in Appendix 1.2.

3. The theory of change from the perspective of the different stakeholders

The theory of change on which this SROI is based is that local areas of greenspace provide opportunities for enhanced learning opportunities within the formal education sector and also offer opportunities for lifelong learning on an informal basis. The site supports and encourages increased knowledge and awareness of biodiversity.

The close proximity of St Patrick's to Dumbreck Marsh enables the school to make sustainable, long-term use of the site. This builds the relationship between pupils and their local environment, and in turn, encourages greater community use of the site by pupils. This results in children encouraging their families to take them to visit the site independently. The school EcoClub's use of the site promotes positive attitudes within the wider community towards both the site and its biodiversity.

I have fun with my friends and get to go on outings to Dumbreck Marsh

P3/4 Pupil

EcoClub is great! The kids pass it all on to their parents!

Parent in attendance at Celebration Event 2010

3.1 St Patrick's Primary School

Within the school there are two groups of stakeholders: the pupils and the staff/school as an educational establishment. For the pupils, a range of outcomes were identified primarily focusing on increased learning opportunities. For staff and the school as a body, the outcomes pertained to establishing links to the emerging Curriculum for Excellence and achieving the Green Flag through supporting an active pupil-led EcoClub.

3.2 Local community

The wider community has a key stake in Dumbreck Marsh. The site is valued as it offers access to lifelong learning opportunities associated with the natural and cultural heritage of the site and access to a local area of greenspace for informal recreational opportunities. The wider community also expressed a strong feeling of support for the designation of the site as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as a tool to help protect the site from future development.

3.3 North Lanarkshire Council Greenspace Services, particularly the Countryside Ranger Service

The Ranger Service has a number of wider strategic objectives associated with biodiversity enhancement, meeting sustainable development outcomes, developing partnership greenspace projects and engaging local communities with their local greenspace areas. They play an enabling role in assisting others to achieve their outcomes. They hope that by sharing information with wider stakeholders about this project through the SROI analysis they will be able to raise their profile and form new partnerships.

3.4 The environment

The environment was originally considered to be a stakeholder. The outcome for the environment was thought to focus on its improvement for biodiversity as a result of activities being undertaken therein and also in terms of the promotion of the environment to the local community.

3.5 Parents of pupils at St Patrick's

It was hoped that the pupils' greater involvement in Dumbreck Marsh would influence their parents who would be encouraged to use and enjoy the Marsh with their children and by so doing increase their knowledge and awareness of the unique properties of the site.

It should be noted that a number of stakeholders and outcomes were not included within this SROI analysis for a several reasons, which are detailed in Appendix 1.1

4. Inputs and outputs

4.1 Investment (inputs)

The inputs reflect the investment that is made in the activity. The primary input has been in terms of time: staff time invested by the school; time spent by parents and members of the wider community invested in visiting Dumbreck Marsh; and, time spent by the Ranger Service in leading activities.

In calculating the cost of the inputs, the staff time inputs from both the Ranger Service and the School have been limited to the time spent on formal activities on the site.

Stakeholder	Description	Amount
School staff time	Staff time figures are drawn from an average Primary Teacher salary costs ¹⁰	£879
Ranger staff time	An annual input of 56 hours of time in delivering support to the EcoClub and to the Celebration Day (a key highlight in the EcoClub's involvement since 2006) Staff time figures are drawn from an average Maingrade Ranger Salary ¹¹	£604
Total inputs for the period under study (August 2009 – July 2010)		£1,483

It should be noted that the staff time inputs do not include the following elements:

- any parent/helper volunteered time to support activities
- any classroom assistant or second teacher involved in activities
- any additional staff inputs in terms of preparation of activities
- costs of any items or equipment used during activities

These have been excluded because no evidence to support these inputs was made available due to the limited contact with the school (this was unavoidable because staff time within North Lanarkshire Council was limited following the loss of the key member of staff).

The inputs do not include any on-going maintenance and management costs at Dumbreck Marsh.

4.2 Outputs

The outputs describe, in numerical terms, the activities that took place as a result of the inputs. These activities or outputs will lead to change (or outcomes) for each of the identified stakeholders. The outputs identified are:

Stakeholder	Relevant outputs
Pupil's at St Patrick's Primary School	20 members in the EcoClub used the site 60 outdoor sessions
St Patrick's Primary School	Achieved second Green Flag
Wider community	40 parents of pupils used the site

¹⁰ <https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/PlanningYourCareer/JobProfiles/JobProfile0813/Pages/default.aspx>

¹¹ SCRA National Ranger Survey 2006

5. Outcomes and valuation

5.1 Outcomes evidence

Outputs describe what has happened in order to meet the desired outcomes. Outcomes reflect the change that has taken place as a result of these activities. Indicators are used to measure whether or not an outcome had been achieved.

Data collection was particularly challenging because of the limited contact with some of the stakeholder groups following staffing changes at North Lanarkshire Council. The outcomes which have been derived from the limited stakeholder engagement and included in the analysis for the different stakeholders are detailed below, together with the data that measured the outcome. Further information on how estimates were derived from the information collected is contained in Appendix 1.3.

Stakeholder	Outcome	Outcome indicator	Source of quantities estimate or data
Pupils at St Patrick's	Pupils are more active outdoors	Amount of time active outdoors Number of sessions undertaken on Dumbreck Marsh	Membership numbers for EcoClub Number of EcoClub sessions
	Pupils have a greater understanding of the wildlife of the LNR	Self-reported increase in knowledge	Questionnaire survey of pupils
	More people have become interested in the work of the EcoClub	Numbers of pupils involved in EcoClub each year Increase in recorded interest in EcoClub	EcoClub membership numbers and waiting list
	Increased personal confidence	Number of pupils in EcoClub that give presentations at assemblies	Information from school on number of assemblies were EcoClub members presented
St Patrick's Primary School	School has achieved second Green Flag through biodiversity activities on site	Participation in EcoSchools programme Achievement of Green Flag	Information from school about Green Flag assessment
Wider Community	Parents are more aware of the wildlife of the LNR	Demonstrate increased awareness of wildlife in survey	On-site questionnaire survey at Celebration Day event
	Parents are more active recreationally on site	Reported increase in recreation in survey	On-site questionnaire survey at Celebration Day event

5.2 Valuation

SROI uses ‘financial proxies’ to represent the value of outcome for the stakeholders. Some represent potential cash savings or are represented by unit costs of providing services. Others are less tangible and represent the values that stakeholders might place on the outcomes.

Usually stakeholders would be consulted on the appropriateness of the proxies identified. However, the limited access to the stakeholders meant that this was not possible for this analysis.

The valuation methods used for each outcome are detailed in Appendix 1.4.

6. Social return calculation and sensitivity analysis

6.1 Duration and drop off

Before the calculation can be finalised a decision has to be made as to how long the changes produced by the EcoClub's use of Dumbreck Marsh LNR will last. In an SROI analysis the length of time changes endure is considered so that their future value can be assessed. The question to be answered is 'if the activity stopped tomorrow, how much of the value would still be there?'

Most of the benefits gained by stakeholders have been knowledge or behaviour related. These benefits are expected to last for longer than the period of activity. Indeed, if there is further engagement in subsequent years, this knowledge or behaviour may be reinforced. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that this is a one-off activity and that any outcomes delivered in year one will be diminished by year five. 20% drop off each year has therefore been applied across all outcomes.

6.2 Reductions in value to avoid over-claiming

As well as considering how long changes will last, it is necessary to take account of other factors that may impact on their. The recorded change might have happened regardless of the activity, something else may have made a contribution to it or the activity may have displaced changes taking place elsewhere. In considering the influence these factors exert a realistic approach should be adopted. The aim is to be pragmatic about the benefits actually provided by the EcoClub and to recognise that the value it creates is influenced by other factors. The SROI methodology does this by reducing the value calculated for each outcome on a percentage basis.

6.2.1 Deadweight

A reduction for deadweight reflects the fact that a proportion of an outcome might have happened without any intervention. In this case, as all of the outcomes pertain to the value gained from St Patrick's School EcoClub's engagement with the site and Ranger Service. None of the outcomes would have occurred without this and so there is no deadweight.

6.2.2 Attribution

Attribution recognises that external factors, or the contribution of others, may have a part to play in the changes that are identified. Two elements required consideration. Firstly, the Green Flag Award which requires study in five areas to achieve the Award. The contribution of Dumbreck Marsh and the EcoClub to the Green Flag Award has therefore been estimated as 20%. Secondly, it is assumed that there may be a general increase in physical activity as a result of other activities, accordingly 50% is assumed for both parents and children.

6.2.3 Displacement

Displacement allows us to consider what activities or outcomes could have been delivered if the project was not taking place. As we are considering this SROI based on a one year summary of a project now entering its sixth year, there is no displacement as the focus of the SROI is of an on-going project.

6.3 Calculation of social return

Appendix 1.5 details the values for each outcome for each stakeholder and takes into account deductions to avoid over-claiming. These individual values have been added together and then compared with the investment in the EcoClub's activities at Dumbreck Marsh LNR as calculated at section 4.1 above.

The results show a social return on investment of around £3 for every £1 invested based on the assumptions set out above.

It is important to note, as highlighted earlier, this is only a partial SROI analysis. Initial discussions defined a different scope for the SROI analysis. Following, the loss of a key member of staff at North Lanarkshire Council who had supported the SROI analysis, the scope of the SROI and the strategy for carrying out the analysis has to be revisited.

As significant work had already been undertaken in relation to stakeholder engagement it was decided to use this as the basis for further dialogue on the amended scope. Inevitably this meant that it was not possible to identify all potential stakeholders and to have meaningful on-going discussions with them.

Stakeholders where additional engagement would have been constructive include:

- North Lanarkshire Council Education Services and Greenspace Services
- Parents of St Patrick's Primary School Children - whilst limited engagement was undertaken on 4 June 2011 via the Celebration Day survey, this is a key audience with whom full engagement has not been possible

Wider community interest groups associated with Dumbreck Marsh LNR, including Friends of Kelvin Valley, were identified in the later stages of the process and so were not included in the analysis.

6.4 Sensitivity analysis

The evaluation was able to utilise data that had been collected in the course of the activity and so this limited the number of assumptions that had to be made. The most significant assumptions that were made in the SROI calculation were tested in the sensitivity analysis as detailed below.

Factor	Base assumption	Variation	Result
Number of parents of pupils having increased opportunities for recreation	40	20	£2.44
Number of parents of pupils having increased opportunities for recreation	40	80	£3.60
Number of parents of pupils increasing their knowledge about the environment	20	10	£2.61
Number of parents of pupils increasing their knowledge about the environment	20	40	£2.43
Number of pupils at St Patrick's PS spending more time outdoors	60	30	£2.75
Number of pupils at St Patrick's PS spending more time outdoors	60	120	£3.00

Applying sensitivity adjustments to the key assumptions produces a range for the SROI ratio of between £2 and £4 for every £1 invested.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This SROI study demonstrates there is a positive value to the work that is on-going at Dumbreck Marsh LNR. The LNR makes a positive contribution to the learning experiences of pupils at St Patrick's Primary School and also to that of their parents and wider community. The surveys demonstrate that the site is highly valued by the local community. A substantial amount of this value can be attributed to the close relationship between the school and site.

The role of the Ranger Service has been instrumental in providing support, advice and encouragement to the school in facilitating their use of the site. It also has significant additional value in providing a well-managed and maintained site for school and community use, providing support for the focal point of the Celebration Day and as an on-going source of information for self-led activities on the Marsh.

The partnership project between North Lanarkshire Council Countryside Ranger Service/Greenspace Services and St Patrick's Primary School in the support of the EcoClub and Celebration Day, as well as a wider package of sustained outdoor learning opportunities at Dumbreck Marsh has important outcomes. Although this SROI analysis was limited, it indicates there is a positive ratio of investment to social return. Whilst the evidence used is sufficiently robust to substantiate the claim that a positive rate of return was generated that represents the limits of its application.

Recommendations

- R1. The SROI analysis should be repeated for the same (or a different) time period with identification, engagement and on-going participation of stakeholders in identifying and valuing the outcomes.
- R2. This report provides a framework to assist the future development and evaluation of the school's involvement with Dumbreck Marsh

Appendix 1: Audit trail and impact map information

1.1 Stakeholders and outcomes that were excluded

Outcomes relating to the environment and indeed the environment as a stakeholder have been excluded from this SROI on the grounds of materiality. There was little evidence to support the environment having an outcome delivered by the project. Whilst it was initially suggested that the environment was a stakeholder, the outcomes that related to it were actually outcomes belonging to one of the other stakeholder groups.

Outcomes pertaining to the parents of children were subsumed into the stakeholder group of the wider community. This was on the basis that when engagement took place, it was not possible to separate outcomes that belonged to parents from the wider community. There was anecdotal evidence that suggested the involvement of pupils in the EcoClub influenced their parents by increasing their awareness of species on the Marsh and their use of the Marsh; this outcome was not clearly distinguished from outcomes enjoyed by the wider community. It was not possible to undertake any additional evidence gathering from pupils' parents due to a lack of time and resources.

1.2 Community consultation

On Saturday 5 June 2010, Dumbreck Marsh hosted their third annual Local Nature Reserve Celebration Day. The event took place between midday and 3pm. It was attended by approximately 50 people, 40 of which were either school children or their teachers/parents from the local primary school. 14 questionnaires were completed, either by parents accompanying children to the site, by members of the public visiting the event or by members of the public visiting the wider site.

The survey found that:

- 70% feel the site is more attractive, 30% the same
- 60% feel there is more wildlife, 30% feel it is the same and 10% less
- 10% feel there is more information, 70% feel there is the same 20% feel there is less
- 20% feel there is more vandalism, 20% the same and 10% less BUT 50% said there was none
- 20% feel that there are more problems, 30% feel that it's the same and 10% feel there are less BUT 30% feel there are no problems on site
- 50% think there are more signs of management, 50% feel it's the same

Open statements about the site or event:

- EcoClub is great – the kids pass it on to the parents!
- It's a local asset right next to where I live
- Enjoying the Outdoors!
- Would be able to use the site with elderly care patients if there were more seats on site
- Would be great to have an adventure play area for the kids
- Keep it simple – no more development – no pavilions!
- Pollution is a problem
- Great for walking the dog

The overwhelming feeling expressed by those questioned on the day, both at the event and on-site, was the high value they placed on the site as a local greenspace which was a haven

for peace, wildlife and scenery. They also expressed support for the view that it was protected from development and the site was maturing very well.

Wildlife most commonly associated with the site were deer, rabbits, ducks and swans. Very few people were able to mention any of the particularly special species or habitats of the site that led to it being designated as an LNR and SINC.

There was some concern at the lack of information about the site and frustration at the pollution incident. But this did not taint the overwhelmingly positive view of the site. In terms of the event, awareness was very low. Of those attending the event, the majority were doing so as a result of the local school engagement in the site and the EcoClub.

The questionnaire demonstrated that awareness before and after the event had increased across the board. Most notably in terms of creating repeat visits either for the wildlife or recreation. However, in most cases this increase in knowledge was attributed by the visitors to their children's involvement in the EcoClub, rather than as a result of the event itself.

Support for the EcoClub was very high amongst parents who really placed a high value on their children's participation in the Club and stated that they learnt a great deal from their children increased awareness of the site.

1.3 Information on quantities

Stakeholder	Outcome	Explanation of estimate of quantities
Pupils at St Patrick's	Pupils are more active outdoors	Amount of time outdoors - the EcoClub has 20 members, with three terms a year, a total of 60 outdoor sessions have been undertaken
	Pupils have a greater understanding of the wildlife of the LNR	26 pupils (out of 26) responded to a questionnaire and reported that their level of knowledge of areas related to the biodiversity and wildlife of Dumbreck had increased
	More people have become interested in the work of the EcoClub	The EcoClub is limited to 20 members each year, although a waiting list exists with the wider committee made up of 50 members
	Increased personal confidence	Information from pupils and staff suggest that a key element of EcoClub is passing information on to the school. Whilst accurate figures were not available, evidence suggests that each member is involved in at least one assembly each year and undertakes additional work such as presentations and displays equal to this each year
St Patrick's Primary School	School has achieved second Green Flag through biodiversity activities on site	St Patrick's achieved its second Green Flag in 2009/10
Wider Community	Parents are more aware of the wildlife of the LNR	A survey undertaken of members of the public - a sample of 14 from 50 present on site in a 3 hour period indicated that 40% (20 people) had a greater level of awareness of the wildlife
	Parents are more active recreationally on site	A survey undertaken of members of the public - a sample of 14 from 50 present on site in a 3 hour period indicated that 80% (40 people) demonstrated they would be more recreationally active
		Number of ranger-led activities No direct information was available for 2009/10 22 hours of activity time was recorded, working on the assumption that one activity session was 2 hours and 11 sessions (or equivalent) were undertaken

1.4 Information on financial proxies

Stakeholder	Outcome	Financial Proxy	Value
Pupils at St Patrick's	Pupils are more active outdoors	An outdoor session in school is valued using the proxy of typical outdoor activity session, drawn from the SROI Project Database of Financial Proxies (http://www.sroiproject.org.uk/sroi-database/proxy-information.aspx?id=2173&from=1599)	£8.29
	Pupils have a greater understanding of the wildlife of the LNR	An increase in knowledge is valued using the estimated cost of a teacher to teach a class. In this case, an average hourly rate for a newly qualified primary teacher has been ascertained from a salary, divided by 39 teaching weeks (195 days per year) and a 35 hour working week. For the purposes of the SROI, the EcoClub (26 pupils) is counted as equivalent to a class, and so one 26th of the teacher's time is the value per pupil of an increase in knowledge assuming a one hour class. Information source: https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/PlanningYourCareer/JobProfiles/JobProfile0813/Pages/default.aspx	£0.60
	More people have become interested in the work of the EcoClub	Membership of the EcoClub is free to children attending the school, but its value is considered to be equitable to the costs associated with joining a wildlife club or conservation organisation as a child. For the purposes of this SROI, junior membership of the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is taken as a representation of value of the EcoClub membership. Information source: http://www.rspb.org.uk/supporting/join/	£15.00
	Increased personal confidence	Presentations to the school and the resultant outcome that greater self-confidence is achieved can be valued using a Financial Proxy linked to the cost of a self-help resource designed to achieve the same or similar outcome. In this case, drawn from the SROI Project Database: http://www.sroiproject.org.uk/sroi-database/proxy-information.aspx?id=2148&from=1606	£8.60
St Patrick's School	School has achieved second Green Flag through biodiversity activities on site	Green Flag is a UK-wide scheme and reflects a whole school approach and ethos to sustainability. Schools are awarded various flags culminating in the Green Flag which the school displays, on demonstrating to judges a commitment to sustainability. There are nine areas of study against which a school is judged, five of which must be covered to achieve second Green Flag status. Value of the Flag is hard to ascertain; schools may receive prize monies, publicity in local and national press, or equipment for the school. However, no evidence of this has been supplied in this instance and so the cost of a flag pole to hang the flag on is considered one way of reflecting value as the school would be required to pay this to display the flag.	£300.00

Stakeholder	Outcome	Financial Proxy	Value
The Wider Community	Parents are more aware of the wildlife of the LNR	Increased awareness in the wider community is a reflection of an outcome associated with lifelong learning. Adults can access this in many ways; an evening course in a leisure category (rather than a more formal category) is considered a reasonable way of reflecting value obtained via informal learning via the EcoClub. Information source: http://www.perth.ac.uk/courses/Pages/PENVGARDENE_1_A.aspx	£6.50
	Parents are more active recreationally on site	Members of the community report that they have become more active on the site. Established financial proxies are hard to find that reflect a value for this, however work has been done on the willingness to pay to visit woodlands and forests. A Local Nature Reserve is considered to be a similar outdoor experience and so this forms the proxy for this element. Information source (SROI Project): http://www.sroiproject.org.uk/sroi-database/proxy-information.aspx?id=1948&from=1632	£5.71

1.5 Calculation

Stakeholder	Outcome	Quantity	Value	Less Deadweight	Less Displacement	Less Attribution	Impact
Pupils at St Patrick's	Increased activity outdoors	60	£8.29	0%	0%	0%	£437.40
	Increased awareness of wildlife Dumbreck Marsh	26	£0.60	0%	0%	0%	£15.60
	Increased membership of EcoClub	20	£15.00	0%	0%	0%	£300.00
	Pupils are more confident and better able to communicate	40	£8.60	0%	0%	0%	£344.00
St Patrick's Primary School	Achieve 2 nd green flag status	1	£300.00	0%	0%	20%	£240.00
Wider Community (primarily made up of parents of pupils in EcoClub)	Parents are more aware of the wildlife	20	£6.50	0%	0%	0%	£130.00
	Parents are more active recreationally on site	40	£5.71	0%	0%	0%	£228.40

Note: The data used as the basis for these calculations is limited in nature and so should only be used for indicative purposes in any other SROI analyses.

Totals

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Present Value (PV)
Impact Value	£1226.70	£1065.80	£970.60	£898.90	£839.98	£5001.98

The Social Return Calculation is expressed as a ratio of return. It is derived from dividing the impact value by the total cost of the investment. The impact value is adjusted to reflect its Present Value (PV); this process is called discounting and reflects the present day value of benefits projected into the future. PV is applied to those values that have been projected for longer than 1 year. The interest rate used to discount the value of future benefits in this case is 3.5% as determined in the Government Green Book¹² recommended discount rate for public funds. This gives the impact over 5 years arising from the EcoClub's use of Dumbreck Marsh LNR as £5,002.

In the account that has been created for this SROI, the total impact calculation is as follows:

- the total impact (PV) calculated from the impact map for Dumbreck Marsh LNR is £5,002
- the total investment figure in the same period to generate this value was £1,483

The SROI index is a result of dividing the PV impact by the investment. This gives an SROI ratio of 1:3.37. Thus the social return on investment, based on the estimates in the evaluation, was in the region of £3 for every £1 invested.

¹² HM Treasury. The Green Book, Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government
<http://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/chp/pkchp/focus/6.pdf>

Appendix 2: The Principles of SROI

Principle	Description
Involve stakeholders	Inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued by involving stakeholders
Understand what changes	Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended or unintended
Value the things that matter	Use financial proxies in order that the value of the outcomes can be recognised. Many outcomes are not traded in markets and as a result their value is not recognised
Only include what is material	Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact
Do not over-claim	Only claim the value that organisations are responsible for creating
Be transparent	Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest, and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders
Verify the result	Ensure independent appropriate assurance

The SROI Network has published a comprehensive guide to SROI. This can be downloaded at www.sronetwork.org.uk

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