£1m capital investment from South of Scotland Enterprise for community moorland buyout

Wednesday 9 September, 2020

South of Scotland Enterprise's Board has announced up to £1 million financial support to the Langholm Initiative charity in its venture to purchase part of Langholm Moor from Buccleuch Estates.

The Langholm Initiative is spearheading a campaign to raise enough funds to buy the land and bring it into community control. If successful, the buyout by the small town of Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway will be the first large-scale purchase of this type in the South of Scotland.

The buyout at Langholm has garnered significant support both from the local community and further afield, with nearly 2,500 people donating £200,000.

Community ownership of Langholm Moor would enable the Langholm Initiative to develop a new National Nature Reserve and capture ongoing revenue from the asset, as well as providing a platform to unlock further community-led enterprise development and job creation. It would provide significant social, environmental and economic benefits to the area.

Kevin Cumming, project leader at the Langholm Initiative, said: "This generous support is a major step towards a successful outcome for the community. We have been working closely with South of Scotland Enterprise over recent weeks, and couldn't be happier with their commitment to support the people of Langholm.

"We still have a race against time to find the rest of the funding required for a purchase to take place. We are investigating every possible option to ensure the buyout is a success."

Professor Russel Griggs OBE, Chair of South of Scotland Enterprise, said: "We are delighted to support The Langholm Initiative project, and recognise that our significant contribution will be a tremendous step toward reaching their ambitious funding package.

"As the new economic development agency for the South of Scotland, our plans to further the region's economic, social and environmental development are at the heart of everything we do, and helping communities to take advantage of the opportunities community asset transfer offers is one the objectives set out for us in the legislation that put us in place.

"Community ownership is a catalytic step in community development and empowerment as it enables communities to make decisions about how assets within their communities are used. The successful acquisition of Langholm Moor represents a long-term economic, social and natural capital development project, and we look forward to working with the Langholm Initiative as the situation develops."

The Langholm Initiative was formed in 1994, as one of south Scotland's earliest development trusts. The charity is seeking other major funders for the land buyout. To find out more and to support the crowdfunding appeal, visit langholminitiative.org.uk. Follow on Twitter at @LBuyout.

South of Scotland Enterprise is the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland. See www.southofscotlandenterprise.com

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