

ANGUS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE – 13 AUGUST 2002

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING TO STAKEHOLDERS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Abstract

This report summarises the recent performance of the Department to satisfy the need to bring this information to the attention of our stakeholders.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) note the content of this report for its interest, and,
- b) agree to the information in the report being made available to other interested stakeholders.

2. BACKGROUND

The remit of the Environmental and Consumer Protection Department is very wide, and not all of our activities make headline news.

Nevertheless, it is important that we report on these activities to ensure that elected members are aware of what we are doing and achieving; and because increasingly we are being urged by outside agencies to improve our public performance reporting, ie telling stakeholders about the services we provide and how well we are performing. This report to a great extent covers the information already provided in our Departmental Service Plan, but it brings it together in a different and, hopefully, more easily readable form. The body of the report can be used as a basis for informing interested stakeholders.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Environmental Health remit covers a wide area of work from Food Safety and Environmental Protection to Public Health and Animal Health and Welfare matters.

The Department has successfully completed a first audit of its Food Standards Service, and awaits the result of a very recent Food Hygiene Audit: both were carried out by the Food Standards Agency.

In furtherance of our Food Safety remit, we have extended the delivery of Food Safety training to include voluntary and ethnic groups, and the latter has involved us in translation services. We have also produced an Angus Food Safety Manual following agreement of a Food Safety Framework by the Food Standards Agency.

In relation to Health and Safety, we have also delivered training to the voluntary section in Angus, and with partner agencies are fully engaged in promoting Home Safety with the aim of reducing the number of accidents and injuries in the home.

Also worthy of mention was our very heavy involvement in the Foot and Mouth Disease crisis, with the Department issuing almost 3000 animal movement licences last year as part of the Angus controls for this disease.

Last, but not least, within our Environmental Protection remit, we published a 10 year Contaminated Land Strategy for Angus, and in the process identified in excess of 50 Contaminated Land sites in preparation for a detailed study of their implications for clean-up and restoration.

4. CONSUMER PROTECTION

Our Trading Standards Team have a remit from Weights and Measures and Consumer Safety to Fair Trading Enforcement and Consumer/Business Advice. The Department recently undertook projects in relation to enforcement and advice in the areas of underage sales of cigarettes and

solvents, and with Tayside Fire service in relation to the dangers of fireworks. We have established a link with Angus CAB with a view to creating a formal Consumer Support Network in Angus to help co-ordinate consumer advice services; and we have produced in-house a number of new leaflets for both consumers and business containing advice on consumer rights and legislation.

In addition, we have developed a Regulators' Charter to help promote the principles of the Government's Enforcement Concordat, and hope to have the Angus Charter adopted more widely throughout Scotland.

On the enforcement front, we have used our legislative powers to enter premises and seize in excess of 1000 items including computers, CD's, software, false weighing equipment and counterfeit goods. Reports have been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal, and one market trader has already been prosecuted for selling counterfeit designer clothing.

New powers to deal with unfair trading practices via the Civil Courts are being introduced using new legislation relating to "STOP NOW ORDERS" (use of interdicts), and co-ordination of this activity is underway with six neighbouring authority partners and an externally funded co-ordinator. Angus is one of two Scottish pilot authorities using a new Office of Fair Trading Consumer Regulation Website which will co-ordinate this work on a national basis. We are working closely with the Law and Administration Department in respect of this area of activity.

Partnership working with other enforcement agencies is developing all the time, as we work with the Police, HM Customs and Excise, Benefits Agency, Vehicle Inspectorate and Trade Bodies in our investigative and monitoring work.

5. WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The area of work covered by our Waste Management Services Section ranges from acting as "client" for Contract Services (refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning and public conveniences) to Waste Strategy and Recycling.

Within the remit on public conveniences, we have established an improvement programme for Angus Superloos, and in the process won a top award for the Arbroath, Market Place facility. In a similar vein, the Montrose Superloo achieved a national award for accessibility.

Along with our partner local authorities in Tayside, and with SEPA we have agreed a 20-year Tayside Strategic Waste Plan, and an investment of £250,000 has allowed completion of the restoration of Lochhead Landfill site. We also plan, in agreement with SEPA, to employ gas extraction techniques from landfill with resultant energy generation and projected income.

Recycling deserves to be highlighted for the successes we have achieved.

Recycling is not necessarily the panacea for all our waste problems, as we need to bear in mind that recycling can be costly; and we need to ensure that equal emphasis is given to re-use, waste minimisation and alternatives to landfill.

We continue to develop recycling initiatives in Angus, including surveying 3000 households to assess recycling potential, expanding the types of materials being recycled, piloting home composting schemes in Angus villages, and introducing a new specialist glass recycling collection vehicle.

Rural recycling sites are being expanded and new Recycling Centres are being opened (such as Kirriemuir), and self-help schemes eg Edzell, are being encouraged. Other achievements include awards for Yellow Pages and Christmas Tree recycling; and Angus has maintained its 3rd place position in the list of best recycling local authorities in Scotland.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no Human Rights issues associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law and Administration have been consulted on the contents of this report.

9. CONCLUSION

As stated in the report, the Department is being encouraged by outside agencies to improve its public performance reporting.

Officers of the Department have not been in the habit of doing so, being more comfortable working behind the scenes to achieve our aims and objectives.

However, we appreciate that we need to tell all our stakeholders what we do and what we achieve; and that a certain degree of publicity can be good for our Service.

S R Heggie
Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

JM/FMCI
15.7.02