

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8 DECEMBER 1998

SUBJECT: LOCAL AGENDA 21

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report outlines proposals to progress the Council's work in preparing a Local Agenda 21.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee note the proposals to progress the work of preparing a Local Agenda 21 for Angus as contained in this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Prime Minister, Tony Blair has called for local authorities to prepare a Local Agenda 21 by the year 2000. Members will recall that the Environment Strategy was approved earlier this year (Policy and Resources Committee 24 March 1998 refers) as part of the progress towards that aim and that the Environment Strategy Group were remitted to progress the work leading to an Angus Local Agenda 21.
- 2.2 In order to move this work forward an exercise was instigated to audit Council activities, projects and services undertaken and the processes used. It soon became evident that the Council is already doing a lot of work which follows the sustainable development path and the audit helped to identify those activities or ways of working which would form part of our Local Agenda 21 commitment. This resulted in a wide range of activities being identified under the eight environmental objective headings used in the Environment Strategy namely: Education and Awareness Raising; Pollution; Waste; Purchasing; Natural Environment; Built Environment; Transport and Energy. The activities identified ranged from the imaginative projects being undertaken in schools such as a Healthy Eating Tuckshop, wildlife gardens and a village visitor guide, to partnership working with various national and local agencies on such topics as biodiversity, coastal management and transport and also included specific initiatives covering, for example, energy conservation, crime and recycling.
- 2.3 The Council's operations were also assessed against the criteria set in the SOLACE publication "Sustainability Stocktake for Chief Executives". This was devised to enable Chief Executives to gauge how well their authority is performing in relation to the principles of sustainability. This exercise confirmed that in delivering key services the Council met the criteria in most areas. However it did highlight some gaps and these mostly came under the "corporate framework" heading and focused on the spheres of management systems, sustainability appraisals, Best Value, tendering and training. Clearly these gaps need to be tackled.

3 FUTURE WORK

- 3.1 In order to address these gaps and to further the Council's relevant key themes and corporate aims it is suggested that various actions be taken.
- 3.2 Actions requiring a fairly fundamental approach include an environmental management system and training. These are likely to require a greater commitment of resources particularly in the assessment of the most appropriate mechanism and in the implementation stage. The important nature of this work was recognised in that a bid of £30,000 for policy-led budgeting was recently approved so that better progress could be made towards a Local Agenda 21 for Angus. There is a need to increase in-house expertise and to improve the general level of awareness of the relevance of sustainability and how we can work towards it. It is proposed that to assist in this and other tasks part of the policy-led funding be used to second or otherwise recruit an officer to the Planning and Transport Department for the remainder of the 1998-99 financial year.
- 3.3 To ensure that full recognition is given to the sustainability issue a structural approach necessary. This would ensure that all Departments gave cognisance to sustainability and would also help to measure the Council's progress in its work of developing and assisting in delivering a Local Agenda 21 for Angus. The introduction of an environmental management system would be a key component of this work. Currently, there are two main systems used by local authorities, EMAS and ISO 14001. It is suggested that it may be appropriate to engage consultants to give advice on these or other appropriate management systems; to assess which would form the best approach for Angus Council; and to recommend the best course of action and possibly assist in the introduction of an environmental management system.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Costs associated with the proposals outlined in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 will be incurred in financial year 1998/99 and will be contained within the £30,000 Policy-led Budget bid approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 October 1998

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Executive and Directors of Finance, Law & Administration and Personnel have been be consulted.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 To meet the year 2000 deadline for the preparation of a Local Agenda 21 for Angus a number of actions are outlined. These include the use of additional resources, as agreed by Policy and Resources Committee of 27 October 1998 for the secondment or recruitment of an officer to the Planning and Transport Department and the engagement of consultants if deemed appropriate by the Director of Planning and Transport.

NOTE

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 the above Report.

AA/PC/IAL
26 November 1998

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

