Abstract: Following the success of last year's Angus Farming Conference, the co-sponsors and organisers Reeves and Neylan and the Royal Bank of Scotland propose to proceed with an event in either November 2004 or January 2005. This Report asks the Committee to note the success of last year's event and confirm Council support towards this second event.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee

1. Note the success of the first Angus Farming Conference and

2. Confirm Council support for a second Conference to be held in Carnoustie either in November 2004 or January 2005.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 33 of the minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee on 16 October 2003 which records that the Committee noted the support being provided by the Council to the Royal Bank of Scotland and Reeves and Neylan in organising an Angus Farming Conference and agreed to underwrite the event by up to £2,400. Opportunity was taken to promote Angus Ahead at the event.

3 THE FIRST ANGUS FARMING CONFERENCE

3.1 The event was held in the Carnoustie Golf Hotel on 26 November 2003. It attracted 110 participants and this despite a heavy schedule of agricultural events around that time and the Winter Fair in Perth on the same day. Feedback from the event was received through the return of 71 evaluation forms and overall the response was very positive, as summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre Conference</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Papers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.2 The feedback also provides useful information on the preferred format and venue. The majority (64) liked the ½ day event and did not favour a change in venue (63).

4 SECOND CONFERENCE

4.1 The joint sponsors agreed that the success of this first event was worth building on and that making it an annual event would enable a steady increase in profile. This in
turn would aid the attraction of top level speakers. Four dates have been suggested for the Conference in late November (29 or 30) or January 2005 (17 or 18) and an initial approach has been made to a keynote speaker regarding availability on these dates. It is anticipated that the costs associated with a second event will be comparable with last year, but it is hoped that there will be increased income through attendance.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Committee agreed to underwrite last years event by up to £2,400 in the event that it had to be cancelled following commitment. The actual amount of shortfall associated with the event was £3,173.73 (net of VAT which was met equally by the 3 partners i.e. £1,057.91 each. It is anticipated that the costs associated with running the 2\textsuperscript{nd} event will be similar but it is hoped that there will be increased income. It is anticipated that the maximum underwriting exposure to the Council would not exceed £2,500. This cost can be met from the Economic Development Revenue budget for 2004/05. Should projections for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} event point to this ceiling being breached, a further Report will be brought to Committee.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Directors of Finance and Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 The co-organisers of last years Angus Farming Conference were pleased with the success of the event despite the busy agricultural event schedule which was fuelled by the CAP reform consultations. Care has been taken to identify dates for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} event that will not conflict with any of the known events for next year and on that basis the organisers are confident that the 2\textsuperscript{nd} event will attract higher numbers of participants. The overall aim is to increase the profile of the event annually, until it becomes recognised as the premier agricultural event of its kind in Scotland.

8.2 This event is important in the context of Angus Ahead and has assisted in promoting the agricultural produce of Angus locally, nationally and internationally.

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.

DV/MM
4 February 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive