

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**21 APRIL 2009**

**SUBJECT: SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT  
ANGUS FARMING & WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP (FWAG)**

**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Abstract: This report advises Members of the demise of the Farming &amp; Wildlife Advisory Group (Scotland) Ltd and reports progress in relation to the 2008/09 Service Level Agreement and advises of the re-establishment of Angus FWAG.</b></p> |
|--|

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (a) notes the successful progress made on delivering outputs specified in the Service Level Agreement with FWAG for 2008/09;
- (b) notes that FWAG (Scotland) Ltd is currently in the hands of an administrator and currently in compulsory liquidation;
- (c) notes that FWAG in Angus has been reformed as Angus FWAG;
- (d) authorises the Head of Planning and Transport to maintain contact with Angus FWAG and to report in due course if appropriate.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Angus Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) has been active since 1985. The organisation was established principally by farmers interested in the provision of advice to farmers and land managers on nature conservation. As the movement became more widespread, Angus FWAG became part of a larger organisation ultimately becoming part of FWAG (Scotland) Ltd. For a number of years, FWAG has employed an advisor in Angus to assist farmers and land managers deliver biodiversity benefits across Angus.
- 2.2 Prior to Local Government reorganisation both Angus District Council and Tayside Regional Council provided core funding to the FWAG. Since 1996/97 Angus Council has had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with FWAG. The SLA has enable FWAG to assist Angus Council in meeting its biodiversity duties by delivering a range of projects and having a key role in the formulation and delivery of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- 2.3 During January this year it became apparent that FWAG (Scotland) Ltd had financial difficulties. An administrator was appointed on 26 February 2009 and FWAG (Scotland) Ltd is now in compulsory liquidation. All staff have been made redundant.

### **3 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2008/2009**

- 3.1 Angus Council had an SLA for the year ending 31 March 2009, which specified a payment of £7,000 in 2008/09. A review of service delivery of the SLA is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.2 The timing of the demise of FWAG (Scotland) Ltd relative to the period of the SLA has fortunately enabled the substantive delivery of the service specification. It is understood that two of the sixteen outputs have not been completed. These related to a hedgerow training course and contributing to display boards. However, the FWAG advisor has had significant involvement in the preparation of the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan over the last year in support of Angus Council. It is therefore considered that the service provided to Angus Council in overall terms exceeds the outputs listed in the SLA.

### **4 ANGUS FWAG**

- 4.1 At an Extraordinary General Meeting of Angus FWAG on 19 March 2009, the Angus Members resolved to continue as a constituted group. The former constitution has been updated and adopted. Office bearers have been appointed and an Angus FWAG bank account is now in place.
- 4.2 It is intended that further consideration on the future direction of Angus FWAG takes place at the AGM in October. In the meantime, there is no intention to employ staff. Angus FWAG would however wish to continue as a grass roots organisation and envisage a series of planned farm visits and events with speakers on farm conservation. It is also hoped that Angus FWAG can maintain a presence at the Angus Show. Towards this end, it is understood to be the intention of Angus FWAG to apply for funding from the Angus Community Grant Scheme to cover the cost of attending the Angus Show and the administration of the group. It is recommended that the Head of Planning and Transport be authorised to maintain contact with Angus FWAG to determine what relationship, if any, the Council may have with the group and to report further on this if appropriate.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Service Level Agreement in place with FWAG (Scotland) Ltd, which specified a payment of £7,000 in return for specified outputs. Following the demise of FWAG (Scotland) Ltd this funding will no longer be payable, but will be held in reserve pending the outcome of the Head of Planning & Transport's discussions with Angus FWAG.

### **6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

### **7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

## **8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

- The importance and benefits to society of the environment is recognised.

## **9 CONSULTATION**

9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

10.1 Angus FWAG has made a substantial contribution to encouraging biodiversity on farms since the 1980s. In recent years Angus FWAG through SLAs have provided a valuable service in assisting Angus Council improve biodiversity in Angus. In particular, FWAG has played a key role in the preparation of the Tayside LBAP and implementing projects which flowed from it. The reforming of FWAG locally as Angus FWAG is therefore welcomed.

ERIC S LOWSON  
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

## **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.

P&T/SJR/IAL  
25 March 2009

## APPENDIX A

## SCHEDULE A SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR 2008/09

| Project                                     | Outputs   | Results   |
|---|---|---|
| Promotion of Local Biodiversity Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the aims of the LBAP on every farm visit, making farmers aware of habitats and species on their farm relevant to the LBAP and what they can do to benefit them</li> <li>• In the FWAG Landmanager Report, which farmers receive after a visit, draw attention to biodiversity species on that farm and relate them to beneficial action that can be carried out by the farmer</li> <li>• Make the Tayside LBAP booklet and the Summit to Sand newsletter available from FWAG stands at the Angus Show, Kirriemuir Show, Scottish Countryside Festival and at all Angus FWAG events and meetings</li> <li>• Promote biodiversity on its stand at the Angus Show in conjunction with the TBP, which would otherwise not have representation at the show</li> <li>• Put an article about one of the priority species, or species of conservation concern, in each of its newsletters, to draw these to the attention of the FWAG members and others</li> <li>• Circulate the "Barns Owls of Lowland Scotland" (issue 2) newsletter to all mailing list</li> </ul> | <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> |
| Barn Owl Nest Box Projects in Angus         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Press Releases</li> <li>• Continue to promote the projects and encourage farmers to put up Barn Owl nest boxes</li> <li>• Investigate options for funding for extra boxes for SNH funded visits</li> <li>• Continue to collate all Tayside Barn Owl records reported through BOOLS Project survey postcards onto Mapmate. Add all previous records held onto Mapmate</li> </ul>  | <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>                                   |

| Project   | Outputs   | Results  |
|---|---|--|
| Promotion of Hedgerow Planting and Maintenance Training Courses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run Hedgerow and Planting Maintenance Training Course</li> <li>• Two press releases</li> </ul>   | Not undertaken   |
| LBAP Meetings and Events  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with LBAP partners on at least eight occasions including, Steering Group meetings, Farmland Subgroup (Chairman), Upland subgroup. Discussion of joint working, promotions of biodiversity and project development</li> </ul>  | Completed  |
| The Linnet Link   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with Angus Council staff and other organisations such as BEAR Scotland as required to ensure smooth running of project to enhance the Arbroath – Dundee cycle path with shrub planting. FWAG has secured funding through Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund with the support of Angus Council for the shrub planting</li> </ul> | Completed  |
| Display Board Projects  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed into design of display boards at Forfar Loch (Rangers would like to include input on agricultural influence on Loch) before taking forward the display boards at the Angus Show Ground, using Angus Ahead prize money as match funding</li> </ul>   | Not undertaken due to slippage of the project within Angus Council |
| Projects  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate possible other projects and apply for project funding as appropriate</li> </ul>  | Completed (Tree Sparrow Phase II)                                  |