

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2009

RIVER SOUTHESK CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT: This report outlines the progress made towards the production of a Catchment Management Plan for the River South Esk and seeks the Committee's approval for the Plan and for a launch event, which is currently planned for December 2009.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) consider and approve the consultative final text for the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan (SECMP);
- (ii) authorise the Head of Economic Development and Environmental & Consumer Protection to sign off the Plan on behalf of Angus Council; and
- (iii) note that the launch of the SECMP has been planned for December 2009;

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 2 June 2009, which records that the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the consultative draft River South Esk Catchment Management Plan; and
- (ii) to note the intention to submit a further report to allow the Committee to consider and approve the final Catchment Management Plan prior to its launch, which was planned for December 2009.

3. PROGRESS

3.1 Considerable progress has been made since the last Committee report in June 2009. The project remains on track and on budget.

3.2 The Steering Group paid tribute to the part-time Project Officer who left in August 2009 to commence alternative employment. A replacement Officer was appointed in mid-August and the part-time role as South Esk Project Officer is to continue until 31 December 2009.

3.3 The final round of consultations took place in August 2009. There were 60 attendees over 2 nights of public meetings on 12 August (Memus Village Hall) and on 13 August (Finavon Hotel). A further 8 consultation responses were received from a mailshot of some 250 stakeholders. These responses have been taken into account in drawing together the final SECMP.

- 3.4 The final SECMP was agreed by the Steering Group on 1 October 2009. In addition to the issues raised during the consultation period, the Steering Group considered a priority list of "Actions". The list had been calculated on the basis of actions most desired and those where some activity was already taking place, or where responsibility for them had already been assigned. The Steering Group also considered the structure and future management of the implementation phase as well as funding options for preferred actions.
- 3.5 It was agreed by the Steering Group that the Plan should undergo a "plain english" check and the document presented to Committee incorporates the changes suggested. The final Plan awaits approval of the final consultative document by the different partner organisations including the Council.
- 3.6 Copies of the final SECMP have been e-mailed out to all committee members and two copies are also placed in the Members' Lounge.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Subject to Committee approval the next stage is for the Steering Group to meet in early December 2009 to finalise plans for the Launch event and to consider the implementation of the SECMP. The date of the launch was scheduled to coincide with the launch of the Tay Area Advisory Group River Basin Plan, now postponed to March 2010 from December 2009. The SECMP launch is still on target for December 2009.
- 4.2 The Steering Group was unanimous in emphasising the importance of maintaining the current considerable momentum to ensure at least some of the recommendations were implemented immediately. A sub-group has been asked to make recommendations on priority actions to the Steering Group meeting in December.
- 4.3 Steering Group members have also been asked to provide details, where possible, of projects currently running within their organisation that would help fulfil catchment objectives. This could be provided before the next meeting and on a regular basis. These details would be collected and compiled into a report by the Project Officer. This would ensure that the current list in the Management Plan could be updated if need be by an addendum.

5. PROJECT FINANCES

- 5.1 Once the final document of the SECMP has been printed, circulated and launched, it is estimated that the sum of £5,000 will remain in the project budget.

6 THE WAY FORWARD – RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 6.1 Following on from the consultation exercise in August 2009, the South Esk Project Officer has circulated the summarised proposed main priorities to be worked on from 2010 to 2012 in the River South Esk catchment. The priorities in the form of Action cards are to be referred to the Steering Group in December 2009. These actions concentrate on areas where activity may be lacking and aims to fill voids in the developmental work being carried out in the catchment. The first two Action card headings listed in priority order are (sub-headings also by priority).

6.2 CMP DELIVERY

- Maintain the South Esk Steering Group
 - Continue to provide assistance, co-ordinate Steering Group activity, keep steering group aware of developments.
- Develop an implementation programme following the launch of the CMP
 - Progress 2010-12 & 2010-15 project plans

- Develop an independent website for the South Esk, and consider website location options
- Set up partnerships own website (**see <http://www.theriverdee.org/>**)
- Create a quarterly e-news letter
- Encourage academic involvement with the catchment
- Encourage undergraduate, post graduate and PHD work to catchment
- Have academics contribute to newsletter (occasional papers etc)
- Demonstrate sites – best practice
- Raise the profile of the partnership as a consultative body
- Establish a monitoring programme to assess effectiveness of the CMP
- 6 montly review of targets being met and short falls
- Monitor new contacts, outreach, media exposure

6.3 HABITATS AND SPECIES

- Raise awareness of protected habitats and species within the catchment and the invasive non-native species, which threaten them.
- Encourage greater working partnerships between all conservation organisations in the catchment
- Produce promotional materials highlighting the catchments species, trails etc
- Encourage survey work of terrestrial and aquatic species
- Investigate other agencies records for species and collate
- CNPA Water Vole Project
- Wetland grassland and woodland promotion
- Investigate funding sources for an eradication programme for invasive weeds in the catchment based on co-ordinated action
- Work with agencies participating in projects
- Research funding opportunities
- Encourage partnership control approach i.e. establish land owners, assess scale of problem, promote approach, monitor work being carried out, report success to encourage further buy in.
- Support the development of a reporting system for all invasive non-native sightings, and a rapid response system as appropriate for new species
- Newsletter section
- Branded scheme promoted on leaflets, interpretation, website etc.
- Adopt a 'river watch' scheme for reporting potentially illegal activities e.g. relating to poaching, pearl mussel fishing, unauthorised tipping, spreading of invasive weeds.
- Investigate other River Watch schemes
- Liaise with partners and police in highlighting and developing this particular approach in the catchment

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- 7.2 However, as outlined in the previous report, the SECMP will inevitably have short, medium and long-term resource implications for a range of agencies and individuals. Budget restrictions and uncertainties within partner agencies may result in a choice of delivery method between project co-ordination and a project-by-project approach. "Habitats and Species" (see 3.6 above) is listed as the priority project.
- 7.3 These options will be costed and discussed at the next Catchment Plan Steering Group (CPSG). A proposal for delivery of the Catchment Management Plan will be considered by the CPSG and a further report will be brought back to Committee outlining these proposals and seeking any necessary approvals.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 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.

10. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

10.1 The proposal contributes to five of the fifteen local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe (sustainable business growth is achieved);
- We live longer, healthier lives (the health of the Angus population is achieved, children and young people in Angus are active with opportunities and encouragement to participate in play and recreation, including sport);
- 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);
- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity (growth in tourism in Angus is achieved, a good quality of life is enjoyed by all in Angus);
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs (resources are used effectively).

11. CONSULTATION

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

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The SECMP has been successfully completed. However, implementation of the Plan is essential to the future sustainable development of the catchment.

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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 a material extent in preparing the above report.