AGENDA ITEM NO 10
REPORT NO 382/11

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 31 MAY 2011

SUBJECT: RIVER SOUTH ESK CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN – IMPLEMENTATION
PHASE 2 – PROPOSED FUNDING PACKAGE

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT:
This report brings forward a proposed funding package for the second implementation phase of the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan to secure the continued employment of the council’s River South Esk Project Officer.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

(i) Note the proposed funding package secured so far for the second implementation phase of the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan (SECMP);

(ii) Approve the contribution of £10,000.00 during 2011/12 towards the second implementation phase of SECMP.

(ii) Authorise the Head of Economic Development and Environment and Consumer Protection Division to extend the employment by the council of the River South Esk Project Co-ordinator as outlined in this report; and

(iv) Note that future progress and monitoring reports will be submitted to the committee to ensure that elected members are kept fully updated.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 23 November 2010, which records that the Committee agreed:-

(i) to note the contents of the Report;

(ii) to note the intention to submit an application for LEADER funding in January 2011;

(iii) to approve in principle contribution of £10,000.00 towards a further year of the South Esk Catchment Management Plan implementation in order to match an application to the Rural Tayside LEADER Programme; and

(iv) to note that regular reports would be submitted to this Committee updating members on progress and monitoring results.

2.2 This report updates the Committee on a funding package and related proposals for the second implementation phase of SECMP.

3. PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION - PROGRESS

3.1 The first phase of the implementation of the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan terminates on 31 May 2011. This one-year project has enabled the employment of a Project Co-ordinator to implement actions identified in the South Esk Catchment Management Plan (SECMP) and initiated the first flag-ship project for the implementation phase (i.e. the control of invasive non-native species (INNS)).
3.2 The Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust (ERFT) as lead applicant to the Rural Tayside LEADER programme, is responsible for the project (SECMP Implementation Phase I). The project is being monitored quarterly both by the SECMP Steering Group and by the Rural Tayside LEADER programme.

3.3 The project is progressing well. It is anticipated that the full LEADER grant funding of £63,125 will be drawn down by the end of the project and that the LEADER objectives and targets are comfortably met.

3.4 The first phase of the INNS Project was completed in October 2010 but the 2010 spraying of a non-selective herbicide was restricted due to the proximity to water.

3.5 Where natural regeneration of vegetation is slow, rivers banks are unstable and vulnerable to erosion. Re-seeding can improve stability in the short term but is eliminated with spraying in the second year. For this reason, additional funding of £15,000 was secured from the Angus Environment Trust (AET). This allowed a re-spray with a selective herbicide during the Spring of 2011. £2,000 of the Angus Council contribution of £10,000 (proposed in this report) is required to match fund to the AET grant for the INNS project.

3.6 The initial impact of the first phase has been very positive with large areas of Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed having been treated throughout the catchment.

3.7 Angus Council continues to employ the SECMP Project Coordinator, the post of which was added to the establishment (Infrastructure Services) during 2010. Angus Council is reimbursed for the Project Coordinator’s staffing costs on a monthly basis by ERFT.

3.8 A newsletter was issued in December 2010 and was posted onto the SECMP web-site (www.angusahead.com/southesk). In January 2011, 40 people attended a South Esk event, held jointly with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) at the Finavon hotel.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE 2

4.1 An application was submitted to the Rural Tayside LEADER programme in January 2011 to help meet the costs of implementing Phase 2. The application requested £18,000 towards a project valued at £126,000, as outlined in Table 1 in section 5.

4.2 The Steering Group’s priority now is to continue the employment of the Council’s Project Coordinator and complete priority actions identified by the Partnership.

4.3 The flagship project of Implementation Phase 2 is the restoration of the Rottal Burn in Glen Clova, the costs of which would largely be met through the River Restoration Fund, (administered by SEPA). The restoration of the Rottal Burn should improve access to the upper catchment and could be used as a demonstration site.

4.4 The Phase 2 project consists of:

(A) Employment of Project Co-ordinator to act mainly as a communication point to the Partnership and to co-ordinate elements of partnership delivery;

(B) The restoration of the Rottal Burn and some habitat enhancement and access;

(C) Marketing research and educational initiatives, such as the promotion of wildlife tourism, the delivery of the education strategy and the development of technology/computer modelling.

4.5 Funding has already been secured unconditionally for elements A and C utilising the approved grants from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Esk District Salmon Fisheries Board (EDSFB) and the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), as noted in section 5 below.
4.6 The current part-time project officer post (the incumbent has now held this temporary post since August 2009) is due to terminate on 30 June 2011. If the Council confirms its £10,000 support for this project the Project Co-ordinator’s post will be extended until 31 May 2012, irrespective of the outcome of the Rottal Burn application.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In March 2011, the Rural Tayside LEADER programme awarded a grant of £15,900. The approved LEADER funding applies from 1 June 2011.

5.2 The LEADER project however cannot start before all match funding is confirmed. The match funding is provided by a mix of unconditional and conditional grants as itemised in Table 1.

5.3 The Project Coordinator’s post ceases on 30 June 2011. Report 852/10 approved in principle a contribution of £10,000 from Angus Council in 2011/12. A commitment from Angus Council of £8,000 is now sought to match the conditional elements of the funding package of £17,000 already secured from partners (SNH, CNPA, EDSFB) not only to confirm the LEADER contribution but also to enable the post of Project Coordinator to continue. It is proposed to utilise the balance of £2,000 from the Angus Council contribution of £10,000 to match the Angus Environmental Trust grant for the INNS project (para 3.5 refers).

5.5 In the event that funding is secured from the River Restoration Fund administered by SEPA, the Rural Tayside LEADER programme project will continue on the basis of the costings and funding package estimated below.

Table 1 – Project Elements Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A - Project Coordinator</th>
<th>Budget (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Travel + Miscellaneous</td>
<td>20,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>1,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – River Naturalisation (in Rottal Burn)</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat enhancement</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>95,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website, printing, media, GIS Project, Consultations</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>126,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Funding Package

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADER Funding Package - Agency</th>
<th>Budget £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angus Council</td>
<td>8,000 Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNH</td>
<td>10,000 Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDSFB</td>
<td>5,000 Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNPA</td>
<td>2,000 Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Restoration Fund (SEPA)</td>
<td>85,000 Application Pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER (13%)</td>
<td>16,000 Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>126,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Approval of the £10,000 contribution from the council will enable part of the INNS project to be completed, confirm the Angus Council contribution to the LEADER project and secure the employment of the Project Coordinator for the SECMP partnership project until 31 May 2012.
5.7 The contribution of £10,000 can be met from divisional budgets within the Infrastructure Services Department in 2011/2012.

5.8 A further report will be submitted to committee to update on progress and monitoring results and when the final funding situation and project details have been confirmed.

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. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. **SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

8.1 This report 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).

9. **CONSULTATION**

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

10. **CONCLUSION**

10.1 The further implementation of the South Esk Catchment Management Plan (CMP) is essential to the future sustainable development of the catchment and the Steering Group.

**ERIC LOWSON**
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

ECDEV/DV/PD/FM
10 May2011