AGENDA ITEM 6
Report No 673/11
ANGUS COUNCIL
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER 2011

ANGUS LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROPOSALS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Abstract: The purpose of this report is to seek approval to convene a Member/Officer Group in order to discuss and make recommendations on the Draft Supplementary Guidance.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

1. agree that the Member/Officer Group formed to discuss planning matters in November 2010 be convened in order to discuss and make recommendations on the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Implementation Guide for Renewable Energy Proposals, to the November meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee;

2. note that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the SPG has been undertaken.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members may recall that a report to the Infrastructure Services Committee at their meeting of 24 August 2010 indicated that supplementary planning guidance (SPG) was being prepared to support the Angus Local Plan Review policies relating to renewable energy and that there was a need to also prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the SPG. (Report 581/10 refers)

2.2 There is increasing interest through both informal enquiries and planning applications for the establishment of renewable energy projects in Angus. While the majority are in connection with a range of wind turbine projects, proposals for small scale hydro schemes have also come forward.

2.3 While the Angus Local Plan Review, which was formally adopted in February 2009, establishes the Council’s land use planning policies in relation to dealing with energy proposals Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) indicates that preparation of supplementary planning guidance may also be useful in clarifying and expanding on renewable energy policies.

2.4 The draft Implementation Guide therefore expands on Local Plan Review Policies ER34: Renewable Energy Development and ER35: Wind Energy Development and those factors that will be taken into account in considering and advising on proposals for renewable energy projects in Angus.

2.6 It is considered that a Member / Officer Group should be convened in order to discuss the details contained in the Draft Supplementary Guidance, and for that Group to make recommendations to the November meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Tackling climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face. The Scottish Government has established targets for the generation of electricity from renewable sources (announcing in May 2011 that the 2011 target had already been exceeded and raising the renewable energy target for 2020 from 80% to 100%) and the land use planning system will contribute to achieving these targets through support for renewable energy generation. Renewable energy provides opportunities to develop locally based sources of power with minimal impact on the local, national and global environment. It can also aid progress towards sustainable development, reduce dependence on energy imports, broaden the energy supply base and create jobs and investment. The growing number of enquiries and development proposals reflects the increasing awareness of renewable energy capacity, financial incentives and technological advances all contributing to increasing interest of renewable energy generation projects across Angus.

3.2 As at August 2011, the current situation in Angus is as follows:
- over 61 small scale single turbines (less than 25m from base to blade tip) have been granted planning permission;
- four applications for turbines over 50m have also been approved but to date only one project has been constructed and is operational;
- one wind farm has been approved at Arkhill (8 x 81m turbines);
- there are a number of proposals for 3 or more turbines at various stages of the planning process;
- a Section 36 Project, the Nathro Hill wind farm, has been notified to the Scottish Government Energy Consents and Deployment Unit;
- offshore wind farm projects are being progressed with Scottish Government at Inchcape and Firth of Forth; and
- three small scale hydro schemes have been approved – Rottal, Glenmarkie and Clova.

3.3 Other energy projects ongoing include the investigation of carbon capture and storage (CCS) test scheme for Longannet using one of the existing national gas pipelines which traverse Angus. This would transfer compressed CO2 in liquid from Longannet to the St Fergus terminal and hence out to the bed rock of the North Sea for storage. In addition SHETL (Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Limited) has indicated that once the Beauly Denny transmission line has been completed the upgrade of the existing 275KV transmission line in Angus to 400KV will be undertaken as part of the east coast line reinforcement.

3.4 The Angus Local Plan Review is supportive of renewable energy in principle and establishes policies and criteria against which renewable energy proposals can be assessed. The draft SPG has been prepared to provide a more detailed explanation
of the various factors that will be taken into account in decision making on renewable energy developments. It also directs developers and other interested parties to other relevant documents, policies, regulations and guidance.

3.5 The draft SPG also notes that where renewable energy projects accord with the local plan policy there may be opportunity for the local community to secure contributions from developers for local community initiatives. It must however be stressed that such negotiations between the community and developers and local contributions secured are totally separate from the land use planning and planning gain processes and will not be considered as part of any planning application.

4 RISKS

4.1 The risk of the SPG not being approved and implemented is that uncertainty could develop with regard to the promotion of renewable energy policies within Angus.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The costs associated with future public consultation on the draft SPG and Environmental Report are minimal, and can be contained within the 2011/12 Planning & Transport Division’s Revenue Budget.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The issues contained in this report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

8.1 The draft Implementation Guide for Renewable Energy Proposals contributes directly the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

COMMUNITIES THAT ARE PROSPEROUS AND FAIR

1. We have a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities
2. Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit

COMMUNITIES THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE

10. Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
11. Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed
12. Our carbon footprint is reduced

9 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

9.1 An Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared as an integral part of the SPG and the initial findings of the assessment have been used to assist in finalising the SPG.
Once Committee approval to publish the SPG is given Angus Council, as the Responsible Authority, are also required to publish the Environmental Report alongside the SPG. There is a prescribed process for this stage – publishing the relevant statutory advertisement; submitting a copy of the ER to the SEA Gateway and Consultation Authorities (SNH, Historic Scotland and SEPA) and also making the Environmental Report publically available for comment. Details of all consultation arrangements associated with the future publication of the SPG and ER will submitted in a subsequent report to Infrastructure Services Committee.

10 CONSULTATION

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

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 Establishment of the Member / Officer Group will allow cross discussion on the emerging draft Implementation Guide for Renewable Energy Proposals in advance of seeking formal Committee approval to publish the document for public consultation.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE: The following 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.

- Angus Local Plan Review, adopted February 2009;
- Scottish Planning Policy, February 2010

P&T/GWC/GDP/IJBD/IAL
15 September 2011