

ANGUS COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11 OCTOBER 2001  
16 OCTOBER 2001

SUBJECT: ANGUS COUNTRYSIDE INITIATIVE

JOINT REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE & THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**Abstract:** This report refers to a request for financial assistance by the Angus Countryside Initiative, a group of Angus farmers, educational staff and representatives of rural businesses, to finance the employment of a part-time Project Officer from October 2001 - March 2002.

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committees authorise the expenditure of up to £380 each from the Economic Development and the Education Budgets for 2001/2002 to assist towards the costs of employing a part-time Project officer for the Angus Countryside initiative from October 2001 – March 2002.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Angus Countryside Initiative (ACI) is managed by a voluntary committee made up of farmers, education staff, and representatives of rural businesses. It is supported by the Royal Highland Educational Trust (RHET), which provides educational materials and teacher briefings and training.
- 2.2 RHET and ACI were developed to help address misconceptions revealed in recent surveys. These exposed a total lack of understanding about the countryside and the origin of basic foodstuffs.
- 2.3 The ACI have three aims: to help the people of Angus develop a greater knowledge and understanding of the working countryside; to develop a wider understanding of food production locally; and, to support the agricultural sector to help itself through the promotion and education of current and future customers.
- 2.4 ACI plan to achieve their aims by making the countryside accessible through school visits, by providing teachers with resources and information to support their classroom work, and by providing schools with speakers that are trained. ACI also intend to provide schools with farm links to enhance the project work and provide a Project Officer as a central link for all participating in the initiative.

**3 PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 3.1 The ACI have invited all primary schools in Angus to take part in the Initiative. Teacher briefing events have already been held and 16 schools have received a Working Countryside Box (paid for by participating farmers). Three school visits have so far been arranged and a farm visit for teachers is planned for 30 October 2001.

**4 PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT OF PART-TIME PROJECT OFFICER**

- 4.1 In partnership with Scottish Enterprise Tayside (SET), and the National Farmers' Union of Scotland (Angus Branch), the ACI Committee wish to appoint a part-time Project Officer to provide a single access point for the schools, farmers and partners to facilitate the delivery of the Initiative. This will be especially important in this initial

year to allow time to create a group of farmers and suitable venues to accommodate the requests of the schools, and to prepare an application to the Rural Challenge Fund.

- 4.2 By March 2002, ACI aim to have offered all interested Primary Schools the opportunity to attend a teacher briefing event and supplied them with a Working Countryside Box. All schools that request a speaker will be provided with one, and farm visits will be considered in the light of Foot and Mouth developments. The Project Officer will identify farmers who will be invited to be give talks to schools and host farm visits. It is also planned to hold farmer training and awareness events.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The estimated cost for the six-month post of part-time Project Officer is £2,511 (£1,870 for 22 weeks @ 10 hours per week plus £641 for travel and expenses). It is proposed that Scottish Enterprise Tayside fund 40% (£1,000) of the costs, that the National Farmers' Union of Scotland (Angus Branch) fund 30% (£750) and that Angus Council meet the remaining 30% (£761). On that basis, the maximum contribution from Angus Council is likely to be £761, which sum can be met equally from the Economic Development Revenue Budget for 2001/2002 and the Education budget for 2001/2002.

## **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 & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 A contribution from the Council will demonstrate its willingness to support the rural community of Angus and help the people of the Angus area to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of the working countryside and of food production locally.

## **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/PD/MR

17 September 2001

A B Watson  
Chief Executive

Jim Anderson  
Director of Education