

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Environment Committee held in the Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 23 August 2006 at 3.00pm.

Present: Councillors Baird, Barnacle, Barr, Caddell, Coburn, Cowan, Gillies, A Grant, Hayton (substituting for Councillor Barrett), Lyall, McDonald, Mulheron and Young.

In Attendance: J Irons, Executive Director (Environment); D Stewart, J Valentine, K McNamara, R Bean, E Rogers-Nicoll, A Rogers and P McMartin (all The Environment Service); A Wilson and Y Oliver (both Corporate Services).

Councillor Barnacle, Convener, Presiding.

536. STRATEGIC WASTE UPDATE

Prior to the commencement of business, the Convener updated the Committee on aspects of the Strategic Waste Strategy. The Scottish Executive had recently confirmed that bids received by them greatly exceeded the funds the Executive had made available. Indications from the Executive appeared to be encouraging Councils to move towards an energy from waste strategy, but to date there was no overt support for this from the Executive. Following the informative visit to such a facility at Huddersfield last year Members and Officers had inspected a further site on the Isle of Man. A report on the visit to what was a most impressive facility was available to all Members for inspection.

537. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

538. MINUTES

(i) Minute of Meeting of the Environment Committee of 7 June 2006

The Minute of Meeting of the Environment Committee of 7 June 2006 (Arts.400-405) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Minute of Meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Environment Committee of 20 July 2006

The Minute of Meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Environment Committee of 20 July 2006 was submitted and noted.

539. FUTURE OF THE TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

The Head of Sustainable Development Planning gave a presentation on the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, noting that the aim of the partnership was to conserve and enhance Tayside's biodiversity - biodiversity meaning 'the variety of life'. He advised that in 2005 Service Information and Technology Architecture (SITA) awarded £100,000 per annum for three years to be used by the Tayside Biodiversity Action Group. Amongst the projects undertaken had been the improvement of the Perth Lade to increase wildlife, for example otters and kingfishers. The Tay Reed Beds Project at Errol/Invergowrie had been another project undertaken, specifically to attract wild birds. R Bean reminded the Committee that there was also sustainable development to be considered. It was the Council's duty to achieve best value and to comply with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. He undertook to make available copies of leaflets entitled "Biodiversity: A Developer's Guide" and "Biodiversity: Householders' Guide to Biodiversity" to members of the Environment Committee.

Thereafter there was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (06/592), (1) seeking approval to continue financial support to the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership for a further three years from 2007-2010; (2) discussing funding options; and (3) updating recent progress made by the Partnership.

Resolved:

- i) The support and funding of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership for three years beyond March 2007, be approved.
- ii) The best means for the Council to deliver on its biodiversity duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, be kept under review.

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION WHICH IS EXEMPT IN TERMS OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973

The Convener ruled that in his opinion the following item should be considered as a matter of urgency in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 due to the other two constituent Councils having already made decisions, during the time Perth and Kinross officers carried out their own in depth study of the options available as to the future provision of analytical and scientific services within the Tayside area.

540. ANALYTICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES (Art.535)

There was submitted and noted a report by the Head of Environment and Consumer Services (06/616) seeking approval (1) for a partnership agreement with Dundee City Council and Angus Council; and (2) for the relocation of the public analyst service.

The Committee noted further that the Community Safety Committee had approved the terms of the report earlier that day.