

# **Biodiversity and Properties Strategy**

**INITIATIVES WHICH ARE INTENDED TO  
BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE PROPERTY  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**22 June 2004**



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Property Services department has made a commitment to contribute to the Council's Environmental Strategy Action Plan, see Appendix 1, and Local Agenda 21 Strategy for Angus, see Appendix 2, by introducing and maintaining sustainable practices in the design, construction and maintenance of its non-housing estate. Similar practices will also be applied when undertaking works on behalf of the Housing department.

A recent presentation to the Environment and Quality of Life Member/Officer Group detailed the contributions the department is currently making and planning to make by developing, implementing and co-ordinating its strategies for: -

- Energy Management
- Sustainable Properties
- Water Management
- Asset Management

## **2 BEST PRACTICE**

The Property Services department is participating in the initiative lead by Tayside Biodiversity Partnership to incorporate biodiversity into local services as well as adopting biodiversity best practice within its Sustainable Properties Strategy.

The reduction in energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> production through the implementation of the Energy Management Strategy and the reduction in water consumption through the Water Management Strategy will similarly contribute to this objective.

## **3 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Property Services department will comply with the relevant recommendations detailed in the draft document A GUIDE TO INCORPORATING BIODIVERSITY INTO LOCAL SERVICES, produced by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership in which Angus Council participates.

Whilst the document has yet to be finalised and published local authorities will be expected to play their part in undertaking initiatives which protect and promote local biodiversity and this paper details the means by which the Property Services can contribute and some initiatives which can be taken forward now.

### **3.2 INITIATIVES**

The Property Services department can implement its own initiatives when undertaking the development of non-housing properties and work to assist the Housing department when undertaking works on their behalf, as detailed below:-

#### **Property Services**

- incorporate into building designs specific wild-life friendly features such as barn owl windows and ledges or swift nest boxes in roof spaces or outbuildings.
- be aware of the possible presence of bats in all buildings (new or old) to be refurbished or re-developed. Bats, their maternity or hibernation roosts, whether or not they are present at the time, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Current advice is that bats should not be handled and the local SNH Area Office contacted before any works are started.

- whenever possible specify materials that do not impact negatively on biodiversity. Try to use timber that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved or equivalent and consider the re-use of materials if appropriate.
- during the redevelopment of buildings conserve existing features that are important for wildlife. If conservation is not possible replace with other designed features nearby.

## Housing

- Use sustainably sourced materials, timber that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved, in maintenance and construction e.g. solvent free or low solvent paints.
- Incorporate a specific housing policy for swallows, swifts and house martins to ensure contractors working on council-owned buildings do not disturb or remove current nests – and if possible to encourage property managers to install artificial nest-boxes as appropriate. This cost effective project will raise awareness, especially where well-known buildings are targeted.

## 3.3 STATUS

### 3.3.1 TIMBER SOURCING

There has been discussion with Dundee City Council who have adopted a policy of procuring, so far as is practicable, timber and timber products from sustainable resources through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme<sup>1</sup> or the Pan-European Forest Certification [PEFC]<sup>1</sup> scheme. There has also been attendance at relevant seminars in 2003 and 2004.

As a consequence a procurement strategy supported by appropriate procedures and contractual arrangements is being developed for implementation in the autumn. It is proposed that the model adopted by Dundee City Council is broadly adopted to ensure that the maximising of timber procurement from renewable resources is achieved. Consideration will be given to new Central Government advice which is awaited and the ability of the timber suppliers to provide these materials.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme is the preferred sourcing arrangement because it is the only scheme that meets every best practice criteria, for a credible certification scheme, which reflects the demands of governments and non-government organisations however the scheme is unlikely to be able to meet the demands placed on it in the next few years..

Such provisions are an integral part of the Council's LA 21 Strategy and Action plan and detailed in the recent Environment and Quality of Life Member Officer Group report.

It is intended that the Property Services department work in partnership with:-

- contractors who undertake construction work for Angus Council,
- timber suppliers who can readily source most timber requirements within these schemes and can accommodate the Chain of Custody requirements,
- local authorities, Universities and the NHS in Tayside to establish a strong and consistent demand which would encourage contractors to put in place the necessary arrangements.

### 3.3.2 SWIFTS

Examples of good practice and achievements, detailed in a handout and leaflet received at the SWIFTS IN URBAN SURROUNDINGS – AN INTRODUCTION TO THEIR CONSERVATION seminar for local authority staff organised by Tayside Biodiversity Partnership on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003 have been made available to all employees on the departmental Website.

Local authorities, Housing Associations and developers can contribute to ensuring that the Swift population is protected by ensuring that nesting sites are retained, provided or protected during refurbishment/construction works.

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<sup>1</sup> Details available upon request.

Whilst requests to Architects, Project Managers, Developers and Contractors to support these initiatives were generally well received, follow through and compliance can be less satisfactory, possibly due to forgetfulness or poor communication and consistency of commitment which is essential.

Efforts will be focused on those locations where Swifts are known to be present, as advised by the Council's Ranger Service.

### 3.3.3 BARN AND OTHER OWLS

Examples of good practice and achievements, detailed in a handout and leaflet received at the PLANNING FOR BARN OWLS seminar for local authority staff organised by Tayside Biodiversity Partnership on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2003 have been made available to all employees on the departmental Website.

### 3.3.4 HEDGES

Examples of good practice and achievements, detailed in a handout and leaflet received at the HEDGE MANAGEMENT AND HEDGE CUTTING TECHNIQUES seminar for local authority staff organised by Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Angus FWAG on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2003 have been made available to all employees on the departmental Website.

### 3.3.5 BATS

Examples of good practice and achievements, detailed in a handout and leaflet received at the BATS IN BUILDINGS AND BRIDGES seminar for local authority staff organised by Tayside Biodiversity Partnership on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004 have been made available to all employees on the departmental Website.

Health and Safety guidance on how to deal with bats in Council buildings has also been issued. A small number of bat roosts have been recently identified and Liaison with Scottish National Heritage is being arranged to discuss how the buildings can be maintained.

## **Appendix 1 Environmental Strategy Action Plan**

### **Key Action Areas**

1. Education and Awareness Raising
2. Natural Environment
3. Transport
4. Built Environment
5. Energy
6. Pollution
7. Waste
8. Purchasing
9. Working in Partnership
10. Public Participation
11. The Way Forward: Towards a Sustainable Angus

## **Appendix 2 Local Agenda 21 Strategy for Angus**

### **The Thirteen Themes of Sustainability:**

1. Resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised by closing cycles.
2. Pollution is limited to levels which natural systems can cope with and without damage.
3. The diversity of nature is valued and protected.
4. Where possible, local needs are met locally.
5. Everyone has access to good food, water, shelter, and fuel at reasonable cost.
6. Everyone has the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy. The value of unpaid work is recognised, whilst payments for work are fair and fairly distributed.
7. People's good health is protected by creating safe, clean, pleasant environments and health services, which emphasise prevention of illness as well as proper care for the sick.
8. Access to facilities, services, goods and other people is not achieved at the expense of the environment or limited to those with cars.
9. People live without fear of personal violence from crime or persecution because of their personal beliefs, race, gender, or sexuality.
10. Everyone has access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable them to play a full part in society.
11. All sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision-making.
12. Opportunities for culture, leisure, and recreation are readily available to all.
13. Places, spaces, and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility. Settlements are 'human' in scale and form. Diversity and local distinctiveness are valued and protected.