

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE**

**11 OCTOBER 2001**

**SUBJECT: CAIRNGORMS LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN  
PROJECT OFFICER**

**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**

<p><b>Abstract: This report recommends that Angus Council contributes towards the fourth year of the Project Officer post.</b></p>
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**1 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to contribute up to £2,000 towards the cost of the Project Officer post up to September 2002, subject to the balance of the funding being secured; this expenditure to be met from the Planning & Transport's Revenue Budget for 2001/2002.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 Members will recall that the Committee has previously agreed to contribute towards the first three years of the Project Officer post (September 1998 – September 2001). (Report Nos. 614/98, 815/99 and 1150/00 refer).

**3 PROJECT OFFICER POST**

3.1 For the last three years the priority of the Project Officer has been to co-ordinate the development of the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). This has involved working with the Steering Group and Habitat Sub-Groups for each of the four habitats which comprise individuals with expertise or interest in the particular habitat. The LBAP has now been drafted and will shortly be put out to public consultation. It is anticipated that the launch of the Plan will take place in January 2002.

3.2 In addition, the Project Officer has developed a number of early projects. These are included as Appendix A.

3.3 Funding is now being sought to progress the Cairngorms LBAP project into the "Action Phase". Subject to various legislative and parliamentary procedures, the formal establishment of a national park in the Cairngorms is scheduled for early 2003. (Report 1149/01 on the Committee's agenda refers). It is considered by the Cairngorms Partnership that extending the project until September 2003 will therefore allow the Project Officer and partners to maintain momentum in delivering the LBAP, whilst also allowing sufficient time for the National Park Authority to review the direction and resources of the project with all of the stakeholders.

- 3.4 The Project Officer's main task will be to work with individual partners to encourage the implementation of the Habitat Action Plans. During the course of such discussions it is envisaged that a series of practical initiatives will emerge. The Project Officer will be responsible for nurturing these initiatives.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The total cost of the post for the two year "Action Phase" is £66,664. The Cairngorms Partnership has requested that Angus Council contributes £2,000 each year towards the costs associated with the post. It is recommended that a contribution of up to £2,000 be made at this stage towards the funding of the post for the first year up to September 2002 from the Planning & Transport Department's Revenue Budget 2001/2002.

#### **5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

#### **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The retention of the Project Officer post is considered the most effective means of taking the Cairngorms LBAP into the "Action Phase". Contribution towards the post represents very good value for money in delivering the LBAP.

#### **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.

AA/SJR/IAL  
2 October 2001

Alex Anderson  
Director of Planning and Transport

## APPENDIX A

**CAIRNGORMS LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN :  
PROJECTS INITIATED TO DATE**

Activity	Progress
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(1) Cairngorms Upland Grain Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully carried out Year I of the Pilot Project &amp; published <b>Monitoring report</b></li> <li>• Initiated Year II of the project</li> <li>• Liaised with FWAG &amp; Scottish Executive to ensure sacrificial crops were included in the revisions to the new Agri-environment scheme (RSS)</li> <li>• High profile media coverage of the project</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(2) Pearl mussel matter Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided advice &amp; awareness raising presentations to local, national &amp; international partners inc. SNH, Local Authority staff, local estate staff, North of Scotland Water Authority, Police Wildlife Liaison Officers, Ranger service, scientists, ecologists &amp; local recreation groups</li> <li>• Gave interviews to local &amp; national media (TV, radio &amp; newspapers) on the importance of freshwater pearl mussels to the ecology &amp; economy of Scottish rivers.</li> <li>• Published three key papers on the conservation of freshwater pearl mussels:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Pearl mussels in peril</b> – <i>British Wildlife 2000</i></li> <li>2. <b>Decline of migratory salmonids: a new threat to pearl mussels in Scotland</b> – <i>Freshwater Forum 2001</i></li> <li>3. <b>Conservation of threatened freshwater pearl mussels: river management, mussel translocation &amp; conflict resolution</b> – <i>Biological Conservation 2001</i></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(3) Aspen action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with partners to hold the first UK seminar on the Biodiversity of Aspen</li> <li>• Provided key presentation on delivering habitat &amp; species action at the Aspen seminar</li> <li>• Collating &amp; editing all papers to publish as a set of Aspen Proceedings</li> <li>• Helping to co-ordinate practical action for 3 UK Priority Aspen species.</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(4) Capercaillie in crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped the Caledonian Partnership develop a LIFE Nature 2001 Capercaillie Project proposal &amp; submission.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with local gamekeepers, &amp; estate managers to provide advice to the Scottish Executive on a 'new' &amp; preventable threat (snaring) to Capercaillie</li> <li>• Published a key Capercaillie conservation paper: <b>Capercaillie captures &amp; snares</b> – <i>Scottish Birds 2001</i></li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(4) Cairngorms Moorland Project – HLF application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped the Cairngorms Moorland Working Party develop the biodiversity elements of a Cairngorms Moorland Project</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(5) Spey Catchment Management Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed &amp; produced paper on key River Spey biodiversity objectives inc. habitat &amp; species accounts for the Spey Catchment Management Plan</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(6) Rural Stewardship Scheme (RSS) – local biodiversity priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaised with local agricultural partners to develop the 'list of 30' local biodiversity priorities for farmers/crofters entering the RSS</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(7) UK joint Lead partner</b> (with RSPB) for 2 Priority species of rare, alpine plants found only in the Cairngorms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated &amp; co-ordinated research work on Alpine sulphur tresses &amp; lcy rock moss. Commissioned researched has subsequently found that both species, whilst still rare &amp; local, are more widespread than formerly thought.</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(8) Pilot estate biodiversity audits &amp; action plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed &amp; produced estate biodiversity audits &amp; action plans</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(9) Deeside Forest Biodiversity Guidance note</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped draft 'Deeside Forest Biodiversity Guidance Note' with Denis Torley. Shortly to be published</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(10) Farmland biodiversity issues</b> – Promotion of the importance of traditional management for biodiversity in the Cairngorms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed &amp; produced Farm Biodiversity Audit for a LEAF (Linking Environment &amp; Farming) demonstration farm.</li> <li>• Helped survey Strathspey farms for breeding waders &amp; promoted importance of traditional farm/croft management for biodiversity conservation in the Cairngorms to key local &amp; national audiences.</li> <li>• Helped Crofters Commission increase their 'biodiversity' profile by assisting their submission on National Parks &amp; providing biodiversity presentation at their Annual conference.</li> </ul>
Development of practical biodiversity projects with local partners: <b>(11) Local Goldeneye group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the development of a local Goldeneye study group &amp; facilitate in the production, erection &amp; monitoring of Goldeneye nest boxes with local farmers, estates &amp; schools.</li> </ul>

Identify a number of new practical initiatives to support & move forward with as part of the forward action plan process in 2001.	Initiatives currently being developed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cairngorms Water vole action plan</li><li>• Introduced or Non-native fish species action plan.</li></ul>
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