

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 JANUARY 2018

RIVER SOUTH ESK CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW 2017

**REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, REGULATORY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES,
PLACE**

ABSTRACT

This report outlines the progress made towards delivering the River South Esk Catchment Partnership's Catchment Management Plan. More than 90% of the actions in the plan have been delivered by the partnership's steering group, of which Angus Council is a founding member.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the success of the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan (RSECMP) in delivering multiple environmental, social and economic benefits in Angus;
- (ii) agree to Angus Council supporting the delivery of a second RSECMP that will focus on ongoing and emerging issues;
- (iii) agree the contents of this report for submission to the Scottish Government, Environment and Forestry Directorate, highlighting good practice in Angus;
- (iv) agree the publication of the report on the Angus Council website.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

Projects delivered through the RSECMP contribute to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- 1. An inclusive and sustainable economy
- 2. A skilled and adaptable workforce
- 3. Attractive employment opportunities

PEOPLE

- 4. The best start in life for children
- 5. More opportunities for people to achieve success
- 6. Improved physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

PLACE

- 7. Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities
- 8. A reduced carbon footprint
- 9. An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The River South Esk Catchment Partnership, a voluntary partnership, was formed in 2005 with the aim of sustainably managing the River South Esk Catchment in Angus. The catchment was deemed to be in need of an integrated management approach as multiple threats to its health were apparent. In 2008, the partnership employed a project officer - a Scottish Natural Heritage seconded officer, housed within Angus Councils Economic Development department. The role of the officer was to carry out a public consultation and develop the RSECMP.

- 3.2 The RSECMP, approved in 2009 (Report No. 868/09) as a means of delivering an innovative, sustainable catchment approach, has proven to be very successful. More than 90% of the actions in the plan have been delivered by the steering group.
- 3.3 The RSECMP was officially launched at Tannadice Primary School on 14 December 2009. At the launch, it was recognised that the River South Esk catchment is of immense importance to Angus. With industries such as farming, forestry, fisheries and tourism all taking place within the boundaries of the catchment, the area provides many people in the Angus area with employment. It also provides opportunities for leisure pursuits including walking, canoeing and cycling and supports a great variety of wildlife and plants.
- 3.4 The success of the RSECMP to date, has stemmed from the close working relationship which has developed through the River South Esk Catchment Partnership Steering Group. This group is made up of a wide range of interests, the three original main funding partners (Scottish Natural Heritage, the Esk District Salmon Fisheries Board and Angus Council), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust, Scottish Agricultural College, Forestry Commission Scotland, initially the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Cairngorms National Park Authority, the James Hutton Institute, Scottish Water, National Farmers' Union Scotland, , the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate and latterly, Littlewood Land Care, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Montrose Port Authority.
- 3.5 Reference is made to Agenda Item No.12 – Report No. 868/09 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 24 November 2009; along with Report No. 43/10 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 19 January 2010; Report No. 400/10 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 01 June 2010; Report No. 850/10 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 23 November 2010 and Report No. 281/16 of the minute of the meeting of the Communities Committee of 16th August 2016.
- 3.6 It is worth noting that since the original plan's inception, the policy landscape in Scotland has changed greatly. Actions in the RSECMP contribute towards many strategies, action plans and statutory obligations that organisations in the partnership, including Angus Council, deliver. Themes include climate change, biodiversity, flood risk management, economic development and community planning. The work of the partnership has been included regularly in mandatory reporting requirements as a key driver mechanism of environmental improvements in Angus e.g. the Annual Climate Change Public Duties Report, The Angus Single Outcome Agreement and the Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report on Delivery.
- 3.7 The RSECMP has successfully delivered against all nine outcomes in the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, having a positive impact on the Economy, People and Place in the catchment. The process of engagement in locality planning has begun in the Brechin and Montrose and the partnership contributed to both the Brechin and Montrose Town Centre Charrettes held in 2015 and 2016.
- 3.8 With its voluntary attendance, informal networks and practical achievements, the partnership has attracted Scottish Government interest, with at least five ministerial visits over the last eight years. The partnership also engages with Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Dee and Spey catchments, all of which have headwaters in the park boundary area (Report No. 281/16).

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 This report (**Appendix 1**) will provide an update on the seven years of progress since the plans launch.
- 4.2 The lessons learned in the River South Esk catchment are transferable, and can be applied to other catchments in Angus. A landscape or catchment scale approach is central to many Angus Council and Scottish Government policies and strategies e.g. the [Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-26](#); the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#); the [Land Use Strategy For Scotland 2016 – 2021](#) and the [Climate Ready Scotland Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme](#)
- 4.3 A second edition RSECMP is planned for 2018 and an Angus wide consultation will highlight ongoing and emerging issues in the catchment. The new plan will complement and feed into

existing Angus Council strategies, an example being, the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-26. The partnership is named against delivery of more than 25% of actions, across all sections of the plan.

4.3.1 The new RSECMP will aim to deliver projects in the following areas:

- Climate Change adaptation;
- Community resilience;
- Ecological coherence;
- Woodland creation;
- Volunteering & citizen science;
- Economic development;
- Angling & wildlife tourism; and
- EU LEADER funding opportunities

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since 2009, Angus Council as an initial funding member of the River South Esk Catchment Partnership has provided the programme manager, in agreement with the partnership, as an in kind contribution. The current programme manager (also an Environmental Strategy Project Officer) has been in post since 2009 and has been employed by Economic Development and latterly by the Planning Service in the role. Work associated with the partnership, in general, is paid for by the partnership, however day to day travel expenses are charged to the Environment and Development Plan Team with any costs arising contained within existing budget provision.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

If unable to produce a second RSECMP, Angus Council may be impeded in delivering, to the best of our ability, many of the environmental elements of our statutory duty requirements. Continuing to work in partnership in the River South Esk catchment secures multiple benefits for Angus Council. These would be almost impossible to achieve in isolation due to resource implications.

7. CONSULTATION

The Strategic Directors of People and Place, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR: STEWART BALL, HEAD OF HOUSING, REGULATORY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

EMAIL DETAILS: CommunitiesBusinessSupport@angus.gov.uk

Appendix1: River South Esk Catchment Management Plan Review 2017