

ANGUS COUNCIL

GRANTS SUB -COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2025

CLIMATE CHANGE / NET ZERO / BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS UPDATE AND PROPOSAL

**REPORT BY JILL PATERSON, SERVICE LEADER VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the projects under the Climate Change / Net Zero / Biodiversity one-off funding made available from uncommitted reserves. It also seeks approval to allocate £55k from the remaining balance to an Electric Vehicle Charging/Demand Responsive Transport post.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 Delivery of projects and initiatives from this fund will contribute to the following priorities in the Angus Council Plan 2023-2028 (2024 Update):

Caring for our Place

- Take action to mitigate against climate change by delivering our Transition to Net Zero Action Plan: 2022 to 2030.
- Reduce our energy use through a reduction in our property estate coupled with good management to reduce wasting energy.
- Enhance and restore Angus Biodiversity, corporately and with a range of stakeholders.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee:
- (i) notes the update on projects allocated funding from the biodiversity and climate change/net zero fund;
 - (ii) agrees the allocation of £55k towards an Electric Vehicle Charging/Demand Responsive Transport post; and
 - (iii) notes that proposals for the remaining balance of £78k will be brought to a future meeting of the Grants-Sub Committee later this year.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the Special Meeting of 2 March 2023, Angus Council agreed the use of £1M of uncommitted reserves for the 2023/24 financial year to be allocated towards a fund to support climate change/net zero/biodiversity project and initiatives ([Report 57/23 refers](#)). Subsequent to this the Policy and Resources Committee agreed at their meeting of 2 May 2023 to use £0.25M towards the Monifieth Learning Campus given the reduced energy consumption and environmental benefits through Passivhaus ([Report 116/23 refers](#)). This left a balance of £0.75M.
- 4.2 At the Communities Committee of 23 May 2023 the approach to take forward the assessment of projects for the allocation of funding from this source (Report [154/23 refers](#)) was approved. A split 65% (£487k) / 35% (£262.5k) between funding allocated to climate change/net zero and biodiversity was also approved.
- 4.3 Fifteen projects were submitted to the officer panel for consideration, six biodiversity and nine climate change/net zero focussed. Ten projects were recommended, and subsequently approved, at a meeting of the Communities Committee on 27 February 2024 ([Report 48/24 refers](#)), leaving an uncommitted balance of £124k.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Delivery of the ten projects has been programmed to fit alongside existing work priorities and the three climate change/net zero projects listed below are now complete:

- LED Lighting Installation (Inverbrothock, Inverkeillor, Carnoustie) - £108k
- Learning for Sustainability Coordinator - £56k (under budget by £9k)
- Climate Resilience Grant Fund - £50k

- 5.2 An update on the remaining projects is provided below and a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating has been applied to each. All but two of the projects at 5.5 and 5.6 are in progress.

5.3 **Angus Coastal Swifts Project – Montrose to Monifieth - £25k**

RAG status: Green

Project planning for 2025/26 is complete and works are underway in relation to public engagement, conference planning, liaison on building projects and swift box installation. A schedule of training for staff and developers is to be prepared for a summer roll out when swifts are present in Angus.

5.4 **Landuse and Nature Based Solutions Officer Angus - £68k**

RAG status: Green

As of September 2024, a Landuse and Nature Based Solutions Project Officer for Angus has been in post. The appointment has seen the Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust house the officer who has begun progressing key tasks identified in the 23-month work plan of which a key element is preparation of a new Catchment Management Plan for the River South Esk Catchment Partnership.

5.5 **Angus Habitat Mapping Phase 1 - £50k**

RAG status: Amber

The progress of this project is reliant upon an accompanying piece of national work carried out by Aecom and NatureScot. Angus Council staff were involved in a pilot study to develop this during 2024. This model will direct the habitat mapping project to focused areas to maximise the benefit of funding available. A methodology and timeline for this project has been drafted and is with NatureScot for comment.

5.6 **Downie Moor Carbon Storage & Habitat Restoration Feasibility and Design - £24k**

RAG status: Amber

Consultation between Angus Council and Scottish Forestry to discuss obligations for restocking the site has taken place. This will inform the parameters of the project. A tender specification is currently in development in conjunction with the Procurement Team. Timescales identify going to tender in May 2025 with a study being carried out during the 2025 survey window, when habitat indicators are visible, up to September 2025. A feasibility and restoration report will be the output from the study.

5.7 **Angus Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment - £40k**

RAG status: Green

The tender process to appoint a consultant to deliver the Angus Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment recently concluded. Discussions to finalise the eight-month delivery of the project is underway. A final report will be available in late 2025 /early 2026.

5.8 **Road to Net Zero Study for the Council's Non-Housing Building Estate - £150k**

RAG status: Green

Following approval by committee on 3 September 2024 consultants were appointed via Hubco to carry out detailed studies on a variety of building 'types'. This work is underway and expected to conclude Spring 2025 with a report on the findings to Committee following the summer recess.

5.9 Air Source Heat Pump Design – Rosemount Primary School

RAG status: Green

Design work completed and details developed to allow the conversion of Rosemount PS from Gas fired heating system to Air Source Heat Pumps. Designs include replacement of heat source; replacement of main heating pipe runs; alterations to various heat emitters.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the update on progress with current projects as set out in Section 5 above.
- 6.2 An uncommitted balance of £133k from this funding remains, comprising the previous £124k and £9k saving from the Learning for Sustainability Post, and officers are reviewing a shortlist of projects which would best help to deliver on existing initiatives. One of these projects is for an Electric Vehicle Charging/Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) post to appropriately resource EV charging infrastructure in Angus and provide both operational support to existing services and assist in the design of future DRT services in new areas of Angus. Due to the time critical nature of this resource this project is being brought forward at this current time.
- 6.3 The creation of one full time equivalent (FTE) post will help to deliver and manage the expansion of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and the roll-out of demand responsive transport as an alternative means of sustaining public bus services in more rural areas. Funding will support the initial 12-month period of the post after which it would be self-financing from revenue arising from the public electric vehicle charging network. Applications to alternative funding sources were not successful as the initiative did not meet some requirements, including the need to programme spend across two financial years.

Electric Vehicle Charging

- 6.4 The transition to electric vehicles is currently the most effective way to rapidly decarbonise Angus's transport system. Electric vehicle ownership is expected to grow from the current 2% of vehicles to 100% cars and vans by 2045. The infrastructure for electric vehicle charging needs to expand to meet the future demand for charging.
- 6.5 [Report No 293/24](#) Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2024-2028 to Communities Committee on 1 October 2024 set out the changing landscape for funding to expand the council's Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) infrastructure, along with [Report No 257/24](#) which set out the current EVC funding bid. These reports give a detailed background to EVC infrastructure in Angus and the revised Scottish Government approach to involve the private sector.
- 6.6 To date, EV charging infrastructure projects have been managed by the Roads Assets team. As we move forward with the current, much larger scale proposals developing private sector investment, additional staff resource will be required.

Demand Responsive Transport

- 6.7 Increases in the costs of subsidised bus services means that new approaches are required to effectively serve rural areas. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 gave Angus Council new powers to directly run bus services.
- 6.8 Demand responsive transport (DRT) produces improved integration within the transport network, by connecting an increased number of rural communities to core transport services.
- 6.9 Fixed line local bus services, operated by large bus vehicles, will be replaced with zone based operations, provided by smaller vehicles. The services will require advance booking, creating greater flexibility for passengers, by allowing the passenger to design their journey end to end.
- 6.10 This service delivery model provides a more efficient service for passengers, whilst securing greater control for the council over its subsidised transport costs.
- 6.11 Angus Council has successfully trialled demand responsive transport in the Sidlaw area and has identified other areas where services can be implemented

- 6.12 Demand responsive transport is currently managed by officers in the Transport team, however with the upcoming growth there is a need for a dedicated officer to provide both operational support to existing services and assist in the design of future DRT services in new areas of Angus.
- 6.13 Approval of this post will commit an additional £55k from the remaining funding leaving a balance of £78k of which proposals will be brought forward a meeting of the Grants-Sub Committee later this year.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is no additional call on Angus Council financial resources to deliver these projects other than officer time to progress. The proposal to allocate funding to the Electric Vehicle/Demand Responsive Transport post will ensure that external funding opportunities for Angus are progressed.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The recommended projects contribute towards meeting statutory climate and biodiversity targets and duties. Failure to fund projects would reduce the positive impact that project delivery will have in the face of the climate and nature crises. Failure to fund would mean that Angus Council staff would have to explore additional means to fund and deliver essential projects which poses a challenge due to staff resources.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This one-off funding is intended to assist with Angus Council's transition to net zero and addressing the nature crisis. All proposals have been assessed on their fit with the relevant strategies (Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plan, Transition to Net Zero Action Plan and the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-26). Delivery of the projects will therefore have a positive contribution to environmental implications.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 10.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the following reason:

The proposal is technical in nature and is to support an additional post.

11. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been undertaken and a full assessment is not required as the "General Principles" do not apply to this proposal.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1 The Director of Finance and the Acting Director of Legal, Governance and Change were 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.

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