

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE
21 January 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

HIGHLAND ENVIRONMENT FORUM

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report introduces the recently established Highland Environment Forum, sets out its role and identifies which organisations are represented on it. It is suggested that the Planning and Development Service should lead for the Council on the Forum and that it is chaired initially by the Vice Chair of the Council's Planning, Environment and Development Committee. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, 19th February 2009.

Committee is invited to:

- (a) Recommend that the Planning and Development Service act as lead for the Council on the Highland Environment Forum and;
- (b) Propose to the Environment Forum that, subject to its approval, it be chaired initially by the Vice Chair of the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 As part of its Concordat with Local Authorities the Scottish Government has entered into a number of Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) with the Council and its Community Planning Partners. For further details of the SOA for the Highlands follow the following link:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/news/newsreleases/2008/August/2008-08-26-02.htm>

1.2 The Highland Council, in partnership with other Community Planning Partners, will have direct responsibility for the delivery of those outcomes related to the environment of the Highlands. Local outcomes are:

- Investing in the infrastructure for rural communities
- Recognition and awareness of the outstanding natural heritage of the Highlands
- Limiting pressure on habitats and species
- Improved environmental awareness and action
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from regional public sector

- operations
 - Promoting renewable energy and improving municipal waste management
 - Adapting public services to deal with the impact of global warming
- 1.3 The successful delivery of the SOA local outcomes depends on the support of environmental organisations in the Highlands and other public bodies. The Highland Environment Forum will form part of the Community Planning Partnership and will have a specific remit to:
- Advise the partnership on environmental priorities and confirm the local environment outcomes to pursue
 - Agree the performance framework for measuring progress against these outcomes
 - Agree the joint actions to be taken
 - Report on progress and performance to the Community Planning Partnership Performance Board
 - To consider the production of a joint Highland Environment Strategy
- 1.4 It is envisaged that meetings will be held two to three times each year. The first meeting will be held on Thursday 19th February in Inverness.

2. Highland Environment Forum

- 2.1 The Community Planning Partnership Performance Board recently considered and agreed the establishment of the Environment Forum on the basis of proposals set out in Appendix 1 to this report. Appendix 1 also provides further detail on how the Environment Forum will operate and which organisations will be represented. The Environment Forum will make recommendations to the Community Planning Partnership Performance Board in delivering the SOA and will report its performance to it. It will be responsible for ensuring that joint actions agreed are taken forward. One early consideration will be the need for a joint CPP Environment Strategy.
- 2.2 It is suggested that, given its responsibility for the Council's Land, Environment and Sustainability Strategy Group, the Planning and Development Service lead for the Highland Council on the Environment Forum. However it is recognised that other Services of the Council will have an interest in the Forum and are likely to become directly involved as it progresses joint actions. The Forum therefore supports cross service working.
- 2.3 It is further suggested that the Vice Chair of the Council's Planning, Environment and Development Committee should, subject to the approval of the Forum, be the initial chair of the Forum. This should help ensure appropriate linkage with the Committee and with the Council's Land, Environment and Sustainability Strategy Group.
- 2.4 Establishing of the Highland Environment Forum is specifically designed to support the successful delivery of the SOA and Community Planning within Highland. This will only be possible with the active participation of the community planning partners and others with a role in the environment. Co-

operation between public and private sectors is a central theme within the Council's SOA document. The Environment Forum provides a valuable source of practical advice on the joint delivery of the SOA and Community Planning

3. Fit with Programme for the Highlands 2009 - 2011

- 3.1 Establishment and membership of the Highland Environment Forum will help ensure that the Council:
- Meets its obligations under the Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government and other Community Planning partners;
 - Delivers it's programme for the Highlands 2009 – 2011 in partnership, and;
 - Maintains appropriate linkage with the work of the Council's Planning, Environment and Development Committee, and the Land, Environment and Sustainability Strategy Group.

4 Resource Implications

- 41 There are no additional resource implications attached to this paper. Work linked to the support of the Environment Forum is already budgeted within the Planning and Development Service

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee:

- (a) Recommend that the Planning and Development Service act as lead for the Council on the Highland Environment Forum and;
- (b) Propose to the Forum that, subject to its approval, it be chaired initially by the Vice Chair of the Planning and Development Service.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date: 12 January 2009

Author: G Hamilton (CHNRM) Ext 2568

Ref:

Background Papers:

Proposed Community Planning Partnership – Environment Forum: paper approved by the CPP Performance Board; 10.11.08.

Proposed Community Planning Partnership – Environment Forum

1.0 Introduction and purpose

It is proposed that the CPP establish an Environment Forum (EF). The EF will provide an opportunity to strengthen co-ordination of partner activities in the environment and delivery of joint priorities set out within the Single Outcome Agreement and contributing plans. It will develop the environment outcomes within the Single Outcome Agreement and the performance framework to measure the progress against these outcomes. The Environment Forum should support and demonstrate partnership working and engage with service users and communities. If required, the EF could agree to produce a Highland Environment Strategy that partners sign up to and implement jointly.

2.0 Membership

Initial membership of the EF is proposed below for discussion and agreement:

- Crofters Commission
- Scottish Crofting Foundation
- SNH
- SEPA
- Forestry Commission
- Cairngorm National Park
- Fishermen's Federation
- Federation of Scottish Aquaculture Producers
- Highland Biodiversity Partnership
- RSPB or Scottish Environment Link
- SG Rural Inspectorate and Payments Directorate (for SRDP)
- Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
- Highland Farm and Wildlife Advisory Group
- National Farmers Union Scotland (Highland Branch)
- SRPBA
- Association of Deer Management Groups
- SGA
- H&I Local Food Forum
- Highland Birchwoods Ltd
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise

3.0 Operation

The EF would be part of the CPP. It would make recommendations to the CPP Performance Board in developing the SOA and report its performance to it. This would be supported by the performance management review group (data collection and analysis). It would be responsible for ensuring that the joint actions agreed are taken forward.

4.0 Lead and frequency of meetings

Lead would lie with the Partnership (alternating chair) and the frequency of meetings would allow for regular reporting to the Partnership or the CPP Performance Board. It is suggested that, initially quarterly meetings may be required to allow discussion, getting to know the issues, developing a focus on joint priorities and the pulling together of a draft CPP Environment Strategy. Thereafter meetings could be once or twice a year to suit monitoring and reporting arrangement.

5.0 Links with HC Land, Environment and Sustainability Strategy Group

The Chair of the Highland Council LESSG should be invited to become a member of the Forum, to ensure appropriate linkage is made between the Strategy Group and the CPP.

Paper drafted for CPP Performance Board 25.9.08. Amendments underlined
10.11.08