

REPORT TO: GREENER STRATEGIC GROUP

SUBJECT: PREPARATION OF MORAY RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY AND PLANNING GUIDANCE

BY: HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to advise the Greener Strategic Group of the Council's intention to prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance document. The report details the aims of the strategy and how it will be developed as an economic development and land use planning document.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The Group is requested to support the Council's proposal to lead on the development of a Moray Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance.**
- 2.2 **The partner organisations are invited to identify staff to participate in a Renewable Energy Operational Group tasked with the delivery of the Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has decided to develop a Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance document. This will take the form of both an economic development and a land use planning document. The aims of the strategy are to ensure that renewable technologies are promoted within Moray. The document will identify opportunities for the local economy, identify targets for renewable energy production whilst assisting developers and planning officers to balance environmental and other considerations to help ensure the sensitive areas of Moray are protected.
- 3.2 Currently, the Council operates Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Energy, however there is no advice on the other renewable technologies detailing issues including their appropriateness, opportunities, constraints, costs, siting and location. The benefits of producing a Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance are as follows, a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, a decrease in wider energy pollution, decentralised energy production, new economic activity and potential for community energy projects. The majority of these are consistent with the aims of the Greener Strategic Group and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) National Objectives. The preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy is also a commitment within the Local Delivery Action Plan. The opportunities for the development of further sustainable

economic growth in Moray would meet objectives relating the Wealthier and Fairer Theme Group.

- 3.3 It is proposed that the strategy be informed by a Renewable Energy Resource Assessment (RERA). As part of the assessment, details of all energy resources will be collated along with the technical and planning constraints and cost factor of each technology. This information will allow estimates of installed capacity and power outputs envisaged under a number of possible development scenarios. This will also allow the development of renewable energy targets and the calculation of carbon dioxide emission reductions.
- 3.4 This is a very specialist piece of work that will have to be undertaken by professional consultants. The costs associated with commissioning this type of research are estimated to be in the region of £25,000 to £30,000. It is proposed to finance the research through the Council's Economic Development budget and pursue funding from sources including Leader and the Climate Challenge Fund if eligible. A further report will be referred to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in November seeking agreement and budget to prepare the document.
- 3.5 Beyond the Renewable Energy Resource Assessment (RERA) the remainder of the strategy will provide developers with advice on appropriate use of technologies, location and siting, this will be prepared in house by Moray Council officers in conjunction with Greener Strategic Group partner organisations. To achieve this an operational group is proposed comprising membership from the Moray Council and each of the Greener Group Partners. The operational group will be tasked with delivering the Renewable Energy Strategy and should meet on a regular basis to progress this. HIE and Forestry Commission Scotland have been approached and expressed an interest in working together to produce a strategy.
- 3.6 To ensure the best use of resources it is proposed to prepare this document as part of the Moray Local Plan 2008 Review and the proposed review of the Councils Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Guidance. There is a close relationship between the two documents and there are possible benefits and cost savings associated with trying to develop these simultaneously. It is proposed to request funding from next financial year's budget and therefore work will begin after April 2010 providing funding can be secured.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Community Plan / Theme Plans / Partner Plans

The development of a Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance is consistent with the achievement of the Single Outcome Agreement National Objectives 12 and 14. This strategy is also a commitment within the Greener Strategic Group Local Delivery Action Plan. An increase in sustainable economic growth is also

consistent with the objectives of the Wealthier and Fairer Theme Group.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Greener Group is one of five Strategic Theme Groups, established in March 2008 as part of the revised Community Planning Partnership structure, with responsibility to address identified national and local outcomes within Moray's SOA.

(c) Resources (Financial, Staffing and Risks)

The resources required for the preparation of the strategy are highlighted within the report and estimated as being between £25,000 and £30,000. A further report will be prepared for the Council's Policy and resources Committee on 19 November 2009 seeking agreement and budget to prepare the strategy. Alternative sources of funding including LEADER and Climate Challenge Funding will be pursued.

(d) Consultations

None

5. CONCLUSION

The preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidance document is consistent with meeting the aims of the Single Outcome Agreement and Scottish Government targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. This document will also enhance economic development opportunities within the renewable energy sector in Moray and contribute towards sustainable economic growth.

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Background Papers:

Ref: