



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

EAST OF SCOTLAND COLLABORATION AGREEMENT ON RENEWABLES

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide information on the proposal to join the East Coast Renewables group. A local authority alliance, which will enable partnership working with Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International to develop the renewable energy, sector and promote the East Coast as a location for investment.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To approve membership of the Council onto the East Coast Renewables Group and Strategic Board.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Developing our economy and working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None at present although modest subscription maybe required in future
IV Consultations	Working in partnership with College, Se, SDI. This report has been present at the Development and Transport PDSP in September 2010 with one amendment to include community benefit as a key benefit. This has been incorporated in this report.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

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In July 2010 seven East Coast Local Authorities entered into an initial agreement to form an alliance to ensure that the East Coast maximises its economic opportunities offered by the emerging renewables sector. The parties involved are Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council, Edinburgh City Council and East Lothian Council.

Both West and Mid Lothian Councils have now been asked if they would want to be considered in the agreement.

The agreement is formed around 10 key areas of activity:-

1. Industry Research and Knowledge Exchange
2. Supply Chain Development
3. Skills for Renewables
4. Infrastructure
5. Internationalisation
6. R&D & Commercialisation Activities
7. Regional Promotion
8. External funding
9. Higher Education
10. Policy & Strategy Development
11. Local Community Benefit

An East Coast Renewables Strategic Board will be established and will oversee and guide specific activities of the initiative

What does this mean for West Lothian

Although at present, West Lothian does not currently have a lot of activity within this sector there are business with the potential to supply to this sector particularly within Engineering.

There are also several Environmental Management companies based in West Lothian currently offering advice on processes on renewables.

The Council's new Waste Treatment Plant will provide also provide renewable energy, as well as other by products which will form opportunities for local business with the correct skills and expertise within this sector. The success of the wind farms in Black Law has brought considerable benefit to the local community.

Partnership working will be taking place with West Lothian College to look at accreditation courses in this field.

This is a growth area where West Lothian cannot afford to be left behind, in a recent Scottish Government report it is estimated that concerted action combined with an expanding global market could increase low carbon employment in Scotland to around 130,000 by 2020. With the potential to create some 60,000 new jobs it is estimated that

- Renewable energy could support an additional 26,000
- Emerging low carbon technologies could also support up to 26,000 jobs
- Environmental Management could deliver a further 8000 jobs.

A range of further studies have identified that by meeting Scotland's renewable electricity and heat targets will alone provide up to £15 billion worth of investment opportunities.

Within renewable energy sectors there will be excellent opportunities to develop the manufacturing base, the supply chain and operation and maintenance capabilities. It is important therefore that West Lothian is seen in any joint market activity both to present to new businesses and expose opportunities to current existing businesses in the area.

E. CONCLUSION

Considering the scale of the opportunities available in terms of investment it is important that West Lothian Council is seen as part of the collaboration in order to enhance the supply chain development, infrastructure and skills for this sector.

That the Council Executive recommend that West Lothian Council's Economic Development Service represent the Council in the alliance and reports back to Committee on progress.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Information files held in Economic Development

Appendices/Attachments:

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