

14. EAST OF SCOTLAND COLLABORATION AGREEMENT ON RENEWABLES

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development and which provided the members with details of the proposal to join the East Coast Renewables Group, which was a local authority alliance that would enable partnership working with Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development to develop the renewable energy sector and promote the East Coast as a location for investment.

The report advised that in July 2010 seven East Coast local authorities entered into an initial agreement to form an alliance to ensure that the East Coast maximised the economic opportunities offered by the emerging renewable sector.

The parties involved were Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council, Edinburgh City Council and East Lothian Council. Both Mid Lothian and West Lothian Council had now been asked if they wished to be considered as partners to the agreement.

The agreement was formed around the following 10 key areas of activity: -

- Industry research and knowledge exchange
- Supply chain development
- Skills for renewables
- Infrastructure
- Internationalisation
- Research and development and commercialisation activities
- Regional promotion
- External funding
- Higher education
- Policy and strategy development

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

The report continued to advise of the implications for West Lothian including businesses with the potential to supply the renewable sector, particularly engineering and several environmental management companies based in West Lothian who would be able to offer advice on

renewables.

Additionally partnership working would take place with West Lothian College to look at accreditation courses in the field of renewables.

The Head of Planning and Economic Services continued to advise that renewables was a growth area and West Lothian could not afford to be left behind and that the renewable energy sector would be an excellent opportunity to develop manufacturing bases, the supply chain and operation and maintenance capabilities.

The report concluded that given the scale of opportunities available in terms of investment it was important that West Lothian Council was seen as part of the collaboration in order to enhance the supply chain development, infrastructure and skills for the sector.

It was recommended that the Council Executive approve the membership of the council into the East Coast Renewable Group and Strategic Board.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.