

COMMITTEE Housing and Environment

DATE 11th January 2010

DIRECTOR Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT Countryside Ranger Service Five-Year Plan 2010 - 2015

REPORT NUMBER:

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Elected Members about the proposed Countryside Ranger Service five-year plan for the period 2010 - 2015

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the committee:-

- i) approves the Countryside Ranger Service five-year plan for 2010 – 2015
- ii) Instruct officers to implement the plan and
- iii) report back to committee on an annual basis regarding progress.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications relating to the production and approval of the plan. The implementation of the plan will require financial support. This will be obtained through the existing small budget for the Countryside Ranger Service, making savings to other Environmental Service budgets through efficiencies, new ways of working, partnership working and through obtaining external grant funding, commercial sponsorship, donations and charges for some elements of the service as previously approved by Resources Management Committee 16 June 2009 Item 4.9.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report links to the Aberdeen City Council's Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan in terms of the following National Outcomes:

- (1) We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe:
- (3) We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- (6) We live longer, healthier lives.
- (7) We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- (9) We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- (10) We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need:

(11) We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

(12) We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations; and

(14) We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.

(15) Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

4.2 This report also links generally to the Council's policy statement, Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking, by promoting the city as a better place to live and work.

4.3 In more specific terms, the report links to Vibrant Dynamic & Forward Thinking as follows:

Education

The best possible education for all our children is essential if we are to ensure that Aberdeen and its citizens have a prosperous future.

The partnership will:

5. Continue work to improve attainment across city schools

Economic Development

The future prosperity of our city depends on ensuring that Aberdeen becomes an even more attractive place in which to do business and so ensure that high quality employment opportunities exist for citizens.

The partnership will:

6. Continue to drive regeneration and take advantage of regeneration opportunities city wide as they present themselves and identify, in consultation with the local communities, immediate priorities for regeneration projects

Health and Care

The care and support of more vulnerable members of our community is a key responsibility of Aberdeen City Council – and a growing challenge as the need for services grows at a time when available finances are under severe pressure.

The partnership will:

1. Improve joint working with the NHS, especially in relation to the delivery of services in mental health and wellbeing, learning disability, care of elderly people, and delayed discharge.

14. Build on the Council's participation in "Scotland's Heath at Work" and in particular implement mental health and wellbeing policies within the Council and promote such policies within the wider community

Environment

Aberdeen's environment - natural and built - is part of what makes our city unique. Aberdeen City Council has a duty both to protect that environment and to play its part in protecting our planet.

The partnership will:

3. Adopt and implement policies which safeguard Aberdeen's green belt and green wedges
4. Institute a programme of tree-planting with the objective, with partners, of planting one tree for every citizen by 2011.
5. Continue support for "Aberdeen in Bloom"
6. Minimise the impact of council activities on the environment, including a target of being carbon neutral overall by 2020 and a commitment that all new council developments will be carbon neutral.
8. Support the use of innovative methods of treating wastewater, including reed beds, and make appropriate use of such treatment methods in new council developments

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Countryside Ranger Service five-year plan outlines the roles and responsibilities, both statutory and non statutory of the Service and how it will be delivered through the existing compliment of staff, 1 FTE Countryside Officer, 2.5FTE Countryside Rangers and 1FTE Woodland Community Ranger (funded to March 2011). The Countryside Ranger Service has responsibility for the management of 31 countryside sites totaling in excess of 1800ha of land including part of the River Dee Special Area for Conservation (SAC)(a European designation) two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), four Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 25 District Wildlife sites. These sites are managed for nature conservation, education and recreation and the Countryside Ranger Service also ensures that the sites are maintained to be fit for purpose and safe for visitors to enjoy.

The five-year plan also outlines the range of legislative requirements that the Countryside Ranger Service delivers on behalf of Aberdeen City Council in terms of protecting the natural environment at a local, national and international level and the public access to the countryside areas of the City. It also highlights the

essential links to other local and national strategies relating to the natural environment, nature conservation and outdoor access.

6. REPORT

The draft Countryside Ranger Service Five-Year Plan 2010 - 2015 will be made available in the Members Library.

The main areas that the plan covers are:-

- Links to local and national legislation and policies
- The Role of The Aberdeen City Council Countryside Ranger Service
- A review of the previous Countryside Ranger Service Management Strategy
- Partnership working
- Income generation
- Awareness raising
- Priority Issues
- Implementation Plan for this five-year plan (NB Attached is an outline draft breakdown for the implementation of this strategy from 2010-2015. This will be worked up in more detail following further consultation within Aberdeen City Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Aberdeen Greenspace etc and delivered through annual work programmes developed for each year to reflect available resources).

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Resources Management Committee 16 June 2009 Item 4.9 - Funding Opportunities for Countryside Ranger Service

Aberdeen City Council Countryside Ranger Service Management Strategy 2000-2005