

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 18 DECEMBER 2001

## COALFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

### Report by Director of Development Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To support the creation of a Coalfield Environmental Initiative in partnership with SNH, RSPB, SWT and Open Cast Coal Operators and to agree terms of reference.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Meetings have been held at officer level with SNH, RSPB, SWT and Scottish Coal aiming at maximising restoration opportunities and in particular to explore the opportunities for linkages between sites being or about to be restored. It is proposed to form a partnership called the E A Coalfield Environmental Initiative which has the following overall aim;

“Given the finite extent of local coal reserves the strategy will work towards the delivery during the remaining period of coal extraction and land restoration of an enhanced economic, social and ecological environment for people living in and visiting the area.”

- 2.2 The terms of reference are suggested as follows:

1. To prepare a strategy for enhancing the social, economic and ecological environment for people living in and visiting the area with particular emphasis on sites subject to o.c.c. extraction.
2. To maximise linkages between sites to ensure that there is added value beyond the restoration plan agreed for each site.
3. To arrange the employment of appropriate staff to implement the strategy and ensure compliance with the strategy on the ground.
4. To monitor compliance with the strategy and to ensure that arrangements are in place for long term maintenance.

- 2.3 To give a focus to the initiative it is proposed that the parties formulate a strategy for positive enhancement and concentrate on one geographical area as a flagship project. To this end it is proposed to appoint a Project Officer and Scottish Coal have agreed to fund this post. The overall intention would be to encourage other operators to participate and indeed share in the costs associated with the post.

### **3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 This proposal is consistent with the Council's Open Cast Coal Subject Plan and is aligned with National Planning Policy which aims to maximise benefits to the community.

### **4. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 No direct financial implications other than officer input to commence and participate in the partnership.

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 **It is recommended that the Committee agree to establishing the Coalfield Environmental Initiative with the overall aims and terms of reference as outlined in Section 2 of this report.**

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

27 November 2001 (AN/SA)

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

**Implementation Officer: Alan Neish**

**AGENDA**