TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

2nd Meeting, 2002 (Session 1)

Wednesday 16 January 2002

The Committee will meet at 9.45 am in Committee Room 1, to consider the following agenda items:

1. **Item in Private:** The Committee will consider whether to take agenda item 4 in private.

2. **Water Industry (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee will consider the Bill at Stage 2 (Day 3).

3. **Aquaculture Research Contract:** The Committee will consider a paper from the Committee’s reporters on the arrangements for proposed research into aquaculture.

4. **Aquaculture Inquiry:** The Committee will consider possible locations for a meeting outside Edinburgh as part of its inquiry into aquaculture.

5. **Organic Waste Spread on Land (in private):** The Committee will consider a draft report on Petition PE327 by the Blairingone and Saline Action Group on Organic Waste Spread on Land.

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The following public paper is relevant for this meeting:

**Paper from the Committee’s reporters on the arrangements for proposed research into aquaculture**  
*Agenda item 3*

TE/02/2/1

The Water Industry (Scotland) Bill and Accompanying Documents are relevant to this meeting. Copies of the Marshalled List of Amendments and the groupings of amendments will be available at the start of the meeting in Committee Room 1.
TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM
TE/02/

Subject: Aquaculture – Proposed tendering arrangements for Research Contracts

Meeting No: 2nd Meeting

Meeting Date: Wednesday 16 January 2002

Author: Committee Reporters

Introduction

The Committee has previously discussed the merits of appointing a co-ordinator, or tendering a contract to review the existing and proposed research into the environmental impacts of sea cage fish farming. This paper updates members on the results of discussions between reporters and Executive officials.

Previous Consideration and Progress

The Committee agreed in September 2001 to pursue the creation of this post and to write to the Scottish Executive requesting that it arrange for the appointment of this person. Subsequent to this Committee Reporters and staff have held several meetings with Executive officials to progress this matter.

The Committee last considered this matter on 19 December 2001, and agreed to note the progress made on this matter; to note the proposed purpose of the contract; and to note the timeframes involved in producing such research. The Committee agreed in principle to the splitting of the contract into two, with two pieces of discrete but complementary work being undertaken by the Executive and the Parliament. The Committee also agreed to pursue a bid for external research funds to back this proposal, and to mandate reporters to continue discussions regarding the role of the contractor, and the tendering and reporting arrangements for the contract with the Executive, with input from SPICe and the Committee adviser.

The Executive Research Contract

Reporters, along with the Committee adviser, have had early input into the development of the specification for the Executive funded part of this research. Further discussions will be needed once contractors have been appointed to finalise the exact detail of this contract and reporters will be able to provide further input at this stage. Early discussions suggest that work will focus primarily on the environmental aspects of aquaculture research with the following components forming the basis of any specification:

- Identification of key environmental issues
- Synthesis of current scientific knowledge regarding these issues
- Review of current and planned research programmes that address these issues
- Identification of gaps in scientific knowledge.
Members will recall that these were the key issues of concern identified by members when the idea of employing a research co-ordinator was initially considered, therefore reporters are pleased to see these components incorporated in the contract.

It is proposed that Reporters are also involved in the ongoing management of this contract, to ensure continuing Committee involvement. It is hoped that the results of this project will be available in March/April 2002, and that the Committee will be able to receive a briefing from the contractors at the conclusion of the contract.

**Committee Research**

It is proposed that the Committee undertake research following on from this contract, by further taking forward the ‘gap analysis’. A separate research proposal will require to be put forward by the Committee for this project.

As the Committee will not have the results of the Executive project until March, it is not possible at this point to write an accurate specification for this project, by the next cut-off point for Committee Research (18 January 2002).

**Committee Reporters therefore propose to monitor the progress of the Executive contract, with a view to putting forward a bid for funds for external research later in 2002 (the next deadline for bids is the end of March 2002).**

The Committee is asked to consider the above proposal and indicate its views on the matter.

Maureen Macmillan MSP
Robin Harper MSP