

ANGUS COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9 OCTOBER 1997

**SUBJECT: TAYSIDE ENGINEERING SECTOR FORUM: PROPOSED PARTICIPATION
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract: This report outlines the proposed participation by Angus Council in the establishment and development of the Tayside Engineering Sector Forum.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) notes the arrangements already made to establish the Tayside Engineering Sector Forum;
- b) agrees to being represented on the Tayside Engineering Sector Steering Committee by the Economic Development Manager; and
- c) instructs appropriate officials to bring back a progress report in due course summarising the response of local firms.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Engineering companies in Scotland, as elsewhere in the UK, are operating within a rapidly developing and changing framework. This includes technological developments; globalisation; skills requirements; new employment patterns and organisational structures; environmental issues and changing attitudes amongst suppliers, customers and employees.
- 2.2 As part of the Engineering Sector Study undertaken by SET over the last two years, a series of workshops were held with the Engineering Community. These were well represented by local firms who are keen to develop mechanisms to address various issues this process has identified.
- 2.3 In conjunction with Angus Council and Dundee City Council, SET have established a series of initiatives including the establishment of a forum. A Steering Group comprising lead employers together with Senior Officers from SET and the two Councils has already been convened and the inaugural meeting of the Forum is scheduled for 4 November 1997.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 The draft objectives of the Forum are set out below:-

1. To create a continuous improvement culture within the engineering sector in Tayside.
2. To promote and encourage companies to achieve best performance (or better practices).
3. To improve the image of engineering as a career opportunity.
4. To identify skills and training needs, to promote and encourage skills and training development within companies, and to facilitate the development of appropriate education, training and skills provision locally.
5. To promote and encourage product development and innovation.
6. To create and maintain an engineering network within Tayside, and encourage partnership between members.
7. To identify constraints, issues and growth opportunities facing the industry in Tayside and facilitate actions to tackle these.
8. To highlight support services available from local authorities, SET and others, and identify sources of industry specific expertise.

3.2 The Council has been invited to join the Forum and participation in this initiative is consistent with the Council's Economic Development Strategy and a reference to it has been incorporated in the Departmental Business Plan. The aim of Angus Council's participation will be to maximise participation by Angus firms and to optimise the benefits accruing to them.

4 PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

4.1 One objective of the Steering Committee and the Forum will be to establish targets. So far, a number of activities have been discussed, but ultimately these will be for the Forum to consider and adopt.

4.2 It is felt that the Forum should establish different targets covering:

- Participation in events and initiatives
- Activity targets arising from the specific objectives under 3.1 above
- Specific benefits to member companies eg
 - turnover/net profitability
 - increased investment in R&D
 - reduction in scrap/reworks/rejects
 - introduction of new products

- 4.3 Achieving targets will be heavily dependent on the willingness of local engineering companies to accept the need for change and the adoption of continuous improvement as a business philosophy. The establishment of the Forum is an important first step towards this. It will provide Angus firms with the opportunity to share experiences with others in Angus, Tayside and further afield and opportunity for networking will be facilitated.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Participation in the Tayside Engineering Sector Forum and Steering Committee will require an investment of staff resources at senior level. Development of the Forum will most likely encourage demand for support assistance with future initiatives. However, the recommendations contained in this report do not raise any financial implications.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive and Directors of Finance and Law & Administration have been consulted and are in agreement with the terms of the recommendation set out above.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The establishment of the Tayside Engineering Sector Forum is an important first step towards addressing key issues affecting a major sector of the Angus economy. The proposed participation by the Council on the Steering Committee will help to ensure that participation by local firms is maximised. Local firms will gain an excellent opportunity to realise benefits of networking which in turn will strengthen their competitive ability and safeguard job opportunities for local people.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/DV/MR

30 September 1997

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