

ANGUS COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

29 MAY 1997

SUBJECT: UK OBJECTIVE 5B PARTNERSHIP

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abstract: This report seeks authorisation for the continued participation of Angus Council in the UK5b Partnership and attendance of an Elected Member and an Officer at the Annual Conference in Powys, Wales on 10 July and 11 July.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee

1. supports active participation in the UK5b Partnership and notes the attendance of an elected member and an officer at the Annual Conference in Powys, Wales, on 10 and 11 July 1997 at a cost of up to £850; and
2. agrees to renew membership of the UK5b Partnership at a cost of £500.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The UK5b Partnership is a forum of 36 local authorities in the UK which are covered and eligible for Objective 5b funding aimed at facilitating the general development of rural areas from the European Union's Structural Funds. Angus Council was represented at officer level at the UK5b Partnership Conference in Lincoln on 10/11 July last year as well as various Technical Users Group (TUG) meetings.
- 2.2 Demand for information exchange and consultation between local authorities participating in the UK's eleven Objective 5b Programmes has gathered considerable momentum. Over the last nine months, the partnership has deepened while at the same time shifting the emphasis towards lobbying government offices, MP's, MEPs, the European Parliament and the European Commission on rural issues.
- 2.3 The Secretariat is based at Dumfries and Galloway Council. Meetings involve officials in the UK5b TUG, meeting approximately five times a year at different venues in the UK. For the Annual Conference each member council of the UK5b Partnership is invited to send one officer and one member.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Recent activities have included the setting up of an Internet Bulletin Board, meetings between the UK5b Partnership and DGVI (Directorate General of the European Commission, Agriculture and Rural Development) focusing on the Partnership's "Rural Development and the Cork Declaration - Practical Policies beyond Cork and the Cohesion Report" discussion paper ("Post-Cork" paper - attached), and the

transnational launch of the partnership (UK 5b TUG Action timetable attached). In March this year the UK 5b Partnership presented evidence on development problems and structural interventions in the UK to the European Parliament and in April the UK5b Post Cork Paper was put forward as a Reflection Paper at the European Commission's Cohesion Forum.

- 3.2 While the UK5b Partnership has firmly established itself as a network of local authorities sharing experience on the operation of the respective Objective 5b Single Programming Documents, the Annual Conference "Rural Europe: The Way Ahead" in Builth Wells, Powys on 10/11 July 1997 will see Franz Fischler, EU Commissioner of DGVI Directorate General of the European Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development deliver the key note, answer questions and launch the EU5b Partnership on 11 July 1997 (Conference outline attached).

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The annual cost of UK5b Partnership membership is £500 per annum. Travel subsistence and accommodation cost for attendance of EU UK5b TUG meetings and the Annual Conference is estimated at between £500 and £850 dependent on the mode of transport available. The total costs can be contained within the 1997/98 Departmental Revenue budget.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration and Director of Finance have been consulted and are in agreement with the terms of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The UK5b Local Authority Partnership is a very valuable network which members are strongly urged to support by agreeing to the full involvement of Angus Council, by the European Services Section. The successful development of a European Strategy post 1999 depends on participation in the discussions shaping the future of the European Union's Structural Fund policies. It is therefore important for members and officers to closely monitor the emerging priorities of the future EU Cohesion Policy.

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/LB/MR

10 April 1997

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