

ANGUS COUNCIL**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE****29 MAY 1997****SUBJECT: NORTH SEA COMMISSION 6TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY - GOTHENBURG 5 -
6 JUNE 1997****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****Abstract: This report seeks homologation for officer representation at the North Sea Commission's 6th General Assembly from 5 to 6 June 1997 in Gothenburg.****1 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee homologates the decision taken by the Convener of Economic Development to send the European Services Manager to represent Angus Council at the 1997 North Sea Commission's Annual General Assembly to be held in Gothenburg on 5 and 6 June 1997.

2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The North Sea Commission (NSC) is one of the five geographical commissions of CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions). Much of the work of the North Sea Commission is undertaken through Technical Groups responsible for : Business Development; Communications; Culture and Tourism; Environment; Fisheries; and Inter Regional Networks. The NSC Secretariat has responsibility for overseeing all Technical Groups and co-ordinates the Inter Regional Networks Group. Between meetings of the Annual General Assembly the affairs of the North Sea Commission are managed by an Executive Council which meets three times a year. Participation in the work of the North Sea Commission provides Angus Council with a valuable opportunity to exchange experience and to lobby on relevant issues.
- 2.2 Angus Council has been a member of the North Sea Commission since autumn 1996 via group membership taken out by ESEC. Over the last seven months the Council has been involved on the North Sea Commission Environment Group (Scotland).
- 2.3 The North Sea Commission has proven to be a valuable organisation for its member regions promoting both political and technical co-operation and is held in high regard in Brussels and amongst its member regions.
- 2.4 The North Sea Commission's Annual General Assembly is the main gathering of member regions drawing around 100 delegates of senior politicians and officials from the member regions around the North Sea. This year the Assembly is being hosted by Bohuslandstinget in the City of Gothenburg, Sweden, 5-6 June 1997. As in previous years, this year's General Assembly will take place over two days, a conference on the first day and an annual business meeting on the second. There will also be workgroups held at the end of the General Assembly.

- 2.5 This year the General Assembly will focus on the INTERREG IIc Programme for the North Sea which has been submitted to the European Commission. As approval is expected shortly after the General Assembly this is a very topical theme. A draft Programme of the General Assembly is attached.
- 2.6 The North Sea INTERREG IIc Programme will be implemented during the period 1997-1999. This is quite a brief period of time and it is therefore important that authorities wishing to become involved in projects consider project ideas and partners for co-operation at this stage. The North Sea Programme is composed of three priorities: Urban and Regional Systems, Transport and Communications and Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage. In total the Programme will amount to 32.4 MECU, with the Eu contribution being 14.2 MECU. A total of 6.4 MECU has been earmarked for the UK with the EU contributing 3.2 MECU.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Attendance at the General Assembly in Gothenburg is estimated to cost in the region of £650 for flights, accommodation and subsistence.
- 3.2 The cost can be contained in the Departmental Revenue Budget for the current financial year under European Liaison.

4 CONSULTATION

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

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The successful development of projects drawing down funding from the INTERREG IIc North Sea Programme will be dependent upon the development of contacts and networking at the North Sea Commission's General Assembly. It is also essential for appropriate officers to keep up to date with funding mechanism and best practice. The development of effective transnational projects in the future will require a working knowledge of the relevant funds and administrative structures. Attendance at the North Sea Commission's General Assembly is therefore seen to be important to the Council in terms of maximising future European funding as well as developing effective transnational links.

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

19 May 1997

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