REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Abstract: This report advised the Committee on the content of a communication dated 23 July 2004 received from the Ministry of Defence on the ARMED FORCES MODERNISATION with particular reference to R M Condor, Arbroath.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

a) notes the contents of this report and the attached letter for information;

b) note that the MoD team will consult fully with Angus Council with regard to the review of R M Condor in terms of Royal Marines co-location and Defence Airfields Reviews; and

c) instructs the Chief Executive to make a suitable response based on the Economic benefit of the base for the Angus Community and the need to take this into account fully in both reviews.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Chief Executive has received a letter (attached) from Mr Ian Bailes, External Relations Unit, Ministry of Defence, concerning the Armed Forces Modernisation review.

2.2 The contents of the letter are self-explanatory and the key interest is that R M Condor will be reviewed from two different aspects:

1. Royal Marines Co-Location: taking into account operational efficiency and effectiveness which could lead to a rationalisation of MoD estates holdings including the Royal Marines Condor establishment and;

2. Defence Airfields Review involving a look at overall defence requirements for airfields in the UK.

2.3 The letter indicates that no decisions have yet been made and that the Council, Trade Unions and other interested parties will have an opportunity to express views in respect of both reviews.

3 RESPONSE

3.1 Reference is made to Report 594/98 which dealt with the submission of Council representations on the relocation and rationalisation of Commachio Group, Royal Marines from R M Condor, Arbroath. This was considered by the Council’s Economic Development Committee in June 1998. At that time it was made clear that
economic impacts resulting from this sort of review are not, under Treasury procedures, taken into account in the defence investment appraisal.

3.2 It is extremely difficult to assess the economic impact of the base because accurate figures on personnel employed and other base expenditure are not available.

3.3 Nevertheless the economic impact of the base is likely to be very significant. In the circumstances it is proposed to reply to the MOD seeking information that would allow the Economic Development Manager to fully assess the importance of the base to the local economy. This will of course require the full co-operation and openness of the MOD.

3.4 In any event the strongest possible representations will be made initially and at appropriate stages in both reviews to highlight the significance of the base for the Arbroath and wider Angus community.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Director of Law & Administration and Finance have been consulted on the terms of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The MoD have given a written assurance that Angus Council will be consulted fully during the review process. While difficult to assess the full economic impact of the base every effort will be made to assemble accurate information and the strongest possible representations will be made to highlight the importance of the base for the local economy.

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.

DV/SMW/MM

31 August 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive