REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Abstract: This report seeks approval for member and officer representation at the North Sea Commission’s 13th General Assembly which takes place in Gothenburg, Sweden from 16 – 18 June 2004.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that Angus Council be represented by a member to be nominated in consultation with the Leader of the Council and an officer nominated by the Chief Executive at the 2004/3 North Sea Commission’s Annual General Assembly to be held in Gothenburg, Sweden from 16 to 18 June 2004.

2 PROPOSALS

2.1 The NSC was founded in 1989 to facilitate and enhance partnerships between the regions which manage the challenges and opportunities presented by the North Sea. The NSC promotes the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe by encouraging joint development initiatives and political lobbying at EU level.

2.2 The North Sea Commission (NSC) is one of the five geographical commissions of the CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions). Much of the work of the North Sea Commission is undertaken through Technical Groups responsible for: Business Development; Transport and Communications; Culture and Tourism; Education and Resources; 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 but more importantly improve access to funding from the INTERREG IIIB Community Initiative, a programme which funds transnational co-operation projects.

2.3 Angus Council has been a member of the North Sea Commission since autumn 1996 via group membership taken out by ESEC (East of Scotland European Consortium).

2.4 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.

2.5 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 Regional Council of Region Västra Götaland in Gothenburg from 16 to 18 June. This year’s General Assembly will take place over three days. The INTERREG IIIB
The theme of this year’s assembly is “North Sea Co-operation – A Contributor to Regional Development”.

The North Sea INTERREG IIIB Programme will be implemented during the period 2001 - 2006. It is important that Angus Council departments wishing to become involved in projects consider project ideas and partners for co-operation at this stage. The General Assembly will therefore be a key event and representation would be of potential benefit to the Council in seeking future funding for future projects.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Attendance at the General Assembly in Gothenburg is estimated to cost up to £1,500 for flights, accommodation and subsistence for member and officer attendance.

3.2 The estimated cost of £1,500 can be contained in the Economic Development Revenue Budget for 2004/2005 under European Liaison.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 The Director of Finance and Director of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The benefit for Angus Council will be dependent upon the development of contacts and networking at the North Sea Commission’s General Assembly culminating in successful applications for funding. 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 building on progress made to date and 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.

DV/AS/MM
24 March 2004

A B Watson
Chief Executive