REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Abstract: This Report asks the Committee for approval to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Convener of Infrastructure Services and the Director of Finance to award grants of up to £5,000 for Community Economic Development (CED) ERDF-funded Projects.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that:

a) the Committee authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Convener of Infrastructure Services and the Director of Finance to approve grants of up to £5,000 for Community Economic Development (CED) ERDF-funded Projects provided the projects fall within the Terms of Reference of the Rural Development Facilitator or Kirriemuir and Brechin and Arbroath Engagement Pilots; and

b) the Financial Regulations (Section 29 refers) be formally amended to reflect this change.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 14 of the minute of Economic Development Committee of 25 April 2002 which records that the Committee agreed:-

a) to authorise the post of Rural Development Facilitator; and

b) to note that confirmation of funding for this post had already been received from Scottish Enterprise Tayside and that an application had been submitted for ERDF funding under the East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme.

2.2 The Committee is asked to note that the confirmation of ERDF funding for the post of Rural Development Facilitator was received in August 2002 under the East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme, Priority 3 (Community Economic Development - CED) Measure 3 (Thematic Activity).

2.3 The Committee is referred to Article 25 of the minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 22 January 2004 which records that the Committee noted the progress and outcomes to date of the Tayside Rural Development Facilitator Project in Angus.

2.4 The Committee is referred to Article 37 of the minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 4 March 2004 which records that the Committee agreed to authorise Angus Council to enter into a Minute of Agreement with Perth & Kinross Council for the delivery of the Tayside Rural Development Facilitators Project.
2.5 The committee is also referred to Report No 685/02 of the Economic Development Committee of 6 June 2002 which records that the committee agreed:-

a) to approve that the post of Angus Towns Promotion Officer be established as a permanent position within the Economic Development Unit.

b) to note that 2 applications had been submitted for ERDF funding under the East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme entitled Kirriemuir and Brechin and Arbroath Engagement Pilots.

2.6 The Committee is asked to note that confirmation of ERDF funding for the post was received in December 2002 under the East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme, Priority 3, Measure 3.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Angus Council currently receives ERDF funding under the East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme, Priority 3 Measure 3 for two posts: the Rural Development Facilitator (Angus) and the Towns Promotions Officer.

3.2 Both posts are involved in working with business and community groups to support community based economic development activity by awarding grants for activities which are in accordance with their Terms of Reference (see Appendices 1 and 2). In the case of the Rural Development Facilitator the grants are monitored through the Project Supervision Group (consisting of officers from Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils) and grants of over £10,000 have to be approved by the Project Steering Group. This latter group involves a number of community representatives from both Council areas and one elected member from each area. The Vice Convener represents the Council on this group. The Kirriemuir and Brechin and Arbroath Engagement Pilots require the establishment of a community based Advisory Panel in each of the burghs. The panel established in Brechin consists each of the three local members and a representative from the Community Council. Similar panels are in the process of being established in Kirriemuir and Arbroath.

4 INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS FUND

4.1 In accordance with Section 29 the Financial Regulations Heads of Service have delegated authority to award grants of up to £500.00. This also applies to the Tayside Rural Development Facilitators Project and the Kirriemuir and Brechin and Arbroath Engagement pilots but in reality a grant of £500 from these sources includes European Regional Development Fund support of around 45%.

4.2 In order to process requests for funding in excess of £500 promptly and to avoid numerous reports to Committee authority is now sought to devolve to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Convener of Infrastructure Services and the Director of Finance to approve grants of up to £5,000 for Community Economic Development (CED) ERDF-funded Projects. This approval is conditional on the individual projects falling within the Terms of Reference of the two projects in question.

4.3 The procedures to be followed for the payment of grants to outside bodies are as detailed in Section 29 of the Council’s Financial Regulations. This section of the
Financial Regulations has not been reviewed since May 2000 and at that time Chief Officers had delegated authority to award grants of up to £500. Any grants above this level required prior Committee approval. An overall review of the contents of the Council’s Financial Regulations is currently being undertaken and without prejudice to the outcome of that review process it will be necessary to formalise any interim decision to increase the grant approval authorisation level of up to £5,000 for CED ERDF funded projects. The necessary consultations attached to the increased £5,000 authorisation level will be included within the revised Financial Regulations interim recording.

4.4 Progress reports will be submitted to the Committee on a bi-annual basis.

4.5 It is intended that only requests for grants in excess of £5,000 for individual projects will be submitted to the Committee for approval.

4.6 The Terms of Reference for the Tayside Rural Development Facilitators Project and the Kirriemuir and Brechin and Arbroath engagement pilots are appended to this report.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. Projects will only be undertaken on the basis of available funding contained in the Economic Development Revenue Budget established provisions for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Directors of Finance, Personnel, and Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 The authorisation from the Council enables the Council to deliver promptly grants to the former Objective 5b communities of Angus and to Arbroath both of which areas are eligible for Community Economic Development funding.

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/MM

03 June 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive