
Report to Council

Date: 4 June 2009

Subject: Membership of East of Scotland European Consortium

Report by: Head of Strategic Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report updates the Council on the East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) and asks Council to consider its continued membership of the organisation in light of significant changes in the context in which local authorities operate in relation to regional economic development and European funding.
- 1.2 ESEC was established in 1991 by four regional councils and in 1996 eleven successor councils, including Clackmannanshire, continued the consortium arrangement.
- 1.3 ESEC's aims are to:
 - a) influence, where directly relevant, the development of emerging European policy and legislation as it affects Eastern Scotland;
 - b) maximise European Union financial assistance;
 - c) foster co-operation between local authorities in Eastern Scotland and provide a framework for the promotion of appropriate geographic and sectoral groupings;
 - d) develop links with similar regional groupings within Scotland, the United Kingdom and other European member states and develop Eastern Scotland corporate representation on appropriate bodies.
- 1.4 Membership fees are £7,500 per annum for each council and the fees fund a secretariat which employs a full-time policy officer and policy assistant. The secretariat is hosted by the authority which chairs ESEC, currently Aberdeen City, which provides support in kind.
- 1.5 Clackmannanshire hosted ESEC between 2003-2008 when Councillor Carrick was the chair of the consortium. Councillor Carrick is currently the Council's representative on ESEC, having been nominated in May 2007 to that role by the Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) gives notice to ESEC of its intention to withdraw membership;
- b) ceases membership of ESEC in 12 months time

3.0 Considerations

3.1. Since the establishment of ESEC, the context in which local authorities operate in relation to regional economic development and European funding has changed significantly. Some of these changes include:

- the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government
- the establishment in Scotland of a system of unitary local authorities
- the expansion of Europe and associated changes to its funding regimes
- the renewed focus on city regions
- changes in the enterprise network
- renewed focus within CoSLA on regional economic development.

3.2 These changes have impacted on the respective roles ESEC and its constituent members play and it is no longer felt that membership of ESEC delivers value for money to the Council.

3.3 Edinburgh City Council has withdrawn from ESEC and another authority has intimated its intention to withdraw at the end of this financial year. A year's notice is required to be given by authorities which wish to withdraw from ESEC.

4.0 Sustainability Implications - NA

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. *Financial Details*

The Council pays £7500 membership fees to ESEC and has budgeted for this in 09-10. Any potential savings from a review of membership would accrue in 2010-11.

5.2. *Staffing*

There would be no impact on the Council's establishment as a result of any Council decision on this matter. ESEC staff are employees of the host Council.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities 2008 - 2011 (Please tick ☒)

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses ☐
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive ☐
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment ☐
- Our communities are safer ☐
- Vulnerable people and families are supported ☐
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced ☐
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing ☐
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all ☐
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence ☒

(2) Council Policies (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes ☐ No ☒

9.0 Legality

9.1 In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒

10.0 Appendices

10.1 NONE

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☒ <http://www.esec.org.uk>

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Approved by

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