

ANGUS COUNCIL

At a MEETING of the **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** held in The Town and County Hall, Forfar on Wednesday 28 February 1996 at 6.03 pm.

Present: Councillors JOHN GIBB, BRIAN MILNE, Mrs FRANCES E DUNCAN, WILLIAM CROWE, IAN McINTOSH, GEORGE ALLAN and WALLIE LEASK.

Councillor GIBB, Convener, in the Chair.

1. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 January 1996 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF LINKS WITH CORFU

There were submitted Report No AC112/96 by the Chief Executive indicating that there were a number of existing links between Corfu and Angus, particularly in the educational field, and suggesting that there was potential benefit in extending these to economic development especially in relation to tourism, business development and European initiatives. To this end, arrangements had been made for a visit to Corfu by the Economic Development Manager and a representative from the Education Department during the period 5-10 March 1996 which would be partially funded through the Central Bureau's International Study Visit Programme funding.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (i) to explore further the development of links with the Municipality of Corfu; and
- (ii) to approve a study visit, with Central Bureau funding as outlined in the Report, and to homologate the arrangements which had been made.

3. CLOSURE OF RAF EDZELL COMMUNICATIONS BASE - UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of the Economic Development Committee of 17 January 1996, there was submitted Report No AC110/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development giving details of progress being made by the RAF Edzell Task Force. The next meeting of the Task Force was programmed to take place on 18 April 1996 and the question of continued representation on the Task Force by Angus Council had arisen.

It was suggested that the Council should continue to be represented by two elected members, the Chief Executive and the Economic Development Manager, or their substitutes. The Committee noted that it had been previously agreed that Angus Council, with support from Aberdeenshire Council, should assume responsibility for administrative support to the Task Force and accordingly an officer nominated by the Director of Law and Administration together with the Council's Media and Public Relations Officer should also attend as necessary.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) that the terms of the Report and the progress made be noted;
- (ii) that two elected members, the Chief Executive and the Economic Development Manager, or their substitutes, represent Angus Council on the Task Force; and
- (iii) that the Director of Law and Administration and the Media Relations and Publicity Officer continue to provide administrative support to the Task Force as required.

4. LEADER II PROGRAMME - IMPLICATIONS FOR ANGUS COUNCIL

There was submitted Report No AC114/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development indicating that LEADER was one of a number of European "Community Initiatives" first set up by the European Commission in 1990 as part of the structural funding process. LEADER II had been introduced in 1994 and would run until the end of 1999.

In Lowland Scotland, there were five LEADER areas including Upland Tayside, which included Angus.

LEADER II was primarily a community based economic development initiative focusing on small scale projects and businesses and the projected funding available equated to some £230,000 each year in Upland Tayside. The programme was being managed at a Scottish level by Scottish Enterprise National, in partnership with the Scottish Office, and locally throughout Scottish Enterprise Tayside and the LEADER "Local Action Group". To gain access to the available EU funding, the local partnership had to organise and fund the Local Management and Administration of the Upland Tayside LEADER Programme.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (i) to note the development of the LEADER II Operational Programme for Upland Tayside, which included those areas in Angus designated under Objective 5b, and the availability of European funding until 1999;
- (ii) to enter into a joint initiative with Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Perth and Kinross Council to fund administrative support for the LEADER Manager for the programme; and
- (iii) to approve a contribution for the administration of the Programme of £2,5000 for 1996/97, to be met from the revenue budget provision.

5. EUROPEAN NETWORKS

There was submitted Report No AC108/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development indicating that, as part of the development of the Council's European strategy, he had investigated the benefits which could accrue to the Council from membership of European orientated bodies and network organisations.

The Council had agreed in principle to become an active member of the Eastern Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) and he suggested that the Council might wish to consider whether it should take out membership of the Conference and Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), North Sea Commission (NSC), Regions of European Traditional Industry (RETI) and the Committee of the Regions (COR).

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (i) to note the ongoing discussions regarding future involvement in a number of European bodies;
- (ii) that Angus Council should either take out individual membership of CPMR, NSC and RETI or should seek corporate membership of these organisations via ESEC as appropriate; and
- (iii) to note that elected member involvement in the COR could only realistically be achieved via involvement in COSLA.

6. INDUSTRIAL LAND AND PROPERTY PORTFOLIO - A POSITION STATEMENT

There was submitted Report No AC109/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development setting out the current extent of the industrial land and property portfolio for which Angus Council would assume responsibility and outlining current measures to extend this portfolio, including the possible provision of a speculative industrial unit at Arbroath Enterprise Park.

The Committee noted the terms of the Report.

7. COSLA MEMBER/OFFICER REVIEW GROUP OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

There was submitted Report No AC113/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development indicating that COSLA had set up a Member/Officer Review Group to consider its membership of the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) in the light of the new structure being put in place to deliver European and International services within COSLA. The Group would be considering the option of withdrawing membership of the LGIB and possibly purchasing specific services on a contractual basis where this would be cost effective. A copy of the paper establishing the Review Group was appended to the Report.

The Report concluded that COSLA's proposals were relevant to the development of Scottish local authorities in a European and International context, and while it was too early to judge, could offer an effective means for members to address practical issues which would arise. However, the proposed delivery would, to a large extent, duplicate those currently provided by the LGIB, and it was felt that COSLA should not renew its membership of the LGIB.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed to advise COSLA:-

- (i) that Angus Council supported the delivery of European and International services to COSLA members;
- (ii) that the option of withdrawing from membership of the LGIB and the possibility of purchasing specific services from LGIB were supported; and
- (iii) that the COSLA Member/Officer Group should be increased in size to include a representative from a smaller authority.

8. THE BUSINESS SHOP - ANGUS

With reference to Article 2 of the Economic Development Committee of 15 November 1995, there was submitted Report No AC115/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development regarding progress in negotiations with Scottish Enterprise Tayside for the establishment of The Business Shop - Angus.

A working group had been formed with three members each from Angus Council, Scottish Enterprise Tayside and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Council was represented by the Convener of the Economic Development Committee, the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development and the Economic Development Manager.

The Report concluded that satisfactory progress was being made by the Working Group given the staffing, legal and financial implications of the task. However, every effort was being made to expedite matters and a detailed report would be submitted in due course.

The Committee noted the terms of the Report.

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved to exclude the public and press during consideration of the following items so as to avoid the possible disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

10. ARBROATH ENTERPRISE PARK - PROPOSED FACTORY DEVELOPMENT

With reference to Article 9 of the Economic Development Committee of 17 January 1996, there was submitted Report No AC111/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development outlining progress in respect of the proposal to provide industrial premises at Arbroath Enterprise Park and setting out the financial implications.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (i) to proceed with a head lease for 5,762 sq m or thereby of factory space at Arbroath Enterprise Park on the basis outlined in the Report, subject to the completion of the necessary legal agreement; and

- (ii) to note the significant financial risks associated with the pursuit of the head lease on a speculative basis.

11. TRAINING DEVELOPMENT SERVICES UNIT - PROPOSED ADDITIONAL TRAINING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

There was submitted Report No AC116/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development regarding proposals to establish an information technology training and assessment facility as an integral part of the Economic Development Unit's Training Development Services Section.

It was proposed that the facility should be established for a period of 12 months during which time the cost effectiveness of the proposal would be assessed.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (i) to the establishment of an in-house information technology training and assessment facility as an integral part of the Training Development Service Section of the Economic Development Unit, for use in conjunction with Government Training Schemes;
- (ii) to utilise premises owned by the Council at the Arbroath Business Centre, Dens Road, Arbroath;
- (iii) to recruit one post of Training Co-ordinator and two Training Instructor posts on a temporary contract basis for an initial period of 12 months;
- (iv) to note that significant estimated savings in net expenditure would accrue to the Training Revenue Account based on cost savings and increased revenue generation; and
- (v) that the situation be reviewed after 12 months operation when the cost effectiveness of the proposal would be assessed to determine whether to continue operating the in-house facility.