

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 AUGUST 2016

**ANGUS COUNCIL EAST OF SCOTLAND EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM (ESEC) HOSTING
ARRANGEMENTS**

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

The Committee is asked to approve an extension to Angus Council's role as host authority by a further two years from May 2017 to May 2019 in light of the EU referendum result and the uncertainty regarding the future position of EU funding arrangements and as a result the future of ESEC.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Agree an extension of two years of the hosting of the ESEC secretariat by Angus Council until May 2019.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The East of Scotland European Consortium is a well-established member organisation supporting the east coast local authorities on EU policy engagement and funding. The ESEC Secretariat hosting rotates around the member local authorities.

3.2 Reference is made to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services of 28 February 2012 which authorised Angus Council to assume the role as host of the ESEC Secretariat from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. Also note committee report number 402/14 approved on 30 September 2014 to extend the hosting of ESEC to align with local elections until May 2017. At this time it was expected that the hosting would pass on to another local authority member.

3.3 ESEC provides crucial policy and project development support to 8 Local Authority members along the East Coast and Central Scotland including Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Stirling Council and Falkirk Council. This centralised support ensures we are using our resources efficiently and to reduce duplication across the area.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The outcome of the EU Referendum on 23 June 2016 has led to uncertainty around timescales for exiting the EU, Scotland's position, the future of EU funding and policy and as result the future role and membership of EU related organisations including ESEC.

4.2 ESEC is serviced by a policy officer employed by a 'host' authority and funded through an annual subscription paid by member authorities. The current postholder has been in post and employed by Angus Council since 18 August 2014.

- 4.3 At the ESEC Policy Board held on 1 July 2016, members agreed that due to the current uncertainties their preference would be for Angus Council to continue as host authority until May 2019 at which point it is hoped that there will be greater clarity regarding the EU exit process and implications on networks such as ESEC.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 ESEC is funded through member authority annual contributions. This is currently £6,750 per annum per authority. These contributions are held by Angus Council on behalf of ESEC. All income and expenditure relating to ESEC is accounted for separately and any costs associated with the operation of ESEC will continue to be met in full from member contributions. Angus Council provides financial support services to ESEC including the preparation of a full set of statutory Accounts. These services are provided from within existing staff resources but the costs are reimbursed by ESEC thus generating a small income for the Corporate Improvement & Finance Division.
- 5.2 ESEC currently has a general reserve balance as at 31 March 2016 of c. £82,268. This reserve would be used to fund any annual shortfall in net expenditure and any associated redundancy and/or pension payments should these occur.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 ESEC provides an invaluable service to east coast local authorities and the hosting of the secretariat by Angus Council will ensure effective continuation of this throughout a period of uncertainty.

9. CONSULTATION

The Strategic Directors of Children and Learning, Communities and Resources, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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 a material extent in preparing the above report.

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