

# The Highland Council

9 May 2013

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## Europe Day - 9 May 2013.

### Report by the Chief Executive

#### Summary

This report describes the origins of Europe Day and notes the activities being undertaken by the Council to celebrate this event. As background the report also highlights the benefits that have accrued to the Highlands from engagement with European programmes. The report also notes the request by members for a presentation to be prepared on Europe and the potential it presents for the Council.

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Council's Programme, Working Together for the Highlands has a commitment that:

"We will work through the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and the Scottish and UK Governments to secure the maximum benefit for the Highlands from the European funding programmes for 2014-20, including transitional funding, and participate actively in key European organisations."

1.2 Therefore the Council engages with the European Union (EU) in order to:

- maximise grant funding for Highland communities, directly as an applicant and indirectly by supporting Council funded and community projects;
- influence E.U. policy and programmes, highlighting the particular opportunities and needs of the region; and
- learn from experience in Europe and to share Council experience for improving public services.

1.3 May 9 has been designated by the European Union as Europe Day to symbolise the birth of the European Union. This reflects the day in 1950 when Robert Schuman, the first President of the European Parliamentary Assembly, presented his proposal for the creation of an organised Europe, indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations across the continent.

1.4 This proposal, known as the 'Schuman declaration', is considered to be the beginning of the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC). 9 May has become Europe Day, which, across the EU, is celebrated with festivals, lectures, public events and a diverse range of cultural and artistic presentations and entertainments. The aim of all this activity is to bring European institutions closer to its citizens and to promote greater mutual understand amongst the peoples of Europe of each other to prevent the growth of national antagonisms which, in the past have led to armed conflict.

1.5 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the UK joining the European Economic

Community.

- 1.6 2013 notes the 20th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty which gave birth to the European Union (EU). The EU moved the EEC on from being a purely economic union to have a greater focus on the peoples of Europe. In celebrating this, 2013 has been designated the "European Year of Citizens" reflecting Article 2 of the Treaty which, for the first time, gave legal rights and protections of Europe's Citizens.

## 2. Europe Day Activities

- 2.1 The following activities are taking place to celebrate Europe Day 2013:
- flying the EU flag at Council HQ;
  - arranging an EU based quiz for the public and for primary schools across Highland;
  - a display, in the Council foyer, of a range of EU funded projects. This will include Council and third party projects;
  - information on European funding that has accrued to the Highlands;
  - a press release to celebrate Europe Day and to promote the quiz noted above to the general public; and
  - European menus in the Council canteen during the week of Europe Day.
- 2.2 Prizes will be made available to the winners of the quizzes. £50 will be awarded to the winning entry from the public and £200 to the winning primary school. The prizes will be funded from the European Team budget.

## 3. European Funding in the Highlands, current and future programmes

- 3.1 Funding has always been and will remain an important aspect of the Council's interaction with Europe. The funding to support regional development in the Highlands from the current 2007-13 programmes was detailed in the annual report on the Council's engagement with Europe, reported to the Finance, Housing and Resources Committee in April 2013. A summary of that information is set out below.
- 3.2 In summary, from 2007-13 Council projects have attracted £6.38m of EU funding and Highland projects submitted by other applicants have attracted £138.6m. ESF and ERDF projects covering the Highlands and Islands have attracted £41m, and the Highland area will have benefitted from these, although it is not possible to disaggregate the value of grant coming to the Highland area. The funding by programme is shown in the tables below.

### 3.3 Highland Council Projects

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Award</b>
European Social Fund (ESF)	£2,808,010
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	£1,724,000
European Fisheries Fund (EFF)	£152,279
Northern Periphery Programme (NPP)	£221,316
LEADER	£1,480,744
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,386,349</b>

Other Highland Projects<sup>1</sup> where the applicant was not the Council<sup>2</sup>

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Award</b>
ESF	£13,267,829
ERDF	£11,349,387
EFF Axis 2	£1,539,056
EFF Axis 3	£1,404,187
Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)	£96,503,763
NPP	£1,313,623
LEADER	£13,282,707
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£138,660,552</b>

Other projects that cover the Highlands and Islands and where the Highland Council area benefits

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Award</b>
ESF	£14,456,804
ERDF	£26,578,200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£41,035,004*</b>

\* These figures are for the H&I region as a whole.

3.4 The management of EU programmes

The Council manages the LEADER Programme 2007-13. It has supported 368 projects by committing £14,763,451 of grants (made up of £8,017,304 of LEADER funds and £6,746,147 of Conversion funds). Of these projects, 32 were Highland Council applications attracting total grant of £1,480,744. Reports on the LEADER programme are considered at the Planning, Environment and Development Committee. The last up-date was [reported](#) in September 2012.

3.5 E.U. Funding Programmes post 2014 and Transition status for the region

As the current programming period closes at the end of 2013, the next period will run from 2014 to 2020. The budget to fund the various EU funding instruments was approved by the European Council on 8 February 2013. The budget of 908bn Euros on expenditure has now been forwarded to the European Parliament for its consideration. The Parliament can either accept or reject the budget and it is anticipated that a decision will be reached in June or July 2013.

3.6 For Highland the highlight of the budget approved by the European Council was the retention of Transition status as part of the architecture of Cohesion (regional development) policy. This means that the Highlands & Islands would be eligible for more funding than other areas in Scotland. This also makes it easier to make the case for separate programmes for the region. Separate programming is important, as it will allow for a greater focus on regional priorities and the development of delivery models that suit local

<sup>1</sup> This excludes agricultural payments made.

<sup>2</sup> The Council will have supported some of the projects by providing match-funding

circumstances.

3.7 Work is underway for the preparation of:

- The UK Partnership Agreement – to show the priorities for regional programmes;
- Contributing to the Scottish chapter of the UK Partnership Agreement;
- Developing the options for running the regional programmes.

#### **4. Other networking activity**

4.1 The Council has been an active member of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), Euromontana and the North Sea Commission (NSC).

4.2 Currently the Council has member engagement as follows:

- The election of the Leader of the Council as the UK representative on the ruling Political Bureau of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) – the pre-eminent lobbying network for regional government;
- The election of the Deputy Leader as the alternate Scottish member on the Executive Committee of the North Sea Commission (NSC), a lobbying and experience exchange network for regional government bordering the North Sea;
- The election of the Convener as vice-chair of the NSC Sustainable Development Thematic Working Group;
- The election of Councillor George Farlow to the Board of Euromontana, a network of organisations with an interest in the development of mountain regions.

4.3 In addition Council officers contribute to Scottish and UK wide networks.

#### **5. Future Activity**

5.1 Following discussion at the Finance, Housing & Resources Committee in April 2013 it was agreed that a briefing for members on engagement with Europe will be prepared and included in the programme of events and training as part of the members' development programme for 2013/14.

#### **6. Implications**

##### **6.1 Resource implications**

The report highlights the major contribution of European funding for the region, with over £145m of funding for Highland from current programmes plus a share of the £41m awarded to the Highlands and Islands region. In addition, the Council manages the LEADER programme for the region and this has distributed £14.7m to community groups included in the total above. The lobbying activity by the Council and its partners through various networks has helped to make the case for Transition status to enable additional funding to accrue to the region in the programmes from 2014 to 2020.

6.2 There are no other implications arising from this report on Europe Day.

## **7. Recommendations**

### **7.1 Members are asked to note:**

- the activities taking place on Europe Day, including the display in the foyer;
- the value of the EU programmes from 2007-13 in Highland, amounting to over £145m plus a share of the £42m awarded to the Highlands and Islands region;
- that the Council and its partners have been successful in making the case for Transition status as part of the EU Cohesion policy. This will enable greater financial support for the region than for elsewhere in Scotland for 2014 to 2020. The EU budget is expected to be agreed by the European Parliament by July 2013.
- That a briefing for members on engaging with the EU will be developed as part of the member development programme in 2013/14.

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