Dear Sir/Madam,

COHESION POLICY CONSULTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the debate surrounding the future of EU Cohesion Policy. Aberdeenshire Council welcomes this opportunity and hope that our input will help to shape the future of this important policy. The enclosed response was approved by our Infrastructure Services Committee on 24 January 2008.

Cohesion Policy has played a fundamental role in the development of Europe’s regions for many years. Aberdeenshire Council feels that it is important that the Policy builds upon these successes post-2013. The Structural Funds in particular have been important tools for regional development and social inclusion in the EU. All areas of the EU should be able to access these Funds post-2013, with the neediest areas receiving the most support.

Indeed, devolution of the implementation of Cohesion Policy to the local and regional levels should be actively encouraged. Sub-Programmes tailored to addressing local and regional issues within the wider framework of EU Cohesion Policy should be developed. Flexibility is important in ensuring that EU funds are targeted wisely on projects which have the greatest impact on the regions.
Demographic change, climate change and increased globalisation of the world economy present many challenges to the EU. Cohesion Policy should aim to address demographic change through assisting regions in coping with ageing populations and migration, whether inward or outward. Reducing demand for energy, coupled with investment in renewable energy technologies, should be a key priority with regards to mitigation of climate change. Adaptation is equally important and the Policy should take account of the problems faced by many parts of the EU in coping with extreme weather conditions such as heatwaves. EU industries are likely to face increased competition and pressure to restructure. Cohesion Policy should support the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in the regions, given that it presents an adaptation strategy for the EU to the challenges of a dynamic global economy.

If you have any comments on Aberdeenshire Council’s submission to the consultation, please contact Martin Brebner at:

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Yours faithfully,

Cllr. Peter Argyle
Chair, Infrastructure Services Committee
Aberdeenshire Council