INTRODUCTION

1.1 Glasgow City Council welcomes the opportunity to make a contribution to the European Committee’s Inquiry into Scotland’s representation within the European Union. We also look forward to receiving the findings of this Inquiry.

GLASGOW’S REPRESENTATION IN EUROPE

2.1 A high proportion of the functions devolved to the Scottish Parliament are affected by EU legislation. EU policies already have, and will continue to have, an impact on the Scottish economy and in turn Glasgow. It is, therefore, vital that Glasgow’s interests are well represented in Brussels.

2.2 Departments within Glasgow City Council working on a European level are supported by Development and Regeneration Services. Firstly, the DRS European Funding Unit deals with applications made for all Council projects seeking European Structural Funds. Secondly, the European and International Policy Group works with European Networks to ensure the Council’s interests are taken account of in European policy developments.

2.3 At the broadest level, Glasgow City Council is a partner in a number of networks (eg Eurocities, Atlantic Arc, West of Scotland European Consortium), which keep Glasgow involved in European trans-national activity. Participation in these networks is important for the development of Glasgow’s European Policies and issues. They allow for the sharing of experiences and the dissemination of information, which achieves greater efficiency for all involved. Glasgow City Council will continue to use these networks as channels of representation, as they provide an appropriate and sometimes specialist voice, for many of Glasgow’s concerns.

2.4 At a Scottish level, Glasgow City Council believes that subsidiarity does not stop at the level of the Scotland’s devolved institutions, any more than it should stop at the level of the UK government. The Council believes that, in this context, it can represent its citizens most effectively. In contrast, any attempt to consolidate Glasgow’s interests into a whole-Scotland framework would risk dilution of that representation.
The implication for "Team Scotland" is that a future arrangement should support and facilitate representative voices, including that of Glasgow City Council. This would allow different strengths to be reflected, rather than presenting a homogenised (and ultimately compromised) compound policy position on many issues.

At present, the West of Scotland European Consortium (WoSEC) is a member of Scotland Europa. WoSEC is one of the main ways that relevant information relating to Europe is currently fed through to Glasgow City Council. Scotland Europa is an established and important body in Brussels, with a good reputation as a model for accommodating a number of Scottish organisations under one "brand name". Glasgow City Council will continue to support WoSEC and - through WoSEC - Scotland Europa. However, at the same time, Glasgow may wish to use its own voice independently, or in exercising its role as the core city of the west of Scotland.

3. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

3.1 As stated above, Glasgow City Council would like to emphasise to the Committee that Glasgow will be seeking the most effective representation to allow the city's voice to be heard in Europe. It will, therefore, welcome an arrangement which facilitates and encourages direct inputs from the Council into appropriate policy discussions.

3.2 We would also stress that more effort should be made from the Parliament, Scottish Executive and also the European Commission to ensure that there is greater participation at regional and local level at the earliest possible stage of any proposed legislation. This would ensure that relevant input could be given before any formal actions are taken.

3.3 For there to be greater effectiveness and accessibility of European issues in Scotland, it is essential that there is also greater involvement and communication between individual local authorities and the Scottish Parliament. Regular correspondence and meetings should take place with appointed officers, to ensure that all local authorities are kept "in the loop". This would allow for greater and more relevant contributions from local authorities.

3.4 Greater focus on networking and development between individual local authorities, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament, should allow Scotland to move forward and maximise the benefits of European strategies. It would also lead to greater clarity on how information can be fed from the local authorities right through to the European Institutions.