
ESSEX ESTUARIES EUROPEAN MARINE SITE PROPOSAL FOR AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NETWORK

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on a proposal to establish an information network for the Essex Estuaries.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Essex Estuaries Initiative has prepared a proposal for the establishment of an information network for the Essex Estuary area, which is designated as a European Marine Site. A copy of the proposal is attached to this report.
- 2.2 A key element of the proposal is a bid for funding to the EU LIFE programme. The bid is intended to support the implementation of the Estuaries Management Scheme and to develop an information system. The LIFE programme can provide up to 50% grant funding for projects. The next bidding takes place in November 2001.
- 2.3 The full details of the proposal are included in the Appendix, but, in summary, the main elements of the project would be:
- arrangements for implementing the management scheme
 - establishment of a Coastal Centre
 - to develop and test an information management system

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 In principle, the proposal for a bid to the LIFE programme merits support and, at this stage, that is all that is being sought by the Essex Estuaries initiative.
- 3.2 In order to pull together the bid documentation, there will be a requirement for some Officer assistance, although this will primarily be by way of comment on the papers.
- 3.3 However, a key component of the bid must be to demonstrate match funding and, prior to submission, this issue will need to be addressed.
- 3.4 It is considered that the proposal is worthy of development into a bid and when that stage has been reached, there will be a further opportunity for Members to consider the financial implications. In effect, whether a financial contribution might be justified to support the bid.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No financial contribution would be required to prepare the documentation for the LIFE programme bid. There would be a modest input of Officer time to assist the preparation of the bid and this can be achieved from existing resources.
- 4.2 The Council will have an opportunity to consider its position with regard to a financial contribution to the initiative once the bid is prepared.

5 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Council supports, in principle, the development of a bid to the EU LIFE Nature Programme, and that the Essex Estuaries Initiative be informed accordingly. (HPS).

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Background Papers:

Letter from Essex Estuaries Initiative dated 10th July 2001.

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