

Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

Meeting: Policy & Resources Committee

Date: 16 July 2003

Report of: Chief Executive

Subject: Arc Manche network

Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to inform Members of the work of the 'Arc Manche' network and to seek agreement on Brighton & Hove City Council's membership of the network

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the City Council's membership of the Arc Manche network
- 2.2 To approve the participation of the Leader of the City Council, or his nominated representative, at the two annual Arc Manche political meetings (see section 5):

3. Background

- 3.1 The Arc Manche is a flexible network of French regions and British local authorities along the Channel. Its two objectives are:
 - 3.1.1 At a Strategic level: to represent the interests and the uniqueness of Arc Manche as a coherent co-operation area by:
 - acting at a political and institutional level in the context of the enlargement of the European Union and of the reform of the European structural funds ;
 - operating as a co-operation network on maritime and coastal issues of common interest;

- taking into account the links between this area and its hinterland as well as with other major European areas.

3.1.2 At an Operational level: to reinforce the partnership between maritime regions within the area through concrete actions and achievements by:

- facilitating the setting-up of joint projects of varying sizes and with different categories of stakeholders;
- leading actions to overcome the economic, social, cultural and administrative differences within the Arc Manche regions;
- promoting the awareness of the Arc Manche area.

3.2 The network was first launched in 1996 with five French regions and nine English counties. Although a useful initiative in part, the network was criticised for being too institutional in its operation.

3.3 As a result the new network will be more flexible: there will be fewer meetings, no working groups and members organisations will select which actions to pursue in line with their own priorities. The network was re-configured and re-launched in March 2003 with the initial participation of five English local authorities and five French regions:

- West Sussex County Council (English lead organisation)
- Kent County Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Brighton & Hove City Council (informal participation pending P&R approval)
- The Region of Upper Normandy (French lead organisation)
- The Region of Lower Normandy
- The Region of Picardy
- The Region of Nord-Pas de Calais
- The Region of Brittany

Other local authorities have expressed an interest in the work of the Arc Manche and it is anticipated the network will expand. Local authorities, such as East Sussex County Council, are keeping a 'watching brief' and may join at a later date.

3.4 The Arc Manche member organisations have identified four priority themes for co-operation:

- Integrated management of the Channel coastal area
- Development of the coastal economy (coastal and maritime tourism)
- Maritime safety
- Fishing and the management of fishery resources

4. Membership benefits

4.1 It is anticipated that the main benefits for the City would be as follows:

- Recognition of the Channel as an important and unique geographic entity and greater influence and visibility of the Channel region at a political and institutional level in the European Union e.g. in the context of the enlargement of the EU and of the reform of European Structural Funds.
- Exchange of best practice and ideas relating to maritime issues and coastal issues of common interest. Some Arc Manche members have an excellent track record in developing successful maritime and coastal environment projects and Brighton & Hove could benefit greatly from sharing that acquired knowledge and experience eg. the Isle of Wight has been successful in attracting EU funding to support integrated coastal zone management projects.
- Provision of 'ready made' partnership to access EU funds to support practical projects of common interest. However, it is worth noting that in many fields, INTERREG IIIA (English-French cross-border co-operation) is the most appropriate and easily accessed source of EU funding for Brighton & Hove organisations. Only 50% of the current Arc Manche member regions and local authorities are eligible to apply for INTERREG IIIA funding. Nonetheless, there are other EU funding relevant streams, such as INTERREG IIIB (transnational co-operation in North-West Europe) and LIFE (an environment programme), that are available to all Arc Manche members.
- Other stakeholders in Brighton & Hove (for example Shoreham Maritime, Brighton Marina and the universities) could benefit from the City Council's participation in Arc Manche.

5. Proposed work programme

5.1 There will be political meetings twice a year (one in France and one in England). Officers will meet two or three times a year (as necessary) to take forward common actions under the themes outlined in 3.4. There will be no working group meetings. Much of the work will be undertaken through e-mail / use of the Arc Manche website.

5.2 A mapping exercise is under way to determine members' priorities for action (under the four themes outlined in 3.4) and to develop a two-year work programme. Officers in Environment, Tourism and Economic

Development will be consulted on the development of this work programme. Member authorities will be able to select which (if any) practical projects to pursue, in line with corporate objectives. It is envisaged that the common projects would be part-financed through EU funding programmes (such as INTERREG IIIB transnational co-operation in North-West Europe).

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 At present there is no membership fee payable for participation in the Arc Manche network.
- 6.2 However, the two lead partners, West Sussex County Council and the Region of Upper Normandy, have allocated resources to the re-launch of network including the creation of an Arc Manche website, and it is feasible that subscription charges will be introduced at some later date. Member organisations have requested that the network first proves its worth, in terms of generating meaningful co-operation projects and promoting the Channel as a significant and unique geographic entity, before the issue of a subscription fee is considered.
- 6.3 The main costs incurred relate to travel, accommodation and officer time.
- 6.4 Membership of the Arch Manche network will allow for possible to access EU funding to finance common projects. Key funding streams include:
- INTERREG IIIA (for Franco-British cross-border co-operation)
 - INTERREG IIIB (transnational co-operation in North-West Europe – one priority focuses specifically on strengthening the territorial integration of regions)

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The following have been consulted on this report:
- Cllr Sue John, Deputy Chair Partnership
 - Cllr Don Turner, chair Licensing Committee
 - Members of the Environment DMT, the Coastal Protection Officer, the Head of Tourism and the Economic Development Manager

8. Contact officer

Rachel Williams, European Manager, tel: 291098

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



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Financial implications

There are no financial implications from this report. At present there is no membership fee for participating in the Arc Manche network.

Finance Officer consulted: Allan Clarkson /Date 18/6/03

Legal implications

There are no legal implications from this report.

Lawyer consulted: Bob Bruce / Date 18/6/03 (also circulated to the corporate law team as they are tracking partnership involvement).

Corporate/Citywide implications

Brighton & Hove City Council involvement in Arc Manche could benefit other key stakeholders in the city e.g. Shoreham Maritime, Brighton Marina and the universities.

Risk assessment

None at present

Sustainability implications

Arc Manche could provide a mechanism to deliver and support projects aimed at improving the local coastal environment and promoting sustainable coastal tourism, amongst other themes.

EU funded projects are required to consider at the time of application how their activities can be sustained after the period of EU funding has ended.

Equalities implications

There are no Equalities implications.

Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications

Background papers [Part 1 reports only]

None

Contact Officer

Rachel Williams, European Manager. Tel: 291098

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