

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 11 SEPTEMBER 2000**

**REPORT ON: THE PORSGRUNN CHALLENGE**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**REPORT NO: 486-2000**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The report seeks to gain the Committee's approval for the adoption of the North Sea Commission's Porsgrunn Challenge by Dundee City Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources agree to the adoption of the Porsgrunn Challenge (see Appendix 1).

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None

**4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Porsgrunn Challenge complements the 15 Key Themes and intentions of Dundee 21.

**5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Porsgrunn Challenge encourages the involvement of citizens in decision making and encourages partnerships to implement policy.

**6. BACKGROUND**

6.1 The North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 to facilitate and enhance partnerships between regions which manage the challenges and opportunities presented by the North Sea. The North Sea Commission also promotes the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe, by encouraging joint development initiatives and political lobbying at European Union level. The Commission is split into 6 technical groups concentrating on issues of common concern, including the Environment Group.

6.2 The Porsgrunn Challenge is a document adopted by the North Sea Commission (NSC) Executive Committee following the 1998 Environment Group Conference in Porsgrunn, Norway in October 1998. It sets out a number of sustainable development principles which the Commission considers should be incorporated into the activities of the NSC members. The text of the Challenge is set out in Appendix 1.

6.3 The Executive Committee recognised that, similar to other international initiatives to promote sustainability at the regional and local level there was considerable difficulty in putting principles into practice. Consequently the Porsgrunn Challenge states that changes would not occur automatically and that positive action was required to change behaviour.

- 6.4 The Porsgrunn Challenge covers various different aspects of sustainable development including; corporate commitment to the principles of sustainable development; integration of policies; training; involvement of citizens; minimising consumption of resources; purchasing of sustainable products; health; auditing of sustainable activities and reporting results; co-operation with other organisations particularly at European scale.
- 6.5 Whilst signing up to the Porsgrunn Challenge may seem an onerous commitment to make, in essence, the Porsgrunn Challenge is very similar to Local Agenda 21. Adoption of the Porsgrunn Challenge by Dundee City Council will complement current work on Local Agenda 21 and confirm the Council's commitment to the North Sea Commission. However, the Council will be expected to make an annual statement on how the challenge is being implemented.

7 **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Director of Corporate Planning, the Director of Finance, the Director of Support Services and other relevant officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None

Chief Executive ..... Date .....

### The Porsgrunn Challenge

Recognising the Rio Earth Summit (1992) and in accord with the Valencia Charter (1995) and the Goteborg Resolution (1997) the North Sea Commission acknowledges the key role of Regional Authorities in the implementation of sustainable development and the Agenda 21 process. The North Sea Commission considers that its members should set an example with regard to their own activities. The North Sea Commission therefore requires each member to undertake the following steps:

- Make sustainable development a central and explicit objective
- Implement policies that integrate social, economic, and environmental objectives
- Implement management structures that encourage the integration of service delivery
- Undertake training so that all staff and politicians are involved in achieving sustainability objectives
- Maximise the support and involvement of citizens in the decision making and policy implementation processes
- Create partnerships to implement development policies
- Minimise the consumption of resources
- Encourage through its purchasing power the use of sustainable products and processes
- Address mental and physical health requirements
- Audit progress on making its own activities and its area more sustainable and publish the results in an annual report
- Undertake co-operation with organisations external to its area to encourage good practice and co-ordinated action at a European level

In implementing the Challenge the North Sea Commission acknowledges that:

- changes will not occur automatically
- positive action will be required to change behaviour

Thus it is the intention of the North Sea Commission to undertake a regular sustainability stocktake of its members to ensure the implementation of The Porsgrunn Challenge.