

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To:	Economic Development Committee	Subject:	Information and Communications Technology Network feasibility study: bid for European funding
From:	Director of Planning & Development		
Date:	24 October 1996	Ref:	TL/SC/091

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks to advise members of the action taken regarding the feasibility study on information and communications technology networks to be commissioned as a result of the Economic Development Committee's decision of 4 July 1996.

2 Background

- 2.1 The stage 2 feasibility study is based on the recommendations contained within the initial feasibility study prepared by EKOS and commissioned by the Motherwell Partnership.
- 2.2 The consultant's report was considered at a meeting of the Economic Development committee (4 July 1996) and the consultant's recommendations were approved viz.
- the development of an information and communications technology strategy;
 - the establishment of an information communications and technology network (ICTN);
 - more detailed investigation of the proposed information communications and technology network and the views of potential users;
 - more detailed assessment of the technical requirements for the network.
- 2.3 The committee agreed that a member/officer working group be established with the consultants to discuss the Council's requirements in stage 2 of the feasibility study.
- 2.4 The working group considered the original issues relating to the proposal and discussed the need to consider the proposal in an NLC-wide context.

- 2.5 In addition to the points raised and noted by the Economic Development committee, the working group also noted that the next study should also take account of changes in circumstances arising from local government reorganisation and the introduction of Programme for Partnership.
- 2.6 The working group was informed that european funding might be available for feasibility studies in the area of information and communications technology under the "Information Society" category. The deadline for the submission of bids was 23 September and, in the light of the tight timescale for action, the working group agreed to submit a bid for funding for the feasibility study for homologation by the Council.
- 2.7 The bid submitted highlighted to the Commission that the proposed feasibility study was only a small but essential part of the development of a wide strategy, covering ICTN in relation to:
- communities
 - the workforce, both employed and unemployed people
 - businesses using ICTN as a business support
 - the development of ICTN as a local industry
- 2.8 The bid concentrated on the development of ICTN for small communities in North Lanarkshire and on social groups excluded from the labour market; this would be compatible with the Council's decision to conduct the feasibility study in terms of option 6 of the initial feasibility report viz the development of an information and communications technology network.
- 2.9 It was anticipated that, if the bid for funding were successful, the feasibility study would lead to the development of individual development programmes, the funding for which would be sought from a variety of sources.
- 2.10 The bid required NLC to have a transnational partner and a transnational partner was identified Vichy Developpement in Vichy, France.
- 2.11 There was some discussion on the possible source of NLC's match funds for the bid. The department of Finance has advised that it may be possible to "capitalise" match funds from this year's capital programme. There would also be a possibility of identifying some revenue match through the council's input "in kind" in relation to the development and management of the project.
- 2.10 The total cost of the study has been estimated at £30,000 which the Council would require to meet initially, claiming back £15,000 from ERDF.

3. Action

Members are asked to homologate the action taken by the member officer group in submitting the bid for european funding in respect of the proposed feasibility study on information and communications technology networks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Smith', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath the name.

for further information contact Mr. G. Smith, Head of Economic Development and Property