

NORTH LANARKSHIRE
COUNCIL
REPORT

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	SUBJECT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: OUTLINE PROPOSALS UNDER CONSIDERATION
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	
Date: 8TH DECEMBER 1996 Ref: TL/REPORT-118	

1. **Purpose of report**

This report seeks to advise members of the current work on project development, including future bids for European funding and to seek approval, in principle, for the preparation of bids for the undernoted proposals, subject to later confirmation of funding being available. As a call for bids for ERDF and ESF is anticipated in December/early January, and RESIDER bids must be submitted by 15 January 1997, it is necessary to seek committee approval for outline proposals at this stage.

2. **Considerations**

- 2.1 The Economic Development Unit is currently drafting outline proposals on employment and training initiatives and business development programmes which may form the basis of bids for European funding.
- 2.2 As members will be aware, bids for European funding must be matched with Council resources; given the restrictions on the Council's budgets in the current financial climate, this will have implications on the number and range of projects which can be developed.
- 2.3 The undernoted proposals are currently being considered and/or prepared at this preliminary stage; it is not anticipated that all of them will be submitted for European funding in the first call for applications and this will be dependent on Council funding and contributions from partners in each project.

(i) **Employment Grants scheme**

This project would be a continuation of the current Employment Grants scheme, which offers financial assistance to local companies to recruit unemployed people into permanent jobs.

This scheme is currently funded through ESF.

(ii) **Management Technology and Training Grant**

This project would be a continuation of the existing scheme which provides grant aid to small and medium sized businesses to cover part of the costs of employee training required to maintain or stabilise company growth, where companies would not otherwise be able to undertake it.

This scheme is currently funded through ESF

(iii) **Youth employment and training initiative (YETI)**

This project would be a continuation of the existing scheme which provides grant aid to encourage local companies to recruit young unemployed people.

This scheme is currently funded through ESF

(iv) **Marketing Assistance Programme**

This project would be a continuation of a previous scheme, previously funded through Motherwell District Council, and its expansion across North Lanarkshire and would provide training to managers to assist them in the development and implementation of marketing strategies.

Both ESF and ERDF are being considered as possible sources of funding.

(v) **Tourism development**

It is proposed to develop a number of tourism-related training programmes for businesses in the tourism sector.

ERDF is being considered as a possible source of funding

(vi) **Intermediate Workforce programme**

This proposal would fund a number of intermediate workforce projects in sectors considered to have the greatest potential to assist long term unemployed people into full time permanent employment.

The sectors under consideration for projects are:

environmental works, linking training for unemployed people with environmental improvements;

“white goods” refurbishment; and

building refurbishment works.

It is proposed to pursue this initiative in partnership with a range of other agencies.

It may be possible to attract Resider and Urban Programme funds to a funding package for these projects as well as ESF and ERDF.

(vii) **Women’s economic development initiatives**

This project would provide a range of personal development and business development training programmes for women in North Lanarkshire

Both ERDF and ESF are being considered as possible sources of funding.

(viii) **Information and Communications Technology Network**

As members will know, a bid for European funding (under the “Information Society” programme) has been submitted for a feasibility study to investigate the development of information and communications technology networks in North Lanarkshire. A decision on that bid is not expected until January 1997.

It is proposed that, in conjunction with this study, a number of pilot schemes be developed in the key development areas identified in the bid for funding for the feasibility study.

Currently these proposals include the development of network links between training and business services providers and outreach facilities and the use of information technology by local community organisations in local economic development.

It is anticipated that a range of funding sources could be approached for these schemes, including ESF, ERDF, Urban Programme, RESIDER, possibly RECHAR.

(ix) **Childcare in support of employment and training**

It is proposed to provide pilot schemes in the provision of child care related to employment and training. The Lady Anne training centre (currently under development) includes a purpose built child care facility which would provide premises for a child care project.

ESF is being considered as the key source of funding for this proposal. It may be possible to attract Urban Programme funding to elements of the project.

(x) **Inward Investment and property issues**

It is proposed to provide a quality information pack to promote North Lanarkshire as an inward investment location.

This project aims to build on the success already achieved throughout the area on the EZ sites and in Cumbernauld. The pack would also serve as a useful marketing and promotional tool at international trade events.

The benefits to North Lanarkshire from the production of such a pack would be:

- The attraction of further inward investment companies.
- Continued diversification of the local economy.
- Increased employment opportunities.
- New jobs without displacement from elsewhere in Scotland.
- Encouragement of local sourcing to the benefit of the indigenous company base.

ERDF is being considered as a source of funding for this proposal.

(xi) **Pathways to employment**

Under this heading, it is proposed to develop a number of programmes to assist the undernoted groups North Lanarkshire residents into employment, self employment or training linked to employment:

- a long term unemployed people
- b young people facing barriers to employment and training
- c childcarers wishing to enter/re-enter the labour market/training
- d people whose existing skills have been made redundant due to economic changes

Currently under investigation are:

a "mentoring" programme to support long term unemployed people and others who have gained employment and require some "post employment" support on their re-entry to the labour market;

the development of an information dissemination system which would target directly unemployed people and people seeking work;

reskilling programmes for workers whose skills have been made redundant due to closures in the steel industry

a range of support programmes which would assist people facing barriers to their return to work e.g. young people with little or no experience in the workforce, people with child care responsibilities, people with disabilities.

ESF and RESIDER are being considered as sources of funding for these schemes.

(xii) **Community based economic development**

It is proposed to provide economic development support to local community organisations involved in/interested in the development and management of local economic development projects.

Proposal currently under consideration are:

a project offering advice, training and support in the development of funding packages and in the management of economic development projects, in particular relation to the funding available from European funds under “economic and social cohesion”; and

the involvement of local community organisations in the management of intermediate workforce programmes

Funding under the “economic and social cohesion” category of European funds may be available for such programmes. RESIDER is another possible source, with the Urban Programme being another possible element in a funding package.

(xiii) **Business Healthcheck**

It is proposed to provide a comprehensive service to companies in assessing their business development, training, marketing and other needs and assisting them in the development and implementation of assistance programmes.

This would link in with our business development programmes and assist the Council to assess the needs of the business community.

ERDF is being investigated as a source of funding for this proposal.

(xiv) **Retail development programme**

It is proposed to provide training and business development services for retailers. As members may know, the retail industry is often excluded from financial support schemes but a developing retail sector is important for the regeneration of town centres, business development in the tourism sector and generally for the economic health of North Lanarkshire.

It is proposed to consider funding bids to the Lotteries Charity Board through the Town Centre management projects and possibly the Urban Programme.

(xv) **Town centre management**

It is proposed to seek funding that will assist in the management of North Lanarkshire’s town centres, implementing the town centre regeneration strategy and supporting local business development.

ERDF is being considered as a source of funding for this proposal.

(xvi) **CONVER**

It is proposed to investigate the possibility of obtaining European funding to conduct, with other local authorities, an assessment of the impact of the diversification of the defence industries under the European scheme "CONVER".

(xvii) **Feasibility Study for Lanarkshire Football and Sports Academy**

This is a feasibility study to assess the potential for a multi faceted tourist attraction, conference centre, banqueting facilities and training centre. The attraction would focus on the strong contribution Lanarkshire people have made to sport in general and football in particular. The academy would combine sports facilities with business and other personal development training. It is anticipated that the commercial elements of the academy would attract businesses from all over Britain and from abroad, particularly North America.

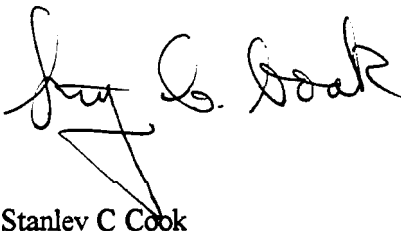
Currently investigating possible external funding sources.

(xviii) **Design Initiative for Small Businesses**

This project would provide consultancy and financial assistance to companies to encourage improvements in packaging and design for point of sale products. It would incorporate the appointment of a Marketing Officer who would raise awareness through a marketing campaign of the benefits of good design and packaging (a smaller version of the GDA Design Initiative) and assist companies through one-to-one consultancy on methods of improving the packaging and design.

3. **Recommendation**

Members are asked to approve, in principle, the projects outlined to be submitted to Strathclyde European Partnership for consideration for European funding subject to match funds for bids being available.



Stanley C Cook
Director of Planning and Development