

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: BUSINESS INFORMATION DATABASE (BID)
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 1 August 1997	Ref: JT/REP.272	

1 Purpose of report

1.1 This reports seeks to advise the Economic Development Committee of the launch and implementation of the Business Information Database (BID) business support service within North Lanarkshire.

2 Background

2.1 The Business Information Database (BID) is a jointly funded local authority initiative which is operated by all 12 Councils within the former Strathclyde area. BID provides up to date information on grants, loans and support services available in the Western Scotland Programme Area, including schemes which cover the whole of Scotland, UK and Europe. There are over 400 schemes on the database with the capacity to add new additions when necessary.

2.2 The project meets the aims of the Strathclyde European Partnership Western Scotland Operational Programme by enhancing the competitiveness of the company base, assisting in the development of a supportive environment designed to sustain economic growth. BID assists in meeting the objectives of the SEN Business Birth Rate Strategy in assisting potential entrepreneurs and growth companies to gain access to appropriate funding and supports the business development network.

2.3 The database is, in addition to local authority funding, part financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and utilised by 12 local authorities and Strathclyde European Partnership. North Lanarkshire Council contributes £2,800 to the initiative.

3 Operation and administration

3.1 The Economic Development Unit accesses the system as a remote site via a modem link with West Dunbartonshire Council, who are responsible for the centralised updating and maintenance of the data, thereby ensuring that all local authorities have access to accurate and constantly updated business support information.

3.2 All support services provided by the Economic Development Unit are contained within the system, as are all business support services available to North Lanarkshire businesses from other organisations/agencies.

4 Benefits

4.1 The benefits identified through the operation of the system include:-

- (i) assisting in company competitiveness;

- (ii) assisting the officers of the Economic Development Unit to provide professional business development support;
- (iii) utilisation as a tool for best practice scheme appraisal; and
- (iv) assisting in the provision of information to businesses considering inward investment and/or relocation within North Lanarkshire.

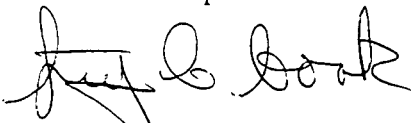
5 Future provision

5.1 It is the intention of the Director of Planning and Development to make the system available to the Chief Executive's Department (Economic Strategy/European Affairs) and, thereafter, to other organisations engaged in economic development activities in North Lanarkshire in order to progress a more effective economic development partnership.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) note the contents of this report; and
- (ii) instruct the Director of Planning and Development to undertake the appropriate marketing and promotion of the Business Information Database system within North Lanarkshire.



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Director of Planning and Development

For further information please contact John J Turley, Senior Economic Development Officer (Tel: 01236 616271).