

To: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE	Subject: PROPOSED REVIEW OF SERVICES ASSISTING UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE INTO WORK
From: CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
Date: 21 August 1998 Ref:	

Purpose of the Report: to outline a proposed study into current activity in Lanarkshire aimed at supporting unemployed people into work, and to seek approval to the Council contributing towards its cost.

Introduction

As part of the preparatory work by the New Deal Strategic Partnership in Lanarkshire in the run up to the implementation of New Deal for 18 - 24 year olds, a 'stocktake' was undertaken the purpose of which was to audit the range of organisations and services in place which assisted unemployed people into work. Developing an understanding of the existing infrastructure has helped with the development of New Deal, and has also raised the question of the implications for these services as New Deal continues to be 'rolled out' to other elements of the unemployed client group.

The 'stocktake' report identified the following issues

- there is a huge variety of existing services attracting significant funding from North and South Lanarkshire Councils and Lanarkshire Development Agency, supplemented by European resources
- the availability of these services varies across the area, and are complex in terms of access, eligibility and links to each other
- target groups are not clearly defined, and there are often weaknesses in the way clients are attracted
- often the function and aim of the service are confused, making it difficult to assess performance
- there are opportunities for improving the impact of our joint activity, both large programmes such as Training for Work as well as smaller locally based initiatives
- there are serious inconsistencies in the quality standards applied.

In view of the conclusions reached, it was felt important that the key strategic agencies, specifically the two local authorities and LDA, should take the next steps to analyse service provision in greater detail in order that these issues can be addressed.

Review of Services - Proposed Study

The North Lanarkshire Partnership which the Council, Lanarkshire Development Agency, Scottish Homes, Lanarkshire Health Board and Employment Service has considered these issues, and proposed a study using external consultants, the aim of which will be to assist in the development of the range of services available to unemployed people in Lanarkshire by providing detailed recommendations for both funding agencies and service deliverers enabling a more effective better focused provision to be established. The proposal has also been considered and agreed by South Lanarkshire Council.

Whilst all of the partnership agencies are supportive, recognising its importance especially in the light of the further development of New Deal, as funding organisations of the majority of activity, the study will be taken forward by North and South Lanarkshire Councils, LDA and Employment Service.

The task to be undertaken will be large scale given the number of organisations and services on the ground. It is proposed to phase the work, firstly prioritising those activities where the greatest degree of mismatch is apparent, and then as a second phase, reviewing these services in detail and providing firm recommendations which reflect the current and future needs of unemployed people in the area.

Given the scale and nature of the project, it has been estimated that the study cost will be in the region of £25,000. A brief for this consultancy has been prepared and is appended. Contributions towards the cost of the study are proposed as follows

Lanarkshire Development Agency	£15,000
South Lanarkshire Council	£ 5,000
North Lanarkshire Council	£ 5,000

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee

- a) note the contents of the report and the attached appendix
- b) agree that the Council contribute £5,000 towards the cost of the study from within the Chief Executive's revenue budget 98/99
- c) seek a further report on the study results in due course

Chief Executive
August 1998

For further information contact Simon Carey in the Policy Unit on ext. 2362