

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: INTERNATIONAL TRADE Update on activity of the Lanarkshire Export Partnership (LEP)
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 20 April 2000	Ref: IL/REP/675	

## 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 i) To update the Committee on the current activity of the Lanarkshire Export Partnership (LEP).  
ii) To request the Committee's approval of continued contributions towards the funding of the Export Counsellor.

## 2 Sustainability

- 2.1 This programme meets the sustainable development policy adopted by the Council through Local Agenda 21 by addressing elements of Section 3 "Economy and work" and Section 11 "Partnership and Funding". In particular the scheme addresses the following areas:

- increasing employment opportunities for local people
- helping local and community businesses to set up and grow
- working in partnership with other departments and agencies.

## 3 Background

- 3.1 Committee is aware that North Lanarkshire Council is an active participant of the Lanarkshire Export Partnership (LEP), comprising: North and South Lanarkshire Councils and Lanarkshire Development Agency. The LEP collaborates with the West of Scotland Trade Partnership (WSTP), (of which NLC is also a member, along with the eleven other local authorities in the West of Scotland) and a range of other providers of export services such as Scottish Trade International (STI) and Chambers of Commerce.
- 3.2 The LEP co-ordinates a range of support services to companies involved in/considering the export market including the organisation and management of trade missions and exhibitions, language translation services, business development support, market information and research, to promote the internationalisation of Lanarkshire companies.

- 3.3 As Committee is aware, an Export Counsellor is funded by the LEP, based at LDA, working closely with the International Trade Officers of North and South Lanarkshire Councils to support Lanarkshire exporters/potential exporters. The Export Counsellor's role is to help the Partnership develop an export culture in Lanarkshire, working closely with individual companies in developing and improving their exporting knowledge and skill. This involves supporting active exporters, where appropriate, encouraging and developing non-exporting companies to start exporting, and to encourage passive exporters to expand their export activities. The post is jointly funded by all three members of the Partnership, with both councils each contributing £5k and LDA contributing £11k per annum towards the salary costs of the Counsellor. This contribution was agreed by Committee in January 1998 for a three year period. It is crucial that funding for this post from the three partners remains in place if the LEP is to continue to provide the quality support services to Lanarkshire companies necessary to the internationalisation of local companies.

#### 4 LEP Performance

- 4.1. The LEP continues to work to the Lanarkshire Export Strategy document and Marketing Plan (as circulated to Committee in August 1999). This strategy document was developed in line with the Scottish Export Forum's Scottish Trade International's strategy document, "The International Challenge: - An Export Development Strategy for Scotland". The key aims of both documents highlighted are to:

- \* Develop company and individual capability to take advantage of international opportunities;
- \* Increase Lanarkshire's and Scotland's penetration of priority country markets;
- \* Achieve greater diversification of Lanarkshire's and Scotland's exporting industries and companies;
- \* Establish greater co-ordination between export support organisations;
- \* Advise companies on the global market situation.

The overall objective is to enable an expansion of Lanarkshire and Scottish exports and thereby generate jobs and prosperity for the people. The LEP continues to be one of the most active export partnerships in Scotland, adopting a strategic approach in its range of support services made available to local companies. The objective of the LEP strategy is to deliver against the targets set by STI and to provide a foundation for sustained growth in international trade. The strategy is regularly updated to reflect the emerging needs of companies in the area.

The success of the LEP is measured by the capacity of Lanarkshire companies to generate wealth and create employment, and to do so in an international business environment. The Partnership is currently achieving its targets as submitted to STI, in respect of increased numbers of exporters in Lanarkshire, with 36 *new* exporters now known to be trading in international markets in 99/00.

- 4.2 The LEP continues to contribute to the West of Scotland Trade Partnership's International Trade Event Programme by leading a number of exhibitions and trade missions in conjunction with WSTP. The LEP's programme includes a number of events for the year 2000/01, covering various sectors of industry, including: **healthcare; food & drink; electronics/engineering; printing/packaging; multi sector trade missions**

#### 4.3 LEP Profile

In recent months work has been carried out to raise the profile of the LEP and increase awareness of its activities amongst local companies, to improve the internationalisation of Lanarkshire companies, including:

- A leaflet has been produced and circulated to local companies, outlining LEP services and programmes;
- A newsletter is currently in production, which will highlight events, current export information and companies achieving success in international markets;
- The LEP now has an up-to-date database of exporters in Lanarkshire which is regularly updated and now includes more information relating to potential and existing exporters, as well as market information.
- A website for the LEP is still under consideration, however, the LEP subscribes to the Trade Scotland website, which is an invaluable tool in the promotion of trade development amongst Scottish companies. All Scottish companies can access this website for exporting information, including current information on the activities and services of their local export partnerships.
- The LEP now holds meetings on a regular basis with representatives from the 7 local enterprise trusts in Lanarkshire. This means that a wider range of potential new exporters can be kept informed of LEP activities.

#### 4.3. Lanarkshire Export Survey

A survey of known and potential exporters in Lanarkshire was recently carried out which will provide accurate information on export activity in the county, and will allow the LEP to report back to STI with export trend information and updates. A high return of replies has been received and results have now been analysed. This information will be used as a baseline of exporting activity and the needs of local companies in relation to exporting, allowing programmes to be designed to meet these needs.

### 5 Future Action

- 5.1 Activity of the LEP will continue to be strengthened and to complement the activity of the West of Scotland Trade Partnership (WSTP) and Scottish Trade International (STI).
- 5.2 The profile of the LEP will continue to be raised so that local companies are kept aware of its services to enable them to enter international markets.
- 5.3 It is proposed to look at the possibility of submitting an ERDF application on behalf of the LEP early in the new financial year, to allow the LEP to continue to offer its range of support services to companies wishing to enter or strengthen their position in international markets. This is particularly urgent as the WSTP ERDF funding will come to an end in March 2001.
- 5.4 The Export Counsellor will continue to work with the International Trade Officers of North and South Lanarkshire Councils to support companies entering/considering entering international markets.

**6 Recommendation**

- 6.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to approve North Lanarkshire Council's contribution of £5000 from within the existing International Trade budget to the funding of the post of Export Counsellor.



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**Director of Planning and Environment**

Date of Report:

27 March 2000

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