

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT SERVICE REVIEW – PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 8 June 2000	Ref : CMcA/EH/REP696	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Economic Development Unit's progress with the implementation of a Service Improvement Plan, which was concluded as a result of a review of services within the Economic Development Unit.

2 Background

- 2.1 North Lanarkshire Council agreed to a corporate programme of Service Reviews as part of the government's Best Value Initiative. The Economic Development Unit was subject to a review in year 2 of this cycle. The Economic Development Unit focused on 3 specific areas and these are detailed below.
- 2.2 Loan services, which are made up of two programmes: Small Business Support Scheme and The West of Scotland Loan Fund. These programmes provide loans to business of between £1,000 - £30,000.
- 2.3. Employment Grant Scheme (EGS) provides wage subsidies ranging from 40 – 60% to business in all sectors (SMEs) employing unemployed people in new and permanent posts.
- 2.4 Staff absence was selected as a third management issue for review.

3. Service Review Findings

- 3.1 The findings of the Service Review were concluded in a Service Improvement Plan that identified 18 action points. Each of these action points is timetabled for completion by the end of 2000.
- 3.2 The Service Review and its Improvement Plan were submitted and accepted by the Council in January 2000.

4. Progress Report

- 4.1 Progress in implementing these action points is summarised in the 10 actions in the attached report. (Please note that many of the original 18 improvement actions are interlinked and therefore have been summarised further into these 10 actions)
- 4.2 To date the Economic Development Unit has completed 3 of the 10 Improvement Actions. The remaining seven action points are all being addressed in the Unit's current workload.

- 4.3 There is a number of issues external to this service review, which have implications for economic development services service and have effected ability to progress some of the improvement details as quickly as we would have anticipated.
- 4.4 These issues include the recent review by the Scottish Executive into Economic Development services. This report which was published on 10 May 2000 is expected to substantially impact on the services provided by the Economic Development Unit and, therefore, its findings are key to any strategic review of Economic Development services.
- 4.5 In addition, changes to European Funding resulted in a number of services drawing to a close and new services being developed in their place. These new services have taken on board the improvement recommendations made in the Service Review.
- 4.6 The Planning & Environment Department is also undergoing a structured review that will impact on the Economic Development service and will address some of the improvement actions.
- 4.7 In tackling the issues of managing absence, all supervising staff are trained on the corporate procedures for managing absence. In addition, new systems and procedures including "Back to Work Interviews" have been put in place.
- 4.8 The Economic Development Unit is currently developing a new Performance Monitoring framework. This framework will not only measure the operational performance of services but also levels of customer and staff satisfaction and service improvements. This will assist greatly in monitoring the impact of service reviews and reporting measurable improvements in service performance to Committee. Information on this new framework will be reported to Committee in due course.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Further reports on progress with the Service Improvement Plan will be reported to Committee on a quarterly basis.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.



David M Porch
Director of Planning and Environment

8 June 2000

19 May 2000

For further information contact Caitriona McAuley, Senior Economic Development Officer. Tel (01236) 616279

Service Review Economic Development (Yr 2) Department Planning and Environment

ACTIONS	Completed		If No status at 19 April 2000	Comments/Target for Completion
	Yes	No		
Strategic review of business development activity.		No	Ongoing.	A new strategic approach is being developed along with a range of new programmes. However the review can not be completed until the findings of the Scottish Executive's Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Committee become clear. Should be complete June / July 2000.
Revision of Employment Grants Scheme client group to avoid overlap with New Deal on employee side and reduce deadweight by focusing on SMEs.	Yes			Original EGS scheme now withdrawn along with the other business development programmes. New programme being developed which will focus on distinct client group.
Increase multiple economic development applications to provide a more holistic service to businesses and people.		No	Ongoing.	This issue is being considered as the new schemes are developed. New business development initiatives launched in May 2000.
Training for staff and intermediaries as appropriate on : loan assessment procedures; customer service; managing staff absence; communications etc.		No	On hold until new schemes are introduced.	Will begin in May 2000 when schemes are up and running.
Review manual aspects of administering EGS scheme once computer system has been fully implemented.		No	On hold until new schemes are introduced.	Still December 2000.
Develop a Performance Monitoring Framework for all economic development activity which will produce monthly and quarterly measures of activity and make greater use of post-scheme evaluation process.		No	Ongoing	Performance Monitoring Framework is being developed and is nearing completion. Will be agreed by EDU management team and implemented in May 2000.
Develop marketing strategy for business development services.		No	On hold until new schemes are introduced.	June 2000. Will be developed when new services are established in May.

Improved workload management		No	Ongoing	Regular work load meetings held. Work plans being developed, along with individual responsibilities and time allocations. Process should be complete by June 2000..
Implementation and Raising Awareness of Corporate Policy on Managing Absence	Yes			Formal procedures established & communicated to staff.
Monthly monitoring reports for absence data.	Yes			Monthly reports now being provided for EDU management team.