

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14

REPORT

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: PILOT PRE-VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 23 November 2000	Ref: SF/DN/REP751	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Economic Development Committee on work undertaken to develop and pilot a Pre-Vocational Training Programme in the Wishaw area of North Lanarkshire.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Earlier this year Economic Development Unit officers were developing on proposals to submit an application for funding, through the European Social Fund Objective 3 funding source, to run a series of Pre-Vocational Training Programmes in S.I.P. and Regeneration areas of North Lanarkshire.
- 2.2 For various reasons it was decided to delay this Objective 3 application and develop a pilot programme as an alternative, which would provide the Unit with valuable intelligence as to the likely impact of a larger programme.

3 Description of Programme

- 3.1 The programme is aimed at unemployed residents of Wishaw Wards which have higher than average levels of unemployment. Whilst not exhaustive these wards will include Pather and Gowkthrapple, Craigneuk, Coltness, Newmains, Stewarton and Netherton/Muirhouse.
- 3.2 Applications will be invited from those unemployed for a period between 0 and six months, those recently made redundant and those adults who are seeking to return to the labour market after a period of caring for members of their family.
- 3.3 The training period will be 10 weeks long at 10 hours per week, spread over 3 days to accommodate family needs, for example the need to drop off and collect children from school. Trainees will receive benefits such as free childcare, reimbursement of travel and other course expenses and a financial bonus on completion of training which will hopefully act as an incentive to continued attendance. The programme is scheduled to commence in Late January of 2001 and will be marketed and promoted between November 2000 and that date
- 3.4 It is envisaged that the training base will be the Craigneuk Development and Support Unit Training Suite in Shieldmuir Street, Wishaw for all aspects of the 10 week programme.

- 3.5 The structure, training content and aim of the programme is geared toward improving individuals core and basic skills, including Information Technology skills, and to ultimately expand their options and choices in further vocational training options and, in doing so, enhance employment prospects.
- 3.6 Recent experiences of EDU staff, particularly in working to provide redundancy support for groups of workers made redundant from the Textile Industry, has led to an awareness of the lack of core and basic skills amongst a significant proportion of those unemployed, even those who are short term unemployed.
- 3.7 These are basic skills which most employers are demanding that potential employees possess. They are also transferable skills and applicable over a range of occupations and industries. Unfortunately, and particularly so for older, single industry workers such as those recently unemployed from the Textile Industry they do not appear to possess these type of skills particularly Information Technology skills.
- 3.8 Although the Economic Development Unit will have ultimate responsibility for the pilot programme its management and day to day control will be sub-contracted to Craigneuk Development and Support Unit as an experienced and appropriate management agent. An appropriate Service Delivery Agreement will be formulated to accommodate this arrangement.
- 3.9 A number of partners will be involved in the organisation and delivery of the programme. The first four week general pre-vocational training and the final two weeks intensive and specific pre-vocational training will be delivered by a trainer who is familiar with current and past Economic Development Unit activity. Craigneuk Development and Support Unit will deliver the Information Technology Training. Craigneuk life long learning Association will deliver all childcare requirements and various other voluntary sector organisations will be approached about involvement in the marketing and promotion of the programme. Our colleagues in Community Services have been consulted and external partners, such as the Employment Service and the Careers Agency will be approached to become involved in recruitment.

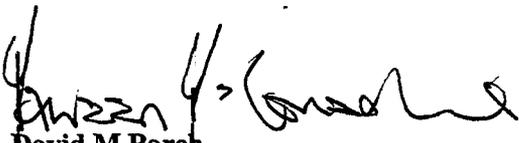
4 Conclusion

- 4.1 It is the opinion of the Economic Development Unit that this pilot programme will provide a value for money opportunity to evaluate the need/demand for this type of training prior to any larger programme being developed.
- 4.2 There is a school of thought that states that short-term unemployed need no support as they enter employment fairly soon after being made unemployed.
- 4.3 Whilst accepting that this may be the case for some people there is still a large proportion who will not, and indeed do not, gain employment and who therefore go on to become long-term unemployed.
- 4.4 In the opinion of the Economic Development Unit early intervention can assist in arresting this process and indeed enhance the scope, range and choice of options in both further training and occupation prospects.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Economic Development Committee:

- i) Notes the content of this report and
- ii) Awaits a report on the outcome of the pilot programme evaluation.

for 
David M Porch
Director of Planning and Environment

Date of Report: 26 October 2000

For further information contact Stephen Fox, Economic Development Officer, telephone 01236 616270.