NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To:	Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub-Committee	Subject:	VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS DATABASE
From:	Chief Executive		
Date: 13 January 1998	Ref: CE012/004/039		

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The lack of comprehensive, up to date information about community and voluntary organisations operating in North Lanarkshire has hindered communication and consultation involving voluntary organisations, the Council and other bodies. The Council in partnership with 9 voluntary organisations have been involved for some time in developing a North Lanarkshire wide database of voluntary organisations. To date information on around 500 local organisations is stored on the database.

1.2 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the progress which has been made in developing the database and to recommend the approval of expenditure to improve the technical capacity of the database and to promote it more intensively throughout North Lanarkshire.

2.0 PROGRESS

2.1 The advantages of joint development and ownership of the database involving both the Council and key voluntary organisations includes the efficiency of sharing resources and the greater capacity to maintain and develop the accuracy and comprehensives of the data.

2.2 Following an initial phase when the purpose and scope of the database were agreed and systems were developed for data collection, inputting, storing, sharing and updating data a data collection questionnaire was piloted. A finalised questionnaire was sent to around 900 organisations resulting in about 500 returns. The Council previously provided financial support of £1,000 to enable the partners to engage a graduate through the MEDCO graduate placement scheme to support this phase of development.

2.3 The database went live in September 1997 and to date has been used extensively for a range of purposes including targeted mailings, contacting consultation participants, networking, identification of volunteering opportunities and responding to enquiries and requests for information from local organisations and individuals.
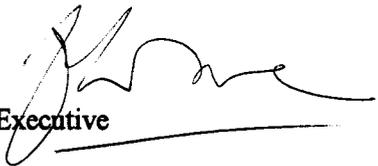
2.4 In addition to contributing to the management and development of the database some of the voluntary sector partners involved provide significant input to the ongoing administration and maintenance of the database including inputting and updating data, controlling the distribution of disks and promoting the initiative. At the present time the data inputting and the technical maintenance of the database is undertaken by Monklands Association for Voluntary Services (MAVS).

3.0 DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The partners have identified the need for additional resources to improve the utility of the database by making it quicker and easier to use and increase the kind of information which can be produced from the data currently held.

3.2 There is also a need to publicise and promote the database more widely both to encourage more local community and voluntary organisations to enter the database and to advertise it as a resource which can be used by voluntary organisations, individuals and agencies as well as within the Council. It is proposed to produce a leaflet for this purpose.

3.3 Based on quotations received by Monklands Association for Voluntary Services (MAVS) on behalf of the partners the programming work required has been costed at £1,150 and the production and distribution of a leaflet at around £400. A grant of £1,550 is therefore sought by MAVS on behalf of the voluntary sector partners to undertake this work.

3.4 There are sufficient resources within the Chief Executive's Payments to Agencies and Other Bodies Budget for 1997/98 to fund this work.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Sub Committee:

a) approve a grant of £1,550 to Monklands Association for Voluntary Services from the 1997/98 Payments to Agencies and Other Bodies Budget to fund programming work and the production of a leaflet to develop the voluntary organisations database; and

b) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Chief Executive