

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 15 JANUARY 2004	Ref: JD/GMcI/AP	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To seek approval to convene a Lanarkshire Conference on Supported Employment in the Spring 2004.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Supported Employment initiative launched by Social Work has been operational for four years. During this time considerable progress has been made in securing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Currently, 70 individuals have been assisted and supported in employment. Of the 70 jobs accessed 25 (35%) are employed in the public sector. On average people work 27 hours per week and in financial terms are £68.50 better off, through earnings opposed to income from benefits.
- 2.2 The Supported Employment operation in North Lanarkshire has developed into one of national leadership and is widely acknowledged for the progress which has been achieved. The service has been awarded a Charter Mark for Excellence in the provision of public services. Last year it was successful in obtaining the COSLA Quality Award for Excellence in Customer Focus.

3 PROPOSAL / CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 A major feature of the Supported Employment operation has been partnership working. In order to sustain and build on the successes achieved to date, it is important to consolidate the partnership approach.
- 3.2 The proposal to hold a Conference provides the opportunity to further enhance partnership working. However, the Conference will also provide a platform to engage with other potential partners, particularly those employers who have not been involved in providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- 3.3 The Conference is also intended to involve service users, carers, supported employment staff and other key personnel on how best Supported Employment can be improved and extended in order to deliver on the key area of social inclusion.

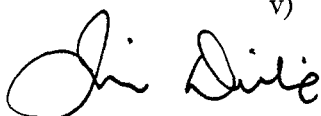
- 3.4 Among those who would be invited to participate will be policy makers and policy planners from all areas of the public sector. It is anticipated, senior Elected Members will be keen to be involved in all aspects of the Conference to underline the strategic importance of Supported Employment in North Lanarkshire.
- 3.5 At this stage plans for the Conference agenda are being developed. It is likely there will be a number of keynote speakers and a number of workshops which will be designed to meet the requirements of the audience. It is hoped that a target figure of 150 attendees can be realised.

4 FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Precise costs for the Conference have still to be determined, however, it is estimated, dependent on the venue, costs will not exceed £7,000. It is envisaged that financial support towards the overall expenditure will be obtained from partnership organisations such as Workstep, Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire, Department of Works and Pensions and possibly the NHS Lanarkshire Board. Enquiries relating to financial contributions from external partners will be pursued and formalised following Committee approval for this report.
- 4.2 Social Work Committee is asked to give consideration to approving expenditure of a maximum of £3,000 towards the organisation of the Conference. This sum can be met from existing Social Work resources.
- 4.3 In order to offset the Conference costs a modest fee will be applied to delegates attending. There will be no costs in respect of service users and carers.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:-
- i) Approve the proposal to convene a Supported Employment Conference in North Lanarkshire.
 - ii) Agree to allocate £3,000 towards the cost of the Conference.
 - iii) Request the Director of Social Work to seek financial contributions from partner organisations to offset the Conference costs.
 - iv) Request the Director of Social Work to provide a report to Committee following the Conference.
 - v) Otherwise note the report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
5 November 2003

*For further information on this report please contact George McInally, Manager Social Work Strategy
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