

REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 12TH FEBRUARY, 2001

REPORT ON: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 57-2001

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval for the Council to act as a partner organisation with 5 other Local Authorities, (North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Stirling, West Lothian and City of Edinburgh), in a COSLA-led European Project which aims to assist, develop and align Local Employment Action Plans that are in line with the European Employment Strategy and the UK National Employment Action Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee agree to the Council acting as a partner organisation and, upon completion of the project, commits itself to implementing the Local Action Plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The total project costs are approximately £100,000, 70% of the project costs will be covered by a grant from the European Commission, each member Council will be required to contribute a sum not in excess of £5000. This sum will be contained within the Economic Development Departments Revenue Budget 2000-01.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Sustainability is a key horizontal theme in European Employment Policy. The development and implementation of the Local Action Plan will meet Local Agenda 21 objectives in a number of ways.

4.2. Local needs are met locally, The development of the Local Action Plan will promote the ability of local people to meet the demands of the local labour market.

4.3. The opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy. The Local Action Plan will aim to support and encourage the workforce to develop skills and engage in higher skilled and value added work. Access to the skills, knowledge and information to enable everyone to play a full role in society.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Equal opportunities is a strong theme in the European Employment Strategy. Many of the actions and initiatives that will be developed through the Local Action Plan will aim to improve access to economic opportunities for all sectors of the community.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1. Article 127 of the European Community Treaty, amended at the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), led to the establishment of the European Employment Strategy.

6.2. The European Employment Strategy is developed around four pillars:-

- Employability;
- Adaptability;
- Enterprise;
- Equal Opportunities

- 6.3. The National Action Plan, adopted in June 1999 develops the European Employment Strategy in the UK context.
- 6.4. The UK Priorities are set out as follows:-
- To tackle under-achievement in schools and colleges;
 - To encourage lifelong learning;
 - Initiatives like the New Deal to bring the long-term unemployed back to work;
 - Changes to the tax and benefit system.
- 6.5. The National Plan also stresses that there will be a diversity of approaches across the UK.
- 6.6. The Dundee Partnership Training & Employment Group is already involved in the process of developing a Local Training & Employment Strategy, involvement in the project will contribute to this process.
- 6.7. COSLA approached the Council in late May with an invitation to be involved in a European Commission project "Local Action For Employment" which recognises, whilst strategies can be developed at the European and National level, actions of organisations at Local Authority level are an essential element in the successful translation of policy into results.
- 6.8. The Council was represented by the Economic Development Department at a subsequent meeting in COSLA where, subject to Committee approval, Dundee City Council's involvement as a partner in the project was agreed.

7. **REPORT**

7.1. The Proposal

7.2. The project will result in a continuation of the current review of the Training & Employment Strategy and the creation of Plan that is, as far as possible, in line with the European Employment Strategy.

7.3. The main objectives of the project are to:

- Highlight the importance and enhance understanding of the European Employment Strategy at the local level.
- Develop and refine Local Action Plans across a diverse range of authorities.
- The European Employment Strategy also impacts on member Councils as employers and education providers. The project aims to develop these connections within an integrated LAP.
- Develop a transferable best practice model for widening the active involvement of citizens and local partners from the public, private and third sectors in preparation and implementation of the Local Action Plan.
- Linking the European Employment Strategy to the Community Planning Process, European funds and the sustainable development process.
- Evaluation of the process in the partner Councils.
- Ensure that local labour markets needs are better identified and dealt with by local action.

7.4. Project activities

7.5. Initial presentation to COSLA groups (Conveners and Heads of Economic Development) and national partners to publicise the project and ensure links to national and European policies.

7.6. Initial presentations to members, officers and local partners in each member Council area.

- 7.7. The project will enable the local partnership to access expertise and support. This will enable the Partnership to augment their existing policy development.
- 7.8. The menu of assistance might include:
- Preparatory work, analysis, labour market needs;
 - Audit of existing activity;
 - Draft of Local Action Plan and consultation stage;
 - Local workshops to launch the Local Action Plan;
 - Live implementation and monitoring;
 - Plan review and refinement.
- 7.9. The six member Councils are at different stages of development and will dip into the process at different starting points.
- 7.10. The project will run from December 2000 to August 2001.

7.11. Project Outputs

- 7.12. Involvement in the project will allow the Dundee Partnership to:
- use the project team as an additional resource to develop the Local Action Plan
 - access to additional expertise
 - to compare and benchmark the effectiveness of the Local Action Plan against other Local Action Plans in Scotland and, long-term, potentially, against similar projects in other member states.
 - Share and learn best practice from other project partners.
 - Place Dundee in an advantageous position to access European funds to assist with the implementation of the Local Action Plan.
 - Raise the profile of Dundee as a forward looking and active area, both in the national and European context.

8. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1. Consultations have taken place with Scottish Enterprise Tayside, Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce & Industry, The Employment Service, Dundee College and Tayside Careers. (Internal consultations – Education, Chief Executive, Support Services, Neighbourhood Resources & Development Departments).

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. European Employment Strategy, National Employment Action Plan, Dundee City Council Economic Development Plan 1996-99, Dundee Partnership Strategy Document 1997-2002 – “A Vision For Dundee”.

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DATE