

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Corporate Services Committee: 28 March 2007

Subject: Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Forum which is being taken forward by the Council under the auspices of the Efficient Government/ Shared Services agenda.
- 1.2** The Committee is asked to formalise the Council's continued commitment to the project through a Minute of Agreement and to nominate a Councillor representative and substitute to be a member of the Joint Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Council is a member of the Clyde Valley Authorities Consortium which is developing a collaborative approach to learning and development for employees in the eight Clyde Valley Authorities. These are South Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, East and West Dunbartonshire. The lead authority for coordinating the work relating to the project is being undertaken by South Lanarkshire Council.
- 2.2** The original work carried out in 2005 and early 2006 was the subject of a bid for funding to the Efficient Government Fund. This bid was put on hold due to the formation of the National Shared Services Board (NBSS) in April 2006 and the transition from the EGF bid fund to a strategic support fund.
- 2.3** Following the publication of the Draft Prospectus from the NBSS, it was identified that additional work would have to be carried out on the original EGF bid to meet the new criteria set out in the prospectus
- 2.4** Following a revised submission in early December 2006 which focussed on increasing the number of learning and development activities progressed in the first year, the Project was again considered by the NBSS at its meeting on 20 December, when the Board approved funding of £685,000 for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development proposal. The level of funding recommended is greater than £500k, and therefore final approval is awaited from the Minister for Local Government.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The learning and development project will cover three phases over the four year life of the project which recognises the areas that require longer development and implementation times. The content of the phases are indicated below:

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| Phase 1 | Design and delivery of- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First aid training• Diversity training• Vocational qualifications |
| Phase 2 | Design and delivery of- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training to support social care• ICT training• Health and Safety• Literacy and Numeracy• Accredited leadership, management and supervisory training |
| Phase 3 | Design and delivery of- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPD for professional groups (e.g. teachers)• Strategic planning• Financial management• People management• Continuous improvement methods and models• Skills training for succession planning and capacity building |

3.2 The Council will benefit from membership of the Learning and Development Consortium through:

- The erosion of duplication of effort in commissioning, developing, delivering and assessing workforce development
- Enhanced consistency of learning and development provision across the consortium councils by agreeing and setting quality monitoring arrangements
- Economies of scale in procurement by joint commissioning
- The sharing of information on the areas of strategic importance for learning and development

3.3 In order for the project bid to be progressed towards the full implementation stage, a number of actions related to governance have to be taken by South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) as the lead authority, and by the remaining seven consortium members.

- 3.4** A Joint Committee needs to be established that has decision making authority to scrutinise the project's progress against set targets and milestones, to monitor the financial probity of the project, and to ensure the on-going commitment and involvement of stakeholders.
- 3.5** Each authority is required to nominate an Elected Member representative, and substitute, to be a member of the Joint Committee. Other members of the Joint Committee will include the Director of Finance from SLC (or equivalent); Senior Officers from the Clyde Valley Group and external representatives approved by the Chief Executives Forum and Clyde Valley Consortium. The external representatives will most likely come from the Improvement Service and the Society of Personnel Directors Scotland (SPDS).
- 3.6** Participating Councils will formally agree their involvement in the project on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding/ Minute of Agreement and Standard Committee report. This agreement will be drawn up by the legal section of SLC in consultation with participating Councils' legal representatives.
- 3.7** Participating Councils will nominate a finance officer to monitor financial support allocations during the lifetime of the project. An accounting supervisor appointed by SLC will brief Council finance representatives.
- 3.8** In addition to the Joint Committee, the governance of the project will be supported by the Project Implementation Steering Group which consists of:
- Clyde Valley Learning and Development Consortium
 - Representatives from SLC covering the roles of:
 - Chair
 - Legal Advisor
 - Accounting Advisor
 - Secretariat
- 3.9** The finance provision provides funding for a Project Implementation Team, including a Project Manager and funded secondees to progress the various elements of the project. The current Clyde Valley Learning and Development Steering Group are in the process of identifying suitably skilled and competent individuals from within the consortium Councils who might be interested in a secondment. Each Council will be responsible for considering the release of interested individuals, but it is hoped that requests will be looked upon favourably.
- 3.10** The role of the Project Implementation Team includes:
- Overall project management
 - Day to day management of each phase of the project
 - Performance monitoring and evaluation
 - Liaison with consortium member Councils
 - Management of appropriate contracts

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are a number of personnel issues related to the Council's continued support for this project.
- 4.2** The first relates to the continuation of WDC's representative; Donald Gordon, from the Employee Development Section, as a member of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Consortium for the life of the project which is until 2011.
- 4.3** The second concerns ongoing support for the project, as appropriate, from the Council's nominated legal and finance representatives for the life of the project. The two officers nominated by their Head of Service for these roles are Burns Shearar, Solicitor, from Legal and Admin, and Janice Rainey, Section Head Accountancy, Finance.
- 4.4** The third concerns individual employees who apply for the soon to be advertised, secondment posts on the project. These secondments will be for an initial period of 12 months, with a possibility of an extension depending on the amount of work to be undertaken, and the continued support of any secondees by their employer. Secondees will be required at varying times during the four life of the project.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The Clyde Valley Consortium will establish an account to manage the financial transactions associated with the learning and development project. The account will be administered by SLC as the lead authority.
- 5.2** Participating Councils will require to provide funds to the project to allow sufficient provision to cover start-up costs for each phase of the project. The funding sought from the consortium Councils will initially be pro-rated on the basis of each authority's employee numbers. The rate of contribution will be reviewed after two years.
- 5.3** At this stage it is not possible to give an exact amount of the annual financial commitment that would be required from WDC over the life of the project, but based on the figures in the original EGF bid, the figure for 2006 was in the region of £4000. This matter will be discussed in greater detail with the finance representatives. However, it is not expected that the project will commence until after the May elections.
- 5.4** Each participating Council having signed a Memorandum of Understanding/ Minute of Agreement setting out their respective commitments to the project for the full duration which is 2011, will be bound to honour these commitments.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** A risk assessment has been carried out by the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Consortium highlighting the areas that are considered to be either low or medium risk. This is detailed in the document referred to below.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The Clyde Valley Consortium has invested considerable time and effort in achieving this successful bid. The project has been designed to deliver a range of benefits across all councils in the consortium including financial and learning and development which will contribute to improved and more efficient ways of working and enhance the level of skills, knowledge and competence of the workforce. This in turn will lead to improvements in service delivery.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and to:-**
- (a) Identify an Elected Member and substitute to be a member of the Joint Committee. Given the forthcoming elections Committee may wish to consider linking this to a Convenors role.**
 - (b) Approve that the Council formalises its commitment to the CVLDC through a Memorandum of Understanding/Minute of Agreement.**

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Chief Executive
Date: 15 March 2007

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Appendices: There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers: The Clyde Valley Learning and Development Consortium, 'Proposal to National Board for Shared Services', November 2006

Wards Affected: There are no proposals within the report that affect council Wards.