Abstract: This Report seeks approval to establish a 1 year pilot project - Media Access Angus in conjunction with Angus Digital Media Centre and the Leader+ programme in order to assist community groups in the Angus Leader+ area to access high level training and resources in digital media to further the groups objectives at no direct cost to the groups.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee

i) note the context (paras 3.1 – 3.9 of this Report) to the proposal to create a one year pilot Media Access Angus project for the benefit of community groups in the Leader+ area of Angus.

ii) note that a Phase 1 Leader+ application has been approved and will provide 50% funding support for the costs of Phase 1 (awareness raising). An application has been submitted for Phase 2 Leader+ which will support the implementation of the project.

iii) agree to establish the pilot project at a total cost of £50,000 which will also cover the costs of Phase 1 (£3,000) at a net cost to the Council of £25,000. In the event that Leader+ support for Phase 2 is not approved the scale of the pilot will be correspondingly reduced with the same net cost to the Council.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 While a significant number of community groups across Angus and elsewhere have approached Angus Digital Media Centre for assistance, and have commissioned ADMC for a variety of multimedia projects, many groups remain unaware of the Centre and its facilities which can assist groups to address their objectives, whether for publicity or end product which can be sold to benefit group funds. Many constituted groups, voluntary associations, charities etc., can access funding through a number of programmes although many are unaware of this source and/or lack the skills or confidence to pursue funding and projects. In addition there are informal groups who may not be properly constituted and/or meet the criteria of these funding sources.

2.2 This Report proposes a new approach to address awareness and group support and seeks approval for the creation of this innovative pilot project.

3 CONTEXT

3.1 Appendix 1 to this Report provides a fuller description of the project – a brief outline is provided as follows:
3.2 Media Access Angus is a proposed training scheme to be operated by Angus Digital Media Centre, aimed at voluntary associations, youth groups, community groups, charities etc. Its purpose will be to help groups without the necessary skills/resources to address their respective objectives. This in turn will result in some economic benefit to Angus – for example the creation of a historical video that will encourage visitors to the area, or through printed brochures, highlighting the tourism facilities/attractions of a specific area.

3.3 A Leader+ application for Phase 1 of this one year pilot has been approved with the objective of raising awareness within the Angus Leader+ area. This covers a large part of Angus including Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir and Montrose (Part). Leader+ funding for pilot projects is only available to support one year.

3.4 Phase 1 would involve raising awareness of the scheme, attracting interest and assisting groups to apply to take part in the scheme. Phase 2 would involve a selection process and result in successful groups being trained at Angus Digital Media Centre to produce their chosen end product. Phase 2 would only proceed if sufficient demand is generated by the Phase 1 campaign.

3.5 Some groups will be ineligible – due to geographic location and the project will therefore provide information and advice on potential alternative funding sources such as Awards for All etc.

3.6 A number of general awareness raising events have already been held to promote external funding sources to organisations and groups in Angus and an example of an event held in January 2004 to promote Direct Grants is attached as Appendix 2 to illustrate the level of group responses. These general awareness raising events in addition to the focussed approach proposed for Media Access Angus will contribute to the build up of contact databases which can then followed up to encourage groups to submit applications for funding.

3.7 Phase 2 – Proposal

On the basis that Phase 1 of the project is successful in demonstrating demand for Media Access Angus the implementation of Phase 2 would commence by inviting groups to submit proposals for projects. The Phase 2 Leader+ application is seeking funding support to create the Media Access Fund of £47K giving a total project cost for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of £50K with 50% of this funded via the Leader+ programme.

3.8 It is envisaged that the community projects to be funded would be assessed by a panel with representatives from Angus Association of Voluntary Organisations (AAVO) and Community Education. ADMC would draw down contributions from the Fund to meet the costs to provide training/end product, so that there would be no direct cost to the groups assisted.

3.9 In terms of sustainability it is felt that positive engagement with the groups will result in sustainable activity from the experience/skills gained by groups and individuals to enable them to pursue further projects and other funding sources.
4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Costs

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<th>£ Angus Council</th>
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4.2 Provision is made within the Economic Development section of the Financial Plan 2003-2007 under Legally Committed Capital Expenditure for £50,000 less Leader+ funding of £25,000 giving a net cost to Angus Council of £25,000.

4.3 In the event that the Phase 2 Leader+ funding is not approved, it would be necessary to scale back the project to total costs of £25,000 funded entirely by the Council, which would result in fewer community groups having the opportunity to participate in the pilot project.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Directors of Law and Administration, Finance and Education have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 ADMC has made significant progress in assisting a diverse range of clients including community groups and organisations. This pilot project, if successful, will raise awareness of media training, production support and funding sources available to groups in Angus and will assist a number of these to fulfil their chosen projects.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

DV/SW/MM  
A B Watson OBE  
Chief Executive  
3 February 2004