

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: BELLSHILL AND DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE	Subject: COMMUNITY FORUM – BELLSHILL AND DISTRICT AREA
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (LIAISON DIRECTOR)	
Date: 28 FEBRUARY 2000	Ref: RM/MF

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to consider the background to community forums, the current position within the Bellshill and District area and proposals for developing the role of forum members including the relationship to the Area Committee.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The original scheme of decentralisation proposed that Area Committees be formal committees of the Council with decision-making powers. This meant that they would be comprised solely of relevant elected members.

Based on proposals outlined in the scheme of decentralisation, other mechanisms for community involvement were identified.

The Council agreed (at the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 January 1997) that the most appropriate way of engaging the community was through community forums, which would comprise of representatives from community groups, tenants associations and other broad based representative groups.

Community forums were intended to run in parallel to Area Committees, with a broad range of local issues being discussed and actioned between the two.

The report to the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 January 1997 also noted proposals for the establishment of community forums, which, it was stated were to be community structures and for community representatives to determine the composition and role of the forums.

The role of the Council in providing guidance and support through the process of community forums formation was also outlined within the report.

3.0 BELLSHILL AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY FORUM

The Bellshill and District Community Forum was established in May 1998 after a process of community consultation.

The forum structure provides a total of 11 places for representatives from special interest groups; six representatives drawn from geographical areas – east, west and central; and up to three local individuals who are interested in furthering the aims of the forum.

In the past the forum enjoyed positive links with the Area Committee:

- Minutes of meetings were mutually exchanged;
- The Area Committee convener received forum papers and an open invitation to attend forum meetings;
- The forum met two weeks prior to the Area Committee and received an indicative agenda of those items likely to be considered by the Committee in order that it may comment or request further information on particular matters; and
- Forum members received a copy of minutes of Area Committee meetings and calling notices of meetings at which they were invited to contribute by the convener.

In the past the community forum relied very much upon the Area Committee to determine its own agenda and business. At the time that Area Committees were deferred in order for the review of decentralisation to continue the forum agreed to cease meetings until the Area Committee was reconvened.

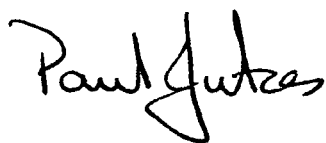
4.0 CONCLUSION

It is proposed that the community forum be engaged in order to discuss reconvening their meetings and redeveloping the relationship with the Bellshill and District Area Committee.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Area Committee:

- (i) Consider the links between the Area Committee and the Community Forum;
- (ii) Agree the reestablishment of a set of working links with the Community Forum and distribute invitations to the Forum members to attend the future meetings of the Bellshill and District Area Committee;
- (iii) Invite the Liaison Director to report to the next Area Committee meeting on discussion with the Community Forum;
- (iv) Otherwise note the content of this report.



Director of Community Services