

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

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| To: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE | Subject: COMMUNITY FORUM - EXPENSES |
| From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES | |
| Date: 10 MAY 2001 | Ref: JMcG/BP/MF |

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise on the disbursement of the service enhancement of £12,000 allocated to area committees for the support and development of their links with community forums
- 1.2 The narrative provided during the budget exercise read as follows:

“Establishment of a budget of £2000 for each of the 6 area committees to assist in the development of the roles of area committees and community forums thereby demonstrating the council’s commitment to working with, and listening to local people.”

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 There are currently 8 community forums in existence, with one in each of the decentralised areas except in the North where 3 forums have been established.
- 2.2 In light of the spread of forums it is now necessary to consider the disbursement of the available budget not solely on the basis of an equal split amongst the 6 area committees. Support arrangements for community forums are currently provided by the department of community services including advice and guidance as well as administrative support with the community development section issuing minutes, agenda calling notices and organising venues and catering. It is suggested at this stage that these arrangements remain in place to further demonstrate the council’s commitment to community forums.

3. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

- 3.1 Each community forum is at a different stage of development with different structures; a range of membership levels; frequency of meetings; and levels of attendance.
- 3.2 In establishing how best to disburse the fund consideration has been given to the funding arrangements for community councils where a lump sum of £450 plus £9 per 100 of the electoral roll is allocated to each council. At this stage the level of funding available to support community forums does not merit such complex analysis. Additionally community forums represent much wider geographical areas than community councils and budgetary constraints would not allow this formulae to be applied.

- 3.3 It is therefore suggested that for this first year each community forum be awarded £750 to cover administration and running costs including members' expenses. The remaining £6000 would then be allocated to the 6 area committees on the basis of £1000 per area to assist in the development of their role.

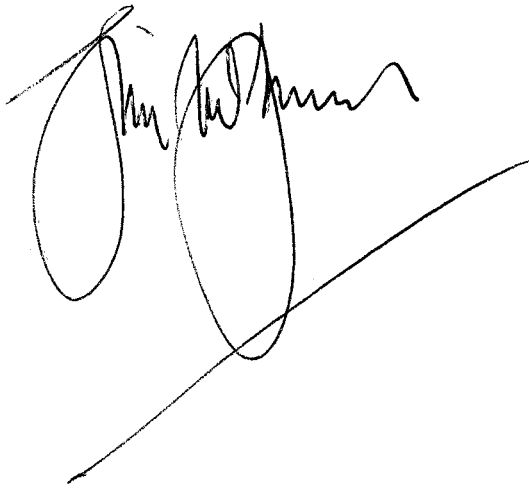
4. **FINANCIAL CONTROLS**

- 4.1 In making payments directly to community forums monitoring arrangements will require to be set in place. Any payments would be made in line with existing grant conditions with specific details of expenditure being reported back via the community services department to each area committee. This would set the necessary audit controls in place and at the same time provide an opportunity to overview areas of spending which would inform future budget exercises.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That the community services committee:

- (i) approve the allocation of £750 to each of the existing community forums
- (ii) agree the allocation of £1000 to each area committee
- (iii) remit this report to area committees for information and advice
- (iv) otherwise note the report.

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