

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL	From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Your Ref. AIC/PFD	Ask For: MR COOK Ext 2217
My Ref. AM/LB/E18/25	Date 02 October 1995
Committee Submission ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Subject COALFIELD COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN
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The Coalfield Communities Campaign (CCC) has written requesting that North Lanarkshire Council becomes a member of its organisation. Of the constituent authorities of North Lanarkshire Council, Motherwell District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council are presently members of the CCC.

Deep mining in the area ceased eleven years ago with the closure of Polkemmet Colliery in 1984. Although located in West Lothian a significant proportion of its workforce lived in Harthill, Shotts and Allanton. This is the reason that the eastern part of Motherwell District is included in the RECHAR programme. The last collieries to close in the Council's area were Bedlay and Cardowan which closed in the early 1980s.

There remain substantial areas of opencast mining in North Lanarkshire while Anderson in Motherwell produces mining machinery. Additionally, much of the area has a legacy of coal mining and the economic problems peculiar to coalfield communities.

The Coalfield Communities Campaign's success lies in its support from the UK's coalfield areas. It lobbies Government and the EU for help to rebuild the economic, social and environmental fabric of coalfield areas. It is a watchdog on many of the post coal privatisation issues such as minewater pollution, land reclamation and opencasting.

The CCC has produced several reports on coal and related issues. The membership is also kept informed at seminars, the annual Conference and well as Ordinary General, Executive and Regional meetings.

The CCC can justly claim to be instrumental in persuading the EC to introduce the RECHAR programme of aid for the coalfield areas. Then, using RECHAR as a test case, the CCC co-ordinated a campaign which led to a UK Government climbdown on the "additionality" issue, which means that ERDF grants coming to the UK can be spent on extra measures. Motherwell District has been awarded in excess of £350,000 from the RECHAR programme.

The subscription fee, at £2,730 may seem costly, especially when compared with Steel Action for which there is no subscription. However, the CCC represents a larger area, presently around 90 Councils, and is able to devote staff time and resources to lobbying, research and keeping both its membership and the media informed. The standard of its reports and meetings are generally of good

quality and well presented. The CCC continues to campaign for the regeneration of our former coal mining areas, both in the UK and Europe.

I consider it worthwhile for NLC to seek membership of the Coalfields Communities Campaign for the year 1996/7, reviewing the terms of membership thereafter with regard to value for money and the prospects for continued lobbying on coalfield community matters.

RECOMMENDATION:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE COALFIELD COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN FOR THE YEAR 1996/97 AND REVIEWS ITS MEMBERSHIP IN 1997.