

**AGENDA ITEM No. 4**

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REPORT**

TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject:  TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 18TH JANUARY 1996	Ref: CMcA/RC/GS/REPORT.002	

**Introduction**

The Economic Development Committee of Motherwell District Council and the Planning & Development Committee of Monklands District Council have instructed officials to proceed with the establishment of a Town Centre Management Initiative for both areas and the employment of Town Centre Managers which will cover the towns of Airdrie and Coatbridge, Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill.

The recruitment for both of these posts has been carried out on the basis of a 2 year fixed term contract subject to approval from North Lanarkshire Council to continue the project after the 31st of March 1996. Monklands District Council have appointed someone to the post which they intend will commence on 12th February 1996. Motherwell District Council are currently at recruitment stages but intend start date in March.

**Background**

**Cumbernauld**

The Town Centre in Cumbernauld was developed under the auspices of Cumbernauld Development Corporation. The Town Centre is unlike others in the new North Lanarkshire Council area in that it does not incorporate any traditional townscape but was wholly developed as part of Cumbernauld New Town within the last 30 years.

The centre is developed in 5 phases with the most recent about to be constructed. Phase 1 and 2 are owned by Cumbernauld Centre Limited and managed on their behalf by Johnston and Hale who employ a shopping centre manager. Phase 3 was the ASDA Supermarket and will soon be demolished, this along with additional land will be re-developed as phase 5 by developers Arrowcroft for Cumbernauld Development Corporation. Phase 4 is owned by C.I.N. and managed by Donaldsons who also employ a shopping centre manager.

It is hoped that the owner/operators of the Town Centre can in the foreseeable future, and upon completion of lettings of Phase 5, be persuaded to co-ordinate their efforts perhaps by using the same managing agents and thus bringing a greater uniformity to the Town Centre and through this apply the principles of Town Centre Management in addition to running the "shopping centre phases".

**Kilsyth**

Over recent years the centre of Kilsyth has seen major changes to improve the Townscape from significant decline. The Council pedestrianised the centre of the Town in the late 1980's and more recently a Housing Action Area was declared to encourage improvement of the properties by means of partnership comprising Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District Council, Scottish Homes, West of Scotland Housing Association and Dumbartonshire Enterprise. This work is ongoing. While not meriting a Town Centre manager in its own right due to size, Kilsyth requires significant attention to halt the decline and revitalise the Town Centre. It is hoped that this can be addressed as an extension to the current proposals in the early months of the new North Lanarkshire Council.

## **Monklands District**

The Lanarkshire Development Agency commissioned consultants to report in 1994 on regional retail demand in Lanarkshire serving all populations in excess of 10,000. The outcome of the study highlighted weak current retailer demand in Airdrie and Coatbridge; and that there was further development opportunities in Airdrie, Coatbridge; and that there is 39% retail leakage for Monklands to areas outwith Lanarkshire (most notably Glasgow). In addition over the last 10 years the number of quality comparison retailers represented in the District has declined, leaving notable gaps in the representation of traders pattern. These amongst other more basic reasons such as ambience and general promotion lead to a report being placed before the Monklands District Council recommending that a Town centre Manager be appointed for Airdrie and Coatbridge for a 2 year pilot period. This was approved by the Planning and Development Committee on 15 April and ratified by the full Council on 27 April 1995. The proposed revenue budgets were £46709 for the first year and £45591 for the second year.

Following recent interviews an appointment has been made with the start date being 12th February 1996. It is anticipated that all capital spend incurred in setting up can be made in the fiscal year 1995/6 by Monklands District Council. The officer is expected to be accommodated in the Coatbridge Business Centre which provides a service backup of reception typing etc. in addition to office accommodation.

## **Motherwell District**

Motherwell District has three main towns, Bellshill, Motherwell and Wishaw each of which have a number of town centre development groups which involve Council officials. These groups are as follows:-

Motherwell Town Centre Management Group  
 Bellshill Traders Forum  
 Wishaw Business Group  
 Bellshill S.U.R.I. (Small Urban Renewal Initiative)  
 Wishaw S.U.R.I.  
 Motherwell Security & Development Trust (C.C.T.V.)  
 Wishaw C.C.T.V. Group

The number of groups and the interest in them illustrates the commitment of local businesses and local economic development organisations including the local authority to ensuring the development, improvement and survival of our traditional town centres.

## **Town Centre Management**

Traditionally the responsibilities for the town centres has been divided between public and private sectors, with private sector concentrating on individual properties and their business interest, and the public sector - itself divided into different professional groups - charged with looking after the public domain.

Town Centre Management strives to create a partnership between these different interests. Third partnerships create new resources, fresh ideas and commitment. A comparable example is the management of a new private shopping centre. The out-of-town and in-town retail centres with single landlords and a single management regime. This regime provides effective design, promotion, maintenance and security. These developments mean that the traditional town centres such as Coatbridge and Wishaw require to organise themselves in a way that can react to these challenges. At the moment a number of groups with different interests eg C.C.T.V., S.U.R.I. and traders forums exist for each of the towns. A mechanism is required to bring these together so that a focused and co-ordinated approach to town centre management can take place.

The concept of town centre management has been introduced in nearly a hundred U.K. towns and cities in the last six years. Most strategies have been led by the local authority working in partnership with retailers and other businesses.

Falkirk was the first town in Scotland to have a Town Centre Manager. This was followed by Hamilton and Paisley. There are now managers in Dundee, Stirling, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Bathgate, Perth, Aberdeen, Ayr, Dumfries, Kirkcaldy and two Border towns.

Specific measurements have been identified and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Town Centre Manager. In addition, the employment of Town Centre Management will assist in making local government accessible to town centre users eg businesses, residents etc. It will also enable local people to be brought into the process of reaching decisions as much as possible about their own environment. Town Centre Management is seen as responsive and adaptive to it's customers demands and will therefore assist greatly during the transitional period.

## Proposal

It is recommended that North Lanarkshire Council support the Town Centre Management schemes proposed and existing in Monklands and Motherwell which will have the effect of stabilising and improving the retail centres of the towns of Motherwell, Wishaw, Bellshill, Airdrie and Coatbridge. It is also recommended that early in the life of North Lanarkshire Council, that Town Centre Management be promoted for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. This will be the subject of a future report.

It is proposed that the operating structure for Town Centre Management be altered as soon as practical after April 1996 from the existing direct Council control to that of an independent body e.g. Company Ltd. by guarantee or Trust status etc., in order to maximise the benefits of Partnership and attract maximum external funding. It is also expected that there will be an additional benefits arising from "ownership" of the project by parties other than the Council.

While details will require to be negotiated with partners in this project it is envisaged that a board of management be established comprising of representatives at senior officer level from those who will be significant players/funders, such as the Council's Planning and Development Department, the Lanarkshire Development Agency, the various town centre liaison groups, and British Steel (Industry) Ltd. This group would act as the steering group for the various liaison groups (local retail/business groups) set up, being one for each Town Centre. It would be the responsibility of the Town Centre Manager to establish liaison groups where required, to co-ordinate actions and encourage participation and input views by the disparate interests within the Town Centres. Those parties likely to be represented on such a liaison group would include Local Traders Associations, shopping centre managers, police, involved Council Department representatives, Lanarkshire Development Agency, Councillors, and perhaps the Enterprise Trust, as well as others as felt appropriate.

The benefits of such a structure are co-ordination, participation and representation by all interested parties and attraction of maximum funding through partnership.

It is suggested that the scheme should run for an initial 2 year period at the end of which a full review would take place.

## Funding

In Motherwell £20,000 was awarded to the project by the District Council with a further £10,000 from British Steel (Industry) Ltd. It has not been agreed that any money awarded by Motherwell District Council would be carried forward into North Lanarkshire Council. In Monklands approval was given by the District Council to revenue budgets of £46709 in the first year and £45591 in the second year.

British Steel (Industry) Ltd have agreed to award £10,000 per annum for the 2 years of the contract.

The operational costs of this project are estimated to be £100,000 p.a. Assuming that only recruitment and set up costs will be met by the existing authorities a requirement of £90,000 is estimated. This would include the employment of two Town Centre Managers (AP5-PO1), two part-time caretakers, accommodation in Motherwell and in Coatbridge, secretarial support and a small marketing budget. Funding for other projects such as business development initiatives, training or promotional/marketing campaigns would be considered on a project by project basis. The Lanarkshire Development Agency have indicated that they would look favourably on project funding applications for Town Centre Manager initiatives.

## Recommendation

That this Committee agree:

- That officials proceed with investigating options for the establishment of an independent body to manage the Town Centre Management Initiative and report back to Committee on the most appropriate option.
- That the Town Centre Manager appointments made by Motherwell District Council, and Monklands District Council would transfer to North Lanarkshire Council until the establishment of an independent body to at which stage the two appointments would transfer to become employees of the new company.
- That a contribution of £90K per annum for the 2 years of the contract be agreed.