

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Subject: BUSINESS FOCUS NEWSLETTER	
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 30 May 1996	Ref: CMcA/JG/REP.031	

Introduction

The Economic Development Unit have produced a newsletter entitled 'Business Focus' as part of their quarterly Marketing Plan outlined at the last meeting of the Economic Development Committee. The publication is to be produced ten times a year on a monthly basis except for December/January and July/August when only one edition in the two months will be produced. The publication will be one of the main vehicles for the Council's communication with the business community.

Distribution

It is intended that every business in North Lanarkshire shall receive this regular newsletter. We are currently using a mailing list of 3,220 companies which breaks down as follows:-

- Northern Area 340
- Central Area 555
- Southern Area 2,325

As the numbers indicate there is an imbalance in the listings across the 3 areas. This is as a result of information inherited by North Lanarkshire Council from five different authorities. A project to update and expand the information on the company base in North Lanarkshire is a subject of a later report for consideration. This will mean that until the information is updated there may be an uneven spread of the distribution among companies across the three areas. To address this issue additional supplies of the publication will be available from a range of public offices including, area planning offices, environmental health offices and enterprise trusts.

Members will receive copies of the Newsletter each month through Member Services.

Content

The publication will include information on success stories from North Lanarkshire companies, including a monthly feature of a company profile by the Herald's business journalist Harry Conroy; information on the range of economic development initiatives which the Council and other agencies offer local companies; details on commercial and industrial property development; information from other Council departments which will be of use to local companies; updates on any new legislation and information on good business practice.

Details on the publication have been circulated to all Council departments so that they will have the opportunity to contribute any items of interest.

Cost

The costs for the design, printing and distribution of Business Focus is illustrated in Table 1. The design is being carried out on a monthly basis by the Planning & Development Departments In-house Design Team and the publication contract was won by J.S. Burns & Sons after prices were sought from three different companies. The distribution is currently being carried out by an outside agency. This will be reviewed in line with work load and staffing levels.

Value for Money

A newsletter is a cost effective way to promote a complete range of Council initiatives compared with many other forms of marketing. The Economic Development Unit has £1.5m worth of economic development aid for which it will require to generate successful applications from local companies. In addition, the Council's substantial industrial and commercial property portfolio will be marketed through Business Focus. The publication will also be used to promote the Marketing Assistance Programme and recruit companies to participate in the Women's Management Development and Women Mean Business Programme.

Past experience has shown that a newsletter targeted to the Council client base through direct mail provides a more cost effective means of communication than paid for advertising. Opportunities will also exist for surveying the needs of local businesses through the publication using questionnaires.

Recommendation

That the Committee:-

- (i) Notes the contents of the report.
- (ii) Approves an annual expenditure of £29,190 on Business Focus.



Stanley C Cook
Director of Planning and Development

For further information contact G Smith, Head of Business Development and Property.

BUSINESS FOCUS COSTS

	DESIGN & PRINT	DISTRIBUTION* including postage	TOTAL COST
Each Edition	1,700	12,190	2,919
Total Annual Cost	17,000	12,190	29,190

* Based on a maximum distribution of 5,000 by 2nd class mail (postage costs = £1,000 per issue)