

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To:	Economic Development Committee	Subject:	Employment and Training Forum, Central Area: Report
From:	Director of Planning and Development		
Date:	1 August 1996	Ref:	CT/P/062

1. Purpose of report

This report seeks to inform members of the establishment of an employment and training forum in the central area.

2. Resource implications

There are no resource implications for the implementation of this project in the central area as there is funding committed through the Urban Programme. However, should the Council support the proposal that the forum be extended across North Lanarkshire, there may be future resource implications.

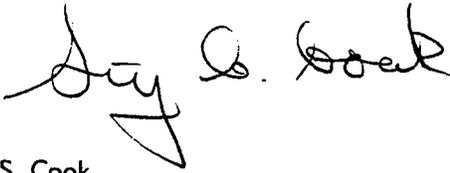
3. Considerations

- 3.1 Attached at appendix one is a copy of the report on the first employment and training forum (Central area) meeting held on 26 June 1996.
- 3.2 The meeting was opened by Councillor Connolly and chaired by Mr. Gordon Smith, the Head of Economic Development and Property.
- 3.3 Urban Programme funding has been allocated to provide a development officer to support and develop the work an employment and training forum in the central area. As urban programme funding was allocated under Monklands District Council, the conditions of grant restrict the use of urban programme resources to the central area's geographical boundaries.
- 3.4 This project will bring together the various agencies and organisations involved in employment and training, both providers and users, and assist them to share information and to work in partnership developing new employment and training initiatives.
- 3.5 There was an unanimous view that the work of an employment and training forum should not be restricted to the central area and it was agreed that this should be considered by Forum members as a matter of urgency.
- 3.6 The forum agreed that a steering group should be established to prepare an operational plan for the development of those issues identified as significant and the coordination of this work is being undertaken by the Summerlee Training Resource Unit.

4. Action\.

4. Action

Members are asked to note the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Cook'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'C'.

S. Cook
Director of Planning and Development

**CENTRAL AREA OF NORTH LANARKSHIRE
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING FORUM**

**TOWNHEAD COMMUNITY CENTRE, COATBRIDGE
WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 1996**

REPORT

Background - Forum and Summerlee Training Resource Unit

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Welcome and Introduction

North Lanarkshire Council - Economic Development Unit Presentation

Discussion Groups - Feedback

WellWise Ltd - Positive Partnership Presentation

Training Resource Bank - Presentation of Cheque to Plains Countryside
Park

Chairman's Closing Remarks

Forum Steering Group

Conclusion

Employment and Training Forum Report

Background to Employment and Training Forum/Role of Summerlee Training Resource Unit

The Central Area of North Lanarkshire Employment and Training Forum took place on the morning of 26 June 1996 in Townhead Community Centre, Coatbridge. Colleagues from more than forty agencies involved in the fields of training and employment were invited to attend and, on the day, fifty delegates took part. (Final delegate list attached).

The idea for the Forum originated with Monklands District Council and the Forum itself is now supported by the Economic Development Unit, within the Department of Planning and Development, of the new North Lanarkshire Council.

Summerlee Training Resource Unit (STRU), and the Forum Development Officer attached to the Unit, will service the Forum and provide on-going support for the Forum's Steering Group.

STRU would like to thank all colleagues who attended on the 26th and who contributed on the day. This final report will be distributed to all who were in attendance.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The event's Chairman, Gordon Smith, Head of Economic Development and Property, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), introduced Councillor Pat Connelly, Vice Convenor of the Economic Development Committee, NLC, and invited him to open the meeting.

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr. Connelly welcomed all delegates, involved in employment and training services from the private, public and voluntary sectors, to Townhead Community Centre. He went on to offer a brief background to STRU, whose staff had organised today's event and commented on Projects with which STRU had been involved along with its partners; Summerlee Heritage Park, NLC, Henry Boot Training Ltd, WellWise and Plains Countryside Park.

With the support of the people present on the day and that of staff from NLC's Economic Development Unit (EDU), Cllr Connelly felt sure the Employment and Training Forum had the potential to be a success. He believed there was a real need for such a Forum and thanked everyone for showing their interest and support by attending the event.

Cllr Connelly concluded by hoping that agencies from all sectors would work in partnership to achieve combined aims and objectives in the work towards the social and economic regeneration of North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire Council - Economic Development Unit Presentation

The morning's first speaker was Teresa Lavery from the Economic Development Unit, Department of Planning and Development, NLC. Teresa heads up the central section of this unit, has responsibility for the Central Area and a functional remit for Social Strategy Liaison.

Employment and Training Forum Report

Teresa kicked off by providing a brief background to the Forum and went on to look at the current relationship the EDU enjoys with the Forum. Four key, strategic areas within the remit of the EDU were identified:-

- Information and advice services with a one-door approach e.g. local training support points set up around the area
- Provision of training in local areas e.g. Chapelhall, Charlotte Toal Centre. Slides were also shown of Henry Boot Training and WellWise trainees who took part in vocational training programmes at Summerlee Heritage Park
- Employment access e.g. counselling and C.V. preparation services
- Support for self-employment and business development e.g. the New Venture Centre, established through partnership working with Monklands Enterprise and Employee Ownership Scotland

The Remit of the Forum within strategic economic development was then examined and the key functions of the Forum identified as follows:-

- Regular exchange of information e.g. Newsletter, open forums/events
- Attraction of funding i.e. as there are regular and numerous changes in funding, access to the correct information can be difficult. The changes brought about by Programme for Partnership are also significant
- Management and monitoring of support services e.g. good practice guides could be delivered for agencies involved in employment and training support

Next to be highlighted were the services offered by the EDU which include:-

- Financial assistance to potential and existing initiatives
- Training and employment initiatives
- Town centre regeneration
- Tourism development
- Marketing NLC to the business community
- Partnerships

In employment and training specifically, these services include:-

- Co-ordination of the employment and training services
- Contributing to partnership initiatives
- Supervision of council sponsored projects

Discussion Groups

At this stage delegates took part in discussion groups which were to address two key areas; the Structure of the Forum and Potential key Issues for the Forum. Leaders and scribes were allocated to each group with scribes feeding back to delegates on one topic.

Some delegates felt that more time had been required to discuss issues in depth and possible solutions to problems identified. There may also have been additional points raised in group discussions which were not fed back to other delegates on the day.

Discussions not highlighted in this report will be addressed by the Steering and Working Groups.

Employment and Training Forum Report

Indeed, everyone participating in the event of 26 June will have the opportunity to be involved in Forum working groups, tackling issues which are of particular relevance or interest to them and therefore to put forward their own proposals. Detailed below are the comments which were fed back by each group Scribe on the day:-

Structure of Forum (Group Leader-Teresa Lavery, Group Scribe-Mary Quinn)

Group One (Yellow)

- The Forum should not be restricted to the Central Area of North Lanarkshire
- It should allow the opportunity to invite participation from NL wide agencies
- A well balanced core steering group should be established which should have a specific remit issues based, short life working groups should be formed
- Issues which might be addressed by the working groups include; support services, crèche facilities, travel to work issues
- There should be a 'timetable for action' which was considered to be a matter of urgency
- The timetable for action should be realistic on prioritising issues

Group Two (Blue)

- The Forum must have an issue based structure
- Issues to be addressed might include; support services, availability of formal/informal training, skills development/taster courses, business development, funding
- A small core group should be set up to steer the activities of the Forum; to structure a calendar of events, identify expertise to be tapped into, establish an information database and to look at other issue based priorities NL wide
- Informal information sharing should take place through the Forum

Key Issues for the Forum (Group Leader-Pat Whelan, Group Scribe-Dan Hamill)

Group One (Red)

Role and Remit of Forum:-

- It was agreed that there is a real need for a Forum
- The Forum is a mechanism for pooling resources
- Effort can be co-ordinated through the Forum

Organisation:-

- There is a conflict between the need to inform and involve a large number of organisations and getting things done

Ideas:-

- Large Forum meetings might be useful
- A management group is needed
- Information could be exchanged through a Forum Newsletter
- An information database would prove useful

Group Two (Green)

Role and Remit:-

- Targets should be set
- Policies need to be developed by Forum members
- There should be a sharp focus on issues; must avoid 'talking shop' situation

Organisation:-

- Every organisation interested should have access to the Forum
- Progress needs to be made
- Strategic working groups should be established from the Forum
- Again, policies could be developed by Forum members

Employment and Training Forum Report

Key Issues for the Forum (Group Leader-Tam Young, Group Scribe-Elaine Symington)

Group One (Green)

- The importance of matching training to work environment was discussed
- Significance now of short contract work and the resulting lack of security should be considered
- The benefits system in its present form it was felt is a disincentive to progress
- There needs to be a better awareness of wider market opportunities; the problem of parochialism is a real one and is prevalent in young people particularly
- Success stories from agencies involved in employment and training; who are the people finding work?

Group Two (Yellow)

- Motivation levels are low in the people for whom we are providing a service and should be addressed
- Skill requirement and training; to ensure that training on offer satisfies the needs of employers
- Effect of income on benefits is an identifiable problem
- Communication of information will be an important function for the Forum
- Opportunity to be flexible locally would be of benefit e.g. in the delivery of national, government training programmes
- Short-term contracts are on the increase
- Mobility versus parochialism; there is a need for people to be prepared to travel further to work, it was felt that this may be a cultural issue
- Partnership - if the way ahead is partnership working, then it must cut across organisational culture

Key Issues for the Forum (Group Leader-Fiona Stewart, Group Scribe-Andrew McQuaker)

Group One (Blue)

- The need to identify and share best practice policies in employment and training was recognised and a mechanism for this could be developed through the Forum
- Networking, which is taking place through events like the Forum meeting of 26/6/96
- Expanding partnerships - this it was felt could only prove beneficial on a local basis
- Funding and training- identifying all sources of both, possible creation of a directory
- Working groups it was felt should issue based and short life

Group Two (Red)

- Again funding was felt to be an issue requiring attention by the forum as some agencies are more adept than others in securing funding
- Working in partnership seems to be the way forward and should be further encouraged if proving successful
- Information on training, jobs and local labour market should be provided and exchanged; we must be aware of the services being provided by other agencies
- There needs to be a link between the training provided and the jobs available; training should be relevant, of a high quality and targeted
- Youth unemployment (16-25yrs) was identified as a key issue for the forum
- Working groups should have open membership and be issue dependant and short-life

On the day, a number of suggestions were put forward relating to possible structure of the Employment and Training Forum. Key issues were identified which might be tackled by Forum members and the experience and expertise required to do so can be made available through Forum working groups.

WellWise Ltd - Positive Partnership Presentation

Second speaker on the day was John Bergin, General Manager of WellWise Ltd who spoke about Positive Partnership.

John offered some background to WellWise Ltd and explained that the company's primary objective is to put unemployed people back to work. In order to be successful, the company must work in partnership. Since 1992 this has been extended and partners now include; NLC, Central Countryside Trust for Scotland, SCVO, Clydesdale District and Link Housing. Support also comes from STRU, JCS Training, Employment Service and Community Enterprise in Motherwell.

The advantages of working in partnership can be assessed when looking at WellWise's 'Partnership Outputs':-

- Paid employment
- Guaranteed local employment
- Local investment; purchasing goods and services locally
- Quality project development and capital investment e.g. Summerlee Project
- Vocational training delivered to SVQ Level 3. In sum, a fully integrated programme.

WellWise 'Partnership Achievements' between 1993- 1996 include:-

- 240 jobs created
- 104 positive outcomes
- 169 vocational qualifications
- Major projects undertaken such as Clyde/Avon Walkway, Summerlee environmental improvements, Wishaw Town Centre and Hillhouse
- European investment during this time amounts to £484,065.

John provided the following example of a typical WellWise programme comprising expenditure and outcomes:-

Project funder	£40k
On-site value of project	£77k
LDA training	£34k
ESF (SCVO)	£38k
Other	£13k
Jobs created	23
Positive outcomes	16
Total value of programme	£125k

Looking to the future, John talked about the joint WellWise and Plains Countryside Park project soon to commence whereby around ten local people will receive vocational training and work experience through the programme.

For WellWise, the partnership approach is the key to further success. By working in partnership, both risks and benefits are shared by organisations and the opportunity is presented to create jobs.

Employment and Training Forum Report

Training Resource Bank - Presentation of Cheque to Management Committee Members of Plains Countryside Park

Gordon Smith, Chairman, invited Cllr Connelly to present a cheque for £30,000 to Richard Cantwell (Chair) and William Morgan (Secretary) of Plains Countryside Park.

The funding, from NLC's Training Resource Bank, will go towards the purchase of equipment for a children's' play area in the park. In partnership with WellWise, Plains will offer vocational training to unemployed local people who will help to create the play area and complete additional environmental improvements.

Plains Countryside Park committee members accepted the cheque from Cllr Connelly but saved the photographs until after the event!

Chair's Closing Remarks

Gordon Smith concluded the morning's event by highlighting some of the points which were raised.

Key Issues:-

- The philosophy and politics of training - what is current training achieving? What should training be offering to people?
- The psychology of unemployment - delegates had considered what it means to be unemployed and the range of difficulties faced by the unemployed.
- Communication - delegates recognise the need for better communication and networking which an event like today can only improve.
- Funding - this is an issue which also requires to be addressed. With such a wide range of funding available, and changes taking place regularly, some agencies may be finding it easier than others to secure funding.
- Best practices - best practice policies can be developed by agencies working together in the field of economic development covering a range of services.
- Young people - the levels of youth unemployment are of real concern to delegates and is an issue which many delegates felt required urgent attention.
- Remit of Forum - many delegates felt that the remit of the Forum must be wider than the Central Area of North Lanarkshire. Much as Scottish Office funding was secured for this area, the Chairman also felt that "rings cannot be drawn around these problems (and issues) raised today."

Structure of Forum:-

- Steering group - many delegates felt that a steering group/management group should be in place to oversee the work of the Forum; set agenda, develop a strategy etc.
- Working groups - it seems likely that key issue working groups will be formed which, it was generally agreed, should be focused and time limited in order to avoid the 'talking shop' trap.
- Responsibility of Forum - it may be partly the responsibility of the Forum to ensure that people have training made available to them which will genuinely assist them in returning to work.
- Role of NLC - Gordon Smith felt that, from today, he could see a role for North Lanarkshire Council in bringing people together who work within the field of economic development.

Employment and Training Forum Report

Questions/Comments from Delegates

- Business Community - one delegate felt that there may have been better representation from this group and that they must be involved in the Forum.
- Forum events - another delegate commented on the fact that an event such the morning's should take place more regularly than annually; possibly every three months. He felt that more time had been required on the day to discuss issues.

Forum Steering Group

Many delegates felt the future work of the Employment and Training Forum should be guided by a Steering or Management Group. To this end, those present on the day were asked to volunteer their time and services to such a group. A varied representation is required for a Steering Group and, on the day, the following people agreed to become involved; Marian Gardiner (Monklands Enterprise), Nancy Duncan (LDA) and Teresa Lavery (NLC).

Conclusion

Staff from Summerlee Training Resource Unit would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues who attended, and contributed to, the event of 26 June.

Feedback from the discussion groups, and initial comments from participants, would suggest that there is a clear need for an Employment and Training Forum in North Lanarkshire. From this event, a potential structure for the Forum has been identified, key issues and gaps in services have been highlighted and a general agreement reached that Forum working groups should be established to tackle these issues.

STRU will continue to support the work of the Forum and, in the first instance, will distribute this Report, draw up an Evaluation Report of the event based on completed evaluation forms and arrange an initial meeting of the Forum's Steering Group.

For now, we look forward to working with our colleagues across North Lanarkshire in the establishment and development of the Employment and Training Forum.

Should you require further information or have any enquiries relating to the Forum, or additional services offered by STRU, please contact us on 01236 - 436801.