

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: CHRISTMAS PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY IN TOWN CENTRES
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 8 October 1996	Ref: CMcA/LU/REP.084	

AIM OF THE REPORT

The aim of this report is to seek agreement from Elected Members on the planned level of expenditure on promotional activities within town centres over the Christmas period.

BACKGROUND

Previous to local government reorganisation the various councils had different practices and different levels of support given to Christmas activity in town centres. The approach this year being recommended is that the Council would support existing initiatives. This approach is recommended as a result of a number of factors:-

- Limited time and resources to organise new events.
- To encourage a balance of activities and events in the town centres throughout the year as opposed to too many events in all of the town centres at the same time.
- Lack of support for some previous Christmas promotional events.

The town centres that are being considered for support are what are considered in the regional shopping hierarchy (Strathclyde Regional Council, Structure Plan 1995) Tier 3 and 4 shopping towns. In North Lanarkshire the shopping centres of Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Motherwell and Wishaw are graded Tier 3 and the town centres of Bellshill and Kilsyth are graded Tier 4.

The issue of Christmas street lights and trees is not straightforward given the different levels of assistance provided by previous Councils. The issue is currently under discussion with departments previously involved and it is intended to resolve the matter in the near future.

Cumbernauld and Motherwell

Both of these towns are privately managed shopping centres and the responsibility for Christmas promotional activity has been with the managing agents. The Council have been approached by one of the managing agents, C I N Property Management Ltd to assist in the purchase of a Santa's Grotto. It is recommended that an award of £400 be made towards the capital purchase of a grotto which will continue to be used in forthcoming years.

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In Motherwell it is proposed that the Council continue to give assistance with the official lighting up ceremony in Motherwell town centre. Assistance in the co-ordination of this event is being given by Town Centre Initiatives (the town centre management company funded by North Lanarkshire Council and British Steel (Industries) Ltd). It is proposed that £200 be awarded. This funding is used for the purchasing of refreshments for school choirs which attend the event.

In addition, Town Centre Initiatives Ltd have negotiated sponsorship from British Telecom to cover the full costs of purchasing Christmas trees in Bellshill and Wishaw and 50% of the cost in Motherwell town centre.

Coatbridge, Airdrie and Kilsyth

In these towns an official switch on of the Christmas lights is planned. An award of £1,000 towards costs incurred at these events across the 3 towns is recommended.

Bellshill Town Centre

Bellshill Town Centre have for some years organised a street event to mark the switching on of the Christmas lights, this has included providing children's entertainment, music and street entertainment. An award of £1,000 towards this event is recommended.

Wishaw Gala Evening

This will be the third year of the Wishaw Gala evening held at the start of December and marks the switching on of the Christmas street lights. The event has in the past attracted an estimated 5 to 6000 people. A contribution of £3,900 is recommended.

Entertainment Staff

It is anticipated that £1,500 will be required to provide a Santa Claus and children's gifts to attend all of the events in Motherwell, Coatbridge, Airdrie, Kilsyth, Wishaw and Bellshill.

FUNDING

The above recommendations are equalling a total cost of £8,000. Discussions have taken place with New Lanarkshire Ltd (Super County Campaign) who have agreed to provide 50% of the funding. It is suggested that the remaining £4,000 be funded from the Economic Development Unit's "Contingency for Joint Ventures" budget.

TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES LTD

All of the above events will be co-ordinated and/or arranged by Town Centre Initiatives Ltd. Town Centre Initiatives Ltd works in partnership with the various business groups and traders forums based in the towns of Coatbridge, Airdrie, Kilsyth, Bellshill, Wishaw and Motherwell. A detailed programme of activity and events across all the towns will be provided to the Committee at a later date.

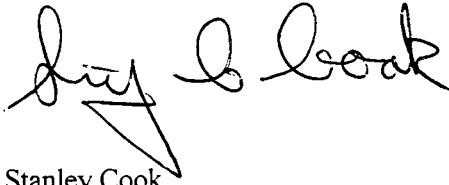
FUTURE PLANNING

The Economic Development Unit would like to see more promotional and community events taking place in the town centres of North Lanarkshire. Through Town Centre Initiatives we would wish to discuss with other departments any plans there are for the development of activity in town centres to ensure a co-ordinated and balanced approach across all of these town centres.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee agrees the allocation of £4,000 towards the funding of Christmas promotional events in town centres from existing funds in the "Contingency for Joint Ventures" budget to be allocated along with £4,000 of New Lanarkshire funding as follows:-

Cumbernauld	£400
Motherwell	£200
Coatbridge, Airdrie and Kilsyth	£1,000
Bellshill	£1,000
Wishaw	£3,900
Entertainment Staff & Gifts	£1,500



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For further information contact Gordon Smith, Head of Economic Development and Planning.