

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Subject: DOORS OPEN DAY 1998	
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 5 MARCH 1998	Ref: DW/REP.375	

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the *Doors Open Day* initiative in 1997 and seek approval for the Economic Development Unit to actively contribute to the 1998 initiative.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 On 21 September 1997 North Lanarkshire Council participated in *Doors Open Day* 1997. Eight buildings in North Lanarkshire were opened to the public free of charge. *Doors Open Day* 1997 was an opportunity for residents of North Lanarkshire and visitors from outwith the area to see behind the doors of buildings of contrasting architectural style which represent some of the finest buildings to be found in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.2 *Doors Open Day* is a unique annual event, sponsored by the Council of Europe, which aims to raise public awareness of the architectural and cultural heritage of their local area. During September, across the whole of Europe, communities invite the general public to explore their built environment. In Scotland, *Doors Open Day* is co-ordinated by the Scottish Civic Trust with financial assistance from Historic Scotland. 1997 was the eighth year of *Doors Open Day* and more buildings were opened than ever before (685 properties). Buildings with a wide range of architectural styles, periods and uses which are not normally open to the public were specially opened and entry to all buildings was free.

### *Experience from 1997*

- 2.3 Co-ordinated by the Department of Planning and Development and promoted by the Department of Leisure Services, a total of 923 'visitors' participated in last year's event. An indication of the number of 'visitors' for each building and study tours conducted is noted below:

	No. of visitors
• Airdrie Observatory	27
• Cumbernauld House	100
• Cumbernauld Theatre	30
• Colzium House, Kilsyth	118
• Motherwell Heritage Centre	298
• Stepps Parish Church	40
• Summerlee Heritage Park	294
• (60 tours of Park and 2 tours of the archaeological site)	
• Weavers' Cottages	16

- 2.4 The inaugural *Doors Open Day* was considered to have been a welcome success. Whilst learning a great deal about the architecture of the various properties, the event was augmented by exhibitions, demonstrations and music, extending the theme to a celebration of the area's history and culture.
- 2.5 *Doors Open Day* is a 'grass roots' movement, with local amenity groups, branches of national societies and officers in local authorities devising their own programmes to meet local needs and address local wishes. In the past, Cumbernauld House and Theatre were opened to the public with the support of Cumbernauld Amenity Trust and the former Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District Council. In 1997 *Doors Open Day* in North Lanarkshire was supported by Cumbernauld Theatre, the Summerlee Transport Group, Friends of Summerlee, ASTRA and Cumbernauld Amenity Trust.

### ***Doors Open Day 1998 - Local Company Participation***

- 2.6 Following last year's experience, it has been deemed appropriate for *Doors Open Day 1998* to be co-ordinated and promoted by the Department of Leisure Services. Leisure Services has the resource of community development staff, as well as operating a number of the main attractions which opened their doors in 1997 (Summerlee Heritage Park, Motherwell Heritage Centre, Weavers' Cottages).
- 2.7 The 1997 event highlighted the rich architectural, archaeological and cultural history which has arisen from North Lanarkshire's industrial past. For the 1998 event, it is proposed that the current industrial and commercial backbone of the economy should also be placed on public view. North Lanarkshire is home to a number of businesses, both indigenous companies and inward investors, old and new, which would provide a fascinating insight for both residents and visitors to the area.
- 2.8 The Economic Development Unit is ideally placed to use its contacts in order to encourage companies to open up their doors on the allotted weekend in September. For operational reasons they may choose to limit their hours/day of opening, and organise guided tours at specific times. At no point should the safety regulations of the premises be compromised.
- 2.9 By offering a wide and varied programme of events over the Open Doors weekend, North Lanarkshire can make its mark at a Scottish level. The integration of working business premises with popular leisure attractions will provide a broad overview of the area's industrial history, culture and future, and can be marketed as the unique selling point for the initiative.
- 2.10 This event has the potential to change people's perceptions of an area. It is an ideal showcase for the regeneration initiatives which have transformed North Lanarkshire, and which are having a substantial positive impact on the economy and the lives of local people. By encouraging visitors into the area for a one-off event like this, *Doors Open Day* can act as a catalyst for future visits and tourism expenditure.
- 2.11 Initial enquiries suggest that it may be possible to obtain financial and other support for this European initiative through EU funding, particularly if an exhibition were combined with a twin-town. Additional sponsorship might also be sought.

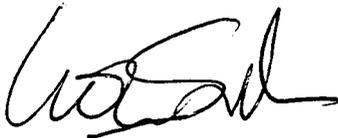
## **3 Conclusions**

- 3.1 *Doors Open Day 1998* provides North Lanarkshire with an opportunity to open up its commercial and historical core to the public, and re-position the area in the public mind. This re-imagining plays an important role in investment decisions, be they industrial, commercial or residential. It has potential for showcasing the visitor attractions of the area, thereby stimulating expenditure in the area in the longer term.

#### 4 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- i) note the contents of the report
- ii) agree that the Planning & Development Department approaches local businesses with a view to participating in the Doors Open Day 1998
- iii) liaises with the Director of Leisure Services in order to maximise the return of this initiative.



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**Director of Planning and Development**

13 February 1998

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