

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: CLOSURE OF SUMMERLEE TRAINING & RESOURCE UNIT, COATBRIDGE
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 23 rd November 2000	Ref: JT/JG/REP737	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Economic Development Committee in order to advise members of the closure of the Summerlee Training Resource Unit, (STRU) project located at Heritage Way, Coatbridge and the subsequent relocation of economic development support services.

2. Background

- 2.1 Summerlee Training Resource Unit (STRU) was established in November 1994, by Monklands District Council as an Urban Programme project in partnership with Summerlee Heritage Trust. The Trust was originally responsible for the implementation and strategic management of the project with overall supervision being the responsibility of Monklands District Council's Planning & Development Department.
- 2.2 The Trust was dissolved and Summerlee Heritage Museum was subsumed into Monklands District Council Leisure & Technical Services Department. Monklands District Council decided, prior to reorganisation, to transfer the project to Summerlee Heritage Museum as it was forming an essential part of the Council's economic development strategy.
- 2.3 Since reorganisation the project has been supervised and managed by the Economic Development Unit, Planning & Environment Department, North Lanarkshire Council.
- 2.4 Under the Urban Programme the aim of the project was to provide an employment related training and resource service targeted at unemployed residents of designated areas of need within the Monklands area which offered training opportunities over a range of activities and a range of skills by co-ordinating existing resources in liaison with appropriate training agencies and funding resources which provided locally based support and counselling.
- 2.5 Urban Programme funding terminated in 1998 and the project has since then been supported financially by funding from the Economic Development Unit and, where appropriate the European Social Fund (ESF). This has enabled the Unit to provide and develop the strategic aims of the Economic Development Unit in relation to provision of support services to unemployed residents and community organisations within North Lanarkshire.

3. Current Position

3.1 In considering the closure of the STRU premises and the relocation of staff and the delivery of support services there were a number of factors which have contributed to this course of action. These include the following:-

- The strategic role of the Economic Development function within the Planning & Environment Department is one which is viewed as a core activity in assisting the regeneration of the North Lanarkshire economy. In order to respond to the challenge of providing a co-ordinated and focused range of support services to unemployed residents and community organisations the support services that exist at present require to be located centrally within the Economic Development Unit.
- While the original aims and objectives of the former Urban Programme project have been met the continuation of the project no longer meets the strategic objectives identified within the recent Lanarkshire-wide Review of Services to the Unemployed in that a community based organisation is no longer available at the project location.
- Changes in the economic environment require that staff presently located within STRU need to work, on a day to day basis, with colleagues within the Economic Development Unit in order to provide a co-ordinated and focused response to the needs of client groups.
- As an outreach project the STRU premises do not provide disabled access and a recent Health & Safety report on the building has raised a number of fundamental issues that would require substantial financial investment.
- At some point in the future the premises would require to be vacated as the building forms part of a development plan to extend the activities of the Summerlee Heritage Museum.
- A recent Health & Safety report by North Lanarkshire Council has identified a number of concerns. As a training venue no egress is available from the training suite. The peripatetic nature of support from STRU has meant that the building was occupied by one female clerical assistant.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Given the above the Director of Planning & Environment concluded that, with effect from Friday 27 October 2000, that the operational support activities provided at STRU would be transferred to the Economic Development Unit. This relocation of support services will not diminish the previous support available within North Lanarkshire and will in all probability enhance existing support services. Three contracted employees of North Lanarkshire Council who at present provide community economic regeneration support, redundancy support and a peripatetic training resource function have been relocated within the Economic Development Unit, based at Fleming House, Cumbernauld

4.2 Management and supervision of the support services identified in 4.1 above are part of the present functions of the Economic Development Unit and the re-location of the support services provided via STRU by the Economic Development Unit will provide greater management control and operational effectiveness in the future delivery of support services.

- 4.3 An exit strategy to effect the rundown and re-location of support services was developed in order to ensure that client groups were not adversely affected by the closure of the STRU building and appropriate Council Departments were informed and consulted during the wind-down process.
- 4.4 Individual clients and community organisations who previously utilised the services of STRU were redirected, where appropriate, to other support organisations. Appropriate customer care measures were taken in order to keep our clients informed of the continual and additional support that may be available from the Economic Development Unit.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Economic Development Committee
- (i) note the closure of the premises located at Summerlee Training Resource Unit, Heritage Way, Coatbridge with effect from Friday 27 October 2000, and
 - (ii) homologate the decision of the Director of Planning and Environment to effect the closure and relocate staff and support services.



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Date of Report: 13 November 2000