

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: PUBLICATION SCHEME
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 5 May 2004	Ref: JAF/IL	

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The report advises of the approval of North Lanarkshire Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, summarises the implications and advises of action taken to bring it into effect.

2. **Background**

2.1 In terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 each Council is required to formulate and submit for the approval of the Scottish Information Commissioner a Publication Scheme detailing all information which is published as a matter of course. On 23 April the Scottish Information Commissioner formally approved the North Lanarkshire Council Publication Scheme. A copy of the approved Publication Scheme has been deposited in the Members' Library and a copy will be sent to each member of the Council for inclusion in the Members' Information Pack.

2.2 A benefit of the Publication Scheme is that, for any information available under the Publication Scheme, the other provisions of the Freedom of Information Act do not apply. Once approved, however, the Council is required to provide any person who requests it with any information covered by the Publication Scheme – subject, as appropriate, to the conditions and/or charges set out in the Publication Scheme.

2.3 In terms of the Act, the Publication Scheme must come into effect by 1 June 2004: it is, however, open to the Council to bring the Publication Scheme into effect at any time before that date.

3. **Implications**

3.1 The Council's Publication Scheme – which, with indices, extends to 96 pages – is available on the Council's web site. It has been compiled by the Corporate Freedom of Information Working Group and, in each instance, its contents have been fully checked with the relevant Department. From the time it comes into force, however, it will be necessary that, within each Department, all staff who are likely to be asked for information are aware of its contents. For that reason, prior to the Council bringing the Publication Scheme into effect, all relevant staff require to be advised of it and of the information published by, in particular, their own Department.

3.2 It is important, too, that the public have ready access to the Publication Scheme. It is accordingly proposed that, in addition to access by way of the web site, hard copies of the Publication Scheme should be available for inspection at the following locations:

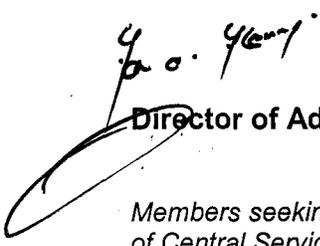
- The Council headquarters, the former District headquarters at Bron Way, Cumbernauld and Kildonan Street, Coatbridge and each departmental headquarters
- All North Lanarkshire Council First Stop Shops
- All North Lanarkshire Council libraries
- All North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Area Offices

#### 4. **Date of Commencement**

- 4.1 In terms of the Act the Council must fully implement the Publication Scheme by 1 June 2004. All of the information contained within the Publication Scheme is now published by the Council: for that reason it would have been possible for the North Lanarkshire Publication Scheme to be brought into immediate effect. There was, however, advantage in giving prior notice of the commencement of the Publication Scheme to all relevant staff and, for that reason, after consultation with the Convener it was determined that the Publication Scheme commencement date be 11 May.

#### 5. **Recommendation**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the approval of North Lanarkshire Council's Publication Scheme, the implications for the Council and the action taken to bring the Publication Scheme into effect.

  
**Director of Administration**

*Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services on Extension 2228.*