

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 32

To: HOUSING & TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: Tenants Information Service-Funding Request 2002/2003	
From: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & PROPERTY SERVICES		
Date: 5 February 2003	Ref: TMcK/CR	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to renew funding to the Tenants Information Service for 2002/2003.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Tenants Information Service (TIS) is an independent organisation, which provides advice and assistance for tenants in Scotland. TIS receive grant support from 17 Local Authorities and provide a wide range of services in return. They offer information on the full range of housing issues to landlords and tenants and provide advice and development assistance as necessary. They contribute to best practice in tenant participation through published guidance reports and as members of the Scottish Executive's Working Group on Tenant Participation.
- 2.2 Last year the Council contributed funding of £8,195 to TIS. This year TIS has requested continuation of funding at this level with a small increase for inflation (Appendix 1). This would represent £8,399 for 2002/2003. In return TIS offer free advice and development support (including personal visits) to tenant and resident groups, publish guides and briefing notes and respond to ad-hoc requests from tenants and housing staff for information. By contributing North Lanarkshire are eligible for discounted rates on training courses.

3. Outline of Main Proposals

- 3.1 Given the Councils commitment to developing tenant participation and increasing community involvement it is recommended that funding support of £8,399 be granted to the Tenants Information Service for 2002/2003.
- 3.2 As part of its Tenant Participation Strategy the Council will be conducting a review of all tenant participation funding and support by April 2004. This review will be undertaken in partnership with tenants and tenant representatives. Any future funding requests will be considered as part of the review process.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that Committee approves the request for funding of £8,399 to TIS for 2002/2003 from within the existing HRA revenue budget and that any continued funding beyond this date is subject to annual review.

5. Background Information

5.1 Background papers are available within the Housing & Property Services Department



Thomas McKenzie
Director of Housing & Property Services



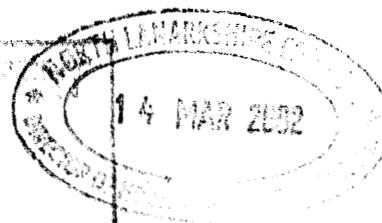
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13th March 2002

North Lanarkshire Council
Mr Tom MacKenzie, Director of Housing & Property
Municipal Buildings
Kildonan Street
COATBRIDGE
ML5 3NG



Dear Mr MacKenzie,

Re: Financial Contribution to Tenants Information Service 2002/2003

I am writing to ask your Council to continue contributing to the funding of the Tenants Information Service, as you have done in the past. Our budget for 2002/2003 is enclosed and shows a planned turnover similar to financial year 2001/02. The structure of income shows more reliance on consultancy income. You can see from this that we require funding from councils to contribute approximately 11% of our overall income, in cash terms being slightly less than last year.

The core service TIS provides throughout Scotland in exchange for council funding can be summarised as follows:

- Responses to ad-hoc requests from tenants and tenant support staff for information on the whole range of housing issues
- Advice and written information on establishing and running tenants' representative organisations
- Advice on constitutions for tenants' organisations
- Advice on the development of the skills needed by tenants' representatives
- Advice on establishing sound tenant participation practices, and dealing with problems arising in tenant participation practice
- Contributing to best practice in tenant participation including implementing the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Provision of a web site for convenient access to our publications
- Free supply of basic guides.

These services are delivered by letter, by phone and by personal visits from TIS staff, depending on need. Recipients are of course tenants' representatives themselves, but notably also include housing staff with duties relating to the promotion of tenant participation. Our range of free information guides now includes a Guide to Starting Up & Running Tenants' Associations. Recently we produced a "Health Check" to assist landlords and tenants review tenant participation from which elements of the statutory tenant participation strategies may be identified.

Council funding also allows TIS to provide tenant places at its conferences and training courses at less than full cost, which promotes better participation at these events.

I hope the foregoing helps verify the all round contribution TIS makes to the furtherance of good tenant participation practice throughout Scotland.

Last financial year your Council contributed **£8,195.00**. Our specific request is that you repeat this with an allowance for inflation.

Audited accounts for 2001/02 and our annual report will be sent to you in June, when they are produced for presentation to our AGM.

I would like to mention in passing that we are increasingly commissioned by landlords to assist with

- ❖ Developing tenant participation strategies
- ❖ Assisting with tenant consultation on the contractual aspects of the Scottish Secure Tenancy
- ❖ Facilitating local tenants' capacity building, and
- ❖ Facilitating particular tenant participation exercises related to service reviews.

If we could help you with any of these tasks, let me know.

Let me know if I can help further in your Council's consideration of this funding request. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,
For Tenants Information Service



PP
Greg Brown, Co-ordinator
Dundee Office

Enc. TIS Budget 2002/2003