

REPORT

To: MOTHERWELL AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: NORTH LANARKSHIRE SCHEME FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS - CONSULTATION EXERCISE
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 02 February 1999	Ref: TG/MR	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council at a meeting of the General Purposes Committee in November last year agreed to initiate a consultation exercise on proposals for the introduction of a North Lanarkshire Scheme for Community Councils.
- 1.2. The consultation exercise commenced on 2 December and this has involved the production of a Consultative Document which has been issued to all Councillors, Community Councils and for reference it was available at various libraries and other public buildings throughout North Lanarkshire.
- 1.3. In law the Council has to produce a Scheme which contains certain elements i.e. Community Council area maps; reasons as to why it is considered unnecessary to have a Community Council for a particular area; provisions for meetings, elections, finances; and proposals for an information exchange amongst other matters.

2. Current Position in North Lanarkshire

- 2.1. At present there are 76 Community Council areas in North Lanarkshire, of which 46 Community Councils are currently active.
- 2.2. Over the past three years the Council while having no direct responsibility for Community Councils has exercised a stewardship over their operation and have received 8 petitions requesting the establishment of Community Councils, while at the same time taking steps to wind up six now defunct Community Councils
- 2.3. A budget of around £40,000 per annum has been set aside for Community Councils and they currently receive a grant of £450 per Community Council plus £9 per 100 of electorate.
- 2.4. In addition, the Council provides copies of Minutes, consults with Community Councils on matters of mutual interest i.e. the promotion of bye-laws prohibiting the drinking of alcohol in public places and gives general assistance in the operation of Community Councils.

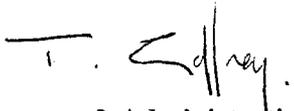
3. Current Status of Consultation Exercise

- 3.1. The official deadline for submissions closed on Friday, 29 January 1999.
- 3.2. To date, 20 or so formal responses have been received, some of which go into considerable detail and the contents of these are currently being assessed. Informally, there has also been feedback from Community Councils and elected Members which has been supportive of the proposals in the Consultation Document.

- 3.3. It is intended to bring a further report to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee prior to the publication of a draft scheme which will deal with these representations.
- 3.4. Again, after considering representations to this draft scheme, the Council will publicise its intentions and after a further period of consultation, if so considered, amend the draft scheme and thereafter adopt it.
- 3.5. It is anticipated that the new Community Councils will be in operation by the Autumn of this year.

4. Future Developments

- 4.1. For a variety of reasons there has been an increase in interest in Community Councils in North Lanarkshire over the past three years.
- 4.2. A survey is currently being conducted by the University of Glasgow on the role and effectiveness of Community Councils which has been commissioned by the Mackintosh Commission on Local Government and the Scottish Parliament.
- 4.3. Whatever the perceptions are about Community Councils and they differ widely throughout Scotland, there is no denying renewed Governmental interest in Community Councils.
- 4.4. One fact supporting this and which should be borne in mind is that of the 33 questions to local authorities and other consultees in Consultation Paper 2 of the Mackintosh Commission, no less than 12 questions touched upon the role of Community Councils in Scotland.



Director of Administration

Should any Member require further information please contact Tom Gaffney at Ext. 2342.