

To: Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub-Committee	Subject: COMMUNITY FORUM CONFERENCE	
From: Chief Executive		
Date: 12 January 1999	Ref: CE012/23/03	

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Sub-Committee to consider and approve arrangements for a Community Forum Conference.

2 Background

2.1 The Council's Decentralisation Scheme identified community involvement as one of the cornerstones of the Council's approach to decentralisation. Community forums will bring together representatives of a range of community organisations were identified as one way of achieving this.

2.2 Area Committees have a remit to establish community forums, to support them and develop effective working relationships with them.

3 Current Position

3.1 In all 9 of the Decentralisation areas, community representatives have through a series of public consultation meetings decided to set up a community forum. To date 7 forums have been inaugurated an update on the position in each area is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 The current annual review of decentralisation has revealed a diversity of arrangements regarding the composition and operation of forums, the way they are supported and the negotiated working arrangements between forums and the Council's area structures.

4 Proposed Conference

4.1 In a Decentralised context a diversity of arrangements regarding community forums is appropriate. It is for the forums themselves to discuss and negotiate working arrangements at an area level with area committees and area teams.

4.2 However, it is incumbent on the Council centrally to identify common issues and good practice which may be relevant in all areas and to support and facilitate an efficient approach to making progress. Accordingly it is proposed to hold a conference bringing together representatives of all community forums to exchange information, identify common issues and consider how these may be addressed through joint initiatives or new links between the forums.

4.3 It is proposed to hold the conference on a suitable date in March. All community forum members will be invited to participate.

- 4.4 It will be important that the event is perceived by participants as an opportunity for them to determine the outcomes. If feasible a small working group comprising one representative of each forum will be established to assist in the development of the programme for the event.
- 4.5 It is proposed to fund the event from the 1998/99 Payments to Agencies and Other Bodies Budget with the Chief Executive's department. Outline costings for the conference have been identified as approximately £3,500 including venue, catering etc.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Sub Committee:
- (a) approve the arrangements and associated expenditure for the community forum conference as detailed in the report; and
 - (b) otherwise note the contents of this report.


Chief Executive

COMMUNITY FORUMS UPDATE

Community representatives in all 9 of the decentralisation areas have decided to set up a community forum. This follows a series of public consultation meetings organised by the Councils Area Committees and Area Teams. The make up of the forums varies from area to area but all will bring together community representatives to raise issues with the Council, influence decisions and debate local priorities. To date 7 forums have been inaugurated

Airdrie and Villages:

The composition of the forum was agreed at a meeting in October. The first meeting of the forum was held on 24 November. Established. Appointing office bearers. 6 weekly cycle of meetings. Formal liaison arrangements with Area Committee. Attend Area Committee meetings.

Bellshill and District:

The forum has met 3 times. It has reached an agreement with the Area Committee about attending Area Committee meetings. The forum is currently considering how to keep the wider community informed of local matters. Established. 6 weekly cycle of meetings. Informal meeting to get to know one another - 14.1.99. Formal invitation to attend Area Committee meetings. Training with Community Education and Social Work Department.

Coatbridge:

The structure of the forum was agreed at a public meeting in September and nominations for the forum have been sought. The inaugural meeting of the forum has been delayed to allow time for a further phase of nominations.

Cumbernauld:

The forum was launched on 6 October and has agreed to meet every 6 weeks. A small working group comprising representatives of the forum is continuing to meet to develop a constitution for the forum. Forum representatives are attending Area Committee meetings

Kilsyth and Villages:

The consultation and planning required to establish the forum is now concluded. The 16 December 1998 meeting of the Area Committee agreed with a proposal from Kilsyth Community Council that the community forum consist of an umbrella grouping of all four of the Community Councils in the Kilsyth and Villages area.

Motherwell:

Forum has had three meetings to consider poverty, Ravenscraig and community safety. Next meeting will take place in February of this year.

Northern Corridor:

The forum held its inaugural meeting in October. The forum is working to enlarge its membership and attract more young people and has agreed to undertake a 'getting organised' programme offered by the Area Team.

Shotts and Harthill:

The structure of the forum was agreed at a public meeting on 6 October together with the membership. The inaugural meeting will take place on 9 November 1998. Established. Appointed office bearers. Constitution finalised. 6 weekly cycle of meetings.

Wishaw and Newmains:

The forum has met 3 times and agreed a range of issues to consider over the coming months. The forum is represented at Area Committee meetings.

NS 14/1/99