

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee	Subject: Lanarkshire Development Agency - Development of Rural Strategy
From: Chief Executive	
Date: 24 February 1999	Ref: CE/012/020/003

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee on Lanarkshire Development Agency's proposals to formulate a Rural Strategy as part of the Changing Gear initiative and to request the Sub Committee to consider supporting the development of this Strategy with a financial contribution of £3,000.

2.0 Background

2.1 Members will recall that the Community Development Sub Committee, at its meeting on 20 January 1999, considered a report by the Chief Executive which detailed progress in regard to the development of a number of Council strategies and policies including a North Lanarkshire Rural Policy. Reference was made to North Lanarkshire Council's involvement with Lanarkshire Development Agency (LDA) and the other Changing Gear partners (South Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Homes) to assist in and support the development of the LDA's Rural Strategy.

2.2 The LDA, as part of Changing Gear, is seeking to develop a Rural Strategy both to promote and safeguard economic development and rural regeneration within the village and rural areas across Lanarkshire. The LDA has invited both North and South Lanarkshire Councils together with Scottish Homes to assist in this process.

2.3 Frontline Consultants, who have previous experience in preparing and researching similar strategies, including recent work in the Scottish Borders, have been appointed by the LDA to assist in the development of the Rural Strategy and North Lanarkshire Council, together with the other partner agencies is requested to consider a financial contribution to this process.

3.0 Input By North Lanarkshire Council

3.1 It is recognised that North Lanarkshire Council does not have a similar level of responsibility for rural areas or villages in comparison to any of the other Changing Gear partner agencies. Similarly, and for prioritisation reasons, the Council has concentrated much of its recent regeneration work in the urban areas. Accordingly, North Lanarkshire Council is only now beginning the process of preparing its own corporate framework for work in rural areas. The potential contribution to be made to the development of the LDA's Rural Strategy is therefore somewhat less, although equally significant, to the contributions to be made by South Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Homes and other appropriate agencies.

3.2 Whilst Frontline intend researching and preparing the draft Rural Strategy through a series of interviews and workshops with key agencies including public, private and voluntary sector representatives and local individuals it is suggested that this approach may be less appropriate in North Lanarkshire for the reasons outlined above and in the absence of a corporate rural policy. In order that North Lanarkshire Council may inform and contribute to the process however, and also to ensure that the resultant Strategy is both relevant and beneficial to the needs of rural communities

within North Lanarkshire it is intended that the Chief Executive's and Planning and Development Departments will provide Frontline with relevant information in relation to issues and current and planned service delivery methods in North Lanarkshire.

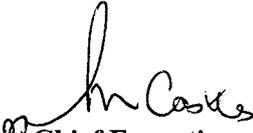
- 3.3 It is further intended that the Rural Strategy will be available in draft format at the end of March and North Lanarkshire Council along with the other partner agencies will be invited to consider the draft Strategy before finally endorsing North Lanarkshire Council support for the proposals contained therein.

4.0 Funding Requirement

- 4.1 The production of the Rural Strategy is estimated to cost some £15,500 excluding any expenses. The LDA and South Lanarkshire Council are already committed to funding the process and North Lanarkshire Council is requested to consider a financial contribution of £3,000. The Strategy will greatly assist North Lanarkshire Council in the development of its own Rural Policy and it is expected that many of those issues raised within the Strategy will be experienced within North Lanarkshire rural communities. Similarly, examples of good practice or innovative approaches to combating rural decline detailed within the Strategy may be replicated in North Lanarkshire. It is further recognised that North Lanarkshire Council is committed to working in partnership with the LDA and other strategic partners to achieve the aims of Changing Gear and any financial contribution would re-affirm this commitment.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee is requested to:
- i) Note the proposal by the LDA and its strategic partners to develop a Lanarkshire Rural Development Strategy as part of the Changing Gear initiative;
 - ii) Confirm North Lanarkshire Council's support for the development of the Strategy and note that a draft copy of the Strategy will be made available to the Council prior to publication;
 - iii) Approve a funding contribution of £3,000 towards the production of the Strategy from the Chief Executive's Payments to Agencies and Other Bodies Budget 1998/99; and
 - iv) Otherwise note the contents of this report.


Chief Executive