

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Shotts & Harthill Area Committee	Subject: Establishment of a Community Forum for the Shotts and Harthill Area
From: Director of Administration as Liaison Director	
Date: 22 April 1998	Ref: SC/CEO12/023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Members will recall that at the Committee of 24 March, 1998 a report was submitted on the outcome of the public meeting which was held on Wednesday, 18 February, 1998 at the Community Education Centre, Shotts to discuss the establishment of a Community Forum for the Shotts and Harthill Area.

1.2 It was determined at this meeting that the format and detail of the proposed Community Forum for Shotts and Harthill be considered at a Special Meeting of the Committee. The purpose of this paper is to outline a proposal for the formation of the Forum and agree a timescale for the next stages.

2.0 Establishment of a Community Forum

2.1 Feedback from the previous public meeting indicated that membership of the Community Forum should comprise both representatives from the local community and voluntary organisations and local people. It was felt that the appointment of representatives should be done in a manner which was open, fair and accountable. At the same time it will be important to minimise unnecessary formality or over elaborate procedures.

2.2 Establishment of an appropriate and effective Community Forum structure will not be achieved immediately and it may take some time for a Forum to be developed which is reflective of local people's requirements and priorities. However as a first stage in this process, it is suggested that the Area Committee consider the structure and process detailed in this report.

2.3 It has been generally accepted that one Community Forum be established to serve the Shotts and Harthill area. The Forum should comprise of a maximum of 'say' 15 members drawn from both community and voluntary organisations and the local community. It is anticipated that the Forum will require representation on an geographic area basis based on recognised Community Councils and an issue or topic basis. In addition there may be merit in providing for places to accommodate representatives who are local interested people not associated with any particular group or organisation.

2.4 It is suggested therefore that the composition of the Shotts and Harthill Community Forum should be:-

	No of Representatives
a) Area Representation - Community Councils	6
b) Community & Voluntary Organisations	6
c) Local Individuals	3

- a) It is suggested that two representatives for each Community Council would be appropriate
- b) Voluntary and community organisations could be grouped under specific themes or common interests e.g. young people, elderly people, disabled and special needs organisations, pre 5's and children, hobby and special interest groups, self help and support organisations and community development organisations.
 - Hobby and special interest groups will include art and music societies and sports club.
 - Self help and support groups will include for example lone parents groups or groups organised around a health issue.
 - Community development organisations refers to groups who have identified a local need or organised around a particular issue. For example housing and tenant associations; credit unions; food co-operatives; environmental groups; information and advice services.

2.5 Community and voluntary organisations themselves will be able to identify the theme most appropriate to their individual aims and it may be possible to identify and add other themes as appropriate if this is of significance at the proposed further public meeting.

2.6 It is anticipated that the Community Forum would meet regularly, perhaps even on a six weekly cycle say two weeks prior to the Area Committee. This meeting cycle may obviously be altered once the Forum is operational. It would be the intention that the Forum would ultimately be a structured organisation with office bearers as appropriate. However it would need initially to operate in an unconstituted format. In order to provide a formal link between the community Forum and the Area Committee, it would perhaps be appropriate for a joint meeting to take place at minimum on a quarterly or six monthly basis chaired by the Convener of the Area Committee. The purpose of this meeting would be to share information on common concerns and issues.

3.0 The Way Forward

3.1 In order to appoint community representatives to serve on the Community Forum it is suggested that a further public meeting be convened to outline the proposed Forum structure and seek nominations and appointments.

3.2 The main purpose of the meeting would be to establish the Community Forum and it is therefore vital that the participants who attend the meeting have a clear understanding in advance, of the purpose of the meeting and the proposal being made. It is suggested that the Area Committee's proposals and the notification of any meeting be distributed as widely and as quickly as possible to allow community organisations sufficient time to discuss the proposals prior to the public meeting. The information should be distributed to the following:

- invitation to all those who attended the previous meeting
- letter and invitation to all known community groups/organisations
- posters displayed in public offices and facilities
- article in the local press.

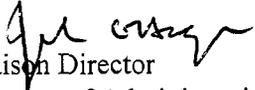
3.3 This meeting would allow community and voluntary groups to meet together under their common interest themes and to select a representative from their group. Similarly area organisations could also meet collectively to select appropriate representation. Nominations for the individual representatives could also be taken at this time.

3.4 Once the representation has been determined and Forum members selected, one of the first items would be discussion on the role, responsibilities and remit of the Community Forum. This would then allow the Forum to plan out its agendas accordingly.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Area Committee is requested to:

approve the suggested Community Forum structure as an initial response and development procedure as outlined in this report and instruct the Liaison Director to make the necessary arrangements to convene and conduct a further public meeting.


Liaison Director
Director of Administration