

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: LANARKSHIRE COMMUNITY CARE FORUM	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 15 JANUARY 2004	Ref: dm/lccf	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report advises Committee of plans to reinvest monies currently used to fund Lanarkshire Community Care Forum to support the establishment of a separate North Lanarkshire Community Users and Carers Forum.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Lanarkshire Community Care Forum was established over ten years ago to represent the voice of service users and carers in Lanarkshire. Following local government reorganisation it was funded on a tripartite basis by North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire. The offices of the Forum are in Beckford Street, Hamilton.
- 2.2. A review of the service provided by the Forum concluded that it was necessary to create a stronger presence in North Lanarkshire. In 1998 it was agreed that the Council would fund the post of a North Lanarkshire Development Worker to supplement existing funding arrangements. This saw the creation of a North Lanarkshire Steering Group and led to a much more dynamic relationship between the Council and the Forum, who conducted various consultation events on major service initiatives. The Steering Group also participated in the establishment of North Lanarkshire Carers Together, an umbrella organisation for carers.
- 2.3. Arrangements in South Lanarkshire to support the service users and carers took on a different shape with the establishment of a user and carer support team within the Council's Social Work Department. Consequently there has been no formal equivalent steering group in South Lanarkshire.
- 2.4. Relationships between North Lanarkshire members of the Forum and the Forum Management Committee have deteriorated over the last 18 months. The North Lanarkshire Development Worker sought to be released to attend a community care course one day a week. This was approved by the North Lanarkshire Steering Group and the Council but overturned by the Forum's Management Committee, which had a majority of members from South Lanarkshire. Officers from North Lanarkshire indicated that the Council could not reasonably be expected to fund an organisation that was prepared to overrule decisions that pertained solely to North Lanarkshire.
- 2.5. This resulted in the North Lanarkshire Steering Group considering whether to move towards a separate organisation for North Lanarkshire or remain within a pan-Lanarkshire arrangement. At that time they decided on the latter. Subsequent events made it increasingly difficult to sustain this position, culminating in a recent and highly acrimonious Annual General Meeting of the Forum in October 2003.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The North Lanarkshire Steering Group has advised funding partners and the Management Committee of the Forum, in writing, that they wish to disassociate themselves and establish a separate Forum for North Lanarkshire.
- 3.2. Currently North Lanarkshire Council is the largest funder of the Forum (£48,886 per annum). South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire each fund £21,732 per annum. Officers from each of the funding organisations have indicated that they are committed to retaining the funding to support the participation of users and carers in the planning and delivery of services.
- 3.3. The use to which these monies is put is likely to vary between Council areas. Officers from South Lanarkshire Council have held preliminary discussions about this with Forum members from their area. NHS Lanarkshire has indicated that they are willing to retain levels of existing investment on a proportionate basis (55%/45%) across Council areas.
- 3.4. The North Lanarkshire Steering Group has produced a draft constitution, will shortly seek charitable status and is searching for suitable premises. Notice has been given to Lanarkshire Community Care Forum of the Council's intention to withdraw funding beyond 31st March 2004. The proposed changes provide an opportunity to strengthen the participation of service users and carers in the planning and delivery of care, and to ensure that resources committed by the Council are fully used within the North Lanarkshire area.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The existing level of Council funding to Lanarkshire Community Care Forum is £48,886. Together with a proportionate share of NHS Lanarkshire funding, it is envisaged that re-investment of existing funding will make a substantial contribution to sustain a viable North Lanarkshire Forum, with some supplementation likely to be required for start-up and property costs etc. A fully costed plan will be presented to a future Committee.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
 - (i) request the Director of Social Work to bring forward a report to a future Committee; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
27 November 2003

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