

North Coast Area Committee
13 August 2015

SKELMORLIE, 13 August 2015 - At a Meeting of the North Coast Area Committee at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Alex Gallagher, Tom Marshall, Alan Hill, Grace McLean

In Attendance

T. Fitzsimmons, Divisional Manager, Y. Holland, Project Manager, C. Dempster, Assistant Network Manager, S. Walker, Technical Officer and H. Miller, Streetscene Officer (Place); J. McHarg, Senior Manager (Participation and Empowerment), C. Sharp, Country Parks Manager and B. Anderson, Performance/Grants Information Officer (Connected Communities) (Economy and Communities); C. Reid, Project Officer (Education and Youth Employment); and M. Anderson, Acting Committee Services Manager (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Inspector J. Conway (Police Scotland); and Station Manager L. Elliot (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Hill in the Chair (Agenda Item 9 (part) and Councillor Gallagher in the Chair (for all other items of business).

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Councillor Gallagher, as Chair of the Viking Festival, declared an indirect pecuniary interest in the group's funding application which formed part of Agenda Item 9 (Community Development Grant Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund - Applications for Financial Assistance), vacated the chair for this item of business and took no part in its determination.

Councillor Hill, as a member of Fairlie Gala Committee, declared an indirect pecuniary interest in the group's funding application considered as part of Agenda Item 9 (Community Development Grant Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund - Applications for Financial Assistance).

Councillor Marshall, as a member of the congregation of St. John's Church of Scotland, Largs, declared an indirect pecuniary interest in the group's funding application, which formed part of Agenda Item 13.1 (Largs Common Good Fund: Application for Financial Assistance), and took no part in its determination.

2. Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the ordinary Meeting of the Committee held on 21 May and the Special Meetings of the Committee held on 18 June and 25 2015 was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. CPP Partners

3.1 North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 11 June 2015

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held on 11 June 2015.

Noted.

3.2 Police Scotland

Inspector Joseph Conway provided a verbal update on issues of local interest for the current financial year to date, including information on the following:-

- crime statistics for the North Coast area, including a drop in overall reported crime compared with the same period last year;
- three serious assaults since the last Area Committee meeting, all of which have now resulted in arrests; and
- policing at recent events, such as Largs Live and the Kelburn Park Garden Party, and plans to provide policing support at the forthcoming Viking Festival.

Members discussed the following:-

- changes to the statistical reporting of crimes and the continued ability to track trends;
- an incident of domestic abuse in the Waterside Street area of Largs; and
- domestic abuse reporting arrangements more generally.

Noted.

3.3 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Submitted report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on incidents within the North Coast area during the period 11 May to 29 July 2015.

The report included information on the following:-

- 5 accidental dwelling fires and one accidental non-domestic fire in Largs;
- 3 heath and grass fires within Largs and Fairlie;
- a number of good intent and equipment fault false alarms, mainly in Largs and Cumbrae;
- three road traffic collision incidents; and
- special services events in Largs.

Members discussed the Fire and Rescue Service's role in assisting paramedics to gain entry to premises.

Noted.

4. Roads Maintenance Programme 2015/16

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Structural Roads and Street Lighting Maintenance Programme for 2015/16. The report set out the approach taken to determining the asset maintenance programme for roads and street lighting and highlighted at Appendices 3a and 3b the 2015/16 maintenance programme.

The Assistant Network Manager also reported verbally on road works to the A760 at the Haylie Brae 2015, planned for September 2015.

Members discussed the following:-

- confirmation that the planned Haylie Brae road works would not impact on traffic movement during the September holiday weekends; and
- factors influencing the lifespan of the road surface on the A760.

Noted.

5. Largs Reports

5.1 Largs Campus

The Committee received a presentation by the Project Manager (Place) on progress in respect of the Largs Campus development, which included a video animation on the consultation process.

The presentation highlighted the following:-

- the consultation arrangements and the next stages;
- feedback from individual schools on the proposals;
- the initial concept design;
- the forthcoming pre-planning consultation exercise; and
- the next stage in terms of the detailed design of the campus.

Members discussed the following:-

- the design principles associated with Curriculum for Excellence;
- the extent to which the views of staff will be taken into account when considering the detailed internal design of the campus; and
- the need, due to the exposed nature of the site, to put in place design measures to avoid wind damage to the exterior of the campus or the formation of wind tunnels.

Noted.

5.2 Largs Sea Front Car Park: Update on Projects and Car Park Usage

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the implementation of agreed projects and the usage of the Largs Sea Front Car Park between April and June 2015.

The report included information on the following:-

- plans to consider improvements to town centre paving as part of the Largs Masterplan;
- the installation by Transport Scotland of new lighting columns;
- the Largs masterplanning exercise, including the outline proposals which were subject to public consultation in January 2015;
- the completion of works to replace two decorative stones on the Pencil Monument;
- improvements to the Haylie Brae picnic area;
- progress in respect of the 'quick win' improvements identified by the Area Committee;
- an analysis of Sea Front Car Park usage; and
- current budget position of the Car Park Fund, which has a balance of £310,728 available in 2015/16 to fund the Viking Project and any new projects.

A verbal update was also provided on the current cost of erecting this year's Viking Festival village, namely £29,407.93.

Members discussed the following:-

- the need for clarification in respect of the presentation of budget expenditure information;
- the status of the masterplanning exercise;
- the accuracy of the information on car park usage; and
- the cost of erecting the Viking Festival village each year and the possibility of either reducing this cost or directing expenditure to a more permanent structure.

Thereafter, the Committee received a presentation by the Streetscene Officer (Place) on issues which would require to be taken into account in terms of a suggested windflower meadow on ground adjacent to the Haylie Brae, including site preparation works, appropriate plant varieties, sowing options and maintenance.

Members the discussed the following:-

- whether any kind of planting proposals would be feasible;
- alternative options for making this area of ground more attractive; and
- a request from a local supermarket to review the charges at the Sea Front Car Park for short, one-hour stays.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Streetscene Officer submit a report to the next meeting on (i) a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with erecting the Viking Festival village, to allow Members to assess if the costs might be reduced and whether to consider alternatives to erecting the village on a year on year basis, (ii) on alternative proposals for introducing a 'gateway to Largs' feature on ground at the Haylie Brae, Largs, following discussion with the Countryside Manager and colleagues within Roads and (iii) the likely financial implications of introducing a reduced parking charge for one-hour stays at Largs Sea Front Car Park; (b) that the Acting Committee Services Manager establish whether the TGP report on the Largs Masterplan is available for circulation to local Members; and (c) otherwise, to note the information provided.

5.3 Targeted Assessment of Property Condition in Largs

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on a pilot 'targeted assessment' of private sector housing stock in Largs. This matter arose from a request by the Area Committee to assess the standard of private housing in the Largs area.

The targeted inspection comprised 41 properties dispersed between 7 blocks, at 97-109 Nelson Street, Largs. Section 2.14 of the report summarised the findings of the pilot exercise, including the identification of one property as falling below the tolerable standard, as well as the number of empty homes. The Private Sector Advice Team has now carried out a 'match-making' exercise, where owners of empty homes who wish to sell agree for their contact details to be passed to other property owners in the area, and this has resulted in one of the empty properties in the pilot area being purchased. The team has also been successful in securing agreement from the majority of owners in two of the three blocks which are experiencing water ingress to attend maintenance plan meetings convened by the Council.

Members discussed the following:-

- other options for securing improvements to properties, including through compulsory purchase;
- the Council Tax applicable to empty homes; and
- the potential for working with other agencies to improve properties.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Divisional Manager (Housing) (i) investigate the available options, including compulsory purchase and work with other agencies, for effecting an improvement in the quality of housing stock available in the area identified within the targeted assessment and (ii) submit a report on the matter to the next meeting; and (b) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

5.4 Economy and Communities Update

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on actions taken in relation to a number of projects and issues in the Largs area.

The report included information on the following:-

- the Largs Forestry proposals, which are still with the Forestry Commission for consideration;
- preparatory work in connection with Largs Viking Festival;
- St Mary's Primary School's work with Ayrshire Opera Experience to develop the first children's opera in Scots;
- work by Archaeology Scotland at the Haylie Chambered Cairn;
- Largs Fun Weekend at Broomlands; and
- the work of the Business Support and Development and Employability teams.

Noted.

6. Fairlie Reports

6.1 Economy and Communities Update

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on actions taken in relation to projects and issues in the Fairlie area.

The report included information on the following:-

- the operation of the A78 traffic signals;
- Ongoing discussions between the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) and Clydeport;
- consideration by SEPA of an application for a variation to EDF's authorisation licence at Hunterston B; and
- progress in terms of work on the Shore Path.

Noted.

7. Skelmorlie Reports

7.1 Economy and Communities Update

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on actions taken in relation to projects and issues in the Skelmorlie area.

The report included information on options to alleviate the traffic concerns at Skelmorlie Cross and continuing work in respect of the Skelmorlie Community Sports Club project.

Noted.

8. Cumbrae Reports

8.1 Economy and Communities Update

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on actions taken in relation to projects and issues in the Cumbrae area.

The report included information on the following:-

- a successful funding bid which will allow the implementation of a Millport Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme early in 2016;
- progress in respect of the Garrison Stables;
- work between Connected Communities staff and Cumbrae Community Development Company to develop more flexible museum space in Garrison House; and
- work in respect of the development of a Cumbrae Economic Regeneration Plan.

Noted.

9. Community Development Grant Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) on applications received in respect of the Community Development Grant Scheme. The Senior Manager (Participation and Empowerment) advised of the receipt of a late grant application from Fairlie Gala Committee.

The Committee agreed to make the following awards:-

Community Development Grant Scheme

Organisation	Award
Largs & District Horticultural Society	£250.00
Largs Viking Festival	£1,850.00, subject to the group allowing other local community groups access to the chairs
Millport Festival Group Association	£1,500.00
Fairlie Gala Committee	£1,000.00, subject to receipt of a satisfactory bank statement and constitution

10. Millport Common Good Fund: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application for financial assistance received in respect of Millport Common Good Fund.

The Committee agreed to award the balance of funding available for disbursement, namely £119, to Millport Festival Group.

11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the North Coast Area Committee will take place on 24 September 2015 in Fairlie Village Hall.

Noted.

12. Future Agenda Items

The Committee agreed to note that Members should advise Committee Services of any potential items for inclusion on a future Agenda.

13. Urgent Item

The Chair agreed to consider the undernoted item of business to allow the matter to be addressed timeously.

13.1 Largs Common Good Fund: St John's Church

The Acting Committee Services Manager referred to a Largs Common Good grant awarded to St John's Church in January 2015 in connection with the purchase of a number of solar panels. The Committee was advised that, due to an administrative error, the group received the total amount of funding requested, rather than the lesser amount awarded by the Committee.

The Committee was invited to consider whether it would wish to seek the return of the additional grant funding, or agree a further award to the group to regularise the matter.

The Committee agreed to approve the award of a further £2,500 to St. John's Church in respect of its earlier Largs Common Good application.

The Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m