

Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee
23 April 2009

STEVENSTON, 23 April 2009 - At a Meeting of the Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee at 2.00 pm.

Present

David Munn, William Gibson, Anthony Gurney, John Hunter, Ronnie McNicol and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

J. Leckie, Head of Service, J. McHarg, Learning Manager, Capacity Building, and B. Anderson, Performance/Grants Information Officer (Community Learning and Development) (Educational Services); J. Cumming, Project Officer and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's).

Also In Attendance

Sergeant. A. Keating (Strathclyde Police) and L. Elliot (Strathclyde Fire and Rescue).

Chair

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Margie Currie and Peter McNamara.

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gibson declared an interest in Agenda Item 7.1 (Ardrossan Common Good Fund) in relation to the application by Ardrossan Academicals RFC and took no part in the discussion thereon.

2. Strathclyde Police

Sergeant Keating provided information on the following issues:-

- Operation Nelson, an ongoing initiative involving the use of probationers to provide high visibility policing and target crime and disorder throughout the area;
- Service pressures linked to a number of recent murders, serious assaults and robberies, including the discovery of a body in premises within Stevenston;
- Operation Impact, tackling drug dealing within the North Ayrshire as a whole;
- Strathclyde Police's public reassurance policy, involving liaison between Community Police Officers and the community to identify local concerns and put in place action plans to tackle "hot-spot" areas;

- A recent roadside initiative on the A78, implemented jointly by the Police, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Trading Standards, to tackle issues such as bogus workmen, fraudulent benefits claims, drink driving and the misuse of "red diesel"; and
- Efforts to address "boy racers" in the Saltcoats shorefront area and loitering by youths, particularly near children's units including Harley Place.

Members asked questions, and received further information on:-

- The relationship between Strathclyde Police and the Community Wardens; and
- The recent discovery of a body in Stevenston and the value of using the associated police presence to target drug dealing in the area.

Noted.

3. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Lawson Elliot circulated statistical information showing trends for the period from 2001/02 to 2008/09 and highlighted the following:-

- The on target reduction in the number of primary fires (involving domestic premises, motor vehicles and industrial buildings) in the area;
- The ongoing Home Fire Safety Visit initiative and measures to encourage take-up of the offer by householders;
- A reduction in the incidence of both refuse fires and malicious calls, attributable in part to positive youth engagement work, including the Fire Reach programme, school advocates and school liaison officers;
- The need to tackle the significant increase in false alarm equipment, through engagement with repeat offenders; and
- An upward trend in Special Services work, including responding to road traffic collisions, flooding incidents and rescue from buildings.

Members asked questions, and received further information on:-

- Measures to address the problem of false alarm equipment and the service's approach to educating the worst offenders;
- The classification of false alarms within school premises;
- The relatively low incidence in the area of attacks directed at units attending fires; and
- The value of Home Fire Safety visits and possible measures to increase their take-up, such as exploring with the Council its inclusion as a requirement of new tenancy agreements.

Noted.

4. New Schools within the Committee Area

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on operational matters at St Matthew's Academy, Stanley Primary and Arran High School.

In relation to St Matthew's Academy, the Council's Building Standards Inspectors and the Health and Safety Executive have both been required to respond to allegations made by a member of the public concerning alleged structure deficiencies. Inspection revealed that these allegations were unproven and the condition of the building was deemed commensurate with the expected standard. Internally, the school has operated normally since opening, with any potentially disruptive snagging and maintenance issues being addressed during holiday periods. With regard to external facilities, the Independent Certifier of the project initially accepted the running track, synthetic pitch and 4 full-sized grass pitches. However, since early December 2008, the 4 full-size grass pitches have been out of use due to land drainage issues. A programme of works is now being considered by the contractor to address the problem. The full-size pitch within the athletics facility, together with 4 seven-a-side grass pitches and an area of informal amenity grass, were not considered to be fully matured and, as a result, are not likely to be ready for use until July 2009.

A recent press report alleging that there was a danger to pupils at Stanley Primary School as a result of a persistent leak, is incorrect. The leak, from the flat roof area above the kitchen, has been ongoing but extensive works undertaken during the October and Christmas holiday period appear to have been successful. During the period of works to remedy the leak, the contractor provided an external mobile catering facility. In terms of heating, some areas of the school have been heated less effectively than others and improvement works to the heating system are planned for the summer holidays. Externally, some of the school's storm drains backed up and flooded the synthetic football pitch following a flash flood. The pitch was out of action for several weeks, but has since been thoroughly sanitised and its safety guaranteed.

Arran High School has been the subject of recent press reports concerning leaks to some areas of the school. The contractors advise that all reported leaks have been attended to and a further visit will be made by their specialist roofing contractor to verify the success of the repairs. The grass pitch area at the rear of the school has been the subject of a number of recent works and is expected to be available for school and community use during April 2009. Works have also been undertaken to relocate the youth cabins in the grounds of the school a number of tests relating to the planning process have now been carried out. Finally, there have been some recurring issues with the quality of ironmongery fitted to the doors at the school and a new sub-contractor has now been engaged to effect more robust repairs to the doors.

Members asked questions, and received further information on:-

- The anticipated "grade 1" quality of the 4 full-size grass pitches at St Matthew's Academy;
- The presence of sewerage on the pitch at Stanley Primary School and the success of measures to sanitise the area;
- Works to resolve quality issues concerning the ironmongery supplied for the doors to Arran High School, together with confirmation of the security of the building;
- The extent to which snagging problems can be expected in new buildings over the first year to eighteen months of their operation;
- Responsibility for the resolution of snagging problems and the Council's rights in terms of withholding payment/applying penalties pending resolution of such issues;
- The efficacy of measures to address drainage issues and the timescale for bringing the grass pitches at St Matthew's Academy into use;
- The background to the initial decision to accept the 4 full-size grass pitches at St Matthew's Academy;
- The role of North Ayrshire Leisure Limited in operating the leisure facilities within the school premises;
- The impact on Stanley Primary School pupils of the kitchen area leak and arrangements by the contractor to bus staff and pupils to a local hotel for a Christmas lunch;
- Technical matters surrounding the commissioning of sophisticated heating systems within new buildings;
- Reasons for the delay in identifying building regulation matters associated with the relocation of youth cabins at Arran High School;
- Any impact on local football teams associated with the delay in pitch provision at Laighdykes;
- The timescale for provision of athletics equipment at Laighdykes, including replacement nets within the throwing area, hurdles and high jump poles; and
- Shared use of the running track at Laighdykes by pupils of both Ardrossan and St Matthew's Academies.

The Head of Service (Educational Services) undertook to provide further information to Members, as required.

The view was expressed that, whilst the teaching and learning facilities provided within the new schools may of a suitable standard, the conclusion paragraph of the report was inaccurate in its description of high quality resources for the wider community.

Councillor Hunter, seconded by Councillor Gurney, moved that the Area Committee reject as erroneous the description within the concluding paragraph of the report of the "high quality...community resources which have been provided for the residents of the area."

As an amendment, Councillor Munn, seconded by Councillor Munro, moved the direct negative.

On a roll call vote, there voted for the amendment Councillors Munn and Munro and for the motion Councillors Gibson, Gurney, Hunter and McNicol, and the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed (a) to note the content of the report; (b) to reject as erroneous the description within the concluding paragraph of the report, of the "high quality...community resources which have been provided for the residents of the area"; and (c) that the Head of Service (Educational Services) provide further information to Members of the Committee on (i) the classification of the 4 full-size grass pitches at St Matthew's Academy as "grade 1" quality; (ii) the background to the initial decision to accept the 4 full-size grass pitches at St Matthew's; (iii) the formal decision regarding North Ayrshire Leisure Limited's responsibility for operating the leisure facilities within the schools; and (iv) the timescale for the provision of outstanding athletics equipment at St Matthew's Academy.

5. North Ayrshire Community Benefit Fund

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications for financial assistance received in respect of the Community Benefit Fund.

The Committee agreed to make the following awards:-

Organisation

Ardrossan Indoor Bowling
Whitlees Community Centre

Award

£1,225.56
£2,500.00, on condition that the group ensures that Winton and St Peter's Primary Schools are also invited to be involved in the project

6. Community Development Grants and Local Youth Action Fund 2009/10: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on applications for financial assistance under the Council's Community Development Grants Scheme and the Local Youth Action Fund.

At its meeting on 10 March 2009, the Executive of North Ayrshire Council agreed to allocate £38,480 and £16,800 to the Area Committee in respect of the Community Development Grants Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund 2009/10, respectively. The Executive also agreed that the Community Development Grant allocation be released in two phases, namely 50% in April 2009 and 50% in September/October 2009.

The Committee agreed to (a) make the following awards:-

Community Development Grants Scheme

Organisation

Award

5th Stevenston Brownies	£537
1st Hayocks Rainbows	£400
Ardrossan Whitlees Community Centre Association	£1,466
SNAP Craft Group	£200
Feis Arainn	£1,200
Whiting Bay Public Hall Committee of Management	£2,000 on condition that the group demonstrate efforts to seek alternative funding sources
Lochranza & Catacol Village Hall	£1,500, on condition that the group demonstrate efforts to seek alternative funding sources
Arran Sports Association	£1,300
Argyle Quilters Group	£800
Ardrossan Old People's Welfare Committee	£500
Retirement Yoga Group	£1,500
Brodick Improvements Committee	£1,000
Saltcoats Gala Committee	£1,500

Local Youth Action Fund

Organisation

Award

1st Ardrossan Scout Troop	£952
Youth for Lourdes	£2,000

and (b) continue consideration of the application from Arran Highland Dancers Club for clarification about the group's efforts to engage with the local community.

7. Common Good Funds

7.1 Ardrossan Common Good Fund

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications received in respect of funding from the Ardrossan Common Good Fund.

In 2008/09, a budget of £3,780 was made available for disbursement from Ardrossan Common Good Fund. Based on year-end accounts, the budget available for 2009/10 is likely to be similar to, but not greater than, that of 2008/09.

The Committee agreed to make the following awards:-

Ardrossan Common Good Fund

Organisation

Ardrossan Old People's Welfare Committee

Ardrossan Academicals RFC

Award

£500 on the basis that the award would benefit a significant proportion of the local community
£1,000 on the basis that (i) the award would benefit the community as a whole by providing diversionary activities for young people and (ii) the club itself is open to all

7.2 Stevenston Common Good Fund

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application received in respect of funding from the Stevenston Common Good Fund.

In 2008/09, a budget of £18,000 was made available for disbursement from Stevenston Common Good Fund. Based on year-end accounts, the budget available for 2009/10 is likely to be similar to, but not greater than, that of 2008/09.

The Committee agreed to make the following award:-

Stevenston Common Good Fund

Organisation

John McCafferty

Award

£500 on the basis that the applicant is raising the profile of Stevenston in a positive way and, in so doing, setting a high standard for, and increasing the aspirations of, the community as a whole

7.3 Ardrossan/Saltcoats/Stevenston Common Good Funds: Combined Applications

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications received in respect of joint funding from the Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston Common Good Funds.

In 2008/09, a budget of £1,530 was made available for disbursement from Saltcoats Common Good Fund. Based on year-end accounts, the amount available for disbursement in 2009/10 is likely to be similar to, but not greater than, that of 2008/09.

The Committee agreed (a) to make the following awards:-

Organisation

Stevenston Thistle Boys and Girls FC

Award

£1,500 (£500 from each of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenson Common Good Funds), on the basis that the award would benefit these communities as a whole by providing diversionary activities for young people

Three Towns Firework Festival Group

£1,200 (underwrite) from each of Ardrossan and Stevenston Common Good Funds and £1,500 (underwrite) from Saltcoats Common Good Fund, on the basis that the award would benefit these communities as a whole

and (b) to remit to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Councillor Munn in his capacity as Chair of the Area Committee, to award a grant of £250 from each of the three Common Good Funds to The Three Towners Association, subject to receipt of further satisfactory background information on the organisation and its project.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Area Committee will be held on Thursday 11 June 2009 at 2.00 p.m. in Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre.

Noted.

9. Future Agenda Items

The Committee agreed that any items for consideration at the next meeting of the Area Committee should be submitted to M. Anderson or D.McCaw.

The Meeting ended at 4.10 p.m.