

Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee
7 January 1998

DREGHORN, 7 January 1998 - At a Meeting of the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Ian Clarkson, James Clements, Gena Seales and Irene Oldfather.

In Attendance

J Leckie, Head of Education Services (Education); H Hunter, Senior Accountant (Financial Services); A Pettigrew, Young People's Services Development Officer; D Gilliland, Area Community Development Officer (Community and Recreational Services); M Hewitt, Corporate Policy Officer and C Graham, Assistant Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Inspector H McFadden and Sergeant J Richmond, Strathclyde Police; and T Kane, Community Fire Safety Officer (Strathclyde Fire Brigade).

Chair

Mr Clarkson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Patrick Browne and Jane Gorman.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Monitoring Reports

(a) Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside: Empty Houses

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on empty Council Houses in the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside areas.

As at 12 December 1997 there were 10 empty properties in the Kilwinning area, representing 1.86% of the total stock in that area and 6 empty properties within Dreghorn and Springside, representing approximately 0.7% of the total stock in that area.

Concerns were raised in relation to the number of days properties are remaining available for offer and on the numbers of offers being recorded against certain empty properties.

After discussion the Committee agreed that the Director of Housing Services (a) report to the next meeting of the Committee giving (i) proposals to reduce the length of time properties are empty, in particular, ways of introducing some flexibility in allocating unpopular houses and reducing the time given to applicants to respond to an offer; (ii) an explanation of the high number of offers being recorded for certain houses; and (b) be requested to ensure that an Officer from the Housing Services Directorate is in attendance at all future Area Committee Meetings.

(b) Analysis of Examination Results

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the examination results published by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) in respect of secondary schools in Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside.

A presentation was given by the Head of Education Services on an initiative by the SOEID to move to a three year average of school performance as a means of target-setting. While this will assist schools in identifying underlying variations, the system does not take account of the socio-economic circumstances of catchment areas served by individual schools. In order to combat any imbalance the SOEID proposes to introduce a schools characteristic index to enable authorities and schools to identify and compare with similar establishments elsewhere in the country. Targets for improvement will then be set for each school in consultation with the education authority.

A report on an analysis of examination results across North Ayrshire was presented to the Education Committee at its meeting on 2 December 1997, comparing trends within the Council's area to national levels of performance. The report indicated that while most results are above the national average, some remain below average.

The Head of Education Services advised that the Education Committee has agreed that schools should prepare a report for the Director of Education outlining their proposals to raise attainment and that the target of increasing the number of awards achieved within schools will be incorporated in the school plans for the 1998/99 session. In noting the report, the Committee requested that both the Scottish and North Ayrshire average figures be incorporated into the Directorate's report for submission in 1999.

Noted.

(c) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 5 December 1997

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Community Development Grants paid to 5 December 1997 in respect of Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside, including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

3. Community Development Grants Scheme: Applications for Grant Aid

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the undernoted applications for community grants to voluntary organisations:-

(a) 51st Ayrshire Scouts

The Committee agreed to award the 51st Ayrshire Scouts £540. The Committee further agreed (i) to consider a supplementary application from the organisation at its next meeting; and (ii) to seek the views of local Members of Parliament on concerns raised regarding the criteria for Lottery funding applications and report;

(b) Dreghorn Boys' Club

The Committee agreed (i) to award the Dreghorn Boys' Club £200 in this instance; (ii) that neither the awarding of this grant nor the level of the grant itself will set a precedent for future similar applications, which will require to be determined on their individual merits; and (iii) to recommend to the Club that a similar application be submitted to the Irvine Area Committee.

4. Springside: Proposed Community Association

(Previous Minute Reference: Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee 14 May 1997.)

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on progress in the setting up of a Community Association in Springside.

After many years of successful operation, the management group of Springside Community Centre became inquorate in July 1996. The local authority then assumed responsibility for the management of the centre, the Association being no longer viable. Support was provided by Community and Recreational Services staff to assist local people develop appropriate structures to form a new Community Association.

Members of the community have now been identified who wish to become members of the Association and a Steering Group formed. A Public Meeting will be held prior to the end of January to advise of the current position and the Steering Group will continue to oversee matters until the end of March 1998 when it is hoped a Committee will be elected.

In response to questions concerning the Springside Boxing Club, the Area Community Development Officer advised that a meeting had recently taken place between Estates and Housing Services regarding the relocation of the Club and agreed to advise the Chair of the current position at the earliest opportunity.

Noted.

5. Kilwinning: Street Naming

(a) Naming of New Private Housing Development by Tay Homes at Woodside E, Kilwinning

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the provision of street names in respect of a new housing development at Woodside E in Kilwinning.

The Committee agreed that the streets be named "Meadow View" and "Meadow Way" as recommended by Councillor Ian Clarkson, the local member.

6. Community Consultation: Meetings with Youth and Elderly/Social Groups

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the responses received from the various Directorates of the Council to matters raised at the Community Consultation Meeting held with Youth and Elderly/Social Groups on 13 October 1997.

Most of the issues raised by members of the community have now been addressed by the Council, resulting in some small financial implications, e.g. the erection of "Cyclists Dismount" signs.

The Committee agreed that a copy of the report be forwarded to those organisations who were invited to attend the meeting.

7. Community Safety

(a) Youth Issues

(Previous Minute Reference: Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee 19 November 1997.)

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on progress with regard to Youth Issues in the context of the Community Safety Strategy.

Following the meeting of the Area Committee on 19 November 1997 when concerns had been raised relating to young people in the Dregghorn and Kilwinning areas, Officers of Strathclyde Police and the Community and Recreational Services Directorate met to consider what steps might be taken to address the problems.

The Young People's Services Development Officer advised that a number of steps are being taken in Dregghorn by the Community and Recreational Services Directorate, including the commencement of "Streetwork", details of which were provided in the report.

It was recognised however that the issues in Kilwinning differ from those in the Dregghorn area and that the lack of accommodation in Kilwinning could directly affect the ability of all parties to respond.

Councillor Clements reminded the Committee of an offer, still in place, to build a community facility in the Woodside area. A Public Meeting had been organised to which all young people/families had been invited but due to a lack of attendance, no progress has been made.

In order to take the matter forward, it was suggested that the Area Committee consult with the young people of Kilwinning through the schools and the Head of Education Services was requested to liaise with the Head Teachers of Kilwinning and St Michael's Academies in the first instance and advise the Chair of the outcome of those discussions.

The Committee agreed (a) the proposals to progress work on Youth Issues in the Dregghorn area; and (b) to await the outcome of initial discussions with the relevant Head Teachers prior to proceeding with any further examination of the practical problems in Kilwinning.

(b) Crime Statistics

Submitted report by Strathclyde Police "UA" Sub-division on the level of recorded crime within the Area Committee's boundaries.

The report gave the crime statistics, excluding traffic offences, for the month of November 1997 and highlighted particular areas of crime and their implications. The year to date crime statistics highlighted a 19% decrease in the Sub-Division.

In response to members' questions, the Strathclyde Police representatives advised that they would continue to monitor the situation at the locations of concern.

Noted.

(c) Strathclyde Fire Brigade: Fire Statistics for the period 10 October to 21 November 1997

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on Fire Statistics for the period 10 October to 21 November 1997.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.