



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

## **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

for the consideration of  
the Audit and Scrutiny  
Committee at its meeting on 11  
October 2017

### **Business**

- 3. Petition: Petition relating to Removal of Douglas Park Shelter, Largs**  
Submit report by the Chief Executive on a Petition received in respect of the removal of Douglas Park Shelter, Largs (copy enclosed).



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## **NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Agenda Item 3**

**11 October 2017**

#### **Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

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**Title:** **Petition relating to Removal of Douglas Park Shelter, Largs**

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**Purpose:** To advise the Committee of the terms of a petition in respect of the removal of Douglas Park Shelter, Largs.

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**Recommendation:** That the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to the Cabinet.

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#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 In terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee has a remit "To receive all petitions and deputations submitted to the Council except those relating to the Council's planning functions, which shall be considered by the Planning Committee. The arrangements for receiving petitions are as set out in Appendix B to the Standing Orders relating to Meetings and Proceedings of the Council and Committees".
- 1.2 This report sets out the background to a petition signed by at least 10 petitioners in relation to the removal of the Douglas Park Shelter, Largs.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The petition, signed by at least 10 petitioners, is for the removal of the disused public toilet building and shelter at Douglas Park, Largs as below:-

"The building at the east end of Douglas Park, comprising male/female toilets and open shelters, was obviously provided for the comfort and convenience of the public. However, it has not fulfilled that purpose for many years and has instead been adopted as a meeting place for young people who unfortunately tend to indulge in anti-social and possibly illegal behaviour. This often consists of loud disturbance - youths shouting, girls screaming and loud music played on portable radios.

Vandalism is ongoing and there have been instances of deliberate fire-raising. The fire service had to attend recently to extinguish a fire that had spread from a litter bin into the shelter roof timbers, which were seriously damaged.

The core problem seems to be small groups of local young people but we believe the police are also concerned about larger groups of youths coming into the park.

We acknowledge that this is a public park, but on most Friday and Saturday evenings and at times of school holidays (the summer holidays have just begun) the noise levels can be intolerable, preventing local residents from enjoying the calm of their gardens. There is ample evidence that much of this behaviour is fuelled by alcohol and that under-age drinking is taking place. The site, on the morning after, is often littered with wine bottles (notably Buckfast), beer and cider cans, caffeine-based energy drink cans and broken glass. Drinking in a public place is illegal in North Ayrshire.

Empty bottles and other objects are occasionally lobbed over the park wall into adjacent gardens.

The building is now a complete eyesore. The toilet doors have been sealed with plate steel to prevent forced entry, presumably because of internal vandalism. All the toilet windows are covered by unsightly steel grilles and all of the shelter glazing is gone. The shelter roof timbers are badly fire-damaged and the benches are charred. The shelter walls are fire-blackened and covered with crude graffiti (sectarian graffiti has been painted over by the Council in the past). It is no longer a useful amenity for the general public and is certainly not a good advert for Largs. The building is prominently located and visitors to the park must be appalled.

Local residents have had to tolerate this nuisance for many years and, despite numerous calls to the police, no effective action has been taken. The problems seem to have been escalating recently and local residents, especially those in Bankhouse Avenue, now have reasonable cause for concern about the potential spread of fire to their properties via the adjacent trees.

We are also concerned about Council funds being expended on cosmetic measures such as timber repairs and repainting; these do not have any beneficial effect and would only perpetuate the problem. The unanimous opinion among affected residents is that the whole building should be demolished to remove it as a venue for anti-social behaviour.

This petition contains signatures of residents living around and close to Douglas Park who have been affected by these issues and wish to see a permanent solution. The majority are residents of Bankhouse Avenue properties (even numbers) that back onto the north boundary of the park and are therefore closest to the toilets/shelter building.

**The purpose of this petition is to demand the complete and permanent removal of the building at the earliest possible opportunity."**

- 2.2 In terms of the procedure for petitions and deputations set out in Standing Orders, representatives of the petitioners have been invited to attend the meeting and to address the Committee. Spokespersons should be restricted to addressing the specific points raised in their petition.
- 2.3 The spokespersons have, collectively, 10 minutes to address the Committee. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- 2.4 Once the Committee has heard from the spokespersons for the petitioners, the Chair will invite Members of the Committee to ask questions of the spokespersons.
- 2.5 The Committee will then deliberate and determine the matter.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to the Cabinet.

#### 4. Implications

<b>Financial:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Equality:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Key Priorities:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Community Benefits:</b>	None arising from this report.

#### 5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Executive Director (Place) was made aware of the terms of the petition.



ELMA MURRAY  
Chief Executive

Reference :

For further information please contact Diane McCaw, Committee Services Officer on 01294 324133.

#### **Background Papers**

Details of signatories to the petition and their comments are available by contacting Committee Services on tel: 01294 324133.