

Community and Recreational Services Committee
17 March 1998

Irvine, 17 March 1998 - At a Meeting of the Community and Recreational Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 3.30 p.m.

Present

Stewart Dewar, Jane Gorman, James Clements, John Donn, James Jennings, Elizabeth McLardy, Peter McNamara, Margaret Munn and John Sillars.

In Attendance

The Director of Community and Recreational Services: The Head of Sports and Horticultural Services, The Head of Cultural and Community Services, The Head of Strategy and Business Management (Community and Recreational Services); D Nibloe, Principal Officer, Accountancy Services (Financial Services); S King, Corporate Policy Officer and S Paxton, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Dewar in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Patrick Browne and George Steven.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Fairlie: Bowling Club

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on a request from Fairlie Bowling Club, to meet with representatives on the Council to discuss the provision of bowling at the Club's rink which is currently leased from Lord Glasgow. The site may be subject to future possible development and the Club has made a successful application to the Lottery Sports Fund to purchase the site.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Local Members to meet representatives and report to a future meeting.

3. The Nobel Exhibition: The Big idea

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on a request from the Nobel Exhibition Trust to use an area of land at Irvine Harbour to provide a pedestrian access and associated setting down/pick up space to the link bridge to the Big Idea.

The report details the works involved in these proposals and confirms the intention to retain the ground in Council ownership with no rental being charged to the Trust.

The Committee agreed (i) to approve the proposals and conditions associated with the works; (ii) that conditions of use be determined by the Legal Services Manager; and (iii) to remit the report to the Irvine Area Committee for its information.

4. Irvine: Dumping of Trolleys in the River Irvine

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the position regarding abandoned shopping with particular attention being given to those which are frequently dumped in rivers throughout North Ayrshire.

Section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 entitles the Council to seize abandoned shopping trolleys on land outwith the immediate area of supermarkets or associated car parks. The Council can keep the trolley for six weeks and sell or otherwise dispose of it. A Notice can be served on the owner of the trolley to reclaim in on payment of an appropriate fee. The matter has already been considered by the Irvine Area Committee and supermarkets in the Irvine area were contacted to ascertain their policy with regard to the dumping of trolleys. One supermarket had a system for collecting trolleys within a half-mile radius of their premises and called upon the local Canoe Club to assist in the removal of trolleys from the River Irvine.

While the Council will continue to collect and charge for the return of abandoned trolleys the long-term solution would be to encourage shop owners to introduce financial incentives whereby trolleys could be returned to suitable bays. The Committee was also of the view that it would be helpful if the Park Ranger Service were to highlight the environmental impact of the dumping of trolleys in rivers to any groups and individuals using their services as well as visitors to the Country Parks in the Council's area.

The Committee agreed (a) that an invitation be extended to all supermarkets in North Ayrshire to meet the Council to discuss how they could further contribute to a resolution of the problem; (b) that the Park Ranger Service be asked to highlight the environmental impact of abandoning trolleys in rivers to the groups they work with; and (c) that the Principal Officer (Marketing and Publicity) be consulted to secure any appropriate publicity which might encourage people to take better care of rivers and avoid such dumping.

5. Public Open Space: The Playing of Ball Games

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the results of consideration by Area Committees on a number of measures proposed by the Directorate to address the problem of the playing of ball games in public open spaces.

Area Committees, while reaffirming that Local Members be consulted with regard to the erection of signs, endorsed the proposed measures to address the problem, viz. that (a) all open space landscaping should in future incorporate features to reduce the possibility of playing ball games in all areas except those that are specifically designated for that purpose; (b) the Directors of Housing and Community and Recreational Services should, in conjunction with Local Members, identify sites within housing areas where the playing of ball games is acceptable; (c) the Legal Services manager should investigate the practicality of promoting Bye-Laws to control the problem; and (d) the Community and Recreational Services Directorate should be responsible for the erection of relevant signage.

The Committee agreed the proposals.

6. Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services regarding the payment of the Council's 1998/99 contribution to the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

The Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee which consists of representatives from North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils considered a number of matters including the revenue budget for the park at their meeting on 30 January 1998, and having taken into account the financial position of contributing councils, agreed to a standstill budget for 1998/99 thereby establishing a contribution of £63,400 from North Ayrshire Council.

The Committee agreed to make a revenue contribution of £63,400 in respect of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park's budget.

7. Future Development of Libraries and Information Services

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the future development of Libraries and Information Services.

Every community in North Ayrshire has either a static or a Mobile Library but because the service is not computerised it cannot meet national performance standards and additionally it spends less than the Scottish average on books per head of population with book additions being well

below COSLA standards.

The installation of computerisation of the Library and Information Service would improve the service to users, enable service users to access the National Grid for learning and the University of Industry and would further enhance decentralisation and the regeneration of local democracy as described in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's report "New Library: The People's network".

The installation of a networked computerised system at a Capital cost of around £180,000 over financial years 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 and an annual Revenue cost of £65,000 would address the issues surrounding the level of performance of the Library Service. The Capital Programme 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 will contain bids for the phased introduction of computer hardware and the Director of Community and Recreational Services will undertake a review of library and information systems to identify means of accommodating the additional revenue costs.

The Committee, in noting the current performance of the Library and Information Service agreed (a) to approve in principle the action being developed to assist in the computerisation of the Library Service; (b) to receive a report on the findings of the internal review which is to be conducted by the Director of Community and Recreational Services; and (c) to write to North Ayrshire MPs requesting that they support the Council's endeavours.

8. The Scottish Arts Council Bequest

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services regarding a recent bequest of contemporary Scottish Art from the Scottish Arts Council.

The Council's Museum Service has previously purchased works from local artists for the Glasgow Vennel Art Gallery and North Ayrshire Museum collection and has been successful in its application to the Scottish Arts Council bequest in attracting twelve contemporary works of art and sculpture by internationally acclaimed artists. The newly acquired works will be displayed at the Glasgow Vennel Art Gallery from 26 February to 31 March 1998 and invitations to attend the Gallery will be sent to schools and other groups. The Director of Community and Recreational Services is also currently investigating sources of funding to improve storage provision at the Glasgow Vennel Art Gallery and the North Ayrshire Museum.

Noted.

9. Arts Lottery Funding

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the Scottish Arts Council consultative document entitled "Capital Strategy for the Distribution of Arts Lottery Funding in Scotland" which pursues the government's requirement that all bodies who distribute grants from the National Lottery must prepare Strategies to guide how they make grants after 1 April 1999.

The Committee discussed the Council's record in attracting Arts Lottery Funding and expressed concern over the lack of advice and guidance to applicants preparing their bids, and the considerable wasted effort and the lack of feedback on unsuccessful bids together with a perceived inconsistency in relation to awards.

Full text of the proposed response was provided. These included concerns regarding the requirement to secure match funding for projects which tended to exacerbate the gap between wealthy and impoverished groups; institutions and local authorities; the procedure for processing applications; and the disproportionately high level of awards secured by Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the terms of response to the consultation document; and (b) to advise North Ayrshire's MPs of the Council's response to the proposed criteria and priorities that the Arts Lottery fund should adopt in considering lottery applications.

10. Urban Programme Terminating Projects

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services confirming proposals for the future operation of services provided by the Harbour Arts Centre, the Playbus and the Towdabout Projects whose Urban Programme funding will cease at 31 March 1998.

(a) Harbour Arts Centre

Since 1994 attendance figures for the Centre have been steadily increasing. It is intended to continue delivering services from the Centre by working in partnership with the voluntary Management Committee, subject to a satisfactory service level agreement being secured. This will require the creation of two permanent posts and assistance toward "seed" money for project funding applications at a total cost of around £34,000.

(b) Mobile Play Team

The Playbus and Towdabout Projects were not eligible for Regeneration Funding but in view of the importance of these services the Council agreed, as part of the revenue process 1998/99, to allocate £56,000 for the creation of a Mobile Play Team which will integrate the two previous

projects.

The report gave details of the staffing for the Mobile Play Team which will provide a service to those areas designated within the Council's Regeneration Strategy.

The Committee agreed (i) with regard to the Harbour Arts Centre (A) to approve the funding for the Centre; (B) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services in conjunction with the Personnel Services Manager formalise the staffing arrangements; and (C) to remit the staffing issues to the Support Services Committee for its consideration; and (ii) with regard to the Mobile Play Team (A) to approve the composition of the Mobile Play Team as detailed in the report; (B) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services in consultation with the Personnel Services Manager formalise the staffing arrangements; and (C) to remit the staffing issues to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

12. Community Development Grants Scheme: Grant Awards 1998/99

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services confirming progress in determining grant awards for 1998/99 and proposing arrangements for consideration of applications.

The Committee agreed to convene a Special Meeting of the Community and Recreational Services Committee in early April to determine the level of awards to applicants.

13. Young People's Services Preliminary Research Group

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the findings of the Preliminary Research Group which was established in September 1997 to identify issues which affect young people.

The Council has already formulated a Children's Services Plan, focusing on children and young people with needs, but this work covers issues which affect all young people across North Ayrshire and examined the services delivered to them by a wide range of Council Directorates and voluntary organisations. It showed that although there is collaboration between Directorates, this work is largely unco-ordinated and that it would be beneficial to develop a North Ayrshire Strategy Policy for providing services to young people which would detail priorities and planning goals for the next five years.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Corporate Strategy Committee to consider the establishment of a Working Group on Youth Strategy.

14. Provision of Bar Facilities: Halls Pilot Project

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services regarding the provision of bar services in community facilities which would result in additional income to the Directorate.

Community Associations and voluntary groups make use of occasional licence permissions to operate bars as fundraising ventures at dances and other events. It is, however, possible to select a limited number of venues which would present the Directorate with an opportunity to work with a contracted partner to provide a bar service to facility users and thereby increase revenue for the Council. In 1997, 291 weekend functions were booked at five of the venues being looked at viz. Saltcoats Town Hall, Ardrossan Civic Centre, Dunlop Memorial Hall, Dreghorn, the Volunteer Rooms and the Woodlands Centre, Irvine. Community Centres and most local halls would however remain outwith the scope of any proposed contract and community groups could continue to make use of occasional licence permissions for their fundraising events.

It is proposed, following consultation with lessees and licensees, to run a Pilot Scheme for the provision of bar services in these five venues for the period May to December 1998.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposal in principle; (b) to receive a further report on consultation with lessees and licensees; and (c) to receive a report by the Legal Services Manager on development of the Scheme and tender process.

15. Market Research

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services confirming market Research undertaken by the Directorate to date and detailing proposals for future research.

The Committee agreed to approval proposals for Market Research in Community and Recreational Services in 1998/99.

The meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.