

Three Towns Area Committee
28 August 1997

Stevenston, 28 August 1997 - At a Meeting of the Three Towns Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, David Munn, Margaret Munn and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

S Good, Divisional Housing Manager (Housing Services); W. Nichol, Senior Accountant (Financial Services), R. McLean, Principal Officer Criminal Justice, J. Mooney, Community Service Organiser, M. Francey, Assistant Area Services Manager (Social Work), S. McLaughlin, Area Community Development Officer, George Clark, Country Parks Manager (Community and Recreational Services), Gordon Clark, Operations Manager Grounds Maintenance, D. McCall, Cemeteries Officer (Commercial Services); S. Bale, Administration Officer and A. Little, Assistant Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Also In Attendance

Inspector Young and Sergeant Edwards (Strathclyde Police); and S. Wright, Manager, and J. Ledgerwood (Three Towns Initiative).

Chair

David Gallagher in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Alan Munro.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 26 June 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Housing Services Directorate: Presentation

The Divisional Housing Manager had been invited to speak to the Committee on the services provided by the Directorate and make a full and informative presentation which highlighted:-

- divisional responsibilities
- the divisional structure
- local priorities; and
- district wide issues

Subsequent discussion had focused on estate management and improvements required. Assurances were given that this aspect has been reviewed and is being addressed.

Noted.

3. Monitoring Reports

Submitted the undernoted monitoring reports on local service provision:-

(a) North Ayrshire Council Surplus Properties

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager regarding properties which have been deemed surplus to requirements by Service Committees of the Council. Future reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis.

In response to Members' questions, clarification was provided on the current position of a number of the properties listed, including the status of two sites at High Road, Stevenston and two houses at Auchendarvie Academy. One site at High Road, Stevenston has been sold to the Ayrshire and Arran Community Health Care NHS Trust for the purpose of a day hospital and the second site is being retained as an option for the Trust.

The two vacant janitors' houses at Auchendarvie Academy had been declared surplus to requirements by the Education Committee and authority given to the Legal Services Manager to dispose of these houses in the most appropriate manner. Concern was expressed by the Committee about the sale of these houses in the light of recent developments and it was considered that the sale of the houses should not proceed until their future use is clarified.

Noted.

(b) North Ayrshire Council Industrial Estate Factories

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the letting/availability of factories on Council Industrial Estates.

Noted.

(c) Garden Tidy Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on service delivery in respect of the 1997 Garden Tidy Scheme.

Within the Three Towns there are 838 gardens on the list, with a waiting list of 13.

As a result of the introduction of the European Working Time Directive, employees are now required to take holiday entitlement during the duration of the Scheme. It may not therefore be possible to complete the six planned cuts and will have implications for future years also.

Members raised concerns at grass cuttings not being lifted and causing a hazard to elderly and disabled. Assurances were given that the Project Manager has been made aware of the problem of uncollected grass cuttings and has instructed all staff to ensure this is uplifted.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to request the Director of Commercial Services to investigate (i) the feasibility of implementing a system whereby residents on the Garden Tidy Scheme remain on the list and do not require to re-apply each year; and (ii) options to enable everyone who requires their garden tended to be given this assistance.

(d) Three Towns Initiative

Submitted report by the Three Towns Initiative Manager on the key project work undertaken and future proposals of the Three Towns Initiative.

Noted.

(e) Analysis of Grants

Submitted report by Chief Executive on the Community Development Grants paid to 1 July 1997 in respect of the Three Towns, including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

4. Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on requests for financial assistance:-

(a) Ardeer Lone Parents Club

The Committee agreed to award Ardeer Lone Parents Club £360.00;

(b) Argyle Playgroup

The Committee agreed to award Argyle Playgroup £800.00;

(c) Group Caledonia

The Committee agreed to award Group Caledonia £300.00;

(d) Stevenston Elderly Forum

On 26 June 1997 the Committee agreed to defer the application by Stevenston Elderly Forum for a report on running costs of the three Elderly Forums in the Three Towns. The Area Community Development Officer will obtain further information and report; and

(e) Park Church Autumn Club

On 26 June 1997 the Committee agreed to defer this application until the disbursement of equipment from Dykesmains School IFE Wing had been determined. The equipment from Dykesmains IFE Wing has now been given to the Park Church Autumn Club.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to request the Director of Community and Recreational Services to report on the implications of purchasing equipment on behalf of groups in terms of the Scheme of Community Development Grants.

5. Stevenston: New Street Cemetery

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of the investigation into ways and means of enhancing security at New Street Cemetery, Stevenston.

A site visit held on 22 July 1997, attended by Councillor Munro, Officers of the Council and Strathclyde Police made a number of proposals to improve security. Since the site visit the proposals have been implemented, including the locking of the main gates with keys being left at the local Housing Office and Library and a police surveillance initiative. It was also agreed to investigate the feasibility of the works required to repair the vandalised headstones being undertaken as a project by the Community Service Order Scheme and the cost of installing barbed wire along certain walls.

The Committee was advised that it is unlikely that the Community Service Order Scheme could assist in the repair of vandalised headstones due to the specialist lifting equipment required.

After discussion the Committee agreed to request the Director of Commercial Services to (a) investigate the implications of (i) laying the vandalised headstones flat; and (ii) a reduced area of barbed wire being installed; and (b) report back.

6. Ardrossan Cemetery: Car Parking

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the position regarding proposals for car parking at Ardrossan Cemetery.

Traffic congestion and parking difficulties have increased at Sorbie Road as a result of the new

housing developments opposite the cemetery and the lack of car parking at Ardrossan Cemetery. Discussions had previously taken place between Cunninghame District Council and the owner of an area of ground opposite the cemetery, regarding the possibility of this ground being transferred to the Council to be used as a cemetery car park. Since then, however, the land in question has been sold.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Director of Commercial Services (i) approach the current owners to ascertain whether they would be willing to consider disposing of the ground to the Council for the purposes of a cemetery car park; and (ii) explore the possibility of alternative sites and report back to the next meeting; and (b) that if appropriate, a bid be made in a future capital programme for any funding required.

7. Stevenston Beach Park

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on proposals for the future management of Stevenston Beach Park.

As a result of growing concerns over the erosion of the sand dune area at Stevenston Beach a review of the area has been undertaken. Interim proposals for its future management have been developed. These include the creation of a Local Nature Reserve; fencing and planting to reduce wind blow and encourage the build up of sand; investigation of an alternative site for off road motorcycles; and consultation with local residents with the intention of establishing a management group.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) the proposals for the future management of Stevenston Beach Park; and (b) to refer to the Community and Recreational Services Committee to consider the prioritisation of a bid of £15,000 to implement the necessary works, to be made in a future capital programme.

8. Community Service Scheme: Removal of Graffiti

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the outcome of discussions with Strathclyde Police and Commercial Services on future arrangements for the removal of graffiti.

The Community Service Scheme has the capacity to undertake light, short-term projects within the Employment Regulations and Health and Safety Procedures, including landscaping gardens of local authority, voluntary and charitable organisation premises and painting and decorating of such premises. Requests for projects should be made directly to the Community Service Organiser. With regard to requests for the removal of graffiti, these should be directed through the Commercial Services Directorate, who will assess the work required and direct appropriate projects to the Community Service Scheme. Areas of work requiring heavy lifting or specialist equipment will be undertaken by the Commercial Services Directorate.

The Committee welcomed clarification on the referral arrangements for removal of graffiti but requested that a system of prioritisation of the projects to be undertaken by the Community Services Scheme be introduced.

A presentation will be made to the Social Work Committee outlining how work will be prioritised by the Community Service Scheme and the establishment of a priority list.

The Committee agreed to the referral and work arrangements proposed.

9. Dog Fouling: Pilot Project Areas

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the initiative to combat dog fouling in the five pilot areas identified and to determine future action.

The Committee was informed that the measures taken to date have been positively received by the general public and the high usage of dog bins has necessitated an increase in the frequency of

emptying. Demand has also been high for dog tidy bags.

In order to streamline and simplify the system for reporting and responding to complaints of dog fouling, the Officers Team has proposed the following options for future provision:

- (a) identifying further pilot projects;
- (b) with the co-operation of Strathclyde Police, providing a more general application of existing measures; and
- (c) deferring further spending in this financial year pending an investigation into the possibility of appointing a new post of Dog Warden to cover tasks currently undertaken by several Directorates of the Council.

The Committee agreed (i) to recommend Lighthdykes playing fields as a further pilot project area; (ii) to recommend to the Corporate Strategy Committee the appointment of a Dog Warden whose remit would cover tasks currently undertaken by several Directorates; and (iii) request the Chief Executive to confirm the position on the provision of signs in school playgrounds.

10. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed to consider the following items as a matter of urgency.

11. Electricity Cards

Mr Gooding advised that the Post Office in Stevenston has ceased to sell Electricity Power Cards and that there are a limited number of locations in Stevenston where these cards are now available.

The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive investigate the matter further and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

12. Saltcoats: Millar Road: Play Area

Mr Taylor advised that Cunninghame Road, Millar Road and Townhead Road Tenants Association has expressed concern about overgrown shrubs surrounding the play area at Millar Road.

Assurances were given that the shrubs will be cut down within the next few days and that if residents remain concerned the shrubs can be removed completely.

Noted.

13. Saltcoats: Town Hall

Mrs Munn requested confirmation of the position on the chairlift at Saltcoats Town Hall. The Committee was advised that the chairlift will be installed on 29 September 1997.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 12.20 p.m.