

North Coast and Arran Area Committee
11 May 1998

Arran, 11 May 1998 - At a Meeting of the North Coast and Arran Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 11.00 a.m.

Present

John Sillars, Margaret Highet, Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Rae and Richard Wilkinson.

In Attendance

F. Keddlity, Head of Sports and Horticultural Services, I. Frame and M. Smyth, Area Community Development Officers and L. Forsyth, Children's Development Services Officer (Community and Recreational Services); J. Houston, Divisional Manager Garnock Valley/Largs (Housing Services); C. Hamilton, Area Services Manager and S. Martin, Principal Officer Service Development (Social Work); K. Thomas, Principal Officer, Environment (Planning, Roads and Environment); H. Hunter, Senior Accountant (Financial Services); J. Lockhart, Area Officer Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance (Commercial Services); A. MacLeod, Assistant Local Officer and J. Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Also In Attendance

T. Barr, Community Fire Officer (Strathclyde Fire Brigade); and PC R. Craig (Strathclyde Police).

Chair

Mr. Sillars in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Monitoring Reports

(a) Housing Services as at 31 March 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services providing statistical information on the performance of the Housing Services Directorate in relation to voids, allocations and housing benefits throughout North Ayrshire.

The report confirmed that with regard to the timescales for the allocation of empty properties in accordance with the Council's allocation policy, the figures for the North Coast and Arran area are generally comparable with the other areas of North Ayrshire. The level of housing benefit uptake will continue to be a high priority and the percentage of tenants claiming housing benefit in the North Coast and Arran Area is slightly lower in comparison to the other areas within North Ayrshire. Details were also provided on the number of void properties within the North Coast and Arran area and, while the overall void level of 1.2% is satisfactory, it is intended that the number of properties falling within the 6-10 weeks and over 10 weeks letting categories will be reduced in the future.

Noted.

(b) Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate

Submitted reports by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the performance of the following services in relation to service delivery for the period April 1997 to March 1998.

(i) Food Safety and Health and Safety

The Council is the enforcing authority in relation to Food Safety and Health and Safety legislation in certain categories of premises, including manufacturers, producers, retailers, offices, restaurants and other caterers. Premises are graded according to level of risk and inspected on the basis of a pre arranged programme which is subject to performance indicator monitoring by the Audit Commission.

A total of 1141 food hygiene visits and 1503 general inspections were carried out in North Ayrshire as a whole during the period and individual statistics were provided for the North Coast and Arran area.

Noted.

(ii) Investigation of Noise Complaints and Public Health Complaints

The Council has a statutory duty in terms of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990 to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance including noise. A number of public health complaints are also investigated each year.

During the current period, the Environment Section received 351 established noise complaints, 72 of which were received from within the North Coast and Arran area. The percentage of complaints responded to within 1 calendar day was 95% and within 3 calendar days 98%.

In addition, a total of 1083 public health complaints were received for the period, 292 of which were received from the North Coast and Arran area. The percentage of complaints responded to within 5 working days was 88%.

Noted.

(iii) Pest Control Service

The Council has a statutory duty in terms of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949 to survey its area and to require any infestation of rats or mice to be treated.

During the period, in addition to this statutory requirement, a total of 2,104 pest control treatments were carried out within North Ayrshire. In terms of response times, the service provided by the Council exceeds the standard required for performance indicators by a national benchmark standard which suggests a positive performance.

Noted.

(iv) Dog Warden Service

Within the North Coast and Arran area, of the 7 dogs uplifted, one was rehoused, one was reclaimed and 5 were humanely destroyed, within the current period.

Noted.

(c) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 3 April 1998

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on Community Development Grants paid to 3 April 1998 in respect of the North Coast and Arran area, including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

3. Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Section: Litter Awareness Reports

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed format of litter awareness monitoring reports which will be submitted on a regular basis to future meetings.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to the next meeting in the proposed format.

4. Community Development Grants Expenditure Analysis 1997/98

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an analysis of the expenditure of the Community Development Grants budget for 1997/98.

The Committee awarded a total of 36 grants from its budget of £12,200 mainly in the form of general grants and grants to young people. The average grant for the North Coast and Arran area was £338 against an average of £420 for North Ayrshire as a whole.

In addition 35 galas/festivals/fun weeks and other special events were supported by grants and awards made to playschemes against a budget centrally held by the Corporate Strategy Committee to allow for a more strategic approach to this funding.

Noted.

5. Community Development Grants Scheme: Requests for Financial Assistance

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

(a) Arran Brass

The Committee agreed to award Arran Brass £500.

(b) Arran Folk Festival

The Committee agreed to award the Arran Folk Festival £500.

(c) APACHE (Senior Citizens Club)

The Committee agreed to award APACHE £255.

(d) Whiting Bay Toddler Group

The Committee agreed to award the Whiting Bay Toddler Group £380.

(e) West Kilbride Museums Trust

The Committee agreed to award the West Kilbride Museums Trust £497.

(f) Largs Museum Trust

The Committee agreed to award the Largs Museum Trust £600.

(g) Millport Country and Western Festival

The Committee agreed to award the Millport Country and Western Festival £1,000.

(h) Largs Tennis Club

The Committee agreed to continue this application to the next meeting for further information.

(i) West Kilbride Development Group

The Committee agreed to award the West Kilbride Development Group £500.

(j) Largs Variations

The Committee agreed to award Largs Variations £300.

(k) Arran Theatre/Education Partnership

The Committee agreed to award the Arran Theatre/Education Partnership £200.

(l) Ardrossan and Saltcoats Scouts

The Committee agreed to continue this application to the next meeting for further information.

(m) 1st Ardrossan 15th Ayrshire Scout Group

The Committee agreed to continue this application to the next meeting for further information.

(n) West Kilbride Gala

The Committee agreed to award the West Kilbride Gala £500.

6. Playscheme Applications: Summer and Autumn 1998 and Easter 1999

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on playscheme applications in respect of Summer and Autumn 1998 and Easter 1999.

(a) Fairlie Summer Scheme Quarriers Homes

The Committee agreed to award the Fairlie Summer Scheme Quarriers Homes travel passes;

(b) West Kilbride Out of School Care

The Committee agreed to award West Kilbride Out of School Care £781;

(c) Pupils Out of School Care

The Committee agreed to award Pupils Out of School Care £472; and.

(d) Largs Churches Holiday Club

The Committee agreed to award Largs Churches Holiday Club £87.

7. Largs Common Good Fund: Applications for Financial Assistance 1998/99

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on applications for funding from the Largs Common Good which had previously been submitted for consideration and continued to enable further information to be obtained. Members met representatives of the Helter Skelter Group on 5 May 1998 to discuss their application.

Having further considered the applications the Committee took the following decisions:-

Application	Decision
The Brisbane Queen Festival Committee	Agreed £450
Helter Skelter	Agreed (a) £1,000; (b) to review the application at future date if appropriate; and (c) to support the provision of assistance in kind.

On 30 March 1998 the Committee approved grants from the Largs Common Good Fund to the Largs Illumination Committee, Largs and District Round Table and the Largs Viking Festival. It was further agreed that these organisations be advised that the level of funding agreed for the current financial year could not be guaranteed in future years and that other sources of income should be identified. Consequently a letter was sent to these organisations but one on them has since expressed concern.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that a further letter be sent to the organisations concerned clarifying the position in relation to future applications for funding, with copies to Members for information; (b) that a revised form of wording be used for any similar future letters; and (c) that the Brisbane Queen Festival Committee also be advised that the level of funding agreed for the current financial year cannot be guaranteed in future years and that other sources of income should be identified.

8. Millport Common Good Fund: Application for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application from Millport Country and Western Festival Association for financial assistance from the Millport Common Good Fund.

The report confirmed that the date of the festival for 1998 has been altered to 4-7 September in an attempt to extend the tourist season and gave details of anticipated expenditure in relation to the hire of bands, equipment and advertising. The amount available for disbursement in Millport Common Good Fund for the current financial year is £1,875.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve a grant of £1,000; and (b) that the organisation be advised that the level of funding agreed for 1998/99 cannot be guaranteed in future years and that other sources of income should be identified.

9. Seasonal Facilities Operation

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the proposed method of operation of seasonal facilities in the North Coast and Arran area during 1998.

As part of the 1998/99 budget savings package it has been agreed that seasonal facilities, which cannot be successfully leased externally, will not operate during the current year. Details were provided on a number of facilities which have been successfully leased. Where no offers have been received and where practical the facilities will be left available for casual use and any further expressions of interest will be considered on receipt.

Noted.

10. Largs: Bowencraig Football Pitches

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the current position in respect of sports pitch provision at Bowencraig, Largs.

The Bowencraig site lies to the west of the main road south of Largs and provides for two full

sized football pitches. Due to the absence of a suitable drainage system the condition of the pitches is poor and during inclement weather they can become unplayable with on occasions, resultant damage to the playing surface. The estimated cost of installing a drainage system at the site is approximately £20,000 per pitch as the work would require the services of a specialised contractor. Given the level of demand for outdoor sports there is currently an under provision of sports pitches in the Largs area. Discussions are however in progress with the local High School to determine the feasibility of their sports pitches being made available for seven aside football. Additionally a site has been identified at Brisbane Glen in Largs for two new sports pitches but it is unlikely that these will be available in the foreseeable future.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Community and Recreational Services Committee be requested to consider the level of provision for outdoor sports and future funding requirements for the North Coast and Arran area; and (b) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services be requested to continue to explore the opportunities to maximise the use of school outdoor sports pitch facilities.

11. Largs: Douglas Park Aviary

Submitted report on the outcome of further consultation with local Members on the future of the Aviary at Douglas Park, Largs, consideration of which had been deferred at the meeting on 30 March 1998.

The condition of the existing structure is poor and would require to be redesigned if it were to be retained. Following consultation with local Members differing views were expressed. Concern was expressed regarding the removal of the aviary which, while it does not form a major attraction, does contribute towards the provision of facilities for tourists. The view was also expressed that the aviary provides pleasure to children and adults and that it should be retained. The Director of Community and Recreational Services has recommended that the birds within the aviary be transferred to the South Ayrshire aviary at Belleisle Park which will provide an improved environment and that the structure at Douglas Park be removed. Since the proposal does not form part of a savings exercise, any resultant reduction in expenditure would be allocated to the removal costs of the structure and to other facilities within Douglas Park.

After a full discussion, Councillor Highet dissenting, the Committee agreed (a) that the aviary be retained at Douglas Park, Largs; and (b) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services make appropriate arrangements for the existing structure to be upgraded.

12. Strathclyde Fire Brigade: Fire Statistics

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on Fire Statistics within the North Coast and Arran area for the period 1 January to 31 March 1998.

Noted.

13. North Ayrshire Community Care Plan 1998-2001 Consultation Draft

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the North Ayrshire Community Care Plan 1998-2001 Consultation Draft. A presentation on the draft document was given by officers from the Social Work Directorate.

The consultation draft outlines the strategic priorities which are as follows:-

- Continued development of community based mental health services;
- Improving service provision for older people and those suffering from dementia, together with their carers;
- Delivering comprehensive and innovative services for people with learning disabilities and their carers; and
- Achieving best value in community care.

Public consultation will be undertaken in Largs on 27 May 1998 and in Brodick on 2 June 1998. The consultation period will end on 5 June 1998. A report will be submitted to the Corporate Strategy Committee and thereafter forwarded to the Scottish Office for final approval of the Community Care Plan.

Noted.

14. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency.

15. Community Safety

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the North Coast and Arran Community Safety Partnership.

The report gave details of the composition of the Partnership and on a Community Safety Awareness Day held in Largs Academy on Wednesday 25 March 1998.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.