

Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee
10 November 2011

STEVENSTON, 10 November 2011 - At a Meeting of the Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Anthony Gurney, John Hunter, Peter McNamara, Jim Montgomerie and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

J. Leckie, Head of Service, J. McHarg, Assistant Manager (Community Services) and B. Anderson, Performance/Grants Information Officer (Education and Skills); A. Kirk, Manager (Design and Property), D. Wilson, Streetscene Manager, C. Forsyth, Assistant Transportation Manager and F. Brown, Bereavement and Burials Officer (Finance and Infrastructure); J. Cumming, Project Officer (Economic Development), and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Inspector B. Skimming (Strathclyde Police); and J. Ledgerwood, Project Manager and B. Nimmo (Irvine Bay Regeneration Company).

Chair

Councillor Gurney in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Margie Currie, William Gibson and Ronnie McNicol.

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor McNamara, as a member of Friends of the Plantation, declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 (Community Development Grant Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund 2011/12: Applications for Financial Assistance) and took no part in the determination of the group's application for funding.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2011 were signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Presentation: Irvine Bay Regeneration Company

The Committee received a presentation by James Ledgerwood, Irvine Bay Regeneration Company, on proposals for the Shell refinery site in Ardrossan.

Mr Ledgerwood provided background information on the role and funding arrangements of the Irvine Bay Regeneration Company and described progress in relation to the draft Masterplan for the Ardrossan North Shore, including proposals of a mixed use development on and around the former Shell refinery site, the planned marina extension and the proposed hotel and office accommodation on the adjacent quayside.

Examples were also provided of other projects in the area, such as improvements to Princes Street, the boat park, the planned medical centre and the former Jack Miller building in Ardrossan, the Saltcoats station building and Town Hall, and the re-development of Stevenston's former Grange Bingo Hall as a business centre.

The presentation concluded with an outline of the challenges facing the Irvine Bay Regeneration Company over the next few years, as well as opportunities to engage further with the local community via work with the Ardrossan Development Group and others.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the rationale for changes to the proposed layout of the marina extension;
- the current position with regard to future core funding for Irvine Bay Regeneration Company;
- the need to re-prioritise some of the work of the Irvine Bay Regeneration Company in the light of the current financial climate;
- the importance to the area of work on Saltcoats Town Hall;
- the high profile nature of projects in Irvine and Ardrossan, compared with regeneration work in other areas, such as Saltcoats and Stevenston;
- an assurance that work to extend the marina in Ardrossan would not preclude any commercial shipping projects in the future;
- the design of the proposed new medical centre in Ardrossan;
- decontamination work on the former Shell refinery site; and
- assurances that the commercial element of the development would proceed as part of the Masterplan, albeit subject to more favourable market conditions.

The Committee agreed to note (a) the content of the presentation; and (b) that Irvine Bay Regeneration Company would (i) arrange a presentation for Members on core funding from the Scottish Government once the allocation has been made; and (ii) confirm that the planned work to extend the marina in Ardrossan would not preclude any future commercial shipping.

4. Strathclyde Police

Inspector Skimming provided information on the following:-

- an ongoing Multi-Agency Problem-Solving Group initiative in the Saltcoats East area, comprising two separate enforcement phases, a community phase and a feedback phase to assess effectiveness;
- policing initiatives in the lead-up to the festive period, including tackling shoplifting and town centre disorder, visits to licensed premises and targeting drink-driving;
- particular actions for the Stevenston area, such as addressing the use by off-road vehicles of the Ardeer and foreshore areas of the town;
- visits to licensed premises on Arran, as well as an initiative to tackle speeding in Brodick and Shiskine; and
- the continuing theft of lead in the area and action to tackle this issue.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the Saltcoats Pubwatch initiative and the issue of the displacement of disturbances to other areas, including Stevenston;
- the work of the Ardrossan Development Group;
- an ongoing issue regarding the illegal parking of commercial vehicles near the cemetery on Sorbie Road; and
- congestion associated with bus driver changeovers on Princes Street, Ardrossan.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the information provided; (b) that the Committee Services Officer liaise with Legal Services to establish the current position on action in respect of the business whose vehicles are continuing to park illegally near the cemetery on Sorbie Road; and (c) that the Assistant Transportation Manager arrange for the Chair to attend a planned site visit of Princes Street by the Council's Supervisory Engineer and a representative of Stagecoach.

5. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue on activity from 26 September to 31 October 2011. The report provided details of deliberate and accidental fires at a number of domestic and non-domestic locations in the Committee's area and well as incidents relating to loose refuse, skip and bin fires. The continued availability of free Home Fire Safety Visits was also highlighted in the report, which indicated that 52 such visits had been completed during the reporting period.

The Chair reported that a potential fire hazard presented by debris on the fairground site next to the former Apollo cinema had now been addressed.

Noted.

6. Saltcoats: Sydney Street: Car Parking

The Committee received a verbal report by the Assistant Transportation Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) on access problems associated with car parking on Sidney Street in Saltcoats and on the access road to the nearby Care Home.

Divisional Commander Davidson of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue had expressed concerns about access issues for emergency vehicles attending the care home in Eglinton Court, due to the presence of parked cars immediately adjacent to the turning from Sidney Street. The Council's Infrastructure and Design Service has examined the matter and identified the need for parking restrictions in front of numbers 10-14 Sidney Street, to allow adequate space for fire units to turn into Eglinton Court. A temporary Traffic Order has now been promoted and will be followed by a permanent Order in the next 18 months.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- consultation with local residents; and
- the potential for local residents to seek permission to use the nearby care home's car park.

7. Ardrossan Castle

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the current condition of Ardrossan Castle and the steps being taken to prevent further deterioration.

Ardrossan Castle is one of two Council-owned castles which are under the ownership of Education and Skills. The structure has suffered as a result of severe weather conditions over the last few years and further damage has been caused to the ruins through vandalism. The castle was surveyed in detail by consultants in late September 2011 as part of a 'watching brief' to review the condition of the castle ruin and monitor deterioration. The results identified further deterioration in the condition of the castle and the requirement for work to repair damaged stonework, remove vegetation and stabilise weak sections of the ruins.

Infrastructure and Design Services have now engaged a firm of engineers to provide further advice and guidance on the condition of the castle. They have identified high and medium priority works which require to be carried out and have advised that measures must be taken in the meantime to prevent access in the interests of public safety. In response to the immediate concern for Public Safety, new bold signage has been erected to warn the public, and the open cellar void areas have been re-secured by steel grills to prevent any entry and Infrastructure and Design Services are currently investigating options for the erection of fencing to further prevent access to the greater structure.

At present, there are no plans for any immediate repairs to be carried out as options cannot be fully assessed until further information is available. Infrastructure and Design Services has extended the consultants' brief to seek a specification of works and probable costs for both medium and high priority issues. Once obtained this, will be discussed with Education and Skills in order that appropriate action and funding can be identified.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on:-

- the cost of fencing off the site and the limited effectiveness of this in terms of preventing access;
- the estimated cost of £100k required to maintain the structure in its current state;
- the potential for joint working with Irvine Bay Regeneration Company to floodlight the Castle as an iconic structure within the town; and
- scope for similarly floodlighting Kerelaw Castle in Stevenston and perhaps including exploiting the tourism potential of a trail between the two castles.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the actions proposed by Infrastructure and Design Services to mitigate danger, strive to reduce vandalism and investigate the options to avoid further deterioration of Ardrossan Castle; (b) that Education and Skills (i) liaise with Irvine Bay Regeneration Company to explore the business case for seeking to promote and floodlight Ardrossan and Kerelaw castles; and (ii) submit a progress report to the next meeting.

8. St. Bride's Chapel, Lamlash

The Committee received a verbal report by the Streetscene Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) on the current position with regard to St. Bride's Chapel in Lamlash and options for its future.

St. Bride's Chapel, a pre-reformation listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument in the grounds of Lamash cemetery, has suffered gradual deterioration which currently requires an estimated £250k to address. Officers from the Council's Streetscene and Cemeteries sections have been liaising with a local group, 'Saving St. Bride's Chapel', which is looking at options to access funding from a variety of sources in order to carry out remedial works to the chapel. It is estimated that £3,500-4,000 will be needed to allow the group to put together initial funding applications. A report on the options will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members asked questions, and received further clarification, on the historic value of the structure and the Council's statutory duty in its regard.

The Committee agreed that the Streetscene Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) submit an update report to the next meeting.

9. Community Benefit Fund: Applications for Grant Aid

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications for grant received in respect of the Community Benefit Fund.

The Committee agreed to (a) make the following awards:-

Organisation	Award
D in the Park	£500.00
Share Arran Roads Safely	£500.00

and (b) continue consideration of the application from Old Clachan Church Group to the next financial year.

10. Community Development Grants Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund 2011/12: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on applications for financial assistance under the Council's Community Development Grants Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund.

The Committee agreed to (a) continue consideration of the applications from The Ayrshire Community Trust to the next meeting to allow the group to make a presentation to the Committee on its activities; and (b) make the following awards:-

Community Development Grants Scheme

Organisation	Award
CLASP	£2,000
Ardrossan Academicals Rugby Football Club	£1,000
Cunninghame Blind Club	£2,000
St. Peter's Children's Centre	£678
Friends of the Plantation	£500

Local Youth Action Fund

Organisation	Award
St. John's Youth Group	£2,000
Ardrossan Castle Rovers	£1,500
Evolution Skate Park	£1,718
Three Towns Open Duke of Edinburgh Award Group	£2,000

11. Stevenston Common Good Fund

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application for financial assistance from the Stevenston Common Good Fund. The Committee Services Officer reported verbally on comments received from the Solicitor to the Council, the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) and Corporate Director (Education and Skills) in relation to the application.

The Committee agreed to award £1,632 to Hit It, on the basis that any lifelong learning undertaken by one sector of the community was of benefit to the community as a whole.

12. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP): Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 15 September 2011

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the Meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) held on 15 September 2011.

Noted.

13. Rotation of Chair

The Committee agreed that Councillor Gurney continue in his role as Chair of the Area Committee for the remainder of the current Administration.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Area Committee will be held on Thursday 2 February 2011 at 2.00 p.m. in the Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre.

15. Future Agenda Items

The Committee (a) highlighted as an item for inclusion on a future agenda, the naming of the new cemetery on the High road, Stevenston; and (b) noted that any additional items for consideration at the next meeting should be submitted to M. Anderson or D. McCaw.

The Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.