

North Coast and Arran Area Committee
5 January 1998

Largs, 5 January 1998 - At a Meeting of the North Coast and Arran Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

C. Hamilton, Area Manager (Social Work); J. Currie, Head of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance (Commercial Services); J. Leckie, Head of Education Service (Education); R. Lee, Assistant Principal Accountant (Financial Services); M. Smyth, Area Community Development Officer (Community and Recreational Services); R. Young, Principal Officer, Common Services and J. Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Also In Attendance

Inspector M. Scally (Strathclyde Police); and T. Barr, Community Fire Officer (Strathclyde Fire Brigade).

Chair

Mr. Sillars in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 November 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Largs: 1st Stop Shop

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on the opening of a 1st Stop Shop in Moorburn House, Largs.

A 1st Stop Shop will operate from the Council Chamber at Moorburn House, Largs from 5 January 1998 as part of the Council's Decentralisation Policy. The facility will be staffed from the Chief Executive's (Legal Services - Registration), Commercial Services and Community and Recreational Services Directorates. In addition to the Intranet information facility a computerised registration system will be introduced along with a mini loop system for the hard of hearing and video conferencing facilities. The new facility, the costs of which have been met from within the Capital Budget Allocation, will be publicised through "Points North" and "Look North" and poster/leaflet distribution. Future meetings of the Area Committee and the Largs Community Council will be held in the former Marriage Room.

Noted.

3. Monitoring Reports

(a) Analysis of Examination Results

Submitted report by the Director of Education on examination results relating to Secondary

Schools published by the Scottish Office which are available to parents in school handbooks.

A short presentation was given on (i) the Relative ratings for Standard Grade subjects which are used for internal comparisons on individual subjects by schools, to determine how the subjects are performing against each other; and (ii) the Value Added Approach to results which seeks to ascertain the value added by a particular school in respect of achievement levels in individual subjects and what steps can be taken to improve performance in low performance subjects.

The SOEID initiative in Raising Standards aims to move to a three year average of school performance in an attempt to smooth out annual variations and enable trends to be identified and targets to be set. In the interests of fairness, comparisons can only be made between similar schools and a schools characteristic index is to be introduced to enable similar establishments to be identified for comparison purposes. In addition to keeping parents informed the detailed analysis of examination results is also a useful management tool for Head Teachers. The Council's Education Committee has agreed that Secondary Schools should submit a report to the Director of Education outlining the actions proposed to raise attainment. The target of increasing the number of awards achieved with schools will be a priority for school plans for session 1998/99. Statistics show that with a few exceptions, the North Coast and Arran examination results are close to the National Average and most North Coast and Arran Schools receive a good report from the Schools Inspector.

Noted.

(b) Industrial Estate Factories

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the letting/availability of factories on Council Industrial Estates within the North Coast and Arran area.

The Keppenburn Workshops, Main Road, Fairlie comprise 6 industrial units. The current occupancy rate is 100% and 16 full-time staff are employed within these units. The level of occupancy/continuing demand for the Council's factory/workshop units at this location is good and is apparently meeting the requirements of a particular niche market for particular types of businesses.

Noted.

(c) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 19 November 1997

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on analysis of Community Development Grants paid to 19 November 1997 in respect of the North Coast and Arran area, including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

4. Community Development Grants Scheme: Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the undernoted applications for grants to voluntary organisations.

(a) North Coast Forum on Disabilities

The Committee agreed to award the North Coast Forum on Disabilities £200.

5. Community Care Services

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work providing further information on the provision of community care services within North Ayrshire.

It was originally intended to review the position regarding the installation of community alarms on Cumbrae in April 1998 with a view to commencing installation of the units thereafter. Following a

recent review of the position it will now be possible to commence installation of community alarms on Cumbrae sooner than was first anticipated. Six persons have already been identified on Cumbrae who will receive community alarm units in late January/early February. Details were also provided on the timescales and procedures involved in small adaptations to properties throughout the North Coast and Arran area which are carried out following assessment subject to available funding. The total cost of work outstanding at present which requires funding amounts to £8,825 and this figure is expected to increase to approximately £35,000 by the end of the current financial year. The outstanding work cannot be undertaken until funding becomes available.

Noted.

6. West Kilbride Beach/Seamill: Toilet Facilities

Mrs. McLardy expressed concern over the delay by the Commercial Services Directorate in responding to her previous request for the provision of toilet facilities in the Seamill, West Kilbride area.

The Committee was advised that the proposal in respect of Portencross had been investigated but it would not be feasible to provide toilet facilities at this location. The foreshore area near the Waterside Inn is currently leased by the Council but the lease conditions preclude the erection of any building within this area. In addition there is no drainage provision at present. The Council's Architectural Services Department has indicated that if a toilet facility is to be provided at the Hyndman Road site it will require to be of brick and block construction with a slate or tiled roof as the site is in an exposed position.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that the Director of Commercial Services investigate the possibility of providing a portable public toilet in the vicinity of the Waterside Inn, Seamill, West Kilbride linked to the existing sewerage services at that location and submit a report to the Commercial Services Committee for consideration at the earliest possible opportunity; (b) to suspend meantime any further action on the provision of a toilet facility at the Hyndman Road site pending the outcome of the investigation into the possible provision of a facility adjacent to the Waterside Inn; (c) to note the position regarding the Portencross site; and (d) that a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

7. Largs: Former Destructor Building/Site

Concern has been expressed by the Local Members, members of the public and the Largs Community Council over the condition of the site of the former destructor building in Largs. The building itself is unsecured and being accessible to children presents a safety hazard. The site has been designated in the Local Plan for housing and there is strong local opinion that the site should be reserved for non-industrial uses. Clarification is being sought on further proposals for the use of the site.

The Committee was advised that the site, which is in the Council's ownership, is currently used as the main depot for Cleansing and Roads in the North Coast area and that there are no suitable alternative locations in the area for these operations. The Director of Commercial Services has no objections to the provision of industrial units on the site provided a satisfactory proportion can be retained for the current uses.

After discussion the Committee agreed that the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services be requested to investigate the options for the future of the site and report to the next meeting on proposals for the future use of the site.

8. Strathclyde Fire Brigade: Fire Statistics

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on Fire Statistics for the period 10 October to 21 November 1997.

Noted.

9. Urgent Items

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

10. Adult Education

Concern was expressed over the fact that recent budget cuts would have a knock on effect on further education provision in Largs with the possibility that provision of FE classes in Largs would end for the remainder of the current financial year. This appeared to be related to the non-filling of posts within the Community and Recreational Services Directorate.

The Committee agreed that the Director of Community and Recreational Services (i) be requested to clarify the position as a matter of urgency; and (ii) submit a report on the matter to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.