

Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee
28 October 1998

Kilwinning, 28 October 1998 - At a Meeting of the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Ian Clarkson, Jane Gorman, Irene Oldfather and Gena Seales.

In Attendance

N Buchan, Head of Roads (Planning, Roads and Environment); M Thomson, Area Housing Manager, Kilwinning (Housing and Construction Services); W Simpson, Community Services Development Officer; J Martin, Libraries and Information Services Manager; A Robinson, Centre Manager; M Gillies, Area Officer Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance (Community Services); D MacRitchie, Manager, Area Services (Social Work); K Nicholls, Accountant (Financial Services); S Paxton, Administration Officer and C Graham, Assistant Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Assistant Divisional Officer Milligan (Strathclyde Fire Brigade); and Superintendent Keenan, Inspector McLanaghan and PC Douglas (Traffic Department) (Strathclyde Police).

Chair

Mr Clarkson in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Patrick Browne and James Clements.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair advised that following a series of consultation meetings with local community groups, the Committee had agreed also to meet in the local Secondary Schools in Kilwinning and Dreghorn and consult with the young people on issues of concern to them. Councillor Clarkson welcomed the pupils of Kilwinning Academy to the meeting.

2. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

3. Monitoring Reports

(a) Empty Houses in the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on empty council houses within the Area Committee's boundaries, including reasons for refusal of properties.

As at 12 October 1998 there were 28 empty properties in the Kilwinning area representing 1.5% of the total stock and 9 empty properties within Dreghorn and Springside, representing approximately 0.9% of stock. In Kilwinning 8 properties have now been let and void

properties in Dreghorn and Springside now number 4, with 7 being let and a further 2 becoming vacant.

In response to questions concerning Montgomerie Terrace, Kilwinning, the Area Housing Manager advised that since the introduction of an Allocation Strategy approximately 18 months ago, the original number of empty houses (approximately 50% of the 60 houses in Montgomerie Terrace) has been reduced to three, two of which are in need of further works to compound dampness problems.

The Strategy was put in place as a result of severe difficulties in letting the properties and has been particularly successful in encouraging people to relocate to Kilwinning and has involved liaison between the Council and the Community Involvement Branch of Strathclyde Police. A dedicated Housing Officer was allocated to the Strategy, and upgrading of the buildings included in the Strategy was carried out to a higher standard than would have taken place under normal works.

The Committee agreed (a) that the numbers of and reasons for void properties in Montgomerie Terrace, Kilwinning be included in future monitoring reports; and (b) otherwise to note the position.

(b) Education: Review of Services for Children Under Eight

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the Triennial Review of services for children under the age of eight years in North Ayrshire, including details of services within the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside areas.

Under the Children Act 1989, all local authorities are required to register and inspect as appropriate, childminders, private nurseries, certain voluntary groups, out of school care services, playgroups, crèches and other supervised activities within their areas. Each local authority must also publish, at intervals of three years, a Review of the pattern and range of education, daycare and related services for children under the age of eight.

The final document comprises two separate sections, namely the Service Review and a Service Directory, both detailing statistical information plus a list of available services by postcode area and information about the services themselves. A video has also been produced and will be made available to members, libraries, pre-five groups etc. by contacting the Education Directorate. Copies of the documentation have been forwarded to the Scottish Office.

Noted.

(c) Community Services

(i) Sports Development

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the levels of activity within the Sports Development Service. Details of attendances at a number of sports development initiatives both within the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside areas and North Ayrshire as a whole were detailed in the Appendix to the report.

Noted.

(ii) Leisure Management

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the levels of activity within the Leisure Management Service including statistical information on attendances at the Magnum Leisure Centre between April and September 1998 in comparison with same period in 1997.

The figures indicated a considerable reduction in the level of activity at the Magnum,

mostly in the level of swimming attendances. Reasons for the reduction included the early evening closures at weekends as part of the Council's savings exercise and a reduction nationally in swimming attendances.

During the period April to September a total of 32 complaints were received which equates to 0.14 complaints per thousand attendances, of which 13 related to the reduction in the levels of service due to revised opening hours.

There was a slight increase in attendances at sports pitches.

Noted.

(iii) Country Parks

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the levels of activity within the Country Parks and Ranger Service during the period April to September 1998. The Ranger Service which operates from Eglinton Country Park in Kilwinning covers designated areas of countryside throughout North Ayrshire.

A total of 18 events were held at various locations on the theme of walking and hiking, with 305 attendances. Recorded attendances at Eglinton Country Park and at other events are down for the first half of the year, largely due to poor weather.

A number of conservation projects have been initiated in partnership with local groups and progress is being made to establish a local Nature Reserve.

Noted.

(iv) Libraries Issue Figures

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on statistical information in relation to the library issue figures within Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside during the period April to September 1998.

The Libraries Service provides information under a number of headings, books, audio, video the Mobile Library, Toy Library, Home Library Service and children's activities.

A financial saving of £50,000 last year has resulted in a reduction in the purchase of new material and this has contributed to the downward trend in the use of the Library Service. The Kilwinning Library usage has increased on the last year by 35% due in part to an increase in stock prior to the budgetary reductions with Springside, which provides a taped book service, showing a 14.3% reduction in usage.

Dreghorn Library's usage has dropped by 23.3% and a tea/coffee service has been introduced in an effort to increase attendance. It is also hoped that the Library may be in a position next year to update its audio section, converting from cassettes to CDs.

The Committee expressed concern over the fall in book issues, largely due to substantial cuts in the book fund and agreed that the Director of Community Services be requested to consider how the book fund could be given increased priority in future budgets.

(v) Litter Awareness

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on service delivery in respect of fly-tipping and the number of calls received by the Litter Hotline in relation to Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside.

No incidences of fly-tipping have been reported and five calls in respect of cleansing were received by the Litter Hotline in the period to September 1998.

Noted.

(d) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 14 October 1998

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Community Development grants paid to 14 October 1998 including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

4. Community Development Grants Scheme: Applications for Grant Aid

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the applications received in respect of community grants to voluntary organisations.

(a) Springside Playgroup

The Committee agreed to award £516 to Springside Playgroup;

(b) Springside Out of School Care

The Committee agreed to award £250 to Springside Out of School Care;

(c) Playmates Playgroup

The Committee agreed to award £200 to Playmates Playgroup;

(d) Chalybeate Social Club

The Committee agreed to award £300 start up funding to the Chalybeate Social Club and to advise the organisation that a further application may be submitted in due course;

(e) 4th Pennyburn Brownies

The Committee agreed to award £350 to the 4th Pennyburn Brownies;

(f) Springside Rainbow Guides

The Committee agreed to award £300 to Springside Rainbow Guides; and

(g) Corsehill Kids Club

The Committee agreed to award £400 to the Corsehill Kids Club.

5. Dreghorn: Corsehill Mount Road: Traffic Regulation Order

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on a traffic management proposal for Corsehill Mount Road, Dreghorn as agreed by the Infrastructure and Environment Services Committee on 11 June and 14 October 1998.

Investigations, procedures and consultations have been carried out in respect of the proposed introduction of a 30 mph speed limit order on Corsehill Mount Road, Dreghorn.

Noted.

6. Community Safety

(a) Strathclyde Police: Crime Statistics

Submitted report by Strathclyde Police "UA" Division regarding the level of recorded crime within the Area Committee's boundaries.

The Strathclyde Police Housebreaking Initiative which commenced on 1 October 1998 as part of the Operation Spotlight Campaign, targets known housebreakers. Drug offences and drug dealers remain a high priority and will continue to be targeted. Details were given of outline plans to improve policing operations in Kilwinning and further details will be provided in due course.

Statistics were also provided for the Sub-Division as a whole, showing an increase of 4 crimes in 1998 from 496 during August 1997 and an increase of 78 for September in comparison to 440 during the same month last year.

Noted.

(b) Strathclyde Fire Brigade: Fire Statistics for the period 1 August to 30 September 1998

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire Brigade on fire statistics within the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside areas.

The Committee was advised of the Fire Brigade's current campaign in primary schools in relation to fireworks safety, and details were also given of assistance provided by the Brigade during the recent flooding.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.45 p.m.