

Garnock Valley Area Committee
7 January 1997

Dalry, 7 January 1997 - At a Meeting of the Garnock Valley Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

R Reilly and G Steven.

In Attendance

R Loney, Director; M Gilmour, Economic Development Officer; J Mason, Principal Engineer (Planning, Roads and Environment); E McNaught, Head of Customer Services (Housing Services); C Watson, Head of Strategy and Business Management; J McKinlay, Area Community Development Officer, G Cowan, Young People's Services Development Officer (Community and Recreational Services); T Jones, Operations Manager (Cleaving) (Commercial Services); C Hamilton, Area Services Manager; K MacGregor, Senior Community Worker (Social Work); W Telford, Accountant (Financial Services); J Bannatyne, Administration Officer and C Graham, Assistant Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Also In Attendance

Inspector R Pollock, Strathclyde Police

Chair

Mr Reilly in the Chair

Apologies for Absence

Thomas Dickie, James Jennings and Thomas Morris.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Dogs in Public Places

(a) Control of Dogs

Submitted report by the Chief Executive giving details on the current statutory provision in relation to the control of dogs in terms of the undernoted Acts:-

- (i) the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
- (ii) the Control of Dogs Order 1992;
- (iii) the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environment Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992; and
- (iv) the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

In addition to the statutory provision, there are numerous other powers available to local authorities in terms of dog breeding, animal boarding, quarantine etc.

Inspector Pollock confirmed that matters relating to the control of dogs, including dog

fouling, are currently being addressed under the 'Spotlight Initiative' and gave an assurance that in circumstances where offences under the existing legislation are committed, charges will be brought where appropriate.

Noted.

(b) Dog Fouling

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the findings of the Officers Working Group on practical measures to address the problems of dog fouling.

On 27 November 1996 the Corporate Strategy Committee instructed the Working Group to develop a strategy based on (i) bin provision; (ii) the installation of better signage; (iii) the provision of poop scoops; and (iv) raising awareness of the problem through education and publicity. Due to the limited resources available (£1,600 in each of the five areas), efforts should be concentrated in a clearly defined area (e.g. a particular housing estate, a large grassy area with streets leading to it, a leisure area etc.).

After discussion the Committee agreed (A) that a central recording system be established to effectively record complaints, to ensure where possible that the area is cleaned, that the Police are notified and that where appropriate individual action is encouraged through the District Court under Section 49 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982; (B) that an area in Dalry, to be identified by the local member, will be the initial priority area on which to concentrate efforts on reducing dog fouling; and (C) that in order to minimise delay, Officers be authorised to prepare a package of measures for the priority area identified and arrange for its implementation as soon as possible following consultation with the Chair.

3. Glengarnock: Longbar: Vacant Properties

Submitted report by the Director of Housing on the Longbar housing estate Glengarnock, including details of the current number of vacant properties and on the reasons for the low demand for housing in this location.

The estate comprises 108 houses, 25 of which are currently vacant. Applicants, particularly families, consider that the Longbar area is remote with a general lack of community facilities. A detailed Estate option appraisal is underway which when completed, will suggest possible solutions. The appraisal will cover all aspects of the physical/environmental and social/economic factors relating to the estate including community facilities, tenure and demand. The preliminary results of the study will be completed by March 1997 and will be submitted to the Housing Services Committee for consideration at that time.

Whilst appreciating the difficulties in letting vacant properties in the Longbar area, the Committee nevertheless expressed concern over the fact that currently 25 properties still remain vacant with a resultant loss of Revenue to the Council.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the position meantime until the results of the Estate option appraisal are available.

4. Three Towns Unemployed Workers Centre

Mr MacGregor, Senior Community Worker, Social Work, reported on the progress of the Short Life Study being undertaken by the Unemployed Workers Centre.

Preliminary visits have been undertaken which have helped to confirm the overall design of the project which in turn has assisted in identifying groups and individuals who can assist in development the information profile. Suitable locations have also been identified to carry out group interviews and survey work. A programme of consultation is due to commence throughout January 1997 and subsequent months.

The study should identify levels of awareness related to income maintenance, the availability and uptake of service training, job opportunities, travel issues and a variety of other issues. This will provide a clearer perspective on issues relating to poverty/hardship in the Garnock Valley which, when used in conjunction with other more general statistics for the area, should provide a useful overview. It is anticipated that the findings will include recommendations on the ways in which some of the issues involved could be addressed and may provide a focus for the development of future strategies for the area in relation to poverty and access to training/employment opportunities.

Noted.

5. Dalry: Off Bridgend Road: Naming of Industrial Units Development Built By The Former Cunninghame District Council

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the provision of a name for the above development.

The Committee agreed that the development be named "Bridgend Industrial Estate" as recommended by Councillor Morris, the local member.

6. Kilbirnie: Central Avenue: Petition in Protest Against the Council's Ban on Ball Games on Open Grassed Areas/Parks in Garden City and Counter-Petition

A petition containing 143 signatures has been received from local residents in the Garden City area of Kilbirnie, protesting against the Council's ban on ball games on grassed areas/parks in the Garden City.

A letter, enclosing a counter-petition, signed by 23 local residents in the Garden City has also been received, objecting to any proposal which would involve the removal of the existing 'No Ball Games' signs. Consultations are currently being undertaken with appropriate Directorates of the Council and the local members for the area on this matter. The petitioners on both sides will also be formally consulted.

The Committee agreed that a report on this matter be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

7. Community Safety

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a suggestion received from a Neighbourhood Watch organisation in Dalry, in relation to crime prevention.

The group wish members of the public to have access to information regarding Community Safety, particularly in respect of local crime. They have suggested that consideration be given to the provision, on request by members of the public in a particular area, of a special telephone contact number which would allow them to obtain relevant information on Community Safety matters within their area and on local crime in particular.

Inspector Pollock confirmed that there is currently a similar general Strathclyde Police scheme in operation for Neighbourhood Watch Groups which is currently under-utilised. He indicated that special arrangements could be made to organise a scheme specifically geared to the needs of the Garnock Valley area, where appropriate information on local crime could be targeted to that area.

The Committee agreed (a) that a copy of the letter from the Neighbourhood Watch Group be passed to Strathclyde Police with the request that they raise the matter with the Group direct; and (b) that arrangements be made for the Area Committee to meet with representatives from appropriate groups/organisations in the Garnock Valley area to discuss matters relating to

Community Safety.

8. Kilbirnie: Holmhead: Pelican Crossing Proposal

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the outcome of investigations for a pedestrian crossing to be located adjacent to the new Health Centre at Holmhead, Kilbirnie.

The committee noted the steps necessary before a new pelican crossing can be located and also that the existing pelican crossings at Holmhead are well used and require to be retained. They considered however in the light of the information available, that a further crossing adjacent to the new Health Centre is desirable.

The Committee therefore agreed that the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment submit a report to the next meeting on the provision of an additional pelican crossing adjacent to the new Health Centre at Holmhead, Kilbirnie.

9. Dalry/Kilbirnie/Beith: Youth Drop-in Facilities

The Young People's Services Development Officer advised that as a result of a partnership between Community and Recreational Services, Social Work and Strathclyde Police, three new facilities for drop-in provision will be available to young people in the Garnock Valley.

The launch of the scheme will take place on 10 January 1997, with the drop-ins themselves commencing in Dalry on 14 January 1997, Kilbirnie on 16 January and in Beith on 20 January. The drop-ins will operate as a means of making positive contact with young people in each of the towns and provide an opportunity for the young people to be involved in activities that interest them. Each drop-in will be held on a twice-weekly basis from 7.00 until 9.30 p.m. and will be aimed at the 13+ age range. The facilities will be staffed by Sessional Youth Workers from the Young People's Development Services and a Community Policeman, with a worker from Kilbirnie Social Work attending two of the drop-ins.

The Committee agreed (a) that reports on the progress of the Drop-in Centres be submitted to future meetings of the Area Committee; and (b) otherwise to note the position.

10. Health For All: Accident Prevention Seminar: Invitation

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an invitation from the Ayrshire and Arran Health For All Partnership for a representative of the Committee to attend an Accident Prevention Seminar to be held in Dower House, Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock on 16 January 1997.

The Committee agreed that the Chair (or his nominee) be authorised to attend the Seminar.

Noted.

11. Monitoring Reports

(a) Collection of Bulky Household Items

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on service delivery in relation to the uplift of bulky household items by the Commercial Services Directorate.

North Ayrshire Council currently provides a service for the free collection of bulky household items and details of the operation of the service were given in the report. There has been considerable growth in the service over the life of the current contract (i.e. 443 uplifts per week in 1988 - 690 uplifts per week in 1996) amounting to 56%. The service is well used and it is anticipated that with the introduction of the restricted opening hours for civic amenity sites, the demand for the service will increase. Current performance indicators show that 99.9% of the

uplifts within the scheme are completed within the required timescale.

Concern was expressed by the Committee over the potential danger of increased fly-tipping in the Garnock Valley area as a result of the restrictions to the opening hours of civic amenity sites and the introduction of the new land fill tax. The Operations Manager confirmed that steps are currently being taken in relation to fly-tipping to prevent habitual tipping. Discussions are currently ongoing with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) who now have sole responsibility for this matter but they have yet to take any legal action in respect of fly-tipping.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to remit to the Corporate Strategy Committee to make representations to SEPA indicating the Council's concern over their failure to take full responsibility for the implementation of appropriate measures to deal with problems in relation to fly-tipping in North Ayrshire; and (b) otherwise to note the report.

(b) Analysis of Grants Paid to 4 December 1996

Submitted report by the Chief Executive detailing the various categories of Grants paid to 4 December 1996.

Noted.

12. Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the undernoted applications for grants to voluntary organisations.

(a) Community Grants

(i) Garnock Valley Education Forum

The Committee agreed to award the Garnock Valley Education Forum £1,150 towards the cost of administration.

(ii) Garnock Playgroup

The Committee agreed to award Garnock Playgroup £250 towards the cost of equipment.

(iii) Garnock Forum on Disability

The Committee agreed to award the Garnock Forum on Disability £200 towards the cost of equipment.

(iv) Beith Community Playgroup

The committee agreed to award Beith Community Playgroup £300 towards the cost of equipment.

(v) Barrmill Community Association

The Committee agreed to award Barrmill Community Association £1,000 towards the cost of upgrading Barrmill Centre.

(b) Festivals and Galas

(i) Dalry Civic Week Committee

The Committee agreed to award Dalry Civic Week Committee £1,000 towards the cost of the 1997 Gala Week.

(c) Sports, Arts and Leisure

(i) Kilbirnie Badminton Club

The Committee agreed to award Kilbirnie Badminton Club £200 towards the purchase of equipment.

13. Strathclyde Police

(a) Crime Statistics

A report on crime statistics for the Garnock Valley area was circulated for information at the meeting by Inspector Pollock from Strathclyde Police.

Overall, year to date crime was down by 18% compared to 1995/96, with 1,054 crimes reported against 1,280. Beith showed the greatest reduction, down by 26% from 476 crimes to 350 crimes, followed by Kilbirnie down 14% from 394 crimes to 337 and Dalry, down 10% from 410 to 367 crimes.

Noted.

(b) Objective-Setting

Inspector Pollock advised the Committee that each year, the Chief Constable sets a number of goals and targets to be met by Police Forces and provided the meeting with an update on the UA Sub Division Local Objectives for 1996/97. These are:-

(a) To work with the community and other agencies to combat the fear of crime by targeting street related disorder and providing a minimum of 20,000 hours foot patrol;

(b) To work with the community and other agencies to reduce the incidence of car related crime; and

(c) To work with the community and other agencies to encourage road safety and reduce road accidents.

To assist in the setting of the goals, consultation is carried out with interested parties to enable informed local objectives to be established. These Sub-Divisional goals, which can be tailored in some instances to specific areas, are then used to promote Divisional and ultimately Force goals.

Contact is made as widely as possible throughout the local communities, e.g. national and local elected members, Community Councils, Residents Associations, Crime Prevention Panels, Victim Support Groups and other interested bodies with whom the public have regular contact. The Garnock Valley Area Committee was invited to nominate targets and objectives they would wish the Police to consider for the year 1997/98.

In general terms, local objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. A timescale of twelve months will be applied, with objectives for 1997/98 commencing in April. Inspector Pollock further advised that local objectives may be carried over for another year if deemed necessary. As objectives are generally set at the beginning of March, Inspector Pollock asked that all proposed objectives be submitted to him by mid to late February.

The Committee agreed (a) that the members, together with appropriate Officers, will provide full co-operation to Strathclyde Police on objective setting as it relates to the Garnock Valley area; and (b) to note the position meantime.

14 Tourism in the Garnock Valley

The Committee received a joint presentation from the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment and the Head of Strategy and Business Management Services on tourism in the Garnock Valley.

The Director of Planning, Roads and Environment outlined the steps which will require to be taken to optimise the economic, social and environmental benefits to be gained from a dynamic Ayrshire and Arran tourism sector. He provided details of the existing tourism resources in the Garnock Valley and on proposals for projects which could be initiated to make the most of the existing resources. At present, mainland North Ayrshire attracts over 900,000 day trippers per annum and it is estimated that approximately 500,000 of these pass through the Garnock Valley every year. The challenge for the Council is to provide facilities which will encourage large numbers of these day trippers to break their journey and to stop and spend time in the Garnock Valley area.

The Head of Strategy and Business Management Services gave details on the development of the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy and of the Community and Recreational Services Directorate's own Strategy in relation to tourism. Information was also provided on the Gateway Initiative and on a proposal for a project which may be included in the Council's Challenge Fund Bid and will reflect the 'Gateway Theme'.

The Committee, in welcoming the presentation, agreed (a) that the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment and the Head of Strategy and Business Management Services provide written summaries, giving details of the information; (b) that the Clerk arrange to forward a copy of the information received to all Members of the Area Committee in order that future consideration can be given as to how best to promote and progress matters relating to tourism in the Garnock Valley; and (c) to note the position in the meantime.

The meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.