

Three Towns Area Committee
17 September 1998

Ardrossan, 17 September 1998 - At a Meeting of the Three Towns Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, David Munn, Margaret Munn and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

S. Burns, Manager (Area Services) (Social Work); S. McLaughlin, Area Community Development Officer, H. Greenwood, Area Officer Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance (Community Services); W. Nicol, Senior Accountant (Financial Services) and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive)

Also In Attendance

Sergeant Michael Oates, Police Liaison Officer and Sergeant J Bryce (Strathclyde Police); Community Fire Safety Officer T. Kane (Strathclyde Fire Brigade); and J. Ledgerwood, Three Towns Initiative.

Chair

Mr Gallagher in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 25th June and 10th July 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Monitoring Reports

(a) Social Work Directorate

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the current situation within Social Work in the Three Towns area.

An audit of resources had been undertaken and a reorganisation of existing resources implemented with a view to improving services and providing best value. In relation to Child Care, there has been a delay in implementing joint work with Auchenharvie Academy but the Child Care Team are now in a position to make progress on this initiative. The new Children's Outreach Unit in Garven Road, Stevenston is well established and there is continuing liaison with the local residents. Groupwork with children is continuing.

Within community care/domiciliary care demand for more intensive packages of care with a strong reliance on the home help service has increased.

With regard to occupational therapy there is a waiting list for this service and it is likely that the waiting list situation will continue as there is a particularly high level of need for occupational therapy in the Three Towns.

The Team for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been relocated to premises in Currie Court, Ardrossan. As well as office space, there is an area identified which will be used for rehabilitation purposes and to offer clients the opportunity to test the equipment before deciding to purchase. With regard to accommodation for persons with learning disabilities, the house at Harvey Gardens, Ardrossan is now well established and a further property has been identified at

Golf Avenue, Stevenston to which renovations are currently being carried out.

The Throughcare Team have recently moved to Kinnier Road, Saltcoats.

Noted.

(b) Community Services: Litter Awareness

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on service delivery regarding litter awareness in the Three Towns.

No fly tipping had occurred over the period and there had been 7 calls to the litter awareness hotline in August.

Members raised the matter of the continuing problem of litter in and around schools. It was noted that schools are already targeted as part of the ongoing Litter Awareness Campaign. The lack of litter bins at Castlehill, Ardrossan was also raised and members were advised that this was due to bins being removed unlawfully, but the feasibility of securing the bins in this area would be looked at.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to remit to the Officers Working Group on Litter Awareness and Prevention to look at ways of reinforcing the campaign in schools.

(c) Three Towns Initiative

Submitted report by the Project Leader on progress of the Three Towns Initiative.

The Cybernews Project was launched on 1st September 1998 in partnership with ASSIST, employing 15 previously unemployed local people to provide IT and multi-media technology support for the voluntary and community sector. This project is part of the Three Towns ILM programme and also links in with the Government's New Deal programme.

With regard to Ardrossan Harbour, James Barr and Son, the consultants have finalised the details of the master plan for the harbour and it is intended to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Area Committee. The Initiative's Support Team to the North Ayrshire Regeneration Partnership will be co-ordinating the submission of outline applications for regeneration funding which require to be submitted by 21st September 1998.

Noted.

(d) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 26 June 1998

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the analysis of grants paid to 26 June 1998 in respect of the Three Towns area, including details of the balance of funding remaining.

Noted.

3. Community Development Grants Scheme: Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted reports by the Director of Community Services on requests for financial assistance.

(a) Argyle Video Camera Club

After discussion, the Committee agreed (i) to refuse the application; and (ii) to remit to the Director of Community Services to investigate the feasibility of centralising all video editing equipment to be held by the Council for use by all groups.

(b) Boatfest 98

Councillor Margaret Munn declared an interest in this application and took no part in the discussion.

The Committee agreed to award Boatfest 98 £750.

(c) Three Towns Horticultural Society and Garden Club

The Committee agreed to award the Three Towns Horticultural Society and Garden Club £250.

(d) Hayocks Family Education Centre

After discussion, the Committee agreed to remit the application to the Director of Community Services to look at alternative sources of funding.

4. Dog Fouling

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on (a) the progress to date on the current initiatives to combat dog fouling in North Ayrshire; and (b) proposals for future action based on the current budget allocation for 1998/99 amounting to approximately £18,000.

The Officers Working Group on dog fouling have framed a programme for 1998/99 which recommends:-

Cleaning of bins	Continue cleaning and emptying
Bin replacement/maintenance	Maintain and repair
Provision of new bins	Provide 5 new bins per Area Committee
Signs	A global sum of £500 be allocated to provide signs identified high profile areas.
Dog Tidy Bags	No further provision of bags, encourage the practice using supermarket carrier bags.
Leaflets/Posters	No further provision be made at this time.
Partnership with Strathclyde Police	Continue to support partnership.
Prosecutions	Co-operate with Strathclyde Police, write to the Scottish Office urging extended Police powers to impose fixed penalties and write to COSLA to support this action and write to the Scottish Office in similar terms.
Publicity	Promote responsible dog ownership in relation to fouling exhibitions etc. and secure publicity which "outlaws" dog fouling offences and publicise successful prosecutions.

After a full discussion the Committee agreed (i) to endorse the proposals contained within the report; (ii) that the new bins within the Three Towns Area be installed at (A) Central Avenue playing fields, Ardrossan; (B) Parkhouse Walkway, Ardrossan; (C) the grassed area at the top of Springvale Street, Saltcoats; (D) Clark Crescent, Stevenston; and (E) one further location to be identified by the Officers' Working Group; and (iii) to recommend to the Officers' Working Group

that signs be considered for Laighdykes playing fields, Saltcoats, Central Avenue playing fields, Ardrossan and Auchendarvie playing fields, Stevenston.

5 North Ayrshire Community Safety Forum and its Links with the Area Committees.

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on developments in the promotion of community safety within North Ayrshire

The North Ayrshire Community Safety Forum on which the Council is represented by the five Area Committee Chairs along with appropriate officers, has now been established and meets regularly. Details were given of the various ways in which the Council is promoting Community Safety including the Steering Groups at Area Committee level. Area Committees will continue to promote Community Safety at local level, liaising with the Forum through their Chairs and will be in a position to seek bids for funding within their areas under the Community Safety Challenge Fund.

The Committee agreed (a) to recognise the continuing role of Area Committees to promote Community Safety at a local level in liaison with the Forum; and (b) to consider requests for financial assistance from the Community Safety Challenge Budget to promote Community Safety within the Area Committee boundaries.

6. Emergency Helpline Services

Submitted report by the Directors of Social Work and Housing and Construction Services on the possibility of establishing a "Helpline Service" for elderly/disabled persons.

On 25th June 1998, arising from the report on fire statistics within the Three Towns area, concern had been expressed over the problems experienced by elderly or disabled people in maintaining smoke alarms and the Community Fire Officer had advised the Committee of a scheme in East Ayrshire Council whereby an emergency helpline number is available for elderly or disabled people who require help in changing smoke alarm batteries, switching off water supplies etc. The Committee had agreed to remit to the Director of Social Work in consultation with the Director of Housing and Construction Services to investigate the possibility of providing an emergency hotline scheme for elderly/disabled people in North Ayrshire.

Currently, each Council house is inspected every two years for the purposes of comprehensive planned maintenance and during such inspections, smoke alarms are checked. If these are not operating due to battery failure, the tenant is advised accordingly and requested to take appropriate action, as it is the responsibility of individual tenants to replace batteries. With regard to services provided by Social Work staff, in future, home care and community alarm staff will be requested to make periodic checks of smoke alarms, but similarly replacement of batteries will be the responsibility of the individual tenant/client.

With regard to helpline services, there is an out of hours emergency repairs telephone number for housing services, homeless persons requiring assistance should contact the Police in the first instance who will then refer the matter to housing services if necessary and there is a Social Work out of hours telephone contact number and emergency team based in Glasgow covering 11 of the Councils covering the former Strathclyde area. In relation to people with hearing difficulties, Social Work can provide vibrating pads.

East Ayrshire Council has a helpline service covering the total range of Council services, with the exception of Social Work, provided by staff who occupy the same premises as their community alarm team, but have no specific arrangements in relation to smoke alarm systems. South Ayrshire Council has a similar service. The arrangements currently in place in North Ayrshire appear to be generally effective.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the arrangements already in place by Housing Services and Social Work in relation to smoke alarm systems; and (b) to remit to the North Ayrshire Community Safety Forum to consider the issues in the report, including obtaining information on

central helpline services operated by other Councils.

7. Community Safety: Fire Statistics

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire Brigade on fire statistics for the Three Towns area for the period 1 June to 31 July 1998.

The report detailed incidents within the Three Towns by station area and using specific Fire Brigade codes. It was noted that there had been a reduction in malicious calls.

Noted.

8. Strathclyde Police: Crime Statistics

Sergeant Bryce, Strathclyde Police reported on crime statistics within the Three Towns area.

Crime figures for 1st April 1998 to 31st August 1998 show a 0.5% increase over the same period last year while reported offences show a decrease of 9%. There has been an increase in the number of housebreakings, but a large percentage of these crimes were committed during the early summer months mainly in relation to garden huts. The September figures are already showing a decrease in relation to domestic housebreakings which cover not only houses but caravans, garden huts, garages etc. There has been a large reduction in vandalism and increase in detection and during the summer months "schoolwatch" was very successful with no reported incidents of vandalism to schools. The statistics for crimes of violence have remained static. The Police are continuing to target drug offences with 76 persons being reported to the Procurator Fiscal for possession of drugs and 11 persons for possession with intent to supply. Incidents of disorder have decreased by 29%. There has been a large increase in the number persons searched for offensive weapons mainly due to the use of metal detectors targeted at persons entering late night venues. The Spotlight Initiative continues to be utilised and during August in the Three Towns covered offensive weapons, disorder/public complaints, underage drinking, licensed premises, consumption of alcohol in public places, parks and public places, vandalism to schools and theft of garden equipment and cycles.

The Police Liaison Officer advised that he will be making available to elected members a Crimestoppers Business Card which Councillors can give out to members of the public at their surgeries etc. The card provides a confidential telephone number to which persons can report information on any criminal activities.

Noted.

9. Stevenston Common Good Fund: Application by Ardeer Thistle Football Club

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application for financial assistance received from Ardeer Thistle Football Club.

Ardeer Thistle Football Club have requested funding of £250 towards the cost of training balls, match balls and medical equipment.

The Committee agreed to grant Ardeer Thistle Football Club £250 from the Stevenston Common Good Fund towards these costs.

The meeting ended at 12.20 p.m.