

VALE OF LEVEN AREA COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Vale of Leven Area Committee held in the Main Hall, Carman Centre, Main Street, Renton on Tuesday, 1 October 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor James Bollan, Geoffrey Calvert, Ronnie McColl, Margaret McGregor and Craig McLaughlin*. Joe Callaghan, James Elder-Woodward, John Kelly* and Martin Rooney.

* Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: David McMillan, Director of Commercial and Technical Services; Alisdair Gregor, Manager of Planning and Development; Liz Cochrane, Principal Policy Officer; Stephen West, Section Head (Accounting and Budgeting) and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Fiona Malcolm.

Councillor James Bollan in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Vale of Leven Area Committee held on 6 August 2002 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM – WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted for consideration at this meeting.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING ISSUES

- (i) Housing Policy and Allocation**
- (ii) Estate Management**
- (iii) Anti-Social Behaviour**

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, the Committee noted that this item of business would be considered at the next meeting of the Area Committee to enable the Director of Social Work and Housing Services and the Head of Housing Services to be in attendance.

1995 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, a report was submitted by the Director of Commercial and Technical Services:-

- (a) in response to the request that an access audit be carried out on shop premises in Main Street and Mitchell Way, Alexandria; and
- (b) in response to the issues raised in relation to the re-surfacing of the car park to the rear of the Alexandria Shopping Centre.

It was noted that a copy of the West Dunbartonshire Access Guide, which was produced by the Access Panel, had been enclosed with the Agenda. In addition, a copy of a paper (tabled) by Mr Elder-Woodward providing further information on what is involved in an access audit was circulated.

Having heard Councillor Bollan and the Director of Commercial and Technical Services in further explanation and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to recommend to Council that an access audit be carried out on shop premises in Mitchell Way and Main Street, Alexandria, in consultation with shop owners;
- (2) that, if Council agrees to the recommendation at (1) above, to recommend to Council that the audit should be carried out by one of the external consultants shown in the Appendix to this minute, or the Council's Access Panel (to be determined by Council); and
- (3) otherwise to note the terms of the Director's report.

Councillor Craig McLaughlin and Mr John Kelly entered the meeting during discussion on the above item.

PLAY AREAS/AMENITIES

Reference was made to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, when it had been agreed that this item, which was raised by Mr Joe Callaghan at the last meeting, be continued to this meeting for consideration. Thereon, a report was submitted by the Director of Commercial and Technical Services providing background information on the provision of play equipment in West Dunbartonshire.

Mr Callaghan made the following statement:-

I would request that the Committee continue the matter until the Area Committee Meeting in February 2003. The 2 reasons for this request are as follows:-

1. The next Area Committee meeting in December 2002 will have the Director of Social Work and Housing Services and the Head of Housing Services presenting their report on Local Authority Housing Issues (item 4 on the Agenda). It is anticipated that this item will take up some time.
2. After speaking with a number of people on this matter, including David McMillan, Director of Commercial and Technical Services, who is currently involved with reports relative to all aspects of Play Areas/Amenities and with the impact of the new funding to be looked at, it was felt that further consultation with interested parties would be the best way forward.

There is one point I wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which relates to the situation at Levenbank Terrace, Jamestown, which is Dunbritton Housing Association build of tenanted and 19 owner houses, with over 100 kids of all age groups. Apart from 2 postage stamp size toddler facilities, there is nowhere for the kids to play.

With large open, currently unused ground (West Dunbartonshire Council Property) to the rear of the Terrace, the motion is to have the appropriate council officers open a dialogue with Dunbritton Housing association, and the local street representatives, with a view to exploring the possibility of acquiring a dedicated piece of land for the use of the kids there.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to continue consideration of the wider issues surrounding play areas/amenities and the Director's report to the meeting of the Committee to be held in February 2003; and
- (2) that appropriate Council officers should enter into a dialogue with Dunbritton Housing Association and the local community to explore the possibility of acquiring a dedicated piece of land for use as a children's play area and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

URGENT ITEM: DUMBARTON & DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

In terms of Standing Order 9, Councillor Bollan, Chair, informed the Committee that he had agreed that this item be considered as a matter of urgency.

A copy of a letter (tabled) by the Dumbarton & District Mental Health Forum, addressed to Malcolm Chisholm MSP, concerning the recent news that 3 consultants had intimated their intention to leave the psychiatric service in this area was circulated for consideration.

Councillor Bollan advised that the Forum had requested that the Area Committee should respond to the issues and concerns raised within the letter.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a letter of support be sent to the Dumbarton & District Mental Health Forum
 - (a) thanking the Forum for their letter and explaining what actions the Committee had taken in response to issues which had been raised;
 - (b) asking the Forum if they required any other assistance from the Committee; and
 - (c) asking the Forum to provide the Area Committee with a copy of the response from Malcolm Chisholm MSP;
- (2) that a letter be sent to Malcolm Chisholm MSP expressing the Committee's concern over the situation; and
- (3) that Jackie Baillie (MSP) and an appropriate representative from the Lomond and Clyde NHS Trust Board be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to discuss this issue and concerns expressed over the general state of health provision in the Vale of Leven area.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 AUGUST 2002

The Minutes of Meeting of the Community Development Co-ordinating Committee held on 8 August 2002 were submitted and noted.

With reference to the item headed "First Meetings of Area Committees" (Paragraph (i)), Councillor Bollan confirmed that he had given up the issue of identification badges for Community Representatives as no other Member of the Community Development Co-ordinating Committee had supported the proposal.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE STRATEGIC COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, a report was re-submitted by the Co-ordinator of West Dunbartonshire Strategic Community Safety Partnership:-

- (a) explaining the purpose of the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Community Safety Partnership and the nature of the Scottish Executive funding of this partnership; and
- (b) requesting a nomination from the Vale of Leven Area Committee to sit on one of the working groups of the Partnership to assist in the award of community grants.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to continue consideration of this item to its next meeting.

PROCEDURES FOR MOTIONS, FORMAL QUESTIONS AND OPEN FORUMS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, a report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the Council's decision on 28 August 2002 on options for raising motions and questions and the holding of Open Forums at the Area Committees.

The Committee agreed to note the arrangements for motions, formal questions and Open Forums, as detailed within the report.

DISAGGREGATION OF LOCAL GRANTS BUDGET

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Area Committee held on 6 August 2002, the Committee agreed to note that after consideration of a recommendation from the Finance Working Group, at the meeting of Council held on 28 August 2002, it had been agreed that:-

- (a) until such times as the recommendations of all the Area Committees on local grants have been submitted and considered, the sum of £12,500 be delegated to each Area Committee from the £50,000 allocated to them by the Council from the Reallocation of the Scottish Budget Resources to allow them to award local grants up to a maximum of £1,000; and
- (b) in order to expedite this, powers be delegated to the Community Development Co-ordinating Committee to approve a system to provide a co-ordinated approach as to how grants were to be administered, checked etc.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS BY AREA COMMITTEES

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the regulations and proposed administrative procedures relating to the awarding of grants to voluntary organisations.

A copy of the proposed grant application form (tabled) was submitted for comment.

Having heard Mr West, Section Head (Accounting and Budgeting) in answer to Members' questions, the Area Committee agreed:-

- (1) to recommend to the Community Development Co-ordinating Committee that the new system of awarding grants via the Area Committees be widely publicised;
- (2) to invite Members to submit any comments they might have on the proposed application form to the Chair or Clerk, prior to meeting of the Community Development Co-ordinating Committee on 17 October 2002; and
- (3) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

REALLOCATION OF SCOTTISH BUDGET RESOURCES – ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

- (a) A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the monies which had been allocated to Area Committees following the reallocation of Scottish Budget Resources and seeking views on the criteria to be used in determining the applications.
- (b) A report was submitted by the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services providing information on an existing environmental project known as the "Mill of Haldane Green Corridor" and seeking budget support.

After discussion and having heard the Principal Policy Officer in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that clarification should be sought on the question of whether environmental projects could be implemented prior to being reported to the Finance Working Group and, if not, to recommend to Council that this requirement be removed in order to allow projects to proceed without delay;
- (2) that the Clerk should write to all Members of the Committee informing them of his findings in respect of paragraph (1) above;
- (3) that, in the Vale of Leven Area, the criteria to be applied to the applications for grant should be the same as those detailed in the Scottish Executive Guidelines and that there should be no cap on the amount of grant for which organisations could apply;

- (4) that the availability of environmental grants should be advertised in local press and that officers should write to all community groups in the Vale of Leven area advising of the general criteria to be applied and enclosing a copy of the appropriate application form;
- (5) that the standard application form for local grants should be used for environmental grants in order to save time; and
- (6) to continue consideration of the bid in respect of the Haldane Green Corridor Project until the meeting of the Committee on 3 December 2002, when all applications received in respect of environmental grants would be considered.

Mr Rooney left the meeting during discussion on the above item.

AREA COMMITTEES AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A report was submitted by the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services on the main ways in which Area Committees might best become involved in Planning Applications.

Having heard the Manager of Planning and Development in further explanation and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that details of planning applications should be circulated to Community Representatives via the 'weekly list' to enable individual comments to be passed to the Planning and Development Section; and
- (2) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

BUSINESS CARDS AND STATIONERY FOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Area Committee noted that Mr Joe Callaghan had requested that the above issue be placed on the agenda for consideration.

Having heard Mr Callaghan in further explanation, the Committee agreed that Community Representatives should be issued with a supply of business cards and stationery.

DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Area Committee would be held in the Craft Room, Alexandria Community Centre, Main Street, Alexandria on Tuesday, 3 December 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN MOTIONS/QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AT NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the closing date for submission of written motions/questions for consideration at the next meeting would be Tuesday, 19 November 2002.

OPEN FORUM – VERBAL QUESTIONS/ISSUES

The following comments/issues were made/raised by members of the public:-

- (a) There should be crèche facilities provided at every meeting of the Area Committee.

The Committee agreed that there should be crèche facilities at meetings of Area Committees but noted that members of public would need to give notice of their intention to use such a facility in advance of the meeting taking place.

- (b) Play Areas should be based in the centre of the community, not hidden away because some people do not like them close to their homes.

Councillor Bollan confirmed that this view would be taken into account when the Committee considered the wider issue of play areas/amenities at its meeting in February 2003.

Mr Elder Woodward left the meeting at this point.

- (c) A member of the public was heard in support of the Haldane Green Corridor Project and questioned the Committee's earlier decision to delay consideration of the bid for funding to the next meeting. The Committee was advised that the Haldane Green Corridor Project would commence works within the next few weeks and that any money which the Committee could contribute towards the project would be spent before 31 March 2002.

Councillor Bollan explained that the reason for the delay was to allow all applications for environmental grants to be considered at the same time.

(d) The Committee was made aware of the following issues of concern by a Council tenant residing in the Rosshead area:

- Damaged security lighting and video cameras.
- Youth violence.
- Poorly designed security doors.
- Estate management problems (homeless).
- Inadequate policing.

Councillor McLaughlin advised that he was aware of the problems with the security lighting and security doors and informed the Committee that it was hoped that the Department of Commercial and Technical Services would commence works within the next few weeks. Councillor Bollan invited the individual to meet with him and Councillor McLaughlin after the meeting to make arrangements to meet with the relevant Housing Officer.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed that Inspector Gould from the Alexandria Police Station be invited to the next meeting to discuss the issue of policing the Rosshead area.

The Committee agreed that, in future, the Open Forum session would take place at the beginning of the agenda.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Councillor Bollan informed the Committee that he intended to resign as Chair of the Area Committee after the next meeting in December 2002. He informed the Committee that he hoped that the position would be taken up by a community representative but pointed out that Council would need to change its existing Standing Orders to allow this to happen.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

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