

**RURAL PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in the Montgomerie Hall, Dundonald,  
on 21st April 2011 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Alec Oattes (Chair), Andy Campbell, Brian Connolly, Hywel Davies and Sandra Goldie.

Apologies: Councillors Mairi Low and Ann Galbraith.

Attending: M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; M. Hastings, Enterprise Manager; G. Collins, Community Engagement Manager; A. Blair, Tourism and Promotion Development Officer (Rural); T. Simpson, Principal Accountant; and A. Gibson, Committee Administrative Officer.

**1. Introductory Remarks by the Chair.**

The Chair welcomed those present to this Panel meeting and introduced Mark Hastings who had recently been appointed as the Enterprise Manager for this Council.

**2. Variation in order of business.**

The Panel agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

**3. Questions which had previously been raised.**

There was submitted a letter (issued) of 27th March 2011 from Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association enquiring

- (1) what relief of deprivation and regeneration could the rural part of the Kyle area anticipate and when it would be given;
- (2) as the Kyle area villages had been afforded enhanced status regarding potential residential developments, as proposed within the developing new South Ayrshire Local Development Plan (LDP), what assistance was the Council likely to give to encourage the uptake; and
- (3) with regard to (2) above, what new considerations were to be put in place to nullify the affordable housing differentials between Carrick, East Ayrshire (Cumnock and Doon Valley Area) and the Kyle area.

**Decided:** having heard

- (a) the Community Engagement Manager in relation to the question detailed at paragraph (1) above, a member of Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association in further comment and various Members present, the Panel noted
  - (i) that it was proposed to upgrade and remodel various halls within the Kyle area, including the dining hall at Annbank Primary School;

- (ii) that a Service Review of staffing in the Community Development Section of the Council was currently being undertaken;
  - (iii) that individuals from the rural communities could, at any time, talk to him or a member of his Section, in order to take projects forward in the rural community;
  - (iv) concerns raised relating to representation from the local community on the Community Planning Board;
  - (v) that the current Area Forums which had arisen from the Community Planning Board, if proved successful, would be rolled-out to other rural areas within South Ayrshire; and
  - (vi) that the Residents' Association should have continuing dialogue with their local members in order to take matters forward; and
- (b) the Head of Planning and Enterprise, in relation to the questions detailed at paragraphs (2) and (3) above, a member of Tarbolton Tenants and Residents Association in further comment and various Members present, the Panel noted
- (i) that the emerging LDP might confirm new housing sites within Tarbolton if suitable and that effective sites had been identified, with these sites being market-driven;
  - (ii) that the LDP was seeking to make it easier and more attractive for sites to be developed by directing growth to a mixture of medium sized sites adjacent/within settlements in the north of the area (and avoiding sites around Ayr, Prestwick and Troon) that benefited from being close to good transport links and amenities and with few infrastructure requirements;
  - (iii) that the Council's current affordable housing policy sought a 25% target contribution from new housing developments over 15 units or 0.6ha across South Ayrshire;
  - (iv) that the Main Issues Report for the new LDP set out a preference to retain this target as it would apply to Tarbolton;
  - (v) that the proposed LDP, due to be published this summer, would set out the Council's revised affordable housing policy;
  - (vi) that in light of the continuing depressed housing market and significantly reduced funding from Scottish Government to build affordable housing, it was likely that the revised LDP policy would be more flexible and would consider a wider range of affordable housing types and tenures, including, for example, shared equity options and low cost home ownership;
  - (vii) that as with the current policy, the LDP would allow developers to submit a viability statement to justify exemption from the policy if they felt providing affordable housing would render a scheme unviable;

- (viii) that the Council had not yet finalised its revised affordable housing policy, so it could not be confirmed how the policy might apply to the Carrick and Kyle areas but that policy was required to reflect and address the levels of housing need and demand identified within different Housing Market Areas (HMA); and
- (ix) that in this regard it was significant that Carrick (Girvan and South Carrick HMA), Tarbolton (Ayr HMA) and Cumnock and Doon Valley were all within different Housing Market Areas.

*The Chair announced that the public's participation in this stage of the proceedings had ended and, thereafter, the Panel dealt with the formal business of the meeting.*

## **B U S I N E S S**

**At this point, Councillor Andy Campbell joined the meeting.**

### **4. Rural Communities Fund – Revenue Budgetary Control 2009/10 – Position Statement at 31st March 2011.**

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 5th April 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advising of the expenditure against its profiled budgets for the year ended at 31st March 2011 which showed a full year underspend of £1,834 against the Rural Communities Fund budget which would contribute to the General Fund surplus for financial year 2010/11.

Having heard a Member enquire if any of the budget allocation for the Rural Communities Fund Budget in 2011/12 had already been allocated, the Principal Accountant advised that no funds for this financial year had yet been allocated.

#### **Decided:**

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to request that the underspend of £1,834 from the Rural Communities Fund Budget in 2010/11 be carried forward to 2011/12 Budget.

## 5. **European Fisheries Fund – Axis 4 - Sustainable Development of Fisheries Areas.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12th April 2011 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment advising of the development of a new fund for the sustainable development of Fisheries areas, namely Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund.

### **Decided:**

- (1) to note the contents of this report;
- (2) to authorise the Executive Director – Development and Environment, in consultation with the Ayrshire Leader Action Group, to assess whether there was sufficient partner support from the Ayrshire coastal area to warrant the submission of an expression of interest in establishing an Ayrshire Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) with funding from Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund and to act appropriately; and
- (3) to request Officers to report back to a special meeting of this Panel on the progress being made on the development of the Ayrshire FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) with a detailed costed proposal and strategy and to obtain instructions on whether to proceed to full submission.

## **C L O S I N G   D I S C U S S I O N**

*At this point of the meeting, the Chair announced that the formal business of the meeting had concluded and opened the meeting to questions from the floor.*

## 6. **Castlegrange Owners' Association.**

A representative from Castlegrange Owners' Association advised of their organisation and enquired if their organisation could apply for funding.

**Decided:-** to note that she should contact Carol Coull, Senior Enterprise Project Development and Funding Officer within the Council, to ascertain if there was any funding that could be applied for.

## 7. **Presentation by James Brown regarding the development of the Pilgrims Trail.**

James Brown, in attendance for this item only, gave a presentation regarding an update on the development of the Pilgrims Trail, between Paisley and Whithorn.

**Decided:** to thank him for his informative presentation.

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.