

RURAL PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in the McCosh Hall, Kirkmichael,
on 15th March 2012 at 7.00 p.m.

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

Attending: M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; M. Hastings, Enterprise Manager; G. Collins, Community Engagement Manager; T. Simpson, Principal Accountant; G. Fiddes, Team Leader (Traffic and Transport); B. Harris, Co-ordinator (Physical Activities and Outdoor Learning); A. Blair, Enterprise Officer; and A. Gibson, Committee Administrative Officer.

1. Introductory Remarks.

- (1) the Chair welcomed those present to this Panel meeting; and
- (2) the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised the Panel that the report entitled "Let Girvan Shine: Town Centre Improvement Project" which had been issued to Members for consideration at this meeting, would not be considered at this Panel meeting and subsequently had been withdrawn from the agenda.

2. Presentation regarding Cycling Development in Rural Scotland.

George Fiddes, Team Leader (Traffic and Transport) and Peter Leslie, Cycling Scotland gave a presentation with regard to cycling development in rural South Ayrshire.

Decided: following a number of questions from Members, to thank them for their informative presentation.

At this point Councillor Low joined the meeting.

3. Questions which had previously been raised.

- (1) With reference to the Minutes of 15th September 2011 (Page 573, paragraph 4) there was submitted a letter (issued) dated 17th February 2012 from Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association
 - (a) advising that at the last meeting of this Panel, it had been asked how this Council could justify the continuing substantial financial sums diverted to Carrick/South Carrick to the detriment of the other rural areas within South Ayrshire;
 - (b) requesting that given the much publicised and continuing financial stimulus to the Carrick area over recent years, a full response in writing would be appreciated, supported by figures (over the last three financial years); and

- (c) concluding that if similar figures were provided over a similar timescale for the rural Kyle area, this would allow for a comparison of financial injections to the representative communities to be discussed at this meeting.

The Community Engagement Manager advised

- (i) of figures which had been passed to Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association (tabled) detailing the awards from the Rural Communities Fund from 2009/10 to 2011/12 which indicated:-
- (A) that North Carrick had been awarded £25,550;
 - (B) that South Carrick had been awarded £23,970;
 - (C) that Carrick had been awarded £4,650; and
 - (D) that Kyle had been awarded £24,800; and
- (ii) of work being undertaken in the Kyle area by the Council's Community Development team including community transport.

The Panel heard a representative from the Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association in response.

Decided:

- (I) that details of spend from the Rural Communities Fund should be reported to future meetings of this Panel;
 - (II) that the Council would write to the South Ayrshire Community Planning Board expressing Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents' Association's concerns regarding the distribution of the Change Fund and what was proposed for the Kyle area; and
 - (III) that a representative from the Community Planning Board should also be invited to attend the next meeting of this Panel to discuss this issue.
- (2) There was submitted an e-mail dated 8th March 2012 (issued) from the Stranraer to Ayr Line Support Association (SAYLSA), the Community Rail Partnership for Carrick and Wigtownshire since 2008, requesting that this Panel ratify the Council's membership of the Partnership.

The Panel heard the Development Officer, SAYLSA in further comment.

Decided: to refer the matter to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel for consideration.

4. LEADER Funding.

A member of the audience expressed his concern that that LEADER funding could only be obtained after the money had been spent and was anything being done to rectify this matter.

The Enterprise Manager advised that the three Ayrshire Councils were currently looking at how cash flow support could be given in the future.

Decided: to note the position.

5. Rural Panel Grant Scheme.

A representative from Dundonald Community Council advised that, in his view, there had been a recent decline in applications to the Rural Communities Fund.

Decided: to note his views.

6. Dundonald Bowling Club.

A representative from Dundonald Community Council expressed his concern about an insurance claim that was ongoing with the Council regarding fire damage to Dundonald Bowling Club.

Decided: to agree that the Principal Accountant would raise this matter with the Executive Director - Development and Environment, who it was understood had an involvement in the matter.

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

7. Infrastructure Review and methods of Enhancing the Active Travel network within the Carrick Area of South Ayrshire.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) updating Members on the progress made regarding outdoor learning/adventure tourism, the community sports hub approach and the links to the development of the multi-faceted facility in Girvan/South Carrick; and

- (2) advising
 - (a) that there was untapped potential for the development and growth of outdoor learning and adventure tourism opportunities in South Carrick focussed around cycling;
 - (b) that the proposed multi-faceted facility at Girvan harbour would provide a perfectly positioned starting point for access to outdoor learning/cycling activities in the future;
 - (c) that the intention was to build up a range of mountain biking/walking/cycling tracks throughout the area between now and the multi-faceted facility opening in 2014; and
 - (d) that this would be matched by similar watersport developments in and around Girvan harbour and the seafront.

Decided: to note

- (i) the contents of the study and endorse the action points as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) the involvement and support of the local community in South Carrick.

8. Developing Sustainable Outdoor Learning in South Carrick

There was submitted a report (issued) of 5th March 2012 by the Head of Community Development

- (1) updating Members on the progress made regarding outdoor learning/adventure tourism, the community sports hub approach and the links to the development of the multi-faceted facility in Girvan/South Carrick; and
- (2) advising
 - (a) that there was untapped potential for the development and growth of outdoor learning and adventure tourism opportunities in South Carrick and that the proposed multi-faceted facility at Girvan harbour would provide a perfectly positioned starting point for access to outdoor learning in the future;
 - (b) that development work was underway in collaboration with key partners to explore the feasibility of utilising the natural land and water based assets in South Carrick, whilst complementing existing initiatives such as the Carrick Way and Sail West harbour improvements;
 - (c) that the Executive Director - Children and Community had recently written to a range of strategic stakeholders (including Forestry Commission, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Power Renewables, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the Private Sector and Southern Energy Group) regarding the development of a sustainable network of outdoor activities based on the land and sea within South Carrick;

- (d) that the intention was to build up a range of mountain biking/walking/cycling tracks throughout the area between now and the multi-faceted facility opening in 2014; and
- (e) that this would be matched by similar watersport developments in and around Girvan harbour and the seafront.

Decided:

- (i) to note the progress made to date regarding the development of outdoor learning in South Carrick and the benefits that this would bring to the longer term capital plans regarding the multi-faceted facility in Girvan;
- (ii) to note the involvement and support of the local community of South Carrick;
- (iii) to agree that Officers continue to work collaboratively to support the development of outdoor learning/adventure tourism opportunities in South Carrick; and
- (iv) to agree that Officers continue to consult with key community representatives in South Carrick regarding the development of outdoor learning.

9. Rural Communities Fund – Revenue Budgetary Control 2011/12 – Position Statement at 29th February 2012.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 5th March 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment and the Executive Director – Corporate Services advising of the expenditure against its profiled budgets for the period to 29th February 2012 (Period 11).

Having heard questions from Members arising from the report, the Principal Accountant responded accordingly.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

10. Application for Financial Support.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 1st March 2012 by the Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment advising that rural grant applications had been submitted as undernoted.

Decided: to award grant as follows:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Summary of Application</u>	<u>Panel Decision</u>
The Carrick Centre Facility Enhancement Project	To seek funding towards new furniture and equipment for the community care room, kitchen cafe, centre library and public access computers, soft play and children's equipment.	Approve award of £5,000;

The Stranraer to Ayr Railway Line (SAYLSA)	To seek funding towards the revision, re-printing and distribution of a total of 16,000 station specific railway timetable pocket cards for Girvan (8,000), Maybole (5,000) and Barrhill (3,000).	Approve award of £1,650; and
Tarbolton Tenants' and Residents Association	To seek funding towards the cost of portable staging for use by the Tarbolton community.	Approve award of £3,000.

11. **Rural Broadband Development.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 1st March 2012 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment

- (1) advising of “Scotland’s Digital Future – Infrastructure Action Plan”; and
- (2) requesting that this Council should lead on behalf of the local authority consortium on the preparation of the strategic case and Local Broadband Development Plan to best position the rural area in the Scottish Government’s funding of next generation broadband provision and to inform future bids for broadband development funding to implement local initiatives.

Decided: to agree

- (a) that the Ayrshire Broadband Consortium be extended to include other interested rural authorities;
- (b) that the Enterprise Service of this Council lead on the preparation of the strategic case and Local Broadband Development Plan on behalf of the Consortium; and
- (c) that this Council should procure technical support to inform the preparation of the strategic case and Local Broadband Development Plan, to be part funded from the 2011/12 revenue budget.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

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.

12. Tourism in South Ayrshire.

A member of the audience expressed his concern that tourism in South Ayrshire was being affected by the poor condition of the roads in South Ayrshire.

The Head of Planning and Enterprise explained

- (1) that the condition of the road network in South Ayrshire was unfortunate, like many other Councils, but that this was due to financial constraints placed upon this Council; and
- (2) the strategy this Council used in the repair of its roads.

Decided: to note the position.

13. Littering.

A representative from Dundonald Community Council advised the Panel that children from Dundonald Primary school had expressed concern about littering within their vicinity.

Decided: to note that he would be given a Council helpline number to pass to the children should they see cases of littering in the future.

14. Pedestrian Crossing in Dundonald.

A representative from Dundonald Community Council advised that the Community Council had funding to provide a pedestrian crossing in Dundonald and requested that permission be given for this to go ahead.

The Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that funding for this could not be accepted from the Community Council and that studies were currently being undertaken by the Council to ascertain the suitability of a new pedestrian crossing being built in Dundonald.

Decided: to note the position.

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.