

DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 1st October 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Kirsty Darwent (Chair), Andy Campbell, Ian Cochrane, Peter Convery, Ann Galbraith, William J. Grant, Mary Kilpatrick and Brian McGinley.

Also Present: Councillors Bill Grant and John McDowall (Portfolio-holders).

Attending: L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; V. Andrews, Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; J. Cronin, Head of Community, Enterprise and Development; M. Newall, Head Neighbourhood Services; C. Cox, Planning Manager; D. Thomson, Trading Standards and Environmental Health Manager; C. Coombs, Manager (Sports and Leisure, Arts and Culture); S. MacDonald, Co-ordinator (Strategy and Support Service); T. Simpson, Principal Accountant; T. Petticrew, Grounds and Streets Service Co-ordinator; D. Lowdon, Development Officer (Park Assets); and A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer.

1. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Item for Call-in: Variation of Tree Preservation Order, Slaphouse Burn Gorge, Maybole Road, Ayr.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 25th September 2013 (Page 6, paragraph 11) when that Panel, having considered a report of 28th August 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment, had agreed to make an order to vary The South Ayrshire Tree Preservation Order No. 2, 2001 (Slaphouse Burn Gorge, Maybole Road, Ayr), by deleting from it an area of land on which no trees were growing.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of a call-in (issued) [\(link attached\)](#) details of which, together with the written responses circulated in advance of the meeting are outlined below.

Question 1

These trees, or more correctly the lack of trees were the subject of decisions of the Regulatory Panel who following a site visit and on Officers' guidance instructed the owner to replant the trees which had been felled.

Answer 1

The Regulatory Panel of 6th September 2012 considered a planning application on this site for the Erection of a Dwellinghouse. One of the reasons for refusal was that the house was located within a confirmed TPO.

Having considered the matter, there was an amendment to seek a site visit. However, the amendment was not carried and the Regulatory Panel refused the planning application.

The minute of the Panel does not mention any instruction to seek replanting. It is recalled that the Panel had some questions around why replanting had not been sought. The Officer gave an explanation as to the measures taken to seek replanting: The former Strategic Services Committee agreed in July 2001 to refer the matter to the Fiscal for consideration of a prosecution and to serve a notice on the landowner requiring replacement planting. The unauthorised felling was reported to the Fiscal who decided not to pursue the matter on the basis the evidence available was insufficient to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, who was responsible for the felling. The deadline for serving a replanting notice has long since (ten years) passed. Such notices have to be served within two years of the failure to re-plant coming to the attention of the Council. The Regulatory Panel were accordingly advised that it could not seek replanting at this time as the relevant time had expired following efforts made in 2001.

Question 2

Why was this information not in the report to the Leadership Panel?

Answer 2

Information on the background to seeking replanting was provided in the Leadership Panel report at paragraph 3.2.

Question 3

Why did Officers not ensure that the previous decision to have the trees replanted was carried out?

Answer 3

This is explained in 1 above: Officers did take up the matter but the Fiscal decided not to pursue the matter.

Question 4

If this removal of the Tree Preservation order is ratified then this gives a green light to others to illegally fell trees covered by a TPO knowing that this Council may huff and puff but will take no meaningful action.

Answer 4

The current landowner did not own the land at the time of the unauthorised felling nor was he responsible for the felling. This unauthorised action was undertaken thirteen years ago. There are no trees on a portion of the TPO area, with no prospect of there ever being any trees on it and even if trees do grow on it, they will not be protected by the Order.

The Chair invited Councillor Douglas to explain his reasons for the call-in and heard him refer to a site visit conducted by the Council's Regulatory Panel a number of years ago relating to a Planning Application which was subsequently refused and at that time the Regulatory Panel were advised that trees would be replanted on this site but that to date, this has not happened.

The Planning Manager referred to Answer 1 above in relation to the most recent Planning Application for the site.

The Panel then heard from Councillor Bill Grant, Portfolio-holder who stated that there had been issues surrounding this site for over twelve years.

Decided: following discussion and review, to uphold the decision of the Leadership Panel.

3. Item for Call-in: Consolidating and Developing Golf South Ayrshire.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 25th September 2013 (Page 6, paragraph 12) when that Panel, having considered a report of 11th September 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment, had agreed

- (1) to note the review exercises currently underway as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report;
- (2) to the proposal to commission an external body to provide expert advice on a golf business plan;
- (3) to consider the options for the redevelopment of Troon Clubhouse once work had been completed on the Golf Business Plan and the business case for alternative models for service delivery and to agree investment of up to £300,000 to undertake necessary works;
- (4) to negotiate an extension to the lease for the existing operator of the catering and bar franchise at Troon Golf Clubhouse for a further period of up to twelve months which would allow a lead in time for tendering once the business plan was finalised in April 2014 and that a report should be submitted to the meeting of this Panel on 29th April 2014 outlining the proposals from the preferred bidder; and
- (5) to approve the extension of the contractual arrangements with the PGA Golf Professionals at Troon and Belleisle and Seafield Golf Courses until 31st March 2015, subject to the conditions set out in this report and in accordance with paragraph 23.2 of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of a call-in (issued) ([link attached](#)) details of which, together with the written responses circulated in advance of the meeting are outlined below.

Question 1

At the Council meeting on 7th October 2009, Elected Members agreed “to establish a strategy for golf in partnership with the Strategic Group for Golf Development in South Ayrshire 201- 2014”. What was the outcome of the Golf Strategy, when was it published and how will it influence the new Golf Business Plan 2013 to 18?

Answer 1

Previous work on the business plan and strategy was not concluded and therefore was not published. The work consulted upon at the beginning of this year resulted in a number of reviews being carried out into the current operation of the Council’s golf service, as outlined in the report to the Leadership Panel.

Question 2

Why has the Council agreed to finance expert advice when we have well qualified staff within the organisation to carry out this exercise?

Answer 2

The Council has many well qualified staff, however, the Council does not have anyone with expertise in turning around a major golf business from a position of sustained and substantial losses. In particular, expertise and experience is needed in considering different products and different scenarios around increasing income and reducing costs.

Question 3

The Council has agreed a £300,000 spend on Troon Golf Clubhouse. Is this sufficient to fund all the faults highlighted in the structural survey? If not, how much more would be required?

Answer 3

Yes, subject to tendering.

Question 4

Why is the Council proposing to spend £300,000 on Troon golf Clubhouse to lease it to someone else when XQR Developers are willing to spend £1.25 million to provide a far superior first class facility?

Answer 4

The Leadership Panel approved up to £300,000 to be spent to ensure the building is wind and watertight. The Leadership Panel paper explains that the Council is seeking to take a strategic and Ayrshire wide-approach to golf and proposed that the decision on whether or not to lease the clubhouse to XQR is delayed to allow all relevant information to be available to Members.

The information we have from XQR is that they propose to spend £650,000 on phase 1 of the clubhouse redevelopment with potential for up to a further £250,000 on phase 2 at a later date.

Question 5

Why will the Council not make a decision at this time on the XQR Developers' proposed investment? What is the reason for delaying the decision?

Answer 5

The reasons for delaying the decision are set out in the Leadership Panel report on 25th September 2013.

Question 6

The Business Plan options for "developing land sales to release capital", will this result in any of the Troon Courses being offered for disposal and if so, which courses?

Answer 6

The Business Plan will consider the number of golf courses currently in Council ownership, however, the recommendations will not be known in relation to this until the work on the business plan is concluded. There also is potential to consider sale of small pieces of land on the periphery of golf courses that could raise a capital receipt.

Question 7

What does "further understanding of XQR's Business Case" mean when the Council has been in receipt of the report for two years providing ample time to consider?

Answer 7

The current business plan relates to the previous proposal from XQR which is based on a complete redevelopment of the building, including the upstairs and the area currently occupied by The Welbeck Golf Club. It was based in part on income being received for renting rooms / bed spaces on the upper floor. The Council does not have a revised business plan based on the new proposal, and the new proposal itself is in a summary format with limited detail.

Question 8

The report indicates that negotiations will take place to extend the current lease for the catering and bar franchise at Troon Golf Clubhouse. Can Officers confirm that all rent in relation to the lease have been paid in full?

Answer 8

There is no outstanding rental payment.

The Chair invited Councillor McFarlane to explain her reasons for the call-in and heard her state

- (a) that the Troon Golf Clubhouse was a unique iconic building;
- (b) her view was that the Council's previously approved Golf Strategy had been abandoned without formal Council approval;
- (c) her concerns that an external body was being commissioned to provide expert advice on a draft golf business plan and that she had a copy of a draft business plan which had not been circulated to all members;
- (d) that £300,000 was not sufficient for the works required to the Clubhouse and enquired as to the tendering that would be involved;
- (e) that as well as ensuring the Clubhouse was windproof and watertight it required to be stabilised;
- (f) her concern that a report on the proposals had been removed from the agenda for the Leadership Panel in June of this year;
- (g) her concern that the proposals may entail the closure of certain golf courses in South Ayrshire and subsequently their sale;
- (h) that, in her view, the Council has had ample time to consider XQR's Business Case and the response to question 7 above had not been adequately answered; and
- (i) that she was not aware if the current leaseholder for the Troon Golf Clubhouse had paid rent over the last two years and who was currently responsible for the gas and electricity payments.

The Head of Community, Enterprise and Development responded accordingly to the above issues raised and it was noted

- (i) that no Golf Strategy had been abandoned as the decision in 2009 was to develop a strategy, not to approve a strategy;
- (ii) that there had been a draft Business Plan at the turn of the year but it required updating as a number of issues in it had been dealt with over the last few months;
- (iii) that a Golf financial expert was required;

- (iv) that there was a 2011 Structural Survey but the works required had been costed in March 2013 and £300,00 should make the building wind and watertight and deal with the subsidence and dry rot, but that the tender for the works would determine the final price;
- (v) that XQR's proposals had altered in a number of ways including a removal of bedspaces and that a revised business case reflecting these altered proposals had not yet been received;
- (vi) that the current intention was to develop the Business Plan, look at a leisure Trust, work with XQR and report back to Council once all information had been assessed; and
- (vii) that as had previously been agreed, the current leaseholder did not pay rent but was liable for costs associated with gas/electricity.

Councillor Convery expressed his concern that the Council's Draft Golf Business Plan 2013/18 had not readily been made available to Members of the Council but had already been made available to the public. The Head of Community, Enterprise and Development commented that the draft Business Plan had been an initial consultative draft only to allow for engagement with golf clubs.

The Panel then heard from Councillor Bill Grant, Portfolio-holder, who stated the importance of golf to Troon and to all of South Ayrshire, particularly with the British Open to be held at Royal Troon in 2016.

Decided: following review and by a majority, to recommend to the Leadership Panel that they proceed with the preferred bidder, namely XQR Developers proposal for Troon Golf Clubhouse without further consultation on the development or work carried out on the Strategy and no expenditure on a golf consultant.

4. Item for Call-in: Service Modernisation – Special Uplifts.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 25th September 2013 (Page 7, paragraph 13) when that Panel, having considered a report of September 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment, had agreed

- (1) to approve the new streamlined system for application and service delivery relating to Special (Bulky) Uplifts and a new pricing structure based on number of items for uplift and the removal of the concession pricing as outlined in the report; and
- (2) to request the Neighbourhood Services Manager to explore the possibility of reintroducing provision of an occasional skip service when required in urban areas.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of a call-in (issued) [\(link attached\)](#) details of which, together with the written responses circulated in advance of the meeting are outlined below.

Question 1

The cost of the provision of the service for uplifts for the last three years?

Answer 1

Approximately between £96,000 and £103,000 for each of the last three years.

Question 2

The income achieved from payments for special uplifts for the same period?

Answer 2

Year	Income
2010/11	£61,045
2011/12	£56,036
2012/13	£54,187

Question 3

A breakdown of the payments at full rate and concessionary rates?

Answer 3

Year	Full Payers	Concessionary Rate	Non-Standard
2010/11	1,524 (£30,225)	1,855 (£27,846)	111 (£2,973)
2011/12	1,298 (£25,825)	1,837 (£27,456)	10 (£2,754)
2012/13	1,242 (£24,640)	1,783 (£26,527)	116 (£3,019)

Question 4

The amount of tonnage of uplifts?

Answer 4

Year	Tonnage
2010/11	343 tonnes
2011/12	379 tonnes
2012/13	298 tonnes

Question 5

The amount of tonnage lifted as a result for fly-tipping for the same?

Answer 5

Year	Fly Tipping Tonnage Lifted
2010/11	122 tonnes
2011/12	132 tonnes
2012/13	86 tonnes

Question 6

What is the cost of uplifts as a result of fly tipping?

Answer 6

Year	Cost of uplifting fly-tipped tonnage
2010/11	£29,743
2011/12	£32,625
2012/13	£31,461

Additional relevant information

Before the introduction of charges in 2006, the Council used to carry out over 25,000 special uplifts per year, and that used to require 3 to 4 collection vehicles and crews to provide that service. The Council now collects just over 3,000 special uplifts per year using one collection vehicle and crew.

Staff experience is that fly-tipping did not increase significantly when the Council introduced a charge for special uplifts, following an initial increase when the charge was first introduced, but then the levels of fly tipping settled down to what they had been previously, and similar to the current levels.

Charging may also encourage re-use of furniture and goods. Charging for the service may make it more likely that householders will look to find a re-use charity shop or other outlet for any furniture or other goods they are discarding because of the charge.

The Chair invited Councillor Dorans to explain his reasons for the call-in and heard him state

- (a) that the removal of the concessionary rate for special uplifts would have a detrimental effect on those most in need in the community; and
- (b) that above the proposed standard rate of £15 for a special uplift, there should be no extra charge for additional items;

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Co-ordinator (Strategy and Support Service) advised

- (i) that only two other Scottish Local Authorities had concessionary rates for special uplifts; and
- (ii) that the previous concessionary rate of £15 would apply to everyone in relation to single items, with additional items being charged at £2.50 each.

The Panel then heard from Councillor John McDowall, Portfolio-holder, who stated that the proposals were part of a modernisation programme and was to encourage residents to use recycling centres and furniture reuse services more.

The Co-ordinator (Strategy and Support Service) further advised that it was proposed to encourage residents to also use charity shops for articles they no longer required and a Member of the Panel suggested that there should be a more formal partnership between the Council and charity organisations for this purpose.

Decided: following review,

- (A) to uphold the decision of the Leadership Panel; and
- (B) to agree that Council might wish to consider a more formal partnership with charity organisations to ensure residents' unwanted goods may be re-cycled and put to good use.

5. Item for Call-in: Maintenance on Grass Slopes Greater than 35 Degrees.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 25th September 2013 (Page 7, paragraph 14) when that Panel, having considered a report of September 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment, had agreed to approve alternative maintenance regimes for twelve location with gradients of 35 degrees or over for which no alternative grass cutting machinery could be identified.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of two call-ins (issued) ([link attached](#)) details of which, together with the written responses circulated in advance of the meeting, are outlined below.

Call-in (1):-

Question 1

Risk assessments to mitigate risk to operatives?

Answer 1

Risk assessments were carried out on all sloping sites and have led to the recommendations in the report to the Leadership Panel. It should also be noted that risk assessments can alter as a result of weather, ground or vegetations conditions which can alter daily or other a season.

Question 2

Cost of equipment to enable slopes to be maintained?

Answer 2

A remote control mower can be used on 11 of the 12 slopes that are proposed for non-cutting maintenance regimes.

The mower would be needed for approximately 5 to 6 days a month (fortnightly cuts) over 30 weeks.

The purchase cost of a remote control mower would be approximately £32,000; hire for 2x 3 day periods per month would come to approximately £15,000; or an annual lease cost would be approximately £6,000 with the last being best option.

The mower requires an operator and also a vehicle and trailer. Depending on hire costs, this could amount to perhaps around £12,000 to £15,000.

Factoring all these costs together would lead to a total of around £18,000 to £21,000 to continue to cut these 11 sites using remote control mower.

Question 3

Lack of consultation with the local communities?

Answer 3

This matter concerns health and safety so the question of whether slopes can continue to be cut is not one for consultation. The alternative maintenance regimes proposed are the ones considered viable for the specific sites.

Question 4

No detail of options appraisal?

Answer 4

Each sloping site was subject to option appraisal with the details outlined below:-

- 84 locations with slopes were measured to be 15 degrees or over. On the second, more accurate measurements, 3 areas were deemed to be less than 15 degrees; and
- 81 slopes at or above 20 degrees were either cut by ride-on, strimmer, pedestrian mower or tractor.

From the 6 areas originally cut with a strimmer:-

- 1 area will continue to be cut with a strimmer;
- 2 areas will continue to be cut with a strimmer but have a medium risk to operators (these areas are relatively small which lessens the risk of Hand and Arm Vibration Syndrome);
- 2 areas will now be cut with a side-arm flail; and
- 1 area will be left uncut as it remains a high risk to operators.

From the 3 areas originally cut with small mowers -

- 2 will now be cut with a larger, more stable mowers; and
- 1 area will be left uncut as it remains a high risk to operators.

From the 60 areas cut with larger, more stable pedestrian mowers -

- 34 areas can still be cut with these mowers;
- 2 areas are now trimmed (small areas);
- 13 areas will be cut with side-arm flail; and
- 10 areas will be left uncut as it remains a high risk to operators and offer no access for side-arm flail.

From the 13 areas originally cut with a ride-on mower -

- all 13 areas will now be cut with heavy pedestrian mower.

2 areas of cutting were ceased a number of years ago as both areas were over 35 degrees and access was impossible (both areas were fenced off as they were too steep).

Other option appraisals carried out:-

- areas originally cut by ride-on mowers are now cut with a pedestrian mower which will increase workload by approximately 280 hours per season;
- tractor with side-arm flail to replace pedestrian mowers will take an additional 2 to 3 days per month; and
- trimmers could not replace any mowers cutting the larger areas due to increased HAVS risks;

Call-in (2):-

Question 1

More information on Health and Safety at Work Act in relation to grass cutting on slopes?

Answer 1

HSE have not produced specific guidance on the subject, however, the Regulations below are relevant:-

- Health & Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 at Section 2(1);
- provision of safe plant and safe systems of work;
- the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 at Regulation 3;
- suitable and sufficient risk assessment;
- the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 at Regulation 4; and
- requires employers, when selecting equipment, to have regard to the working conditions and the risks to health and safety which exist where the equipment is used as well as any additional risks posed by its use. The equipment is to be used only for the operations for which it is suitable. "Suitable" is defined as being suitable in any respect which it is reasonably foreseeable will affect the health and safety of any person.

Please also refer to attached links:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/apg/280710/3-5-enforcement.pdf>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/030210/amenity-landscaping.pdf>

Question 2

Information on possible adaptations on ride-on mowers?

Answer 2

Please note there are only 12 locations identified as being cut by ride-on mowers. These areas are now cut with heavier pedestrian mowers.

The remaining 67 locations were either strimmed or cut with pedestrian mowers. Manufacturer's guidelines on machinery use must be adhered to.

Remote control mowers are dealt with above (see answer 2).

Question 3

Consider the possible impact on loss of natural light in certain buildings as a result of tree planting?

Answer 3

Cavendish Place	trees will be 17 metres from the nearest house and would not have a significant impact (if any) on natural light with the use of garden trees (also south facing aspect);
Dundonald School	trees already growing on embankment;
Gardenrose Primary School	trees will be 16 to 85 metres distance from school and would not have a significant impact on natural light with the use of garden trees (also south facing aspect); and
Ladywell Road	no buildings in the vicinity

The Chair invited Councillor Connolly to explain his reasons for call-in (1) and heard him further in relation to the risk assessment that had been carried out and state that he did not wish to see workers at any risk in undertaking their duties.

The Grounds and Streets Service Co-ordinator advised that the Service had looked at its current machinery to cut grass slopes of different gradients and that the purchase of a remote-controlled grass mower would be an additional cost to the Council. It was clarified that only twelve sites were affected.

Councillor Connolly further stated

- (1) that the character of various slopes would be changed if the slopes were not maintained and that £32,000 should be requested from the Council's Change Fund for additional resources to alleviate this problem; and
- (2) that he was disappointed with the response to question 3 above relating to consultation and that he would like to have seen more options listed in response to question 4 above.

The Executive Director – Economy Neighbourhood and Environment and the Head of Neighbourhood Services responded and it was noted

- that perhaps the consultation undertaken could have been better and that the communities would now be consulted in relation to the twelve sites affected; and
- that it was not the intention of the proposals to abandon the upkeep of any of the sites with grass slopes greater than 35 degrees – what was being proposed was alternative maintenance regimes given that it was not safe to cut these slopes with available machinery.

The Chair invited Councillor Allan to explain his reasons for call-in (2) and heard him state

- that a positive alternative should be examined; and
- that the hiring of a remote controlled grass mower may be a good investment to the Council.

The Panel then heard from Councillor McDowall, Portfolio-holder state

- that a number of valid points had been made today regarding this matter;
- that health and safety was paramount for employees and this Council had a duty as a responsible employer; and
- that the Council had to match the funding available to the services that it undertook to provide.

Decided: following review, to agree to recommend to the Leadership Panel

- (a) that they consider options to identify and procure alternative equipment to cut the grass slopes greater than 35 degrees; and
- (b) that the decision not to cut the grass at twelve locations should be re-examined.

The time being 11.55 a.m., the Panel agreed to adjourn.

The Panel resumed at 12.05 p.m.

At this point Councillor McGinley had left the meeting.

6. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 3rd September 2013 (issued) ([link attached](#)) were submitted and approved.

7. Audit Scotland report on Protecting Consumers.

Reference was made to the minutes of the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel of 9th May 2013 when it had been agreed

- (1) to note the recommendations as outlined within the Audit Scotland report at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) meantime, to refer this matter to the Development and Environment Standing Scrutiny Panel for its consideration, including the 'Questions for Councillors' information outlined within Appendix 2 of the report and to note that a representative from Audit Scotland would be in attendance at that meeting; and
- (3) to request that the Development and Environment Standing Scrutiny Panel take cognisance that the Corporate and Community Planning Standing Scrutiny Panel was minded to refer this matter to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel or Council depending on the outcome of the Summit taking place in June 2013,

there was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of September 2013 by the Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment.

Mark Roberts, Audit Scotland (in attendance for this item only) gave a presentation regarding the Audit Scotland report “Protecting Consumers”.

Decided:

- (a) to note the recommendations as set out in the Audit Scotland report, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) to note the ‘Questions for Councillors’ as set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (c) to request the Executive Director - Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment to submit a report on progress being made by the Council locally, and COSLA and others, nationally, in relation to these issues in the new year.

8. Variation to order of business.

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 13.2, the Panel agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

9. Sub-Group Report – Library Service for the 21st Century.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 3rd September 2013 (Page 000, paragraph 00) and there was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of 24th September 2013 setting out the draft recommendations of the Libraries Sub-Group, a Scrutiny Review that was being undertaken by this Panel.

Gordon, Hunt, University of the West of Scotland who was acting a “critical friend” for this Review (in attendance for this item only) gave a background to the findings of the Sub-Group with key concerns being lack of resources and wi-fi issues.

The Members of the Panel stated that they were pleased with the outcome of the Sub-Group’s findings.

Decided: in the meantime, to agree the following draft recommendations of the Sub-Group, with the final draft report and recommendations being reported back to this Panel in November 2013 for approval and then referred to the Leadership Panel:-

- (1) that the Council consider resources to enable the Library Service to deliver against the challenges and opportunities presented by the Welfare Reform Act;
- (2) that Libraries form an integral part of discussions regarding co-location of services when appropriate
- (3) that the Library Service book fund be protected from further reduction;
- (4) that consideration be given to the development of technology, for example, Wi-fi access, within Libraries to expand options for future use;
- (5) that the Development and Environment Standing Scrutiny Panel Libraries Sub-Group continue to have an oversight should recommendations in this report be agreed and taken forward by Leadership Panel; and
- (6) that it be ensured that “succession planning” was in place following the completion of the Review.

10. Sub-Group Report – Community Involvement in Grounds Maintenance.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 3rd September 2013 (Page 000, paragraph 00) and there was submitted a report (issued) ([link attached](#)) of 24th September 2013 setting out the draft recommendations of the Grounds Maintenance Sub-Group, a Scrutiny Review that was being undertaken by this Panel.

Decided: in the meantime, to agree the following draft recommendations of the Sub-Group, with the final draft report and recommendations being reported back to this Panel in November 2013 for approval and then referred to the Leadership Panel:-

- (1) the development of an “In Bloom” type competition for villages and a “Best Kept Garden” initiative for urban areas;
- (2) the support and development of the Ayrshire Litter Volunteer Network initiative (ALVN) proposed by the organiser, Mr. David Pugh; and
- (3) the development of a guide to encourage community participation, including contact details of relevant organisations to signpost interested volunteers to.

The meeting ended at 12.45 p.m.