

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 18 MAY 2011

KILMARNOCK FOOTBALL CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update of the Council's partnership work with Kilmarnock Football Club; outline the recent benefits of this partnership for East Ayrshire residents and to seek approval for continued joint working with the Club.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 East Ayrshire is home to one of Scotland's top 12 Football Clubs, Kilmarnock FC, which as well as being a source of local pride, also provides an excellent profile nationally.
- 2.2 The Council has a strong track record of partnership working with Kilmarnock Football Club which pre-dates the Council's formation in 1996 and has focused on the local development of grassroots football.
- 2.3 During this period of partnership working, Kilmarnock FC and the Scottish Football Association have jointly funded a Football Development Officer post and Community Football Programme at a cost to the Council of £10,000 per annum.
- 2.4 In addition to the Football Development Officer post, there have been several short-term agreements in respect of specific football related programmes as well as corporate advertising and promotion investments.

3. KILMARNOCK FOOTBALL CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY

- 3.1 The partnership employment of the Council's Football Development Officer has made a significant contribution to the 20,000 recorded attendances per annum at grassroots football programmes throughout East Ayrshire.
- 3.2 These opportunities include pre-school 'mini-kickers' activities which focus on the fundamentals of football, physical activity and movement; 'Killie Futures', the 'Premier Football Academy' for primary school aged children; a wide range of school curricular and extra-curricular activities; and, an extensive youth football development set-up which has produced many talented footballers in recent years. In addition, there is an extensive regional programme of football coach education with over 230 new coaches becoming qualified in the last year (2010/11)

- 3.3 Kilmarnock Football Club has also been instrumental in the ongoing development and delivery of a dynamic range of football related diversionary programmes including the initial development and establishment of the Premier Night League programme which was amongst the first and most extensive in Scotland, and latterly, the StreetSport Cage Network which has been widely recognised as best practice in Scotland.
- 3.4 More recently, the Football Club has supported the development and implementation of the 'Kilmarnock Football Club StreetSport Icon' Initiative including actual delivery of elements of the programme in East Ayrshire communities, promotion of the initiative amongst corporate sponsors, free provision of the majority of prizes including strips, training kit and a weeklong training experience for winners of the competition.
- 3.5 In addition to the core programmes identified above, the community section of the Club also support a wide range of other football themed initiatives including 'Show Racism the Red Card'; a range of employment related initiatives including the Future Jobs Fund Programme amongst other training and skills development opportunities; and, most recently delivered the 'Football Fans in Training' (FFiT) initiative which successfully improved the health and well being of local men who were at risk of ill-health. A full report on FFiT is available on the members portal.
- 3.6 The football club itself, and by extension the Park Hotel and Kilmarnock Fitness Suite, provides employment locally and attracts thousands of visitors to the authority area on an annual basis.

4. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL CORPORATE ADVERTISING WITH KILMARNOCK FOOTBALL CLUB

- 4.1 Kilmarnock Football Club like all similar professional sporting organisations rely on income generation from a mixture of corporate sponsorship, associated business ventures such as the Park Hotel, ticketing and merchandise sales, and television rights amongst other smaller scale fundraising activities.
- 4.2 In recent years, East Ayrshire Council has invested in corporate advertising and sponsorship at Kilmarnock Football Club. The main elements of this include an investment in an advertising board at the club costing £6,500 and covering the period 2008/09 – 2010/11 and a range of as and when required smaller adverts within both the club match-day programme and the Kilmarnock in the Community annual guide.
- 4.3 In light of the range and number of visitors to Rugby Park on an annual basis, almost 100,000 to date this season, it may be concluded that the investment made by East Ayrshire Council to be associated with Kilmarnock Football Club and its exposure to so many residents and visitors is delivering best value.

- 4.4 It is also notable that in return for this contribution, Kilmarnock FC provided over 5,000 free tickets last year to school children and vulnerable groups including those looked after and accommodated within one of East Ayrshire's Children's Houses.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Over the last three financial years the Department of Neighbourhood Services has contributed to Kilmarnock Football Club in respect of the joint Football Development Officer post and community football development programmes has been as follows: 2008/09 - £26,310; 2009/10 - £28,905; and 2010/11- £21,495
- 5.2 In the same time period, the Department of Neighbourhood Services spend on Advertising and Promotion at the Club was as follows: 2008/09 - £10,523; 2009/10 - £7,341; and nil in 2010/11.
- 5.3 If support to Kilmarnock Football Club continues, it is envisaged that the Council would contribute approximately £20,000 per annum over the next three financial years in respect of the joint Football Development Officer post and community football development programmes (£15,000) and support for advertising and promotion (£5,000). This figure takes account of recent Fairer Scotland Fund savings within Sports Development budgets.
- 5.4 An agreement is currently in place which allows buses for pupils from Gargieston Primary School currently dispersed to other schools while the new school is built to use the Rugby Park Car Park to pick up and drop off pupils each day. In return for allowing this usage Kilmarnock Football Club receives free use of the synthetic grass pitches at Grange and St Joseph's Sports Centres. The estimated value of this free use is £15,000 per year for the two year construction period.

6. POLICY/COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Whilst Kilmarnock Football Club is not a formal Community Planning Partner in respect of having membership of the Community Planning Board, the organisation is an essential partner in the delivery of services that deliver on priorities across all four themes of the East Ayrshire Plan and subsequently support achievement of outcomes within our Single Outcome Agreement.
- 6.2 In respect of Health and Wellbeing, the Club is committed to the delivery of activities not only for the young or the most talented but have also proven that they can engage the hardest to reach and most vulnerable through the recent Football Fans in Training programme. Further, the work of Kilmarnock FC is reported within wider leisure services updates attached to Local Outcomes of the Improving Health and Wellbeing Thematic Action Plan.
- 6.3 In relation to Community Safety, Kilmarnock FC are instrumental in delivering positive activities across the community for young people and play a significant role in the delivery of night time and diversionary programmes that

help make East Ayrshire residents feel safer, their work in this respect is reflected within leisure services reports on local outcomes of the improving Community Safety thematic action plan.

- 6.4 Kilmarnock FC alongside the Park Hotel and the Kilmarnock Fitness Suite provide significant employment, training and skills development opportunities all of which help support the achievement of Lifelong Learning and Community Regeneration outcomes. In addition, the club has real potential to promote community spirit and cohesion and will support the Council's wider ambitions in respect of community development.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Council, Kilmarnock FC and the Scottish Football Association have a shared vision for Football Development as part of the national strategy which ensures that East Ayrshire has strong local infrastructure for football.
- 7.2 The work of Kilmarnock FC locally is reflected within the East Ayrshire Council Leisure and Cultural Strategy.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Kilmarnock FC operate their activities in a well structured and professional manner. The club employs and checks all football coaches, and have their own insurance, risk assessment and risk management processes in line with Scottish FA guidance. There is always a small risk of injury within the sports arena however there would only be a very limited risk to the Council's reputation should any incident of this nature occur.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The work of Kilmarnock Football Club is fully inclusive and equitable. In addition to universal provision, the club provide a range of specific and targeted initiatives including particular interventions promoting equality in terms of Gender, Race and Disability. The work of Kilmarnock FC in the community provides a positive scoring on equality impact assessment.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 As well as having a high national profile as a professional sports club, Kilmarnock Football Club is an excellent example of a community orientated organisation. The club has demonstrated this through its own commitment not only to grassroots football which can have an obvious benefit for the club in terms of player development but also through less traditional interventions including night time and diversionary sport and pure health promotion activities.
- 10.2 During the 2009 campaign to "Keep Johnnie Walker in Kilmarnock", the football club demonstrated significant commitment to the community of

Kilmarnock and East Ayrshire. In practical terms, this included the printing and photocopying of leaflets, but more notably the entire first team, management and many backroom staff marched the entire route along with thousands of supporters in support of the demonstration.

- 10.3 More recently, Kilmarnock FC have been important partners in supporting the Provost's chosen charity of the year – Alzheimer Scotland. This has included the usual range of corporate gifts and hospitality; however, in addition they have hosted free meetings in the Park Hotel, supported a collection at the football ground, are leading delivery of the Provost Charity Cup which will take place in June 2011 and are heavily involved in developing a new football reminiscence project which will seek to engage particularly with men experiencing dementia.
- 10.4 Kilmarnock Football Club is a source of local pride in professional football terms. In season 2009/10 over 110,000 people attended matches at Rugby Park, an average of almost 7,000 people per game. It is prudent that East Ayrshire Council continues to benefit from the club's local profile and sustain its relationship with the Club; the Council will therefore continue to work jointly with the Club into the future to achieve positive outcomes for the community of Kilmarnock and the wider East Ayrshire area.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- i) notes the significant contribution that Kilmarnock Football Club makes to the East Ayrshire community;
- ii) agrees to continue to support the Club as in previous years through the partnership Football Development Officer post at a cost of approximately £15,000 each year for the next three financial years (2011/12-2013/14) with support for advertising and promotion at a cost of £5,000 each year for the next three financial years, as before; and
- iii) otherwise notes the contents of this report.

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10th May 2011

EM/AB

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

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