

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOUTHERN LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUM - 6 SEPTEMBER 2007

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM 15 MINUTE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

<u>NO.</u>	<u>MATTER RAISED</u>	<u>RESPONSE/ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>CURRENT POSITION</u>
1.	Community Representative Mr Tony Foote made reference to incidences where Council tenants had been charged excessive amounts in respect of repairs carried out to the houses which they occupy by the Council's Works Section; and enquired as to the reasons for the level of recharges levied.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be drawn to the attention of the appropriate Officer of the Council and a response provided directly to Mr Foote.	The Head of Housing currently has this matter under consideration with a view to a response of substance being provided to Mr Foote directly.
2.	Community Representative Mrs Jean Smith requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum to update on the operation of the Community Warden Service within the local area.	Noted that the Administrative Officer would make arrangements with the appropriate Department of the Council for a report on this matter to be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum.	A report will be submitted to an early future meeting of the Forum.
3.	Community Representative Mr William Lees drew attention to an incident which had occurred on Friday 31 August 2007 at Lanehead Terrace in New Cumnock when detritus had been deposited and left on the roadway by the bin washing vehicle.	The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this matter would be referred to the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention and that a response would be provided to Mr Lees directly.	The Head of Housing currently has this matter under consideration with a view to a response of substance being provided to Mr Lees directly.

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4.	On the matter having been raised by Substitute Community Representative Mr Geoff Crolley, Councillor Eric Jackson requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum on proposals for the Year of Homecoming in 2009 to mark the 250 th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth.	Noted that the Administrative Officer would arrange for a report on this matter to be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum by the appropriate Officer of the Council.	Arrangements are being made for a report to be submitted to an early future meeting of the Forum.
5.	Substitute Community Representative Mr Geoff Crolley sought information with regard to the paths network in New Cumnock.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be referred to the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention with a view to Mr Crolley being contacted directly by the Officer concerned.	The Project Manager, Outdoor Access Unit, has been asked to contact Mr Crolley direct to discuss this matter.
6.	Community Representative Mr William Barr and Substitute Community Representative Mr George Jones requested that the dog foul bins at Ladies Walk and the playingfields in Drongan which had been vandalised be replaced and, if possible, augmented by additional bins.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be referred to the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention and that a response would be provided directly to Mr Barr and Mr Jones.	A response has been provided to Mr Barr and Mr Jones by the Assistant Operations Manager within the Department of Neighbourhood Services advising (a) that the dog waste bins in Ladies Walk will be replaced following Guy Fawkes night, due to the potential for arson; and (b) that while it would be desirable to replace the dog waste bins at the playing fields in Drongan, this is not financially viable due to the continual vandalism of the bins at this location.

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7.	Councillor Eric Ross drew attention to the fact that the dog foul bin at Pathhead in New Cumnock was not being regularly emptied and to the want of a dog foul bin at Afton Bridgend in New Cumnock. Also, there was a need for a dog foul bin at Barshare Road in Cumnock.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be referred to the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention and a response provided directly to Councillor Ross.	The Assistant Operations Manager, Department of Neighbourhood Services, has responded to Councillor Ross advising (a) that the dog waste bin at Pathhead in New Cumnock is emptied on a regular basis, but is a well used bin and tends to fill up quickly; (b) that with regard to the need for dog waste bins at Barshare Road, Cumnock and Afton Bridgend, New Cumnock, there are litter bins at these locations which are also stickered for use for bagged dog waste.
8.	Councillor Eric Ross made reference to a system used elsewhere for collecting dog fouling, involving an operative with appropriate apparatus disinfecting and collecting the faeces; and suggested that East Ayrshire Council could trial a similar system.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be referred to the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention and a response provided directly to Councillor Ross.	The Assistant Operations Manager, Department of Neighbourhood Services has responded to Councillor Ross advising that while he is unaware of the specific system to which Councillor Ross referred, he is aware of mechanised collection systems and whilst they have some benefits, are expensive and labour intensive. He collects data from street sweepers as part of the quality system and where this indicates a problem, the Department will, where resources allow, provide a free standing litter bin suitably stickered for dual use for litter and bagged dog waste.

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9.	Community Representative Mrs Grace Garrity advised that she was not aware of having seen dog fouling patrols operating within Dalrymple.	Eleanor Bell, Environmental Health Officer, advised that it was intended that over the coming winter period, Officers, who had previously been deployed with regard to the ban on smoking in public places, and Officers who were employed on pest control duties during the Summer would be redeployed to assist in undertaking dog fouling patrols. The points made by Mrs Garrity and others at this meeting regarding dog fouling would be taken on board with regard to future dog fouling patrols.	The Team Leader, Pollution Control, Department of Corporate Support has responded to Mrs Garrity advising that until now, dog fouling patrols by Officers of the Council have been carried out in response to specific complaints by members of the public, Elected Members etc., and this has met with some success with a number of Fixed Penalty Notices having been issued. Officers who carry out the patrols do not wear clothing which would identify them as being Council Officials, and this may be a contributing factor in the patrols being able to deal with offenders successfully. However, it is intended to introduce a more formalised regime of patrols to be carried out over the coming months utilising Pest Control Officers employed by the Council who have a dual role as both Pest Control Officers and Dog Wardens, and now that demand for pest control services begins to tail off more time can be devoted to dog fouling work. It is hoped to make patrols as conspicuous as possible to seek compliance by education rather than enforcement.

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10.	Community Representative Mrs Jean Smith sought clarification as to ownership of the car park adjacent to the Visions Leisure Centre in Cumnock, particularly whether this parking area was available only for the Visions patrons or more generally for users of the Broomfield Park area.	Councillor Eric Ross advised that the existing car park is for use by Visions patrons. However, in conjunction with the new housing development in that area, a new and additional, car parking and bus parking area would be provided for general use.	N/A

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11.	<p>Councillor Eric Ross drew attention to the extensive littering problem which occurs at lunch times on school days, mainly within The Square at Cumnock but also on the access routes to and from Cumnock Academy and suggested that appropriate Officers of the Council should be deployed during these times with a view to discouraging littering, if necessary, through the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.</p>	<p>Eleanor Bell, Environmental Health Officer, advised of the responsibilities of Community Wardens and Environmental Health staff with regard to this matter and advised that the issue raised by Councillor Ross would be taken on board for future action.</p>	<p>The Assistant Operations Manager, Department of Neighbourhood Services has responded to Councillor Ross advising that Cumnock Town Centre is covered by a Street Sweeper constantly throughout the day which utilises the small mechanical pavement sweeper from 7.00 a.m. until mid morning which, generally, clears litter deposited by school pupils on Townhead Street to the Academy, incorporating The Square, the Tanyard and the area around the Shopping Centre. Following lunch time, the same route is covered and The Square (which has 10 litter bins) is covered by the sweeper three times per day. Litter dropped by school pupils is an ongoing problem and it must be noted that the sweeper can only clear litter which is present at the time and it is unlikely that in heavily used areas standards could be maintained for long periods. A large mechanical sweeper is also used throughout the town centre on a daily basis and the option of enforcement action throughout the whole of East Ayrshire with regard to both littering and dog fouling is borne in mind.</p>

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12.	Substitute Community Representative Mr Geoff Crolley suggested that there is a need for a greater number of litter bins within the central part of New Cumnock.	The Head of Democratic Services advised that this matter would be raised with the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention and a response provided directly to Mr Crolley.	The Assistant Operations Manager, Department of Neighbourhood Services has written to Mr Crolley advising that there are 10 litter bins located within the central part of New Cumnock which is considered to be sufficient provision for that area. However, an additional bin will be provided at Pathhead in New Cumnock and further, any litter bins now provided will be stickered as being suitable for both litter and bagged dog waste.

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13.	<p>Community Representative Mr William Lees drew attention to incidences, which, he felt, constituted breaches of health and safety regulations by Council employees. The first of these, which he had observed a number of weeks ago, related to Refuse Collection Operatives riding on the foot rests of a refuse collection vehicle at Hawtrees corner in New Cumnock. The second related to an incident which he had observed on 6 September 2007 regarding a John Deer ride-on grass cutter machine in the Main Street of New Cumnock, which had been carrying one standing passenger in addition to the driver.</p>	<p>The Head of Democratic Services outlined the general nature of the Council's responsibilities with regard to Health and Safety, which is a critical issue whether in respect of employees or the public; and confirmed that the matters to which Mr Lees had referred would be drawn to the attention of the appropriate Officer of the Council for attention, and that a response would be provided to Mr Lees directly.</p>	<p>The Assistant Operations Manager, Department of Neighbourhood Services has responded to Mr Lees with regard to the incident involving the ride-on grass cutter machine, confirming that the Department take any breach of health and safety very seriously; and advising that following investigation, it has become apparent that this incident involved two of the Council's seasonal employees who have since left the Council's employment and, therefore, no further action can be taken against them. However, existing employees have been reminded that disciplinary action will be pursued against any employee who is considered to be in breach of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.</p> <p>The Head of Housing currently has under consideration the issue raised by Mr Lees regarding the refuse collection operatives, with a view to providing a response directly.</p>

22 October 2007
SN/SR