

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL MEETING – 9 DECEMBER 2004**

#### **BURNS MONUMENT, KAY PARK, KILMARNOCK**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give details of the recent fire incident at the Burns Monument and to recommend that options for the recovery of the site be explored.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Burns Monument, Kay Park, Kilmarnock is currently a “B” Listed Building and is one of the most prominent features of Kilmarnock. It has been an important part of the town’s history since its completion in 1879. The building was closed to the public prior to local government reorganisation but is inspected on a regular basis. The building was also secured and protected by a 2.5 metre palisade fence.

### **3. FIRE AT BURNS MONUMENT**

- 3.1 The Fire Service was called at 5am on Friday, 19 November 2004 to attend a fire at the Burns Monument, Kay Park, Kilmarnock. The Fire Service attended immediately and found the monument well alight. From an initial inspection of the fire it would appear that it began at the base of the tower.
- 3.2 At approximately 5.20 a.m. the tower collapsed as a result of the intense heat and fire weakening the structure. Two firefighters were seriously injured by falling masonry. Both were taken to Crosshouse Hospital where they were treated for their injuries. They continue to progress well and hopefully they will be discharged in the not too distant future.
- 3.3 In view of the historical nature of the building and the need for forensic examination of the site the fallen stonework was carefully removed and any ornate or salvageable masonry has been retained for future use.
- 3.4 A substantial part of the front portico gable remains standing although the top part which formed part of the front wall of the tower has subsequently had to be demolished for safety reasons. The statue of Burns was not

damaged by the fire and the statue and the surrounding stonework has now been made safe and secure.

- 3.5 Historic Scotland and our insurers were notified immediately of the loss and initial contact has been made with officers from Historic Scotland on the recovery of the site. They are satisfied with the work that has been carried out to date and will work closely with the Council in taking the matter forward. It is important that the restoration takes full account of current building standards and relevant legislation since the monument is a prominent feature in Kilmarnock.
- 3.6 Strathclyde Police have now advised that three males aged 16, 18 and 22 years have been apprehended in connection with the fire and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal in due course.

#### **4. INSURANCE ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Loss Adjusters are satisfied that the cause of the loss was deliberate fire raising. The building is a "B" Listed location and if Historic Scotland require full reinstatement the costs would be in excess of £4m. The Loss Adjusters' current claims reserve is just over £1m; this has been made on an initial assessment that it might not in fact be feasible to fully reinstate the building given the materials and skills required.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Discussions are ongoing with the Loss Adjusters in respect of the fire damage to the Burns Monument.

#### **6. LEGAL/POLICY ISSUES**

- 6.1 Nil

#### **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 As previously indicated in this report the remaining structure has now been made safe and secure. Discussion with our insurers and Historic Scotland are ongoing and all potential options are being explored with a view to submitting a report to the Community Services Committee in early course outlining a possible way forward.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that:-

- (i) it be remitted to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to explore the options for the recovery of the site; and
- (ii) a report be submitted to the relevant Committee in due course.

William Stafford  
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JS

30<sup>th</sup> November 2004

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Briefing note dated 22 November 2004 from the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, note of progress meetings held on Friday, 19 and Monday, 22 November 2004.

Anyone wishing further information on this report should contact William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services on 01563 576023.

**Implementation Officer: William Stafford**