

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE : 10 MARCH 2004**

### **COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS & PROJECTS 2003/2004 & 2004/2005**

#### **Report by the Director of Development Services**

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

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform Committee of progress with the Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans and Projects being implemented in 2003/2004 through the Planning & Building Control Division in conjunction with the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP). The report also outlines those Action Plans and projects to be implemented in 2004/2005.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Planning & Building Control Division has responsibility for a budget of £170,000 in 2003/2004 from the SIP for the production of Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans and implementation of associated environmental improvement projects. As part of this process the Restoring Communities Programme is being implemented within Auchinleck as a pilot project. External funding is also attracted for individual projects.

#### **3. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS 2003/2004**

- 3.1** To date 8 Finalised Action Plans have been prepared for individual settlements as part of the ongoing programme. Plans are now finalised for Auchinleck, Drongan, Dalmellington, New Cumnock, Patna, Rankinston, Muirkirk and Catrine. In addition to this, two draft Action Plans have been produced for Logan and Bellsbank. The community consultation process for these settlements is nearing completion. On completion, the finalised plans will be circulated to community bodies and through consultation, priority projects identified. Projects will be implemented depending on available resources.

#### **4. PROJECTS 2003/2004**

- 4.1** Implementation of environmental improvement projects is split between projects within Auchinleck under the Restoring Communities Programme and projects within other communities in the Coalfield Area. All projects are implemented in partnership with a local community group through the Policy & Projects Section. The projects are as follows:

## **4.2 AUCHINLECK**

### **WELL ROAD PARK PROJECT**

- 4.2.1** The project is being implemented by the Auchinleck Community Council in conjunction with the Policy & Projects Section, Community Services Department and St Patrick's Primary School. The aim of the project is to enhance and develop the park to encourage maximum use by residents of Auchinleck and improve the image of the area.
- 4.2.2** Funding has been secured for this project from the SIP, the Council (from the former C&DV Initiative funds) and for future maintenance, the 'Quality of Life' fund. A further application for funding has been submitted to the New Opportunities Fund 'Fresh Futures' and is currently being assessed. The Community Council has appointed EAC Homes & Technical Services Department as Project Manager for the implementation process. Under the approved Playpark Improvement Programme, the Community Services Department has now replaced the play area within the park. The improvement works to the remainder of the park are due to be completed by the end of March.

### **MAIN STREET "PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME"**

- 4.2.3** The Property Improvement Scheme aims to implement environmental improvements to properties in the Main Street in partnership with property owners. Consultants have been appointed to progress the scheme and it is expected that four properties in the Main Street will benefit from the scheme in this financial year.

### **AUCHINLECK COMMUNITY WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER**

- 4.2.4** A Newsroom Steering Group has been formed to develop the community website and newsletter. The first issue of the newsletter was launched in December 2003 and widely circulated in the local area. It has recently been agreed that the newsletter will become a monthly publication. The community website is currently being developed by the community group in conjunction with Ayrshire Electronic Community and computer equipment has been ordered for the Steering Group to assist with the development of the website and newsletter.
- 4.2.5** The Newsroom Steering Group has identified the need for a dedicated office, the preferred location being within the Auchinleck Community Centre. This is currently being progressed by the Policy & Projects Section. The Steering Group also consider it essential to secure a project co-ordinator who will co-ordinate the activities of the Group and provide administrative support. Options, including assistance from CONDUIT or the Step Up Programme are currently being explored.

### **AUCHINLECK "ONE STOP SHOP" PROJECT**

- 4.2.6** The development of a One Stop Shop in Auchinleck which will serve the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area is being progressed by the community in partnership with the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO), the Council and the SIP. A constituted Management Group has been formed and an options appraisal report is being produced to assist the Management Group in identifying a suitable site.

### **PEDEN CHURCH AUCHINLECK, LANDSCAPING**

- 4.2.7** In conjunction with East Ayrshire Woodlands an environmental enhancement scheme will be implemented in the grounds of the Peden Church, Back Rogerton Crescent. Part funded by the Planning SIP budget. The primary aim of the planting scheme is to discourage public use of the area as a through route or as a dumping ground. The Church is contributing to the project in the form of demolishing and removing a redundant boiler house and erecting a section of security fencing. The planting works will be carried out by East Ayrshire Woodlands and will be completed before the end of March 2004.

### **4.3 CATRINE**

- 4.3.1** Through the consultation process for the Catrine Community Environmental Improvement Action Plan, a number of priority projects were identified. To date several smaller scale projects have been developed. These include improvements to the footpaths near Shawlands Street and Newton Street, installation of bench seating at the former Mill site, the infilling of the railway bridge near Gordon Street and a survey of the Catrine Weir to enable emergency works to be carried out.

- 4.3.2** The major project within the Action Plan is the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project (CEHP). This project is being developed by the Policy and Projects Section with the support of the Catrine Voes Trust, Catrine Environment Group, East Ayrshire Coalfield Area SIP, Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, River Ayr Salmon Fishery Board, Scottish Wildlife Trust, and Daldorch House Autistic Society. The CEHP aims to establish and implement a range of proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the historic and environmental importance of Catrine, maximising the potential for related educational and recreational uses.

- 4.3.3** A project paper outlining the above has been finalised and is available as a background paper. The project partners approved the contents of the paper and it was submitted to the Heritage Lottery fund in October 2003 as part of an application for a project planning grant. A decision on this application is due in March 2004. A contribution has already been approved for this project from the Planning SIP budget.

- 4.3.4** A project planning grant will enable the proposals to be further developed and costed by consultants, allowing further bids to be made to external funding bodies. It is envisaged that should funding applications be successful, the implementation of capital works may begin during 2005. A constituted group

consisting of representatives of the partner groups will be set up specifically to implement the project.

#### **4.4 MUIRKIRK**

##### **MUIRKIRK VILLAGE CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

- 4.4.1** The project consists of the upgrading of the village car park adjacent to the community office at Garan House as well as the improvement of the recycling centre currently located within the car park. The project is being co-ordinated by Economic Development Division on behalf of the Policy & Projects Section and will be completed by the end of March 2004.

#### **4.5 NEW CUMNOCK**

##### **NEW CUMNOCK WATER WHEEL**

- 4.5.1** As part of the Aftonview Gardens/Old Mill Corner project being implemented by the New Cumnock Environmental Regeneration Volunteers (NERV), funding was approved through the Planning SIP budget for the resiting of the water wheel. The works have now been completed.

#### **5. OTHER PROJECTS**

##### **NETHERTHIRD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

- 5.1** In association with the development of the new Family Centre in Netherthird, access improvements and a landscaping scheme within the centre grounds have been implemented. This was funded through the SIP Community Environmental Improvement budget. The land is in the ownership of the Council under the Education account and the Education Department will be responsible for long term maintenance.
- 5.2** A cairn to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Council housing at Netherthird has been constructed. This was carried out in partnership with the Netherthird & Craigens Residents Association and the Cumnock & Landward Community Council.

#### **6. TARGETS & PRIORITIES FOR 2004/2005**

- 6.1** The EA Coalfield Area SIP Board, at its meeting on 4 December 2003, agreed to allocate **£170,000** to the continued programme of Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans & Projects in 2004/2005. The agreed programme is outlined below.
- 6.2** The target for the production of the **Action Plans** for 2004/2005 is to produce finalised Action Plans for the settlements of Netherthird and Cumnock. It is also intended to extrapolate information from the existing Muirkirk Action Plan, which was produced by a consultant, to form an Action Plan of a similar format to those of other settlements. It is also intended to update all the

existing Action Plans to highlight the clusters of vacant and derelict buildings in the settlements as identified in the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2003 report to Development Services Committee "The Regeneration of Vacant & Derelict Buildings and Sites".

**6.3** Within the **Restoring Communities Programme**, a rolling programme of projects and development will continue to be developed. For example the One Stop Shop project, subsequent phases of the Well Road Park project, the further development of the Main Street Auchinleck Property Improvement Scheme, the Community Newsroom and the Derelict Property Revolving Fund.

**6.4** The following **environmental improvement projects** will be progressed in 2004/2005 by community groups in conjunction with the Policy & Projects Section:

- the improvement of the former Social Work office site at Aird Ave, Auchinleck (additional funding already secured through the former C&DV Initiative)
- an environmental improvement project as part of the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project
- a project in Dalmellington/Bellsbank in conjunction with the Community Council and the Dalmellington Partnership
- a project in Logan in conjunction with the Lugar & Logan Community Council

**6.5** The Revolving Maintenance Fund will continue and external funding will be sought for each of the above projects.

## **7. FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** The projects listed above are or will be funded by various funders including the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership. Priority will be given to maximising the amount of funding that can be levered in from external agencies. Any additional maintenance obligations on the Council will be met from the Quality of Life funding which was approved for the maintenance of prominent amenity areas by the Development Services Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**8.1** It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (a) note the progress made in 2003/2004 on both the production of Action Plans and implementation of projects as outlined in this report; and

- (b) note the programme of Environmental Improvement Action Plans and projects for 2004/2005 as outlined in section 5 above.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**  
26 February 2004 (SJ/SA)

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

1. Catrine Environmental Heritage Project – project planning paper – October 2003
2. Report to Development Services Committee “Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans & Projects 2003/2004” – 26 August 2003
3. Report to Community Services Committee “Playpark Improvement Programme” – 13 November 2002.
4. Report to Development Services Committee “Quality of Life Funding 2003/2004 to 2005/2006” - 20 May 2003.
5. Report to Development Services Committee “The Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Buildings and Sites” – 20 May 2003.
6. Report to Development Services Committee “Restoring Communities Programme” – 13 March 2002.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above papers please contact Susan Jones on (01563) 576755.

***Implementation Officer: Alan Neish***