

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

IRVINE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2005

LOCAL COMMITTEE COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME - PEACE

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise of the current position in respect of the voluntary organisation PEACE and to seek Committee approval to accept the utilisation by the group of the Local Committee grant funding for financial years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Participate in East Ayrshire Childcare Experience (PEACE) is a voluntary organisation which promotes the care and educational needs of children outwith school hours and school holidays. PEACE currently provides services to approximately 400 families in East Ayrshire.
- 2.2** PEACE has received Community Grant funding in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 from Kilmarnock Central, South, North, Northern Area and Irvine Valley Local Committees to assist with the costs associated with funding a programme of activities for Easter, Summer and October Playschemes.
- 2.3** PEACE also receives funding from the allocation of funding to out-of-school care services which is normally considered through the Childcare Partnership using a funding formula.
- 2.4** The Education Committee at its meeting on 23 March 2005 were advised that there had been a number of concerns regarding the overall management of PEACE out-of-school care services, and it had been agreed at a PEACE Management Committee held on 18 January 2005 that a new management structure be put in place.
- 2.5** The Council commissioned Keith Miller Associates to support PEACE to implement the new structure, to ensure sound corporate governance in relation to the Council's funding to PEACE.
- 2.6** As part of the proposals, the Out-of-School Care Services operating in New Farm Primary School and Silverwood Primary School were merged. The Education Committee, in recognition of the importance placed on providing care and educational needs of children outwith school hours and school holidays, agreed to fund a deficit, as a result of the merger of £2,660.24 in order to retain the provision of the childcare services from PEACE.

- 2.7 It has been confirmed that the review of the management structure has successfully been undertaken and the organisation are operating efficiently and effectively.

3. PRESENT POSITION

- 3.1 As part of the overall review of PEACE, Internal Audit examined the group's financial records for 2003/2004. The review revealed that an element of Community Grant funding was utilised by the group to support staff costs in the provision of direct childcare in connection with Easter, Summer and October school holiday playschemes. It is necessary, as part of the Local Committee Community Grants process, for the findings of this review to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

- 3.2 Internal Audit have advised that in the financial year 2003/2004, £2,835.46 was allocated to cover staffing costs from a total grant allocation of £10,981.57 for Summer, Easter and October playschemes.

- 3.3 The new management committee have also advised that in the financial year 2004/2005, £7,646.06 was allocated to staffing costs from a total grant allocation of £18,612.23 to assist with the costs associated with funding a programme of activities for children during Easter, Summer and October playschemes.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Notwithstanding the terms of the Community Grant awards, it is clear that the funding was used to assist with staffing costs to deliver the main aims of the group, namely, providing care and educational needs of children within East Ayrshire over Easter, Summer and October holiday periods.

- 4.2 There is no indication to suggest that there was anything untoward relating to the use of the group's funding. It is also recognised that the group are not in a position to return the said funding as it is likely that the service could not be sustained and therefore would impact negatively on the provision of childcare outwith school hours and during school holidays within East Ayrshire communities.

- 4.3 It is suggested that it would be reasonable for the Committee to accept that the expenditure by the group on staffing costs to provide care and educational needs of children within East Ayrshire during the Easter, Summer and October school holidays met with the main principle of the Community Grant award in maintaining support to families within East Ayrshire during school holidays.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil.

6. LEGAL/POLICY/COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The provision of out-of-school care is in line with the National Childcare Strategy, Schools Out and Improving Opportunities theme of the Community Plan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Having regard to the terms of the report, it is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) agree to accept that the Community Grant funding awarded to PEACE of £2,835.46 for 2003/2004 and £7,646.06 for 2004/2005 was used to assist with staffing costs to fund a programme of activities for Easter, Summer and October Playschemes;
- (ii) that the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support write to the organisation and advise of the Committee's decision; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

SMcH/SM
5 August 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Memorandum from Internal Audit Section dated 12 July 2005.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Sharon McHarg, Administrative Officer, on Tel No (01563) 576131. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576135.

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