

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 11 JANUARY 2007

ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Report by Annual Seminar Working Group

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to advise the Local Committee of the outcome of the Annual Seminar for Community Representatives held on 11 November 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Decentralisation Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 24 September 1998 (Item 2, Page 3875, 96/99) agreed to progress with arrangements proposed by the Working Group for the Annual Seminar as part of the Council's commitment to continual improvement within the Decentralisation Scheme.
- 2.2** The main purpose of the Seminar was to provide a Forum for Community Representatives to exchange best practice ideas on Local Committee processes, identify personal development needs and comment on the Decentralisation Scheme insofar as it affected Local Committees.

3. 2006 ANNUAL SEMINAR

- 3.1** Following on from the success of the 2005 Annual Seminar, the Working Group agreed that the 2006 seminar would focus on informing Community Representatives and Substitutes of East Ayrshire Council's Community Plan.
- 3.2** It was therefore, agreed to hold the Annual Seminar on Saturday 11 November 2006 in the Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm.
- 3.3** The Seminar began with a presentation by the Chief Executive on the successes of the Community Plan to date, and which gave an overview of the Community Plan's focus for future action.
- 3.4** Three workshops were held during the Seminar, each focusing on two of the six main themes of the Community Plan. The workshops were facilitated by Community Workers from the Council's Community Learning and Development Section who were supported by the Lead Officer for the relevant theme or their representative (as referred to in Appendix II).

3.5 Thereafter, the Community Representatives and Substitutes had the opportunity to participate in an open question and answer session, involving the Chair of Community Planning, the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support, Superintendent Liz Weir, Strathclyde Police and the Lead Officers or representatives as referred to in Paragraph 3.4.

3.6 The evaluation results from the Seminar are enclosed under Appendix 1. It can be seen from the evaluation responses that the Seminar was an overwhelming success with those attending finding it beneficial.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Any financial implications arising from the Seminar will be met from existing budgets.

5. POLICY/LEGAL/COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS - Nil.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 To recommend that the Committee:-

- (i) note the success of the 2006 Annual Seminar for Community Representatives.

LY/KS

15 December 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Lynn Young, Administrative Officer.

APPENDIX I

LOCAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL SEMINAR: 11 NOVEMBER 2006

EVALUATION

<u>Session</u>	<u>Good Overall</u>	<u>Mainly Good</u>	<u>Just Adequate</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Community Planning Presentation	24	3	1	
Workshops	18	6	3	1
Plenary Session	17	10		

Please indicate how you rate the overall seminar.

What was the best part of the Seminar?

- Main Presentation - Informative.
- Workshop - Created interesting discussion raising important points.
- Found Chief Executive's presentation very useful and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the aims in the workshop, also found the plenary session informative.
- New initiatives require to be addressed in relation to young people being targeted to become involved in activities.
- It was nice to see Councillors in attendance, but they could have been spread out
- Community Plan Presentation, meeting other reps who have exactly similar problems.
- Meeting the people.
- Presentation – Very Informative. Workshop also excellent – atmosphere warm and inviting. Discussion lively and informative.
- Information given out.
- The number of new faces.
- Meeting new people.
- Interaction.
- Overview of Community Planning.
- Workshop (7 comments).
- Interacting with other people and learning more about the Authority's Activities, ideas for future possibilities.
- Chief Executive's intro.
- Open discussion interesting and informative.
- Very Informative – lots of real issues discussed.
- Workshop.
- Workshop 2 and lunch (2 comments).
- Chief Executive's presentation and workshop B.
- Workshop and lunch
- All
- Workshop C

What was the worst part of the Seminar?

- Long sitting.
- Workshop presenters, length of talking by speakers and not sufficient time for questions.
- Councillors may try to include too much .
- Nothing, I felt every aspect was beneficial.
- Sitting too long.
- None, the seminar was excellent.
- The weather.
- The acoustics in the workshop.
- Not enough time to take part in more than one workshop.
- Too much attention paid to the Cumnock Area.
- Workshop not long enough.
- Too hurried.

What did you learn?

- Success and Action Points from each department/priority.
- That the consultation process continues to grow in strength and that the community continues to be involved.
- Many of the Community Reps are not aware of the Community Plan.
- Other people have similar problems.
- A better appreciation of services.
- Things better than I thought, hopefully North Ayrshire will get the “treatment”.
- Mostly, an update of Council’s aims and plans and the importance of Community Involvement.
- Good Question and Answer Session.
- The Council are trying to do things right.
- Something about the Community.
- Contacts.
- The Community at large seems to be unaware of Community Planning.
- I think the general public should know what is going on and future plans.
- To get access to the Local Plan.
- We have many common problems over all Authorities.
- More about Poverty and Environment.
- Much more than I first thought.
- What was happening in all other areas of the Council.
- Who to contact with various problems.
- A lot of opportunities to be addressed and education opportunities and that both are limited, lots of help available for young people.
- Who to contact for information.
- Learned more about the themes which I had not heard of before.
- Made more aware of the future plans.
- Comments made by other participants bringing to my attention that I wasn’t aware of.

How could the Seminar be improved?

- Prepare speakers to present their subject.
- More of the same. Perhaps identification of the Council Officials during the presentation.
- Prefer more interchanging of groups.
- At the introduction part, some people's contribution was recognised, it would have been good for these people to stand so that other people could know who they were.
- Longer workshop session or only one subject.
- Opportunity to take part in more than one workshop.
- To have more issues on an East Ayrshire wide basis.
- More time for Community Reps to view their points.
- A wee bit more time in the workshop (although keeping short and sharp appreciated, especially on a Saturday).
- More time.

Do you wish to see the Community Representatives Seminar repeated next year with a new topic or do you think the seminar as a whole needs to be reviewed?

- Continue as is.
- Yes, (13 comments).
- Next Year it would help if we knew if plans and targets were being met. If not, why not.
- Repeat as before, with updates.
- New topic (3 comments)
- Should continue, leave general topics to working party
- It will be back anyway because it was so enjoyable – it would be good to hear from Authority Reps/ Lead Officers about specific projects
- Yes - keep topics as they are, but any improvement that are made are very welcome
- Needs reviewing
- Look at other topics within the Local Committee set up and review the Seminar outlay as a whole. Need to make it interesting for new/ young people

<u>Item</u>	<u>Good Overall</u>	<u>Mainly Good</u>	<u>Just Adequate</u>	<u>Not Satisfactory</u>
Venue	29	1		
Lunch	25	2	2	
Day	23	5		
Time	24	4		
Staff	27	1		

42 ATTENDED (30 reps/ subs and 12 Elected Members)

31 RETURNS (not including Elected Members)

Updated: 3 January 2007

APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES SEMINAR: SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2006

Workshop A - Themes: Improving Opportunities and Promoting Community Learning

Improving Opportunities - Robert Paton, Head of Economic Development

- The Community Representatives felt that Education needs to be developed for all ages, particularly vulnerable adults.
- The Community Representatives were of the view that alternative education would be more beneficial, the focus to reach all needs rather than the schools traditional curriculum. It was recommended that alternative education would consist and focus on raising the awareness and importance of work experience. It was decided that this should be a large part of the school programme, raising confidence and preparing the young people for work and reaching those that do not enjoy the academic curriculum.
- It was suggested that additional training for 'old trades' was significant. The skills of 'old trades' such as, plumbing and joinery are valuable and there was a fear of them dying out. Therefore, it was recognised that they must be passed on with the main focus / priority to young people.
- How do you work with areas that have very little facilities and services for employment opportunities?
- What opportunities are there and what has been done in the Irvine Valley Area?

Promoting Community Learning - Janice Harrison, Team Leader

- Some of the Community Representatives questioned whether young people were participating in the Outreach Project and whether the programme was active. The general opinion was that the young people who attend were referred from other authorities and that they do not participate through choice.
- The Community Representatives requested figures of the attendance for the Outreach Project and other Youth Clubs.
- The Community Representatives felt that it was the same young people attending the clubs.
- The Community Representatives were impressed with the determination and commitment of Voluntary Organisations.

- The Community Representatives commented that Community Learning & Development should make strong links with Voluntary Organisations, supporting and helping with their finances.
- The Community Representatives questioned whether young people were more likely to attend Voluntary Organisations than ones run by local authorities.
- With regard to the weightlifting project, the Community Representative's praised the success of the Project and recommended that there should be more like it. The Community Representatives felt that money and funding should be used more creatively and imaginatively.
- How and what had been done to target those with very low self esteem? How does Community Learning reach and make contact with those that are most disadvantaged?
- How to tackle those not interested in education?
- Have those in the past that never attended school missed out on initiatives.
- What opportunities are available for the elderly generation?
- Why are young people still not taking part in opportunities provided? e.g. Youth Clubs with low attendance numbers.
- What research has been done to illustrate why the programmes are not attracting all young people?
- If there is research, then what evidence is there?
- Money should be spent on the research rather than spent on programmes that do not bring in the numbers.
- It was queried whether there was a theme/trend emerging of why low attendance.
- The matter was raised that not all young people could access workshops or have a wide range of employment due to public transport.
- The Community Representatives commented that it is not always clear where to access future funding. It was agreed that a list of all the available funding must be created.
- It was also suggested that for new groups that are starting up there should be more opportunities and support required e.g. free access or lets to facilities until the group has been established.

- It was agreed that the Community Partnerships should be expanded and that Community Learning & Development and Improving Opportunities must link closely together.
- Peer Education was discussed, relating back to the Outreach programmes, explaining that young people should go out on the streets interacting and reaching to the needs of their peers.

Workshop B - Themes: Improving Health and Improving Community Safety

Improving Health: Cathy Roarty, NHS Ayrshire and Arran

- It was encouraging to see collaborative working between East Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran. There is still a need for more, especially at the community level.
- Need to follow up work with alcohol and drugs, safety net required. Identify lead roles.
- Food initiatives required, salt intake, sugar etc also looking at the bigger picture with food. Healthy eating/cooking and additives.
- Shared services, police, health services, social services, education and environmental services. Need for more communication with each other.

Improving Community Safety: Anne Williams, Community Safety Officer

- Who will pay for more services i.e. community safety awareness?
- People feeling venerable in their homes, afraid to go out at night, afraid to report incidents.
- Introduce on spot fines - give power to community wardens.
- Spot fines for litter, dog fouling and drinking alcohol on the street.
- No cycling on pavements requires action now.
- Bins obstructing pavements after emptying – require bins to be put back in place.
- Police presence in Kilmarnock town centre at weekend welcomed as well as taxi rank marshals. Police also required in suburbs at weekend. Will this initiative be set up in Cumnock?
- More people are seeing youth drinking on streets and parks. Enforce the laws on drinking. Introduce age card, heavy fines for adults supplying or buying alcohol for under age youths.

Workshop C - Themes: Eliminating Poverty and Improving The Environment

Eliminating Poverty: Jackie Donnelly, Executive Head of Social Work

- Housing is essential to an Anti-Poverty agenda. Resources are taken away from Local Authority to Housing Associations. Is this a good idea?
- White meter heating is expensive and, on reduced incomes, very difficult to manage successfully in cold months.
- Local Plan: Resources need to be set aside for affordable housing.
- Registration of social landlords. How helpful will this be?
- Local Authority should press for the buying back of social housing and at the price it was originally sold at.
- Fuel poverty - grant for changing fuel needs clarification very confusing; Need specialist advisors on use of fuel; and expense of getting fuel access to housing stock.
- What debt counselling is happening in schools at this time?
- Credit Union in Shortlees? What plans?
- Shopmobility – Opened on 17th August in Kilmarnock Town Centre. Is this for anyone with mobility problems?.

Improving the Environment: Karl Doroszenko, Policy and Project Manager

- New Cumnock Town Hall needs improvement.
- Community Action Plans - Local Communities want to be involved in developing what they want seen and accomplished in their Communities.
- When are improvements coming to Shortlees and Kilmarnock and Loudoun areas?
- Woodland Group - needs more money. This has been an excellent piece of work.
- Property Developers are causing problems with Communities - if they are moving into communities they need to support and improve leisure/recreational facilities. Council should pre-think before planning agreed.
- A clear focus on agreements with planning and Community – keeping the balance is important so investment comes to East Ayrshire Council.

- What are the development plans for Southcraigs?
- Core Paths Plan a good thing. Any chance of this being expanded? Note - Chips not relevant for walking.
- Long running projects ie old opera house Howard Park area – nothing happening. Any developments for this site?.
- Kay Park Monument – are we any further forward?
- Problems with information on these issues for local communities.
- Local Authorities, especially East Ayrshire, does not do enough public relations on what it does do.
- Legislation is changing rapidly – prohibits compulsive purchase – 4 years to do.
- Can we learn lessons from the Dean Visitor Centre Success?
- Burns - this is an important focus for visitor attraction to Kilmarnock. Council need to address.
- Dean Castle links to Kay Park. Seem to have been left aside.