

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE: 6 NOVEMBER 2003

FORMER CUMNOCK AND DOON VALLEY INITIATIVE FUNDS

Report by the Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To update Members on the progress of the environmental improvement projects funded from the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative funds and to seek Committee approval for the allocation of the balance of the former Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative funds which were transferred to East Ayrshire Council's Development Services Account.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Policy & Resources Committee of 30th November 2000, under the report titled "Cumnock and Doon Valley Initiative Transfer of Initiative Funds to East Ayrshire Council", agreed that the balance of the funds under the Cumnock and Doon Valley Initiative, Loans and Grants Scheme Joint Committee, a total of £89,257.06 be transferred to East Ayrshire Council on the following conditions:-
- (i) £40,000 of the funds were to be used to support Environmental Improvement Projects identified by the Doon Valley Local Committee and the Cumnock Area Local Committee , and
 - (ii) The balance of the monies (£49,257.06) is to be used to support projects within the Doon Valley Local Committee administrative area and Cumnock Area Local Committee administrative area including projects such as the establishment of a local Credit Union which are supported and approved by the Social Inclusion Partnership.
- 2.2** It should be noted that the Credit Union has received funding from SIP amongst others. However, the SIP has not made a decision about funding for the Credit Union beyond March 2004, this will be subject to the SIP review. The Credit Union is currently in a difficult position as they are awaiting a decision from the European Commission in regard to their need to comply with the State Aid rules. If the European Commission decides that they need to comply with the State Aid rules then there will be a maximum level of public funding which they can receive. No decision has been made to date.

3 PROGRESS WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- 3.1** The £40,000 which was allocated to support Environmental Improvement Projects identified by the Doon Valley Local Committee and the Cumnock Area Local Committee was allocated to the following projects:-

Doon Valley Local Committee - £15,000

Dalmellington Facelift Phase2 - £7,500 - Complete

Camlarg Bridge - £2,500 – Complete

Loch Doon - £5,000 - Ongoing

Cumnock Area Local Committee - £25,000

Netherthird Footpath - £1,500 - Complete

Hearth Road, Cumnock - £3,500 - Complete

Catrine Footbridge, River Ayr - £7,500 – Complete

Muirkirk Millennium Stones - £3,000 – Complete

Muirkirk Former Co-op Building - £9,500 – Complete

- 3.2** As indicated above with the exception of the Loch Doon project, all the projects are now complete and the budget has been utilised. Progress has been slow with the Loch Doon project due to land ownership issues, however the potential to improve signage within the area is currently being progressed.

- 3.3** When the Cumnock Area Local Committee agreed the five projects listed above, they also identified a reserve projects list to be progressed if the priority projects were unable to proceed, the following are these projects with an update on the sites since the original report in February 1999 :-

- (i)** Auchinleck, Site of the former Social Work Offices, Aird Avenue – this site has had limited short term improvements carried out, but requires further substantial improvements.
- (ii)** Cumnock, Upgrading of existing site between Tanyard and Lugar Bridge/ creation of feature site entrance to Lugar Street – no significant improvements to this site have been carried out.
- (iii)** Cumnock, Elizabeth Crescent / Townhead Street, Upgrading of sites – one of the identified sites is now being used as a car parking area, a dropped kerb having been installed. The other area which was identified is very small and of limited townscape value.

4. ALLOCATION OF THE BALANCE OF THE FORMER CUMNOCK AND DOON VALLEY INITIATIVE FUNDS.

- 4.1** The balance of the former Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative funds amount to £49,257.06. At present the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area SIP are progressing two significant pilot projects within the Cumnock & Doon Valley Area. These are the Restoring Communities Programme (RCP) in Auchinleck and the Public Art Strategy that is to be piloted in Dalmellington. Both of these projects have been proposed through the relevant Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans that are supported by the SIP. In addition two significant projects from the Cumnock Area Local Committee's reserve list require to be undertaken to complete the previously identified projects. These are Aird Avenue, Auchinleck and between Tanyard and Lugar Bridge, Cumnock.
- 4.2** **RCP Well Road Park, Auchinleck** - The RCP is a regeneration initiative which aims to tackle the problems of dereliction and decay in the environment of those settlements identified as being in most need within the SIP area. Auchinleck has been identified as the pilot project area for the RCP. The main focus of the RCP in Auchinleck is the physical improvement of the town centre as well as the economic and social regeneration of the town. One of the main projects being developed under the RCP is the Well Road Park, Auchinleck project. This project is being implemented by the Auchinleck Community Council in conjunction with St Patrick's Primary School, and aims to enhance and develop the park to encourage maximum use and improve the image of the area. The proposal includes upgrading a footpath, installing new street lighting for increased community safety, bench seating, creation of an avenue of trees along the main footpath link, planting of shrubs and trees in specific locations which can then be utilised by the local schools for environmental projects. The total project cost is estimated at £80,000 to date the project has received £30,000 from the SIP, and the Community Council have also submitted bids for funding to the Cumnock & Doon Valley Minerals Trust and to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). *It is suggested that £10,000 of the balance of the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative funds be allocated to this project.*
- 4.3** **Public Art Strategy, Dalmellington Gateway Feature** - The Scottish Arts Council has funded the Public Art Strategy for the SIP area, the Dalmellington Gateway Feature is to be the pilot project of the Strategy, but the Scottish Arts Council will not fund this specific project. The SIP is supportive of the project and has delegated the management of the consultancy to develop the Public Arts Strategy and to design a piece of art work to Dalmellington Partnership. The total cost of the project is £40,000 approx, Dalmellington Partnership intend to apply to funding bodies such as the Cumnock & Doon Valley Minerals Trust, Landfill Tax and potentially the SIP. *It is suggested that £19,257.06 of the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative Funds, be allocated to this project.*

4.4 Site of Former Social Work Offices, Aird Avenue, Auchinleck.

This site was identified as a possible environmental improvement project in the 25th February 1999 report to the Cumnock Area Local Committee. The former Social Work Offices were demolished and the site has been cleared. The site has had some short term improvements carried out, however a long term designed solution is required which will require further substantial improvements. The estimated cost of the project is £10,000. *It is suggested that £10,000 of the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative Funds be allocated to this project.*

4.5 Upgrading of existing site between Tanyard and Lugar Bridge / creation of feature site entrance to Lugar Street.

This site was also identified as needing upgrading in the 25th February 1999 report to the Cumnock Area Local Committee. No significant improvements have been carried out since that date. The site is in a prominent location adjacent to the entrance to Cumnock Town Centre and therefore it's improvement would have a significant impact on the Cumnock townscape. The initial proposal is to provide new flowerbeds, re-turf the surrounding area, replace existing seating, clean/ replace the existing slabs and crazy paving. The estimated cost of the project is £10,000, the works to be carried out by Community Services. *It is suggested that the balance of the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative Funds, totalling £10,000 be allocated to this project.*

5. FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 If the suggested allocations are agreed the funds would be transferred to Auchinleck Community Council, Dalmellington Partnership and the appropriate Council Services as contributions to the specific projects on receipt of valid invoices.

5.2 The implementation of the above projects on land owned by the Council will improve the quality of the environment through partnership with the community.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i)** notes the progress with the environmental improvement projects funded from the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative Funds, and
- (ii)** agrees the allocation of the balance of the Cumnock & Doon Valley Initiative Funds as indicated in section 4 above.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Cumnock Area Local Committee “ A Programme For Environmental Improvement Projects” – 25th February 1999.
2. Report to Policy & Resources Committee “Cumnock and Doon Valley Initiative Transfer of Initiative Funds to East Ayrshire Council” – 30th November 2000.
3. Report to Development Services Committee “ Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans & Projects 2003/2004 ” – 26th August 2003.

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