

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE : 26 AUGUST 2003

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS & PROJECTS 2003/2004

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 outline those projects to be implemented in 2003/2004 through the Planning & Building Control Division in conjunction with the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP).
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval for the Policy & Projects Section in conjunction with the relevant community groups, to implement a range of environmental improvement projects within the East Ayrshire Coalfield SIP area.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning & Building Control Division has responsibility for a budget of £150,000 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.

These programmes complement other initiatives being lead by the department aimed at regeneration run-down areas. Other initiatives include the Newmilns THI (see separate report on Committee's Agenda) and the fund for tackling eye-sore derelict buildings in prominent locations, which was subject to a report on priorities at the last committee,

3. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS

- 3.1 As part on an ongoing programme of production of Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans, finalised Action Plans have been prepared for Auchinleck, Drongan, Dalmellington, New Cumnock, Patna, Rankinston and Muirkirk and a draft Action Plan has been produced for Catrine. In addition to this, two Action Plans are being produced for each settlement this financial year for Logan and Bellsbank. An initial draft plan has been produced in consultation with relevant local members for discussion with community groups, prior to a programme of community consultation being carried out. Following any feedback received, the plans will be put on public display and amended accordingly. 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

4.1 The SIP Board has agreed that the 2003/2004 budget for implementation of projects will be split between projects within Auchinleck under the Restoring Communities Programme and projects within other communities in the Coalfield Area. All projects will be implemented by a local community group in conjunction with the Policy & Projects Section. The projects are as follows:

4.2 AUCHINLECK, WELL ROAD PARK PROJECT

4.2.1 The improvement of Well Road Park was identified as a priority project in the Auchinleck Community Environmental Improvement Action Plan. The aim of the project is to enhance and develop the park to encourage maximum use of the park by residents of Auchinleck and improve the image of the area.

4.2.2 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. A landscape consultant was appointed last financial year to produce proposals for the park. The resultant proposal includes upgrading a footpath, installing new streetlighting columns for increased community safety, bench seating, creation of an avenue of trees along the main footpath link, planting shrubs and trees in specific locations which can then be utilised by the local schools for environmental projects.

4.2.3 The park is in Council ownership and is held under a large housing title. The grassed areas of the park and the existing play area are currently maintained by the Community Services Department. The play area is due to be replaced by the Community Services Department in this financial year under the approved Playpark Improvement Programme. The Roads Division currently maintain two of the existing footpaths and agreement has been reached at officer level for the Roads Division to adopt the footpath adjacent to the Community Centre providing that it is upgraded to an adoptable standard. Associated streetlighting is proposed adjacent to the play area and Community Centre which will also be adopted subject to meeting acceptable standards.

4.2.4 In addition to the funding secured through the SIP for this project, the Community Council intend to apply to the Cumnock & Doon Valley Minerals Trust and SCORE Environment for funding. It is the intention of the Community Council to appoint a Project Manager to implement the project on their behalf. It is necessary that the SIP funding is spent within this financial year and it is therefore proposed that the project begin on site as soon as possible.

4.3 AUCHINLECK “ONE STOP SHOP” PROJECT

4.3.1 Through the Restoring Communities Programme, a Town Appraisal was undertaken which identified the need for a range of services and facilities within Auchinleck. A proposal was submitted to and approved by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) to identify Auchinleck as one of the Phase 2 One Stop Shop projects in Scotland. The One Stop Shop will provide a range of multi-purpose rooms and office space that will be able to accommodate such services as health clinics, debt counselling and credit union. Community leisure facilities are also planned including a community café.

4.4 MAIN STREET, AUCHINLECK “PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME”

4.4.1 In order to tackle the issue of the poor quality environment in Main Street it is proposed to set up a Property Improvement Scheme which will aim to implement environmental improvements to properties in partnership with property owners. The scheme will be based on similar schemes such as that undertaken at Bank Street, Kilmarnock. Details of the Property Improvement Scheme are currently being developed. It is intended to approach Community Scotland for support for the project.

4.4.2 This will complement the action being taken to remove a number of prominent derelict properties through the separate funds available for such projects. The Committee has previously agreed that an initial priority for the use of these funds should be Auchinleck Main Street.

4.5 AUCHINLECK COMMUNITY WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER

4.5.1 The Town Appraisal carried out in Auchinleck identified a need for improved circulation of information to the community. It is therefore proposed to develop an Auchinleck community website and newsletter. The website and newsletter will be developed in conjunction with local schools, community groups and Ayrshire Electronic Community.

4.6 NETHERTHIRD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

4.6.1 In association with the development of the new Family Centre in Netherthird it is proposed to carry out access improvements and implement a landscaping scheme within the grounds of the new centre funded by the SIP Community Environmental Improvement budget. The land is in the ownership of the Council under the Education account and discussions are ongoing with the Education Department and Community Services regarding long term maintenance arrangements and responsibilities. In addition the SIP Community Environmental Improvement budget is supporting a cairn to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Council housing at Netherthird, now owned and managed by Shire Housing Association. This is being carried out in partnership with the Netherthird & Craigen Residents Association and the Cumnock & Landward Community Council.

4.7 CATRINE

4.7.1 Through the consultation process for Catrine Community Environmental Improvement Action Plan a number of priority projects were identified. To date various options are still being developed and a final decision on an initial project has yet to be made. The options being considered are linked to the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project (CEHP). This is a major project 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 project 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. The intention is that the project will include:-

- The Restoration of the Catrine Weir and Voes System (Scheduled Ancient Monument);
- Implementation of a townscape improvement scheme;
- Implementation of a Conservation Management Plan for the proposed Catrine Weir and Voes Nature Reserve;
- Restoration of the Fish Ladder;
- Development of a Trout Hatchery;
- Construction of Interpretation Boards;
- Development of the Path Network;
- Development of associated Tourist Facilities; and
- A Marketing Plan.

4.7.2 Currently, a series of meetings are being carried out with potential partners, to obtain comments on the draft proposals. Following the conclusion of these meeting potential funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire will be approached for project development funding. East Ayrshire Coalfield Area SIP have already agreed to allocate up to £10,000 from the Community Environment Improvement budget for the development of this project.

5. FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The projects listed above will be funded by various funders including the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership. 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 20th May 2003.

- 5.2** The implementation of those projects as outlined above on land owned by the Council will improve the quality of the land utilising external funding. Approval is therefore sought to implement the projects.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- (a) notes the programme of Action Plans and projects proposed this financial year as outlined in this report;
- (b) agrees to the implementation of the environmental improvement projects as outlined in section 4 of this report; and
- (c) supports the development of the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project outlined in paragraph 4.7.1 of this report.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services
23 July 2003 (SJ/SA)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Community Services Committee "Playpark Improvement Programme" – 13 November 2002.
2. Report to Development Services Committee "Quality of Life Funding 2003/2004 to 2005/2006" - 20 May 2003.
3. Report to Development Services Committee "The Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Buildings and Sites" – 20 May 2003.
4. Report to Development Services Committee "Restoring Communities Programme" – 13 March 2002.

For further information on the content of the report contact Susan Jones, Planning Officer Policy & Projects, on 01563 576755

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