

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 16 SEPTEMBER 2003

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF CRAIGMALLOCH OUTDOOR CENTRE AND OCHILTREE COMMUNITY LEARNING STORES

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members of the use of Craigmalloch Outdoor Centre and Ochiltree Community Learning Stores and to propose closure of both facilities.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Centre at Craigmalloch, Loch Doon is currently used as an outdoor centre. It is situated at the northern end of Loch Doon and is about 30 minutes drive from Bellsbank. Situated on the banks of the Loch it offers access to water sports as well as hill walking and other related outdoor activity. The nature of the environment requires more than the basic level of qualification for hill walking and water sports.
- 2.2** Ochiltree Community Learning Store is situated in the old school In Ochiltree where a wide range of equipment is held for use by community learning staff and community groups.

3. REPORT

3.1 Craigmalloch Outdoor Centre

Craigmalloch was established by Strathclyde Regional Council, one of many outdoor centres across the Region. It can accommodate up to 16 people in 4 dormitories each with 2 bunk beds i.e. sleeping 4 people. There is a lounge area and kitchen. Showers are in an unheated block outside the main building.

- 3.2** The use of the centre was adversely impacted by foot and mouth in 2001/2 when access to the centre was denied in order to minimise transfer of infection.

The centre has an annual budget of £8,808 which includes staffing property costs and income.

- 3.3** From 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003 a total of 479 bed nights were used. This equates to 0.08% of available usage. A total of 19 groups used the facility and of this 2 groups were from East Ayrshire. In addition there has been a downward trend in income over the past 3 years.

3.4 The general fabric of the building is deteriorating and attention is required to the gutters and surrounds. The windows are in poor condition and will require to be replaced. Future development would also need to consider the integration of the showers into the main building.

3.5 Ochiltree Stores

Equipment held in the Stores is hired by a wide range of community and voluntary groups across the council area, stores equipment is also accessed by other council services and departments. Equipment hired includes PA systems, tables, crockery and outdoor equipment.

3.6 Although the store has offered this service for many years, in more recent times changes in legislation have meant that some equipment has had to be removed from hire as it no longer meets the required standard. In addition outdoor and electrical equipment needs to be checked regularly by specialists to ensure that it is maintained in a fit for purpose state and the cost implications for this inspection make it no longer a viable option.

3.7 As a result of the above there has been a reduction in the demand for this service and a reduction in bookings, this trend is expected to continue.

3.8 The Store has an annual budget of £23,732 which includes staffing and property costs.

3.9 In the event of closure, it is proposed, where appropriate to offer the equipment to frequent users with the agreement that any necessary checks become their responsibility. Informal discussions have also taken place with administration services to access the proposed corporate stores for remaining equipment.

4. DECLARATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

4.1 It is proposed that Craigmalloch Outdoor Centre is declared surplus to the requirements of the Department and that the building should be referred to Development Services for disposal.

4.2 It is proposed that Ochiltree Stores are declared surplus to the requirements of the Department and that the building should be referred to Development Services for disposal

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Craigmalloch employs one part time caretaker who would be offered alternative employment options within the service.

5.2 Ochiltree Stores has the establishment of one full time stores person, at present the post is vacant. It is proposed to transfer the funds to establish a post to

assist the Site Services Supervisor in the coordination of the supervision of all site services within the Community Learning and Development Service.

- 5.3** Ochiltree Stores also have a contract for cleaning with Onsite Services which would require to be terminated

6. LEGAL /POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Nil

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 7.1** Transfer of £15,257 will be used to establish the new post to support Site Services Supervisor; this will result in total efficiency gains of £17,283.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that the Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) agree to declare Craigmalloch Outdoor Centre surplus to the requirements of Educational and Social Services;
- (ii) agree to declare Ochiltree Community Learning Stores surplus to the requirements of Educational and Social Services;
- (iii) refer the Personnel implications to the Corporate Governance Committee; and
- (iv) refer this matter to Development Services for disposal.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

KG/AJ
21 August 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Anne Jackson, Principal Officer, Communities Tel: (01563) 576126.

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