

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

KILMARNOCK SOUTH LOCAL COMMITTEE – 7 NOVEMBER 2001

**PAYMENT COLLECTION SERVICES AT 64/68 CAPRINGTON AVENUE,
SHORTLEES, KILMARNOCK**

Report by the Director of Finance

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the outcome of a review of cash collection facilities at the above office.

BACKGROUND

A report was made to this committee on 23 May 2001 advising that the above service was under review. Members asked that a report be made to a future meeting following the review.

CONSULTATION

The views of local representatives was sought in relation to the usage of the facility, whether they thought usage would increase if it was open for longer or more days each week and whether they considered that any additional expenditure required to continue the facility would be justified, bearing in mind that any additional resources would need to be diverted from elsewhere.

Questionnaires were sent to twelve local representatives and included a stamped addressed envelope for return. Seven responses were received.

None of the consultees who responded use the facility. Instead they either pay in person at the Bellfield, Greenholm Street or John Dickie Street offices or use direct banking or telephone payments.

Most of those who responded were not sure whether extending the service would result in more usage. Only one considered that additional expenditure could be justified but only if it was a success.

USAGE

A review of usage indicated that over a four week period an average of 10 payments per day were taken. The actual number each day ranged from 5 to 18. Some customers made more than one payment so the actual number of callers is less than this. This compares with Greenholm Street where up to 283 payments per day are taken and Bellfield which takes up to 266. The quality of physical security for staff needs to be the same whatever the level of payments however.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of the service has highlighted a number health and safety issues for the staff involved in providing the service. To address these significant capital expenditure on the office itself is required together with additional ongoing costs of £500 per annum. It should be noted that this expenditure is required simply to continue with the existing level of service. Further additional costs would be incurred if the service were to be extended.

PROPOSAL

The review indicates that the service does not appear to be well used, there are alternative facilities available locally and additional expenditure is required simply to continue the service at its present level.

In order to refurbish and equip the Caprington Avenue Housing Office, resources would need to be re-allocated away from other council services.

It is appreciated however that the provision of enhanced local services is desirable. It seems likely that improved local amenities will result from the Better Neighbourhood Services project which is currently the subject of consultation with residents of the area. The provision of a full time payments counter should be considered as part of any new council facility.

In view of the above, it is proposed that the service be withdrawn over the next month and that customers be advised when they call of the alternative facilities available including direct bank payments and using other local office sites at Bellfield, which is less than a mile away, Greenholm Street and John Dickie Street.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

Alex McPhee
Director of Finance

AMcP/JP
22 October 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

AGENDA