

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 15 JANUARY 2004

ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Report by Annual Seminar Working Party

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to advise the Local Committee of the outcome of the Local Committee Open Day held on 22 November 2003 and to identify issues arising for consideration.

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 its 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. THE 2003 LOCAL COMMITTEE OPEN DAY

- 3.1** Following consultation with Local Committees, the Working Group met and agreed that the format of the Seminar be altered with a view to promoting the activities of Local Committees and to encourage the recruitment of potential Community Representatives.
- 3.2** It was, therefore, agreed to hold a Local Committee Open Day on Saturday 22 November 2003 in the Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock between 10.00am and 2.00pm. Each Community Representative and Substitute was given the opportunity to invite two friends along to the Open Day.
- 3.3** The format of the Open Day was an informal day with specific topic areas:- "Role of the Youth Representative", "Training", "Support for Community Representatives", "Strathclyde Police" and "Grants" designed to raise awareness of the work of the Local Committee, promote the value and relevance of the Local Committee and look in particular at how to increase youth involvement on Local Committees and was attended by 55 people.
- 3.4** The evaluation results from the Open Day are enclosed under Appendix 1. It can be seen from the evaluation responses that the Open Day was an overwhelming success with those attending finding it very beneficial. The

main concern of over half the numbers responding felt that the day was not long enough which can be viewed as positive feedback on the interest experienced by participants.

- 3.5 As part of the Open Day consultation process suggestion boxes were placed in each topic area and participants were encouraged to place comments/suggestions in the boxes. A summary of responses and comments are detailed in Appendix 2.

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Two key comments were raised at the Open Day which the Working Group consider should be taken forward by the Council and these are detailed below:-

- **Increase Youth involvement in the Local Committee** - It is recognised that there has been a problem within the Local Committee process of both obtaining and maintaining youth representation. The Working Party have suggested that the possibility of establishing effective communication links between Local Committees and existing Youth Forums be investigated. Such links it is hoped would allow youth issues to be fed into the Local Committee process more effectively and provide regular contact between Local Committees and established Youth Forums. The Working Group recognises that other Departments within the Council already have links to Youth Groups and will be consulting with these Departments; and
- **Development of Further Training to both Community Representatives and Substitutes and also other groups** - Training is offered to all existing Community Representatives and Substitutes and is targeted to coincide with the new Representatives and Substitutes taking up their positions.

Training for new Representatives has been a success and the Working Group have suggested that the opportunity exists to develop further training initiatives. The Working Group will investigate the possibility of developing a training programme which could initially be delivered to potential Community Representatives giving information on what is required to become a Community Representative. Further investigation will also be given to the possibility of extending such training to a wide range of community groups to help improve their skills.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any financial implications arising from the Introduction of any new initiatives would be met from existing budgets.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To recommend that the Committee:-

- (i) note the success of the 2003 Local Committee Open Day; and
- (ii) agree that the issues identified in Paragraph 4 of the report be remitted to the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources to progress in consultation with appropriate Departments.

The Working Party for the Annual Seminar for Community Representatives

CB/KC

12 January 2004

Encs (2)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - Nil

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on 01563 576135.

Implementation Officer: Christine Baillie, Administrative Officer

**LOCAL COMMITTEE OPEN DAY
22 NOVEMBER 2003**

EVALUATION

How did you rate the following sessions?

<u>Topic Area</u>	<u>Good Overall</u>	<u>Mainly Good</u>	<u>Just Adequate</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Grants	29	17		
Training	22	19	4	
Police	40	4	1	
Support for Representatives	26	17	3	
Role of Youth Representatives	32	10	3	
Information Day Overall	32	9	2	

How could the Information Day have been improved?

- The most popular comment (27 in total) was that there was not enough time in each topic area resulting in not enough time to ask questions. Some suggestions were to have less topics or to extend the timing of the Open Day.
- Okay.
- Couldn't have been improved.
- Good.
- Each speaker very good.
- Some more explaining on what the areas involved.
- Cloakroom facilities.
- More space in some of the rooms. Less emphasis on "powerpoint" presentations One room for each presentation.
- Workshops on what each Department does.
- Excellent.
- Some of the workshops could have had more visual aids, such as training.
- Happy with the overall presentation.

Any further comments you have on any aspect of the Day

- Again the most popular comment (6 in total) was concerning the lack of time to ask questions in each topic area.
- The overall information was very good.
- Facilitators did not, but perhaps should have, asked each member of group for comment. Time allocation – not enough so promoting communication both ways did not work.

- Training session could have been more specific to groups attending.
- A tendency for some speakers to speak too fast.
- Good central area.
- Very good!
- General feeling not all Community Representatives allowed to participate at Local Committee meetings.
- The buffet lunch was lovely.
- Sometimes “some” of the speakers went on too long, with no time for questions.
- I would like some more information on the topic area on training.
- More time for discussion and introduction to each other (groups) in order to stimulate co-operation and communication.
- Very good.
- Too long overall, but not enough time on each topic.
- Does it have to be a Saturday?
- Very well organised.
- Good venue, overall good day. Met local Councillors.
- Good food. Good idea having suggestion box.
- Very good overall.
- Lunch was very nice.

If there was one thing you could change about the Local Committee, what would it be?

- 3 comments suggested that there should be more support and input for Substitute Representatives.
- 3 comments suggested that there should be more youth consideration/ involvement at the Local Committee.
- 2 suggestions were for the meeting to be held in the evenings, if not on a regular basis then on alternative or occasional occasions.
- 2 suggestions were for more support for new members.
- More information on how to be a good Community Council member.
- Pre-Agenda meetings.
- To reach more people consider reports in local news columns in local press.
- Time of meeting.
- Chairs trained – more freedom of speech.
- Better information to Community Council advising on procedures and planning.
- A little less formal to encourage Community Representatives to participate more.
- No change.
- Awareness – people don’t know about them or what they do.
- Persuade the Chairman to allow more Community Representative involvement.
- Each Community Representative on groups available for pre-meeting. Attendance could be better.

What did you learn?

- More ways to communicate and the number of facilities available.
- Always learn something.
- Nothing.
- In common with other organisations a lack of communication.
- More on greater police deployment.
- That we hope to have the younger generation involved.
- Funds, grants available for youth clubs, etc.
- More about grants. Information on police was excellent.
- Where to get more information.
- How few police we have on actual duty on the street.
- Quite a lot.
- Good information.
- Wide training available.
- Information on available support for groups.
- Dis-satisfaction of Community Representatives.
- That, as suggested at the groups, better communication is needed.
- Learned about topics that I didn't know anything about.
- More about role of local committees.
- There are classes for self improvement.
- Information.
- Learned a lot and how the process works.
- The training information and help for representatives.
- How to address facilities within Council. Speaking with other groups makes Council officials seem more "user friendly".
- More ways to communicate.
- The training available is too extensive.
- That all local committees do not operate on the same basis.
- Training is available throughout East Ayrshire In-house training to representatives.
- Not enough police on streets. Should be more.
- A lot of good information.
- More about youth and training.
- How easy it is to forget. Good to get memory refreshed.
- About the police and more about role of youth representative which was very interesting.
- The number of facilities that are available to myself as a Community Representative.
- Who does what.
- About Community Workers.
- Since I started knowing nothing it has all been a learning process.

DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS

	<u>Good Overall</u>	<u>Mainly Good</u>	<u>Just Adequate</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Venue	38	7	1	
Lunch	41	5		
Day	36	10		
Time	34	7	3	2
Staff	44	2		

CB/JW
26 November 2003

ROLE OF THE YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

A total of 17 suggestions/comments/questions were put forward under the theme "Role of the Youth Representative". Several common themes were identified and they have been summarised below (shown in bold), together with a summary of the appropriate response (shown in italics).

The majority of comments (7 in total) were concerning youth representation and how to encourage the flow of information between youth forums/youth groups and the local committees. Some suggestions included having a report on each Local Committee agenda from the Multi Agency Youth Forum giving information on their activities; and, perhaps, for Officers to meet with youth/school forums and to feed issues to, and from, their meetings.

It is recognised that there has been a problem within the Local Committee process of both obtaining and maintaining youth representation. The Working Party have suggested that the possibility of establishing effective communication links between Local Committees and existing Youth Forums be investigated. The Working Group recognises that other Departments within the Council already have links to Youth Groups and will be consulting with these departments.

3 comments were made asking if Community Workers, who at the present time facilitate pre-meetings for Local Committee Representatives and Substitutes, could attend the actual Local Committee meeting to support Community Representatives/Substitutes.

The remit of the Community Worker within the Local Committee process is to assist Community Representatives/Substitutes in their own environment i.e. the pre-meeting, to ensure that they understand and are able to discuss the reports being submitted for consideration. There is no role for the Community Worker to play during the actual Local Committee meeting i.e. they would not be able to speak on behalf of the Representatives. It would, therefore, not be an effective use of staff resources.

What age must you be to join the Community Council?

You must be 18 before you qualify for nomination as a candidate for election as, or to be elected to, or to be, a member of a Community Council. However, the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Council's does provide for Community Councils to co-opt other persons, such as younger people, residing within the Community Council's area. Whilst such appointed members are not entitled to vote they can participate in discussion and inform the Community Council on their areas of expertise.

Could meetings be evenings rather than during the day?

The Council annually determines its meeting arrangements. There has been no great demand expressed for evening meetings.

Can we get to know what other groups are doing?

Although not entirely clear what this comment relates to, the Grapevine from each Local Committee meeting is circulated to a wide range of Community Groups, all Local Offices and Libraries and also to each Community Council Secretary. It is also available for perusal on the East Ayrshire Council's website and gives details of all Local Committee business. As part of proposals to develop communication links with Youth Forums, the opportunity to widen the circulation of grapevine to include such groups will be taken.

Where and when does question time for the public take place?

Each Local Committee has a 15 minute, maximum, question and answer session at the beginning of each meeting whereby members of the committee, as well as members of the public, can put forward a question to the Council. Advance publicity of local committee meetings and the 15 minute question and answer session is given.

TRAINING

12 suggestions/comments/questions were put forward under the theme of "Training". Again they have been summarised below (shown in bold), together with the appropriate response (shown in italics below).

Are there costs involved with the ECDL (European Community Driving Licence).

Yipworld.com, Ayrshire Economic Community and the Conduit programme offer training and support for the ECDL. Costs vary on the type of group and where they are based.

When will Community Representatives receive training/information on the Community Plan?

All Community Councils have been issued with an information pack on the Community Plan and a presentation has been made to Community Councils at the annual East Ayrshire Council – Community Council Consultative meeting. Officers from the Department of Corporate Resources have attended all Local Committees and representative forums with a presentation prior to the plan being developed. A range of local community and voluntary groups were involved in developing the action plans and the community planning partners are currently reviewing existing structures and opportunities for community participation.

For new people coming on board Local Committee's set training in the early stages what Local Committee's do

Every new Community Representative/Substitute receives an introductory pack from the Administration Manager. This contains a copy of the Guide to Local Committee's as well as information on travelling expenses. Training is offered for all Community Representatives and Substitutes and we try to organise the training to coincide with the new Representatives and Substitutes taking up the position(s). Further investigation will be given to developing a training initiative which will target potential community representatives.

Not enough information or advertising to the public.

Local Committee agendas are distributed to all Local Offices and Libraries. A notice advertising Local Committee details is displayed in the venue at which the meeting is to be held. A generic notice giving details of all seven local committee dates, times and venues is displayed in all Local Offices, Libraries and Community Halls. Details are also available on the Council's website.

Training should be given not only to Reps but also to members of the Community Council.

East Ayrshire Council recognises the important role Community Council's play and the support and resourcing of Community Council's is a separate responsibility of the Administrative and Legal Service. Under this remit the Administration Manager will consider the needs of Community Councils.

It would be advantageous if a Training Programme on the role of the Council could be provided before people are elected to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to volunteer or not.

Reference has been made to investigate the feasibility of developing a new Training Initiative targeting potential Community Representatives and as such this information can be included.

I think minutes of the Local Grants Committee meetings would be most helpful as sometimes some things are missed. This would give a correct record to report back to groups.

There is no separate "Local Grants Committee", community grants are considered at each Local Committee meeting, with the exception of the Cumnock Area Local Committee which deals with all grant application at one meeting. Minutes of these meetings, which give details of all grants awarded are circulated in the usual way. Grapevine also gives details of all grants awarded.

Go to youth establishments with information, training and encouragement.

Reference has been made earlier about developing communication links with Youth Forums and this issue will be taken on board.

Chairs should introduce new people and before speaking people should say who they are. Chairs should say who they are. Chairs should be trained and visit Committees that are run democratically.

The Guide to Local Committees identifies the role of the Chair. All Committees are run democratically. Chairs would have no objection to introducing new people and on the whole this practice happens. Officers will be reminded to introduce themselves prior to speaking at Local Committees.

Council should have a way to give advice to what each Department does and able to give a list to Officers.

The Guide to Local Committees provides a summary of what each department does. Information on remit of each Department is also available on the Council's website. However, this issue will be considered under the review of training.

Give a more in-depth training scheme out to youth groups and representatives. Send a training pack to Colleges/Schools so they know what is involved.

This matter will be considered under the review of training which could include an information exchange section on the role of the Council, its members and Departments.

Local Committee Reps are there to take info back to their Groups and to actively take part in discussions. If minutes were put out to Community Representatives at an early stage it would take the worry of reporting back to their group away and allow the Reps to be more active in input and discussion at the meeting. More concentration could be about participation – not about taking back what other people say. Decision on training changed from centre – to ask what training needs are.

Grapevine, which gives information on decisions, was introduced, amongst other things, to assist Community Representatives in reporting back to Members' Groups. Grapevine is issued to all Community Representatives at an early stage. The training provided to Community Representatives is geared towards assisting Community Representatives participate more effectively at local committee meetings. The Training Programme was developed by officers but in consultation with the Community Representatives Working Group. Any new training initiatives will be prepared in consultation with the Community Representatives Working Group.

SUPPORT FOR REPS

10 suggestions/comments/questions were put forward on the topic "Support for Representatives"

The majority of comments (7 in total) concerned the pre-meeting arrangements and asked why the support worker was not encouraged to attend the Local Committee meeting.

It is acknowledged that pre-meetings are better attended in some Local Committee areas than others. The main purpose of the pre-meeting is to allow Community Representatives and Substitutes an opportunity to discuss the agenda items and to ensure they understand the content in more informal surroundings.

As previously intimated the remit of the Community Worker in the Local Committee process is to assist Community Representatives/Substitutes in their own environment i.e. the pre-meeting, to ensure that they understand and are able to discuss the reports being submitted for consideration. There is no role for the Community Worker to play during the actual Local Committee meeting i.e. they would not be able to speak on behalf of the Representatives. It would, therefore, not be an effective use of staff resources.

More information to Community (2 comments)

Although not entirely sure what these questions relate to, agendas are circulated to all Local Offices and Libraries. They are also available for perusal on the Council's website. Grapevine is widely distributed throughout East Ayrshire and can be expanded as required.

As a substitute representative, no information has been passed to me about the pre-meeting.

The Administration Manager will ensure that Community Workers, who facilitate pre-meetings, have the most up-to-date list of Community Reps and Subs.

POLICE

6 suggestions/comments/questions were raised on the topic "Police".

Excellent communication in Stewarton. Community Policing paying dividends, more needed.

Community Policing is part of our Public Reassurance Strategy and there is a commitment by Strathclyde Police to continue to provide local policing by locally known officers.

More ways of getting Community Cops to be seen helping their Community.

Much of the work carried out by community constables is, by necessity, unseen. Notwithstanding that, where there are no issues in terms of confidentiality, Strathclyde Police will seek to promote initiatives undertaken by these officers.

Has there been any thought given to the incidence of illness from the new TETRA Mast System in “Police Communications”.

Existing biological evidence provides no grounds for believing that TETRA systems pose a risk to health.

Not enough Police for East Ayrshire area. Not enough Police in Irvine Valley. Far too many in Cumnock and Doon Valley. Take some Police from Cumnock and Doon Valley and give them to Irvine Valley. Irvine Valley – 2 – not enough.

Strathclyde Police are currently developing a Resource Allocation Model which should allow a more scientific analysis of policing needs in individual areas. See also final bullet point.

Contact youth and work with youth to crack down on youth crime and behaviour.

Strathclyde Police in East Ayrshire have recently been allocated substantial funds from the Scottish Executive. This money will be used to fund a truancy initiative involving police and truancy officers and diversionary projects organised by local community constables.

More Police officers on the beat and possibly more funding for the Police to cut down on the crime rate.

The funding formula for Scottish Police Forces was explained to participants. Demands on Strathclyde Police are at record levels and a number of strategies have been put in place in an effort to provide a more efficient response. Realistically, we must endeavour to make better use of existing staff and systems. Contact Centres and Call Handling Units are central to the way Strathclyde Police will handle its business in future. The introduction of the National Intelligence Model will ensure problems are analysed and resources are effectively targeted. The police cannot work in isolation and East Ayrshire’s Community Plan has already ensured that agencies are working closer together to find permanent solutions to community problems.

GRANTS

4 suggestions/comments/questions were raised under the topic "Grants"

Should all Local Committee's operate on a similar basis. This does not appear to happen at present.

The structure and support mechanisms are consistent for each Local Committee, but would acknowledge that the level of discussion varies from Committee to Committee. It is not suggested that all Local Committee's should operate exactly the same, due to their decentralised nature, but it is considered that provision exists to ensure that adequate discussion is allowed.

Is there any plan to review the level of funding to Council's to narrow the disparity between Local Committee's

The Council, as part of its budget setting procedures, determines the Local Committee Grants Scheme allocations. The amounts are based on certain socio-economic indicators i.e. population, elderly population, deprivation, clothing and footwear grants, rural population and non-Coalfield/Better Neighbourhood Services Fund designation. The government introduced new information which will impact on some of these indicators. The indicators are under review and will be reported to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. The premise under which each Local Committee's allocation is determined is always on need.

Information on what's available and help and training with applications.

Information on grants, both internal and external, is available on the Council's website. A guide to grants is enclosed with each Community Grant application issued to assist with completion and trained Officers are always willing to assist groups with the completion of applications. A comprehensive guide to applying for grants has been available for some time and voluntary bodies can obtain copies by contacting the Council's Administration Manager.

Visit Community Council's with advice on grants available for projects, both internal and external.

If a Community Council contacts the Council looking for advice on funding for a specific project, Officers would be willing to attend a meeting of the Community Council to discuss. As already intimated a comprehensive guide to applying for grants has been available for some time and Community Council's can obtain copies by contacting the Council's Administration Manager.