



## RESTORING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

**SIP Board – 5 December 2002**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the Restoring Communities Programme (RCP) which is being co-ordinated, on behalf of the SIP, by the Policy & Projects Section of East Ayrshire Council's Planning & Building Control Division.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Restoring Communities Programme has been adopted as a 'second arm' to the Community Environmental Action Plan process and aims to tackle the problems of dereliction and decay in the settlements identified as being in most need within the EA Coalfield Area SIP. The Board has agreed previously that in order to pilot this project, the focus of activity should be in Main Street, Auchinleck. The results of the pilot will allow the Board to determine whether the adopted approach will be suitable to roll out within other settlements in the wider SIP area. The emphasis throughout the life of the project will be on partnership working with the local community.

### **3. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 3.1 The Phase 1 consultant study was produced by Ryden in May 2002. The study identified specific opportunities to facilitate development within the coalfield communities, utilising Main Street, Auchinleck as a pilot project. The Phase 2 study was commissioned in September 2002 and the consultancy arm of Ryden's was again appointed. This study, due to be completed in December 2002, is currently investigating the organisational, funding and staffing requirements of the RCP and the most appropriate delivery mechanism.
- 3.2 A Town Appraisal for Auchinleck is currently underway and again will be completed by December 2002. The Town Appraisal, designed to identify local issues, is being undertaken by the consultant in conjunction with a local community group and the recently appointed RCP Regeneration Officer.
- 3.3 Progress is being made to set up an EAC Officer Working Group, lead by Planning & Building Control Division staff and other relevant key Council personnel. At a later stage a Project Steering Group will be established consisting of relevant agencies and appropriate community representation.

- 3.4 As part of the RCP, a Revolving Fund for Demolitions has been set up to address the problem of a high concentration of vacant/derelict properties in private ownership and with non-active owners. The Revolving Fund will initially tackle the opportunity posed by the vacant/derelict properties at 115/125 Main Street.

#### **4. TARGETS ACHIEVED and ONGOING**

- Phase 1 consultant study completed by Ryden in May 2002.
- List of suggested priority projects produced for Auchinleck.
- RCP Regeneration Officer in post 4 November 2002.
- Phase 2 consultant study commissioned September 2002, final report due by end December 2002.
- Auchinleck Town Appraisal being carried out by consultant, in conjunction with Regeneration Officer and community representatives. Initial community consultation questionnaire completed. Town Appraisal to be completed by end of December 2002.
- EAC Officer Working Group being set up, first meeting to be held December 2002.
- Secured CISWO involvement to take forward a one stop shop in Auchinleck.
- Pilot project at 115/125 Main Street being progressed – site acquisition discussions to be concluded by December 2002, work on site scheduled to begin before March 2003.
- Revolving Fund for Demolitions linked to the RCP set up and initial funding (£40,000) secured through Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire. Additional funding (£30,000) secured by EAC from the Scottish Executive.

#### **5. TARGETS & PRIORITIES FOR 2003/2004**

- 5.1 The following list sets out the targets and priorities for the Restoring Communities Programme for the financial year 2003/2004:

- Finalise the organisational, staffing and funding requirements for the RCP and adopt the most appropriate delivery mechanism to implement the RCP.
- Produce a detailed Action Plan for the development of the RCP for a 5 year period.
- Produce a database of priority projects within Auchinleck in conjunction with the Town Appraisal exercise.
- Formulate a public communication strategy.
- Take forward the proposals to establish a one stop shop in Auchinleck.
- Hold regular meetings of the EAC Officer Working Group and form a Project Steering Group consisting of relevant external agencies and appropriate community representation.
- Investigate the potential links with other existing and proposed projects within the SIP area.
- Investigate potential external funding partnership sources.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that Board members:

- (i) note the progress made regarding the development of the Restoring Communities Programme;
- (ii) seek support from their partner agencies to participate in the Restoring Communities Programme.

**Gwen Barker**  
**Manager Social Inclusion**  
**5 December 2002**