SCRUTINY GROUP: PROMOTING TOWN CENTRE LIVING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2016 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE WILLIAM MURDOCH ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Barney Menzies, John McFadzean, Drew McIntyre, Elaine Cowan and Jim Roberts.

ATTENDING: Dot Grieve, Service Manager Sustainable Communities; Deborah Brady, Development and Regeneration Officer; Antony McGuiness, Senior Planning Officer; and Lynn Young, Democratic Services Officer.

CHAIR: Councillor Barney Menzies, Chair (Item 1-4); and Councillor John McFadzean, Vice Chair (Item 4, part).

PREVIOUS MINUTES

1. APPROVAL AS A CORRECT RECORD

There were submitted and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Group held on 26 November 2015 (circulated).

1.2 MATTERS ARISING

1.2.1 Council Tax Vacancy Database

On the matter having being raised in respect of measures undertaken to address the accurate recording of the numbers of unoccupied/vacant dwellings within the Town Centre Living Boundaries of Kilmarnock and Cumnock, it was agreed that a report on the matter be submitted to the first available meeting of the Scrutiny Group: Promoting Town Centre Living, following the investigation by the Chief Governance Officer into the matter.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: PROMOTING TOWN CENTRE LIVING:
PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

2. There was submitted the Reporting Framework Performance Report (circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development on the Strategic Priority 2015/16 Promoting Town Centre Living.

Having noted the Reporting Framework, the following matters were discussed:

- the lack of new council house builds within the former Cumnock and Doon Valley area, and whilst it was further noted that the Housing Asset Management Framework, was being implemented which would help inform suitable sites for future development across East Ayrshire, would be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet, that a separate report on new builds within the former Cumnock and Doon Valley area be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Group;

- Partnership activity between officers of East Ayrshire Housing Service and Police Scotland, particularly in areas where there are known local issues, and it is agreed to report back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Group on current joint working between the Housing Service and Police Scotland, including examples of joint working practice;
• the differences between the Town Centre Boundary and the Town Centre Living Boundary, and it was agreed to circulate both maps to members of the Scrutiny Group for their information;

• the survey in respect of the methodology for the Kilmarnock Town Centre Health Check had been completed with the Cumnock Town Centre Health Check to commence in due course, and it was agreed to submit a briefing note to all Elected Members of the outcome of both surveys once completed;

• the large number of programmed events scheduled for Cumnock Town Centre for children and young people, and the need to promote Trade and Business in Cumnock in a more positive manner;

• the positive outcome from the deep cleaning of the town centres, and how Vibrant Communities are supporting local businesses through the Kilmarnock Town Centre Action Plan and links with National Spring Clean Week. The Scrutiny Group noted the challenges around changing attitudes to litter dropping and discussed innovative ways in which to tackle the problem, including greater presence of the Corporate Enforcement Unit, particularly in known local hotspots as well as interactive litter bins;

• disappointment at the reporting of crime statistics, which are not coterminous with Police Beat or ward areas, and following a verbal report from the Senior Planning Officer, it was agreed that a paper be circulated to Members of the group, providing an update on the activity of reducing crime in Kilmarnock and Cumnock Town Centres;

• highlighting of the hotspots around both town centre boundaries, and the possibility of a traffic light system to highlight the areas in question, and it was agreed that the Senior Planning Officer raise the issue with the Police Local Liaison Officer;

• current investigations with regards to the drop in investment within Cumnock Town Centre in respect of Area for Action 1.3: Build on our Investment in Town Centre Regeneration, from £1.23m in 2014/15 to £35,000 in 2015/16; and

• figures relative to the proportion of town centre premises in use for different functions, and it was agreed to attempt to obtain current information, even if only a snapshot in time.

NEW COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING IN OUR TOWN CENTRES

3. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Head of Housing and Communities which provided an update on the new build council housing and affordable housing.

The Development and Regeneration Officer advised and it was noted that in connection with the site at Lochore Terrace, Darvel, the development was now complete.

During discussion, members noted the following matters;

• issues which had been identified with regards to abnormal ground at Montgomery Street/Hill Street, Kilmarnock;
- the housing stock within Dalrymple was currently being investigated with proposals to follow in due course;
- the possibility of the Shortlees: Atrium Homes site being developed in one year rather than over 2 years as previously reported;
- protocols around Voids, and in particular the Voids Management Programme.

It was agreed:-

(i) to note that in respect of the information detailed in Section 4 of the report, all developments had been completed, and as such no longer required to be reported to the Scrutiny Group; and

(ii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Drew McIntyre left the meeting at this point.

PROGRESS REPORT ON CUMNOCK AND KILMARNOCK COMMUNITY LED ACTION PLANS AND TOWN CENTRE EVENTS

4. There was submitted a report dated 11 March 2016 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive: Safer Communities, which provided an update on the progress of the Cumnock and Kilmarnock Community Led Action Plans and Events planned for both town centres.

Having heard the Service Manager – Sustainable Communities, providing an update in respect of both Action Plans, Members noted the following points:

- the difference in the Cumnock Community Council boundary to the Cumnock Town Centre boundary, and its wider impact on the whole of Cumnock;
- Cumnock town centre events predominantly focused on children and young people;
- the potential impact on support to both Cumnock and Kilmarnock town centres as a result of the outcomes of both Action Plans;
- the Cumnock Town Centre Management Budget and it was agreed that an update on discussions which had taken place at the recent Cumnock Business Forum be forwarded to members of the Scrutiny Group; and
- links with the Cumnock Town Centre Action Plan and the development at Knockroon.

Councillor Barney Menzies, left the meeting during consideration of the above item, upon which Councillor John McFadzean, Vice Chair, took over the Chair.

It was agreed to note the contents of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1130 hours.