

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - COWDENBEATH AREA COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING**

**16<sup>th</sup> June, 2021**

**2.00 p.m. – 4.40 p.m.**

- PRESENT:** Councillors Linda Erskine (Convener), Alistair Bain, Alex Campbell, Gary Guichan, Rosemary Liewald, Mary Lockhart, Lea McLelland and Darren Watt.
- ATTENDING:** Gary Daniell, Team Manager (Community Development), Alastair Mutch, Community Manager (South & West Fife), Communities and Neighbourhoods; Neil Watson, Lead Consultant (Roads and Lighting Asset Management), Assets, Transportation, and Environment, Roads and Transportation Services; Jacqueline Price, Quality Improvement Manager for SEIC, Debbie Aitken, Headteacher, Stephen Ross, Rector, Education Services; Russell Gray, Housing Manager - Cowdenbeath, Dawn Jamieson, Team Manager (Safer Communities), Lisa Taylor, Lead Officer (Safer Communities Officers), Housing Services; Brian Westwater, Lead Officer (Safer Communities), Housing Services; Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, and Michelle Hyslop, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services
- ALSO ATTENDING:** Group Commander Iain Brocklebank, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Community Inspector Gavin Cameron and Chief Inspector Yvonne Stenhouse, Police Scotland

**224. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

**225. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 28TH APRIL 2021**

The Committee considered the minute of the meeting of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 28th April, 2021.

**Decision**

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

*At this stage, the Convener agreed to defer items 4 and 5 on the agenda until later in the meeting as the officer presenting the reports was having technical difficulties joining the meeting.*

**226. SCHOOL ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services which provided members with a summary on 2019-20 school attainment for young people who left school in 2019-20 across the secondary schools serving the area.

Details./

Details of how to access School Standards and Quality reports and Recovery/Improvement Plans were also provided for primary and secondary schools across the area as outlined in the Appendices to the report.

**Decision**

The Committee: -

- (1) agreed to engage directly with local schools to find out more about school attainment and achievement;
- (2) noted the details contained in the report in relation to the nature of this year's report due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (3) noted the information provided on the secondary schools,
- (4) agreed to engage with secondary Headteachers to discuss arrangements for this year's Alternative Certification Model for SQA Qualifications and how this was progressing in their school, and
- (5) thanked all staff in Education for their work over the past year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**227. SAFER COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, providing an update on the operational activity of the Safer Communities Team within the Cowdenbeath Committee area during the 12 month period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) noted and commented on the activity, to date, as detailed in the report; and
- (2) agreed that a workshop be arranged to allow members to input to the development of a plan to deal with recent anti-social issues arising in Lochgelly.

**228. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN – OPERATIONAL BRIEFING ON POLICING ACTIVITIES WITHIN COWDENBEATH.**

The Committee considered a report by Chief Inspector, Yvonne Stenhouse, Local Area Commander, West Fife, which provided members with an update on Policing activities in the Cowdenbeath Area.

**Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the policing activities taken forward; and
- (2) agreed to support Police Scotland in addressing their priorities.

**229. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE COWDENBEATH AREA ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report by Mike Youngson, Station Commander, Lochgelly Community Fire Station (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) providing incident information for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 in the Cowdenbeath area to enable the Committee to scrutinise the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) activity against its key performance indicators (KPIs).

**Decision**

The Committee noted the progress across a range of the key performance indicators as detailed in the report.

**230. PROPOSED ROAD ADOPTIONS - COWDENBEATH**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment which sought approval to promote the adoption of a section of carriageway and some footpaths at Johnston Park, Cowdenbeath.

**Decision**

The Committee agreed to defer the item to the next meeting of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 to allow further information to be provided.

*Councillor Mary Lockhart left the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

**231. LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN, WARD AND ANTI-POVERTY BUDGET PROPOSAL**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods detailing proposals for the allocation of the LCP, Ward and Anti-Poverty area budgets.

**Decision**

The Committee approved the proposals as detailed in the report.

**232. APPLICATION TO COWDENBEATH ANTI-POVERTY BUDGET AND LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING BUDGET**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods in respect of an application from the Cowdenbeath Community Learning and Development team for £40,000 to fund the return of the youth work programme during the 2021 summer school break.

**Decision**

Members approved an award of £40,000 to the Cowdenbeath Community Learning and Development team for the return of the youth work programme, being a contribution of £15,000 each from the Ward 7&8 budgets and £10,000 from the Anti-Poverty Budget.

**233. COWDENBEATH AREA FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the draft forward work programme for the Cowdenbeath Area Committee.

**234. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Questions were submitted (in terms of Standing Order No 6.1.) by Mr Tom Kinnaird, resident of Benarty, and Mr David Taylor, Secretary, Cardenden Community Council respectively.

Question 1

Remedial works on the Shank Brae, Ballingry previously included a new retaining wall at a cost of £24,000 and above that a new timber fence at a cost of £6000. The retaining wall was constructed of basic concrete block and though it is a good solid construction and does its job, it is not aesthetically pleasing and the stepped pattern is irregular.

As this brae is an entrance to the village and to Fife, first impressions are surely important and I wonder if it might be possible to look at completing the wall with either facing brick or masonry slips to present something a bit more pleasing to the eye? Similarly, the £6000 timber fence is low quality and is showing signs of distortion already. This should be either attended to by the original contractor or replaced with something more substantial; a nice set of railings maybe, to match the Miner's Memorial Garden opposite perhaps?

Finally, the fencing contractor dumped their spoil and a number of large boulders onto the embankment which prevented the Parks and Open Spaces crews from mowing the grass, leading it to overgrow and become a complete mess. It received just one cut in the last year and is now an unruly weed patch. Would it be possible to have this area returned to a neat and tidy garden once more, with a selection of shrubs, like it used to be?

Response

Housing Services previously invested a significant amount of money in renewing the wall and installing fencing at the Shank brae. This was in response to a health & safety issue as the existing wall was in poor condition and was unstable in areas.

We have carried out recent checks on the work and agree that it is a good solid construction. We are aware that the embankment is in need of attention and have carried out a site inspection with our Grounds Maintenance Team. The result being we have agreed to undertake a programme of spraying and strimming to clear the area, including the front of the fence. When this is complete, we are looking to improve the appearance with ground spreading plants and shrubs

Whilst upgrading the fence and the brickwork are not essential works at this time, we are happy to keep this under review as we identify projects for improvements on Housing land over the remainder of the financial year.

Question 2./

Question 2

Cardenden Community Council have received numerous questions by members of the public regarding the condition of the roads in and around Cardenden.

We, the Committee of Cardenden Community Council would request that the Cowdenbeath Area Committee review the following points on our behalf, and that of the people residing within the Cardenden area, in order to provide us with feedback.

The road from Lochgelly to Cardenden has part of the road resurfaced with a further section from Auchterderran Road to the Graveyard section to be completed within the next budget year. Unfortunately, the remainder of the road is peppered with deep potholes with the exit from the Purvis site now broken down so that you can see both the base and sub-base sections. (Numerous complaints of cars being damaged when it has been impossible to avoid the deep potholes – ball joints being the most common complaint.) We have been unable to ascertain when this road will be fully repaired as there doesn't appear to be any contingency in the Roads Budget for 2021/22 for these works.

Drains and gullies are in bad repair with gullies broken and drains blocked, especially at Dundonald Brae. Some areas were repaired during August 2020. Unfortunately, it appears the repairs have been faulty as they have broken apart again.

Flood water lying in various roads of the village, eg Woodend, outside the old Auchterderran School Janitor's house (drain now leads to a soakaway instead of to the drainage system). Also, water gathering at the bottom of Liza Brae.

Roads within the village are breaking up – similar to the road outside of the Purvis Site entrance, eg Orebank Road near to where it joins with Derran Drive, roads in the Dundonald area, road from the Main Street to Fernlea Residential Home and access to the back of Bowhill Swimming Pool.

The road humps in Carden Avenue are breaking up and leaving sharp edges on both sides of the road.

Numerous patches have been made to the roads but these have broken up and are often now worse than when the repair was made.

Numerous areas of pavements are in a bad way and the repairs to the pavement adjacent to the River Ore have not addressed the camber of the pavement and is uneven resulting in many deep puddles after it rains.

It is not clear how often the roads in and around Cardenden are inspected.

At the moment, it is not possible to identify what budget has been allocated to the roads in and around Cardenden in comparison to similar sized towns/villages in Fife in the Roads Budget for 2021/2022. We would be grateful if these issues can be addressed and if necessary a site visit to the area arranged to see first hand the problems being encountered.

Response./

**Response from Sara Wilson, Lead Consultant**

We have been awarded additional budget this year and next for patching and resurfacing works across Fife.

Although pothole repairs were issued for the B981 at the end of April, the local inspector also identified the area outside Purvis as a possible patching site. This area will be assessed further and added to a rather long list of competing priorities. The areas you have highlighted within the village will also be assessed and Ian Balfour (Network Condition) will get back to you directly with his findings. The road humps will also be taken into consideration during inspection.

I have forwarded your observations about blocked gullies to my colleague Kane Smith who looks after gully cleaning in the area, and I will arrange inspection of Dundonald Brae specifically paying attention to the ironwork. Any defects causing concern will be picked up and an order issued for repair.

The main roads through Cardenden are inspected on a monthly basis, i.e., the bus routes. The more residential areas are inspected annually. If there are any specific areas of concern at present, please let me know and I will arrange an ad-hoc inspection.

The Cowdenbeath Area Roads Programme may be viewed here: [Cowdenbeath | Fife Council](#).

The locations you have identified with flooding/drainage concerns have been noted and added to our Wet Day Check register. Please note it may be some time before these are inspected as we are still following up on areas identified during the flooding last August. Ross Walker will get back to you with an update.

**Response from Neil Watson, Lead Consultant**

Regarding your query about budgets and a comparison of spend in towns similar in size to Cardenden.

We don't gather information town by town, so I am unable to provide a comparison. Note that not all roads wear out at the same rate and not all similar sized towns have the same mix of A Class, B Class, C Class and unclassified roads, each will have differing traffic volumes and road construction depths, so comparisons wouldn't be meaningful.

The Area Roads Programme (ARP) is a capital budget which is devolved to the seven area committees. This budget is for resurfacing over the full width and along significant lengths. Anything which doesn't need full width resurfacing tends to be repaired by planned patching. Planned patching budgets are not devolved to area committees and is spent on an as needs basis across Fife.

The overall carriageways ARP budget is split into an allocation for each committee area. The split is based on the results of an annual independent machine-based road condition survey of a sample of roads.

During./

During the period April to October each year, any carriageway or footpath location identified as perhaps requiring to be resurfaced is assessed using set criteria,

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ranked in order of how poor the condition is and an estimated cost for resurfacing is calculated.

Locations for assessment can come from a variety of sources, e.g. machine-based surveys, roads inspector's reports, requests from Elected Members, the public etc. The ranked lists of assessed locations are then discussed with the Elected Members on the committee, usually in November/ December, to agree the schemes to be taken forward in the following financial year up to the limit of their allocated budget. A formal report is taken to each area committee detailing the agreed schemes so we have an approved programme for each area committee by 31st March at the latest. These programmes are then delivered the following financial year through a mix of external contractors and our own in-house construction team.

If your Community Council has suggestions for roads and paths to be assessed then please let us know, ideally with a good description of the location or a plan.

### **Actions since 20th May 2021**

The gullies on Dundonald Brae have been checked and are all running apart from the one adjacent to streetlight column number 10 which is full of concrete. An order has been issued to replace the gully.

Ian Balfour has yet to inspect the Cardenden carriageways and footways.

Drainage/flooding issues cannot be assessed properly until the next significant rainfall.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the questions submitted by Mr Tom Kinnaird and Mr David Taylor and the respective responses.

*Councillor Campbell left the meeting during consideration of the above item.*