

Corporate Strategy Committee  
25 June 1998

**Irvine, 25 June 1998** - At a Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Ian Clarkson, Stewart Dewar, Thomas Dickie, John Donn, David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney, Thomas Morris, Robert Rae, Robert Reilly, John Sillars, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

**In Attendance**

Chief Executive, the Head of Corporate Business, the Directors of Financial Services and Social Work, the Personnel Services Manager, J. Leckie, the Head of Education Services (Education), P Bryers, Head of Planning and Development (Social Work), and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

**Chair**

Mr. Clements in the Chair.

**1. Strathclyde Regional Council Inherited Deficit**

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the latest position concerning the deficit inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council.

The accounts for the former Strathclyde Regional Council for its last year of operation ending 31 March 1996 have been completed and a draft report by the Auditor (the Accounts Commission) has been submitted to Glasgow City Council as the accounting authority responsible for closing the Strathclyde Regional Council accounts. The accumulated deficit amounts to £49.3m, which includes items such as employee severance costs, unrealised savings and property costs. There is already a formal agreement between the twelve unitary authorities making up the former Strathclyde area to share the surplus/deficit in accordance with the Council's Band D equivalent, approximately 6% and provision has been made by the Council in its 1998/99 budget for the full amount of the share of the £49.3m. The agreement also provides for post balance sheet transactions which occur and which have to be shared by the unitary Councils at the same proportions.

Following investigation by independent experts about the amount of debtors included in the Accounts of Strathclyde Regional Council for Revenue Support Grant and Non-Domestic Rates over a period of years, the majority of which required write off, the conclusion has been reached that £28.5m of the debtors raised were in error and that the true deficit of Strathclyde Regional Council was £79m. The balance of £28.5m requires to be funded by the constituent authorities. This will result in an amount of £1.71m to be met by the Council, which is equivalent to around £37 per annum on Band D of the Council Tax. Further charges in respect of interest on transactions incurred on behalf of Strathclyde Regional Council since reorganisation also require to be met and these amount to £18.3m. Provision has been made in the 1998/99 budget of £350,000, leaving a shortfall of £0.716m shared between the General Fund, viz. £236,000 and the Housing Revenue Account viz. £480,000. All benefits which derive from the Loans Fund are pooled and include benefit to the Housing Revenue Account and therefore the Housing Revenue Account also has to bear its share of the deficit. In 1998/99 however, the Housing Revenue Account will benefit by

£1.2m in interest reduction, which will more than offset the £480,000 share of the deficit.

Further shortfalls in the provision made by Strathclyde Regional Council in respect of insurance claims against the Council have been identified amounting to around £10m. These, however, are likely to be spread over a number of years and will not have a significant impact on the Council's budget.

It is intended to submit a full statement in July of the Council's budgetary position from 1996/97 to date, taking into account the Council's own position, as well as the inherited deficit.

The Committee expressed their extreme concern about the inherited deficit, the ensuing liabilities to successor Councils and the fact that this had not been identified earlier by the officials of the former Regional Council or by the internal and external auditors.

Glasgow City Council, as the authority responsible for winding up the accounts of Strathclyde Regional Council, have been holding the debt and incurring the payments required. The amount owed by the Council has therefore been paid to Glasgow City Council. The matter will be discussed at a meeting of the Leaders of all the unitary authorities from the former Strathclyde area on 26 June 1998. The Leader of the Council undertook to advise the Leaders' meeting of the Council's concerns and their view that the successor local authorities should not be held liable for the deficit of the former Strathclyde Regional Council.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Scotland expressing the Committee's extreme concerns; (b) that a press release be issued on the Council's position; and (c) to note the implications for the level of Council Tax in 1999/2000.

## **2. Teachers Pay Settlement 1998**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a remit from the Support Services Committee regarding the financial implications of the Teachers pay settlement 1998.

The nationally agreed pay award, which is applicable to all teaching staff in posts on or after 1 April 1998, represents a 3% increase in payroll costs. The Council has budgeted for an increase of 2.5% and the shortfall of £234,000 will therefore require to be made up through stringent budget management. The Director of Education has also been requested to report to the Education Committee on the budget issues arising from the implementation of the pay award.

The APT&C and the Chief Officers pay settlements have also exceeded the 2.5% budgeted increase. All Directors have therefore been requested to prepare a strategy for dealing with the anticipated shortfall.

The Committee agreed to appoint a Member Working Party comprising Chair, Vice-Chair and the Chairs of each Service Committee to consider the Council's financial position and report.

## **3. Client/Contractor Splits in the Post-CCT Era**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on client/contractor splits in the post-CCT era.

On 26 May 1998, the Committee approved a strategic reorganisation of the Council's Directorates including the elimination of the client/contractor splits between and within Directorates as far as possible. The Committee further agreed that the detailed responsibilities of Client Monitoring Officers be reviewed in the light of the reorganisation of services, as well as the detail of the allocation of posts from existing Directorates into the newly structured Directorates. The new Directorates of Housing and Construction Services and Community Services in effect eliminate the client/contractor split at Director level and it is proposed that this be extended further to the Head of Service level. In particular, this affects Grounds Maintenance. It is intended that the client role and budget for the grounds maintenance of roads, verges and roundabouts be transferred from the Head of Roads in the Planning Roads and Environment Directorate to the Head of Cleansing,

Parks and Transport in the new Community Services Directorate. In addition, it is also intended that the client responsibility for other grounds maintenance at present undertaken by the Head of Sports and Horticultural Services, Community and Recreational Services Directorate be transferred to the Head of Cleansing, Parks and Transport, along with the Facilities Maintenance Team, comprising four officers who deal with playground maintenance. The client role of Architectural Services and Housing Services will amalgamate with the contracting function of the Works Department under the new Housing and Construction Services Directorate and the Roads DLO will transfer to the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate, thus completing the client/contractor amalgamation.

With regard to the admin support, it is proposed that the accountancy posts in the current Commercial Services Directorate be transferred to the Financial Services Directorate, that the Personnel Services related posts be transferred to the Personnel Services Department and that the Marketing posts be transferred to the Chief Executive's Directorate. A review of the bonus incentive scheme requires to be addressed, particularly in view of the Accounts Commission's intention to audit schemes to ensure proficient management. It is intended that a team of Officers within the current Commercial Services Directorate who are temporarily assigned to this purpose within the Works Department will transfer to the Housing and Construction Services Directorate and that two Monitoring Officers and the Assistant Monitoring Officer undertaking this role in relation to Cleansing, Transport and Grounds Maintenance be assigned to this role in the new Community Services Directorate.

A number of posts undertaking client roles perform other duties related to service issues which are non-client function related and further time is required to look in more detail at individual job roles and gradings throughout the workforce with particular regard to the client/contractor interface and the improved effectiveness of the new Directorates. The most pressing requirement is to deal with the sequestration of budgets and provide new targets for the DLOs.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that the responsibility for both the client and contracting roles in relation to grounds maintenance of road verges and roundabouts as well as other grounds maintenance activities be transferred to the Head of Cleansing, Parks and Transport, Community Services Directorate; (b) that the Facilities Maintenance Team of four employees be directly managed by the Head of Cleansing, Parks and Transport; (c) that the APT&C posts in existing Directorates transfer to the new service Directorates and existing support Directorates as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; (d) that the manual worker workforce transfer to each new Directorate in support of the relevant Heads of Service; (e) that the new Directorates be established from 6 July 1998 with the management reporting lines and responsibilities effective from that date; (f) that the Directors of Housing and Construction Services and Community Services review the new integrated services in order to effect improvements in operational service delivery; (g) that a further report be submitted to the Support Services Committee in the autumn detailing the reorganisational implications of the new administrative support remits in each Directorate, including the continued operation of the existing temporary arrangement in relation to the Works Section bonus scheme management; and (h) that the Personnel Services Manager investigate current overtime working and report.

#### **4. Central Support Services**

Submitted report Chief Executive on a review of central support services.

Following completion of the Revenue Budget process for 1998/99, the Council instructed a report back on a number of items including a review of central support services. The Council at its inception structured the central support services under Managers in the Chief Executive's Directorate with the exception of Financial Services which was retained as a Directorate. The former Strathclyde Regional Council model which was being inherited for the larger Departments of Education, Social Work etc. was adopted whereby the day-to-day administration of these functions was undertaken within the Department and the strategic or corporate overview was the responsibility of the centre.

With regard to Financial Services, the financial function carried out at Departmental level was restricted to financial administration rather than to Accountancy and with the previous decision

to dissolve the Commercial Services Directorate, the Director of Financial Services is satisfied that his concerns in this area have been addressed and the concept of a total “non-core” business delivered from the centre is not therefore being proposed.

With regard to Personnel Services, the present organisation is based on a model of corporate core responsibility for policy and strategic development, corporate support to the Council and its Committees and an element of operational support and administration in relation to the Chief Executive and Financial Services Directorates. In all other Directorates routine Personnel administration is devolved. The Chief Executive has delegated powers through the Personnel Services Manager to devolve Personnel administration to Directors. No changes are recommended with regard to Personnel Services, although a further review may be undertaken if there are further Directorate changes or if the position of Financial Services is reviewed.

With regard to Information Technology, within the predecessor Councils, Cunninghame had a centralised service and Strathclyde, by reason of its scale had a shared structure in the larger Departments of Education and Social Work. At the formation of North Ayrshire, a shared system was attempted although the Strathclyde scale was absent. As there are limited funds available and the staff skills required are a scarce resource, it is considered that the staff skills should be deployed to corporate goals, albeit that even with the concentration of all staff skills at the centre, not all corporate goals can be achieved. It is recommended therefore that all I.T. staff transfer to the Chief Executive's Directorate under the Information Technology Services Manager. This in effect would result in three staff (four posts) transferring from the Planning, Roads and Environment and Social Work Directorates as three staff in the Commercial Services Directorate have already transferred in terms of the restructuring arising from the review of the client/contractor splits.

With regard to Marketing and Publicity, corporate responsibility for marketing the Council and its services and for media relations lies with the Chief Executive. Other promotional activities are carried out by various Directorates, some of which employ marketing staff e.g. Community and Recreational Services and others rely on other professional staff with marketing disciplines, e.g. Planning, Roads and Environment (Business Development). The promotion of the Council and the Council area, including its tourist potential should remain a matter for the corporate service, as well as promotion of the services provided by the Council. The only exception to date has been the leisure centres and visitor attractions of the Community and Recreational Services Directorate and the continuation of this practice can be justified in the light of the ongoing discussions on Trust status. It is proposed therefore that subject only to this limited exception, viz. the promotion of leisure centres and visitor attractions within the new Community Services Directorate that all other services of that Directorate and other Directorates as well as the corporate function be marketed at the centre.

It is not possible at this stage to provide assurances that the transfer of all I.T. functions to the centre will not affect the service currently undertaken within the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate as there may well be problems due to corporate goals having to be maintained, including the fundamental replacement of financial systems and payroll systems throughout all Directorates. The individual priorities of the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate will have to be evaluated against all other Departments' priorities.

After a full discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that no changes be authorised in respect of the provision of Financial Services, apart from those resulting from the decision at item 3 above on the dissolution of the Commercial Services Directorate; (b) that no changes be made to the provision of Personnel Services, although the position of delegation by the Chief Executive should be noted and kept under review; (c) that a “non-core” business service in relation to information technology be provided centrally to maximise scarce use of human resources and focus on corporate goals; (d) to authorise the transfer of three staff (four posts) in the Planning, Roads and Environment and Social Work Directorates to the Information Technology Services Department; and (e) that all marketing be undertaken by the Chief Executive through the Head of Corporate Business, apart from the leisure centres and visitor attractions within the Community and Recreational Services Directorate which will be undertaken by the new Community Services Directorate

## **5. Renewal of Mainstream School Transport Contracts**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on award of mainstream school transport contracts which were re-advertised.

On 21 April 1998, the Education Committee in awarding an number of contracts for mainstream school transport agreed that 17 contracts be re-advertised due to an excessive increase in costs. Strathclyde Passenger Transport have now completed this exercise and analysed the tenders received. There is only one contract about which SPT still remain concerned on the basis of costs.

The Committee agreed (a) to award the contracts, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) that SPT be requested to negotiate prices for contract number 6757B.

## **6. Beef Ban in Schools**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the current position with regard to public health measures on beef.

In April 1996 the Council, having regard to various concerns expressed about the condition of beef, agreed to withdraw the serving of beef within its primary schools. Beef continued to be offered as an option for meals within secondary schools, although a non-beef alternative as well as a vegetarian option was available. The government has since introduced a number of measures to protect public health concerning BSE and the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture has now asked about the possibility of the Council removing the ban on the serving of beef within primary schools. The supply and delivery of butchermeat to the Council is operated by Alan Sharp and Sons, Linwood, whose premises have been deemed to achieve the necessary standards and who are members of the Guild of Scottish Quality Meats Suppliers, which ensures that they only purchase Scottish beef from quality suppliers. Should the Council agree to re-introduce the serving of beef within primary schools, there would be a non-beef alternative available as well as a vegetarian option.

The Committee agreed (a) to the removal of the ban on serving beef within primary schools in North Ayrshire with effect from August 1998, the start of the new academic year; and (b) that the Chief Executive investigate whether the Commercial Services Directorate are using a local supplier on Arran.

## **7. North Ayrshire Community Care Plan 1998-2001**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the Community Care Plan.

The Scottish Office requires a Community Care Plan for the period 1998-2001 to be submitted by 30 June 1998. The Member/Officer Working Group on the Community Care Plan approved a Consultation Draft on 20 April 1998, which has been distributed widely and consultation meetings arranged for all interested parties. The Consultation Draft was also submitted to the Area Committees. All comments received have been carefully considered and appropriate amendments made to the final Draft document. The Plan is also being submitted simultaneously to Ayrshire and Arran Health Board for approval. The Health Board have requested some additional paragraphs to be added but these will not alter the tenor of the report in any way.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the joint Community Care Plan, together with the Factfile and Summary, including any minor revisions requested by Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, to be submitted to the Scottish Office; (b) to authorise the publication and distribution of the Plan; and (c) that the Member/Officer Working Group on the Community Care Plan be reconstituted as a Review Group to monitor the implementation of the Plan.



## **8. Renaming of the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the renaming of the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate.

On 10 June 1998, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee considered a report on the progress of the Directorate's strategy process and arising from the report it was agreed to remit a suggestion that the Directorate of Planning, Roads and Environment be renamed the Directorate of Infrastructure and Environment Services.

In view of the short timescale until the end of this Administration and to avoid confusion to the public, the Committee agreed (a) to make no change to the name of the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate; and (b) that the matter should be remitted to the new Administration for consideration.

## **9. Joint Venture: The EDI Group**

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on the potential way forward in relation to establishing joint ventures with the private sector in North Ayrshire.

As part of the examination of the ways in which private finance can be introduced to aid economic development, discussions have taken place with Economic Development Investment Limited, an organisation which specialises in partnership arrangements with local authorities. A number of options were considered in relation to establishing joint ventures and these matters have been scrutinised by the Legal Services Department and the Financial Services Directorate. Key issues to be looked at include (i) what areas of Council land or what Council functions require private capital and require a joint venture; (ii) whether or not EDI Group is the best partner, dependent on the type of development; (iii) the amount of capital which the private sector could introduce; and (iv) whether a company is the best means of promoting a joint venture.

Having regard to the above, it is recommended that the Council explore jointly with EDI the possibility of specific joint ventures, without any commitment at this stage.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to examine jointly with EDI Limited the creation of joint venture companies to develop (i) the landraise site at Bogside, Irvine; and (ii) call centres within North Ayrshire; (b) that a further report be submitted to the next meeting detailing the Heads of Agreement and an outline business plan; and (c) that Officers of North Ayrshire Council be authorised to assist EDI Limited in the Heads of Agreement and business plan.

## **10. Private Finance Initiative**

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on possible bids for PFI projects which have been identified by Directors.

The Scottish Office is at present reviewing the method of funding PFI projects to bring this into line with the conventional method of financing capital projects through borrowing. They had requested local authorities to submit by 31 March 1998 the Council's intention to submit an Outline Business Case for the projects it intends to pursue through PFI; and by 30 June 1998 an Outline Business Case for each project in priority order. PFI is now a widely accepted alternative form of finance to build and operate facilities such as schools, roads, information technology systems etc. The Council has submitted a list of projects to the Scottish Office with brief details of each, intended as a marker of the Council's intentions for possible future PFI Capital Projects. Due to the extremely short timetable, the need to seek the views of Members on both the principle of using PFIs and the priorities which Members identify, together with the substantial input required to prepare a business case, it is considered that the Council will be unable to make any meaningful submission in time for the deadline of 30 June. It is proposed therefore that an Officers Group be established to develop and prepare a Business Case for submission to the next round of PFI bids in 1999/2000 and that the appointment of an external adviser specialising in PFI submissions to

guide the Group be investigated.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that a seminar on the principles of PFI as a method of financing and operating projects be arranged for the Council, to include presentations from the Scottish Office, COSLA and a PFI expert; and (b) to resume consideration of the proposals following the seminar.

#### **11. Employment Opportunities**

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on the Government's decision to introduce Regional Selective Assistance Priority and Property Employment Support Programme in areas of North Ayrshire.

Since February 1997, the Council has been working at both political and Officer level to achieve special status for North Ayrshire. Whilst not fully achieving Enterprise Zone status, the recent announcement by the Government to introduce Regional Selective Assistance to a number of disadvantaged areas including the Three Towns, whereby grants of up to £3,000 will be provided for each new job created and filled by a resident of the area will assist in tackling the disadvantage and attracting investment to the area. Furthermore the Three Towns and Glengarnock are amongst ten areas in Scotland to receive the benefit of the Property Employment Support programme, which is designed to create jobs for local residents by encouraging investment in industrial and commercial property in deprived areas. Full details of both schemes have not yet been received, but both should be welcomed as additional support to certain disadvantaged areas of North Ayrshire.

Noted.

#### **12. Council Chambers and Committee Rooms Refurbishment**

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on the options for refurbishment of the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms and of the action taken thus far.

The furniture within the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms in Cunninghame House has not changed in almost 25 years, has now reached the end of its useful life and requires to be replaced. Furthermore the current type of furniture does not lend itself to flexibility of the use of the accommodation which now requires increasingly to be used for presentations, seminars etc.

In order to take advantage of the summer recess and following consultation with the Convenor and the Chair, replacement tables and chairs of the flexible, stackable type have been ordered, so that the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms can be used for presentations as well as meetings. Further works proposed include redecoration, revised lighting and renewed carpeting.

The Committee agreed to (a) homologate the action of the Chair in approving the refurbishment proposals so far; and (b) to approve additional refurbishment in accordance with the phasing detailed in the report, subject to funds becoming available in this financial year.

#### **13. Trinity Centre, Irvine: Repairs to Dangerous Building: Report on Final Costs and Grant Aid**

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on repairs to the Trinity Centre, Irvine and on final costs and grant aid.

In June 1997, the Council served a Dangerous Building Notice under Section 13 of the Building (Scotland) Act 1959-70 on the Trinity Trust requiring repairs to the spire to remove the danger to the public. Acting as Building Authority, the Council arranged for the repairs to be carried out and these have been completed at a total cost of £215,573. The Trustees of the Trinity Centre were unable to fund the repayment of these costs and grant assistance was obtained from

Historic Scotland. A balance of £111,488 still requires to be met, however, and it is proposed that this balance be recovered through Landfill Tax Credits. Landfill site operators are not allowed to contribute to schemes which will directly benefit them and must make contributions to approved bodies registered with Entrust. Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust, who are an Entrust registered body have therefore been selected and have applied to Entrust to register a project which will enable them to give financial assistance to listed buildings in North Ayrshire. The works for the repair of Trinity Church will qualify for funding under the terms of this project. The application will be submitted to Entrust's Board meeting on 8 July 1998.

Arising from the discussion on this item, the Committee raised the matter of the former Irvine Development Corporation plans and funding of £300,000 to convert the Trinity Church into a community facility. At the demise of Irvine Development Corporation, the funds were allocated to Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust on condition that they be used for the purposes of conversion to a museum. Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust are working with the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the plans, although the £300,000 allocation will fall well short of the total costs of conversion and further funding will require to be sought by the Trinity Trust itself with the assistance of Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust and the Community and Recreational Services Directorate. A report on this matter will be submitted to the Community and Recreational Services Committee.

Noted.

#### **14. Corporate Plan Progress**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on progress in the preparation of the Corporate Plan.

On 20 April 1998, a Corporate Planning Seminar was held for Members to provide an update and to seek approval of progress to date in drawing up the Council's Corporate Plan for the period 1998-2001. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken since then to develop the draft Corporate Plan including the development of a Vision Statement which has been prepared in consultation with the Leader, the Depute Leader and the Secretary of the majority group of the Administration and details have been incorporated of the work to date and the work planned by the various Directorates in support of the Community and Organisational Aims. It is proposed during July to seek comments on the draft Plan from a variety of organisations including members of the public.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the draft Corporate Plan 1998-2001 as a consultation document; and (b) that a further report be submitted in due course.

#### **15. Urban Programme Evaluation**

##### **(a) Access Ability**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the findings of the Evaluation Panel at its visit to the Access Ability project.

On 21 January 1997, the Committee agreed to establish an Officer Evaluation Group to evaluate all Urban Programme projects within North Ayrshire. The Evaluation Panel has now completed its report on Access Ability which is funded under the Urban Programme until April 1999. The evaluation concludes that the project is operating well and achieving its aims and objectives within limited resources. The report also identifies a number of issues requiring to be addressed to enable the project to secure a future role for itself after the Urban Programme funding ends in April 1999.

##### **(b) Apex Trust (Scotland)**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the findings of the Evaluation Panel at its visit to



Apex Trust (Scotland).

The Evaluation Panel has now completed its report on Apex Trust (Scotland), which is funded under the Urban Programme to May 1999. The evaluation concludes that the project demonstrates a positive approach to staff development and an impressive quality of both work and ethos. The report also identifies a number of issues to be addressed, including a confusion of roles between supervision and management resulting from the project being departmentally led and the preparation of a future strategy likely to secure the project's continuation beyond the period of Urban Programme funding as an independent organisation.

It was emphasised that the evaluations of projects are independent, but the recommendations will require to be followed up with the sponsoring Departments who will be able to make comment at that stage.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the findings of the evaluation reports as detailed in Appendix 1 to each report; and (b) that the project staff and management, the Management Committee and the sponsoring Department which is the Social Work Directorate should be advised of the evaluation reports' findings and invited to respond.

#### **16. A Childcare Strategy for Scotland**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposals contained in the Government's Consultation Paper on "Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Childcare Strategy for Scotland".

The Consultation Paper explains the Government's aim to ensure good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0-14 in every neighbourhood. This will include both formal childcare and support for informal arrangements by (i) raising the quality of care; (ii) making childcare more affordable and available; and (iii) making childcare more accessible by increasing places and improving information. The aims of the strategy are broadly to be welcomed and tie in with the Council's Early Years policy. The final date for comments is 28 July 1998.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and appropriate Directors, to respond to the Consultation Paper on behalf of the Council.

#### **17. NHS Trusts in Ayrshire**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposals to reshape the 3 NHS Trusts in Ayrshire.

A presentation on the proposals was given to Members by the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board General Manager on 26 May 1998. Comments require to be submitted to the Health Board by 30 June 1998. The proposals are in response to the recent Government White Paper which aims to provide a seamless healthcare service focused on patients' needs. The proposed changes are broadly to be welcomed and should assist in reducing bureaucracy and duplication within the Health Service whilst providing greater access to specialist expertise throughout Ayrshire. The importance of ensuring that services are provided at a local, accessible level should also be stressed so that they are spread throughout the community.

The Committee agreed to approve the response to the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board as detailed in the report.

#### **18. Ground at Dick Terrace/Anderson Drive, Irvine: Proposed Disposal**

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of ground at Dick Terrace/Anderson Drive, Irvine.

On 5 May 1998, the Support Services Committee approved the granting of a Minute of

Waiver to Mr. and Mrs. G. Singh to permit the erection of two dwellinghouses on land at Anderson Drive, Irvine. As a condition of the Planning Permission the purchase of an area of ground at the junction of Anderson Drive and Dick Terrace, Irvine, opposite the site, is required to provide parking. The ground in question is held in the Housing Services account. The Director of Housing Services has confirmed that he has no objection to the ground being released for sale for this purpose.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the ground as surplus to requirements; and (b) to authorise the Legal Services Manager to enter into negotiations for the disposal of the ground.

#### **19. Argyll and the Islands Enterprise**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an invitation by Argyll and the Islands Enterprise to Councillor J. Sillars to apply for a Directorship of AIE.

Argyll and the Islands Enterprise has responsibility for economic development and strengthening of communities in that area which includes the islands of Arran and Cumbrae. At present there are two Members of Argyll and Bute Council who currently serve on the AIE as Directors and AIE consider that there should be representation from North Ayrshire Council.

The Committee agreed to authorise Councillor Sillars to accept the invitation.

#### **20. Requests for Financial Assistance**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on requests received for financial assistance:-

##### **(a) Strathclyde and Central Energy Efficiency Advice Centre**

The Committee agreed to award Strathclyde and Central Energy Efficiency Advice Centre £800.

#### **21. Conferences, Seminars Etc.: Invitations**

Submitted invitations to attend the undernoted Conference/Seminar:-

(a) COSLA "The Bond of Trust: A New Ethical Framework for Scotland" Seminar to be held in Rosebery House, Edinburgh on 13 July 1998.

The Committee agreed that there be no attendance at the Seminar.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.