

Property Services Committee
21 November 2006

IRVINE, 21 November 2006 - At a Meeting of the Property Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Samuel Taylor, John Bell, Anna Donn, Jane Gorman, Margaret McDougall, Margaret Munn, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, John Reid and Nan Wallace.

In Attendance

T. Orr, Corporate Director, Olga Clayton, Head of Housing, R. Small, Head of Roads, J. Currie, Head of Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Transport, J. Paul, Head of Technical Services, K. McDonald, Finance Manager (Finance), M. Cashmore, Principal Officer (Property Services) G. Lawson, Corporate Support Manager, and J. Stevenson, Communications Officer and P. Shiach, Corporate Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Taylor in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Jacqueline Browne, Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie, Drew Duncan, Elizabeth McLardy and Richard Wilkinson

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 3 October 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Revenue Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the budgetary control position for Property Services at the end of September 2006 and projections for financial year 2006/07.

The Committee agreed to approve the current financial position and the year-end projections.

3. Extension of Contract with Nobel Enterprises

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on a proposed extension to the existing contract with Nobel Enterprises for green waste composting.

North Ayrshire Council currently has an Agreement with Noble Enterprises in relation to collected green waste for composting. The Agreement, which expires in 2007, has enabled the Council to comply with the Scottish Executive's current recycling target of 25% for 2006.

The report proposed an extension of the Agreement for a further two year period until 2009. The costs involved and the financial implications relative thereto were contained within the report.

The Committee agreed to the extension of the existing Service Level Agreement between North Ayrshire and Nobel Enterprises for a period of two years on the basis of a base price of £14.00 per tonne for the year 2008.

4. Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the current position regarding the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group and appointment of the Lead Officer.

The Council is represented on the Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group and has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding in conjunction with East and South Ayrshire Councils.

Under the terms of the Memorandum, the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, currently held by Councillor J O'Neill and Councillor S Taylor, of East and North Ayrshire Councils respectively, should alternate on a six monthly basis. In addition, Blair Thomson of South Ayrshire Council who previously held the role of Lead Officer has retired.

The Project Group, at it's meeting on 21 September 2006 agreed that the current Chair and Vice Chair remain in office until the next meeting of the Group. It was also agreed that Trevor Jones of North Ayrshire Council should take over the role of Lead Officer with appropriate administration supplied by North Ayrshire Council

The Committee agreed to approve the actions taken at the meeting of the Project Group on 21 September 2006.

5. Road Lighting Policy for Arran

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on a revised policy on the provision of road lighting on Arran.

Road lighting on Arran is installed generally throughout the larger settlements with partial lighting in the smaller settlements along the main roads and some local streets. Procedural and technical requirements for road lighting in new developments are set out in the Roads Development Guide as adopted by North Ayrshire Council.

The design standards have recently been revised and consolidated in a combined European and UK document, published in the UK as British Standard 5489, which gives greater scope in the choice of lighting standards to be applied to both traffic routes and residential roads.

Road lighting is principally provided for road safety reasons and to protect the Council from possible litigation, as well as providing additional benefits to the community.

In view of concerns raised with regard to the provision of new lighting developments, a nine point approach for road lighting on Arran, as outlined in the report, was proposed.

The local Member, Councillor Currie, while broadly in support of the proposals, submitted a written request for clarification on several issues, to which the Head of Roads responded.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the policy set out in the report for the road network on Arran; and (b) the new policy being applied in conjunction with the other lighting requirements of the Roads Development Guide.

6. Private Sector Housing Grants

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the current budgetary position in relation to the Private Sector Housing Grant.

The provision of financial assistance to the private sector has, since 2004/05, taken the form of the Private Sector Housing Grant, a direct Capital Grant from the Scottish Executive, allocated and monitored by Communities Scotland.

In March 2004, the Council agreed to extend the type of work which would qualify for grant assistance, details of which were contained in Appendix 1 to the report. The revised policy took into account new discretionary powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in respect of grant assistance and the need to address national priorities. Details thereon were contained within the report.

During the current financial year, demand has exceeded budget limitations, particularly in respect of grants for disability adaptations and grants to owners of former council houses included in the Council's lead programmes of major common repairs. In order to address the problem, disabled grants have been restricted to certain specific works in relation to disability access where there is a mandatory entitlement to grant. Furthermore the formulation of the 2007/08 Re-roofing and Re-rendering programmes will require to take account of the possible unavailability or limitation of grant funding.

Reference was made to properties that had benefitted from grants in the 1980's and which may, in the near future, require the original works to be repaired or replaced, and it was suggested that the position be brought to the attention of Communities Scotland.

The Committee agreed that (a) that additional grant funding from Communities Scotland be sought; (b) to continue to manage the private sector Grants Service within the available budget; (c) to refer the funding issue for consideration by the Council as part of the revenue budget process for 2007/08, and (d) to notify Communities Scotland of the possibility of additional grant funding requirements in relation to properties renovated between 25 and 30 years ago.

7. Good Neighbour Awards

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on proposals to introduce a Good Neighbour Award Scheme for tenants and residents of North Ayrshire.

The Antisocial Behaviour, etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 placed a duty on the Council and Strathclyde Police to prepare an Antisocial Behaviour Strategy covering the period from 2005 to 2008, with significant funding from the Scottish Executive committed for ASB services, including community wardens and support for victims of antisocial behaviour. A substantial commitment from the Council has also been made in terms of the introduction of a community mediation service and a specialist ASB investigation team.

A range of measures and initiatives developed by the Community Planning Partners in North Ayrshire in tackling antisocial behaviour was outlined in the report.

In order to counter-balance the enforcement activity undertaken through the ASB Strategy, the report proposed the introduction of Good Neighbour Awards in 2007 for tenants and residents within Council-tenanted estates. These awards, which will include a specific award to a young person aged 16 to 25, would publically recognise "good neighbours", and examples of the criteria used to determine the proposed recipients of the awards were contained within the report. The cost of the proposed awards will be met from the Tenant Participation budget.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals for Good Neighbour Awards in 2007 as contained in the report.

The Meeting ended at 2:50 p.m.