

Support Services Committee
6 May 1997

Irvine, 6 May 1997 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David O'Neill, Alan Munro, Patrick Browne, James Clements, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Elliot Gray, Margaret Highet, James Jennings, David Munn, George Steven and Richard Wilkinson.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Director of Financial Services, the Head of Corporate Business, B. Gardner, Head of Education Resources (Education), Personnel Services Manager, Legal Services Manager, R. Samson, Principal Estates Officer (Legal Services) and B. Hannah, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 25 March 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Collection Statements

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the current collection levels in respect of Community Charge and Council Tax for the period ended 30 April 1997.

The Director of Financial Services reported that in excess of £1m of outstanding Community Charge had been collected during the 1996/97 financial year. Over 60,000 Council Tax notices have been issued to residents in North Ayrshire in respect of the 1997/98 collection together with details of rebate entitlements.

Noted.

3. Arran No. 1 Housing Action Area: Cancellation of Charges

Submitted report by the Chief Executive detailing outstanding charges in respect of owners' costs for works undertaken as part of the Arran No. 1 Housing Action Area for Improvement at 1-12 The Row, Catacol, Isle of Arran.

The former Cunninghame District Council declared properties at 1-12 The Row, Catacol to be a Housing Action Area for Improvement and undertook works to these

properties throughout 1991. A series of difficulties were experienced in relation to the project which were exacerbated by the properties' isolated location, difficulties in contacting owners and unforeseen costs involved in repairing the properties. Repeated attempts to deal with owners' concerns in relation to repair works resulted in the majority of the owners paying outstanding sums due to the Council, but, 3 owners, namely the owners of No. 1, No. 8 and No. 9 The Row, remain dissatisfied with the works undertaken.

The total outstanding sums due in respect of these properties are £12,761 and to pursue the recovery of the debts would require legal action which would be costly and may not be successful. In order to resolve the situation the outstanding charges may be cancelled which would require the sum of £12,761 to be met from the Council's non-HRA Capital Budget for 1997/98 and therefore impact on that budget.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to cancel the outstanding charges totalling £12,761 in respect of outstanding sums due from the owners of No. 1, No. 8 and No. 9 The Row, Catacol; and (b) to note that the outstanding charges due in respect of these properties will be met from the Council's non-HRA Capital Budget for 1997/98.

4. PC Maintenance Contract

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the provision of PC maintenance services within the Education Directorate.

On 28 August 1996, the Committee agreed to approve the appointment of NVT Computing Limited as the Council's PC Maintenance Contractor for one year commencing on 1 September 1996 subject to the provision of a further report on PC maintenance contracts within the Education Service.

Equipment within educational establishments was included in the contract as an option dependent upon the Head of each establishment requiring the service. Consultations have now taken place with individual educational establishments and it has been established that the Technicians' service at Kilmarnock is currently used for all Apple computer repairs. For non-Apple computers totalling approximately 700 there is no central service used. All educational establishments were advised of the Council's contract and offered the maintenance option, but, only 5 have expressed an interest in the contract. Given this level of interest it is considered that NVT Computing Limited be advised that any requirement for maintenance within educational establishments should be conducted on an ad hoc basis with the Information Technology Services Department continuing to include options for educational establishments in any future PC maintenance contracts awarded.

After discussion the Committee agreed to instruct the Information Technology Services Manager to include Education Services in any future PC maintenance contract awarded as an option dependent on the needs of each individual educational establishment.

5. Year 2000: Planning

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on proposed planning for the implications to the Council's computer applications of the date change at the millennium.

The impact of the year 2000 date change on information technology equipment will have operational implications for North Ayrshire Council as many of the Council's computer applications were designed with a 2 year digit code thus storing and displaying a 4 year digit such as 1996 as 96. The consequence of this is that the year 2000 will appear as 00 and not 2000 which will impact on applications which rely on correct date entries.

The Information Technology Services Manager is currently addressing this matter and has carried out initial investigations to determine the range of I.T. equipment used within the Council. Procedures have been put in place to ensure that any new purchase of I.T. equipment are accompanied by a year 2000 compliance statement from the supplier and all Directorates have been requested to complete a document detailing all computer applications in use and further indicate the probability of the application being used after 1999.

The Committee noted the progress made towards meeting the year 2000 compliance issue.

6. Information Technology Security Policy

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager detailing a proposed Internet Security Code of Practice and Network Security Policy.

The Support Services Committee on 12 November 1996 approved a general I.T. Security Policy and policies for personal computers and the UNIX systems. A Network Security Policy and Internet Code of Practice are the final policy areas relating to the I.T. Security Policy of the Council. The proposed Internet Code of Practice advises that the Internet must only be used for business purposes and must not be used to transmit confidential information or publish any material which may make the Council liable to any claim. The Network Security Policy makes provision for the security of communications, cabinets and hardware and prohibits unauthorised access.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the Network Security Policy and Internet Code of Practice; and (b) to instruct the Information Technology Services Manager to introduce the policies throughout the Council's Directorates.

7. Information Technology Services Delivery

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager detailing progress made in the provision of I.T. services during 1996/97 and the Service Delivery Plan for 1997/98.

During 1996/97 a number of major projects were undertaken including the UNIX-based ex-SRC Systems handover which took place on 31 October 1996 and the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with South Lanarkshire Council for services provided by the Caird Centre at Hamilton. The migration from the Caird Centre is due to take place in March 1998 which is a major project and will require a number of projects to run in tandem for its successful completion. The 1997/98 Service Delivery Plan will include the replacement of the Housing Benefits and Rents system, the development of the Intranet and the upgrading of the Registration system.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the I.T. Service Delivery Plan for 1997/98; and (b) to note progress made to date.

8. Planning, Roads and Environment: Application for Unpaid Leave of Absence

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on an application for an unpaid leave of absence submitted by a Technician within the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate.

The Director of Planning, Roads and Environment has intimated that he has no objection to the application which relates to the period September 1997 to September 1998.

The Committee agreed to approve the application for unpaid leave of absence between September 1997 and September 1998 on condition that no precedent be set with any further requests for unpaid leave of absence being considered on their respective merits.

9. Temporary Posts in Education: Teachers and Nursery Nurses

Submitted report by the Director of Education on proposed interim procedures for the filling of temporary vacancies in respect of Teachers and Nursery Nurses within the Education Service.

Temporary vacancies in educational establishments can occur for a variety of reasons such as, illness, maternity leave and the impact of role related national staffing standards which may, on a year to year basis, increase a schools establishment thus requiring temporary staff.

The procedures adopted by the former Strathclyde Regional Council varied between short and long-term absence. In the case of short-term absence the Sub-Regional

Educational Officer held a list of candidates who had previously expressed an interest in short-term supply work. These names were provided to the Head Teacher who made a decision on an appointment.

For long-term absence cover which was defined as being in excess of 3 weeks the decision regarding the appointment of a Teacher was made at Sub-Regional Office level.

In both cases the main determinant was length of service and no interview process was conducted.

Interim measures have now been drafted for both short-term and long-term contracts. It is proposed that North Ayrshire Council establish a register of Teachers seeking temporary employment in North Ayrshire which will include details of an individual's employment history and require the completion of an application form. Length of service will not be used as the main determinant for structuring the supply list and a separate list will be kept for the primary and secondary sectors and also for Nursery Nurses. Short-term absence will be defined as a period of extending to no more than 13 weeks. The existing procedures in relation to short-term vacancies will continue, however, prior to filling a long-term vacancy Head Teachers will be required to draw up a list for interview in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures and thereafter a panel of 3 comprising the Head Teacher and two other members of staff, being one from the school in question and one from another school, will interview the candidates to make the most suitable appointments based on merit.

The Personnel Services Manager reported on the outcome of negotiations with the Trade Unions in relation to the interim temporary procedures and advised that a report on a corporate approach to temporary positions would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the suggested procedures for filling temporary vacancies; and (b) to note that a report on a corporate approach to temporary vacancies will be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

10. National Joint Council: Circulars and National Agreements: Amendments to Conditions of Service

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager advising that an agreement has been reached nationally on certain Conditions of Service issues as detailed in Circular SO/212, APT&C services; MW163, Manual Workers; CS37, Craft Operatives and SE146, Teachers. The agreements relate to the payment of certain expenses.

The Committee agreed to adopt and implement the Conditions of Service Circulars as detailed in the report.

11. Pay Negotiations: APT&C Staffs: Manual Workers and Teachers

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager detailing progress made in relation to pay negotiations at the Scottish Council.

The Scottish Council are currently holding negotiations in respect of pay for APT&C Staffs, Manual Workers and Teachers. The Scottish Council's negotiations normally take cognisance of the Government's Pay Review Body and the National Joint Council's decisions.

Due to time constraints the Chief Executive and the Personnel Services Manager have responded to COSLA in relation to the current year's pay negotiations but consider that while pay negotiations be retained at a national level, a Member/Officer Working Group be established to formulate and agree the Council's response to consultations commencing with the 1998 pay negotiations.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the action taken by the Chief Executive and Personnel Services Manager in relation to the 1997 pay negotiations; and (b) to establish a Member/Officer Working Group comprising the Chair, Leader of the Council, Depute Leader of the Council, Convener and Chairs of appropriate Service Committees as appropriate to consider and agree the Council's response to consultations in respect of pay negotiations with effect from the 1998 round.

12. Responsibility Allowance Scheme

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposed Responsibility Allowance Scheme.

The Responsibility Allowance Policy and Procedures enable employees, subject to certain exemptions, who are temporarily undertaking higher duties to receive payments in respect of all or part of the responsibility associated with the higher post. The Responsibility Allowance Scheme will affect Chief Officials, APT&C Staffs, Teaching Staffs with a separate policy developed for Manual and Craft Workers.

After discussion the Committee agreed to approve the Responsibility Allowance Schemes.

13. Social Work Directorate: Three Towns Community Health Project

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager requesting approval for an amendment to the staffing structure for the Community House at Garven Road, Stevenston operated as part of the Social Work Directorate.

On 12 March 1997 the Social Work Committee agreed to terminate the Three Towns Community Health Project with the recommendation that the post of Clerical Assistant (35 hours per week Grade GS1/2) and Caretaker/Cleaner (20 hours per week Grade MW3) be transferred to mainline funding to provide essential support at

the Community House.

After discussion the Committee agreed to approve the addition of the post of Clerical Assistant (35 hours per week GS1/2) and Caretaker/Cleaner (20 hours per week MW3) to the establishment of the Social Work Directorate.

14. Irvine: Area of Land Adjoining Unit 41, Kyle Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of an area of land extending to 995 sq. metres adjoining property at 41 Kyle Road, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

15. Irvine: Land Adjacent to 75 Lamont Drive

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of an area of land extending to 145 sq. metres adjacent to 75 Lamont Drive, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

16. Irvine: 19R Bank Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of 19R Bank Street, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

17. Irvine: 2/4 North Vennel

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of office accommodation at 2/4 North Vennel, Irvine.

The Committee agreed, in principle, to the lease of offices at 2/4 North Vennel, Irvine subject to terms to be agreed by the Director of Housing Services in consultation with the Legal Services Manager.

18. Dreghorn: GEC Avery Depot, Corsehillmount Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed assignation of Lease in respect of property at the former GEC Avery Depot at Corsehillmount, Dreghorn.

The Committee agreed to approve the assignation of Lease on terms and conditions

provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

19. Kilwinning: Land Adjacent to 39 Ashgrove Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of an area of land extending to 192 sq. metres adjacent to 39 Ashgrove Road, Kilwinning.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

20. Ardrossan: Former Seton Street Hall

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of the former Seton Street Hall, Ardrossan.

The Committee agreed to continue consideration of the disposal of the property to a future meeting.

21. Stevenston: Land at 100/104 Boglemart Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of an area of land extending to 0.449 acres at 100/104 Boglemart Street, Stevenston.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of land on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

22. Ardrossan: Area of Ground to the Rear of 96 Greenacres

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of an area of land extending to 49.4 square metres adjacent to 96 Greenacres, Ardrossan.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of the land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

23. Dalry: Ground at 2 Putyan Avenue

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of an area of land extending to 123 square metres adjacent to 2 Putyan Avenue, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposed sale of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

24. Dalry: Unit 2/10 Bridgend

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of Units 2/10 Bridgend, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to approve the lease on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

25. Dalry: Unit 7, Bridgend Industrial Estate

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of Unit 7, Bridgend Industrial Estate, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to approve the lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

26. Fairlie: Unit 6, Keppenburn Workshops

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of Unit 6, Keppenburn Workshops, Fairlie.

The Committee agreed to approve the lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

27. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed that the undernoted matter be considered as a matter of urgency.

28. Commercial Services Directorate: Industrial Tribunal Decision

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager advising of the outcome of an Industrial Tribunal in relation to a former employee of Strathclyde Regional Council.

The Tribunal determined that the former employee of Strathclyde Regional Council was unfairly dismissed from his post of Equipment Materials Controller within the Cleaning and Related Services Department. The Tribunal further determined that as the post which the applicant occupied prior to his dismissal transferred, as a vacancy, to North Ayrshire Council on 1 April 1996, the Council would require to offer him a position.

The post of Equipment Materials Controller was included in the structure of the Cleaning and Catering Section of the Commercial Services Directorate and remained unfilled as part of the budget savings.

In order to comply with the Industrial Tribunal decision the Director of Commercial Services in consultation with the Personnel Services Manager offered a post within North Ayrshire Council to the former employee and this was accepted with effect from 21 April 1997.

The decision of the Tribunal has no bearing on North Ayrshire Council and the restoration awarded by the Tribunal will be accrued to Strathclyde Regional Council.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the action taken by the

Director of Commercial Services in order to comply with the decision of the Industrial Tribunal; and (b) otherwise to note the Industrial Tribunal's decision.

The Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.