

The Executive of North Ayrshire Council
30 March 2010

IRVINE, 30 March 2010 - At a meeting of the Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David O'Neill, John Reid, Tom Barr, John Bell, Margaret McDougall and Peter McNamara.

Also Present

Alan Munro.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; A. Herbert, Corporate Director and C. Hatton, Head of Environment and Related Services (Finance and Infrastructure); B. Docherty, Corporate Director (Social Services and Health); C. Kirk, Corporate Director, J. Leckie, Head of Service, J. McKnight, Principal Officer (Community Learning and Development) and A. Sutton, Library and Information Manager (Education and Skills); I. T. Mackay, Solicitor to the Council; and J. Montgomery, General Manager, L. McEwan, Communications Manager, and M. McKeown, Committee Services Manager (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

P. Wiggins, Chief Executive, Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company.

Chair

Councillor O'Neill in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 16, Councillor Bell, as an employee of ECG Facilities Services, declared an interest in relation to agenda item 9 below (Measured Term Contracts 2010 / 2013 Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems: Servicing, Maintenance & Repairs and Drainage & Sewerage Services: Cleaning, Repairs & Minor Works), and took no part in the determination thereof.

2. Independent High Level Review of Social Services

The Chair advised that the proposed presentation and report would be continued to a future meeting of the Executive. The Chief Executive advised the Executive of the consultations that will be undertaken meantime.

Noted.

3. Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company (URC)

At its meeting held on 9 March 2010, the Executive received a presentation by the Chief Executive of Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company on the company's regeneration work, including physical developments facilitated by the transfer of land from the Council. The presentation provided details of:-

- the background to the establishment of the URC and its geographical remit;
- the various strands of its strategy to encourage regeneration;
- its initial areas of priority;
- the nature and sources of financial and other support available to the URC;
- plans for physical developments in Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston and Irvine; and
- the URC's partnership working and community engagement activities.

At that time, the Executive asked questions, and received clarification, on the implications of the proposed expansion of Clyde Marina, Ardrossan on other marinas in the area. It was agreed that the Chief Executive of the URC be invited to the next meeting of the Executive to respond to any further questions arising from the presentation. Mr Wiggins was in attendance. Members asked questions and received clarification in relation to the following areas:-

- progress of a proposed golf, hotel and residential developments at beach park and harbourside, Irvine, and the potential of the development to create jobs and attract tourism to the area;
- levels of training and employment opportunities arising from the URC's work;
- the role of the company in promoting employment opportunities;
- the work of the company in securing manufacturing jobs in the area and in regenerating offices and industrial spaces to facilitate inward investment;
- the role of other agencies such as Scottish Development International and the Council in assisting the company in its work;
- planned and potential works around Ardrossan Harbour;
- potential for inward investment in areas outwith Irvine Bay as a result of the company activities;
- the longer term future and development of the company and the Council's role in shaping that future.

Noted.

4. Development of a Waste Management Strategy and Implementation Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on the proposed formation of a working group to develop a Waste Management Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The National Waste Strategy places stretching targets upon Local Authorities to reduce the amount of waste disposed of at landfill and to increase the amount of waste that is recycled. In 2007 a cross-party Member/Officer Working Group was established to examine collection methodologies and the alterations required to enable the achievement of statutory targets for 2010. This Group subsequently made recommendations to the Executive resulting in the implementation of revised collection methodologies during 2008 and 2009.

The Council needs to develop plans and actions to enable the achievement of statutory targets for 2013 onwards to 2020. The European Union Landfill Directive sets down targets for Member States to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste disposed of at landfill to:-

- 75% of the 1995 level by 2010
- 50% of the 1995 level by 2013
- 35% of the 1995 level by 2020

Government has allocated landfill allowances to Local Authorities to implement these targets. Where these allowances are exceeded, penalties of £150 for each additional tonne can be levied against the appropriate Local Authority. However, the Scottish Government has recently stated that due to the progress made by Scottish Councils in meeting these targets, the penalty scheme has been suspended during the life of the current Parliament. The National Waste Strategy further supports the principle of securing more sustainable ways of dealing with waste by setting down the following recycling targets:-

- 40% by 2010
- 50% by 2013
- 60% by 2020
- 70% by 2025

The implementation of new waste collection methodologies, recommended by the cross-party Working Group, has realised the performance change necessary for the Council to achieve targets for 2010.

However, in order to meet the stretching statutory targets for future years and the wider ambitions of the national waste strategy it is now necessary to undertake a fundamental review of current waste management services and to devise a long term detailed strategy and subsequent implementation plan. The service changes required to achieve these statutory targets will have wide ranging implications for residents and other service users in the manner that their waste is managed, future budgetary requirements and the impact upon 'greenhouse' gases. It is likely that the implementation phase will require the examination of a number of contractual arrangements that will require legal services input. It is important to ensure that these factors are duly considered in the development of a suitable strategy.

The Executive agreed to establish a cross-party Working Group of Elected Members, supported by Officers within Waste Management, Finance, Communications, Legal, and Energy Management, to consider options and make recommendations to the Executive in the form of a detailed Waste Strategy and an implementation plan.

5. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (HMIE) Inspection of the Learning Community Surrounding Auchenharvie Academy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on the HMIE report on the inspection of the learning community surrounding Auchenharvie Academy, Stevenston.

The HMIE inspection covered the work of the Council's Community Services teams, including Community Learning and Development, arts, culture, libraries and children's services, and the work by community volunteers and partnership groups. The HMIE inspectors evaluated the range and quality of learning opportunities available to young and adult people, the inclusion opportunities provided to adults with learning difficulties, ex offenders, unemployed and minority and ethnic groups. Members of the inspection team met staff from a range of Council Services, volunteers and partner organisations. The report by the HM Inspectors was published on 2 March 2010.

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths:

- well-targeted and inclusive provision;
- responsive and effective local partnerships;
- effective community groups;
- embedded culture of self-evaluation across community learning partners.

Additionally, the following areas for improvement have been agreed between the HMIE, the community services teams and local partners:

- improve networking with local community based youth organisations;
- ensure a more consistent level of capacity building;
- support to local communities and networks.

In consultation with the community services team, plans are being put in place to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report in service improvement plans. The education authority and partners will build on the strengths identified in the inspection report and work together to address the areas for improvement by developing opportunities for more structured involvement by local volunteer youth organisations operating within the learning community area; and by ensuring that support to voluntary groups, local communities and networks is consistent and recorded in reporting procedures. The various community service plans to address the points for improvement will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval following consultation with staff and community partners. The HMIE indicated in their report that they were able to rely on the high quality of self-evaluation provided by the learning community. As a result the HMIE ended their inspection process at this stage.

Members welcomed the very positive report, recorded their appreciation of work being done by Council employees, volunteers and partner organisations, and expressed the hope that the same high standard of work and positive outcomes could be extended to other areas of North Ayrshire. Arising from the discussion, Councillor Munro asked for and received information on the progress of the Hayocks action plan and on the targeting of resources, both capital and revenue, to address the problems of that area.

The Executive agreed to (a) approve the proposals made to address the key points for action in the Inspection Report; and (b) note the arrangements for follow-through.

6. Irvine: Ayr Road/Lamont Place: Unit 85

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on the proposed sale of Unit 85, Ayr Road/Lamont Place, Irvine.

Unit 85, Ayr Road/Lamont Place, Irvine was formerly held on lease by Comet Radio Vision Services Limited. The property is now vacant and was offered for sale subject to a set of planning guidelines. The existing building extends to approximately 1,797 sq. m. on a site area of 5,271 sq. m. The report provided details of the offers received for the property all of which are conditional on planning permission.

The Executive agreed to accept the highest offer by Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited in the sum of £850,000, subject to terms and conditions to be agreed, including planning permission for a petrol filling station and payment of the Council's Legal and Estates fees.

7. Sundry Debtors Write Off

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on balances to be written off under delegated powers and seeking authority to write off balances over £1,000.

The Council's Financial Regulations provide that sums due to the Council may be written off when all avenues for recovery have been exhausted and where the sums are considered to be irrecoverable. Debts of less than £500 may be written off under delegated powers by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure), whilst debts of between £500 and £1,000 may be written off by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) following consultation with the Chief Executive. Individual debts over £1,000 require the approval of the Executive before being written off.

The appendix to the report provided details of 372 accounts below £1,000 with a value of £30,364.78 that have been written off under delegated powers. A further 57 accounts in excess of £1,000 totalling £54,494.06 require Executive approval to be written off. Although it is proposed that the accounts be written off as irrecoverable, further attempts will be made to recover the debts through Stirling Park, Sheriff Officers, where possible. Since April 2007, debt previously written off totalling £843,021.13 has been passed to Stirling Park for collection. To date £33,132.20 (3.93%) has been recovered.

The Executive (a) noted the sums written off under delegated powers; and (b) authorised the write off of debts over £1000, as set out in the report.

8. Auchenharvie Ice Rink

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on the progress of procuring a contract by competitive tender for refurbishment of the Ice Rink at the Auchenharvie Leisure Centre, Stevenston.

The General Services Capital Programme, as approved by the Executive on 11 February 2010, has provision to provide an improved ice facility at the Auchenharvie Leisure Centre. The total allocation of the capital budget, including fees and direct purchase etc., is £3.9 m. Works to the ice rink at the Auchenharvie Leisure Centre comprise two contracts. The first is for the demolition of the old leisure ice pad and the stripping out of all plant, materials, etc., and other down takings which are required prior to the refurbishment contract. The second contract is for the fitting-out of the improved ice facility. Utilising two separate contracts has allowed an earlier start to the works and minimised the duration of the main refurbishment contract. Subsequent to competitive tenders being sought, the demolition contract was let to Dem-Master Demolition of Bathgate in the sum of £95,600.91. These works commenced on 29 March 2010. Details of the proposed works were summarised in the report.

A contract period of 40 weeks has been set after consultation with various contractors and is believed to be the shortest practicable period for the scale and complexity of the works. However, tenderers are also required to submit a price to carry out the works in 36 weeks. This will enable the Council to decide whether the additional cost of an accelerated programme is value for money prior to the successful tender being accepted. The tenderers have been selected from the Council's list of approved contractors as being the most suitable for the type of work.

Noted.

9. Measured Term Contracts 2010 / 2013 Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems: Servicing, Maintenance & Repairs and Drainage & Sewerage Services: Cleaning, Repairs & Minor Works

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on the tender received both for Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Systems and for Drainage and Sewerage Services (copy enclosed).

Infrastructure and Design Services manages a range of specialist Measured Term Contracts relevant to the Council's operational properties. These include areas of critical reactive maintenance works which allow properties to remain operational and service provision to continue in the event of maintenance defects arising. Two such contracts relate to (a) Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Systems: Servicing, Maintenance and Repairs, and (b) Drainage and Sewerage Services: Cleaning, Repairs and Minor Works. These contracts enable the Council to maintain the operational status of properties and fulfil statutory obligations in respect of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems safety.

Following approval to re-tender these contracts, a tendering exercise was undertaken in line with European and UK legislation and in accordance with the Council's own Corporate Procurement Policy. This tendering exercise included thorough evaluation of all submissions on a cost/quality ratio to determine the most economically advantageous tender for the Council. Results of these evaluations were shown in the appendix to the report.

The Executive agreed to accept (a) the offer from ROK Building Limited, at an annual notional value of £150,000 and (b) the offer from George Leslie Limited, at an annual notional value of £163,250, both being the most economically advantageous tenders, as set out in appendix 1.

10. New Care Homes for Young People: Pennyburn and Redstone, Kilwinning

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance & Infrastructure) on tenders received for two new care homes for young people at Pennyburn and Redstone, Kilwinning.

The General Services Capital Programme, as approved by the Executive on 11 February 2010, has provision for two new care homes for young people, to be located at Pennyburn and Redstone, Kilwinning. Each care home is designed to accommodate six young people in facilities built to current standards, together with all associated facilities for staff. The care home at Pennyburn is scheduled to be completed in April 2011 and the Redstone unit in May 2011.

Tenders were received on 26 February 2010 for the Redstone project and on 15 March 2010 for the Pennyburn development. Tenderers were selected from the all-Ayrshire approved list, as being those most suitable for the type of work. Quality standards were defined in the specifications within the tender documents. Details of the tenders received were provided in the appendix to the report.

The Executive agreed to accept the offers received from Barr Ltd., Paisley in the sum of £1,239,594.47 for the Redstone development and £1,056,850.72 for the Pennyburn Road development.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.