

Commercial Services Committee
25 March 1998

Irvine, 25 March 1998 - At a Meeting of the Commercial Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council held at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Thomas Dickie, Peter McNamara, Patrick Browne, Alan Munro, Gena Seales, George Stevenand Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

W. Cowan, Director of Commercial Services, J. Currie, Head of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance, K. Wilson, Head of Catering and Cleaning, D. McCall, Cemeteries Manager, J. Hair, Principal Officer (Financial Services) and M. McKeown, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Donn and Irene Oldfather.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 11 February 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Tenders for Vehicles 1997/98

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the progress to date in the replacement vehicles programme for 1997/98.

Noted.

3. Supply of Unleaded Petrol and Derv from Local Garages

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on tenders received for the supply of vehicle fuel for 1998/99.

Tenders were invited for the supply of petrol and derv from local garages for the year commencing 1 April 1998 to supplement the bulk supplies of unleaded petrol and derv obtained via the Buying Agency Contract. Eight local garages submitted tenders and details of the bids were presented to the Committee. It was noted that the prices quoted would be subject to adjustments to reflect the increases in fuel prices announced in the Chancellor's budget.

After discussion the Committee a) noted that the cheapest tenders had been accepted for each Area; and b) agreed that the Director of Commercial Services should report to the next meeting of the Committee on the impact of the increased costs on the various Directorates' budgets.

4. Supply of Tyres

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on tenders received for the supply of tyres for 1998/99.

Tenders were invited on the basis of cost per tyre as well as breakdown and puncture repair prices, and each tenderer was issued with the Council's fleet list and a list of tyre manufacturers used.

Overall the best tender received was from Motorway Tyres and it was recommended that the Committee should accept this tender.

The Committee agreed to accept this recommendation.

5. Tenders for Vehicle Hire

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on tenders received for vehicle hire for the Garden Tidy Scheme.

Tenders were invited from six companies for the supply of vehicles and trailers for use in the seasonal Garden tidy scheme. Details of the offers submitted by each tenderer were presented to the Committee. It was noted that the lowest 'acceptable' tenders were as follows:

<u>Tender</u>	<u>Lowest Tenderer Per Unit</u>
Supply Six Crew Cabs with Tipping Bodies and Trailers.	Swinton Car & Van Rental - £142 per unit
Supply Three Standard 1.5 Tonne pick Ups with Tow Ball	Turner Hire Drive Limited - £85 per unit

The Committee agreed to accept these tenders.

6. Wheeled Bins: Pilot Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the progress of the Pilot Scheme for the introduction of wheeled bins in the Garnock Valley.

Detailed discussions have taken place between all parties involved in the delivery of the proposed wheel bin service and a programme for implementation has been drawn up. It is anticipated that the distribution of bins to households will begin on 2 April 1998 with collection starting 20 April 1998. Arrangements are being put in place for householders for whom wheeled bins are not practical, for example, e.g. by reason of infirmity or ill health.

Noted.

7. Wheeled Bins - Full Implementation

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on tenders received for the supply and delivery of wheeled bins throughout the remainder of North Ayrshire.

On 11 February 1998 the Committee was advised that a notice had been placed in

the European Journal inviting prospective companies to tender for the supply and installation of wheeled bins to complete provision throughout the whole of North Ayrshire. Of the responses received, nine companies were eligible and the Committee agreed that these companies should be invited to tender, subject to Council approval of the scheme and its financing.

Only eight companies submitted tenders only eight did so. Of these, the lowest acceptable tender, based on the criteria of price, weight, design and quality, was submitted by SSI Schaefer in the sum of £656,200.

The Committee agreed to award the contract to SSI Schaefer.

8. Value for Money Audit 1996/97: Trade Refuse

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the final Audit Report on Value for Money in relation to the Council's trade refuse services.

The Accounts Commission's draft report was considered by the Committee on 11 February 1998 when it was agreed to increase the charges for trade refuse collection in response to the observations made by the Commission regarding the present heavy subsidy of the service.

The final report has now been discussed with officers of the Council and the Accounts Commission and an Action Plan agreed. Issues to be addressed by the Plan have either been attended to or are under discussion, and specific reference was made to the Commission's recommendation that no new bag agreements should be permitted except in exceptional circumstances, with customers being required to purchase wheeled bins in future.

After consideration the Committee a) noted the report and the timescale and actions being taken to address issues raised by the Accounts Commission; b) agreed that no new bag agreements should be entered in to; and c) agreed that the feasibility of setting up an annual trading account for trade refuse should be considered.

9. Cemetery Charges 1998/99

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the proposed charges for burial services in North Ayrshire for 1998/99.

The 1997 review of cemeteries within North Ayrshire Council highlighted that the charges imposed for the service were insufficient to maintain the required standard of administration and service delivery. As a result it was agreed that the charges should be increased on a phased basis over 3 years in order to improve the service and achieve costs more in line with the Scottish average, with a gradual impact on the user of the service.

The proposed rates for the financial year 1998/99 were set out in the report. It was noted that the services relating to memorial permits, lair searches and scattering of remains, had no charge in 1997/98, but would be accounted for in 1998/99. Charges have been increased in line with year 2 of the 1997 review and include 2.5% for inflation.

The Committee agreed that the proposed charges as set out in the report should be implemented from 1 April 1998.

10. CoSLA Merit Award: Alpha Card System

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the CoSLA Merit Award received for the Alpha Cashless School Meals system.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) operate an annual quality awards scheme which recognises achievements within local government. The award is based on successful quality projects that have displayed innovations such as market research, service improvement, planning, introduction and operation, customer consultation, review, and social impact.

The Commercial Services Directorate entered the Alpha Card, the Council's cashless school meals system, into the category concerning 'Service Improvement' and the system was subsequently awarded a merit award by CoSLA.

The Committee welcomed this achievement and asked that congratulations be passed on to relevant staff.

11. Lunch Clubs

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on measures taken to transfer the administration of Lunch Clubs from the Social Work Directorate to the Commercial Services Directorate.

Lunch clubs are a non assessed facility operated largely by volunteers and demand for the service has risen dramatically over the last two years and continues to rise. The nature of the service does not allow the Social Work Directorate to adequately oversee and control the demand, since access to it is not dependent on Social Work assessment nor is provision is of a care package.

To ensure more appropriate monitoring of demand, more efficient use of resources and oversight of money collection and hygiene standards, it has been agreed that responsibility for the provision of the lunch clubs should transfer to the Commercial Services Directorate.

The Committee noted the position.

12. Building Cleaning Benchmarking Forum

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the involvement of the Catering and Cleaning Section in a benchmarking group comprising various local authorities within Scotland.

The introduction of 'Best Value' has empowered service providers within local government to benchmark their services against other operators and service providers. The benchmarking exercise is designed to measure a series of performance indicators within a specific function and through this, identify areas of excellence as well as areas for improvement.

The Catering and Cleaning Section of the Commercial Services Directorate has been invited to join a benchmarking group made up of various local authorities within Scotland. A series of meetings has been arranged and a questionnaire has been issued for completion. The data collected will be collated and reproduced into a report for use by each authority.

The Committee agreed to receive a report on the benchmarking results in due course.

13. Customer Comments Scheme Monitoring Covering 3 Month Period Ending 31 December 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the performance in managing customer comments.

Noted.

14. Cleaning Contract: Customer Satisfaction Report 3/12/97 - 30/12/97

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the standards achieved in the Building Cleaning Contract.

Noted.

15. Conferences

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on proposed attendance at conferences.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Chair and Vice-Chair or their nominees to attend :

- (a) The Institute of Wastes Management Conference in Torbay from 9 to 12 June 1998
- (b) The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management Seminar in Portsmouth from 7 to 9 September 1998; and
- (c) A Catering Conference still to be selected.

16. Urgent Items

Littering

The Committee discussed the problems of littering and fly tipping at various locations within the Council's boundaries and the need to continue to heighten public awareness of the problem.

Arising out of this discussion it was agreed that there should be regular monitoring reports to each Area Committee highlighting issues on an Area by Area basis.

The meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.