

Property Services Committee  
22 August 2006

**IRVINE, 22 August 2006** - At a Meeting of the Property Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

Samuel Taylor, Stewart Dewar, John Bell, Gordon Allison, Jacqueline Browne, Margie Currie, Anna Donn, Margaret McDougall, Elizabeth McLardy, Margaret Munn, David O'Neill and Nan Wallace.

**In Attendance**

T. Orr, Corporate Director, O. Clayton, Head of Housing, R. Small, Head of Roads, J. Currie, Head of Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Transport, J. Paul, Head of Technical Services, I. Grice, Head of Building Services and M. Cashmore, Principal Officer (Property Services); K. McDonald, Finance Manager (Finance); and J. Stevenson, Communications Officer and M. McKeown, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer and (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Taylor in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Drew Duncan, John Reid and Richard Wilkinson.

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 June 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Revenue Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Property Services at the end of June 2006, and on projections to the end of financial year 2006/07.

Noted.

**3. Multi Storey Flats: Saltcoats: Lambie and O'Connor Court**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on a proposal to convert the multi-storey flats at Lambie and O'Connor Courts, Saltcoats, from general needs housing to amenity standard housing.

The two blocks were built in 1967 as general needs housing and are available to let to persons over the age of 16 years. Of the 64 tenants currently living in the blocks, 57 are over 60 year of age. Due to the high number of older residents in the blocks, and the problems that can occur when people with incompatible lifestyles are living in very close proximity in high flats, the Housing Service has operated an informal local letting policy where only people aged over sixty or disabled applicants are selected for any properties that become vacant. Recent inspections by Communities Scotland of South Ayrshire Council and other local authorities have however highlighted that it is illegal in terms of the Housing Scotland Act 1987 for landlords to take into account a person's age when allocating general needs houses. Age can only be a factor in allocating a property where that property has design features, which make it specifically suited to people of a particular age bracket.

Under the Council's Allocation Policy, Sheltered Housing or Amenity Housing can only be let to applicants over 60 years. The Council can refuse to sell amenity housing although it requires to apply to the Scottish Minister for consent to refuse to sell and each case is considered on its individual merits. It was proposed that flats that become vacant within the Lambie Court and O'Connor Court, Saltcoats, should be converted to amenity housing standard. Converted flats will only be allocated to older or disabled tenants.

The Committee agreed that flats becoming vacant in the multi-storey flats at Lambie Court and O'Connor Court, Saltcoats, should be reallocated as amenity housing on the terms set out in the report.

#### **4. Vineburgh Redevelopment**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on proposals to progress the redevelopment and regeneration of the Vineburgh estate, Irvine.

In November 2005, the Committee agreed to the demolition and redevelopment of 306 properties in the Vineburgh area of Irvine. Since then a Steering Group has been formed to ensure the input of a wide range of stakeholders in the redevelopment proposals.

A research company was commissioned to interview Council tenants affected by the proposals, in order to ascertain their preferences for temporary or permanent rehousing. The outcome of this consultation indicated that 73% of tenants wished to remain permanently in Vineburgh, 21% wished to be rehoused elsewhere in Irvine and 6% no longer wished to remain in Irvine at all. The project will deal not only with issues of temporary relocation and compensation/ purchase of properties, but also the potential for owners to return to the area following redevelopment in the tenure of their choice. The rights of the 18 home owners affected by the proposal must also be considered.

The decision to demolish all of the properties requires consideration to be given to no longer allow Right to Buy sales by sitting tenants. Legal and Protective Service have been consulted on this matter and have advised that in order to refuse an application to buy, the Council must first seek the approval of Scottish Ministers. Before permission to refuse will be granted the Council must have formulated a programme for demolition which includes a date for the property affected to be demolished.

Having considered various options to take the redevelopment of Vineburgh forward, the Steering Group has concluded that a masterplanning approach is best placed to deliver on the overall aims of regenerating and improving the physical and social environment of Vineburgh. This approach will aim to raise aspirations for the area, achieve consensus on the way forward, and develop realistic delivery routes. It also recognises the long term nature of the project both in terms of implementation and in providing a lasting solution. A consultant has been engaged to provide advice on the overall masterplan for the area and to assist in drawing up a brief for the production of the plan. The new Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company will also be consulted on the proposals.

The Committee agreed to (a) the engagement of a consultant to assist in the production of the Vineburgh masterplan; (b) award special case status for rehousing to those residents affected by any demolition under the terms of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy; (c) authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) to seek permission from Scottish Ministers to issue a notice of refusal of any Right to Buy applications received following the production of the masterplan and the timetable for demolition; (d) the payment, where appropriate, of home loss and disturbance allowances to tenants and owners; and (e) the purchase by negotiation through an independent valuer, of the owner occupied properties within the redevelopment area.

## **5. Proposals for Park and Ride Facilities at Irvine Station**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the outcome of the Park and Ride Study at Irvine Station.

The Council has previously obtained funding from WESTRANS transport partnership to undertake a feasibility study into parking at Irvine Station and to look at the potential locations for additional parking. Consulting engineers, Faber Maunsell were appointed to assess the existing and latent parking demands at the station and to consider options for alleviating the problems. The consultants' report, the Executive Summary from which was appended to the report, identifies five possible options for detailed appraisal. These were:-

Option A - Extend existing station car park  
Option B - Provide a new car park facility at the Fullarton yard site  
Option C - Utilise part of the Maritime Museum car park  
Option D - Provide a new car park on land adjacent to Homebase on Riverway  
Option E - Seek agreement with the Rivergate shopping centre to allow all day parking in areas of their car parks allowing park and ride users to park

Of the options considered by the consultants, options B and C were considered to be the most favourable.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the outcome of the consultants' study; and (b) that further investigation be given to Options B and C, as set out in the consultants' report.

## **6. Scotland's National Transport Strategy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the Council's response to the Scottish Executive's consultation on issues for the National Transport Strategy.

The Scottish Executive White Paper published in June 2004 "Scotland's Transport Future", made a commitment to the preparation of a National Transport Strategy (NTS). Transport issues to be covered by the NTS will include public transport, managing and maintaining the road network, accessibility and rural transport, travel choices, demand management/reduction, and international and UK connections.

A consultation document on the future NTS was issued by the Executive in April 2006 with responses sought by 13 July 2006. The results of the consultation will be considered in the development of the final NTS later this year. Due to the timing of the consultation, the Chief Executive authorised the submission of an Officer's response to the Executive. A copy of the response was appended to the report.

The Committee agreed to the terms of the response submitted to the Scottish Executive on the Council's behalf.

## **7. Saltcoats Flood Prevention Scheme**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the outcome of the public consultation exercise in relation to a proposed Saltcoats Flood Prevention Scheme.

At its meeting held in June 2005, the Committee was advised of the findings of a feasibility report to find a solution to the problem of coastal flooding in the town centre and Winton Circus areas of Saltcoats and authorised the Head of Roads to undertake a public consultation on the options presented in the feasibility study.

A manned public exhibition was held on 3 and 4 April 2006 at Saltcoats Town Hall. The exhibition was publicised through leaflets, notices in the local press, posters in local shops and along the seafront, and on the Council's website. The exhibition, which was left in place for the remainder of the week, presented the options being considered and sought feedback from the public. The option that emerged as most favourable involves the construction of rock control structures within the harbour which will minimise the impact on the geological Site of Special Scientific Interest, the raising of defences north of the harbour headland, and the construction of retired flood walls and/or banks within the Braes car park area. An apparent higher degree of flooding to the north of the harbour, and flooding in the Winton Circus area, has also been identified which will require further consideration.

In implementing the Flood Prevention Scheme the opportunity will be taken, subject to finance being identified, to carry out a range of amenity improvements to the harbour and promenade areas.

The Committee agreed (a) to the implementation of the preferred option as set out in the report; and (b) that the Head of Roads take the project forward through the promotion of a Flood Prevention Scheme, detailing design, tendering procedures and construction.

#### **8. Arran: Alternative Monthly Collection of Residual Waste and Recycled Material**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed policy in relation to the introduction of a 2 bin system for the collection of residual waste and dry recycle materials from the Island of Arran from 6 November 2006.

The Policy, a copy of which was appended to the report, covers all aspects of the system for the collection of residual and recycled waste, including the operation of special uplift services, collection of commercial waste, and the disposal of solid fuel. The Policy also makes provision for a special pull out service for householders who are unable, due to medical infirmity, to present their wheeled bins container at the kerbside, or other designated collection point, and where there is no other able bodied person available to do so. The operation of the Policy will be monitored on an annual basis.

The Committee agreed to approve the policy for the alternative monthly collection of residual waste and recycled materials from the Island of Arran, as set out in the appendix to the report.

## **9. Hazardous Household Waste**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the outcome of the tendering exercise undertaken in relation to the recycling of Hazardous Household Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

The Scottish Executive has made an offer of grant of £32,800 to the Council towards the additional costs arising from disposing of separately collected Household Hazardous Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment e.g. TVs and computer monitors containing cathode ray tubes.

In order to identify a suitable outlet for this waste, officers from the three Ayrshire Councils prepared tender documents which were issued to five companies. The lowest and most cost effective was received from CCL (North) Ltd., of Irvine, at a cost of £3.00 per unit collected and £2.00 per unit delivered to their premises.

The Committee agreed to accept the tender from CCL (North) Ltd., of Irvine, to provide a recycling service for Household Hazardous Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, on the terms indicated in the report.

## **10. Corporate Asset Management system: Provision of Property Condition Surveys and AutoCAD Plans**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on tenders received for the provision of property condition surveys and AutoCAD plans.

Up-to-date property condition surveys and electronic AutoCAD plans are key components of the Corporate Asset Management System. Provision has been made within the General Services Capital Programme for the costs associated with the procurement of these surveys and drawings and five consultants were invited to tender for the work. Following an evaluation process the tender submitted by Tribal Property Specialist Services in the sum of £488,512.50 was considered to be the most economically advantageous offer. To allow the project to proceed the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, authorised the acceptance of the tender from Tribal Property Specialist Services.

The Committee agreed to approve the action taken by the Chief Executive in authorising acceptance of the tender from Tribal Property Specialist Services in the sum of £488,512.50 for the provision of property condition surveys and electronic AutoCAD plans.

## **11. Closing Order: Largs: 1 Gallowgate Lane**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed serving of a Closing Order on a property at 1 Gallowgate Lane, Largs, which, following inspection, was found to be Below Tolerable Standard and not fit for occupation.

The Committee agreed to authorise the serving of a Closing Order on the owner of a property at 1 Gallowgate Lane, Largs, to prevent occupation.

## **12. Valedictory**

The Corporate Director (Property Services) advised the Committee that Mr Iain Grice, Head of Building Services, was leaving the Council to take up alternative employment.

The Committee recorded its appreciation of Mr Grice's contribution to the success of the Building Service within Property Services.

The meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.