

Support Services Committee
5 May 1998

Irvine, 5 May 1998 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

The Director of Financial Services; the Head of Corporate Business; the Legal Services Manager; the Information Technology Services Manager; A. Ferguson, Principal Personnel Officer (Personnel Services); and J. Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. Munro in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

David O'Neill and Patrick Browne.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 24 March 1998, 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 to 31 March 1998.

A total of £150,000 was collected in respect of Community Charge during March 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debt of £16,889,000, while £1,664,000 was collected for Council Tax in March 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debt in this case of £4,633,000.

Noted.

3. Non Domestic Rates: Warrant Sale Request

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services confirming that the Chair had authorised Sheriff Officers to proceed to warrant sale as a matter of urgency in a particular case.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision by the Chair.

4. Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Framework Agreement Contract

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the outcome of an evaluation of recent tenders for the supply of mobile phones and pagers in accordance with the Council's Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Policy.

The final stage in the implementation of the Procurement Policy will be to introduce a

corporate framework agreement with key suppliers. To this end, seventeen companies submitted a pre tender questionnaire in response to an advertisement in the Glasgow Herald and valid tenders were subsequently received from British Telecom, DX Communications, Sedgewall, Scottish Telecom and Vodafone within the allotted timescale. Separate evaluations were carried out for mobile phones and pagers as companies were allowed to tender for either or both. The report gave details on the substance of the contracts to be awarded under the framework agreement which will commit the Council to purchase from the successful suppliers for the next two years, with an option to extend for a third year, which is in keeping with the principles of 'Best Value'.

The Committee agreed (a) to request that Members approve the award of contract under a framework agreement to BT and Scottish Telecom for Mobile phones and BT and Sedgewall for Pagers; (b) that the IT Services Manager implement the framework agreement throughout the Council; and (c) that Directors and Heads of Department be advised that all future purchases of mobile phones and pagers will be placed through the framework agreement.

5. Minutes

(a) Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS1) being the Minutes of the meeting of the Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee held on 20 March 1998.

Noted.

(b) Special Sub-Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS2) being the Minutes of the meeting of the Support Services Special Sub-Committee held on 24 March 1998.

Noted.

(c) Council Tax Review Board

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS3) being the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Tax Review Board held on 27 March 1998.

Noted.

6. Outstanding Industrial Tribunal Cases

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the progress on outstanding Industrial Tribunal cases involving North Ayrshire Council.

Noted.

7. Social Work Directorate

(a) Irvine: Befriend a Child Project

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposal to establish a new post of Project Leader within the Social Work Directorate following the termination of Urban Programme funding for the Befriend a Child Project.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to continue consideration of this matter pending a report by the Director of Social Work on the specific source of funding provision for the post.

(b) Services to the Physically Frail Elderly and Elderly Mentally Infirm: Staffing

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposal to establish 8 additional posts within the Social Work Directorate as a result of a transfer of resources from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board to the 3 Ayrshire Councils.

Following negotiations between Ayrshire and Arran Health Board and the 3 Ayrshire Authorities a formula has been agreed for the distribution of these funds which are to be allocated to the expansion of services in respect of Community Care to the physically frail elderly and elderly mentally infirm. The additional staffing resources involved would be managed through the Kilbirnie/Largs/Arran Area Social Work Manager and details of the staffing proposals and associated costs, amounting to £50,768 per annum were provided in the report. It was further confirmed that all additional costs would be met through funding from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

The Committee agreed to authorise the establishment of these eight new posts.

8. Social Work/Commercial Services Directorates: Changes to the Staffing Structures within Residential Child Care

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposed changes to the Social Work Directorate staffing establishment within Residential Child Care arising from the closure of the Children's Unit at Warner Street in Stevenston.

Following the closure of the Unit last autumn, the Social Work Committee agreed to open 2 new annexes linked to existing Children's Units at Seaton Terrace, Irvine (linked to 24 Kilwinning Road Children's Unit) and Garven Road, Stevenston (linked to Harley Place Children's Unit). Thirteen staff of the Social Work Directorate formerly located within Warner Street Children's Unit have agreed to be redeployed to the two new annexes and four employees from the Commercial Services Directorate, affected by the closure, have also been redeployed into vacant posts at other Social Work establishments. Comprehensive details were provided on the staffing implications of these proposals and the report also confirmed that their associated costs will result in an overall saving of £83,796.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the disestablishment of residential child care staffing from Warner Street Children's Unit, Stevenston; and (b) the establishment of residential child care staffing structures within the annexes at 24 Kilwinning Road, Irvine and Harley Place Children's Unit, Saltcoats, as detailed in the report.

9. Community and Recreational Services Directorate

(a) Staffing of the Harbour Arts Centre

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed establishment of a staffing structure arising from the agreed arrangements for the management of the Harbour Arts Centre on termination of its Urban Programme funding.

The Committee agreed to continue consideration of this matter pending a report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the specific source of funding provision for the two new posts involved and report further.

(b) Staffing of the Mobile Play Team

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposed staffing structure for the Mobile Play Team involving the transfer of five full-time posts to mainline funding, arising from the termination of Urban Programme funding for the Towdabout and Playbus projects.

The Committee agreed to continue consideration of this matter pending a report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the specific source of funding provision for

the two new posts involved and report further.

10. Early Closure of Administration Offices and Branch Libraries on Hogmanay

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposal to close administrative offices and branch libraries at 1.00 p.m. on Thursday 31 December 1998.

This would be in accordance with previous practice whereby staff who choose to take annual leave on 31 December 1998 only require to take a half day's leave. The Trade Unions have been consulted.

The Committee agreed to approve the early closure on 31 December 1998.

11. Managing Sickness Absence: Policy and Procedures

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposal to establish a formal policy and related procedures to be adopted in the management of sickness absence within the Council.

Although the Council's sickness absence rates compare favourably with the average absence rate within the public sector, the Council previously recognised that there was a need to introduce continuous management controls and absence monitoring with a view to minimising sickness levels through appropriate management of individual cases. Absence statistics for all Directorates and Departments will be collated on a quarterly basis and will be the subject of regular reports to the Committee, commencing on 16 June 1998. Guidance notes for Managers/Supervisors and an Employee Information Booklet will also be produced to provide advice on notification procedures, entitlements and the way in which sickness absence will be managed in future. Additionally it is intended to establish a training programme for operational managers in due course. Trade Unions require to be consulted on the policy and procedures.

The Committee agreed, to approve the adoption of the policy and procedures document presented with the report.

12. Irvine Lease of Land at Portland Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the Council's position on the lease of land at Portland Road, Irvine to the Trustees of Irvine Shooting Club.

The former Irvine Development Corporation leased land at Portland Road, Irvine to the Trustees of Irvine Shooting Club solely for the purpose of a Shooting Club. The lease bound the Club to erect a building to safety standards approved by the International Shooting Council. As the building erected by the Trustees does not comply with the appropriate safety standards, the Club is now non-operational. No rent is currently payable to the Council as the lease provides that rental payments are calculated on a one pound per member per annum basis.

The Committee agreed (a) that the lease be brought to an end; and (b) to receive a further report from the Legal Services Manager on the future use of the site in due course.

13. Irvine: Ayr Road: Former Hume Pipe Site: Sale of Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of land known as the Former Hume Pipe Site, Ayr Road, Irvine to Mr. Hugh Muir.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the sale of the land to Mr. Hugh Muir on terms and conditions provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

14. Irvine: Corsehillmount Road: Proposed Radio Mast

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed lease of land adjacent to the Territorial Army Centre, Corsehillmount Road, Irvine to Messrs. Orange PCS Ltd.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the land to Messrs. Orange PCS Ltd. on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

15. Irvine: 44 Pladda Terrace: Sale of Ground for Garden Extension

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of ground at 44 Pladda Terrace, Irvine to Mr. Kevin Platts for an extension to garden ground and the formation of a car parking area.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the sale of the ground at 44 Pladda Terrace, Irvine on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

16. Irvine: Area of Land at Dick Terrace/Anderson Drive: Minute of Waiver

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the granting of a Minute of Waiver over an area of land at Dick Terrace/Anderson Drive, Irvine, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

17. Irvine: Lease of Shop at 8 Bridgegate

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of the shop unit at 8 Bridgegate, Irvine to AC Partners, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

18. Irvine: Disposal of Plots 8, 11 and 16 Perceton D

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of Plots 8, 11 and 16 at Perceton D, Irvine, provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

19. Irvine: Ayrshire Central Hospital: Pavilion 9: Disability Resource Centre: Lease of Property

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of a former ward pavilion of Ayrshire Central Hospital, provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

20. Kilbirnie: Lease of Block 1, Units 2 and 3 River Place

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Block 1, Units 2 and 3 River Place, Kilbirnie to Flow Connection Ltd., provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

21. Kilbirnie: Disposal of Ground at Holmhead

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of ground at Holmhead, Kilbirnie to Messrs. Paterson & Brown.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the disposal of ground to Messrs. Paterson & Brown on terms and conditions provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

22. Saltcoats: McGillivray Avenue: Transfer of Land at Springvale Nursery School/ Three Towns Community Nursery

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the transfer of land at Springvale Nursery School/Three Towns Community Nursery, McGillivray Avenue, Saltcoats from Education Services to Housing Services, provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

23. Stevenston No. 3 (11-17 Fullarton Place) Housing Action Area for Demolition: Compulsory Purchase Order

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a proposal to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of properties at 11-17 Fullarton Place, Stevenston which are contained within the Stevenston No. 3 Housing Action Area, with a view to ensuring that the objectives of the Housing Action Area are met and securing the demolition of the buildings.

The Committee agreed (a) to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of the properties at 11-17 Fullarton Place, Stevenston; and (b) to make a formal Resolution in this regard in the terms indicated in the report.

24. Stevenston: 14 Glebe Street: North Ayrshire Advocacy Service: Premises Requirement

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a Licence to Occupy premises at 14 Glebe Street, Stevenston, provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

25. Stevenston: Sale of Land Adjacent to 83c Glencairn Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of ground adjacent to 83c Glencairn Street, Stevenston to Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie for an extension to their garden.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the sale of ground to Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie on terms and conditions provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

26. Stevenston: Sale of Land at 51/67 New Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed sale of land at 51/67 New Street, Stevenston to Cunninghame Housing Association.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the sale of land to Cunninghame Housing Association on terms and conditions provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

27. Stevenston: Lease of Unit 10 Portland Place

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Unit 10 Portland Place, Stevenston to Mr. David McAulay, provisionally agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

28. CIPFA Conference 16-17 April 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the attendance of the Vice-Chair at the CIPFA Scottish Conference from 16-17 April 1998, which had previously been authorised by the Chair given that there had been insufficient time to seek the Committee's approval at that stage.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

The Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.