

Irvine Area Committee
14 March 2012

IRVINE, 14 March 2012 - At a Special Meeting of the Irvine Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 4.15 p.m.

Present

Pat McPhee, Tom Barr, Matthew Brown, Ian Clarkson, Ruby Kirkwood, John Moffat, David O'Neill and Joan Sturgeon.

In Attendance

I. Mackay, Solicitor to the Council (Corporate Services); A. Grossart, Team Manager (Finance) (Finance and Infrastructure); L. McEwan, Communications Manager and A. Little, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Provost McPhee in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 16.

2. Irvine Common Good Fund

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the proposed budget for 2012/13 including the level of grant funding available for disbursement.

At its meeting on 15 February 2012, the Committee considered a report on the initial budget for 2012/13. The Committee agreed that the report be continued to a future meeting in order that further information could be provided on (a) the rental value of Bartonhill and Quarry Road sites as assessed by the District Valuer and backdated rent for these sites for previous years; (b) the budget for the provision of hospitality at Marymass; (c) a breakdown of the property costs for Haysholm Nursery; (d) the projected property costs for the Townhouse in 2011/12; and (e) the implications for the fund if expenditure exceeds the recommended budget level.

The report provided further information on:-

- Bartonholm Household Waste Centre Rent Level - the rent for Bartonholm Household Waste Centre was set at £750 per annum on 5/1/2005 and then subsequently reviewed by Bell Ingram on 5 January 2010, to £1,250 per annum. The next rent review is due on 5 January 2015;

- Quarry Road Depot Rent Level - a nominal rent of £1 is being charged to the Council in respect of Quarry Road Depot although there is not a formal lease in existence. The Council's Estates Section has advised that, based on available comparisons, the market rental value for the lease of this ground would be in the region of £2,500 to £3,000 per annum. The costs of an independent external valuation of £950 (plus VAT) would be chargeable to the Common Good fund.
- Hospitality at Marymass - to date this has been funded by the Common Good Fund but, following a review of the costs, it is proposed that alternative funding sources are identified. The Council will, at a future date, determine the nature and cost of the Council's presence at Marymass.
- Haysholm Nursery - analysis of costs incurred in 2011/12 identified that costs of £880 were incurred in flailing heavy weeds.
- Townhouse Property Costs - Infrastructure and Design Services have indicated that costs of £2,000 are expected to be incurred at the Townhouse for 3 high level inspections in 2012/13. However, in view of the ongoing discussions surrounding the Townhouse in terms of the site for the new Irvine Leisure Centre, it is proposed that only essential works would be carried out to the building in the immediate future. A budget of £5,000 has been set aside in this respect but any costs exceeding that sum would require to be met from the Common Good balances. The situation will continue to be monitored and reviewed in light of any decision regarding future development of the site.
- Clarification of implications for the fund of expenditure exceeding recommended level - the terms of reference of the Area Committee include 'to administer the disbursement of any grant or other financial payment to local organisations or individuals from within the area in terms ofthe common good funds or other public trusts'. A statement is provided by the Corporate Director, Finance and Infrastructure on an annual basis advising of the amount available for disbursement and, should the recommended figure be exceeded, approval would be required from the full Council.

The report provided further details on changes to the budget as a result of additional information becoming available since the report to the Area Committee on 15 February 2012. The appendix to the report provided information on the total expected income and expenditure of the fund.

A budgetary control report for the period ended 30 September 2012 will be brought to Members to keep them informed of the ongoing financial position of the Common Good fund. In view of the considerable level of resources held in the Common Good Funds within North Ayrshire, a review of all the funds will be undertaken in 2012/13.

The Committee was advised that information had now been obtained in relation to costs of repairing the access road to Irvine Golf Club, Bogside, Irvine. The cost for the repairs total £11,000 and will be shared equally with Irvine Golf Club.

A revised appendix, incorporating the access road repair costs, was circulated to the Committee. The appendix detailed the total expected income of £84,642 which is £25,989 less than originally proposed. This is partially offset by a reduction in projected expenditure of £22,745. Total estimated expenditure is now £29,383. It was proposed that, for 2012-13 only, there will be no sums retained for maintaining the future spending power of the fund. The proposed amount available for disbursement is, therefore, now £55,259.

Members asked questions and were provided with information in relation to:-

- rental valuation for Bartonholm Household Waste Centre compared to valuations for other comparable facilities;
- the historical nominal rent for Quarry Road Depot and valuation of the site by an independent valuer;
- the remit of the Executive to manage the investment of funds, including Common Good Funds and the remit of Area Committees to administer the disbursement of grants from Common Good Funds; and
- income to the Common Good Fund from the lease of the moor to the Fairground operators and the food franchise at Marymass.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the budget of £55,259 for 2012/13; (b) to note that the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) will provide a mid-year budgetary control report to the Committee for the period ended 30 September 2012; (c) to note that a full review of all Common Good Funds will be carried out during 2012/13; and (d) that the Solicitor to the Council report to the next meeting of the Committee on back-claiming rent for the site at Quarry Road and the maximum period that rent can be back-claimed.

The meeting ended at 4.50 p.m.