

Commercial Services Committee
2 October 1996

Irvine, 2 October 1996 - At a Meeting of the Commercial Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Thomas Dickie, Peter McNamara, Patrick Browne, James Clements, Joseph McKinney, Alan Munro, Irene Oldfather and Gena Seales.

In Attendance

A Herbert, Head of Accountancy Services, (Financial Services); N McCallum, Head of Commercial Support, J Currie, Head of Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance, A Smart, Head of Works, Roads and Transport, A Bryson, Operations Manager (Works), R Baillie, Works Controller (Commercial Services); G Young, Senior Personnel Officer (Personnel Services); and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Donn, Robert Rae, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 August 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Compulsory Competitive Tendering

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the management arrangements relative to the preparation for Compulsory Competitive Tendering and on the requirements for compliance with the Scottish Office Circular 6/1996 in this regard.

The re-introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering and its extension to white collar services requires the Council to confirm its management arrangements and agree the steps taken to afford a member overview which complies with the Scottish Office directive in SODD Circular 6/1996 as to transparency - separation of client/contractor interests. The report confirmed the roles which have been assigned to Directors, the Head of Corporate Business and Managers to progress the Council's preparation for each of the "defined activities" to be put out to tender under CCT and outlined the role of the various Committees.

Noted.

3. Civic Amenity Sites

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on proposals to revise the opening hours of the four civic amenity sites on the mainland and to introduce manning.

The four purpose-built civic amenity sites at Largs, Kilbirnie, Irvine and Dreghorn are presently open twenty-four hours per day. Problems have however arisen through misuse of the sites by unauthorised commercial contractors and through disturbance of the skips by unauthorised persons. Additionally, from 1 October 1996 the new land-fill tax will impose a levy of £7.00 per tonne for waste deposited at the civic amenity sites and failure to stop waste being deposited by commercial contractors will leave the Council with their tax liability. SEPA have also indicated that the Council will require these sites to be manned when open to the public, as a condition of their site licence. The report highlighted the fact that the closure of the Bartonholm site after 6.00 p.m. each evening over the preceding two months following misuse of the site, had resulted in better control and little negative reaction from the public. The Head of Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance confirmed that the sites would be gated when not manned and that the opening hours would be advertised appropriately.

The Committee expressed concern over the possibility of an increase in illegal dumping as a result of the restricted opening hours but the Head of Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance reassured members that the position would be closely monitored and reviewed in six months time.

The Committee agreed that (a) the four mainland civic amenity sites be open to the public between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m., seven days per week from April to September and from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., seven days per week from October to March; (b) the situation be reviewed in six months time; and (c) that following final confirmation from SEPA on the manning of the civic amenity sites, a further report be submitted to the Committee.

4. Catering Contract

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the Retail Price Index applicable to the Catering Statutory Operations for July 1996.

The Catering Statutory Operations bid is annually uplifted by the Retail Price Index in July of each year and the index for July 1996 was announced on 15 August 1996.

The details are as follow:-

	July 1995	July 1996	Annual Movement
All Items Index	149.1	152.4	+2.2%

Food Cost Index	135.9	141.3	+4.0%
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The effect of this movement is to increase the bids as follows:-

· Multi Price Bids

Fixed Lump sum	+2.2%
Percentage of Income	+4.0%
Charge per Meal Specified (Non Cash)	+4.0%
	.

Single Price Bids

Meals on Wheels and Lunch Clubs	+2.2%
	.

Special Catering

Subject to revision by 2.2% as agreed between Client and Operations. Schedule of Charges to be revised.

Noted.

5. Tenders for Vehicles 1996/97

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the action taken to date in relation to the issue/submission of tenders for the replacement of vehicles for 1996/97.

The first phase of the programme has now been carried out and details of the tenderers and their costs were provided in the report. It was pointed out that where the conditions of the tender documents have been met, the lowest tender has been recommended for acceptance. In some cases however the corrected offer was shown as higher than the original offer as the leasing company no longer wished an allowance to be made for trade-ins of existing vehicles but wished them to be returned to the leasing company on expiry of the lease.

The Committee, while expressing their satisfaction that the CCT regulations with regard to 'transparency' had been met, expressed concern that some contractors who had originally expressed a desire to submit tenders did not do so, thereby

raising the possibility of having only a single tender submitted.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services to investigate this and to report to Committee in due course.

6. SkillChoice Programme

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the strategy being adopted by the Commercial Services Directorate in the development of individual training plans for its employees and the processes involved.

As a result of the merging of a large and diversely skilled workforce the Commercial Services Directorate is faced with the prospect of developing personal training plans for its employees. Consultation between the Director of Commercial Services, the Personnel Services Manager and Radix, a Training Agency funded through Enterprise Ayrshire has resulted in agreement to establish a pilot programme in a process called SkillChoice.

Radix will initially undertake a series of one-to-one interviews with every member of staff to establish where they are on the VQ (vocational qualification) structure. People who have been with the Directorate for some time will be identified as being ready for assessment in various parts of the VQ. As well as identifying where people are on this VQ structure the process will also produce training records, personal development plans and individual action plans. Radix findings will therefore provide a skills matrix and a benchmark of all skills within the Directorate.

Radix will commence the process at the earliest possible time in discussion with the Directorate's senior management. It is proposed in the first instance to carry out the process with all APT & C staff, the entire roads manual workforce and all transport employees. Consultation with the appropriate trade unions is required in the first instance and the process can follow on immediately thereafter.

Noted.

7. Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign: Progress

The Committee were advised of the steps being taken to promote the Council-wide campaign on litter awareness and prevention, approved by the Committee on 21 August 1996. The Commercial Services Committee will take the lead in the campaign which will run in conjunction with the Council's programme for Agenda 21. A campaign logo and slogan are to be introduced and additional staff are initially to be allocated to Kilwinning Irvine and Saltcoats town centres to promote the campaign. Officers of the Council will discuss matters relating to Agenda 21 on Friday 4 October 1996 and members were asked to submit any ideas for the campaign to Mr McNamara. Reference was also made at this time to the 'Spotlight Initiative' currently being undertaken by Strathclyde Police to address a number of problem areas, including litter and the support which the Council is already giving to the scheme.

Noted.

8. Exclusion of Public

The Committee resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act respectively.

9. Catering Operations

Submitted two reports by the Director of Commercial Services on Catering Operations within North Ayrshire.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the recommendations in each case

10. Building and Works Section: Presentation

At the close of the formal business the Committee received a presentation by the Operations Manager - Works on the work of the Building and Works Section. The Chair thanked the Manager for his talk and in conclusion the Committee agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services, make appropriate arrangements for the Committee to visit the various works depots.

The meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.