

Corporate Services Committee  
28 November 2006

**IRVINE, 28 November 2006** - At a Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

David Munn, Tom Barr, John Moffat, Gordon Clarkson, Jane Gorman, Alan Hill, Margaret McDougall, Peter McNamara, Elisabeth Marshall, Alan Munro, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, Donald Reid and John Reid.

**In Attendance**

T. Orr, Corporate Director and B. Samson, Principal Estates Officer (Property Services); A. Herbert, Assistant Chief Executive and S. Humphries, Chief Revenues and Benefits Officer (Finance); J. M. Macfarlane, Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel); J. Barrett, Assistant Chief Executive (Information Technology); K. Thomas, Manager Protective Services, J. Delury, Chief Building Standards Officer and S. McKenzie, Senior Building Standards Surveyor (Legal and Protective); G. Lawson, Corporate Support Manager, A. Wattie, Communications Officer and M. Anderson, Corporate Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Drew Duncan, Elizabeth McLardy and Ian Richardson.

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors McDougall and O'Neill declared an interest in items 8 and 15 respectively and took no part in the discussion thereon.

**3. Review of the Assisted Areas Map 2007-13**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of the UK Department of Trade & Industry's consultation on the Review of Assisted Areas 2007-13.

In October 2006, the Government published its revised map of Assisted Areas, showing the zones where businesses can apply for regional aid from 2007 until 2013. The new Assisted Areas map will, subject to ratification by the European Commission, come into effect from 1 January 2007.

Of the 25 wards proposed in the Council's Phase 1 consultation response, the Government's Phase 2 consultation paper identified 20 as qualifying for Assisted Area status. Two regionally significant sites, at Riverside Business Park and DSM Nutritional Products (UK) Limited, were initially excluded. However, the Government was subsequently persuaded by the Council's case and the 2 wards in question have now been included as meriting Assisted Area status under Article 87(3)(c). Arran and the Cumbraes will acquire regional aid eligibility separately, under Article 87(3)(a).

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the Phase 2 consultation response made on its behalf by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development & Promotion), as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; and (b) await the final approval of the Assisted Area map by the European Commission.

#### **4. Stevenston: Land at Lumsden Place**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed sale of land at Lumsden Place, Stevenston.

The site, which extends to approximately 0.2 hectares and is held in the Council's Housing Services Account, was recently marketed for sale. The highest offer received, for £145,000 inclusive of VAT, was from Atrium Maintenance Limited for residential development.

The Committee agreed to approve the sale of land at Lumsden Place, Stevenston, to Atrium Maintenance Limited, for £145,000, inclusive of VAT, together with the payment of fees and on other terms to be agreed.

#### **5. Stevenston: Land at Garven Road**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed sale of land at Garven Road, Stevenston.

The site, which extends to approximately 0.45 hectares and is held in the Education Account, was recently marketed for sale. The highest offer received was for £295,000, inclusive of VAT, from Topaz Developments Limited for residential development.

The Committee agreed to approve the sale of land at Garven Road, Stevenston to Topaz Developments Limited for £295,000 including VAT, together with the payment of fees and on other terms to be agreed.

#### **6. Stevenston: Land at Ardoch Court/Ardoch Crescent**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed sale of land at Ardoch Court/Ardoch Crescent, Stevenston.

The land, which extends to approximately 7,549 square metres and is held in the Housing Services Account, is the balance of a site previously developed by the former Cunninghame District Council. 6 offers to purchase have been received, the highest of which is for £285,000 exclusive of VAT, from D. McLaughlin and Sons Limited for residential development.

The Committee agreed to approve the sale of land at Ardoch Court/Ardoch Crescent, Stevenston, to D. McLaughlin & Sons Limited for £285,000, exclusive of VAT, together with the payment of fees and on other terms to be agreed.

#### **7. Glengarnock: Longbar: Ground at Smith Avenue**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed sale of land at Smith Avenue, Longbar, Glengarnock.

The site, previously occupied by Local Authority housing and held in the Housing Services Account, extends to 0.82 hectares. 1 offer to purchase has been received, for £801,000 inclusive of VAT, from Topaz Developments Limited for residential development.

The Committee agreed to approve the sale of land at Smith Avenue, Longbar, Glengarnock to Topaz Developments Limited for £801,000, inclusive of VAT, together with the payment of fees and on other terms to be agreed.

#### **8. Irvine: Clark Drive: Site of Former Haysholm Nursery**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed sale of the site of the former Haysholm Nursery, Clark Drive, Irvine.

The site, which extends to approximately 1.34 hectares, is held by Irvine Common Good. Following marketing of the site, 13 offers to purchase have been received. The highest offer has a proposed density of development greater than that defined in the development brief for the site and it is not considered that it would be possible for planning permission to be granted for this excessive level of development. The second highest offer, from Carronvale Homes Limited for £2,193,000, exclusive of VAT, for the development of 34 detached units, is generally in accordance with the brief.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the sale of the site of the former Haysholm Nursery, Clark Drive, Irvine, to Carronvale Homes Limited for £2,193,000, exclusive of VAT, together with the payment of fees and on other terms to be agreed; and (b) note that the capital receipt from the sale will be in favour of Irvine Common Good.

#### **9. Irvine: 168 High Street: Library**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed purchase of 168 High Street, Irvine.

The library property at 168 High Street, Irvine is held on lease for a period of 20 years from 1 May 2005. The owner of the property, Harbour View Estates Limited, has received an offer to purchase from a third party and, in terms of the Council's lease, the company is obliged to offer the property for sale to the Council as tenant. The price in terms of the right of pre-emption is £795,000.

An option appraisal exercise has shown that, in the longer term, it would be financially beneficial to purchase the property and an independent valuation report supports the price of £795,000.

The Committee agreed to the purchase of 168 High Street, Irvine at a price of £795,000.

#### **10. Corporate Services Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control**

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

The Committee (a) noted the year-end projected underspend based on current information; and (b) agreed that the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executives continue to closely monitor the position for the remainder of the financial year.

#### **11. Benefits Investigation Team Performance 2006/07 for Quarters 1 and 2**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the performance of the Benefits Investigation Team.

The 2006/07 Annual Business Plan for the Benefits Investigation Team contains 19 performance indicators. Appendix 1 to the report listed the performance indicators, the annual target and the target for quarters 1 and 2 against the actual performance for that period. The statistics show that, as at the end of the second quarter, 12 indicators are either on target or are above the target set, 3 are performing just below the expected target and require no further action at this time and 4 are below the expected target and require action to improve performance.

The indicators which performed below the expected level are all affected by the number of referrals received, which has fallen compared with the figure for last year. To increase the number of referrals, the Benefits Investigation Team will be carrying out more fraud awareness training to Benefits staff, Housing officers and the telephone contact centre. Articles will be included in "The Knack" and "Now" publications, as well as in the local press, to encourage the general public to report their suspicions using a confidential fraud hotline. The team will also be launching its own poster campaign to coincide with the Department for Work and Pensions media campaign on targeting Benefit fraud.

Noted.

## **12. e-Government Progress Report**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Information Technology) on progress made to implement the Council's e-Government action plan and on main priorities for the next 6 months.

The report highlighted progress to date in respect of the Customer Contact Strategy, the Citizen's Account, the Corporate Address Gazetteer, the SmartCard, electronic service delivery, the Benefits tracking framework, digital inclusion and democratic support.

The following 8 priorities have been identified for the next 6 months:-

- continue to enhance the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system;
- ensure development of the local Citizen's Account is aligned with national Customer First Programme;
- develop use of Corporate Address Gazetteer;
- add Library membership to the national entitlement card;
- assist with the introduction of the national travel card scheme for 16-18 year olds;
- increase on-line support for 46 core services;
- develop efficiency and effectiveness measures for both local and national use; and
- continue to work with Members' Services on post-election ICT support.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the progress made to implement the action plan; (b) approve the main priorities for the next 6 months; and (c) receive a further progress report in 6 months.

## **13. EC Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EC: Bathing Water Quality Results 2006: Application for Beach Awards**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the quality of bathing water at the identified and other beaches in North Ayrshire.

There are 4 identified beaches within North Ayrshire, namely Irvine, Ardrossan/Saltcoats South Beach, Millport and Pencil Beach, Largs. All 4 passed the quality standards set out in the EC Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EC and Ardrossan/Saltcoats South Beach recorded its best ever standard.

In the last 3 years, Ardrossan/Saltcoats South Beach has achieved a Seaside Award in view of the good bathing water quality and the level of facilities and amenities provided at the beach. In 2006, Newton Beach, Millport and Irvine Beach also gained Seaside Awards. The Council has been invited by Keep Scotland Beautiful to apply in 2007 for Seaside Awards for Newton Beach, Millport and Irvine Beach and for a Resort Award for Ardrossan/Saltcoats South Beach.

Whilst there is no requirement to test non-identified beaches, 3 other beaches within North Ayrshire, namely Largs Main Beach, Seamill and Stevenston, were also tested during summer 2006. Largs Main Beach and Stevenston Beach failed the quality standards; however, 8 excellent samples were recorded at Seamill Beach.

Arising from discussion, the Manager Protective Services undertook to request Keep Scotland Beautiful to inspect Largs Pencil Beach with a view to providing advice on the facilities which would be required to allow the beach to apply for a Seaside Award.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the results of bathing water samples taken at the four identified and 3 non-identified beaches in North Ayrshire during summer 2006; and (b) nominate the beaches at Irvine and Newton, Millport for Seaside Awards and Ardrossan/Saltcoats for a Resort Award for 2007.

#### **14. Audit of North Ayrshire Council's Building Standards Service by the Scottish Building Standards Agency and the submission of a new Balanced Scorecard**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the outcome of the audit of the Council's Building Standards Service and on the requirement to submit annually a new Balanced Scorecard for acceptance by the Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA).

A new Scottish Building Standards system came into force on 1 May 2005. All 32 Scottish Local Authorities have been appointed as sole verifiers for their respective geographical areas for a period of 6 years. The Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA) has been appointed by Scottish Ministers to audit the verifiers who have, along with the SBSA, agreed an "Balanced Scorecard" of 5 perspectives:- public interest, private customer, internal business, continuous improvement and finance.

The Council's Balanced Scorecard and supporting evidence was submitted to the SBSA earlier in the year in order for the audit to take place and facilitate on-site assessment. The SBSA has now published its report on the Council's Building Standards Service, which was set out in the Appendix to the report. Overall, the Building Standards service scored well against its balanced scorecard submission and the SBSA has concluded that there will be no need to undertake any further audits within the current verification period.

As a new balanced scorecard requires to be submitted to the SBSA in March 2007, a number of new actions will be devised and developed for inclusion within the scorecard. These will be incorporated within the existing 5 perspectives and, where appropriate, aligned with the Council's priorities.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the requirement for further Balanced Scorecards to be submitted on an annual basis; and (b) that the Chief Building Standards Officer carry out all necessary actions to continue with the Balanced Scorecard process.

#### **15. Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company: Staffing Support Arrangements**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on the temporary secondment of staff from the Council to the Urban Regeneration Company.

The Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company has recently been set up to promote economic development and regeneration in North Ayrshire. Due to the Council's involvement in supporting the set up of the company and its expertise and knowledge of the economic climate and development and regeneration issues within North Ayrshire, the company has requested the 3-year secondment of the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) to assist with its development.

It is intended that the post of Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) will remain unfilled within the Council for the duration of the secondment and that the following temporary re-organisation arrangements be put in place to ensure business continuity of that service:-

- Economic Development will operate as a stand-alone unit reporting directly to the Chief Executive;
- the Estates Team, including the Asset Management Unit, will become the management responsibility of the Head of Technical Services; and
- Planning will be combined with Development Control under the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective), with the Planning Services Manager assuming responsibility for both teams.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) will be replaced as the Council's representative on various bodies, as appropriate. Specifically, it is recommended that the Chief Executive, or his nominee, replace him on both the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures (the joint venture company with EDI) and North Ayrshire Ventures Trust.

It is proposed that other, short-term secondments of professional staff be made by the Council to the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company as demand for that expertise arises and subject to the business continuity of the Council's service provision.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the arrangement for staff secondments between the Council and the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company; and (b) that the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) be replaced by the Chief Executive, or his nominee, on the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures and North Ayrshire Ventures Trust.

## **16. Occupational Health Policy**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on a revised policy for the management of employee health-related issues.

The Council's new Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Council in March 2005. The Occupational Health Policy set out in Appendix 1 to the report, forms part of the supporting suite of policies and procedures.

A policy and supporting procedure for the management of employee health issues within the Council has been in place for a number of years, but requires revision in the light of current practice and the review of the Health and Safety Guidance within the Health and Safety Master File. The proposed policy establishes revised arrangements for an easier and more streamlined procedure for employees to refer, or be referred to, the Council's Occupational Health Service and is also designed to support the Council's objective of managing and improving sickness absence levels.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised Occupational Health Policy as set out in the Appendix to the report.

## **17. Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee: Head of Community Care (Social Services)**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on the establishment of the Recruitment Sub Committee in order to effect an appointment to the post of Head of Community Care.



In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the appointment of the Chief Executive and Chief Officers, including the Head of Community Care, requires to be undertaken by the Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee.

In view of the time delay from the post being vacated to the next Corporate Services Committee, it was agreed by the Chair of the Corporate Services Committee, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director (Social Services) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) that appropriate steps be taken to seek a new appointment to the post.

The Recruitment Sub-Committee comprised the Chair of the Corporate Services Committee, the Chair of the Property Services Committee, the Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and 2 representatives of the Property Services Committee, at least 1 of whom was required to be a member of a minority party.

The Committee agreed to approve the actions taken to establish a Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee as set out in the report.

#### **18. Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee**

Submitted the annexed reports (Appendices CS1 and CS2) being the Minutes of the Meetings of the Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee held on (i) 13 October 2006; and (ii) 21 November 2006.

Noted.

#### **19. Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee**

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS3) being the Minutes of the Meetings of the Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee held on 10 November 2006.

The Committee agreed to approve the Minutes.

The Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.

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Appendix No  
**CS1**

Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee  
13 October 2006

**IRVINE, 13 October 2006** - At a Meeting of the Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m.

**Present**

David Munn, Alan Munro and David O'Neill.

**In Attendance**

B. Docherty, Corporate Director (Social Services); G. Young, Personnel Manager (Personnel); A. Grossart, Finance Manager (Finance); and M. Anderson, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Samuel Taylor and Peter McNamara.

**1. Exclusion of the Public**

The Sub Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**2. Request for Early Retirement: Social Services**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on a request for early retirement from an employee within Social Services.

The report indicated the implications for the Council should the request be approved.

The Sub Committee agreed to approve the request for early retirement on the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Meeting ended at 10.20 a.m.

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Appendix No  
**CS2**

Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee  
21 November 2006

**IRVINE, 21 November 2006** - At a Meeting of the Corporate Services (Conditions of Service) Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 1.15 p.m.

**Present**

David Munn, Peter McNamara, Alan Munro, David O'Neill and Sam Taylor.

**In Attendance**

S. Paterson, Head of Service (Children, Families and Criminal Justice) (Social Services); G. Young, Personnel Manager (Personnel); D. Nibloe, Chief Accountant (Finance); and M. Anderson, Corporate Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

**1. Exclusion of the Public**

The Sub Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**2. Requests for Early Severance: Social Services**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on requests for early retirement from 4 employees within Social Services.

The report indicated the implications for the Council should the requests be approved.

The Sub Committee agreed to approve the requests for early retirement on the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Meeting ended at 1.35 p.m.

**Corporate Services Committee**  
**28/11/2006**

Appendix No  
**CS3**

Corporate Services (Recruitment) Sub Committee  
10 November 2006

**IRVINE, 10 November 2006** - At a Meeting of the Recruitment Sub Committee of Corporate Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

David Munn, David O'Neill, Alan Munro and Elizabeth McLardy.

**In Attendance**

B. Docherty, Corporate Director (Social Services) and J.M. Macfarlane, Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel).

**Chair**

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Margie Currie.

**1. Exclusion of the Public**

The Sub 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 item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**2. Post of Head of Service (Community Care) (Social Services)**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on an appointment to the post of Head of Community Care within Social Services.

The Sub Committee agreed to appoint Ms. Sheena Gault to the post of Head of Service (Community Care) (Social Services).

The meeting ended at 2.15 p.m.