

Commercial Services Committee
10 March 1999

Irvine, 10 March 1999 - At a Meeting of the Commercial Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Thomas Dickie, Peter McNamara, James Clements, Joseph McKinney and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

T. Orr, Corporate Director; J. Currie, Head of Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Transport; K. Wilson, Head of Catering and Cleaning; A. Smart, Head of Building Services; T. Jones, Operations Manager (Cleansing); G. Clark, Operations Manager (Grounds Maintenance)(Property Services); W. Nichol, Senior Accountant (Finance); and M. McKeown, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Donn, Irene Oldfather and George Steven.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 27th January 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Genetically Modified Organisms

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the use of foods containing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) by Catering Services.

On 27th January 1999 the Committee agreed to the introduction of a new menu labelling system, by June 1999, to inform users of the Council's Catering Services of products which contain GMOs.

In light of the continued high profile of, and public concern about, GMO, discussions have been held with the Authorities Buying Consortium with a view to pressurising food suppliers still using GMOs to withdraw these products. This has now been achieved.

The Committee agreed that a statement be issued advising that genetically modified foodstuffs will not knowingly be used by the Catering Services of North Ayrshire Council.

3. National School Meals Week

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Property Services) on the inclusion of the Council's Catering Services within the National School Meals Week (26th - 30th April 1999).

The objectives of the 1999 National School Meals Week are to:-

- increase awareness amongst children, parents and teachers of the high standards within the Schools Meals Service;
- highlight the importance of healthy eating;
- emphasise the partnership between schools and the school meal provider; and
- promote the advantages of a sensible diet and regular exercise.

A series of promotional events will be held during the Week and promotional materials and prizes will be offered to encourage school pupils to use the school meals service within their school.

The Committee agreed to the participation of North Ayrshire Council's Catering Services in the National Schools Meals Week 1999.

4. Shewalton Landfill Site

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Property Services) regarding Shewalton Landfill site.

On 27th January 1999 the Committee were advised of the condition attached to the Waste Management Licence for Shewalton Landfill Site which prohibits the deposit of bio-degradable waste in the site, unless it is into an area with a lining system approved by SEPA. The imposition of this condition would result in the facility either being closed on the expiry of 2 years, or the facility requiring to be engineered to allow containment of waste on the expiry of the 2 year time limit. The aim of the condition is to protect the groundwater on the site and it was noted that the condition may be removed if it can be shown that the groundwater is permanently unsuitable for use.

RPS Cairns, a company which carries out environmental monitoring for the Council, have now examined the position. They agree with the Council's own assessment of the consequences of the condition and have recommended that the Council appeal against the licence.

The Committee agreed to (a) appeal against the licence conditions regarding the landfill liner; and (b) appoint RPS Cairns Ltd to carry out the appeal, if required.

5. Uplift of Container Waste for Re-cycling

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Property Services) on the current situation concerning the collection of container waste.

Due to the considerable cost being incurred by the Council in collecting container waste, compared with the price being paid for it, and difficulties being encountered in uplifting the waste, it was suggested that the Council should either discontinue the collection of container waste from the two industrial outlets receiving this service or charge a realistic price for the service.

The Committee agreed to discontinue the collection of container waste from industrial outlets in North Ayrshire.

6. Completion of Introduction of Wheeled Bins

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on progress in the introduction of wheeled bins throughout the mainland of North Ayrshire.

Wheeled bin collections have now been introduced throughout mainland North Ayrshire and have generally been well received. It was suggested, however, that the current policy with regard to the provision of replacement bins to private residents, either because they had been stolen or lost, should be re-examined. The policy requires that private residents should meet the costs of replacement bins from their home insurance whilst Council tenants in a similar situation are provided with replacement bins by Housing Services as part of their overall service.

The Committee (a) noted the efforts of Cleansing staff in successfully introducing wheeled bins throughout mainland North Ayrshire; (b) agreed that a report on the outcome of a feasibility study into the introduction of a similar service for both domestic and commercial users on the Islands of Cumbrae and Arran be submitted to the Council in due course; and (c) agreed that the policy on the replacement of wheeled bins be reviewed after three months and that a report be submitted to the Council.

7. Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the achievements of the Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign in 1998.

The Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign has now completed a second successful year of operation. A number of events to promote the Campaign's aim of making North Ayrshire a clean and tidy place were held throughout 1998 and the efforts of all the bodies which had contributed to the success of the Campaign were acknowledged.

The Committee agreed that the Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign

continue during 1999.

8. Cemetery of the Year Award

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the 1999 Cemetery of the Year Awards.

The aim of the Awards is to reward excellence in cemetery design and management. A number of cemeteries in North Ayrshire meet the entry criteria.

The Committee agreed to enter the 1999 Cemetery of the Year contest on the basis outlined in the report.

9. Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Property Services) on the successful completion by Catering Services of Stage 1 of its Scottish Vocational Qualification Programme.

Of the eight members of staff who were selected to participate in the first stage of the programme, four have had their portfolios successfully verified, whilst the remaining four are awaiting confirmation of their qualifications. The programme will now be extended to involve all catering staff within North Ayrshire Council.

Noted.

10. Best Value: Benchmarking

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the results of the Best Value benchmarking exercise concerning the Building Cleaning function.

As part of Catering and Cleaning Services' commitment to Best Value the Section has continued to participate in a series of Benchmarking Groups involving Scottish Councils. The results of a recent benchmarking exercise involving the Building Cleaning function were summarised and it was noted that these findings will allow the Council to monitor its performance against other local authorities.

Noted.

11. Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Transport - Achievements (1996-1999)

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the achievements of the Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Transport Sections during 1996 - 1999.

Noted.

12. Catering and Cleaning - Achievements (1996-1999)

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the achievements of the Catering and Cleaning Sections during 1996 - 1999.

Noted.

13 Valedictory

The Chair recorded his appreciation and thanks to both the Members and Officers of the Council who, through their involvement with the Committee, had contributed to the achievements of the Council's Commercial Services since April 1996.

In response Mr Currie, on behalf of the Officers present, thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their support of the Council's Commercial Services during their time on the Committee.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.