

Commercial Services Committee
1 May 1996

Irvine, 1 May 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, John Donn, Joseph McKinney, Alan Munro, Irene Oldfather, Gena Seales, George Steven, and Robert Rae.

In Attendance

The Director of Commercial Services, Head of Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance (John Currie) the Principal Officer (Accounting and Budgeting) (John Hair), a Corporate Policy Officer (Shona King) and an Administration Officer (Jim Bannatyne).

Chair

Mr. Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

David O'Neill and Samuel Taylor.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20 March 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Commercial Refuse Charges

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on a proposal to increase the charges to be levied by North Ayrshire Council for the year 1996/97 in respect of the collection and disposal of commercial refuse.

On first October 1996 a new landfill tax for commercial refuse will be introduced by the government which will be levied at £7 per tonne. It will be necessary for the Council to recover this charge which is outwith its own control and to account for it to HM Customs and Excise. The current charge is based on a unit price, one unit being equivalent to three sacks being collected once per week.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve a charge of 25 pence per unit (excluding VAT) for the six months from 1st April - 30th September 1996; and (b) to approve an increased charge of 37.5 pence per unit (excluding VAT) for the six months from 1st October 1996 - 31st March 1997 to reflect the cost of landfill tax which will be effective from 1st October 1996.

3. Waste Disposal: Irvine: Shewalton Landfill Site: Proposed Monitoring

Arrangements/Use of Domestic Refuse for Experimental Purposes

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the need for environmental monitoring at Shewalton landfill site and for co-operation in experimental work on domestic refuse.

The Enviro Centre of Strathclyde University has completed work undertaken for the Council during 1995/96 in relation to environmental monitoring at Shewalton landfill site. This work has proved invaluable in the running of a modern landfill site and it is proposed that the Council should enter into an annual contract with Strathclyde University which would allow for monthly, quarterly and annual sampling to various parameters for leachate and landfill gas produced from the site. Reports would be produced on a quarterly basis with monthly summaries provided for submission to the Regulatory Authority as required. The Director of Commercial Services emphasised that the increased costs involved would be offset by the additional benefits derived. These included better safety checks and would ensure compliance with regulations given that the Scottish Environment Protection Agency now require to be satisfied as to the quality of material being deposited in landfill sites. Since extra grant for treating refuse which used to be available no longer applies, it is desirable to convince the government of the quality of the landfill material with a view to obtaining any grant assistance which may be available in the future.

A German company specialising in recycling were very impressed during a visit to the pulverisation plant, Shewalton early in 1996. The company's interest is in non-organic elements, plastic etc. and they have expressed a wish to transfer some refuse to Germany for experimental purposes at no cost to the Council. This may be the first export of such refuse from Scotland and CIPA are assisting with the necessary documentation.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) that the Council enter into a contract with Enviro Centre of Strathclyde University to carry out environmental monitoring at Shewalton landfill site at an annual cost of £6,670; and (b) that the Council co-operate in experimental work on refuse from the Shewalton pulverisation plant.

4. Local Authority Trading Powers

The Association of Direct Labour Organisations has recently been pressing for primary legislation which would clarify and widen local authority powers to trade within the public and private sector for the income generating benefit of Councils subject to certain restrictions.

As a result of ADLO's representation Gordon Prentice M.P. has agreed to introduce a Ten Minute Rule Bill designed to achieve this and the debate will take place in the House of Commons on 1st May 1996. Whilst the process itself is unlikely to lead to legislation it done nonetheless provide an opportunity to raise the issue in the House of Commons.

A Draft Bill will be published in advance of the debate and member authorities of ADLO are therefore being urged to contact their M.P. and to forward letters of support. Following consultation with the Chair letters had been forwarded to Brian

Donohoe M.P., Brian Wilson M.P. and Gordon Prentice to promote the Bill. The Chair confirmed that fifteen responses had already been received pledging support which included George Robertson, Labour Shadow Scottish Secretary, Andrew Welsh, Vice-President, SNP and Archie Kirkwood, Chief Whip, Liberal Democrats. North Ayrshire Council's two M.P.s have already agreed to sign the Motion introducing the Bill.

The Committee agreed to homologate the action taken and to note the progress made.

5.Revised Code of Practice on the Duty of Care under Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the introduction of a revised Code of Practice on the Duty of Care under Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which imposes a Duty of Care on persons concerned with controlled waste. The revised Code of Practice replaces the original Code published in 1991 and details were given of the guidance provided in its introductory chapter.

The Committee agreed that appropriate steps be taken to publicise the new Code of Practice to all persons in the area for which the Council is responsible who have responsibility for controlled waste.

6. The Waste Management Regulations 1996

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the recent notification by the Scottish Office of the provisions of the Waste Management Regulations 1996 which came into force on 1st April 1996.

The Regulations introduce changes to the technical competence requirements for managers and an increase in the payment paid for recycling credits. It is now a requirement that managers who have disposal facilities hold a Certificate of Technical Competence although a number of existing managers who have attained a certain age and have relevant experience will be attributed with what are termed "grandfather rights". Steps have already been taken to commence the training of the remaining managers and the Head of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance is a qualified assessor and will supervise the training arrangements in terms of the conditions laid down by the Waste Management Industry Training Board.

The Regulations also increase waste recycling payments in line with the December Retail Price Index. These payments are made to charitable organisations engaged in recycling work.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Director of Commercial Services arrange training for managers of facilities who require Certificate of Technical Competence; and (b)

that the Council implement the revised payment for waste recycling credits presently applied to certain charitable organisations.

7. Financial Objectives for Direct Labour Organisations and Direct Service Organisations

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the implications of Scottish Office Development Department Circular SODD8/96 in relation to changes to the financial objectives for DLOs and DSOs for financial year 1996/97 and thereafter.

Previously DLOs and DSOs were required to make a rate of return of 6% on capital employed. The new specifications set for all local authority services subject to CCT the object of break-even. After taking into account capital changes which will include a capital financing charge of 6% of the value of fixed assets used in the provision of the service in question. The objective of the capital financing charge is to ensure that the accounts showing the DLO/DSO financial performance reflect the resource costs of DLO/DSO use of assets. Transitional arrangements have been introduced relating to contracts which began or were negotiated before 1st April 1996 and details were given in the report.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

8. Membership of the Association of Contract Services Chief Officers

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the structure and aims of the Association of Contract Services Chief Officers (ACSCO) which was formed in 1990 in response to the impact which competitive tendering has had on Direct Service Organisations and Direct Labour Organisations. The report highlighted the benefits to the Council in taking up membership which is open to Senior and Chief Officers responsible for DSOs and DLOs.

The Committee agreed that North Ayrshire Council take up membership of the Association of Contract Services Chief Officers at an annual cost of £100.

9. Catering and Cleaning Section

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on progress on the provision of the Smart Card System, dietetic services, application for EC milk/butter subsidies and steps being taken to promote the image of the Catering and Cleaning Section by the introduction of new uniforms and the adoption of a new name.

The report confirmed that following consultation agreement has been reached that the new card system for the provision of school meals will be named the Alpha Card. It is intended to replace all Catering and Cleaning staff uniforms within the current financial year and a presentation on the range of uniforms available will be made to the Committee prior to a final selection being made. The previous Regional Authority had a successful image using the names Catering and Catering Direct. It is proposed that a new name be adopted and investigations are currently being

undertaken regarding a number of possible names which will be presented to the Committee for approval. The Committee were also invited to submit names to the Director of Commercial Services for consideration.

The Committee agreed (a) to homologate the action taken to date; and (b) that a further report on image, name etc. be submitted to a future meeting.

10. Attendance at Conferences/Seminars

Submitted report by the Chief Executive identifying three annual conferences as suitable for the attendance of Members/Officers of North Ayrshire Council in accordance with the Group's decision on attendance at conferences/seminars.

The Committee agreed (a) to authorise attendance at (i) the Scottish Region ADLO Building Division Annual Conference/Exhibition (Peebles); (ii) the National ADLO Annual Conference and Exhibition (Swansea); and (iii) the Scottish ADLO Vehicle Maintenance and Transportation Annual Conference (Aviemore); (b) to nominate the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director of Commercial Services (or their nominee) to attend; and (c) that any other conferences/seminars which are considered to be of value and worthy of attendance be brought to the attention of the Committee for consideration.

The Meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.