

Commercial Services Committee
6 May 1998

Irvine, 6 May 1998 - At a Meeting of the Commercial Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Thomas Dickie, James Clements, Joseph McKinney, Alan Munro, Irene Oldfather, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, Gena Seales, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Director of Commercial Services; J Currie, Head of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance; K Wilson, Head of Catering and Cleaning; D McCall, Cemeteries Manager (Commercial Services); W Nicol, Senior Accountant (Financial Services); and M McKeown, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Peter McNamara and John Donn.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 March 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Vehicle Fuel Prices

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the financial impact of increases in Vehicle Fuel Tax.

On 25th March 1998 the Committee approved tenders for the supply of unleaded petrol and derv from local garages. Members were however informed that the tenders would be affected by the increases in Vehicle Fuel Tax announced in the Chancellor's Budget and the Director of Commercial Services was instructed to report to the Committee on the increased costs involved.

The larger proportion of fuel used is purchased through Government Agencies and consortia and fuel bought in bulk is some 5 pence cheaper per litre than local garages, which are used only where it is uneconomical to travel to the Council's own bulk tanks at Shewalton, Irvine and Byrehill Garage, Kilwinning, for derv, and Portland Place, Stevenston, for petrol.

Members were advised that the increase in Vehicle Fuel Tax will have the effect of increasing the vehicle fuel costs to the Council by approximately £57,000, which will fall mainly on the Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance DSOs and on the Building and Works and Roads DLOs.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that every effort should be made to use fuel supplied via bulk contracts; and (b) that a report on increasing fuel efficiency should be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. Transport Section: Customer Survey - Vehicle Maintenance Service

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the results of a customer survey of users of internal transport as part of the Council's commitment to achieving Best Value.

A questionnaire was issued to user departments/directorates within the Council to determine the extent of customer satisfaction with the Vehicle Maintenance Service; to establish customer needs and expectations; and to measure the gap between the expectations and the Service currently delivered.

Overall the responses to the questionnaire indicated that users of the Vehicle Maintenance Service were satisfied with the service provided.

Noted.

4. Wheeled Bins

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the implementation programme for the introduction of wheeled bins for domestic refuse.

In December 1997 the Council agreed to the introduction of a Wheeled Bin Scheme for domestic refuse in the Garnock Valley area and, subsequently in March 1998, it was agreed to introduce the Scheme throughout North Ayrshire.

Wheeled bin collections will commence in the Largs and North Coast areas, excluding Cumbrae, on 15 June 1998, and in the Three Towns Area on 24 August 1998. Further discussions will be held before the scheme is introduced in Cumbrae to take account of its unique situation in geographical and logistical terms. The programme of action in respect of implementation within the Irvine New Town Area will be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised of operational changes to the scheme as a result of the lessons learned from the Garnock Valley Pilot scheme.

Noted.

5. Irvine: Bogside: Landraise Site

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on progress made in lodging the Planning Application for the Bogside Landraise Site, Irvine.

Members were advised that the documentation and plans for the site have now been finalised and that it will be possible to lodge the Planning Application with the Planning Authority during May 1998. Additionally Scottish Natural Heritage have reiterated their right to object or withdraw subject to receiving the lodged Environmental Statement.

Funding arrangements for the site, including the access bridge over the River Garnock have still to be agreed and a number of options, including possible PFI and partnership approaches, are being considered.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that the application to administer a Notice of Intent to Develop should be submitted to the Planning Authority; (b) that subject to the granting of the Notice, application should be made to SEPA for a Waste Disposal Licence for the Site; and (c) that a report on funding options should be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. Garden Tidy Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on arrangements for the Garden Tidy Scheme which commenced on 6 May 1998.

Members were advised that some 3000-3500 applications have been received from individuals who meet the Council criteria.

Noted.

7. Largs: Proposed New Cemetery

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on progress to date on the provision of a new cemetery in Largs.

On 11 February 1998 the Committee agreed that contact should be made with the Landowner in connection with the proposed new cemetery in Largs. Members were advised that negotiations are continuing and it is hoped that a satisfactory agreement can be achieved in the near future to allow development of the land to proceed.

A survey of the land has already been carried out and an application for Planning Permission was lodged on 31 March 1998, with full permission anticipated in early course.

Noted.

8. Management Rules for Cemeteries

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the proposal to implement Management Rules for Cemeteries.

In 1997, the Cemeteries Review identified the need for some form of regulation within North Ayrshire Council's Cemeteries, relating to service delivery, and detailing the various procedures required to be carried out by the public, Undertakers, Clergy and the Council. The Charter for the Bereaved, prepared by the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration had appeared to offer a suitable document for this purpose, but due to the differences between English and Scottish Law, the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch of the Institute decided that an alternative Management Rules document should be drawn up for Scotland. A draft document has now been prepared in respect of North Ayrshire Council's Cemeteries.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to remit the Management Rules document to the next meeting of the Protective Services Committee for requisite approval in terms of Section 112 of the Civic Government (Scotland) act 1982.

9. Irvine: Bourtreehill Village Centre: Public Toilets

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the closure of the public toilets at Bourtreehill Village Centre and a proposal to declare the building surplus to requirements.

The Public Toilets at the Village Centre, Bourtreehill are under-utilised due to a combination of lack of public demand and the consequences of vandalism and with the agreement of the local member have been closed for some time.

In the circumstances the Committee agreed (a) to approve the permanent closure of the toilets; and; (b) to remit to the Support Services Committee to declare the building surplus to requirements.

10. SVQ Training

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on SVQ training currently being carried out for members of the Catering and Cleaning workforce.

At a previous meeting the Committee noted the Catering and Cleaning Section's decision to establish an SVQ for all Catering and Cleaning staff, linked to the establishment of a Cadet Scheme, designed to ensure the establishment of a well-trained and motivated workforce.

Ten Cadets have now been identified within the Catering Section and ten within the Cleaning Section and the relevant SVQ manuals have been produced. Training of Assessors and Internal Verifiers has also taken place and, as a result, all necessary elements are in place to allow the programme to be extended to all staff in due course.

Noted.

11. ISO 9002

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on ISO 9002 accreditation within the Catering and Cleaning Section.

The Commercial Services Directorate identified that one of its main goals, in providing Best Value, was to ensure that all sections within the Directorate achieved accreditation to ISO 9002, an internationally recognised standard for quality which provides the basis for assessing and measuring an organisation's operational disciplines and controls, and bench-marking them against other organisations.

The Catering and Cleaning Section has now completed and revised its quality manuals for all Catering and Cleaning premises within North Ayrshire Council and it is anticipated that an Audit of the Section's systems will be carried out in late June 1998.

Noted.

12. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the introduction of a revised procedure within the Catering Section in connection with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations which aim to protect people against risk to their health which may occur from exposure to substances or processes hazardous to their health in the workplace.

As part of its commitment to COSHH the Catering Section has now established a revised training programme and set of procedures for all hazardous cleaning chemicals currently in use in catering locations within North Ayrshire Council.

Noted.

13. Scottish Schools Meals Week 27th April - 1st May 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the Scottish Schools Meals Week promotion within North Ayrshire.

The Scottish Schools Meals Week is held annually within North Ayrshire to promote the School Meals Service to parents and customers alike. As part of the 1998 event, a national competition has been organised for all participating schools and a quantity of promotional material will be allocated by the Catering and Cleaning Section to all primary

and special needs schools to assist their entries to the competition.

Noted.

14. Learning Point

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the introduction of a 'satellite' Learning Point in Nobel House which will allow employees within the Directorate who work in Kilwinning, Stevenston, Ardrossan and Saltcoats to take advantage of the training facilities presently offered within the Council headquarters.

Noted.

15. Cleaning Contract: Customer Satisfaction Report: 31 December 1997 - 27 January 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the standards of cleanliness achieved in the Building Cleaning Contract together with details of the new Pilot Assessment Scheme.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.