

Corporate Strategy Committee
16 February 1999

Irvine, 16 February 1999 - At a Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Ian Clarkson, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney, Thomas Morris, Robert Rae, Robert Reilly, John Sillars, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Corporate Directors (Property Services and Social Services), the Assistant Chief Executives (Finance, Development and Promotion and Personnel), G. Lawson, Principal Policy & Administration Officer, S. Paxton, Administration Officer and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Samuel Gooding.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 5th January and 21st January 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Transfer of North Ayrshire Council Services to the New Local Delivery Organisation

Submitted joint report by the Assistant Chief Executives (Development and Promotion) and (Personnel) on the relevant issues associated with the Services transfer.

On 21st January 1999, the Committee agreed (a) to offer to transfer to the new LDO the services and activities of the Council's Business Development Service and the Youth and Adult Training Unit based at Moorpark House, Kilbirnie, with the exception of the Administration and Clerical Skillseeker programme; and (b) that an Officers Working Group be established to examine the detailed staff transfer, financial and operational issues and report back to the Committee as a matter of urgency.

The Officers Working Group has now identified the detailed issues which require to be addressed in relation to the service transfer, including employee issues, Business Development operational issues, Youth and Adult Training operational issues, business support and property issues and funding and contracting arrangements and has drawn up proposals in relation to each of these. The proposals have been forwarded to the Chief Executive of the new LDO and a meeting has been arranged to discuss the details further. It is considered that the transfer date of 1st April 1999 can be met, although the transfer of support systems may require to be addressed over a longer transition period in order to effect a smooth transfer.

After a full discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to remit to the appropriate officers to negotiate with the Chief Executive of the new LDO and the Trade Unions, on the basis of the terms outlined in the report; and (b) to report back to the Committee and to the Steering Group on the

3. *Garnock Biblical Garden: Community Economic Development and Employment Opportunities*

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on the outcome of an investigation into the practicality of creating a Biblical Garden and associated economic and community development activities at Moorpark House and Grounds, Kilbirnie.

On 9th September 1997, the Committee agreed (a) that further evaluation and exploratory work be undertaken in the support of the development of a Biblical Garden in the Garnock Valley; and (b) that a detailed evaluation report be submitted to a future meeting.

The Garnock Valley Biblical Garden Interim Steering Group comprising community and Council representatives was constituted in March 1998. It was considered that the Biblical Garden should not only include a garden exhibiting the plants mentioned in the Bible, but also associated activities which would stimulate employment, address environmental concerns and tackle social exclusion. The Group appointed the Taylor Clarke Partnership, Consultants to undertake a feasibility study. The Group has since received a presentation from the Consultants on the proposals which include a Commercial Garden Centre, a Biblical Garden, an Arts and Performance Venue and a Craft Incubation Facility. It is considered that the most appropriate delivery model for the Project would be the creation of a community owned Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. The Project would be funded through a private/public sector partnership and a possible funding package is currently being explored with Enterprise Ayrshire and the EDI Group Ltd, Edinburgh.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the outcome of the research into the practicality of creating a Biblical Garden and associated economic and community regeneration activities; (b) that the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) pursue in conjunction with the Garnock Valley Biblical Garden Interim Steering Group (or successor Company Limited by Guarantee), Enterprise Ayrshire and the EDI Group Limited, the appointment of a Project Manager to implement the Project; (c) to appoint the Chair of the Garnock Valley Area Committee to the Board of the proposed Company Limited by Guarantee which will oversee the Project; (d) to remit to the Support Services Committee consideration of the transfer of the land at Moorpark, but not the House, to the Garnock Valley Biblical Garden Interim Steering Group (or successor Company Limited by Guarantee), subject to continued support for the Project being obtained from Enterprise Ayrshire; (e) to continue to support the Project on an "in kind" basis; and (f) that a further report be submitted in due course on progress of the Project including, if appropriate, costs associated with any personnel/resource transfers.

4. *Sheltered Housing Warden Services*

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the results of the review of the Sheltered Housing Warden Service.

The Committee agreed to remit this matter back to the Member/Officer Working Group on the Review of Warden Services to examine the implications of (a) the linked residential aspect; and (b) how the proposals would be implemented, and report back.

5. *CoSLA, Local Government and the Scottish Parliament: A Consultation*

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a consultation document on the implications of the Scottish Parliament for CoSLA and Local Government in Scotland.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Chief Executive submit a detailed response to CoSLA, in consultation with the Chair; and (b) to approve the attendance of the Chair, or a representative at the Focus Group meeting on the issues raised in the consultation document to be held on 23rd February 1999, in Kilmarnock.

6. Preventing Violence Against Women

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a proposed response to the Scottish Office Action Plan on "Preventing Violence Against Women".

It is considered that the Action Plan provides a useful framework and a comprehensive summary of the main issues associated with preventing domestic violence. It would be of assistance, if more detail could be included on the means of implementing the Action Points and on the proposed mechanisms for monitoring progress.

The Committee agreed to approve the draft response to the consultation document as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

7. Community Safety: Discarded Needles

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the current position in relation to the disposal of discarded needles.

At the meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Safety Forum in October 1998, concerns were raised over an incident involving discarded needles in the Three Towns area and the lack of guidance about responsibility for their collection, particularly outwith normal working hours. The Forum agreed that a report be submitted to the Corporate Strategy Committee on the means of tackling this issue, including the possibility of linking to a helpline service and also on preventative measures generally.

During working hours discarded needles are dealt with by the Council's Cleansing, Roads and Building Services staff as appropriate. It is relatively uncommon for reports on discarded needles to be received outwith normal working hours and it is proposed that the Buildings Services Standby Service be used as an emergency out of hours service to be called on by the Police.

The Committee agreed (a) that the local Police station should be the contact point for the reporting of discarded needles; (b) that in cases where assistance is required outwith working hours, Building Services' Standby service is used; and (c) that the Police and 1st Stop Shops be advised of the appropriate services to be contacted during working hours.

8. National Concessionary Fare Arrangements for Blind Persons

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed establishment of a National Concessionary Fare Scheme for blind persons.

Establishing a National Concessionary Fare Scheme for the blind is an agreed objective of both CoSLA and the Government and is highlighted in the recent Government Transport White Paper. Following a survey of all existing Council concessionary fare schemes, CoSLA is seeking endorsement of their proposals for the setting up of a National Concessionary Fare Scheme for blind persons. In essence, the proposals represent a voluntary agreement amongst operators to provide free national travel on the basis of Councils maintaining local concession schemes for blind people at an agreed level of support for three years and agreeing to administer the issuing of standardised concession cards with local scheme identifiers.

A Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee is in the process of being established to take certain decisions to allow the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive to act for the 12 Councils involved in existing schemes. SPT has also considered the proposals at its meeting on 5th February 1999 at which a number of issues were raised, including the financial implications to SPT and therefore to its funding Councils. SPT have agreed participation in the proposed arrangements only on receiving an appropriate undertaking relating to its financial neutrality on rail and underground revenue.

The Committee agreed (a) to submit a response to CoSLA approving in principle the proposed arrangements for a National Concessionary Fare Scheme for blind persons, subject to

the issues raised by SPT being addressed; and (b) to remit to the Chair, as the Council's representative on the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee to submit the Council's view on this matter to the Joint Committee.

9. Local Agenda 21 Issues

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the progress made by the Local Agenda 21 Officers Team.

The Team have recently been involved in a number of activities including (i) the publication of the Programme of Action implementing the Council's Environmental Policy; (ii) the first meeting of the Ayrshire Biodiversity Steering Group on 22nd January 1999, which is being hosted by the Council; (iii) the awarding to the Council a National Gold Award in the Green Apple Environment Awards Scheme in recognition of the Council's Environmental Policy; and (iv) the launch of the publication "Changed Days: Local Agenda 21 in Scotland" to which each Council in Scotland has contributed an article on their Local Agenda 21 activities.

Noted.

10. North Ayrshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1999

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the confirmation of the North Ayrshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1999 by the Secretary of State.

The Order, which came into force on 1st January 1999, gives effect, with minor modifications, to the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland and confirms that the area of North Ayrshire Council will be divided into 30 Wards electoral wards, which will apply from the May election.

Noted.

11. Scottish Parliament and Council Elections: Polling Places

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposed polling places for the Scottish Parliament and Council Elections.

The polling places proposed are those used at previous elections, along with St. Mark's Primary School, Irvine; Kelburn Primary School, Largs; and Broomlands Primary School, Irvine, with the last named replacing Broomlands Community Centre which is no longer available for voting purposes.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that the list of proposed polling places be circulated to all members of the Council; and (b) that members be requested to submit any comments on these to the Principal Officer (Policy and Administration) as soon as possible.

12. West of Scotland Water Authority: Nomination of Council Representatives

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a request for nominations to serve on the West of Scotland Water Authority.

CoSLA have invited all Councils to nominate up to 2 representatives to serve on Water Authorities. In the case of West of Scotland Water, there are 5 vacancies from 1st July 1999. CoSLA will forward the nominations to the Scottish Office and the final decision on appointments will rest with the Secretary of State.

The Committee agreed to nominate Councillors S. Dewar and P. McNamara.

13. Area Committees

(a) North Coast and Arran

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS1) of the North Coast and Arran Area Committee, being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 1st February 1999.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(b) Garnock Valley

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS2) of the Garnock Valley Area Committee, being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 2nd February 1999.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(c) Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS3) of the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee, being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 3rd February 1999.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(d) Irvine

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS4) of the Irvine Area Committee, being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 3rd February 1999.

The Committee agreed to note the report

(e) Three Towns

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS5) of the Three Towns Area Committee, being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 4th February 1999.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

14. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed to hear the following items as a matter of urgency.

15. Conference

An invitation to attend a seminar on "The Law Relating to Prisons" to be held on 15th March 1999 has been received.

The Committee agreed to authorise the attendance of Elliot Gray at the seminar.

16. Irvine: March and Rally in Support of Volvo Workers: Request for Free

Let

Submitted a request from Irvine and District Trades Union Council for a free let of the Volunteer Rooms, Irvine and free use of the public address system, for a rally in support of the Volvo Workers, Irvine to be held on 13th March 1999.

The Committee agreed to grant the request.

The meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.