

North Ayrshire Council  
20 December 1995

**Irvine, 20 December 1995** - Minutes of the Meeting of the North Ayrshire Council held in Cunninghame District Council Chambers, Cunninghame House, Irvine on Wednesday 20th December, 1995 at 6.00 p.m.

**Present**

George Steven, John Donn, Thomas Barr, Patrick Browne, Ian Clarkson, James Clements, Stewart Dewar, David Gallagher, Elliot Gray, Margaret Highet, Joseph McKinney, Elizabeth McLardy, Peter McNamara, David Munn, Margaret Munn, Alan Munro, Irene Murdoch, Irene Oldfather, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, Robert Reilly, Gena Seales and Samuel Taylor.

**In Attendance**

The Chief Executive, the Directors of Education, Financial Services, Housing Services, Community and Recreational Services, Planning, Roads and the Environment and Commercial Services, the Head of Corporate Business, the Legal Services Manager, the Information Technology Services Manager, the Architectural Services Manager, the Personnel Services Manager, the Head of Education Resource Services, two Heads of Education Services (Mr. J. Leckie and Dr. J. Tulips), the Head of Accountancy Services, the Head of Revenue Services, the Head of Planning and Environment, the Head of Service Management, the Head of Sports and Horticultural Services, the Head of Cultural and Community Services and an Administration Officer of CDC (Miss Hewitt).

**Chair**

Mr. Steven in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Jack Carson, Thomas Dickie, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Thomas Morris and John Sillars.

**1. MINUTES CONFIRMED**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the North Ayrshire Council held on 25th October, 1995, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

**2. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

The annexed reports of Committees, being the Minutes of their Meetings as undernoted, were submitted, moved and seconded in terms of Standing Order No. 8 and approved as follows:-

**Committee**

**Pages**

Recruitment Committee: 31st October 1995

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Staffing Structure Committee: 8th November 1995	4 - 7
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### **3. CORPORATE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

#### **(a) Appointments**

##### **(i) Minority Member**

On 25th October, 1995 the Council agreed that the minority member to be appointed to the Corporate Strategy Committee would be confirmed at its next Meeting.

Mrs. McLardy, seconded by Mrs. Murdoch, proposed Mr. Robert Rae as the minority member on the Committee and this was approved.

##### **(ii) Woman Member**

The Council in recognition of the importance of ensuring representation on the Committee of its women members, agreed that Mrs. Jane Gorman be appointed as an additional member on the Committee.

#### **(b) Member/Officer Working Groups**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a proposal that five Member/Officer Working Groups be established to examine the issues of decentralisation, consultation, the remit of Area Committees, members' role and support, and the culture of North Ayrshire and empowerment of its staff. This proposal was discussed at an Induction Meeting for the Corporate Strategy Committee held on 7th December and it is proposed that each group would report back to the Committee in February 1996.

The Council (i) approved the establishment of the 5 proposed Member/Officer Working Groups; and (ii) agreed that each of the undernoted Groups comprise the

following members and officers:-

<b>Members</b>	<b>Officers</b>
<b>Decentralisation</b>	
Ian Clarkson	David Addison (Finance)
Alan Munro	Jim Leckie (Education)
Elliot Gray	Alan Hewitt (Social Work)
Jane Gorman	
<b>Consultation</b>	
Robert Reilly	Shirley Martin (Social Work)
Gena Seales	Lesley Rowson (Education)
Peter McNamara	
Irene Oldfather	
<b>Remit of the Area Committees</b>	
David Gallagher	David McRitchie (Social Work)
Tom Barr	James Tulips (Education)
Margaret Munn	Alistair Osborne (Chief Executive's)
<b>Members' Role and Support</b>	
John Sillars	Shona King (Chief Executive's)
David Munn	Gerard Lawson (Chief Executive's)
Patrick Browne	Marjorie Hewitt (Chief Executive's)
<b>Culture of North Ayrshire and Empowerment of Staff</b>	
Joseph McKinney	J. Murray Macfarlane (Personnel)

John Donn	Elma Murray (IT)
Margaret Highet	William Cowan (Commercial Services)

#### 4. COMMITTEE CYCLE

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed Committee Cycle for the Council and associated arrangements. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

On 25th October, 1995 the Council approved a report of the Member Structures Committee which recommended a Committee Cycle of six weeks and also acknowledged the need for a substantial delegation of powers to Committees.

The proposed cycle to incorporate the Corporate Strategy Committee, two Resource Committees and six Service Committees will be as follows:-

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6
Monday						
Tuesday	Corporate Strategy	Education	Community and Recreation	Support Services		North Ayrshire Council
Wednesday		Social Work	Infrastructure and Environment Services	Commercial Services		
Thursday		Housing Services	Protective Services			
Friday						

Meetings of the five Area Committees would be held in Week 5 in each local area. The day and time of these Meetings requires to be flexible in order to accommodate consultation with community groups. Week 1 of the Committee Cycle will commence on Monday 15th January, 1996 and for the remainder of the year will commence on the following dates, allowing for a four week recess during the month of July:-

26th February, 8th April, 20th May, 29th July, 9th September, 21st October and 25th November.

The Council agreed (a) to approve the above Committee Cycle of Meetings and dates; (b) that all Committee Meetings, with the exception of Area Committees, commence at 2.00 p.m.; (c) that the Council commence at 6.00 p.m.; and (d) that the first Meetings of the Area Committees be held on a day and time to be fixed by the Chief Executive following consultation with each Area Committee Chair.

## 5. HEADS OF SERVICE: APPOINTMENTS

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of the following Heads of Service to each of the Council's directorates:-

<b>(a)</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>		
	Head of Corporate Business	-	Brian McDonald
<b>(b)</b>	<b>Education</b>		
	Head of Education Resource Services	-	Brian Gardner
	Head of Education Services	-	James Leckie
	Head of Education Services	-	Dr. James Tulips
	Head of Education Services	-	Lesley Rowson
<b>(c)</b>	<b>Social Work</b>		
	Head of Service Management	-	Allan Hewitt
	Head of Planning and Development	-	Philip Bryers
<b>(d)</b>	<b>Financial Services</b>		
	Head of Accountancy Services	-	Alasdair Herbert
	Head of Revenue Services	-	David Addison
<b>(e)</b>	<b>Planning, Roads and Environment</b>		

	Head of Planning and Environment	-	Dr. Jack McCorkell
	Head of Roads	-	Neil Buchan
<b>(f)</b>	<b>Housing</b>		
	Head of Property Services	-	James Paul
	Head of Customer Services	-	Elaine McNaught
	Head of Strategy and Development	-	Fanchea Kelly
<b>(g)</b>	<b>Community and Recreational Services</b>		
	Head of Sports and Horticultural Services	-	Francis Keddilty
	Head of Cultural and Community Services	-	David Anderson
	Head of Strategy and Business Management	-	Clare Watson
<b>(h)</b>	<b>Commercial Services</b>		
	Head of Works, Roads and Transport	-	Alex Smart
	Head of Commercial Support	-	Neil McCallum
	Head of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance	-	John Currie
	Head of Catering and Cleaning	-	Kenneth Wilson

Noted.

## 6. STAFFING

### (a) Transfer Schemes

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on progress in reaching agreement on Staff Transfer Schemes. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Local Authorities (Staff Transfer) (Scotland) Order 1995 requires that existing authorities prepare Staff Transfer Schemes and that new authorities give their consent to these Schemes by 15th November, 1995. These Schemes were submitted by CDC and SRC and the Chief Executive responded to both the District and Regional Councils on 14th November agreeing to the Schemes on behalf of

North Ayrshire Council.

All permanent CDC employees will transfer to North Ayrshire Council, a total of 1,672 posts, 182 of which are currently vacant.

The disaggregated posts included in SRC's Scheme total 4,578, of which 261 are vacant. There may be a shortfall in the number of disaggregated staff due to be transferred to North Ayrshire from SRC and the Council will require to recruit Roads Engineers, Building Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, Solicitors and Personnel Officers.

Management Structures have been prepared and approved for all directorates and a number of voluntary severance applications have been received. The requests have been made on the basis that the individuals concerned are surplus to the requirements of the Council or that it would not be in the efficient interests of the Council's service that they continue to be employed.

The Council (i) homologated the Chief Executive's agreement to the Transfer Schemes; and (ii) agreed to approve the voluntary severance requests recommended by Cunninghame District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council.

#### **(b) Staffing Structures**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the organisational Staffing Structures approved by the Staffing Structures Committee. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Staffing Structures Committee at its Meetings on 8th, 15th and 20th November recommended that the proposed structures be approved and that the Trade Unions be invited to comment. An extensive consultation exercise with the Trade Unions has been conducted and the structures for each of the directorates have now been approved. A small number of amendments have been discussed with the Trade Unions and are considered acceptable by the Personnel Services Manager and the respective Director or Manager. These amendments relate to (i) three posts of Principal Officer in the Financial Services Directorate; and (ii) the post of Senior Estates Officer and 2 posts of Senior Solicitor in the Chief Executive's Directorate. The amendments are one increment in each case involving a total cost of £3,762 per annum. The Directorates concerned can accommodate the increase within the Transfer Scheme costs.

The Council noted the progress made and approved the amendments to the above six posts.

## **7. ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

The Chief Executive reported on proposed alterations to the Accommodation Strategy for the Council. These adjustments have been necessary because he could not recommend the Council to pursue the option of housing the Irvine Branch Library within the former Hourstons Store in view of the onerous terms of lease proposed.

The Council approved the proposed adjustments to the Accommodation Strategy and authorised the Chief Executive to pursue its implementation.

## **8. PURCHASING CONSORTIUM**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed establishment of a Purchasing Consortium. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

A Minute of Agreement will be submitted for signature by all Councils in the Strathclyde area participating in the Purchasing Consortium. This Agreement will bind each Council to an initial membership of two years and a requirement to provide twelve months notice of withdrawal, the sharing of the operating costs, the transfer of staff, the relocation of the consortium's operations in the Renfrewshire area and various other conditions.

The Council (a) agreed to participate in the Purchasing Consortium on the basis of the Minute of Agreement to be signed by all Councils in the geographical area of Strathclyde Region; (b) appointed Mr. Elliot Gray to represent the Council on the Consortium Joint Committee; and (c) authorised the Chief Executive to sign the Minute of Agreement on the Council's behalf.

## **9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 1996/97**

Submitted (a) report by the Director of Financial Services on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 1996/97; and (b) Scottish Office Finance Circular 24/1995 on the provision of Notional Budgets advising that the Council has been allocated a Notional Budget of £136,572,000.

Noted.

## **10. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Council's Capital Programme has been prepared listing all of the Council's outstanding commitments from the existing Councils. The Scottish Office have indicated that all plans must be submitted by 22nd December and that members' comments and adjustments will be accepted following that date.

The Council agreed (a) to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to submit the Capital Programme to the Scottish Office by 22nd December; and (b) to remit with powers to the Corporate Strategy Committee at its Meeting on 16th January, 1996 to finalise the Council's comments on the



Capital Programme.

## **11. APPOINTMENTS**

### **(a) Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The North Ayrshire Council delegation led by Brian Wilson MP which met with Lord James Douglas Hamilton, the Scottish Office Minister of State with responsibility for Transport to press the case for the inclusion of Arran and Cumbrae within the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority area are awaiting a response to their representations from the Minister.

The Strathclyde Elderly Forum have submitted a petition with 800 signatories which was presented to North Ayrshire Council pressing for a Concessionary Travel Scheme. Article 20 of the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority Order 1995 gives powers to the SPTA from 1st April, 1996 to establish Travel Concession Schemes and provides for the existing Scheme, established by SRC, to be deemed to be established by the SPTA and the new Unitary Authorities. A report on the Concessionary Scheme will be submitted to the Infrastructure and Environment Services Committee.

The Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (Constitution, Membership and Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Order 1995 provides for the Authority to consist of 34 members appointed by the new Councils. North Ayrshire Council is entitled to appoint two members and two deputy members. The first Meeting of the Authority will be held on 10th January, 1996.

Representation on a range of other outside bodies and organisations has still to be determined and, where agreed, appointments made. These requests will be submitted to future Meetings of the Corporate Strategy Committee.

The Council (i) agreed that the Strathclyde Elderly Forum be advised of the position regarding the continuation of the existing SRC Travel Concession Scheme; (ii) appointed Mr. John Sillars and Mr. Alan Munro as members and Mr. Ian Clarkson and Mr. Robert Reilly as deputy members to the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority; and (iii) agreed that membership and representation on outside bodies and organisations be determined at future Meetings of the Corporate Strategy Committee.

### **(b) Children's Panel Advisory Committee**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Children's Panel Advisory Committee, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The Council will be responsible for providing administrative support to the Children's Panel Advisory Committee but will not be responsible for the Reporters Service

which will be provided by the Children's Reporter Administration.

The role of the CPAC is to:-

- (i) recommend new Children's Panel Members to the Secretary of State;
- (ii) recommend existing Panel Members for re-appointment;
- (iii) regularly monitor all Panel Members in service (there are presently 45 Panel Members in North Ayrshire); and
- (iv) advise the Secretary of State on such matters relating to the general administration of the Panel as he may refer to them.

The CPAC comprises five members, three of whom (including the Chair) are to be appointed by the Secretary of State. The Council is invited to nominate two representatives and these do not require to be elected members.

The Council will require to provide a Clerk and associated administrative support for the CPAC as well as secretarial support to the Chairs of the CPAC and the Children's Panel.

At present the combined costs to SRC for all Strathclyde of Panel Members' expenses, training and recruitment, including the cost of the CPAC, is £219,020 based on the 1994/95 outturn. Arrangements will require to be put in place for the payment of expenses, budgetary monitoring arrangements, etc.

The Council agreed (i) to remit to the Social Work Committee to appoint two representatives to the CPAC; (ii) to remit to the Director of Financial Services to consider the budgetary implications of the establishment of the CPAC; and (iii) to remit to the Chief Executive to consider the staffing implications of providing the required administrative and secretarial support.

#### **(c) Scottish Water and Sewerage Customers Council: Area Committee**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an invitation from COSLA to propose an elected member to serve on the West Area Committee of the Scottish Water and Sewerage Customers Council. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

Each of the three Area Committees in Scotland must have no fewer than seven and no more than eleven members who will serve in an individual capacity. The Customers Council represents the interests of customers of the new water authorities and will also monitor the performance of these authorities, investigate complaints, etc. COSLA's Office Bearers will make a final decision on the nominations to be put to the Water and Sewerage Customers Council for consideration.

The Council agreed to nominate Mr. David Munn as a member for consideration by COSLA to the West Area Committee of the Scottish Water and Sewerage Customers Council.

## **12. JOINT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Submitted report on (a) an invitation to join the Scottish Local Government Information Unit Joint Committee; and (b) progress made in establishing the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Committee, the Strathclyde Fire Board, the Strathclyde Joint Police Board and the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

At a recent Meeting of Leaders of the new authorities there was support for the continuance of the Scottish Local Government Information Unit. The Unit provides an information and research service to local authorities and also organises conferences and produces monthly information bulletins on Government issues etc. The Council has been asked to consider making a financial contribution to the Unit for 1996/97 at a rate of £22 per 1,000 of population (£3,058).

The Council (a) agreed to take up membership of the Scottish Local Government Information Unit Joint Committee and to pay a levy of £22 per 1,000 of population; and (b) noted the progress made in establishing the other Joint Committee and Boards.

## **13. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on members' allowances, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The Strathclyde Fire Board and Strathclyde Fire Joint Police Board at their first Meetings agreed to adopt a Scheme of Approved Duties and of Travel and Subsistence Allowances. In order to be consistent with the payments made to the Council's Board Members, it is proposed that the Council retain the principles of these Schemes.

The provision of mobile phones to members has also been investigated and such facilities could be acquired at a very reasonable cost and provided to members on request. This would involve the following addition to the existing Telephone Payments Scheme:-

(a) that the Council cover the rental cost of a mobile phone where these are supplied; and

(b) that the Scheme allow, as far as negotiations on tariff permit, a minimum level of pre-paid calls with members requiring to pay any amount in excess of that total.

The Council agreed (a) to approve in principle the application to North Ayrshire Council of the Scheme of Travel and Subsistence Allowances adopted by the Strathclyde Fire and Police Joint Boards; (b) to remit to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to adjust the Scheme in its detailed application to North Ayrshire Council and report to the Corporate Strategy Committee; (c) to approve the above addition to the Council's Telephone Payments

Scheme; and (d) to authorise the appropriate officers to negotiate the best acquisition/pre-paid tariff for mobile phones and implement a scheme at the earliest possible date.

## **14. COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES IN NORTH AYRSHIRE**

### **(a) Adult Education**

Submitted joint report by the Directors of Education and Community and Recreational Services on Community Education Services in North Ayrshire. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

On 26th September, 1995 the Reorganisation Committee agreed that a report prepared on the allocation of functions and responsibilities between the Education and Community and Recreational Services Directorates be used as a basis for consultation with relevant Community Education Service staff, service users and voluntary sector partners within North Ayrshire. This extensive consultation process is now complete.

The main findings arising from this process were (i) the high value placed on youth, adult and community development services; (ii) a consensus that the transfer of all Community Education staff to one department would provide a more efficient management structure and greater flexibility in the deployment of staff; and (iii) that as Youth and Community staff will transfer to the Community and Recreational Services Directorate, it would be appropriate to transfer Adult Education staff to that Directorate. The Directorate of Education, however, would retain its ability to influence the future development of adult education provision and this would be achieved by placing financial provision for specific aspects of adult education within the Education Directorate Budget.

The Council agreed (i) that all SRC Community Education Services staff transfer to the Community and Recreational Services Directorate; (ii) that budgetary provision for formal adult education and appropriate creche support be retained within the Education Directorate; and (iii) that the Director of Education negotiate a Service Level Agreement setting out the formal Adult Education Service to be delivered by the Community and Recreational Services Directorate.

### **(b) Staffing Structure**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed organisational staffing structure for the Community and Recreational Services Directorate, copies of which were circulated at the Meeting.

On 20th November, 1995 the Staffing Structure Committee recommended approval of the structure for the Community and Recreational Services Directorate subject to a number of conditions. Following a Meeting held with the Trade Unions on 19th December and the proposals for the location of the Adult Education Service, a revised staffing structure has been agreed with the Trade Unions for the Cultural and Community Services Division of the Directorate. The costs of the changes to the

structure can be accommodated within the Transfer Scheme costs. In addition, an amendment to the salary grades of two senior posts within the Libraries and Information Service Section of this Division have also been agreed with the Trade Unions, namely Library Services Manager and Libraries Development Services Officer.

The Council (i) approved the amendments to the staffing structure for the Cultural and Community Services Division of the Community and Recreational Services Directorate; and (ii) agreed to the above amendments to salary grades.

## **15. FURTHER EDUCATION BURSARIES**

### **(a) Transfer of Responsibility**

The Secretary of State has advised that he is transferring responsibility for Further Education Bursaries from local authorities to colleges as from 1st April, 1996. He has further advised that it will be necessary to transfer resources from local authorities to the FE Colleges and this will mean a reduction in the AEF figure for 1996/97 which he has previously announced.

COSLA have expressed their outrage at the Secretary of State's decision to implement this transfer without consultation.

Noted.

### **(b) Briefing Note**

Submitted a briefing note on the provision of bursaries by local authorities and the implications of the recent announcement, outlining various areas of concern arising from this decision. From 1st April, 1996 funding will be allocated to the Boards of Management of the relevant colleges requiring them to operate a further education bursaries system. Local authorities will be funded to continue the provision of Higher School Bursaries and Further Education Bursaries for those students not attending the colleges supported by the Secretary of State e.g. students enrolling in expensive courses such as dance or special needs courses, with no assurance that appropriate financial provision will be available.

The Council agreed to make representations to the two MPs for North Ayrshire advising them of the concerns detailed in the report and seeking their support in opposing these measures.

## **16. BURNS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an invitation to the Council to become a member of the Burns International Festival Company and to appoint two representatives as Directors of the Company. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Council agreed to continue consideration of the invitation to become a member

of the Burns International Festival Company pending a report by the Director of Planning, Roads and the Environment.

## **17. TASK FORCE ON THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the recent publication of a report of the Task Force on Local Government Conduct which considered the current mechanisms for ensuring probity in local government. Copies of the report had previously been circulated. The report indicated that the Task Force found local government to be open and accountable.

Noted.

## **18. Conferences**

Submitted invitations to attend the following conferences:-

- (a) a COSLA/Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Conference on "The Children's Hearings System and the New Councils" to be held in Stirling on 18th January, 1996;
- (b) an Association of Children's Reporters Conference on "The Future of the Children's Hearings System" to be held in Peebles on 25th-26th March, 1996;
- (c) a Community Enterprise Lothian and Lothian Region Credit Unit Development Agency Conference on "Action For Local Economic Development" to be held in Edinburgh on 9th February, 1996;
- (d) a Women's Local Authority Network Conference on "Community Care" to be held in Stirling on 26th January, 1996; and
- (e) a CIPFA Conference on "New Agenda: Public Sector or Private Business?" to be held in Perthshire on 11th-12th April, 1996.

The Council agreed that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, determine appropriate representation at the above Conferences.

## **19. WATER AND SEWERAGE CHARGES: ARRANGEMENTS FOR BILLING AND COLLECTION**

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on proposed arrangements for the billing and collection of domestic water and sewerage charges on behalf of the West of Scotland Water Authority in 1996/97, copies of which had previously been circulated.

A Scottish Office Consultation Paper on the proposals for the billing and collection arrangements has invited the Council's comments on this issue by 31st December,

1995. A number of concerns have been identified relating to the proposals for allocating the sums collected, the reimbursement of administration costs and the presentation of financial information to Council Tax payers on local authority Council Tax Demand Notices.

The Council agreed (a) that representations be made to the Scottish Office outlining the Council's concerns on the above issues; and (b) that the two MPs for North Ayrshire be advised of the Council's concerns and asked to support the Council in opposing these proposals.

## **20. CUNNINGHAME DISTRICT COUNCIL: CAPITAL PROGRAMMES**

The Corporate Strategy Committee on 7th December, 1995 agreed (a) to advise CDC that North Ayrshire Council have no objections to the remaining tenders reported to the Meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee on 13th November, 1995 being accepted; (b) that CDC be requested to delete certain projects from its General Services Capital Plan for 1995/96; and (c) that CDC be requested to make available to North Ayrshire Council its Capital Resources to enable North Ayrshire Council to meet its accommodation requirements and further to ensure that the Capital Receipt from the Braes Site, Saltcoats is received by 31st March, 1996.

The Chief Executive confirmed that CDC had agreed to all of the above at a Meeting of the Council on 19th December, 1995. The Chief Executive further advised that North Ayrshire Council had received notification that its capital bid for accommodation of £328,616 has just been approved by the Scottish Office.

Noted.

## **21. CONVENER'S REMARKS**

The Convener then thanked all of the members and officers for their efforts in recent months in making such progress in establishing the new authority.

The Meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.