

Commercial Services Committee
20 August 1997

Irvine, 20 August 1997 - At a Meeting of the Commercial Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Thomas Dickie, Peter McNamara, Joseph McKinney, Alan Munro, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, Gena Seales and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Director of Commercial Services; J Currie, Head of Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance; N McCallum, Head of Commercial Support; K Wilson, Head of Catering/Cleaning (Commercial Services); J Hair, Principal Officer (Financial Services); and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Dickie in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Donn, James Clements, Irene Oldfather and George Steven.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Tenders for Vehicles Etc. 1997/98

(Previous Minute Reference: Commercial Services Committee 18 June 1997.)

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on tenders received and accepted to date in the replacement vehicles programme for 1997/98.

Noted.

3. Wheeled Bins: Proposed Pilot Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on a proposal to introduce a Pilot Scheme in the Garnock Valley area to test the use of wheeled bins for domestic refuse collection.

The proposal which has been identified in line with "Best Value" would replace the existing back door black sack service and provide a kerbside collection except where properties have no direct access (e.g. terraced houses) and special arrangements would be made for residents who are disabled. Current arrangements for garden refuse and special uplifts would remain.

The Garnock Valley towns of Kilbirnie, Beith and Dalry have been selected for trials over a six month period with a view to then determining whether the scheme should be phased in elsewhere.

The report highlights the benefits of this proposal (e.g. reduced physical effort for collectors, improved safety, reduced litter) and highlights the savings which can be made. Full consultation would take place with the public, workforce and unions on its introduction.

The report also supplied details of an offer by a supplier to establish the scheme on the Council's behalf provided certain conditions could be met but the Legal Services Manager has confirmed that it would be inappropriate to pursue this option.

The Committee agreed after discussion (a) that the pilot scheme proposals be introduced in the Garnock Valley for six months with a review thereafter; and (b) to authorise the Director of Commercial Services to invite offers for the provision of requisite equipment and materials etc.

4. Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs)

(Previous Minute Reference: Commercial Services Committee 21 August 1996.)

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services confirming that the APCs in Kilwinning and Stevenston have now been replaced with new Universal Superloos which also provide access for wheelchair users.

The need for this specific provision for disabled people had been identified in a consultation exercise. The Three Towns Disability Forum and local members who selected the Stevenston location had subsequently been involved in its opening.

To date the units are being well used with a significant number using RADAR keys for access.

Noted.

5. Waste Disposal Site Licence: Waste Management Licences

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services confirming that SEPA have now granted Waste Management Licences in respect of the four Civic Amenity Sites currently operated by the Council at Largs, Kilbirmie, Irvine and Dreghorn and detailing the conditions which will apply. Information was also provided on the revised site opening hours agreed by the Council in October 1996 which are operating satisfactorily.

The Committee was also advised that SEPA is still considering the Council's applications in respect of their main landfill sites which will be treated in the same manner as new sites and that the legislation relating to the new sites which is onerous will have cost implications if implemented to the full by SEPA.

The Committee agreed that a further report be presented to a future Committee on the progress of the main landfill site licence applications.

6. Consultation Paper: Commercial Waste Services in Rural Areas

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on a Consultation Paper which has been received from the Scottish Office Environment Group on a Draft Code of Practice which is intended to identify examples of good practice in dealing with the particular problems of commercial waste collection in small towns and villages. The Code, which will apply only to Scotland, will be published as guidance for councils to encourage consistency of approach throughout Scotland. In addition to responding to specific questions the Council has been asked for its general comments and for suggestions on how the content and impact of the proposed code could be improved.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Director of Commercial Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair to provide an appropriate response to the Consultation Paper by 29 August 1997 as requested.

7. Ardrossan: Cleansing Depot at Central Avenue: Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirement

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on a request to declare the Cleansing Depot at Central Avenue, Ardrossan which is now vacant and no longer required by his Directorate to be surplus to requirements.

The Committee agreed (a) to declare the property surplus to requirements; and (b) to remit to the Support Services Committee to consider its future use.

8. Pennington Report

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the action taken by his Directorate in response to the recommendations of the Pennington Report in relation to Catering.

The Pennington Report was produced as a result of the 1996 outbreak of E Coli 0157 within Central Scotland and makes a number of recommendations in relation to the controls which should apply to food premises to avoid any further outbreaks of the infection. Following consultation between representatives of the Catering Section of the Commercial Service Directorate and the Environment Section of the Planning, Roads and Environment Directorate, agreement has been reached that continued emphasis should be given to the training of all food handlers.

Details of the various aspects of the training programme currently operating within the Commercial Services Directorate were provided and members were advised of a proposal to investigate the creation of an induction video for the benefit of Catering, Cleaning and Janitorial staff.

Noted.

9. Cleaning Contract: Customer Satisfaction Report

(Previous Minute Reference: Commercial Services Committee 7 May 1997.)

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the current standards of cleanliness being achieved in the Building and Cleaning Contract which is subject to Compulsory Competitive Tendering and is currently carried out by the in-house contractor.

The Customer Satisfaction Reports cover the period from 26 March 1997 to 17 June 1997 during which the level of building cleaning achieving the acceptable standard or above is 88%.

The Committee agreed that the results of the Customer Satisfaction Reports be used as part of the bench-marking process to help evaluate the service being delivered.

10. Alpha Cards: Cashless School Meals Service

(Previous Minute Reference: Commercial Services Committee 18 December 1996.)

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on the operational and financial impact of the Alpha Card System within the School Meals Service.

The system originally introduced to Irvine Royal Academy, Ardrossan Academy and St Michael's Academy in October 1996 has been operating successfully although the brittle nature of the original photographic cards has resulted in their replacement by a new and more flexible card. The system has proved popular with teachers and pupils and has resulted in increased income and a 17% increase in the number of free meals issued by the School Meals Service.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Director of Commercial Services should look to extend the Alpha Card Scheme to the other secondary schools throughout North Ayrshire, and make

provision within the 1997/98 budget for this.

11. Starter Packs

Submitted report by the Director of Commercial Services on a 'Starter Pack' promotion to be operated throughout primary schools in North Ayrshire.

In an effort to further promote the use of the School Meals Service to children and parents, the Commercial Services Directorate, with the support of the Education Directorate is to issue each Primary 1 child within North Ayrshire with a school starter pack consisting of a decorated cylinder pencil case containing a pencil, ruler, eraser and sample of the School Meals Service menu and price list. The starter packs which have been heavily subsidised by suppliers will also contain a letter to parents/guardians giving information on the School Meals Service.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.