

Corporate Strategy Committee  
7 May 1997

**Irvine, 7 May 1997** - At a Special Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 3.00 p.m.

**Present**

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Jack Carson, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney, Thomas Morris, Robert Rae, Robert Reilly, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

**In Attendance**

The Chief Executive; The Directors of Education and Financial Services; The Head of Corporate Business; The Principal Officer (Marketing/Publicity) and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

**Chair**

Mr Clements in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Ian Clarkson, Thomas Dickie and John Sillars.

**1. FE College Development in North Ayrshire**

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 15 April 1997.)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the recommendations of the Officer Working Group following further presentations by James Watt College, Kilmarnock College and Ayr College.

James Watt College, Ayr College and Kilmarnock College have presented proposals to the Council to address in varying ways the recognised gap in Further Education provision in North Ayrshire. The James Watt College proposal for a £7.2m college in Kilwinning is the only proposal which is fully compatible with the needs of the Ayrshire economy and is supported by the Council.

The Member/Officer Working Group has also heard further proposals from James Watt College for the provision of a Community Learning Centre in the Three Towns area and from Kilmarnock and Ayr Colleges in relation to their proposed developments in that area. All three proposals offer a presence in the Three Towns Regeneration area and would represent a significant enhancement of Further Education provision in that area. The Kilmarnock and Ayr College curriculum proposals would result in a traditional FE menu of non-advanced courses which would also be available in Kilwinning. It is likely that students progressing to more advanced courses would therefore do so at Kilmarnock or Ayr rather than transferring to Kilwinning. The net effect of this would be to reduce the number of students attending the Kilwinning College by 20-25%. Such a reduction would seriously damage the viability of the Kilwinning development and might well make it difficult to put together the necessary funding package.

North Ayrshire Council has committed £.5m to the Kilwinning College development and would be unable to support another development either directly in cash or indirectly through reduced site values without influencing other essential developments in its Capital programme. Members and officers have met previously with senior officers of Enterprise Ayrshire and have received assurances of their full backing for the James Watt College proposals details of which were outlined in the report. Enterprise Ayrshire has also indicated that there are strict limits on the

funding which could be provided to support Further Education developments in North Ayrshire.

James Watt College have now presented two options for Community Learning Centre provision within the Three Towns for consideration by the Council. Option 1 consists of a small Community Learning Centre in the Three Towns to be located in the shop units adjacent to ASSIST's current premises in Saltcoats and would represent a partnership approach between the College and ASSIST. A medium sized Centre would be located on a second site yet to be identified and developed along similar lines to the ASSIST Project. Option 2 consists of the provision of one large facility at a site to be identified by the College in partnership with the Council and other relevant agencies. This facility would be a £.5m development and would involve a partnership with an existing project or projects. It is envisaged that the Centre would employ 15-20 personnel and would concentrate on the provision of guidance, access programmes, confidence building and job seeking skills, IT training, open/flexible learning and enterprise programmes. It is expected that between 1,500 and 2,000 would use either of the facilities each year. Additional information on the type of facility envisaged was provided in the report.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to reiterate its support for the James Watt College development in Kilwinning; (b) to thank Ayr and Kilmarnock Colleges for their interest and for the work they have put into developing their proposals; (c) that no support for competing FE College developments be considered until the James Watt College Campus in Kilwinning is fully operational; (d) to advise the James Watt College that in relation to Community Learning Centre provision in the Three Towns, option 2 as detailed in the report is the preferred option of the Council; (e) in the meantime, not to release sites in the Three Towns which could be used for competing FE developments; and (f) to advise Enterprise Ayrshire, the Three Towns Initiative, the West of Scotland European Partnership and the Colleges concerned of the Council's decision.

## ***2. Highlands and Islands European Partnership: Highlands and Islands Conveners Group***

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business seeking the Committee's approval for his participation in a visit to North Norway.

The Highlands and Islands European Partnership in which the Council previously agreed to participate, has been preparing for the end of the present Structural Funds programme in 1999. They wish to determine how much of the European budget will be available to help economic and social development post 1999 and which regions of Europe will benefit. Officials of the Highlands and Islands European Partnership have been involved in a number of initiatives and discussion groups over a six-month period and following discussions with Commission officials and Nordic colleagues, the Partnership has set up a Task Group with Nordic partners with the aim of producing good statistical evidence to highlight the main issues affecting those living at the northern edge of Europe and to form partnerships to lobby the EC.

The Norwegian Consulate has invited the Highlands and Islands European Partnership to send a small party to visit Norway to establish the basis for northern periphery links and to study aspects of service delivery in remote rural areas and various other aspects of these areas. The partners in the visit will include the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the University of the Highlands and Islands, the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and the Highlands and Islands European Partnership. North Ayrshire Council has been invited to send one representative on this Study Tour. The Council will require to meet costs in relation to travel and accommodation which can be met from existing budgets.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Head of Corporate Business to participate in the Highlands and Islands European Partnership Study Tour in Norway between 20 and 27 June 1997.

## ***3. Arran: Bus Service Provision***

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 15 April 1997.)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive seeking authority to provide specific information held by the Council to all companies seeking to tender for the contracts for bus service provision on Arran.

A private company who have expressed an interest in the submission of a tender for the bus service provision contracts on Arran are seeking information from the Council on use and revenue levels of operation on Arran. The Council currently hold this information and is entitled on commercial grounds to hold the information and use it for its own purposes. Following appropriate consultations it is considered that the Council should provide tenderers with this information.

The Committee agreed to provide the necessary information to the company and make it available for any other company wishing to submit a tender.

#### **4. *Europe Day: 9 May 1997***

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on a request from the European Commission to fly the European Flag on 9 May.

The European Commission have written to North Ayrshire Council requesting that the Council fly the European Flag on civic buildings on or around 9 May 1997 which is Europe Day.

The Committee agreed to the request.

#### **5. *Local Health Strategy***

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on the Council's participation in the development of a Local Health Strategy for Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

In March 1997 Ayrshire and Arran Health Board advised the Council of its intention to publish, for consultation purposes, a revised local Health Strategy in the autumn. This will involve the gathering of information from a variety of organisations including the Council itself. The Council has been invited to nominate a representative to join the Strategy Development Team and will be formally consulted by the Health Board on the Strategy document following its completion.

The Committee agreed that the Head of Corporate Business (a) represent the Council on the Strategy Development Team; and (b) in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and Convener, provide information to Ayrshire and Arran Health Board in relation to the Strategy Development process as appropriate.

#### **6. *Assistance to Industry***

The Chief Executive reported on an enquiry received from Locate in Scotland through the Ayrshire Location Service and on the action he had taken in consultation with the Chair. The Council have been requested to assist with a package to be offered towards an inward investment opportunity.

After hearing the Chief Executive further, the Committee agreed (a) to approve the action taken to date; and (b) to make a contribution as requested.

#### **7. *Educational and Cultural Links with Karmoy***

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy 9 May 1996.)

The Committee was asked to consider the Council's representation for this year's visit to the Karmoy Viking Festival in Norway.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Convener and the Chair of the Community and Recreational Services Committee, along with the Director of Community and Recreational

Services to attend this year's festival in June.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.