

Support Services Committee
19 August 1997

Irvine, 19 August 1997 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David O'Neill, Alan Munro, Patrick Browne, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Elliot Gray, Margaret Highet, James Jennings and David Munn.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, Director of Financial Services, Director of Social Work, Architectural Services Manager, Personnel Services Manager, Information Technology Services Manager, Legal Services Manager, J. Ferguson, Assistant Principal Estates Officer (Legal Services), B. Gardner, Head of Education Resources (Education), K. Wilson, Head of Catering and Cleaning (Commercial Services) and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

James Clements, George Steven and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 17 June 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Collection Statements

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the current collection levels in respect of Community Charge and Council Tax for the period ended 31 July 1997.

A total of £156,000 was collected in respect of Community Charge during June 1997 and £109,000 in July 1997. The Council Tax collection level is ahead of target and the Community Charge collection level is also improving.

Noted.

3. Community Charges and Council Tax Collection Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the Government's proposed scheme to assist recovery initiatives in the collection of outstanding Community Charges and Council Tax.

In February 1997, following discussions with COSLA the Government announced the intention to provide additional funds for local authorities to promote recovery initiatives. The Scottish Office has now provided details of the proposed scheme. The Council has been awarded a maximum grant of £106,690 to meet spending on a recovery initiative in 1997/98 and 1998/99 and proposals for the initiative require to be submitted to the Scottish Office by 12 September 1997. It is proposed to set up a dedicated recovery team who will undertake the initiatives in collecting outstanding Community Charges and Council Tax by a variety of methods.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve, in principle, the creation of a dedicated recovery team; (b) to appoint a Member/Officer Working Group comprising the Leader of the Council, Depute Leader of the Council, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Support Services Committee together with appropriate Officers to determine the structure, processes and remit of the recovery team; and (c) that the recommendations of the Working Group be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee.

4. Revenue Budgetary Control Report for Period 1 April to 18 July 1997

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the financial position of the Council at 18 July 1997 and early year end projections.

On 6 March 1997, the Council, in approving the Revenue Estimates for 1997/98, requested Directorates, in consultation with the Director of Financial Services, to prepare spending profiles of how their budgets would be spent during 1997/98, with a view to these projections being compared on a periodic basis to the actual position and regular reports to be submitted.

This is therefore the first of such reports giving a breakdown of the budget by Directorate and following the necessary timing adjustments, showing the true variances, whether adverse or favourable on each budget and providing an explanation for these variances.

On the total Council budget of £153m, there is at present a projected overspend of £800,000 at the year end. The projections are likely to change, however, as a number of figures require more detailed investigation and other factors such as the pay settlement will require to be taken into account.

The format of the report will be revised for the next Meeting and further clarification will be provided on any variances. It is also intended that each Committee will be provided with a detailed breakdown of their own budget.

Noted.

5. Strathclyde Regional Council Accounts 1995/96: Post Accounts Transactions

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the arrangements for the treatment of Post Accounts Transactions.

The accounts of Strathclyde Regional Council are now complete, but have not yet been finally audited. Glasgow City Council are required to account to the successive authorities for all payments and receipts of the Regional Council. It is necessary for the twelve unitary authorities to agree on arrangements for sharing any deficit inherited together with the treatment of any Post Accounts Transactions which may occur, the sharing of the cost of these Transactions and the arrangements for reimbursement. The report detailed arrangements as to how this can be achieved. There is still a further £9.2m to be allocated across the twelve unitary authorities and there will be a substantial amount to fund against the Council Tax for 1998/99.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the arrangements on items to be charged as Post Accounts Transactions submitted by Glasgow City Council; and (b) to authorise the Chief Executive and/or the Director of Financial Services to sign the agreement on behalf of North Ayrshire Council.

6. North Ayrshire Municipal Bank Limited

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a Resolution in terms of Section 103 of the Banking Act 1987.

The Scottish Office has written to the Treasurer of the Municipal Bank advising that in the view of HM Treasury, the assertions made by the Bank to confirm compliance with Section 103 of the Banking Act 1987 are no longer sufficient and that the Treasury now expects the Council to pass a formal Resolution as required by Section 103. This will require the Council to formalise the existing arrangements, whereby the Council will guarantee that in the event of the collapse of North Ayrshire Municipal Bank, the Council has sufficient funds to protect all the Bank's depositors.

The Committee agreed to resolve to guarantee the deposits of North Ayrshire Municipal Bank Limited.

7. Contracts for Works: Final Measurements

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager on Final Measurements agreed for various Contracts carried out by North Ayrshire Council and the former Cunninghame District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council.

The Appendix attached to the report provided a detailed breakdown of the final adjustments made to the contract sum of various completed contracts for works. An indication was also given of the reasons for the over or under expenditure.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to the final accounts for these contracts.

8. BT One Bill and Corporate Choices

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on benefits of BT One Bill and Corporate Choices.

The BT One Bill scheme will enable the Council to receive all its different telephone bills at one specified time, while still providing individual telephone bills if required. The scheme will allow the Council to make one payment to British Telecom, significantly reducing the administration and costs involved in the payment of telephone bills; will provide better management information on telephone usage; better budgetary control, and by joining the Corporate Choices Discount scheme will save the Council approximately £30,000, which is 12% of the total telephone charges.

The Committee agreed to approve the introduction of BT One Bill and Corporate Choices Discount scheme.

9. Client Satisfaction

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the results of the initial Client Satisfaction Survey carried out by I.T. Services in May 1997.

An initial survey of all departmental I.T. Co-ordinators was carried out in May 1997, requesting them to rate the performance of the I.T. Services Department. The results have highlighted the critical and most important factors in the provision of the service and have also provided an indication of areas which can be improved. A further comparison will be carried out over the next year. The detailed results of the survey were circulated with the report.

Noted.

10. Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Policy

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the benefits of a Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Policy.

The Council has approximately 100 mobile phones and 50 pagers in use across all its Directorates. These are a combination of analogue and digital phones, have been purchased from a number of suppliers and are on a range of different tariffs and contract lengths. It is proposed to rationalise the current situation and implement a Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Policy, in order to provide a better service. One overall contract for the supply of mobile phones and pagers would reduce payment and bills administration, as well as increasing the Council's purchasing power to obtain better discounts and prices. It is proposed that I.T. Services Manager and the Director of Commercial Services in partnership with the Authorities Buying Consortium implement a corporate framework agreement for the purchase of mobiles

and pagers with one or a number of key suppliers.

The Committee agreed to approve the introduction of a Corporate Mobile and Pager Procurement Policy to be introduced throughout the Council.

11. Disposal of Information Technology Equipment

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on a proposed procedure for disposing of redundant I.T. equipment.

It is proposed to introduce a formal policy for the effective disposal of I.T. equipment which has become redundant either due to changing technology or through replacement. In the first instance, the I.T. Services Manager will circulate an inventory list of any surplus equipment to all Departments within the Council for their interest. If there is no interest, the other options for disposal as detailed in the report will then be followed,.

The Committee agreed to the adoption of the procedure for disposal of redundant I.T. equipment, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

12. PC Maintenance Contract Extension

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager requesting an extension to the Council's existing PC maintenance contract.

In August 1996, the Council awarded NVT Computing Limited the contract for the provision of personal computer maintenance for one year commencing on 1 September 1996, with an option for an additional year. During the past year, the contractor has been called out on 349 occasions and the I.T. Services Department have been monitoring the value and effectiveness of the service provided. It is proposed to extend the existing contract for one year, during which time the provision of PC maintenance cover will be reviewed.

The Committee agreed to extend the contract for personal computer maintenance awarded to NVT Computing Limited until 31 August 1998.

13. Caird Exit Plan: Progress

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on progress in relation to North Ayrshire Council's exit from the Caird Centre, Hamilton.

The Council requires to effect an exit from the Caird Centre, Hamilton by 31 March 1998. In addition, the Council is committed to implementing a replacement Unified Benefits, Council Tax and Housing Rents system prior to that date. A common exit strategy for the removal of data and services from the Caird Centre was agreed by all 12 Unitary Authorities in June 1997. In all cases, the Council can comply with the final dates by which Authorities must have put alternative I.T. arrangements in place.

The highest risk in exiting from the Caird Centre will be the transfer of existing data from the old systems to the new systems. This risk applies also to the data held in the Housing systems, but, this conversion exercise is within the control of the Council. Due to the timescale for the availability of data the Council will be unable to meet the target implementation of February 1998. Alternative arrangements have been made therefore whereby the Council has assisted with the development of the data extract specification and will be able to get access to the data in August 1997. The Council will require to meet all dates, as any slippage cannot be resourced by the Caird Centre and any requirement for a Council Tax service in a third year would incur service charges from the Caird Centre for which there is no budget provision.

The exit strategy will therefore require to be given the highest priority by the I.T. Services Department, with the result that I.T. Services may not be able to meet all the requirements of other Council Directorates in 1997/98.

Noted.

14. Financial Services Directorate (Accountancy Section) Accountancy Assistant Post

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed establishment of a new post of Accountancy Assistant in the Accountancy Section of the Financial Services Department.

Since local government re-organisation the Head of Revenue Services has undertaken the Accountancy function for revenues. It is considered that this function for revenue should be undertaken within the Accountancy Section of the Directorate by suitably qualified personnel. It is therefore proposed to address the additional workload situation by establishing a new post of Accountancy Assistant (AP3) to assist with this function. There is no budget provision to fund this post, but it is anticipated that the performance of the Revenues Section will generate additional revenue in the current year which will cover the additional cost.

The Committee agreed to increase the Financial Services Directorate establishment by the creation of a post of Accountancy Assistant at grade AP3.

15. Outcome of Salary Grading Appeals at COSLA

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the outcome of salary grading appeals at COSLA.

In March 1996, the Appeals Sub-Committee of Cunninghame District Council considered a large number of salary grading appeals from APT & C staffs. A number of those appellants whose appeals were not upheld by the former District Council subsequently lodged an appeal to CoSLA, and were considered by the Appeals and Disputes Committee of COSLA in June 1997. Three appeals in the former Leisure Services Department and one appeal in the former Cleansing Department have been

upheld either in part or in full. The financial implications in respect of implementing these decisions are estimated at £17,248 in 1997/98 and £6,160 in the next financial year.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the decisions of COSLA on the salary grading appeals as detailed in the report; and (b) confirmed the regradings of the posts.

16. Staffing Establishment: Community and Recreational Services Directorate

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on an updated staffing establishment for the Community and Recreational Services Directorate following the transfer and placement of staff.

On 20 November 1996, the Transitional Staffing Structures Committee approved the management structure of the Community and Recreational Services Directorate and noted that any subsequent adjustments required to the establishment would be reported in due course. The current structure below senior management level transferred to the Council from Strathclyde Regional Council and Cunninghame District Council on 1 April 1996. The Director of Community and Recreational Services has now had an opportunity to examine the structure at this level, and in order to rationalise the structure in the light of experience since re-organisation is proposing a number of minor regradings, deletion of posts and creation of new posts.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised establishment structure for the Community and Recreational Services Directorate as detailed in the report.

17. Social Work Structure

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager advising of experience gained by implementing a decentralised management structure within the Social Work Directorate and of modifications now required.

Following two senior posts within the Social Work Directorate recently becoming vacant, the Director of Social Work has reviewed the Directorate's senior management structure at Headquarters with a view to flattening the structure, re-aligning/re-allocating duties and also providing a new frontline service post in the Garnock Valley team. The re-structuring proposals will result in savings of £33,000 per annum which could be redirected to fund other requirements.

The Committee agreed to amend the staffing establishment of the Social Work Directorate by (a) the deletion of the posts of Principal Officer (Development) and Assistant Co-ordinator (Information); (b) the re-alignment of the duties and responsibilities of the posts of Principal Officer (Resources) and Principal Officer (Specialist Services) and regrading these posts from PO11 to PO16; (c) the redesignation of the current post of Manager (Development) to that of Principal Officer (Service Development); (d) the redesignation of the current post of Principal Officer (Criminal Justice Service) to that of Manager (Criminal Justice Services) and regrading that post from PO11 to PO16; (e) the redesignation of the post of Assistant

Co-ordinator (Health) and regrading the post from PO2 to PO5; and (f) the establishment of a new post of Resource Worker in the Garnock Valley Area Team (grade QSW/AP4/5).

18. Management Development Programme

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the introduction of a corporate Management Development Programme.

At present there is a range of training managed and delivered by the Personnel Services Department along with specific job-related training organised by Directorates relating to their own particular functions. A key area which has not been tackled to date within the Council is management development. At present the situation is largely ad hoc and responsive to individual requests for further training. It is considered that such training should be targeted at the needs of the Council and that a strategic programme of management development training should be introduced for all Managers from Director to the level of first line Manager. The proposed programme would be run in conjunction with the Scottish Local Authorities Management Centre, allowing the programme to be accredited and thus contributing towards further degree and diploma courses for those individuals who wish to progress to that level. The cost of a pilot programme in this financial year is £16,000 and in subsequent years the annual cost would be £65,000, which would require to be met from the Revenue Budget.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to approve the Management Development Programme as a pilot project in 1997/98; and (b) to approve the Diploma and MSc in Local Authority Management as the approved management courses of study where employees are supported through the Council's post entry training scheme.

19. Partnership with the Prince's Trust Volunteers

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a policy of supporting the Prince's Trust Volunteers.

The Prince's Trust Volunteers is a programme for young, disadvantaged people aged 16-25 to develop personal and social skills through participation in a 12 week programme of team building events, project work and placements mainly in the caring or environmental sector. Each programme consists of up to 15 young people, mainly unemployed, but including volunteers who are in employment and sponsored by their employer. The programme is managed by Strathclyde Fire Brigade. Consultations have taken place with the Prince's Trust on the Council becoming involved in a programme in this area. The cost of employee volunteer participation will be £5,000 per year, which can be funded from existing budgets.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve participation in the Prince's Trust Volunteers programme by providing employee volunteers for programmes within the North Ayrshire area; (b) that assistance be given by Council Directorates as appropriate in providing suitable voluntary placements, primarily in the areas of caring or environmental improvement; and (c) that the Prince's Trust be offered the use of any

available Council premises which are identified as being suitable for a volunteer base.

20. National Joint Council: Circulars and National Agreements: Amendments to Conditions of Service

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the adoption and implementation of amendments to Conditions of Service.

Agreement has been reached nationally on certain Conditions of Service issues relating to (a) APT & C Services salary awards 1997; (b) Manual Workers pay settlement 1997; (c) Chief Officials car and motor cycle allowance and assisted car purchase; (d) Chief Officials salary agreement 1997; (e) APT & C Services part-time Registrars and Assistant Registrars; (f) standby duty for Officers other than Social Workers; and (g) revised Foreign Language Assistant's allowances.

The Committee agreed to approve the report and implement the Conditions of Service Circulars as detailed in the report.

21. Provision of Independent Financial Advice to Employees

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the provision of an independent Financial Advisory Service for employees.

On 11 February 1997, the Committee agreed that submissions could be sought from interested independent financial advisors with a view to selecting two companies to provide the service and that the selection be delegated to an Officer's Panel nominated by the Personnel Services Manager and the Director of Financial Services. Six organisations were therefore shortlisted to make a presentation to the Officers and following this presentation, it is proposed to appoint two companies, Hymans Robertson and Blythswood Associates to provide an independent financial advice service to Council Members and employees.

The Committee agreed to approve the appointment of Hymans Robertson and Blythswood Associates.

22. Social Work Directorate: Request for Early Retirement

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a decision by the Support Services Sub-Committee to grant early retirement to an employee within the Social Work Directorate.

On 6 February 1996, the Committee agreed to delegate powers to a Sub-Committee comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Support Services Committee and the Chair of the Corporate Strategy Committee to approve severance terms to employees.

On 27 June 1997, the Sub-Committee approved the retirement of an employee within the Directorate of Social Work, on the grounds of the interests of the efficiency of the

service.

Noted.

23. Commercial Services Directorate: Incentive Schemes

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on agreements reached in relation to the standardisation of incentive bonus schemes.

Following lengthy negotiations with the Trade Unions, agreement has been reached on the incentive bonus schemes and related Conditions of Service for employees within the Refuse Collection and Related Cleaning Contract and the Building Maintenance Contract. A copy of the agreed scheme was appended to the report.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the revised incentive bonus scheme agreed in respect of employees within the Refuse Collection and Other Cleaning services; (b) to approve the continuation of the Year End Attendance Related Share Scheme subject to further discussion with the employees' representatives on clarification of conditions governing entitlement to payments under the Scheme; (c) to approve the new standardised incentive bonus scheme agreed in principle with employee representatives in respect of Building Maintenance Operators to commence on 3 November 1997; and (d) to authorise the Director of Commercial Services to continue negotiations on a Year End Attendance Related Payment Scheme for Building Maintenance Operators and submit a further report to the Committee on the finalised Scheme.

24. Education Directorate: Early Intervention: Grants Programme

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the establishment of an additional staffing complement to support a grant aided literacy and numeracy intervention programme.

On 5 August 1997, the Education Committee were advised that their application to the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department for a grant to implement an early intervention programme in relation to literacy and numeracy for pupils in P1 and P2 in North Ayrshire had been successful. The grant award is for a period of 3 years. The Committee agreed to refer to the staffing proposals to the Support Services Committee for consideration.

As the early intervention programme is a new initiative, it is proposed that the initial posts be established on a temporary basis for 1 year in the first instance, either through the provision of temporary contracts or secondment, with a review following the pilot programme.

The Committee agreed to approve the appointment of 14 full time equivalent Nursery Nurses (Nursery Nurse Grade), 1 Staff Tutor (to be seconded), and one part time

Research Assistant (14 hours/week, AP5/PO2 pro rata), on temporary contracts.

25. Temporary Employees

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the number of temporary employees engaged by North Ayrshire Council.

On 17 December 1996, the Committee noted a report detailing the number of temporary employees employed within the Council and requested that the Personnel Services Manager review the position and report.

During the period from March to July 1997, the number of temporary employees has reduced from 746 to 489, a reduction of 34.5%. This has been achieved by various means, including some posts being no longer required, others being given permanent contracts, a re-evaluation of workloads and a quicker turnaround in advertising vacancies. Of the Council's 6,421 employees, 92.4% are permanent employees and 7.6% are employed on temporary contracts.

Members were advised of the continuing need for temporary employees, but that the numbers and reasons for temporary employment would be the subject of continual review. Further reports will be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Noted.

26. Irvine: Proposed Development at Irvine Royal Academy Site

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request for a Minute of Waiver of feuing conditions in respect of the former Irvine Royal Academy site, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to grant a Minute of Waiver of feuing conditions on terms and conditions agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

27. Irvine: Golffields Road: District Gas Governor Site

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of the District Gas Governor site at Golffields Road, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to approve the terms provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

28. Irvine: 225 Dickson Drive: Garage Access

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request for a Granting of Servitude Right of access in respect of a garage access at 225 Dickson Drive, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the Granting of Servitude Right of Access on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

29. Irvine: 20 Kyle Road: Unit 23 (A & E)

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a termination of lease by the tenants in respect of Unit 32, (A & E), 20 Kyle Road, Irvine.

Noted.

30. Irvine: Ayr Road: Advertising Station

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a renewal of lease in respect of the Advertising Station, Ayr Road, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the renewal of lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

31. Clark Drive: St. Mark's Primary School

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request for a Wayleave for drains from a proposed development site at Berry Drive, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the request for a Wayleave on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

32. Irvine: 19U Bank Street: Shop Premises

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of shop premises at 19U Bank Street, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

33. Dreghorn: Land Adjacent to 16 Harris Court: Request to Purchase Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request to purchase land adjacent to 16 Harris Court, Dreghorn.

The Committee agreed to the request to purchase land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

34. Stevenston: Units 1 & 2 New Street Shopping Centre: Former Social Work Offices

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the Council's obligations upon termination of the lease at the former Social Work Offices, Units 1 & 2 New Street Shopping Centre, Stevenston.

In November 1975 Strathclyde Regional Council entered into a 21 year lease with

M.D.W. Developments Limited for the lease of offices for the Social Work Department, at New Street, Stevenston. Upon termination of the lease, the current landlords who are Europe and Jersey Estates Limited, arranged an inspection of the property and subsequently submitted a Schedule of Dilapidations amounting to £82,578.80. Following an independent review the bill has been reduced to £76,385.39.

A claim has now been received from the previous landlord, that at the date of expiry of the lease, he and not Europe and Jersey Estates Limited was the landlord and that no provision was made for the incoming landlord to receive any monies in respect of these units.

The Committee agreed (a) to acknowledge the legal obligation to restore the former Social Work Offices at Units 1 & 2 New Street, Stevenston; and (b) that no action be taken until the present dispute over the landlord's rights is settled.

35. Stevenston: Units 9 & 10 New Street: Former Library Building

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the Council's obligations upon termination of the lease at the former Library Building, Units 9 & 10 New Street, Stevenston.

Cunninghame District Council leased the shop units at 9 & 10 New Street, Stevenston as a library in 1983 for 10 years. In 1993 the lease was extended for a further 5 years until 14 May 1998. The Director of Community and Recreational Services has now indicated that the premises are no longer required and an early termination of lease is sought. The landlord in this case is Europe and Jersey Estates Limited and they are seeking a payment of rent for the unexpired term of the lease, along with payment of common repairs, fees and outlays and restoration amounting to £76,968.

It is considered that the amount of restoration works appears high and that this issue should be resolved by an arbiter. Once the arbiter has determined what works are actually required, the Council's own workforce can undertake the works.

Members expressed their concern about the financial implication for the Council and about the deteriorating condition of the New Street shopping centre. Assurances were given that a further report would be submitted to the Committee as soon as possible on the arbiter's decision.

The Committee agreed (a) to acknowledge the legal obligation to meet the cost of rent and other financial elements including restoration of the former library premises at Units 9 & 10 New Street, Stevenston; and (b) to note that a further report will be submitted on the arbiter's recommendation.

36. Stevenston: Kerelaw Road: Kerelaw Depot

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of the Kerelaw Depot, Kerelaw Road, Stevenston.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

37. Stevenston: 1/3 Portland Place; Fairlie: Unit 5, Keppenburn Workshops; Kilwinning: Bankhead Road: Former Gasworks Site

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of premises at 1/3 Portland Place, Stevenston; Unit 5, Keppenburn Workshops, Fairlie; and Former Gasworks Site, Bankhead Road, Kilwinning.

During July 1997, as a matter of urgency, the Vice-Chair authorised the let of these premises.

The Committee agreed to homologate the action of the Vice-Chair.

38. Kilbirnie: Avil's Place: District Gas Governor Site

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of the District Gas Governor site at Avil's Place, Kilbirnie.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

39. Dalry: Land Adjacent to St. Margaret's Avenue: Request to Purchase

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request to purchase land at St. Margaret's Avenue, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to the request to purchase land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

40. Dalry: Area of Ground to the Rear of Aitken Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the sale of Servitude Right of Access on an area of ground to the rear of Aitken Street, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to the sale of Servitude Right of Access on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

41. Arran: Lease of Ground for Public Toilets at Whiting Bay

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of the lease of ground for public toilets at Whiting Bay, Arran.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

42. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 8 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

43. Arran: Purchase of Arnhall Centre

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed purchase of Arnhall Centre, Whiting Bay, Arran.

On 5 August 1997, the Education Committee agreed in principle to pursue the acquisition of the whole property at the Arnhall Centre, Whiting Bay, Arran, subject to a full survey of the property, for the purposes of residential accommodation and an administration and equipment base for the Arran Outdoor Education Resource. The Committee further agreed to refer the proposed purchase to the Support Services Committee for consideration and, if appropriate, to authorise the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chair of Support Services, to finalise an offer for the property dependent on the final closing date for bids.

The property is being sold in 4 lots with a total asking price of offers over £185,000. Only lots 1 and 2 are required to meet the needs of the Education Directorate at a total asking price of £130,000 with a further £20,000 required for adaptations. There is provision in the Capital Programme of £150,000 to meet these costs. The Committee was advised that there is a “clawback clause” on lot 4 requiring 50% of any profit on the future disposal of any part of the property to be passed on to Save the Children, the current owners of the property.

The Committee agreed (a) to refer to the Corporate Strategy Committee consideration of the financial implications on the Capital Programme of making an appropriate offer to purchase the whole of the property at the Arnhall Centre, Arran; and (b) noted that notwithstanding (a) above, delegated powers have been remitted to the Chief Executive and the Chair of Support Services to proceed to submit an offer, if considered necessary.

44. Staffing Establishment: Chief Executive's and Corporate Support Services Directorate

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on an amendment to staffing within the Marketing and Publicity Section of the Chief Executive's Directorate.

On 20 August 1996, the Committee approved the establishment of the Chief Executive's and Corporate Support Services Directorate. It was also agreed that the newly established post of Public Relations Assistant, following a period of review, would be the subject of a further report to the Committee to determine the appropriate grade of the post in the light of the developing duties and responsibilities.

The duties and responsibilities of the post have now been reviewed and it is proposed to redesignate the post Public Relations Officer and regrade to AP5/PO1. There is financial provision within the budget to meet the costs of the regrading.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the redesignation of the post of Public Relations Assistant to Public Relations Officer; and (b) the regrading of the post from AP3 to AP5/PO1.

45. Urgent Item

The Chair agreed that the following item be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

46. Scottish Maritime Museum: Financial Assistance

The Chief Executive reported that an approach had been received from the Scottish Maritime Museum for bridging finance between the start of their financial year and their European and other funding being received. Irvine Development Corporation previously provided such bridging finance. The request in this instance is for an amount of £50,000. After consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Strategy Committee, the Chief Executive exercised his emergency powers to approve the issue of £50,000 to the Scottish Maritime Museum.

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.