

Corporate Strategy Committee
30 March 1999

Irvine, 30 March 1999 - At a meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, Margaret Highet, James Jennings, David Munn, Margaret Munn, Alan Munro, Irene Oldfather, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Corporate Director (Property Services), Assistant Chief Executives (Finance, Personnel and Information Technology), A Hewitt, Head of Service Management (Social Services), A Fraser, Principal Legal Officer (Legal and Regulatory), R Young, Year 2000 Project Manager, J Montgomery, Principal Officer (Performance Review), M McCormick, Media Officer and S Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr Clements in the Chair

Apologies for Absence

Thomas Dickie, Samuel Gooding, Joseph McKinney, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, John Sillars and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 February 1999 and the Special Meetings held on 16 and 23 February and 9 March 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

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

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) on the outcome of discussions with the Local Delivery Organisation (LDO) on the transfer of resources.

On 21 January 1999, the Committee agreed to transfer parts of the Business Development and Youth and Adult Training Services from the Council to the new North Ayrshire LDO, subject to a further report on the detailed transfer issues. A report was subsequently submitted to the meeting on 16 February 1999, when the Committee agreed to remit to the appropriate officers (i) to negotiate with the Chief Executive of the new LDO and the Trade Unions on the basis of the terms outlined in the report on the detailed transfer issues; and (ii) to report back on the outcome of the discussions with the LDO.

Agreement has now been reached that the basis of transfer would be as reported previously with the exception that 3 posts of Business Development Adviser will transfer to the LDO rather than 4 posts as previously indicated. The LDO has produced a Business Plan which the Chief Executive of the LDO has confirmed will meet the objectives set within the resources being transferred. The transfer to the new LDO will take effect from 1 April 1999, although detailed operational matters will be the subject of ongoing discussion during the transition period of the first

year.

Noted.

3. *Anti-Social Behaviour Orders*

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

On 1 April 1999 the provisions of Section 23 of the Crime and Disorder Act come into force relating to Anti-Social Behaviour. The most significant of the new provisions is the introduction of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) which may be made by a Civil Court on application by a local authority and will prohibit particular individuals from engaging in unreasonable conduct which adversely affects members of their community. The Council already has a policy on Anti-Social Neighbours and Neighbour Disputes, which includes options for taking legal action where other efforts to resolve the problem have failed. The new legislation will, however, apply equally to local authority and private tenants and to home owners. The Council will now be responsible for making applications for ASBOs on behalf of Housing Associations, private landlords and owner/occupiers.

The legislation also makes Anti-Social Behaviour a ground for eviction. Investigations leading to an application for an ASBO will be undertaken in the case of Council tenants, by Housing Services and in the case of Housing Association tenants, by the Housing Association itself. There will be implications for Legal and Regulatory who will require to undertake the legal work for all ASBOs both for the public and the private sectors. The level of demand for ASBOs is difficult to quantify at this stage, however, and further discussion will be required with Housing Associations and private landlords on a protocol for dealing with requests for ASBOs. Arrangements for owner/occupiers and for recharging the costs of any legal work in connection with ASBOs are also being examined.

After a full discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to approve amendments to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy regarding the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders for Council tenants; (b) that a review be carried out with regard to the use of these Orders for Housing Associations, private landlords and owner/occupiers; (c) that an Officer's Working Group prepare and implement procedures for dealing with these Orders from 1 April 1999; and (d) that the issues involved be included in a briefing for members of the new Administration.

4. *Best Value - Key Performance Indicators*

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the first set of Key Performance Indicators.

On 5 January 1999, the Committee agreed (a) to homologate the response to a Scottish Office consultation paper on proposals for the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Best Value; and (b) that a further report on the final KPIs be submitted in due course. Following the consultation process, the Scottish Office extended the deadline for submission of the first set of KPIs to 19 March 1999 and further advised that (i) Councils should submit performance information and targets to demonstrate their commitment to, and progress towards, Best Value; and (ii) the requirement to develop "prototype" public performance reports by June 1999 will be amended to recognise the workload facing Councils following the local elections and the emerging thinking about Public Performance Reporting. The first set of KPIs has been submitted to the Scottish Office, but the new Administration will have the opportunity to revise the information as required in June 1999.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the KPI information, as submitted to the Scottish Office; (b) to note that the new Administration will have the opportunity to revise the information as required, in June 1999; (c) to welcome the proposal to set up an Accounts Commission/Local Government/Scottish Office Working Group to examine the issue of Performance Indicators; and (d) to remit consideration of possible longer term KPIs to the aforementioned Working Group.

5. Update on EMU Preparations

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on preparations for Economic and Monetary Union and a proposed strategy for the next phase.

On 26 May 1998 the Committee agreed that a Member/Officer Working Group be appointed to agree a strategy and timetable for addressing the various issues which will affect the Council as a result of Economic and Monetary Union.

The Member/Office Working Group has since met to consider the initial implications which the introduction of EMU would have on their service and the steps which will be required to address these. In February 1998 the Government announced their National Changeover Plan, outlining the timescale from a Government decision to join EMU up to the withdrawal of Sterling, which indicates that all arrangements may require to be in place by April 2004. The current transition period for first wave entrants to the Euro-Zone is 3 years, but the period for second wave entrants is likely to be less. All Council services will therefore require to make preparations for possible entry to EMU.

COSLA has established an EMU Preparations Network on which the Council is currently represented, which will give COSLA member Councils the opportunity to raise questions with regard to EMU and will disseminate information and good practice.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Council action plan and timetable for EMU preparations as detailed in the report; and (b) that focus groups be established within each service to progress the relevant preparations required.

6. The Year 2000 Problem

Submitted report by the Year 2000 Project Manager on action taken to minimise the impact of the Year 2000 date change on Council services.

Progress continues to be made on IT applications, data and voice systems, PCs, file servers and UNIX servers, printers and embedded systems in accordance with the timetable detailed in the Project Plan to ensure that all the Council's key business systems and equipment are Year 2000 compliant.

Noted.

7. Corporate Strategy Grants Budget 1999/2000

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposal for grants to community and voluntary organisations and other outside bodies.

The budget has been increased by £40,000 to fund a Millennium Grants Scheme. In determining priorities within the overall figure, consideration has been given to those activities targeted exclusively on North Ayrshire, organisations operating wholly within North Ayrshire and other bodies whose activities can be shown to benefit North Ayrshire or are consistent with policies and strategies of the Council.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the grants budget of £499,587 as detailed in the report; and (b) to consider at future meetings further applications for funding against outstanding balances within the relevant budget headings.

8. 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 15 March 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 16 March 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 17 March 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 17 March 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 18 March 1999.

In noting the report the Committee agreed with regard to Item 8 on Junction Priorities at Burns Avenue/Simpson Drive, Saltcoats, that a report by Roads Services be submitted to the Special Corporate Strategy Committee on 6 April 1999.

9. Ex Council Tenant Rent Arrears for Write Off

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) seeking authority to write off various ex council tenant rent arrears in excess of £100 in accordance with the provision of Section 7.4 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

In certain circumstances, the Council is unable to recover ex tenants' rent arrears and in the financial year 1998/99 total of £146,799.97 had not been recovered, representing 0.50% of the Council's total rental income for the year. In the event that these arrears are written off, efforts will continue to pursue their recovery.

The Committee agreed to approve the write off of ex Council tenant arrears totalling £146,799.97 for the financial year 1998/99.

10. Foster Care Allowances

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the proposed revised rate to the Scheme of Payment for Foster Care Allowances in 1999/2000.

Each year COSLA recommends to local authorities the weekly rates to be paid to foster parents in respect of children being looked after by local authorities and placed in foster care. The recommended COSLA rates for 1999/2000 with effect from 1 April 1999 represent a 3% increase in line with the current retail price index inflationary figure.

On 26 August 1998, the Social Work Committee agreed to implement revised fostering allowances as from 1 October 1998 which increased the basic allowance as recommended by COSLA by 30%. The COSLA recommended increase would therefore apply to these revised rates, as well as to the additional allowances applicable to identified cases of emergency care, care for older (teenage) children or children with severe disabilities.

The Committee agreed to approve the application of the recommended COSLA rate of increase on foster care allowances with effect from 1 April 1999.

11. Safeguarders, Curators Ad Litem and Reporting Officers: Scale of Fees

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the revised recommended scale of fees for Safeguarders, Curators Ad Litem and Reporting Officers.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised scale of fees as recommended by COSLA with effect from 1 April 1999.

12. Enforcement Notice: 68b Townfoot, Dreghorn

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Regulatory) on proposed enforcement action in respect of the premises at 68b Townfoot, Dreghorn.

On 16 February 1999, the Development Control Sub-Committee continued consideration of Planning Application N/01/98/0705 from K B Glass Ltd, 68b Townfoot, Dreghorn for alteration and change of use from a domestic garage to a commercial garage for the servicing and repair of motor vehicles and MOT testing, to allow a site visit to take place. The site visit was subsequently held and on 9 March 1999, the Development Control Sub-Committee, having considered the report on the site visit and further information received from the applicant, agreed (a) to refuse the application on the grounds that (i) the proposed development is contrary to Town Centre Policy 9 of the Adopted Local Plan for Irvine/Kilwinning in that it is an industrial use within a mixed use area; and (ii) the proposed development would be incompatible with and detrimental to the amenity of the adjoining residential properties by reason of noise and disturbance; and (b) to recommend to the next appropriate Committee that enforcement notices be served as the use has been in operation for several months.

The Committee agreed to serve an Enforcement Notice on the appropriate persons to effect the discontinuance of an unauthorised use and removal of vehicles and equipment from the premises and surrounding land at 68b Townfoot, Dreghorn.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.