

Support Services Committee
19 March 1996

Irvine, 19 March 1996 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Director of Financial Services, the Personnel Services and Information Technology Managers, a Corporate Policy Officer (Mr. Osborne) and a CDC Administration Officer (Mr. Hannah).

Chair

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 6 February 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated were confirmed.

2. Scheme of Delegation

Submitted report by the Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, on the Scheme of Delegation to the Support Services Committee approved by the Corporate Strategy Committee at their Meeting on 27 February 1996.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Scheme of Delegation subject to the following modification:-

(a) Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee

That paragraph (a)(ii) be deleted and there be substituted "(ii) to determine the outcome of grievance appeals by employees following the exhaustion of the appeal stages up to and including Directors, Managers, Heads of Service and the Chief Executive subject to the proviso that appeals submitted by Managers or Heads of Services will be considered by the Sub-Committee".

3. Service Delivery Plan

(a) Personnel Services

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager detailing (i) the services to be provided by the Personnel Services Department from 1 April 1996; and outlining (ii) plans for their delivery. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Personnel Services Department will provide a comprehensive range of functions with regard to personnel management, training and development and health and safety. During 1996/97 the Department will concentrate on a number of major issues including personnel procedures, new legislation, the Disability Act, Health and Safety Procedures, a Corporate Training

Strategy and the development of the Council's Moorpark training facility.

The Committee agreed to approve the Personnel Services Department Service Delivery Plan.

(b) Information Technology Services

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager detailing (i) the services to be provided by the Information Technology Services Department from 1 April 1996; and outlining (ii) plans for their delivery.

The Information Technology Services Department will provide a wide range of services to Council Directorates/Departments and members including inter alia systems analysis, network design, security systems in audit and operational support. Targets have been identified for the 1996/97 period including the negotiation of a service level agreement with South Lanarkshire Council for the Caird Centre service with regard to the Council Tax which may last until 1998 beyond which alternative arrangements for the Council Tax will require to be made. In addition a review of all major systems and supporting communication networks will be conducted to establish ways of harmonising existing systems. Target dates have also been set in relation to the hand over of communications networks personal computer based local area network systems and all UNIX based financial systems. An Information Technology strategy for North Ayrshire Council will be developed as a priority.

The Committee agreed to approve the Information Technology Department Service Delivery Plan.

4. Children's Panel: Members' Expenses

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on expenses for Children's Panel and Children's Panel Advisory Committee Members in connection with their approved duties. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 enables a local authority to pay the expenses of members or prospective members of the Children's Panel in respect of attendance at a Children's Hearing or during training; and members or prospective members of the Children's Panel Advisory Committee in connection with their duties. The level of payment is determined by the Council having regard to guidance issued by the Scottish Office and covers travel, subsistence and financial loss. A budgetary provision of £19,000 exists for this and it is proposed that members of North Ayrshire Children's Panel and CPAC be entitled to claim for attendance at the following:-

- a) Children's Hearings;
- b) Meetings of the CPAC;
- c) Training including monthly training meetings, refresher courses, seminars and conferences, visits, other in-service and new member training;
- d) Meetings of the Panel Chairmen, CPAC Chairmen, Reporter and Clerk up to an approved limit; and
- e) National Conferences and Meetings of the Children's Panel Advisory Group and other national agencies.

The Committee agreed to approve payment to Children's Panel and Children's Panel Advisory Committee members on this basis and at the rates suggested by the Scottish Office in their guidance to authorities as from 1 April 1996.

5. Treasury Policy Statement 1996/97

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services detailing a proposed Treasury Policy Statement for 1996/97 to comply with the CIPFA Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Treasury Management Policy details approved activities in relation to the operation of

the Treasury in respect of borrowing, lending, funding decision making, financial instruments, risk exposure, cash flow and the repayment of debt and outlines the responsibilities and activities which the Director of Financial Services may conduct on behalf of the Council and the powers which can be delegated to the Support Services Committee and the Director of Financial Services.

The Committee agreed to approve the Treasury Policy Statement for 1996/97.

6. Treasury Management Strategy 1996/97

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on a proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 1996/97 as required by the Treasury Policy Statement.

The Treasury Management Strategy relates to 6 major areas and outlines procedures/prospects in respect of each, viz:-

- a) prospects of interest rates;
- b) treasury limits for 1996/97;
- c) capital borrowings required and the portfolio strategy
- d) temporary investment strategy;
- e)

the policy for using set aside Capital Receipts for debt redemption; and

f) debt scheduling.

The Committee agreed to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 1996/97.

7. Appointment of a Treasury Management Consultant

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the appointment of Treasury Management Consultant.

The Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) Ltd. have been Treasury Management Consultants to Cunninghame District Council and have provided advice in relation to loan funds interest savings, debt rescheduling and other matters.

The Committee agreed to appoint UBS Ltd. as Treasury Management Consultants at an annual fee of £22,000 for a 3 year period with the proviso that a "no savings no fee" clause be included in the contract.

8. Insurance

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 7/12/95)

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on proposed insurance arrangements for North Ayrshire Council. Copies of the report had previously been circulated. The Corporate Strategy Committee at their Meeting on 7 December 1996 appointed Bowring, Marsh and McLellan as Insurance Brokers and Risk Management Consultants to the Council. Following an assessment of the Council's requirements, a tender process was undertaken in relation to insurance cover required by the Council. In addition self insurance and risk management were also investigated and it is proposed to establish an insurance fund for North Ayrshire Council and to contribute to the fund a sum equivalent to the maximum cost of insurance less £100,000 which would be set aside to finance risk management measures promoted by Council Directorates and Departments. The contribution would be £985,130 in 1996/97 together with £100,000 will be recharged to Departments on the basis of risk exposure and claims experience initially on an estimated basis but revised to the actual at the year end. The management of the funds being conducted by a risk management group. The insurance fund would meet the cost of premiums and the cost of insurance claims within the excess and stop loss limits.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the undernoted tenders for insurance cover as detailed in **Appendix SS1** hereto; (b) to authorise the phased introduction of a self insurance scheme by means of an insurance fund; (c) to approve the development of a risk management programme and the purchase of appropriate computer software at an estimated cost of £5,000; and (d) to note that a report on the establishment of a risk management group will be submitted to a future Meeting of the Committee.

9. Voluntary Severance

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager, copies of which had previously been circulated, on additional applications by employees for voluntary severance where the appropriate Directors of North Ayrshire Council have recommended that early retirement be granted.

The undernoted additional employees have requested voluntary severance:-

Strathclyde Regional Council

Department	Post No.	Designation	Comments
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DARS	1263	Senior Engineer	Interests of Efficiency
Education	-	Adviser	Voluntary Redundancy
Education	18010	Storeperson	Voluntary Redundancy
Education	616	Senior Clerical Assistant	Interests of Efficiency
Social Work	413	Assistant District Officer	Interests of Efficiency
Cunninghame District Council			
Technical Services	91	Architect	Interests of Efficiency
Leisure Services	-	Foreperson	Voluntary Redundancy

The Committee agreed to grant early retirement to the employees in each of these posts.

10. APT&C Staffs, Chief Officials: Rationalisation of Service Conditions

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposed conditions of service required for the rationalisation of operational services from 1 April 1996.

Consultations have been undertaken with the Joint Trade Unions regarding the rationalisation/harmonisation of service conditions. The main areas of discussion have been in respect of office hours, leave (including flexible working hours) and group life assurance. The proposed normal office hours have been suggested as 9.00 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. on Mondays to Thursdays with a 45 minute lunchbreak and 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Fridays with a 30 minute lunchbreak. Core flexible working hours have also been agreed in principle as has lunch time opening in all offices where staffing levels permit. There will be 8 fixed public holidays per annum with 4 days to be taken at employees' discretion subject to the exigencies of the service. In addition to the annual leave provisions agreed by the Scottish Council (20 days; and 25 days after 5 years) employees who complete 10 years reckonable service will be awarded 3 additional days leave. The Group Life Assurance will be twice an employee's annual salary.

The Committee agreed to approve the service conditions as detailed in the report subject to the agreement by the Joint Trade Unions.

11. Education Directorate: Administrative Structure

Submitted joint report by the Director of Education and Personnel Services Manager requesting approval for the administrative structure within the Education Directorate.

An administrative structure for the Education Directorate has been determined having regard to the most efficient and effective structure required to meet the statutory requirements placed upon the Directorate. The proposed structure identifies 3 sections within the Directorate relating to (a) personnel; (b) administrative/finance/secretarial support and word processing; and

(c) support services.

After discussion the Committee agreed to approve the administrative structure as detailed in **Appendix SS2** hereto.

12. Housing Directorate: Capital Programme Section

(Previous Minute Reference: Support Services Committee 6/2/96)

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services, copies of which had previously been circulated, detailing administrative/clerical support requirements of the Directorate's Non-HRA Housing Service.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the establishment of an Administrative and Information Assistant post grade AP1 within the Housing Services Directorate to provide administrative/clerical back-up in respect of Non-HRA work and strategic and development functions; and (b) that the post should be filled as soon as possible.

13. Social Work Directorate: Recruitment of Social Workers

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the appointment of additional Social Workers. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The Social Work Department of Strathclyde Regional Council has developed strong links with Colleges of Further Education including an agreement with them to appoint up to 7 qualified Social Workers each year above establishment levels following college graduations in June/July of each year. These additional Social Workers provided a cushion for vacancies occurring later in the year and this policy ensured (a) the continuity of service delivery to persons in need; and (b) that newly qualified staff were gradually introduced to a full range of duties and responsibilities.

The Committee agreed after discussion that the Director of Social Work be authorised to appoint up to 5 Social Workers above the establishment levels in June/July 1996 subject to (a) the additional posts being used up by filling vacancies which occur before the end of the financial year; and (b) that the additional posts will not lead to an overspend in the Social Work Directorate's Staffing Budget.

14. Social Work Directorate: Restructuring of Headquarters Administrative and Clerical Functions

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on a proposed restructuring of the Administrative and Clerical functions at Social Work Headquarters. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

The administrative and clerical structure at Social Work Headquarters has been designed in accordance with the available financial resources. The revised structure will provide the Directorate with an adequate Finance and Personnel function, appropriate clerical and administrative back-up to operational sections and enable the headquarters to support the decentralised Social Work teams more effectively.

The Committee agreed after discussion to approve the administrative structure for Social Work Headquarters as detailed in **Appendices SS3 and SS4** hereto.

15. 1995 Urban Programme Terminating Projects: Staffing Recommendations

(Previous Minute Reference: Social Work Committee 6/3/96; and Community and Recreational Services Committee 12/3/96)

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on staffing recommendations in relation to the undernoted Urban Programme Terminating Projects transferring from Strathclyde

Regional Council. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

- a) 1/89 - Cunninghame Money Advice (Joint Initiative with Cunninghame District Council);
- b) 5/90 - Fullarton Youth Project; and
- c) Outreach Development Youthworker.

At their Meeting on 6 March 1996 the Social Work Committee agreed, subject to the approval of the Support Services Committee, to the establishment of a post of a Money Advice Worker at Salary Scale AP3 to be included within the establishment of the Social Work Directorate. The Community and Recreational Services Committee agreed, subject to the approval of the Support Services Committee (a) that the posts of 1 Community Education Worker (Grade CEW + 7.5% irregular hours allowance) and 3 youth workers (part-time 20 hours + 7.5% irregular hours allowance) at Grade AP1 be included in the Community and Recreational Services Directorate in respect of the Fullarton Youth Project; and (b) that 1 Community Education Worker (Grade CEW + 7.5% irregular hours allowance), 1 youth worker at AP1 (+ 7.5% irregular hours allowance) and 1 clerical assistant/typist (part-time 20 hours) Grade GS1 be appointed to the Outreach Development Youth Worker Project and be included within the establishment of the Community and Recreational Services Directorate. All posts are permanent.

The Committee agreed to approve the establishment of the posts in the Social Work and Community and Recreational Services Directorates as detailed in the report.

16. Staffing Recommendations for Continuation of Terminating Rural Strategy/Youth Partnership Projects

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on staffing recommendations in respect of Terminating Rural Strategy/Youth Partnership Projects. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

At their Meeting on 12 March 1996 the Community and Recreational Services Committee agreed, subject to the approval of the Support Services and Corporate Strategy Committees to support the continuation of the undernoted projects:-

- a) Arran Dial-a-Creche Rural Strategy;
- b) Youth Connect Young Persons Development Project (Youth Partnership); and
- c) The Arran Youth Information Project (Rural Strategy).

These projects have associated staffing implications and the Director of Community and Recreational Services has intimated that budgetary provision has been made for staff costs associated with the proposals.

The Committee agreed, after discussion, to approve the establishment of the undernoted posts within the Community and Recreational Services Directorate for the duration of the projects i.e. until 31 March 1997:-

Project Title	Establishment
Arran Dial-a-Creche	1 part time Project Leader (20 hours per week) Grade A Sessional Creche Budget £7,800
Connect Young Persons Development Project	1 part time Project Officer/Access Worker (20 hours per week) Grade CEW (+ 7.5% irregular hours allowance) 1 part time assistant Access Worker (20 hours per week) Grade AP2 (+ 7.5% irregular hours allowance)

	Administrative Support (3 hours per week) Grade GS1
Arran Youth Information Project	<p>1 part time Project Worker (25 hours per week) Grade AP1/2 (+ 7.5% irregular hours allowance)</p> <p>1 part time Clerical Assistant (6 hours per week) Grade GS2</p> <p>Ancillary Staff Budget £1,410</p>

18. Criminal Justice Service: Staffing

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on staffing recommendations for the Criminal Justice Services. Copies of the report had previously been circulated.

At their Meeting on 6 March 1996 the Social Work Committee agreed, subject to the approval of the Support Services Committee, that (a) the existing clerical/administrative post within the Criminal Justice Services be upgraded from GS2 to AP1; and (b) a new post of Resource Worker be established at Scale AP4/5.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations of the Social Work Committee.

19. Urgent Item

The Chair agreed that the following item be considered as urgent.

20. Employment Services Agency: Double Tick Initiative

The Personnel Services Manager reported that the Employment Services Agency have now agreed that North Ayrshire Council be permitted to use their Double Tick Initiative which guarantees that persons with disabilities who apply for and meet the criteria for a particular post will receive an interview upon application.

The Committee welcomed the decision of the Employment Services Agency to include the Council in this Initiative.

The Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.