

Corporate Strategy Committee
21 October 1998

Irvine, 21 October 1998 - At a Meeting of the Special Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 3.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Jack Carson, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney, Thomas Morris, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, George Steven.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Directors of Education, Housing and Construction Services, Social Work and Financial Services, the Personnel Services Manager, A. Herbert, Head of Accountancy (Financial Services), B. Gardner, Head of Education Resources (Education), , G. Lawson, Principal Officer (Policy/Administration) and S. Bale, Administration Officer, (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Clements in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Ian Clarkson, Thomas Dickie, Samuel Gooding, Robert Reilly, John Sillars and Samuel Taylor.

1. Budget Monitoring

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SCS1) of the Budget Monitoring Working Party being the Minutes of its Meeting held on 13th October 1998.

After discussion, during which clarification was provided on a number of the savings proposals, the Committee agreed (a) to note the report; and (b) that the Budget Monitoring Working Party continue to meet on a six weekly cycle.

2. North Ayrshire Council Corporate Directorships

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposals for a top management structure, the timescale for early implementation and the necessary mechanisms to achieve this.

As part of the 1998/99 budget process, the Chief Executive was instructed by the Council to report on (i) client/contractor splits in the post- CCT era; (ii) a review of Central Support Services; and (iii) management costs. On 26th May 1998 and on 25th June 1998, the Committee approved reports on items (i) and (ii).

With regard to management costs, proposals have now been drawn up on a management structure best suited to meet the Council's need for more corporate working as well as the challenges facing local government. It is further proposed that the changes be implemented during the remaining period of this Administration. The term of office for Councils from May 1999 has been reduced from 4 years to 3 years. Implementation of a revised officer structure now will allow more time for members in the next Administration to focus on drawing up their own member structures and implementing their manifesto.

The management structure proposed moves to groupings of services each under a

Corporate Director and reduces the total number of Directors. The individual service or business units under each Corporate Director would be headed by a Manager to whom day to day operations would be devolved with support and a separate budget over time. There is a clear indication from Government that there should be a separation of member role between the executive and policy formulation and the Corporate Directorate structure proposed will facilitate changes in this direction at member level. The structure provides for three groupings of services, viz. Educational Services, Social Services and Property Services with corporate governance to be grouped under the Chief Executive.

The advantages of the new Chief Officer structure are (i) a flatter management structure; (ii) delivering options for overhead cost reductions; (iii) enhanced corporate working; (iv) greater budget transparency in the future; (v) future interchangeability without disruption; and (vi) compatibility with changing member structures. The importance of achieving the target timescale for implementing the new structure was stressed. Members will be advised of progress on the new structure, including locations of staff and responsibilities for the various functions.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to approve the management structure as detailed in the annexed report (Appendix SCS2); (b) to confirm with immediate effect (i) J. Travers as Director of Educational Services, (ii) G. Irving as Director of Social Services and (iii) T. Orr as Director of Property Services; (c) to confirm the Chief Executive's responsibility for the Corporate Governance units; (d) to approve the timescale for implementation as follows:-

- (i) Approval of a revised chief officer structure - end of October 1998;
- (ii) Implementation of the structure - end of November 1998 or earlier;
- (iii) Disaggregation of all support services - end of December 1998; and
- (iv) Disaggregation of budgets - end of March 1999;

(d) to appoint a Special Sub-Committee with powers to deal with all personnel issues as expeditiously as possible including the approval of a revised chief officer structure and any approvals on early retirements, severance etc; (e) that the Sub-Committee be chaired by the Chair of Support Services and comprise the Convenor, the Leader of the Council, the Chair of the appropriate service Committee or substitute of one Vice-Chair nominated by the Chair and the nominated opposition spokesperson or substitute; and (f) that progress reports be submitted to the Committee in due course.

The meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.