

Support Services Committee
16 June 1998

Irvine, 16 June 1998 - 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, John Donn, Margaret Highet, James Jennings, David Munn, George Steven and Richard Wilkinson.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive; the Director of Financial Services; the Head of Corporate Business; the Personnel Services Manager; the Legal Services Manager; the Information Technology Services Manager; G. Wallace, Principal Officer, Property Services (Architectural Services); and J. Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Patrick Browne, Stewart Dewar and Elliot Gray.

1. Presentation of Managing Safely Awards

The Chair presented certificates to the undernoted employees of the Council who have successfully completed the five day Managing Safely Course for which the Council has accreditation from the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health:-

- Janice Bald (Community and Recreational Services);
- Gilly Cannan (Commercial Services);
- Philip Bryers (Social Work); and
- Stewart Bates (Social Work).

A further four employees who have achieved this award were unable to attend.

The Chair congratulated all the employees on behalf of the Council.

2. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 5 May 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

3. Collection Statements

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the current collection levels in respect of Community Charge and Council Tax to 31 May 1998.

A total of £100,000 was collected in respect of Community Charge during May 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debt of £16,736,000, while £1,636,000 was collected for Council Tax in May 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debt in this case of £32,968,000

Noted.

4. Recommended Products List

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the current list of products recommended to the Council for the use and development of information technology.

The Information Technology Service currently provides a corporate procurement service for information technology hardware and software which ensures consistency and standardisation in purchasing and maximum efficiency in the procurement process. Efficiencies are also provided in relation to initial implementation scheduling and ongoing technical support and the total cost of ownership is minimised. Recommended products are those which have been tested and evaluated by IT Services, which meet the business needs of the Council and comply with the principles of the Corporate Information Technology Strategy. Full details of the recommended products were provided in the report. Other products not included in the list will be supported on a best endeavours basis as will specialist products purchased for specific departmental needs. Users of older hardware and software will be encouraged to update to the recommended products whenever possible.

Noted.

5. Standing Restricted List of Contractors for Building and Related Works

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager detailing those contractors who have been deemed to meet the Council's technical and financial requirements to allow their inclusion on the Ayrshire-wide Standing Restricted List of Contractors for Building and Related Works previously adopted by the Council. This joint initiative by the three Ayrshire Councils to form a new list of contractors will mean that the interim use of the lists held by the former Strathclyde Regional and Cunninghame District Councils can be discontinued. The list will continue to be updated as required.

The Committee agreed to approve the list of contractors detailed in the report.

6. Minutes: Support Services Sub-Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS1) being the Minutes of the meeting of the Support Services Sub-Committee held on 6 May 1998.

7. Community and Recreational Services Directorate

(a) Staffing of the Harbour Arts Centre

The Committee resumed consideration of a proposed staffing structure for the management of the Harbour Arts centre following termination of its Urban Programme funding, in the light of a further report by the Personnel Services Manager. This confirmed details on the specific sources of funding for the two new posts of a Centre Development Manager and a part-time Clerical Assistant.

The Committee was advised that both posts which would be within the Community and Recreational Services Directorate would be managed by the Arts Services Development Officer. Additionally the full year costs, which had been £65,200 under the Urban Programme, would now be met on a joint basis. Under these arrangements the Council would meet the £20,000 for the two new posts (as agreed by Corporate Strategy on 20 February 1998 in its budget review process) and the remaining running costs (which have been considerably reduced overall) would be funded by the Voluntary Management Committee who are the other partners in the operation of the Centre.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised establishment for the Centre.

(b) Staffing of the Mobile Play Team

The Committee resumed consideration of a proposed staffing structure for a Mobile Play Team following the termination of Urban Programme funding for the existing Towdabout and Playbus projects, in the light of a further report by the Personnel Services Manager. The report included details of the specific sources of funding for the proposed new staffing structure, which involves the transfer of five full-time posts to mainline funding.

Details were provided on the existing staffing structures of the Urban Programme funded Towdabout and Playbus projects including costs amounting to £54,058. Although the total full year costs of the Urban Programme projects was £80,200, these have reduced significantly mainly due to the proposed removal of the playbus from the operation of the service. Details were also provided on the proposed staffing transfers to mainline funding for the new Mobile Play Team with costs amounting to £37,611. The Director of Community and Recreational Services has confirmed that funding provision to meet the staffing implications was made in this regard and has been approved as part of the overall budget review process.

The Committee agreed to approve the staffing structure and implementation dates for the Mobile Play Team.

8. Social Work Directorate: Irvine: Befriend a Child Project

The Committee resumed consideration of a proposal to establish a new post of Project Leader with the Social Work Directorate following the termination of Urban Programme funding for the Befriend a Child project, in the light of a further report by the Personnel Services Manager. This confirmed details on the specific source of funding for the proposed new post.

It was decided that the post of Project Leader be transferred to mainline funding to allow the provision of the service to be continued in a reduced capacity. The report gave full details of the staffing structure for the project under Urban Programme funding including associated costs amounting to £52,404. It is proposed that the Project Leader be transferred to mainline funding and located within the Kids and Carers base in Irvine and managed through the Irvine/Kilwinning/Dreghorn Area Manager. Details of the staffing implications and associated costs amounting to £25,141 were given in the report. The Director of Social Work has confirmed that savings amounting to £50,409 associated with the redeployment of residential care staff, following the closure of Warner Street Children's Unit, have been achieved and that it is intended to fund the costs associated with the new Project Leader post from this source.

The Committee agreed to approve the creation of the new post.

9. Education Directorate

(a) Provision for Hearing Impaired Pupils

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed establishment of additional staffing resources to the new unit for hearing impaired pupils in Towerlands Primary School, Irvine, which was established by the Education Committee on 10 March 1998 and which will replace the provision currently met by West Park School in East Ayrshire.

The new staffing structure will comprise one Assistant Head Teacher; two Teachers; one Auxiliary; and one Clerical Assistant. The total costs, based on a roll of six pupils, are £65,047 and, based on a roll of up to ten pupils, £84,032. One Teacher's post will remain vacant until the unit's roll is increased from the initial six.

The proposal will have no adverse effect on the Education Directorate's existing budget since the costs for an initial roll of six pupils will be balanced by savings effected through the discontinuance of the inter-authority fees (currently £10,800 per pupil payable to East Ayrshire Council) and additionally through reduced travel costs. Further advantages will be gained when

the unit's roll can be increased to its maximum projected potential of 10 pupils.

The Committee agreed to approve the staffing proposals detailed in the report.

(b) Nursery Education: West Kilbride Primary School

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed establishment of nursery staffing at West Kilbride Primary School.

The Education Committee on 21 April 1998 agreed to terminate the existing arrangement and lease with Nurserytime, a private sector company who utilise accommodation at West Kilbride Primary School, in favour of establishing a local authority controlled facility which would be managed by the Head Teacher of the school. Details were provided on the staffing proposals and associated costs amounting to £31,001 which will have no impact on the Education budget as nursery education for children in their pre-school year is funded by the Scottish Office.

The Committee agreed to approve the staffing resources detailed in the report.

(c) Nursery Provision in Stevenston

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposed amendments to staffing resources in relation to nursery provision in Stevenston following approval of the Education Committee on 10 March 1998 of the creation of a larger nursery class at Ardeer Primary School and an amendment to the nursery provision at Auchendarvie Academy.

Due to a substantially increased nursery role and in order to satisfy approved ratios and service provision needs, an additional Nursery Teacher's post is to be established at Ardeer Nursery at a cost of £18,985 per annum. In the case of Auchendarvie Nursery School the reorganisation of the staffing establishment will however result in an annual saving of £45,623 and the employees displaced by these proposals will be redeployed to suitable vacant posts within the Council.

The Committee agreed to approve the staffing establishments for Ardeer Nursery and Auchendarvie Nursery schools detailed in the report.

10. Closure of Administration Offices and Leisure Facilities between Christmas and New Year

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals for the closure of administration offices and leisure facilities between Christmas and New Year.

The closure of the premises which will result in savings to the Council in respect of heating, lighting, etc., are in line with those implemented last year and will not have a significant impact on the public. The Trade Unions were advised of the closure proposals during discussions on budget savings for 1998/99 and Directors have indicated their support.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the closure of offices and facilities between Christmas and New Year as detailed (Appendix SS2); and (b) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services report to a future meeting on the attendance figures at the Magnum on 3 and 4 January 1999.

11. Report on Sickness Absence Statistics

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the rate of employee sickness absence within North Ayrshire Council for the period January to March 1998.

The report gave detailed statistical information on the percentage of sickness absence encompassing all employees in each Directorate, differentiating between self-certificated and medically certificated sickness. Discussion will be undertaken with Directorates to identify problem

areas with a view to appropriate action being taken to minimise sickness absence.

Noted.

12. Report on Employee Numbers as at 14 March 1998

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager giving detailed statistical information on (i) the total number of staff; (ii) the full-time equivalent of staff; and (iii) the number of full and part-time employees by gender, employed by the Council as at 14 March 1998.

The statistics indicate a small reduction in the total number of staff employed which is not seen as significant and can be accounted for in terms of normal turnover factors.

Noted.

13. Teachers' Pay Settlement 1998

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed implementation of the Teachers' annual pay settlement on which agreement has been reached nationally, with effect from 1 April 1998.

The annual salary pay award amounts to an increase of 3% on all salary points and is applicable to all teaching staff in post on or after 1 April 1998. In view of the fact that the Council has budgeted for an increase of only 2.5% the anticipated shortfall amounting to £234,000 would require to be made up through stringent budget management.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the adoption of the Teachers' revised salary scales brought about by the annual pay award; (b) that the report (i) be submitted to the Corporate Strategy Committee to note the financial implications; and (ii) be forwarded to the Education Committee to address the budget issues which will arise from the implementation of the pay award.

14. Recruitment Strategy: Incorporating Welfare to Work: New Deal

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals to introduce a corporate recruitment strategy incorporating provision for access to job opportunities by New Deal candidates and the Council's skillseeker and adult trainees in accordance with the decision of the Corporate Strategy Committee on 26 May 1998.

The report gave details of the Council's current recruitment strategy which targets various employment sources on the basis of the level of vacancies, the skills requirement and the availability of suitable applicants. Additionally participants in the Council's administrative and IT skillseeker and adult training programmes have access to basic grade clerical vacancies prior to their external advertisement. Information was also provided on the eligibility for and the aims of the New Deal Programme and comprehensive details were given on proposals to amend the Council's existing recruitment strategy to include 'New Deal' candidates. These proposals will further strengthen the Council's commitment to its skillseeker and adult training programmes and indicate positive support for the New Deal Programme. The strategy also maximises the Council's investment in training initiatives on a value for money basis through maximising income streams for skillseeker and adult training and recruitment of New Deal clients.

The Committee agreed (a) that permanent and temporary posts for basic grade clerical employees, general building operations, horticulture and catering be advertised amongst the Council's adult and skillseeker trainees in the first instance, and that where trainees meet the essential requirements of the person specification, every effort should be made to recruit from this source; (b) that the initial recruitment source for other manual and administrative posts (permanent or temporary) should be New Deal candidates, and that posts advertised and not filled from skillseeker and adult trainees, should then be advertised to New Deal candidates; (c) that

administrative and manual posts which offer supervisory responsibility or career development opportunities should be advertised internally in the first instance; (d) that where recruitment advertising to targeted groups fails to draw suitable candidates, and in the case of senior and middle management posts, professional and technical posts, external media sources should be utilised; and (e) that the Personnel Services Manager reviews the strategy on an ongoing basis and makes adjustments as appropriate in response to the employment market fluctuations.

15. North Ayrshire Council: Property Management Policy

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager outlining proposals for a Property Management Policy to be adopted by the Council and implemented through the Council's Legal Services Department.

With the amalgamation of the property holdings of the former Strathclyde Regional Council and the former Cunninghame District Council as at 1 April 1996, subsequently supplemented by transfers of property from Irvine Development Corporation, the Council has a substantial property portfolio. The leases on these properties, the terms of which were inherited by the Council, will increasingly fall due for renewal and it is felt therefore that a statement of a Property Management Policy for the Council is now required.

The key elements of the proposed Policy are that the Council:-

- adopt the policy of the corporate ownership of property;
- support the Department's Council Property File (CPF) as a property database;
- develop effective property management and advisory services in order to identify under-utilised/surplus properties with a view to identifying development opportunities;
- support the development of systems for the provision of information to Council Committees and Service Directorates; and
- ensure that regular operational Council property audits are carried out.

Whilst initially there may be no direct beneficial financial implications for the Council these may appear over time arising from better use being made of Council property assets. In line with various Accounts Commission and Audit Commission reports, the question of the adoption of a policy on the corporate ownership of property by the Council will be the subject of a future report.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Property Management Policy as detailed in the report.

16. Irvine: Lease of Unit 10 Ailsa Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Unit 10, Ailsa Road, Irvine to Irvine Spring Co. Ltd., previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

17. Irvine: Lease of Units 32A and E Kyle Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Units 32A and E Kyle Road, Irvine to Barony Universal Products plc of Auchinleck.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the premises to Barony Universal Products plc on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

18. Irvine: 31 Bank Street: Renewal of Lease of Unit 1/6 Galt House

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the renewal of lease of Unit 1/6 Galt House, 31 Bank Street, Irvine to Hara Hill Wason Insurance Services Ltd.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the renewal of lease to Hara Hill Wason Insurance Services Ltd. on the terms and conditions

provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

19. Irvine: 82 East Road: Termination of Lease and Disposal of Former Roads Depot

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the termination of lease and disposal of the former roads depot at 82 East Road, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the termination of lease with the 1195th Irvine Squadron Aid Training Corps; and (ii) enter into negotiations for the sale of the subjects to an adjoining residential proprietor.

20. Irvine: Site at Boyle Street; and Stevenston: Warner Street Children's Home: Disposals

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of properties at Boyle Street, Irvine and Warner Street Children's Home, Stevenston to Cunninghame Housing Association, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decisions of the Chair.

21. Irvine: Proposed Marketing of Land at South Gailes

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed marketing of land at South Gailes, Irvine for golf course development.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed to market the land at South Gailes, Irvine for golf course development.

22. Kilwinning: Lease of 21 Almswall Road

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of 21 Almswall Road, Kilwinning, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

23. Stevenston: Disposal of Plot 1 Glen Crescent

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of Plot 1, Glen Crescent, Stevenston to Mr. G. Narducci.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the disposal of Plot 1, Glen Crescent, Stevenston to Mr. G. Narducci on the basis of the offer received; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

24. Ardrossan: Former St. Peter's Primary School, 24 South Crescent; and Saltcoats: Former Kyleshill Primary School, Glencairn Street: Disposal of Properties

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed marketing for disposal of properties at the former St. Peter's Primary School, 24 South Crescent, Ardrossan and the former Kyleshill Primary School, Glencairn Street, Saltcoats.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager (a) to proceed to market for disposal the properties at the former St. Peter's Primary School, 24 South Crescent, Ardrossan and the former Kyleshill Primary School, Glencairn Street, Saltcoats; and (b) to report back to the Committee on offers received.

25. Saltcoats: Disposal of Plot at 41 Raise Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of 41 Raise Street, Saltcoats to Mr. G. Narducci.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the disposal of 41 Raise Street, Saltcoats to Mr. G. Narducci on the basis of the offer received; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

26. Dalry: Lease of Units 4 and 5 Bridgend Industrial Estate, Bridgend

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Units 4 and 5 Bridgend Industrial Estate, Bridgend, Dalry to Mr. T. Pollock, trading as Evolvon Ltd.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the premises to Mr. T. Pollock, on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

27. Kilbirnie: Lease of Block 2, Unit 1, River Place

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Block 2, Unit 1, River Place, Kilbirnie to Mr. W. Duffield of Garnock Auto Electrics.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the premises to Mr. W. Duffield of Garnock Auto Electrics, on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

28. Kilbirnie: Lease of Block 2, Unit 2, River Place

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Block 2, Unit 2, River Place, Kilbirnie to Mr. T. McEwan of Equinox Diesinking.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the premises to Mr. T. McEwan of Equinox Diesinking, on terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

29. Fairlie: Disposal of Property at 23 Keppernburn Avenue

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of property at 23 Keppernburn Avenue, Fairlie to Quarriers Homes.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to (i) proceed with the disposal of property at 23 Keppernburn Avenue, Fairlie to Quarriers Homes on terms and conditions provisionally agreed; and (ii) conclude the transaction.

30. Largs: Irvine Road: Lease of Douglas Park Bowling Clubhouse and Greens

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Douglas Park Bowling Clubhouse and Greens, Largs to the Douglas Park Bowling Club, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

31. Conferences/Seminars: Invitations

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on invitations to attend the undernoted Conferences/Seminars:-

(a) COSLA/Health and Safety Executive Conference/Seminar entitled "Raising the Profile of Health and Safety Enforcement" to be held on 30th June 1998; and

(b) Society of Information Technology Management 1998 Annual Conference to be held from 11-13 October 1998.

The Committee agreed that there be no attendance at (a) and that the Chair or his nominee be authorised to attend (b).

32. Urgent Items

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

33. Industrial Tribunal: Decision

The Personnel Services Manager reported on the outcome of an Industrial Tribunal involving an employee of the Council. The Tribunal upheld a claim for unfair dismissal, but as this involved the former Strathclyde Regional Council and no fault was found with North Ayrshire Council's proceedings, the Council was exonerated. Due to severance payments already made, no financial award was made by the Tribunal.

The Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.

**Closure of Administration Offices and Leisure Facilities
between Christmas and New Year**

<u>Admin. Offices/Leisure Facilities</u>	<u>Closure Dates</u>	
	From	To
i) <i>Administration Centres</i>		
Cunninghame House	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Perceton House	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Nobel House	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Moorpark House	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Library H.Q		
ii) <i>Education Directorate</i>		
Education Resource Centre,	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Greenwood Teachers Centre	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Psychological Services Offices,	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Irvine and Saltcoats		
Pre-School Community Organisers Base		
St Andrews Academy	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
iii) <i>Social Work Directorate</i>	25 December 1998	4 January 1999

Social Work Office, Ardrossan		25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Social Work Office, Dreghorn		25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Community Service Scheme Office		25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Centre	Hazeldene Resource	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
	Training Office, Irvine		
	Disability Resource		
Centre, Irvine		24 December 1998	2 January 1999
		24 December 1998	2 January 1999
		24 December 1998	2 January 1999
iv)	<i>Leisure Facilities</i>	24 December 1998	2 January 1999
	Magnum Centre	25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Harvies		25 December 1998	4 January 1999
Garnock Swimming Pool			
Vikingar			
	Community		
Halls/Centres			
Branch Libraries			

The dates indicated above are inclusive.