

Support Services Committee  
30 April 1996

**Irvine, 30 April 1996** - 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, James Clements, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Elliot Gray, Margaret Highet, James Jennings, David Munn and George Steven.

**In Attendance**

Mr. Devine, the Chief Executive, Mr. Hunter, the Director of Financial Services, Mr. MacDonald, the Head of Corporate Business, Mr. Macfarlane, the Personnel Services Manager, Ms. Murray, the Information Technology Services Manager and Mr. Hannah, an Administration Officer.

**Chair**

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

**1. Minutes Confirmed**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 19th March 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Turning Point Scotland**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the terms of an invitation from Turning Point Scotland to appoint the Head of Corporate Business to their Scottish Committee.

The Committee approved the terms of the invitation.

**3. Financial Services Directorate: Service Delivery Plan**

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services detailing (a) the services to be provided by the Financial Services Directorate from 1st April 1996; and (b) outlining plans for their delivery.

The Financial Services Directorate will provide a wide range of financial services to the Council and its Directorates. The Service Delivery proposals include an extension of the services to Ardeer and Perceton House at a minimal cost. A comprehensive range of revenue services will be provided with the objective of improving the Council's financial position by maximising collection levels of Council Tax, non-domestic rates, sundry debtors and residual Community Charges.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Financial Services Directorate's Service Delivery Plan; and (b) that the Director of Financial Services submit regular financial statements to the Committee in respect of (i) collection levels of Council Tax, non-domestic rates, sundry debtors and residual Community Charge etc.; and (ii) methods of pursuing outstanding debtors who are encountering difficulties in meeting residual Community Charge, Council Tax and non-domestic rates repayments.

#### **4. Council Tax Billing**

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on arrangements for the billing and recovery of charges in respect of Council Tax.

Noted.

#### **5. Corporate Information Technology Strategy**

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager detailing a proposed Corporate Information Technology Strategy.

The Strategy details the current information technology infrastructure provided and general principles for its future development through specified proposals, the objective being to provide a corporate framework for Information Technology services to Directorates and Departments. It is anticipated that a more comprehensive review of the information technology needs of the Council will be undertaken early in 1997 to take account of the evolving role of the Council and changes in technology.

Following discussion the Committee agreed (a) to refer consideration of the Corporate Information Technology Strategy to the Corporate Strategy Committee; and (b) that the Information Technology Services Manager submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on I.T. Services which could be extended to Members.

#### **6. Information Technology Support Services for Ex-Regional Systems**

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager detailing preparatory works being undertaken to obtain Information Technology support services.

A Joint Working Group comprising six authorities has been established to identify the implications of supporting the systems transferring from Strathclyde Regional Council to the successor authorities. Five groups of applications have been identified namely, payroll, financial management systems, social work systems, architectural systems and road and transport costing. Due to staffing etc. constraints KPMG Consultants engaged to specify the implications of supporting the systems following which the Information Technology Services Manager will be able to establish the support required for each group of systems under investigation.

Noted.

#### **7. Appraisal of Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a proposed appraisal of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Administration system.

At their meeting on 18th April 1996 the Housing Services Committee agreed to recommend to the Support Services Committee that the provision of a new computer system for administering the Housing and Council Tax Benefit be investigated in the context of the Council's Information Technology Strategy.

The Committee agreed that the Information Technology Services Manager, in consultation with the Director of Housing Services investigate the provision of a new computer system for the administration of Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

## **8. Grievance Procedure**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager detailing a proposed corporate Grievance Procedure for APT&C Staff, Manual, Craft and Teaching Staffs.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Grievance Procedure as detailed in the report.

## **9. Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedure: Chief Officers, Heads of Section, APT&C Staff, Manual and Craft Employees**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposed Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures for Chief Officers, Heads of Section, APT&C Staff, Manual and Craft Employees.

The Personnel Services Manager reported on the terms of negotiations with appropriate Trade Unions on the Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures as detailed in the report.

## **10. Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedure: Teaching Staffs**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposed Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures for Teaching Staff.

The Personnel Services Manager reported that negotiations are at present continuing with Teaching Staffs' Unions with regard to certain aspects of the Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedure.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures as detailed in the report as an interim measure pending the outcome of negotiations between the Council and Teaching Staffs' representatives.

## **11. Manual and Craft Workers: Rationalisation of Service Conditions**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposed conditions of service required for the rationalisation of operational services in respect of Manual Workers and Craft Operatives.

The Manual and Craft Employees who transferred to North Ayrshire Council had their conditions of service determined by the Scottish Council for Local Authority Services. Differences exist however in the conditions applicable to comparable workgroups due to the approaches of the former authorities in relation to the application of framework agreements determined by the Scottish Council and through competitive tendering pressures. These areas include differences in working hours, public holidays, bonus schemes and sick pay.

In order to rationalise the situation it is proposed that the Council adopt the conditions of service as agreed by the Scottish Council which may be varied from time to time without prejudice to the Council's ability to enter into local negotiations in respect of competitive tendering etc.

The Committee agreed to approve the service conditions as detailed in the report.

## **12. Teaching Staffs: Conditions of Service**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed adoption of conditions of service for Teaching Staff as applied by Strathclyde Regional Council and as agreed through the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education.

The Personnel Services Manager reported that any proposed amendments to the conditions of service for Teaching Staffs may be agreed through the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee or determined locally, following consultation with the appropriate Trade Unions.

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

## **13. Training Policy and Post Entry Training Scheme**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a corporate training policy and post entry training scheme.

The training policy and post entry training scheme have been designed to ensure that Council employees have a wide access to on-the-job training and further education opportunities. The training policy provides a commitment to the effective training and development of all employees in relation to their current duties and in respect of their potential career development within the Council. The post entry training scheme will provide assistance to employees in the achievement of further education qualifications.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to adopt the training policy and post entry training scheme; and (b) that the Personnel Services Manager submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the training courses currently undertaken by employees in the Council's Directorates.

## **14. Provision of Telephones Scheme for APT & C Staff, Manual and Craft Operatives**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager detailing the terms of a proposed telephone scheme for eligible staff within North Ayrshire.

The telephone scheme makes provision to reimburse employees for certain telephone charges where the employee, as an integral part of their duties, have to use a mobile telephone or telephone at home for Council business.

The Committee agreed to adopt the provisions of the telephone scheme for APT & C Staff, Manual Workers and Craft Operatives.

## **15. Local Government (Compensation for Reduction of Remuneration on Reorganisation) (Scotland) Regulations 1995**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the provisions of the Detriment Regulations which provide employment protection for employees who incurred a reduction in remuneration as a result of local government reorganisation.

The Regulations provide protection of employees' remuneration levels for a minimum three year period where a reduction in earnings is experienced due to reorganisation. The Regulations are provided by the Secretary of State for Scotland, but it has not been determined if the Regulations take precedence over individual contracts of employment which transfer with employees under the Local Government Etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 and the transfer of undertakings (Public Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981. The matter is currently under review by COSLA but the Council require to take action in relation to the Detriment Regulations and contracts of employment prior to

the implementation of the 1996 pay award.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the provision of the Detriment Regulations for employees who were matched into posts with North Ayrshire Council subject to the position being reviewed following receipt of further advice from COSLA or agreements reached with the Trade Unions on the Scottish Council for Local Authority Services.

#### **16. Employment Services Agency: Double Tick Initiative**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the Council's adoption of the Employment Services Agency's Double Tick Initiative.

The Council have received approval from the Employment Services Agency to use the disability symbol namely the Double Tick. The Double Tick symbol will now appear on all job advertisements, application forms and recruitment literature and should be displayed on appropriate signs within the Personnel department. The commitments attached to the use of the symbol should form the minimum requirements reflected in all equal opportunities policies and procedures adopted by the Council in relation to employment during promotion and the retention of staff with disabilities. They should also provide, amongst other things, a guaranteed interview to all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to welcome the adoption of the Double Tick Initiative by the Council; and (b) to confirm the Council's commitment to the criteria associated with the use of the symbol for employment and retention of staff with disabilities.

#### **17. Definition of Reckonable Service for Annual Leave Entitlement Purposes**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the definition of previous reckonable service for annual leave entitlement purposes for Chief Officers, Heads of Section, APT & C Staff, Manual and Craft Employees.

The National Conditions of Service applicable to each category of employee define reckonable service for annual leave purposes as all previous service with any local authority and any previous service with an employer listed in the Redundancy Payment (Local Government) Modification Order 1983 as amended. In addition to annual leave reckonable service is used to calculate an employee's entitlement to sickness allowance, maternity leave and pay notice period in connection with termination of employment and severance payments. It is proposed that the Council adopt the provisions of the Modification Order and, in addition, where an employee has transferred to North Ayrshire Council due to the reorganisation of local government and had service recognised other than with an employing authority etc. listed in the Modification Orders by their previous authority, then that employee should retain that reckonable service.

After discussion the Committee agreed to adopt the definition of reckonable service for annual leave purposes as defined in the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officials and National Joint Councils for APT & C Staff and Manual and Craft Employees.

#### **18. Grading Schemes for Certain Classifications of Professional Staff, Technician Staff and I.T. Support Staff**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the introduction and implementation of a grading scheme for certain categories of staff namely professional staff, technician staff and information technology support staff.

At reorganisation of local government certain staff in similar jobs were transferred to North Ayrshire Council on different grading criteria established by previous authorities. There is a requirement to provide a corporate and comprehensive grading scheme in respect of this matter which will provide employees with clearly defined stages with progression being based on qualifications and experience. The proposed classification scheme provides for progression to higher

salary levels upon the achievement of certain qualifications/experience. It also facilitates the recruitment of staff, provides clear guidelines for the grading and placing of employees and allow employees to follow a career progression based on qualification success and satisfactory work experience.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to adopt the grading scheme as detailed in the report; and (b) to note that the scheme shall apply only to categories of staff identified therein.

#### **19. Chief Social Work Officers: Qualifications**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the contents of Scottish Officer Circular SG9/96 which prescribes qualifications to be held by Chief Social Work Officers.

Noted.

#### **20. Post of Drugs Outreach Worker, Irvine**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the proposed establishment of a new post of Drugs Outreach Worker at the Townhead Centre, Irvine.

The funding for the post will be provided by Ayrshire and Arran Health Board through the Scottish Office. The funding is renewable annually but may at a future date become the subject of a resource transfer to the Council.

The Committee agreed to approve the establishment of a Drugs Outreach Worker at Grade AP3/4 within the Social Work Directorate to be attached to the Townhead Centre, Irvine.

#### **21. Criminal Justice Staff**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the proposed regrading of five clerical staff transferred from Strathclyde Regional Council to the Criminal Justice Section.

The Committee agreed to the regrading of four clerical assistant posts in the Criminal Justice Section from GS1 to GS1/2 and one post from GS2 to GS2/3.

#### **22. Ayrshire Structure Plan Team: Staffing Structure**

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed staffing structure of the Ayrshire Structure Plan Team.

The Ayrshire Structure Plan Team will be composed of staff from the Councils of North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire. Two employees from Strathclyde Regional Council's Physical Planning Department have been transferred to North Ayrshire Council and these employees will take up posts in the Ayrshire Structure Plan Team with the remaining posts being filled by employees from South and East Ayrshire Councils. The total staffing costs applicable to the Ayrshire Structure Plan Team are £162, 408 per annum to be shared between the three Ayrshire authorities.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the Ayrshire Structure Plan Staffing Structure as detailed in the report; and (b) that the Personnel Services Manager discuss the working arrangements of the Team in conjunction with East and South Ayrshire Councils.

#### **23. Legal Services Department: Registration Services: Saturday Civil Weddings**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed introduction of Saturday Civil Weddings.

On 25th April 1996 the Protective Services Committee agreed, subject to the approval of the

Support Services Committee, to introduce Saturday Civil Weddings within North Ayrshire at the enhanced fees and charges introduced by Strathclyde Regional Council. The introduction of Saturday Civil Weddings will have staffing implications which will require to be negotiated with the appropriate Trade Unions in order that early agreement may be reached with regard to the various issues involved.

After discussion the Committee agreed that the Personnel Services Manager enter into negotiations with the appropriate Trade Unions on the creation of a Saturday Civil Marriage Ceremony Scheme.

#### **24. Appointments to Sub-Committees**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposed appointments to the Support Services Sub-Committees namely the Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee and the Support Services (Trade Union) Liaison Sub-Committee.

The Committee agreed to appoint the undernoted Members to the Sub-Committees:

Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee - Chair, Vice-Chair and Ex Officio Members

Support Services (Trade Union) Liaison Sub-Committee - Chair, Vice-Chair, Chair of Commercial Services Committee together with the Ex Officio Members and Chair of Education Committee (Teaching Staffs Trade Union Liaison only).

#### **25. Exclusion of 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 11 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

#### **26. Support Services (Trade Union) Liaison Sub-Committee**

##### **(a) Disciplinary Procedures: APT & C Staffs**

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS1) of the Meeting of the Support Services (Trade Union) Sub-Committee, being the Minutes of their meeting held on 3rd April 1996.

The Committee agreed to adopt the report.

##### **(b) Disciplinary Procedures: Teaching Staffs**

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS2) of the Support Services (Trade Union) Liaison Sub-Committee, being the Minutes of their Meeting held on 25th April 1996.

The Committee agreed to adopt the report.

#### **27. Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee**

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS3) of the Support Services (Appeals) Sub-Committee, being the Minutes of their Meeting held on 26th April 1996.

The Committee agreed to adopt the report.

The meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.