

Corporate Strategy Committee
12 December 1996

Irvine, 12 December 1996 - At a Special Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 5.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, Thomas Dickie, John Donn, David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Thomas Morris, David O'Neill, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive; The Directors of Education, Financial Services, Housing Services and Commercial Services; The Head of Corporate Business; The Legal Services Manager; The Architectural Services Manager; The Principal Personnel Officer; and G Lawson, Principal Officer (Policy/Administration) (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Clements in the Chair.

1. Compulsory Competitive Tendering

The Chairman referred to the Seminar held earlier that day to discuss the contract for Building Repairs and Maintenance in respect of Compulsory Competitive Tendering. The Chairman thanked, on behalf of the Members of the Council, all Officers who made presentations at the Seminar which the Members found to be informative and helpful in their deliberations on the contract for Building Repairs and Maintenance.

The Committee agreed (a) that the packaging for the contract for Building Repairs and Maintenance be split into two contracts, i.e. one for Housing and one for Non-Housing with both contracts covering all of North Ayrshire; and (b) that both contracts should be priced.

The Committee further agreed that measures be taken so that the Director of Housing Services is in control of expenditure for all work and that appropriate budget systems should be in place to accommodate this.

2. FE College Development in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on developments in relation to the provision of further education in North Ayrshire.

The Council recently responded to proposals for the development of FE provision and the Board of Enterprise Ayrshire has now concluded its consideration of the same proposals. The Enterprise Ayrshire policy differs from that recommended by North Ayrshire Council in four significant respects viz.

- (a) the differential funding given to advanced level courses;
- (b) the setting of an overall limit of 1,000 places;
- (c) the introduction of a displacement factor which would reduce the funding per place;

and

(d) the level of commitment and investment.

Enterprise Ayrshire propose a per capita contribution of £250 for each new FTE place created in North Ayrshire up to a Higher National Certificate level and £375 for provision at Higher National Diploma level or above. The Council consider that the provision of £375 should apply to both HNC and HND courses.

Enterprise Ayrshire wish to encourage the development of up to 1,000 nett additional places in North Ayrshire over the next three years. However the Council considers that this target is inadequate as there is under-provision of further education in Ayrshire as a whole and the report commissioned by Cunninghame District Council recommended that the new College in North Ayrshire should accommodate 1,500 students.

The displacement factors calculated by Enterprise Ayrshire are based on the assumption that 60% of the student population will be school leavers. Statistics show however that over 70% of students attending FE/HE institutions are now over 18 years of age and 75% of enrolments are on a part-time, evening, open learning or outreach basis. Enterprise Ayrshire identifies the needs of school leavers and unemployed adults as the greatest influence on the education and training needs of the community, whereas the needs of industry and adults seeking advanced level qualifications will play the major part in the shape of the College. Consequently Enterprise Ayrshire's response on this matter under-states the potentially high level of demand from industry and the contribution which the College could make to economic regeneration.

The funding generated by Enterprise Ayrshire over the last three years has been significant but has resulted only in a modest expansion in FE/HE provision in the two Ayrshire Colleges and a continuing under-provision of FE/HE in Ayrshire which is only half the Strathclyde average.

Enterprise Ayrshire's policy makes a commitment of up to £300,000 in expenditure from surplus over the period 1997/98 to 1999/2000, but this sum does not meet the funding requirements of costing new places if Ayrshire is to compete effectively at national level.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to request Enterprise Ayrshire to reconsider the policy adopted at its Board Meeting on 29 November 1996 to take account of the points raised in the report by the Chief Executive; (b) that Enterprise Ayrshire acknowledge that in strategic terms the James Watt proposal provides the best value to the economy of North Ayrshire and Ayrshire as a whole; (c) to suggest to Enterprise Ayrshire that if funds are as limited as they now suggest these should be concentrated on the pre-eminent proposal of James Watt College; (d) to suggest further to Enterprise Ayrshire that additional funds be identified by them for a separate parcel of assistance for the development of FE/HE in the Three Towns; (e) that the Council advises the West of Scotland European Partnership of its views on the competing bids by the three Colleges and asks that the Council's views be taken into account in the Partnership's consideration of the College's bid for European funding; and (f) to seek a meeting at Member/Board level with Enterprise Ayrshire to ensure that Enterprise Ayrshire are aware of the Council's major concerns in this matter.

3. Irvine Housing Association: Member Representation

The Chief Executive reported that Irvine Housing Association had still not taken any decision with regard to the Council's recommendation that Councillor Browne become a Member of the Association. The proposal has now been outstanding for approximately three months.

The Committee expressed its deep concern over Irvine Housing Association's delay in dealing with this matter and agreed that the Chief Executive write to Scottish Homes requesting that they intervene to bring this to a conclusion.

4. Dreghorn: Main Street: Proposed Social Work Office

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager with details of the revised tender for a contract to construct the Social Work Office at Main Street, Dreghorn.

On 4 December 1996 the Social Work Committee considered the tenders for the construction of the office but was advised that the lowest tender was in excess of the budget for the contract. The Social Work Committee agreed that a revised tender be negotiated with Balmoral Homes on the basis of the proposed savings and that it be submitted to this Committee for approval.

Following negotiations with Balmoral Homes the revised tender amounts to £274,611.77.

The Committee agreed to accept the revised tender.

5. Three Towns Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS1) of the Three Towns Area Committee being the Minutes of a Special Meeting held on 2 December 1996.

(a) CCTV: Stevenston Cross

The Committee further agreed that the Three Towns Area Committee meet with representatives of Strathclyde Police to discuss the provision of CCTV in the Three Towns Area and report back.

(b) Saltcoats: Landsborough/Trinity Church

The Committee further agreed (i) that the proposal to purchase the church be referred to the Community and Recreational Services Committee who would consider this within their Capital Programme for 1997/98; (ii) that the Community and Recreational Services Committee in examining this issue ascertain what further funding, if any, can be obtained to assist with the possible purchase; and (iii) to write to COSLA suggesting that they contact all religious organisations in Scotland requesting if that organisation proposes to sell one of its churches then the local authority be advised before the church is advertised for sale on the open market.

The Committee otherwise agreed to note the report.

The meeting ended at 6.10 p.m.