

Support Services Committee
20 October 1998

Irvine, 20 October 1998 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

The Director of Financial Services; The Head of Corporate Business; The Personnel Services Manager; The Legal Services Manager; A Fraser, Principal Legal Officer; D Green, Senior Solicitor (Legal Services); and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Alan Munro and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 8 September 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Collection Statements

Submitted reports by the Director of Financial Services on the current collection levels in respect of Community Charge and Council Tax to 30 September 1998.

A total of £61,000 was collected in respect of Community Charge during September 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debt of £16,411,000.

A total of £2,618,000 was collected for Council Tax in September 1998 leaving outstanding recoverable debts of £22,354,000.

Noted.

3. Minutes: Support Services Sub-Committees

Submitted:-

- (a) The annexed report (Appendix SS1) being the Minutes of the Support Services Sub-Committee held on 8 September 1998; and
- (b) The annexed report (Appendix SS2) being the Minutes of the Support Services Sub-Committee held on 12 October 1998 (tabled).

Noted.

4. Travelling Expenses and Payment for Subsistence Scheme

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on the proposed introduction of a rationalised Travelling Expenses and Payment of Subsistence Scheme for all Chief Officers, APT&C Staff, Manual Workers and Craft Operatives.

At present there are no uniform principles and guidelines on which employees can base claims for additional expenditure incurred while carrying out their duties. Given that a variety of practices have been inherited by the Council, there is a need to define more clearly employee entitlement to additional expenses and to detail the conditions governing their payment and authorisation. Changes by the Inland Revenue in respect of alterations to tax rules in relation to employees travel and subsistence allowances have also highlighted the need to rationalise and simplify existing practices.

Comparisons have been made with the Schemes applicable to the National Joint Council of Local Authority Services and with several other neighbouring Councils. Whilst some Councils pay lunch expenses at a fixed allowance, the proposed Scheme will reimburse employees on the basis of actual expenditure incurred. Some re-classification of essential users to casual users will be required within the terms of the new Scheme which could result in a financial loss to specific individuals and with the exception of this element of the proposals, the Scheme has otherwise been agreed by the Trade Unions. Further consultation will however be required on this point. No additional financial costs will be incurred by the introduction of the Scheme.

The Committee agreed to approve the introduction of the new Scheme in the terms indicated in the report.

5. Smoking in the Workplace: Policy and Procedures

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager giving comprehensive details on proposals for the introduction of a Policy incorporating formal Procedures which will address smoking in the workplace with a view to a total ban during working hours by 1 January 2000.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Policy Document and the accompanying Procedures; (b) that the Policy and Procedures be circulated to all employees of the Council; (c) that appropriate means of counselling and support be made available to employees who encounter difficulty in meeting the requirements of the Policy; (d) that appropriate Designated Smoking Areas be provided where possible throughout the phased introduction period as detailed; and (e) that visitors and members of the public be requested to refrain from smoking whilst in Council establishments by means of prominently displayed signs.

6. Social Work Directorate: Staffing Report on Changes to the Establishment of the Occupational Therapy Service

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposed changes to the Social Work Directorate staffing establishment within the Occupational Therapy Service in response to changing demands within that Service.

One of several developments in the Occupational Therapy Service under North Ayrshire Council has been the opening of a new Disability Resource Centre within the grounds of Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine. The Director of Social Work in consultation with the Personnel Services Manager is presently reviewing the staffing structure within the Centre and in the interim formed the view that it would be possible to utilise two existing posts in the Resource Centre to address the service need in the Three Towns area. Details were provided on both the existing and proposed staffing structures within the Occupational Therapy Service Three Towns Area Team, which if implemented, would result in a saving on staff costs amounting to £8,769. The proposals have been discussed with the Head Occupational Therapist, the relevant Area Services Manager and the Health Board and the relevant Trade Unions are to be consulted.

The Committee agreed to approve the staffing structure in the terms indicated in the report.

7. Irvine: Unit 34 Kyle Road Industrial Estate: Lease

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of Unit 34, Kyle Road Industrial Estate, Kyle Road Irvine to Messrs Precision Tooling Services Limited, Lochshore East, Glengarnock.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the lease of the premises on the outline terms and conditions previously agreed.

8. Irvine: Ground at Portland Avenue: Assignment of Lease

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the assignment of a lease in respect of the ground at Portland Avenue, Irvine from R M C Catherwood Scotland Limited to R M C Retail and Merchanting Limited.

The Committee agreed to authorise the assignment of the lease on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

9. Irvine: 32 Pladda Avenue: Community Flats: Lease

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of three Community Flats at 32 Pladda Avenue, Irvine to East Irvine Nursery and Afterschool Care Limited.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to conclude the transaction on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

10. Irvine: Bank Street: Knadgerhill Cemetery Lodge House: Disposal

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of Knadgerhill Cemetery Lodge House, Bank Street, Irvine to Mr and Mrs Graeme Obree, previously agreed by the Chair as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision of the Chair.

11. Saltcoats: Ground at Seabank Street/Ground Adjacent to Auchendarvie Golf Course

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of ground at Seabank Street, Saltcoats/ground adjacent to Auchendarvie Golf Course to A and W Blair and Sons, Funeral Directors.

The Committee agreed to authorise the disposal of the area of ground on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed.

12. Ardrossan: 18 Central Avenue

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the renewal of the lease in respect of the property at 18 Central Avenue, Ardrossan to J and W Ferguson and Company.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to proceed with the renewal of the lease on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed and to conclude the transaction.

13. Ardrossan: Eglinton Road: Seafield School

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on an amendment to the proposed lease conditions in respect of Seafield School, Eglinton Road, Ardrossan.

Since the granting of entry to Quarrier's Homes by virtue of a Licence from 1 December 1995, negotiations have failed to conclude the Formal Lease Agreement. Quarrier's Homes have indicated that they would be prepared to proceed on the basis of an internal repairing and insuring lease with the Council being liable for the maintenance and repair of all external walls of the buildings on site together with the boundary wall surrounding the property. The Architectural Services Manager estimates that the costs in relation to the annual external repair and maintenance would be approximately £15,000.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to continue consideration of this matter: (b) to remit to a Special sub-Committee comprising the Chair, Vice-Chair, Mr Dewar and Mr Steven to visit the site to examine the buildings and the boundary wall to consider the requirements for its future maintenance; and (c) that a further report be submitted to the next meeting.

14. Dalry: Site at West End

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of a site at West End, Dalry to Cunninghame Housing Association.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to enter into negotiations with Cunninghame Housing Association for the disposal of the site.

Exempt Information

15. Exclusion of Public

The Committee 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 the Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act, shown against each item.

16. Stevenston: New Street Shopping Centre (Paragraph 12)

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on matters relating to the lease of units and ownership of the ground at New Street Shopping Centre, Stevenston.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals outlined in the report.

17. Stevenston: 85 Boglemart Street (Paragraph 6)

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the present status of the Subjects at 85 Boglemart Street, Stevenston.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.