

Corporate Strategy Committee
14 April 1998

Irvine, 14 April 1998 - At a Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney, Thomas Morris, Robert Reilly, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Directors of Education and Financial Services; the Head of Corporate Business; J. Andrew, Principal Officer (Property Services) (Architectural Services); A. Fraser, Principal Legal Officer (Legal Services); A. Osborne, Corporate Policy Officer and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. Clements in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Stewart Dewar, Thomas Dickie, John Donn, Samuel Gooding, Robert Rae and John Sillars.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 3 March 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Capital Plan (Other Services)

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the proposed Capital Programme for 1998/99.

The Council's capital allocation for 1998/99, including additional grants for Education and Spend to Save proposals, amounts to £8.660m. Taking into account the overspend for 1997/98, all estimated capital receipts and the already committed capital expenditure of £8.762m, the net resources available for new capital projects amounts to £1.207m. The total bids submitted to the various Service Committees amount to £12.298m. A programme of proposed new projects has therefore been drawn up on the basis of the top priorities identified by each Service Committee which can be accommodated within the available resources. The proposed programme is allocated in two phases. Phase 1 amounting to £1.577m which allows for an overspend of £371,000, within the maximum permitted by the Scottish Office, can proceed immediately. Phase 2 amounts to £552,000, which will be subject to additional resources becoming available through slippage. The programme also commits a sum of £922,000 in 1999/2000 in addition to the existing commitment of £3.282m, resulting in a total commitment of £4.204m for 1999/2000.

After discussion, during the course of which reference was made to a potential additional capital receipt at the Kylehill Primary School site, Saltcoats, the Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposed new projects in the Capital Programme for 1998/99 listed in Phase 1 and subject to additional resources becoming available through slippage Phase 2, both as detailed in the annexed report (Appendix CS1); and (b) that a report be submitted to the appropriate Committee as to whether the Kylehill Primary School building requires to be retained for Further Education

use.

3. *Energy Management Annual Report 1997/98*

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager on the Energy Management Initiatives completed during the 1997/98 financial year.

On 21 January 1997, the Committee approved the North Ayrshire Council Energy Management Policy and related five year programme of energy efficiency measures. During 1997/98, the first year of the programme, the budget of £100,000 has been used to set up energy management systems, provide an energy management advisory service and to fund specific energy efficiency projects. Additionally, the Education Directorate funded various water management projects to a total value of £9,500. In total, one-off savings of £60,000 have been achieved and the energy and water efficiency measures which have been put in place should result in further savings of approximately £30,000 each year for at least the next five years.

It is proposed during 1998/99 to continue the present programme, to seek to develop the existing energy management systems, to continue to offer advice and assistance to other Council Departments and to fund further energy efficiency projects. The programme will assist the Council both in terms of achieving Best Value and in making a positive contribution to the environment.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the 1997/98 annual report on energy management; and (b) to approve the proposed programme for 1998/99 of energy efficiency and water conservation initiatives.

4. *Scheme of Delegation to Officers*

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on proposed revisions to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

On 21 May 1996, the Committee approved the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, including that a review be undertaken within the first year. The review has been completed taking into account changes in legislation, as well as structures within Directorates and the transfer of functions. Other changes have been required to reflect changes in operational responsibilities between Directorates or adjustments where the appropriate officer had not been given the relevant powers in the first Scheme. There has also been a review of the powers delegated to a number of Chief Officers.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised version of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

5. *Youth Strategy Steering Group*

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a proposal to establish a Youth Strategy Steering Group to develop a strategy for young people's services.

On 17 March 1998, the Community and Recreational Services Committee considered a report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on the findings of the Preliminary Research Group, which had been established to identify issues which affect young people and agreed to remit to the Corporate Strategy Committee to consider the establishment of a Youth Strategy Steering Group.

The Committee agreed (a) to appoint a Youth Strategy Steering Group comprising Councillor McNamara, appropriate officers from the Housing Services, Social Work, Education and Community and Recreational Services Directorates, Strathclyde Police and representatives of voluntary groups and young people in North Ayrshire, to formulate a five year strategic plan for the provision of services to young people; and (b) that a report on the proposed Strategy be submitted to the Committee in due course.

6. Consultative Mechanisms with the Community and Voluntary Sector

Submitted joint report by the Chief Executive and the Director of Community and Recreational Services on proposed consultative mechanisms between the Council and the community and voluntary sector.

On 12 February 1998, the North Ayrshire Regeneration Partnership agreed that priority should be given to supporting the development of the community and voluntary sectors and their involvement with the Partnership, particularly from the Three Towns area and that the Council be invited to submit proposals on how this might be achieved. These issues were already being considered by the Council's Corporate Task Group on Regeneration. There exists already within North Ayrshire, a well developed network of community and voluntary organisations representing a diverse range of interests and activities. At present, however, there is no method of drawing together the views of these organisations and furthermore the Council has no established mechanism for consulting with them. It had also been envisaged in the Council's Scheme of Decentralisation that consideration would be given to the formation of community forums to act as umbrella groups to be consulted on a regular basis. Whilst the Area Committees have already held 26 community consultation meetings, the Area Committees would benefit from the early formation of such community forums to facilitate more effective ongoing consultation.

In order to involve the voluntary sector in the process, the Corporate Task Group on Regeneration propose that (i) a general meeting of community and voluntary sector organisations in North Ayrshire be convened in May 1998 to explore mechanisms that would improve links with the Council; (ii) a Steering Group be formed from that meeting with the remit of considering options to be presented to and adopted at a subsequent "community conference" to be held in Autumn 1998; (iii) this Steering Group be constructed in such a way as to ensure representation from a range of interest groups; and (iv) as an adjunct to the general meeting, an interim Three Towns Community Forum be formed with the specific remit of promoting greater involvement of the community and voluntary sector within the work and processes of the Regeneration Partnership.

The Committee agreed (a) that consultative mechanisms between the Council and the community and voluntary sector in partnership be further developed as outlined at (i) to (iv) above; (b) that support be sought from the Regeneration Partnership as appropriate; (c) to nominate Councillors Browne and Taylor to work on the options for consultative mechanisms in conjunction with the proposed Steering Group; and (d) that a report on the findings of the Steering Group be submitted to a future meeting.

7. Women's Safety

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on initiatives undertaken by the Council to promote women's safety.

On 20 January 1998, the Committee was advised of Strathclyde Police's Spotlight Initiative on Women's Safety and agreed (a) to approve the establishment of an Officer Working Group on Women's Safety; and (b) that issues relating to passenger transport be included in the Group's considerations.

Since then, the Council has participated in a number of initiatives in conjunction with the Police's Operation Spotlight, including (i) publishing leaflets and stickers giving emergency telephone numbers for victims of violence; (ii) publicising the campaign and the leaflets in the spring issues of Look North; and (iii) promoting the initiative at the Council's Women's Conference in Beith. The Officer Working Group has met to consider ways in which the Council's services could be adapted to ensure women's safety needs are considered focusing principally on ways in which the Council's services assist in tackling violence against women. Arising from this, it is proposed that a smaller group be formed with responsibility for preparing a multi-agency strategy to tackle violence against women in North Ayrshire and reviewing the services currently available. Other proposals include offering seminars to women employees on personal safety. With regard to the issue of passenger transport, the Police have undertaken to ensure that there are more high visibility patrols on public transport and on the streets and this initiative is also being supported by

British Transport Police.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the establishment of an Officers Group including Officers from the Housing Services and Social Work Directorates and the Police to meet with the voluntary agencies involved such as Women's Aid and Ayr Rape Crisis, to pursue a multi-agency approach in tackling violence against women; and (b) the holding of Women's Safety Seminars for the Council's women employees.

8. Working Together for a Healthier Scotland

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a response to the Green Paper "Working Together for a Healthier Scotland".

The Green Paper seeks views from the public, Councils and other agencies, health bodies etc. on how to work together towards improving public health. The document stresses the significance of "a worthwhile job, a decent home and a clean environment" as key health determinants and of a good education in increasing self-esteem and enhancing employment prospects. It seeks to address this by acting on the life circumstances that influence public health and the lifestyle changes which can improve health and prevent illness. It acknowledges that success will require strong partnerships between health professionals and other local bodies within a national framework and there is a particular emphasis on the importance of working with local authorities. A proposed response has been prepared which endorses the main thrust of the Green Paper's objectives in examining and seeking to address the underlying social, economic and environmental circumstances which influence health and welcoming the acknowledgement that local authorities are key players in this process.

Additionally, an invitation has been received from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board to attend a seminar on the Green Paper and an invitation has been received from the South Ayrshire Hospitals NHS Trust to attend their monthly Board meetings.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposed response to the Green Paper as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; (b) that Councillor Clarkson be nominated to attend meetings of the South Ayrshire Hospitals NHS Trust Board; and (c) that Councillor Margaret Munn and 2 other Members to be advised, be nominated to attend the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board Seminar on the Green Paper to be held on 21st April, 1998.

9. Scottish Office Consultation Paper on Social Exclusion in Scotland

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Scottish Office Consultation Paper on Social Exclusion in Scotland.

The paper was circulated for comment to interested groups, individuals and organisations across Scotland with a response date of 27th March 1998 and will be followed by a "summit" in the late spring. The conclusions of this process will subsequently be incorporated into the government's developing policy response to Social Exclusion. A number of government initiatives are already in place including the New Deal Welfare to Work Programme; Programme for Partnership promoting urban regeneration; and the proposals on addressing health inequalities in the Green Paper "Working Together for a Healthier Scotland". The consultation paper further identifies specific areas of action including (i) tackling exclusion from education; (ii) community safety; (iii) Scotland's housing; (iv) childcare strategy; and (v) integrated transport policy. The paper concludes by calling for co-ordination of effort in tackling social exclusion by targeting the areas of greatest need; promoting partnership working; encouraging innovation; and moving the emphasis from dealing with symptoms to preventative measures.

In view of the deadline of 27th March 1998, a response has been submitted to the Scottish Office generally welcoming the government's initiative in addressing Social Exclusion, commenting on a number of the general issues raised such as the community planning role, involving local people and equal opportunities and responding to the specific questions covering areas such as priorities for tackling social exclusion, target groups for fast track action and developing the

strategy.

The Committee agreed to homologate the response as detailed within the report.

10. Community Planning

Submitted report by the Chief Executive advising on government proposals to modernise local government.

The government's proposals include the updating of local electoral arrangements, ways of involving local communities, modernising the way Councils work and emphasising Councils' leadership role amongst their communities. This is currently the subject of a consultation paper in England. The government is keen to encourage Councils to take a pro-active approach by involving public, private and voluntary agencies with an interest in their areas to define local needs and participate in planning to meet these needs. This process has become known as "community planning".

A joint Scottish Office/COSLA Working Group on Community Planning has been established which addresses a number of the themes included in the English consultation paper. COSLA requested the Council's views at short notice on issues which emerged from the joint Scottish Office/COSLA Working Group, in relation to the Councils' leadership role. It has been proposed by COSLA that Councils should have a duty of community planning where they would take the lead in developing a community planning process, coming together with other agencies to develop a plan setting out how they would collectively contribute to the provision of services for local communities. COSLA are further of the view that a duty of community planning is more important than a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area.

In consultation with the Chair, a response has been submitted to COSLA confirming the Council's support in general terms to the proposals for a duty of community planning and to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area in order to enhance the powers of local authorities in Scotland, particularly at this time of change.

The Committee agreed to homologate the response as detailed in the report.

11. Best Value: Response to DETR Consultation Paper

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on a proposed response to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) consultation paper on Best Value.

Whilst the consultation document does not directly affect Scotland, COSLA believes it is important that Scottish Councils should respond, to provide a united endorsement of the different and responsible approach which is being taken in Scotland. The DETR approach has involved inviting all 400 Councils and 41 Police authorities in England to submit bids to be awarded "Pilot Best Value Authority" status. This has resulted in the selection of 35 local authorities and 2 Police authorities as full pilots and as such they will be awarded complete exemption from CCT. A further 16 authorities have been granted selective exemption from CCT. CCT therefore remains in force for the vast majority of English authorities.

In Scotland, a unique partnership approach has been taken to Best Value with a joint Scottish Office/COSLA/Accounts Commission Task Force developing a less prescriptive framework for Best Value, with the focus on success rather than failure and taking the view that Best Value should be delivered through cultural change and self-regulation rather than legislation. All 32 Scottish Councils have now been granted exemption from CCT, subject to final agreement on their Implementation Plans. The proposed response on behalf of the Council to the consultation document in summary indicates that Best Value can, and should be developed in a less prescriptive and more positive manner.

The Committee agreed to approve the response as detailed in the report.

12. North Ayrshire Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on arrangements for the introduction of an initiative involving the use of the "Bin It" logo on computer screens within Council offices.

On 26 November 1997, the Committee approved the future proposals for the North Ayrshire Litter Awareness and Prevention Campaign including authorising Officers to progress specifically the initiatives in relation to the use of the "Bin It" logo on computer screens within Council offices and schools. The proposal involves the use of the "Bin It" character and slogan with the Litter Hotline number and brief message as wallpaper or, where more appropriate, as a screensaver. In order to be effective the initiative will require to be applied universally in Council premises over a period of time. It is proposed that it should run between May 1998 and April 1999. The screensaver/wallpaper could be introduced to computers within Council premises at no cost. At this time, however, the proposals cannot be applied to schools due to their extensive use of Apple Mac computers which are not compatible with the systems which are used within other Council premises.

The Committee agreed (a) to instruct each Directorate wherever possible to participate fully in this initiative; and (b) that further investigation be undertaken in relation to the introduction of the initiative into schools.

13. Community Safety Task Group

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposals for the setting-up of a Community Safety Task Group.

On 27th May 1997, the Committee approved proposals for the setting-up of a Community Safety Task Group and authorised the Chief Executive to take steps to implement them. A letter has since been received from Strathclyde Police inviting the Council to participate in the setting-up of Community Safety Task Groups within Council areas.

The Committee agreed to nominate the five Area Committee Chairs and Senior Officers from the relevant Council Directorates to serve on a North Ayrshire Community Safety Task Group to promote community safety throughout North Ayrshire.

14. Area Committees

(a) North Coast and Arran Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS2) of the North Coast and Arran Area Committee, being the Minutes of its meeting held on 30 March 1998.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(b) Garnock Valley Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS3) of the Garnock Valley Area Committee, being the Minutes of its meeting held on 31 March 1998.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(c) Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS4) of the Kilwinning, Dreghorn and Springside Area Committee, being the Minutes of its meeting held on 1 April 1998.

Arising from the Minutes, the undernoted matter was brought to the attention of the Committee:-

(1) Agenda item 11(a): Kilwinning Pedestrian Precinct

The Area Committee agreed to highlight to the Corporate Strategy Committee the need for overall co-ordination between Directorates in the implementation of the works to Kilwinning pedestrian precinct.

The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive's Directorate should co-ordinate the implementation of the works required.

(d) Irvine Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS5) of the Irvine Area Committee, being the Minutes of its meeting held on 1 April 1998.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

(e) Three Towns Area Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS6) of the Three Towns Area Committee, being the Minutes of its meeting held on 2 April 1998.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

15. Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on requests received for financial assistance:-

(a) Volunteer Development Scotland

The Committee agreed to award Volunteer Development Scotland £75;

(b) Crimestoppers

The Committee agreed to award Crimestoppers £1,000;

(c) Children in Scotland

The Committee agreed to award Children in Scotland £1,200;

(d) Poverty Alliance

The Committee agreed to award Poverty Alliance £1,500;

(e) Scottish Human Rights Centre (Formerly Civil Liberties Council)

The Committee agreed to award Scottish Human Rights Centre £2,000;

(f) Nuclear Free Local Authorities

The Committee agreed to award Nuclear Free Local Authorities £200;

(g) Rural Forum

The Committee agreed to award Rural Forum £1,000;

(h) Scottish Low Pay Unit

The Committee agreed to award Scottish Low Pay Unit £3,000;

(i) West of Scotland Lesbian and Gay Advisory Forum

The Committee agreed to award West of Scotland Lesbian and Gay Advisory Forum £150;
and

(j) Friends of the Earth Scotland

The Committee agreed to award Friends of the Earth Scotland £200.

16. Conferences, Seminar Etc: Invitations

Submitted invitations to attend the undernoted Conferences/Seminars etc.:-

(a) COSLA European Conference: The Future of European Rural Policy to be held in Perth on Friday 5 June 1998;

(b) Strathclyde European Partnership Community Economic Development European Study Visit to be held in Glasgow on 27-29 April 1998;

(c) LGC Communications Partnerships for Progress 2 day event to be held in York on 28-29 May 1998;

(d) 6th European Conference on the Social Economy to be held in Birmingham on 3-5 June 1998; and

(e) The Planning Exchange Conference on "Infrastructure and its Effects on Economic Development" to be held in Edinburgh on 13th May 1998.

The Committee agreed (i) that Councillor Sillars be authorised to attend (a); and (ii) that there be no attendance at (b) (c) (d) and (e).

17. Urgent Items

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

18. European Study Visit on Community Economic Development

Submitted report by the Head of Corporate Business on a request from the Strathclyde European Partnership for financial support for a European study visit on community economic development to be held in Glasgow from 27-29 April 1998.

The Strathclyde European Partnership expects to attract around 150 people from other Objective 2 regions in Europe to examine practice and explore key issues from their experience in the target communities over the last 20 years or so. The estimated total costs are £90,000 and in order to subsidise travel and other costs for overseas delegates the Strathclyde European Partnership are seeking to raise sponsorship of a further £17,000.

The Committee agreed to contribute up to a maximum of £500.

The Meeting ended at 2.25 p.m.

**Corporate Strategy Committee
14/04/98**

Appendix No **CS1**

REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT REQUESTED	1997/98 AWARD	PURPOSE	RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS
VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND	£75	£75	Affiliation	£75	
CRIMESTOPPERS	£2,500	£1,500	Public information to stop crime	£1,000	
CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND	£2,071	£1,665	Membership	£1,200	COSLA
POVERTY ALLIANCE	£4,000	£4,000	Running Costs	£1,500	
SCOTTISH HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE (FORMERLY CIVIL LIBERTIES COUNCIL)	£2,781	£2,781	Membership	£2,000	COSLA
NUCLEAR FREE LOCAL AUTHORITIES	£1,363	£1,333	Affiliation	£200	Donation Recommended
RURAL FORUM	£1,250	-	Membership	£1,000	COSLA
SCOTTISH LOW PAY UNIT	£4,500	£3,629	Membership	£3,000	COSLA
WEST OF SCOTLAND LESBIAN AND GAY ADVISORY FORUM	£3,297	£1,000	Membership	£150	Donation

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCOTLAND		£770	General Running Costs	£200	Donation
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