

Corporate Strategy Committee
26 June 1997

Irvine, 26 June 1997 - At a Special Meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Patrick Browne, Stewart Dewar, Thomas Dickie, David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Joseph McKinney and Robert Rae.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive; The Directors of Education, Social Work, Commercial Services and Community and Recreational Services; The Legal Services manager; The Architectural Services Manager; J Paul, Head of Property Services (Housing Services); P Bryers, Head of Planning and Development (Social Work); J Hair, Principal Officer, Accountancy Services (Financial Services); The Principal Officer (Performance Review), The Principal Officer (Marketing/Publicity), The Principal Officer (Policy/Administration) and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Clements in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, John Donn, Robert Reilly, John Sillars, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

1. CCT/Best Value

(a) Contract for Refuse Collection and Other Cleaning Services

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the award of the contract for Refuse Collection and other Cleaning Services.

In accordance with the decision of the Committee on 8 April 1997 tender documents were issued to Rethmann Recycling (UK) Limited, BIFFA Waste Services Limited, Serviceteam Limited and North Ayrshire Council's Commercial Services Directorate. Tenders were required to be submitted by 19 May 1997 and by that date a tender had been received from the Council's Commercial Services Directorate. All other contractors had intimated on or before 19 May that they would not be tendering for the contract. The tender from the Council's Commercial Services Directorate was assessed in terms of the Tender Evaluation Model previously approved by the Committee which calls for the scoring of the bid against pre-determined sets of criteria covering both financial and non-financial matters. It is considered that the bid submitted is the most economically advantageous and should be accepted.

The Committee agreed that the contract for Refuse Collection and Other Cleaning Services 1997/2002 be awarded to the DSO Management Team, Commercial Services Directorate, North Ayrshire Council for the sum of £4,723,267.

(b) General Building Maintenance Contracts: Housing and Non-Housing

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the completion of the pre-tender

phase of the tendering process for Housing and Non-Housing General Building Maintenance Contracts.

The Committee previously agreed that tenders for the Housing and Non-Housing General Building Maintenance Contracts would be sought from Morris and Spottiswood, Mowlem Building Maintenance, Chatterton (Building Services) Limited, Robison and Davidson Limited and North Ayrshire Council Commercial Services Directorate. Confirmation was given that all preparatory work for the tenders has now been completed and accordingly it was suggested that documentation should be submitted to the contractors for pricing as soon as possible. It is considered that the contractors should be able to price the contract within a period of 30 days and accordingly the proposed date for the return of tenders is 11 August 1997. Evaluation of all tenders received will follow thereafter and the contracts for each of the services awarded as soon as possible after that date.

Noted.

(c) Best Value Regime

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on proposals for the introduction of a "best value" regime to replace Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

On 27 May 1997 the Secretary of State for Scotland announced proposals for the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of "best value" to replace Compulsory Competitive Tendering. The new scheme is aimed at maximising the extent to which councils can achieve value for money and competition will remain a fundamental element of the new scheme which is expected to come into force in July 1998. Whilst the broad framework of the scheme is already known, it is proposed that a joint Scottish Office/COSLA/Accounts Commission Officer Task Force will work up the details of "best value" in preparation for the Secretary of State's first formal meeting with COSLA on 4 July 1997. The "best value" scheme will not require primary legislation but will be enforced through the statutory duty on Scottish local authorities to maximise value for money and the scheme will be extended to all areas of public sector activity with local government being targeted as the first area. The Government has announced an extension to the moratorium on the letting of CCT contracts put in place during the local government reorganisation to allow the introduction of the "best value" scheme. While councils showing a willingness and ability to comply with the new scheme may be exempted from Compulsory Competitive Tendering, such exemption will require to be earned by individual councils. The Government will make decisions on these exemptions in November 1997 and the failure of some services to demonstrate the ability to comply with the requirements of the scheme may result in all of the council's CCT defined activities having to return to a CCT environment following expiry of the one year extension to the moratorium.

The "best value" scheme will be more extensive than Compulsory Competitive Tendering covering all of the services provided by the Council and is aimed at ensuring that councils have a sympathetic and comprehensive approach to maximising value for money in everything they do. The Government considers that CCT is only one tool in a "suite" of tools which councils should be using to achieve best value. This is based largely on good management practice regarding strategic planning, performance monitoring and budgetary control and is closely associated with the Accounts Commission's audit of management arrangements. The Government intends that "best value" will operate through performance plans for each service, agreed in consultation with local communities. The performance plans will include standards of service and specific targets against which councils must monitor performance. It is also expected that "best value" will emphasise the need for Performance Indicators for each key area of service delivery and each year's performance plan must also link closely to available budgets. The Government's proposal to move towards longer-term financial planning in the form of three year Revenue and Capital budgeting is anticipated to be a key element of the new proposals. It is intended that all elements of "best value" will be auditable. By autumn of this year Scottish local authorities will be invited to submit an assessment of the extent to which they can comply with the new regime and an implementation plan indicating how they will achieve full compliance within a specified period. The Council will therefore require to focus its efforts over the next few months to ensure that it is in

a position to claim exemption from Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

Noted.

2. Millport: Garrison House: Relocation of Council Services Etc.

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 4 March 1997.)

Submitted (a) report by the Chief Executive on the relocation of Administration staff at Garrison House; and (b) report by the Director of Community and Recreational Services on proposals for the relocation of the Library and Museum staff.

Since March 1997 a number of properties owned by the Council or for sale on Cumbrae have been inspected in relation to the possibility of their future use for the provision of Administrative and Registration Services on Cumbrae when Garrison House has been vacated. The only suitable property identified to date is the Harbour Restaurant at 15 Stuart Street, Millport details of which were given in the report. It had been suggested that pending the development of this property to ensure continuity of the services on the island that a temporary leasing arrangement be entered into with the Cunninghame Housing Association regarding their local office at 49 Stuart Street, Millport. Additional resources of £23,000 (over and above the £48,000 authorised by the Committee at its meeting on 21 January 1997) would be required to enable this project to proceed.

The Director of Community and Recreational Services has also been examining possible alternative arrangements required for the relocation of Millport Library and the Museum of the Cumbraes and details of a number of options currently being considered were provided. In response to a question regarding the suitability of the current opening hours for Millport Library, the Director of Community and Recreational Services undertook to investigate this matter and advise the local member of the position.

The Chief Executive confirmed that following recent discussions with the Council's insurers, agreement had been reached for an extension to the use of Garrison House services from which now require to cease operations by 31 August 1997. Thereafter a further two week period will be allowed to vacate the premises.

The Chief Executive further reported on his discussions with Bute Estates and the Argyle and the Isles Enterprise on the formation of a Steering Group and a Local Campaign Committee to secure the future of the building

The Committee agreed (i) that, subject to all necessary consents being obtained, the Council purchase the property known as the Harbour Restaurant at 15 Stuart Street, Millport on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Legal Services Manager for development as a First Stop Shop and Registration/Marriage Room; (ii) that, pending the development of the foregoing property, the Council enter into a short-term lease with the Cunninghame Housing Association in respect of their offices at 49 Stuart Street, Millport; (iii) that additional resources of £23,000 be authorised to enable the project to proceed; (iv) that the Chief Executive submit a further report to the meeting on 29 July 1997; (v) that the Director of Community and Recreational Services submit a further report to the meeting on 29 July 1997 on his proposals for the relocation of Millport Library and the Museum of the Cumbraes and to authorise officers to take necessary action as the need arises in the meantime; and (vi) otherwise to note the position meantime.

3. FE College Development in North Ayrshire

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 27 May 1997.)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the progress of developments in relation to the provision of Further Education in North Ayrshire.

The Council has over the past twelve months undertaken exhaustive investigations of the

cases presented by Ayr, James Watt and Kilmarnock Colleges to develop Further Education in North Ayrshire. The Council has pledged its full support for the proposals submitted by James Watt College to provide a North Ayrshire College in Kilwinning and a Community Learning Facility in the Three Towns where Auchenharvie Academy is being looked at as the preferred location.

James Watt College has now submitted ERDF applications in respect of both projects with North Ayrshire Council and Enterprise Ayrshire as backers. The Minister for Education and Industry has now indicated that he will reserve judgement on the Kilwinning proposals pending the outcome of a study involving the FE Funding Division, the Economic Advisory Service, Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the Colleges themselves, which will seek collaborative solutions to the educational requirements of the area which are, as far as possible, acceptable to all the affected parties. Kilmarnock College has now submitted an ERDF application in respect of new proposals for a Community College in the shopping centre, Stevenston. The need for a study could delay matters for James Watt College in relation to the PFI Programme for North Ayrshire College which is now at the invitation to tender stage. Both the Chief Executive and James Watt College have expressed their disappointment to the Minister that such a decision should be taken at this stage and have requested clarification on a number of matters relating to the proposed study. The Member/Officer Working Group have also expressed their disappointment at the decision and their concern that the James Watt College proposals could be jeopardised by any delay.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Council (i) reiterate their full support for the James Watt College proposals for a North Ayrshire College in Kilwinning and a Community Learning Facility in the Three Towns to the Minister; (ii) emphasise to him that the Council's core argument for selecting these proposals rather than those submitted by either Ayr or Kilmarnock College is because they present the best option for North Ayrshire in both educational and economic terms and that this can be clearly demonstrated; (iii) insist that they have a role in the study which has been commissioned; and (iv) note the further proposal by Kilmarnock College.

4. Community Care Plan Review 1997

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the final draft of the Community Care Plan Review 1997. Copies of the final draft had previously been circulated.

In response to a request from the Scottish Office that councils produce Community Care Plans for the period 1997-2000 by June 1997, a Member/Officer Group has initially produced the Community Care Plan Review 1997 which is primarily a plan for implementation and development. The final draft version of the community Care Plan Review 1997 was submitted to a Council Seminar on 4 June 1997. This will also provide the foundation for a more comprehensive North Ayrshire Council Community Care Plan which will be completed by early 1998. Although the proposed developments outlined in the Plan are modest given the severe restriction on financial resources, the proposals are considered achievable and should have major positive implications for service users and their carers.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Community Care Plan Review 1997; and (b) to authorise formal submission to the Scottish Office.

5. Arran Bus Service Provision

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the current position in relation to tenders for the Arran Bus Service Contract for schools and local services.

Tender documents for the fifteen contracts on the island, local and schools/local services had been sought following the SPT's invitation to tender which was published in The Herald on 3 June 1997. All fifteen contracts had been studied to allow preparation of a tender by the Council in respect of all services on the island and the closing date for tenders was set for 24 June 1997. A report on the outcome of the tender process will be submitted to the Corporate Strategy Committee on 29 July 1997.

Noted.

6. Bus Shelters: Capital Programme 1997/98

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Council's contribution towards the cost of bus stop/bus shelter replacement/provision and associated works in 1997/98 as confirmed by SPT.

The replacement and provision of bus stops/shelters and associated works are undertaken by SPT on behalf of the Council. The Council's contribution towards these costs and the contribution of the other eleven authorities within SPT's area is based on a total budget of £400,000 which is apportioned on the basis of the population within the area. Due to the fact that component parts of shelters had been purchased in the previous year, the Council's share of costs in 1996/97 was only £6,000 which related solely to the cost of erecting shelters. Additionally, no allowance was made last year for a Capital Programme on Arran given its position outwith the SPT's area of responsibility.

On the basis of surveys undertaken by the SPT there are currently eight sites within North Ayrshire where new/replacement shelters have been shown to be justified and costs are likely to be in the region of £16,000. There are also a number of outstanding requests by members which are at the stage of survey. Accordingly, £24,000 would allow the programme and its associated works on a number of outstanding requests for new shelters/replacements to be accommodated. Additional provision is however required on Arran and £8,000 would seem a reasonable figure in the first instance since there has been no new or replacement provision on Arran for some time. This would cover the likely costs of transporting and installing two shelters and providing replacement information panels, many of which are in poor condition.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve a contribution of £24,000 by the Council towards bus stop/shelter provision/replacement and associated works in 1997/98 on the mainland; (b) to provide the sum of £8,000 towards a Capital Programme for Arran in 1997/98; and (c) that a further report on sites be submitted to enable priorities to be established.

7. Scheme of Decentralisation

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate strategy Committee 4 March 1997.)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of the consultation period on the Draft Decentralisation Scheme and its proposed adoption.

The Committee on 4 March 1997 approved the content of a Draft Decentralisation Scheme to be published on booklet format and circulated to interested parties for comment. Full public consultation on the Draft Scheme has now been undertaken and details of the responses were given in the report.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the comments submitted in response to the consultation; (b) to adopt the Draft Scheme as the Council's Decentralisation Scheme; (c) to authorise the Chief Executive to give Public Notice that such a Scheme has been adopted; (d) to submit the final Scheme to the Secretary of State for Scotland; and (e) to monitor the implementation of the Scheme and the ongoing development of the Council's Decentralisation Policies.

8 Closed Circuit Television: Irvine Town Centre

(Previous Minute Reference: Corporate Strategy Committee 4 March 1997.)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the current position regarding the proposed introduction of a pilot scheme to provide Closed Circuit Television for Irvine Town Centre.

The Committee previously agreed to provide indicative sums in the 1997/98 Capital

Programme for the development of a CCTV Project and in the Revenue budget from 1997/98 to 1999/2000 for the running costs associated with the programme. In terms of Capital costs the Council have been successful in attracting grants of £18,500 from the Strathclyde Joint Police Board, and £27,000 from the Scottish Office which must be match-funded. The Irvine Traders have also pledged a total of £2,500 resulting in a shortfall of £24,500 to meet the Capital costs associated with the system. The Revenue costs for the remaining six months of the year are approximately £30,000 and there is currently a deficit of £17,500 in Revenue terms. Enterprise Ayrshire have declined on two occasions to contribute towards the development of the Irvine CCTV system although substantial contributions have been made by them towards similar systems in Ayr and Kilmarnock.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to accept the grant from Strathclyde Joint Police Board of £18,500; and (b) to instruct the Chief Executive to (i) make a further approach to Enterprise Ayrshire regarding their refusal to support the Irvine CCTV project; and (ii) submit a further report to the Committee detailing the outcome of Enterprise Ayrshire's decision.

9. Urgent Items

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

10. Grounds Maintenance Contracts

The Education, Planning, Roads and Environment and Commercial Services Directorates currently share the responsibility for grass cutting within North Ayrshire and clarification was sought in this regard.

The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive report on the responsibilities of the various Directorates for grounds maintenance contracts and the procedures currently adopted.

11. The National Health Service (1948-1998): 50th Anniversary Celebrations

5 July 1998 marks the 50th Anniversary of the National Health Service. The Chairman of the South Ayrshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust has indicated that he is of the view that some local activities should be arranged to mark the occasion and that to this end he has established a small Steering Group from the local Trusts, the local Health Council, the British Medical Association and the Presbytery of Ayr. An invitation has been extended to the three Ayrshire local authorities to nominate a representative to participate in the Steering Group.

The Committee agreed that Ian Clarkson be nominated as North Ayrshire Council's representative on the Steering Group.

12. Exempt Information

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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

13. Review of Property Repairs and Maintenance Services

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on (a) the progress in clearing the invoicing backlog from Commercial Services to Housing Services and Architectural Services, and (b) the outcome of the Business and Systems Review of the Property Repairs and Maintenance Services.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve all of the detailed recommendations contained in the Executive Summary of the report by Deloitte & Touche whilst noting that the revised staffing structures being recommended would be the subject of a report by the Personnel Services

Manager to the next meeting of the Support Services Committee; and (b) to note the progress in clearing the invoicing backlog.

The meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.