

Corporate Strategy Committee
13 April 1999

Irvine, 13 April 1999 - At a meeting of the Special Corporate Strategy Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Clements, Ian Clarkson, Stewart Dewar, Thomas Dickie, David Gallagher, Margaret Highet, James Jennings, David Munn, Margaret Munn, Alan Munro, David O'Neill, Robert Rae, Robert Reilly, George Steven and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Chief Executive, the Corporate Director (Educational Services), the Assistant Chief Executives (Finance & Development and Promotion), J Paul, Head of Technical Services (Property Services), R Samson, Principal Estates Officer (Development and Promotion), A Ferguson, Principal Personnel Officer (Personnel), M McCormick, Media Relations Officer and J Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr Clements in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Jack Carson, John Donn, Samuel Gooding, Thomas Morris, Evelyn Sillars, John Sillars and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Capital Plan 1999/2000

(a) Housing HRA

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the Housing HRA Capital Programme for 1999/2000.

The Council have received advance notice from the Scottish Office of borrowing consent amounting to £2.953m for capital expenditure on housing in 1999/2000. The Council's total available allocation, taking into account estimated capital receipts of £1,130,000 and Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR) of £1,950,000, amounts to £6,033,000. Details were provided on a draft Capital Programme for 1999/2000 amounting to total expenditure of £6,645,000, which includes carried forward expenditure from 1998/99 of £604,000 and a built-in element of over-programming to take account of slippage.

The Committee agreed to approve the Housing HRA Capital Programme (Appendix CS1) for 1999/2000.

(b) Other Services

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the proposed Capital Programme for Other Services for 1999/2000.

The Council's Capital Allocation for 1999/2000, taking into account additional resources for education of £0.782m (New Deal for Schools) and entitlement to capital receipts of £1.821m and £0.433m (Excellence for Schools), amounts in total to £10,440,000. Committed expenditure amounts to £8.197m leaving net resources available for new projects of £2.243m. An allowance of £0.725m has been built into the programme for slippage, although it is expected that the permitted level by the Scottish Office of £0.351m will not be breached. The Service Committees have approved bids which amount in total to £12.793m. A programme of proposed new projects has therefore been drawn up on the basis of the top priorities identified for each Service to utilise the available resources of £2.968m in 1999/2000 and allowing for some slippage.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposed new projects in the Capital Programme for 1999/2000 as detailed in the annexed report (Appendix CS2); and (b) to instruct the Corporate Director (Property Services) to arrange for the stabilisation of the bank and footbridge at Annick Water to be completed at the earliest possible opportunity.

2. Childcare Plan

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an Interim Childcare Plan for Pre-School Education and Childcare in North Ayrshire.

The Interim Plan includes details of the recent audit of childcare provision in North Ayrshire; the expansions in nursery education and out-of-school care; and proposals for an all-Ayrshire Childcare Information Service. It has been prepared by a Steering Group comprising members of the North Ayrshire Childcare Partnership. The Scottish Office has asked that Interim Plans be submitted to them by April 1999 and further details of action points for implementation will be sent to them by October 1999.

The Committee agreed to approve the Interim Childcare Plan for Pre-School Education and Childcare for submission to the Scottish Office.

3. North Ayrshire Women's Aid

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application from North Ayrshire Women's Aid for financial assistance for 1999/2000.

Following a review of the services provided by North Ayrshire Women's Aid a payment of £340,575, including Housing Benefit payments, was made in 1998/99. This payment was made up of a grant of £301,500 and of housing benefit estimated to amount to £39,075. It was met from the Housing Services Budget in two instalments. It is proposed the same arrangement apply in 1999/2000 and the second payment to be made on 1 October will be subject to the receipt of audited accounts. The previous arrangements for liaison involving both Housing and Social Services have continued during 1998/99 and proposals are currently being discussed with Women's Aid in relation to their compliance with the requirements of the Best Value regime. Women's Aid are preparing their proposals for a Best Value Review for June 1999 and these will be developed further over the next year.

The Committee agreed to approve a payment of £340,575, including Housing Benefit payments to North Ayrshire Women's Aid and that this payment be phased in two instalments.

4. Scottish Maritime Museum: Grant Assistance 1999/2000

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a proposal to provide grant assistance to the Scottish Maritime Museum for the financial year 1999/2000.

In recognition of the role that the Scottish Maritime Museum plays in attracting visitors to North Ayrshire, the Council has supported the Museum through the payment of an annual grant. In 1998/99 a grant of £86,000 was made to the Organisation.

The Committee agreed to approve grant assistance in the sum of £86,000 to the Scottish Maritime Museum for 1999/2000.

5. Nursery Provision in Saltcoats

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a proposal to carry out a Geotechnical survey to investigate the suitability of a site at Springvale Nursery School, Saltcoats for a potential expansion of nursery provision.

Since Government funding will be made available to the Council to increase the provision for young children in the 0-3 year old age group over the next 2 years, there is an opportunity to consider the replacement of Springvale Nursery with accommodation suitable for extended provision. Within the grounds of the Nursery there is adequate space to build a new facility but before proceeding it will be necessary to conduct a Geotechnical survey of the site. Funding for this is available from the Scottish Office.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposal to carry out a Geotechnical survey to investigate the suitability of the site; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Educational Services) ensure that the member for Ward 23 is kept informed of developments at the site.

6. Kilbirnie No 1 (42/50 Kirkland Road): Housing Action Area for Improvement: Final Resolution

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on the proposed Final Resolution in respect of properties at 42/50 Kirkland Road within the Kilbirnie No 1 Housing Action Area for Improvement.

On 8 October 1998, the Housing Services Committee agreed to make a Draft Resolution declaring a Housing Action Area for Improvement in respect of the properties at 42/50 Kirkland Road, Kilbirnie.

Only one owner has submitted a letter raising reservations about a number of aspects of the Housing Action Area. Cunninghame Housing Association has now acquired 6 of the properties and will meet the cost of bringing them up to the tolerable standard. It is normal practice for Repairs Notices to be served on such properties to ensure that they are also brought up to the tolerable standard. The total cost of the proposed works is approximately £600,000, with the Council's contribution towards the costs through Improvement Grants an estimated at £540,000. Provision for a proportion of this sum will be included within the Non-Housing Revenue Account for 1999/2000, with a carry-forward commitment into 2000/2001.

The Committee agreed (a) to make a final resolution in respect of Kilbirnie No 1 Housing Action Area for Improvement as detailed in Appendix (CS3); and (b) to authorise the service of Repairs Notices on all of the owners of the properties at 42/50 Kirkland Road, Kilbirnie.

7. Ardrossan No 4 Housing Action Area: Ardrossan: 4 Glasgow Street: Revocation of Closing Orders

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) seeking authority for the revocation of Closing Orders served on 23 August 1987 in respect of properties at first left, first right front, first right rear, and the Second Floor at 4 Glasgow Street, Ardrossan which, following upgrading, now meet the tolerable standard.

The Committee agreed to the revocation of the Closing Orders.

8. Private Sector Housing Grants

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS4) by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on grant applications for Improvement Disabled, Lead Replacement, Repairs and Environmental Improvement Grants.

The Committee agreed to the decisions intimated in the final column of the said Appendix.

9. Kilbirnie: Glenriddet Avenue: Ground Surplus to Requirements

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on a proposal to declare ground at Glenriddet Avenue, Kilbirnie surplus to requirements to enable it to be sold to the Salvation Army.

Discussions are currently in progress with the Salvation Army regarding the development of an area of ground adjacent to the site of the proposed new Area Social Work Office in Kilbirnie. Initial site investigations have confirmed that 2 triangular areas of ground which are currently held on the Housing Account are also required to allow access to the site from Glenriddet Avenue. The Corporate Director (Property Services) has no objections to the proposals.

The Committee agreed (a) to declare the 2 triangular areas of ground identified in the report surplus to requirements; and (b) to authorise the Principal Estates Officer to enter into negotiations with the Salvation Army for the disposal of all land required for the development.

10. Kosovo Refugees: Provision of Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on suggestions received on the ways in which the Council could provide assistance to the Kosovo refugees.

COSLA have advised that there may in the near future may be a special programme across the European Union to take in refugees from Kosovo and that pending the receipt of further information it has been asked by the Scottish Office to develop contingency plans. The Scottish Refugee Council will initially require to identify 2 suitable premises to act as reception centres, one in the east of Scotland and one in the west, which are likely to be situated close to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The second phase of any programme would involve moving refugees out of the reception centres into the community after a period of 3 to 5 months. COSLA have requested that details of a designated contact officer within each Council be provided by 16 April 1999 to enable a full list of contact officers to be made available to the Scottish Refugee Council and the Scottish Office.

The report gave details of ways in which the Council could provide assistance to the Kosovo. In addition a special Fund Raising Appeal has been initiated by the Convener throughout Cunninghame House with a view to raising additional funds to assist the Kosovo refugees.

The Committee agreed (a) to remit to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to take appropriate action based on the responses received; (b) that the special

Fund Raising Appeal initiated by the Convener be extended to other Council properties and facilities; (c) to advise COSLA that the Corporate Director (Social Services) will be the designated contact officer for the Council; and (d) that the designated contact officer be requested to consult with the other Chief Officers on any transport arrangements which may require to be put into effect.

11. Minutes

(a) Argyll and the Islands Enterprise Company/North Ayrshire Council Liaison Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS5) being the minutes of the Argyll and the Islands Enterprise Company/North Ayrshire Council Liaison Committee meeting held on 12 February 1999.

Noted.

(b) Advisory Committee on Inspection

Submitted the report being the minutes of the Advisory Committee on Inspection meeting held on 8 March 1999.

Noted.

(c) Support Services Special Sub-Committee: Non-Domestic Rates

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS6) being the minutes of a Special Support Services Sub-Committee on Non-Domestic Rates held on 9 March 1999.

Noted.

(d) Joint Consultative Committee (Manual and Craft Workers)

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS7) being the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee (Manual and Craft Workers) meeting held on 26 March 1999.

Noted.

(e) Joint Consultative Committee (Apt&C Staffs)

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS8) being the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee (APT&C Staff) meeting held on 26 March 1999.

Noted

(f) Development Control Sub-Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix CS9) being the minutes of the Development Control Sub-Committee meeting held on 30 March 1999.

Noted.

12. Ardrossan: North Shore: Renewal of Lease

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on a proposal by the Council to renew the lease of an area of ground, owned by Southannan Estates, for car parking, recreation and a footpath at North Shore, Ardrossan.

The Committee agreed to approve the renewal of the lease on the terms and conditions outlined in the report.

13. Beith: Yard at 77 Mains Road: Disposal

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on the disposal of a yard and associated ground at 77 Mains Road, Beith to Mr R Wilson who currently leases the ground on a monthly basis.

The Committee agreed to authorise disposal of the property on the basis of the provisionally agreed terms and to conclude the transaction.

14. Irvine: Broomlands Gate Community Rooms: Lease of Property

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on a proposal to lease Broomlands Gate Community Rooms, Irvine to Broomlands and Bourtreehill Baptist Church.

The Committee agreed to approve the lease of the property on the terms and conditions outlined in the report.

15. Irvine: Carrick Drive: Former Moor Community Nursery School

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Development and Promotion) on proposals for the site of the former Moor Community Nursery.

The majority of the buildings at the former Nursery School, Carrick Drive, Irvine, have now been sealed up for security reasons with the exception of a two-storey house which continues to be occupied by Social Services' Family Support Unit. Attempts to identify suitable alternative premises have so far proved unsuccessful. Arrangements for the demolition of the buildings have therefore been delayed.

The Development Brief for this site recommends immediate demolition of the surplus buildings to prevent vandalism and on health and safety grounds. It is proposed that demolition now proceed in two phases leaving the occupied building intact until the Family Support Unit have been relocated.

The Committee agreed (a) to authorise the demolition of the vacant buildings on the site; and (b) that the site be advertised for disposal on the open market as soon as the single remaining property has been vacated.

The meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.