

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 15 MARCH 2000**

#### **WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE: BUSINESS REVIEW**

##### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To advise Committee on the progress of current discussions regarding funding of the West of Scotland Archaeology Services (WoSAS) and the Councils future involvement.

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 WoSAS was formed in 1996 to provide archaeological advice to participating Councils in the former Strathclyde Regional Council area. Other than East Dunbartonshire Council all Councils within the former Strathclyde area agreed to jointly fund the Service on an equal shares basis, with Argyll and Bute Council providing a double share given the extent of known archaeological sites within the area. In addition, income is gained on a contribution basis from West of Scotland Water.

2.2 In January of this year this Committee noted that WoSAS had established a Business Review Group to

- examine the financial viability of the service (arising from a standstill budget and the imminent withdrawal of East Renfrewshire Council in April 2001);
- assess, utilising the principles of Best Value, the current level of service for each Council in comparison to cost;
- determine levels of service for each Council in comparison to cost;
- determine levels of customer satisfaction; and
- measure performance.

2.3 The Committee noted that on completion of the Business Review it would receive a further report outlining its conclusions and the implications for East Ayrshire Council.

##### **3. BUSINESS REVIEW (DRAFT)**

3.1 In January 2000 a completed draft of the Business Review was discussed by Senior Officers of most Councils contributing funds to WoSAS. The meeting noted the following conclusions contained in the Review:

- the existing funding formula is inequitable when funding contributions are compared to the number of planning applications raising archaeological implications (appendix 1 provides details);
- the service would be in a deficit position by the financial year 2001/02 unless changes were made to the funding formula;
- there was a deteriorating level of performance attributed to resource difficulties and growth in the secondary (ie non Council) customer base.

3.2 In discussion of the above issues the senior officer meeting noted that WoSAS had attempted to

- increase its Council base; and
- maximise fee earning work (without detriment to the service to Councils)

but that no new partner Council could be identified and insufficient funds could be raised from other sources to overcome the funding deficit.

3.3 To address the issues the meeting noted that the Business Review had identified various funding options for consideration but only two were costed on the following basis.

- a core cost calculated on an equal shares basis to cover management, administration and maintenance of the Sites and Monuments register; and
- a varying service level charge based on the number of planning applications that raised archaeological implications.

3.4 In relation to East Ayrshire Council both options would have involved a substantial increase in the Councils contribution.

3.5 Given that only two options had been costed the meeting agreed that

- all opportunities to increase the partnership base of the service should be fully investigated and exhausted;
- approaches should be made to Historic Scotland to assess the likelihood of it providing financial support;
- further costed options should be produced that minimises or removes the need for increased contributions from the partnership authorities; and
- more radical options should be investigated.

3.6 The most radical option would involve the three Ayrshire local authorities leaving WoSAS and setting up a Joint Ayrshire Archaeological Service. To date no detailed financial assessment has been carried out but initial indications are that this option could be the most cost effective and provide Best Value. The option however would involve all three Ayrshire Councils agreeing to set up the service and withdrawing from WoSAS at the same time. Both North and South Ayrshire Councils are considering submitting a Notice of Withdrawal to WoSAS.

3.7 Under the Minute of Agreement to set up WoSAS a two year notice of withdrawal is required to be given by participating Councils. Accordingly, to enable the Council to identify and investigate the most practical and financially viable option within and outwith current arrangements and to reserve its position, it is recommended that the Committee agree that the Council give notice of its withdrawal from WoSAS. It is stressed that options within existing arrangements may, following more detailed scrutiny, prove to be the most effective way of providing the service. If this proves to be the case the Council could withdraw its Notice of withdrawal.

#### **4. PERSONNEL, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 If, following further rigorous investigations, alternative arrangements for providing an Archaeological Service are proven to provide Best Value, the personnel, financial and legal implications will be fully detailed in a future report.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

##### **5.1 It is recommended that the Committee**

- (i) note this report;**
- (ii) agree, in order for the Council to protect its position and provide Best Value, that it should give notice of withdrawal from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service; and**
- (iii) agree that in the interim a further report recommending a way forward be prepared and submitted to a future committee once all options for the funding of WoSAS or an archaeological service have been fully investigated.**

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

(KD/MS)

2 March 2000

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Report to Development Services Committee, 20 January 2000, The Public Pound: West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

For further information on the contents of this report please contact K Doroszenko, Planning and Building Control Division. Tel: 01563 (57)6790.

i:Comrep/WOSASBusReview7



## APPENDIX 1

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS RAISING ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

	Current Contribution	96/97	97/98	98/99	Average Share (rounded)	Suggested Contribution	
						Option 1	Option 2
Argyll & Bute	£22,000	8.7%	15.4%	22.3%	15%	16,680	21,684
East Ayrshire	£11,000	13.0%	13.1%	9.6%	12%	14,304	18,595
East Renfrewshire	"	-	3.1%	1.1%	2%	6,384	8,299
Glasgow City	"	10.9%	6.9%	5.3%	8%	11,136	14,477
Inverclyde	"	6.5%	5.4%	3.2%	5%	8,760	11,388
North Ayrshire	"	9.8%	6.9%	10.6%	9%	11,928	15,506
North Lanarkshire	"	11.9%	4.6%	3.2%	7%	10,344	13,447
Renfrewshire	"	6.5%	6.1%	5.3%	6%	9,552	12,418
South Ayrshire	"	10.9%	12.3%	14.9%	13%	15,096	19,625
South Lanarkshire	"	17.4%	19.2%	19.1%	18%	19,056	24,773
West Dunbartonshire	"	3.3%	6.9%	5.3%	5%	8,760	11,388

Option 1: Current cost of service proportioned on the basis of core costs and a varying service level charge.

Option 2: Based on increased staffing and proportioned as Option 1.

**AGENDA**



