

**APPENDIX 3****EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****DECENTRALISATION SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7 MARCH 1996  
AT 1400 HOURS  
IN THE MEETING ROOM, LONDON ROAD CENTRE, KILMARNOCK**

- PRESENT:** Councillors David Fulton, Ronald Brailsford, Jane Darnborough, Kathleen Hall, Robert Beattie, David Sneller, and Eric Jackson.
- ATTENDING:** David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive; Barbara Haughan, Director of Support Services; Douglas Campbell, Head of Public Relations and Marketing; Iain McLachlan, Director of Personnel Services; Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services; and Support Unit (Donald McVicar, George Fraser and Valerie Murdoch).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Andrew McIntyre, Wilma Doyle, Kim Nicoll, Jim Kelly, and Tommy Farrell.
- CHAIR:** Councillor David Fulton, Chair.

**COMMUNITY FIRST SURVEY : FINAL REPORT**

1. There was submitted a report dated 29 February 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services outlining the final results of the Community First survey carried out during December 1995. Having heard the Head of Public Relations and Marketing outline the contents of the report, it was agreed:
  - (a) to note the final Community First survey report;
  - (b) to remit the final report to individual Local Committees, for consideration during their first meeting cycle; and
  - (c) to offer, through CoSLA, to organise and host a conference for local authorities in the autumn centred on the preliminary decentralisation scheme and the result of the Community First survey.

## PROPOSALS FOR PRELIMINARY DECENTRALISATION SCHEME

2. There was submitted a report dated 5 March 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive recommending a preliminary decentralisation scheme for the Council's first year, having taken into account the views and comments made during the Council's public consultation exercise which ended on 29 February 1996. The Committee having heard the Depute Chief Executive in answer to Members' questions, agreed:
- (a) to support and approve the proposals contained within the consultation document entitled "Putting the Community First" as follows:
    - (i) the proposals for development of information and advice schemes;
    - (ii) that four community forums being held in each Local Committee area in the first year of the scheme during the months of May, late August, November and February;
    - (iii) to note that a scheme of delegation would be prepared and submitted to Council on 2 April 1996;
    - (iv) the Terms of Reference for Local Committees as set out in Appendix 1;
    - (v) a six-weekly cycle for Local Committee meetings, to meet during normal business hours;
    - (vi) the proposals for community involvement;
    - (vii) that the Chief Executive construct a process for the monitoring and evaluation of the decentralisation scheme; and
    - (viii) the timetable for key tasks for 1996/97;
  - (b) that Local Committees meet late March/early April to note Terms of Reference and quorum, and to identify local organisations who would be invited to nominate community representatives in order that the first full business meeting could take place in early May;
  - (c) that a report regarding the appointment of Chairs to Local Committees be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee in late March;
  - (d) to seek further reports on the following issues:
    - (i) the question of transport/travel expenses for community representatives;
    - (ii) the requirement for community work staff to support local community representatives;
    - (iii) monitoring and evaluation processes;
    - (iv) the involvement of Trades Unions, Trades Council and School Boards;
    - (v) the future of Area Liaison Committees; and
    - (vi) the distribution of Committee papers to community groups and voluntary organisations.

- (e) that there be submitted to future meetings of the Sub-Committee reports on the above issues; together with, following the third cycle of meetings, a report reviewing the timing of meetings in the light of experience, with particular reference to community group representation and the degree and nature of support requiring to be resourced from Council staff;
- (f) the preliminary scheme for decentralisation noting that it would be subject to review and evaluation and that changes could be made in the light of operational experience;
- (g) to recommend the proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

### **COMMUNITY FIRST - UPDATE REPORT ON TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

3. There was submitted and noted an interim report dated 29 February 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Personnel Services updating the Sub-Committee on the position concerning the outline training requirements in respect of the preliminary decentralisation scheme.

### **PUTTING THE COMMUNITY FIRST : LAUNCH ARRANGEMENTS**

4. There was submitted a report dated 29 February 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services making proposals for the launch of the Council's preliminary decentralisation scheme.

It was agreed:

- (a) that the general launch arrangements contained within the report be approved for implementation by the Director of Support Services in conjunction with the Chair of the Sub-Committee; and
- (b) that, in addition, a report be submitted to the (Publicity and Publications) Sub- Committee on the possibility of a regular feature on local radio and on the most appropriate use of newspapers with respect to current circulation arrangements.

### **QUORUM ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOCAL COMMITTEES**

5. There was submitted a report dated 5 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services advising Members of the legal requirements for fixing a quorum for a Local Committee, and of the practical issues and difficulties which could arise in relation to the determination of planning applications. The Director of Support Services outlined the contents of the report and the various difficulties that could arise in achieving a quorum and reaching a determination.

It was agreed:

- (a) to approve the formation of separate Local Planning Committees to determine planning applications in accordance with the scheme as approved by the Development Services Committee, each Local Planning Committee to consist of the members of Council on the relevant Local Committee, together with sufficient members drawn from the Chair of the Decentralisation Sub-Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Development Services Committee, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure a quorum is present;
- (b) that the quorum for Local Planning Committees be fixed at four members of Council;
- (c) that the Local Planning Committees convene immediately before the Local Committees;
- (d) to note the need for arrangements to ensure that meetings are quorate; and
- (e) that the quorum for Local Committees be two members of Council.

### **THE ROLE OF LIAISON COMMITTEES**

- 6. There was submitted a report dated 28 February 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive on the work of the three Liaison Committees which operated within East Ayrshire and proposing a review process in the light of the Council's decentralisation plans.

It was agreed:

- (a) that the three groups highlighted in the report should continue until July 1996 in their current form by which time a full review would be undertaken by the relevant Local Committees in conjunction with members of the three groups, in order to clarify if there was a continuing need for them to meet in the light of the effects of the Council's decentralisation process; and
- (b) that the review documents and proposals be submitted within two meeting cycles to this Sub-Committee for consideration.

### **DECENTRALISATION - AGENDA AND TIMETABLE**

- 7. There was submitted and noted a report dated 4 March 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive on the progress made in response to the timetable for decentralisation.

The Sub-Committee expressed appreciation for the work of officers and Members in achieving the timescale and objectives involved.

The meeting terminated at 15.25 hours.

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**EXCERPT FROM REPORT -  
QUALITY - ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS  
SUBMITTED TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 14 MARCH 1996**

**4. QUALITY SERVICES IN EAST AYRSHIRE**

**4.1** In East Ayrshire the Council has already taken a number of decisions to ensure that quality - economy, efficiency and effectiveness will become a routine part of life within the new Council:

- the Council will develop a **Charter for Service Users** which will include an undertaking to:
  - provide services of a high standard which acknowledge and meet the needs of different groups of the community;
  - consult regularly with Community Groups on the accessibility and appropriateness of services;
  - treat all members of the public fairly and without discrimination;
  - treat all complaints seriously and develop an accessible complaints procedure; and
  - regularly review and improve services to ensure they meet quality standards.
- **Local Committees** will involve local people in their own areas having the opportunity to influence and shape decisions on local services;
- **Community Forums** will provide an opportunity for people to discuss Council services in their own areas, ask the Council questions and say how they think the Council should be run;
- **continuous consultation** to receive feedback on Council services will be a feature of East Ayrshire Council;
- there will be **local arrangements for service delivery** providing efficient, prompt and cost effective services to the public;
- **local accountability** will be strengthened by devolving decision making and budgets to local level and giving responsibility to area staff;

- the **Customer Care Unit** will be established to provide an overview of departmental quality systems, general helpline facilities and a means of resolving complaints not resolved at departmental level;
- all **counter staff working in Council offices** will be trained to answer enquiries about any Council service, an A-Z guide will be available on Council services and new technology will progressively be put in place to ensure that the information necessary to deal with enquiries is readily accessible;
- the Council has recognised the importance of **quality training** for staff by allocating additional resources within the 1996/97 budget;
- the Council will establish a formal **complaints procedure** whereby any person who considers that they have received a poor service can submit a complaint which will be dealt with formally; and
- the arrangements for services outwith normal business hours are also being reviewed with the aim of providing a **single telephone contact point** for a range of services in the event of emergency situations without the normal working day.