

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 MARCH 1996 AT 1000 HOURS  
IN THE MEETING ROOM, LONDON ROAD CENTRE, KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillors David Sneller, Drew McIntyre, Irene Reeves, Douglas Reid, Ronald Brailsford, Jane Darnbrough, Jim O'Neill, Kathleen Hall, Bob Beattie, Daniel Coffey, David Fulton, Kim Nicoll, George Turnbull, Eric Ross, Jimmy Kelly, Tommy Farrell and Eric Jackson

**ATTENDING:** David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive; William Stafford, Director of Community Services; Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services; John Mulgrew, Director of Education; Iain McLachlan, Director of Personnel Services; Barbara Haughan, Director of Support Services; Alex McPhee, Senior Depute Director of Finance; Christopher McAleavey, Senior Depute Director of Housing; Douglas Campbell, Head of Public Relations and Marketing and Anne Marie Carr (Support Unit).

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Wilma Doyle, Robert Stirling and Jimmy Boyd.

**CHAIR:** Councillor David Sneller, Chair.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS**

1. The Chair made reference to the recent tragic events at Dunblane Primary School and the Committee agreed to send, on behalf of East Ayrshire Council, a message of sympathy and support to the community of Dunblane, to be conveyed in a joint letter from the Leader of the Administration and the Leader from the Opposition Group to Corrie McChord, Leader of Central Regional Council. The Committee, as a mark of respect, observed one minute's silence prior to the commencement of business.

**SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES**

2. There were submitted and approved the undernoted Sub Committee minutes, (all circulated) as indicated at Appendices 1 to 3 of this Minute viz:-
  - 2.1 Members Services Sub Committee of 23 January 1996.
  - 2.2 Decentralisation Sub Committee of 7 February 1996.
  - 2.3 Decentralisation Sub Committee of 7 March 1996.

## **FINANCE**

### **3.1 BUDGETARY CONTROL - REPORT FOR PERIOD TO 1 MARCH 1996**

There was submitted and noted a report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Finance advising members of the current budgetary control position for revenue and capital expenditure.

### **3.2 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL STRATEGY REPORT 1996/97**

There was submitted and approved a report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Finance advising members of the assumptions made in the compilation of the estimated debt charges for 1996/97 financial year and seeking approval of the annual strategy report 1996/97 in terms of the Council's treasury policy statement.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **4.1 VACANCY - DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES - POST OF HEAD OF LEISURE SERVICES**

There was submitted a report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Personnel Services recommending the establishment of a recruitment panel concerning the filling of the recently vacated post of Head of Leisure Services.

It was agreed to establish a recruitment panel to fill the post, comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee and one member of the opposition group.

### **STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT: MEMBER/OFFICER GROUP ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

- 5.** There was submitted a report dated 7 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Personnel Services, requesting approval of a draft strategy statement prepared by the Member/Officer Group on Equal Opportunities.

Having heard the Chief Executive and in answer to Members questions it was agreed:

- (i) to endorse the draft Equal Opportunities Statement subject to developing further Page 7 Section (iii) entitled "Equal Opportunities in the Wider Community" to take account of the Council's key role in promoting equality of opportunity throughout its area;
- (ii) that it be referred to all Service Committees in order that consideration be given as to how each service will contribute to its implementation;

- (iii) that the proposal to consult with the widest range of interested parties and particularly with representative organisations and groups active within the East Ayrshire Community, utilising Local Committees as appropriate, be approved;
- (iv) that the monitoring and evaluation process recommended in the policy statement be approved.

### **CIVIC AND CEREMONIAL ISSUES**

6. There was submitted a report dated 23 February 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services identifying civic and ceremonial issues which would require to be addressed by the Council and suggesting the establishment of an ad-hoc Sub Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee to undertake this remit.

Having heard the Director of Support Services, it was agreed:

- (i) that an ad-hoc Civic Ceremonial Sub Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee be established;
- (ii) that the membership of the Sub Committee be seven members, five from the Administration and two from the Opposition Group, with the quorum being three, and that members be appointed at the full Council meeting on 2 April 1996;
- (iii) that the terms of reference of the Sub Committee be as follows:
  - all ceremonial matters;
  - the provision of civic receptions and hospitality;
  - the maintenance and furtherance of town twinning links; and
- (iv) that the Sub Committee have full delegated powers to deal with all matters within the above terms of reference subject to existing Council policies and in compliance with approved revenue estimates.

### **TOWN TWINNING LINKS**

7. There was submitted a report dated 23 February 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services advising the Committee of the background information on the history of town twinning links within East Ayrshire, identifying outstanding issues and suggesting proposals in respect of the future of town twinning links within East Ayrshire.

Having heard the Director of Support Services it was agreed:

- (i) that, pending a review of town twinning issues within East Ayrshire, existing twinning links continue meantime;

- (ii) that all twinning issues be referred, with powers of determination, to the Sub Committee established to deal with civic and ceremonial issues.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO INTERIM STANDING ORDERS AND  
DESIGNATION OF THE CONVENER OF THE COUNCIL**

8. There was submitted a report dated 5 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services advising the Committee of proposals for the amendment of standing orders and the code of conduct and raising for consideration the issue of the designation of the Convener of the Council.

Councillor Sneller, seconded by Councillor McIntyre moved that:

- (i) that the proposed amendments to the standing orders and code of conduct as detailed in the Appendix to the report be adopted;
- (ii) that the designation of the Convener of East Ayrshire Council be Provost;
- (iii) that the interim standing orders as amended, be submitted to the meeting of the Council on 2 April 1996 for adoption; and
- (iv) that it be remitted to the Director of Support Services to make the necessary arrangements.

Councillor Coffey seconded by Councillor Nicoll moved as an amendment

- (i) that the designation of the Convener of East Ayrshire Council be Provost; and
- (ii) that the terms 'Chair' and 'Vice Chair' be redesignated 'Convener' and 'Vice-Convener'.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 12 votes to 5.

**COMPULSORY COMPETITIVE TENDERING (CCT - DE MINIMIS CONTRACTS)**

9. There was submitted a report by the Director of Support Services dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) advising members of the current position regarding those defined activities under CCT Legislation which are currently "De Minimis" at Cumnock and Doon Valley District, namely, Other Catering, Cleaning of Buildings and Repair and Maintenance of Vehicles.

Having heard the Director of Support Services it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**DEVOLUTION OF POWERS TO COUNCILS**

10. There was submitted a report dated 8 March 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive advising the Committee of the proposals contained within the Consultation Paper "Devolution of Power to Councils" for which the views of Local Authorities had been sought and highlighting those areas where East Ayrshire Council may wish to make a response.

Having heard the Chair in answer to members questions and with certain amendments and minor additions suggested it was agreed:

- (i) that the issues and observations contained within the report, adjusted to take account of points made in discussion, should form the basis of the Council's response to the Secretary of State;
- (ii) that a copy of the Council's earlier submission to COSLA on Central/Local Government relations approved by Council on 18 October 1995 as contained within Appendix 1 of the report be forwarded to the Secretary of State with the request that those issues not contained within the current Consultation Document be now addressed;
- (iii) that the Secretary of State be requested to restore the ability of Local Authorities to capitalise long leases thus better enabling, a Local Authority for example to promote and support economic development within its area through the provision of industrial units;
- (iv) to endorse as indicated in Section 17 of the report the views expressed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities with regard to the current consultation exercise and its proposals to pursue the proposals which the Secretary of State has not accepted for consultation; and
- (v) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

#### **CONVENTION OF SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES REVISED CONSTITUTION**

11. There was submitted a report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive advising the Committee of the proposed constitution for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on which the views of member Councils had been invited prior to formal adoption at the Shadow Convention on 27 March 1996.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the terms of the proposed constitution for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities;
- (ii) to confirm to the Convention support for the revised constitution as stated; and

- (iii) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

**QUALITY, ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY  
AND EFFECTIVENESS**

- 12.** There was submitted a report dated 11 March 1996 (circulated) by the Chief Executive to address the issues of quality, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and to propose a range of procedures in order that members can be assured of the quality of Council services.

The Chief Executive outlined the background to the report and the statutory duty placed on Local Authorities to assess services in terms of their economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Chief Executive further advised that the Accounts Commission was currently developing guidance for its staff with regard to their inspection role in seeking to ensure that the necessary internal control mechanisms were in place so as to ensure that Councils were fulfilling their statutory duties in terms of the legislation; East Ayrshire offices would be co-operating with the Accounts Commission in its development of practical guidance.

The Chief Executive also highlighted the need to ensure that quality initiatives were not merely a short term issue for the Council; this was an area which required to be reviewed continuously. In addition, it was essential that East Ayrshire Council provided the best possible services to its residents within the resources available. Furthermore, the Chief Executive advised that the involvement of staff at all levels in the quality process was vital and that it was important to recognise the contribution made from staff where their responses were above and beyond the call of duty.

The Chief Executive further reported that reports would be submitted to each of the Service Committees as progress is secured in this matter in each of the Council's departments.

Having heard the Chief Executive it was agreed:

- (i) to note the quality initiatives which had been undertaken by the existing Councils;
- (ii) to request that the Chief Executive proceed to take action as necessary to put in place those services referred to in Section 4 of the report as shown in Appendix 4 attached;
- (iii) to note the steps which were being taken by Directors to ensure that the necessary management information systems are in place with regard to the Accounts Commission 1995 Directive and the intention that there be a rehearsal, to check procedures six months into the Council's first operational phase;
- (iv) that quality initiatives be developed by each service, to embody the key features detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the report in that they should:

- realise tangible benefits for people using Council services and the Council as a whole;
  - be based on the continuous improvement of services;
  - offer increased efficiency and value for money;
  - seek to involve staff working at all levels in the devising of schemes;
  - secure feedback from people who use Council services; and
  - recognise the commitment of staff and their achievements.
- (v) that Directors submit to the relevant Service Committees a report on the quality initiatives for their service by the end of 1996;
- (vi) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT : CONCESSIONARY FARES AND AGREEMENTS**

- 13.** There was submitted a report dated 7 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Development Services recommending authorisation of the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) to continue to operate a concessionary fares scheme on behalf of the Council and recommending that the Council contracts with the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) to secure public bus services in the area excluded from the PTA and to provide and maintain bus infrastructure, both within the PTA area and outside it.

Having heard the Director of Development Services it was agreed:

- (i) to authorise the PTA, in respect of East Ayrshire Council's interest, to arrange with the PTE to continue management of a region-wide concessionary fares scheme;
- (ii) to authorise the PTA to set a flat rate concessionary fare of not more than 35p;
- (iii) to request the PTE to undertake a general review of policy options before consideration of the budget for its operation, together with the concessionary fares scheme for 1997/98;
- (iv) to authorise the Chief Executive to enter into agreements as detailed above with the PTE to secure subsidised public bus services in the area outside the PTA and to provide and maintain bus infrastructures throughout the area, subject to all agreements being for a three year period initially and to legal verification by the Head of Legal Services of the agreements;

- (v) to instruct the PTE to maintain current levels of service provision for subsidised bus services and bus infrastructure in the area outside the PTA subject to joint review over the next year; and
- (vi) to authorise the PTA to agree to maintain current levels of service for provision of bus infrastructure within the PTA area.

#### **RETURNING OFFICER/PARLIAMENTARY RETURNING OFFICER**

- 14.** There was submitted a report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services outlining the arrangements for Parliamentary Returning Officers now made by the Scottish Office and, in particular the designation of the Parliamentary Returning Officer for the new Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley Constituency which will take effect at the next General Election and recommending that the Chief Executive be the Returning Officer for the East Ayrshire Council area.

Having heard the Chair it was agreed:

- (i) to note that South Ayrshire will be the Council responsible for appointing the Returning Officer for the New Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley Constituency to take effect at the next General Election;
- (ii) that the Chief Executive be designated the Parliamentary Returning Officer for the existing Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley and Kilmarnock and Loudoun Constituencies in the event of a By-election being held between 1 April and the date of the next General Election;
- (iii) that the Chief Executive be designated the Parliamentary Returning Officer for the new Kilmarnock and Loudoun Constituency;
- (iv) that the Chief Executive be designated the Returning Officer for Local Elections;
- (v) that the Council write to South Ayrshire Council asking that the count for the new Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley Constituency be held in Cumnock; and
- (vi) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1050 hours.

**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
  - 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 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 outwith the normal working day.