

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 1999 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

**PRESENT:** Depute Provost Boyd and Councillors Gordon McCredie, Drew McIntyre, Irene Reeves, Gordon Cree, Douglas Reid, Wilma Doyle, Jane Darnbrough, Alan Campbell, Jim O'Neill, Ann Hay, John Knapp, Daniel Coffey, David Fulton, David Macrae, Kim Nicoll, Robert McDill, Eric Ross, Jim Kelly, David Sneller, George Smith, Jimmy Carmichael, John Smith, Tommy Farrell and Eric Jackson.

**ATTENDING:** David Montgomery, Chief Executive; William Stafford, Director of Community Services; Barbara Haughan, Director of Corporate Services; Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services; John Mulgrew, Director of Education; Alex McPhee, Director of Finance; James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services; Douglas Bulloch, Director of Social Work; William Taylor, Acting Director of Commercial Operations; Kate McVey, Solicitor to the Council; Roddy Wallace, Head of Administration; David Mitchell, Principal Solicitor; Graham Kerr, Publicity Officer and Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Provost Robert Stirling and Councillor George Turnbull.

**CHAIR:** In the absence of Provost Robert Stirling, Depute Provost Boyd.

#### CHAIR'S REMARKS

1. Depute Provost Boyd welcomed James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services to his first Council meeting.

#### PREVIOUS MINUTES

2. There were submitted Minutes of meeting of Council held on 1 April 1999 (circulated) which were approved as a correct record.

#### COMMITTEE MINUTES

3. There were submitted (circulated) and approved, both as correct records and in respect of recommendations contained therein, the Minutes of the undernoted Committee meetings as follows:-
  - 2.1 **SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 22 MARCH 1999 (pages 4418-4421)**
  - 2.2 **SPECIAL SOUTHERN LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 24 MARCH 1999 (pages 4422-4425)**
  - 2.3 **EMERGENCY POWERS COMMITTEE OF 29 MARCH 1999 (page 4426)**
  - 2.4 **SPECIAL KILMARNOCK NORTH LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 30 MARCH 1999 (pages 4427-4428)**
  - 2.5 **SPECIAL DOON VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 30 MARCH 1999 (pages 4429-4432)**
  - 2.6 **SPECIAL AD HOC COMMERCIAL STRATEGY REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 6 APRIL 1999 (pages 4436-4438)**

- 2.7 KILMARNOCK NORTH LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 6 APRIL 1999 (pages 4439-4443)
- 2.8 CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 8 APRIL 1999 (pages 4444-4447)
- 2.9 NORTHERN AREA LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 9 APRIL 1999 (page 4448)
- 2.10 HOUSING COMMITTEE OF 14 APRIL 1999 (pages 4449-4452)
- 2.11 IRVINE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 14 APRIL 1999 (pages 4453-4457)
- 2.12 SOUTHERN LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 16 APRIL 1999 (pages 4458-4464)
- 2.13 SPECIAL NORTHERN AREA LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 16 APRIL 1999 (pages 4465-4469)
- 2.14 CENTRAL LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 19 APRIL 1999 (pages 4470-4478)
- 2.15 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 20 APRIL 1999 (pages 4479-4488)
- 2.16 KILMARNOCK CENTRAL LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 20 APRIL 1999 (pages 4489-4491)
- 2.17 KILMARNOCK SOUTH LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 20 APRIL 1999 (pages 4492-4495)
- 2.18 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 21 APRIL 1999 (pages 4496-4504)
- 2.19 NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 21 APRIL 1999 (pages 4505-4509)
- 2.20 DOON VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE OF 21 APRIL 1999 (pages 4510-4513)
- 2.21 EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF 22 APRIL 1999 (pages 4514-4519)
- 2.22 SPECIAL NORTHERN AREA LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 22 APRIL 1999 (page 4520)
- 2.23 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 23 APRIL 1999 (4521-4543)
- 2.24 SPECIAL AD-HOC COMMERCIAL STRATEGY REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 23 APRIL 1999 (pages 4544-4546)
  - (i) **DSO BUSINESS PLANS (Item 4, Page 4545)** - It was agreed that the Director of Community Services write to Councillor Nicoll before 6 May 1999 to confirm that a cleansing contract was in place for Galston Cross.
- 2.25 RECRUITMENT SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 27 APRIL 1999 - (pages 4547-4548)
- 2.26 SPECIAL CENTRAL LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 28 APRIL 1999 - (pages 4549-4551)
- 2.27 SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 29 APRIL 1999 - (pages 4552-4553)
- 2.28 SPECIAL AD HOC COMMERCIAL STRATEGY REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 29 APRIL 1999 - (pages 4554)
- 2.29 SPECIAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 29 APRIL 1999 - (pages 4555-4556)

### **EAST AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM**

3. There was submitted and noted Minutes of meeting held on 17 March 1999 (circulated) as shown in Appendix 1.

### **VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

4. The Chief Executive commenced by stating that this was the last Council meeting marking the end of the first term for East Ayrshire Council. He stated it would be a time to look forward not only to a new Council and its new relationship with the Scottish Parliament but also to reflect back to the start of the shadow year of East Ayrshire Council and to the significant events in development of the Council over the past four years. Thereafter, he expressed best wishes to all Members who were retiring and finished by expressing the pride he felt in East Ayrshire Council and what had been attained overall to date.

Councillor Sneller then made the following statement:-

"In preparing for this morning I took the opportunity of looking back to the statement that I made at the first Council meeting on 18 April 1995. In that statement we set out a clear vision for the people of East Ayrshire, and I will come back in a moment to discuss some of the key achievements over the last four years.

Before that, I want to concentrate on three issues that were raised.

The first was the task that Members faced four years ago in bringing together three Councils and three sets of workforce to create the new East Ayrshire Council.

Over the last four years, thanks to the efforts of the staff and the working of Elected Members, I believe we have successfully created the new Council. It is important that we don't underestimate that achievement and the work that has had to take place on a day to day basis by the Officers and Senior Officers of this Council, and the staff and the workforce to come together to try and make the new Council work.

I have to admit that we have had some difficulties, but by and large those difficulties are far less than many of the pessimists were expecting four years ago.

Next is an issue that appears not to have changed. At that first meeting we agreed to write to Ian Lang to ask him to recognise the local democratic process. Secretaries of State come and go, we have had the famous Michael Forsyth during this time, and obviously the election of a new Government. A Government that still pursues a tight financial framework for local government and local Council.

I am sure, party politics aside, all the people in this room believe in strong local government and believe in strong local democracy, I hope that the new Parliament can lift some of the restrictions on local government and allow local Councils to govern in the best interests of local people without undue Central restriction.

A further point I wish to raise before things we have achieved, is my call at that meeting to try and put party politics aside and concentrate on the task ahead. I think, to be fair, over the last four years, apart from a relatively small number of issues, party politics have by and large been put aside. All Councillors in this room have worked in the spirit of one of the Council's key principles, that of partnership, and have come together and addressed issues at this table in a mature and responsible manner, working in the best interests of their communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for the personal support they have given me in what at times has been very difficult circumstances over the last four years. I think to be fair, Danny, I have to thank you and your Party for the way your Party, in general, has operated, and the mature and responsible position you have taken in trying to get this Council to work in the best interests of all the people of East Ayrshire. I will return to Elected Members later.

It is the achievements of the Council over the last four years that I want to concentrate on now. I said before that we set out a clear vision for East Ayrshire, and the success of this Council will be measured against its achievements on that vision, that long-term goal for the people of East Ayrshire.

In that vision we called for the elimination of poverty, deprivation and unemployment. That has been adopted by the Council as its top priority and much has been achieved over the last four years.

Members, collectively working with Officers, are responsible for the protection or creation of over 5,000 jobs in East Ayrshire. Just to remind people, that is one in seven of every jobs in the area, and 40% of all manufacturing jobs.

Key successes have been supporting existing industries at Johnnie Walker's, Glenfield and Kennedy, Riverside Bakeries, Cumnock Knitwear and Falmers. As well as the most recent work there is the Fielding Group and Basfords. We should not forget that the key developments in the Queens Drive area of Kilmarnock, and the new Prison, as well as the Egger Factory in Auchinleck, have all provided new opportunities for employment in the area. The Council has played a key role in all those developments.

The Council was one of the first Councils in Scotland to adopt an Anti-Poverty Strategy, and in the lifetime of the Council, over £6.5m of additional income has been found for the most vulnerable people through our anti-poverty work.

I know that all Members were delighted at the successful bid for the Council made for Social Inclusion. This will bring additional money for some of our most deprived communities in East Ayrshire to try and combat the long-term effects of deprivation in the Communities.

We also said in that vision that we would give each person a chance to reach their full potential. Looking back over the capital programmes, we have invested an extra £10m in Education facilities over the last three years. Over and above that, we promised, way before the present National Government had made their commitment, a place for every pre-school child. This has been achieved and more - about one third of three year olds have the opportunity of places with the Council area.

The Education Committee and Department are to be congratulated in gaining money for one of the first community schools in Scotland, and also the Council's early intervention Strategy is receiving national attention. Our aim as a Council has been to give children the best start in life, and things are now considerably better than they were four years ago.

The protection of the weak and the vulnerable was again a key goal for the Council in its vision. I would like to thank all Members on the basis that the bulk of the Council's strategies are driven on need. That doesn't mean fair or equal share - that means targeting resources where they can best achieve our vision. Examples of that include the additional money made available in Aids and Adaptations, rising to

over £1m within the year, and in the coming year Education along will target over £3m at the most vulnerable schools and vulnerable pupils to combat exclusion in our communities.

Another long-term vision for the Council is decent affordable housing catering for the needs of the communities. Our Council rents remain among the lowest in Scotland, and I know every Member in this room and those people in the wider community welcome the House Warming 2000 programme, which will provide modern central heating and new replacement windows for all Council houses by 1 January 2000. This is an initiative that will fight poverty by reducing fuel bills, giving people a chance to live in warmth and comfort at a reasonable price.

Again, I welcome the all party support that we have had for that initiative, as well as the East Ayrshire Housing Partnership which is now in the process of building nearly 500 houses in our communities aimed at those people that don't have easy access to the private housing market, and bringing £26m of investment to our communities.

In the vision we set out, we also called for a quality environment for people to live and work in. An Environmental Strategy was adopted in the first year and we have set up a successful Environmental Forum, looking at how we can best achieve sustainable development and bio-diversity in the Council's area.

I shouldn't need to remind Members that the Councillors worked hard to develop partnerships with some of the key players, Scottish National Heritage, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, to help improve our environment in East Ayrshire. We have almost completed the £500,000 investment in recycling materials facilities.

We also said in the wider vision for East Ayrshire that our communities should be offered a safe and secure environment free from crime. Although the Spotlight Initiative working closely with Strathclyde Police has reduced crime levels in our communities, much more needs to be done. I am sure that we all know that the issue of drugs in the one area where more work needs to be done.

However, we have seen the extension of CCTV systems in towns and in communities and we have seen the additional security in schools that protect our centres and our young people. We have successfully pushed forward as a Council a ban on drinking alcohol in public places. This and the CCTV initiative are improving town centres.

The work of seconded Officers from Strathclyde Police to develop the Council's Community Safety Strategy and Forum are to be welcomed as a first step to achieving our long-term vision.

Equality was a key issue when the Council was established and we indicated in our vision that we wanted to see a society based on equality and equal opportunities. Equality underpins all the work that we carried out, and people are well aware of the various Forums that have been established as well as the Equal Opportunities Policy that has been adopted.

Our long-term vision of high quality leisure services was developed to improve and reflect the needs and wishes of our communities. I am sure I speak for all Members when I say that if more resources were available, this is an area where more could have been achieved. The Council has now developed and approved a long-term

Leisure Strategy for the area, and is working closely with local and national bodies to improve facilities. We have also taken the opportunity of upgrading existing facilities within the area.

We said in our vision that we wanted to see communities linked by good public transport and good road and rail connections. Through Eric, and the good work of Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, we have seen increased bus and rail provision over the last three years. I am sure when we get a fully integrated transport strategy that we should be able to do more.

I am sure I express on behalf of all Members our disappointment that our campaigns for upgrading the A77, A71 and A70, although vociferous, and supported by local people, have failed to receive the support from Central Government that I am sure we all believe East Ayrshire deserves, and the people of East Ayrshire need.

It is important that we recognise that many of the visions that we set out couldn't be achieved but for the people and organisations working in partnership with the Council. Partnership has been a founding value of the Council and we work very closely with local and national organisations to develop new services in East Ayrshire.

Finally on the vision, we talked about an accountable Council with power being devolved. Over the past few years I believe the Council has become one of the most accountable in Scotland. Our scheme of decentralisation has been recognised nationally, and I would take this opportunity to thank all those people in the communities that have participated in local committees and the local forums.

I remember, as a Councillor before East Ayrshire, how little formal contact there was from the Council with the public in terms of public meetings and discussions. Our community forums have been well attended at times, and over 84 have taken place over the last three years. These have provided to the community a greater access to their Council and Councillors than ever before. Again, I would thank the work of Elected Members who are prominent in the decentralisation scheme, David Fulton in particular, but also the work of Officers who on a week-by-week basis support that scheme.

I am sure I could go on and keep people here all day, but I think that is enough on the achievements. I think it is worthwhile recognising that those achievements couldn't have taken place without the work of the Elected Members.

Sadly, in the life of the Council, we have lost two friends, friends of local government, in Bob Beattie and Ron Brailsford. I had not known Bob before and it was a privilege for me to work with him in those early years of the Council, and I am sure that the people of Kilmaurs gave him the greatest respect by Bob being known as Mr Kilmaurs. Bob had a love for the people in his community, but also the wider community, and he played an important part in establishing leisure and cultural services for the people of East Ayrshire, but also on the national stage at CoSLA, Bob supported and developed, with great respect, a position for the Council.

Similarly, I had not met Ron Brailsford before we operated in the same political circles, but Ron was a man that I came to admire. I think he was a great tribute to his Party and a tribute to the Council, to his work and belief in local people and his attempts to try and improve their lot and the lot of the community.

Can I now turn to the other Elected Members, first of all, a general thanks to every Member here, particularly my own Group, who have not given me such a hard time and have worked in a spirit of co-operation.

Can I offer my best wishes, and I am sure, the best wishes of the Council to those Members who are retiring on a voluntary basis - Councillor Doyle, Councillor McCredie, Councillor Reeves, Councillor John Smith, Provost Stirling, Councillor Turnbull, Councillor Nicoll and Councillor Fulton.

Can I take the opportunity of wishing you and your families all the best and no doubt you will be able to take the "cardboard cut-outs" down now and reacquaint yourselves with your loved ones.

Thank you on behalf of the people of East Ayrshire for your support and commitment to improve the quality of life in our communities.

To the remaining Councillors, we all face the electorate next Thursday, and I am sure we will all wait with interest to see what the results are on Friday. Can I take this opportunity of wishing you all the best over the next few days and I would hope to see the majority of you again.

Can I finally turn to the Officers of the Council. On behalf of the Elected Members, I would like to thank the Chief Executive and his staff and all the Directors and their staff for the way they have supported Members over the last four years.

All the achievements I spoke about earlier could not have been achieved by the work of Elected Members alone. We might have the ideas, bright or otherwise, but it is left to Officers to deal with and implement those ideas over a period of time.

I think it is a great personal tribute to yourself David that you have managed to move the Council forward, weld an effective management team, and achieve so much in the past four years. National awards that the Council have won both at Scottish and UK level are a testament to the hard work of the Council and all its Officers.

Can I say, on a personal basis, and you know as Chief Executive, being Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, is sometimes very lonely, and I thank you for all the support you personally have given me over the lifetime of the Council, and particularly the support that was provided over a very difficult time last Summer. Thank you David.

In finishing, I believe we can all be proud that we have laid a firm foundation for East Ayrshire Council and are ready to move "Forward into the Millennium".

That's it - I wish everybody all the best for whatever may happen next Thursday. Thank you all".

Councillor Coffey endorsed the comments already expressed by the Chief Executive and Councillor Sneller. In particular he commented on the loss of Councillor Beattie and Councillor Brailsford and outlined the long working relationship which he had enjoyed with Councillor Brailsford in particular. He made reference to the Members of the Opposition who would not be standing for re-election and wished them the very best for the future.

He then thanked all staff members on behalf of the Opposition Group for their work and in particular to frontline staff for their hard work over the years.

He commented on the Members with whom he had working relationships dating back to the former Strathclyde Regional Council and Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council, some of which would be retiring, and wished Members standing for re-election the very best of luck.

He complimented Depute Provost Boyd on deputising for Provost Stirling during Provost Stirling's illness and passed on his best wishes to Provost Stirling for a speedy recovery to good health.

Depute Provost Boyd then thanked everyone for their comments and extended his own personal thanks to Officers, Members and media colleagues for their assistance carrying out his duties as Depute Provost.

To all Members not returning to the Council he extended his best wishes and, as this was the final meeting of the first term of East Ayrshire Council he thanked everyone who had been working for and with East Ayrshire Council during its first term.

The meeting terminated at 1045 hours.