

**APPENDIX 1****EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****POLICY AND RESOURCES (DECENTRALISATION) SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 12 September 1995, at 10am in the  
Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council Chambers, Lugar.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D. Fulton (Chair), R. Beattie, R. Brailsford and E. Jackson.

**ATTENDING:** D. Montgomery, Chief Executive, F. Lees, Depute Chief Executive, G. Fraser, D. McVicar, D. Stewart, D. Campbell, Head of Public Relations and Marketing, and K. McVey, Head of Legal Services.

**1. SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES**

The sederunt was taken and apologies intimated on behalf of Councillors T. Farrell and D. Sneller.

**2. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE POLICY AND RESOURCES (DECENTRALISATION) SUB-COMMITTEE**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive advising the Sub-Committee of the terms of reference, membership and quorum. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation the Sub-Committee agreed:

- (a) to note the terms of reference outlined in the report; and
- (b) a quorum of four.

**3. MINUTES OF INTERIM DECENTRALISATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Interim Decentralisation Sub-Committee of 15 June 1995 (issued) were submitted and noted.

**4. DECENTRALISATION - DEFINITION, PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive outlining the definition, principles and objectives of decentralisation in conjunction with the paper (tabled) proposing new recommendations to replace those in the report. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation and in response to Members' suggestions the following was agreed:

- (i) a definition of decentralisation in the following terms:
  - (a) East Ayrshire Council defines its approach to decentralisation as one in which, within overall Council policies and priorities set centrally, arrangements are established for:

- the taking of political and managerial decisions on local matters at local level wherever appropriate;
  - regular consultation with local communities;
  - access to Council services;
  - local access to information and advice; and
  - accountability both locally and centrally, for service delivery to all sections of the community;
- (ii) that the principles of the decentralisation scheme should encompass the following:
- (a) the establishment of local Committees which will:
    - be delegated optimum decision making responsibilities;
    - have the ability to influence the Council's policy and constituent services; and
    - reflect in the broad spectrum of interest within the community and voluntary sectors;
  - (b) the establishment of formal communication structures between local Committees and relevant community organisations;
  - (c) the establishment of a scheme of decentralised service delivery consistent with efficient, prompt and cost effective services to the public;
  - (d) the development of local offices incorporating information technology support to ensure service, information and advice is readily available to the local people; and
  - (e) the establishment of a process whereby financial resources from the Council are allocated to local Committees to allow the development of local initiatives and projects.
- (iii) that the objectives of the scheme should encompass the following:
- (a) to improve services by:
    - increasing local participation
    - linking service planning to local priorities
    - increasing access to information and advice;
  - (b) to strengthen local accountability by:
    - devolving decision making to local level

- empowering area staff
  - devolving budgets to the local level;
- (c) to increase public participation and access by:
- considering the co-option of community and voluntary sector representatives on to local committees;
  - setting up local forums;
  - undertaking area based consultations;
  - developing local offices and information points.
- (d) to develop staff by:
- encouraging clear links with the public;
  - developing generic working where appropriate;
  - increasing commitment to the solution of local problems;
- (e) to foster equity by:
- linking resources to need;
  - enhancing access to services and information to all;
  - allocating additional funds through a needs based approach, to the most deprived areas and/or disadvantaged groups;
  - reducing the urban/rural gap and easing access to Council services.

## **5. EVALUATION OF JUNE 1995 INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive outlining the procedures, evaluating the responses and making recommendations resulting from the June 1995 Initial Public Consultation exercise. After hearing Donald McVicar in explanation the Sub-Committee agreed:

- (a) to proceed to develop for implementation, decentralisation schemes which will:
- create local Committees with some decision making powers;
  - establish local consultation Forums;
  - facilitate local access to Council services and information; and
  - empower wherever appropriate, Council staff at local level to tailor services to local needs;

- (b) to endorse the proposals for the seven local areas serving the areas of Irvine Valley (Wards 16-20), Doon Valley (Wards 27-29), Cumnock Area (Wards 21-26 and Ward 30), Kilmarnock North (Wards 1, 2, 14 and 15), Kilmarnock Central (Wards 3-7), and Kilmarnock South (Wards 8-10), and for Wards 11-13 a Committee to be formed with the name to be confirmed following consultation with Councillor Beattie, and remit the matter to the Policy and Resources Committee for agreement; and
- (c) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

## **6. OUTLINE DECENTRALISATION AGENDA AND DRAFT TIMETABLE**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive introducing an outline timetable for progress in the development of a draft decentralisation scheme by 1 April 1996. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation that another round of consultation will be organised in October, using a questionnaire, it was agreed:

- (a) to approve the outline decentralisation agenda and draft timetable; and
- (b) that it be a standing item on the agenda to allow the Sub-Committee to monitor progress.

## **7. DECENTRALISATION - DEPARTMENTAL PROPOSALS**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive highlighting the need for departments to consider the optimum decentralisation of their services. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation that all Service Committees be asked to draw up proposals for the decentralisation operation of their services (including budgetary devolution where appropriate):

- (i) from 1 April 1996; and
- (ii) in the longer term;

it was agreed to approve the remit for Service Committees.

## **8. DECENTRALISATION - CURRENT PRACTICE AND RANGE OF OPTIONS FOR EAST AYRSHIRE**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive outlining the range of options available to the Council in the field of decentralisation and advising of current practice in a number of authorities throughout the UK. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation that the report would be an excellent reference document for Elected Members and Directors, the Committee agreed:

- (a) to circulate the report to all Directors and Elected Members of the Council to assist them in the identification of the optimum decentralisation of their service; and
- (b) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

## **9. CURRENT PRACTICE - PROGRAMME OF VISITS**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive proposing that a number of visits to local authorities and other agencies be made by a Member/Officer delegation, to learn from their experiences in developing aspects of decentralised working. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation and after discussion when it was confirmed that the minimum number on each visit would be the Sub-Committee quorum of four and two officers, together with Directors as necessary, it was agreed:

- (a) to approve the list of visits outlined in Section 2 of the report;
- (b) to approve the timing of the visits; and
- (c) to approve the holding of a seminar outlined in Section 4 of the report and delegate appropriate arrangements to the Chief Executive; and
- (d) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

#### **10. SCOTTISH OFFICE: “DECENTRALISATION - A GUIDE”**

There was submitted a report (issued) by the Chief Executive summarising the key points in the Scottish Office Guidance Paper on decentralisation and up-dating Members as to Council progress against the good practice checklist detailed in the publication. After hearing Fiona Lees in explanation it was agreed:

- (a) to note that the Council was performing well against the check list; and
- (b) otherwise to note the contents of the report.