

**MINUTES of MEETING of STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD  
on THURSDAY, 5 MAY 2005**

**Present:** Councillor Allan Macaskill (Chair)

Councillor Robin Banks	Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Robert Macintyre
Councillor Ian Gillies	Councillor Bruce Marshall
Councillor Alison Hay	Councillor James McQueen
Councillor Daniel Kelly	Councillor Dick Walsh

**Also Present:** Councillor Rory Colville Councillor Robin Currie  
Councillor Donald MacMillan Councillor Elaine Robertson

**Attending:** James McLellan, Chief Executive  
Douglas Hendry, Director of Community Services  
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance (for item 2 only)  
Gordon Nash, Head of Housing  
Stewart Turner, Head of Roads and Amenity Services  
David Logan, Governance and Risk Manager  
Janette Gardner, NDR Arrears Supervisor  
Carl Olivarius, Road Safety Training Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Alastair McKinlay

The Leader intimated that Councillor Robin Currie, who was not a Member of the Strategic Policy Committee, had notified him that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak and vote on item 8 of the Minutes. He confirmed that he would exercise his discretion to allow him to speak and vote on this item of the minute when his Ward was being referred to by a motion or amendment.

Prior to discussion of any item of business, the Leader congratulated and presented a cheque to Mr Carl Olivarius whose suggestion to the Employee Suggestion Scheme had reduced costs to the Council in the production of a Council Tax Year Planner.

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Strategic Policy Committee of 13 April 2005 were approved as a correct record.

**2. LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader of the Council submitted a report highlighting issues such as his recent meeting with the COSLA Vice President, Councillor Corrie McChord and Chief Executive, Rory Mair as well as more general matters such as co-terminosity; a request to the Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs, Ross Finnie, MSP seeking an additional £1.1m Land Reform monies for 12 Local Authorities; storm damage suffered in August 2004 and January 2005; the future of NHS Argyll & Clyde and participation in the Community Development Programme; his visit to North Ayrshire to discuss potential for using Special Purpose Vehicles; finance issues such as the increase in collections of Non Domestic Rates and Council Tax and the increase in charges for second homes who now pay 90% Council Tax rather than 50%. He also gave detail of his forthcoming meetings from 9 May to 27 May 2005 and responded to questions arising from his report.

## **Decision**

1. To note the contents of the report for the period 2 April 2005 to 26 April 2005.
2. To instruct the Head of Strategic Finance to prepare a report for the next Strategic Policy Committee outlining the Bellwin Scheme.
3. To note that the Chief Executive would circulate to all Members the reports that were previously circulated to the Area Committees on costs incurred by the Council as a result of storm damage.

(Ref: Report by Leader dated 25 April 2005, submitted).

## **3. HOUSING ISSUES**

The Spokesperson for Housing issues, Councillor George Freeman, submitted a report highlighting progress made with the Housing Stock Transfer; an expected announcement from the Communities Minister regarding a review of Strategic Housing Investment in Scotland; the anticipated annual update in July on the Local Housing Strategy; a review on the current Rent Arrears Policy; the latest Housing Market Study covering Oban, Lorn & the Isles which is near completion; the second Argyll & Bute Housing Staff Conference scheduled for 14 May 2005 and the Council's Allocations Policy. Thereafter, he responded to questions arising from his report.

## **Decision**

To note the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Housing Spokesperson dated 25 April 2005, submitted).

## **4. POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UNAUTHORISED CAMPING BY GYPSIES/TRAVELLERS**

In response to a decision of the Council in November 2004 to establish a policy for dealing with unauthorised camping by gypsies/travellers within Argyll and Bute, Officers had now prepared a document which was before the Committee for consideration.

## **Decision**

1. To approve the policy for the Management of Unauthorised Encampments by Gypsies/Travellers.
2. That the Policy be reviewed in the Autumn of 2005 once Officers have had experience of the practical application of the new Policy.
3. That a further report be brought to this Committee within one year.

(Ref: Report by Director of Community Services dated 4 April 2005, submitted).

## **5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION: CONSULTATION**

All Local Authorities had been asked to respond to the draft regulations under Section 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 by 15 April 2005. Section 7 refers to "Persons living in hostel and other accommodation" and the Ministers had previously agreed to consider extending these regulations to cover ex-offenders, women's refuges and temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation.

## **Decision**

That the following points be made within the response to the consultation:-

- Bed & Breakfast accommodation be removed from the terms of this legislation at the current time, and is considered separately.
- Argyll & Bute Council accepts that hostel dwellers and occupants of women's refuges and other types of accommodation have an entitlement to occupancy agreements and to a minimum period of notice of termination of occupancy. The draft regulations are helpful in this regard.

(Ref: Report by Director of Community Services dated 30 March 2005, submitted).

## **6. ALLOCATION OF CENTRAL SOCIAL WELFARE GRANT BUDGET 2005-6**

The Committee was asked to consider recommendations as to the allocation of the Social Welfare Grant budget for 2005/06. The total Social Welfare Grant budget made available by the Council for allocation to voluntary organisations is £114,600. £51,000 of this had been allocated in terms of Service Level Agreements for 3 years from April 2004 leaving a balance of £63,600. This would allow for an allocation of £15,000 to each of the four administrative areas and for the remaining £3,600 to be held centrally for allocation to national and Argyll and Bute wide organisations.

### **Motion:**

That the balance of £3,600 in the central Social Welfare Grant budget be allocated to a total of 11 organisations requesting grants as detailed in the report.

Moved by Councillor Gillies, seconded by Councillor R. MacIntyre.

### **Amendment:**

That the balance of £3,600 in the central Social Welfare Grant be allocated as follows:

- (a) A further £600 be allocated to Argyll Couple Counselling bringing the total grant awarded to £1,500.
- (b) A further £600 be allocated to Childline Scotland bringing the total grant awarded to £1,000.
- (c) A further £400 be allocated to (CSV) Clyde Action Cash for Kids bringing the total grant awarded to £1,100.

Moved by Councillor Freeman, seconded by Councillor Marshall.

## **Decision**

The Motion was carried by 9 votes to 2 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

(Ref: Report by Director of Community Services dated 18 March 2005, submitted)

## **7. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES**

The current position in relation to the proposed new management arrangements for Adult Criminal Justice Services and the consultation process involved in this was outlined.

## Decision

1. To note the proposed consultation process.
2. To agree that Councillors Macaskill and Walsh meet with the Director of Community Services to draw up a response to the consultation from Argyll and Bute Council.

(Ref: Report by Director of Community Services dated April 1005, submitted)

## 8. REVIEW OF PIERS, HARBOURS AND FERRIES

The Committee considered a review document which had been written to highlight proposals that will impact upon the level of service provision for the maintenance of the Council's piers and harbours. Approval was sought to issue the review to the Area Committees for their consideration in June 2005 and also to issue the review to all stakeholders.

### Decision

To approve the issue of the review document in accordance with the timetable contained within the Appendix to the submitted report subject to the following amendments to the review document:

- (a) On Page 2 of the review document add "Mallaig and North West Fishermen's Association and other relevant bodies".
- (a) On page 7 of the review document begin third last paragraph with "**Kilcreggan/Helensburgh**" in bold.
- (b) On page 9 of the review document add a further category "IV – installations with a transport or fishery function where no dues are charged"; and apply this category to Arinagour Mid Pier.
- (c) On page 16 of review document under Port Appin – Point Lismore -
  1. remove the word "Promote" from second bullet point.
  2. add to the end of the third bullet point "(This has been investigated and evaluated and is not considered to be sustainable)".
  3. check that the maximum number of sailings stated in document is correct.
- (d) On page 17 of the review document amend proposal for Port Askaig – Feolin Ferry to read "The proposal is either that the fares are pitched at a reasonable level having regard to the rurality of the area and the cost of providing the service or that the timetable is reconsidered.
- (e) On page 66 of the review document -
  1. amend location of Lagg to "Jura (Sound of Jura)".
  2. remove type "H" from Port Charlotte.

(Ref: Report by Director of Operational Services dated 12 April 2005, submitted).

## **9. MAINTAINING SCOTLAND'S ROADS: UPDATE OF ACTION PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report which provides an update of the action plan contained within the earlier "Maintaining Scotland's Roads" report considered by the Strategic Policy Committee on 9 December 2004.

### **Decision**

1. To note that an action plan based on the recommendations of the report "Maintaining Scotland's Roads" is being implemented.
2. To approve the content of the updated plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
3. To note the Road Maintenance backlog figures as calculated by SCOTS set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report.
4. To note the update to Local Performance Indicators as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.

(Ref: Report by Director of Operational Services dated 12 April 2005, submitted)

## **10. CHANGES TO DISCRETIONARY RATES RELIEF FOR PREMISES IN RURAL AREAS**

The Non Domestic Rates (Rural Areas and Rateable Value Limit) (Scotland) Order 2005 extends the maximum rateable value on premises to which Mandatory and Discretionary Rural Rate Relief can be awarded under the Local Government Rating Act 1997 from 1 April 2005. The Committee considered a proposal to extend the maximum rateable value threshold for discretionary rural rates relief in line with the changes to the mandatory relief rateable value thresholds including in this Order.

### **Decision**

To agree that the existing discretionary scheme be amended with effect from 1 April 2005 to reflect the increased maximum rateable values for Rural Relief as follows:-

- (i) Increase rateable value threshold for top up 50% discretionary relief for qualifying General Stores and Post Offices (sole General Store or Post Office in designated rural settlement) from £6,000 to £7,000.
- (ii) Increase rateable value threshold for 50% discretionary relief for sole General Store or Post Office in designated rural settlement from £12,000 to £14,000.
- (iii) Increase rateable value threshold for 100% discretionary relief for no more than two General Stores or Post Offices in designated rural settlement from £6,000 to £7,000.
- (iv) Increase rateable value threshold for top up 50% discretionary relief for up to two qualifying food stores in a designated rural settlement from £6,000 to £7,000.
- (v) Increase rateable value threshold for 100% discretionary relief for Council owned schools, halls and public conveniences in designated rural settlements from £12,000 to £14,000.
- (vi) Increase rateable value threshold for 100% discretionary relief for Abattoirs,

Auction Marts, Landing Pads, Piers and Jetties and Pharmacies in designated rural settlements from £6,000 to £7,000.

- (vii) Increase rateable value threshold for top up 50% discretionary relief for Petrol Filling Stations in designated rural settlements where no other owned in Scotland from £9,000 to £10,500.
- (viii) Increase rateable value threshold for 100% discretionary relief for Petrol Filling Stations in designated rural settlements where ratepayer owns another in Scotland from £6,000 to £7,000.

(Ref: Report by Head of ICT & Financial Services dated 12 April 2005, submitted)

## **11. DUNOON ACTION PLAN**

£35,000 funding for the production of an action plan to take forward the development and enhancement of the Dunoon area as envisaged in the approved Structure Plan and the Final Draft Argyll and Bute Local Plan was sought.

### **Decision**

To agree to provide £35,000 as match funding for this exercise in recognition of the need for a Dunoon Action Plan.

(Ref: Report by Director of Development Services dated 5 May 2005, submitted).