

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 26 May 2004 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillors Denis Agnew, Margaret Bootland, *Dennis Brogan, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, Jack Duffy, Jackie Maceira, Douglas McAllister, James McCallum, Linda McColl, Duncan McDonald, Margaret McGregor, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair, Connie O'Sullivan, Martin Rooney and Andy White.

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Eric Walker, Director of Corporate Services; Dan Henderson, Director of Development and Environmental Services; David McMillan, Director of Housing and Technical Services; Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work Services; Bob Cook, Acting Director of Education and Cultural Services; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bollan, Tony Devine, James Flynn and Raymond Young.

* Arrived later in the meeting.

Provost Macdonald in the Chair

OPEN FORUM

2773 The following question was submitted to Council for consideration:-

Mr Chris Neill, 3 Garshake Terrace, Dumbarton – Restructure of Council Departments

2774 I was at the last meeting where the restructure of council departments was put forward and agreed. I am extremely concerned that this decision was made on the premise of a report that wasn't published yet and that in-fact the council were indeed pre-empting its contents.

2775 I am not against the smoothing of processes and indeed see it as a "positive step in the right direction" to the delivery and access of better run services.

2776 Craig McLaughlin and Jim Bollan both agreed that to pre-empt the report was putting the cart before the horse. Craig indeed asked if the Leader of the council had seen the report and indicated there had been behind the door meetings. Councillor White indicated he had met with Community Scotland and there was some confusion when that meeting was. As a lay person I am confused as to the protocol for such meetings.

- 2777 However both Craig and Jim felt that it was better to wait until the full report had been published and consultation with the front line staff had been completed before any changes were implemented and asked for a months adjournment on this basis, this amendment was not accepted as the Labour group voted against it.
- 2778 I feel pretty uneasy that such deep rooted and probably very costly changes could be made when no report had been officially received. I do not see how any Councillor could nod through such radical changes without reading such a report and again without proper consultation with frontline services and in-fact they were implemented 3 days after they were accepted.
- 2779 It was also pointed out that previous changes had been hastily pushed through during a previous administration it seems that this is the case again and perhaps more council tax payer's money is being squandered. It seems bad timing when the council has restructured its finances and cut services to save money that money is being spent on a re-structure that may or may not work.
- 2780 I would therefore like to ask how the council came up with such radical changes without seeing the full report as it seems these changes were being planned sometime ago because of their deep seated impact on the whole delivery of council services or are they just a knee jerk reaction to the sighting of a draft report?

Councillor Connie O'Sullivan responded in the following terms:-

- 2781 Changes were not made in response to the Community Scotland report although it was acknowledged in the Chief Executive's report, and by the Leader of the Council, that the Community Scotland report was likely to be critical of the Council.
- 2782 Changes were made to provide wider service and a cleaner safer environment.

Mr Neill asked the following supplementary question:-

- 2783 In regard to the changes to Council structures, what did the Chief Executive base his recommendation on?
- 2784 **Councillor O'Sullivan advised that a written response would be made to Mr Neill on his supplementary question.**

Note: Councillor Brogan entered the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2785 The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 28 April 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

- 2786 In relation to a point raised by Councillor McLaughlin concerning the item under the heading "Open Space Maintenance – Charge to General Fund" (Page 736, paragraph 2545 refers), the Director of Corporate Services was heard in response.
- 2787 In relation to a point raised by Councillor McLaughlin concerning the item under the heading "Council Structures" (Page 736, paragraph 2549 refers), the Chief Executive was heard in elaboration thereof.

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

- 2788 The Minutes of Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held on 21 April 2004, reconvened on 7 May 2004, were submitted for information and all decisions contained therein were approved.

MINUTES OF THE RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

- 2789 The Minutes of Meeting of the Recruitment Committee held on 11 May 2004 were submitted and noted.

REMIT FROM COMMUNITY SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 2790 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee held on 5 May 2004 (Page 759, Paragraph 2637 refers), a relevant excerpt minute was submitted together with a report by the Director of Development and Environmental Services making recommendations concerning the allocation of funding of £1.980M contained in the Council's General Services Capital Programme (2004/05) for Economic Regeneration.
- 2791 The Council agreed:-
- (1) to approve a contribution of £1,130,000 to the Economic Regeneration projects detailed in the Clydebank Rebuilt Business Plan;
 - (2) to approve an allocation of £825,000 to the Economic Regeneration Projects in Dumbarton and Alexandria, as outlined in the report, with the precise allocation of funding to projects being delegated to the Director of Development and Environmental Services to be implemented in consultation with the Convener and the Board of the West Dunbartonshire Town Centres Initiative;

- (3) that an allocation of funding of £25,000 in the year 2004/05 and £25,000 in the year 2005/06 be made to the Loch Lomond Steamship Company subject to the company assembling a funding package for the refurbishment of the Balloch Steam Slipway complex, with the funds for 2004/05 being deducted from the allocation for Dumbarton and Alexandria if required; and
- (4) that the sum of £25,000 be allocated to the Stoneymollan Gateway Project.

SKYPOINT, FAIFLEY – FINAL UPDATE

- 2792 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 25 February 2004 (Page 607, paragraph 2007 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing an update in regard to Skypoint, Faifley.
- 2793 Having heard Councillor Bootland, the Council agreed to continue consideration of this item to the next meeting.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2004-2009

- 2794 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 28 April 2004 (Page 735, paragraph 2537 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services seeking approval to submit the Local Housing Strategy document to Communities Scotland for assessment, as directed by Scottish Ministers.
- 2795 Having heard Councillor McDonald, Service Spokesperson for Housing and Technical Services, and following discussion, the Council agreed:-
 - (1) to the adoption of the final draft, as appended to the Director's report, as the West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009;
 - (2) to approve the submission of the West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 to Communities Scotland for assessment, as directed by Scottish Ministers; and
 - (3) to seek funding from Communities Scotland for an option appraisal of its stock and, if successful, to employ consultants to carry out this work.

MONITORING OFFICER

- 2796 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the appointment of West Dunbartonshire Council's Monitoring Officer in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 2797 The Council agreed to approve the appointment of Dan Henderson, Director of Development and Environmental Services as Monitoring Officer.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

- 2798 The Provost, in terms of Section 50B(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, decided that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency on the grounds that the action to be taken required early consideration.

NOTIFICATION OF DEPUTE LEADER

- 2799 It was noted that at the AGM of the Labour Group on Monday, 24 May 2004, it had been agreed that Councillor James Flynn be appointed as the Depute Leader of the Council in substitution for Councillor Geoff Calvert.
- 2800 After discussion, Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor Bootland, moved:-
- 2801 That Council agrees to this change and that Councillor Flynn would assume the post of Depute Leader of the Council and all rights, duties and responsibilities pertaining to this role with immediate effect.
- 2802 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved:-
- 2803 That Councillor Calvert should continue as Depute Leader of the Council.
- 2804 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 15 Members voted for the motion, which was accordingly declared carried.

THE PROVISION OF FREE SWIMMING FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE SCHOOLCHILDREN DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS SUMMER 2004

- 2805 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services examining the feasibility and cost of providing free swimming in Council leisure facilities for schoolchildren of West Dunbartonshire during the school summer holidays of summer 2004.
- 2806 Having heard Councillor McDonald, Service Spokesperson for Housing and Technical Services, and following discussion, the Council agreed:-
- (1) to approve implementation of the initiative to offer free swimming to school children in West Dunbartonshire during the school holidays of summer 2004 in recognition of likely financial projections as outlined in the Director's report; and
 - (2) that the Director of Housing and Technical Services be requested to submit a further report to a future meeting of Council providing costing information on implementing this initiative throughout the year.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL: AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS AND SCHEME OF DELEGATED POWERS

2807 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services seeking approval to amend the existing West Dunbartonshire Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegated Powers.

2808 Having heard the Head of Legal and Administrative Services in further explanation, Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Duffy, moved:-

2809 That the Council agrees:-

- (1) that the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegated Powers be amended as detailed in the Appendix to the report;
- (2) that any reference to the departments, formally known as Commercial and Technical Services, Economic, Planning and Environmental Services and Social Work and Housing Services within the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegated Powers, be changed to read Housing and Technical Services, Development and Environmental Services and Social Work Services; and
- (3) that no action be taken meantime on any consequential changes to Committee Conveners, Members and Spokespersons as this matter would be kept under review.

2810 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved:-

2811 That any changes to the Council's Standing Orders requires a two-thirds majority to suspend the Standing Orders prior to their amendment. Further, he viewed with serious concern that the Council appears to be operating a month to month set of Standing Orders.

2812 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 15 Members voted for the motion, which was accordingly declared carried.

SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

2813 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of an adjustment to the Basic Allowance and requesting approval thereof.

2814 The Council agreed to approve payment of the Basic Allowance at an annual amount of £6,102 and that authority be delegated to the Council's Section 95 Officer to implement any such future increases as advised by the Scottish Executive.

BILLING AND COLLECTION ORDER – A CONSULTATION

- 2815 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services recommending a Council response to the consultation paper by the Scottish Executive Environment Group on the Water Services Charges (Billing and Collections Order) (Scotland) Order 2002.
- 2816 It was agreed that the comments outlined in the Appendix to the report be submitted as the Council's formal response to the consultation paper.

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR MULTI-MEMBER WORKING

- 2817 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking a response to the Scottish Executive on a draft protocol for multi-member working.
- 2818 It was agreed that the comments contained in the report be sent to the Scottish Executive as the Council's formal response on this consultation document.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS ETC. – AUTHORISATION OF ATTENDANCE

- 2819 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services proposing the introduction of a mechanism to authorise the attendance of Members at specific conferences which are not included on the Standing List of Conferences.
- 2820 Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Duffy, moved that Council approves the recommendation of the report, as follows:-
- 2821 That the Council agrees that powers be delegated to each Departmental Director to authorise the attendance of individual members at specific conferences, seminars, etc. not on the approved Standing List of Conferences.
- 2822 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved:-
- 2823 That Council takes no action on this matter and that the status quo should apply in respect of conferences, seminars, etc. not on the approved Standing List of Conferences.
- 2824 On a vote being taken, 3 Members voted for the amendment and 15 Members voted for the motion, which was accordingly declared carried.

CONFERENCE: DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITIES

- 2825 An invitation for the Council to be represented at the “Dialogue with Communities” Conference to be held on 3 and 4 June 2004 in the West Park Conference Centre, Dundee was submitted for consideration.
- 2826 The Council agreed that there be no Member representation at the above conference.

VALEDICTORY

- 2827 At this point in the meeting, Provost Macdonald informed the Council that this would be the last Meeting of the Council which Mr Jim Collins, Council Officer would attend as he was retiring from Council service on 4 June 2004.
- 2828 Provost Macdonald then paid tribute to the dignity and diplomacy in which Mr Collins had conducted himself throughout his time with West Dunbartonshire Council, and its predecessor authority, and took the opportunity to wish him a long, happy and peaceful retirement. Members warmly concurred with the Provost’s remarks.
- 2829 In response, Mr Collins thanked everyone for their kind words and advised that he had enjoyed the amiable manner in which the Council had conducted its meetings.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.