

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held by video conference on Wednesday, 16 December 2020 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie, Bailie Denis Agnew and Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, Daniel Lennie, Caroline McAllister, Douglas McAllister, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, Marie McNair, John Millar, John Mooney, Lawrence O'Neill, Sally Page, Martin Rooney and Brian Walker.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Angela Wilson, Strategic Director – Transformation & Public Service Reform; Richard Cairns, Strategic Director – Regeneration, Environment & Growth, Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer, Health & Social Care Partnership, Peter Hessel, Chief Officer – Regulatory & Regeneration (Legal Officer); Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing & Employability; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People & Technology; Malcolm Bennie, Chief Officer – Communications, Culture & Communities; Laura Mason, Chief Officer - Education; Gail MacFarlane, Chief Officer – Roads & Neighbourhood ; George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic & Registration Services; Michael McGuinness, Manager – Regeneration; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Provost William Hendrie in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

The Provost advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Council agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

As previously agreed by Council, the following motions were continued from the Reconvened Meeting held at 1 p.m. today.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(b) Motion by Councillor Gail Casey – Strathclyde Pension Fund

Councillor Casey moved:-

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has described public sector pension funds as “reservoirs of local wealth” that could be invested to support Community Wealth Building.

Strathclyde Pension Fund is one of the largest pension funds in the UK with a fund exceeding £24billion in value but the fund does not do direct local investments that would invest in local and regional economies within the funds area.

The Council therefore agrees to:-

1. Lobby Strathclyde Pension Fund for a proper direct local investment strategy; that invests in the local and regional economies that the funds members live and work; and invests in projects that provide a financial return to the fund whilst delivering wider economic and social benefits for communities across the funds area.
2. Support divestment of the fund through a direct local investment strategy.
3. Request a review of the Fund’s governance with the aim of ensuring that every local authority within the Fund’s region has an input on the operation of the Fund.
4. Work with the other local authorities, non-local authority employers and trade unions across the Strathclyde Pension Fund area to support points 1, 2 and 3.

Councillor Dickson asked Councillor Casey if she was willing to amend the word ‘divestment’ in point 2, to ‘diversification’. Having heard Councillor Casey agree the Council agreed the motion as amended.

(c) Motion by Councillor Lawrence O'Neill – Richie Venton

Councillor O'Neill moved:-

Council agrees to support the call to reinstate Richie Venton the USDAW shop stewards convener sacked by IKEA for defending his members' health and lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

50 Westminster MP's from five different parties have supported the call by signing an early day motion to reinstate Richie. The issue has also been raised and given support in the Scottish Parliament. To date over 9,000 people have signed the petition calling on reinstatement.

It is a fundamental principle that workers are entitled to representation in the workplace and even more so during this pandemic. Council therefore calls on IKEA to review their decision and reinstate Richie Venton.

Councillor McColl asked if Councillor O'Neill would accept the following as an addendum to his motion:-

Council agrees to write to the UK Government urging them to devolve powers currently reserved under schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998 (as amended in 2012), specifically the provisions under Specific Reservations, Head H, Employment, employment and industrial relations and health and safety.

Councillor O'Neill confirmed his acceptance of the addendum and the motion was then seconded by Councillor McColl.

The Council agreed the motion with addendum.

Councillor Page, having failed to find a seconder for a proposed amendment, requested that her dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 September 2020 were submitted and the Council agreed the decisions contained therein.

OPEN FORUM

The Council noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REPORT 2020/21

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing an update on treasury management during the first six months of 2020/21 and requesting approval for revised 2020/21 treasury and prudential indicators as noted within the report.

After discussion and having heard Finance Manager in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the treasury management stewardship information within the appendix to the report;
- (2) to approve the 2020/21 revised estimates of treasury and prudential indicators as advised within the appendix to the report (Tables A, B, C, D, E, F, H, L and N); and
- (3) to agree that the appendix to the report be remitted to the Audit Committee to ensure further scrutiny takes place.

COUNCIL MOTION: REVIEW OF THE MAXIMUM COVID SAFE CAPACITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the outcome of the review of the maximum COVID safe capacity of pupils and staff in secondary schools and the potential impact of blended learning as a further mitigation.

Councillor Douglas McAllister moved:-

Council agrees:-

- (a) to note the significant efforts of teachers and support staff in maintaining school based education since the re-opening of schools in June 2020;
- (b) to note the Public Health and Health and Safety contents within the report;
- (c) to note West Dunbartonshire EIS Executive balloted its members between 11th and 15th December with a 75% turn-out. 91% voted yes to declaring a dispute and 9% voted no. The EIS formally declared a dispute with the employer and stated in the dispute "it is our view that the employer is failing in its duty of care of teachers and schools staff by refusing to agree to requested measures to protect staff"; and
- (d) that should the Scottish Government place West Dunbartonshire Council into Level 4 restrictions again, this Council will convene an emergency special Council meeting to consider what urgent additional measures are required to protect our staff.

As an amendment, Councillor Conaghan moved:-

Council thanks officers for the report and for the phenomenal work that has been done by Laura Mason and her Educational Services team at all levels to provide as safe a learning environment as possible during this pandemic. It is clear that our officers, from teachers and school staff on the front line right up to senior management, are all acting in the best interests of our pupils at this unprecedented time.

Council notes that a recent consultative ballot by EIS shows that 68% of their members (91% of a 75% turnout) would support industrial action if schools remain fully open should we return to protection level four. This result reflects the anecdotal evidence we have heard at Council previously about staff concerns.

Within the last couple of days, the Council Leader has reiterated in a face to face meeting with Scottish Government politicians, advisors and civil servants, that we stand ready to provide all the support that children could need through a blended learning model.

Council also stands ready and would be supportive of a blended learning approach for a period after pupils return to school, to enable better social distancing. The Council Leader has also made this suggestion to the Scottish Government.

Council notes that it is not within our power to close or move all of our schools to a blended learning model. This would require a direction from the Scottish Government or an Act of Parliament to give us the power to do so.

Council agrees that the Council Leader will continue to lobby the Scottish Government to give Councils the flexibility to implement blended learning across our schools, especially if we end up in protection level 4 after Christmas.

In making such representation, Council acknowledges that the Scottish Government must take into account all of the data and factor in not just the risk of harm to staff, pupils and their families, but also to the wider community.

Any blended learning model introduced by the Council must seek to protect those children we know need positive adult contact in schools and must be able to accommodate children whose parents/guardians are not working from home and who are unable to provide a suitable at home learning environment for their children.

In the meantime, Council agrees that we will continue to do everything we can within our power to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible.

Councillor McColl asked Councillor Conaghan if she would accept as an addendum to her amendment part (d) of Councillor McAllister's motion.

Councillor Conaghan confirmed her acceptance to the addendum, and her amendment was then seconded by Councillor McColl.

ADJOURNMENT

At the request of Councillor Douglas McAllister, the Provost agreed to a 5 minute adjournment to allow Members to consider the motion and amendment.

The meeting reconvened at 3.29 p.m. with those Members noted in the sederunt present.

At this point Councillor Mooney asked Councillor Douglas McAllister if he would accept Councillor Conaghan's amendment as an addendum to his motion. Councillor McAllister confirmed his acceptance and his motion was then seconded by Councillor Mooney.

On a roll call vote being taken 13 Members voted for the amendment with addendum, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren, McNair, Page and Walker and 9 Members voted for the motion with addendum, namely Councillors Bollan, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Millar, Mooney, O'Neill and Rooney. The amendment with addendum was accordingly declared carried.

COVID-19 UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update in relation to COVID-19 in West Dunbartonshire since the previous update report to Council in November 2020.

After discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the information provided on COVID-19 in West Dunbartonshire since the update provided to the November 2020 Council;
- (2) to note the information provided in relation to the additional support and advice that the council is providing to communities and businesses across West Dunbartonshire to help alleviate the impact of COVID-19; and
- (3) to the planned approach for the use of the funding provided with the purpose of addressing future need to support individuals at financial risk, as advised in paragraph 6.8 of the report.

Note:- Due to technical difficulties Councillor Douglas McAllister left the meeting during consideration of the above.

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regeneration on the above.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive and Manager - Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress of the Glasgow City Region (GCR); and
- (2) to note the Council's City Deal project for the Exxon site.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council agreed to adjourn the meeting for a short period until 5.25 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 5.26 p.m. with all those Members noted in the sederunt present, with the exception of Councillor Douglas McAllister.

INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory advising of the response to the consultation on the interim review of polling districts and seeking approval of the final polling scheme.

After discussion and having heard Manager of Democratic and Registration Services in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to adopt the changes to the scheme of polling districts and polling places as shown in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed in paragraph 4.9 to the report; and
- (2) that given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty over the position at the time of the elections in May 2021 the Returning Officer had delegated authority to vary the polling scheme where an approved polling place was no longer deemed suitable due to the guidelines on social distancing in force at that time.

DALMUIR GOLF CLUB UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Roads and Neighbourhood providing an update in relation to increasing participation numbers at Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the increased usage levels and subsequent reduction in the net cost of operating Dalmuir Golf Course as detailed in sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the report;
- (2) to note that the actions detailed in section 3.2 (ii-vi) of the report were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that these will recommence during early spring of 2021;
- (3) that officers continue with the implemented pricing structure and further develop marketing opportunities to increase income levels at the facility; and
- (4) to note that a further update would be provided for consideration in December 2021.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Mooney, seconded by Councillor Millar moved:-

Council re-affirms its commitment to services at the Vale of Leven Hospital as follows:-

- (1) Council opposes any change in the status or location of the dedicated wards for dementia patients, Fruin and Katrine;
- (2) Council thanks Hospitalwatch for its ongoing work to secure services at the Vale of Leven Hospital for the people of the Vale of Leven and Dumbarton;
- (3) Although Council welcomes the announcement of a partial restoration of the GP out-of-hours service at the Vale of Leven Hospital, Council urges greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board to continue its work here in consultation with Hospitalwatch and local communities to secure a GP out-of-hours service at weekends and in the evenings; and
- (4) Council agrees to continue its promotion of services at the Vale of Leven Hospital to people in Clydebank, and urges GG&C HB to do likewise.

Council calls upon our representative on GG&C HB to make our views clear, and reiterate our commitment to services at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

As an amendment, Councillor McColl seconded by Councillor McNair moved:-

Council re-affirms its commitment to services at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

Council notes that there are no plans to change the status or location of the dedicated wards for dementia patients, Fruin and Katrine, and Council would oppose any detrimental changes.

Council thanks our HSCP Chief Officer for acting quickly to secure cover for the unplanned absence of clinical staff, that meant there was no disruption to services provided at the Fruin and Katrine wards.

Council notes from coverage in this week's local press that nursing staff at the Vale of Leven Hospital may have been led to believe that there were plans in place to close the Fruin and Katrine wards.

Council asks that members be provided with a briefing laying out the facts for elected members and the public.

Council thanks Hospitalwatch for its ongoing work to secure services at the Vale of Leven Hospital for the people of the Vale of Leven and Dumbarton, and for their positive comments in local press in recent weeks regarding the long-term future of our hospital.

Council also thanks the Scottish Government for reaffirming their commitment to the Vale of Leven hospital, repeating once again the commitment that has been kept for the past 13 years since the SNP took office in the Scottish Parliament.

Since Nicola Sturgeon MSP, then Health Secretary, first intervened to ensure the Health Board could not run down and close our local hospital, despite constant negative publicity, our hospital continues to deliver local services that are being added to year on year. The Scottish Government, Hospitalwatch and our Health Board representative will continue to ensure that our hospital remains at the heart of health provision in our local area and that service redesign will see enhanced provision for the people of our area and beyond who rely on the Vale of Leven Hospital.

Although Council welcomes the announcement of a partial restoration of the GP out-of-hours service at the Vale of Leven Hospital, Council urges greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board to continue its work here in consultation with local GPs, Hospitalwatch and local communities to secure a full GP out-of-hours service at weekends and in the evenings. Council agrees to offer any appropriate assistance we can provide to this process.

Council also agrees to continue its promotion of services at the Vale of Leven Hospital to people in Clydebank and asks that Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board do likewise.

Council calls on our representative on Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to make our views clear and reiterate our commitment to services at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

Note:- Councillor Walker left at this point in the meeting.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren and McNair and 9 Members for

the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Casey, Lennie, McBride, Millar, Mooney, O'Neill, Page and Rooney. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Before closing the meeting, Provost Hendrie wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 6.28 p.m.