

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held by Zoom video conference on Wednesday, 26 August 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 Hissett, Strategic Lead – Regulatory (Legal Officer); Jim McAloon, Strategic Lead – Regeneration; Peter Barry, Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability; Victoria Rogers, Strategic Lead – People & Technology; Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture & Communities; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; Gail MacFarlane, Roads & Transportation Manager; George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic & Registration Services; and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending: Fiona Mitchell-Knight, Audit Director and Richard Smith, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland.

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.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 24 June and reconvened on 25 June 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment to the Motion by Councillor Gail Casey – Formal Record of Thanks to the Communities of West Dunbartonshire:-

With regard to the addendum, Councillor Lennie's name should replace Councillor Docherty.

OPEN FORUM

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

DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing a copy of the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019/20.

Having heard the Chief Executive and Finance Manager in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and the attached draft Statements of Accounts, subject to the understanding that the draft accounts may change depending upon the accounts undertaken by the Council's external auditors;
- (2) to note the information provided in relation to the financial performance of the Council's services and capital plan for 2019/20;
- (3) to note the current position regarding the General Fund free reserves;
- (4) to note a report on the audited accounts would be submitted to a meeting of Council by 30 November 2020 for approval as identified at paragraph 4.18 of the report;
- (5) to note that the current external auditor contract would be extended to cover the financial year 2021/22; and
- (6) to note the draft 2021/22 budget timetable attached to the report.

INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory seeking approval to conduct an interim review of polling districts and polling places within its area and outlining the timetable and processes for carrying out the review.

Having heard the Strategic Lead – Regulatory in further explanation of the report, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Notice of Review and timetable as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) to note that a report containing the final proposals and representations would be submitted for approval to the meeting of Council in December 2020.

COVID-19 UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the above.

After discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor Rooney moved:-

That Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the actions and decisions taken under the revised governance arrangements put in place following the Government lockdown on 24 March 2020 since the previous report to Council in June 2020;
- (2) to note the update on the organisational and financial impact of COVID-19;
- (3) to note the information provided in relation to the approach to future service provision through the recovery phases and the strategic objectives in recovery;
- (4) to note that further information will be provided to Members on impacts of COVID-19 both in financial terms and in relation to service recovery through appropriate communication routes as normal Committee and Governance structures have recommenced;
- (5) to note the draft officer response to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee as detailed as Appendix 2 to the report;
- (6) to cancel the fireworks and Christmas switch on events due to COVID-19 safety concerns; and
- (7) to reject at this time the Scottish Government's flexibility detailed in para 6.1.3 that in this instance allows Councils to continue to charge the HRA

for lost income. Council instructs officers to discuss this proposal with the Scottish Housing Regulator to seek their views and if they agree this is a correct use of tenants rent payments we then consult the proposal with the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation and report back to the next Council meeting for decision.

Having heard Councillor Rooney, Councillor McBride agreed to accept the following addendum to his motion:-

- (8) to note that the Council is using £2.35m from the Early Years Fund, Pupil Equity Fund and Attainment Challenge Fund and for Council to explore recovery of the funds with the Scottish Government.

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

That Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the actions and decisions taken under the revised governance arrangements put in place following the Government lockdown on 24 March 2020 since the previous report to Council in June 2020;
- (2) to note the update on the organisational and financial impact of COVID-19;
- (3) to note the information provided in relation to the approach to future service provision through the recovery phases and the strategic objectives in recovery;
- (4) to note that further information will be provided to Members on impacts of COVID-19 both in financial terms and in relation to service recovery through appropriate communication routes as normal Committee and Governance structures have recommenced;
- (5) to note the draft Officer response to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee as detailed as Appendix 2 to the report;
- (6) to cancel the fireworks and Christmas switch-on events due to COVID-19 safety concerns; and
- (7) to note that the Council is using £2.35m from the Early Years Fund, Pupil Equity Fund and Attainment Challenge Fund and for Council to explore recovery of the funds with the Scottish Government.

On a roll call 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 11 Members voted for the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Millar, Mooney, O'Neill, Page, Rooney and Walker.

There being an equality of votes, the Provost, Chair, used his casting vote in favour of the amendment which was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council agreed to adjourn for a period of 10 minutes. The meeting reconvened at 4.32 p.m. with all Members shown in the sederunt present.

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regeneration providing an update on the progress with the implementation of the Glasgow City Region, City Deal.

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.

GENERAL SERVICE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT P3 TO 30 JUNE 2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources advising on both the General Services revenue budget and the approved capital programme to 30 June 2020.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual adverse variance of £3.554m (1.52% of the total budget);
- (2) to note that of this projection £3.666m was due to the projected impact of covid and the underlying position would be £0.112m favourable; and
- (3) to note that the capital account showed that planned expenditure and resource for 2020/21 was lower than budgeted by £17.762m (25.26% of the budget), made up of £18.395m (26.16% of the budget) relating to project slippage, partially offset by £0.634m relating to an in year overspend.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT P3 TO 30 JUNE 2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 30 June 2020 (Period 3) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21.

After discussion the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to underspend against budget by £1.048m (2.37%) at the year-end; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which was highlighting an in-year variance of £12.622m (21.07%) due to projected slippage.

SUPPORTING FOODBANKS

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability providing an update on the work done with West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare and the discussions that had taken place with Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and Faifley Foodshare.

Following discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability in answer to Members' questions the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note support for Community Foodshare to develop their plans for long term sustainability. This support has been agreed with Community Foodshare and includes an organisational review and health check, and the development of an appropriate business plan;
- (2) to note the financial and practical support for Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and Faifley Foodshare. This includes an appropriate level of community development and financial support that will complement the broader plan to address food insecurity in West Dunbartonshire following the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- (3) to ask officers to work with all of our foodbanks, large and small, to determine how their resources can be pooled and joint working facilitated to deliver a more equitable and comprehensive emergency food and essential supplies service to communities across West Dunbartonshire.

GUIDANCE ON COUNCILLORS' EXPENSES

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory seeking approval of new Guidance on Councillors' Expenses.

Following discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead – Regulatory in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to continue this matter to a future meeting of Council to allow Elected Members to submit comments on the guidance before a final report was brought for debate and decision.

VACANCY ON THE INDEPENDENT RESOURCE CENTRE MANAGEMENT BOARD

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory seeking a nomination to fill a vacancy on the Independent Resource Centre Management Board.

Councillor McColl, seconded by Bailie Agnew moved that Councillor Marie McNair fill the vacancy.

As an amendment Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McBride moved that Councillor Daniel Lennie fill the vacancy.

Having heard the Legal Officer, Councillor McColl and Bailie Agnew agreed to the withdrawal of the motion, which was accepted by the Council.

Accordingly, the Council agreed that Councillor Daniel Lennie be nominated to fill the vacancy on the Board.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(a) Motion by Councillor Iain McLaren – First Bus 208 Service

Councillor McLaren moved:-

Council thanks the organisers of the “Reinstate the 208” campaign for their hard work which saved the First Bus 208 service from being axed, and who walked countless miles to gather over six hundred signatures for their petition.

Council recognises that the withdrawal of any bus service is contrary to the Council’s and SPT’s strategic objectives of “improving the quality of people’s lives through more effective, joined-up and appropriate delivery of services”, and that the current pandemic is likely to mean public transport services will be under threat for some time to come.

Council thanks officers for their support and advice given to elected members during the campaign to reinstate the 208 service, and asks them to work closely with SPT and other stakeholders should this situation arise again.

Councillor McBride asked if Councillor McLaren would accept the following addendum to his motion:-

Amend the last paragraph to read:-

Council thanks officers for their support and advice given to elected members during the campaign to reinstate the 208 service, and asks them to formally propose that SPT will lobby for bus regulation which will protect less profitable routes if they are issued as a package with more financially viable routes”

Followed by:-

In addition we request officers scope the current routes locally, many of which have been operating for many years without considering regeneration projects and new housing estates. We would particularly welcome a review of services in Dumbarton which could add Dumbarton Central Station and Health centre to a current route that serves Dumbarton High Street. This review could then be raised with local transport providers and SPT.

Councillor McLaren confirmed his acceptance to the addendum and the motion as amended was agreed by the Council.

(b) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – Through-floor Lifts

Councillor Bollan moved:-

Since 2012 the Council has agreed to provide ongoing maintenance for stairlifts in residential properties. This disadvantages the more severely disabled people in our community who require through-floor lifts to accommodate their wheelchairs. The Council therefore agrees to extend ongoing maintenance to through the floor lifts, where it has been recommended by the HSCP assessment team that this type needs to be installed as an alternative to a stairlift

The Council agreed the motion.

Note: Councillor Millar left the meeting during consideration of the next item.

(c) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – Commemorative Plaque for HMS Tullichewan

Councillor Bollan seconded by Councillor O'Neill moved:-

Council agrees to install a suitable plaque in an appropriate location in Balloch/Tullichewan to commemorate the women who served at HMS Tullichewan, a training base for WRENS located at Tullichewan Castle. Many WRENS were local women and some subsequently transferred to Bletchley Park, the famous decoding centre in England. The costs which are estimated to be up to £2000 to come from the Cultural Budget or, if there is insufficient funds available, un-earmarked reserves.

As an amendment Bailie Agnew, seconded by Councillor Caroline McAllister moved:-

Council agrees to recognise the women who served at HMS Tullichewan and agrees that these women, and others across West Dunbartonshire who have served their country, deserve to have their story told.

Council remits this matter to the Cultural Committee for discussion on how best to recognise and tell the story of the local women who played a huge part in the war effort and keeping our country functioning during World War 2.

On a roll call vote being taken 13 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren, McNair, Page and Walker and 8 Members for the motion, namely Councillors Bolla, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Mooney, O'Neill and Rooney. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.