

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, on Thursday, 28 January 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Denis Agnew and Councillors George Black, Jim Bolla, Margaret Bootland, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, Jim Finn, William Hendrie, Douglas McAllister, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Ronnie McColl, Jim McElhill, Patrick McGlinchey, Craig McLaughlin, Willie McLaughlin, Marie McNair, John Millar, Iain Robertson, Martin Rooney and May Smillie.

Attending: David McMillan, Chief Executive; Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Terry Lanagan, Executive Director of Educational Services; David Connell, Head of Finance and ICT; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Gillian McNeilly, Manager of Accounting; Jim Pow, Manager of Finance, Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; David Clarke, Head of Service (Resources), Educational Services; Andrew Fraser, Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services; and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Provost Denis Agnew in the Chair

PROVOST'S REMARKS

Before proceeding with the business of the meeting, Provost Agnew welcomed Councillor Bootland to the meeting following her recent absence due to illness.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

BUDGET PUBLIC FORUM MEETINGS FEEDBACK – 12, 13 & 14 JANUARY 2010

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing the Council with feedback for consideration in setting the budget including:-

- (a) points raised by community representatives and members of the public at the public forum meetings held to discuss the Council's revenue budget for 2010/11; and
- (b) the points raised via the Council's budget website proforma.

In relation to a point raised by Councillor W. McLaughlin, it was agreed that a further public consultation meeting would be held at the appropriate time next year in Clydebank for community representatives and members of the public.

The Council agreed to note the contents of the report.

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE ESTIMATES AND COUNCIL TAX

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing the Council with sufficient information to:-

- (a) approve the General Services Revenue Estimates for 2010/11;
- (b) set the level of prudential reserves for 2010/11; and
- (c) set the Council Tax level for 2010/11.

It was noted that the draft Revenue Estimates book, as referred to in the aforementioned report, had been circulated to all Members on 6 January 2010.

At this point, the SNP Group's Budget proposal documents were circulated.

Councillor McLaughlin moved:-

That the Council approves the SNP Revenue Budget proposals for 2010/2011 as detailed in the undernoted documents:-

- Sustainability in Tough Times – Revenue Budget Proposals 2010/2011 (shown in Appendix I to these Minutes); and
- West Dunbartonshire Council – 2010/2011 Revenue Estimates – Budget Savings Options (shown as Appendix II to these minutes).

Therefore I am recommending that Council agrees:-

- (1) that Council Tax levels are frozen for the third year in a row;
- (2) a Council Tax collection rate for the coming year of 97%;
- (3) that the cost of collection of Council Tax will be kept under continual review; and
- (4) a Band D equivalent of £34,207.

At this point the Labour Group's Budget proposal document was circulated.

As an amendment, Councillor McBride moved:-

In moving the Labour Budget document, I would propose that all proposals contained within the document are to be subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment, statutory, formal and trade union consultation as required (shown as Appendix III to these Minutes). Specifically, I move as follows:-

1. That a net General Services Revenue budget of £249,179,260 be approved. This budget should be based on the draft estimates book issued by the Chief Executive to all Members on 6 January 2010.
2. That the enhancements set out in Section 3 (Appendix III refers) and valued at £2,358,760 should be approved.
3. That the efficiency savings of £4,581,480 as described in Section 4 (Appendix III refers) should be approved.
4. That the reserve of £1m previously earmarked for additional single status costs is applied to capital investment.
5. That the 2010/11 Band D council tax should be £1,163.00 which represents zero increase and assumes a collection rate of 97.00%.

At this point Councillor Rooney seconded the amendment by Councillor McBride.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Provost Agnew, the Council agreed to adjourn for a period of 5 minutes to allow the Legal Officer to check the position with regard to his interpretation of Standing Order 20(c) in view of Points of Order that had been raised by Members.

The meeting reconvened at 3.07 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

As a second amendment, Councillor Black moved:-

That the Council agrees the budget proposals recommended by him (Review of Savings Options) amounting to £2,222,720 (Appendix IV to these Minutes refer).

At this point Councillor R. McColl seconded the motion by Councillor C. McLaughlin and advised the Council of an addendum he would like to make in regard to the SNP budget proposals.

In response to a question by Councillor Rooney, the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services confirmed that Councillor Rooney had indeed seconded the first amendment (Councillor McBride). The Legal Officer was also heard in relation to clarification on Standing Orders 20 and 21.

Councillor McBride advised Council that, following the advice given by the Legal Officer, he would request that his amendment be withdrawn as the document contained a typographical error in respect of EC13 'Withdrawal of Free School Milk in Primary Schools from April 2010' and that P1-P3 should be removed from the text.

Note: Appendix III has been revised to incorporate this change.

Thereafter Councillor McBride, with the consent of the Council withdrew his amendment and resubmitted it in amended form.

At this point, Councillor McNair advised Council that she wished to move a further amendment, and gave Council an indication of her proposed amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Provost Agnew, the Council agreed to adjourn for a period of 30 minutes to allow consideration to take place on the budget proposals presented and for the Legal Officer to clarify the position with regard to the proposed third amendment by Councillor McNair.

The meeting reconvened at 4.25 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

During the adjournment, copies of the revised SNP budget proposals had been distributed to Members at the meeting.

Note: Appendix II has been revised to incorporate this change.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Having heard the Legal Officer's advice in relation to Councillor McNair's proposed amendment, Provost Agnew moved Suspension of Standing Orders as the decision made to set the budget on this date had been taken within the last 6 months.

On a vote being taken, 12 Members voted for the Suspension of Standing Orders and 10 against. Accordingly, Standing Orders were not suspended as two-thirds of those present and voting did not vote in favour of the motion.

At this point, Councillor R. McColl advised Council that he would request that his seconding of Councillor C. McLaughlin's motion be withdrawn.

Thereafter Councillor R. McColl, with the consent of the Council withdrew his seconding of the motion. He asked if Councillor C. McLaughlin would accept an addendum to remove SWK27 'Older People Day Care' from the motion. Councillor C. McLaughlin confirmed that he was willing to amend his motion to this effect and Councillor R. McColl thereafter seconded his motion.

At this point Councillor Rooney seconded the first amendment (as amended) by Councillor McBride. Councillor Bollan seconded the second amendment by Councillor Black.

Thereafter, Councillor C. McLaughlin, Councillor McBride, the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance and ICT and the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services were heard in response to Members' questions.

On a vote being taken between the second amendment (Councillor Black) and the first amendment (Councillor McBride), 4 Members voted for the second amendment and 8 for the first amendment.

On a further vote being taken between the amendment (Councillor McBride) and the motion (Councillor C. McLaughlin), 8 Members voted for the amendment and 11 Members voted for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a vote, the Council agreed to adjourn for a period of 10 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 6.02 p.m. with all those Members shown in the sederunt in attendance, with the exception of Councillors Bootland and McAllister.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) ESTIMATES 2010/2011

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development making recommendations in respect of the HRA Estimates and rent levels for 2010/11 and HRA Prudential Reserves for 2010/11.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

To approve certain of the recommendations at 11.11 of the report (as shown below):-

- (i) to agree a weekly rent increase of 4.6%, equating to an average rent rise of £2.31 on a 52 week basis and £2.56 on a 47 week basis;
- (ii) that the close cleaning service be mainlined subject to a review of the quality of the service;
- (iii) that the special uplift service be included in tenants' rent costs up to the value of £50,000, to be taken from the HRA reserve, subject to consultation with tenants groups; and
- (iv) to maintain the existing level of lock up rentals.

PROVOST'S REMARKS

The Provost, on behalf of the Council, thanked officers for their work in preparing the budgets.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.