

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 27 March 2019 at 2.06 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, 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, West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership; Peter Hissett, Strategic Lead – Regulatory (Legal Officer); Stephen West, Strategic Lead – Resources; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Victoria Rogers, Strategic Lead – People & Technology; Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture & Communities; Jim McAloon, Strategic Lead – Regeneration; Peter Barry, Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability;; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor John Mooney.

Also Attending: Carol Hislop, Senior Audit Manager and Zahrah Mahmood, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland.

Provost William Hendrie in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

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.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 14 February 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Provost advised that the following Open Forum question had been received from Mrs Rose Harvie. He then invited Mrs Harvie forward and she read out her question to Council:-

Mrs Rose Harvie, Dumbarton – Climate Change

Context: I am aware that WDC has appointed an officer to represent the Council on Climate Ready Clyde. This organisation represents all the local authorities within the Clyde and Loch Lomond areas, which are likely to be affected by climate change. I have read all the documents in the CRC website with great interest. These detail the various mechanisms by which local authorities are planning to adapt their communities to the threats of rising sea and river levels. If global temperatures are not reduced in line with internationally agreed and recommended targets, it is predicted that large areas at sea level will be subjected to flooding. There is a great deal about adaptation to climate change, but very little mention about mitigation, that is prevention, in the CRC documents.

Climate Change is the greatest threat to the planet. While adaptation to its effects is of course of vital importance, climate change scientists recommend stringent and urgent measures of mitigation, to reduce carbon and other harmful emissions.

Question: What measures is WDC considering, not only to adapt to climate change, but to help prevent it; and would the Council consider setting up a 'working group', of Councillors, officers, representatives of community groups etc. to consider possible mitigation measures, so that our grandchildren do not look back at our generation and say of us 'they knew what to do, but they did not do it.....'?

Councillor McLaren provided the following response:-

I'll begin by thanking Mrs Harvie for her question.

I believe climate change is something we all need to do more to combat, it is not just the duty of the Council.

I agree with what Mrs Harvie has said, but I don't think she's being dramatic enough.

It won't be far down the line that it will be our grandchildren questioning our inaction, the consequences of climate change will hit us far sooner than that.

We're already seeing huge problems around the world with air quality, water pollution, extremes of weather, and scientists are now warning of massive problems in the next few years, not decades.

In response to Mrs Harvie's question, officers have very kindly provided me with a list of the actions the Council is taking to mitigate climate change, which I'm very grateful for - and I'm happy to share with Mrs Harvie and have it appended to the minutes of this meeting.

The report contains a great many things that detail WDC's ambitious programme of activities to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change.

I won't read all of it out, but I will highlight some of the areas it covers.

Our Sustainability, Energy and Carbon Management Group is led by officers, and has many objectives including:-

Raising awareness of the sustainability and resource efficiency agendas

Improving efficiency in the Council

Review new government targets and legislation, and formalise how we deal with these

Submit mandatory annual report on Carbon emissions and

Promote sustainable transport guidance to staff

Areas where we are actively working to reduce CO2 emissions are:

- Queens Quay – the new district heating system will provide low carbon heat and hot water to the area
- Energy efficiency works across council buildings and upgrading the street lighting to LED
- Investigating renewable energy sources such as wind and hydro, including the recently-approved hydro scheme at Gavinburn Farm
- New house builds are insulated to a higher standard than legislation requires
- The office rationalisation project – reduced number of buildings and replaced old with new more energy efficient
- Procurement takes into account the Sustainable Public Procurement Prioritisation Tool
- ICT have delivered server-based computing, and made power-saving settings on devices mandatory

- We have a pool of 1 electric vehicles, with more on order, and we're engaging with Scottish Government to install EV charging points
- Working together with other councils to put in place joint residual waste treatment contracts that meet the 2021 legislation targets
- Planting 10,000 trees between 2016 and 2021
- Increased areas of open space developed for biodiversity, which encourages an increase in pollinators and other important insects and mammals, as well as reducing the amount of fossil fuels burnt to mow them
And we are of course members of Climate Ready Clyde, which is the cross-sector initiative. The City Region's first climate risk and opportunity assessment is now complete, and with the Scottish Government for review.

This is just a quick run through some of the highlights of what West Dunbartonshire Council is doing with regard to climate change, and as I say I'd be more than happy to send you the full report, and have it appended to the minutes (shown as Appendix 1 to these Minutes)

Mrs Harvie then asked the following supplementary question:-

Today in the Scottish Parliament there is a debate on the climate change emergency, which is clearly relevant to my first question. The relevant motions have cross party political support.

Climate Ready Clyde is organising a Climate Change awareness week in October (7th to 13th).

In this context, will WDC consider a public awareness campaign, including a press release, to inform the public of what efforts WDC is making to reduce the risks of climate change, to encourage people to support these efforts, and become more involved, if possible, in Climate Week in October. This should include encouragement to all schools to get involved.

The Provost thanked Mrs Harvie for her questions, advising that she would receive a written response within 7 days of the meeting. Mrs Harvie returned to the public gallery.

Note:- Councillor Finn left the meeting at this point.

GENERAL SERVICES – BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2019 (PERIOD 11)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Resources advising on the General Services revenue budget and the approved capital programme to 28 February 2019 (Period 11).

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

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently shows a projected annual favourable variance of £0.118m (0.06% of the total budget); and
- (2) to note that the capital account shows that planned expenditure and resource for 2018/19 is lower than budgeted by £29.213m (34.87% of the budget), made up of £29.573m relating to project slippage, partially offset by £0.360m relating to an in year overspend.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2019 (PERIOD 11)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 28 February 2019 (Period 11) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which shows a projected favourable revenue variance of £0.062m (0.1%); and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which is highlighting a variance of £9.811m (29.4%) due to projected slippage of £11.227m (33.6%), and an in-year anticipated net overspend of £1.416m (- 4.2%).

CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20 TO 2028/29

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing the capital strategy for the period 2019/20 to 2028/29.

Following discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to approve the Capital Strategy as appended to the report.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGET PREPARATION 2019/20 TO 2021/22 – BUDGET UPDATE AND BUDGET SETTING 2019/20

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

Councillor Dickson moved:-

Council thanks officers for their work to deliver the 2018/19 budget with a favourable variance, despite numerous challenges throughout the year.

Council also thanks officers for their assistance to all groups and individual members throughout this year's budget process and agrees the recommendations at 2.1 and 4.2.7 bullet point 3 of the report, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report.

Furthermore, Council approves the Administration's budget, appended to this motion (shown as Appendix 2 to these Minutes), which balances the £4.538 budget gap for 2019/20 and brings next year's budget gap down from £13.109m to £9.816m.

Council notes that of the £2.504m of extra investment from the Administration, £2.384m is being funded from one off reserves, ensuring that this burden is not being passed on to future years' budgets. This Administration will always find the best possible balance between investment and securing the sustainable future of our local services.

As an amendment Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McBride moved:-

Council thanks officers for the budget which sets out the various changes that have taken place since the December and February Council meetings.

Council also notes that as a result of Barnett consequential the Scottish Government will receive a budget increase in 2019/20 of around £950m from the UK Government. At the same time the Scottish Government is failing to properly fund Scottish Councils. As a consequence, The Scottish Government Grant to West Dunbartonshire is reduced by 1.56% in 2019/20 and when inflation is taken into account this is a real terms cut of between 3% and 4%.

West Dunbartonshire Council does not accept another year of SNP cuts and agrees the only way that this Council's financial situation will improve is through fair funding from the SNP Government.

Given the above this council agrees:

- (a) To reject the £2.239m of Management Adjustments presented to the November Council which restores the Change Fund balance to £1.511m;
- (b) To confirm its rejection of the £1.717m of savings options presented at December Council; and
- (c) To reject the SNP Administrations initiative which would see changes to the Council's charging policy bringing in significant increases.

The Council also agrees to:

- (d) Note the updated projections for the revenue budget in 2018/19.
- (e) Note the updated provisions and reserves of the Council identified in the report;
- (f) Note the updated projected cumulative funding gaps as:

- (i) 2019/20 £4.538m;
 - (ii) 2020/21 £13.109m; and
 - (iii) 2021/22 £20.473m;
- (g) To note the projected outturn position for capital for 2018/19; and
- (h) Agree the proposed updated capital plan from 2019/20 as detailed in the report;

In rejecting the November Management Adjustments; and the charging options the budget gap is increased by £2.239m and £0.250m to £7.027m. However, the Change Fund would be restored to £1.511m which would be available to help with the 2019/20 budget gap if required.

The Council notes that despite a number of variables the budget gap requires to be closed in 2019/20 and in order to do so this Council agrees the following:

- (i) To change the policy on the Treatment of Capital Receipts this would release: £2.100m in 2018/19; and £3.000m in 2019/20.
- (j) To agree the Loans Fund Review: £1.037m in 2019/20; £3.050m in 2020/21; and £3.300m in 2021/22.
- (k) To use the balance of the Sinking Fund monies to Offset Principal Repayments Council; £2.829m in 18/19 but this means a recurring cost of (i) £0.445m in 2019/20; (ii) a recurring cost of £0.451m in 2020/21; a recurring cost of £0.456m in 2021/22;
- (l) To use the restored Change Fund balance in 2019/20 of £1.511m;
- (m) To use the previously earmarked reserves of £0.426m in 2019/20;
- (n) To use the free projected un-earmarked reserves of £0.116m from 2018/19 in 2019/20;
- (o) To note the combined effect of the above would mean the following reserves were available to balance the budget:
 - (iv) 2018/19 - £4.929m to increase available reserves for 2019/20;
 - (v) 2019/20 - £5.645m;
 - (vi) 2020/21 - £2.599m; and
 - (vii) 2021/22 - £2.844m.

In addition, the Council would still have £4.192m in its Prudential Reserve.

The Labour proposals would mean we had £10.574m available in 2019/20 budget setting and we would use £7.027m to close the 2019/20 budget gap – (i) Reversing the Management Adjustments; and (ii) Rejecting the SNP Administrations commercialisation charges. The £3.547m balance would allow the Council to consider other options.

This Council agrees to introduce extend Special Paid Leave for staff affected by Domestic Abuse at an estimated annual cost of £0.010m.

The Council also notes that North Lanarkshire Council had introduced a Holiday Hunger Programme which included activities over the summer. The total cost of this was £1.500m with £0.500m of the costs being provided by the Scottish Government.

North Lanarkshire Council with its population of 340,000 is almost 4 times the size of West Dunbartonshire Council with a population of 89,000. It would therefore be reasonable to expect that the total cost of our Holiday Hunger Programme would be circa £0.400m and it would be reasonable to expect the Scottish Government to contribute a third of the cost like they have done in North Lanarkshire. Council asks officers to engage with the Scottish Government on this. This would mean that WDC would pay £0.267m and the Scottish Government would be asked to provide £0.133m. In the meantime this budget proposal would include the full cost of £0.400m for a trial during 2019/20.

These two growth items to the budget would increase the gap for 2019/20 to £7.437m. This would be funded from the £10.574m, leaving an unused Reserves Balance of £3.137m to be placed in the Change Fund. These options would provide £2.599m and £2.844m to assist close the funding gaps in 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively.

The Council also agrees to a recurring revenue support of £18,900 to ensure that WDCF have rent free use of Unit 22 at Leven Valley Enterprise Centre and the costs for use of the three Leisure Trust distributions locations are paid to WDLT.

At the request of Councillor O'Neill the Council proceeded by way of a roll call vote.

On a vote being taken 8 members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Bolland, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Millar, O'Neill and Rooney. 10 members voted for the motion, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren and McNair and 2 members abstained, namely Councillors Page and Walker.

ADJOURNMENT

Having heard the Provost, the Council agreed to adjourn the meeting for a period of 5 minutes. The meeting reconvened at 5.12 p.m. with all Members listed in the sederunt present, with the exception of Councillor Finn.

RESPONSE TO MOTION TO COUNCIL – NOVEMBER 2018: FREE LETS OF LEISURE TUST PREMISES FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY FOODSHARE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Director – Transformation & Public Service Reform providing a response to the motion agreed at the meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on Wednesday, 28 November 2018.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the costs associated with the provision of space for foodbanks as detailed in section 4.1 of the report;
- (2) to note the update on Universal Credit and work of the communities team as outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the report;
- (3) to note the update on options to increase other funding opportunities as detailed in section 4.4 of the report;
- (4) to note the established programmes as part of our child poverty action plan;
- (5) to note the additional options for consideration in addressing holiday hunger as detailed in section 4.5 of the report; and
- (6) to note that officers will monitor discretionary funds and staff capacity and will report back to Members should there be any future requirement for extra investment to meet increased local need as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out.

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2018/19 TO 2025/26 AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/20 TO 2028/29

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources seeking approval of the proposed Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 to 2021/22 and Treasury Management Strategy (including the Investment Strategy) for 2019/20 to 2021/22.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) the following Prudential Indicators and Limits discussed in Appendix 1 of the report and set out within Appendix 6 of the report for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22:

Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirements (Tables A and B);

Forecast and estimates of the ratio of financing costs to Net Revenue Stream (Table D);

- (2) to approve the policy for loans fund advances discussed in Appendix 1 of the report in section 3;
- (3) to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 to 2021/22 (including the Investment Strategy) contained within Appendices 2 to 6 of the report;
- (4) the following Treasury Prudential Indicators and Limits discussed in Appendix 2 of the report and set out within Appendix 6 of the report for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22:

Operational Boundaries (Table F);

Authorised Limits (Table G);

Counterparty Limits (Table J); and

Treasury Management Limits on Activity (Table L);

- (5) to note the draft Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for the period 2022/23 to 2028/29 discussed in Appendices 1 and 2 and set out within Appendix 6 of the report;
- (6) to approve the statement by the Section 95 Officer regarding the gross debt level in comparison to the Capital Financing Requirement (report Appendix 2 - Point 2.3); and
- (7) to refer this report to the Audit Committee to ensure further scrutiny takes place.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND BUDGET UPDATE 2019/20

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing an update on the Dumbarton Common Good budget and seeking approval for a revised budget for 2019/20.

Councillor Dickson moved that Council agree the recommendations contained in the report, namely:-

- (1) to note the probable outturn for 2018/19 as set out in the Appendix to the report;
- (2) to approve the revised 2019/20 budget as set out in the Appendix to the report; and
- (3) to note the projected balances carried forward of £0.503m at 31 March 2019 and £0.361m at 31 March 2020 (based upon the revised draft budget 2019/20).

Councillor McBride then moved the following addendum:-

This Council is proud of its new Dumbarton office in Church St. and we are delighted that it has been recognised with the Regeneration Project of the Year award at the recent Scottish Property Awards.

The new modern office complex shows that we value our staff, it offers a welcoming environment to our citizens and it saves around £400k per year for the Council.

Importantly, the new office gave us an opportunity to restore the A listed facade which is part of the old Academy Buildings which in itself is a key part of Dumbarton's rich heritage and is now part of its future as a working building again and it will be here for the benefit of future generations.

In addition, this project has been successful in increasing footfall to the town centre as staff and visitors of 16 Church St. boost spending in the town centre bringing economic benefits to local businesses and putting our high street at the heart of our community.

The Council congratulates all our staff involved in making this regeneration project a success.

One of the issues that was identified at all stages of the project was that there was a legitimate concern regarding parking issues, traffic flow and making the town centre accessible to vehicle and pedestrians while also encouraging the use of public transport links.

Experience since the building was opened, suggests that parking is still the major concern and it is a potential threat to the continued regeneration of our town centre.

To ensure the additional staff and visitors do not have a negative impact on the town centre, the Council must take the opportunity to review the parking capacity now that we have had a year of operational experience to draw upon.

The Council notes there is currently £229K in the Dumbarton Common Good Fund Town Centre Fund. This was earmarked for Capital projects linked to Town Centre regeneration. It was also hoped that that the Dumbarton Common Good Funding could draw in additional funding from council departments and from external partners to maximize the investment.

One of the partners could be the Scottish Government who have already committed £800k for town centre regeneration in West Dunbartonshire.

Therefore, the Council calls on the Chief Executive to initiate a review of the parking and traffic flows for Dumbarton town centre and to bring back a report to council or committee for consideration.

The report should consider options for increasing capacity, demand and tackling inconsiderate and illegal parking in Dumbarton Town Centre.

The report should detail opportunities and associated costs to increase capacity, including reconfiguration and expanding current parking to maximise parking spaces for local residents, staff and visitors.

The Dumbarton Town Centre Forum could be asked to lead a public consultation on the options identified by the council to ensure that local residents have their say on their town centre

Council agreed the motion with addendum.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Motion by Councillor Iain McLaren – Scottish Property Awards

Councillor McLaren moved:-

Council notes the award presented at the 2019 Scottish Property Awards for “Regeneration Project of the Year” in recognition of the outstanding work undertaken to redevelop the former Dumbarton Academy building into new offices for the Council.

Council congratulates our staff, our partner Hub West Scotland and all involved in the project for their achievement, and thanks them for their excellent efforts and hard work in bringing this project to fruition.

The Council agreed the motion.

The meeting closed at 5.24 p.m.