

INFRASTRUCTURE, REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Special Hybrid Meeting of the Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Friday, 7 July 2023 at 9.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Michelle McGinty, John Millar, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Chris Pollock, Martin Rooney, Gordon Scanlan, Hazel Sorrell, Clare Steel and Sophie Traynor.

Attending: Alan Douglas, Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration; Craig Jardine, Corporate Asset Manager; Michelle Lynn, Assets Coordinator; Ashley MacIntyre and Lynn Straker, Committee Officers.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Amanda Graham, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; Gail Macfarlane, Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood and Laurence Slavin, Chief Officer – Resources.

Councillor David McBride in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor David McBride, Chair, 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 the item of business on the agenda.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee agreed that all votes taken during the meeting be done by Roll Call vote to ensure an accurate record.

LEASE OF NAPIER HALL, 312 DUMBARTON ROAD, OLD KILPATRICK

(a) Deputation

In terms of Standing Order No. 18, the Committee agreed to receive a contribution from Ms Julie Hunter in relation to the following petition:-

After 55 years, The Napier Hall is up for closure which directly affects the local playgroup & toddlers which has been run by the same person for 20 years (or more). This group has brought together children and parents during a time where socialising has been extremely difficult and now with the option being ripped away and forced to close, we are hoping to save the group and hall! We have tried many different approaches, all which have failed, and now Thursday 22nd June is set to be the final day. Please help us save our local hall/playgroup!

The Chair, Councillor McBride, on behalf of the Committee thanked Ms Julie Hunter for her contribution.

(b) Report by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property, considering the transfer of Napier Hall to a community organisation that would manage the facility for the benefit of the local community in the form of a lease arrangement.

After discussion and having heard the Assets Coordinator in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor McGinty moved:-

The Committee agrees:-

- (1) to approve the lease to Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels on the basis of a 10 year lease at a rental of £10,200 per annum;
- (2) that the lease would contain the same terms and conditions for use as in the current title deeds, this would ensure the hall remains for community use for the full period of the 10 year lease;
- (3) to authorise the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property to conclude negotiations; and
- (4) to authorise the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate.

As an amendment, Councillor Oxley, seconded by Councillor Scanlan moved:-

If a decision is taken today, significant bad feeling will be felt within the community which will not benefit Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels, West Dunbartonshire Council, nor the community of Old Kilpatrick as a whole.

Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels is a valuable and worthwhile community group that has helped so many in their hour of need. This motion does not question the value and importance of this local community group.

It is imperative that all parties are clear that a fair due process took place which led to this long lasting decision and that clarity is found in regard to the viability and practicality of current user groups continuing to use the hall.

With this in mind, Committee agrees to continue this matter to the next full IRED Committee on 16 August 2023 for two reasons:-

- (1) to allow for further detail around the process to be brought back to the Committee to satisfy all interested parties, including the bidders who were not chosen; and
- (2) to allow time for discussion to determine the feasibility of all user groups continuing to use the hall and having written conditions presented for agreement to secure continued access where possible.

The Council should use the time afforded to provide mediation opportunities between all parties involved around continued access and to release further information regarding the process which led to this recommendation. This transparency is crucial as some groups believe they could not use the hall for various reasons. It is vital that this Committee has information at hand and that it is presented publically before a decision is made.

The amendment speaks for itself and is a reasonable request that Committee should consider. Having spoken and met with every single community group that submitted a note of interest, it has been clear from all conversations that there has been a lack of information and also misinformation spread, both of which has caused tensions amongst the community.

Regardless of whatever decision is taken and whichever group the Napier Hall is leased to, the Council has to take some responsibility for the mess that has been made and must help clean it up through some sort of mediation. This amendment gives the Council time to do this and when we discuss the matter again next month, I would hope that some of the big issues and concerns would have been addressed and a somewhat positive outcome can be reached for all.

ADJOURNMENT

Having heard Councillor McBride, Chair, the Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9.45 a.m. for one hour to allow a Special Meeting of the Education Committee to commence at 10 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10.45 a.m. with all Members listed in the sederunt present.

LEASE OF NAPIER HALL, 312 DUMBARTON ROAD, OLD KILPATRICK (CONTINUED)

On a roll call vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the motion, namely Councillors McBride, McGinty, Millar, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 5 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors McColl, Oxley, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor. The motion was accordingly declared carried.

The meeting closed at 11.20 a.m.