

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At the Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Monday, 8 March 2004 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillors Denis Agnew, Margaret Bootland, Dennis Brogan, Geoff Calvert, Tony Devine, Jack Duffy, James Flynn, Jackie Maceira, Douglas McAllister, James McCallum, Duncan McDonald, Margaret McGregor, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair, Connie O'Sullivan, Martin Rooney, Andy White and Raymond Young.

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Eric Walker, Director of Corporate Services; Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services; David McMillan, Director of Commercial and Technical Services; Frank Newall, Head of Service, Education and Cultural Services; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf Councillors Gail Casey, Linda McColl and Jim Bollan.

Provost Macdonald in the Chair

BUILDING OUR FUTURE – THE REGENERATION OF THE SCHOOLS' ESTATE

2091 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 25 June 2003 (Page 59, paragraph 223 refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval of:-

- (a) the 'Building Our Future' strategy by which the Council intends to address, over the next ten years, the regeneration of the whole of the schools' estate across West Dunbartonshire; and
- (b) the submission of the Outline Business Case to the Scottish Executive for revenue support for that part of the Building Our Future programme to be funded through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Initiative.

2092 After discussion on the issue of whether members of the public should be allowed to ask questions at this meeting, Councillor McLaughlin proposed that that the issue should be put to the vote. Thereafter, the Council unanimously agreed that the issue be put to the vote.

2093 On a vote being taken, 15 Members voted against the proposal to allow members of public to ask questions and 4 Members voted for the proposal.

- 2094 Thereafter, Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor White, moved as follows:-
- 2095 This Council welcomes the proposals contained within the Regeneration of the Schools' Estate Outline Business Case and the Building Our Future Council report.
- 2096 Council also endorses the vision of educational excellence outlined within the report.
- 2097 West Dunbartonshire Council, similar to many other local authorities, has suffered from years of under investment in our schools' estate due to the financial pressures we face as an organisation and the substantial costs identified for just maintaining our schools.
- 2098 Councils across Scotland are engaged in the largest ever school building programme as referred to in section 2.1 of the report. This Council believes that there is an urgent need to regenerate our schools bearing in mind the prolonged consultation process and the lack of progress made by previous Administration, which involved 125 meetings and not a brick being laid.
- 2099 Council believes we must now secure a multi-million pounds investment, which will provide 21st Century Schools for 21st Century Education.
- 2100 Council therefore, instructs the Chief Executive to submit the Outline Business Case to the Scottish Executive on the understanding that it is subject to any changes the Council decides to make as a result of the consultation process.
- 2101 Council also instructs the Chief Executive to organise consultation with the relevant parties. This consultation process will be led by the Convener of Education, Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Director of Education and Cultural Services.
- 2102 The Charter for Regeneration principles will guide the consultation process.
- 2103 Furthermore, the report and its appendices be passed to the next meeting of the Children's Services Committee for the interest of the non-elected Members of that Committee.
- 2104 Thereafter, Councillor McCallum gave a brief presentation in support of his motion.
- 2105 At this point in the meeting the Leader of the Council, the Convener of the Children's Services Committee and the Chief Executive were heard in answer to questions by Councillor McLaughlin.

- 2106 Thereafter, as an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Young, moved:-
- 2107 The Council notes the report on the Regeneration of the Schools' Estate. Given that the proposals represent a substantial change in the Education Service of West Dunbartonshire Council, full consultation on the schools affected by the proposals should take place before any bid document is submitted to the Scottish Executive.
- 2108 The Council notes with concern the proposals for "super school" campuses and is concerned about the financial needs of the Council being put before the educational attainment of children in such schools.
- 2109 The Council also expresses deep concern that the report's proposals raise the possibility of soft services, such as cleaning, janitorial and catering being privatised as part of the PPP package.
- 2110 The SNP calls on the Council to commit to the retention of all soft services in public control and to protect jobs from privatisation.
- 2111 The Council then entered into debate on the above motion and amendment.

Adjournment

- 2112 In terms of Standing Order 13(a), Provost Macdonald adjourned the meeting at this point in the proceedings. The meeting resumed at 7.55 p.m. with the same Members and officers present as listed in the Sederunt, with the exception of Councillor Denis Agnew, who left the meeting during the adjournment.
- 2113 After hearing the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Cultural Services in answer to Members' questions, the Council continued to debate the above motion and amendment.
- 2114 Thereafter, the Council agreed to proceed by way of a Roll Call Vote.
- 2115 On the vote being taken, 3 Members voted for the amendment (namely, Councillors McGregor, McLaughlin and Young) and 14 for the motion (namely Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillors Bootland, Calvert, Devine, Duffy, Flynn, Maceira, McAllister, McCallum, McDonald, McNair, O'Sullivan, Rooney, and White), which was accordingly declared carried. It was noted that Councillor Brogan abstained.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.