

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a Special meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday 13 February 2003 at 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillors James Bolla, Geoffrey Calvert, Mary Campbell, Mary Collins, Anthony Devine, James Flynn, Daniel McCafferty, James McCallum, Linda McColl, Ronnie McColl, John McCutcheon, Duncan McDonald, Ian McDonald; James McElhill, Margaret McGregor, Craig McLaughlin, Connie O'Sullivan, Iain Robertson, John Syme, and Andrew White.

**Attending:** Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Eric Walker, Director of Corporate Services; Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Dan Henderson, Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services; David McMillan, Director of Commercial and Technical Services; Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work and Housing Services; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; Lynn Bradley, Head of Finance; Bob Cook; Head of Resource Development; David Connell, Manager of Accounting; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Jim Pow, Manager of Resources (Social Work and Housing); Stephen West (Section Head, Accounting); Janine Scott, Trainee Accountant; and Dave Low, Administrative Assistant.

### **Provost Alistair Macdonald in the Chair**

## **REVENUE ESTIMATES AND COUNCIL TAX**

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing Members with appropriate information to allow them to agree (i) the revenue estimates for 2003/2004; (ii) the level of prudential reserves for 2003/2004; the council tax level for 2003/2004; and (iii) the indicative council tax increases for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. The details of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2003/2006 had previously been intimated to the Council at its meeting on 18 December 2002. The draft 2003/2004 Revenue Estimates Book had been circulated to Members on 8 January 2003 together with a covering report by the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services was thereafter heard in respect of the contents of his report, including the adjustments outlined therein and the requirement of the Council to set the level of council tax to be levied for 2003/2004.

Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McCafferty, submitted a proposed budget, thanked all those staff involved in the general services revenue estimates preparation and moved:-

That the recommendations be agreed subject to the proposals for budget savings totalling £1,865,050 and service enhancements totalling £190,000, and that on the basis of the revenue estimates agreed, that balances of £650,000 be applied towards the funding of the budget and that a collection rate of 95.5% be assumed.

Therefore the Band D council tax level for 2003/2004 of £1,070 representing an increase of 1.9% be approved, all as shown in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

With regard to the following two years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006, it is anticipated that the council tax increases will not exceed 5% as per current Scottish Executive guidelines but everything will be done to keep increases to nearer the level of inflation.

As an amendment, Councillor White, seconded by Councillor O'Sullivan, moved as follows:-

I move that all of the information and recommendations, contained within the 2003/04 budget reports by the Director of Corporate Services, be agreed subject to the Labour Group's proposals for savings of £2,535,040 and a further £212,500 of enhancements.

I also move that, on the basis of the Revenue Estimates agreed, that a collection level of 95.5% be assumed, and that a 2003/04 Band D Council Tax of £1,066 representing an increase of 1.5% be approved.

With regard to the following two years, 2004/05 and 2005/06, it is anticipated that the council tax increases will not exceed 4%, but everything will be done to keep increases nearer to the level of inflation.

Furthermore, Council also notes that the scrapping of the Area Committees will release resources to address the issues that really matter to residents in West Dunbartonshire.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to table at the next meeting of the Community Planning Core Group the following proposals to deliver effective Youth Justice:

1. Extend childcare and family support services;
2. Introduce 2 new posts to the Housing ASIST Team to work with youth/crime issues;

3. Provide additional resources to the Estate Wardens;
4. Build on existing BNSF provision of free access to sports facilities by extending the age range; and
5. Introduction of a Mentoring Scheme to work with the hard to reach youngsters.

Finally, this Council notes that the Scottish Executive in agreement with Cosla has agreed to set aside significant resources to be allocated to Councils who experience a budget shortfall when implementing the free bus travel scheme for elderly and disabled people.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to bid for the resources necessary in West Dunbartonshire. Council notes that a successful bid will free up at least £250,000 within our revenue budgets.

Council therefore instructs the Director of CATS to develop proposals for consideration by the Council that will effectively tackle the problems experienced by our communities caused by the growing nuisance of litter and graffiti in West Dunbartonshire.

*(The Labour Group proposals are attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes.)*

After debate, on a vote being taken, 9 Members voted for the amendment and 11 for the motion. The motion was accordingly declared carried.

### **Adjournment**

The Council unanimously agreed to adjourn at this point in the meeting and resumed a short time thereafter those present being as shown on the sederunt.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) ESTIMATES 2003/2004**

A report by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services was submitted intimating that the Council was required to set an HRA Budget for 2003/2004 and indicating options available to Members in this regard.

Councillor McCafferty, seconded by Councillor Ronnie McColl, moved that Council agree:-

- (a) an average weekly rent increase of £0.96, being 2.5% as presented in Appendix 3 to these minutes;
- (b) to accept the tenants' desire to reinstate the current level of CFCR as outlined in paragraph 9.5 of the Director's report;

- (c) to maintain the existing level of lockup rentals, and
- (d) that £20,000 be deducted from the Open Space Maintenance Budget for 2003/2004, this sum to be added to the Jobbing Repairs budget.

The Director of Corporate Services advised the Council at this point that approval of recommendation (d) above would result in a variance to the General Fund budget for 2003/2004 agreed earlier in the meeting.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor Flynn, moved that Council agree an average weekly increase of 2%.

After debate, on a vote being taken, no Members voted for the amendment and 18 Members voted for the motion, which was accordingly declared carried.

The meeting concluded at 10.20 p.m.