

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held by video conference on Monday, 22 March 2021 at 10.10 a.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, John Mooney, Lawrence O'Neill, Sally Page, Martin Rooney and Brian Walker.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution & Property; Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer, West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership; Peter Hessel, Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration (Legal Officer); Stephen West, Chief Officer – Resources; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People & Technology; Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing & Employability; Gail MacFarlane, Chief Officer – Roads & Neighbourhood; Malcolm Bennie, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities; Laura Mason, Chief Officer – Education; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; Raymond Lynch, Section Head (Licensing); Robert Mackie, Senior Officer (Licensing Services); George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic & Registration Services and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Also Attending: Richard Smith, Senior Audit Manager and Zahrah Mahmood, Audit Scotland.

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

Provost Hendrie 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.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Council agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGET PREPARATION 2021/22 TO 2023/24 – BUDGET UPDATE: BUDGET SETTING 2021/22

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources:-

- (a) providing an update in relation to both the revenue and capital budget process for 2021/22 to 2023/24;
- (b) providing an update on specific issues and seeking approval as appropriate; and
- (c) seeking approval to set the General Services revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22 through approval of options to close the 2021/22 budget gap.

Councillor Dickson, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

Council agree the budget as detailed in the spreadsheet and associated Fairer Future document (*shown as Appendices 1 and 2 to these Minutes*).

Agree recommendations 2.1 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (g), (i) and (j).

Agree to make the two existing temporary project worker posts in the Communities Team permanent with a report to come back to Corporate Services outlining how the Council plans to deliver the Community Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan, and what resources are required.

Agree that a report will come to Corporate Services for members to decide whether to accept the Digital Team growth bid.

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

The Labour group approach to the budget this year has been straightforward in that we have rejected service cuts and utilised reserves to: (i) protect council services; (ii) protect council jobs; and (iii) protect valued services for our communities.

The Council agrees the recommendations at 2.1 of the report

The Council also agrees the use of the estimated one-off **£700,000** additional announced by the Scottish Government / COSLA on Thursday 18th March to reduce the budget gap for 2021/22 from **£3.345m** to **£2.645m**.

This Council notes that the Trades Unions have rejected the COSLA Pay offer, therefore West Dunbartonshire Council agrees to set aside as part of the revenue budget the one-off grant of **£700,000** to contribute towards any additional costs of the Local Government Pay Negotiations for 2021 and to cover any costs associated relating to Councils decision on Item 8 later in the

agenda on Taxi Licensing Fees, with any unused funds would be retained in reserves.

Furthermore, the Council notes that West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership has **£3.517m** of COVID reserves and calls on the Council members on the Integrated Joint Board to support an increase to social care pay rates and to explore options for a phased increase to **£15** per hour.

As well as the above, the council agrees to explore the following for inclusion into the Councils Capital Programme and requests that officers bring forward reports around the potential options for these two projects to a future committee for consideration:

- An options appraisal on a replacement for the HUB CE Centre.
- An options appraisal on a replacement Linnvale Community Centre in the context of future redevelopment of the school campus

In order to balance the Council remaining revenue budget gap the measures identified in the table below would be implemented.

BUDGET SAVINGS

ITEM DESCRIPTION	NON RECURRING	RECURRING	TOTAL
Use of Change Fund - available per report	£1,136,000		£1,136,000
Implement funding of transactional costs to capital receipts per report	£895,000		£895,000
Accelerate use of PPP Sinking Fund from savings option 1	£700,000		£700,000
Unearmark and use Net Zero Carbon Target fund	£344,000		£344,000
Recover to prudential reserves over a 2 year period rather than 100% in 2021/22	£170,000		£170,000
Apply a general efficiency target for CMT		£100,000	£100,000
TOTALS	£3,245,000	£100,000	£3,345,000

BUDGET GROWTH

ITEM DESCRIPTION	NON RECURRING	RECURRING	TOTAL
Use one-off grant to contribute towards Local Government Pay / Taxi Licensing costs / reserves	£700,000		£700,000
TOTALS	£700,000		£700,000

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Bollan, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Millar, Mooney, O'Neill, Page, Rooney and Walker and 11 Members voted for the motion, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew, Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren and McNair.

There being an equality of votes, the Provost, Chair, used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2020/21 TO 2030/31 AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2030/31

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources seeking approval of the proposed Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Treasury Management Strategy (including the Investment Strategy) for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Having heard the Finance Manager in further explanation and in answer to a Member's questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) the following Prudential Indicators and Limits discussed in Appendix 1 and set out within Appendix 6 of the report for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24:
 - Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirements (Tables A and B of the report);
 - Forecast and estimates of the ratio of financing costs to Net Revenue Stream (Table D of the report);
- (2) to approve the policy for loans fund advances discussed in Appendix 1 in section 3 of the report;
- (3) to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 to 2023/24 (including the Investment Strategy) contained within Appendices 2 to 6 of the report;
- (4) to agree the following Treasury Prudential Indicators and Limits discussed in Appendix 2 and set out within Appendix 6 of the report for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24:
 - 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 2024/25 to 2030/31 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 (Appendix 2 - Point 2.3 of the report); and
- (7) to note the report will be referred to Audit Committee for further scrutiny.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND BUDGET UPDATE 2021/22

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the Dumbarton Common Good budget and seeking approval of a revised budget for 2021/22 and indicative budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

After discussion and having heard the Finance Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the probable outturn for 2020/21 as set out in the Appendix to the report;
- (2) to approve the revised 2021/22 budget as set out in the Appendix to the report;
- (3) to note the indicative budgets to 2023/24 as set out in the Appendix to the report;
- (4) to note the projected balances carried forward of £0.518m at 31 March 2021 and £0.389m at 31 March 2022 (based upon the revised draft budget 2021/22); and
- (5) to note that WD HSCP has agreed to fund the grant application from Alternatives.

TAXI LICENSING FEES

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration providing an analysis of the position within West Dunbartonshire Council in respect to both Taxi/Private Hire Car Driver's Licences and Taxi/Private Hire Car Operator's Licences with regard to the level of fees charged and how this compares to other local authorities.

After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Licensing) and the Senior Officer (Licensing Services) in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the terms of the report.

The meeting closed at 12.02 p.m.