

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Hybrid Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 22 June 2022, at 10.06 a.m.

Present: Provost Douglas McAllister and Councillors Jim Bollan, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Craig Edward, Gurpreet Singh Johal, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, James McElhill, Michelle McGinty, June McKay, Lawrence O'Neill, Chris Pollock, Martin Rooney, Gordon Scanlan, Hazel Sorrell, Clare Steel and Sophie Traynor.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Peter Hessett, Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration (Legal Officer); Laurence Slavin, Chief Officer – Resources and Section 95 Officer; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People and Technology; Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Amanda Graham, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; Laura Mason, Chief Officer – Education; Gail Macfarlane, Chief Officer – Shared Services Roads and Neighbourhood; Lesley James, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice; George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic and Registration Services and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Also attending: Christopher Gardner and Sanya Ahmed, Audit Scotland.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors John Millar and Lauren Oxley.

Provost Douglas McAllister in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

The Provost advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Provost advised that he had received requests for two emergency motions to be considered; one from Councillor McGinty in respect of the cost of living crisis and a

second from Councillor Bollan in connection with rent abatements for small, local businesses in Alexandria.

Both Elected Members relayed the terms of their emergency motions to the Council, and the Provost agreed that the motions would be considered before agenda Item 14 – Notice of Motions.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda at this point in the meeting.

RECORDING OF VOTES

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of Meetings of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 18 May 2022 (Statutory Meeting) and 25 May 2022 (Special Meeting) were submitted and approved as correct records.

OPEN FORUM

The Council noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration noting the progress with the implementation of the Glasgow City Region, City Deal.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer provide an update on the drawing down of additional costs for producing the Full Business Case, Councillor Rooney seconded by Councillor McGinty moved that the Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the progress of the Glasgow City Region;
- (2) to note progress of the Council's City Deal project for the Exxon site and approve submission of a change request to the City Region Project Management Office to delay the submission of the Full Business Case until June 2023; and

- (3) to note the Council's support for a Green Freeport bid as detailed in paragraphs 5.3 to 5.7 of the report.

The motion was agreed.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to find a seconder for a proposed amendment, requested that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial challenges facing the Council, the estimated 2023/24 and 2024/25 revenue budget gaps, available COVID funds, and the approach to be adopted to identify saving options to enable the Council to deliver a balanced 2023/24 budget.

Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McGinty moved:-

This Council notes that the Scottish Government is the main funder of West Dunbartonshire Council. Council notes that for financial year 2022/23 the Scottish Government received a significant increase of 10.6%. The Scottish Government budget increased in both cash and real terms from £36.7 billion to £41.8 billion. Despite this increase the Scottish Government has continued to underfund West Dunbartonshire Council.

The Scottish Government is also looking to reduce funding to local government by a further 7% over the following 4 years. This is extremely worrying for our Council and our communities.

Council also notes that disappointingly, SNP raided the Council's reserves to balance the books and left the Council with a forecast budget gap of £13.8 million for next year. This is a disastrous situation for our communities as we have a perfect storm of rising inflation, funding cuts and a massive debt left by the SNP.

Council agrees to note the report and its implications and asks the Chief Executive to explore ways to reduce the impact of the SNP failure to properly fund West Dunbartonshire Council and the SNP failure to effectively manage the Council budget.

As an amendment, Councillor Conaghan seconded by Councillor McColl moved:-

That Council agrees to note the recommendations contained in the report

On a roll call vote being taken 8 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, McColl, McElhill, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor and 11 Members voted for the motion, namely Provost McAllister and Councillors Edward, Johal, Lennie, McBride, McGinty, McKay, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel. Councillor Bollan abstained from voting. The motion was declared carried.

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE - AUGUST 2022 TO JUNE 2023

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration seeking approval of a committee timetable for the period August 2022 to June 2023.

Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McGinty moved:-

Council notes the recommendations in the report to adopt the timetable of meetings at the appendix to the report (and shown as an appendix to these Minutes); that Council and policy meetings will be held in hybrid format in the Civic Space, Council Offices, Church Street, Dumbarton; regulatory committees, namely Planning and Licensing, will alternate between the Council Offices, Dumbarton and Clydebank Town Hall; Appeals Committee meetings continue to be held in the Council Offices, Dumbarton; and the remaining committees will be held in the Council Chamber, Clydebank Town Hall.

Furthermore, the Council agrees to schedule a Special Cultural Committee meeting for Wednesday 29th June at 10:00 in Church Street, Dumbarton. In addition a timetable for committee meetings for the subsequent four years is brought to a future Council meeting.

Council also agrees that the Chair of the Cost of Living Working Group shall organise appropriate meetings in order to progress the *West Dunbartonshire Cost Of Living Plan*.

Councillor Conaghan asked if Councillor Rooney would accept the following as an addendum to his motion:-

That meetings of the Audit Committee alternate between Clydebank and Dumbarton and that all meetings of the Dumbarton Trust Committee be held in Dumbarton.

Councillor Rooney confirmed his acceptance and the motion with addendum was then agreed by the Council.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to find a seconder for a proposed amendment, requested that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

TOWARDS 2030

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive setting out the progress of the Council over the last decade and highlighting the key challenges moving towards 2030.

The Council agreed to note the contents of the report.

VALEDICTORY JOYCE WHITE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Provost McAllister advised that this was the last meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council that Joyce White, Chief Executive, would be attending as she was leaving Council service on 24 June. On behalf of all Elected Members, staff, residents and community organisations in West Dunbartonshire he thanked Mrs White for her outstanding service over the last 14 years and wished her well for the future.

Councillor Rooney concurred with the Provost's sentiments, acknowledging Mrs White's strong, strategic leadership through many challenges and that she had been a fantastic Chief Executive for West Dunbartonshire who had promoted continuous change.

Councillor McColl acknowledged Mrs White's professionalism and how he valued the support she had given him over her 14 years at West Dunbartonshire Council. He referred to her commitment to the area and how her strategic leadership had contributed to the performance of the Council going from strength to strength. He wished her well for the future.

Councillor Conaghan referred to the many personal qualities that Mrs White had used to network with external bodies and how these connections had benefitted the Council. Councillor Conaghan extended her good wishes to Mrs White for the future.

Councillor McBride referred to his close working with Mrs White over the last 14 years, her good nature and welcoming attitude, and that she had always been a Chief Executive who was accessible to Elected Members and staff. He wished her well in her retirement.

In response, Mrs White thanked everyone for their kind words, stating it had been a great privilege and honour to serve in West Dunbartonshire.

LEVELLING UP FUNDING TRANSPORT BID PROPOSAL

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood (Shared Services) seeking approval to submit a bid to the UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF) by the Round 2 deadline of 6 July 2022.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to approve the proposed bid submission comprising the Clydebank Transportation Hub and the Carless Access Road (Scottish Marine Technology Park);
- (2) to note that should the Carless Access Road not be able to proceed further due to the assessment of the state aid position the Kilbowie Roundabout project would be developed for submission; and

- (3) to authorise the commencement of the procurement processes relating to the projects included in the bid.

WEST BRIDGEND HALL – MOTION FROM COUNCIL 9 MARCH 2022

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property providing an update on the progress of the West Bridgend Hall project and indicative costs.

Councillor McBride moved:-

The Council notes the report and the significant increase in costs since the new Community Centre was first proposed.

This Council reaffirms its supports for the Westbridgend Community Group who have worked hard to get the group constituted and to develop their business plan.

The Council is fully committed to ensuring that the group secure a suitable Community Centre for their area.

Council notes that the ten year capital plan already includes a new Westbridgend Community Centre.

The Council needs to demonstrate best value when committing public funds therefore, prior to progressing with the new built option, council officers are to explore whether the Church Hall which is up for sale and which has accessible access old meet the organisation's needs. This could mean the facility could be available much quicker and at significantly lower cost than the new build option.

This Council requests that officers bring a further report in August with suitable options, highlighting any issues to allow the council to make its an informed decision so that we demonstrate best value and can progress with securing a suitable Community facility.

In the meantime we will link with CVS who will be helping the Group with applications for funding - for example the Big Lottery Fund; or funds which may assist with fit out costs.

We will be attending the Group AGM on 23 June. Our intention would be to have regular meetings, ensuring the most appropriate people attend including CVS and various council officers - regeneration, assets and communities teams - to assist with the above.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT CONVENTION – MOTION FROM COUNCIL 9 FEBRUARY 2022

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – People and Technology providing a summary of the work being undertaken in support of the Violence and Harassment Convention, and addressing the specific points raised in the motion submitted to Council on 9 February 2022.

Councillor Rooney moved that Council agree to note the update.

Councillor Conaghan asked Councillor Rooney if he would accept the following as an addendum to his motion:-

Council recognises the real problems West Dunbartonshire has with domestic violence and therefore commits to no reduction in funding to Women's Aid and Rape Crisis for the whole of this Council term.

Councillor Rooney confirmed his acceptance, and the motion with addendum was agreed by the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The Provost adjourned the meeting for a short recess. The meeting reconvened at 12.08 p.m. with all those listed in the sederunt present.

EMERGENCY ITEM OF BUSINESS COUNCILLOR MCGINTY - COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Councillor McGinty moved:-

This Council notes the cost of living increased markedly over the past year driven by the increase in the wholesale cost of oil and gas; the increase in demand following the public health emergency, market failure in the energy market and the impact of Brexit.

Council also notes that the UK Government and Scottish Government took measures to address the impact of the cost of living crisis, but there is still more to be done.

West Dunbartonshire Council had already agreed to set up a cross-party cost of living working group to help local residents to cope with the impact of rising prices.

In order to fund local initiatives the council agrees to use available COVID funds to release £600,000 to add to the £400,000 set aside at the budget in March, creating a Cost of Living fund of £1m.

In addition, the Council also agrees to earmark a further £1m of capital to support council and community organisations with capital costs for cost of living initiatives.

A process will be developed to review applications for funding to be submitted through the Cost of Living Working Group for consideration and then passed to an appropriate committee or council for approval.

Given the urgency of getting some initiatives in place in advance of the summer the Council agrees the following projects are funded from the cost of living fund.

- £52,000 funding to provide a foodbank supplement of £1,000 per week shared between West Dunbartonshire foodbanks
- £25,000 to Antonine Sports Centre to support sports and leisure programme for local residents over the rest of the financial year.
- £22,000 free summer swim for school pupils initiative helping families with additional costs.
- £12,500 for free all-inclusive family memberships from July to August for families identified by Working4U.
- £8,350 to support the Recycling Room with rental costs for the next 12 months while they develop a bid to the lottery or other funders.
- £5,000 for free gym membership over the summer for 14 year to 18 year in WDLT fitness suites.
- In addition there are a number of school based activities funded from within existing education services resources.

As well as the above, the Council agrees to:

- Set up a an energy Household Energy Support Fund using £250,000 and
- To provide up to £50,000 for targeted community bulk uplifts, grass cutting and litter picking to clean up our estates where families do not have the funds to pay for these items.

Council officers are requested to work with Faifley Food Share to help them submit a bid through the Cost of Living Working Group for capital funding for a replacement van; and to support Awestruck Academy to submit bids to the Cost of Living working Group to help develop the services they provide to the local community.

The Council notes that the cost of living package includes the £750,000 clothing grant which was agreed in March.

The Governance arrangements mean that a planned HSCP package which includes a range of proposals to be considered by the Health & Social Care Partnership are set out below:

- 4 x welfare rights staff to support an income maximisation campaign
£150,000
- Children's services staff x 4 £120,000

- Participatory budget £300,000
- Kinship carers and Foster carers £120,000
- Carers support £850,000

The above have been discussed with the Chief Officer but it is for the Integrated Joint Board to approve these earmarked funds- to support the west Dunbartonshire Cost of Living Plan.

In addition to the above the Labour Administration plan to abolish the £1.5m of non-residential care charges at the August HSCP. The aim is that the HSCP covers the loss of income from HSCP un-earmarked reserves.

The Council agreed the motion.

**EMERGENCY ITEM OF BUSINESS
COUNCILLOR BOLLAN - RENT ABATEMENT, SMALL BUSINESSES,
ALEXANDRIA**

Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor Dickson moved:-

Council agrees to 100% rent abatement for the small, family businesses in Main Street, Alexandria affected by the Masterplan works currently underway for the remainder of the contract.

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

This Council notes that many of the small businesses in Alexandria have been adversely affected by the ongoing works taking place at Smollett Fountain and need support. We also acknowledge that they have struggled to survive the effects of the pandemic and are now facing a cost of living crisis. The normal approach is that businesses need to provide proof of loss and the Council must be aware of how much any action would cost.

Given the urgency of the situation this Council instructs officers to meet with the businesses over the next week and to come to a quickly arranged Cost of Living Group meeting to put forward any proposals that will give them the appropriate support that they need and this will be delegated to the Assets Co-ordinator to implement following the recommendations from the Working Group. This will have to include measures such as rent relief and ensuring that the shops are shown to be open for business and any other measures that could help increase the footfall of these shops.

ADJOURNMENT

The Provost agreed to adjourn the meeting for a short period to allow the motion and amendment to be considered by officers.

The meeting reconvened at 1.29 p.m. with all those listed in the sederunt present.

The Legal Officer provided clarification on the Scheme of Delegation, and in view of this and with the agreement of the mover, seconder and majority of those present Councillor McGinty withdrew her amendment and moved an amended version as follows, which was seconded by Councillor Rooney:-

This Council recognises that many small businesses in Alexandria have been adversely affected by the ongoing works taking place at the Smollett Fountain and require support. We also acknowledge that they have struggled to survive the effects of the COVID pandemic and are now facing a cost of living crisis. The normal approach is that businesses need to provide proof of loss and the Council must be aware of how much that action would cost and how it will be funded.

Given the urgency of this matter, this Council instructs officers to start meeting with the businesses today to discuss any proposals to give them the appropriate support they need. This will include measures such as rent abatements from today for the small locally owned businesses and any other measures to show that these shops remain open for business and help them to increase their footfall.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost McAllister and Councillors Edward, Johal, Lennie, McBride, McGinty, McKay, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 9 voted for the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, McColl, McElhill, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor. The amendment was declared carried.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(a) Motion by Councillor Gordon Scanlan – West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust

Councillor Scanlan, seconded by Councillor Pollock moved:-

Council recognises the outstanding contribution of all staff and volunteers from all arms of West Dunbartonshire Leisure including Sport Development and active schools, many of whom have been dedicated to the delivery of sport, physical activity and physical literacy for decades. Council appreciates the lifelong benefits of this to residents of all ages within our community and especially so for their contribution in areas of high deprivation, to children and to those with additional support needs.

Council finds the current restructure proposal which would result in staff losses unacceptable, especially given the rise in the management budget for leisure services.

Council calls on the Leisure Trust to scrap the current restructure proposal.

Council is conscious that the staff affected have now faced 2 such restructure proposals in the space of 18 months, and understand that the handling of this

latest restructure idea has caused distress, and negatively impacted trust and goodwill in senior management.

Council recommends that the Leisure Trust implement a moratorium on any organisational restructure which would result in job losses for the next 3 years giving the staff much needed security and the breathing space to continue their great work. Such an act would go a long way to help repair strained workplace relations.

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

That the Council notes the motion and takes no action at this time when consultation is ongoing.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost McAllister and Councillors Edward, Johal, Lennie, McBride, McGinty, McKay, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 9 voted for the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, McColl, McElhill, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor. The amendment was declared carried.

(b) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – Warmth Centres

Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor Dickson moved:-

Council agrees that no Citizen should need to choose between heating or eating. Accordingly the Council agrees to explore the option of setting up , in advance of the winter, at least three "warmth centres" across West Dunbartonshire for people to attend through the day and evenings to ensure no Citizen needs to choose between heating or eating with a report being brought back to the next Council meeting providing options and costs. The warmth centres could be located in church halls with the Council paying heating costs or in community centres which are already staffed. The report can detail options. The report can also outline how any costs can be paid for, however a request should be made that reserves held by the HSCP be used for this purpose.

Further, the Council also agrees to state publicly, via the Council Leader, that WDC will not agree to any forced energy disconnections of domestic premises and will assist/advise any citizen facing a disconnection by any energy supplier.

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

This Council welcomes Jim's proposals for Warmth Centres but we believe this should be discussed by the Working Group, which will then bring forward proposals to either Council or the appropriate committee.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost McAllister and Councillors Edward, Johal, Lennie, McBride, McGinty,

McKay, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 9 voted for the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, McColl, McElhill, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor. The amendment was declared carried.

(c) **Motion by Councillor Karen Conaghan – Democracy and Political Balance**

The Provost advised that the Council required to suspend Standing Order 20(a) to allow consideration of this item of business.

On a vote being taken, 9 Members voted for the suspension of the Standing Order and 11 against. As two thirds of those present and voting were not in favour of the suspension, the item of business was not considered.

(d) **Motion by Councillor Daniel Lennie – Vandalism at Our Lady of Loretto Primary School**

Councillor Lennie moved:-

This Council is deeply disappointed to learn about yet another incident of vandalism at Our Lady of Loretto Primary School in Dalmuir.

It is noted that according to Police Scotland this is the latest of a series of instances of vandalism at the school over recent months.

This Council is concerned about the security of the outdoor spaces at the school and calls on the Council to consider measures to make the school outdoor spaces more secure.

Council also agrees that the damaged facilities and equipment should be repaired and replaced as a matter of priority to ensure children can continue to use outdoor play facilities when they return after the summer holidays.

The costs of the repair works and any improvements to security are to be funded from existing council capital and revenue resources within Education.

The proposed improvements shall include the following:

- A new Multi-Use Games Area as already agreed £250,000
- Upgrade to CCTV £21,485
- New fencing and gates £63,658

The Council agreed the motion.

(e) Motion by Depute Provost John Millar – Armed Forces Covenant

In Depute Provost Millar's absence Councillor Rooney moved:-

West Dunbartonshire Council renews its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, which is based on the premise that those who serve or have served, and their families deserve respect, support and fair treatment. In particular, it states that:

“Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.”

West Dunbartonshire Council is proud to be Armed Forces friendly and recognises the enormous contribution and sacrifices that members of the Armed Forces and their families make every day for the safety and security of our country.

West Dunbartonshire values the service of all British Armed Forces personnel, past and present, including those from Commonwealth Nations.

This Council requests the production of a report examining what more West Dunbartonshire Council can do to support our serving and veteran community across the full range of services we provide and strengthen partnerships with the Armed Forces Community.

The Council agreed the motion.

The meeting closed at 2.27 p.m.

