

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 25 October 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald, Councillors Denis Agnew, George Black, Jim Bolland, Margaret Bootland, Dennis Brogan*, Geoff Calvert*, Gail Casey, Tony Devine, James Flynn, Jackie Maceira, Douglas McAllister, James McCallum, Linda McColl, Duncan McDonald, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair, Connie O'Sullivan, Iain Robertson, Martin Rooney and Andy White.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; David McMillan, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services; Liz McGinley, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work Services; Terry Lanagan, Head of Service (Schools' Estate); David Connell, Head of Finance; Jim Pow, Manager of Finance (Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services); Stephen Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Margaret McGregor.

Provost Alistair Macdonald in the Chair

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 10360 Having heard Provost Macdonald, the Council agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter recorded in these minutes.
- 10361 At this point Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-
- 10362 In terms of Standing Order 13 (B), the Council agrees to adjourn this meeting until after the adjourned special meeting has been reconvened.
- 10363 The Best Value report is a public document which has raised considerable public debate about this Council.

- 10364 The refusal of the Labour Administration to discuss the report is without doubt fuelling the poor public opinion of this Council.
- 10365 To allow this report to go unchallenged in the chamber is neglecting the Council's responsibilities to its citizens.
- 10366 After hearing Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed to proceed by way of a roll call vote.
- 10367 On a vote being taken, 4 Members voted for the adjournment (namely Councillors Bollan, Black, McLaughlin and Robertson) and 15 against (namely Provost Macdonald and Councillors Agnew, Bootland, Casey, Devine, Flynn, Maceira, McAllister, McCallum, McColl, McDonald, McNair, O'Sullivan, Rooney and White).
- 10368 Accordingly, the motion for the adjournment was not carried and the meeting proceeded as follows.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2006/2007 – BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2006 (PERIOD 5)

- 10369 A report was submitted the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services containing information on the performance of the Housing Revenue Account to the period ended 15 September 2006 (Period 5).
- 10370 Having heard the Manager of Finance (Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services) in answer to Members' questions and following discussion, the Council agreed to note the terms of the report.

NOTE: Councillor Brogan entered the meeting during the discussion on the above item.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/2007 – BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2006 (PERIOD 5)

- 10371 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2006/2007 up to 15 September 2006 (Period 5).
- 10372 Having heard the Manager of Finance (Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services) and Councillor Flynn, Spokesperson for Housing Services in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the contents of the report and approved the budget virement as referred to in paragraph 3.8 of the report and detailed on Appendix D of the report (shown as Appendix I to these Minutes).

OPEN FORUM

- 10373 The Council noted that no open forum questions had been received from members of the public.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 10374 The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 30 August 2006 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

- 10375 The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 31 August 2006 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 10376 The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit and Performance Review Committee held on 20 September 2006 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

NOTE: Councillor Flynn left the meeting at this point.

- 10377 Having heard the Chief Executive in response to a question by Councillor Black on the Leader's Open Line, it was noted that the Chief Executive would provide Councillor Black with further information outwith the meeting.

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

- 10378 The Minutes of Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held on 20 September 2006 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

MINUTES OF THE RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

- 10379 The Minutes of Meeting of the Recruitment Committee held on 5 October 2006 were submitted and noted.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 10380 Councillor Robertson declared a non-financial interest in the following item of business and left the Chamber during the deliberation thereon.

REMITTS FROM CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE

- 10381 Reference was made to the Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee (CSC) held on 27 September 2006 (Pages 2698/99, paragraphs 10167/74 refer), when it had been agreed to refer the undernoted applications for grant to Council for approval:-
- (a) Mill Road Sheltered Housing Residents;
 - (b) Clydebank Life Story Group;
 - (c) Linnvale Senior Citizens Club; and
 - (d) St. Peter's Primary School.
- 10382 Copies of the schedules, which provided details of the applications together with the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee (as shown in Appendix II to these minutes), were submitted for consideration.
- 10383 Having heard Councillor Devine, the Council agreed:-
- (1) to approve the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee in respect of those applications of grant referred to at (a) to (c) above; and
 - (2) in view of the budgetary pressures faced by the local grants budget, the Council instructs the Chief Executive together with the Director of Education and Cultural Services and the Acting Director of Social Work Services to liaise with the Head of Finance and agree a virement transfer of £60,000 into the local grants budget. Full details of the budget lines comprising the transfer will be presented to the Corporate Services Committee at its meeting to be held on 29 November 2006.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 10384 Councillor Devine declared a non-financial interest in the application for grant received from St. Peter's Primary School and left the Chamber during the deliberation thereon.
- 10385 Having heard Councillor White, the Council agreed to approve the recommendation of the Corporate Services Committee in respect of the application for grant received from St. Peter's Primary School.

GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2006/2007 (PERIOD 5)

- 10386 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the progress of the General Services Capital Plan for 2006/2007.

10387 Having heard the Manager of Finance (Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services) in answer to Members' questions and following discussion, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to approve the updated capital plan as outlined in Appendices, I, II and III to the report; and
- (2) to note that the Manager of Finance (Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services) would provide Councillor McLaughlin with the additional information that he had requested in respect of the Capital Plan outwith the meeting.

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2006/2007 (PERIOD 5)

10388 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the performance of the General Services Revenue Budget for the period to 15 September 2006.

10389 Councillor Devine, seconded by Councillor Rooney, moved:-

10390 That the Council agrees to note the terms of the report.

10391 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Bollan, moved:-

10392 That the Council agrees to note the report on the General Services Revenue Budget.

10393 In addition, the Council agrees that large organisations are by their very nature open to potential fraudulent activities and misuse of resources.

10394 The Best Value Audit Report highlighted weaknesses and potential misuse of resources as well as concerns over the procurement of contracts and goods.

10395 Therefore to restore public confidence in the Council we instruct the monitoring officer to request that Internal Audit, Audit Scotland and Strathclyde Police are invited into the Council to provide advice and to investigate any alleged breaches of the Council's financial regulations.

10396 The agencies should also be requested to investigate all Council & Committee decisions, in particular the Recruitment Committee, the Community Planning Partnership and the Children's Services Committee's decisions on school closures.

10397 In addition, the Council also agrees to instruct the monitoring officer to bring a further report back to Council on the following issues:-

- (a) Lowering the delegated financial threshold of officers to £25,000.
- (b) Possible revisions to the extent of officer's delegated authority.
- (c) Consideration that tender documents should no longer be opened by the departments involved and all sealed bids should be submitted directly to the Legal Department.

NOTE: Councillor Calvert entered the meeting during the debate on this item.

10398 On a vote being taken, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 16 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS 2005/2006

10399 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing the Council with a copy of the audited abstract of accounts for the year to 31 March 2006.

10400 Councillor Devine, seconded by White, moved:-

10401 That the Council agrees to note the abstract of accounts for the year to 31 March 2006 and thanks all staff involved in the preparation of the accounts.

10402 The Head of Legal and Administrative Services and Head of Finance were heard in response to Members' questions.

10403 At this point Councillor Bollan proposed the following amendment to the motion:-

10404 That this Council expresses some concerns over the recent sale of assets in Dumbarton and Alexandria.

10405 In particular the decisions regarding the disposal of Leven Cottage, Renton CE Centre, Renton Library and Levenford House which were highlighted as having no strategic approach.

10406 Therefore in light of these comments this Council agrees, where able, to suspend the decisions highlighted.

10407 The Council instructs the monitoring officer and Internal Audit to conduct an investigation into the decision making processes, associated costs and consequences resulting from the decisions taken.

10408 Following consultation with the Legal Officer, Provost Macdonald ruled that the amendment was not competent and accordingly, the motion was carried.

THE SCHOOLS FUND 2006/07 – ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION

- 10409 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing Council of the allocation of additional funds made available by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) for school building improvements in 2006-2007 and seeking approval of Council to proposals for the disbursement of these additional funds.
- 10410 Councillor Agnew, seconded by Councillor McNair, moved:-
- 10411 That the recommendations of the report be approved as follows:-
- (1) to approve the allocation of the additional School Fund grant for 2006/07 of £610,000 to the projects outlined in paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8 of the report, namely:-
- St. Joseph's Primary School – Replacement window Programme: £285,000;
 - installation of thermostatic radiator valves to 15 schools: £100,000;
 - extension of Building Energy Maintenance Systems (BEMS) controls to school heating systems in 15 schools: £115,000;
 - improvement to boiler house pipe insulation in 15 schools: £14,000;
 - improvement to cavity wall and/or loft insulation in 11 schools: £33,000;
 - completion of project to install energy efficient lighting to Our Lady and St Patrick's High School: £60,000; and
- (2) to instruct officers to commence the planning, tendering and implementation of these projects as a matter of urgency to ensure that the full grant is spent by 31 March 2007.
- 10412 The Head of Service (Schools' Estate) was heard in answer to Members' questions.
- 10413 As an amendment, Councillor Robertson, seconded by Councillor Brogan, moved:-
- 10414 That this Council agrees the recommendation and endorses the comments of all Members in relation to the proposals for schools.
- 10415 The Council welcomes the officer's report and professional recommendations and identification of priorities for the new resources.
- 10416 However, the Council expresses deep concern over the decision making processes that led to the allocation of the previous round of Schools Fund.

- 10417 And in the light of the comments in the Best Value Audit Report regarding the role of the leadership in the decision of the allocation of the previous school's improvement fund: the Council agrees that Education should always remain above political interference and resources should be distributed on the basis of identified need, rather than a political agenda.
- 10418 While the Audit report highlights that the Leadership has a clear commitment and vision it has not been able to convey that vision to others, despite being in post for some time.
- 10419 This Council agrees that there is sufficient evidence contained within the report to prove that the Leadership, both politically and managerially, has at times been grossly ineffective.
- 10420 In addition, it is clear that the majority of staff responding to the Audit Commission survey said that the Members did not provide good leadership and nearly half respondents said the same of managers.
- 10421 Therefore, this Council agrees to call on the Labour Party to suspend Councillor Leader Andrew White and his Depute, Councillor Jim Flynn from their posts.
- 10422 Further, the Council agrees to establish an Investigation Committee to take evidence on areas of managerial weaknesses and report back to the Council after 3 months.
- 10423 The Council also instructs the monitoring officer to draft a Councillors' and Convenors' responsibilities protocol and that all Members undertake compulsory training on the protocol.
- 10424 Furthermore, this Council agrees to develop stronger reporting mechanisms for officers who feel pressurised by Councillors and Senior Management.
- 10425 The Council also instructs the monitoring officer to scrutinise all Committee reports and to ensure that a professional officer recommendation is contained within each report.

ADJOURNMENT

- 10426 Having heard Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed to adjourn for a short period.
- 10427 The meeting reconvened at 3.15 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance with the exception of Councillors Bootland, Devine and McDonald.

NOTE: Councillors Bootland, Devine and McDonald re-entered the meeting during the debate on the above item.

- 10428 On a vote being taken, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 16 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

THE INTEGRATED CARE PILOT AT VALE OF LEVEN HOSPITAL

- 10429 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services highlighting concerns about NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's decision not to proceed with the Integrated Care Pilot and the impact this decision would have on the future viability of services at the Vale of Leven Hospital.
- 10430 Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McNair, moved:-
- 10431 That this Council expresses its concerns about NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's decision not to proceed with the Integrated Care Pilot, which follows on from over 20 significant services which have been curtailed, transferred or withdrawn since 2002 and the impact these cumulative decisions will have on the future viability of services at the Vale of Leven Hospital.
- 10432 Furthermore, this Council is dismayed that the evidence on which the assessment of the pilot was made has not been made fully public. Council calls on NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GG&C) to make the assessment public so that the people of West Dunbartonshire can draw their own conclusions about this extremely disappointing situation.
- 10433 Council recognises the need for a proactive leadership role in the overall campaign for the long-term future of the Vale of Leven Hospital. It has been suggested that the Scottish Ambulance Service future planning is for four Trauma Centres for the whole of Scotland and we instruct the Chief Executive to invite the Ambulance Service to make an early presentation to Council on their plans.
- 10434 We further instruct the Chief Executive to invite presentations from the Chief Executive and the Chair of NHS GG&C to full Council.
- 10435 Finally we call on all groups campaigning to retain services at the Vale of Leven Hospital to work together in the interests of the whole community of Dumbarton, Vale of Leven and Helensburgh district.
- 10436 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-
- 10437 That the Council recognises the critical role that the Vale of Leven Hospital plays in the health of our local and surrounding populations.

- 10438 The Council also recognises that the government's policy of centralisation of services is at the core of the problems facing most hospitals like the Vale. This Council also agrees that there is only one party placing the health service under threat and as such we urge the Council to agree the following:-
- 10439 This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the MSP and MP, instructing them to inform the Health Minister to force Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to shelf any further plans for the removal of services at the Vale. In addition the Minister should also be asked to address the questions, anomalies and issues raised in the report.
- 10440 Furthermore, the Council agrees to ask the Minister to give a public commitment to restoring the services that have been stripped away since the Government's flagship policy was passed.
- 10441 Finally, the Council instructs the Chief Executive to invite the Ambulance Service to make an early presentation to Council on their plans.
- 10442 On a vote being taken, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 16 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 10443 Councillor White declared a non-financial interest in the following item of business and left the Chamber during the deliberation thereon.

ST. ANDREWS DAY ANTI RACISM EVENT 2006 – LOVE SCOTLAND HATE RACISM

- 10444 The Council noted that the Scottish Trades Union Congress, supported by the Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance, would hold the Annual St. Andrew's Day Anti-Racism Event on Saturday 25 November 2006 in the ABC Concert Venue, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.
- 10445 Having heard Councillor McNair, the Council agreed:-
- (1) that the Council should send a letter of support to the organisers and agrees to publicise this event, widely throughout West Dunbartonshire; and
 - (2) to make a contribution of £200 towards the costs of the march and rally.

RETIRAL OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 10446 Provost Macdonald informed the Council that this would be the last meeting which Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive, would attend as he was retiring from Council Service at the end of the month.
- 10447 Provost Macdonald thanked Mr Huntingford for his services to the Council over the past 11 years and wished him a long and happy retirement.
- 10448 On behalf of the Administration, Councillor White, praised Mr Huntingford for his work as Chief Executive and previously as Director of Social Work and Housing Services of West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 10449 Councillor McLaughlin, on behalf of the Opposition, thanked Mr Huntingford for his services to the Council and wished him a happy retirement.
- 10450 In response, Mr Huntingford thanked everyone for their kind words and informed the Council that he had mixed emotions about leaving. He thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to lead the Council staff over the past seven and half years and closed by wishing the Council, individual elected members and staff well for the future.

The meeting closed at 4.26 p.m.