

FINANCE COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Finance Committee held within the Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 13 September 2000 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald (LAB) and Councillors Anthony Devine (LAB), Mary Campbell (LAB), Daniel McCafferty (LAB), Andrew White (LAB), Geoffrey Calvet (LAB & CO-OP), James McCallum (LAB & CO-OP), John Trainer (LAB), James Bollan (SSP), Craig McLaughlin (SNP), Ronald McColl (SNP), Margaret McGregor (SNP) and James Flynn (LAB).

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Eric Walker, Director of Corporate Services; Crawford Howat, Head of Finance; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; James Alexander, Information Services Systems Manager and David Connell, Manager of Accounting.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Iain Robertson (SNP) and Connie O'Sullivan (LAB).

Councillor Anthony Devine in the Chair

KNOWETOP COMMUNITY FARM - DEPUTATION

There were submitted letters received from the Knowetop Community Farm Management Committee asking that the Committee receive a Deputation from the Management Committee to allow them to present the case for continued funding of the Community Farm.

The Committee, in terms of Standing Order 16(a) agreed that the Deputation be heard.

Accordingly, at this point in the meeting Mrs Eleanor Mitchell, Project Administrator and Mrs Mary Sweeney, Treasurer of the Knowetop Community Farm Management Committee were introduced to the meeting. Mrs Mitchell proceeded to outline the case on behalf of the Committee for the grant of continued funding support for the Community Farm up until March 2001. Mrs Sweeney was also heard in this regard. Thereafter the representatives of the Management Committee answered questions by members and officials and then withdrew.

On the motion of Councillor Trainer, seconded by Councillor Calvert, the Committee unanimously agreed that the sum of £10,500 be granted to Knowetop Community Farm to allow the project to continue until March 2001, such sum to be met from the Dumbarton Common Good Fund.

GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

There was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services with regard to further funding of grants to voluntary organisations for consideration by the Committee.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McCafferty declared an interest in the application for grant for Clydebank Burgh Band and took no part in the Committee's deliberations thereon.

Councillor McGregor declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application for West Dunbartonshire Community Drugs Services and accordingly took no part in the Committee's deliberations thereof

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the applications received for Education Grants be dealt with as shown in Appendix 1 to this minute;
- (b) that the applications received for Social Work Grants be dealt with as shown in Appendix 2 to this minute;
- (c) that the applications received for Local/General Grants be dealt with as shown in Appendix 3 to this minute;
- (d) in terms of the foregoing item of business, that a grant of £10,500 be made to Knowetop Community Farm, this sum to be met from the Dumbarton Common Good Fund;
- (e) that a grant of £3,500 for rent of Dumbarton premises be awarded from the Dumbarton Common Good Fund towards Alternatives - West Dunbartonshire Community Drugs Services;
- (f) in relation to the West Dunbartonshire Festival Association it was agreed that this matter be continued to the next meeting of the Committee and that a further report be submitted at that time on the advantages/disadvantages of the previous move away from Balloch to Dumbarton, further changes to be made and the security costs; and
- (g) that applications for community council funding be as shown as Appendix 4 to these minutes; that the sum of £1,030.87 be made to Dumbarton North Community Council in accordance with the previously agreed formula whilst noting that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting by the Director of Corporate Services on outstanding matters, particularly relating to property costs.

PREPARATION OF 2001/2002 REVENUE ESTIMATES

There was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services advising that work was about to commence on the preparation of the 2001/2002 Revenue Estimates and recommending the basis on which those estimates should be prepared.

The Committee agreed that the Draft 2001/2002 Revenue Estimates be prepared on the basis of the current level of service provision. Councillor Bollan requested that his dissent be recorded.

**THE COUNCIL TAX (ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT) (SCOTLAND)
AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2000**

There was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the impact of the new Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Amendment to Regulations 2000 which came into force on 1 August 2000 and making recommendations on their implementation.

Councillor Ronald McColl, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved that no action be taken on the implementation of Paragraph 3.1.1 of the report until the system was shown to work properly.

As an amendment, Councillor Devine, seconded by Councillor White, moved that the Committee approve the report in that:-

- (a) there be no requirement to issue Final Notices from 2001/2002 onwards;
- (b) with respect to the date of the first instalment, the Council seek confirmation from the Scottish Executive regarding the timetable of announcements for 2001/2002 and that in the interim period the 2001/2002 budget timetable be based upon the earliest date as per the options attached to the report; and
- (c) the points raised by members of the Opposition on the Committee be referred to the Anti-Poverty Working Group.

On a vote being taken, 4 members voted for the motion and 7 for the amendment. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

INVITATION TO TENDER - DEBT RECOVERY SERVICE

With reference to the minutes of meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 1999 (**Volume page 5050 refers**) there was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services recommending a specification for Debt Recovery Services which would form the Council's invitation to tender for such services.

Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Ronald McColl, moved that the Committee:-

- (a) approve the report, subject to Clause 23 to the report being expanded to include Job Seekers Allowance Income Based and any other benefits of a similar nature; and
- (b) ask officers to investigate the possibility of a one year duration for the contract but that, if this was not reasonably possible, both Group Leaders and the Convener of this Committee be advised in order that they might consult with their colleagues.

Councillor Bollan asked that his dissent be recorded.

UPDATE ON FINANCE REVENUES COLLECTION

There was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the progress made in connection with the collection of the Council Tax levied.

The Committee, following discussion, noted that the collection performance for 2000/2001 as at 31 July 2000 was significantly better than the performance for any prior year at the same point in time and that significant reductions in mail back-logs were being achieved as a result of the recruitment of additional staff.

HOUSING BILL OFFICER - COSLA REQUEST FOR FUNDING

There was submitted report by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services intimating that a request had been made by COSLA for authorities to each make a contribution of £2,000 towards the cost of a Temporary Housing Bill Officer.

The Committee agreed to approve a contribution of £2,000 to COSLA to assist in the funding of the temporary post of Housing Bill Officer, such costs to be met from the 2000/2001 HRA Budget.

1999/2000 ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS

There was submitted, and noted, report by the Director of Corporate Services, enclosing letter from the Accounts Commission to the effect that the Commission was delighted to note that the Council had met the 30 June deadline for lodgement of the 1999/2000 draft Accounts.

DRAFT ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2000

There was submitted, and noted, report by the Director of Corporate Services on the Draft Abstract of Accounts for the year to 31 March 2000.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

There was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services, the Annual Treasury Management Report for 1999/2000.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

TREASURY TRANSACTION

There was submitted, and noted, report by the Director of Corporate Services on the Treasury Transactions of the Council for the period from 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2000.

INTEREST RATES (1 APRIL 2000 TO 31 JULY 2000)

There was submitted, and noted, report by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the interest rates during the period from 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2000.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2000/01

There was submitted report by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the performance of the General Services Budget for the current year.

The Committee, following discussion, agreed:-

- (a) that a report be submitted to Council on the actual net savings arising from the Management Review;
- (b) that the Chief Executive instruct all departments to provide an updated list of those Officers who had left Council; and
- (c) that the Committee thank all those officers involved in the Management Review.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND

There was submitted, and noted, report by the Director of Corporate Services providing details of income and expenditure to Period 4 and advising of the implications of the organisational changes of Lomond Enterprise and Clydebank Development Company with regard to their funding arrangements within West Dunbartonshire Council.

IRRV - ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION - TORQUAY

There were submitted details of the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Conference and Exhibition to be held in Torquay between 17 and 20 October 2000.

The Committee agreed that any member of the Committee who so wished be authorised to attend.

The meeting finished at 11.50 a.m.