

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Council: 27 October 2010

Subject: Venues for Council Meetings in Clydebank in 2011

1. Purpose

1.1 This report asks the Council to consider possible venues for Council meetings in Clydebank in 2011.

2. Background

2.1 At its meeting on 29 September 2010, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Committee timetable for meetings to be held in January to December 2011 (as appended to the report) subject to the provisions in paragraphs (2) and (3) below;*
- (2) to approve, in principle, that those meetings scheduled to be held in Clydebank should be held in the Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, unless officers are able to identify other suitable accommodation in the Clydebank area;*
- (3) to request officers to investigate the possibility of using other venues for meetings in the Clydebank area and report back to the next meeting of Council; and*
- (4) that, given the current financial pressures on the Council and the amount of officers' time taken up in the production of the Council diary, the Council should no longer produce a diary.*

2.2 Given the relatively short period of time between the decision being taken and the deadline for reports, officers have only been able to carry out some initial work on this and therefore this report informs the Council of the position to date.

3. Main Issues

3.1 It is important to note that all accommodation used to host Council/Committee meetings must be accessible to all members of public. In addition, the venue should have good lighting, suitable furniture, and have adequate parking facilities for both able bodied and disabled persons.

- 3.2** At its previous meeting the Council rejected the use of the Dalmuir CE Centre as it did not want existing users to be displaced to accommodate Council meetings. It was also suggested that officers should look at using the new schools albeit concerns were expressed on the possible costs which the Council might incur as a result of this.

Use of schools to host meetings

- 3.3** It is clear that this option only relates to meetings of the full Council which are held in the evening. It would not be possible for meetings to take place in schools during daytime as the assembly halls will be in use by the school and, in any event, the meeting would be interrupted by noise from children outwith class time and/or the school bell or siren.
- 3.4** Having inspected both Clydebank High School and St Peter the Apostle High School, it would appear that the only suitable rooms for full Council meetings would be the main assembly halls; the Conference Rooms are too small and therefore would not be suitable. However, it is also likely that acoustics in the Assembly Halls would be poor due to the high ceilings and therefore Members would need to use microphones in order to be heard. The cost of hiring the new schools would be £32 per hour for every hour after 10.00 p.m. Given that meetings could potentially not finish until 11.30 p.m. and allowing time to clear the hall, it is anticipated that the let for each meeting would cost £64. Given that there are 5 Council meetings scheduled to take place in Clydebank the total cost is estimated to be £320.
- 3.5** Goldenhill Primary School was also considered as a possible venue but has been ruled out due to lack of suitable (adult sized) furniture. In addition, the head teacher has advised that there is a regular let in the school on a Wednesday evening which would need to be moved to accommodate Council meetings.

Other Venues

- 3.6** St Eunan's Community Hall, which has been refurbished recently, is available for both daytime and evening lets on a Wednesday, subject to approval by the Parish Council. On inspection, the main hall is a good size, is well lit and is accessible to wheelchair users; there is as a ramp to the front of the building and a disabled toilet in the ladies toilet area. There is also adequate parking to the front and rear of the hall and at the side of the Church. However, the cost of the lets will be approximately £20 - £25 per hour (still to be set) which means that the cost of full Council would be approximately £120 to £150 per meeting. Based on 5 scheduled meetings in 2011, the cost would be approximately £600 to £750. There are 20 service committee meetings scheduled to take place in Clydebank in 2011 therefore based on 3 hours per meeting the cost of booking the hall would be approximately £1200 - £1500 for the year.

3.7 There are of course other community/church halls in the Clydebank area which Members might wish to consider. However, it is recommended that an inspection takes place prior to any decision being taken.

4. People Implications

4.1 The use of external accommodation would mean that there would be no requirement for 'Council Officers' to attend the meeting as janitorial staff would be provided by the venue. This should reduce the burden of overtime on the council and offset some of the additional costs mentioned above.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications are outlined in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.6 above.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 It is important to note that all accommodation used to host Council/Committee meetings must be accessible to all members of public and therefore this should be a key consideration in the choice of venue.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 It is clear that there are suitable venues such as St Eunan's Community Hall and the two new High Schools which could accommodate meetings of the full Council. However, it is not feasible to hold meetings in schools during the daytime unlike St Eunan's Community Hall. In terms of acoustics, St Eunan's Community Hall has a low ceiling which should enable Members to be heard without the requirement for microphones; the same cannot be said of the two high schools.

8.2 It is recommended that the Council considers the issue of venues for Council meetings in Clydebank and instructs officers accordingly.

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Wards Affected: All Clydebank Wards

Background Papers: Report to West Dunbartonshire Council on 29 September 2010 – Timetable of Meetings January to December 2011.

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