

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, on Wednesday 31 October 2007 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Denis Agnew and Councillors George Black, Jim Bollan, Margaret Bootland, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Jim Finn, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Ronnie McColl, Jim McElhill, Patrick McGlinchey, Craig McLaughlin, Willie McLaughlin, Marie McNair, John Millar, Iain Robertson, Martin Rooney and May Smillie.

Attending: David McMillan, Chief Executive; Liz McGinlay, Executive Director of Educational Services; Bill Clark, Executive Director of Social Work and Health; Ronnie Dinnie, Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Land and Environment); Irving Hodgson, Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration Services); David Connell, Head of Finance; Tricia O'Neill, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Liz Cochrane, Principal Policy Officer; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer.

Also

Attending: Phil White (Manager) and George Gillespie (Chairman), West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gail Casey and Douglas McAllister.

Provost Denis Agnew in the Chair

OPEN FORUM

The following question was submitted to Council for consideration:-

Mrs Heather Graham, Dumbarton - Manor Kingdom Development at Kiel School, Kirktonhill Conservation Area, Dumbarton

The wholesale removal of mature trees has been carried out in a large area of the above woodland site *regardless* of their condition. (A good number of these trees *were* in good condition, despite subjective claims to the contrary.)

Indeed, in this part of the site, according to the Planning Department's own Report, houses were built only in '*natural clearings, to prevent unacceptably compromising the mature trees*'.

However, all trees have instead been removed and the developer is constructing high density housing very close to the boundary wall at Helenslee Road.

In the case of the house under construction which faces out along Dixon Drive – this is so obviously sited in order to be a permanent advert for the Manor Kingdom Development – but it is insensitively and poorly sited with regard to the integrity of the Conservation Area at that end of Dixon Drive.

This development is creating massive and severe alterations to the landscape throughout the site, whereby the ground level is being substantially raised. High artificial mounds have been formed, on top of which 'luxury' houses are being constructed. Thus the conservation area landscape is being entirely remodelled for *no other purpose than to suit the developer* (presumably with Council approval). This is being carried out regardless of the serious impact on adjacent properties and to the local environment (with the exception that towards the south of the lower site there is some justification to raise the ground level sufficiently to protect against the potential risk of future flooding).

To respond by saying that the developer will eventually undertake re-planting of trees and surface landscaping seriously misses the point.

In consideration of the above and in particular that this major development is within a Conservation Area, my question is:-

How does the Council justify approving the wholesale removal of trees in the Conservation area; approving the immense earthwork operations which are substantially raising the ground level throughout the site to the detriment of adjacent properties; approving the high density and inappropriate locations of new builds, and regarding the high density, does this not set a (negative) precedent for other parts of the site and other parts of the Conservation area, in particular, the adjacent Carmelite Monastery and Methlan Park?

After hearing Provost Agnew, it was noted that Mrs Graham was not present and therefore the following response would be sent to Mrs Graham in writing.

Councillor Ronnie McColl responded in the following terms:-

Proposed developments have been the subject of a number of planning applications in 2004 and 2006. Most recently a planning application was granted by the Planning Committee on 8 December 2006, subject to 45 conditions. The planning applications have gone through the required procedures. Members of the public have had an opportunity to submit objections and to be heard in accordance with the Council's normal procedures.

A great deal of care and consideration went into processing the planning application for housing at the former Keil School grounds.

The site occupies an extensive area within the Kirktonhill Conservation Area in Dumbarton which contains listed buildings, former playing fields and mature trees. The trees are found in various parts of the site and include some dense woodland, perimeter planting, individual species and various self-seeded trees. Large parts of the site were also heavily overgrown with rhododendrons.

As part of the planning application an independent tree survey was carried out by arboriculturalists with individual trees being identified, tagged and their condition assessed. The survey report formed the basis of discussions with the developer over an acceptable layout for the site. The majority of trees were in poor condition, due to age, disease, damage or lack of active management. Their removal gives the opportunity to supplement the remaining trees with new planting which, combined with active management, will ensure the future natural heritage of the site.

Due to the changes in ground levels between the lower lying playing fields and the rest of the site it was necessary to carry out earthworks, including up-filling, to construct a suitable internal access road to Roads Standards. These works are ongoing and in accordance with the approved plans.

Constraints were placed on the number of houses at an early stage in the proposal to take into account its location within the conservation area, the trees on the site and the potential impact on Keil House which is a listed building. This resulted in a development of varying density with the new build element concentrated on the former playing fields and a much smaller number of units in woodland clearings. The future life of the listed building is being safeguarded by its renovation and conversion to flats. The new houses are designed to take into account design features found elsewhere in the conservation area and the plot sizes reflect the larger gardens found in the more traditional houses. It should be noted, however, that there is no uniform density in Kirktonhill as the area has a mix of modern and traditional housing.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 26 September 2007 were submitted and approved as a correct record subject to the undernoted amendment to the item under the heading "Consultation Phases One, Two and Three of the Acquired Brain Injury Services" (Page 463 refers):-

Replace the wording of (2) in the third paragraph of Page 463, with the following wording:-

"(2) that a report providing an update on the situation should be submitted to the next of meeting of the Council and every meeting thereafter until the situation is resolved."

With reference to the item headed "Consultation Phases One, Two and Three of the Acquired Brain Injury Services" (Pages 462/3 refer), Councillor McColl invited the Executive Director of Social Work and Health to provide the Council with an update on the situation.

The Executive Director of Social Work and Health made the undernoted statement:-

I have to apologise to the Council and all the service users of our Brain Injury Services and their carers.

We have failed to deliver any of the solutions we'd hope to be able to offer Mrs Irwin's family and the other 60 people with brain injury who could benefit from the support of clinical psychology.

The Consultant Psychologists who had expressed interest in taking on the supervisory role have not been able to make the commitment.

We now propose to fund and recruit a Grade A Psychologist post for the Brain Injury Team - this post will require less formal supervision and the NHS has agreed to offer this level of supervisory cover.

We are still exploring the option of sessional time to meet the immediate needs of our clients.

Tom Divers, following the letter from the Leader, has agreed to meet with us to look at the wider issue of connecting our local services into Greater Glasgow networks.

Across the rest of Greater Glasgow, Psychological Services for Brain Injury are provided from the Southern General HUB unit for brain injury. Our West Dunbartonshire service is the only community based team working in this field and that's why we don't fit into their model.

We will continue to try and find a workable solution to sustain this important service in our area.

Having heard Councillors J. McColl and McBride express their concerns on the situation, it was agreed that the Executive Director of Social Work and Health should keep Councillor J. McColl, Spokesperson for Social Work and Health and Councillor McNair, Shadow Spokesperson for Social Work and Health, informed of any developments on a weekly basis.

With reference to the item headed "Post Office Network Change Programme" (Page 466 refers), the Chief Executive was heard in response to Members' questions and, in so doing, informed the Council that a briefing note had been issued to all Members providing an update on the current situation. The Chief Executive also confirmed that he would pursue the issue of whether a letter had been sent to John McFall, MP, seeking his support to oppose any post office closures.

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 6 September 2007 were submitted.

After hearing Councillor Bootland, it was noted that these minutes had been approved at the previous meeting of Council and therefore no decision was required.

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit and Performance Review Committee held on 18 September 2007 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved, with the exception of the item headed "Review of Audit and Performance Review Committee" which had been continued at the last meeting of the Council (Page 464 refers).

CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2012

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of Council held on 26 September 2007 (Page 464 refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking the Council's approval of the final version of the Council's new Corporate Plan.

Following discussion, the Council agreed to approve the Corporate Plan 2008 -2012, as detailed in the Appendix to the report subject to the deletion of the word "administration" in the third paragraph of the Foreword (Page 3 of the document refers).

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2007 (Page 465 refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising on representations received in relation to the Council's proposed scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places for parliamentary elections and recommending adoption of a final scheme.

After hearing Councillors J. McColl and Rooney, the Council agreed to approve the undernoted motion:-

Council notes that there have been a number of representations from West Dunbartonshire Access Panel regarding possible difficulties for disabled or infirm persons accessing polling stations.

Council instructs the Returning Officer to write to Candidates and Agents after close of nominations to make them aware of the concerns people have over polling station access. The letter should ask candidates, agents and their polling agents to be mindful of the needs of the infirm and ask that they offer assistance where it is needed.

Council also instructs the Returning Officer to investigate further how best to maximise access at these identified polling stations and to bear the concerns of West Dunbartonshire Access Panel in mind when deploying his staff.

Council formally adopts the preferred scheme of polling districts and places, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, as the Council's approved scheme.

The Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services was heard in response to comments made by Councillor J. McColl concerning actions taken by officers on issues raised in relation to the accessibility of some polling places.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP – KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing the Council with an update on key developments within West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP).

Councillor Robertson moved the undernoted motion:-

In addition to the recommendation, Council instructs the Leader of the Council to table a motion at the next Community Planning Partnership Board meeting.

The motion will instruct a full review of the structure of the Community Planning Partnership management and operations to be progressed by the Partnership Board Executive Group, to ensure that the Partnership is fit for purpose and fulfils its obligations to deliver the Community Plan.

The Manager of the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership was heard in answer to Members' questions.

Following discussion, Councillor Robertson agreed to accept the undernoted amendment by Councillor Calvert as an addendum to his motion.

The Council recognises the challenges faced by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). This Council notes with disapproval also, that the Leader of the Council does not appear to be receiving the support he needs from other quarters in order to get the Partnership onto a strong and sustainable foundation.

This Council is clear in its support for the Leader of the Council in his efforts and expects all partners and agencies to confirm their support also.

In the reconfiguration of the Community Planning Partnership, this Council is concerned that the Community Safety Partnership, a partnership with an admirable track record of delivery, suffers as a consequence of actions of the Community Planning Partnership. This Council is clear in its support for the Community Safety Partnership and confirms that any decisions taken in order to develop the Community Planning Partnership must not impinge upon or undermine the successes of the CSP.

The Council agreed to approve the motion (as amended to include the above addendum).

Thereafter, Councillor Robertson confirmed that he would be happy to raise, at the CPP Board, the points made by Councillor Bolland in relation to the re-shaping of the CPP.

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS 2006/2007

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive submitting the audited abstract of accounts for the year to 31 March 2007.

Following discussion and having heard the Head of Finance in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the final abstract of accounts for the year to 31 March 2007.

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 5 (2007/2008)

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising the Council of the performance of the General Services Revenue Budget for the period to 15 September 2007.

The Council agreed to note the terms of the report.

GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 5 (2007/2008)

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive updating the Council on the General Services Capital Plan for 2007/2008.

The Council approved the updated capital plan as outlined in Appendices I, II and III of the report, shown as an Appendix to these minutes.

HRA 2007/2008 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT: PERIOD 5 (2007/2008)

A report was submitted by the Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing & Regeneration Services) providing the Council with an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the period ended 15 September 2007.

The Council agreed to note the contents of the report.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/2008 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT: PERIOD 5 (2007/2008)

A report was submitted by the Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration Services) advising the Council on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2007/2008.

Following discussion and having heard the Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration Services) in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note that a report providing more details on the projected underspend within the HRA Capital Programme would be submitted to the next meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee for consideration;
- (2) to approve the budget virement as referred to in paragraph 3.8, as detailed in Appendix D of the report; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

QUESTION

The undernoted question was submitted in terms of Standing Order No 9 (b):-

Question by Councillor Patrick McGlinchey to Councillor May Smillie, Spokesperson for Educational Services – 2008/2009 Revenue Estimates Budget Savings Options

The 2008/2009 Revenue Estimates Budget Savings Options contains £6,765,082 worth of efficiency savings for the Education and Lifelong Learning Department. However the Leader of the Council already ruled out taking any efficiency savings from the Pre 5 budgets and from the Council's successful Early Intervention Team. However the Leader of the Council has left the options of school closures on the table. What school closures do you support?

Response by Councillor May Smillie

Schools closures should only be considered where there is an educational imperative to do so, and only as part of a strategy for delivering innovation, development and attainment across the schools estate. The Council will be asked to discuss later an innovative approach to delivering quality education in a specific local area.

It is worthy of noting that the schools estate in West Dunbartonshire has suffered tremendously at the hands of the Labour party through failures to address the crumbling infrastructure within the schools estate.

The Council agrees that previous Labour administrations ignored the continued warning signs about lack of investment and falling populations, and have left the Council's education estate in an extremely poor position.

The inability to make the decisions needed to deliver quality schools for the next generation is a key fundamental failing of previous administrations that this Council must recognise.

In addition, it is worthy of mentioning that unlike this SNP Administration's Council Leader, Iain Robertson, the Leader of the Labour Opposition has made no public announcement with regard to safeguarding the world leading Early Intervention programme or our first class nursery provision.

NOTICES OF MOTION

The Council considered the undernoted motions which were submitted in accordance with Standing Order No. 8:-

(a) Motion by Councillor David McBride – Financial Settlement – Meeting with John Swinney MSP

This Council acknowledges and thanks the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, John Swinney MSP for the time and courtesy he extended towards the cross-party representation made to him by West Dunbartonshire Council at the recent meeting. The Council reiterates the points made to Mr. Swinney, namely:

- That the previous Labour Finance Minister, Tom McCabe gave West Dunbartonshire Council an increase of 4.25% in financial year 2007/2008. This equates to an extra £7m. The Finance Minister also gave the Council £1.1m for spend to save projects.
- That in noting that the SNP national policy is to have a zero percent increase in Council Tax in 2008/2009, and given that inflation is currently running at 3.3% this equates to £1.3 million of lost revenue, the Council looks to the Minister to make up any shortfall in funding consequential to implementation of this SNP manifesto commitment.
- That the Council requests that the Scottish Government matches the 4.25% increase awarded by the previous Labour led Administration.

This Council therefore instructs the Leader of the Council to confirm these points in writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Efficient Government requesting confirmation that the Cabinet Secretary will accede to these requests.

Councillor McBride was heard in support of his motion.

After hearing Councillor Black, Councillor McBride agreed that the word “matches” in the third bullet point of his motion be replaced with the word “increases”. Thereafter, Councillor Black seconded the above motion (as amended).

As an amendment, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

This Council acknowledges and thanks the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, John Swinney MSP, for the time and courtesy he extended towards the cross-party representation made to him by West Dunbartonshire Council at the recent meeting. The Council reiterates the points made to Mr. Swinney.

The Council notes that the previous Scottish Executive Finance Minister, Tom McCabe stuffed West Dunbartonshire with the lowest local government financial settlement in Scotland.

This Council notes with extreme concern the Scottish Grant settlement from Westminster is the lowest in the last 8 years.

This settlement clearly shows the contempt that the Westminster Government has for the Scottish people and their democratically elected Government.

Furthermore, this Council notes with concern the likely impact that the settlement from Westminster is going to have on Scottish Local government funding and indeed this Council.

To that end the Council agrees to write to all Scottish MPs to demand that they take up the case with the Chancellor as a matter of urgency.

The Council recognises with concern that the former First Minister, Jack McConnell, negotiated away a £100m fund of money coming to Scotland to offset council tax rises because the former Chancellor “glared” at him over a table.

On a vote being taken, 10 Members voted for the amendment and 10 for the motion (as amended). There being an equality of votes, Provost Agnew used his casting vote in favour of the amendment which was accordingly declared carried.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Millar, J.McColl, R.McColl, Hendrie and Black declared an interest in the following item and left the meeting during the deliberations thereon.

The Councillors had indicated that they, or a close relative of theirs, had an interest in the outcome of the Single Status negotiations.

(b) Motion by Councillor Geoff Calvert - Single Status Costs

This Council notes that average number of historic pay inequalities means that Single Status and Equal Pay will cost this Council an extra 8.5% increase on the base payroll.

This is an estimated additional cost of £5.7m for 2006/2007, £7.1m for 2007/2008; and £8.3m for 2008/2009.

The Council agrees that the Leader of the Council writes to the Scottish Government and asks them to recognise the above average number of pay inequalities in West Dunbartonshire and seeks additional help in funding Single Status and Equal Pay. Council also agrees that paying for Single Status and Equal Pay should not result in job losses.

Councillor Calvert was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor McBride.

As an amendment, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

This Council notes that successive Labour run councils, dating back to Strathclyde, have all failed to recognise and address the issue of Single Status and Equal Pay. Their failure has resulted in an organisation where inequalities are rife.

The Council recognises that the former Chancellor, now Prime Minister, indicated that Westminster would be considering in excess of £300m worth of additional funding to help organisations in England and Wales deal with the impact of Single Status,

However this Council recognises that no such commitment was made by the former Chancellor in relation to Scotland, via the block grant. This represents a further clear betrayal of Scotland by the Prime Minister and the Labour Party by denying the Scottish Government its fair proportion.

It is also further recognised by the Council that the current Chancellor has made no additional funding available to the Scottish Government in the next 3 years to help deal with the impact of the implementation of Single Status.

Therefore, this Council agrees to write to John McFall MP and demand that in his role as Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, he raises this matter with the Chancellor immediately.

After hearing Councillor C. McLaughlin, Councillor Calvert agreed to accept the undernoted wording as an addendum to his motion.

Therefore, this Council agrees to write to John McFall MP and demand that in his role as Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, he raises this matter with the Chancellor immediately.

Councillor C. McLaughlin, with the consent of Council, agreed to withdraw his amendment.

Thereafter, the Council approved the motion and the addendum.

ADJOURNMENT

On the request of Councillor Bootland, the Council agreed to adjourn for a short period.

The meeting reconvened at 8.45 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

(c) Motion by Councillor William McLaughlin – HMY Britannia

This Council agrees to explore the possibilities of having the HMY Britannia returned to Clydebank on a permanent or temporary basis.

This Council also agrees to communicate with the Royal Navy regarding the prospects of naval ships berthing in Clydebank on goodwill visits in the future.

Councillor W. McLaughlin was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor Bootland.

As an amendment, Councillor Hendrie, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

Council welcomes the motion from Councillor William McLaughlin seeking support for the berthing of Her Majesty's Royal Yacht Britannia and other naval vessels in Clydebank.

This is an attractive proposal for a developing town to use its history of ship building to attract regeneration and tourism.

Council notes that sadly, Her Majesty's Royal Yacht Britannia has no operational engines. The costs associated with towing her from the Forth to the Clyde would be substantial.

Further to a conversation between officers and Clydeport regarding berthing of ships at Clydebank, Council notes that the only area available for this purpose is west of the basin. This area is currently silted up and will cost £30,000 to dredge with ongoing dredging required.

Given the costs associated with this exercise, it is unlikely that Council would be in a position to fund this project.

Council would however like to see HMY Britannia and other vessels berthed in Clydebank. To this end, Council instructs officers to write to John McFall MP and Des McNulty MSP asking them to lobby the Royal Navy and British Government for support and monies to facilitate our goal.

Following discussion and after hearing Councillor Robertson, Councillor W. McLaughlin agreed to accept the undernoted wording as an addendum to his motion:-

Council would however like to see HMY Britannia and other vessels berthed in Clydebank. To this end, Council instructs officers to write to John McFall MP and Des McNulty MSP asking them to ask the Royal Navy and British Government for support and monies to facilitate our goal.

At this point Councillor Hendrie withdrew his amendment with the consent of the Council. Thereafter, the Council agreed to approve the motion and the addendum.

(d) Motion by Councillor Iain Robertson – Future Provision of Council Offices

This Council recognises that as elected members we have a responsibility to ensure the sustainability and development of this organisation.

It is important that the Council does not just merely exist but it is seen to develop and innovate to ensure the organisation does not stagnate.

As the primary employer for the area we must be seen to drive forward a fresh approach to regenerating our communities while developing the organisation.

Garshake and Rosebery Place are old buildings and are costing considerable sums in repairs and maintenance; and we must also ensure that they are fit for purpose for the future of West Dunbartonshire Council.

The Council also has a duty to do what it can to stimulate economic regeneration in our local town centres including consideration being given to relocating as many council facilities directly into the centres as possible.

Therefore the Council agrees to instruct officers to prepare an options appraisal study looking at the long term costs of Rosebery Place and Garshake offices.

The report should look at the cost effectiveness of all options available including relocating these offices directly into the town centres to help deliver sustainable economic regeneration.

Councillor Robertson was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor C. McLaughlin.

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

Council notes that the proposal to '**...undertake a review of the options for re-locating council office accommodation to locations nearer our town centres and public transport hubs and sharing these offices with other public services.**' is contained in the Corporate Plan 2008-2012.

The draft Corporate Plan was first presented to Council on 26 September 2007 and has been approved by Council on 31 October 2007.

Council further notes that the capital costs for any new build will be expensive and therefore it is likely that any option appraisal will include the possibility of a partnership approach with private contractors.

Whilst this Council recognises the significant benefits for economic development that a move of office accommodation would bring, it must be accepted that any decision on the future capital spend for the provision of Council Offices will have to be considered alongside other capital spending priorities.

We need to build new primary schools; and to provide for new care homes and sheltered accommodation to meet improving standards and the identified needs of our ageing population.

On a vote being taken, 8 Members vote for the amendment and 12 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

(e) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin – Local Plan Housing Quota

For sometime now the future of housing in West Dunbartonshire has been driven purely by the commercial forces of the housing market and the need to extend the council tax base.

This short term view has led to a lack of clear planning of housing needs throughout West Dunbartonshire.

The recent housing needs study has indicated that there are identifiable long term shortfalls in the socially rented housing sector in West Dunbartonshire.

In order to offset this shortfall action is required now to put the necessary mechanisms in place to offset this position.

Therefore the Council agrees to instruct officers to prepare a report looking at the findings of the housing options appraisal study with a view to developing quota policies for socially rented housing for inclusion in the current local plan.

A regeneration fund should also be established by the Council to act as a delivery mechanism for future regeneration projects across the Authority.

In addition officers should arrange a meeting with the Convener of Housing and all local housing associations to develop the quota policy and ensure that the rented sector is prepared for the implementation of the policy.

Councillor C. McLaughlin was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor Robertson.

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

This Council notes with satisfaction that West Dunbartonshire is becoming a very attractive place to live and bring up children. The buoyancy of the local housing for sale market is a recognition that policies for the development of old, unattractive, brown field sites for release for new build housing has proved successful and is bringing visible benefits to the residents of West Dunbartonshire. As well as providing new build housing, these policies have brought about the removal of the contaminated residue of our industrial past. This Council accepts that without such investment in private sector housing, the Council would be left with an unmanageable problem of waste and contamination.

Notwithstanding the achievements so far, it is becoming apparent throughout the UK that the provision of high quality homes for rent has not kept pace with the needs of the population. This demand has not been helped by successive governments' determination to remove housing from Local Authority ownership.

Once the findings of the Housing Needs Study is complete, a report will come to Council that will recommend options for the Community Ownership Programme. This Council requests that an options appraisal on the need for enhancing the provision of high quality homes for rent by the imposition of a housing quota on developers be considered within the overall report.

The Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration) was heard in answer to Members' questions.

On a vote being taken, 8 Members vote for the amendment and 11 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

(f) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin – Policing in West Dunbartonshire

At a recent public meeting on Anti-Social behaviour the issue of the number of police officers on shift at anyone time was raised.

The meeting was concerned to learn the low number of officers available to respond to incidents and emergency calls.

The meeting also expressed concern about the new call handling arrangements, being operated by Strathclyde Police, where all calls are now filtered via a call centre in either Govan or Motherwell.

It is important that the Council and the Police work to deliver real reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour for our communities. Therefore the Council agrees to invite the Chief Constable to the next suitable Council meeting to discuss the issues mentioned.

Councillor C. McLaughlin was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor R. McColl.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor McNair, moved:-

This Council notes the concerns that some members of the public have voiced regarding the new Police Contact and Command and Control Centres. In order to ensure that the elected members are fully informed, this Council requests the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Constable to arrange for a visit and tour of the new call handling facilities for all elected members of West Dunbartonshire Council.

In addition, this Council invites the Council's sole representative on the Personnel Sub-Committee of the Strathclyde Joint Police Board to submit a briefing on Police Personnel matters as they affect West Dunbartonshire to all elected members, at his convenience, inviting input from the Divisional Police Commander of 'L' Division as the senior officer responsible for all policing matters in West Dunbartonshire.

Furthermore, this Council recognises the efforts and successes of the Community Safety Partnership and the work of the Task Groups, including the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group. This Council agrees that this work must be supported and instructs the Chief Executive to ensure that any changes to the Community Planning Partnership currently under consideration do not impinge or in any way undermine the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

This Council notes that the current Chief Constable, Sir William Rae, is to retire within the immediate future and the new Chief Constable will not be in post until the New Year. An invitation to the Chief Constable to attend this Council will have little benefit at this time.

On a vote being taken, 8 Members vote for the amendment and 10 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

(g) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin – Financial Settlement

This Council notes with extreme concern that the Scottish Grant settlement from Westminster is the lowest in the last 8 years.

This settlement clearly shows the contempt that the Westminster Government has for the Scottish people and their democratically elected Government.

Furthermore this Council notes with concern the likely impact that the settlement from Westminster is going to have on Scottish Local government funding and indeed this Council.

To that end the Council agrees to write to all Scottish MPs to demand that they take up the case with the Chancellor as a matter of urgency.

Councillor McLaughlin withdrew the above motion with the consent of the Council.

(h) Motion by Councillor May Smillie – Renton Community School

Regenerating and rebuilding communities will form a corner stone of this administration's aspirations. We will work in partner with communities and agencies to deliver sustainable futures for communities and services.

As part of this approach the Council will explore innovative ways of delivering services in communities and welcomes the approach from Cordale Housing Association concerning a partnership approach to build a new village community school and other facilities.

This administration accepts that a considerable amount of work needs to be done to assess the viability of the proposal and therefore instructs officers to meet with the Associations' Directors to develop an options appraisal for the project.

Councillor Smillie was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor Robertson.

As an amendment, Councillor McGlinchey, seconded by Councillor Millar, moved:-

Council notes that the Executive Director of Educational Services informed the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 12 September that a report on phase 2 Schools Regeneration Programme will be presented to the October Council meeting.

Council also notes that the Executive Director also informed the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 26 September that a report will be presented to the October Council.

Council further notes that the Executive Director informed the Leader of the Opposition that the report on Phase 2 Schools Regeneration Programme would be completed during October week in order to ensure that a report would be provided to the Chief Executive two weeks prior to the Council meeting on 31 October.

Council is extremely concerned that these commitments have not been adhered to. Council agrees that the decision making process in relation to phase 2 Schools Regeneration Programme must be open and transparent and that consequently a report on phase 2 of the Schools Regeneration Programme must be presented to all Councillors for consideration.

The Chief Executive addressed Council and advised on the reasons why the report on Phase 2 of the Schools Regeneration Programme had not yet been submitted to Council.

On a vote being taken, 8 Members vote for the amendment and 10 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

(i) Motion by Councillor William Hendrie – St. Margaret’s Hospice

This Council recognises the unique care provided to people by St. Margaret’s Hospice. Council condemns Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board’s plans to remove service from the Hospice. Council instructs its Leader to write to the Hospice pledging our support and to write to the Health Board to protest in the strongest terms.

Councillor Hendrie was heard in support of his motion which was seconded by Councillor McElhill.

As an amendment, Councillor Bootland, seconded by Councillor George Black, moved:-

That in addition to the above motion Council agrees to the following:-

Council recognises the importance of end of life care provided by St. Margaret’s Hospice in Clydebank and condemns the proposal to remove funding support and nursing care from the Hospice.

Council instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, requesting that she intervenes to prevent the loss of these vital services from St. Margaret's Hospital in Clydebank.

Following discussion, Councillor Hendrie agreed to accept the wording of the amendment as an addendum to his motion. Thereafter, Councillor Bootland withdrew her amendment with the consent of Council.

The Council agreed to approve the motion and the addendum.

(j) Motion by Councillor Jonathan McColl – Clydebank Asbestos Group

This Council recognises the good work of Clydebank Asbestos Group. Council understands that funds have been secured by the group for a memorial to those who have suffered from asbestosis.

Council agrees to form a working group to assist Clydebank Asbestos Group in securing an appropriate site in the future for their memorial.

Having heard Councillor McNair, Councillor J. McColl, agreed to accept the undernoted wording as an addendum to his motion:-

This Council condemns unreservedly the recent House of Lords decision regarding pleural plaques.

The Law Lords decision means that pleural plaques will not be considered as a disease and therefore not eligible for compensation.

Council notes that pleural plaques can be a forerunner to asbestosis and mesothelioma and is evidence of exposure to asbestos.

Council believes that this decision is an injustice and a decision clearly in the interest of insurers and not asbestos victims and their families.

Council therefore resolves to contract the Clydebank Asbestos Group to pledge our full support to their campaign to have this decision changed.

Furthermore, Council agrees to write to the Scottish and Westminster Governments expressing our concern and calling for action to be taken to reverse this appalling decision.

The Council agreed to approve the motion and the addendum.

It was noted that any Councillor would be welcome to form part of the Working Group and that the Provost would be asked to Chair the Working Group.

The meeting closed at 10.35 p.m.